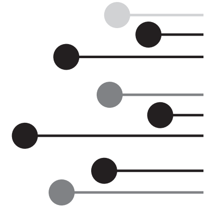
CHAPTER

# 2 Cultural Contexts of Family Violence



*Consuelo Verdugo was unconscious when her mother and her mother's boyfriend, Vicente Benavides, rushed her to the hospital on November 17, 1991. Benavides, an immigrant farm worker, had been babysitting for Consuelo, 21-months-old, while her mother was at work. Hospital staff tried repeatedly to catheterize the unconscious child, but were unsuccessful; her condition worsened. A week later she died. What was the cause of death? A forensic pathologist said Consuelo died from injuries indicative of being sodomized. Other doctors confirmed the diagnosis. Benavides was arrested and his case went to trial. His story was that he had lost track of Consuelo's whereabouts, looked for her, and had found her outside injured. He was convicted of rape and murder and sentenced to death, which he awaited for 26 years in San Quentin prison. (Gaspar, 2018)*

What is your response to this story? Do you feel enraged, disgusted, and/or horrified, that an innocent child died such a horrific death? Do you think the death penalty is too good for someone like Benavides? Or do you have some reservations?

In August, 2018, Benavides was exonerated by the Supreme Court of California. All but one of the physicians who had originally concurred that the fatal injuries to Consuel were caused by sexual assault recanted, indicating that they had never seen the child's complete medical records. Those records revealed that there was no evidence of sexual assault when Consuel first arrived at the hospital; indeed, the medical personnel who originally saw her said that the injuries to her genital area were likely caused by the efforts to insert a catheter—a medical error—and that the purported cause of death was an anatomical impossibility. An expert who reviewed the original records argued that the child's injuries showed signs that she had been hit by a car. Benavides has been released (Innocence Project, 2018; The National Registry of Exonerations, 2019). The medical community, the social service community, and the legal community, working together, had sentenced an innocent man to death. What cultural variables can you identify that help explain what happened here?

In the previous chapter, we introduced the ecological model of family violence, and offered some examples of studies providing evidence of contributors to family violence at the individual, microsystem, exosystem, and macrosystem levels of influence. In this chapter, we focus on particular macrosystem cultural contexts in which family violence takes place.



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These contexts are themselves inherently predictive of various forms of family violence.

## Cultures of Violence?

Norms concerning the treatment of children, intimate partners, and elderly parents are embedded within a broader cultural framework. Although many characteristics of the American macrosystem play a role in family violence, there are five in particular that warrant special consideration: (1) patterns of incarceration and legalized capital punishment; (2) protection and tolerance of firearm ownership; (3) media violence, pornography, and various forms of cyber violence; (4) poverty and social and economic inequality; and (5) racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, and otherisms (discrimination and violence against anyone seen as an "other" on almost any basis).

### Incarceration

In the mid-1970s, only 2% of the country's population ever spent any time in prison (Wildeman & Western, 2010); by 2016 the rate was 6.9% (Walmsley, 2018). More specifically, by 2016, there were 2.2 million people in the nation's prisons and jails—a 500% increase over the previous 40 years. The United States has the highest rate of incarceration in the world—the country imprisons approximately seven times more people than the western European average, and only a few of the former Soviet Republics and South Africa approach the US rate. While the United States has only 5% of the world's population, it has nearly 25% of its prisoners—about 2.2 million people (Collier, 2014). Of particular relevance to this chapter is the fact that likelihood of incarceration varies disproportionately by race/ethnicity (Wagner & Sawyer, 2018). Blacks, for example, constitute only 13% of the US population but account for 40% of the incarcerated population. Wildeman and Western (2010) attribute the large increase in incarceration both to economic factors—particularly decreases in employment for young Black youth—and an increasingly punitive mindset in the United States. Incarceration affects not just the immediate victims but their families as well. In the United States in 2018, 1 out of every 12 children (more than 5.7 million) had experienced the loss of at least one parent to incarceration at some point during their development (Gotsch, 2018).

### Capital Punishment

Related to high levels of incarceration in the United States is the continued legality of capital punishment on a federal level and in most states. The United Nations, the European Union, Amnesty International, the Organization of American States, and other groups have all passed resolutions against **capital punishment**, which has declined in recent years



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in most parts of the world. In 2017, the United States ranked eighth in number of executions performed—down from many years of being in the top five death penalty countries, along with nations such as China and Iran (Amnesty International, 2018a). Between 1976 (when the Supreme Court reinstated capital punishment after a 9-year hiatus) and March 2012, approximately 1,289 people were put to death in this country for capital crimes, with 1,058 occurring in the South, 150 in the Midwest, 77 in the West, and 4 in the Northeast (Death Penalty Information Center, 2012). Overall, 56% of those executed were White, 34% were Black, 8% were Latinx, and 2% were of other races/ethnicities. Currently, despite substantial evidence that capital punishment is not an effective deterrent to crime (Death Penalty Information Center, 2017a; Travis & Western, 2014), the death penalty is supported by statute in 34 states. Executions take place primarily in the South (especially Texas and Virginia, where 590 of the 1,289 executions have taken place) and disproportionately involve Black men (Death Penalty Information Center, 2017a). Moreover, several studies show that the death penalty is much more likely in cases involving White victims (Death Penalty Information Center, 2017a), with those who killed Whites three to four times as likely to be executed as those who killed either Blacks or Latinx. Evidence from Washington state showed that, despite similarity in cases, jurors are three times more likely to recommend a death sentence for Black defendants than for White defendants (Beckett, 2014).

Capital punishment of juveniles (youth under the age of 18 years at the time of crime) is a violation of international law (e.g., the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). The US Supreme Court ruled in 2005 (*Roper v. Simmons*) that imposing the death penalty on offenders younger than age 18 years at the time they were charged with murder violates the Eighth Amendment. Nevertheless, nearly 400 juveniles have also been executed in the United States, including 22 in the period 1973–2003 (Death Penalty Information Center, 2017a). Nearly two-thirds of these recent executions of minors occurred in Texas, which during that period put to death more juveniles than the rest of the world combined.

When asked whether they support capital punishment, a majority of people in the United States indicate their approval, a fact that has been used by the Supreme Court as evidence that the death penalty is consistent with community standards. A Gallup poll survey in October 2017 found that 55% of the respondents were in favor of the death penalty for individuals convicted of murder, 45% were not in favor, and only 3% had no opinion. Among those respondents, 51% said it was applied fairly, and 39% said that it is not imposed often enough (Jones, 2017). In a May 2018 Gallup poll, 62% of the respondents said the death penalty was morally acceptable, and only 33% said it was morally wrong. Thus, although support for the death penalty has been declining in recent years, the majority of Americans still approve of it as a form of punishment for murder. How might this tolerance of capital punishment be related to family violence? Consider, for example, the correlates of capital punishment and incarceration listed in Table 2.1.



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**Table 2.1** Incarceration and the Death Penalty

| Context | Author | Source of Data | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Incarceration rates | Gotsch (2018) | Literature review regarding effects of parental incarceration | In the United States, 1 out of every 12 American children under age 18 years (more than 5.7 million minors) have experienced parental incarceration at some point during their lives. |
| | Walmsley (2015) | International Centre for Prison Studies, tenth edition of the World Prison Population List | In 2013, the United States had the highest prison population rate in the world, 716 per 100,000 of the national population. |
| | Collier (2014) | Review of research by National Academy of Sciences | Although the United States has only 5% of the world's population, it has nearly 25% of its prisoners—about 2.2 million people. One out of every 100 American adults is incarcerated, a per capita rate 5–10 times higher than that in Western Europe or other democracies. |
| | Carson (2015) | Bureau of Justice Statistics | The United States had an estimated 1,506,800 prisoners in state and federal correctional authorities as of December 31, 2016—a decline of 19,800 prisoners (down 1%) from year-end 2015. |
| Correlates of incarceration | Khan, Scheidell, Rosen, Geller, and Brotman (2018) | The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health | The experience of parental incarceration at any age was moderately to strongly associated with later sexually transmitted infections and HIV outcomes. Among Black participants, parental incarceration at <8 years old was associated with more than double the odds of later use of marijuana and cocaine. |

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| Context | Author | Source of Data | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Ross, Waterhouse-Bradley, Contractor, and Armour (2018) | Analyzed sample of US military veterans identified through the National Epidemiological Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions-III | Compared to a low-adversity group, three maltreatment/dysfunction groups (based on level of childhood abuse and neglect and exposure to intimate partner violence [IPV]) had significantly elevated risk for adult incarceration. |
| | Turney (2018) | Data from the 2016 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) | Children of incarcerated parents are exposed to nearly five times as many other adverse childhood experiences (e.g., potentially stressful events such as abuse, neglect, or a substance-abusing family member) as their counterparts without incarcerated parents. |
| | Jones, Worthen, Sharp, and McLeod (2018) | Stratified random sample of all incarcerated women in Oklahoma | In incarcerated women, adverse childhood experiences, particularly childhood maltreatment, were associated with later IPV victimization preincarceration. |
| | Armstrong, Cain, Wylie, Muftić, and Bouffard (2018) | Survey of Youth in Residential Placement (SYRP) 2003, a large-scale, nationally representative sample of justice-involved youth, ages 10–20 years | Youth incarcerated for child to parent violence were typically White and male. The incarcerated youths, particularly the female aggressors, tended to have substantial histories of substance use and/or victimization (e.g., physical, emotional, or sexual abuse as a child) and exposure to serious violence. |
| | White, Cordie-Garcia, and Fuller-Thomson (2016) | Samples from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2011 and 2012 | In men (but not women), the experience of having a parent incarcerated during their childhood was associated with increased risk of a heart attack in adulthood. |

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Table 2.1 *(Continued)*

| Context | Author | Source of Data | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Jung and Lalonde (2016) | Admission and exit records from the Illinois Department of Corrections and out-of-home placements from the Illinois Department Children and Family Services | Women with early-teen foster care experience had higher rates of reincarceration than women without foster care—particularly if they had limited education or history of drug addiction—regardless of whether they were reunited with their parents. |
| | Hatzenbuehler, Keyes, Hamilton, Uddin, and Galea (2015) | Detroit Neighborhood Health Study (DNHS), a longitudinal cohort (2008–2012) of predominately Black adults (aged 18 years and older) living in Detroit, Michigan | Across the three assessment periods, individuals residing in neighborhoods characterized by high prison admission rates were more likely to meet criteria for a current and lifetime major depressive disorder as well as current and lifetime anxiety disorder than individuals residing in neighborhoods with low prison admission rates. |
| Death Penalty | Amnesty International (2018a) | National databases | In the United States in 2017, the number of executions (23) and death sentences (41) was slightly higher than in 2016, but remained within historically low trends of recent years. For the second year in a row, and the second time since 2006, the United States was not among the top five global executioners, dropping from 7th to 8th. Four states—Idaho, Mississippi, Missouri, and Nebraska—as well as US federal courts, imposed death sentences in 2017, bringing the number of US states imposing death sentences to 15 (2 more than in 2016). |

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| Context | Author | Source of Data | Findings |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Death Penalty Information Center (2017a) | National databases | In the United States, 1,463 people were executed between 1976 and 2017. |
| | Death Penalty Information Center (2017b) | International databases | In the United States, more than 1,000 people have been executed since 1993; during this period more than 40 countries have passed legislation to abolish the death penalty. |
| Perspectives on death penalty | Baxter Oliphant (2018) | Pew Research Center Survey | In 2017, 54% of Americans favored the death penalty for people convicted of murder, while 39% were opposed. In favor of capital punishment: 61% of men and 46% women; 59% White, 47% Hispanic, 36% Black; 73% White evangelical Protestants, 61% mainline Protestants, 53% Catholics, and 48% religiously unaffiliated. |
| | Jones (2013) | National population-based sample of 1,028 adults aged 18 years and older living in the United States; telephone interviews conducted October 3–6, 2013 (Gallup poll) | In 2013, 60% of Americans supported the death penalty for individuals convicted of murder—lowest level since 1972. 52% believe it is applied fairly in the United States; 44% believe it is not imposed often enough. |

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## Firearms

*Two 3-year-old boys were shot at the home of their babysitter in Dearborn, Michigan. The boys, one of whom was shot in the face and the other in the shoulder, survived. While visiting a man with her mother, a three-year-old girl was shot in the face and dies. A three-year-old girl was shot in the stomach and survives. (Ingraham, 2017)*



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The "perpetrator" in each of these cases was a toddler, a young child who found an unsecured weapon and accidentally fired it. Nearly 1,300 children die and 5,790 are treated for gunshot wounds each year (Fowler, Dahlberg, Haileyesus, Gutierrez, & Bacon, 2017). Shooters playing with guns were the most common perpetrators of unintentional firearm deaths of children. Boys, older children, and ethnic minority children are disproportionately involved in firearm deaths.

