

RECOGNIZING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AS A POLITICAL ISSUE

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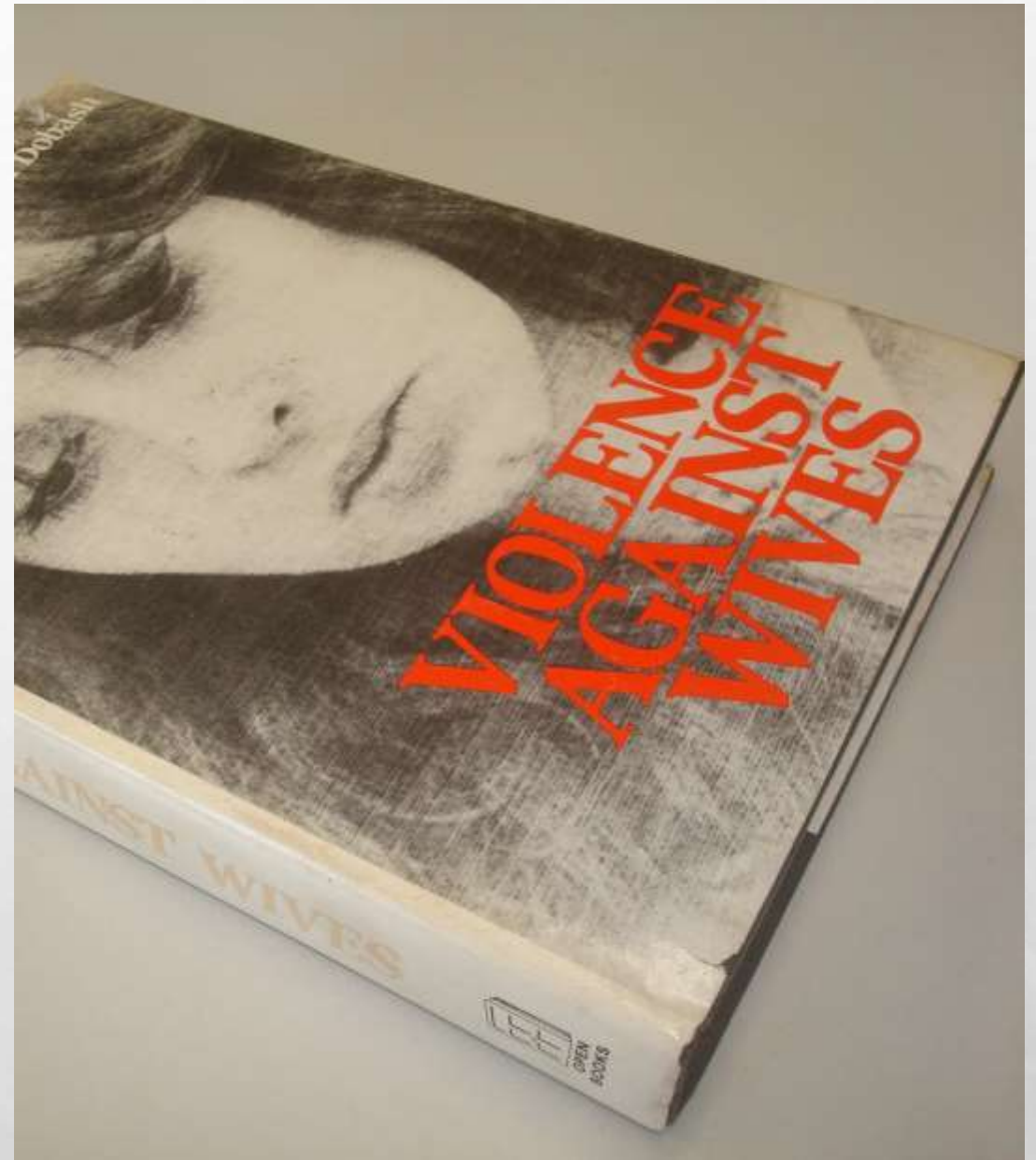
PURPOSE OF THIS PRESENTATION

- **I DESCRIBE HOW MAINSTREAM WORK CAME TO NOW DOMINATE THE SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW).**
- **I ALSO SUGGEST A FEW STRATEGIES FOR CHALLENGING THE HEGEMONY OF ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUAL ASSAULTS, BEATINGS, ONLINE ASSAULTS, AND OTHER FORMS OF WOMAN ABUSE.**

