SEPARATION, DIVORCE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN BY MALE PARTNERS:
SOME CANADIAN EXAMPLES

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We are only recently becoming cognizant about the close link between separation and divorce, and the increased propensity for male violence against women. My own recognition of the link coincides with interviews I conducted with separated and divorced women to understand their (and their children's) adjustment after divorce (see Sev'er and Pirie, 1991a/1991b; Sev'er, 1992). Although violence was not the focus of the mentioned study, I was surprised by accounts of control, harassment, stalking and even physical and sexual assaults my respondents recalled during or shortly after their separation.

In this paper, my exclusive focus is on violence perpetrated by men against their female partners (Lupri, Grandin and Brinkerhoff, 1994; DeKeseredy and Hinch, 1991; Dobash and Dobash, 1979). I use the term "violence" within its broadest context as intentional acts to cause pain, injury or even death (Brinkerhoff and Lupri, 1988; Kennedy and Dutton, 1989). My definition also subsumes controlling and degrading behaviours (DeKeseredy and Hinch, 1991; DeKeseredy and MacLeod, 1997; Dobash et al. 1995; Kirkwood, 1993; MacLeod, 1987; Tifft, 1993). I use the term separation as an imminent or recent termination of any intimate relationship of some longevity. According to Crawford and Gartner (1992), recent separation rather than divorce per se is the crucial risk factor in violence against women. Moreover, I concentrate on woman-initiated separations since they challenge male hegemony the most. Within these boundaries, I will provide a review about intimate violence and termination of relations, apply a conceptual power and control model, and exemplify how this violence manifests itself. Examples are selected from the Canadian media as well as from interviews I conducted with separated/divorced women as well as with survivors of intimate violence. Finally, I will suggest ways to break the cycle of violence.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In the literature, marriage license is often called a "hitting license" (see Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1986, 1980, also see Gelles, 1987, 1994). Studies in Canada and the United States also show the existence of this socially repugnant aspect of intimate relations (WAC Stats, 1993; Canadian Panel, 1993). Sadly, anywhere from one in four to one in eight women report at least one incident of physical abuse in their long-term relationships (VAWS, 1993). Nevertheless, thinking about marriage as a hitting license is
misleading in at least two ways. First, common-law or dating partners also engage in violence (Crawford and Gartner, 1992; DeKeseredy, 1989a; 1989b.) Second, even if the marriage (license) is terminated, violence may not cease. Often, it escalates, and sometimes it spreads outside of the home. Women report that partners who were not violent before sometimes become violent during or after a separation (Bean, 1992; Block and Christakos, 1995; Crawford and Gartner, 1992; Johnson and Chisolm, 1990; Okun, 1986; Wilson and Daly, 1992).

The link between violence and the break-up of marriages can be seen in at least three different bodies of literature: divorce statistics, victimization surveys and femicide data.

**Violence as a Precursor to Divorce**

Official statistics on interpersonal violence are often open to errors of underreporting—due to fear, shame, availability of no-fault categories such as a three-year waiting period etc.5 Probably, this underreporting also mars the reported grounds for divorce (see Rodgers, 1994 and Bain, 1991:i for underreporting problems). It is likely that the correlation between divorce and termination of marriages is even stronger than what official statistics show. Despite this minimization, statistics on grounds for divorce often reflect the existence of violence prior to the break-up, in legal marriages. For instance, divorce statistics prior to the 1985 Divorce Act4 show a clear link between violence and the break-up of legal marriages in Canada. Under the 1968 Divorce Act, physical and mental cruelty categories accounted for 60% of all alleged grounds for marital offences (see Sev'er, 1992: 84-90 for an analysis).

Statistics on divorce also glean over the gender of the victim. Nevertheless, since as much as 92-95% of violence among intimates is directed towards female partners (Statistics Canada, 1994; WAC Stats, 1993: 55), the fact that 60% of the alleged grounds for marital offences were in categories of violence is revealing. In the United States, 30% of divorced adults cite physical violence as the reason for their divorce, again clearly linking violence and marital break-up (WAC Stats, 1993). However, divorce statistics alone do not explain how earlier violence may translate into further violence after separation. For these, we need to consult other sources, such as victimization surveys and femicide data.