Personal ownership of guns appears to be more widespread in this country than in any other developed nation, with approximately 30% of US adults reporting that they own a gun and about 40% saying they live in a gun-owning household. More than 60% of Americans report having lived in a household where somebody owned a gun at least once in their lifetime (Pew, 2017). Over 40% say they personally know someone who has been shot, either accidentally or intentionally, and 23% say they or someone in their family have been threatened or intimidated by someone using a gun (Parker, Horowitz, Igielnik, Oliphant, & Brown, 2017). In 2011, although a majority of Americans supported measures to keep guns away from criminals (e.g., by requiring a background check and a 5-day waiting period before a handgun can be purchased), more than 74% opposed limiting gun ownership to the police and other authorized persons, a record high since Gallup first began asking that question in 1959 (Jones, 2011). National surveys administered before and after the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, revealed that support for requiring background checks for all gun sales, and for banning sales of assault weapons, *decreased* in the 2 years following the massacre (Barry, McGinty, Vernick, & Webster, 2015). As of October 2018, support for banning assault weapons had decreased further, with only 40% supporting a ban (Brenan, 2018). Table 2.2 provides information on selected studies on firearm ownership, perspectives on gun violence, and the role of guns in family violence (and accidental) deaths.

The resistance to increased gun control laws in the United States is important because of the significant role that guns play in violence within the home. According to a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018):

> ***Gun violence has a devastating impact on American children and teenagers.*** *Over 2,700 children and teens (ages 0–19) are shot and killed and nearly 14,500 are shot and injured every year—that's an average of 47 American children and teens shot every day. And the effects of gun violence extend far beyond those struck by a bullet: gun violence shapes the lives of the millions of children who witness it, know someone who was shot, or live in fear of the next shooting.*

Firearms are also involved in a substantial percentage of domestic violence homicides (see discussion in Chapter 5), as well as in crippling injuries. In the year 2000, 95% of female firearm homicide victims were murdered by a male—usually an intimate partner (Violence Policy Center, 2000).



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**Table 2.2** Firearm Ownership, Perspectives on Gun Policy, and Role of Guns in Family Violence Deaths

| Context | Author | Source of Data | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gun ownership | Kalesan, Villarreal, Keyes, and Galea (2016) | A nationally representative sample of 4,000 adults in 2013 | One-third of US residents are gun owners, and gun ownership rates vary widely between states. Exposure to social gun culture was robustly associated with gun ownership. |
| Opinions on gun policy | Barry et al. (2015) | Nationally representative samples of 2,703 adults in 2013 and 1,326 adults in 2015—before and after mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut—participated in study of public opinion on gun policy | Support for requiring background checks for all gun sales decreased from 89% to 84% with no differences between gun owners and nongun owners in 2015. Support for banning assault weapons decreased from 69% to 63%, and support for banning the sale of large-capacity ammunition magazines decreased from 68% to 60%. |
| Firearm-related deaths | Thakrar, Forrest, Maltenfort, and Forrest (2018) | Analysis of mortality trends for the United States and 19 comparator nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development for children ages 0–19 years from 1961 to 2010 | From 2001 to 2010 the risk of death in the United States was 76% greater for infants and 57% greater for children ages 1–19 years than in peer nations. During this decade, children ages 15–19 years were 82 times more likely to die from gun homicide in the United States than the other countries. |
| | Geier, Kern, and Geier (2017) | A longitudinal study of firearm-related deaths from 1999 through 2014 using the Underlying Cause of Death database | Household firearm ownership was directly correlated with firearm-related deaths. |

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Table 2.2 *(Continued)*

| Context | Author | Source of Data | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Fowler et al. (2017) | An examination of fatal and nonfatal firearm injuries among children aged 0–17 years in the United States | From 2012 to 2014, nearly 1,300 children died each year in the United States from a firearm-related injury, for an annual crude rate of 1.8 per 100,000; an average of 5,790 children each year received medical treatment in an ED for a firearm-related assault, an act of self-harm, or from an unintentional firearm injury, for an average annual rate of 7.9 per 100,000. |
| | Diez et al. (2017) | FBI Uniform Crime Records, Supplementary Homicide Reports | Average intimate partner homicide rates across states ranged from the lowest 0.36 per 100,000 persons in Minnesota to the highest 1.67 per 100,000 persons in Louisiana.<br>State laws prohibiting people subject to IPV-related restraining orders from possessing firearms and also requiring them to relinquish firearms in their possession were associated with 14.0% lower firearm-related IPH rates than in states without these laws. |
| | Grinshteyn and Hemenway (2016) | An international comparison of 24 high-income OECD countries using 2010 mortality data | Firearm death rates for US children between 0–4 and 5–14 years were 33.8 and 14.2 times higher than for the other 23 high-income OECD countries combined. Firearm |



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| Context | Author | Source of Data | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | death rates for US youth aged 15–24 years were 22.5 times higher than for the other 23 high-income OECD countries combined. 91% of all children aged 0–14 years who were killed by firearms and 92% of youth aged 15–24 years who were killed by firearms were from the United States. |
| Firearms and family violence | Gerney and Parsons (2014) | FBI Reports | Nationally, between 2003 and 2012, an average of 52.5% of victims murdered by intimate partners were killed with a gun; 54.8% of women victims murdered by intimate partners were killed with a gun. |
| | Bonomi, Trabert, Anderson, Kernic, and Holt (2014) | Police records and census data from Seattle, Washington, 1999–2001 | 5% of intimate partner abuse reports involved a knife, gun, or vehicle as a weapon. |

Other research has indicated that when there are one or more guns in the home, the risk of suicide among women increases nearly five times and the risk of homicide more than triples—due largely to homicides at the hands of a spouse, intimate acquaintance, or close relative (Violence Policy Center, 2000).

Despite the rise in resistance to gun control in the United States, some legislation has been passed to reduce the role of firearms in domestic homicide. In 1994, Congress passed the Protective Order Gun Ban, which prohibits gun possession by a person against whom there is a restraining or protective order for domestic violence, and in 1996, it passed the Domestic Violence Misdemeanor Gun Ban, which prohibits anyone convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence or child abuse from purchasing or possessing a gun. Individual states are making strides toward more gun control as well. For instance, in 2009, California enacted a new law providing additional requirements for the sale of common handgun ammunition; it also stipulates that sales of handgun ammunition must occur in person, and ammunition dealers must keep records of sales for at least 5 years (Egelko, 2009).



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## Media Violence and Pornography

> *I was aware I was being photographed (age 6–8). In order to survive and reduce violence, I had to pretend to enjoy anal penetration while being photographed. This has caused a lot of problems with standard psychiatric and psychological assessments which all with varying degrees read, "appeared happy, expressive, no signs of depression." Just as in my "happy" child pornographic pictures, looks can be deceiving. (Gewirtz-Meydan, Walsh, Wolak, & Finkelhor, 2018, p. 243)*

Have you been exposed to any form of pornography? If so, what did you think of the experience? Did you think pornography should be banned? How about the use of children in pornography? Is that a form of child abuse? What's your view of people who use children in pornographic photos or films? If you ever saw a porno film involving children, what was your response? What do you think should or could be done to ban at least those forms of pornography that involve unwilling participants, particularly children?

And how about nonpornographic media violence? Where have you been most likely to see and hear it—on TV, at the movies, over the Internet? Do you and your close friends seek out or avoid violent media? Has exposure to media violence ever had any noticeable effects on you (or your friends)? Angered you? Made you sick? Interfered with your sleep? Do you think societies should strive to reduce or ban or otherwise control violence in the media? Why or why not? Some research (Coyne, Callister, Gentile, & Howard, 2016) shows that women are more offended by media violence than men. Does that fit with your experience? How would you explain this finding?

On average, Americans, either intentionally or unintentionally, are exposed to large doses of violence and pornography in the media. Children are particularly susceptible to the negative effects of viewing violent acts. Although there continue to be debates regarding the extent to which violence in the media has negative effects on children and families (Ivory et al., 2015), rigorous research provides considerable evidence of negative effects. Based on a study of media psychologists and mass communication scientists, pediatricians, and parents, Bushman, Gollwitzer, and Cruz (2015a, 2015b) reported that all groups agreed that exposure to media violence can increase aggression in children. For example, a study of 5,147 fifth graders from a total of 118 schools from metropolitan Birmingham, Alabama; Los Angeles County, California; and Houston, Texas, found that self-reported observation of violence in TV shows and movies; video, computer, and Internet games; and music were all significant predictors of self-reported physical aggression by children—e.g., hitting, pushing another child, threatening to hurt a teacher or physically harming another child, or threatening someone with a knife or gun (Coker et al., 2015). Other studies have shown, for example, that: prepubertal children who viewed a PG-rated movie containing guns



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played with a real (disabled) gun longer and pulled the trigger more times than did children who viewed the same movie not containing guns (Dillon & Bushman, 2017); childhood exposure to video game violence was indirectly associated with lower levels of prosocial behavior and higher levels of externalizing behavior in adolescents (Coyne, Warburton, Essig, & Stockdale, 2018); in a sample of university students, higher levels of exposure to first-person shooter games were associated with more negative attitudes concerning gun control, and more experience using realistic, motion-capturing gun controllers was also associated with greater support for the idea that greater gun availability can help guarantee public safety (Lapierre & Farrar, 2018).

There is also some important evidence directly linking exposure to violent media to domestic and dating violence. Friedlander, Connolly, Pepler, and Craig (2013) found that extensive aggressive media usage was associated with both victimization and perpetration of dating violence across three time waves. In a study of 417 emerging adults (late adolescents transitioning into adulthood) McAuslan, Leonard, and Pickett (2018) found that the majority of the respondents had both experienced and perpetrated some dating violence, and that having more conflict-laden, less supportive early family relationships was associated with greater influence by and preference for aggressive media. Media use mediated the relationships between early experience and attitudes accepting of aggression in relationships, as well as overall experience with dating violence. In addition, women who were high TV violence viewers as children were more likely to have thrown something at their spouses, and had punched, beaten, or choked another adult four times more than the rate of other women (Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski, & Eron, 2003). Table 2.3 highlights important findings on the ways in which the observation of media violence appears to contribute to everyday violence in the lives of children and adults.

