

Evolution of Research about Male Perpetrators of Violence Against Women

Russell Dobash & Rebecca Dobash
Professors Emeritus, University of Manchester, UK

Keynote Address – Zoom presentation

Inspiring Domestic Violence Policies and Practices: International Perspectives

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CONTENT

- **FOCUS :**

- Ever expanding knowledge about the violence men perpetrate against their women partners (wives, cohabitants)

Using Evidence from three of our research studies:

- **1)--Violence Against Wives Study [VAW]**

- **2)--Violent Men Study ...ChViolMen,**

- **3)--Murder Study [WMMW...]**

- We examine

- violence & injuries inflicted by men against their women partners,

- evidence about men who murder their women partners

-Each study provides some ANSWERS & also raise some QUESTIONS


Today, we explore the evidence so far

... main focus on

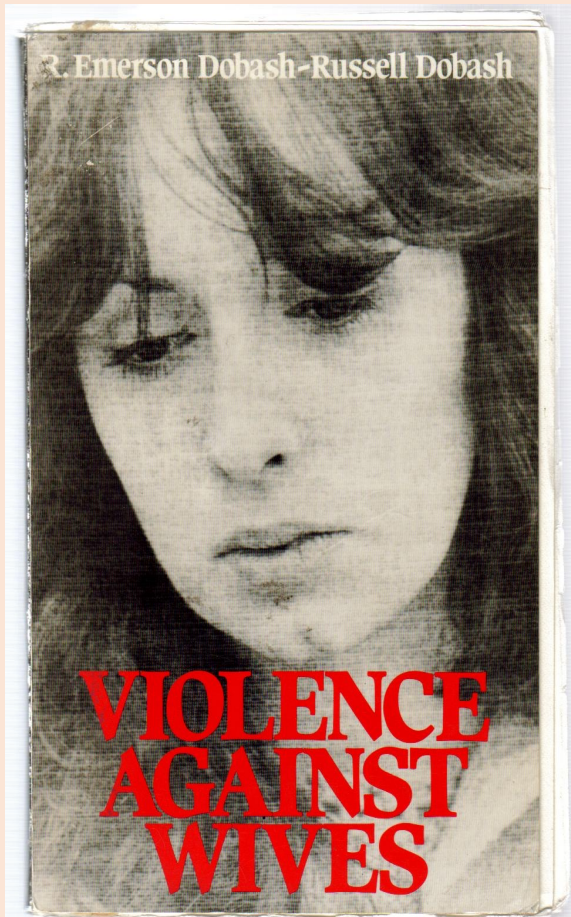
- Conflict (context)
- Violence
- injuries

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Study 1: Violence Against Wives...



Men & Violence Against Women/Wives

Women's accounts of men's violence
&
Police accounts of men's violence

.....CONFLICTS

.....VIOLENCE

.....INJURIES

Ever Expanding Knowledge about...
Violence Against Women & Men Who Perpetrate the Violence
- Three Studies ---- #1. Violence Against Wives

1974--: RESEARCH STUDY – [findings reported in ‘**VIOLENCE AGAINST WIVES**’]

Interview 109 ‘battered’ women in 1st refuges for ‘battered women’ in Scotland

Examine 34,724* police records (all police cases for 1 year) Edinburgh & one district in Glasgow)

Data: How much violence? How much violence against ‘wives’?

Nature of the Violence & Injuries?, Responses to women? Responses to men?

Of 34,724 police cases,

--- 3,020 involved ANY FORM OF VIOLENCE [ie. all violence],

..... of 3,020 cases involving any form of violence,

.....759 cases involved violence against a woman partner

..This Represents **25%*** Of All Cases Of Violence Dealt With By Police

* Similar Findings have been found elsewhere

So, What is this Violence Like? What Conflicts Are Involved? What Injuries are inflicted?
Dobash&Dobash, (1979) Violence Against Wives, New York: Free Press,

Sources of CONFLICT leading to violent events

Interviews with abused women (& Police Records)

(note: selected items only --- reported most frequently by women)

<u>INTERVIEWS</u> (w/women,n=100) <u>info.(conflict)</u>	<u>Typical</u> Violent Event	<u>Last</u> Violent Event	<u>Police Records</u> ,n=513* [contained
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SOURCE OF CONFLICT:

Possessiveness,jealousy	45%	22%	12%
Domestic work	16%	32%	37%
Money	17%	11%	10%
Woman tries to leave	0%	15%	17%

Dobash&Dobash, Violence Against Wives, 1979, pp.247-48;

'The Nature & Antecedents of Violent Events, British Jr. Criminology, vol.24, July, 1984, p 273.

Nature of VIOLENCE & INJURIES

Interviews with abused women (& Police Records)

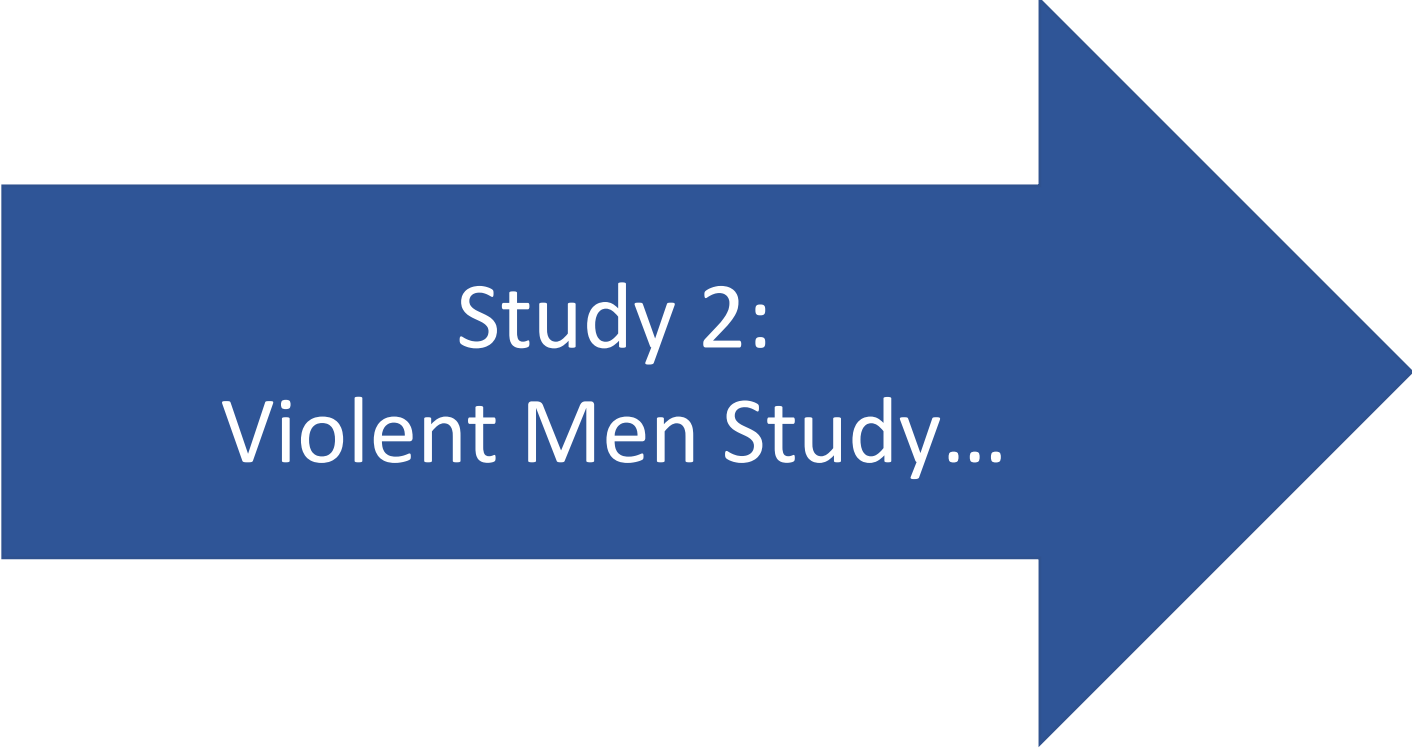
(note: selected items -- reported most frequently by women)

<u>INTERVIEWS</u> (w/women,n=100)	<u>Typical</u> Violent Event	<u>Last</u> Violent Event	<u>Police Records</u> ,n=838* [contained info.(violence)]
<u>NATURE VIOLENCE/PHYSICAL FORCE:</u>			
Slap, or push-pull			
into non-injurious object	15%	21%	21%
Punch face or body	45%	31%	33%
Push/pull - injurious object	4%	15%	16%
Kick, knee butt	28%	18%	16%
....			
.....			
<u>NATURE OF INJURIES:</u>			
Bruise face &/or body	--	65%	70%
Cuts	--	23%	13%