**Victimization Surveys**

Survey research furnishes a more direct link between separation and intimate violence against women. For example, Kennedy and Dutton (1989) found that while about 55% of separating/divorcing people reported physical violence, the percentage among still cohabiting partners was significantly lower (about 40%). Other findings also attest to the increased risk of victimization of separated women (Smith, 1990; MacLeod, 1980; also see Canadian Panel, 1993; DeKeseredy and MacLeod, 1997; Wilson and Daly, 1993). Moreover, a recent Canadian survey found that 19% of females who reported violence by a partner claimed that the violence occurred during or after separation. In one of three reported cases, the severity of violence had increased at the time of separation (Johnson, 1995; Rodgers, 1994; VAWS, 1993).
**Femicide Data**

At an extreme, women are killed by their partners during or shortly after separation (Campbell, 1992; Daly, 1992). Crawford and Gartner (1992) claim that the number one risk factor in intimate homicides is separation. While Canada's rate of woman killing is approximately half the rate in the US, it is twice as high as the rates in most other developed countries (1992: 38). Moreover, the rate Canadian women are killed by their intimate partners is increasing (1992: 44,51,57,101).

Wilson and Daly (1994) analyzed 1435 wife murders in Canada between 1974 and 1992, and observed that the risk of being murdered was not random. Married women were nine times more likely to be killed by their spouse than by a stranger. Separation presented a six-fold increase in risk to women in comparison to couples who continued to reside together. Wilson and Daly (1993) underscore the fact that the heightened risk is despite the estranged husband's decreased access to his former wife.

Thus, in divorce statistics, victimization studies or intimate femicide statistics, the elevated risk for women during or after separation is irrefutable. The reasons behind this increased risk needs to be addressed.

**THEORIES OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE**

The existing theories of spousal violence range from psychological (which place the blame on deranged individuals, sadistic men or masochistic women) to social-psychological (which focus on behavioural/social deficiencies, alcohol/drug dependency, general aggression, inability to keep jobs etc.). Yet, there are also strong challenges to these explanations. For example, a vast majority of men who abuse their partners do not have clinical pathologies (Gelles and Straus, 1988; Gelles and Loseke, 1993). Neither do they randomly beat up on their bosses, friends or neighbours. Instead, they selectively and systematically target their female partners (Bograd, 1988). Moreover, although alcohol consumption is highly correlated with cases of violence against wives, alcohol is neither a necessary nor a sufficient cause for such violence (Crawford and Gartner, 1992; Gelles and Loseke, 1993; Lent, 1991; MacLeod, 1980; Rodgers, 1994). In sum, although intrapersonal or interpersonal factors may offer an explanation for a particular individual's behaviour, they fail to explain while so many men abuse their wives or lovers. Therefore, I will briefly discuss theories which go beyond micro-level explanations and seek the roots of violence in socio-cultural dimensions.

As the name implies, social learning theories assert that violence is learned. Learning occurs through observation, modelling and reward systems. Learning can be direct (experience), or vicarious (through observing what happens to other perpetrators/victims). Generally, social learning theories accentuate the generational or peer transmission of violence. Transmission is extremely important when one considers the fact that many children witness violence against their mothers or are victimized themselves (Rodgers, 1994:1; also see Ney, 1992; Wolfe, Zak and Wilson, 1986). The Ontario Medical Association reports that one in three battered women and one in two
abusers were either abused as children or witnessed domestic violence between their parents (Lent, 1991). In an extreme, children witness the murder of their mothers (Crawford and Gartner, 1992:87).