Pornography is another multibillion-dollar industry in the United States that may contribute to tolerance of family aggression; moreover, the Internet has made pornography readily available to children of all ages. Child pornography, which must be considered its own particular form of child maltreatment because of its effects on the children exploited for pornographic purposes (Gewirtz-Meydan et al., 2018), as well as potential effects on viewers, is a huge industry. One study of child pornographic materials on one person-to-person file-sharing network (Gnutella P2P) over a 1-year period (October 1, 2010–September 18, 2011) revealed that 244,920 US computers shared 120,418 unique child pornography files, known to government authorities, on Gnutella during the study year (Wolak, Liberatore, & Levine, 2014). In addition to these and other person-to-person exchanges of child pornography, there are a variety of other forms of pornography that can be found on the Internet as well as through more traditional media; whether this material is sought deliberately or found accidentally, there is some evidence that such exposure can have ill effects. In one study (Mitchell, Jones, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2014) with three nationally representative samples of



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**Table 2.3** Media Violence

| Context | Author | Source of Data | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Media violence | Bender, Plante, and Gentile (2018) | Reviewed recent survey evidence from cross-sectional studies, experiments, longitudinal studies, and meta-analyses | Findings from diverse studies largely converge in showing that exposure to violent media is a risk factor for aggression months, years, and even decades later. Authors conclude that media violence constitutes one risk factor among many, although, unlike other risk factors (e.g., bullying, poverty, genetics), it is one that can be easily influenced. |
| | Coyne et al. (2018) | Studied 488 adolescents and their parents who completed self- and parental measures at three different time points, each 2 years apart, over a 5-year period | Early exposure to video game violence was indirectly associated with lower levels of prosocial behavior (mediated by lower levels of benevolence); early video game violence play was directly associated with higher levels of externalizing behavior at the first assessment, but not 5 years later. |
| | Lapierre and Farrar (2018) | 510 students from a northeastern university and 267 from a southeastern university; 37.7% male ($n$ = 294) and 61.7% female ($n$ = 481), ranging in age from 17 to 40 (average age = 19) predominantly (82.7%) White | Higher levels of exposure to first-person shooter games were associated with more negative attitudes concerning gun control. More experience using realistic, motion-capturing gun controllers was also associated with negative attitudes toward gun control as well as greater support for the idea that greater gun availability can help guarantee public safety. |

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| Context | Author | Source of Data | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Dillon and Bushman (2017) | 104 children ages 8–12 years recruited through ads were randomly assigned in pairs to watch a 20-minute PG-rated movie that did or did not show guns | Children who viewed a PG-rated movie containing guns played with a real (disabled) gun longer and pulled the trigger more times than did children who viewed the same movie not containing guns. |
| | Coyne et al. (2016) | Students from two universities completed online surveys regarding views on violence in the media | Women were significantly more offended than men by media violence in all genres (movies, books, TV, advertising, music, and video games) and in real life (e.g., witnessing a mugging on the street). Overall, compared with other content in the media, media violence was perceived as relatively inoffensive. |
| | Bushman et al. (2015) | 371 media psychologists and mass communication scientists, 92 pediatricians, and 268 parents completed an anonymous online survey about media violence | All groups agreed that exposure to media violence can increase aggression in children. Ratings for violent video games and movies produced the highest level of agreement. The only question on which groups differed in their opinions was whether media violence was a major factor in producing real-life violence: parents and pediatricians agreed that it was, media researchers did not agree. |
| | Coker et al. (2015) | 5,147 fifth graders and their parents in three US metropolitan areas | Media violence exposure (including TV, video game, and music) was associated with physical aggression in fifth-grade children. |

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**Table 2.3** *(Continued)*

| Context | Author | Source of Data | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Media violence and relationship violence | McAuslan et al. (2018) | 417 emerging adults completed an online survey with questions on media use (e.g., preference for aggressive media), as well as attitudes supportive of violence and dating violence victimization and perpetration | The majority of the respondents had both experienced and perpetrated some dating violence. Media use mediated the relationships between early experience and attitudes tolerant of aggression in relationships, as well as overall experience with dating violence. |
| | Friedlander et al. (2013) | 238 boys and 246 girls (average age 15 years) with romantic partners completed measures of media aggression, dating violence-tolerant attitudes, and victimization and perpetration of dating violence three times over a 3-year period | Findings indicated that extensive aggressive media usage was associated with both victimization and perpetration of dating violence across the three time waves. Violence-tolerant attitudes fully mediated the longitudinal pathway between aggressive media use and perpetration of dating violence and partially mediated the pathway for victimization. |

youth Internet users at three time points (2000, 2005, 2010), 16% reported at least one stress symptom as a result of unwanted exposure to Internet pornography. Only 8% of the youth reported seeing pictures that were violent; 13% of the exposures identified as distressing involved violent sexual pictures. In a study of 39 adolescents recruited from the pediatric emergency department of a large Boston hospital (Rothman, Kaczmarsky, Burke, Jansen, & Baughman, 2015), all participants reported watching online pornography, including pornography featuring incest, rape, and bestiality, and sometimes bondage, group sex, choking, and public humiliation. A few of the girls expressed distaste and surprise, but in general the girls were either indifferent toward or accepting of these more extreme forms of pornography. What is your reaction to these findings? Are they consistent with your own reactions to viewing pornography, particularly extreme forms of pornography if you



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have ever been exposed to them? Do you think the findings provide a true picture? That is, do you think adolescents aged 18 years and under would really be blasé about viewing such acts? If they are blasé, what might be the implications for their intimate relationships?

Although the proportion of youth reporting distress as a result of exposure to online pornography in the Mitchell et al. (2014) study was relatively small, negative effects of such exposure may manifest themselves in a number of ways. In a longitudinal nationwide study of Internet exposure to pornography and self-reported sexually aggressive behavior (Ybarra, Mitchell, Hamburger, Diener-West, & Leaf, 2011), 15% of the girls and 30% of the boys (ages 10–15 years at the first assessment) reported exposure to x-rated material. For both boys and girls, the odds of sexually aggressive behavior were more than five times higher if violent x-rated material consumption was reported. Reviews of the literature regarding the relationship between exposure to pornography and sexual aggression suggest, not surprisingly, that the relationships are complex and influenced by a number of other factors, such as age. Based on their review of adolescents' exposure to Internet pornography, Owens, Behun, Manning, and Reid (2012) reported consistent findings linking adolescent use of pornography featuring violence with increased degrees of sexually aggressive behavior. Malamuth (2018), based on his review of literature regarding effects on men of viewing pornography featuring nonconsenting actors (e.g., children), concluded that pornography use may add to the risk of sexual aggression only for those men already predisposed to aggress sexually due to more primary causes than pornography use. In a review of the literature regarding outcomes of sexual media exposure in adolescent and emerging adults, Rodenhizer and Edwards (2019) concluded that exposure to sexually explicit and sexually violent media is related to more accepting attitudes toward domestic violence and sexual violence, including higher rape myth endorsement and assumptions that are consistent with commonly held rape myths (e.g., the victim wanted it) and to actual and anticipated domestic violence and sexual violence victimization and perpetration. Table 2.4 provides examples from the literature on pornography and its role in violence.

## Sexting, Revenge Porn, and Cyber Aggression

*Regina: When the actual video was released, um, well, I can admit now that I was suicidal, and … to let you know how suicidal I was, I didn't tell anybody because I knew if I told anyone that I just wanted to kill myself that they would try to stop me, so I didn't tell anyone because I didn't want anyone to stop me…. I had a doctorate degree. I lost everything. So, how did that make me feel? Um, devastated. I just don't even have words to describe it. Horrifying, humiliated, embarrassed, betrayed, I mean, I just never thought that a man I had loved, I married him, he was my husband, I trusted him. How could he do something like this? So I just felt very, very worthless. (Bates, 2017)*



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**Table 2.4** Media Pornography and Violence

| Context | Author | Source of Data | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Availability of pornography | Mitchell et al. (2014) | Telephone interviews of nationally representative sample of around 1,500 youth Internet users, ages 10–17 years, in each of three time points (2000, 2005, 2010) | Episodes of unwanted exposure to Internet pornography that were distressing were relatively stable across assessments: 23% in 2000, 26% in 2005, and 22% in 2010. Of youth reporting unwanted exposure, 66% saw pictures of naked people; 24% saw people having sex. Although the majority of youth reported that the unwanted exposures were not distressing, 16% reported at least one stress symptom as a result. Only 8% of the respondents reported seeing pictures that were violent; 13% of reports of distressing exposure involved violent sexual pictures. |
| | Rothman et al. (2015) | Interviewed convenience sample of 39 youth ages 16–18 years recruited from the pediatric emergency department of a large, urban, Safety Net hospital in Boston, Massachusetts | All participants reported watching pornography online including pornography featuring incest, rape, and bestiality. Several reported seeing pornography featuring bondage, group sex, choking, and public humiliation. |
| | Owens et al. (2012) | A review of literature of adolescents' exposure to Internet pornography | Findings revealed a consistent pattern linking adolescent use of pornography depicting violence with increased degrees of sexually aggressive behavior. |

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| Context | Author | Source of Data | Findings |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Ybarra et al. (2011) | Growing up with Media national longitudinal survey of children initially aged 10–15 years old. Over a 36-month period, assessed intentional exposure to violent x-rated material and children's self-reported sexually aggressive behavior | 15% of girls and 30% of boys reported exposure to x-rated material. For both boys and girls, the odds of sexually aggressive behavior were more than five times higher if violent x-rated material consumption was reported. |
| Correlates of exposure to pornography | Malamuth (2018) | Review of literature regarding effects on men of viewing nonconsenting adult and child pornography | Pornography use may add to the risk of sexual aggression only in those men already predisposed to aggress sexually. |
| | Gewirtz-Meydan et al. (2018) | Online survey of a convenience sample of adult survivors of involvement in production of childhood pornography | Nearly half of the respondents reported having specific problems from involvement in producing sexual images that differed from the problems caused by other aspects of the abuse. Nearly half constantly worried that people would think they were willing participants or would recognize them. Three major themes emerged from survivors' perspectives as adults: guilt and shame, an ongoing sense of vulnerability, and an empowerment dimension. |
| | Seabrook, Ward, and Giaccardi (2018) | Surveys administered to 283 undergraduate men to assess TV consumption (across four genres) and | Consumption of reality TV, sports programming, and pornography were all positively associated |

*(Continued)*



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**Table 2.4** *(Continued)*

| Context | Author | Source of Data | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | pornography use, acceptance of objectification of women, rape myth acceptance, and sexual deception behaviors | with greater acceptance of objectification of women, which in turn was associated with greater rape myth acceptance and more frequent acts of sexual deception. Objectification of women mediated the relations among pornography consumption and rape myth acceptance and sexual deception. |
| | Rodenhizer and Edwards (2019) | Review of literature on impacts of sexual media exposure on adolescent and emerging adults' dating and sexual violence attitudes and behaviors | Exposure to sexually explicit media and sexually violent media is related to more accepting attitudes toward domestic violence and sexual violence, including higher rape myth endorsement, and to actual and anticipated domestic violence and sexual violence victimization and perpetration. |

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When you read Regina's story, do you know immediately what she is talking about? What term would you use to describe the terrible experience she has had? **Cyberbullying**? **Revenge porn**? Intimate partner violence (IPV)? All of the above? All of those terms have been used to describe this relatively new form of partner abuse. Have you known anyone who was the victim of this kind of maltreatment? What was the outcome of the event?

One of the most recent ways in which the social media have played a role in violence, including relationship violence, is through the spread of sexting, revenge porn, and other forms of cyber aggression. Young adults have described many ways in which cyber technology contributes to maltreatment and violence in dating relationships—for example, through monitoring cell phone and social media behaviors, stalking in cyberspace, and posting incriminating photos and videos (Melander, 2010), as well as through



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arguing with a partner, monitoring or controlling a partner's activities or whereabouts, and perpetrating emotional or verbal aggression against a partner (Draucker & Martsolf, 2010), and pressuring partners to engage in sexting when they don't want to (Drouin, Ross, & Tobin, 2015). With how many of those forms of maltreatment are you familiar? Have you used any of them yourself? Did you/do you view them as forms of maltreatment? Have you seen any negative effects of such treatment in the victim? The perpetrator? Thompson and Morrison (2013) found that five major characteristics of perpetrators were predictive of **technology-based coercive behavior (TBC)**: number of sexual partners, rape-supportive beliefs, peer approval of forced sex, exposure to pornography, and participation in student government. Do those predictors make sense to you? Can you think of other characteristics of perpetrators that might contribute to a tendency to engage in TBC?

There has been considerable concern about the potential ill effects of contemporary online sexual behavior. In a sample of 365 college students from a large midwestern university, Reed, Tolman, and Ward (2016) found that digital monitoring behaviors were common in both sexes, and were associated with physical, sexual, and psychological dating violence. The majority of the sample reported experiencing one or more victimization behaviors (74.1%) and one or more perpetration behaviors (69.5%) in their lifetime as well as both victimization (68.8%) and perpetration (62.6%) during the previous year. In a qualitative study of female survivors of male revenge pornography, the major themes emerging from the women's narratives were loss of trust, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression, and in some cases changes in self-esteem, confidence, and feelings of control (Reed, Tolman, & Ward, 2017). These responses to revenge porn are similar to those following sexual assault. Perhaps even more concerning is the connection in young women between phone sexting and sensation seeking and sexual hookup (unplanned, casual sexual encounters between individuals not romantically committed) (Dir & Cyders, 2015). Table 2.5 provides findings from representative studies of sexting, revenge porn, and other forms of TBC aggression.

