

Family Structure and Family Violence

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Laura A. McCloskey and Riane Eisler, JD

Overview of Family Structure

Families provide the universal building blocks of human communities, governing reproduction and child rearing, caregiving across the generations, and economic activities from consumption to division of labor. Indeed, they are the template from which caring and prosocial behaviors emanate (see Eisler & Fry, 2019). Family structures may include biologically related or unrelated family members, same-sex or different-sex parents, with further differences in race, religion, and age among partners. Parenting is a key organizing principle of many families, and family structures that account for parenting environments include the (1) nuclear family (with both biological or adoptive parents present); (2) stepfamily (with two parents, one of whom is biologically unrelated or enters a parental role later in the child's life); (3) reconstituted family, with both parents introducing children from former unions; (4) single-parent-headed household; and (5) co-residential extended families. The proportion of families identified as within a single-parent headed household has increased over the past forty years, overtaking the traditional "nuclear" family, although there is decreasing trend recently in the United States. Indeed recent estimates are that 40% of American households are headed by women.

Family structure varies across cultures and is often indexed by demographic variables, such as the number and ages of children in the home or single- or two-parent families. The definition of family boundaries, identification of people as kin, rituals surrounding family formation and maintenance, and related subjects have occupied generations of cultural anthropologists. Perhaps the only universal feature of families in human communities is that they are identifiable in virtually every long-term community that biologically reproduces. Family structure lays the foundation for how marital power relations are expressed, deriving from the social, political, educational, and economic macrostructure underlying the distribution of resources and labor within families (Eisler, 2007). The question we address in this article is how and

in what ways variants of family structure across cultures elevate or reduce the risk of family violence.

It has long been observed that intimate partner violence is more prevalent in unmarried cohabiting couples than married couples. One explanation is that marriage imposes social controls on men's behavior, inhibiting the transition to violence. Another possible reason posed by sociologists is that marital status is non-random. That is, men who are non-violent are more likely to remain married, and men prone to violence are more likely to be divorced and to enter the households of single women. The co-habiting male partner therefore is drawn from this latter group more likely to display violent behavior. Indeed child abuse risk rates are higher in stepfather families. In fact, having a stepfather in the home compared to other single parent households raises results in 47.6 times the rate of child fatality. Marriage is increasingly supplanted by co-habitation, and living with a partner outside of marriage has steadily risen for the past thirty to forty years. In 1987 40% of American women had ever lived with a man, and by 2011 73% had ever had a live-in partner.

Ultimately, quantifiable features of family structure are inadequate to explain the presence or absence of interpersonal physical abuse per se. How the family is nested in the surrounding ecosystem, influences the potential for abuse. In particular, the political, economic and general social environment may promote or inhibit men's expression of aggression within the family. Unemployment takes a particularly harsh toll on men in the society accompanied by feelings of depression and increased substance use, especially drinking. In one cross-lag study the wives of men laid off only became depressed themselves several months later after their husbands had become depressed and difficult. Unemployment does raise the likelihood of violence against women in households. Researchers have found that when women are promoted beyond the work level of their husbands, or they are able to keep working when their husbands lose their job, the result is an increase in intimate partner violence.

In this article we explore the social conditions and changes in family structure which serve to shield or expose women and children to abuse. A major tenet of this article is that we can better understand what causes wife and child abuse if we juxtapose the study of pacifism and nurturance with the study of violence. The research on family violence focuses on the harm people do to one another rather than the potential support they provide. Families reveal the best and the worst of human social potential, and this article explores how family structure, kinship relations, and the lens of culture shed light on such dynamics. Cooperative and mutually supportive families have been achieved despite ideologies that construct adversarial sexual relations and men's domination as the chief organizing principle. Close and trusting

relationships between the sexes have surfaced in even the most inhospitable social climates; just as relationships between members of different races within a racist society, living side by side, sometimes give way to the humanity of that relationship. Still, if the dominant culture is rooted in a set of beliefs of women's inferiority, the walls are well mortared against intimacy and communication across strict gender boundaries.