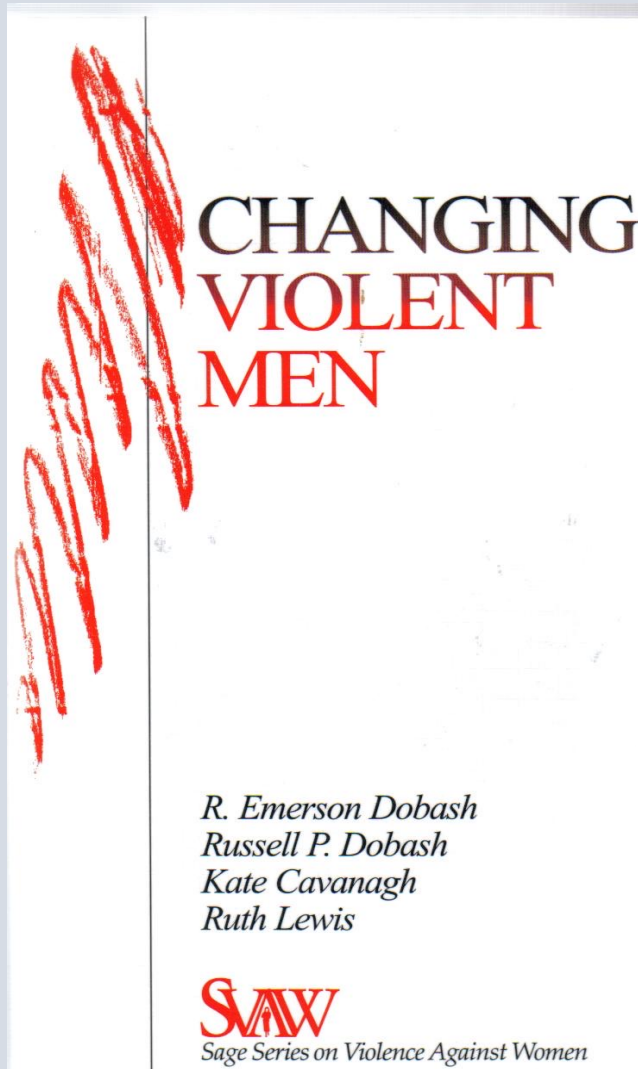
Dobash&Dobash, Violence Against Wives, 1979, pp.248; 'The Nature & Antecedents of Violent Events, British Jr. Criminology, vol.24, July, 1984, p 274, 276.

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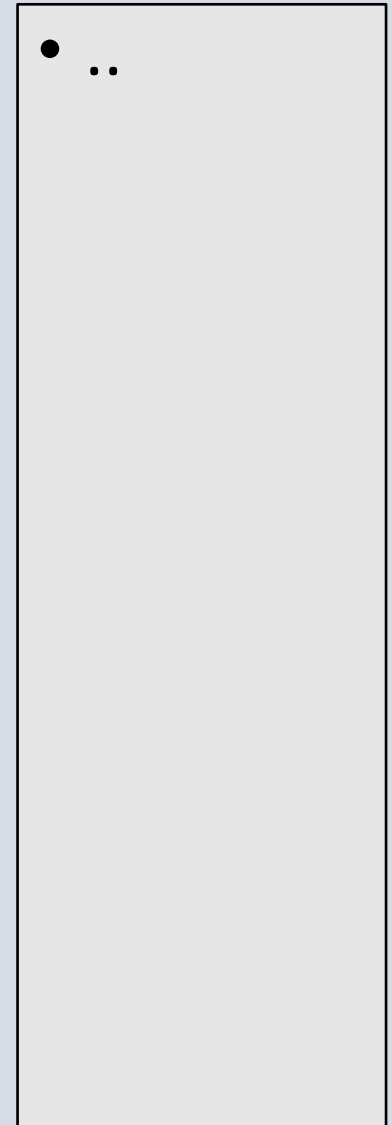
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Study 2:
Violent Men Study...



Study of Violent Men & Their Women Partners



Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh & Lewis (2000) *Changing Violent Men*,
Thousand Oaks & London: Sage

Expanding Knowledge -Three Studies

#2. Violent Men Study

Interviews with Violent Men & Women Partners

-122 Men convicted of violence against a woman partner

-134 women partners (including 95 couples)

Interviews (in-depth, tape recorded, transcribed):

- -violence
- -injuries
- -controlling behaviours

We developed 3 Indexes/Scales

----- **'CONSTELLATION OF VIOLENCE'** -----:

..... Violence Assessment Index, [VAI]. p.191

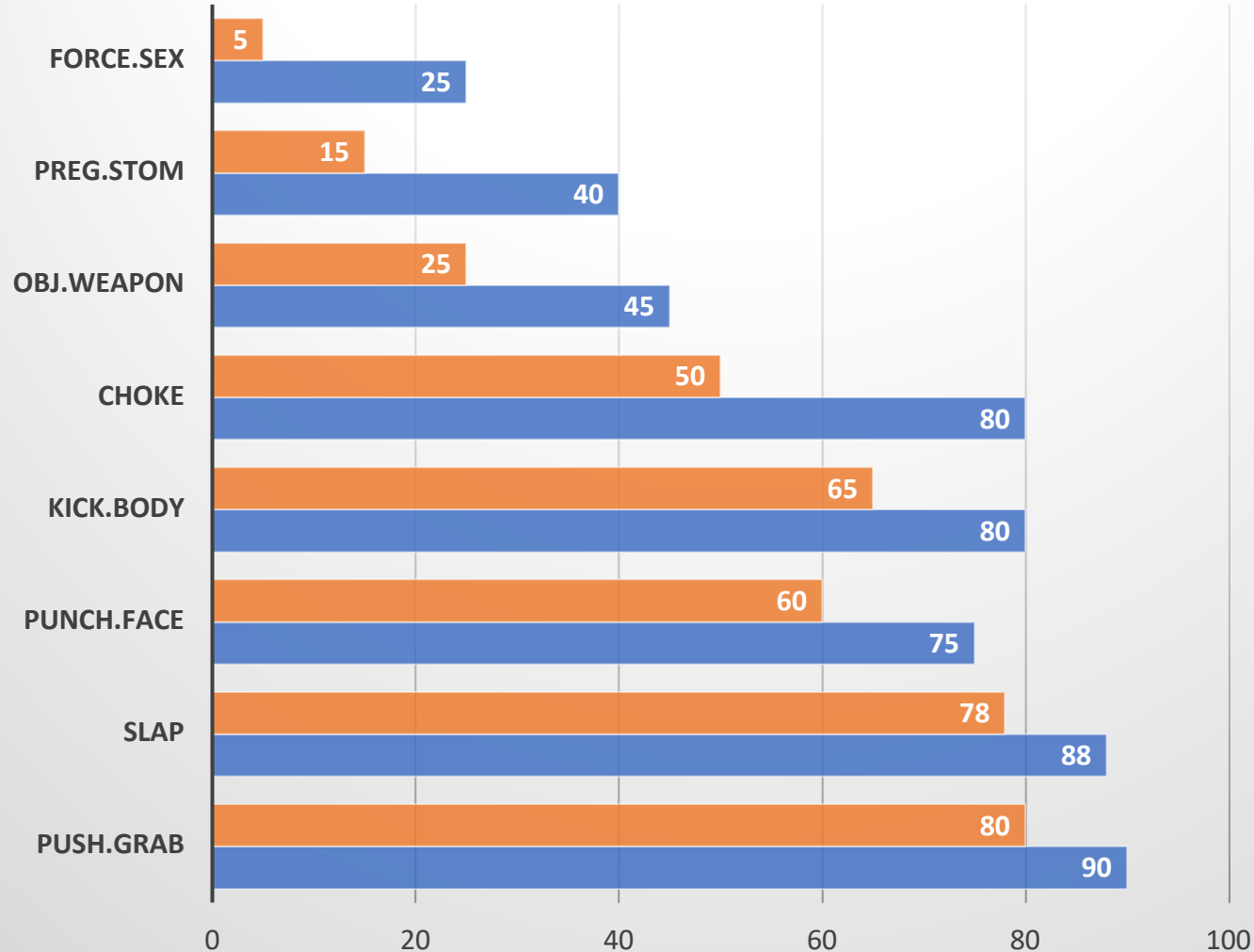
..... Injury Assessment Index, [IAI] p.192

..... Controlling Behaviour Index, [CBI] p.193

Dobash, et.al (2000), Changing Violent Men, Sage [details of study, scales & findings]

Types of Violence

(reports of men & women compared) (prevalence over one year, %)
Violent Men Study