- **PRIOR TO THE LATE 1970S, SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC THEORIES OF VAW CENTERED MAINLY ON “WIFE BEATING,” WERE GROUNDED IN PSYCHOLOGY, AND FOCUSED ON THE CHARACTERISTICS AND BEHAVIORS OF FEMALE SURVIVORS INSTEAD OF MALE OFFENDERS.**
- **AS WELL, THERE WERE (AND STILL ARE) PSYCHOLOGISTS WHO ASSERTED THAT MEN ABUSE AND KILL WOMEN BECAUSE THEY ARE MENTALLY ILL, SUFFER FROM PERSONALITY DISORDERS, OR CONSUME LARGE QUANTITIES OF ALCOHOL.**



- **DUE IN LARGE PART TO THE PIONEERING EMPIRICAL AND THEORETICAL EFFORTS OF RADICAL FEMINIST SOCIOLOGISTS SUCH AS DOBASH AND DOBASH (1979), THERE WAS A MAJOR SHIFT IN THE LATE 1970S.**
- **FOCUS ON GENDER NORMS AND DIFFERENTIAL POWER THAT MEN AND WOMEN HAVE IN SOCIETY.**

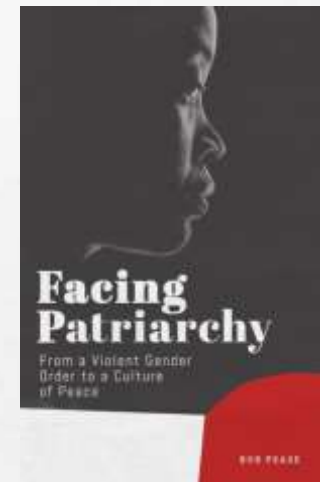




- **FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP, ACTIVISM, AND PRACTICE EXPANDED CONSIDERABLY SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF *VIOLENCE AGAINST WIVES* AND BROWNMILLER'S (1975) *AGAINST OUR WILL*, BUT IT IS BEYOND THE SCOPE OF MY PAPER TO DOCUMENT ALL OF MY FEMINIST COLLEAGUES' ACHIEVEMENTS.**
- **STILL, IT MUST BE EMPHASIZED THAT FEMINIST SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSES OF WOMAN ABUSE THAT PRIORITIZE THE CONCEPT OF *PATRIARCHY*, ESPECIALLY IN NORTH AMERICA, HAVE LEVELED OFF OR DECLINED IN THE LAST 12 YEARS.**

- **EXAMINATIONS OF MAJOR BIBLIOMETRIC DATABASES IN THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE, BIOMEDICAL, AND LEGAL DISCIPLINES AND OTHER TYPES OF DATA SHOW THAT MOST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AUTHORS ARE NOW BASED IN PSYCHOLOGY, PSYCHIATRY, NURSING AND MEDICINE.**
- **THESE WAYS OF KNOWING HAVE MADE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS, BUT THEY FOCUS MORE ON INDIVIDUALS AND LOSE SIGHT OF HOW BROADER SOCIAL, CULTURAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC FORCES SHAPE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND SOCIETAL REACTIONS TO ITS MANY SHAPES AND FORMS.**

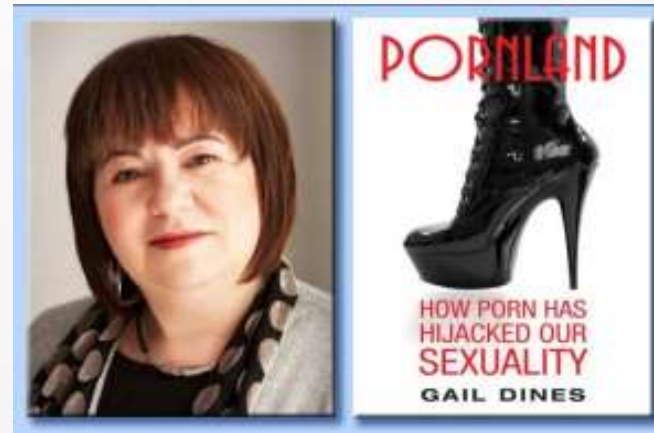
WHAT HAPPENED?