Family Violence

The term 'family violence' encompasses a wide range of adverse dynamics perpetrated by a range of family members, referring most commonly to abuse or violence between husbands and wives, or parental abuse toward children. Family violence is characterized by a pattern of control and intent to coerce or harm, and takes many forms, from psychological abuse to physical cruelty to sexual exploitation. Although research in this area is relatively new, for most of recorded history parental violence against children and men's violence against their wives were condoned. In the West, wife and child abuse have only recently been challenged in law and policies of enforcement.

Although women may inflict unilateral violence against their husbands or partners, and children sometimes attack parents, the most widespread form of family violence, imposing the heaviest societal burden, is expressed through the 'dominator model', or by the person vested with most power within the family against those less powerful. Such power attributes tend to fall along gender or age-related lines in most families. The notion of hegemony, or power disparities, in family relationships is key to understanding the phenomenon. Many researchers have neglected power dynamics in their studies of family violence. Power discrepancies between male and female partners are so entrenched, and seen almost worldwide, that to overlook such dynamics in favor of behaviorism limits the progress of research on this topic. This article integrates empirical findings with theory, as reflected in Riane Eisler's studies of dominator and partnership models of culture and political economy. Analysis will largely be restricted to the most prevalent forms of family violence: (1) spousal abuse inflicted on wives (or women partners) and (2) parental abuse (either mother or father) against dependents, because the power dynamics typically fall along the lines of men's power vis-à-vis women, or parents' vis-à-vis children.

Intimate Partner Violence

Although intimate partner violence is sometimes presented as a 'mutual' problem between men and women, it is clear that both the impact of intimate violence and their prevalence weigh against women in relationships. In a population-based US survey, researchers found that women are nearly ten times more likely to be physically assaulted in an

intimate relationship than men. Moreover when violence erupts in a relationship women sustain the highest burden of physical injuries by a wide margin. Finally, women are disproportionately the victims in partner homicides, or femicides. In fact while 4.9% of men who are homicide victims are killed by a woman partner, at least 20% of women's violent deaths are attributed to male partners. In Bangladesh, for example, uxoricide, or the husband's murder of his wife, accounts for half of 'all' homicides. In the United States, it is estimated that about two in three homicides with women as victims result from partner abuse. In Mumbai, India, one out of every five deaths among women 15–44 years of age was found to be due to 'accidental burns' – that is, infamous 'bride-burnings' or 'dowry deaths'. The study of homicide of women is sometimes referred to as 'femicide', because women's gender-restricted roles, their experience of domination by abusive partners, and misogyny account for such a large proportion of women's risk. Violence against women by men in intimate relationships is not only a major cause of injury to women, but accounts for violent fatalities.

Women who are abused by their partners typically report many different ways that their partners control and threaten them. Such abusive partners impose a policy of 'patriarchal terrorism', terrorizing their wives and often keeping them from working and remaining employed, visiting friends or family, and maintaining normal social connections. In addition to physical assault, marital rape, stalking, harassing, and ultimately even the threat of homicide characterize wife abuse. Significant numbers of abused women also have been subject to reproductive coercion, or a partner preventing women from using contraception to force an unwanted pregnancy. Employment disparities between men and women favoring the wife sometimes result in increases in intimate partner violence.

A notable proportion of women who escape abusive relationships meet the clinical criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder testifying to the extent of the abuse and its influence on women's psychological well-being. Women with abusive partners are also more likely to be depressed. This psychological baggage makes it harder for women to re-establish their lives.

Child Abuse

Child abuse within the family encompasses physical coercion and use of corporal punishment and battering. Sexual abuse is also a prevalent form of child abuse in families, with girls targeted more often than boys. Another form of abuse identified during the past decade include exposing children to domestic violence between the adults in the household. Child neglect, especially of infants, accounts for the largest number of reports and fatalities, although our analysis here is limited to physically or sexually aggressive assaults on children. What comprises abuse by community standards, policy, or the law is sometimes at odds with how psychologists might view harsh or

abusive parenting. In general, communities are tolerant of a wide range of coercive tactics and the rights of parents to inflict what might be seen as harmful measures in their child rearing. Nearly half of American parents admit to spanking or hitting their child and corporal punishment in the schools is permitted in 19 states. In fact, the United States is in the upper tier of promoting and tolerating corporal punishment of children at home and in the schools with countries as varied as Sweden, Colombia, Ethiopia, and New Zealand prohibiting such use of physical punishment. Physical attacks against young children, under 3 years of age, are more likely to result in injury, attracting the attention of law enforcement and child protective services, than when applied to school-aged children.

