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THE RISK OF VIOLENCE AND INTIMATE PARTNER CHOICE WITHIN A RISK SOCIETY

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THE RISK OF VIOLENCE AND
INTIMATE PARTNER CHOICE WITHIN A RISK SOCIETY

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky

By

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Lexington, Kentucky

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Lexington, Kentucky

2012

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

THE RISK OF VIOLENCE AND INTIMATE PARTNER CHOICE WITHIN A RISK SOCIETY

This dissertation examines the influence of competing risks in shaping individuals' choices about potential intimate relationships. According to Ulrich Beck's "risk society" theory, the individualization of social risks has direct and measurable consequences for the ways people organize and evaluate potential intimate relationships (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995, 2002, 2004; Giddens, 1994; Lupton, 2006). This study investigates the ways in which subjective or identity-related risks hypothesized by scholars of late modernity shape the perception and the actual risk of dating violence. Empirical research on dating violence identifies many objective "risk factors" related to a person's chances of experiencing intimate partner violence; however studies investigating perceptions of dating risk from the subject's perspective sometimes reveal more personal concerns and priorities. To date, no intimate partner violence research explicitly utilizes a conceptualization of risk informed by risk society theories. The present study explores the potential for utilizing risk society concepts in explaining the relationships between perceptions of instrumental risks and identity-related risks, and how these risk perceptions may impact involvement in dating violence.

KEYWORDS: Intimate partner violence, risk perception,
dating violence, identity, intimate relationships

Adam J. Pritchard

April 16, 2012

THE RISK OF VIOLENCE AND
INTIMATE PARTNER CHOICE WITHIN A RISK SOCIETY

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Chapter One

Introduction

Introduction

Everyday life in contemporary society is frequently and pervasively influenced by discourses about risks. The widespread availability of information made possible by mass media, education, and information technologies today provides an unprecedented level of critical awareness among citizens in the industrialized West, and in particular the United States and Europe. The types of risks an average person is regularly made aware of range in scale from global issues (i.e., global warming, health pandemics), to state-level issues (i.e., economic crises, terrorism), to local community issues (i.e., crime rates, severe weather forecasts), and even to the consequences of personal choices (i.e., side effects of medication, risk of sexually transmitted diseases). With the proliferation of information about risks in society, the responsibility of each individual to first know about these risks and second to make appropriate choices to “manage” these risks becomes paramount. A responsible citizen is regularly required to negotiate complex needs and interests on multiple levels in the face of evolving and conflicting information about the riskiness of these choices. If a person is looking for answers (or even if they are not, as the case may often be) a myriad of opinions, conflicting facts, and additional questions are readily available with few guarantees as to the reliability of the information at hand. Perhaps the only unifying certainty is that contemporary life appears to be a series of choices unique to each individual about which facts to believe, which risks to prioritize, and ultimately who to blame for the confusion that will inevitably ensue from such a dilemma.

Sociologists Anthony Giddens in his discussions of reflexive modernity (Giddens, 1990, 1991) and Ulrich Beck through his conceptualization of a “risk society” (Beck, 1992) have located the proliferation of individualized risk discourses within essential changes in late modern societies. To put it briefly, the critique by modern institutions including science and constitutional government against their

institutional predecessors did not cease once these new institutions became the status-quo. Instead, modernity has reflexively turned the critical lens upon itself and has in some ways undermined its own institutional legitimacy. This is because late modern societies are well equipped to identify the risks and hazards facing society, but are by virtue of this same critical expertise unable to define with certainty the normatively right ways to respond to them. Elsewhere, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) argue that an "institutionalized individualization" (*individualisierung*) has emerged as a micro-level consequence of living in a risk society. This new social dynamic stems from the emergence and proliferation of real, uncontrollable, technologically-based hazards and in turn underpins the individualized re-examination of other more mundane risks that had been previously unproblematic. Structural change in the organization of households, in particular the emerging distinctions between married and cohabitating couples is frequently cited by risk scholars as evidence that individuals are rejecting existing social structures in various practical, creative, and idiosyncratic ways (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Vogler, 2005); or as Beck puts it, "disembedding without reembedding" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. xxii).