## Poverty and Income Inequality

*When police stumbled across the makeshift shelter in the Joshua Tree desert last week they made a shocking discovery: three children were living in a plywood box. There appeared to be no electricity, no running water and not enough food but piles of rubbish and human feces, a scene of squalor and isolation. There was no record of the children attending school. The parents, Mona Kirk, 51, and Daniel Panico, 73, were charged with three felony counts of child abuse and the children were put in care of social services. (Carroll, 2018)*



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**Table 2.5** Revenge Porn, Sexting, and Cyber Violence

| Context | Author | Source of Data | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Revenge porn, sexting, and cyberbullying | Bates (2017) | Qualitative interviews with 18 female survivors of revenge pornography from male partners; recruited through snowball sampling; ages 21–54, average 31 | Major themes after victimization from revenge porn: loss of trust, PTSD, anxiety, depression, changes in self-esteem, confidence, and feelings of control. |
| | Reed et al. (2016) | Survey regarding digital dating abuse (DDA), a pattern of behaviors that control, pressure, or threaten a dating partner using a cell phone or the Internet, administered to 307 college students | Digital monitoring behaviors were common in both sexes, and were associated with measures of physical, sexual, and psychological dating violence—both perpetration and victimization. |
| | Dir and Cyders (2015) | 611 undergraduate students (77.35% female) from a large, public, midwestern university completed an online survey regarding sexting | Findings included a significant indirect effect of sensation seeking on phone sexting behaviors through sex-related sexting expectancies and a significant indirect effect of sensation seeking on sexual hookup behaviors through phone sexting behaviors, but only for females. |
| | Drouin et al. (2015) | Online survey of 480 young adult undergraduates (160 men and 320 women) from a mid-sized midwestern university; examined relationships among sexting coercion, physical sex coercion, intimate partner violence (IPV), and mental health and trauma symptoms | Approximately 20% of the sample reported coercive sexting. The tactics were more often psychological (e.g., making participant feel obligated) than severe (e.g., physical threats), with the women more likely than the men to experience physical sex coercion. Nearly half reported sending a |



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| Context | Author | Source of Data | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | sexually explicit picture. Sexting coercion was significantly correlated with anxiety, depression, and generalized trauma, as well as both physical sex coercion and IPV. |
| | Thompson and Morrison (2013) | 795 male students at a large southeastern university, participating in a four-wave longitudinal study on the correlates of technology-based coercive behavior (TBC) | Approximately one-fifth of males completing their final year of college self-reported having engaged in online coercive behaviors consistent with sexual solicitation and harassment. |
| | Draucker and Martsolf (2010) | 56 women and men (ages 18–21 years) recruited through fliers posted in public places in nine diverse communities in northeast Ohio for longitudinal qualitative study of electronic communication technology and partner violence | Among the relationship-related uses of technology were arguing with a partner, monitoring or controlling the activities or whereabouts of a partner, perpetrating emotional or verbal aggression against a partner, seeking help during a violent episode, and limiting a partner's access to oneself. |
| | Melander (2010) | Convenience sample of 39 undergraduate students who participated in male-only or female-only focus group interviews | Groups discussed types of intimate partner psychologically aggressive behaviors monitoring cell phone and social media behaviors, stalking in cyberspace, and posting incriminating photos and videos. |

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What are your thoughts when you read this true story? Are you thinking, "Thank goodness the authorities fulfilled their responsibilities and rescued those poor children?" Are there any questions you would like to ask about the case before you concluded that those poor children, living in a box in the midst of hunger and squalor, were clearly being maltreated? Do you feel confident that placing them in foster care was the best solution?

A neighbor and family friend, the Girl Scout troop leader for the girls in this family, had plenty to say about the case, declaring that the family had fallen on hard times but chose self-reliance over state help or charity, using their own initiative to build an improvised 200 = square = ft shelter made of plywood, tin, and sheeting. Neighbors rallied outside the courthouse with placards saying "Guilty of being poor," "Being homeless is not a crime," and "Poverty is not a choice." Given this additional information, do you have any further thoughts about this case? Does it seem possible to you that sometimes government officials may be too quick to make a judgment of child maltreatment when what they are looking at are the effects of poverty, of conditions for which it is inappropriate to blame the family? Do you think there might be other characteristics of families that may lead to rushes to judgment regarding the possibility of maltreatment? Or do you feel some sympathy for the parents but still believe that no child should live in circumstances like that, so the label of maltreatment is appropriate? Ayana's story is a bit different:

> *I done had a hard life growing up and been through all this [becoming infected with AIDS] and abused in relationships and lived on the street and had to deal with men touching me and I don't understand why and couldn't run to momma, cause when you're scared you go to momma and they comfort you [but] my momma beat me. (Peltzer, Ogawa, Tusher, Farnan, & Gerkovich, 2017)*

Is there little doubt that Ayana has been maltreated—by men, by her mother, by the circumstances in which she has grown up? And how about poverty? What are all the ways in which poverty has affected Ayana's life? There are probably hundreds of thousands of children growing up in similar circumstances in the United States. How should the problem be addressed? Should the legal, criminal justice arm of society arrest the mother? Jail the child molesters? Would that help? How about the medical and social service communities? What should their roles be? And finally, will actions from those segments of society make a lasting difference in the lives of children like Ayana, or does society need to find ways to address the whole issue of poverty and social economic inequality?

Although the United States is in many ways one of the wealthiest nations in the world, it also has a persistently high number of individuals and families living in poverty. According to US Bureau of the Census data (Fontenot, Semega, & Kolla, 2018), in 2017, 39.7 million people in this country were living in poverty, disproportionately people of color and children aged 18 years and younger. Internationally, child poverty is not equally distributed



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across nations, and not related solely to the overall wealth of nations. In 2014, the average poverty rate in the more than 30 countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) was 11%, with poverty rates highest at around 18% in Israel and the United States (OECD, 2016). Noting that in the United States, 40 million people live in poverty, Allston (2017) reported that the youth poverty rate in the United States is the highest across the OECD with one quarter of youth living in poverty compared to less than 14% in the other nations. The World Income Inequality Report (2018) revealed that in the United States, people of color are hardest hit by poverty. Among White toddlers and infants in this country, only 14% are poor; by contrast, 42% of all Black children, 33% of all Hispanic children, and 37% of Native American children are poor.

The evidence is overwhelming that poverty is associated with a broad range of social problems, including various forms of violence. For example, an analysis of a longitudinal (from 1999 to 2001) dataset from a large metropolitan US sample (5,994) involved in a first-time male-to-female perpetrated IPV event reported to police, Bonomi, Trabert, Anderson, Kernic, and Holt (2014) found that at the baseline abuse incident, IPV rates were highest in the poorest neighborhoods. County-level data obtained from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System from 2005 to 2009 indicated that neighborhoods with clusters of families living in poverty had dramatically high rates of child maltreatment (Molnar et al., 2016). On the other hand, there is some positive news. While acknowledging that children from low-income families are at risk for child maltreatment, Raissian and Bullinger (2017) reported that an increase in the minimum wage reduced the risk of child maltreatment, particularly neglect, and especially for school-aged children. Moreover, Cancian, Slack, and Yang (2010) examined data collected for the Child Support Demonstration Evaluation (CSDE) and the TANF Integrated Data Project to assess the effects of providing small increments in child support to an experimental group of mothers receiving welfare benefits. They found that over a 2-year period, the mothers receiving even a small amount of additional child support were less likely to be reported to the child welfare system for child maltreatment than a control group of mothers who received no such supplement. Because they used an experimental design to examine income as a predictor of child maltreatment, Cancian et al. concluded that they demonstrated that low income is a cause of child maltreatment.

**Income inequality**—a gap between rich and poor that has increased steadily in the United States in recent decades—was one of the targets of the Occupy Movement that captured attention in the United States in 2011 and 2012. It was also identified as a problem by President Obama. How big a problem is it? This income inequality—this gap between individuals or households making the greatest percentage of income in a country and those making very little—varies greatly internationally. Based on the World Fact Book produced by the CIA in 2009, Fisher (2011) pointed out that on the Gini index (a measure of statistical dispersion) for income inequality, the



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United States has one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world—worse not only in comparison to Western Europe but also in comparison to most of West Africa and North Africa; indeed the level of income inequality in the United States is similar to that in Rwanda, Uganda, and Ecuador. In 2014, income inequality levels were lowest in the Nordic and central European countries and highest in Chile, Israel, Mexico, Turkey, and the United States (OECD, 2016).

Like poverty, income inequality has enormous implications for individual and social well-being within a country. By 2015, 43% of the children in the United States were living in low-income families, and 21% lived in a poor family. Income inequality was associated with violent crime, including homicide (Jiang, Granja, & Koball, 2017). Moreover, there is evidence that extreme inequality in the United States is increasing (World Inequality Report, 2018). Several reviews of research have confirmed the contribution of income inequality to child maltreatment (e.g., Drake & Jonson-Reid, 2014). In a study using county-level data from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System for 2005–2009, Eckenrode, Smith, McCarthy, and Dineen (2014) found that higher rates of income inequality across US counties are significantly associated with higher county-level rates of child maltreatment. A study using US Bureau of the Census data (Molnar, et al, 2016) revealed that the highest rate of family violence occurred in neighborhoods with the lowest levels of economic resources. Understanding the relationship between income inequality and maltreatment within families has implications for steps to reducing child maltreatment. You may have heard debates about raising the minimum wage for workers across the United States. Have you heard anyone mention the potential impact of that increase on maltreatment within families and communities? Should that argument be made? Table 2.6 provides examples of research focusing on poverty, social and economic inequality, and their outcomes, particularly in regard to family violence.

In America today, Black and Latinx children are at an increased risk of living at or below the poverty line. For children under age 5 years, 41.9% of Blacks and 35% of Latinxs are classified as poor (as compared to about 15% of White children). Extreme poverty, defined as living at half the poverty level or below, is experienced by more than one in six Black children and one in seven Latinx children (whereas one in 20 White children live in extreme poverty) (Children's Defense Fund [CDF], 2011). As mentioned in Chapter 1, despite the high correlation of poverty with family violence and other social ills, it may not be poverty per se that is the causal agent of family violence as much as related factors such as social and/or economic inequality. Income inequality (the juxtaposition of extreme poverty with extreme wealth) is associated with both interpersonal and collective violence (Mercy, Krug, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2003). There is also evidence that rather than overall poverty, income inequality favoring women over men contributes to IPV against women (McCloskey, 1996), and that income inequality favoring Whites over Blacks may contribute to IPV in the Black community (Aborampah, 1989). Given that immigrants and people of color are



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**Table 2.6** Poverty, Social and Economic Inequality, and Their Outcomes

| Contextual Factor | Author | Focus | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Poverty rates | Fontenot et al. (2018, September) | US Bureau of the Census (2018). National databases | The poverty rate in 2017 was 8.7% for non-Hispanic Whites, 21.2% for Blacks, 10.0% for Asians, and 18.3% for Hispanics. For people under the age of 18 years, 17.5% (12.8 million) were in poverty in 2017. |
| | World Inequality Report (2018) | Analyzed all relevant economic data sources available internationally | Extreme inequality is increasing in the United States. People of color are hardest hit by poverty. While only 14% of White toddlers and infants in this country are poor, 42% of all Black children, 33% of all Hispanic children, and 37% of Native American children are poor. |
| | Allston (2017) | United Nations data sources | In the United States, 40 million people live in poverty. The youth poverty rate in the United States is the highest across the OECD with one quarter of youth living in poverty compared to less than 14% across the OECD. |
| Poverty and family violence | McLeigh, McDonell, and Lavenda (2018) | Explored relationships between neighborhood poverty and child abuse and neglect rates in neighborhoods in South Carolina through surveys, substantiated reports of child abuse and neglect, and Census block group data | Significant direct effects of poverty on rates of neglect and abuse were found. Social cohesion was found to mediate the association between neighborhood-level poverty and abuse rates but not neglect rates. |
| | Schneider, Waldfogel, and Brooks-Gunn (2017) | Analyzed longitudinal data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, a | Uncertainty associated with the Great Recession, and the share of the local population |