The emotional and psychological damage incurred from repeated or severe physical corporal punishment, however, has been well documented. In addition, children who witness or observe intimate partner violence display psychological problems on par with children who are directly abused. Living in a home in which there is intimate partner violence, therefore, constitutes a form of child maltreatment. In fact children are seven times more likely to witness violence when their mothers are single or living with a partner than in a two-parent family suggesting that family structure does hold some unique hazards to both women and their children.

Family violence is found in cultures with family structures ranging from single-parent to nuclear to extended families, occurring across affluent and poor countries. Family violence is observed across social classes within a nation's borders, although risk is concentrated among the poor. The translation of the structure of families into behaviors and dynamics of family members, therefore, is complex. Beliefs about violence, aggression, and privileges of men to dominate women are central to the perpetuation of domestic violence.

Much of the recent impetus for the cross-cultural study of violence against women has come from organized action by women, launched during the United Nations Decade for Women (1975–85). Anthropologists have become more engaged in studying women's circumstances within a cultural context, giving rise to more focused studies of abuse and violence in marriage and families. The World Health Organization released a large-scale, population-based cross national report of research documenting rates of intimate partner violence so we now have international prevalence rates for comparison. The report reveals that there are indeed significant differences in the rates of intimate partner violence across countries and cultures. In comparing national domestic violence rates and indicators of women's status (e.g., education), Yodanis found that rates of violence could be predicted by the relative status and freedom women enjoyed. The better access to education and employment

opportunities, the less intimate partner violence across different countries.

Another potential risk factor for intimate partner violence is when gender roles are reversed in marriage or relationships. When women are the 'breadwinners', some husbands or partners might chafe at the role reversal, and the underlying threat to their own masculine privileges within the household. Under such circumstances women are targeted for physical abuse as an 'equalizing' power tactic.

Family Structure and Intimate Partner Violence

There are multiple ways in which family structure relates to the risk for intimate partner violence: (1) through the type of sexual union, reflected in marriage, divorce, or cohabitation; and (2) through extended family ties, which may either support or deter intimate partner violence in different cultures. The adaptation of family members within these units is affected by surrounding experiences and pressures. Heise and Ellsberg note that in many cultures, violence against women is often justified when women do not follow traditional gender roles or norms. In many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, both men and women condone wife abuse when the wife leaves without telling the partner, fails to accomplish household chores, and ostensibly neglects the children. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is widespread across the world, yet there are stark differences in rates and the manifestation of violence (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006). According to the in-person surveys the researchers performed across several countries the one-year past prevalence ranges from 4% to 54%. Culture, therefore, underlies the expression of abuse against wives or partners. Indeed, beliefs in patriarchy, and in the dominator model of heterosexual relationships, appear to be related to community members' attitudes and tolerance for IPV, and the expression of IPV in communities (Prospero et al., 2009)

Partner abuse can surface immediately in a new relationship, but it can also emerge after courtship and during marriage. Despite the risk of violence against married women, researchers find that women who are single and live with a man are not only at increased odds of partner violence, but their children face similar risk. To the extent that co-habitation has become the relationship model for women under 34, eclipsing marriage, the greater the chance that women will face intimate partner violence.

Yet marriage can enfold a woman in multiple obligations which make it hard or impossible to separate if abuse occurs. If the degree and severity of domestic violence increases, and the women fail to receive services, women are likely to stay even longer than women whose partners display less-severe violent behavior. The strong commitment and expectation that the biological father to their child is a preferable choice to a live-in partner combine to discourage married women from abandoning the apparent

security of marriage. Even pregnancy fails to deter intimate partner violence, and researchers find across studies that the rates of intimate partner violence are higher among pregnant women than among women of child-bearing age who are not pregnant. The use of women's shelters addressing abuse, or "battered women's shelters" as they have been called, shortens the length of an abusive union by several times compared to women who did not access services.

Marriage may offer inadequate protection from battering, but short-term liaisons carry their own risk. Across studies, researchers have found that co-habiting couples (in the US) have a higher risk for intimate partner violence. In one study over the course of a year, 35% of co-habiting American couples reported intimate partner violence in contrast to 15% of married couples, matched on age and other demographic variables. According to the National Crime Victimization Survey, 65% of all domestic violence crimes against women were perpetrated by boyfriends (live-in or not) or ex-husbands; only 9% were committed by husbands (though it is possible that married women are more reluctant to report partner violence).