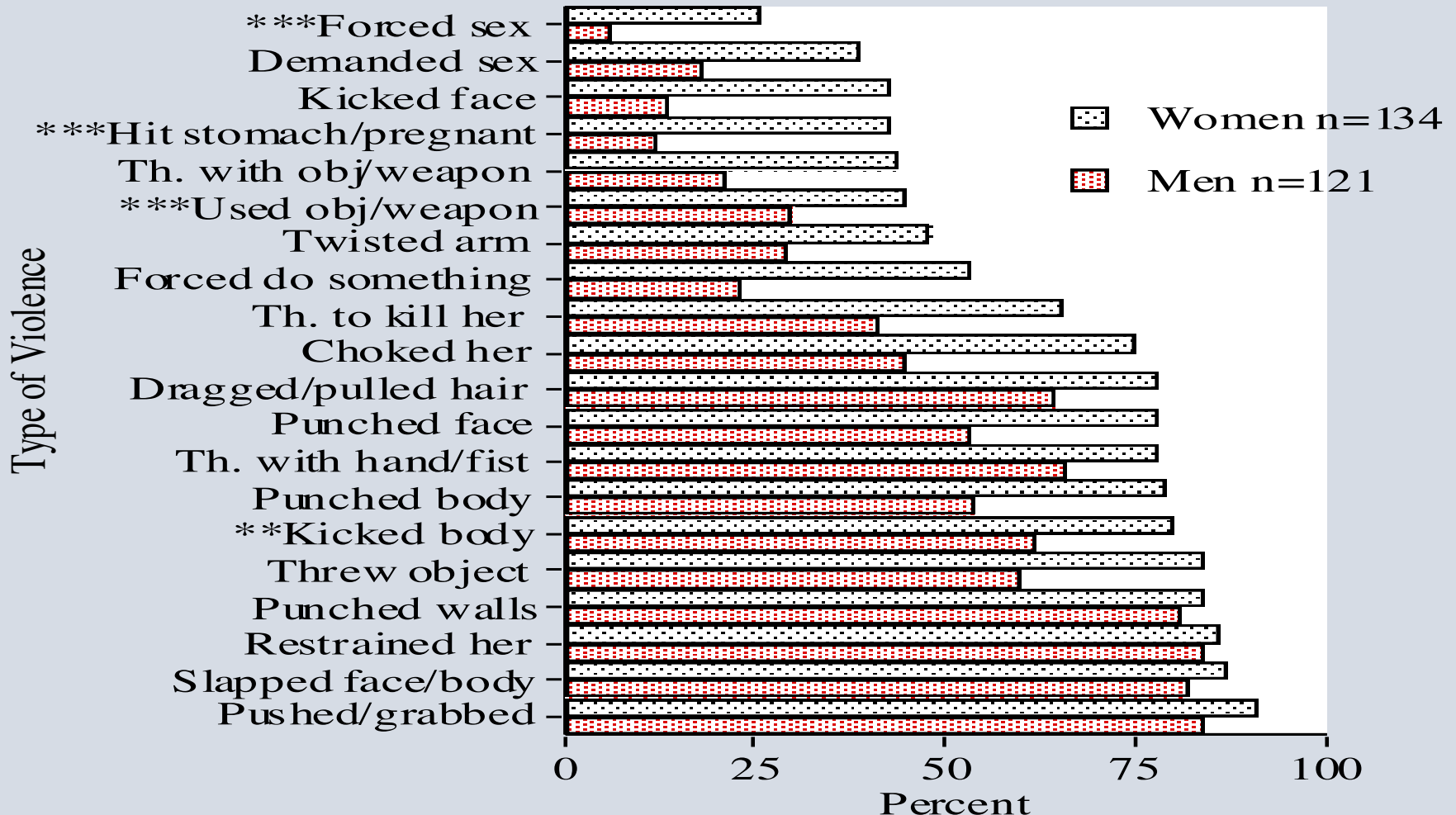


men=121

women=134

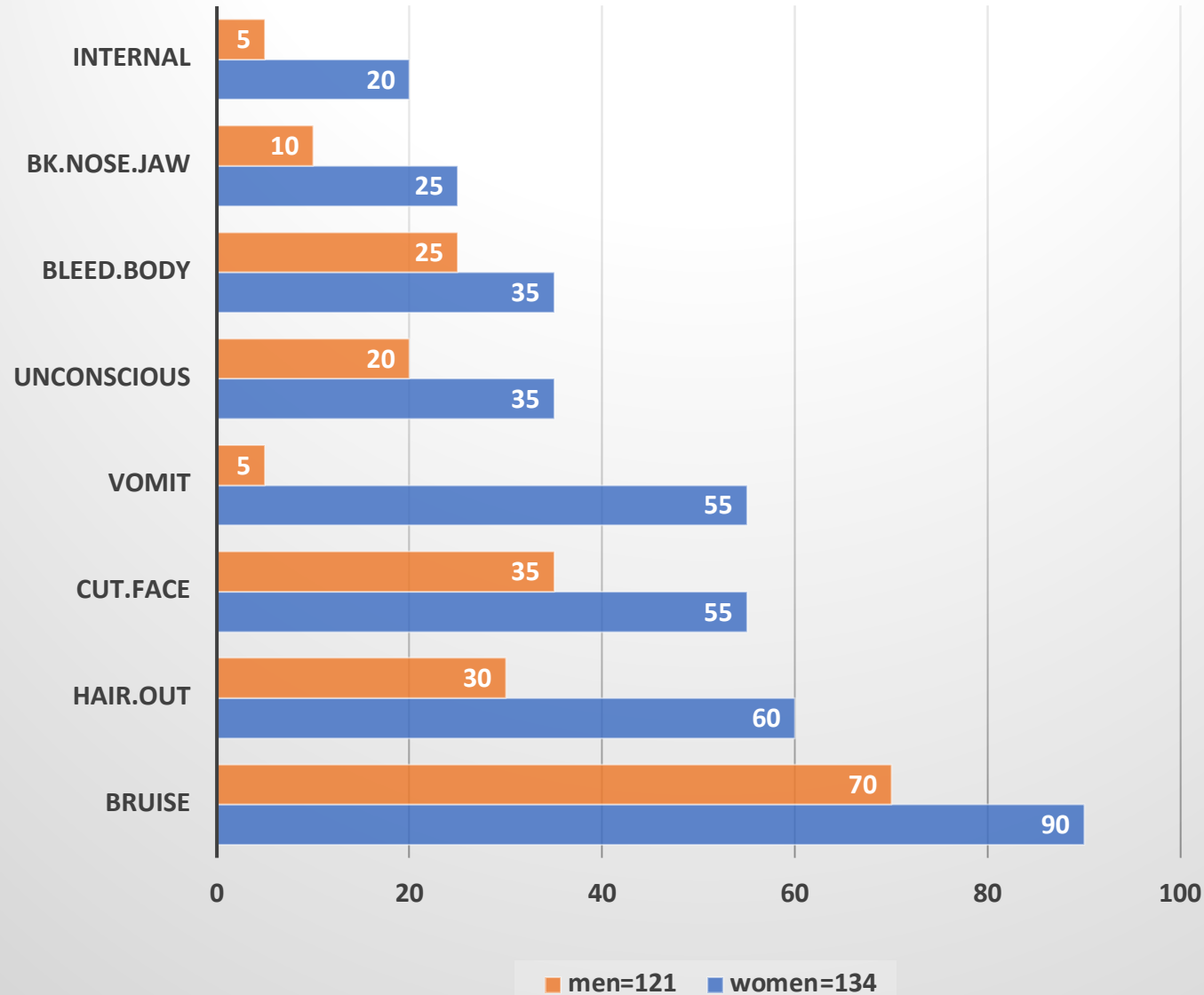
Types of Violence (prevalance)

(reports of men and women compared)

