



INTERSECTIONS OF RELIGION, CULTURE, AND SOCIAL LOCATION IN INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

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RESEARCH TEAM

- Johnson, A.J. (Ed.) (2015). *Religion and Men's Violence Against Women*. New Springer Science+Business Media.
- Johnson, A.J., Nelson, J.R., & Lund, E.M. (Eds.) (2017). *Religion, Disability, and Interpersonal Violence*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Johnson, A.J. & Lund, E.M. (Eds.) (in progress). *Violence Against LGBTQ+ Persons: Research, Practice, & Advocacy*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

WHY I DEVELOPED INTEREST IN INTERSECTIONALITY

- Mental health professionals working in IPV may not be familiar with the vast array of religious and cultural groups.
 - How these can affect work addressing IPV.
- Religious leaders often not aware of the dynamics of IPV and may even act to make things worse.
- Religious clients as survivors and perpetrators of gender violence.

- My role as a clinician.
- History of research involvement.

SCREENING FOR IPV

- How many ask clients affected by intimate partner violence about their spiritual beliefs surrounding burial practices?

MOST SURPRISING FINDING FOR ME IN *RELIGION AND MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN*

- Religious cultural beliefs surrounding burial is one of the primary reasons Hmong women tend to remain in abusive marriages. (Vang, 2015)
- For many Hmong colleagues and clients this is ordinary and obvious.
- Why is it surprising to me?
 - Role of context, personal experience.
 - Tempting to judge but consider this—how odd is it that many white Christians like me believe if a survivor just submits enough to her violent husband the abuse will somehow magically go away? And that this is somehow endorsed by a God that is described as loving and compassionate?

IPV AMONG THE HMONG (VANG, 2015)

- Unique Dynamics
- Difficult to condemn VAW for fear of disrupting patriarchal and collectivist traditions at the core of Hmong culture
 - Men carry the clan name, families organized according to patrilineal lineage.
 - Men perform rituals with major implications for well-being of clan members from birth to death (including burial). Rarely confronted due to their status.
 - Individual Hmong identity—not considered to possess personhood unless connected to a clan.
 - Daughter's seen as wives of others, transferred to another clan upon marriage.
 - Only sons can ensure that parents will have all they need in the spirit world after they die.
 - Clans resistant to perform funerals for divorced women from another clan.

BURDENS ON HMONG MEN

- Obligated to practice traditions to enhance and maintain their spiritual lineage.
- Need to marry and keep family together to fulfill these obligations.
 - Seen as a right and an obligation in community—may go to extreme lengths.
 - May use abuse to keep a “sense of order.”
 - No consequences in community as maintaining order seen as a right.
 - Need to learn alternative strategies for family harmony and cohesion.
- Focus on developing alternative strategies for fulfilling cultural traditions.

WHAT THIS PRESENTATION IS NOT

- Not an overview of everything you need to know to work with every religious client at every intersection.
- Not a handful of clinical tricks or tools that can be used with each and every religious client regardless of background.
 - One size does not fit all.
- Not a justification of thinking we are too busy to learn about the beliefs and situational contexts of diverse others.
 - Yet also not insisting you need to be an expert in each and every intersection of religion, culture, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender violence.

WHAT IS THE PRESENTATION THEN?

- Cultural humility—you do need to know some things but also have the openness to realize that what works in one situation might not work in another.
 - Take time to learn about the most important barriers and supports within diverse groups.
 - Interesting
 - Increased effectiveness
- Will focus on issues that I have found to be most helpful for professionals.

VULNERABILITY AS A FUNCTION OF SOCIAL LOCATION (FITZSIMONS, 2017)

- Not a personal characteristic.
- Interpersonal violence against persons with disabilities.
- Examples of unique considerations within Deaf community—reporting to police (Crowe, 2017).
- Why self-defense classes miss the mark.
- Bystander empowerment training: MVP (Jackson Katz), Green Dot

IPV IN ORTHODOX JEWISH MARRIAGES (BILEK, 2015)

- Meaning of Torah observance in the community
- Value working on self to purify and make G_dly as possible, relationship with G_d.
- Marriage and gender roles.
- Sometimes family interactions may be judged abusive when religious practices of a rigid nature are at work.