While the length and level of commitment in sexual relationships, whether during courtship, common law liaisons, brief relationships, or marriage, probably has little bearing on whether a woman will be initially exposed to violent behavior, the social and legal construction of these relations will largely determine whether the woman has the freedom to leave an abusive relationship. Across cultures, as a general rule, women who are unmarried have more ostensible freedom to leave an abusive relationship than women who are married. Freedom is of course relative, since part of the battering involves restriction and in some cases virtual imprisonment by the partner. For instance, some men who control and abuse their wives restrict their access to telephones, keep them homebound and without transportation, and isolate them from friends, family, and the community.

A characteristic feature of many battering husbands is that they willfully isolate their wives, often cutting off contact with her family of origin or friends, and discouraging her from employment or activities out of the home. Few studies to date have explicitly tested the role of networks and extended families in protecting women from relationship violence. Although there is little direct evidence indicating that, for instance, matrilineal societies have lower rates of marital violence than patrilineal ones, or that the presence of extended family members inhibits men's abusive behavior toward their wives, it is plausible that such a mechanism operates in some cultures. (Eisler & Fry, 2019) We know that among nonhuman primate societies, close female liaisons and coresidential groups offer protection to allied females from male aggression. Among humans, this protection is only available for women when societal proscriptions against wife abuse are established, and

their families are both willing and free to enforce them. On the other hand, research in India has shown that a woman's mother-in-law may be a strict enforcer of adhering to gender-based expectations and act as an agent of physical abuse. The cultural background in this case sets the stage for abuse of young brides. Additionally, in China until the beginning of this century, well-to-do 'first wives' exercised supreme domestic control, and participated in oppressing subsequent wives in these historically polygynous households. One motive for abuse of young wives surrounds issues of fertility. The mother-in-law may be carefully monitoring women's periods to maximize the potential for offspring. Among young women in the United States and elsewhere men have been observed to interfere with their girlfriend's contraception, a phenomenon known as "reproductive coercion."

Although family configuration may appear unrelated in any systematic way to violence or nonviolence, there are indications that extended family connections promote cooperative and nonviolent partnerships. Various studies of Mexican immigrant families, for instance, have revealed that newly immigrated men are less likely to be violent toward their wives than second-generation Mexican-American men. One possible explanation of this finding is that when immigrant families come to the United States they typically come en masse, with in-laws and relatives on both sides of the spouses' families. The experience of poverty and immigration intensifies interdependency, and the marriage itself may serve as a nexus for various close in law relationships involving employment and work opportunities for men. Close economic interdependency may discourage marital conflict and violence in these immigrant cultures; or perhaps there is less reporting in them.

Family Structure and Child Abuse

Like violence against wives, violence against children is often practiced with tacit and even explicit social approval. For instance, as many as 77% of American parents approve of and admit to spanking their children. Although parents are less likely to approve of their child being spanked by someone outside of the family, there remain many communities in the United States in which corporal punishment continues to be used in schools. Most people would not place spanking in the same class of behaviors as child abuse, but there is research to indicate that the more corporal punishment is used against a child, the more mental health symptoms and behavior problems that child will display. In addition, it should be kept in mind that escalated forms of physical abuse – for example, beatings resulting in injuries – start with a single slap or spank. When spanking is widely practiced, the gate is left open for more extreme expressions of parental anger.

Both fathers and mothers who use corporal punishment believe that it is their responsibility to discipline their children, and they are in most cases well

intentioned. However, physical coercion is actually the least effective tactic for socializing children to be cooperative and other-oriented. In fact, such coercive tactics often backfire to make children defiant, noncompliant, and aggressive. Straus has campaigned vigorously against corporal punishment of all kinds in American families, pointing out that even 'common spanking' results in elevated symptoms of psychopathology among children, in contrast to verbal criticism or other forms of discipline (e.g., 'time out'). Unfortunately, the large body of evidence that has amassed in child socialization research demonstrating problems with coercive parenting has yet to reach most popular channels or to widely alter parental practices.