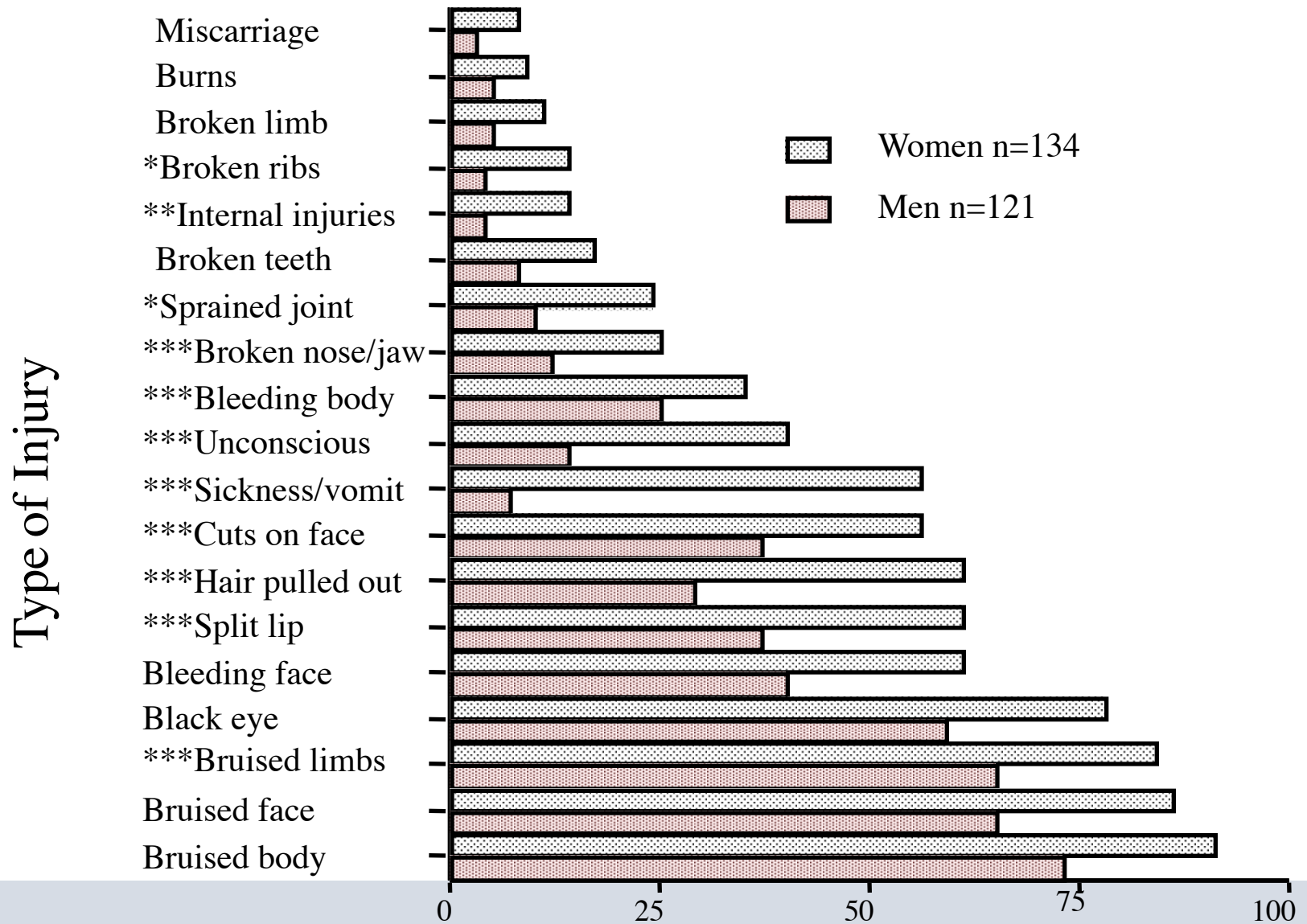


Injuries

(reports of men and women compared) (prevalence over one year, %)
Violent Men Study



Injuries (prevalence)(reports of men and women compared)



Nature of injuries , 5or more in one year men's report --&-- women's reports compared

- Bruised body
- Bruised limbs
- Bruised face
- Hair pulled out
- Black eye
- Sickness, vomit
- Bleeding face
- Cut face
- Split lip
- Bleeding body
- unconscious

....Source:Dobash&Dobash, (2000) Changing Violent Men-p188

Frequent Injuries-5+ in one year (Reports of Women & Men)

...[Violent Men Study, Dobash&Dobash]

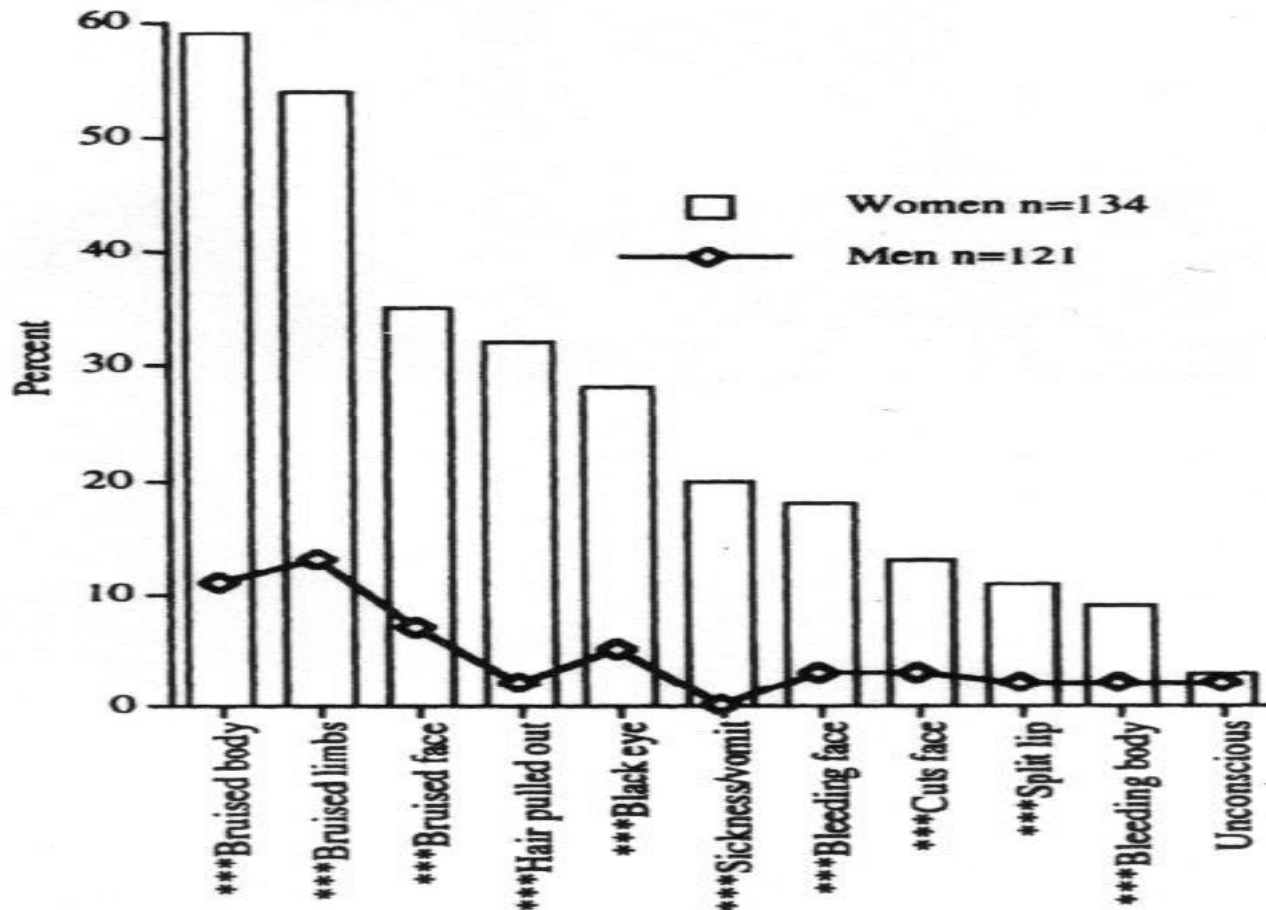


Figure 4: Frequent injuries (at least five times during a typical year of relationship) — reports of women and men compared

*** $p < .001$

Overview – What do these two studies tell us about men who use violence against their woman partner?

Both interviews and official records provide valuable evidence

- Interviews with women who are abused provide detailed accounts of the nature and extent of men's violence & controlling behaviours
- Men's violence is purposeful, intentional & functional, as well as serious & consequential.
- Men & women give different accounts of the same violent incidents
- Men's accounts of their violence are often sparse and exculpatory
- Men's violence is usually preceded by disputes and intimidation
- Men's violence & aggression demonstrates that they are 'in charge'
- Men's violence illustrates their sense of entitlement

Overall, this behavior constitutes a 'constellation of violence' that includes physical and sexual violence, as well as controlling & coercive behavior

...

What Did the Men Say About Their Violence to Their Woman Partner?

Intimate Partner Abusers - Accounts

Accounts – men enter the narrative at points that blame the woman...