The transmission of violence could be vertical (such as violent fathers/sons, Levinson, 1989). Indeed, women whose fathers-in-law were violent reported more frequent and more severe abuse than women with non-violent fathers-in-law (Rodgers, 1994; VAWS, 1993). It could also be horizontal (violent peers, subcultures of violence, Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967). Although there is support for the latter in peer cultures and dating relationships (see DeKeseredy, 1988; 1989a/b and DeKeseredy and Kelly, 1993 for recent examples), there are also limits to such explanations (see Dobash and Dobash, 1979). In sum, learning theories have a substantial explanatory power in terms of general violence. However, they are not well-equipped to explain either the onset or escalation of violence during a separation. Therefore, I now turn to a discussion of feminist views about power and control.

**Power, Control and Challenges to Control**

Despite differences in orientation, feminist theories seek the roots of violence in the intersection between social structures and interpersonal processes. In this interface, they emphasize the central role of gendered distribution of power (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Kirkwood, 1993; Okun, 1986; Pence and Paymar, 1993; Yllo, 1988). Gendered power and its manifestation (control) are seen to determine work, politics, law, health, education, religion, and family relations (Dworkin, 1993; Firestone, 1970; Radford, 1987, 1992a/b; Russell, 1989). Although all men are not "all powerful" and all women are not "all powerless," and certainly all men are not abusers, a large number abuse women in order to exert and maintain "coercive control" over them (Daly and Wilson, 1988, Ch. 9; also see Wilson and Daly, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993; Radford, 1987; Stets, 1988). Some even argue that all men benefit from keeping women in their place.

Another way of conceptualizing the position of feminist theories is through identifying what they are against. For example, mainstream theories derive from as well as reinforce the historical perception of male authority as an "earned and deserved" right (see the resource theory of Blood and Wolfe, 1960). Early research also indicates that men may resort to physical power when their privileges are challenged (Goode, 1971; Straus, 1974). Thus, while the traditional literature assumes the "legitimacy" of male dominance, feminists unequivocally challenge its legitimacy. Instead, feminist explanations locate the roots of intimate violence within the power and control a gender hierarchy spawns.

It is true that no theory has all the necessary components to adequately explain the underlying complexity of violence against mates. However, when one considers violence during the dissolution of relationships, feminist theories that focus on gendered power differentials offer unrivalled insights (Okun, 1986) precisely because women-initiated separations challenge the foundation of a historic male bastion: "his" power and control within "his" home. In light of these insights, I argue that when controlling men feel external or internal, real or perceived threats to their authority and power within the family, the propensity for violence escalates. More specifically, men who have routinely exercised dominance are likely to attempt to regain control and re-establish the status quo if they feel their control over their mates is threatened or diminished. To use Dutton and Browning's terms (1988a/b), men who experience evasions of intimacy," anxiety
and feelings of abandonment may attempt to reclaim control through increased psychological or physical pressure on their mates who have challenged them (Renzetti, 1988). Probably the most complete package of challenge to men's dominance unfolds in cases of women-initiated separations since any one or a combination of the following may be interpreted as a "dare."

Negation of his decision-making power and choice (when a woman decides to separate and escape from his day-by-day control (economic, social, sexual).

Negation of his taken-for-granted roles (as husband/lover/ provider/parent etc.).

Enactment of some of these roles by another man will escalate the threat (a denial of his exclusive proprietary rights over his wife/children).

Increased prominence of her new social support systems (friends/family/counsellor/police/lawyer/lover) that signals the dismantling of his earlier isolation efforts.

Rejection of his resources (income/housing) or a more direct entitlement to these resources outside of his traditional control (alimony, child support, division of property).

Restrictions to his free access (to home/belongings/accounts/ visitation with children, etc.).

In Figure 1, we see the relationship between violence and power and control as articulated in Pence and Paymar's (1993) groundbreaking Duluth Project Model. The power and control tactics subsumed in each slice of the wheel are already well-conceptualized and documented in recent works (see Tifft, 1993; Dobash et al., 1995). All eight segments of the power and control model generally work in unison and determine the physical and sexual violence during the tenure of intimate relationships. However, I propose that four of the eight segments of the model are particularly relevant during separations triggered by women.