Violence against children can take many forms, from systematic beatings of children of both sexes to more female-directed forms of abuse such as the foot-binding of girl children in prerevolutionary China or the ongoing infanticide of female children in parts of China, Bangladesh, and India. The circumstances under which different family configurations elicit nurturant or abusive patterns of behavior toward children can vary extensively. More telling is the society's system of cultural beliefs and organizational frameworks, especially in relation to matters such as laws or customs abridging or denying female inheritance rights or inheritance for some male children; beliefs that women's sexuality is male property; beliefs about female inferiority and consequent male preference; lack of access by females to earning or control over property; and legal, economic, religious, and social factors leading to the view that some children are less valuable than others.

Birth order, for instance, can be the determining factor for infanticide in cultures with inheritance rules of primogeniture (where only first-born male children inherit property), as in eighteenth-century Austria and other Alpine regions. Still today, the child's female sex is the basis in some cultures for infanticide or systematic neglect, as in the pattern of allocating resources primarily to male children in some parts of India and withholding medical treatment for girls. Hypergamy, or the custom of arranging marriages for females up the social caste ladder or at least equal to their caste at birth, places higher-caste female children at unique risk, since there will be a restricted pool of marriage prospects. The largest number of missing girls so to speak is still in China through the aid of medical neglect and infanticide or female selected abortion. The ratio of male:female in China is among the most unbalanced in the world. When sex ratios favor boys, girls often suffer in the society and may be commodified and married too young.

Large numbers of children in a family and economic stress also pose a risk for child maltreatment.

In the United States there has been a virtual revolution in family structure, however, and within this society certain elements of family composition can

place children more at risk. Below is a review of these different configurations of family, and the risks and benefits they offer to children.

Two-Parent Families

Most American families, regardless of family structure, use physical punishment to control children's behavior. In some families this cultural license to spank escalates to the equivalent of beatings, and also makes frequent slapping and spanking a potential problem when the parents are under stress. When mothers report knowing few other strategies of discipline or control, living in a cultural climate that promotes the use of physical punishment, child abuse can escalate. Again, cultural ideology (reflecting and reinforcing what Eisler calls the dominator model of social and family organization) seems to carry the most influence in a parent's decision to use physical punishment. Once physical abuse is employed as a regular tactic there is always the danger that it can escalate in severity. Yet overall trends in the use of punishment with an object, for instance, have declined over the last forty years.

Despite the apparent equity between parents in spanking, fathers pose more of a serious physical threat when they do take over the corporal punishment of the children. Fathers are typically larger, stronger, and more imposing disciplinarians in children's eyes. They are also implicated in 75% of the cases when punishment escalates to homicide, according to a recent study in Los Angeles. Other studies of child homicide in Canada over the past decade indicate that when mothers are perpetrators of homicide the children are typically under the age of 3, and fathers are more likely to be the perpetrators of children over this age. However rare, fathers, both biological and unrelated, therefore, are more likely to escalate abuse to homicide than mothers in "intact families," and this effect is strongest among older children. Although lethal child abuse is uncommon, it is nevertheless among the five most common reasons for child mortality among children under ten in the United States, according to recent Center for Disease Control statistics. In addition, child fatalities are several times more likely to occur in homes in which a stepfather resides.

Single-Parent and Divorced Families

The United States family has undergone rapid changes in structure because of both rising divorce rates and the rising birth rate to unmarried mothers, the latter being most pronounced among urban African-Americans. As a result of these trends, the United States has the highest proportion of mother-headed households in the industrial world (40%). In the United States, mother-headed families are poorer than either father-headed or two-parent families. Unmarried women with young children face unique economic struggles and poverty because of sex-based discrimination in employment

and wage-earning prospects and because fathers often avoid financial responsibilities to their offspring.

