

**PETS, INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE,
AND THE ABUSER'S PERSPECTIVE**

by

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BA (Hons), Simon Fraser University 2009

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

In the
Department of Criminology
University of Ottawa

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ABSTRACT

Domestic violence remains a serious social issue. In North America, millions of women are victimized each year, and many of these women are victims of violence at the hand of their intimate partners. A small but growing body of research on domestic violence has shown that companion animals are among the victims of such violence. Abuse of or threats to the pets are used to control, manipulate and emotionally abuse the female partner. However, the majority of this research has focused on the perspective of the abused female partner; the male perspective is missing. Through semi-structured interviews with ten incarcerated men who have committed intimate partner violence (IPV), this thesis explores the abuser's motivations for abuse of the pet as well as their perspective of pets in the context of a violent relationship. The findings indicate that, contrary to previous research, most men do not abuse pets in the relationship, and in fact have positive relationships with their pets. Just as pets are sources of comfort for women in abusive relationships, pets can be sources of comfort and support for the abusive men as well. When incorporated into violence intervention and treatment programs, relationships with pets can provide a venue for men construct a masculine identity in a positive way, and the treatment of animals can illustrate how violence is not an effective solution.

Keywords: intimate partner violence, animal abuse, masculinity, domestic violence, attachment, human-animal relationships

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Sarah and Angie for your time, your help in organizing the interviews, and for making me feel so very welcome.

Thank you to my reviewers, Dr. Colette Parent and Dr. Véronique Strimelle, for your valuable insight, lively conversation, and support for this thesis.

Thank you to my supervisor, Dr. Holly Johnson. You helped me to be a better writer, a better researcher, and to produce a thesis I am very proud of.

Thank you to Alex, Kurt, Marcel, Gabe, Orson, Cameron, Elliot, Randy, Ivan, and Theo for sharing your experiences with me. This research would not have been possible without you.

Thank you to Tane, Coco, and Gabby for the comic relief and unconditional love that made this research process a little bit easier.

Finally, thank you to Bob, for your unfailing support, your unwavering confidence, and above all, your patience. You are my rock.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Violence against women remains a pressing social issue. In North America, millions of women are victimized each year, and many of these women are victims of violence at the hands of their intimate partners (National Institute of Justice, 2007; Statistics Canada, 2011). Over the last four decades, a vast amount of research has been conducted into domestic violence generally, and intimate partner violence in particular. Intimate partner violence (IPV) generally refers to “the physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse that takes place between intimate partners” whereas domestic violence is more encompassing, including violence between family members and who reside in the same household (Hattery, 2009: 12). A small but growing body of research on domestic violence has shown that companion animals are often among the victims of such violence.

Companion animals are an important part of life for many people. General pet ownership estimates for North America indicate that about 60 percent of households have at least one pet (APPMA, 2008; Humane Society of Canada, 2004). Pets are increasingly being considered family members (Cain, 1985; Kurdek, 2009; Maiuro, Eberle, Rastaman, & Snowflake, 2008; Turner, 2005). Pets are often viewed as children or siblings and anthropomorphized (Veevers, 1985) and genuinely grieved when they die (Donohoe, 2005; Turner, 2005). The status of companion animals as family members also creates a vulnerability for being victimized along with the human family members in situations of domestic violence.

The connection between animal abuse and violence against women is made clear with research findings such as “women residing at domestic violence shelters were nearly 11 times

more likely to report that their partner had hurt or killed pets than [those]... who had not experienced intimate violence” (Ascione et al., 2007). Ascione (1998) found that 71 percent of women in a domestic violence shelter reported threats to or harm to their pets by their abuser. McIntosh (2004) reported that 56 percent of her sample of women in Calgary shelters stated that threats or harm to their pets had occurred, and almost half of the women in Faver and Strand’s (2003) study reported the same. Other studies have found that women who experienced domestic violence are much more likely to report that their partner had threatened or harmed their pets than women who have not experienced violence (Ascione et al., 2007; Volant, Johnson, Gullone, & Coleman, 2008). While these results point to the need for further research into the inclusion of pets in the commission of domestic violence, the studies simply reported the connections between domestic violence and pet abuse in terms of risk factors and behaviours, and made no attempt to explain *why* the pet abuse occurred.

Other research has looked at motivations for the abuse of animals. Kellert and Felthous (1985) interviewed incarcerated offenders about animal cruelty committed in childhood. They found nine motivations for the cruelty, including retaliation, entertainment, prejudice, control, sadism, expression or enhancement of aggression, and displacement of anger. Interestingly, Kellert and Felthous (1985) were among the first to report that inmates who had experienced domestic violence in childhood were more likely to report committing animal cruelty. Subsequent research has reported similar motivations for animal cruelty; however, domestic violence (when mentioned) is an aside and not a focused part of the research (e.g., Bickerstaff, 2003; Hensley & Tallichet, 2005a; Hensley & Tallichet, 2008; Merz-Perez & Heide, 2004).

Even though questions about pets are increasingly incorporated into research studies looking at intimate partner violence, there are still gaps in this literature. While there are

researchers who acknowledge the importance of including pets in the victims of domestic violence, much of the research still overlooks companion animals in this context. The studies that do include companion animals in research into domestic violence primarily focus on women's accounts of abuse as most of the samples are drawn from domestic violence shelters (e.g., Ascione, 1998a; Faver & Strand, 2003; McIntosh, 2004; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007). Domestic violence is overlooked in investigations into motivations for animal cruelty. Even when domestic violence is included in research looking at motives for animal abuse, it is conducted without asking the abusive partner and instead using the victim's perspective (e.g., Carlisle-Frank, Frank, & Nielsen, 2004). This leaves a substantial gap in the literature: in situations of intimate partner violence, the abuser's perspective of pets, as well as the motivations for abuse of the pet, is missing. This thesis begins to fill this gap in knowledge about pets, intimate partner violence, and the abuser's perspective.

This research focuses specifically on intimate partner violence committed by men against their female partners, as this type of intimate violence is most prevalent and presents serious impacts in terms of injury and outcomes for women. This thesis explores four research questions.

1. What is the abuser's perspective of the pet in the context of a relationship with intimate partner violence?
2. Is abuse of or threats to the pet used in the abuse of the female partner?
3. What are the motivations of the abuser in situations of intimate partner violence in regards to companion animal abuse?
4. Are abusers' attitudes towards pets a manifestation of general patriarchal attitudes?

The first two questions relate directly to the limited perspective of the abuser in the literature regarding pets and intimate partner violence, as well as the absence of pets in research looking at

motivations for partner abuse. The latter two research questions pertain to the attitudes and motivations of the abuser and are framed from a feminist perspective of intimate partner violence and companion animal abuse.

This research study employs a qualitative approach, drawing heavily from grounded theory. This is appropriate for the relatively understudied nature of the abuser's perspective, and allows unexpected or unanticipated themes to emerge from the data, revealing motivations that may have been overlooked using a quantitative or structured methodology. Through semi-structured interviews with ten incarcerated men who have committed intimate partner violence, this research explores motivations for the abuse of the pet, and the attitudes and perceptions held about the companion animal and animals in general.

This thesis is organized as follows. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 includes prevalence estimates of violence against women, a critique of the methodology used in studies of domestic violence, and a review of explanations for intimate partner violence. Also included in Chapter 2 is a look at the prevalence of animal abuse, the explanations for animal abuse, as well as the research connecting cruelty to animals and intimate partner violence. Chapter 3 contains the methodology used to conduct the research. A section on reflexivity is incorporated, addressing some of the more personal issues that arose during the course of the research. Chapter 4 presents the results, which are discussed in Chapter 5. The discussion in Chapter 5 includes the implications of the findings, the limitations of the study, and directions for future research. Chapter 6 provides overall conclusions for the research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The volume of research into intimate partner violence speaks to the level of concern about the abuse in our society. There are also examples of how animals are used and included in the abuse perpetrated by the men in these relationships from the perspective of women and their advocates. There is much less research examining the inclusion of pets in situations of intimate partner violence from the perspective of violent men.

This chapter reviews the relevant literature on intimate partner violence and theories about the causes of violence in intimate relationships. This chapter also reviews the literature on animal abuse and cruelty, looking at the motivations, prevalence and social impact of the commission of violence against animals. The body of literature that blends the two research foci is reviewed as well, looking at women's accounts of cruelty against their pets and the depth and prevalence of the abuse of animals in connection with the commission of partner violence.

Intimate Partner Violence: Prevalence and Perpetration

Violence against women is indeed a social issue that demands a solution. In Canada, there were over 38,000 incidents of IPV reported to police in 2006, representing approximately 15 percent of all violent incidents reported that year (Bressan, 2008). However, official data in the form of police reports and other criminal justice agency statistics offer a limited view of the prevalence of IPV. This information relies on the incidents of partner violence being reported to the police, and furthermore being correctly categorized by the police officer as an intimate partner assault. Intimate partner violence is very often not reported; only 22 percent of all assaults on a partner are reported to police (Statistics Canada, 2011). In a national population

survey, Statistics Canada (2011) reports that roughly six percent of Canadian adults have experienced violence in their current or previous relationship, and this number jumps to 17 percent when emotional and financial abuse are included. The National Institute of Justice reports that over two million adults in the United States experience physical abuse by their intimate partner each year. What the official data does reveal about the prevalence of IPV is that women are more often the victims of such violence, women suffer more and serious injuries, and women are more likely to be murdered by their partners than are men (National Institute of Justice, 2007; Statistics Canada, 2011).

Self-report data offers a more comprehensive picture of IPV prevalence, but it too has flaws in the reliance on memory and, more importantly, the willingness to disclose victimization. Victimization research can include large and nationally administered surveys, such as the 2004 and 2009 General Social Surveys conducted by Statistics Canada which focused on victimization, or smaller, more in-depth questionnaires and interviews targeting women attending a domestic violence shelter or in a particular community (e.g., Ascione et al., 2007; Dobash & Dobash, 1979). The picture that emerges of IPV based on large scale victimization research is one of the male abuser and female victim. The abuse against the female partner can be severe, encompassing physical, psychological, emotional, financial aspects, and associated with a severe level of injury (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Kurst-Swanger & Petcosky, 2003; Loseke & Kurz, 2005). Non-physical abuse, such as insults, derogatory name-calling, social isolation, and attempts to control behaviour, tend to be more widespread than physical abuse; however, the presence of non-physical abuse increases the likelihood of physical abuse in a relationship (Outlaw, 2009; Salari & Baldwin, 2002). Using data from the 2004 General Social Survey, Ansara and Hindin (2011) found that women were

more likely than men to be subjected to severe physical aggression and control by their partner. Women who reported experiencing severely abusive behaviour, including being kicked, threatened with a weapon, threatened with harm against a loved one, and verbally insulted, also reported a large array of negative psychosocial effects such as depression, low self-esteem and fear (Ansara & Hindin, 2011). The level of injury, both psychological and physical, is more severe for women than men in violent relationships.

Data gathered via in depth interviews with women attending shelters or with agency staff or front-line domestic violence workers also finds that men are the primary perpetrators of IPV, women are more likely to sustain injury, and the psychological repercussions of experiencing IPV are profound and long lasting (e.g., Ascione, Weber, & Wood, 1997; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Fitzgerald, 2005; Flynn, 2000c). These samples are necessarily purposive – the overall aim of these studies is to understand the experiences of the women in situations of IPV. Drawbacks to this data are that it tends to be one-sided as often the perspective of the men in the relationships is missing, and that it could be representing only the worst and most severe cases of IPV. However, the benefit of such qualitative research is a detailed understanding of the kinds of abuses that occur within the abusive relationships, the contexts in which these abuses occur, the generation of ideas as to how to address the needs of women leaving abusive relationships as well as possible prevention strategies.

There is also a body of data indicating that men and women are relatively equal in their perpetration of abuse in intimate relationships, mainly gathered through household surveys (e.g., Straus, 1979), convenience samples of undergraduate students (e.g., Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996), or clinical populations (e.g., Straus, 2011). The majority of the studies supporting the idea of gender symmetry, or family conflict, have used the Conflict

Tactics Scale (CTS) developed by Straus (1979), the revised version (CTS2) developed by Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy and Sugarman (1996), or adaptations of these instruments. The CTS2 is a checklist of 39 behaviours that both the respondent and their partner have engaged in during the previous twelve months. Items range from “said something to spite my partner” representing minor psychological aggression to “used a knife or gun on my partner” representing severe physical aggression (Straus et al., 1996: 308). The limited range of behaviours allows the CTS2 to be easily administered, but also limits the explanatory power of the CTS2 in understanding IPV. In general, this body of research tends to find higher and more equal levels of partner violence than more detailed dedicated victimization surveys, as well as a lower rate of injury (Kimmel, 2002).

Although the CTS and the CTS2 have been used in over 200 studies (Straus, 2011), there are still questions about how well these instruments actually reveal the nature of intimate partner violence. Some of the more common critiques of the idea that couples are mutually violent are that the studies ignore the roles of power and control, the research ignores emotional abuses focusing primarily on physical acts of aggression, and that the data returned by the CTS is too generic and glosses over the experiences of individual women. One of the predominant critiques of the CTS is its focus on counting single acts of violence while failing to take account of the context of or motivation for the behaviours (Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992; Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Kimmel, 2002). Straus et al. (1996) state quite clearly that “the CTS is not intended to measure attitudes about conflict or violence” (284), nor is it able to assess motivations for the violence against an intimate partner. The CTS is designed to be used with other instruments to provide context, but “this is usually not done which gives the appearance that the context and impacts are identical for women and men” (Johnson & Dawson, 2011: 56).

Context is important to the understanding of IPV. Simple tallying of behaviours does not reveal the impact or significance of those behaviours to both partners. Something as simple as a text message or a phone call asking when the partner will be returning home could have very different meanings in an abusive relationship and a non-abusive relationship, and quantitative measures like the CTS miss this nuance.

From the perspective of this research study it is important to note that a question about pets is not included on the CTS nor on dedicated surveys on violence against women. The rationale for the deliberate exclusion of the question was that the CTS2 should be universally applicable to couples, and that not all couples would have pets (Straus et al., 1996). The universality argument does not hold true as not all couples will engage in every single behaviour listed on the CTS2. In fact, the authors note that “torturing a pet can be an important form of psychological abuse,” yet follow with stating that the items chosen “represented a range of severity” (Straus et al., 1996: 290). Deliberately including a question about treatment of pets could add depth to the range of behaviours counted by the CTS, especially since the authors themselves point to the relevance of violence against pets in the severity of abuse committed against an intimate partner.

Both large scale quantitative measures like the Conflict Tactics Scales and qualitative research using small, targeted samples offer a conflicting idea about the prevalence and perpetration of IPV. Victimization surveys provide a picture of the kinds of abuses that mainly women endure at the hands of their male partners. Qualitative in-depth interviews with women who have experienced IPV provide the nuanced descriptions which are missed by quantitative instruments, providing the necessary context for understanding IPV. Research using the Conflict Tactics Scales or similar instruments includes the male perspective that is missing in much of the

research using shelter or agency data, but does so without attention to context and meaning of the violence committed within the relationship.

Typologies

Johnson (2006, 2008), Johnson and Ferraro (2000), and Johnson and Kelly (2008) offer a bridge between the gendered nature of the victimization survey studies and the gender-neutral family conflict research in differentiating between the types of (and motives for) violence in relationships. The typology derived by Michael Johnson and his colleagues is centred on control and coercion (and by extension power differentials) within the relationship, concepts which feature prominently in feminist explanations of IPV. Johnson's typology acknowledges the research showing that some couples are mutually violent, but unlike studies showing gender symmetry in partner violence, "the types themselves are defined by the degree of control, not by the characteristics of the violence" (Johnson, 2006: 1006). The four types of IPV are: situational couple violence, in which there is little evidence of control; violent resistance, where a partner resists the other's attempts to control through violence; separation-instigated violence, which occurs only during the separation phase of the relationship; and coercive controlling violence,¹ in which one partner is violent and controlling of the other (Johnson, 2006; Kelly & Johnson, 2008). Coercive controlling violence, which includes psychological as well as physical abuse, is most commonly seen in the criminal justice system and shelter samples, whereas situational couple violence is more akin to poor conflict management and emotional control, and is the type more often captured by the national victimization surveys and the CTS (Kelly & Johnson, 2008). In offering control as a motive for violence in a relationship, Johnson's typology offers one potential explanation for the differences in prevalence in the literature on IPV.

¹ In response to feedback, the previously named 'intimate terrorism' (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000; Johnson, 2008) was changed to 'coercive controlling violence' (Kelly & Johnson, 2008).

Explanations for Intimate Partner Violence

Feminist Theories

Patriarchy with the attendant concepts of male control, domination, and power over women are fundamental to feminist approaches to and explanations of violence against women (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Dutton, 2006; Felson & Messner, 2000; Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Price, 2005). Patriarchy is defined as both “a structure, in which men have more power and privilege than women, and an ideology that legitimizes this arrangement” (Smith, 1990: 257). Politics and employment are examples of venues to observe the structural aspects of patriarchy. Women are underrepresented in elected positions on all levels of government, and women are still earning less than their male counterparts even with the presence of legislation guaranteeing equality (Brodie, 2008). Ideologically, an example of patriarchy is the persistent double standard about sexuality. The power of men to define female sexuality is especially obvious in the criminal courtroom during cases of rape or sexual assault. The male-dominated discourse is evident in assumptions about sex and consent like ‘she asked for it’ based on the manner of dress, or that ‘she liked it and wanted it’ based on a history of previous sexual partners. These assumptions minimize the control that a woman has over her own body and sexuality, instead making her an object for the use of men (Smart, 1989). A sexually active woman runs the risk of being negatively labelled a ‘slut’ or being blamed for her own sexual assault, thus removing her power to define her own victimization (Price, 2005). These are a few of the ways that patriarchy functions in contributing to and reproducing male power and (relative) female powerlessness, underlining the argument of many feminists that equality is a solution to violence against women.

Some, like Corvo and Johnson (2007) and Dutton (2006, 2007) believe that patriarchy is

too broad a concept to be useful on its own, but should still be incorporated into explanations for IPV. Corvo and Johnson (2007) found that socioeconomic factors at the state level were more strongly correlated to homicides of women than the relative status of women (used to represent patriarchy). Corvo and Johnson (2007) used homicides of women as an indication of general violence against women and IPV. Although homicide of women is a more reliable measure of violence against women, homicide of women is a poor proxy for IPV as homicide occurs in a relatively small proportion of violent relationships (Statistics Canada, 2009; Statistics Canada, 2011). Others, like Smith (1990), believe that patriarchy is a valuable and central concept in explaining IPV. Smith (1990) operationalized patriarchy in a more direct way than Corvo and Johnson (2007), asking 604 randomly selected women how strongly their husbands would agree with belief statements like “a man has the right to decide whether his wife/partner should work outside the home” and “sometimes it is important for a man to show his wife/partner that he is head of the house” (264). Smith (1990) also used the CTS to assess relationship violence, but followed up each response indicating the presence of violence with open-ended questions to capture the context of the violence. Smith (1990) found that “the more patriarchal the husband’s beliefs and attitudes, the greater the probability that he beat his wife” (266), offering support for patriarchy as a root cause of violence against women.

Many researchers, both with and without feminist leanings, advocate an ecological approach (Figure 1), incorporating multiple factors on individual, situational, social and structural levels to help explain IPV (e.g., Dutton, 2006; Heise, 1998; Manley, 2009). Noting that women are victimized predominantly, Heise (1998) asserts that “male dominance is the foundation for any realistic theory of violence, but experience suggests that as a single factor explanation, it is inadequate” (263). Dutton (2006) places patriarchy in a mediating role in the

interactions between men and women; patriarchy is not the cause of IPV but neither does it discourage violent behaviour. Individual differences in personal history, immediate context, employment, peer groups, and culture all work within the macrostructure of patriarchy to influence the commission of IPV.

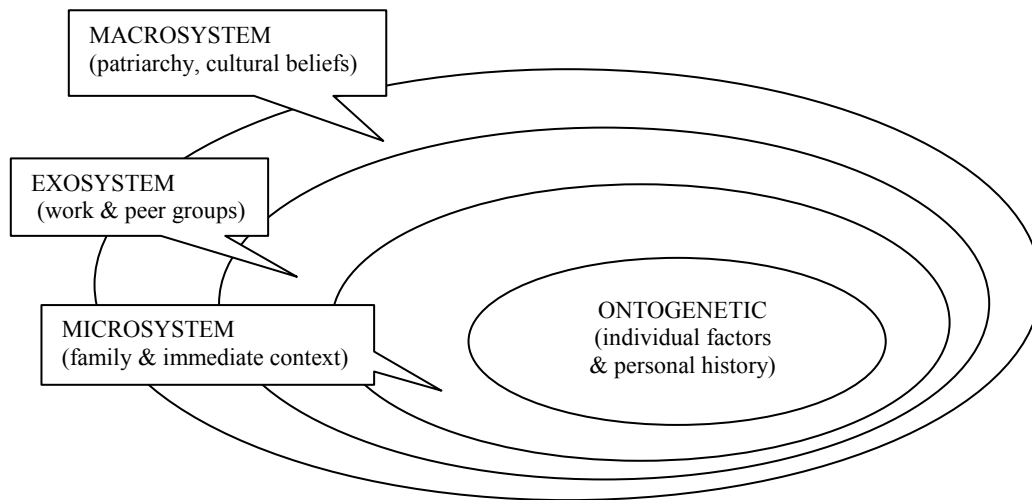


Figure 1: Ecological Model (Dutton, 2006; Heise, 1998)

Explanations based on an ecological model of IPV point to the probability that witnessing partner abuse between parents during childhood may reinforce the belief that women need to be controlled by men and violence is a method of doing so. This attitude of male control and entitlement is then reproduced in one's own romantic relationships. The male partner may be a part of a peer group or community that encourages male power and domination, which then positively reinforces his behaviour and attitudes. The attitudes inherent in the ideology of patriarchy, and reinforced through various structures, allow for the rationalization of controlling behaviour within a relationship as how a man is 'supposed to' behave.

The Central Concept of Control

Regardless of the value placed on patriarchy as a cause of IPV, the need for (and lack of) male control over women has been theorized to be a central concept in feminist explanations. The idea of coercive control “grew inductively out of the day-to-day work of battered women and activists who struggled to make sense of the victimization they saw” (Yllo, 2005: 22). Kelly and Johnson (2008) would argue that “battering” represents one type of IPV, namely coercive controlling violence. The often referenced Power and Control Wheel (Figure 2) is an illustration of the interaction of physical and non-physical modes of control used by abusers in relationships with IPV (Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, 2008). Interestingly, the majority of the control is non-physical in nature, including intimidation, social isolation, emotional abuse, and threats, which is held together by the threat of physical violence. Physical violence does not have to be frequent to be effective as a control strategy; simply the threat can be enough to ensure compliance.

Domination is at the heart of control (Stark, 2007; Yllo, 2005). Zilney (2007) and Simmons and Lehmann (2007) suggest that when abusing one’s partner men are essentially illustrating their dominance by exerting physical control over weaker others, including women, children and animals in the home. According to Stark’s (2007) theory of coercive control, “it is the social endowment men inherit from sexual inequality, not the motives or frequency of these [violent] acts, that allows them (but rarely women) to shape discrete acts into patterns of dominance that entrap partners and make them subordinate” (199). Patriarchal social, legal and economic structures that result in gender inequality provide the norms and rationalization for the coercive control of women by their male partners. For example, it is considered a female role to stay home with the children, thus giving up economic control and power whereas the male

gender role contains the expectation to work and support the family, thus maintaining economic control and power. Belittling and devaluing traditional ‘women’s work’ is not only a part of the coercive control process, but is a normal part of gender relations (Stark, 2007). Belittling and insults are acts that attack the psychological or emotional aspects of a woman, and are much more effective than physical violence for creating and maintaining control (Anderson, 2009; Dutton & Goodman, 2005; Stark, 2007). Stark (2007) compares the coercive control in intimate relationships with the “rituals of degradation” in a hostage situation – pervasive monitoring, insults and degradation, and threats of physical harm are all non-physical behaviours reported by both former hostages and victims of IPV (204). The key is the purpose for all these behaviours: total domination resulting in total control of another person.