- **AS BOB PEASE (2019) POINTS OUT, “IN THE CONTEXT OF A BACKLASH AGAINST FEMINISM, LIBERAL FEMINIST IDEAS HAVE GAINED DOMINANCE. SOCIAL MOVEMENT POLITICS AGAINST MEN’S VIOLENCE INFORMED BY RADICAL, SOCIALIST AND MULTICULTURAL FEMINISM HAVE BEEN SUPPLANTED BY LIBERAL FEMINIST, PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROFESSIONALIZED APPROACHES TO VIOLENCE PREVENTION. CONSEQUENTLY, WE HAVE WITNESSED A DERADICALIZATION OF FEMINISM AND GENDER ANALYSES, STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING MEN THAT OVEREMPHASIZE RECONSTRUCTING MASCULINITY RATHER THAN CHALLENGING PATRIARCHY, “A NOT ALL MEN” REFRAIN FROM SO-CALLED “GOOD MEN,” AND A GREATER ACCEPTANCE OF ANTI-FEMINIST POLITICS WITHIN THE MAINSTREAM (P. 5).**

- **THE DOMINANCE OF LIBERAL FEMINISM IDENTIFIED BY PEASE CONSTITUTES A MAJOR TRANSITION BECAUSE OF ALL THE FEMINIST THEORIES, *RADICAL FEMINISM* PLAYED THE MOST IMPORTANT ROLE IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE VAST AMOUNT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN RESEARCH GOING ON TODAY (REZZETTI, 2018).**