Attempts to reclaim power and control will concentrate on use of intimidation, use of children, use of economic resources, and use of coercion and threats. Moreover, I argue that during a separation, the rim of violence will expand beyond the partner/children and subsume friends, neighbours, other kin and even innocent bystanders. Another aspect which needs emphasis is the increased overlap among different control strategies, such as verbal intimidation, stalking, physical assault or rape.

Figure 1. Power and control model as conceptualized by Pence and Paymar (1993:31).

**Control Through Escalated Intimidation**

In intimate relations revolving around male power and control, intimidation may take the form of looks, gestures, words, actions and ritualistic displays such as destroying property and belongings. During or shortly after a separation, these tactics may escalate to harassing calls, threats, stalking, abducting and kidnapping. They may also involve
major destruction of property and violence towards the woman's loved ones.

Some Examples

Laurette, explained the crushing control on her life in the following words: "Every morning, I woke up and felt that there was a thick layer of cement on me. I did not want to get up, all I wanted was to go back to sleep." Moreover, when she obtained a court order against her abusive husband and initiated divorce proceedings, he escalated the pressure. He made relentless phone calls. Her husband broke into their house and physically assaulted her and their teenage son. He instructed his lawyers to subpoena her telephone bills so that he could scrutinize her contacts. Another survivor, Sue, was also repeatedly stalked by her estranged partner. She received harassing calls twenty to thirty times a day, dotted with serious threats. She laid charges on several occasions. Ironically, a (male) judge said "Oh no! Not you again!" as if her complaints rather than the partner's relentless stalking/harassment were the problems.

A young woman, whom I will call "Damian's mother," has changed her own as well as her son's names in order to escape persecution by her estranged husband. When I met her, she was temporarily sheltered in a friend's house during the day. However, she and her five-year-old son spent the nights among the massive garbage-bins of the apartment building since she (and her host) feared an unexpected raid by her persecutor. Damian complained about the smell of garbage which kept him awake most of the night. Although he was eager to talk about his nightmarish life, he stammered profusely. Sadly, the neighbours who knew nothing about the predicament of the mother and son complained about the "vagrants" sleeping among the garbage. Shortly after I met them, they left behind the meagre safety of their pungent refuge.

News reports abound with stories of terror. Mr. MacNeile was convicted for choking his wife's female friend, whom he felt his (estranged) wife should not associate with. Although they were legally separated, "he felt he had a right to make decisions for her" (cited in Toronto Star, March 28, 1996: A28). Mr. Schmidt was sentenced to two-and-a-half years for terrorizing, stalking, threatening and swearing at his estranged wife because "he could not accept the fact that his marriage was over." When he heard of his sentence he called out, "I might as well have killed her!" (Toronto Star, April 7, 1995: A20). Mr. Vellupuram kidnapped his former girlfriend at the point of a shotgun three months after she broke off their relationship (Toronto Star, May 30: 1995:A14).

Control Through Children and Other Loved Ones

In controlling relationships, children may be routinely used to induce guilt, take sides, demean and threaten the woman, or they may serve as additional targets of abuse. It is also likely that men will escalate their control during the separation process and harass people closest to their estranged mates.

Some Examples

Sue's estranged partner picked up her son (from an earlier marriage) from school, without her knowledge or consent. Although her son was returned unharmed, she was
terrified about what else he would/could do to them. A perusal of kidnapping and murder cases reflected in the media justifies her fear. For example, Mr. Korzan drenched his children and his estranged wife with gasoline and turned his wife into a human torch. He also burned down their house awaiting sale after the separation (Toronto Star, May 31, 1993: A1/A4). Alan Gubernat fatally shot his three-year-old son in the head, and then killed himself. His murderous rage followed a judgment allowing the child to carry his estranged wife's last name (Toronto Star, May 16, 1995: A21). Richard Brosseau killed himself as well as his two-and-a-half-year-old daughter. The murder/suicide took place six weeks after his wife left him (Toronto Star, May 26, 1994: A1). Eugene Banks abducted and killed his two children and himself by locking his parked car inside a rented storage unit and turning on the engine. The newspaper mentioned that he had taken his children to a pizzeria for their last supper (Toronto Star, November 4, 1995:A2). Fortunately, the above incidents are rare, but the terror they generate is debilitatingly real for most separated women.