*(Continued)*

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**Table 2.6** *(Continued)*

| Contextual Factor | Author | Focus | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | birth cohort study of families in 20 US cities (*N* = 3,177; 50% African American; 25% Hispanic; 22% non-Hispanic White; 3% other). Focused on data from before, during, and after the Great Recession (2007–2010) | that was unemployed, were significantly associated with elevated risk for child abuse by mothers but with decreased physical and supervisory neglect. Households with a social rather than a biological father present were particularly vulnerable to child maltreatment by mothers. |
| | Espinosa et al. (2017) | Data from interviews with 170 African American (78%) and Latinx mothers of preadolescents in an at-risk, mostly unmarried, low-SES community sample of women | On average, African American mothers had higher Child Abuse Potential Inventory (CAPI) scores than Latinx mothers. SES was negatively associated with CAPI scores (even after controlling for other sociodemographic variables). |
| | Molnar et al. (2016) | Examined maltreatment cases substantiated by Illinois' child protection agency, 1995–2005, US Census data, proportions of neighborhoods on public assistance, and crime data | The percentage of children living in poverty in a neighborhood cluster was strongly associated with maltreatment rates. |
| | Bonomi et al. (2014) | Used data from a large metropolitan US sample involved in a first-time male-to-female perpetrated intimate partner violence (IPV) event reported to police and followed over a 2-year period | At the baseline abuse incident, IPV rates were highest in the poorest neighborhoods. However, in the longitudinal analysis, weapon use at the baseline abuse event was a much stronger predictor of repeat abuse. |

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| Contextual Factor | Author | Focus | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Social and economic inequality and family violence | Raissian and Bullinger (2017) | Child maltreatment report from National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System from 2004 to 2013 | Increase in minimum wage reduced the risk of child maltreatment, particularly neglect, and especially for school-aged children. |
| | Jiang et al. (2017) | National database in 2015. A cross-national analysis of available reports | By 2015, 43% of children in the United States lived in low-income families, and 21% lived in a poor family. Income inequality was associated with violent crime, including homicide. |
| | US Bureau of the Census (2016) | National database in 2016 | In 2016, 12.7% Americans were living in poverty, reduced by 0.8% from 2015. Highest rate of family violence occurred in neighborhoods with the lowest levels of economic resources. |
| | Drake and Jonson-Reid (2014) | Literature review | Research is consistent in showing that poor children are overrepresented among maltreated children at a ratio of 3:1 or higher. |
| | Eckenrode et al. (2014) | County-level data obtained from National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System from 2005 to 2009 | Across US counties, higher rates of income inequality are significantly associated with higher county-level rates of child maltreatment. |

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disproportionately represented at poverty levels and the primary victims of social inequality, it should be no surprise that rates of family violence sometimes are higher in those communities than in the majority community, although differential reporting practices may also play a role in these figures (Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2004).



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## Racism and Other Otherisms in the United States

*April, a 51-year-old African American single mother of two in New York, experienced racial harassment routinely. She worked at a retirement home with a largely white resident population that uttered "racial slurs" to her regularly. When asked why she put up with it, she replied, "I have to, honey. I just go for my kids....it's such a nasty job, it makes me mad...but I don't bring that home, otherwise I'll kill somebody." (Dominguez & Menjivar, 2014)*

What do you think of April's story? Have you ever had a job where you were constantly called names, verbally abused? If so, how did you feel? How did it affect your behavior, on and off the job? Could that kind of treatment affect April's mental health? Her physical health? Her relationships with others? Would it surprise you if April sometimes yelled at her kids when she got home from work? If April verbally or physically maltreated her kids, where would you place the blame for her behavior? Would you place it solely on April? Why or why not?

According to the 2017 US Census, there were over 325 million people in the United States that year; of this population, 76.6% were White, 18.1% Latinx, 13.4% African American, 5.8% Asian, and 1.3% Native American (US Bureau of the Census, 2017). As of 2017, there are 73.6 million children who live in America; of this number, 51% are White, 25% Latinx, 14% African American, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander, and <1% Native American (Children's Defense Fund [CDF], 2017). The US foreign-born population reached a record 43.7 million in 2016, accounting for 13.5% of the US population.

People of color and other politically labeled groups based on social categories such as ethnicity, religion, social class, gender, and sexual orientation, and targeted for various forms of discrimination, are often called "minority groups"—a euphemism. These groups, in total, do not constitute a minority of the US population; moreover, a label focusing on percentages of the population does not begin to capture the experiences of these groups. Wealthy White European American males are not the majority in this country, yet they exercise an enormous amount of power over the majority of the population. So, what should we call *other* groups based on the politically and economically important social categories to which they are assigned? Rather than lumping them under the label "minorities," they might better be recognized as discriminated against, subjected to human rights violations, and maltreated—and perhaps worse than that, marginalized, demonized, victimized, stigmatized, oppressed, and infrahumanized (portrayed as less human, less evolved). Moreover, it's important to recognize that these maltreated groups are disproportionately burdened with most if not all of the risk factors identified as contributing to family violence. Consider, for example,



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all the sources of stress that more marginalized as compared to more privileged families face.

Much of the recent psychological research has focused on racism in the criminal justice system, where racial disparities unfavorable to people of color are apparent at every level. Based on an analysis of data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Social Security Administration, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Lum, Swarup, Eubank, and Hawdon (2014) concluded that the commonly observed racial disparities in incarceration rates between Black and White Americans can be explained as the result of differential sentencing between the two demographic groups. Similarly, based on an analysis of United States Justice Department data (2010–2015) from 12 law enforcement departments from diverse locations, Goff, Lloyd, Geller, Raphael, and Glaser (2016) found that even when controlling for racial distribution of local arrest rates, Black residents were more likely than Whites to be targeted for force. They conclude that the common argument asserting that crime is the primary driver of racial disparities was not supported by the evidence. Differential treatment of offenders based on race appears to start early. In an interview study of 13–19-year-old boys and girls living in residential facilities for juvenile offenders in western Pennsylvania, Lee, Goodkind, and Shook (2017) found evidence that young White offenders were funneled into the mental health system while youth of color were sent into the justice system.

Consistent with the evidence concerning racial disparities in incarceration rates and police use of force, there are racial disparities in death sentences. In Louisiana, for example, data on death sentence cases and their reversals, 1976–2015, showed that death sentences were imposed in only 0.52% of cases in which both perpetrator and victim were Black males, but in 15.56% of cases with Black male offenders and White female victims. Regardless of offender race, offenders convicted of killing Whites were more than six times more likely to receive a death penalty than convicted killers of Blacks, and 14 times more likely to be executed. No White person has been executed in Louisiana for a crime against a Black victim since 1752 (Baumgartner & Lyman, 2015).

Although much attention has been focused on issues of violence against people of color by police and within the justice system—confirming that people are arrested, prosecuted, incarcerated, and sometimes killed for the "crime" of being Black or some other non-White color—it is evident that racism pervades almost every undertaking in the United States. Social media has become a blatant tool of racism, with, for example, some White groups developing and joining Internet sites with blatantly racist purposes (Daniels, 2012). Moreover, there is increasing recognition that a substantial portion of racial aggression, both on- and offline, takes the form of **microaggressions**—intentional or unintentional words or behaviors that communicate hostile, derogatory insults to the targeted person or group (Sue et al., 2011). Table 2.7 highlights recent research on racism in the criminal justice system and racial microaggressions, online and off.



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**Table 2.7** Racism and Racial Microaggressions

| Contextual Factor | Author | Focus | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Racism in the criminal justice system | Lee et al. (2017) | Structured one-on-one interviews with a nonprobability sample of 13–19-year-old youth in residential facilities for juvenile offenders in western Pennsylvania | Prior to incarceration, the Black and Hispanic youth were less likely than White youth to have used mental health and substance abuse services, even when controlling for predisposing, enabling, and need factors. |
| | Goff et al. (2016) | Analyzed data (2010–2015) from 12 law enforcement departments included in National Justice Database for the Center for Policing Equity | Even when controlling for racial distribution of local arrest rates, Black residents were more likely than Whites to be targeted for force. |
| | Baumgartner and Lyman (2015) | Available data on Louisiana death sentence cases and their reversals, 1976–2015 | Since 2000, Louisiana has seen numerous examples of racial discrepancies in assignment of death penalty. |
| | Lum et al. (2014) | Data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Social Security Administration, and Bureau of Justice Statistics | Analyses supported the hypothesis that the observed racial disparities in incarceration rates between Black and White Americans result from differential sentencing. |
| Racism online and in daily life | Bliuc, Faulkner, Jakubowicz, and McGarty (2018) | Systematic review of 10 years of research on cyber-based racism in various online contexts (e.g., websites, blogs, forums, chat rooms, etc.) | Groups communicate racism online to disseminate racist propaganda, reinforce the stronger group, hurt the outgroup, increase the social tolerance of racist views, and validate racist views by reframing racism as a natural response to the oppression of White people, trivializing and denying racism, and creating "moral panic" about the outgroup. |

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| Contextual Factor | Author | Focus | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Keum and Miller (2018) | Reviewed relevant online communication and racism theories and studies that have examined online social mechanisms | Online anonymity appears to foster: (a) a sense of invisibility allowing people to act radically different than they would in nonanonymous settings, (b) a reliance on familiar race norms and stereotypes, and (c) an inclination to seek out like-minded people who share similar racist beliefs. |
| | NPR/Robert Wood Johnson Foundation/Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health (2017) | Survey conducted January 26–April 9, 2017, with a nationally representative, probability-based telephone (cell and landline) sample of 3,453 adults age 18 years or older | About 50% of African Americans say they have personally been discriminated against by police because they are Black; 45% say the court system has treated them unfairly because they are Black; 42% have experienced racial violence. |
| | Hollingsworth et al. (2017) | 135 African American students (56.3% female) recruited online from large, predominantly White institution in the Midwest completed online survey | Self-reported racial microaggressions implying invisibility, low-achievement/undesirable culture, and environmental invalidations were significantly positively correlated with suicide ideation; perceived burdensomeness mediated those relationships. |
| | Kanter et al. (2017) | 33 Black and 118 non-Hispanic White undergraduates at a public Southern/Midwest university participated. Black students identified microaggressions that were possibly “racist” in specific contexts. White students indicated how likely they were to commit those microaggressions and completed measures of racism | White students who reported that they were more likely to microaggress were more likely to endorse color-blind, symbolic, and modern racist attitudes, report significantly less favorable attitudes toward Black people, and report significantly less positive attitudes toward Black people. |

*(Continued)*



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Table 2.7 *(Continued)*

| Contextual Factor | Author | Focus | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Bucchianeri, Eisenberg, and Neumark-Sztainer (2013) | Analyzed data from a diverse population of adolescents from Project Eating and Activity in Teens 2010 | Over 35% of teens reported race-based harassment. |
| | Rauch and Schanz (2013) | 623 Internet users read one of three Facebook arguments—(1) Whites are a superior race and should feel able to demonstrate a sense of pride; (2) Whites are the most discriminated against group in society today; and (3) Discrimination against Blacks is alive and well today—and then provided reactions to the message and message writer | More frequent Facebook users had more positive reactions to both the superiority and victim conditions (messages 1 and 2) as compared to less frequent Facebook users. |
| | Nadal et al. (2012) | Semistructured open-ended focus group interviews with Muslim Americans coded for microaggression themes | Microaggressions included endorsing religious stereotypes of Muslims as terrorists; assuming there is something abnormal about Muslims; assuming that all Muslims are alike; using Islamophobic or mocking language; and making the Muslims feel like aliens in their own land. |
| | Clark, Salas-Wright, Vaughn, and Whitfield (2015) | Analyzed 10 weblogs from an online forum featuring views on discontinuing the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign's racialized (Native American) mascot | Major racial microaggression themes included: (a) advocating for White sociopolitical dominance, (b) alleging oversensitivity in anyone opposed to continuation of racialized mascot, (c) waging stereotype attacks regarding Native Americans, (d) denying that support for |

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| Contextual Factor | Author | Focus | Findings |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | maintaining the mascot indicated racism. |
| | Steinfeldt and Wong (2010) | Qualitative analysis of newspaper comments supporting Native-themed nicknames and logos from online forums in a community with a Native-themed sports nickname and logo (i.e., University of North Dakota *Fighting Sioux*) | A substantial portion of the comments revealed disdain for American Indians, perpetuated stereotypes, expressed overtly racist attitudes toward American Indians, and conveyed a perspective dominated by presumptions of White power and privilege. |

A classic and widely cited paper by Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, and Torino (2009) describes three forms of racial microaggression: (1) ***microinsults***, actions or remarks that are rude, insensitive, or demeaning in regard to a person's racial identity or heritage; (2) ***microinvalidations***, which act to exclude, negate, or nullify the ideas, feelings, or experienced realities of people of color; and (3) ***macroassaults***, which are generally conscious and deliberate racial attacks that can be verbal (e.g., racial epithets), nonverbal (e.g., discriminatory behaviors), or environmental (e.g., offensive graffiti) and are intended to hurt people of color. Microaggressions, like more overt forms of racism, are associated with a range of negative effects—for example, depression (Choi, Lewis, Harwood, Mendenhall, & Huntt, 2017; Donovan, Galban, Grace, Bennett, & Felicié, 2013; Huynh, 2012); suicidal thoughts (Hollingsworth et al., 2017; O'Keefe, Wingate, Cole, Hollingsworth, &Tucker, 2015); substance abuse disorders (Clark et al., 2015); and poorer self-rated physical health (Mouzon, Taylor, Woodward, & Chatters, 2017).

