Trends in Violence Against Women and the Gender Gap in Violent Victimization: Forty Years of NCVS Data

Karen Heimer
University of Iowa

Janet L. Lauritsen
University of Missouri-St. Louis

Presentation prepared for
Roundtable on Crime Trends in America
Washington DC, May 18, 2015.
Why study violence against women and the gender gap over time?

Empirical Reasons
• differences in homicide trends across sex — especially in intimate partner homicide
• gender gap in IPH has narrowed some
• gender gap in some forms of non-lethal violent victimization has narrowed

Policy Interest
• VAWA (1994) provided resources which could reduce violence against women
• New survey (NISVS) by CDC targeting violence against women over time; first survey 2010, ongoing
Why study violence against women and the gender gap over time?

Theoretical perspectives suggest that women’s exposure to violent victimization may differ from men’s in some important ways that may speak to change over time:

- Lifestyle & Routine Activities Theories
- Liberation & Equality Perspectives
- Decay of Chivalry & Backlash Arguments
- Economic Marginalization Perspective
- Civilizing Arguments
How can we study violence against women and the gender gap over time?

• Few data sources allow us to observe national rates of violence against women

• To date, none but the NCVS allow us to observe rates of non-lethal violence against women over time

• To date, none but the NCVS allow us to observe rates of non-lethal intimate partner violence against women by over time

• [None but the NCVS allow reliable estimates of sub-national rates of non-lethal violence against women over time]

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AND....

• Homicide and non-lethal violent victimization patterns over time are not the same for women
Male and Female Serious Violent Victimization Rates:
NCVS 1973-2013

Gender rate ratio
Male and Female Aggravated Assault Victimization Rates:
NCVS 1973-2013

Males

Females

Gender rate ratio
Male and Female Robbery Victimization Rates: NCVS 1973-2013

Gender rate ratio
Summary

• Homicide is different
• Closing of the gender gap in assaults and SVC, largely because male rates have declined more than female rates over time
• Some closing of the gender gap in robbery, especially in recent years, because male rates declined and female rates did not

Theories/Explanations?

• Lifestyle & Routine Activities Theories
• Economic Marginalization Perspective
• Liberation & Equality Perspectives
• Decay of Chivalry & Backlash Arguments
• Civilizing Arguments

Gender ratio

Male rate

Female rate

Graph showing the male and female labor force participation rates from 1973 to 2012, with a gradual increase in participation rates over time.
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Next: How do patterns of intimate partner violence differ?
Male and Female Intimate Partner Homicide Victimization Rates:
SHR 1976-2010

![Graph showing trends in male and female intimate partner homicide victimization rates from 1976 to 2010.]

- **Males**
- **Females**
- **Gender rate ratio**
Female and Male Intimate Partner Violent Victimization Rates:
NCVS 1980-2013

Gender rate ratio

Females

Males
Conclusions

• A comparative approach (M and F) is key

• AGAIN, homicide is different – for both overall violence and intimate partner violence. Therefore, it is important to examine non-lethal violence.

• For assaults and robbery, the gender gap has been closing, mainly because male victimization has declined more than female victimization.

• For intimate partner violence, the gender gap has closing as well, but because female rates of IPV declined substantially between 1994 and 2004, while make rates remained low throughout the series.
  • Indicates the importance of examining the victim-offender relationship in the case of women
Conclusions

• Trends are consistent with several theoretical explanations
  Lifestyle/ routine activities, backlash,
  economic marginalization,
  civilizing influences

Examining these explanations requires
comparative data (M&F).