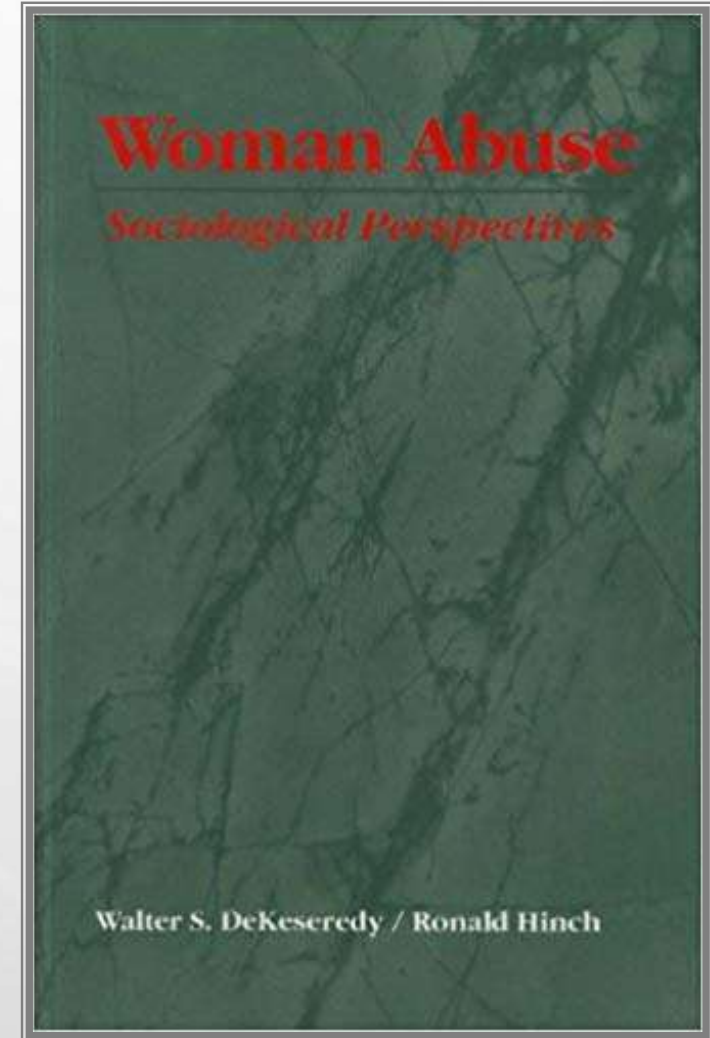


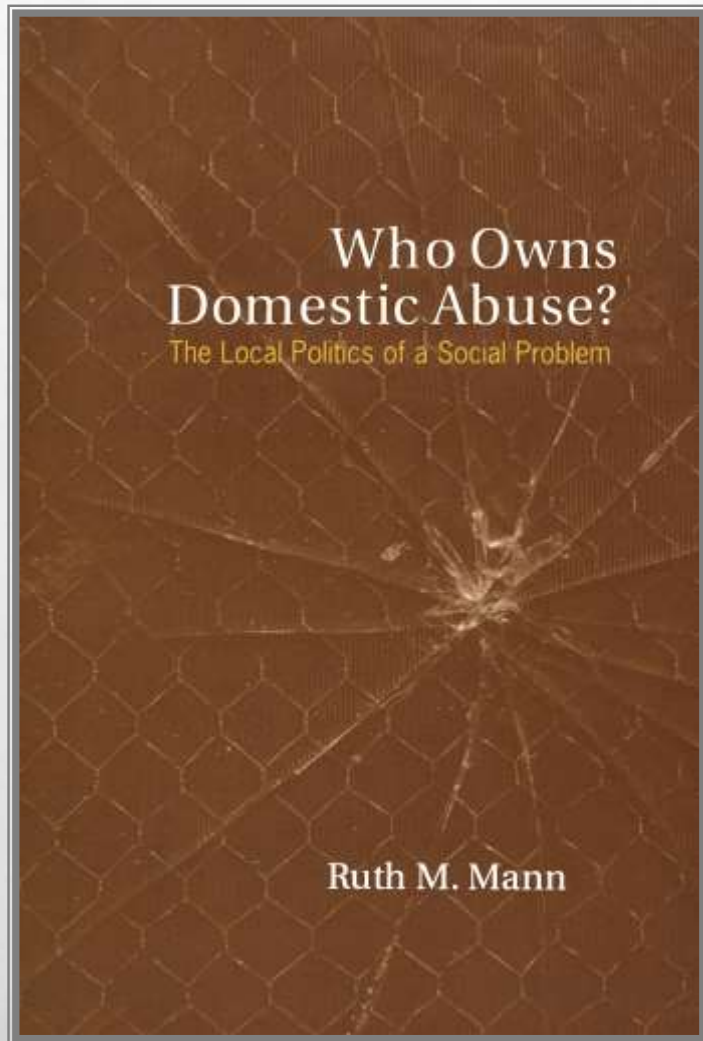


- **RADICAL FEMINISTS ARGUE THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT SET OF SOCIAL RELATIONS IS FOUND IN PATRIARCHY. ALL OTHER SOCIAL RELATIONS, SUCH AS CLASS, ARE SECONDARY AND ORIGINATE FROM MALE-FEMALE RELATIONS (BEIRNE & MESSERSCHMIDT, 2014). LIBERAL FEMINISTS, ON THE OTHER HAND, ASSERT THAT WOMEN ARE DISCRIMINATED ON THE BASIS OF THEIR SEX, SO THAT THEY ARE DENIED ACCESS TO THE SAME POLITICAL, FINANCIAL, CAREER, AND PERSONAL OPPORTUNITIES AS MEN (BRUBAKER, 2019). FOR THEM, THE PROBLEM OF GENDER INEQUALITY CAN BE SOLVED BY CLEARING THE WAY FOR “WOMEN’S RAPID INTEGRATION INTO WHAT HAS BEEN THE WORLD OF MEN” (EHRENREICH & ENGLISH, 1978, P. 19).**

- **ONE OF THE FIRST SIGNS OF THE BEGINNING OF THE SCENARIO DESCRIBED BY PEASE IS THE RETURN OF USING GENDER-NEUTRAL DEFINITIONS TO NAME WOMEN'S VIOLENT EXPERIENCES. SINCE THE END OF THE LAST DECADE, WE HAVE SEEN A MAJOR GROWTH, PARTICULARLY IN THE UNITED STATES, IN THE NUMBER OF FEMINIST SCHOLARS AND OTHER TYPES OF ACADEMICS WHO USE THE TERM *INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE* (IPV).**
- **AS NOTED DECADES AGO BY FEMINIST CRITICS, TERMS LIKE IPV, "DOMESTIC VIOLENCE," AND "SPOUSAL VIOLENCE" PROVIDE AN INACCURATE "MUTUAL COMBAT" IMAGE OF VIOLENCE IN HETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS. IN OTHER WORDS, THEY ASSUME THAT MEN AND WOMEN ARE EQUALLY VIOLENT.**