After the dismantling of a controlling relationship, new partners, family and friends may also find themselves engulfed by violence. Mr. MacFie kidnapped his wife not once, but twice. He also stabbed her brother and beat up her sister (Globe and Mail, August 7, 1997: A11). Mr. Quance broke into his estranged wife's boyfriend's apartment. He doused them with gasoline and set them on fire (Toronto Star, April 19, 1996: A28 and March 19, 1996: A8). One of the most vicious mass murders in Canadian history was also committed by a recently estranged husband when nine members of a British Columbia family were gunned down. The death toll reached ten when the assailant fatally shot himself (Toronto Star, April 6 and 7, 1996: A1; Globe and Mail, April 8, 1996: A4).

Control Through Economic and Legal Abuse

By now, it is a very well-known fact that women's standard of living sharply declines after a separation. Many women are left to fend for themselves and for their children under the auspices of equality in the eyes of the law. Others receive minimal and often non-reliable support, even if their partners may be economically secure (see Sev'er, 1992 for an in-depth analysis). Some men prefer to go to jail rather than make alimony payments (Toronto Star, February 5, 1998: A5). What is less well-known, however, is the fact that most controlling men block their partners' economic self-sufficiency throughout their relationship. They may interfere with employment opportunities, usurp their income, refuse to share their own money and show reluctance to meet the most basic household necessities (DeKeseredy and MacLeod, 1997; Hoff, 1990; Kirkwood, 1993). During the separation process, these tactics may escalate and even involve the use or misuse of the courts.

Some Examples

Many women mentioned their estranged partners' tightening grip on their economic well-being, but the following story is particularly noteworthy (also see Scutt, 1997). Because Laurette had no independent income, and because her estranged husband was refusing to pay alimony or child support (for four children), she often bought groceries with money she borrowed from her mother. To save Laurette from the humiliation of "asking" for grocery money, and to save herself trips to the bank, her mother gave her
(withdrawal privileges on her own bank account. When Laurette received a support payment, she paid her mother what she owed (deposits). However, her estranged husband used this joint account information to "drag" Laurette's aged mother to court, as a "co-conspirator" in depriving his children of food by "stashing away money" from "his child support!" Laurette had to submit to the court (and thus to his scrutiny) every grocery bill during the last two years of their legal battles. In her own words: "He was so articulate and accomplished that the judge did not expect him to concoct these vicious lies. Even my own lawyer may have thought... that I was starving my own children!"

The day Iris separated from her husband of twelve years was also the day he took back all her credit cards. Her husband also cancelled her health and dental benefits (which required a modest coverage fee at the time), although his employer covered the fees. Iris had no established line of credit on her own. Losing her dental coverage also meant losing numerous teeth.

Control Through Coercion, Threats, and Explosive Violence

In controlling relationships, simple threats often produce a docile acceptance. Conformity can also be attained through threats of reporting/exposing intimate information to family, friends or authorities. During the separation process, these tactics may not be seen as sufficient. The control-seeking man may increase the pressure on numerous people, not just the ex-partner. In an extreme, his tactics may spiral into physical and sexual assault, and even intimate femicide or murder.

Some Examples

According to Rodgers (1994:8), 35% of currently married but 59% of previously married women report some form of emotional abuse by their partner. Moreover, almost half of these women claim that, at some point, they feared for their lives. The research also indicates the bone chilling fact that when men kill their intimate partners, they often "overkill" by using much more force than it would have been necessary to end a life (Crawford and Gartner, 1992:97). Examples abound in the media reports: Suzanne Ferry was bludgeoned to death, then set on fire (Toronto Star, November 25, 1992: A22); a man believed to be despondent over his marriage breakup rigged an explosion which burned three houses down, including his estranged wife's house. His wife's life was miraculously saved through the heroic efforts of the neighbours (Toronto Star, June 12, 1995:A8). Nicole Mattison was killed then her body was cut into pieces and disposed of in Lake Ontario (Toronto Star, June 10, 1992: A5); Graciela Montants was viciously beaten, then strangled to death (Toronto Star, February 11, 1993: A10). In all cases, the victims had recently left their partners. One had left her partner the day she was killed.