This dissertation examines individuals' choices about intimate partnership, arguably one of the most basic levels of social integration. The risk society is taken as the historical and social backdrop for this analysis, exploring the consequences of societal-level risk discourses on how individuals manage their private lives. From a risk society perspective, the individualization of social risks has direct and measurable consequences for the ways people organize and evaluate potential intimate relationships (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995, 2002, 2004; Giddens, 1994; Lupton, 2006a). In particular, this project investigates the ways in which *subjective or identity-related risks* hypothesized by scholars of late modernity operate within the context of dating violence. Empirical research on dating violence identifies many "risk factors" related to a person's chances of experiencing intimate partner violence; however studies investigating perceptions of dating risk from the subject's perspective sometimes reveal very different concerns and priorities. To date, no intimate partner violence research explicitly utilizes a

conceptualization of risk informed by risk society theories. The present study explores the potential for utilizing risk society concepts in explaining the relationship between perceptions of relationship risk and involvement in dating violence.

Risk Society and Intimate Partner Violence

Ulrich Beck (1992) defines a modern *risk* as a "systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself" (p.21). Thus, modern risks have certain characteristics which distinguish them from other hazards. Beck contends that modern risks are *global* rather than *personal* in their consequences, are *not* easily perceived by the lay person, and arise not from *scarcity* but from *abundance* arising directly from modernization processes. In Chapter 2, I make the case for why intimate partner violence is an example of this type of modern risk. Despite the existence of family violence throughout history, the social construction of the domestic violence movement as a political and social problem is a historically recent phenomenon. The emergence of a domestic violence narrative at this historical moment, in my view, is dependent upon two important social facts: the presupposition of a nuclear family in Western industrial societies, and gains in political and social equality for women which challenged the insularity of the home. What emerges from reflexive late modern social critiques of the institutions of family and gender is a *global* or comprehensive challenge to the oppressed status of women in both society and within intimate relationships. This modern process allowed scholars, political activists, and lawmakers to problematize intimate partner violence and develop forms of expertise which measured and validated violent experiences.

The emerging public discourse about the risks of domestic violence and the pressures for equality within the home opened up an unprecedented *abundance* of possibilities for women's agency within intimate relationships. At the same time as traditional gender roles became subject to feminist critiques, social institutions were transforming in ways that began to allow women *as individuals* to

address their own material and economic needs outside of the context of marriage and family. For many women, this meant a wider range of *identity* options; whether to work, to marry, or to have children became a *choice* about who she wanted to be, rather than a largely taken-for-granted part of life. Importantly, the intimate relationship as a source of love and personal fulfillment began to distinguish itself from the institution of marriage as a social and economic necessity.

When intimate partner violence is considered through the lens of the risk society outlined above, I believe that two distinct influences emerge within violent intimate relationships. First, there is the *objective or instrumental need* created by intimate partner violence. Historically, this has been the focus of intimate partner violence research. Meeting these types of needs can be understood as risks that are structural, economic, or material in nature and include problems such as financial dependency, shared housing and property, access to health care, or children in common. These types of instrumental barriers are frequently identified as factors which prevent women from leaving abusive relationships (Jordan, 2004; Logan, Walker, Jordan, & Leukefeld, 2006; Renzetti, 2011; R. Walker, Logan, Jordan, & Campbell, 2004), and have also been identified as potential contributors to perpetration of partner violence (Benson, Fox, DeMaris, & Van Wyk, 2003; Renzetti, 2011). The material consequences of domestic violence may also include loss of income, loss of employment, or medical needs. Empowering women to address these types of *objective/instrumental needs* has long been the focus of the domestic violence movement and related research.