- **WHAT CRITICS ALSO POINTED OUT DECADES AGO IS THAT GENDER-NEUTRAL DEFINITIONS DO NOT ADDRESS WHO INITIATES THE VIOLENCE, VARIANCE IN PHYSICAL STRENGTH AND FIGHTING COMPETENCE BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN, THE EXTENT OF WILLINGNESS TO USE THIS VIOLENCE, AND WHETHER VIOLENCE IS IN SELF-DEFENSE (DEKESEREDY & HINCH, 1991).**





- **WHY HAVE MANY CONTEMPORARY FEMINISTS ABANDONED GENDER-SPECIFIC TERMS?**
- **THIS POINT IS HARDLY TRIVIAL BECAUSE THE MOST AGGRESSIVE ADVOCATES OF GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE ARE ANTI-FEMINIST ACADEMICS AND ACTIVISTS (E.G., DUTTON, 2006, 2010; STRAUS, 2014) WHO ASSERT THAT WOMEN ARE AS VIOLENT AS MEN AND WHO ARE INTENT ON ELIMINATING MAJOR LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS TO CURB WOMAN ABUSE.**

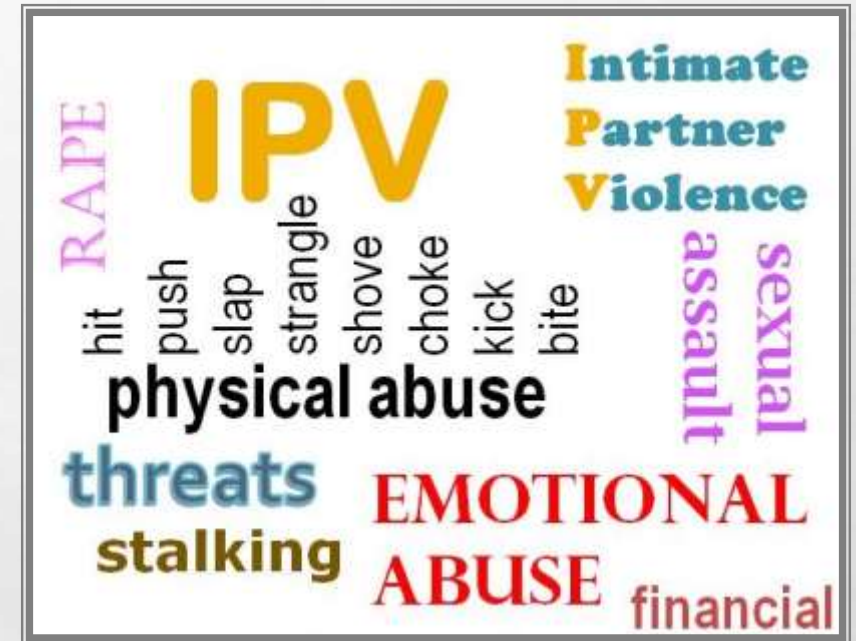
- **AS PEASE NOTES, THE LANGUAGE SHIFT STEMS FROM FEMINISTS BEING PRESSURED TO “LOCATE THEMSELVES IN THE DOMINANT DISCOURSE TO ENABLE THEM TO GAIN SOME TRACTION ON WOMEN’S VICTIMIZATION. THIS MEANS THAT THEY HAVE BEEN FORCED TO SOFTEN THEIR ANALYSIS OR OMIT SOME ASPECTS OF THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM” (P. 5).**
- **THE INTENT MAY BE GOOD, BUT THEY ENTERED INTO AN “UNHOLY ALLIANCE” WITH NEOLIBERAL STATES WITH NO INTEREST IN ELIMINATING WOMEN’S SYSTEMATIC OPPRESSION.**
- **CONSIDER WHAT THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION IS DOING TO ATTEMPTS TO CURB SEXUAL ASSAULT AND OTHER TYPES OF WOMAN ABUSE IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING. ALSO, KELLY’S CONTINUUM OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS NO LONGER OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED BY THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION.**

OTHER REASONS

- **UNDER ENORMOUS PRESSURE, THEN, TO OBTAIN EXTERNAL RESEARCH FUNDS THAT INCLUDE OVERHEAD COSTS, A SIZEABLE PORTION OF OTHER FEMINISTS WITH QUANTITATIVE SKILLS, ALMOST ALL OF WHOM ARE LIBERAL FEMINISTS, DO NOT CRITICIZE THE CURRENT STATE OF REQUESTS FOR GRANT PROPOSALS, BUT INSTEAD “GO WITH THE FLOW” AND DEVELOP ATHEORETICAL, GENDER-NEUTRAL GRANT PROPOSALS TO ENSURE THEIR SURVIVAL IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING.**

LIBERAL FEMINISM.