- Selective forgetting/remembering – circumstances, events, violence
- Deny , *‘nothing happened’*
- Rationalize, *‘I had just lost my job’, ‘I was drunk’, ...*
- Discount/minimize, *‘it wasn’t very bad; it wasn’t that bad, others have done worse’*

Man blames:

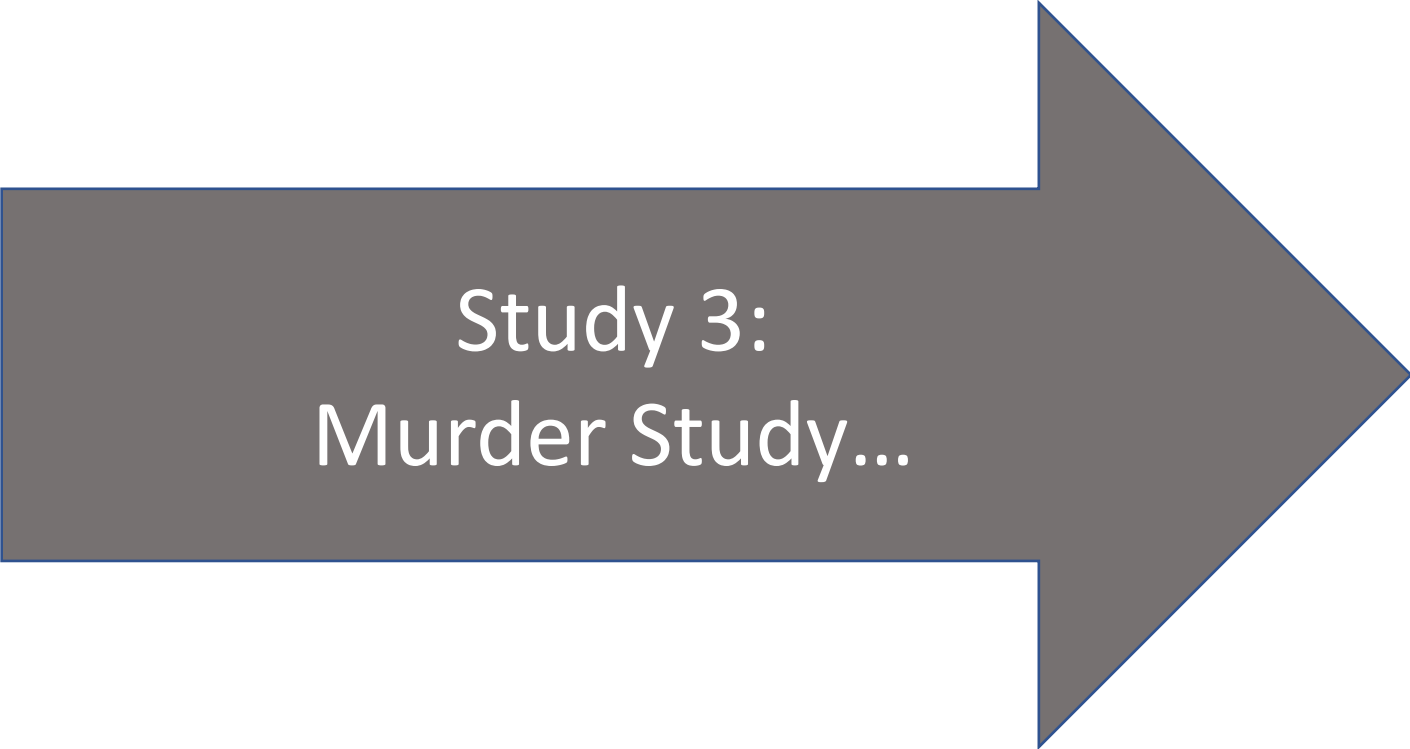
- loss of control, *‘I just lost it’* , but men had clear objectives: *‘to frighten/to punish, ...*
- Blames the woman, *‘If she hadn’t; If she had’*
- Alcohol/drugs, *‘It was the drink’; I was high’*
- Contradiction: *‘I didn’t do it’, ...* but seeks forgiveness for doing it

...

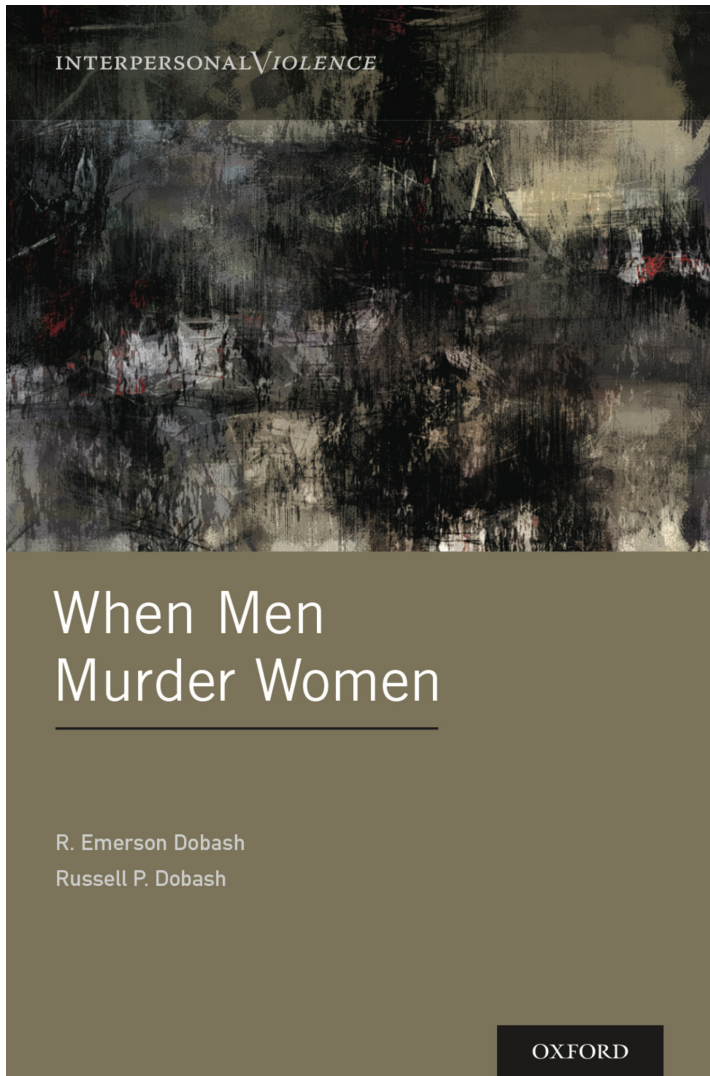
What Do We Know About Men Who Murder Their Woman Partner ?

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Study 3:
Murder Study...



When Men Murder Women

(2015) Dobash, R.E. & Dobash, R.P.
When Men Murder Women, New
York: Oxford University Press.

Murder Study (funded by ESRC)

•Objectives

- all types of murder
 - pathways to murder
 - contexts, situations, circumstances & murder event
 - relationships between perpetrators & victims
 - perpetrators lifecourse: child - adulthood – murder
-
- **3 Sources of Data:** (quantitative & qualitative)
 - **-Homicide Index** [official database for UK]
 - **-866 Casefiles of** murderers: (786 men, 80 women)
 - sample: all murderers currently serving life in prison:
 - England & Wales (3,000 men, 115 women)
 - Scotland (500 men, 10 women)
 - **-200 Interviews with murderers in prison:**
 - - (180 men, 20 women)

Murder Study - Casefile & Interview Data

PERPETRATORS:

•Childhood

Family - School - Social & Legal Services

•Adult Life and Circumstances

Employment, Relationships, Problems/alcohol, Social Services

•Previous Violence & Offending (all offences)

All Convictions, Previous Violence Against Women, etc.

MURDER:

Relationships of victims and offenders

Violence, Circumstances, & Situations

PRISON:

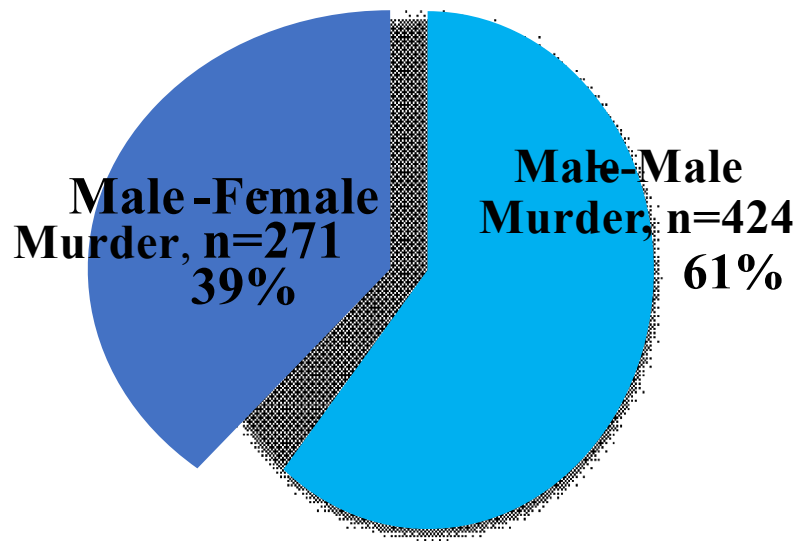
Adjustment, Empathy, Remorse & Future Dange

- Male Murderers ONLY -

All Adult Victims, n=695 (excluding 90 child victims)

..Men Murder Men (n=424) (61%)

.....Men Murder Women (n=271) (39%)