The second influence, more closely related to a risk society perspective, is that processes related to the *individualization of risk* increasingly require individuals to navigate potential hazards in their own personal and social lives and choices. Importantly, people are required to make sense of their own decisions in contexts where external validation of specific choices (e.g., through norms or traditions) is increasingly suspect. These risks give rise to forms of *subjective or identity needs*. The risk society posits an increasingly uncertain, normatively diverse, and individualized world where a carefully maintained

identity becomes both the refuge and responsibility of individual actors. *Subjective/identity needs* associated with intimate relationships include: love, sexual satisfaction, personal fulfillment, or a sense of having lived a meaningful or purposeful life. While structural barriers may explain why couples who are married or who have children in common engage in intimate violence and conflict for extended periods of time, these *subjective/identity needs* are frequently overlooked as influences on people's decisions to rationalize or remain in violent relationships. Research suggests that not only is economic investment an important factor in ongoing intimate partner violence, but so is emotional investment and psychological attachment (Buelna, Ulloa, & Ulibarri, 2009; Downey, Feldman, & Ayduk, 2000; Follingstad, Bradley, Helff, & Laughlin, 2002; Follingstad, Bradley, Laughlin, & Burke, 1999). It is my view that social and psychological factors influencing individuals' involvement in violent relationships have, for the most part, been previously viewed in the context of clinical psychology and psychopathology, and have not been properly characterized within the broader sociological context which influences these individual outcomes for many people.

The Present Study

In this dissertation, I argue that both *objective/instrumental needs* and *subjective/identity needs* are considered by individuals when they assess their own needs, risks, and priorities within a long-term intimate partnership. In a risk society, the process of meeting both types of needs through normatively validated activities is not meaningfully guaranteed. In the absence of societal validation for one's actions and choices, the individual becomes increasingly responsible for identifying, interpreting, and adjudicating information about risk in all areas of his or her life. As a consequence of this process, *subjective/identity needs* may take priority over *objective/instrumental needs*; the lack of socially valid "right choices" means the individual must first construct an identity that allows him or her to live with the consequences of personal decisions. I argue that this state of heightened self-efficacy can become problematic for the individual when actions intended to avoid the risks associated with meeting

subjective/identity needs create negative consequences for meeting one's *objective/instrumental needs*, or vice versa.

In order to investigate the possibility that these competing forms of need influence an individual's involvement in intimate partner violence, I examine the relationship between these forms of risk within the context of dating violence. Unlike intimate partner violence between married couples, young dating couples can experience violence in contexts which are less constrained by structural barriers (e.g., they are not legally married, and are less economically intertwined). Therefore, the examination of dating violence represents a better opportunity to examine the potential for violence arising from an individual's weighing of risks rather than instrumental realities.

In thinking about the risks associated with a potential dating partner, individuals are expected to negotiate the tension between *subjective/identity needs* and *objective/instrumental needs*. In terms of the potential impact, partner violence and abuse can be among the most severe risks associated with dating relationships. However, early in the partner selection process the risk of severe or escalating violence at the hands of a dating partner may not seem as likely or as important as more mundane, identity-related risks associated with starting intimate relationships such as the likelihood of infidelity, disagreements about the possibility of marriage or children, or the ability to sustain passion for each other. Alternatively, structural risks such as potential for employment or financial stability may be prioritized. Consequently, early experiences of dating violence may be minimized or overlooked as part of a routine compromise between ideals and reality. By locating the various risks being considered by an individual during partner selection within either *subjective/identity needs* or *objective/instrumental needs*, this dissertation seeks to understand the role these different forms of competing risks play in facilitating dating violence. In other words, does the relative importance of *subjective/identity risks* considered by an individual when choosing an intimate partner affect that individual's experience of relationship violence (an objective risk)?

Implications and Contributions

Unlike previous research which defines a person's risk of violence objectively using correlations between social phenomena and specific outcomes, my dissertation conceptualizes risk as a subjective understanding by individual social actors of their own needs and priorities. While so-called objective "risk factors" are important for understanding aggregate trends and patterns among groups of people, research investigating these types of constructs often neglects to investigate the subjective influences considered by the individuals whose decisions ultimately create the measured outcome. My dissertation seeks to address this gap by comparing the risks considered and weighed by young adults when thinking about a long-term intimate partnership. This conceptualization locates the sources and implications of risk within a broader theory of society. In doing so, this investigation of the implications of a risk society on decision-making within individual private lives contributes empirically to the ongoing theoretical debate on how public discourses about risk impact individuals within their day-to-day lives.

Methodologically, my dissertation investigates this study's constructs and hypothesis by both utilizing previously validated measures such as the Things I Worry About Scale (Millar & Gallagher, 1996), questions from the National Violence Against Women Survey (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000), and by developing a new instrument to measure perceptions of risk within dating violence. These instruments have been selected, adapted, or constructed with attention to factors previously investigated within the dating violence research literature. These specific conceptualizations of risk and violence are described in detail in Chapter 4.