ABUSE IN ORTHODOX RELATIONSHIPS OFTEN OVERLOOKED BY THERAPISTS

- Husband pressuring wife to violate *niddah*—prohibition of sexual relations for half of each month
- Husband working to force wives to violate *halacha* (Jewish law)
- Violating *halacha* in front of wife and/or children
- Misuse of *teshuvah* and ideas about forgiveness by perpetrator
 - Examples of abuse—not sanctifying the Sabbath over a cup of wine (*kiddush*) and blessing over the bread (*hamotzi*)
 - Forcing wife to violate *tznius* (modesty)
- Spiritual abuse
- Not issuing a *gett*

CONSERVATIVE AND REFORM JUDAISM (DORFF, 2015)

- Jewish law evolves over time.
- Orthodox—emphasize traditional practice
- Conservative—communal decision on how to integrate tradition and contemporary life as both are embraced
- Reform—emphasize autonomy of individuals to decide which traditions to adopt

GRAETZ (1998) ON RABBINIC RULINGS ON WIFE BEATING

- Acceptance -- permitted under some situations
- Denial – “doesn’t happen in our community”
- Apologetics – defend Jewish community by minimizing, justifying, or displacing blame to external culture
- Rejection – wife beating unconditionally unacceptable
- Evasiveness – wife beating is wrong but feel they are powerless to do anything

AMERICAN INDIAN, FIRST NATIONS, AND INDIGENOUS GROUPS (PIERCE, 2015)

- Pre-contact gender roles and relationship patterns
- Gender roles and relationship patterns among the colonists
- Effects on gender roles and relationships
- Intergenerational transmission of trauma
- Genocide and IPV

NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS MATRILINEAL AND MATRIFOCAL

- Contrast with colonists
- Most indigenous societies had strict prohibitions against maltreatment of women.
 - E.g., Iroquois men intervened to prevent wife battering by colonists as they would in their own society
 - Violence toward women illegal among the Dine' (Navajo)
 - Lakota men violent towards women seen as "lacking self-discipline, respect, caring, and spiritual understanding to lead" (Pierce, 2015, p. 62)
- Severe sanctions for violence against women
- Be aware that preventing VAW flows more naturally out of indigenous culture than mainstream American culture.
 - The call is for a return to indigenous values not "progress" to the ways of the mainstream. Historically, the colonists were systematically misogynistic.

AFRICAN AMERICANS: THE LEGACY OF LYNCHING AND IPV

- Cone, J. (2013). *The cross and the lynching tree*. New York: Orbis Books.
- Dynamics of accusation regarding rape, effects on family life, women sometimes lynched if they defended the men, effects on the reporting of IPV within communities of African ancestry.
- <https://withoutsanctuary.org>

BLACK LIVES MATTER AND IPV

- Jamar Clark case.
- <https://www.twincities.com/2015/01/13/st-paul-man-killed-by-police-had-threatened-officers-earlier-report-says/>
- In both cases, police were called in on a domestic and the African American man was shot and killed.
- How might this affect you if you were an African American survivor of IPV at the hands of an African American man?
- How might this affect the way an African American abusive partner responds to treatment?
- Effects within African American communities

AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS (BENT-GOODLEY & BRADE STENNIS, 2015)

- Loss of traditional supports from home country
- Connections with relatives
- Help seeking behavior within religious congregations (Muhovich & Geddes, 2015).
 - The role of elders

IPV IN LATINO AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CULTURAL GROUPS (AMES & WARE, 2015)

- Unique features due to national origin, immigration status, religion, and culture
- Focus here on immigration—diversity due to national origin, multiple other factors; shared history of conquest and colonization in Latin America
 - Improve economic situation, escape oppression, other reasons
- Challenges
 - Poverty
 - Unstable employment
 - Prejudice, oppression
 - Disconnected from family, sometimes churches a replacement support system
 - Traditional gender roles interact with prejudice, oppression

CHALLENGES RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Fear of deportation and loss of children—barrier to reporting on top of cultural concerns
- Changes in laws and enforcement patterns—essential to investigate options available to immigrant survivors through an immigration attorney or agency
- Often more willing to use informal networks and the church
- Undocumented survivors may see church as only safe option
 - Opportunities to work through religious communities
 - Offer training and consultation
 - Involve members of Latino community—may be suspicious of motives for wanting to work with them
- See Ames & Ware (2015) for more info and for recommendations

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

Adapted from Hamid, R. (2015). Domestic Violence in Muslim Communities. In A.J. Johnson (Ed.). *Religion and Men's Violence Against Women*. New York: Springer.