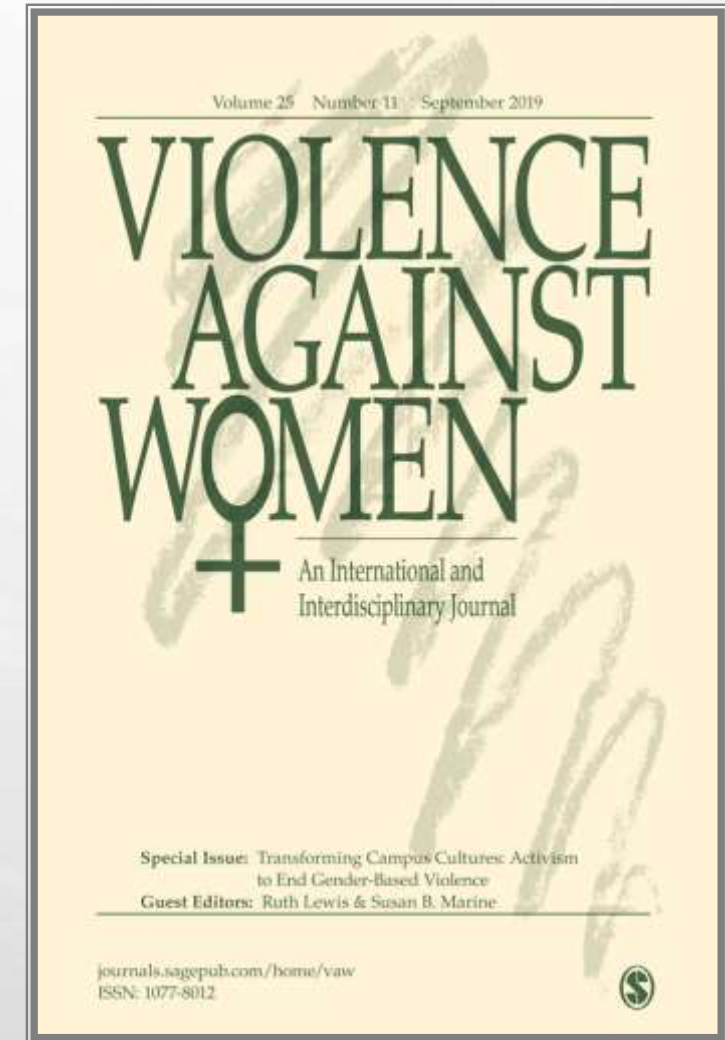
- **ANOTHER GROUP OF FEMINISTS THAT INCLUDES THOSE WHO PUBLICLY IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS RADICAL, SOCIALIST, INTERSECTIONAL, OR AS OTHER TYPES OF CRITICAL SCHOLARS USE THE TERM IPV BECAUSE THEY CLAIM IT IS MORE INCLUSIVE OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS.**



- **INCLUSIVITY IS ESSENTIAL, BUT THERE ARE OTHER WAYS OF BEING ALL-ENCOMPASSING THAT DO NOT UNINTENTIONALLY ALIGN WITH THE INTERESTS OF MEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVISTS (MRAS) AND OTHER CONSERVATIVE, HETERONORMATIVE ORGANIZATIONS CONSISTING OF "ANGRY WHITE MEN" WHO ARE EXPERIENCING *AGGRIEVED ENTITLEMENT*.**
- **THUS, TO AVOID BUTTRESSING THE INTERESTS OF RIGHT-WING MEN AND THE WOMEN WHO SUPPORT THEM, MORE SPECIFIC TERMS THAT DESCRIBE THE VIOLENT EXPERIENCES OF LGBTQ COMMUNITY MEMBERS SHOULD BE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED. SOME EXAMPLES ARE: "INTIMATE VIOLENCE AGAINST LESBIAN PARTNERS," "INTIMATE VIOLENCE AGAINST GAY PARTNERS," AND "INTIMATE VIOLENCE AGAINST TRANS PARTNERS."**