Substantively, my dissertation contributes to the study of intimate partner violence and violence against women from an innovative, sociological perspective. Due to the widely interdisciplinary nature of violence against women research, Jordan (2009) recently argued that the study of violence against women and other forms of intimate violence need to move beyond isolated "research agendas" and towards a unified, scientific model incorporating more comprehensive constructs and theory-based

research. The need for more theoretical development in the violence against women area has been a long-standing recommendation among scholars (Crowell & Burgess, 1996; Kruttschnitt, Gartner, & Ferraro, 2002). My dissertation is an attempt to contribute to this dialogue by applying an emerging theory of society from my own discipline to this substantive area. By situating the potential for dating violence within a broadly-based theory of society, research into intimate partner violence can move beyond the tendency to only focus on individual abusers and survivors largely from a mental health standpoint. Certainly research has shown that mental illness can play a critical role in the likelihood of perpetration (Holtzworth-Munroe, Meehan, Herron, & Stuart, 1999; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994) and the severity of the impact of victimization (Coker, 2007; Coker, Smith, McKeown, & King, 2000; Sharps & Campbell, 1999). However, intimate partner violence also occurs across very broad contexts which defy our expectations based on other inquiries into social problems. Social class, sexuality, mental health status, disability, cultural norms, gender and substance abuse are all variables which have been demonstrated to predict intimate violence, and yet intimate partner violence also occurs in the absence of expected predictors. My dissertation attempts to locate the potential for violence outside of these “typical” problem constructs and risk factors, and to examine the role societal-level changes in access to meeting *subjective/identity needs* plays in individuals’ decisions to instigate or endure partner violence. This dissertation explores at least one possible pathway towards a model of partner violence capable of explaining why some intimate violence still occurs in those contexts for which previous explanatory factors cannot adequately account.

Chapter Two

Life in a Risk Society

Introduction

The theory of a “risk society” was first put forward by German sociologist Ulrich Beck in his book *Risk Society* (1992) in part as an effort to explain the growing political and social awareness of the potential for unchecked global catastrophe posed by modern technologies, such as the use of nuclear energy, industrial pollution, and biotechnology. Beck essentially argues that technological advances made possible by industrialization and rationalization are quickly outpacing society’s ability to safely control the consequences of that technology, and as a result the social institutions built upon the promises of the Enlightenment and science are now also increasingly vulnerable to reflexive self-critique. What emerged from this idea was the risk society, a comprehensive social theory that describes the social changes of the last half of the 20th century as an epochal shift in the fundamental driving forces behind modernity. Where industrialization and early modernity were organized around the distribution of *wealth* via the mechanism of social class, late modernity is being re-shaped by the distribution of *risks*. Emerging evidence in the two decades since the theory was first proposed suggests the risk society is a global world *coming to be* increasingly dominated by risk narratives and the social, political, and personal consequences of ubiquitous discourses about risk.

This chapter discusses the risk society theory on both a macro- and micro-level, since risk scholars in sociology are concerned both with the globalization of modern, techno-scientific hazards as well as the social and social-psychological consequences of emerging reflexive challenges to the social institutions that have historically been intended to guarantee safety and individual well-being. In Part I, I outline the risk society theory's key macro-level premises and present critiques of the perspective by two prominent areas of risk scholarship: the anthropologically based culturalist perspectives, and the politically focused governmentality perspectives. Part II examines in detail the major theoretical

assumptions of the risk society theory, and addresses these requirements as part of a micro-level application of this theory to the problem of intimate partner violence. This section makes the case that intimate partner violence can be conceptualized as a late-modern risk, arguing that the emergence of domestic violence as a public risk issue directly results from reflexive changes to the institutions of family, economy, scientific expertise, and identity politics. Part III discusses Beck's micro-level concept of "institutionalized individualization" said to emerge as a radical re-invention of individual identity within a risk society, thereby providing the theoretical basis for conceptualizations of identity risk in subsequent chapters.