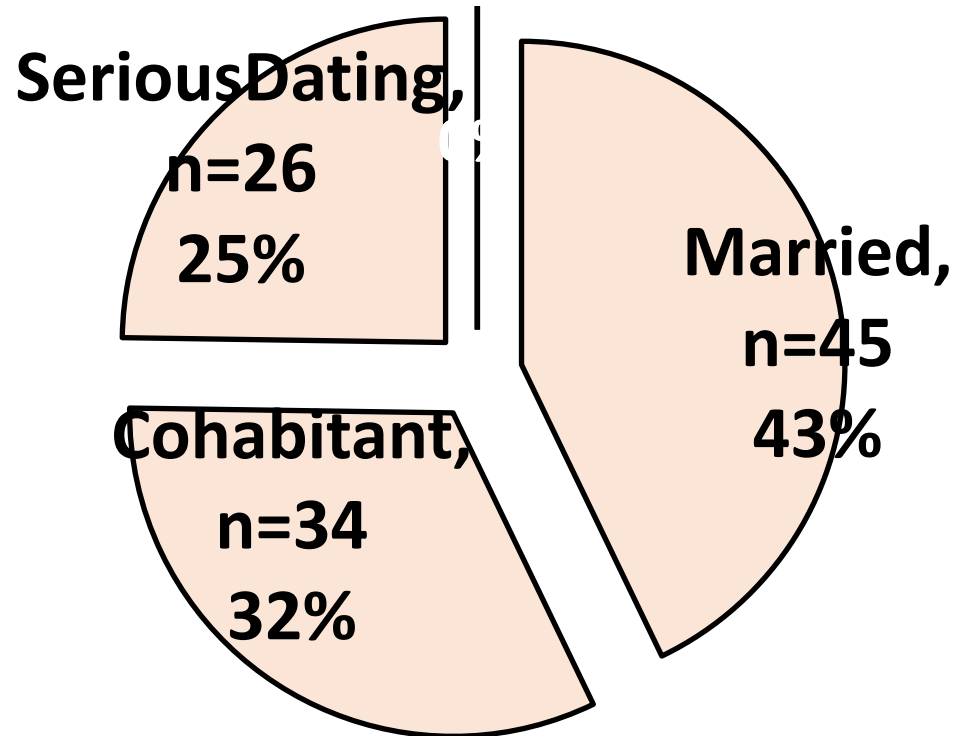


...When Men Murder Women...

- MEN MURDER INTIMATE WOMEN PARTNERS

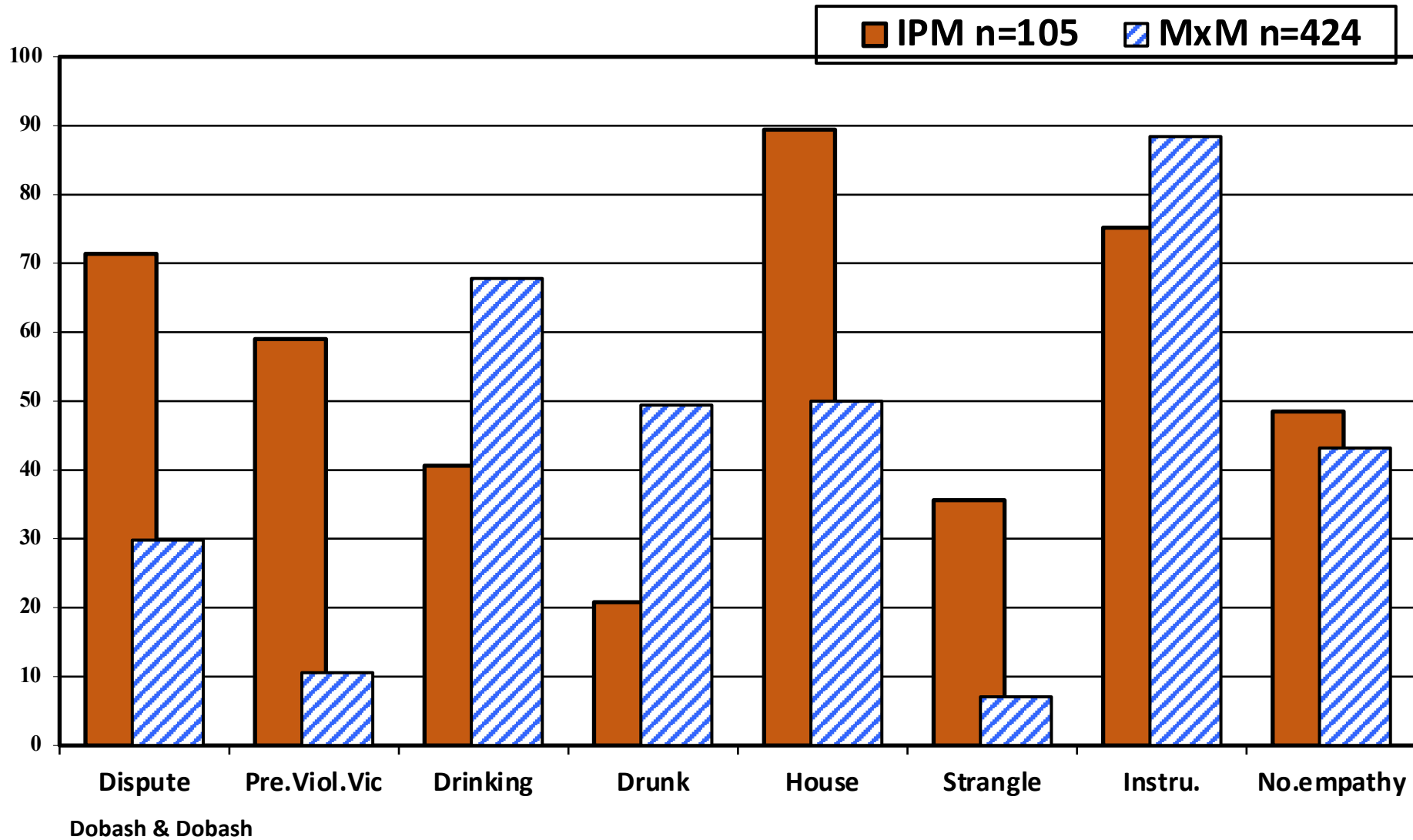
Intimate Partner Murder (IPM)

Relationship - perpetrator & victim, n=105



Murder Event

IPMurder & MxM Murder



Context of IPMurder & Murder Event

Intimate Partner Murder (IPM)

Context of IPMurder:

- Relationship, Situation, Context
- Prolonged conflict
- Possessiveness, jealousy, control
- Previous violence (physical, sexual)
- Tenuous relationship- dating, cohabitating
- Separation/ Attempts to leave
- Divorce / New Male Partner

Changing the Project:

...(from trying to 'keep' her to deciding to 'destroy' her

Murder Event (IPM):

- location: at home
- Only one perpetrator
- Ongoing dispute
- Confrontation
- Some men (perpetrators) were drinking, a few men were drunk

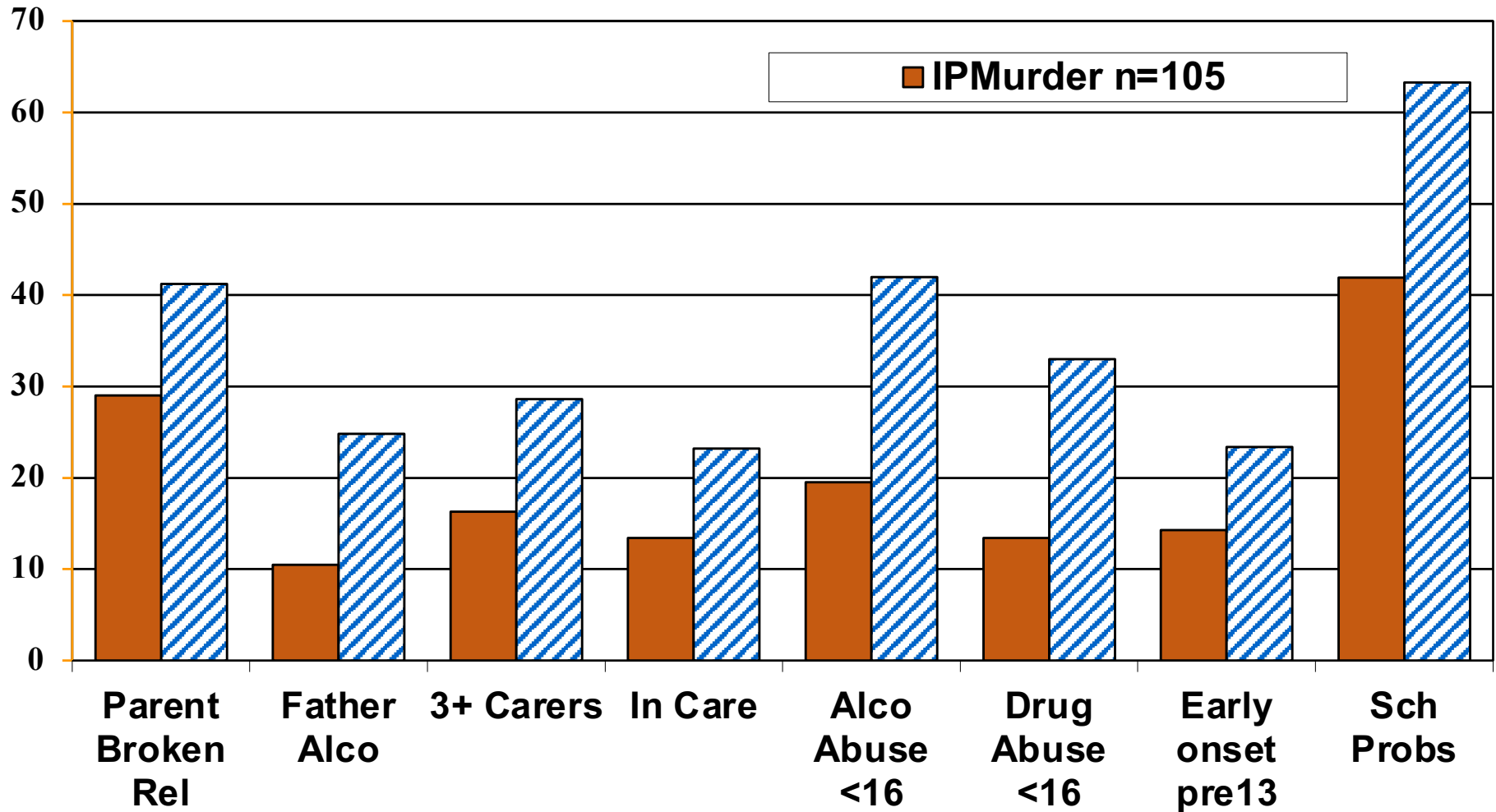
Method of killing woman partner:

- Choke/strangle, Beat, ...
- Instruments/household knives

Collateral Murders: other victims
children, protectors, new male partners

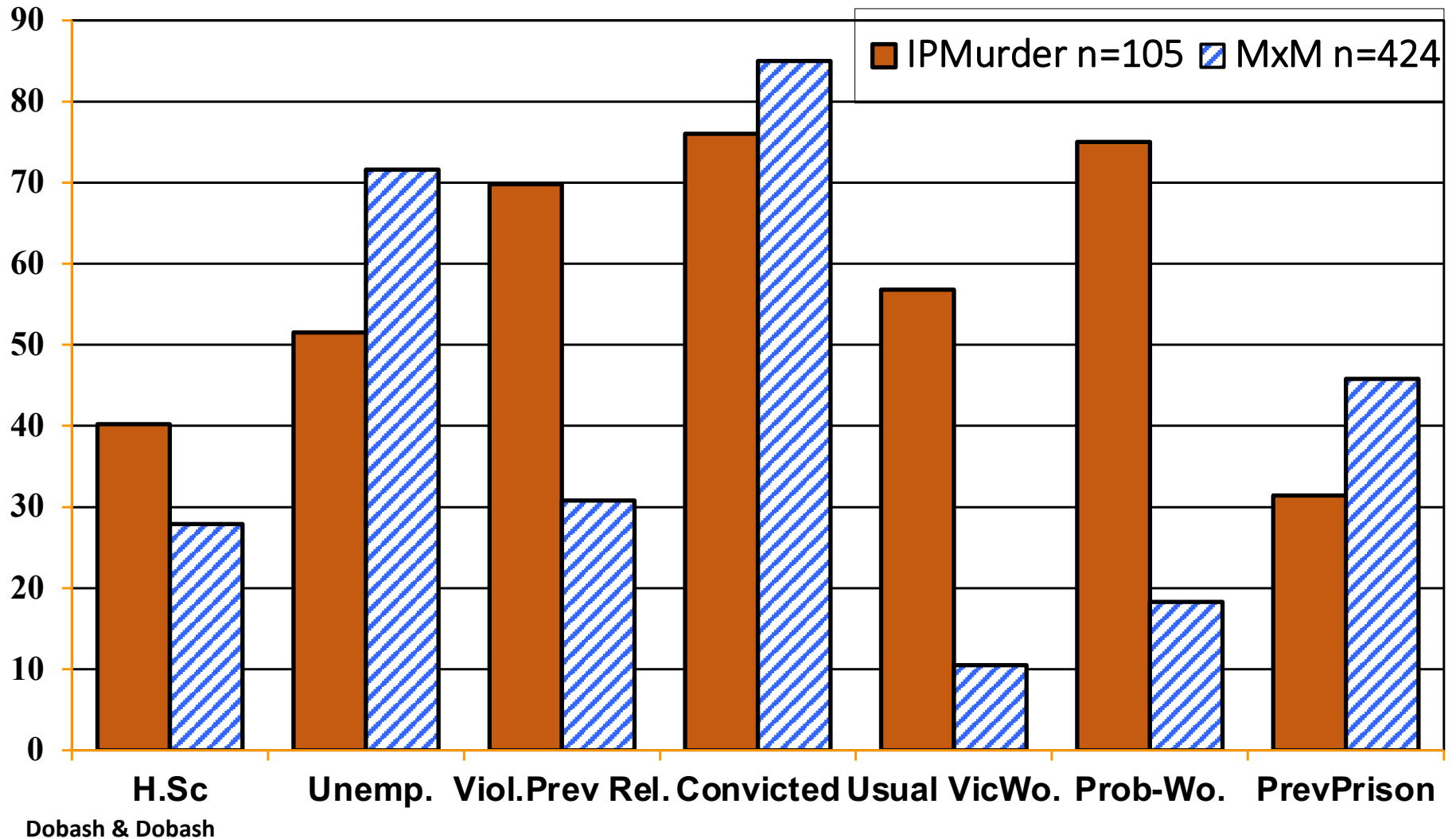
Childhood (before 16) - Perpetrator

IPMurder & MxM Murder



Adulthood - Perpetrator

Intimate Partner Murder (IPM) & MxM Murder



Brief Overview

(Lifecycle) - Childhood & Adulthood -

Men Who Murder Women Intimate Partners

- Male Perpetrators:

- Childhood (over 50%):.....

- School problems, with learning &/or discipline

- Male Perpetrators:

- Adulthood (over 50%):

- Unemployed
- Previous conviction
- Violent in a previous intimate relationship
- Had problems with women
- If had a previous conviction for violence, the victim was a woman

IPMurderers
Men with Previous Convictions
&
Men with NO Previous Convictions

IPM_{with} previous convictions (75%, $n=79$) *'the expected'*

-IPM_{with} NO previous convictions (25%, $n=25$) *'out of the blue'*

Similarities

-Intimate Partner Murderers – Men WITH & WITHOUT Previous Convictions

Circumstances & Situations

- **Ongoing dispute (often long duration)**
- **Previous Violence to victim (physical & sometimes sexual)**
- **Jealousy/Possessiveness**
- **Separation - threats of separation - attempts to separate**

Orientations

- **Problems with women**
- **Lack of Remorse [for murder]**
- **Lack of Empathy [with his victim]**
- **Assessed as Dangerous**
-

..

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What were they thinking ????

What Did Men Say About Murdering Their Woman Partner ?

‘What Were They Thinking’ Problems with Women in Intimate Relationships

Problems with Women

Throughout his adult life, he has displayed evidence of a difficulty in maintaining stable relationships with women.

He now recognizes that he needs to look at his attitude to women. There are many issues in his treatment of his wife prior to her death that need addressing. She was a tiny, frail young woman, who was oppressed.

...

Denial of Previous violence to intimate partners

‘He has a history of relationship problems with a propensity to use violence against females.

‘He says he only ever hit is wife once before - denies a long standing history of domestic violence’

If I remember, I only hit her twice’

‘What Were They Thinking’
Denial – Denial - Denial

Deny the murder

‘I couldn’t believe it.... I’ve only ever seen one document where it actually said ‘deceased’.

‘He continues to claim death was an accident – she fell on his knife’

‘I never thought my wife had died. I thought she was in a deep sleep.’

Acknowledge Murder but Deny Responsibility for Murder

‘He tends to present his behavior as a mystery which he can’t solve, and isn’t responsible for.’

‘It is convenient for him to see himself as mentally ill.’

He sees it as a domestic offense and the [sentence] as too high.’

‘The police said this was premeditated which I deny. It was an accident which happened while I was drunk’.

‘What Were They Thinking’

Orientations to Murder – No Empathy, No Remorse

Lack of Empathy & Remorse

‘He is extremely dangerous, a complete absence of remorse, compassion or pity for his victim’

‘I felt they [the victims] deserved to be taught a lesson.’

His almost total omission of thoughts on his feelings for his wife and daughter may reflect the degree of regard he had or has for them [near zero].

‘I could find no evidence of spontaneous empathy or appropriate remorse apart from the effect on himself.

‘He showed very little emotions while recounting the details of his offense and there was little to indicate any remorse’.

‘What Were They Thinking’

Orientations to the Murder – Blame the Victim

Blame the Victim

‘He has no real insight into the circumstances leading up to the offence. He claims she was a very bossy woman’.