What do you think of the cases presented in Box 2.1? Can you recognize the racial microaggressions embedded in each case? Do you see them as forms of racism in action? What would you have done if you were a person of color having an experience like this? Have you ever been in a situation where you have been yelled at, sworn at, called names based on your skin color, your gender, your religion? Your accent? Your sexual identity? A disability? If so, how did you feel at the time? Did the incident(s) make you angry? Depressed? What, if anything, did you do to deal with the situation at the time? Did you have trouble putting them out of your mind? Did it make you mad enough to want to strike out somehow at somebody? How did you handle those feelings?



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Racism causes harm not just through discrimination and the violation of rights, both of which have received increasing attention. There is a growing literature indicating that racism, including at the microaggression level, can have serious effects on the physical and psychological health of oppressed groups (e.g., Miller, 2009). Building on the research literature concerning the effects of oppression, Holmes, Facemire, and DaFonseca (2016) argue in favor of expanding American Psychiatric Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Criterion A for PTSD to recognize a broader list of types of oppression shown to contribute to PTSD symptoms. In their view, oppression should be recognized as a state of asymmetric power relations characterized by domination, subordination, and resistance, where the dominating persons or groups restrict access to material resources and implant fear and self-deprecation in the subordinated persons or groups. Criterion A for PTSD requires that the individual endure "exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence" through direct exposure, witnessing, learning that the event happened to a loved one, or experiencing "extreme exposure to aversive details." In their view, Criterion A, as currently written, fails to include oppression, despite evidence of the trauma associated with it. On the other hand, there is considerable acknowledgment that experiences of discrimination are often associated with diagnoses of clinical depression and anxiety (e.g., Clark et al., 2015). Table 2.8 presents some of the important findings on the negative effects of racism and other forms of otherism.

*The way … society views women … as less than human a lot of the time … in the context of sexual violence … how men often view lesbians as … these people they can "correct" through sexual violence and make them … a straight woman. (Ollen, Ameral, Palm Reed, & Hines, 2017, p. 115)*

The harmful effects of sexism have been a focus of social and political scientists for decades; attention to the harmful effects of heterosexism (the pathologizing of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual members of society) is much more recent. Accumulating evidence indicates that these, like other *isms*, are associated with a variety of problems. For example, blatant victimization and microaggressions (also called homonegative microaggressions) are associated with anxiety in LGBTQ college students (Seelman, Woodford, & Nicolazzo, 2017). There has been a particular focus on PTSD symptoms; research findings from several different kinds of sexual minority samples include evidence of PTSD in lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) persons responding to an online survey (Bandermann & Szymanski, 2014); bisexual men and women (Ovrebow et al., 2018); several samples of LGB participants (Alessi, Martin, Gyamerah, & Meyer, 2013; Roberts, Austin, Corliss, Vandermorris, & Koenen, 2010); samples of women identifying as lesbians (Kaysen et al., 2014; Szymanski & Balsam, 2011); and a sample of women identifying as lesbian or bisexual (Dworkin et al., 2018).



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## Box 2.1 Cases of Racial/Ethnic Microaggression

*I am a patient care technician at (a hospital in central Alabama). I assist the nurses, handle vital signs, draw blood, give baths, help patients, etc. One night while at work I was asked to handle a patient's blood work. I gathered everything I needed and went into my patient's room to draw his blood. The patient was a White, middle age male. When I entered his room, I told him what I had come to do and his exact words were, "Get this nigger bitch out of my room now!" ….One of the White, male nurses heard all of the fuss and came in…. When the patient saw the White male nurse being respectful and nice towards me he calmed down…. I didn't know if I should've walked out of the room, cursed him out, stuck him on purpose, or ignored him…. I will never forget this day. (Wilson, 2017)*

*Larry recalled in his youth, little White boys pointing toy machine guns at him and yelling "Gook, gook!" Larry said, "[It's] hurtful (pause), and I think that my being able to remember so vividly the way they looked, the way the guns looked (pause) now, 12, 15 years later, I guess it tells me that it was a hard thing…. When you recall [a racist] story, all of the feelings come back … and now, you're feeling like it's still with you and it's there." (Nadal et al., 2012)*

*So I had a student in eighth grade last year where he knew my full last name was [Hussein] and he would speak in this accent but totally not from where I'm from. And he would call me like a Taliban. I felt like, "You need to stop." And it was getting to a point where he started calling me a terrorist at work and I didn't appreciate that. (Dominguez & Menjivar, 2014)*

*There are times when people would be so interested in the idea that I am Asian that they would ask me (1) what type of Asian am I? and (2) what is your last name? What is worse is when they say, "Let me guess your last name," and they start listing off these common Asian names, like Kim, Wong, Lee, Tran, etc. First of all, it is offensive that you would automatically assume I have an Asian last name. Even if I do have one, assuming shows that judgment and racial stereotypes are engraved in our modern American society. Second, these last names include Koreans, Japanese, Vietnamese, Chinese, etc. This is another example of how all Asians are grouped together as one large entity, and our individual identities are lost under this. (Mukkamala & Suyemoto, 2018, p. 38)*

## Contexts of Violence and Protection: Religion in the United States

*We have a lot of perpetrators that blame religion and say things like, "You know it's my duty as a father. It's our religious belief that the father is the mentor and the teacher of the family, and I am teaching my daughters how to have sex." We hear that a lot. (Tishelman & Fontes, 2017, p. 123)*



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**Table 2.8** The Effects of Racism and Other Otherisms

| Contextual Factor | Author | Focus | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| Negative effects of racism and other otherisms | Keum et al. (2018) | Analysis of data collected from 564 Asian American women | Gendered racial microaggression scores were associated with sexism, racial microaggressions, depressive symptoms, and internalized racism. |
| | Longmire-Avital and McQueen (2019) | 149 Black women from across the United States who completed an anonymous online survey | Race-related stress was significantly correlated with emotional eating—a predictor of obesity. |
| | Choi et al. (2017) | Online survey of 353 Asian American students recruited from a large predominantly White public university in the Midwest | Racial microaggressions were a significant predictor of depressive symptoms although ethnic identity served as a buffer against the negative effects of microaggression experiences. |
| | Hollingsworth et al. (2017) | Online survey of 135 African American students (56.3% female) recruited online from large, predominantly White institution in the Midwest | Self-reported racial microaggressions implying invisibility, low achievement, undesirability, and environmental invalidations were significantly positively correlated with suicide ideation. The everyday experience of verbal, behavioral, and environmental racial slights or insults was associated with increased perceptions of being a burden on others, which in turn was associated with increased thoughts of suicide. |

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| Contextual Factor | Author | Focus | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Mouzon et al. (2017) | Data from the National Survey of American Life: Coping with Stress in the 21st Century (February 2001–June 2003), which included interviews with 3,570 African Americans ages 18 years and older | Racial discrimination was associated with poorer self-rated physical and oral health, higher odds of all types of health problems, greater number of health problems, as well as total number of chronic health problems, and more daily interference from pain problems and from the total number of chronic health problems. |
| | Busse, Yim, Campos, and Marshburn (2017) | 158 (92 female, 66 male) students at California universities and community colleges. 57.3% Latinx, and 42.7% non-Latinx (White: 15.4%, Asian: 14.7%, other: 12.6%) took stress tests | Latinx ethnicity predicted (a) heightened cortisol reactivity and (b) more pronounced cortisol recovery through discrimination experiences (mediator), with a significant indirect effect only among males. |
| | Clark et al. (2015) | Interview data from National Survey of American Life (NSAL), a nationally representative survey of the mental health of noninstitutionalized US adults; sample was 3,570 African American and 1,623 Caribbean Black adults, 18 years and older | Compared with African American and Caribbean Black adults who have experienced infrequent, low levels of discrimination, African American and Caribbean Black adults who have experienced universally elevated levels of discrimination were significantly more likely to meet DSM-IV criteria for the mood and substance use disorders. |
| | Anglin, Lighty, Greenspoon, and Ellman (2014) | 650 young adults from large urban public university system in the Northeast with high proportion of ethnic minorities and | 70% of the sample reported racial discrimination. Self-reported experiences of racial discrimination were significantly related to anxiety and |

*(Continued)*



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Table 2.8 *(Continued)*

| Contextual Factor | Author | Focus | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | immigrants completed self-report measures for psychosis risk and experiences of discrimination | depression and to subthreshold psychotic symptoms (e.g., perceptual disturbances). |
| | Donovan et al. (2013) | Online surveys on perceived racial macroaggressions (PRMa) and perceived racial microaggressions (PRMi), depression, and anxiety completed by 187 undergraduate students self-identifying as Black women | The two most common PRMi were being treated rudely or disrespectfully because of race (83%) and being ignored, overlooked, or not given service (in a restaurant, store, etc.) because of race (80%). PRMa and PRMi both significantly predicted depressive symptoms; however, PRMa made a stronger unique contribution. |
| | Huynh (2012) | Examined frequency and impact of microaggressions in Latinx ($n$ = 247) and Asian American ($n$ = 113) adolescents (57% girls) from two Southern California schools with high proportion of Asian and Latinx students | Both Latinx and Asian American adolescents perceive and are affected by microaggressions. Latinx adolescents reported more negative treatment (e.g., ignored by clerk) microaggressions than Asian adolescents. Frequency of microaggressions was associated with more depressive and somatic symptoms, with microaggressions associated more strongly with depressive symptoms in girls than boys. |
| | Kaholokula et al. (2012) | Examined the correlation between self-reported experiences of racism and two physiological stress indices (cortisol level and blood | Native Hawaiians reporting more experiences of racism had significantly lower average cortisol levels and significantly higher systolic blood pressure |

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| Contextual Factor | Author | Focus | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | pressure) in 146 adult Native Hawaiians | than those reporting less racism. |
| | Grekin (2012) | Surveyed African American and White college freshman with self-report scales assessing frequency and stressfulness of racist experiences as well as alcohol use | 90% of African American students reported experiencing at least one racist event in their lifetime. Racism-related stress predicted alcohol consequences for both African American and Caucasian college students. Frequency of racist events predicted negative alcohol consequences for Caucasian but not African American students. |
| | Goebert, Else, Matsu, Chung-Do, and Chang (2011) | Survey responses from 677 Hawaiian high school students on interpersonal youth violence and risk and protective factors | More than half the students had experienced cyberbullying in the last year. Cyberbullying victimization increased the likelihood of substance use, with binge drinking and marijuana use both more than doubled and the likelihood of depression increased by almost 2 times, and suicide attempts by 3.2 times. |
| | Pieterse, Carter, Evans, and Walter (2010) | Examined perceptions of racial and/or ethnic discrimination, racial climate, and trauma-related symptoms among 289 racially diverse college undergraduates from a large state institution in the mid-Atlantic region | Racial and/or ethnic discrimination was a significant and positive predictor of trauma-related symptoms for Black students. For Asian students, perceived discrimination and racial climate both had a significant, positive, bivariate association with trauma-related symptoms. |

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*We had the adoptive children who were molested by their adopted dad, a strong Mormon influence in play there.... Part of his grooming process was to teach his boys, and to keep the teaching and training at home.... The strong tie of closeness, or family, of his being in charge, again needing to train and be the teacher, when in actuality it was a grooming process. But it was very interesting when it came to court in trial, the strong Mormon contingency that was present to support the perpetrator. (Tishelman & Fontes, 2017, p. 123)*

A final macrosystem variable that can work as both a risk factor for and protective factor against family violence is religion. The "we" in the above quotations are participants in a study of child forensic interviewers and child advocacy center directors responding to questions about abuse in religious contexts and religious justifications for abuse. As we show in this section, some organized religions have been criticized, particularly by children's and women's rights advocates, for supporting—or at least not adequately resisting—subjugation of women and children in ways that may result in their abuse (e.g., Hoffmann, Ellison, & Bartkowski, 2017; Knickmeyer, Levitt, & Horne, 2010; Tishelman & Fontes, 2017). By contrast, spirituality and religiosity, particularly intrinsic religiosity, can sometimes serve as protective factors reducing the likelihood of abuse or reducing its negative effects (Sabri, Simonet, & Campbell, 2018).