PART I: Risk Society and Modernity

Reflexive Modernity Perspectives

Ulrich Beck's risk society (1992) is one of several prominent theories of late modernity which attempt to address the consequences of increasing reflexivity and corresponding legitimation crises within the societies of the industrial West. The term "late modernity" is only loosely defined by most theorists, but can generally be understood to refer to societies in which the forces of capitalism, industrialization, and rationalization have reached a level of material maturity predicted to an extent by classical sociological theories. The period of late modernity has elsewhere been characterized as post-modern (Fox, 1999), post-industrial neo-liberalism (Dean, 1999), or as reflexive modernity (Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994; Giddens, 1990, 1991; Lash, 1993), but is generally understood to be taking place in the "first world" West beginning in earnest around the 1970's. For Beck, the risk society begins to emerge given two conditions: 1) through technological productive effort, modern societies can more or less identify and meet its citizens' "genuine material need"; and, 2) in the process of this accomplishment of modernization, new hazards and threats are "unleashed to an extent that was previously unknown" (Beck, 1992, p. 19).

In its diagnosis of contemporary society, Beck's risk society perspective complements and has since developed alongside the notion of reflexive modernity put forward by Anthony Giddens (1990, 1991). Scholars of reflexive modernization argue that the cultural processes which drove early modernization are today becoming self-critical. In their view, institutions of science, industry, and government developed as a critique of superstition, tradition, and religion. Scientific knowledge, industrial efficiency, and constitutional government were seen by many as the ultimate tools for the liberation of human potential that had been held back by "irrational" traditions and culture. In late modernity, however, the forms of rationality that critiqued the status quo have not ceased to operate once these modern structures were established. Instead, these scholars argue that the institutions of industrial society are turning their critical capacities back upon themselves. Proponents of the risk society perspective argue that this process of reflexive modernization is what generates widespread public awareness of risk and the discourses surrounding it.

Culturalist Perspectives

Not all scholars agree with this diagnosis of risk as a new phenomenon, nor exactly how one should define risks in the first place. Anthropologist Mary Douglas, for example, has developed a structural functionalist view of risk that locates risk as a mechanism for maintaining cultural boundaries (Douglas, 1992; Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982). From this perspective, social and even physical hazards are defined and identified as risks only to the extent that they threaten the notions of self and society held by one's culture. For example, proponents of this perspective might argue environmentalism is a predominant risk discourse in the United States because it directly threatens the automobile-dependent culture and the cornucopia view of nature through which many Americans express an individual and collective identity. Douglas's perspective is considered a "culturalist" approach to risk, defining risk as much more subjective than Beck's risk society approach, which has been criticized as too realist (Fox, 1999; Lupton, 2006b, 1999). Taking the culturalist critique a step further, Fox (1999) proposes what he

calls a “postmodern” position on risk where social discourses about risk actually *create* the hazards for which risks must then be calculated. This postmodern position, Fox argues, stands in contrast to Beck’s realist risk society perspective. In Fox’s view “*both risks and hazards are cultural products*”, where for Beck technologies of late modernity indeed produce new, real and potentially catastrophic hazards (Fox, 1999, p. 22).

It is inaccurate, however, to cast the risk society perspective in a purely realist light. Lupton (1999), for instance, correctly points out that “the ‘risk society’ perspective tends to waver between a realist and a weak social constructionist position on risk” and that “Beck explicitly seeks to develop a position that lies between realism and social constructionism” (p.5). While Beck’s initial work on risk does focus primarily on real industrial hazards, elsewhere with Beck-Gernsheim he explores the construction of other risk by society in light of the existence of unpredictable hazards and the impact this has on individual action (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995, 2002). The concept of “institutionalized individualization” (*individualisierung*), which Beck argues to be the micro-level consequence of living in a risk society (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002), appears to be Beck’s answer to the criticisms of more constructionist scholars. The risk society perspective seems to relegate the social construction of risk to a secondary role since for Beck the emergence and proliferation of real, uncontrollable hazards is what underpins the individualized re-examination of other more mundane risks that were previously unproblematic. In short, public knowledge that any hazard may be unpredictable and uncontrollable calls into question the mechanisms of control for other concerns about which we may have contested knowledge.