Figure 2: The Power and Control Wheel

Stark (2007) offers “solidifying a woman’s generic obedience to male authority” as an explanation for why men exert control in such a pervasive manner (213). This rationale is tautological: men exert coercive control to gain control, and they gain control via exerting coercive control. Though Stark (2007) connects coercive control to traditional ways of doing masculinity and femininity in terms of male dominance and female submission, the theory’s dependence on the social structure as constructing the context in which coercive control exists leaves the individual motivation for the violence unclear.

Wood (2004) interviewed incarcerated men who had committed intimate partner violence and who were participating in a partner violence intervention program. Wood (2004) opened her with the statement “I’m trying to understand *your* perspective on violence in your relationships with women” (560). The themes that arose out of the data were consistent with a feminist approach, such as ‘she disrespected me as a man’, ‘a man has a right to control/discipline his woman’ and ‘men as dominant and superior’ (Wood, 2004). These themes also speak to the masculinity theory insofar that they reference an ideal of maleness, and the behaviours are all in pursuit of achieving the hegemonic masculine ideal – powerful, aggressive, dominant, strong, respected, and successful (Anderson & Umberson, 2001). However, like much of the research targeting IPV, this study failed to ask about pets in the relationship, even as it provided evidence to support feminist assumptions about patriarchal control and power being motivating factors in domestic violence generally (Wood, 2004).

Masculinity Theory

Masculinity theory takes its foundation from feminism in the attention to male power, privilege and domination as the root of violence against women, but brings in how men and women ‘do’ gender and the effect on social interactions, including perpetration and victimization

of IPV. Masculinity theorists like Kimmel, Connell, and Messerschmidt agree that male power, privilege and domination are part of the explanation for male violence against women, but argue that not all men hold the same power or even access to power (Connell, 2002; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kimmel, 2002; Kimmel, 2007; Messerschmidt, 1986; Messerschmidt, 1993). Just as men hold power over women (generally speaking), men also hold power over other men based on factors like age, socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity. Gender, according to masculinity theorists, is an action and a process (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Part of ‘doing gender’ is exerting dominance over weaker others (i.e., women, children, animals, and other men) as required by the hegemonic masculine ideal of strength, power, and control. Masculinity theory looks at how men use violence against women to do masculinity, to feel powerful, in one sphere of life when they experience an inability to do masculinity in other spheres of life.

The traditional gender role for the male partner in a relationship is “dominant, strong, authoritarian, aggressive, and [the] rational provider for the family” whereas the female partner is typically “dependent, passive, submissive, [and] soft” (McCue, 2008: 15). The masculine is defined in opposition to the feminine. Even the differences in violent behaviour are defined oppositionally with men defining their own violence as “rational, effective, and explosive” and defining women’s violence as “hysterical, trivial, and ineffectual”, essentially painting themselves as powerful and women as powerless (Anderson & Umberson, 2001: 363).

When the traditional female gender roles are challenged or violated, violence can be the result (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Reidy, Shirk, Sloan, & Zeichner, 2009; Salari & Baldwin, 2002). In an interesting twist on the Milgram experiments on obedience to authority, Reidy et al. (2009) used the administration of electrical shocks to a female ‘competitor’ to measure the connection between gender role violation and aggression. The male participants were allowed to

overhear their female ‘competitor’ (actually a recording) respond to questions with statements either supporting a hyperfeminine gender role in a desire to be a homemaker and stay home with the children or a hypofeminine gender role expressing no desire for children or marriage and instead being career focused. The male participants who adhered to a hypermasculine ideal (embracement of violence and domination of women) were more likely to use excessive aggression as measured by higher shock values against a hypofeminine woman than a hyperfeminine woman (Reidy et al., 2009). Though this study took place in a laboratory setting using undergraduate students, the behaviour tends to look very similar in clinical samples of men who have committed IPV against their female partners. The men interviewed by Anderson and Umberson (2001) used violence as an effective but temporary way to “reconstruct men as masculine and women as feminine” (375). Hattery (2009) interviewed men recruited from a domestic violence intervention program as well as men in the community who had committed IPV but were not involved in the criminal justice system. Hattery (2009) described the genesis of the physical violence by one of the men in her study: “When she does not deliver his meal on time she is disregarding her role as a good wife” (111). Challenges to the traditional feminine gender role in holding attitudes that are considered to be more masculine (Reidy et al., 2009), or violation of the expected behaviour inherent in the feminine ideal (Anderson & Umberson, 2001; Dobash & Dobash, 1979) are two possible explanations for IPV from the masculinity perspective.

Threats to the traditional gender roles of men and their masculinity also represents an increased risk for violence against women. Challenges to the specific masculine trait of financial success often results in physical and psychological violence against a female partner (Hattery, 2009; Moore et al., 2010; Salari & Baldwin, 2002). Some of the men interviewed by Hattery

(2009) felt as though they were inadequate or a failure when compared to their partner's financial contribution to the relationship, while others felt like they were being 'nagged' for not earning enough money. These feelings were treated by the men as reasons for their violence against their partners with the violence being a way to reassert their masculine power and authority in the home (Hattery, 2009). The connection between partner violence and income differences between the partners was also noted by Salari and Baldwin (2002). When the female partner made more money or had a higher status occupation than the male partner, she was more likely to be the victim of physical violence causing injury. Salari and Baldwin (2002) theorized that violence "may be used to shift the balance of power" back to a position favourable to the male partner, or that men "may use aggression as a means of maintaining control and power over a woman who otherwise would become more independent and less reliant on the relationship" (545). The relative inability to be the primary provider for the family, either via unemployment or underemployment, caused conflict in the relationships (Hattery, 2009; Salari & Baldwin, 2002). Essentially the masculine responsibility of being the 'breadwinner' was being challenged and the hegemonic ideal of financial affluence was being undermined, resulting in justification for assaulting their female partner.

Challenges to the (hetero)sexuality and sexual ability of men is another specific trigger for physical and psychological violence against a female partner (Hattery, 2009; Moore et al., 2010). Jealousy over real or perceived sexual competition for or infidelity by their partner was a trigger identified by both the men and women individually in Hattery's (2009) study. This perception/fear about infidelity directly challenged the masculine ideal of sexual prowess, which was connected to physical violence in the effort to control their partner's behaviour and maintain/regain their personal image as a sexual stud. Oppositely, Moore et al. (2010) found that

stress associated with sexual performance within a relationship was more likely to result in verbal and psychological aggression than physical aggression, whereas challenges to the traditional masculine sexual role of ‘playboy’ was associated with both physical and psychological aggression. Stress generated by internal concerns about ability to achieve the hegemonic masculine sexual ideal or direct challenges to sexual prowess by intimate partners in the form of infidelity or insults may result in abusive behaviour in order to demonstrate masculinity (Hattery, 2009; Moore et al., 2010).

While challenges or threats to masculinity and femininity does increase the risk for violence against women in relationships, most men do not abuse their partners and find other ways to demonstrate masculinity. Men do not use violence if it is not status enhancing – social context matters (Daly & Wilson, 1988; Johnson & Dawson, 2011). In most social contexts violence is not an acceptable way to do masculinity, and instead methods like educational attainment, sport, financial success or sexual prowess are favoured. However, not all men have access to the same resources with which to do their masculinity, and violence may be one resource readily available (Kimmel, 2007). Moore and Stuart (2005) offer an explanation for the variance in commission of IPV as it connects to masculinity theory:

A man may describe himself as tough, powerful, and in control, but these characteristics may only be relevant to partner violence when considering the extent to which he feels that toughness and power are important to him and the extent to which he experiences stress or conflict when he perceived a challenge to his toughness and power (56).

While feminist and masculinity perspectives tend to focus on the social and macro levels of explanation, psychological approaches focus on an individual level of explanation, understanding that individuals exist in a larger (and for the most part patriarchal) social structure. Some research has looked to mental illness, such as schizophrenia or severe depression (McCue,

2008), while other research investigated unbalanced brain chemistry and head injuries as explanations for violence (Dutton, 2006). Additional research has looked at diagnoses like intermittent explosive disorder and the inability to control rage (Dutton, 2007). More recent research from psychology has focused on the explanatory power of personality disorders, attachment theory, and the intergenerational transmission of violence to understand IPV.

Social Learning Theory and Intergenerational Transmission

The negative effects on children in homes with domestic violence has long been documented (Adams, 2009; Ascione, 1998a; Ehrensaft, 2009; Flynn, 2000b; Kellert & Felthous, 1985; Wiehe, 1998). One of the negative effects appears to be an increased risk for victimization or perpetration of IPV in adult relationships. The intergenerational transmission of violence thesis is based on the idea of modelling behaviour of important others, namely parents. Modelling of negative interaction styles continues into relationships with peers in childhood and adolescence. The subsequent positive or negative reinforcement of the behaviour by others cements the behaviours which continue into adulthood (Ehrensaft et al., 2003). Intergenerational transmission has been used to explain the observation that many men who commit IPV have experienced domestic violence in childhood, either via direct abuse or exposure to IPV between their parents.

There are two basic models for the intergenerational transmission of behaviour: specific modelling, where the children model behaviour of their parents in a gendered or role-based way; and generalized modelling, where the children model the behaviour of their parents in a general way (Kalmuss, 1984; Kwong, Bartholomew, Henderson, & Trinke, 2003). For example, with generalized modelling, a child exposed to violence in their family would engage in violence in later interactions with others. With specific modelling, the child would engage in the same

behaviour seen or experienced in their family, such as a son engaging in the abuse of his female partner in a later relationship after witnessing his father abuse his mother in childhood. There tends to be more support for generalized modelling in the literature (Ehrensaft et al., 2003; Ireland & Smith, 2009; Kalmuss, 1984; Kwong et al., 2003). Specific modelling can be very difficult to measure, as there are an unlimited number of factors that would need to be controlled. (West & Dalley, 2004)

Experiencing versus Witnessing Violence

There appears to be a difference in the predictive value between experiencing violence in the family of origin (child abuse, physical punishment) and witnessing violence between the parents in the family. Though behaviours can co-occur, they may have differing long term effects (Ireland & Smith, 2009). Several studies have reported that the observation of parental violence is a better predictor for later severe aggression than the experience of violence (Anderson & Kras, 2007; Ehrensaft et al., 2003; Ireland & Smith, 2009; Kalmuss, 1984; Kwong et al., 2003).

Kalmuss (1984) reported that the experience of being hit by parents or caregivers during adolescence was not a significant predictor for later partner violence, whereas observing parental violence increased the likelihood for both perpetration and victimization of IPV (severe aggression as measured by the CTS) in adult relationships. Following parents and their children for over 20 years, Ireland and Smith (2009) found that when severe IPV between parents was present during adolescence, there was an increased risk for committing IPV as adults. Ireland and Smith (2009) also found that the observation of violence in the home increased the probability that the children would engage in antisocial and aggressive behaviour during adolescence. In their longitudinal study, Ehrensaft et al. (2003) found that both exposure to violence between parents and experience of abuse in childhood were significantly connected to perpetrating IPV in

adulthood; however, exposure to violence had higher odds.

Wareham, Boots and Chavez (2009) found the opposite in that the experience of physical maltreatment was a stronger predictor of minor and severe IPV in adulthood than witnessing IPV during childhood. Using retrospective reports from a sample of men recruited from domestic violence programs, they assessed how often the men received physical punishment in their childhood in the form of “having something thrown” at them, “spanked with an instrument,” or “kicked or hit with a closed fist” (Wareham et al., 2009: 166). Ehrensaft et al. (2003) argue that “excessively coercive punishment may serve as a model for coercive conflict resolution that is learned and generalized from the parent-child relationship to the romantic partner relationship” (742).

Experiencing violence or exposure to violence in the family of origin may encourage attitudes favourable towards the use of violence to solve problems or resolve conflict within the family as well as in other areas of life (Ireland & Smith, 2009; Markowitz, 2001). According to Markowitz (2001), attitudes towards violence mediate the relationship between the experience of violence in childhood and the commission of violence against the spouse and children as an adult. Adams (2009) explored where the attitudes towards the use of violence originated during in-depth interviews with men who committed intimate partner homicide and attempted homicide. He found that the men were “emulating” the attitudes and internalizing the values of their abusive father, either in “a general dislike or antipathy towards women” or in adopting a hypermasculine attitude (Adams, 2009: 224). These were attitudes and values that the men themselves directly connected to their abuse or homicides of their intimate partners.

A commonality among the majority of research explaining the link between experiencing and witnessing violence to explain IPV is the use of the simple presence or absence of physical

abuse as the dependent measure assessed, often using the Conflict Tactics Scales (Straus, 1979; Straus et al., 1996). What is missing from these analyses, and what could be the critical factor in explaining why some children exposed to IPV model the behaviour in their adult relationships is the meaning or the motive attached to the IPV. Is the IPV an inability to handle stress, or is it due to a desire to control the partner's behaviour? Is the aggression aimed at intimidation, or is it an attempt to create distance in the relationship? A simple count of the behaviours is not enough to answer these questions.

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory was originally developed by Bowlby (1969) to explain infant attachment or bonding to parents or caregivers, and its later impact on adult relationships (Bartholomew, 1990). According to Bowlby's original thesis, the need for attachment is separate from but just as important as food or sex in terms of human evolution; attachment to others is a primary, basic drive of all humans (Bretherton, 1992). Where humans differ is in their attachment styles, defined as "constellations of thoughts and feelings about intimacy" (Dutton, 2007: 151), which affect how the individual behaves in relationships. Early attachment theorists determined three attachment styles: anxious/ambivalent, in which intimacy is desired but rejected at the same time; secure, in which intimacy is accepted and nourished; and anxious/avoidant, in which intimacy is actively avoided (Dutton, 2007; Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Attachment theory has been used to understand adult romantic relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), as well as relationships characterized by IPV (Allison, Bartholomew, Mayseless, & Dutton, 2008; Bartholomew & Allison, 2006; Dutton, Saunders, Starzomski, & Bartholomew, 1994; Henderson, Bartholomew, Trinke, & Kwong, 2005). The same attachment styles that operate in infancy can be used to understand the communication and conflict in adult intimate

relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Roberts & Noller, 1998). Research into adult relationships has revised the three infant attachment styles to four attachment styles (Allison et al., 2008; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Dutton et al., 1994). Figure 3, presented by Allison et al. (2008), portrays the features and characteristics of the four attachment styles now commonly accepted by attachment theorists. Developed by Bartholomew (Bartholomew, 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), the attachment styles of *secure*, *preoccupied* (or ambivalent), *dismissing-avoidant*, and *fearful-avoidant* (or anxious-avoidant), are very similar to the initial three attachment styles; they vary based on the degree of trust of self and others, comfort level with intimacy, and self-image. According to Bartholomew (1990), “the defining features of infant-mother attachment characterize most love relationships: a desire for closeness to the attachment figure, especially under stress; a sense of security from contact; and distress or protest when threatened with loss or separation” (158).

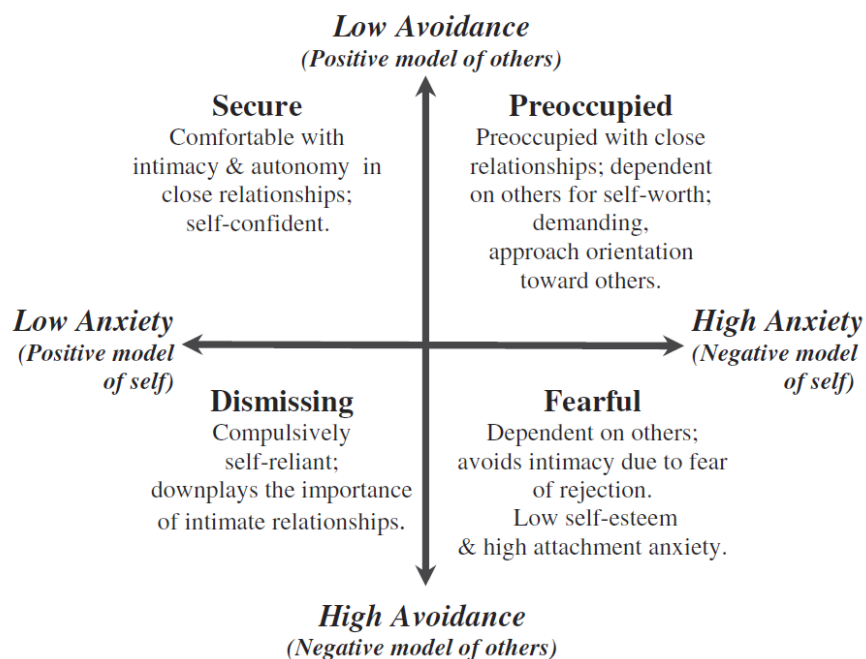


Figure 3: Bartholomew's Model of Adult Attachment

Of the attachment styles, individuals with the secure style are the least likely to experience or commit IPV. Dutton et al. (1994) assessed a group of men referred for treatment for partner violence, a control group of men who had not committed partner violence, and a sample of the female partners from each group. Fearful and preoccupied attachment styles were significantly higher in the group referred for treatment, and the dismissing attachment style was not significantly different between the two groups of men. Features of abusive relationships like anger, jealousy as well as domination and emotional abuse were most strongly and positively correlated with the fearful attachment style, while these same features were negatively correlated with the secure attachment style. The preoccupied style was not correlated with anger, but showed a weak but significant correlation with jealousy, dominance and emotional abuse. Interestingly, this correlation was run on the entire sample of men, blending the treatment and control groups, and still the fearful attachment style indicated the greatest degree of relationship violence. Although other research returns slightly different results (e.g., Allison et al., 2008; Henderson et al., 2005), the consistent finding is that anxiety over attachment (or abandonment), whether in a fearful or preoccupied attachment style, increases the risk of IPV perpetration.

Individuals with anxious attachment styles are more sensitive to the potential of abandonment, and are more likely to interpret innocent acts as threats to the relationship (Bartholomew & Allison, 2006). Individuals who have high levels of abandonment anxiety are also more likely to use “dominating and coercive tactics during conflict” (Roberts & Noller, 1998: 326). Dutton et al. (1994) hypothesize that “an assaultive male’s violent outburst may be a form of protest behavior directed at his attachment figure (in this case, a sexual partner) and precipitated by perceived threats of separation or abandonment” (1368). Men who are abusive have a history of an absent or dismissive mother (the primary attachment figure in childhood),

which fosters a repressed anger based on the conflict between the need for closeness and the inability to express the anger at rejection due to the fear of further rejection or abandonment (Dutton, 2006; Dutton, 2007). Essentially, men learn to anticipate that women in their lives will abandon and reject them, and utilize controlling and abusive behaviours to “diminish their anxiety about being abandoned” (Dutton, 2007: 165). It is the anxiety over the potential abandonment or perceived rejection that causes anger, and the anger or abuse is a way to retain the partner’s affection and remove the threat of abandonment. While this seems like a backwards approach to maintain a relationship, the (attempted) control over the partner reduces the anxiety of abandonment. In addition, the “violent outburst” noted by Dutton et al. (1994) is not necessarily a physical attack, but could take the form of insults or threats to discourage the partner from leaving the relationship.

Instead of simply looking at one partner in the relationship, the interaction between the partners and their respective attachment styles offers a relational perspective of IPV. Roberts and Noller (1998) explain that when attachment styles conflict in regards to the need for intimacy it can lead to the use of violence. An anxiously attached person needs/desires a high degree of intimacy, but may interpret the need for emotional distance expressed or exhibited in someone with a dismissive attachment style to be a threat of separation, and the anxious individual may react with violence (Roberts & Noller, 1998). Allison et al. (2008) identified two strategies in negotiating the conflicting attachment styles: pursuit and distancing. Pursuit strategies were intended to increase closeness or intimacy, and were most often used by preoccupied individuals. Pursuit strategies included behaviours like “verbal or physical abuse, clinging, demanding or needy behaviour, and displays of jealousy” (Allison et al., 2008: 136). The partners with fearful or dismissing attachment styles typically employed distancing strategies to counteract the pursuit

strategies, including leaving the home or simply ceasing to talk to the partner. Violence could be used to create distance and push the partner away, or to bring the partner closer (pursuit), by “forc[ing] one partner to focus on the other” (Allison et al., 2008: 139).

Connected to conflicting attachment styles, violence in a relationship can result when the attachment needs of either partner are not being met (Allison et al., 2008; Bartholomew & Allison, 2006). Henderson et al. (2005) found that preoccupied attachment was the sole attachment style that predicted for both perpetration and receipt of intimate partner violence in their community sample of men and women. Given the dependence on and investment in relationships, preoccupied individuals have very high expectations of their partners, and “can become increasingly demanding and potentially aggressive when attachment needs are not met” (Henderson et al., 2005: 226-7). Regarding victimization, Henderson et al. (2005) also speculate that preoccupied individuals may have unrealistic expectations about their partners’ ability to change or may excuse their partner’s behaviour, thus resulting in continued victimization. Additionally, the authors mention that preoccupied individuals may equate the physical or psychological abuse with intimacy or greater involvement in the relationship.

Personality Disorders

Another area of inquiry offering an explanation for IPV is personality disorders (Dutton, 1995; Dutton & Bodnarchuk, 2005; Dutton, 2007; Ehrensaft, Cohen, & Johnson, 2006; South, Turkheimer, & Oltmanns, 2008; Thornton, Graham-Kevan, & Archer, 2010; Tweed & Dutton, 1998). South, Turkheimer and Oltmanns (2008) found that “a person’s self-reported level of total [personality disorder] symptoms was associated with verbal aggression and partner violence” (774), explaining that people with personality disorders tend to be inflexible in their interpersonal relationships, which may exacerbate a conflict or disagreement. The *Diagnostic*

and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders lists ten different disorders, organized into three ‘clusters’ based on similar features (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Cluster A encompasses the ‘odd/eccentric’ personality disorders of paranoid, schizoid, and schizotypal, while Cluster C includes the ‘anxious’ personality disorders of avoidant, dependent, and obsessive-compulsive (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Cluster B contains the ‘dramatic’ personality disorders of antisocial, borderline, histrionic, and narcissistic.

Some research has found that Cluster A personality disorders are correlated with IPV, and have predictive value for future IPV (Ehrensaft et al., 2006; Ehrensaft et al., 2006; South et al., 2008; Thornton et al., 2010). The traits inherent in Cluster A’s disorders (e.g., mistrust, suspicion, cognitive distortions) are the same traits observed in abusive men, manifesting in jealousy, control, suspicion and hostility (Ehrensaft et al., 2006). In their sample of university students, Thornton et al. (2010) found that Cluster A as opposed to Cluster B personality disorders were predictive of IPV perpetration by men, whereas Cluster B personality disorders predicted IPV perpetration by women, indicating a difference in risk factors based on sex.

Much of the research into personality disorders and IPV has illustrated a strong correlation between the Cluster B antisocial and borderline personality disorders and IPV. Antisocial personality disorder is characterized by deceitfulness, impulsive behaviour, aggressiveness, callousness, lack of empathy and disregard for the rights or feelings of others, while borderline personality disorder is characterized by fear of abandonment and rejection, impulsivity, difficulty controlling anger, instability in personal relationships, and mood swings (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Ehrensaft et al. (2006) found that Cluster B disorders predicted IPV, and the most severe abuse was committed by men reporting features of antisocial personality disorder. Tweed and Dutton (1998) returned the same result in their study, finding

that the men who presented with features of an antisocial personality also evidenced low affect, were instrumental in their use of aggression, and committed more severe violence against their partners.

On the other hand, Edwards et al. (2003) allude to the “impulse control” or “hair-trigger temper” prevalent in individuals with both antisocial and borderline personality disorders as a primary factor in the perpetration of IPV (4). Edwards et al. (2003) assessed men convicted of spouse abuse (divided into high and low violence) and a group of men convicted of non-violent offences for personality disorders. They found that spousal assault was positively correlated with both antisocial and borderline personality disorders as well as impulsivity and impulsive aggression, with no significant differences between the groups. This contrasts Tweed and Dutton’s (1998) study which found that men presenting with borderline personality disorder committed less serious violence, and they were more impulsive and emotional in their use of aggression.