IPV AND ISLAM

- Misuse of the Qur'an
- Dynamics of a religious minority
- Role of stereotypes
- Immigration

GENERAL BACKGROUND (HAMID, 2015)

- Domestic violence is unacceptable in Islam
- Qur'an stipulates relationship between husband and wife as that of helpers, supports, and friends of each other
- Muhammad instructed men to treat women kindly; admonished those who were abusive to their wives
- However, one Qur'an verse (4:34) often misused to justify domestic violence:
 - Domestic violence rates among Muslim communities in the U.S. is on par with that of the general American population (10 % - 30%) (NCADV)

MISCONCEPTIONS OF ISLAM

- Verse 4:34: The Verse of Abuse
 - Men are Qawwamun of women (have authority over them)
- Unconditional Obedience
 - Idribuhunna (does verse 4:34 really mean 'to beat'?)
- Why such a common misinterpretation:
 1. Necessity or public interest
 2. Change in the facts on which the original law was based
 3. Change in the customs or usage that led to the original law

VERSE 4:34

- Arguably the most misinterpreted verse in the Quran
 - “Men are the protectors and maintainers of women (**qawwam**), because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient (**qanitat**), and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct (**nushuz**), admonish them (first), (Next), refuse to share their beds, (And last) beat them (lightly) (**adraboo**); but if they return to obedience (**ataa**), seek not against them Means (of annoyance): For Allah is Most High, great (above you all). ”

VERSE 4:34

- Adrabooh: The Arabic word, which is often translated as “to hit” to justify beating of women, has several dozens of meanings, such as “to beat,” “to forsake,” “to avoid,” “to leave.”
- While the classical Quranic translation may permit a “gentle” strike, or a symbolic strike (e.g., a handkerchief or *miswak* (*tooth brush*)), Islamic scholars discourage its use based on its inherent inconsistency with the rest of the scripture, Prophet’s traditions, and norms of modern society.

VIOLENCE AGAINST LGBTQ+ PERSONS (JOHNSON & LUND, IN PROGRESS)

- Homophobia/transphobia
 - Discrimination
 - Hate crimes
 - Interpersonal violence
 - Intimate partner violence
 - Spiritual/religious abuse
-
- For purposes of the BISC Conference, will discuss theological resources.

THE WESLEYAN QUADRILATERAL

- A model of sources of knowing that can be useful in understanding what types of information are emphasized in Christian groups
- Four parts include
 - Tradition
 - Scripture
 - Reason
 - Experience
- Individuals from different religious groups will favor one or two sources over the others
 - e.g. mainline Protestants may favor reason and experience
- May cause misunderstandings between religious groups because one side may overlook the other sources of faith

AFFIRMING THEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- First, Patrick Cheng has a good overview of works available:
- Cheng, P. S. (2011). *Radical love: An introduction to queer theology*. New York: Seabury Books.

AFFIRMING BIBLICAL STUDIES WORKS REGARDING LGBTQ ISSUES (SCRIPTURE EMPHASIS)

- Helminiak, D. A. (1994). *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality*.
- Gushee, D. P., McLaren, B. D., Tickle, P., & Vines, M. (2015). *Changing our mind: A call from America's leading evangelical ethics scholar for full acceptance of LGBT Christians in the church*.
- Martin, C. (2016). *Unclobber: Rethinking our misuse of the Bible on homosexuality*.

SOURCE FOCUSING ON RELIGIOUS TRADITION

- The work of John Boswell problematizes the idea of there being one "traditional" perspective on LGBTQ issues in the Christian church:
- Boswell, J. (1980). *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century*.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Alice Ogden Bellis and Terry L. Hufford, *Science, Scripture, and Homosexuality* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010).
- John F. Dwyer, *Those 7 References: Study of the 7 References of Homosexuality in the Bible* (BookSurge Publishing, 2007).
- Peter Gomes, *The Good Book: Reading the Bible with Heart and Mind* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996).
- Mark D. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).
- Dale B. Martin, *Sex and the Single Savior: Gender and Sexuality in Biblical Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).
- Jay Michaelson, *God vs. Gay? The Religious Case for Equality* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2011).
- Jack Rogers, *Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).
- Matthew Vines, *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships* (New York: Convergent Books, 2014).