Governmentality Perspectives

The third predominant social science approach to the role of risk in late modern society has been categorized broadly as the “governmentality” perspective (Dean, 1999; Lupton, 2006b, 1999). The governmentality perspectives on risk all have in common a Foucaultian emphasis on the dynamics of

power and governance in the construction of risk narratives. Like the culturalist critics, governmentality approaches to risk also criticize Beck's perspective as too realist, arguing instead that:

There is no such thing as risk in reality. Risk is a way – or rather, a set of different ways – of ordering reality, of rendering it into a calculable form. It is a way of representing events so they might be made governable in particular ways, with particular techniques, and for particular goals. (Dean, 1999, p. 131)

Scholars endorsing this view of risk share many similarities with Beck and Giddens, including the idea that governing institutions must become more reflexive; however, they explicitly reject the notion that late modernity is any more "risky" than any other historical time. Further, they reject the notion that there exists any new form of hazard that is unpredictable or unmanageable. Rather, they choose to examine the processes, or technologies, by which risk is created, understood, appropriated, and mitigated as a consequence of emerging rationales about individual rights within the neo-liberal political framework. O'Malley (2003), for instance, uses the term "new prudentialism" in describing the social actor as a neo-liberal subject who is a self-responsible, rational actor, for whom the government sets the rules by which actors can choose how to best protect themselves from a myriad of personal and public risks. Other scholars endorse an economic model of risk. Notably, Dean maintains as unproblematic the autarkic (i.e., self-sufficient) neo-liberal subject, even in arguing for new forms of reflexive government which take advantage of what he calls "technologies of performance" and "technologies of agency" to deal with public unrest about how entrenched forms of political power manage risk (Dean, 1999). In fact, most scholars with a governmental approach to risk have long maintained a certain faith in technology and progress (itself the ethos of early industrialism). This sentiment persists everywhere from Miller and Rose's (1934) assertion that governmental rationales are "congenitally failing" and must continuously address and reformulate their approaches to problems, to Ewald's (1959) notion of "calculative rationality" by which the very purpose of the insurance industry is to insure

unpredictability, to the neo-liberal notion that the future of effective governance in a highly differentiated society is to promote internalized self-governance (Lupton, 2006b, p. 14).

Governmental perspectives see as unproblematic what Beck calls the “false image of autarky” inherent in this neo-liberal notion of the individual (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. xxi). By assuming a completely self-sufficient rational actor, Beck argues, one ignores the integrative functions of individualization that have long underpinned sociological theories of society (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. xxi). It is precisely this integrative role of individualization found in sociology from Marx through Habermas that Beck sees as underlying the potential for radical social change. Unlike governmentality approaches whose main focus is an analytic *response* to emerging processes and narratives about risk, Beck’s risk society seeks to *explain* why these emerging processes are now becoming necessary. The risk society does rely on a realist diagnosis that the material technologies of late modernity yield actual, uncontrollable hazards. However, risk society scholars also examine the “social technologies” which identify, examine, diagnose and disseminate information about risk, which themselves generate social consequences that must also be acknowledged. Risk society scholars characterize modern institutions as unable to respond to threats that cannot be calculated or controlled and foresee an epochal shift in the role of the individual within society, while governmentality scholars see emerging risk narratives as problems that have not *yet* been calculated or controlled by governing rationales to the extent demanded by autonomous, reflexive individuals.

The shift of risk responsibility from governments and institutions into the hands of individuals within a society, however, precludes the development of a governing rationale by which such risks are effectively managed. For this reason, the risk society perspective is better suited for exploring the micro-level processes of risk management in people's day-to-day lives.

PART II: A Micro-Level Adaptation of the Risk Society Theory for the Study of Intimate Violence