The majority of Donald Dutton’s research has been looking at ‘the abusive personality’ which is based on the borderline personality (e.g., Dutton, 1994; Dutton, 1995; Dutton & Bodnarchuk, 2005; Dutton, 2007). ‘Borderline personality organization’ (BPO) includes the same traits included in the borderline personality disorder, but on a less serious scale (Dutton, 1995; Dutton, 2007). Dutton (1995, 2007) asserts that men with BPO are more frequently the perpetrators of IPV than individuals presenting with antisocial or other personality disorders. Aspects of BPO are the fear of abandonment, jealousy, manipulation, impulsiveness, mood swings and intense anger (Dutton et al., 1994; Dutton, 1994; Dutton, 2007). The fear of abandonment and the resultant “intimacy-anger” characteristic of individuals with BPO are the pivotal features that contribute to the abuse of partners. As Dutton (1994, 1995) explains, when

the individual perceives a threat of rejection or abandonment, they react with intimacy-anger, which is extreme anger born out of the need for/fear of intimacy. Research conducted by Dutton and colleagues (Dutton et al., 1994; Dutton, 1994; Dutton, 1995; Dutton, 2007; Tweed & Dutton, 1998) has shown that men who commit IPV are significantly more likely to evidence the traits in the BPO than those who do not engage in IPV. In addition, BPO is significantly and strongly correlated with increased emotional and physical abuse of partners (Dutton, 1994).

Personality disorders, attachment theory, and intergenerational transmission could work together to explain the risks of perpetration of IPV. Dutton's work on the abusive personality draws very heavily on attachment theory to explain both the etiology of the traits and 'intimacy-anger' (e.g., Dutton et al., 1994; Dutton, 1995; Dutton, 2007). Disruptions in attachment during childhood based on the observation or the experience of violence in the home have been connected to the development of personality disorders (Ehrensaft et al., 2006). Other research has tried to incorporate intergenerational transmission with attachment theory (Corvo, 2006) to explain exactly how and why men come to abuse their partners. While these combined theories offer more comprehensive explanations, there still appears to be something missing from the explanations. Animal abuse could be part of what is missing.

Animal Abuse: Prevalence and Perpetration

Animal abuse is a hidden or covert behaviour (Agnew, 1998; Ascione, 2005; Kurst-Swanger & Petcosky, 2003), and prevalence estimates on prevalence of animal abuse are difficult to attain. Abuses against wild and unowned animals are even harder to count unless there is a human witness who reports the cruelty. Much of the academic research reporting prevalence of animal abuse uses parental reports about the children's behaviour with or without self reports from children or youth (Baldry, 2003; Baldry, 2005), retrospective reports from

undergraduate students (Henry, 2004), or incarcerated populations (Miller & Knutson, 1997) to estimate the prevalence in the general population. The research using reports from children and/or their parents shows that children tend to reveal a higher rate of animal cruelty behaviour than is reported by their parents, illustrating the hidden nature of the behaviour. Dadds, Whiting and Hawes (2006) found that about half of the children in their non-clinical sample reported committing at least one act of animal abuse, while only one quarter of the parents reported their children had engaged in animal abuse. In her sample of nearly 1400 youth, Baldry (2003) found that 50 percent reported committing animal abuse.

Studies using retrospective reports have reported a prevalence of approximately 20 percent in the undergraduate populations (Flynn, 1999; Henry, 2004; Miller & Knutson, 1997). Incarcerated populations showed a much higher prevalence of animal abuse, ranging from 43 percent (Hensley & Tallichet, 2008) to nearly 68 percent (Miller & Knutson, 1997). There are several limitations to this research. Retrospective reports have limitations of memory recall, and the social desirability factor related to reporting acts of abuse against animals likely resulted in underreporting rather than overreporting of abuse. Most importantly, this research only assesses animal cruelty in childhood, not in adulthood.

Prevalence estimates in adult populations are much harder to come by. Records kept by the humane societies and animal control agencies are variable – some keep excellent and detailed records including the alleged or known perpetrators, others do not (Ascione, 2005; Stevenson, 2009). The website Pet Abuse (www.pet-abuse.com) is the only database compiling cases of cruelty and abuse from several countries including Canada and the United States, and following up on the status of investigations and prosecutions. Anyone can submit a case of cruelty to the database, but the requirements include the name of the (alleged) abuser and that the offence was

reported to the authorities.² Although the Pet Abuse database contains over 17,000 cases, often the identity of the individual who committed the animal cruelty is not known, thus the number of cases is a vast underrepresentation of the amount of cruelty to animals that is likely occurring and remains undiscovered.

Even with the limitations in the research showing prevalence of animal cruelty, there are a few trends that stand out.³ Males, regardless of age, are most often the perpetrators of acts of animal cruelty, being two to three times more likely to commit animal abuse than females (Arluke, Levin, Luke, & Ascione, 1999; Baldry, 2003; Flynn, 1999; Miller & Knutson, 1997). The age trend of animal abuse follows that of other crimes, peaking in adolescence and early adulthood and declining with age. In 58 percent of the cases prosecuted for animal cruelty reviewed by Arluke et al. (1997) the offender was under the age of 21.

Explanations for Animal Abuse

The limited data on the prevalence of animal abuse does not offer an explanation as to why these individuals are cruel to animals. Though the research is not nearly as extensive as the research into IPV, there have been a number of theories applied to the behaviour of animal abuse, and interestingly, these are many of the same theories that have been used to explain IPV. Psychological explanations including conduct disorder and other mental disorders have included animal cruelty as a symptom or have been used to explain the acts of animal cruelty, but these studies have primarily focused on childhood animal cruelty in clinical or psychiatric populations (American Psychiatric Association, 2000; Ascione, 1998b; Ascione, Friedrich, Heath, & Hayashi, 2003; Felthous, 1980; Tapia, 1971). Feminist theories with the attendant concepts of

² The complete list of requirements for submitting a case to the Pet Abuse database can be found at http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/cruelty_database/submitting_cases.php.

³ The notable exception to both the age and gender trends is hoarding, which is predominantly perpetrated by elderly women (Gerbasi, 2004).

male control, masculinity theory with the concepts of male power and domination, intergenerational transmission and social learning theory are some of the more common theories applied to understand animal cruelty. Mostly however, these theories use animal abuse as a risk factor in the commission of violence against humans. Theories such as the generality of deviance and the violence graduation hypothesis fall firmly into this category.

Feminist and Masculinity Perspectives

Feminist and masculinity perspectives on power and control have been applied to the understanding animal cruelty in general as well as in connection with IPV. Adams (1995) presents several reasons based on a feminist understanding of intimate partner violence, including that IPV is used as a demonstration and/or confirmation of masculine power, to teach submission, and to sever relationships, all of which can be applied to relationships with pets. Adams (1995) states that “animals are objectified, ontologized as useable, and viewed instrumentally” in the commission of partner abuse (78) – pets have low status in relation to the patriarchal male head of the family and simply serve as instruments of control. Adams (1998) also argues that patriarchy implies a value hierarchy, in which women and animals are at the bottom, which increases their vulnerability and justifies their abuse by the male in the relationship. Adams’ work is a theoretical application which has not been empirically tested, mainly using anecdotal evidence and victim testimony. Yet the two articles by Adams are two of the most widely cited in the literature which counts pets as victims of family violence.

Few studies have tried to answer the question about a connection between pet abuse and patriarchal attitudes. Zilney (2007) looked at a general community sample for (among other correlations) the correlation between dominionistic and patriarchal attitudes and animal cruelty. She found that those who held patriarchal attitudes were more likely to engage in both animal

abuse and partner violence. However, the study was not designed to get at the motivations of the abusers, using very structured telephone surveys with limited response availability. Fitzgerald (2005) explored the motivations of abusers from the woman's perspective and found support for the feminist paradigm in her research. Fitzgerald (2005) summarizes the interaction between a feminist approach to IPV, animal abuse, and the motivations of the abusive partners:

While animal abuse in the context of family violence is clearly related to issues of control in this sample, as hypothesized using the feminist power and control perspective of family violence, it appears to be related in two ways. First of all, the maltreatment of a pet can be instrumentalized in the abuse of others to gain power and control over them. Secondly, the abuser may feel a lack of control over the relationship between his partner and the pets that he does not own and control and may be angered by her self-determined behaviour related to the pets, and may appear to remove them or abuse them out of jealousy (162).

Social Learning and Intergenerational Transmission

Social learning theory has also been used to explain the commission of animal cruelty, though it has mainly focused on the commission of and exposure to animal abuse in childhood. Social learning theory incorporates peers and important others in the modelling and learning of behaviour, whereas intergenerational transmission has a more specific focus on behaviour modelled in the family, and then imitated by the child or adolescent. Henry (2004) found that observing animal abuse increased the likelihood that the participant also engaged in acts of animal cruelty in his sample of undergraduate students, however he did not ask who had committed the observed abuse. Hensley and Tallichet (2005) also examined both the observation of and participation in acts of animal cruelty in their sample of incarcerated offenders. Witnessing a family member or a friend hurt or kill an animal was positively correlated ($r = .29$ and $r = .24$ respectively) with the number of times the respondents hurt or killed an animal (Hensley & Tallichet, 2005b). The fact that these were significant correlations and witnessing a

neighbour commit animal cruelty was not correlated with the respondent's own acts of animal abuse indicates moderate support for social learning theory in modelling the behaviour of important figures in one's life.

Some of the research in this area presents a contradiction between the influence of violence within the family and translating the behaviour to violence against animals, and witnessing the actual abuse of animals and imitating the behaviour. Kellert and Felthous (1985), Baldry (2003), and others have shown that children who have been exposed to domestic violence, either by experiencing the abuse themselves or witnessing violence between their parents, are more likely to abuse animals. Kellert and Felthous (1985) examined three groups in regards to animal cruelty: aggressive incarcerated offenders, non-aggressive incarcerated offenders, and a non-criminal community sample. Though animal abuse was more prevalent in the aggressive group, participants who revealed committing animal abuse in childhood also reported exposure to domestic violence in childhood regardless of group membership (Kellert & Felthous, 1985). Baldry (2003) found that of the youth in her sample, almost all of those reporting engaging in animal abuse also reported that they had been exposed to violence between their parents. Unlike Kellert and Felthous (1985) however, Baldry (2003) separated the effects of witnessing a parent harming an animal from witnessing a peer harming an animal, finding that the peer relationship increased the odds of animal abuse more than the parental relationship though both were significant. This result could be a factor of the age of the sample (range from 9 to 17 years old; mean age 12.1), as the influence of the peer group grows in adolescence, overtaking the influence of the family as a site of socialization.

The research by Ascione, primarily using samples of women in domestic violence shelters, pays attention to the children's experiences with animal abuse in addition to the

women's experiences. Ascione et al. (2007) discovered that the shelter-based women who reported that their partners committed animal abuse also reported that the children had witnessed the abuse of the pet. Between maternal reports and the children's self-disclosure, nearly 40 percent of children had engaged in abuses against the family pet (Ascione et al., 2007). This would indicate support for the intergenerational transmission of animal cruelty for some of the children. The most interesting result of Ascione et al.'s (2007) study was the revelation that nearly half of the children had actively placed themselves in harm's way to protect their pet from the abuse perpetrated against them. This would contradict both social learning and intergenerational transmission in that the children evidence the opposite attitude and behaviour than is being modelled in the home.

Violence Graduation Hypothesis versus Generality of Deviance

Linked to learning theories is the violence graduation hypothesis of animal abuse, which in its simplest form states that children who abuse animals 'graduate' to violence against humans. The scores of evidence (mainly anecdotal) of serial killers (e.g., Ressler, Burgess, Hartman, Douglas, & McCormack, 1986; Wright & Hensley, 2003) or mass murderers (e.g., Beirne, 2004; Kellert & Felthous, 1985) who begin with killing animals is an example of the popularity of this thesis. The key to the violence graduation hypothesis is the temporal aspect: a person must *begin* with committing animal cruelty and *then* commit violence against people. This temporal aspect is difficult to prove, though several studies have tried to validate the violence graduation hypothesis.

The most common method used in violence graduation research is to identify convicted violent offenders in adulthood and retrospectively map self reports of animal cruelty in childhood or adolescence. Tallichet and Hensley (2004) assessed the degree of interpersonal

violence in an incarcerated sample of men based on the number of convictions for murder, attempted murder, rape, attempted rape, and aggravated assault. Animal cruelty was measured by the question “how many times have you hurt or killed animals, other than for hunting” (Tallichet & Hensley, 2004: 310). Of the variety of other variables considered (e.g., age, race, education, rural/urban residence, parental marital status), committing animal cruelty was the most powerful predictor of committing repeated acts of interpersonal violence in adulthood. The respondents who had engaged in animal cruelty prior to adulthood had more convictions for violent offences (average 1.33) than those who had not committed animal abuse (average .56) (Hensley & Tallichet, 2009).⁴ Hensley, Tallichet and Dutkiewicz (2009) replicated Tallichet and Hensley’s (2004) study with a different sample of incarcerated men and added simple assault and robbery to the list of violent offences with nearly identical results. Participants who had a higher number of convictions for violence offences were more likely to have committed animal cruelty in childhood or adolescence (Hensley, Tallichet, & Dutkiewicz, 2009).

Other studies, such as Kellert and Felthous (1985), Merz-Perez, Heide, and Silverman (2001), and Merz-Perez and Heide (2004), have all found the same as Hensley, Tallichet and colleagues: aggressive or violent offenders are more likely to report committing animal cruelty in childhood. Aside from the problems inherent in retrospective reports, the flaw with these studies is that the men are incarcerated in adulthood, and likely for lengthy sentences given the offences for which they have been convicted. Assessing the presence of childhood animal cruelty is only one part of supporting the violence graduation hypothesis. The other piece of information necessary is the presence of animal cruelty in adulthood, a piece that none of the above studies mention. According to the principles of the violence graduation hypothesis, the focus of the

⁴ The same dataset has been used in other studies by Hensley and Tallichet and their colleagues.

aggression shifts from or graduates to violence against humans, which implies a desistance of violence against animals in favour of violence against humans in adulthood. When the participants are incarcerated, in some cases serving life sentences, and therefore do not have the ability to offend against human or animal, accounting for the alternative explanation is not possible which therefore weakens the support for the violence graduation hypothesis.

Unlike the violence graduation hypothesis, the generality of deviance hypothesis states that animal abuse is part of spectrum of criminal and deviant behaviours, and is not specific to interpersonal violence nor is animal abuse temporally rooted in childhood. This tends to be a less common view in the literature on animal cruelty. Most of the research tends to support the violence graduation hypothesis in some form, while generality of deviance is either modestly supported or not studied. The studies that do examine generality of deviance typically do so in contrast to the violence graduation hypothesis.

Interpersonal violence is fairly straightforward to quantify, but conceptualizations of deviance are more variable in the animal cruelty research arena. Zilney (2007) measured deviance through three items on her questionnaire: participation in activities that were known to be illegal, experimenting with or using drugs, and consuming alcohol. There was no elaboration about participation in illegal activities, answers were simply recorded as a yes/no; positive responses were followed by a request to identify the stage in life in which the participation occurred: child, teenager, or adult (Zilney, 2007). This is a very narrow measure of deviance, and the argument could be made that it failed to capture the intended deviant acts, undermining the content validity of the measure. Asking about specific acts, such as vandalism, shoplifting, or fighting, may have yielded a more comprehensive measure than simply asking about participation in illegal acts. Some participants may not remember all or most acts committed in

childhood or adolescence without a memory cue. A teenager who steals liquor from a neighbour's garage and consumes it in public place as well as a teenager who has a glass of wine at their parent's anniversary party would both be captured by the question about alcohol consumption, but they are qualitatively different in terms of deviance. On the other hand, Zilney (2007) measured interpersonal violence through specific questions about physical, emotional, and sexual abuse of both intimate partners and children. Given the differences in clarity and scope of the measures of interpersonal violence and deviance, it is not surprising that Zilney's (2007) research found moderate support for generality of deviance, but greater support for the violence graduation hypothesis.

Arluke et al. (1999) approached the research problem a different way. The authors identified 153 individuals that had been prosecuted for animal cruelty using official records from the Massachusetts Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. These individuals were then matched to a control of the same gender and similar in age who resided in the abuser's neighbourhood at the time of the offence. Both the abusers' and controls' criminal records were tracked to provide a measure of deviance. The abusers were over three times more likely to have a criminal record (excluding the animal cruelty prosecution) than the controls (Arluke et al., 1999). Although there was a significant association between animal cruelty and violence offences, the correlations between animal cruelty and convictions for drug offences, property offences, and disorderly behaviour were also significant, supporting generality of deviance. The violence graduation hypothesis was not supported as the criminal offence was just as likely to occur before as after the animal cruelty offence (Arluke et al., 1999). An important limitation to Arluke et al.'s (1999) study was the inability to identify behaviour in childhood or adolescence as the juvenile criminal records are sealed. The design of the study illustrated a confirmation

bias, precluding a complete assessment of the violence graduation hypothesis, and therefore providing more support for generality of deviance. The authors offer an interesting hypothesis in regards to the conflicting results over the temporal order of animal cruelty and interpersonal violence: “there may be some sort of graduation – not necessarily from animals to people, but from remote to intimate targets” (Arluke et al., 1999: 971).

Agnew’s Theory of Animal Abuse

There has been one theory to date specifically developed to explain animal abuse. Agnew’s (1998) theory blends a variety of social and psychological perspectives including demographic influences such as gender, age, occupation and education; individual traits like empathy and self-control; modelling, social control and attachment; and rational perspectives such as cost/benefit analyses and techniques of neutralization of the abuse (see Figure 4). According to the theory, animal abuse is likely to occur when the person is ignorant or uncaring about the consequences of the abusive behaviour, which is influenced by their demographic or social position, and mediated by individual level factors like empathy, socialization and strain. Socialization is more closely connected with the socially acceptable forms of animal abuse (i.e., wearing fur, consuming meat, attending a rodeo), while the strain component of the theory is more connected with the socially unacceptable forms of animal abuse (i.e., direct physical violence against the animal). Agnew (1998) uses strain in conjunction with feminist and masculinity perspectives to explain socially unacceptable animal abuse: “animal abuse may be a vehicle for accomplishing masculinity...most likely among those who have difficulty accomplishing masculinity through other routes (that is, those who are strained)” (197). Agnew also loosely draws on feminism in his discussion of socialization and its impact on the likelihood of animal abuse: “individuals...may be socialized in ways that explicitly encourage or

discourage certain types of animal abuse” and, by extension, “animal abuse may be a method for accomplishing gender” in the aggressive masculine role (195).

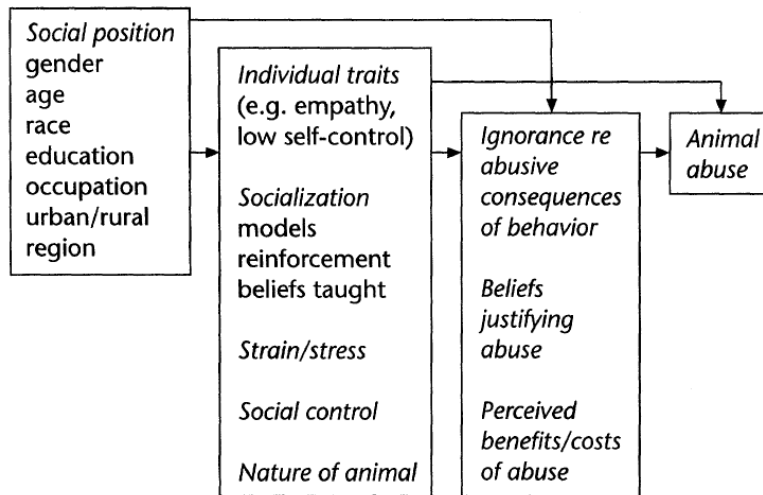


Figure 4: Agnew's (1998) Social Psychological Model of Animal Abuse

While Agnew's theory incorporates a variety of different perspectives and their application to animal abuse, it is not without flaws. One of the primary flaws with Agnew's theory is the definition of abuse used is so broad that it is difficult to operationalize in any meaningful way. Defining animal abuse as “any act that contributes to the pain or death of an animal or otherwise threatens the welfare of an animal” (Agnew, 1998: 179) removes the context of the abuse and the motivation for the behaviour from consideration. Under Agnew's non-hierarchical definition, anyone who chooses to consume meat, happens to need medication that utilized animal testing in its development, or kicks the family pet during an argument with their partner is guilty of animal abuse. The overbroad nature of the theory and definition captures all possible behaviours connected with animal abuse, but does not really explain any one in enough detail to be useful.

Attachment Theory

Unlike the above theories on animal abuse, attachment theory has mostly been used to understand positive relationships with companion animals (Beck & Madresh, 2008; Johnson, Garrity, & Stallones, 1992; Poresky & Daniels, 1998; Sable, 1995). There are four central features of an attachment figure that distinguish them from other individuals in a person's life: "Their physical nearness and accessibility are enjoyable (proximity maintenance); they are missed when absent (separation distress); they are dependable sources of comfort (secure base); and they are sought to alleviate distress (safe haven)" (Kurdek, 2009: 439). The vast majority of pet owners describe their pets as very important to them and their relationship with their pet provides enjoyment on a daily basis (Beck & Madresh, 2008; Cain, 1985; Johnson et al., 1992; Sable, 1995). When the pet dies, the grief experienced by the human family members is on par with the loss of a human loved one (Donohoe, 2005; Sable, 1995; Turner, 2005). There is evidence that people form close bonds with their companion animals. The applications of attachment theory to relationships between pets and their owners have focused mainly on the value of this bond and comparing the human-pet relationship with relationships between humans.

Comparing romantic relationships and pet relationships, Maiuro et al. (2008) note that the same behaviours, such as close intimate contact and sleeping together, are present in both relationships. Using adaptations of measures developed by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) to assess attachment in human relationships, Beck and Madresh (2008) compared romantic relationships and owner-pet relationships in a sample of 192 pet owners recruited for participation in the web-based survey. In spite of the fact that a romantic partner is the most important attachment figure in an adult's life, people rated their relationships with their pets more positively than the relationships with their partners (Beck & Madresh, 2008). More

importantly, Beck and Madresh (2008) found that the relationships with pets were consistently rated as more secure than the relationships with the partners. Kurdek (2009) also used a web-based survey assessing attachment of pet owners to their dogs in comparison to human attachment figures. Opposite to Beck and Madresh (2008), Kurdek (2009) found that of seven adult human relationships (mother, father, sister, brother, best friend, partner, child), only the partner exceeded the dog in terms of attachment of the respondent. However, when the marital status was taken into account, only respondents who were married (as opposed to divorced, widowed, cohabitating or single) indicated stronger attachment to their partner over their dog (Kurdek, 2009). Though these results are conflicting, they both indicate that pet owners do form attachment bonds with their pets.

Some research shows that pets, though referred to as if they were true family members (as a child or a baby) or appear to hold relatively high status, “occupy an overlapping but different space from humans in a family” (Cohen, 2002: 633). People tend to rate their pets as being more accepting, less critical, more supportive, and less demanding than human family members (Beck & Madresh, 2008; Cohen, 2002). Beck and Madresh (2008) hypothesize about the difference in relationship ratings in that “pets are not merely substitutes for human interaction, but fill a specific role by providing a consistent, and relatively controllable, sense of relationship security...making it easier for pet owners to cope with the ups and downs of daily life” (53).

It is this sense of relationship security that (in part) qualifies companion animals as attachment figures, specifically in regards to the features of a secure base and safe haven. Sable (1995) explains that “adults seek closeness and security from attachment figures at times of stress; attaining and maintaining proximity reduces fear and insecurity” (336). Pets are a positive

and supportive presence in the lives of their owners during periods of transition such as divorce, death and grieving, and unemployment, providing a safe haven and a secure base from which to deal with the upheaval or crisis (Cain, 1985; Sable, 1995; Turner, 2005). Many research studies present clinical evidence of companion animals alleviating symptoms of depression, dealing with a serious illness like cancer, and coping with the loss of a partner (Donohoe, 2005; Folse, Minder, Aycock, & Santana, 1994; Risley-Curtiss, 2010; Sable, 1995; Watson & Weinstein, 1993). Especially salient for this research, companion animals are very important forms of safe haven for women experiencing stress and negative emotions associated with experiencing IPV (Fitzgerald, 2005; Flynn, 2000a).

The Connection between Intimate Partner Violence and Animal Abuse

The revelation that pets are included in the study of violence against women is not a new idea to those who work with women escaping violence. Ascione, Weber and Wood (1997) surveyed 48 shelters across the United States asking the shelter staff about whether their clients relate incidents of companion animal abuse, and 85 percent of shelters responded that their clients did indeed talk about the abuse of pets in their relationship. In Canada, Stevenson (2009) found that every one of the 109 shelters and transition houses contacted was aware of the pets being included in the violence aimed at the female partners in a relationship.