Threats and control can also be sexual. Mr. MacFie, kidnapped his estranged wife twice. Each time, the abduction followed harassing calls, stalking, and a confrontation with family and friends who intervened. Each time, she was severely beaten and raped. Eventually, Ms Meredith's mangled body was found in Mr. MacFie's van (Globe and Mail, August 7, 1977:11).

Ann, a young woman I interviewed, is legally disabled as a result of repeated beatings. The frequency and the severity of abuse increased when she wanted to end the
relationship. After an attempt to leave, Ann was driven to a remote nature conservation area under the auspices of "reconciliation." She was violently raped, and forced to walk, totally exposed, for seven miles. He drove ahead, watching her from his rear-view mirror. Although he was convicted of assault, he served less than a month in jail, and only on weekends. He continued to make harassing calls, even when he was in jail. The night caretaker was his cousin.

The grip of control also expands to beloved belongings. Laurette and Sue talked about the shattering of their treasured heirlooms. Laurette's husband burned her books when she decided to take a few university courses. Daisy's husband slashed her favourite dress into ribbons, so that she would not look pretty and "run-away" with other men. There were no other men in Daisy's severely isolated existence. Ann's partner's violence extended to the cat she loved (and still keeps). He would raise the cat closer and closer to the revolving blades of the ceiling fan, and demand that Ann swallow large doses of sleeping pills. The partner liked to keep her drowsy and docile.

**DISCUSSION**

As the examples clearly show, the termination of a relationship is not a guarantee for the termination of control tactics or violence, regardless of the type of relationship. In contrast, the magnitude of control may even escalate and spread outside of the dyad. What also needs emphasis is the fact that in all of the cited cases, the abusers/killers were "normal" men in other aspects of their lives. Even more ironically, some were prominent men (such as Laurette's ex-husband).

I must stress the fact that the examples I provided from my interviews and the media reports are too selective to lead to any generalizable conclusion. Nevertheless, all entail elements of control during the onset, continuation or escalation of violence against estranged female partners. It is not so infrequent that men kill their former partners or murder their/her children, family, friends and lovers. These acts are sometimes cold and calculated. At other times, they reflect frantic and explosive attempts to re-establish control, and to re-possess the woman who wants to get away.

Disgruntled male partner's control tactics include attempts to make decisions for ex-wife/lover or in blocking the decisions she makes for herself/children; by psychological pressure such as harassment, stalking, kidnapping and even dispensing drugs (in Ann's case) and making the woman vulnerable and docile; by menacing things/people she cares about; through economic deprivation or legal wrangling; through desecrating, threatening, harming children, new lover, family members, friends, including meaningful belongings, house and pets; and by defiling her body through sexual assault, burning and maiming. At an extreme, men "achieve" the ultimate control through single or multiple murders.

Children are also used and abused. This may be because they are small, trusting and vulnerable. Men also use children to get back at the partner. During an inquest about the two-and-a-half-year-old daughter Richard Brousseau murdered (see above), his own mother said: "He vowed to make his former wife suffer for ever!" (*Toronto Star*, October 23, 1995:A6).

What can we do to break the link between separation and increased propensity for male violence? The answer to this question is intimately linked with what one considers to be
at the root of violence. Feminists see violence towards women as a criminal offence and squarely place the blame on the abusers. Thus, an effective use of the criminal justice system combined with re-education of men are offered as a possible remedy (Burris and Jaffe, 1983; Stout, 1992). In this regard, the Duluth project in the United States and its offshoots remain promising (Pence, 1983; Pence and Paymar, 1993; Sherman, 1992; Dobash et al., 1995, see Snider, 1990 for conceptual difficulties). Yet, Dobash et al.'s (1997) meticulous analysis also shows that not all men are candidates for such intensive efforts, and from those who complete the program, a sizeable portion continue to inflict violence against their partners.