OTHER PROBLEMS

- **SINCE IPV NOW DOMINATES THE DEFINITIONAL DISCOURSE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT THE OVERWHELMING BULK OF RESEARCH ABOUT PRIVATE VIOLENCE THAT APPEARS IN MAJOR JOURNALS BASED IN THE U.S. IS ATHEORETICAL AND CONSTITUTES WHAT MILLS (1959) CALLS *ABSTRACTED EMPIRICISM* (E.G., RESEARCH DIVORCED FROM THEORY).**
- **SOME EXCEPTIONS ARE THE JOURNALS SUCH AS *VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN* AND *FEMINIST CRIMINOLOGY*.**



MOVING FEMINIST SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSES FORWARD

- **IT IS NECESSARY TO CONTINUE DOING NEW EMPIRICAL AND THEORETICAL WORK THAT BOTH “RESURRECTS THE CONCEPT OF PATRIARCHY” (HUNNICUTT, 2009) AND AVOIDS SIMPLY ESPOUSING “OPPOSITIONAL RHETORIC” ABOUT ORTHODOX SOCIAL SCIENCE (CARLEN, 2011).**
- **DEVELOP AN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF COLLEAGUES TO SHARE OUR WORK WITH.**
- **DOING *PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY*.**
- **DEVOTE ATTENTION TO THE INTERSECTION OF RACE/ETHNICITY, SOCIAL CLASS, SEXUALITY, IMMIGRATION STATUS, AND OTHER TYPES OF INEQUALITY.**



MOVING FORWARD, TOO, SOMETIMES REQUIRES LOOKING BACKWARD AND REVISITING SOME IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE PAST

- **REVISIT LIZ KELLY'S CONTINUUM OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE.**
- **ADDRESS POLYVICTIMIZATION, WHICH MEANS HAVING BEEN TARGETED BY MULTIPLE VICTIMIZATIONS OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF BEHAVIORS LOCATED ON THE CONTINUUM OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE, NOT JUST MULTIPLE EXPERIENCES OF THE SAME TYPE OF ABUSE.**
- **LOCAL COMMUNITY SURVEYS.**

CONCLUSIONS

- **THERE WILL PROBABLY BE SOME, OR MUCH, DISAGREEMENT WITH THE HISTORICAL SECTION OF THIS ARTICLE. THIS IS NOT A PROBLEM AND THERE SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM OF THIS CHRONICLE. AS MICHALOWSKI (1996) STATES IN HIS ANALYSIS OF THE STORY OF CRITICAL CRIMINOLOGY, “THIS IS ALL TO THE GOOD. I INCREASINGLY SUSPECT THAT WE CAN ARRIVE A USEFUL TRUTH BY TELLING AND HEARING MULTIPLE VERSIONS OF THE SAME STORY” (P. 9).**



- **THOUGH MANY READERS MAY TAKE ISSUE WITH THE PRESENTATION OF EVENTS DESCRIBED EARLIER, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THEY WOULD DISAGREE WITH THE FACT THAT FEMINIST WORK ON HOW PATRIARCHY SHAPES VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND SOCIETAL REACTIONS TO IT IS THINNING, ESPECIALLY IN NORTH AMERICA.**
- **AS WELL, IN THIS NEO-LIBERAL ERA, IT IS WIDELY KNOWN THAT MANY WHO OPPOSE FEMINIST INQUIRY PERPETUATE MYTHS ABOUT FEMINIST SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT AND ARE HEAVILY INVOLVED IN A PROCESS OF DEMONSTRATING THAT THEIR PERSPECTIVES ON WOMAN ABUSE ARE MORE AUTHORITATIVE. THEY, TOO, ARE GETTING STRONGER EVERY DAY BECAUSE IT IS THEIR VOICE – NOT THOSE OF FEMINISTS OR SURVIVORS – THAT IS THE LOUDEST.**



SOME REASONS TO BE OPTIMISTIC

- **#METOO MOVEMENT
REINVIGORATED AND
HEAVILY PUBLICIZED THE
FEMINIST SOCIOLOGICAL
ARGUMENT THAT WOMAN
ABUSE IS A WIDESPREAD
SOCIAL PROBLEM.**
- **LET'S REMIND OURSELVES
THAT WE ARE DOING GOOD
SCHOLARSHIP AND
ACTIVISM.**