The majority of studies connecting IPV and animal abuse tend to focus on the experiences of women escaping situations of domestic violence. In conjunction with Ascione, Weber and Wood's (1997) study, Ascione (1998) surveyed women in a domestic violence shelter in Utah. In his sample of 38 women, he found that just over half the women interviewed reported that their partner had threatened or actually hurt their pets. Flynn (2000b), interviewing women in a shelter in South Carolina, found that just under half had experienced threats or harm to their

pets as part of the violence they experienced. Surveying 100 women from a domestic violence shelter in Calgary, Alberta, McIntosh (2004) returned very similar numbers to Ascione (1998) and Flynn (2000b) in that 56 percent of women who had pets in the relationship ($n = 65$) reported threats or actual harm to their pets. Other studies, all based on the reports of women who have experienced IPV, offer very similar results in that approximately half of the women report threats or harm to their pets (Allen, Gallagher, & Jones, 2006; Ascione et al., 2007; Carlisle-Frank et al., 2004; Faver & Strand, 2003; Fitzgerald, 2005; Volant et al., 2008). Even with the small sample sizes and the bias inherent in a sample selected from what are often the most severe cases of IPV, half of the women reported that their pets were abused or threatened. When this is coupled with the vast number of women who are subjected to IPV each year (Bressan, 2008; Johnson, 1996), the number of women who are being emotionally and psychologically abused via harm to their pets is substantial, to say nothing of the harm to the animals themselves.

One of the findings that arises in almost every study based on women's experience was that the women delayed leaving the abusive relationship out of concern and fear for their pets. Ascione (1998) and McIntosh (2004) both directly inquired about whether concern for the companion animals prevented or delayed leaving the relationship. Ascione (1998) found that 18 percent of women delayed leaving, while McIntosh (2004) returned a slightly higher proportion at 25 percent. Faver and Strand (2003) measured whether concern for the pet affected the decision to leave or to stay in the relationship. Twenty-seven percent of their respondents (women who were receiving services from domestic violence agencies) stated that their concern for the pet did affect their decision (Faver & Strand, 2003). Not only does concern for pets affect the decision to leave the abusive situation, but also the decision to return to the relationship. Quinlisk (1999) described several cases where the woman returned to the abuser, either out of

fear for the safety of the animals or in response to direct threats made after the woman left.

A suggestion for future research that was frequently mentioned was the need for a comparison group in order to ascertain whether the abuse of pets was in fact connected to IPV. Ascione et al. (2007) looked at a comparative sample between women with pets in the community who had not experienced domestic violence and those with pets who had attended a shelter for abused women in terms of the incidents of animal cruelty experienced. Not surprisingly, the results showed that women who experienced domestic violence were much more likely to report that their partner had threatened or harmed their pets (Ascione et al., 2007). They found that 72 percent of women who experienced abuse also stated that their pets had been threatened, hurt or killed by their abuser, compared with less than 20 percent of the women who had not experienced abuse (Ascione et al., 2007). Volant et al. (2008) also conducted a study using a comparison group to assess the prevalence of pet abuse in families with domestic violence versus those without violence. Though a smaller proportion of women reported threats to (46%) or actual abuse of (53%) their pets, the significant difference between the two groups was just as striking. The group of women who had not experienced IPV reported no abuse of their pets by their partners, and only 6% reported threats to their animals (Volant et al., 2008). Though there have been few comparative studies to date (and therefore data is limited), these two studies do indicate that animal abuse is much less common in relationships without IPV.

Based on the experiences women have related in studies specifically exploring the inclusion of pets in IPV, animal abuse typically occurs in relationships marked by coercive controlling violence as defined by Johnson and Kelly (2008). Faver and Strand (2003, 2007) use the women's own words to describe how threats and harm to pets are used to control and intimidate in situations of IPV. In Flynn's (2000a) study interviewing women at a domestic

violence shelter, “it became clear that controlling these women by hurting, terrorizing, and intimidating them was a primary purpose of males’ animal abuse” (Flynn, 2000a: 109). The women’s descriptions of the behaviours perpetrated by the men in Flynn’s research, including jealousy, control, intimidation, and threats, are very similar to the description of coercive controlling violence according to Johnson and Ferraro (2000) and Kelly and Johnson (2008). Simmons and Lehmann (2007) clearly connect control and violence to animal abuse in their research: “Individuals who abuse the family pet (a) use more forms of aggressive violence and (b) demonstrate a greater use of controlling behaviours than those who do not” (1218). Even acknowledging that their choice to sample women in a domestic violence shelter may have strengthened their results, Simmons and Lehmann’s (2007) study indicates the very real connection between IPV and animal abuse.

While this research points to the need for further investigation of the inclusion of pets in the commission of domestic violence, the studies simply reported the connections between domestic violence and pet abuse in terms of risk factors and behaviours. There was no attempt to explain *why* the pet abuse occurred – a limitation directly mentioned by the authors in several studies. Future research suggestions included the “need to question batterers about their own perpetration of animal abuse” (Ascione et al., 2007: 366) and the need to include the male abuser’s perspective in order to gain a more complete picture of domestic violence (Ascione, 1998a).

Motivations for Animal Abuse in a Context of Violence

Few studies have looked at motives for animal abuse by specifically asking the abusers (Ascione & Blakelock, 2003; Bickerstaff, 2003; Hensley & Tallichet, 2005a; Kellert & Felthous, 1985; Lea, 2007). In their ground-breaking study, Kellert and Felthous (1985) found nine motives

for animal cruelty, four of which are supported in subsequent studies connecting animal abuse and domestic violence: expression of aggression through an animal; enhancement of their own aggressiveness; retaliation against a person; and the displacement of hostility from a person to an animal. This study involved interviews with incarcerated and non-incarcerated men, but looked at childhood accounts of animal cruelty and did not ask about adult behaviour towards animals. Interestingly, Kellert and Felthous (1985) were one of the first to notice the connection between domestic violence and animal cruelty and found that participants who reported committing animal cruelty were more likely to report exposure to domestic violence in childhood (Kellert & Felthous, 1985).

The purpose for Hensley and Tallichet's (2005) research was to look at the demographic characteristics of abusers, the situational factors surrounding animal abuse, and the connections between these factors on the motives for the abuse of the animals. The list of motivations explored in the study was based on the list provided by Kellert and Felthous (1985). They noted that there was often more than one motive related to committing animal abuse among their sample of 112 incarcerated men who had engaged in animal cruelty (Hensley & Tallichet, 2005). The most prevalent motives for animal cruelty were anger (54%) and for fun (43%), followed by control of the animal (25%) and dislike for the animal (25%). In addition, they found that revenge against another person was a motive very closely correlated with the motives of anger and fun. However, Hensley and Tallichet (2005) did not address IPV in their sample, only asking about childhood and adolescent acts of animal cruelty.

Bickertsaff (2003) approached the issue of determining the motives for animal cruelty from a different perspective, using a content analysis of newspaper reports rather than incarcerated offenders. The rationale for the use of media reports (even taking into accounts the

limitations and problems with the sample) was that “there was usually sufficient detail explicitly stating motivation or allowing for inferences of motivation” (Bickerstaff, 2003: 54). Analyzing over 700 cases of animal cruelty, Bickerstaff (2003) derived 14 motivations. Because she was using such a broad sample capturing everything from inhumane breeding facilities (puppy mills) to targeted retribution against another person, the motives were varied. The three most common motives for cruelty against animals were profit, thrill-seeking, and indifference. Thrill-seeking was essentially the same as the ‘for fun’ motive from Kellert and Felthous (1985), whereas indifference was represented as a lack of empathy and was closer to neglect than active cruelty (Bickerstaff, 2003). The sole motive connected to other persons was substitution where the animals were “substitute targets and recipients of displaced anger” (Bickerstaff, 2003: 101). The motive of substitution could be equated with the motive of retaliation from Kellert and Felthous (1985). Though Bickerstaff (2003) provided examples of cases where the pets were harmed in the context of an abusive relationship, IPV was not a part of her discussion except to note that there were additional criminal charges in connection with several of the cases.

There has only been one study to date to explore animal abuse by asking the abusers who have committed IPV. The purpose of Ascione and Blakelock’s (2003) research was:

to explore the most recent and past history of experiences with and treatment of animals reported by men incarcerated for and/or admitting to violence in their relationships with their intimate partners (e.g., live-in companions, dating partners, spouses).

Incarcerated offenders (n=42) were assessed using existing survey instruments including the CTS2 and the Reports of Animal Care and Abuse (RACA), a checklist of behaviours similar to the CTS2 developed by Ascione. Ascione and Blakelock (2003) found that just over half (55%) of the men who had pets had actually hurt or killed the animals. When cross tabulations were conducted with items on the CTS2 and the RACA, the men who had hurt or killed the pets were

more likely to engage in serious forms of physical aggression against their partner (Ascione & Blakelock, 2003). However, these measurement instruments did not include motives for the abuse, and simply corroborated the research results of studies asking women about the abuses against their pets.

Research based on women's perspectives has attempted to address the issue of motivation for violence against animals in the relationship. In looking at the roles that pets play in the lives of women who experience intimate partner violence, Flynn (2000a, 2000b) offered some ideas about attitudes and motivations of the abusers, although he did so by inferring motives from the victims' perspective. Flynn (2000b) found that the women in his sample were more likely to report abuse of their pet when they also reported that the pet was very important to them, the implication being a desire to use the abuse of the pets to hurt the woman. In a follow-up study interviewing a small sample of women who experienced intimate partner violence in addition to having their pets abused, Flynn (2000a) explored motivations for the animal cruelty. Power, domination and control were overriding themes, including using threats or harm to the animal to manipulate and control the partner, and general attitudes supportive of male dominance (Flynn, 2000a). The abuser's jealousy of the relationship between the woman and her pet was another theme that was raised (Flynn, 2000a).

Fitzgerald (2005) and Allen, Gallagher and Jones (2006) specifically asked the women in their studies about their partners' motivations for the animal abuse. Fitzgerald (2005) asked women recruited from a domestic violence shelter as well as a support group for women who experienced relationship violence "why *they* thought their ex/partners had physically abused the pets [emphasis added]" (139). Losing control of emotions and using the animal as 'an outlet' for anger were some of the responses from the women, more common motivations were

manipulation and control of the human family members as well as retaliation (Fitzgerald, 2005). One of the motivations for the abuse of the pets was connected to the loss of control in other aspect of the abusive partner's life or relationship, and "abuse of the pets was an attempt to regain control" (Fitzgerald, 2005: 143). Allen, Gallagher and Jones (2006) asked their participants (also recruited from domestic violence shelters) "to ascribe a motivation for these abuses and threats of abuse" (173). Every woman who had experienced pet abuse reported the motivations of revenge (for leaving the relationship) and anger; however, the women perceived these motivations as "simply another form of control" (Allen et al., 2006: 173). Like Fitzgerald (2005), the authors were careful to qualify the motivations ascribed to the abusers in the relationships, stating that these were the reasons for the abuse "as the women understood them" (Allen et al., 2006: 173).

On the other hand, Carlisle-Frank, Frank and Nielsen (2004) were not as careful with attributing motivations to the abusers of pets. According to the authors, their study "examined pet-abusing and non-pet-abusing domestic violence batterers' perceptions of companion animals," yet this was accomplished via using a sample of women from a domestic violence shelter (Carlisle-Frank et al., 2004: 27). Carlisle-Frank et al. (2004) reasoned that the women would be more reliable sources of information as abusive men tend to underestimate or minimize their violent behaviour. Some of the items on the questionnaire distributed to the participants were about the treatment of the pet, for example, if the pets accompanied the family on vacation and if the pet's name was signed to greeting cards, and logically the women would be able to answer these questions. Other questions presented more of a methodological issue. Items like the frequency of telling the pet that the person loves them have lower reliability because they require the women to project what their partner may be doing when they are not present, and "the partner

is most upset about the disrespect shown” requires the woman to determine her partner’s emotional state at the time of the incident (Carlisle-Frank et al., 2004: 34). The authors note none of these limitations, and write with confidence about their results, for example the attitudes of the abusers viewing pets as property and never telling the pets that they love them (Carlisle-Frank et al., 2004).

Gaps in Existing Research on Intimate Partner Violence and Animal Abuse

While important in illustrating and understanding the impact of the abusive partner’s cruelty towards pets on the human family members, the above research is limited by its narrow focus on the victims’ voice. Motivations for animal abuse and cruelty in the majority of these studies were gleaned through the perspective of the victim. Though this perspective is critical in understanding the effects of abuse, it is only one side of the relationship – the abuser’s perspective is needed in order to gain a thorough understanding of his motives.

On the other hand, the majority of research studies from the abuser’s perspective very rarely mention pets as possible victims of domestic violence. This is true as well for research into motivations for intimate partner violence, whether it looks at the victim’s post-hoc attributions (Flynn, 2000a) or the subjective explanations of the abusers.

The studies that do ask about the abuse of animals tend to focus on childhood and adolescent animal cruelty using a sample population of incarcerated male offenders. The co-occurrence of intimate partner violence and animal cruelty is necessarily excluded by virtue of the time frame in question, though it can and does arise in a peripheral manner by way of experiencing family violence during childhood. Other studies attempt to link animal cruelty to overall criminality or violence towards humans, but domestic violence (when mentioned) is

treated as a general part of criminality without attention to the unique features of intimate relationships (e.g., Arluke et al., 1999; Lea, 2007; Merz-Perez & Heide, 2004).

The need to question abusers themselves about their motives and attitudes about both IPV and animals has been noted in many studies. Ascione (1998), Ascione et al. (2007), Fitzgerald (2005), Volant et al., (2008) and Hensley and Tallichet (2005) all related a need to question the abusers about motivations. Hensley and Tallichet (2008) specifically note that qualitative research is needed to explore and assess the motives for the abuse of animals generally, as much of the research has been of a quantitative nature to date. The current research will help address this gap by addressing the missing male perspective, the questions about animal abuse in the context of IPV, and the use of a qualitative method by asking men who have committed IPV about the pets in their relationships.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This thesis explores four research questions. The first two questions relate directly to the limited perspective of the abuser in the literature regarding pets and intimate partner violence, as well as the absence of pets in research looking at motivations for partner abuse.

1. What is the abuser's perspective of the pet in the context of a relationship with intimate partner violence?
2. Is abuse of or threats to the pet used in the abuse of the female partner?

Two more specific research questions are addressed pertaining to the attitudes and motivations of the abuser. These two questions are framed from a feminist perspective of intimate partner violence and companion animal abuse.

3. What are the motivations of the abuser in situations of intimate partner violence in regards to companion animal abuse?
4. Are abusers' attitudes towards pets a manifestation of general patriarchal attitudes?

A fifth question, 'Does the pet present a challenge to the abuse's authority or masculinity?' was initially proposed. This avenue of inquiry was incorporated into question 4, as authority and masculinity are implicit concepts in general patriarchal attitudes.

The nature of these four research questions points directly to the appropriateness of a qualitative approach to this study. West and Dalley (2004) state that "Qualitative methodology is particularly suitable for studies where the purpose is to examine the nuances of motivations, attitudes and beliefs" (53). Each of the research questions focus on the abuser's motivations, attitudes and perceptions of pets. Qualitative research focuses on the construction of meaning

and understanding the subjective experiences of the participants, making the semi-structured qualitative interview used in this study the logical choice for data collection. A qualitative ideographic approach focuses on depth of description of a few cases and does not claim to be able to generalize the results to a larger population. Qualitative research tends to be inductive, working from data to theory, thus allowing themes to emerge organically from the data rather than identifying particular theoretical variables in advance. This allows for alternative explanations to emerge, and does not restrict or assume to frame the perspective of the participants in advance of the interview. Grounded theory is the guiding methodology for this research.

Within the qualitative research arena, grounded theory is a method that is being used more frequently, especially in research which is exploratory, nuanced, and experience or perspective-based. It can be considered both a methodology and an epistemology. Grounded theory is an epistemology because of how it (and the researchers that embrace it) views knowledge. Knowledge is not objectively assessed through impartial observation; knowledge is negotiated, constructed, and uncovered through attending to those who have it. To grounded theorists, knowledge is an exploration of data, negotiated through the experience of doing research. Grounded theory is also a methodology, offering rigorous methods for conducting research and data analysis, such as the methods offered by Charmaz (2010) or Strauss and Corbin (1998). The benefit of a grounded theory approach to analysis is that it allows unexpected or unanticipated themes to emerge from the data, possibly revealing motivations that may have been overlooked using a deductive approach. Wood (2004) describes the process of grounded theory research as “comb[ing] data for emergent themes that reflect key thoughts, feelings, and meanings in participants’ worlds” (560). The strength of the grounded theory approach is that it

produces a resultant theory which is empirically grounded (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

In its ideal form, grounded theory is a methodology guided only by the data rather than theory; it is purely inductive research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The only deductive elements in the process arise in the move to assess the fit of the data and the categories generated with other instances in the data, and there is no overarching theoretical framework. Researching in the area of IPV, it is very difficult to conduct a grounded theory study absent of deductive elements. The volume of research and theorizing done on IPV makes conducting a study absent of external theoretical influences next to impossible. That said, the methodology and epistemology of grounded theory are very effective when exploring a new perspective or an under-researched area of an existing topic of study, even if there has been nearly exhaustive research done on closely related areas. While not being exclusively inductive, this study draws very heavily from grounded theory in the importance placed on the data as the generation of theory and understanding, the use of the constant comparative method in analysis, and the emphasis on the meaning constructed by the participants.

Major Concepts Defined

Even though a grounded theory approach is focused on themes and definitions emerging from the data, some core concepts needed to be defined in order to structure the interview questions and guide the analysis. These concepts are derived from the research literature.

As a concept, domestic violence is extremely broad and varied, encompassing child abuse, partner abuse, and elder abuse. Some would also argue that sibling abuse (Wiehe, 1998) and pet abuse (Ascione & Arkow, 1999) fall under the umbrella of domestic violence. In order to narrow the scope of the violence, this study focuses on intimate partner violence, using the

commonly accepted definition of ‘physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional abuse occurring within an intimate romantic relationship’ (e.g., Kurst-Swanger & Petcosky, 2003; Straus et al., 1996). This definition limits the violence to a romantic relationship without concern as to the legal nature of the relationship, whether it be a marriage, cohabitation or dating relationship. This definition also places broad boundaries around what is considered to be abuse or violence within the relationship, aiming to capture a variety of potential interpretations of the concept.

The concept of a ‘companion animal’ or ‘pet’ has been minimally defined in the literature. Most researchers assume that there is a commonly held definition among participants about the nature of a companion animal (e.g., Ascione et al., 1997; Flynn, 2000c). One of the few definitions of a ‘pet’ comes from Kellert and Felthous (1985): “a kind of “humanized” animal...allowed in the house, it was given a personal name, and it was never eaten” (1114). Bickerstaff (2003) offered another definition of companion animals as “dogs, cats and other domesticated animals found in or near the household” (12). While a common conception might exist among participants, placing boundaries around the concept alleviates any potential ambiguity about what is considered a companion animal in this study. This study treats the terms ‘companion animal’ and ‘pet’ interchangeably, defining them as ‘a domesticated animal who is primarily kept for companionship and enjoyment of the human family member(s).’ This definition is quite broad, and does not name specific species of animals as pets. Encompassing non-specificity in the type of animal allows for the possibility that animals which are traditionally considered to be livestock, such as horses or pigs, could be kept for companionship and considered by the participants to be pets. Limiting the definition to traditional pets such as dogs, cats, small rodents, and birds would exclude non-traditional pets like horses and pigs, but also lizards, snakes, or spiders. In Ascione et al.’s (2007) study, the response categories for type

of pet (dog, cat, bird, other) effectively limited the diversity of animals that could possibly be considered companions. The definition used in the current research allows for the participant to categorize the companion animal based on the relationship between the owner and animal, rather than the species.

The motivations for the abuse of the companion animal were allowed to emerge naturally from the participants in this study. However, motivations which have been identified in the literature, such as jealousy, control, retaliation, anger, and disrespect (Flynn, 2000a; Kellert & Felthous, 1985; Merz-Perez & Heide, 2004; Wood, 2004) were available to be used to prompt or clarify interview questions if required. In regards to the treatment or maltreatment of companion animals, this was deliberately left to the participants to define as well. Imposing a structured definition of what is (or is not) appropriate treatment of animals, or what is considered abuse could have coloured the participants' responses, and may not have evidenced their true opinions about companion animals. The openness of the concept allowed for the possibility that the behaviour towards pets (with the attendant motivations) could emerge on a continuum and include all possibilities, not solely negative treatment.

Procedures: Participants and Data Collection

Participants and Recruitment

This study employed a purposive convenience sample. Participants were recruited from incarcerated offenders who had completed either the High-Intensity or Moderate-Intensity Family Violence Prevention Program (FVPP)⁵ at Bath Institution in Kingston, Ontario, and who

⁵ The FVPP, a cognitive-behavioural program based on the Duluth Model, is an intervention program for inmates presenting a high or moderate risk for committing intimate partner violence. The goal of the FVPP is to eliminate violence in the family through challenging and changing abusive attitudes and beliefs. Programs run for 12 to 15

had a companion animal in the home during the time the violence was occurring in the relationship. All inmates who had committed intimate partner violence were eligible to participate, including offenders who were incarcerated for offences unrelated to intimate partner violence. Ethical approval was received from both the University of Ottawa (Appendix A) and the Correctional Service of Canada (Appendix B).

Bath Institution is a medium-security federal penitentiary operated by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC). Bath Institution was the site recommended by CSC⁶ based on the availability of the FVPP at the institution, and the number of graduates of the program still incarcerated there. Bath Institution had a population of 360 inmates at the time of the research,⁷ and a total of 18 graduates of the Moderate-Intensity FVPP.

Previous research examining male violence and cruelty to animals has also used incarcerated offenders (Hensley & Tallichet, 2005a; Hensley & Tallichet, 2008; Kellert & Felthous, 1985; Merz-Perez & Heide, 2004; Tallichet, Hensley, & O'Bryan, 2005). Though there have been critiques of these research studies on the basis that the samples are not representative, exploration of the motives, and not generalizability, was the aim of the current study. The use of an incarcerated sample allows for validation of the results of this analysis through comparison with previous research conducted using similar methodology. In addition, the incarcerated sample presents a pragmatic benefit in the identification of men who have committed intimate partner violence. As part of the process moving from sentencing to incarceration, CSC conducts an assessment of each inmate. The result of this assessment is an inmate's correctional plan,

weeks and are a combination of group and individual counseling sessions. More information about the FVPP can be found at the Correctional Service of Canada website <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/fv-eng.shtml>.

⁶ Email correspondence with Program Administration department at the Regional Headquarters (Ontario) during the process of obtaining approval to proceed with the research in the Ontario region.

⁷ S. Pullen, personal communication, February 15, 2011

which contains programs that the inmate must complete based on their needs and risk factors. The inmates who completed the FVPP are those who CSC identified as having committed intimate partner violence. The use of the FVPP as a criterion for participation streamlined the recruitment process through eliminating the potentially time consuming and sensitive process of inquiring about the commission of intimate partner violence.

Recruitment and interviews were conducted in January and February 2011. Recruitment took place in two waves, and was aided by the Manager of Programs and the Program Coordinator in Bath Institution. The first wave of recruitment included all the inmates who had completed the FVPP while in Bath Institution. The Program Coordinator compiled the names of all the inmates who had completed the FVPP for the purpose of asking them to attend an information and recruitment session for the research study. These names were placed on a 'pickup list', which is a request to the inmates to report to a particular part of the institution at a particular time; the inmates have the choice to refuse to attend. The pickup list contained nineteen names, and eighteen inmates presented themselves for the information session. The Program Coordinator was present for the first few minutes of the session to confirm attendance of the inmates on the pickup list during which it was learned that the missing inmate had recently been released from the penitentiary.