Blame the Victim

..He says he just ‘snapped’

*He insists this stemmed out of **severe provocation** from his wife... He says she had gone on and on at him, he **‘snapped’** and reached for a hammer. He viewed her as a **‘nagging, ungrateful wife’** and himself as a **‘bullied husband’**.*

‘What Were They Thinking’
Possessiveness & Jealousy
Separation & Changing the Project

Using violence to try to keep her

‘The relationship deteriorated & she wished to terminate it. In an effort to dissuade her, he carried out a prolonged and vicious attack’.

‘Changing The Project’

‘She made various attempts to break off the relationship. He had made up his mind what he was going to do with the woman who no longer wanted his attention – she was going to die’.

- What were they thinking -

Problematic:

Orientations to women,
Relationships with women,
Problems with alcohol

Previous Violence & Murder:

- Denies, doesn't remember, not his fault, refuses to talk.....
- Offers Inauthentic apology &/or no empathy, no remorse
- Blames victim
- Self pity
- Egocentric: effect of [murder/conviction/prison] on HIS LIFE

Overall - Relevant Factors

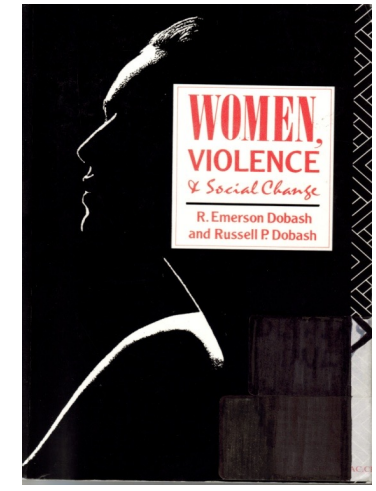
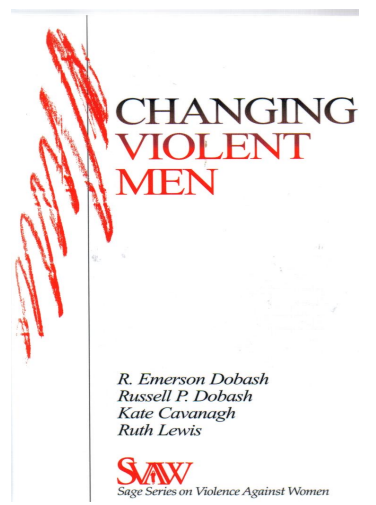
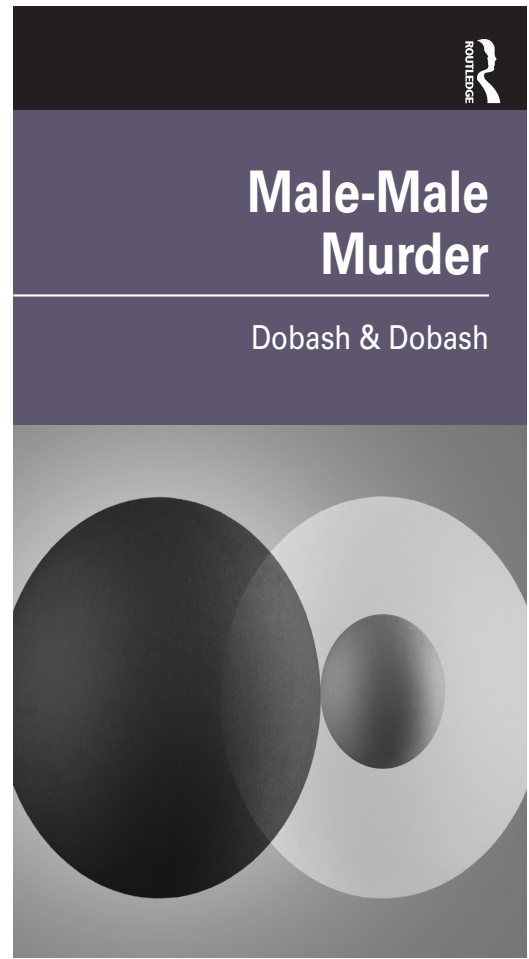
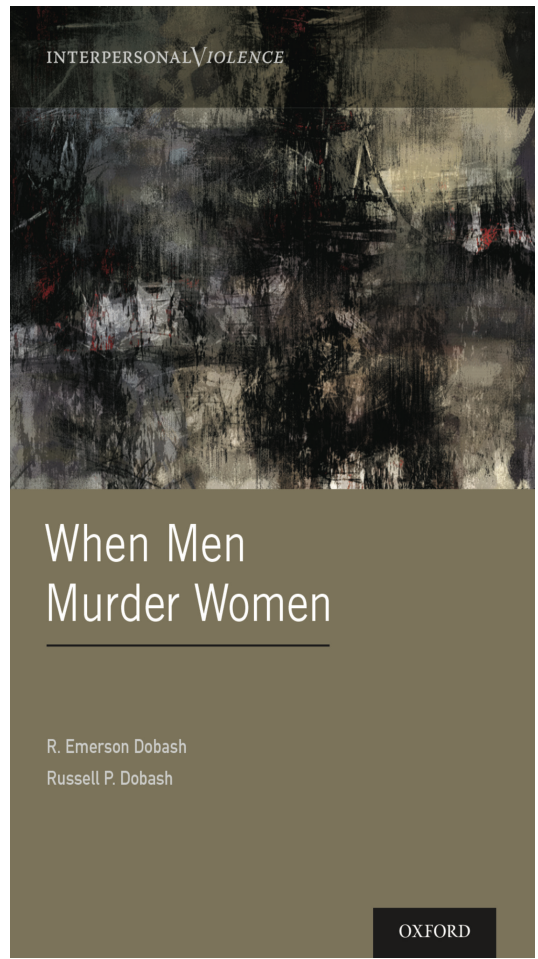
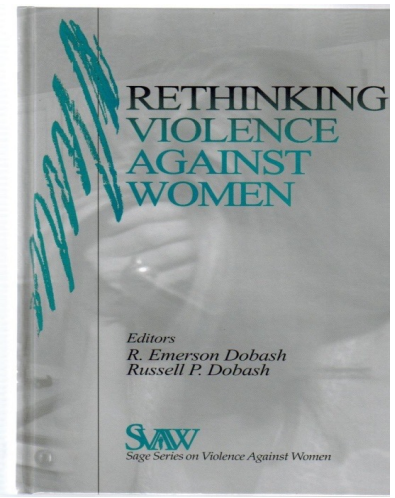
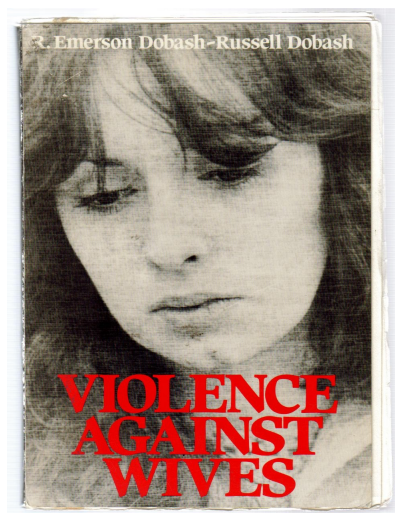
•Offenders:

- Unemployed
- Alcohol abuse
- Arrest/previous convictions
- Violent offending
- Problems with women
- Viol. to a previous partner - -
.....Specialises in VAW
- Previous viol. to murder victim
- Suicide threats
- Continued harassment

•Relationship Situational & contextual factors:

- Prolonged conflict
- Possessiveness & jealousy
- Tenuous relationships
(cohabiting, dating)
- Contested relationships
- Separation/attempts to leave
- Forced sex
- Choke/strangle
- Use
instruments/knives,etc.

Dobash&Dobash – Research on Violence Against Women & Murder (selected books):
Male-Male Murder (2021); *When Men Murder Women* (2015), *Changing Violent Men* (2000);
Rethinking Violence Against Women (1998); *Women, Violence and Social Change* (1992);
Violence Against Wives (1979)



When Men Murder Women & Violence Against Women Selected Books - Dobash & Dobash

- 2021 **Male-Male Murder** Dobash & Dobash, London: Routledge
- 2015 **When Men Murder Women** Dobash & Dobash, New York: Oxford University Press.
- 2000 **Changing Violent Men** Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, & Lewis, London: Sage.
- 1998 **Rethinking Violence Against Women** Dobash & Dobash (eds.), London: Sage.
- 1992 **Women, Violence and Social Change** Dobash & Dobash, London: Routledge.
- 1979 **Violence Against Wives** Dobash & Dobash, New York: Free Press.

Relevant publications

2015, Dobash, R. Emerson & Dobash, Russell P., ***When Men Murder Women***, Oxford University Press, New York & Oxford.

2011, ***What were they thinking? Men who murder an intimate partner.*** Violence Against Women, 17:111-132.

2001, Cavanagh, K, R.E. Dobash, R.P.Dobash & R. Lewis, ***Remedial Work: Men's Strategic Responses to Their Violence Against Intimate Female Partners***, Sociology, 35:695-714.