In most single-mother-headed households throughout the world maternal child abuse is no more likely than in intact families. For instance, among the African Ashanti single motherhood is widespread, with traditional roots, and children are well cared for. It is also the case that among the Ashanti resources in single-mother-headed households are often sufficient to raise the children, since there is a long-standing history of such family structures. In Brazil, among poor women in the north coastal areas, children are rarely beaten, and physical child abuse is extremely rare. In these same mother-headed families infanticide within the first few weeks or months of a newborn's life is common as documented by Nancy Scheper-Hughes, essentially as a form of birth control, but subsequent violence or even corporal punishment toward offspring who survived is unusual. One risk factor for children of mother-headed households is the likelihood that an unrelated male partner will co-reside with them. Children appear to be at greater risk for both physical and sexual abuse when there are stepfathers in the home. The presence of stepfathers greatly increases the likelihood of child sexual abuse, especially of girls. Children are also at risk for physical abuse when their mothers are battered. They can be hurt if they try to intervene or are even present during violent marital disputes, and they are psychologically damaged by witnessing the abuse of their mothers. Violence against wives, therefore, places children at heightened physical and psychological risk even when they are not the intentional target.

Extended Families

Extended families composed of grandparents, aunts, and uncles can be protective of children, given a nonabusive ideology. If there is an abusive ideology, however, the extended family can pose as much a risk as a buffer to children. Simple generalizations, therefore, about features of family structure and their role in child maltreatment cannot be made.

There are widespread beliefs that the presence of grandparents is a buffer for children, and probably inhibits abuse. However, research findings on the support provided by grandparents to young children are mixed. In one study of African-American extended families children within single or divorced mother-headed households, did show signs of better adjustment when a grandmother lived with them. However, this effect did not seem due to the grandmother's parenting skills or direct care to the child, but to the support these grandmothers provided their daughters. The daughters, therefore, became more effective and less stressed during their own parenting tasks, and the children subsequently benefited. In the United States, therefore, the nuclear family relationships remain the most critical for the children's health and outcome. When single mothers are nested in supportive extended family

contexts, the children benefit from the direct aid offered to the mother.

There have been some studies on what kinds of skills promote nonviolent and nurturant parenting. For example, researchers in child development found that mothers who are able to develop higher levels of attunement or synchrony when interacting with toddlers, and who are able to establish a mutual focus with the child on some activity or thought, have children who are more compliant and happier than mothers who are less attuned, so to speak, to their young children. Flowing with the child rather than against her or him seems to be the best practice for socializing cooperativeness and stability. Finally, the quality of the relationship between parents has a profound impact on children's coping and mental health. These findings are consistent with the early fostering of the partnership model in Eisler and Fry's recent work.

Once again, the indicators of nonviolent parenting seem to be lodged within parenting beliefs more than in the structure of the family. Coercive parenting engenders aggression in children, either through modeling parental aggression or through the development of an internal mental script or 'working model' of antagonistic interpersonal relationships. Although there have been few direct studies to date, it appears that parents who espouse a 'partnership model' with each other are more likely to raise children to do the same, and to develop mutual respect for boundaries, opinions, and interests that will benefit the child, as well as the parents. The 'dominator model', or the traditional patriarchal family, is a problematic environment for successful child rearing, and, in fact, promotes "cycles of brutality and violence" (Eisler & Fry, 2019, p. 54).

Conclusions: Cultural Ideology and Family Violence

As we have seen, in many cultures family violence has been, and continues to be, considered normal and permitted. One important aspect that has begun to receive attention is the study of the relationship between stereotypical gender roles and violence. Societies that devalue women's contributions or children's value create a backdrop for potential abuse. Eisler's work has focused on the interaction between intimate relations in the private sphere and economic or political relations in the public sphere. By contrast, in families and societies orienting primarily to the partnership model – where relations are based primarily on linking, with hierarchies of actualization maintained by enabling rather than disabling power – the teaching of empathy, caring, and the exchange of mutual benefits can be central in the socialization process.

Despite the recalcitrance of cultural ideologies governing violence in families it is important to remember that cultural norms do shift over time, often for the better although not uniformly. For instance, during the Great Depression

and the beginning of World War II in the United States more women enrolled in college since any previous time; they also worked in factories advancing the war effort, enjoying fully subsidized on-site childcare and good working conditions. Millions of women expected a continuing commitment to fairness yet that was not to happen. The 1950's heralded the largest baby boom in American history and relegated women to the kitchen. Job opportunities receded. We do not know whether this regression in women's development led to an increase in domestic violence, but we do know that the 50's was a period in which such events in the family were typically kept secret.