The general recruitment script is presented in Appendix C. The information session began with introducing myself, including that I had worked with John Howard Society (a non-profit agency offering advocacy and support for offenders) in the institutions in British Columbia for several years. The aim of sharing this information was to help build trust towards me and overcome some of the potential barriers that coming in as an outsider with no real ties to the institution could raise. My experience in a helping capacity in the institutions may have

encouraged the session attendees to volunteer more readily than they would have with someone who had no experience in prisons. The session continued with an introduction and explanation of the project, the requirements of participation, an explanation of the risks of participation, and a discussion of confidentiality and anonymity in addition to answering questions regarding the project, procedures and interviews. I made it very clear that there was no direct incentive offered for participation, and that there were no repercussions for non-participation or withdrawal from the research. This assurance is essential in any research, especially when dealing with an incarcerated population whose freedom of choice is limited.

The reactions of the men in this information session varied. There were no particular questions about the research or the requirements for participation, but there were some comments inquiring if I was actually serious about studying pets and intimate partner violence. There were a few comments about the silliness and ridiculousness of the idea. Yet others seemed genuinely interested. There were a few who said it sounded interesting but that they did not have pets, so they were not able to participate. At the conclusion of my explanation of the research and the requirements of participation, I informed the group that they could either speak to me after the session or speak to the Program Coordinator to arrange a time for a confidential interview. A few men raised their hands and informed me that they would like to participate, while a few others approached me as the group was leaving the room to let me know they would like to participate. Out of eighteen potential participants who had completed the FVPP, seven volunteered during the information session, and all seven approached me directly to indicate their willingness to participate. One interview was conducted immediately following the information session, while the other six were conducted the following week over two consecutive days. The Program Coordinator aided in organizing the interview times by placing the participant's name on the

pickup list for the appropriate time.

The second wave of recruitment occurred after the first round of interviews was completed. The second recruitment attempt was made to identify additional inmates who had completed the FVPP in order to exhaust the potential pool of participants currently housed in Bath Institution. The Manager of Programs sent an email to the internal parole officers in Bath Institution informing them broadly about the research study and what it entailed. The email asked the parole officers to review the files of the inmates that they handled to identify those who have completed the FVPP at another institution, and to submit these names to her. A follow up email was sent by the Manager of Programs one week later, reiterating the need for their help in my research. An additional seven potential participants were identified, and placed on the pickup list for another information session. The second information session followed the same format and information as the first, but only four of the seven potential participants attended. Of the four, three did have pets and volunteered to participate, again approaching me directly to indicate their interest. One interview took place immediately following the information session, with the remaining two occurring the following day. Again, the Program Coordinator aided with organizing the interviews by placing the participant's name on the pickup list for the appropriate time.

In total, 22 inmates attended the two information sessions, and 10 men volunteered for participation in the research. Interviews were conducted with all ten participants ranging from 15 minutes to one and a half hours. Table 1 presents the ages, index offences (the offences for which they were sentenced), relationship length of the participants, and type of pets. The names of the participants used in this research are pseudonyms chosen by me. The participants' ages ranged from 29 to 72 years old, and the index offence for all but two participants was directly

related to intimate partner violence in the most recent relationship. Relationship length varied from a few months to 45 years of marriage, and some participants discussed more than one relationship. The most common pet among participants was a dog.

Table 1: Participant Characteristics

	Age	Index Offence	Relationship Length(s)	Pets
Alex	49	Second degree murder	21 years	Dogs
Cameron	72	Second degree murder	45 years	Dogs
Elliot	34	Aggravated assault	4 months	Dog, cat
		Assault	4 years	Dogs
		Uttering death threats		
		Mischief		
Gabe	57	Second degree murder	2 years	Dog, cat
			Previous marriage	Dogs, cats, rabbits
Ivan	51	Assault	4 years	Dogs, cat
		Sexual assault	9 years	Dogs, cats
		Assault causing bodily harm		
Kurt	51	Second degree murder	5 years	Dogs
			7 years	Dogs
Marcel	48	Break and enter with intent	2 years	Budgie
			1 year	Dog
		Criminal harassment	Previous marriage	Dog, cat
Orson	29	Driving while intoxicated *	10 years	Dog
		Driving without licence *		
		Refusing breathalyser *		
Randy	29	Second degree murder *	3 years	Cat
Theo	40	Second degree murder	1 year	Dogs

* Index offence unrelated to intimate partner violence.

Data Collection – Semi-Structured Interviews

Given the focus on the abuser's perspective and voice, in-person interviews as the data collection method was chosen. In-person interviews are more feasible than telephone interviews for an incarcerated population, as the inmates often have limited and/or restricted access to telephone communication. Conducting the interviews in a face-to-face manner can be viewed as an indication of genuine interest in their perspective by the inmates, as well as an indication of respect for their time and participation, both of which helps in building rapport. In-person interviews also allow for a nuanced interaction with the participant. Information can be communicated via body language such as eye contact, posture, facial expression, and physical expressions such as shrugging or hand movements. Body language can be used by the participant to communicate emotion or emphasize a comment. Body language can also be used by the researcher to indicate openness and interest over and above what is verbally communicated.

The interviews were conducted by myself in a private office within Bath Institution. The balance between the need for a private confidential space to conduct the interview with the consideration for my safety was met by ensuring that the office had a window in the door; people walking by the corridor could see me and the participant, but we had the privacy to be able to speak openly. Although it was next to impossible to provide anonymity within the prison environment, anonymity within the finished research is provided through the use of pseudonyms.

Each interview began with signing the Informed Consent Form required by CSC for the inmate's file (Appendix D). This consent form included permission for the interview to be audio recorded. Once this form was signed the audio recorder was turned on and the remainder of the interview was recorded. These forms were given to the Program Coordinator; no signed copies were retained by the participant or myself. In order to address possible literacy issues that may

arise in an incarcerated population, the Informed Consent Form specific to the research (Appendix E) was reviewed verbally to ensure that the consent was given based on a complete understanding of the scope and voluntariness of participation. Two copies were signed; one was retained by the participant, one was retained by me. Only one participant did not take his signed Informed Consent Form with him at the conclusion of the interview.

The interviews were semi-structured, involving a mixture of open and closed questions. Semi-structured interviews with a general interview schedule allow for a more free flow of dialogue as compared to a structured questionnaire. The questions were informed by the research literature, most of which approaches intimate partner violence from a feminist standpoint. That said, the questions were not worded in an attempt to support a particular theoretical stance; they were structured in a way as to allow for alternative explanations to arise embracing the epistemology of grounded theory. The interview schedule is broken into three main sets of questions (see Appendix F). The first set of four questions deals with basic information such as the length of the romantic relationship, and the number and kind of pets that were present in the relationship. The second set of two questions asks the participant to relate the day-to-day treatment of the pet as well as how the participant views the pet generally. There are a few prompts in this section, such as ‘just another mouth to feed’ or ‘treated with affection’. The final set of questions asks specifically about the participant’s aggressiveness with the pet both when the partner was involved and when they were not involved. This section also asks the participant to relate how the aggression towards the pet may have been linked to the aggression towards the partner.

The interview schedule represented general topics that I wanted to cover in the interview. The questions were used to encourage the participant to open up about his attitudes about

companion animals as well as to relate his experiences in his own words. Not all questions on the schedule were asked, and follow-up questions were asked based on the participant's responses and dialogue. A notable change that occurred to the interview schedule was a natural shift in the question about the involvement of the pet in the aggressive situation to the question "When you and your partner were arguing/fighting, what did the pet/species/pet's name do?" This question invited more of a dialogue than the previous question, was less confrontational, and flowed better with the general tone of most of the interviews.

After each interview, detailed fieldnotes were composed contained my overall impression of the interview. The notes focused on items such as the participant's posture, gestures, emotion, and any other observations that may have come to mind. These fieldnotes also included my own emotions and personal reactions to what was revealed in the interviews. The notes also contained a personal critique of my interview skills, noting what I could have done differently and should be sensitive to in subsequent interviews. These fieldnotes notes were used in both the transcription process to augment the written words and in the coding and analysis process to augment the research memos written. The process of writing fieldnotes after each interview helped to ensure that I was being reflexive about my place within and influence on the entire research project.

Analysis

The interviews were transcribed in their entirety, and pseudonyms were assigned to the participants to provide anonymity. The interviews were transcribed with pauses, repeated words, and other utterances such as "um, uh, you know," as these were a part of the participant's natural speech patterns could have an impact on the analysis.

A grounded theory approach was used to analyze the data, in particular, the constant comparative method of analysis. In the constant comparative method, “themes gleaned from interviews conducted late in the research process are tested against, and used to reanalyze, interviews conducted early in the research process” which helps to validate the themes against each other (Wood, 2004: 560). Giske and Artinian (2007) note that fit is the most fundamental criterion in grounded theory. They emphasize that themes or “categories not be forced or selected out of preconceived understandings...It is essential that they be generated systematically from data and constantly validated by the hard work of fitting and refitting the categories to data” (Giske & Artinian, 2007: 69).

Each interview transcript was first analyzed using the initial line-by-line method recommended by Charmaz (2010). Each line of the interview transcript was assessed and coded with an active, descriptive phrase. The focus was given to both what was said (words, phrasing) as well as how it was said (emotion, cadence, pauses) within the voice of the participant. According to Charmaz (2010), the process of line-by-line coding “frees you from becoming so immersed in your respondents’ worldviews that you accept them without question” and encourages a critical and analytical engagement with the data (51). Coding the data line-by-line reduces the possibility of simply imposing your own impressions, ideas or themes on the data. This process allows the data to speak for itself, revealing themes that may otherwise have gone unnoticed.

Next, focused coding was employed based on the line-by-line codes. Charmaz (2010) states that “focused coding requires making decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize your data incisively and completely” (57). This was a more iterative process, moving back and forth between interviews, identifying common themes and instances.

This is where the constant comparative method first encouraged by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was used. The focused codes were compared with other transcripts, looking for both concurrences and conflicts between the data to ensure both consistency and comprehensiveness of the categories. These focused codes were analyzed and condensed into themes, upon which the results and discussion are based.

Throughout the data collection process, research memos were composed in addition to the fieldnotes composed after each interview. The research memos were written throughout the transcription process and during the coding and analysis stages. These memos aided in identifying and thinking through conflicts and anomalies present in the data, helped in examining the nature of connections between concepts and themes, and formed part of the process of being reflexive throughout the research.

Reflexivity

Being reflexive about my place in the interview process as well as the larger research process is critical. Cresswell (2009) states that in grounded theory research, “the researcher brackets or sets aside his or her own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study” (13). Rubin and Rubin (1995) view the researcher differently: “the researcher is not neutral, distant or emotionally uninvolved. He or she forms a relationship with the interviewee, and that relationship is likely to be involving” (12). Instead, Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggest seeking a balance between empathy and searching for the multiple sides of the issue, while at the same time recognizing the bias that each researcher brings to the research process. Being open about my own biases and reactions to the participants are particularly important in this research.

One of the aspects which I needed to be particularly cognizant of is my placement of relative privilege in comparison to my participants. I am a white, female, university student, and

as such am different from my participants. Being reflexive about my position of privilege, there were steps I could take to minimize the impact on the research process. My previous experience working with inmates in prisons in British Columbia helped attune me to the aspects of privilege that I could realistically address. Rubin and Rubin (1995) state that barriers such as privilege and gender can be dealt with in a positive way, but that “you have to accept that how you are seen by the person being interviewed will affect what is said” (39). I selected my attire to minimize any obvious class markers while still maintaining a professional style of dress for the prison environment. Wearing a suit or a skirt would have highlighted the class and gender barriers between me and my participants, but jeans, casual shoes, and a dressy sweater reflected the neutral dress code adhered to by most of the staff in the institution who did not wear a uniform.

Most importantly in regards to privilege is the fact that I am taking the participants’ words with me when I leave. The participants are trusting me with their stories, and trusting me to portray them accurately and honestly. Part of my process of being reflexive included a constant recognition of the commitment that I have made as a researcher and as an academic to the participants. The fieldnotes and the research memos aided in this as I was able to record and check my emotional reactions against their words and intent.

It was anticipated, given the sensitive subject matter in this research, that some disturbing information would arise in the course of the interviews. As the researcher, I needed to be able to handle such disclosures in a neutral, non-judgemental fashion – respecting the participant at all points during the interview. I needed to listen to the participant’s voice, their perspective, without increasing their stress by reacting adversely to any particular information that may come up. Monitoring my reaction was difficult at points during the interviews. Several participants became emotional, openly crying at certain points. I attempted to balance understanding and

acceptance of their emotion without getting overly involved myself, though at times it was difficult. Upon review of the transcripts, I believe I achieved that balance during the interviews.

However, when transcribing the interviews, I felt like I was re-experiencing the interview complete with the emotional reactions that I was unable to engage with during the interview itself. I was in a much safer space to be able to attend to these emotions, but it also made transcribing some of the interviews very difficult. There were points when I was only able to transcribe five minutes of an interview before having to take a break. This was an unanticipated personal consequence of conducting this research. Writing research memos (recommended by grounded theorists such as Charmaz, 2010 and Glaser and Strauss, 1967) helped to identify where my emotions were coming from. Exploring my reactions through the memos helped to identify what I was reacting to in the interviews, whether the participant himself or the experience he was relating. These research memos also helped in the analysis stage, by providing a document I could use to check my biases against, to make sure that the results were reflective of the participants' voice, and not my emotional reaction or personal values.

During the analysis stage, I identified a potential danger in over-identifying with some of the participants. I started feeling like there were some participants that I liked more than others or empathized with more than others. Using my research memos and fieldnotes helped me identify the participants that I may have been overly critical of or favourable towards during the analysis stage. These were participants that I disagreed with, that I may have disliked or had a negative emotional reaction to during the interviews based on their attitudes, as well as participants with whom I felt an empathetic connection. Part of my analytical process was actively questioning whether I was conducting a critical and thoughtful analysis of the transcripts or whether I was simply being critical. The constant comparative method helped to keep this in

check by comparing the instances of the different themes from the interviews and questioning how they were both similar and different. Nonetheless, I still needed to remain aware of the tendency to be more critical of some participants than others.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The results are presented as answers to the specific research questions. The presence of companion animal abuse is discussed, followed by attitudes about animal abuse in general. The majority of this chapter addresses the research questions about patriarchal attitudes and the perception of the men towards the pets in the abusive relationships, and how these attitudes of the participants influenced the relationship with the pets.

Direct or Indirect Companion Animal Abuse

In contrast to other research findings, nine of the ten participants did not commit abuse (by their definition) of companion animals either directly connected to intimate partner violence or otherwise. No definition of animal abuse was provided for the participants during the interviews or information sessions, which meant that any identification of abuse was based on what they considered to be abuse or cruelty. Although several of the participants engaged in some physical discipline of the pets, none of the participants classified this as abuse of the animals. All seemed to follow the definition of animal cruelty by Ascione and Shapiro (2009): “nonaccidental, socially unacceptable behaviour that causes pain, suffering, or distress to and/or the death of an animal” (570).

When asked about the pet in the context of arguments or physical altercations between the men and their partners, nine of the participants answered that the pet was not involved in the argument or was a target of abuse. A few participants could not remember what the pet was doing during arguments with their partner. The single incident of physical violence in Marcel’s relationship was when he was drunk, and he could not remember where his girlfriend’s dog was

at the time. Alex related that his dog “might get rambunctious and bark” during verbal arguments, but for the most part took little notice of what the dog was doing as he was so focused on the argument. Gabe said that his dog “didn’t do a whole lot” during the verbal arguments with his partner. These types of responses indicate that the pets in the relationships were not used directly in the abuse of the partner. The aggression or anger was directed at the partner, not the pet.

Of the ten participants, only Elliot engaged in abuse of the pet directly connected to the abuse of his partner. In response to a question about discipline of his dogs, Elliot revealed that he had “kicked a dog” during an argument with his girlfriend. Elliot connected his behaviour to the emotional abuse he committed against his partner, stating that his motivation for kicking the dog was intimidation of his partner. When questioned about how kicking his dog was intimidating, Elliot replied that it was the message that “you’re lucky I’m kicking the dog and not you.” Instead of physically abusing his girlfriend, Elliot kicked his dog to illustrate that he could assault her if he wanted to. Physically kicking the dog was likely considered a more socially acceptable behaviour as Elliot lived on a First Nations Reserve where, according to Elliot, dogs were not really valued and “most dogs aren’t taken care of.” Elliot remembered that the dog “whimpered and ran out of the room” and that the incident ended the argument with his girlfriend. In essence, the emotional abuse perpetrated against his girlfriend via engaging in animal abuse was instrumental: it was directed at intimidation, and served the purpose of ending the argument with agreement with Elliot’s point of view and Elliot in control of the situation. When asked about similar incidents in that relationship or in subsequent relationships, Elliot said there were none.

Gabe stated that his partner had committed abuse of the companion animal in the

relationship. Gabe believed that his wife had mistreated his dog based on the dog's behaviour: "You know it like when you see an animal walking and it kind of veers around somebody to keep a space." Although he never actually saw his wife harm his dog, the fact that the dog would only destroy items belonging to his wife was another indication to Gabe that "something had to have happened." This was raised in the context of the mutual nature of the violence in the relationship, with statements like "she gave as good as she got." Gabe revealed that he was the victim of the physical abuse in the relationship, and though both he and his wife engaged in emotional and verbal abuse, he had never physically assaulted her or retaliated when she assaulted him. In this case, the mistreatment of the animal formed a component of the emotional abuse of the male partner in the relationship. Gabe attributed his wife's alleged mistreatment of his dog (as well as her poor treatment of his children) to jealousy. He stated that she was jealous of close relationships he had with his children and his dog, and Gabe suggested that his wife felt that others were getting the love and attention that she felt she deserved. The abuse of the dog may have been transference of his wife's frustration and anger from Gabe to the animal, or retaliation or revenge against Gabe for something he had said or done.

General Attitudes about Companion Animal Abuse

Almost every participant held an opinion on the subject of pets being included in IPV, and about animal abuse generally. These opinions arose organically out of the interviews rather than being responses to a specific question. For the most part, the participants had very negative views of cruelty to animals. The stronger the opinions against animal abuse, the closer the relationship was between the participant and the companion animals in his life.

Several participants asked about the purpose of my research at the conclusion of the interview. When I explained the rationale for my research, that sometimes pets are involved in

situations of domestic violence and that I was interested in their (the men in the relationships) perspective, the reactions were mostly negative. Orson had not heard of the issue before, but said that “a guy who could hit, a person who could hit a dog is a mean person.” Marcel became almost visibly upset about pets being involved in IPV, shaking his head and saying “that’s not good, no that’s not good, you can’t take it out on the animal [...] no, that’s not cool.”

An interesting method the participants used to communicate their attitudes about companion animal abuse was through a narrative describing others’ treatment of animals. The narratives came up naturally throughout the interview, there was no specific question asked about the behaviour of others. For some participants, this appeared to be a way of distancing themselves from the abuse and neglect that was perpetrated by a third party, while at the same time revealing their own opinions.

For example, Theo spoke of how the husband of the woman he was having an affair with treated her two dogs, relating an incident where the man threw a steel-toed boot at the dog, striking the dog in the mouth. Theo stated that he was upset about the man’s behaviour: “I didn’t approve of it at all, no I didn’t like that. I actually lost a lot of respect for him being mean to a helpless dog.” In an interesting parallel, Theo’s belief that animals are vulnerable and should be protected mirrored his view of women as weak and in need of protection. Randy talked about how his friend’s family mistreated their dog, including throwing things at the dog, and not walking or feeding the dog regularly. Through the narrative, Randy indicated his negative views of the abuse (and neglect) of animals via his tone of voice and facial expressions as well as by his actual words. Alex was more direct in relating his opinion of animal abuse: “I’ve seen people kick their dogs and yell at them and hit them and stuff. And that doesn’t solve anything, that just makes the dog evil.” Alex implied knowledge that animals can be used as scapegoats and

targeted for abuse in order to hurt others, and took a very negative view of individuals who would behave in that manner.

On the other hand, Kurt illustrated his conflicting attitudes on animal abuse. During the interview, Kurt told of how his sons' cat had been kicked by their stepfather, who had taken the cat to the veterinarian for medical care. For Kurt, it was not the abuse of the cat that he did not understand, it was the money spent on veterinary care:

I couldn't understand why he would kick the cat and then pay like \$400 to get the cat fixed, right. Take it to the vet, right. Personally I just would've said, taken it to the vet, said here, put a needle into it and, it was over with, right. (laughing) Like if you're going to kick the shit out of the cat, the cat gets all mangled up, like you know c'mon, get rid of the cat. Why keep it, why pay all that, why you do that there and then pay all that money to get it fixed? Like, didn't make any sense to me.

Yet when he was moving to a house where he could not keep pets, Kurt made sure that his dog was going to a good home, describing in detail how well the new owner would be treating the dog. Instead of accepting the offered money in exchange for the dog, Kurt insisted that the new owner make a donation to the local humane society. His rationale was if someone was willing to spend money for a dog, they were less likely to abuse the animal. Kurt's overall opinion about companion animal abuse seemed to be 'don't abuse your pet, but if you do, just get rid of the animal.' This seemed to be the same attitude he held on relationships with women as well, leaving the relationship rather than 'dealing with the trouble.'

The Abuser's Perspective: Partners and Pets

During the interviews, the participants seemed to be making unintended comparisons between the partners and the pets in their relationships, revealing their perspective of and relationships with companion animals. These comparisons offered an explanation for the lack of

abuse against pets in this sample of men who have committed violence against an intimate partner. Within these comparisons, two overarching themes emerged: *Attachment* and *Masculinity*. These themes both influence and are influenced by the attitudes towards and treatment of the pets.

Attachment

Attachment arose in the context of the relationship between the participant and both his intimate partner and his animals. It presented in both a negative way (i.e., no attachment) as well as a positive way (i.e., strong attachment). *Attachment* was a theme that arose directly from the participants, and refers to the degree of closeness and the bond between the participant and his partner or animals in the relationship. The relationship and degree of attachment to the pet seemed to have very little to do with the amount of abuse of the human partner in the relationship, contrary to other research that has identified a connection between companion animal abuse and serious and chronic IPV (e.g., Zilney, 2007).

The participant's answer to the question 'how did you view the pets?' proved to be a good indication of the relationship the participant had with the pet, and by extension, the attachment of the participant to the pet. *Attachment* appeared on a continuum (Figure 5), moving from no relationship with the animal to a close familial relationship. The participants ranged from viewing animals as having a function, such as for protection or farm livestock, to viewing the animals as companions. The language used to speak about the pets, and animals in general, illustrated the relationship the participants had with (and attachment to) their pets.

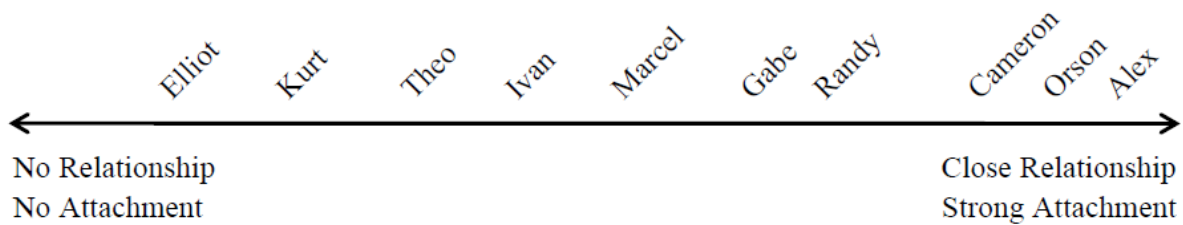


Figure 5: The Participant-Pet Relationship/Attachment Continuum

None of the participants landed on the end of the continuum with no relationship and no attachment; however, Elliot was the closest. Elliot's attitude towards and relationship with his pets could be explained by the general attitude towards animals held in his community on a First Nations Reserve. Elliot viewed pets as an inconvenience rather than as companions. Dogs were fine to keep around when they were cute puppies, but were "kicked outside" as they got older to run free. Although Elliot used the phrase "the family dog," it was a reference to the common ownership of the dog rather than an indication of his relationship with the pets. Elliot specifically spoke about the dogs being useful for protection, and not needing to lock his doors because of the presence of the dogs. The off-hand, almost casual way he spoke of having the police shoot his dogs rather than finding them a new home when moving off the First Nations Reserve revealed his lack of attachment to (and weak relationship with) the dogs.

Some of the participants were able to see the attachment to animals that others had, although they did not experience the attachment themselves. Kurt did not seem to understand or appreciate the attachment that others had for their pets (or other animals). He called his brother's children "drama queens" and that he did not know "what their problem was" when the children got upset about the pigs the family owned being butchered for meat. Kurt actively discouraged his children from forming attachments to the animals in their life, indicating his own lack of attachment and distant relationships with the animals in his life. Giving the dogs away was not a

loss; the animal was simply something that was no longer convenient to have around and easily discarded. For Kurt, as with Elliot, animals were functional, and companionship was low on the list of purposes animals served.