Another crucial task is to alter the perceptions and attitudes of law makers and enforcers themselves, since there are many examples of blatant ignorance and sexism within the justice system itself. In 1954, G.H. Hatherill, a commander of Scotland Yard stated, "[t]here are about twenty murders a year in London and not all are serious--some are just husbands killing their wives" (cited in Toronto Star, December 11, 1995:A17). Lest we think this is dated, here is a more recent example. A Michigan court judge, Joel Gehrke, "told a man convicted of spousal abuse to roll up his shirt sleeve, then punished him with a three-finger 'slap' on the wrist (Toronto Star, January 18, 1996:A13). How can women expect protection from a system that resonates with such archaic paternalism?

More easily and immediately attainable strategies are suggested by some of the women I interviewed (also see the resilience of women in Hoff's (1990) interviews). Their suggestions revolve around breaking the control over their lives, preferably before it engulfs them. Survivors suggest prevention as the golden rule. Pointing out the link between early episodes and later manifestations of violent behaviour, they suggest avoiding abusive dating partners. If prevention is not possible, getting immediate help, or getting out of the relationship are advised. With the authority their often tragic experiences has given them, they argue that outbursts followed by reconciliations will only fuel explosions at the time of separation (also see Ellis, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993; Nielsen, Endo and Ellington, 1992). They recommend that women resist isolation and nourish a social network that can witness the events and offer help when needed. The goal is "to reclaim oneself" psychologically, socially, economically and sexually, from the talons of the partner's control. They also demand more sensitivity towards women from the political and most particularly, legal systems.

NOTES

1 Since the presentation of this paper during the Humboldt University and the University of Toronto Exchange, a conceptually and theoretically expanded version is accepted by the Violence Against Women Journal.

2 Same-sex relationships can also be violent. The power and control processes I discuss in this paper may be relevant to violence in same-sex relationships (see Hart, 1986; Renzetti, 1988, 1992).

3 This paper provides a conceptual overview rather than report results from a particular
study. The examples I use are drawn from three different sources: interviews I conducted with eighty-seven divorced women, between 1985 and 1988 (see Sev'er, 1992; Sever and Pirie, 1991a/b); interviews with twelve survivors of long-term abuse from an ongoing study supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC); and mass media reports of intimate violence collected between 1990 and 1996 from the Toronto Star and The Globe and Mail, which have the largest circulation in Canada. Although none of these sources are random or representative, they nevertheless provide clarity to the conceptual links I explore here.

4 Under the 1968 Divorce Act, Canadian law allowed a number of "marital offences" such as adultery, physical cruelty, mental cruelty and others (i.e., sodomy, bestiality, homosexual acts, etc.). The law also allowed a number of "marital breakdown" categories such as addiction to alcohol, separation not less than three years, desertion not less than five years, etc. In 1985, the Divorce Act was liberalized by eliminating "marital offences" terminology as well as reducing the waiting period from three to one year. Under the revised act, more than 95% of divorcing couples now use the no fault category of separation not less than one year (see Sev'er, 1992).

5 The stated duration is prior to the 1985 liberalization of the Divorce Act (see note 3, above).

6 For examples, see Allen and Straus (1980) in status inconsistency situations where the husband's contribution is seriously deficient (i.e., unemployed) or inferior to his wife's (lower income/education, etc.). For the severe punishment of adulterous wives who have "transgressed" their husbands' exclusive proprietary rights over their bodies, see Phillips (1988). For shifts in the status quo (i.e., pregnancy), see Lent, 1991; MacLeod, 1980 and VAWS, 1993).

7 According to Pence and Paymar (1993), the power and control model is also applicable to violence in same-sex relationships.

8 I use pseudonyms to refer to the survivors I interviewed.

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