Even when there is no shift in gender ideology or change in attitudes towards corporal punishment, practical policies have been instituted to combat family violence. There are a series of steps women can invoke for protection from an abusive partner which may start with a call to the police. Some cities require the police officers to make a mandatory arrest, usually of the offending man. For men without an arrest record this intervention is often sufficient to stop his abusive behavior; as criminologists note however for men who are chronic offenders arrest fails as a deterrent. Women may also file a protective order which provides further intimidation for her abuser. For men who have re-offended the courts offer jail time or a diversion program, and usually probation. Although significant funds have been spent supporting diversion programs there remains no evidence that they actually reduce recidivism. On the other hand, probation, which is less costly, is highly effective. These different policies and practices under the auspices of the courts do not require change in gender ideology yet they do confer protection and limit a woman's exposure to abuse. The Diversion programs are often oriented towards raising men's consciousness about unequal treatment of women, although unfortunately with the high levels of attrition from these programs they do not appear to be an effective tool. Shelters for women, on the other hand, do give women an advantage in starting out on their own. Women who participated in an advocacy program in addition to shelter residence were less likely to be abused again in the future; and one longitudinal study showed that women who sought refuge in shelters left the abusive relationships in half the time abused women without shelter contact. This finding translates to many years and improved quality of life for women who stay at a shelter.

One of the most serious and continuing threats to women and children – especially girl children – is the higher valuation of males over females. This feature of so many cultures is also characteristic of cultures orienting to the 'dominator' model. In fact, female offspring are so devalued that, according to the economist Amartya Sen at least 60 million girls who would otherwise be expected to be alive are 'missing' from various populations as a result of sex selective neglect and abortions. The recent number has been re-calculated to 100 million. Although the women are missing from the

world's population, the most chilling fact is that they are missing because they are dead. It is important to recognize that when women are scarce in a population they suffer the consequences generally of a more sexist and exploitive society. China, for instance, has the highest number of women and girls sexually trafficked in the world.

There have been a number of different approaches to ending violence against women and children. While at one time acceptance of corporal punishment was featured in most theories of pedagogy, today in the United States there are public health and political movements against the use of physical punishment with children. Changes in legislation, due to the pressure of organized women's rights, children's rights, and other human rights supporting groups, are also of great significance. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, are important developments. Most important are the continuing grassroots actions of groups all over the world – from groups working to stop the sex trade of women and girls to groups working against rape, battering of women, child abuse, genital mutilation of female children, and other human rights violations. Such organizations are flourishing throughout the world, attempting to end violence against women and children.

Family violence occurs across different cultures and family structures, and to the extent that cultural mores and gender roles are similar, rates of intimate partner violence may be comparable. The common denominators are the cultural attitudes and the social structure that the family both shapes and is shaped by. It would seem that only fundamental cultural changes and changes in these entrenched social structures – in Eisler's terms, a shift from the dominator to a partnership model family and social orientation – will make it possible to deal with family violence in a systemic way and to move to nonviolence as the norm in both families and societies worldwide (Eisler, 2013; Eisler & Fry, 2019).

See also:

Childrearing, Violent and Nonviolent; Child Abuse; Feminist and Peace Perspectives on Women; Gender Studies; Human Rights; Dominator and Partnership Societies, Institutionalization of Violence; Peaceful Societies; Sexual Assault; Social Control and Violence; Warriors, Anthropology of

Glossary

Child Abuse: Physical or sexual abuse of children under the age of 18 years.

Dominator Model: Social organization based primarily on hierarchies of

domination enforced by institutions of power to threaten or inflict pain.

Family Structure: Encompasses the size and family roles of family members.

Intimate Partner Violence: Physical or sexual abuse against wives or intimate partners.

Kinship: Relationship by blood or descent.

Matrilocal: Family units residing near the wife's or mother's kin.

Partnership Model: Social organization based primarily on linkings maintained by the exchange of mutual benefits, as well as hierarchies of actualization in which power is informed by empathy and caring. Family structure is egalitarian and the norm for child rearing is nonviolent.

Patriarchal: Governed by men or fathers.

Patrilocal: of, or relating to, a housing pattern or custom in which a married couple lives with or near the husband's parents.

Sexual Union: The form of sexual partnership, determined in part by culture and law, including unmarried ('dating' or coresidential), monogamous marriage, polygamous marriage, polyandrous.

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