Theo and Ivan were both aware of the strong bonds that others had for the animals in their lives, and treated the animals relatively well. Theo acknowledged how important his partner's dogs were to her. Although his treatment of the dogs was positive, it appeared to be rooted in the competition with her husband for her affection rather than based on close attachment. Ivan took care of his partner's cat while she was in prison, "'cause I knew she was so attached to it so I didn't want to see anything happen to the cat." Ivan acknowledged the strong relationship between his partner and her cat, but showed no attachment to the animal himself. When asked how he felt about accidentally running over his dog with a snow plow, Ivan replied that he "felt very bad" but that he "was sad for the kids, yeah, they hurt more." Ivan's reply indicates a relative lack of attachment on his part to the dog, but a clear acknowledgement of the attachment his children had to the dog. Ivan liked to have animals around, describing them as "handy" and "good company," but there were no deep relationships with the pets in his life.

Marcel, Gabe and Randy were closer to the strong attachment end of the relationship continuum, but still made clear distinctions in the hierarchy of relationships. Gabe and Randy placed different animals on a hierarchy. Pets were part of their family, but only certain pets. Randy had very little attachment to the hamsters he had, but had a very close bond with his cat. Gabe drew clear lines between the more functional relationship he had with his horses and the close relationship he had with his dog. Marcel described treating his girlfriend's dog as "just like a child," but then immediately clarified his position and relationship by stating "can't say like a child, well like a child is different, but hey, part of the family." Marcel's language indicated the

strength of his relationship with the dog. Marcel included animals as members of his family, but as less valuable or important members.

Cameron, Orson, and Alex did not share Marcel's opinion of animals as less important than the human family members, and landed very firmly at the 'close relationship' end of the relationship continuum. Cameron described his dogs as "like a human" and "just like a person." Cameron described taking one of his dogs to a 'special doctor' to deal with the dog's fear of thunderstorms, not because the dog's behaviour was an irritation, but because Cameron wanted the dog to feel happy, safe and loved all the time, indicating the strength of his attachment. Orson used direct human referents in talking about his dog, an indication of how he regarded the dog "as a family member" and the nature of their relationship. For example, Orson used the same language to refer to both his children and his dog. He called the dog "a baby" instead of a puppy when noting the dog's age, and referred to the dog as being "potty trained" rather than housebroken. A clear indication of the close relationship that Orson had with his dog was the fact that along with pictures of his children, he had pictures of the dog posted in his cell. For Alex, the dog was a valued family member, included in family activities and holidays. Alex referred to himself as the dog's "dad," and the belief that the dog viewed him as a parent was mirrored in Alex's statement "to me the dog was just like having another kid in the family [...] both our dogs acted very much like kids in the family." The depth of the relationship was also apparent when speaking about the dog's death while he was in prison. Alex openly cried, expressing his heartbreak and grief over the loss of his dog.

The finer nuances of *Attachment* (and by extension the relationships with pets) in this research are understood through three sub-themes: *Abandonment*; *Letting Others Down*; and *Trust*. These subthemes were understood via a series of opposites, where the relationship with

the pet was often more secure than the relationship with the partner.

Abandonment

Abandonment appeared primarily as emotional abandonment. There was no fear on the part of the participants that the pets would abandon them. In fact, there was complete trust that the pets were loyal versus the partners who were disloyal in several different ways, including withdrawal of love and lack of support. The contrasts between the partner and the pet were revealing, especially when the pets were the ones the participant turned to for some of the support and love that they were not receiving from their partner. The (perceived) abandonment by the partner made the attachment to the animal that much stronger, and the pet served as a stable influence in the face of abandonment by the partner.

Orson very clearly voiced a fear of abandonment, stating that he was insecure about his girlfriend's love and was afraid that she would leave him. However, Orson felt no insecurity about his relationship with his dog. When talking about a physical argument between him and his girlfriend, Orson related the only time his dog bit him. Orson did not interpret the dog's actions as rejection or evidence of lack of affection, but instead attributed the incident to the dog being excited and being "just a baby." In contrast, Orson viewed his girlfriend's actions of throwing juice at him and shouting at him as evidence that she did not love him. The reciprocal abuse in the relationship, trading insults as well as shoving and other physical contact, contributed to Orson's feelings of insecurity and fear of abandonment. The security in Orson's relationship with his dog was underscored by the dog's perceived inability to reject him, thereby lessening the fears of abandonment.

Emotional abandonment can be seen in Cameron's experience. In speaking about his wife's extramarital affair, Cameron said "she took my dreams [...] she killed me, no more

dreams.” The manner in which Cameron spoke about the emotional abandonment of his wife versus the constancy of his dogs was revealing of the differences in attachment. His wife’s emotional abandonment “destroyed” Cameron. He was crying as he spoke about how deeply she had hurt him, not only because of the coarse and insulting language she directed towards him, but because this represented the loss of her love and the end of his marriage. On the other hand, the only genuine smiles during the interview were seen when he was speaking about his dogs, and how much joy they brought to his life. The dogs were a source of support for Cameron, making him feel loved and valued when he did not feel loved and valued by his wife. Talking about his future plans, Cameron said he wanted to get a dog because they are “good company, especially for your heart,” indicating trust that the dog would not abandon him. Cameron also stated quite clearly that he did not want another romantic relationship, that he did not “want to make dreams again” of love and marriage. Cameron was willing to become attached to another dog who would not abandon him, but not willing to become attached to another person who could abandon him.

Alex also experienced emotional abandonment on the part of his wife. After losing his job, Alex was “absolutely deflated” and “felt like a failure.” His wife did not offer emotional support and understanding about what he was experiencing, instead calling him a loser and telling him he was a failure. In contrast, Alex’s dog offered emotional support, not abandoning him when he needed someone.

And there were times that I swear to God the dog understood me, she just looked at me, hey I know how you feel. Just keep walking, throw the ball, throw the ball, throw the kong, whatever you, no big thing. But it, I found a lot of peace in the dog too. [...] And their unconditional love is, you know. You can have the worst day in the world, you can be in the worst mood in the world, you can be whatever you want and the dog come up and lick your hand, wag its tail, and look at you like its smiling. (laughing) You kinda go yeah, you got the right idea.

For Alex, the unconditional love and acceptance from his dog stood in stark contrast to the criticism, insults and conditional support that his wife offered. Alex's partner abandoned him when he needed emotional support; his dog did not abandon him and represented a source of support during a difficult emotional period in his life.

The participants' relationship with and attachment to their partners was undermined by the emotional abandonment, but the relationship with the companion animals in their lives helped to buffer the abandonment by the partner. The participants who turned to their pets for support were those with the closest relationships with their pets, viewing them more as family members with the support that one would expect from family in times of emotional turmoil. Both Alex and Cameron found joy in spending time with their dogs, receiving affection and positive attention from their dogs that they were not receiving from their wives. Orson placed a great deal of trust in the security of his relationship with his dog, believing the dog would not abandon him.

Letting Others Down

The theme of *Letting Others Down* is almost the opposite of *Abandonment*. Rather than being abandoned by their partner (or not abandoned by their pet), the participant let down the partner or the pet. *Letting Others Down* arose via two routes: self-imposed expectations, and the expectations and demands of others. When the expectations of others were not met, it resulted in more pressure and guilt on the part of the participant. Pets had lower expectations and were easier to satisfy whereas the expectations of individuals were much higher and therefore more difficult to satisfy. When the self-imposed expectations were not met, the pets were just as likely as the partners to be included in those who were let down by the actions of the participant.

Orson felt that he was letting his girlfriend, his children, and his dog down by being arrested and sent to prison. Orson said that by being in prison "I put [my girlfriend] in a bad

position,” especially in terms of the lack of financial support and bearing the sole burden of raising their children. He felt like he was letting his children down: “The thing I feel really bad about, is leaving. I’m supposed to be there for my kids.” Orson also felt like he let his dog down. During Orson’s sentence, his family was living with his girlfriend’s parents. His dog was not getting along with his girlfriend’s parents and the dog was experiencing stress (evidenced through chewing behaviour). The fact that Orson specifically mentioned his dog when speaking about how he had let others down is an indication of the importance of that relationship. Orson felt directly responsible for the stress on his whole family, as well as frustration at being unable to do more to help his family. Orson was unable to meet both his self-imposed and external expectations of being a good partner, father and dog owner due to his incarceration, and his guilt over his actions and his inability to support his family placed a physical distance in his relationships.

Alex felt that by losing his job, he let his family down, placing an emotional distance in his relationship with his wife. He clearly voiced how his feelings of guilt negatively impacted his relationship: “I became withdrawn, I, I, I pulled away from my family. I felt like a failure. Um, I started fighting with my wife a lot, we argued about anything, we’d argue about the colour of the sky.” Alex felt that without his job, he could no longer meet the expectations of his family, to have the best of everything and to provide for his family. The expectations of his dog were much easier to meet in terms of affection and care, resulting in less pressure on Alex. Being able to meet the relationship expectations of his dog gave Alex a sense of accomplishment that was missing in his other relationships.

Not being able or willing to care for the pets in the relationship was an aspect of *Letting Others Down* that was connected to self-imposed expectations. Alex got tears in his eyes when

recounting having to give his dog to his friend to care for when he came to prison. Alex felt guilty about not keeping his commitment to his dog to care for her for the length of her life, feeling like he let her down. Marcel had a dog during his previous marriage, and gave the dog away because they could not handle the dog as well as the two young children they had at the time. Marcel said “we always felt bad about that and then the guy we gave the dog to offered it back so we took it back.” Taking the dog back gave Marcel a chance to mitigate his feeling that he let the dog down by giving him away. By taking the dog back, Marcel was able to re-establish his relationship with his dog, honouring the commitment he had made to care for the dog.

Conversely, Kurt did not experience the feeling that he let his dogs down by giving them away to others. He spoke about giving one of his dogs to a friend the same way he spoke about getting rid of his furniture; the dog was simply a possession that he could not take with him when he moved. Though he treated the dogs well when he had them, Kurt did not feel badly about not being able to keep the dogs. Similar to Kurt, Elliot treated his dogs comparatively well when he had them but did not appear to feel like he let his dogs down by not taking them when he moved off the First Nations reserve. Elliot did not feel badly that he had the reserve police shoot the dogs instead of finding them a new home, rationalizing his decision by asserting that the dogs “were too vicious with anybody else.” Both Kurt and Elliot had very little in the way of self-imposed expectations about the treatment and care of their pets, evidence of a very weak attachment and relationship with the animals.

Trust

Trust arose in a few ways in the interviews. Orson had a general mistrust of people, but trusted his dog, saying “He’s a really good dog, that dog. He’s good with my babies.” Alex was mistrustful of his own feelings and his own actions, but felt that his dog trusted him, which gave

him a bit of solace.

The most common way *Trust* came out was in not being able to trust the partner but being able to trust the pet in the relationship. Gabe said that he was not good at expressing his feelings to his partners, not really trusting them with his feelings, and instead “buried [his emotions] inside and just didn’t talk about them.” Gabe said that “in comparison, with an animal it, it’s more natural, it’s easy” to express his feelings. The contrast in the trust Gabe had in his dog and cat versus his partner was summed up when he said that the pets “don’t judge you,” implying that the human partners in the relationship do judge and therefore cannot be trusted with his emotions. The trust was prevalent in Gabe’s close and stable relationship with his pets, whereas there was a distinct lack of trust in his unstable romantic relationships.

Like Gabe, Randy also did not trust the women in his romantic relationships. His girlfriend lied to him about being pregnant in order to continue the relationship, resulting in Randy feeling like she had taken advantage of his generous nature. When talking about his other relationships, Randy referred to one girlfriend as a “gold digger” and stating that he “was just the money shooter” and only “got the girls because of money.” Randy did not trust the motives or emotions of the women with whom he had relationships; however, he felt like he was able to trust his cat. He spoke about his cat presenting him with ‘gifts’ of bats and mice that the cat had caught. Randy said “the psychologist actually told me one time that [the cat] felt so part of the family that he was bringing presents and wanted to share.” Instead of being used by his girlfriends, Randy’s perception of the cat’s behaviour was that the cat genuinely cared, and was worthy of trust. Randy had a secure, trusting relationship with his cat, something that he did not get from his romantic relationships.

Trust came up in a unique way with Theo. He described how he invested time in training

and the dedication in building the trust of his budgie:

Eventually if you hold him enough times he's going to see that he can trust you and that you're not going to hurt him and he's going to stop biting you [...] And it's very difficult, you have to put in at least a good year of training to get a budgie to not bite you, and to listen to you, come fly to you.

What was unique about Theo was that although he fostered and encouraged the trust of his budgie, his relationship with his partner was rooted in dishonesty as she was still married at the time and they were both lying to her husband. Moreover, Theo actively destroyed the trust in the relationship with his partner, primarily through telling her husband about their affair. Theo desired trust and the close relationship that trust builds, but seemed unable to make the connection between his actions and the lack of trust generated by his behaviour.

Masculinity

The research question about whether the abuser's attitudes toward pets are a manifestation of patriarchal attitudes is addressed in the theme of *Masculinity*. Elliot kicked his dog during an argument with his partner, using violence against a weaker being to intimidate his partner. In doing so, Elliot illustrated his power and control over the situation, ending the argument with his actions against the animal. In contrast to Elliot, Theo believed men should protect those who were weaker and more vulnerable than men, namely women and animals. Theo knew what was best for "his woman," evidencing an attitude of control and ownership. The subthemes of *Competition* and *Control* that arose in this research are common concepts within the feminist literature on IPV (e.g., Connell, 2002; Faver & Strand, 2007; Kurst-Swanger & Petcosky, 2003). The companion animals provided an opportunity to do masculinity, whether in the context of competing against others or in giving the participant a measure of control that was not available in other aspects of their lives.

Competition

Theo offered the most direct example of *Competition* in regards to his partner. After telling his girlfriend's husband about their affair, Theo explained that their relationship was "better than ever" because he "didn't have to compete with" her husband anymore. However, when his girlfriend told Theo that she was going to be reconciling with her husband, he felt like he had lost the competition which was the catalyst for the violence that ended the relationship. The pets in the relationship were owned by Theo's partner, and also played a role in the competition between Theo and his partner's husband. Theo's relationship with his girlfriend's dogs was certainly one with affection, and appeared on the surface to be one based on companionship. However, the relationship was tempered by Theo's use of the dogs in the competition with his girlfriend's husband for her exclusive affection. Statements such as "the dogs liked me better" and "I gave the dogs treats all the time, and [her husband] never did" revealed that though there may have been genuine affection in the relationship with the dogs, treatment of the dogs was more closely connected to competition in the interpersonal relationship rather than Theo's own relationship with the animals.

Unlike Theo, Randy did not view his girlfriend's infidelity as a competition with other men, but viewed the event as an escape from the relationship. *Competition* arose for Randy in the relationships with the animals in his life. Talking about his cat, Randy said "I guess he knew it was just me and him or something, he didn't really like anybody else, he'd always sleep with me, he was just a wicked cat. I just loved him." The cat's affection and preference for Randy's company gave him a sense of exclusivity, winning the competition for the affection of the cat. The same idea came up when talking about the dogs in his father's home. All the dogs chose to sleep with Randy and he "loved it," again giving the idea of exclusivity of affection, winning the

competition for the dogs' affection. Given that in other aspects of Randy's life he did not feel like he could compete with others, (e.g., his romantic relationships were based on his financial status rather than affection), the animals in his life provided a venue to compete against others (his father, his brothers, men in general) and win.

Other participants did not include the animals in competition. Elliot stated that there was no competition between him and his girlfriend for the attention of the dogs, it was relatively equal. However, Elliot did not have a close relationship with his dogs and did not care enough about them to compete for their attention or affection. Alex related that both he and his wife participated in the training of the dogs in the relationship so there was an equality in affection and obedience of the dogs for both partners. For Cameron, spending time with and caring for the dogs was something that he and his wife did together. In Orson's relationship, the dog was not a point of competition, but a shared focus of affection between him and his partner. The pets in the lives of Alex, Cameron, and Orson represented a lack of competition; rather, caring for the animals was a method they used to accomplish masculinity in being good providers and 'parents' to their dogs.

Gabe himself was the site of competition between his second wife and his daughters. Gabe had a very close relationship with his children, and believed that his wife was jealous of any attention that he paid to his children. Gabe theorized that she may have been insecure about the verbal and physical affection he gave to his children: "I don't think she understood how close we all were. [...] I don't know whether she felt as if she wasn't getting all of my love because I was giving it to the kids." Essentially, Gabe's wife felt that she had to compete for Gabe's attention and affection. Gabe's dog entered competition in a similar way to his children. During arguments between Gabe and his wife, his dog would sit beside Gabe, almost seeming to place

herself in opposition to his wife. Feeling like he could not ‘win’ arguments in his relationship with his wife, having his dog choose to support him gave Gabe the sense that someone was ‘on his side.’

Control

Not surprisingly, the idea of control and respect arose in every interview; however the ways in which the pets played into the issues of control varied. Orson connected his insecurity to his need to control his girlfriend’s behaviour. Elliot used insults and put downs of his girlfriend when she did not see his point of view, trying to control her thinking through verbal abuse. Randy laughed at his girlfriends’ attempts to control his drinking, resisting ultimatums, and ending the relationship if they persisted in trying to control his behaviour. Ivan labelled power and control as two issues that he had in his relationships. He tried to control the alcohol consumption of his partner, but actively resisted her attempts to control his drinking.

Alex felt little control in his professional life with changes in his position in the company and then being fired, as well as in his personal life with his marriage deteriorating. Having an obedient dog offered a way to feel in control. Alex spoke about not having to leash his dog because she was so obedient; the dog was so well trained that Alex “took two blue ribbon awards with her at [the facility] for training.” Not only was having a perfectly obedient dog connected to his pride, but also to Alex’s need for control. Alex described his own behaviour in his marriage as “controlling, [...] and it was my way or the highway.” When Alex started losing control of other aspects of his life such as work and marriage, the obedience of his dog offered a measure of control that was comforting in that there was still one aspect of his life that he controlled completely.

Kurt routinely used physical abuse to control his partner, whereas he used limited

physical means to control or train his dogs. Kurt noted the limits to a dog's obedience insofar that the dog needs to know what is being asked, while at the same time explained that he used voice commands rather than physical contact to control the dog. Kurt, like Alex, stated that his dog was so obedient that she did not need to be leashed, even when walking in a very busy part of the city. The near-perfect obedience of the dog gave Kurt a measure of control that was not present in his relationship with his wife. Kurt portrayed his wife as constantly challenging him, nagging about his job, and being unreasonable about other women in his life. Describing an argument with one of his partners, Kurt said "I hauled off and smacked her a couple of times, and she went and laid down and never bothered me no more." Violence was Kurt's way of controlling the arguments, as well as ending any attempts by the partner to control him. However, Kurt did not use violence to control the animals in his life.

Control in Theo's case manifested in several ways. He believed that women need to be told what is best for them, telling his girlfriend "you don't know what you want, you want me." Theo also took control of the direction of the relationship by telling his girlfriend's husband about the affair. Theo took control of the boundaries of the relationship by "using stalking techniques" and actually breaking into his girlfriend's house to talk to her. In spite of his behaviour, Theo stated that people cannot be trained in the same way as animals, and that people cannot be controlled in the same way as animals:

Like you don't want the dog jumping up on the couch when you have guests. So you're going to say sit over there in your spot or put him in a different room or something like that. With a person you can't do that. You know, with a person they're wherever they want to be.

Theo trained his budgie to land on his finger, to come when he was called, and to return to his cage when Theo instructed him to do so. When talking about the animals in his life, obedience (and by extension, Theo's control) was an important trait.

Gabe felt a clear lack of control in his relationship. He described an incident where he was falsely accused of assault by his wife, arrested, and then released on bail. No contact with his wife was one of the conditions of his release. Gabe explained his feelings of powerlessness, and his wife's control over him:

[My wife] went and got the bail conditions changed so I could go back in but after that it was always “look I put you away once I can put you away again for whatever, so you have to do what I say.” So there was manipulation. [...] I mean you're being manipulated but there's not much you can do about it because you know like you go back [to prison] on a breach of bail conditions you're not getting out again.

Unlike Alex and Theo who used the animals to attain or regain a sense of control, Gabe did not try to control the animals in his life. Obedience was not a primary concern. He described how he “had to put the leash and collar on [the cat]” and take her for a walk with the dog. Gabe also laughed about how his previous dog would jump in the car, ‘forcing him’ to take the dog along wherever he was going. Gabe's other cat would claw at his legs until he grabbed the cat's tail in greeting. Even though the animals could be perceived as influencing Gabe's behaviour, Gabe found the antics amusing, not manipulative. Gabe's solace from his wife's manipulation came from the affection he received from his pets, not his control over them.

Attachment, Masculinity, and Pets

The participants' perspective of the pet in relationships with IPV is influenced by the attitudes and experiences embedded in *Masculinity* and *Attachment* as they appeared in this research. Figure 6 illustrates how these attitudes, evident through the treatment of the pets, interrelate to influence the human-animal relationships.

Masculinity affects the relationship with the pet in the way it influences the treatment and perception of the companion animal. For example, Theo's view of the man as the protector of

women and animals contributed to the positive treatment of the pets of his girlfriend. Cameron's adherence to the role of male provider was a positive influence on his relationship with his dogs in that he took pride in being able to give them everything they needed, including visits to a specialist. *Control* and *Competition* as subthemes of *Masculinity* are complementary concepts as they relate to the participants' perceptions of pets. For Alex and Kurt, the obedience of their dogs afforded a degree of control that was not available in other aspects of their lives, though the treatment of and relationships with the dogs were markedly different. Kurt had a very weak relationship with his dog, whereas Alex's relationship with his dog was very strong. *Competition* functioned in much the same way, strengthening the attachment to the pet in Randy's case, but detracting from the deepness of Theo's relationship with the dogs as they were almost pawns in his competition with his girlfriend's husband. *Masculinity* was a consistent theme that ran through the participants' descriptions of their relationships, with both the pets and their partners, but it influenced the relationships of each participant in different ways.

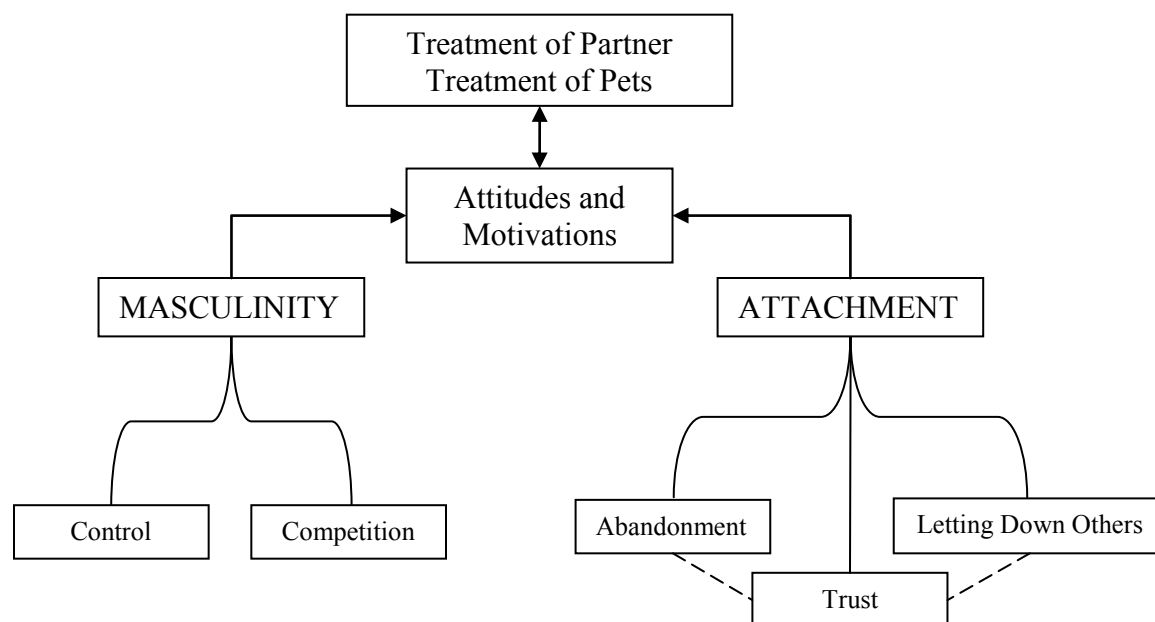


Figure 6: Influences of Masculinity and Attachment on Relationships with Pets and Partners

Attachment affects the relationship with the pet in a slightly different manner than *Masculinity*. *Attachment* is the bond between the participant and the animal, and the degree of attachment has a direct bearing on the relationship. For example, though Ivan treated his pets well, he had very little in the way of attachment to the animals, and an arms-length relationship with the animals in his life. Alex had strong attachment to his dogs which formed the basis for his parent-child style of relationship with the pets. *Abandonment*, whether actual or feared, was a negative influence on the relationships with the partners. The positive relationships with the pets compensated for the fears of abandonment by the partners. None of the participants feared abandonment on the part of their pets, regardless of the degree of attachment. *Letting Others Down* influenced the strength of the relationship in opposite directions. Alex let down his partner creating stress in the relationship, but not his dog which strengthened his attachment to his dog. It did not occur to Elliot that he might be letting his dogs down by having the reserve police shoot them rather than finding them another home, evidence of the absence of attachment to the animals.