Conservative Protestants include two main groups—fundamentalists, who believe in the literalness and infallibility of the Bible, and evangelicals, who may see the Bible more metaphorically (Ellison, Burr, & McCall, 2003). Fundamentalists of any major religion are likely to believe that their holy texts are inerrant (i.e., infallible) and literally true. When feminists and others are critical of the negative role of religion in family violence, it is often the religious culture of the fundamentalist branches of different religions that are the primary concern.

## Religions as Cultural Systems

Any adequate consideration of the role of religion in family violence must recognize that within the world's major religions and spiritual orientations there are countless sects and denominations, and the belief systems held by different sects within a broader religious grouping may vary widely. Indeed, it is possible that the highly conservative or fundamentalist factions of different religions have more in common with each other than with the more liberal denominations within the same religion. To understand the role of religion in family violence, it is essential to recognize religious groups as cultural groups, in which cultural identity becomes part of people's worldviews and influences their cognitions, with family violence conceptualized in ways that are consistent with cultural norms (Ammar, Couture-Carron, Alvi, & San Antonio, 2014; Ross, 2014). Each religious community has its own subjective meanings for the roles of "husband," "wife," and "children." Each has scripture with descriptions of family roles and relationships—descriptions that



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## Box 2.2 Excerpts from Holy Books on Family Relationships

**The Bible, Old and New Testaments**

- To the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain, you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Genesis 3:16).
- If anyone sets his heart on being a bishop he desire a noble task... He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church? (Timothy 3:1–5).
- Discipline your son while there is still hope; do not set your heart on his destruction (Proverbs 19:18).
- He who spares the rod hates his son (Proverbs 13:24).
- "I took this woman (in marriage) and slept with her and did not find proof of virginity in her," then the girl's father and mother shall take the proof of her virginity to the elders of the town, at the town gate ... if, on the other hand, the accusation is true and no proof of the girl's virginity is found, then they shall bring her out to the door of her father's house and the men of her town shall stone her to death... She has committed an outrage in Israel by playing the prostitute in her father's house; you shall rid yourselves of this wickedness (Deuteronomy 22:14–21).
- To the men he said "for man did not originally spring from woman, but woman was made out of man; and man was not created for woman's sake, but woman for the sake of man" (I Corinthians 11:8–9).

**The Qur'an and Other Islamic Holy Writings**

- Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because God has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what God would have them guard. As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (Next), refuse to share their beds, (And last) beat them (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them Means (of annoyance): For God is Most High, great (above you all) (Ayah 34 of Surah 4).
- In inheritance, the son inherits as much as two daughters (Quran 4:11).

**Hindu Texts**

- A virtuous woman should serve her husband like a god (Manu 5:147–164).
- A wife, a son, and a slave, these three are declared to have no property; the wealth which they earn is (acquired) for him to whom they belong (Manu 8:416).
- In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent (Manu 5:148).

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often become prescriptions, especially with the modern global movement toward religious fundamentalism (e.g., Herriot, 2009). According to fundamentalist interpretations of the scriptures of all the major religions, a woman's place is in the home, where her duties include raising her husband's children, serving as his helpmate, and respecting his authority in all earthly matters (Bottoms, Goodman, Tolou-Shams, Diviak, & Shaver, 2015; Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009; Hoffmann et al., 2017; Stephens & Walker, 2015). In the face of feminist and human rights efforts to achieve gender equality, such tenets can lead to frustration and conflict in families as well as directly to violence and maltreatment.

Consider the excerpts from several major holy books provided in Box 2.2. How do you interpret them? What are their implications for relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children? Do they seem to provide a rationale for men's dominance over women and parental beating of children? Do they lend themselves to interpretations providing justification for violence within family relationships?

Obviously, these passages do not provide all the relevant messages in the holy writings of the religions represented in the box. Each religion also has scripture with very different messages from these. Moreover, within every major religion there are controversies over the interpretations of these and other texts (e.g., Hassouneh-Phillips, 2003; Levitt & Ware, 2006).

Consider now the excerpts in Box 2.3. These excerpts have quite different messages from those in Box 2.2, and are emphasized by the more liberal congregational cultures preferring to focus on messages of mutual respect in the Bible (Levitt & Ware, 2006), the Qur'an (Rahim, 2000), and Hindu religious texts (Rahim, 2000). These passages are often cited by reformists arguing that despite the traditional mistreatment of women and children within presumably religious homes and communities, it is possible to seek equal human rights and still stay within a religious fold, particularly if faith leaders can be actively engaged in promoting the more child- and wife-supportive passages in holy texts (e.g., Choi, Elkins, & Disney, 2016; Rahim, 2000; Ross, 2014).

If religious people simply adopted the values expressed in Box 2.3, would that reduce family violence? Or is increased secularization the only effective response to violence in families? Does the increasing political power of the religious right, both in the United States and abroad, endanger women and threaten to enshrine corporal punishment of children, even as European countries ban it from homes and schools? Can women fight for their rights for freedom from violence and still be at ease with their religions? Can faith leaders who have been teaching that children must be punished severely to ensure obedience and women must be convinced by any means to be submissive be led to change their tunes? Should they be? Do you have any ideas about how this might be done?



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## Box 2.3 Different Messages from Holy Books

**The Bible, The New Testament**

- Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy… In this same way husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church (Paul, Ephesians 5:25–28).
- Fathers, do not exasperate (scold or punish too harshly) your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Paul, Ephesians 6:4).

**The Qur'an**

- And among His signs is that He created for you mates from among yourselves that you may live in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between you; verily, in that are signs for people who reflect (30:21).
- None honors women except he who is honorable, and none despises them except he who is despicable (Hadith).
- Whosoever has a daughter and he does not bury her alive, does not insult her, and does not favor his son over her, God will enter him into Paradise (Ibn Hanbal, No. 1957). Whosoever supports two daughters till they mature, he and I will come in the day of judgment as this (and he pointed with his two fingers held together).

**Prophet Muhammad**

- The best of you is the best to his family, and I am the best among you to my family. The most perfect believers are the best in conduct and best of you are those who are best to their wives (Ibn-Hanbal, No. 7396).

**Hindu Sacred Texts**

- Where women are honored, there the gods are pleased… Where the female relations live in grief, the family soon wholly perishes; but that family where they are not unhappy ever prospers (Laws of Manu, as cited in Radhakrishnan & Moore, 1989, pp. 189–190).
- He only is a perfect man who consists (of three persons united): his wife, himself, and his offspring (Laws of Manu, as cited in Radhakrishnan & Moore, 1989, p. 190).
- The wife and husband, being the equal halves of one substance, are equal in every aspect; therefore, both should join and take equal parts in all work, religious and secular (The Vedas, as cited in Polisi, 2003).

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### Controversies Over the Interpretation of Texts

A good example of religious text controversies between conservative practitioners of a religion and more liberal practitioners can be found in a qualitative study by Levitt and Ware (2006). Levitt interviewed 25 senior and



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midlevel faith leaders representing Conservative Protestants, Mainline Christians, Nontraditional Christians, and Orthodox Christians, as well as Conservative, Orthodox, and Reformed Jews, and American Islamic and Sunni Islamic Muslims regarding the role of women in the family. Regarding the issue of whether holy texts dictated that women should be submissive to men, Levitt reported "It was striking that faith leaders on both sides of the submission argument cited scripture as the foundation for their exegesis, often referring to the same text, pointing to the centrality of the interpretive process" (p. 1180). Despite these controversies over the interpretation of Biblical texts, Levitt found that "91% of the leaders were concerned that teachings of submission could be interpreted to support abusive behavior. Some leaders believed this distortion occurred only when teachings were misconstrued, whereas for other leaders, submissive teachings by definition created unbalanced power dynamics that increased the chances of IPV" (p. 1186).

## Religious Affiliation and Religious Conservatism as Risk Factors for Family Violence

### Child Maltreatment

Consider the following cases from the files of social service agencies, police departments, and prosecutors' offices nationwide (Bottoms et al., 2015):

> …a medical neglect case *involved parents who "did not seek medical care/hospitalization. After several days of seizures and vomiting, child died. Parent used prayer to heal." In a* ridding-evil case*, a respondent said that an abused girl's father told the authorities he was beating "the devil out of her with the Bible's permission." A* religious authority case *involved child pornography magazines with children engaged in various sexual activities….*"*[The] main defendant was the head minister of this city's largest Baptist church" (italics added).*

These three examples were selected from 249 cases reported to authorities, illustrating three types of religion-related child maltreatment: maltreatment perpetrated by persons with religious authority, such as ministers and priests; the withholding of medical care for religious reasons; and abusive attempts to rid a child of presumptive evil. Does it shock you to think of cruel, painful, often life-threatening harm being done to children in the name of religion, indeed in the name of God? Have you read similar stories? Do you know of children who have been subjected to forms of maltreatment such as these? Certainly, the idea of "beating the devil out of children" has such a long history in the United States, and one might forget its connection to organized religion—particularly conservative Protestantism. Even at an exosystem ecological level, the larger the concentration of



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religious conservativism in a community, the higher the rate of child abuse (Breyer & MacPhee, 2015).

Despite the long commitment of some fundamentalist sects to corporal punishment, efforts to reduce the use of spanking as a "disciplinary" tactic have met with some success, even among Conservative Protestants. For example, in an experiment assessing an antispanking education project in a sample of 129 college students (70% female) at a private, Christian university, Miller-Perrin and Perrin (2017) found that, especially among Conservative Protestants, interventions focusing on both empirical research and progressive biblical interpretations of scripture can reduce positive attitudes toward, and intentions to use, spanking. What are your thoughts about the groups for which such an intervention program might be effective? If you are a nonspanking advocate, what kinds of approaches do you think might be more effective in nonacademic communities?

Finally, as shown in this book, it is not only physical maltreatment that hurts. Consider a parent saying to a child, "God will punish you for your misbehavior." Do you think this statement is a form of psychological maltreatment? Why or why not? What is the likely effect of such a statement on the child? Do you think regular threats of this sort are more or less abusive than corporal punishment? Why? Child medical neglect can also have extremely harmful effects, including death. In Chapter 5, we consider various forms of religion-based neglect, and the legal and social services controversies related to them.

## Intimate Partner Violence

> *I would sit there and put on the minister's wife mask. I would watch him preach … nobody could read my emotions, nobody could see the pain and the hurt, you know, because nobody could help … nobody wanted to make the effort to help me and, you know, it was during one of those sermons … that I had bruises on the side … in my chest the size of his fist and I'm barely even able to really function … because I'm so sore and God just told me … he [God] said, "It's an epidemic in my church, you're not the only who is suffering like this." (Knickmeyer et al., 2010, p. 107)*

In general, feminists and proponents of international human rights have argued that writings from all the major religious texts have been used—and misused—within patriarchal systems to maintain the power and authority of men, and to keep women and children in subordinate positions, by force if necessary (e.g., Choi et al., 2016; Drumm, Popescu, & Riggs, 2009; Knickmeyer et al., 2010; Koch & Ramirez, 2010; Levitt & Ware, 2006; Nash, 2006; Ross, 2014; Stephens & Walker, 2015). From this perspective, the problem is not so much with the religions per se as with the misuse of their texts for political purposes, specifically for maintaining male dominance. It is probably not coincidental that the feminist movement, the international human rights movement, and the new conservatism (which is closely tied to



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religious conservatism) have acted as competing forces over the past few decades. As women around the globe have fought to gain greater educational, employment, and political opportunities, and as their struggles have become incorporated into the human rights movement, political forces directed at maintaining the status quo have united with fundamentalist and other conservative religious leaders striving to maintain a hierarchical social structure with clearly delineated gender roles and power resting firmly in the hands of men (e.g., Choi et al., 2016; Gül & Gül, 2000; Haggard, Kaelen, Saroglou, Klein, & Rowatt, 2018; Knickmeyer et al., 2010; Koch & Ramirez, 2010; Mogahed & Chouhoud, 2017).