AFFIRMING THEOLOGICAL AND OTHER RESOURCES FOR TRANS, GENDER NONCONFORMING, AND NONBINARY PERSONS

- Hartke, A. (2018). *Transforming : The Bible and the lives of transgender Christians*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
 - See also references from the back of this book for theological and psychological resources.
- Robertson, B., Meléndez, R. L., & Tolton, J. (2018). *Our witness: The unheard stories of LGBT+ Christians*.
- Both of these are notable for an emphasis on Experience and Reason from the Wesleyan Quadrilateral.

IPV IN LGBTQ+ RELATIONSHIPS

- Unique Dynamics and Considerations
- See Messinger, A. M. (2017). *LGBTQ intimate partner violence: Lessons for policy, practice, and research*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

ESTABLISHING COMMON GROUND (JOHNSON & STEPHENS, 2015)

- Various religious cultural groups are at different places in terms of readiness to address men's violence against women
- Importance of finding common ground
 - Case study of Doris the Domestic Violence Educator and Pastor Bob
 - Differences in word connotations, communication styles, Scriptural emphasis, etc.
 - How a mental professional frames initial contact and message with a religious cultural leader may be just as important, if not more so, than the content presented
 - Emphasis on trust and loyalty vs. competence in some cases

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POLICIES FOR RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

- See work of Ludy Green (2015).
- For a developmental model of collaborating with religious communities, see Kim & Menzie (2015).
- Both can be found in Johnson, A.J. (Ed.) (2015). *Religion and Men's Violence Against Women*. New York: Springer.

THE WESLEYAN QUADRILATERAL

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HAIDT'S (2007) APPROACH

- An approach to understanding collective, religious aspect of the moral domain
 - Western progressives tend to have a morality that is restricted primarily to considerations of harm and fairness
 - Yet, for the rest of the world there are widespread institutions about:
 - Ingroup-outgroup dynamics and the importance of loyalty
 - Authority, and the importance of respect and obedience
 - Bodily and spiritual purity and the importance of living in a sanctified way
- Tension between relying on all five foundations versus relying on the harm and fairness foundations

OPENNESS TO MULTI-FAITH WORK

- Some leaders are open and involved in multi-faith work
 - Can be encouraged to see information in a program that highlights issues related to violence against women in diverse religious communities
 - Emphasis on peaceful, non-violent relationships
- Others are comfortable with diverse groups within their own faith tradition
 - E.g. Catholic priests and Protestant pastors
 - May be interested in information about violence against women that originates within their faith
- Yet, some are not comfortable working with anyone outside their tightly defined religious group
 - Convinced their group is the only valid truth
 - Referred to as “particularistic”

PARTICULARISM

- A religious leader influenced by particularism will most likely not respond well to information which contains elements from their own religion, unless it is within their specific denomination
 - In multi-faith workshops, they may feel pressure to identify the failings of other religious groups while denying that abuse happens within their own religious group
- Mental health professionals must adjust their strategies when trying to open the door for intimate partner violence education in these religious groups

GETTING STARTED

- Some churches/religious groups are offering increased resources for IPV survivors.
- Use of Adaptive Counseling and Therapy (ACT)
 - Confidence can be problematic when applied to the assessment of developmental readiness to address IPV
 - Global assessment of the competence, confidence, and motivation of the religious leader to perform task of addressing IPV
 - Didactic training on the prevalence/dynamics of abuse, how to identify signs of IPV, how to encourage a victim to safety, etc.
- Mental health professionals need to take a developmental approach to understanding collaboration with a religious cultural community (Kim & Menzie, 2015).
- Start with primary interventions that focus either on prevention or on tertiary interventions that emphasize caring for survivors & their children

WORK WITH INDIVIDUAL CLIENTS (JOHNSON & STEPHENS, 2015)

- Cultural sensitivity is a must
- Interventions can be more beneficial to client if underlying religious beliefs are addressed (not glossed over)
- Ethical issues become salient as survivor contemplates relationship with abuser
- Guiding principle: Focus on safety for the survivor and framing interventions in culturally relevant ways to change the violent behavior of the perpetrator.