Trust connects *Abandonment* and *Letting Others Down*, though in opposite ways. In the subtheme of *Abandonment*, the lack of trust in the partner is part of the issue. Orson did not trust his girlfriend's emotions, but he trusted his dog's affection. Cameron's trust in the loyalty of women was broken when his wife had an affair, but his trust in the loyalty of dogs remained steadfast. In the subtheme of *Letting Others Down*, it is the trust of others that is broken by the participant. Marcel broke the trust of his dog by giving her away, but then regained a measure of the trust when adopting her back. *Trust* is directly connected to *Attachment* as well. If there is little trust on the part of the participant, then the attachment, and the relationship, is weaker.

However, *Trust* was a negative factor only for the participants' relationships with their partners; *Trust* was a positive aspect of the relationships with their pets.

Though there was a constancy of the themes in the participants' accounts, the myriad attitudes present in the themes of *Masculinity* and *Attachment* presented a variety of sometimes contradictory influences on the participants' relationships with the companion animals in their lives. What this suggests is that the relationship between the abusive partner and the pet in relationships with IPV is not a simple one to understand. This also suggests that the connection between animal abuse, IPV, and the abuser's perspective on pets may not be as clear as the research to date has implied. What is clear from this research is that pets can provide a positive and supportive relationship even within a negative and violent relationship with an intimate partner.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Some of the findings in this research study were consistent with previous research, whereas other findings were not consistent with previous findings. Is the abuse of the pet used in the abuse of the female partner? Only Elliot kicked his dog to intimidate his female partner, thus using the abuse of the dog in the emotional abuse of his girlfriend. This was an anticipated result as research from the women's perspective indicates that pets are often used in the commission of IPV. Yet this only occurred in one out of ten participants. What are the motivations of the abuser for animal abuse in situations of IPV? According to Elliot, the motivation was intimidation and control. These were expected motivations for animal abuse as they arise in the research into animal cruelty generally (e.g., Kellert and Felthous, 1985), and are noted by the women who have experienced abuse of both themselves and their pets (e.g., Fitzgerald, 2005; Flynn, 2000a). The current research adds to the existing knowledge about the inclusion of pets in domestic violence by providing a male perspective, and raises important questions about the generalizability of the notion that violent men are violent to all beings in the family.

The abuse of companion animals, as noted by Fitzgerald (2005) and Adams (1995), is often used instrumentally in the commission of emotional abuse against an intimate partner. Instrumental aggression is aggression used for a particular purpose, such as intimidation or control (Boyle & Vivian, 1996; Gupta, 2008). The Power and Control Wheel (Figure 2) categorizes the instrumental use of abuse or threats against the pets in the intimidation segment of the wheel (Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, 2008). This research supports the results of Fitzgerald (2005) and Flynn (2000a, 2000b), whose female participants noted that abuse against the pets was used instrumentally by their partners to intimidate and control, in offering a

corroborating male perspective. Elliot, the lone participant who engaged in animal abuse, did so instrumentally. The purpose was intimidation of his partner and control of the situation.

Others have shown that IPV is connected to expressive aggression (Flynn, 2000a; Hattery, 2009). The inability to control emotions, reacting out of anger, ‘losing control,’ and the inability to handle conflict are a few examples of expressive aggression. Expressive aggression was certainly a part of the IPV committed by the participants in this research. The interesting part about this research, and contrary to much of the research on the inclusion of pets in domestic violence, is that the pet was *not targeted* in the aggression. The motive of displaced anger for animal abuse noted in Kellert and Felthous (1985), or the abuse of an animal as a scapegoat (Zilney, 2007) did not emerge in the interviews in this study. The focus of the anger in the relationship was directed at the partner, not the pet. Violence against the pets was not used in an expressive manner, or to relieve stress or strain (contrary to Agnew’s theory). Instead, the presence of the animals was a soothing and calming influence. This mirrors what women in violent relationships have revealed: their pets are sources of comfort and joy, and are often their sole source of support and love (Flynn, 2000a; Flynn, 2000c; Kogan, McConnell, Schoenfeldtacher, & Jansen-lock, 2004). This indicates that in relationships characterized by violence, companion animals can be beneficial influences in the lives of both the victim and the abuser.

The unanticipated result was the number of participants who *did not* engage in animal abuse in the context of IPV. Only one participant out of ten engaged in animal abuse. This contrasts with the existing literature, mainly using shelter-based samples of abused women, which shows about half of men engaging in IPV abuse the family pets as well (Ascione, 1998; Faver & Strand, 2003; McIntosh, 2004; Volant, et al., 2008). Even taking into account the small biased sample, the current research found a much lower proportion of men who commit both IPV

and animal abuse. The more intriguing and unique contribution of the current study was *why* the participants did not engage in animal abuse. In answering the research questions about the abuser's perspective of pets in the context of a relationship with IPV and whether the abuser's attitudes towards pets are a manifestation of patriarchal attitudes the rationale for the absence of animal abuse becomes apparent.

Masculinity

Masculinity and femininity are constructed; they are something that is done (performed) in relation to other men and women within social contexts. Illustrating power and domination over weaker others is a way for men to do masculinity in the drive to achieve hegemonic ideals of strength, power, aggression, and control. Connell (2002) argues that there is not a singular masculine ideal, but that there are a multitude of masculinities which vary along cultural and individual lines. Two men may do masculinity very differently, even though they both may be trying to evidence strength and power. Men do masculinity differently depending on their social context, their culture, their individual circumstances, and the resources available. Some men use violence against women in order to perform their gender when other avenues are blocked or challenged. Connell (2002) observes that "in the public realm men who batter wives/partners are not cultural heroes" (93), but that men are expected to be the 'head of the house' and thus may use violence in private to effect masculinity.

One of the pro-social and socially acceptable ways men do masculinity is through employment or financial success (Hattery, 2009; Schrock & Padavic, 2007). Financial stress is one of the most consistent factors contributing to stress reported by women and men in relationships with IPV. Regardless of the socioeconomic status, threats to the ability of the male in the relationship to contribute to the finances has been connected with IPV. In Hattery (2009),

men who made less than their partners were more likely to abuse them, and in a more severe manner than men whose earning power was relatively equal to or greater than their partner. In Schrock and Padavic's (2007) study of men in a domestic violence intervention program being a 'breadwinner' was a central way for men to do masculinity. This was certainly the case in this research. Almost every participant raised money or finances as a point of stress in the relationship. Alex lost his job, impeding his ability to provide for his family. By being incarcerated, Orson placed the burden for supporting his family on the shoulders of his girlfriend. Kurt described arguments over money with his wife, and Elliot stated that money was always a problem in his relationships. The participants either alluded to money being the cause of or contributing to the conflict in the relationship, which included violence against their partners. Performing according to a hegemonic masculinity only represents the potential for violence; there is no guarantee of violence (Connell, 2002).

The current research challenges the generally accepted idea that violence against animals is a method of accomplishing masculinity (Adams, 1995; Fitzgerald, 2005; Zilney, 2007). Abuse of animals is used instrumentally with the underlying purpose being to do masculinity in a way that compensates for the inability to do so in other areas of life. However, rather than using violence against the pets in the relationship to accomplish masculinity, care of the pets was the avenue utilized by most of the participants in this research to do their gender. This stands in direct contrast to the feminist arguments that the abuse of animals is connected to masculine power and domination, in essence, performing masculinity. Masculinity, at least as it relates to the pets in the relationship, manifested in a positive way. The participants fulfilled their masculine roles in the family by being a provider and protector, using the pet to accomplish this when faced with challenges from other areas. Even when their breadwinner status was

challenged, either through unemployment or underemployment, they were still able to provide for their pets' needs, doing masculinity in a positive, non-violent manner.

Fitzgerald (2005) was one of the very few to question why the minority of partners in her study did not abuse the pets in the relationship in her analysis. She found that the lack of abuse was closely related to ownership of the pets in that the women were not the primary owners and caregivers, the men in the relationships were (Fitzgerald, 2005). This is consistent with the findings in the current study. Marcel did not bring any pets into the relationship, but took on ownership and caretaking of his girlfriend's dog. Cameron, Alex and Orson, although the dogs were considered family pets, made it clear that ownership of the animals was shared equally. For Elliot, the solitary case where there was abuse, ownership and the responsibility for caretaking were constantly in question due to the number of extended family members who lived in the home at the time. When combined with the protector/provider aspect of masculinity embraced by the participants, this suggests that in cases where the ownership or caretaking responsibilities lies with the abusive partner, the pets may be less likely to be used in the psychological abuse of the female partner.

A central concept in the literature on masculinity is control – control of self, control over emotions, control over others (Anderson & Umberson, 2001; Umberson, Anderson, Williams, & Chen, 2003). The abuse of pets to control the partner in abusive relationships has been documented. Threats to the pet can be used to get the partner to remain in or to return to the abusive relationship (Faver & Strand, 2003; Kogan et al., 2004; Quinlisk, 1999). Although every participant raised control in some way, control manifested itself differently from the existing literature in this research. Rather than control of the partner through violence against the pet, the participants gained a measure of control through the obedience of their pet. It could be that

violence was not necessary to control the pet. Obedience is simply control manifested in a socially acceptable way. While the socially unacceptable (and criminal) violence in the relationship may have been used to control the female partner, the obedience of the pet offered a socially acceptable way to satisfy their need for control in their lives. Again, pets can function in a very positive way for both partners in abusive relationships, not simply the abused partner as has been the focus to this point in the body of research.

Attachment

According to attachment theory, a strong attachment bond to another individual (human or animal) involves four factors: their presence is enjoyed; they are missed when absent; they provide a secure base as a dependable source of comfort; and they provide safe haven as they are turned to in times of distress (Kurdek, 2009). Companion animals provide both safe haven and a secure base which are especially important in the face of the violence that the women experience from their intimate partners (Fitzgerald, 2005; Flynn, 2000a; 2000b). Bonds between the abused partner and their pet can be extremely strong, to the point of risking their own lives to protect the pet by staying in an abusive relationship or returning to an abuser out of fear for the pet's safety (Faver & Strand, 2003; Flynn, 2000a; 2000b). What this body of research tends to gloss over is the possibility that the abusers may have very close relationships with the pets as well. The focus in the majority of the research is on the acts of abuse against the companion animals that the male abusers in the relationships commit, and the effect on the abused human family members. This research study took a different perspective, looking at how the male abusers view the companion animals in the relationships. Interestingly, the responses from the participants in this study parallel the responses of the abused women in other research studies, such as Fitzgerald (2005) and Faver and Strand (2003) in the sense that the pets were viewed as family members, as

confidants, and as sources of comfort and support. Alex described his dog as being a great source of comfort, and Gabe said that he was able to express emotions to his dog that he could not reveal to his partner or anyone else. The unique contribution of the current research is that abusive men can and do form very close bonds with the pets in violent relationships and, as seen through the participants in this research, most often do not use the animals in the abuse of the female partner.

Research using attachment theory to evaluate and understand the human-animal bond supports the results of this study. Beck and Madresh (2008) found that people rated their relationships with their pets more positively than the relationships with their partners, and more importantly, they found that the relationships with pets were consistently rated as more secure than the relationships with the partners. This result from Beck and Madresh (2008) mirrors the results in this study, that the men were more comfortable and secure in their relationships with their pets which were characterized by trust, emotional intimacy and mutual dependency. Other participants in the current study indicated little attachment to their partners or their pets, and this relative lack of attachment extended to their partners as well. Again, this is supported by the literature as there is a degree of consistency of attachment styles across both the pet and human relationships (Beck & Madresh, 2008).

The instability in the human relationships may have played a role in the relatively positive treatment of the animals. The romantic relationships were either unstable due to issues like drugs, alcohol or physical and emotional abuse, or became unstable through external stressors such as the loss of employment or infidelity. The instability in the interpersonal relationship made the relatively stable companion animal that much easier to bond with, to rely on, and to trust. Sable (1995) theorizes that “adults seek closeness and security from attachment

figures at times of stress; attaining and maintaining proximity reduces fear and insecurity” (336), a sentiment that was echoed by Beck and Madresh (2008). This reduction in stress was seen in several of the participants, from Alex walking with his dog after a bad day to Gabe using the purring cat on his lap to relax. Given that the animals were a positive presence in the lives of most of the participants, it follows that they would not be abused or mistreated.

Two central concepts in attachment in adult relationships are the degree of comfort with intimacy or closeness in the relationship, and fear or anxiety about abandonment. Violence in intimate relationships can be used to manage these anxieties. Allison et al. (2008) noted that violence against the partners was used to create distance and avoid intimacy in some cases, and used in attempts to bring the partners closer or to increase intimacy in other cases. Through the dialogues presented by the participants, violence was used in both ensuring distance from the partner (such as Kurt and Ivan) as well as in the pursuit of intimacy (such as Orson). Within the relationships with the pets, there was no evidence of discomfort with intimacy. The nature of the participant-pet relationship allowed the participants to dictate the degree of intimacy within their comfort levels. The pets took as much attention and affection as the participants were willing to give without making demands for more or less intimacy. The undemanding nature of the pets stood in direct contrast with the partners in the relationships, who either wanted more intimacy than the participants were willing to give, or less intimacy which was communicated through physical or emotional abandonment. Violence was not used against the pets, perhaps because the intimacy and closeness was controlled without violence in the participant-pet relationship.

Roberts and Noller (1998) showed that fear or anxiety over abandonment was more connected to partner violence than being uncomfortable with closeness or intimacy in relationships. Abandonment, real or feared, was an issue that came up for many of the

participants in the current study, but only as it related to their partners. Orson attributed his violence to his insecurity about his girlfriend's love. Cameron murdered his wife when she told him about her affair. Theo killed his girlfriend when she said she was leaving him to return to her husband. Attachment theory research shows the connection between abandonment anxiety and violence against the intimate partners, as was the case in the current research. It was the feelings of being abandoned by their partner that made the secure nature of the attachment to the pet obvious. There was no fear of or actual abandonment by their pets, consistent with a secure attachment style. The potential for abandonment was dealt with in a proactive and pro-social manner such as leashing the dog, or through confidence in the obedience of the animal. This connects to the concept of control insofar that in controlling the animal, the control over their proximity (and thus the possibility of abandonment) is also controlled. Violence against the pet was not necessary to prevent abandonment.

In their grounded theory study exploring the male's perspective of IPV, Tilley and Brackley (2005) described mistrust as a broad concept influencing the violence in the relationship. Though rarely addressed directly, mistrust also underpins relationship anxiety in terms of attachment theory. Anxiously or fearfully attached individuals have a mistrust of their partner's affections, a mistrust of their fidelity, and a mistrust of their intentions. Mistrust plays a large role in fear of abandonment. When discussing their partners, the participants for the most part indicated a lack of trust, either of their partner's emotions, their fidelity, or their commitment to the relationship. Mistrust seemed to lead to abuse of the partner, or at least a minimal attachment to the partner. Mistrust of fidelity manifested as fear of abandonment, while mistrust of self was seen in the fear of not meeting the expectations and obligations of their partners.

The striking aspect of this research was that for the most part, the participants did not feel this lack of trust for their pets. From the participants' perspectives, the companion animals in their lives were inherently trustworthy. This could have been due to the nature of the pet. Pets cannot be unfaithful in the same way that an intimate partner can. For example, infidelity is a direct challenge to a man's masculinity as heterosexuality and sexual prowess are central components of hegemonic masculinity. Pets cannot threaten masculinity in the same way. Partners are able to be openly critical or derisive of emotions or feelings disclosed by the participant (constituting emotional abandonment), whereas the pets cannot respond in such a directly negative manner. The open and guileless nature of the animals made it easier for the participants to be emotionally intimate, and thus create a degree of trust, with their pets as opposed to their partners. Placing this in attachment theory terms, the pets provided an uncritical safe haven and secure base. Not only could the participants trust their pets to provide a dependable source of comfort, they could trust that the comfort offered would not be met with a list of demands and expectations. The same could not be said for their partners. The participants were able to turn to their pets for comfort and support when they were unable to trust that their partners would provide the support they needed. It is this sense of trust for the pets that likely contributed to the lack of animal abuse.

Implications of the Current Research

Though this sample is small and biased, made up of men serving lengthy sentences for murder, and serious assault, and the research is exploratory, the ideas generated within this research have implications for the treatment and counselling of men who commit IPV. For example, the importance of the pet to both the victim and abuser can be a point of common ground for those couples who choose therapy to address the violence rather than separation or

divorce. Building on the bond between the abuser and his pet (or animals in general) may be able to teach a more pro-social way to deal with the frustration or negative emotions that come out of a conflict without resorting to violence or psychological aggression. The relationship with the pet could be used as a safe haven to ease the stress of conflict. Treatment programs could encourage the positive nature of the relationship with the pet, highlighting the support and comfort that such a relationship offers. Taking a dog for a walk or petting a purring cat are just two of the numerous ways that pets can provide a soothing and calming presence in times of distress or relationship conflict (Cain, 1985; Cohen, 2002; Flynn, 2000c; Sable, 1995).

Many of the existing IPV intervention models are based on a feminist framework, such as the Duluth model. The focus of these programs is on challenging beliefs about male power and control in relationships, and in so doing, to reduce violence. According to Schrock and Padavic (2007), “the internal goal [of the Duluth model] is thus to change men from patriarchal authoritarians bent on controlling women into pro-feminist men” (626), a process which is often resisted resulting in low positive outcomes. The ‘blame and shame’ approach is seen in many intervention programs through pointing out all the harmful behaviours and thinking patterns coupled with the requirement of taking responsibility for the abusive behaviour (Curwood, DeGeer, Hymmen, & Lehmann, 2011; Gondolf, 2002; Schrock & Padavic, 2007; Stuart, Temple, & Moore, 2007). This is a negative (and potentially ineffective) way to approach the treatment and counselling of men who have committed IPV (Gondolf, 2002; Stuart et al., 2007).

One of the potential implications of this research is to build on the positive ways of doing masculinity rather than exclusively focusing on the ways in which masculinity is negatively performed. Instead of challenging and confronting the attitudes of the men in the intervention programs directly, building on the positive and pro-social ways in which the pets enter into how

they do masculinity could illustrate that violence is not necessary to ‘be a real man.’ The ability to draw on a tangible example of a positive relationship from the man’s own life and experience may provide a better learning tool than an explanation of how healthy relationships are supposed to work. A degree of confrontation of negative attitudes will likely remain a necessary part of any intervention program; however, “the tendency to see abusive men as nothing more than the personification of their offences” (Curwood et al., 2011: 2699) could be minimized if the positive relationships with pets were incorporated as learning tools. Approaching at least part of the intervention in a positive way could provide the participant with the ability to maintain a positive masculine identity, especially in involuntary treatment programs where resistance is more common.

The positive relationship with the pet can enter into intervention for IPV as an example of how men can do masculinity in a positive way, but can also enter as an example of a healthy relationship. The intervention program could use the relationship with the pet as a base for analyzing what a healthy and stable relationship looks like and in identifying the important elements of a non-violent relationship. For example, the participants could be asked to reflect on why they trust their pet, and the difference between the relationships with their pet and their partner. This could allow for a discussion about the insecurities of the participant towards their partner within a relatively safe context of discussing the pet. Another positive way the participant-pet relationship could be used is examining why the participants do not abuse their pets, and extending these rationales to the treatment of the partner. For example, a question could be framed around the communication style used with the pet, and contrasting the communication style used with the partner. Do they speak calmly to the pet, and yell at the partner? Drawing the comparison between positive and respectful treatment of the partner and the positive and

respectful treatment of the pet could be a powerful image to use in identifying, and then reproducing, a healthy relationship.

On the other hand, the comparisons drawn between the partner and the pet could also take place within a negative context. Reviews of intervention programs and interviews with abusive men consistently show that abusers minimize, rationalize and justify their violent behaviour (Ptacek, 1998; Schrock & Padavic, 2007; Wood, 2004). The ability to draw parallels between the treatment of the pet and the treatment of the partner, especially when both are subjected to violence, could allow the facilitators of the program to challenge the rationalizations for the violence against both victims of violence in the relationship.

Not all men who commit IPV also abuse animals, as the current research has shown. One of the primary implications of the current study is the recognition of multiple aspects of abusive men, who can be kind on one hand and cruel on the other. The relationships abusive men have with animals provides a space to question the differences between multiple aspects of their behaviour. Relationships, especially violent relationships, are complex with layers and nuances. The relationship with pets highlights one of the layers of complexity that exists within violent men. Relationships with the pets can provide a venue for men to construct a masculine identity in a positive way, and the treatment of the animals can illustrate how violence is not an effective solution. Incorporating the relationships with companion animals into IPV intervention programs represents a small but potentially important change. Incorporating relationships with pets is simply adding a tool to the toolbox of counselling and treatment programs in the aims of positive outcomes for the abusive partner, the abused partner, and the pets.

Limitations of the Current Research

As with any research, there are limitations to this study. The primary limitations of this research relate to the sample, both in size and selection. The sample in this research was very small with only ten participants. Smaller samples are often used in qualitative interview research given the in-depth nature of the research and time required to conduct the research. Smaller samples are also typically employed in grounded theory research, as the aim of the research is to explore the phenomenon under study. The sample was comprised of a very specific population who were incarcerated at Bath Institution, had committed IPV, had completed the Family Violence Prevention Program (or similar intervention program), and had pets within their romantic relationship(s). Given the sensitive nature of the focus of the research, and the very specific criteria for inclusion, there likely would have been difficulty in recruiting from a different population. Between the small sample size and the narrow criteria for inclusion in the research, the results are not generalizable to the broader population of men who have committed IPV. That said, generalizability was not the aim of the current study. The purpose in this research was exploratory, given the understudied nature of abusive men about the companion animals in their life. The rationale was to examine the attitudes of men who had committed IPV towards companion animals and explore the motivations for positive or negative treatment of the animals, the results of which could then be used to inform future research.

The response rate for this research was quite high at 45 percent in comparison to other studies using incarcerated populations. Tallichet and Hensley (2004) had a response rate of 12.5 percent, and noted that “most prison studies dealing with sensitive issues attract 25 percent or fewer respondents” (309). The invitation to participate in the research was framed in a neutral manner, not focusing on negative treatment of animals, just asking for their perspective of the

pets present their intimate relationships. It could be that those who committed animal abuse may not have volunteered for the research, or only those with positive relationships with their pets may have been the ones to volunteer, thus skewing the results towards very positive treatment of and attitudes towards companion animals. Framing the research focus in a neutral manner (without the specific mention of animal abuse) may have encouraged more participants to volunteer. Corbin and Strauss (2008) observe, “a researcher can never be certain why persons agree to be research participants” (29). There was no incentives offered for participation, so it could be that the participants were just interested in someone outside of the prison environment to speak with, regardless of the subject of conversation. Several participants offered thanks at the end of the interviews for listening to them and providing the opportunity to tell their story. Taking the potential selection bias into account together with the high response rate and the fact that the connection between animal abuse and IPV was revealed only at the end of the interviews, it is unlikely that the sample was skewed to the extent of diminished confidence in the results.