## Positive Roles of Religion and Religiosity

### Positive Aspects of Conservative Protestant Child-Rearing

Some efforts have been made to identify the potentially positive aspects of conservative Protestant child-rearing techniques. In a longitudinal study of 456 children from the National Survey of Families and Households, Ellison, Musick, and Holden (2011) found that although spanking that began in or persisted into middle childhood was generally associated with difficulties, children whose mothers belonged to conservative Protestant groups exhibited minimal adverse effects of corporal punishment as compared to children from other (or no) religious backgrounds. Such a finding appears consistent with the Evangelical Christian view (e.g., Bartkowski, 1995) that chastising a child with a neutral object (i.e., a rod) rather than a loving hand is good for children when combined with affection and praise. However, belief in the effectiveness of "the rod" runs counter to the dominant modes of thinking in the social service domain as well as in the bulk of research concerning the effects of child maltreatment—to be discussed in later chapters. What are your thoughts about this issue?

Several studies have shown that religion can play a positive role in human life. In general, both religiosity and spirituality have been identified as protective factors against a broad range of personal ills, many of which are risk factors for violence in families. For example, among both adolescents and adults, religiosity has shown an inhibitory effect on engagement in delinquent and criminal activities (Corlis & Damashek, 2019; Holmes & Lockman, 2012; Li, 2014), and on engagement in risky sexual activities (George Dalmida et al., 2016). Moreover, religious coping (i.e., using religion to make sense of and deal with adversity) is associated with resilience and recovery in young adult survivors of physical and/or sexual maltreatment (Schaefer, Howell, Schwartz, Bottomley, & Crossnine, 2018). In one of the few studies of outcomes of childhood maltreatment within Jewish communities, a history of sexual abuse was associated with greater depression, higher anxiety, lower subjective well-being, and a greater likelihood of a psychiatric diagnosis across denominations; however, both general and intrinsic religiousness had



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## Box 2.4 Religious Counsel for Battered Women

*My husband was verbally abusive and very controlling. We were very involved in our church, so I had long been indoctrinated into believing that getting a divorce is a sin. I was told by the people at my church that the reason I was unhappy in my marriage was that I didn't submit enough to my husband. (Shore, 2010, para. 3)*

*I have seen it presented that if you suffer at the hands of your husband that you will receive* ajars *[rewards] from Allah for doing so, so do not help him reform, do not get counseling, do not try to seek a better way. Just accept his abuse and* Allah *will bless you for it … you know, accept the oppression because when you die you will go to heaven. (Hassouneh-Phillips, 2003, p. 688)*

*I don't go to them [religious leaders] because I went to one one time when it [abuse] first started and begged for help to get out and they told me to just pray. Like praying does not stop his [perpetrator's] fist from hitting my face. Sorry. (Gezinski, Gonzalez-Pons, & Rogers, 2019, p. 12)*

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a buffering effect in regard to anxiety and depression (Rosmarin, Pirutinsky, Appel, & Kaplan, 2018).

What are your views on the findings of studies such as these on a positive role of religion in the outcomes experienced by survivors of abuse? What limitations do you see to the studies? What are their implications for leaders of religious communities who learn about abuse being done to one or more of their members? What are the implications for counselors working with families in which corporal punishment and child maltreatment are occurring? Should the response to such families vary depending on whether they belong to a conservative faith group or not? If the parents are very affectionate with their children but believe that severe physical punishment is God's will, should the response to the family be different from what it would be if the parents seem perpetually angry and abusive? Should the counselors be investigating levels of religiosity in the children as well as the parents in making judgments about the potential outcomes of the maltreatment?

### Religiosity and Spirituality as Factors Reducing or Ameliorating Spousal Maltreatment

As in regard to so many other issues regarding maltreatment, relationships between religiosity and spousal maltreatment are complex. For example, in a



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sample of urban African American women who had recently been subject to IPV and were also dealing with HIV, spirituality was associated with higher risk of mental health problems in maltreated women who had HIV but not in women who did not have HIV (Kaufman, Thurston, Howell, & Crossnine, 2019, February 11).Why do you think this pattern might occur?

> *I've always believed in God, but during this turmoil [IPV], it was like God had abandoned me. And I come to find out, I come to realize God didn't abandon me, I walked away from him. So it took from my pastor, the support from my family, to help me get where I am. I still have a ways to go, and I'm not going to stop 'til I get there. (Angel, age 42) (Anderson, Renner, & Danis, 2012)*

Although Angel's personal spirituality proved helpful to her in dealing with IPV, women's religiosity has sometimes proved a burden to women suffering from spousal violence. Historically, across religions, a typical response of clergy has been to tell women to stay with their husbands, keep the family together, and try harder not to anger their husbands. Box 2.4 provides several of these women's stories. What similarities and differences do you see in these stories? What do you think may be the sources underlying the clerics' efforts to preserve the marriages of these women from diverse religious backgrounds?

Personal accounts of the response of religious authorities to women's experience of maltreatment often indicate that the message to battered wives is that suffering is good, that it helps ensure a place in heaven. Tracy (2011) provides numerous examples of the failure of evangelical Christian pastors to address—and even to recognize—IPV among their practitioners. Pyles (2007), in a study of community response to IPV in Wyoming, found that in some cases churches proved to be a major source of support for many survivors of IPV, but in other cases, churches contributed to the problems faced by battered woman.

In regard to Muslim Americans, IPV occurs approximately as often as it does in Christian and nonaffiliated communities; however, Muslim victims are more likely to seek advice from faith leaders. In one Muslim sample, 13% of the respondents said they knew at least one victim of partner maltreatment in their faith community. This rate is similar to rates of 15% of Catholics, 17% of Protestants, 14% of nonaffiliated, and 15% of the general public; rates within the Jewish community appear to be lower, at 7% (Mogahed & Chouhoud, 2017). These American Muslim respondents reported that a faith leader was informed of IPV cases about half the time, a significantly higher rate than any other faith group (Mogahed & Chouhoud, 2017).

Although there continues to be strong evidence of patriarchal doctrines that increase risk of IPV against women (Celik & Sabri, 2012; Choi et al., 2016; Kaelen, Saroglou, Klein, & Rowatt, 2018; Knickmeyer et al., 2010; Koch & Ramirez, 2010), religious leaders from many different faiths have



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made strides to combat IPV in their communities. Because so many family members turn to clergy for help in dealing with issues of family violence, many religious organizations have responded with declarations and position statements designed to improve the response of their clergy to victims of violence in families. For example, Kaufman (2010) describes progress within the broader Jewish community, noting the growing number of books that are helping to empower abused Jewish women to seek help and the growing number of programs designed to assist them. Hancock, Ames, and Behnke (2014) describe a program designed to protect rural Latinx immigrant women from IPV. The leaders of the project collaborated with local service providers to recruit church leaders willing to participate in workshops where the resource materials were presented. In post-workshop evaluations more than half of the participating pastors indicated their intention to use most of the resources provided in the workshop—particularly incorporating content on family violence into family day activities and talking with and assisting abused women. An IPV training project for Seventh-Day Adventist pastors addressed three major goals: (a) increasing understanding of the dynamics in abusive relationships, (b) providing information on IPV resources and services, and (c) encouraging pastors to be proactive in addressing IPV. Posttraining evaluations provided evidence of progress toward all three goals (Drumm et al., 2018). These kinds of educational programs for pastors appear to be greatly needed across denominations.

Clearly, the relationships among religious affiliation, religiosity, endorsement of various kinds of maltreatment in families, and responses to maltreatment are complex; however, increasing attention is being given to these relationships. Efforts within different faith groups, as within social and public service agencies, are being directed at shining greater light on family violence behind closed doors and patriarchal pulpits, and developing programs to decrease that violence. Based on your reading of this section, how likely would you be, given your own religious and spiritual beliefs and any religious affiliation you may have, to turn to or recommend faith leaders to help you address abusive situations?

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## SUMMARY

All family violence takes place within a set of contexts, and those contexts can contribute to the occurrence of the violence, the extent to which the violence is judged as abusive, the response to the violence, and the possibility of interventions to address the violence. The macrosystem in which maltreatment of children, partners, and the elderly take place is itself a culture of violence, as evidenced by: (1) patterns of incarceration and legalized capital punishment; (2) protection and tolerance of firearm ownership; (3) media violence, pornography, and various forms of cyber violence; (4) poverty and social and economic inequality; and (5) racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, and other otherisms. All of these macrosystem contexts influence and are influenced by maltreatment of family members within homes in the United States. Another set of macrosystem contexts overlapping the others are the religious contexts that influence perceptions of family roles, responsibilities, and rights within communities. Of particular concern to the public health community is evidence that the beliefs and values of some religious communities, particularly the conservative branches of all major religions, can contribute to maltreatment of children and women.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think of the portrayal of the United States as a set of cultures of violence? In your daily life, how much exposure do you get to evidence of incarceration, firearm availability, media violence, pornography, poverty and social and economic inequality, and racism? In what ways might efforts to reduce all of these macrosystem factors help reduce violence in families?
2. In your view, why has the United States become the most incarcerating country in the world and why is it responsible for such a high rate of capital punishment? In what ways might family stability be increased and maltreatment within homes decreased by the development of alternatives to incarceration and the death penalty as ways of dealing with people considered to be dangerous in some way to their communities or the larger society?
3. How do you explain the explosion of firearm use in this country? Have you personally ever felt that you or someone you know might be at risk because of the availability of firearms? Have you ever taken any steps to try to reduce the availability of firearms? What steps might be taken to provide greater protection to people from the risks that firearms pose?
4. Have you noticed the prevalence of violence in your own viewing of movies, television, music videos, video games, and Internet use? Reflect on your experiences. Has this ubiquitous violence affected your view of violence in everyday life? Do you view violence as a "normal" part of life or something that happens on rare occasions? Is it something that occurs primarily among strangers or within our interpersonal relationships?



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5. Why is it important to consider poverty and income inequality when seeking to understand why family violence occurs and what can be done on a macrosystem level to help reduce violence in families? How might reducing income inequality at a macrosystem level contribute to lowering levels of violence within the family microsystem? There is considerable evidence that income inequality is getting worse in the United States. What are the implications for families?

6. Why is it important to consider racism and other isms when seeking to understand why family violence occurs and what can be done on a macrosystem level to help reduce violence in families? To what extent do you think efforts are being made in this country today to address racism? How might reducing racism at a macrosystem level contribute to lowering levels of violence within the family microsystem?

7. What are your views on spanking? What are your opinions with respect to the views offered by experts and international human rights groups? If you are against spanking, how would you respond to someone who says, "Of course I will spank my child. I was spanked and I turned out fine"? If you are in favor of spanking, how would you respond to the experts' arguments against spanking and the empirical evidence indicating that spanking is a predictor of later aggression and psychological problems?

8. To what extent do religious beliefs and interpretations of holy books seem to provide justifications for mistreating family members? If abusers assert that their holy books justify their behavior, what arguments can be directed at those assertions?

9. Can a person be a devout member of his/her religion and refrain from mistreating family members, or would he/she be violating religious tenets by not being punitive?

10. If you were asked to identify "religion-related" cases of child maltreatment, what kinds of maltreatment would come to mind?

11. Why do you think different religious groups differ in their uses of and opinions concerning corporal punishment?

12. Can spanking, hitting, or kicking be labeled abusive if parents believe they are just doing what their religion tells them to do?

13. What response do you think men victimized by partner violence might get from a conservative religious community as compared to a more liberal religious community?

14. Do you believe it is right for officials to intervene in cases involving religious maltreatment of children? Should the parents be sentenced to jail time? Why or why not?

15. What should be done about religious leaders who justify, discount, or deny that IPV occurs in their congregations?



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