Another limitation of the sample, though balanced by a corresponding benefit, was the fact that the participants completed the Family Violence Prevention Program. The initial benefit of using this selection criterion was that completion of the program would have given the participants the skills and tools to deal with any stress that may have arisen from the sensitive topics of their potential abuse of the pets in the relationship and talking about the violence perpetrated against their partners. In being given the tools to deal with stress, the participants were also given language with which to describe their behaviour and attitudes. Several participants used ‘program language,’ attributing acknowledgement of intimidation, control, and emotional abuse based on information learned in the intervention program. The possibility exists

that program participation changed the participants' attitudes, and the participants were more in tune with their own motivations and attitudes than they would have been before the program. Or, the possibility also exists that the participants were simply telling me what they thought I wanted to hear, parroting the language and concepts learned in the FVPP. Though parroting may have been the case with some of the participants, the responses revealed varied attitudes and views indicating that this was not the case with many of the participants.

The issue of social desirability may have come up insofar that the participants may have been attempting to portray themselves in a positive light through their positive treatment of animals. Abusive men typically have a very low reporting rate of acts of animal abuse, as many are in denial that what they have done is abuse (Jorgensen & Maloney, 1999). Within the current research, the participants were not provided with a definition of animal abuse but rather were allowed to define their own behaviour as abusive or not. This indicated my lack of judgement of their behaviour, and perhaps encouraged a more open dialogue and limited the impact of social desirability. Had a definition of abuse been provided such as the one used by Carlisle-Frank et al. (2004) of the "socially unacceptable, deliberate and unnecessary suffering and harm inflicted on animals" (30), it is possible that the participants may have been more cautious in discussing their treatment of the pets, thus not revealing their true attitudes.

A particular challenge to this research is the setting in which the interviews were conducted. Prisons are not the ideal place to conduct an interview about sensitive subjects like intimate partner violence and animal abuse. The participants may have tried to portray an image of toughness or strength in order to maintain their image among their peers. There may have been a degree of reluctance to discuss particular details based on the perception that someone from the institution may be listening, even though the interview took place in a private office and

confidentiality was assured. Unfortunately, there was very little that could have minimized the setting effects in this research design.

Interviewer effects is another potential limitation. I have experience in the prison setting, in dealing with inmates, and an understanding of the prison culture. My experience in a helping capacity in the institutions may have encouraged the participants to open up more to me than to someone with no experience in prisons. Approaching the situation with the proper respect and knowledge of the prison culture may have helped alleviate interviewer effects. It is likely that I affected the data collection process through my skill as interviewer, my ability to create rapport, and my ability to remain neutral and open during the interviews. Though my previous work with inmates helped me in this regard as I have experience dealing with sensitive and sometimes upsetting revelations in a non-judgemental manner, this is a noted limitation of research designs using interviews, especially qualitative in-depth interviews.

Gender is also a factor of interviewer effects, and the fact that I am a woman interviewing men who have abused their female partners is a consideration for this research. It is likely that the participants would have responded in a different manner to a male interviewer; however, this could be both a strength as well as a limitation. Several of my participants were openly emotional during the interviews, and there is the possibility that they felt comfortable enough with me to share their emotions because I was a woman. They could have been more open about their pets and relationships than they would have been had they been interviewed by a man. The possibility also exists that the participants were minimizing their behaviour because I was a woman. They could have been leaving out more negative treatment of both their partner and their pets because they did not want to upset me whereas this information may have been revealed to a male interviewer.

One of the strengths, as well as a potential limitation, of qualitative research is the fact that the researcher is the research instrument, and as such, brings biases, conceptual baggage, and preconceptions into the research. Transparency about my biases and my position as a researcher, an academic, a pet lover, and animal advocate within the research is one way to deal with this limitation. For example, the points of disagreement that I privately held about some of the participants' treatment of the animals in their lives was noted in my research journals, memos and fieldnotes, and formed a part of the questioning process of my own analysis. Was my analysis a result of my reaction as a pet lover or was it a reflection of the themes present in the participant's dialogue? The reflexive process of checking each and every result against my own bias through my notes and memos was part of the way that I both acknowledged the potential limitation of my bias encroaching, as well as dealt with the bias in an analytical and critical manner. No research is truly objective; who you are as a person influences both what you research as well as how you research it. Transparency is one of the keys to good qualitative research (Charmaz, 2010), and being open and transparent about my position within my own research balances the limitation with the strength of being the research instrument.

Future Directions

Given the very limited research conducted into the male partner's motivations for abuse of the family pets in relationships characterized by IPV, this research represents a starting point for future research. This was a very small exploratory study, and a logical direction would be to expand the sample size and breadth. Future research should look to evaluate non-incarcerated men who have committed IPV and those who have not been violent towards a partner. Using a community-based treatment sample, as well as a non-violent community sample as a control group addresses a few additional limitations in this research. The possibility exists that more

serious and severe offenders are sentenced to prison, and therefore represent an extreme example of IPV offenders. The possibility also exists that those considered less serious or severe offenders are sentenced to mandatory treatment in the community rather than prison. Using the community based treatment group would also capture men who are voluntarily attending counselling to 'save' their relationships. Expanding the breadth of the sample would allow for a stronger ability to generalize to different populations. The use of several different groups, including a control group, may help to identify whether men who abuse their intimate partners hold a substantively different attitude towards companion animals. Using a larger sample size would hopefully yield more diversity in the treatment of pets, both positive and negative, to more deeply explore the themes raised in this study.

Another direction for future research is to look at the specific roles that pets play in the lives of the abusive men. Several participants in this research indicated how the pets were a source of comfort when they were experiencing negative events such as job loss or relationship conflict. Exploring how this positive relationship with the pet may help mitigate the use of negative coping mechanisms (such as violence against a partner, alcohol or drugs) to deal with negative events could provide a better understanding of how pets function in our lives generally.

A broader suggestion for future research is an exploration of how the presence (or absence) of pets in the relationship can aggravate or mitigate the violence in the relationship. Though most of the participants in this research had a positive relationship with their pets, pets could be a source of strain or a source of comfort in other relationships. Including both partners in future research would provide a rounded perspective of the role that pets play in the violence for the individual partners, whether abuse is used against the pet in the aim of hurting the other partner, or whether the pet is a source of solace. Research which includes both partners could

look at the individual relationships with the pet, as well as the collective relationship with the pet, to begin to identify the factors and attitudes that may contribute to animal abuse in relationships with intimate partner violence.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Millions of women are victimized each year in North America by their intimate partners (National Institute of Justice, 2007; Statistics Canada, 2011). Companion animals provide comfort and support to women in violent relationships as research by Flynn (2000a; 2000b), Fitzgerald (2000) and others has shown. At the same time, abused women in domestic violence shelters have revealed that their pets are threatened and abused by their partners as well (Ascione, 1998; Faver and Strand, 2003). Pets are increasingly being considered family members, which has many positive aspects in the companionship, support, comfort, and joy that pets bring to our lives. Unfortunately, their status as family members and the close relationship also creates a vulnerability for abuse in situations of domestic violence.

While this research illuminates a serious aspect of violent relationships, namely the inclusion of pets in the violence, two critical gaps in knowledge remain. The body of research examining the connection between IPV and animal abuse has focused on the perspective of the women, drawing almost exclusively from shelters and other services for victims of domestic violence. For the most part, these studies simply explain the connection between animal abuse and IPV, motivations for the abuse of the pet are not included. When motivations for the violence against the pets are addressed, control, manipulation and emotional abuse are raised; however, these motivations are based on the perspective of the women or theorized from a feminist point of view. The perspective of the men is missing. Several studies noted the “need to question batterers about their own perpetration of animal abuse” (Ascione et al., 2007) and that future research should include the male abuser’s perspective in order to gain a more complete picture of domestic violence (Ascione, 1998a). This research differs from the previous research

in two important ways. One, it asks about motivations for the behaviour towards the pet, and two, it asks the men in the abusive relationships.

Through qualitative semi-structured interviews with ten incarcerated men who had committed IPV and a grounded theory approach to data analysis, this thesis sought to answer questions about the abuser's perspective of and attitudes towards the pets in relationships with intimate partner violence. What this research revealed was a different perspective from the existing research, and a different perspective is critical to the understanding of IPV. The vast majority of the research into animal abuse and IPV has focused on the negative treatment of pets that the abusive partners have committed. Very little attention had been given to the positive treatment of pets in relationships characterized by IPV. The current study has shown that not all men who abuse their partners also abuse the companion animals in the home. Pets can and do provide a secure source of support and unconditional love for the abusive partners in violent relationships.

What this research has highlighted is one layer in the complex dynamic of intimate partner violence. Pets can be a positive presence in the lives of both partners in an abusive relationship. Future research directed at understanding the role pets play in violent relationships may reveal how to move forward without violence – to any member of the family.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: University of Ottawa Ethics Approval

File Number: 05-10-34



Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 12/13/2010

Université d'Ottawa **University of Ottawa**
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

Ethics Approval Notice Social Science and Humanities REB

Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Role</u>
Holly	Johnson	Social Sciences / Criminology	Supervisor
Rochelle	Stevenson	Social Sciences / Criminology	Student Researcher

File Number: 05-10-34

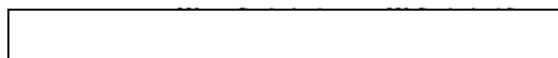
Type of Project: Master's Thesis

Title: Pets, Intimate Partner Violence and the Abuser's Perspective

Approval Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Expiry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Approval Type
09/21/2010	09/20/2011	I

(Ia: Approval, Ib: Approval for initial stage only)

Special Conditions / Comments:
N/A



File Number: 05-10-34

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 12/13/2010



Université d'Ottawa **University of Ottawa**
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

This is to confirm that the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board identified above, which operates in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement and other applicable laws and regulations in Ontario, has examined and approved the application for ethical approval for the above named research project as of the Ethics Approval Date indicated for the period above and subject to the conditions listed the section above entitled "Special Conditions / Comments".

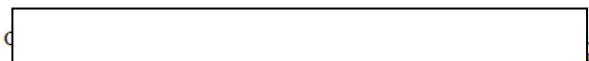
During the course of the study the protocol may not be modified without prior written approval from the REB except when necessary to remove subjects from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) pertain to only administrative or logistical components of the study (e.g. change of telephone number). Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes which increase the risk to participant(s), any changes which considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project and safety of the participant(s). Modifications to the project, information/consent documentation, and/or recruitment documentation, should be submitted to this office for approval using the "Modification to research project" form available at: http://www.rges.uottawa.ca/ethics/application_dwn.asp

Please submit an annual status report to the Protocol Officer 4 weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to either close the file or request a renewal of ethics approval. This document can be found at: http://www.rges.uottawa.ca/ethics/application_dwn.asp

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Office at extension 5841 or by e-mail at: ethics@uOttawa.ca.

Signature:

Leslie-Anne Barber
Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research
For Barbara Graves, Chair of the Social Sciences and Humanities REB



Appendix B: Correctional Service of Canada Certificate of Ethical Approval



Correctional Service Canada
Service correctionnel Canada

PROTECTED A ☒ B ☐ C ☐
PROTÉGÉE A ☒ B ☐ C ☐ ONCE COMPLETED
UNE FOIS REMPLIE

RESEARCH APPLICATION AND UNDERTAKING

Research Branch

FORMULE DE DEMANDE DE RENSEIGNEMENTS À DES FINS DE RECHERCHE ET ENGAGEMENTS CORRÉLATIFS

Direction de la recherche

NOTE - SEE REVERSE FOR TERMS AND CONDITIONS.

NOTA - VOIR LES CONDITIONS AU VERSO

Date submitted: November 2010
Date déposée :

RRC and RDC Recommended

RESEARCH PROJECT - PROJET DE RECHERCHE

PROJECT TITLE - TITRE DU PROJET :

Pets, Intimate Partner Violence and the Abuser's Perspective

PROJECT DESCRIPTION - DESCRIPTION DU PROJET

Purpose: To explore the roles of companion animals in situations of domestic violence.

Participants: 20-25 offenders who have completed the Family Violence Program at Bath Institution.

TYPE/CLASS OF INFORMATION REQUESTED - TYPE ET CLASSE DES RENSEIGNEMENTS : Voluntary - Informed consent to participate

- Criteria:
- a. conformity with the principles of CCRA
 - b. contribution to the achievement of the Mission and the priorities of CSC
 - c. compliance with the Tri-councils Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans
 - d. level of disruption to the implementation of correctional objectives from an operational perspective
 - e. quality of the methodology
 - f. qualifications of the researchers
 - g. anticipated benefit to corrections
 - h. value for money

PRIMARY RESEARCHER - CHERCHEUR PRINCIPAL

a) Name and Title - Nom et titre Rochelle Stevenson MA Candidate Dept of Criminology	Operational Unit - Unité University of Ottawa	Sector - Secteur Bath Inst	Region - Région Ontario
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b) Address - Adresse	c) Telephone number - N° de téléphone
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OTHER RESEARCHERS - AUTRES CHERCHEURS

a) Name and Affiliation - Nom et affiliation	a) Telephone number - N° de téléphone
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b) Name and Affiliation - Nom et affiliation	b) Telephone number - N° de téléphone
--	---------------------------------------

c) Name and Affiliation - Nom et affiliation	c) Telephone number - N° de téléphone
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APPROVAL - APPROBATION

Director General - Research Directeur général - Recherche Brian A. Grant, Ph.D.	Signature	Date Y-A NOV 10 2010
	Signature	Date Y-A M D-J
	Signature	Date Y-A M D-J

DISTRIBUTION

Original =	Copy =
Original =	Copie =

TERMS AND CONDITIONS**Interpretation:**

The provision of data for research purposes is approved by the Director General of Research. All participants shall adhere to the terms and conditions of the Research Application and Undertaking Form. The Service has the right to examine any results or reports in order to verify that there has been no compromise of the personal information. No further personal information will be provided to the participant(s) if this agreement is violated.

Non-disclosure of Personal Information : The researcher or organisation;

- I) agrees that information contained in or resulting from the data provided shall be rendered anonymous (i.e., coded and stripped of personal identifiers) at the earliest time possible.
- II) shall not contact the study's participant(s) unless specifically authorized to do so, and, if authorized, guarantee any additional information obtained from those individuals receives the same level of confidentiality as maintained for the original data.
- III) agrees that no subsequent disclosure of the information in a form that could reasonably be expected to identify the individual(s) to whom it relates will be made to any other person or third party which is not participating in the research project.

Data Location, Consultation and Disposal : For any data not secured within the physical confines of the Correctional Service of Canada, the participant(s) shall provide;

- I) a written statement specifying where data or copies of records will be consulted or used.
- II) a list of any data linkages that have been approved and an undertaking not to perform other matches without written authorisation.
- III) a written statement regarding the conditions governing disposal of identifiable personal data and, if desirable and applicable, the archival arrangements for working data and the relevant programs, codes and guides.

Participant(s) Acknowledgements :

The participant(s)

- I) recognizes that permission to conduct research may be withdrawn at any time for violations of standing orders, rules and regulations related to security or unapproved deviations from the original proposal, or may be temporarily suspended for operational reasons.
- II) will abide by the standing orders and rules of the institution or parole office, including those designed to ensure the researcher's own safety.
- III) acknowledges that, other than the report submitted for publication, no further release of data shall be made without the permission of the Service and/or the Ministry.
- IV) will make appropriated acknowledgement in all subsequent reports of the sponsorship of the research by the Correctional Service of Canada, as well as an appropriate disclaimer that the opinions and conclusions do not necessarily represent those of the Service and/or Ministry.
- V) acknowledges that the ownership of the data rests with the Correctional Service of Canada.

Approval : It is agreed that all parties signing this agreement and any attachments thereto are satisfied with and will adhere to its terms and conditions.

MODALITÉS ET CONDITIONS**Interprétation :**

La cueillette de données destinées à la recherche doit être approuvée par le directeur général à la recherche. Les participants au projet doivent se conformer aux modalités et conditions contenues dans la *formule de demande de renseignements à des fins de recherche et engagements corrélatifs*. Le Service se réserve le droit de vérifier les résultats et rapports dans le but de s'assurer que l'utilisation des renseignements personnels est conforme à la réglementation. Aucun autre renseignement personnel ne sera communiqué au(x) participant(s) dans le cas de non-respect de la réglementation.

La non divulgation de renseignements personnels : Le chercheur ou l'organisme

- I) s'engage à donner un caractère anonyme aux renseignements de la recherche (codés et dépourvus d'identifiants) le plus tôt possible;
- II) s'engage à ne pas entrer en contact avec le(s) participant(s) à moins d'en être autorisé et, dans ce cas, d'accorder aux renseignements recueillis le même degré de confidentialité qu'il a été accordé aux renseignements initiaux;
- III) s'engage à ne pas divulguer à un tiers ou à quiconque ne participe pas à la recherche, tout renseignement qui permettrait, même indirectement, d'identifier la source.

Stockage, consultation et élimination des données : Dans le cas des données qui ne sont pas confinées aux locaux du Service correctionnel du Canada, le participant remettra

- I) un document qui précise où seront consultées ou utilisées les données et copies de document;
- II) une liste renfermant les couplages de données approuvés accompagnée d'un engagement formel de ne pas procéder à d'autres couplages sans autorisation écrite;
- III) un document qui précise les conditions régissant l'élimination des renseignements personnels dont on peut retracer la source ainsi que, dans la mesure du possible, les procédés d'archive utilisés pour les données et programmes sensibles ainsi que les codes et guides connexes.

Déclaration du participant :

Le participant

- I) reconnaît que le droit qui lui est accordé de participer aux travaux de recherche peut lui être retiré en tout temps en cas de non respect des règlements concernant la sécurité ou de démarches non conformes à l'esprit du projet tel qu'il fut présenté. Le droit de participation peut également être temporairement suspendu pour des raisons opérationnelles;
- II) s'engage à respecter les consignes émises par l'institution ou par le bureau de libération conditionnelle, y compris celles concernant sa propre sécurité;
- III) s'engage à ne pas diffuser ou publier de données autres que celles déjà contenues dans le rapport officiel sur le projet, à moins d'y être autorisé par le SCC ou le Ministère;
- IV) s'engage à faire mention du parrainage accordé par le Service correctionnel du Canada lors de toute publication ultérieure touchant le projet et d'y joindre une clause précisant que les opinions ou conclusions exprimées ne représentent pas nécessairement le point de vue du Service ou du Ministère;
- V) reconnaît que toutes les données du projet de recherche sont la propriété exclusive du Service correctionnel du Canada.

Approbation : Les signataires de la présente formule et des pièces qui peuvent y être jointes se déclarent en accord avec les modalités et les conditions que renferment ces documents et s'engagent à les respecter.

Appendix C: Recruitment Script

I'd like to invite you to participate in a research study looking at the role of pets in the context of intimate partner violence. I'm interested in learning about your relationships with any pets you may have had prior to coming to prison including your attitude toward those pets. My goal is to use this information to help prevent domestic violence in the future and improve the treatment and counselling of intimate partner violence offenders.

You are invited to participate in a confidential interview lasting approximately one hour. In this interview, you will be asked to discuss openly and honestly your opinions and attitudes about animals. In addition, I will ask you to talk about what role your pet played within your relationship. Your participation is very important and will help in the prevention of domestic violence.

Participation is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate, you will not suffer any consequences. Also, if you decide to participate, you can refuse to answer any questions during the interview. You can withdraw at any time, and anything you've said will not be used in the research.

I understand that this is a sensitive subject. Your contribution will remain strictly confidential, and your responses will not be linked with you in any way. An exception to this confidentiality would be if you revealed to me that you were intending to harm yourself or another person. In this case, confidentiality would be broken only insofar that information regarding the specific harm would be shared with the prison management. Everything else you contributed would remain confidential.

I am hoping to conduct interviews with between 15 and 20 volunteers, and the first 20 people to volunteer will be accepted. In order to be eligible to participate, you need to have had a pet, owned by either yourself or your partner, during your relationship. If you would like to participate, please talk to me after the information session and we can arrange a time for your interview.

Are there any questions about my research that I have not answered? Thank you very much for your time.

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form – CSC Inmate File

Informed Consent Form

I _____ give permission to have my interview for the research study for Pets, Intimate Partner Violence, and the Abuser’s Perspective audio recorded. The interview will be conducted by Rochelle Stevenson from the University of Ottawa. It has been explained how this information will be used and stored and I agree with the conditions.

Name

FPS

Appendix E: Informed Consent Form – University of Ottawa

Note: The Informed Consent Form was presented on University of Ottawa letterhead as required by the Office of Research Ethics.

Informed Consent Form

Title of the study: Pets, Intimate Partner Violence, and the Abuser's Perspective

Rochelle Stevenson, MA Candidate
Principal Researcher
 University of Ottawa
 Department of Criminology
 Faculty of Social Science
 (email)
 (phone)

Dr. Holly Johnson
 Thesis Supervisor
 University of Ottawa
 Department of Criminology
 Faculty of Social Science
 (email)
 (phone)

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Rochelle Stevenson, and supervised by Dr. Holly Johnson.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to explore the roles that pets play in the context of intimate partner violence, including attitudes abusers hold regarding the human-pet relationship. The information gathered in this research will help prevent domestic violence and improve the treatment and counseling of domestic violence offenders.

Participation: My participation will consist of speaking with the researcher during a one hour interview about my experiences with intimate partner violence. I will be asked specifically about the roles that pets played in the relationship, and the attitudes I hold about pets I have had.

Risks: My participation in this study involves discussing my past behavior and talking about my attitudes and opinions. This may cause me to feel uncomfortable or experience emotional stress. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks and that I can refuse to answer questions and withdraw my participation at any time. Ms. Stevenson informed me at the beginning of our interview of the resources available to deal with these stresses in Bath Institution should I need them. The social risks are also minimal, as I have already been identified as having experience with intimate partner violence. Maintenance of confidentiality and all attempts to ensure anonymity will help to alleviate any social stigma that may arise from my participation.

Benefits: My participation in this study will help improve prevention programs and help improve the treatment and counseling of domestic violence offenders.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for research purposes and that my confidentiality will be protected. This will be done through secure storage of the information that I provide, the limited people who have access to this information (Ms. Stevenson and Dr. Johnson), and the fact that the interview is taking place in a quiet, private space with no outside recording.

devices aside from the interviewer's recorder. I am aware that if I disclose information regarding the imminent harm to myself or another person, this confidentiality would be broken only insofar that information regarding the specific harm would be shared with prison managers. Everything else that I have contributed would remain confidential. **Anonymity** will also be protected. I will not be asked to provide any specific information during the interview that could be used to identify me. I will provide a pseudonym for the interview. My real name will not be revealed in any documentation, transcripts, or publications connected to this research, and a pseudonym will be used in any reference to my specific contributions.

Conservation of data: All data collected will be securely held in an office at the University of Ottawa protected by a security alarm for five (5) years following the conclusion of the research. The electronic data collected (including audio recordings of this interview, transcripts, and any notes or documentation arising from this interview) will be stored on a compact disc and the files will be protected by a password available only to Ms. Stevenson and Dr. Johnson. Any hard copy documents (including consent forms, interview notes and other documentation) will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, and only accessible to Ms. Stevenson and Dr. Johnson.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed.

Acceptance: I, _____ (*insert the first name only or the agreed-upon pseudonym*) agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Rochelle Stevenson of the Department of Criminology at the University of Ottawa, and which is conducted under the supervision of Dr. Holly Johnson.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact:
the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research
University of Ottawa
(address)
(address)
(phone)
(email)

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix F: Schedule of Interview Questions

1. How old are you?
2. What is your index offence? (the offence that led to your prison sentence)
3. How long was your relationship with your partner? (the relationship that brought you to FVPP)
4. What kinds of pets did you have while in this relationship? How many?
5. How did/do you view the pets in your home? (part of the family, just another mouth to feed, a friend, good for the kids, etc)
6. How would you describe your treatment of the pet on a day-to-day basis (discipline, attention, affection)?
7. When you became involved in an aggressive (either verbal or physical) situation with your partner, was the pet involved as well? If so, how? If not, why not? How did you feel?
8. Were there any instances when you were aggressive with your pet (hit, kicked, starved, threatening gestures, left outside, etc) when you were not also aggressive with your partner?
9. Thinking back, can you tell me: was this behaviour related in any way to your behaviour towards your partner?
10. What was your partner's reaction to your behaviour towards your pet?
11. How did you feel after this incident?