The risk society theory has primarily been received as a macro-level theory describing social and political change caused by reflexive modernization. The theory examines the realities of real hazards created by modernization processes, along with the social construction of risk discourses meant to manage the social instability, mistrust, and uncertainty created by the fundamental nature of these new dangers. However in explicating the "individualization thesis" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) and in the theory's application within a range of disciplines (Mythen & Walklate, 2006), it is clear that the risk society concepts were also intended to encourage inquiry into corresponding micro-level social changes. Recall that Beck defines a modern risk as a "systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself" (Beck, 1992, p. 21). Risks are not new hazards, rather risks define hazards which: 1) are now *global* rather than *personal* in their consequences; 2) are *not obvious* or easy to perceive without expertise; and 3) arise not from *lack* of something needed but rather *abundance* of something unwanted as a direct result of modernization processes (p.21). Frequently referenced modern risks include the dangers of nuclear energy, chemical pollutants, or genetic engineering. However, modernization is not solely a technological process; modernization also results in evolutions of social, political, cultural, and psychological processes, all of which have developed their own systems of expertise and ways of identifying and mitigating risks within a particular field. It is possible to employ a risk society approach to describe micro-level processes in ways that hold true to Beck's definition of risk, and to the three defining characteristics outlined above.¹ This section details a micro-level application of Beck's concept of risk to problem of intimate partner violence,

¹ Meso-level applications of risk society concepts also appear throughout the work of Beck and others, particularly in his collaborations with Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash (Beck, et al., 1994) on reflexive modernity and the notion of side-by-side old and emerging institutions (Beck refers to the former as "zombie institutions" – not dead yet, but clearly no longer functioning), and is subject to vigorous scholarly debate, particularly from Foucault-inspired governmentality scholars. I might argue that the risk society approach has several clear advantages, but to make this case involves a philosophical debate over the concept of realism, one which is, unfortunately, tangential to this dissertation and is therefore avoided for now.

proposing to use identity as the micro-level mechanism through which risk operates, by arguing the following: 1) that domestic violence is not a new problem, but can be viewed as a hazard that is induced and amplified by modernization processes *and* is systematically managed as a modern risk; 2) that the consequences are *global* in scope rather than isolated within one social location or role; 3) the risk of intimate partner violence is an *invisible* risk socially constructed as knowable only through expertise; and 4) that identity needs and the risk of violence arise paradoxically from a situation of *abundance* of options² opened up by the modernization of personal life.

Domestic Violence³ as a Modern Risk

Violence against women, in general, is a hazard that pre-dates modernization, likely existing in some form as long as there have been human communities. The construction of “domestic violence” and later “intimate partner violence” as a social problem, however, is a much more recent development (Perrin & Miller-Perrin, 2011). In the United States, for example, the public acknowledgement of domestic violence as anything more than a “private trouble” dates back only as far as the feminist movements of the 1970's which first problematized spousal battering (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Domestic violence *as a social problem* requires, at the very least, two hallmarks of modernization: 1) the presupposition of a patriarchal nuclear family structure in which to locate the conflict; and 2) the political mobilization of women seeking equality within and outside of the home in order to validate the feminist mantra that the “personal is political.” I am not suggesting that domestic violence does not exist in the absence of modernization, but rather that the *raising of domestic violence to the level of a social problem* would not be possible absent the forces of both early modernization (in creating a

² I use the word “paradoxically” because it is odd to talk about abuse arising from an abundance of options – mostly because scholars have long focused on factors that prevent women from leaving (e.g., lack of options). But, I use options here to refer to possibilities, social constructs, not actual things. Options are identity, not wealth, abstract and not material. *Identity* options are staying single, divorce, cohabitation, abandonment, homosexuality, infidelity, STDs, or anything that threatens either partner's sense of self or threatens to alter the accepted definition of marriage.

³ I use the term “domestic violence” instead of “intimate partner violence” only for discussing the political movement, which has been historically built on the use of that term.

modern family structure wherein private sphere stresses weigh upon the primary bond between wife and husband, yet with the husband as authority) and of late modernization (in the reflexive intellectual and political critiques of the inherent inequalities in the modern family structure). Inasmuch as these premises are true, intimate partner violence can be understood as a hazard whose full potential as a social threat has been amplified and realized as a direct consequence of modernization itself.

The domestic violence movement has developed as a direct, reflexive critique and reconstruction of the institution of criminal justice (Cramer, 2005) and as such has been instrumental in developing a systemic risk-logic of intimate partner violence, complete with expertise on the causes, solutions, protective factors, and risk factors for domestic abuse. Since the mid-1970's, feminist movements have and continue to transform the medical, judicial, legislative, and public understandings of the risks of domestic violence, despite the lackluster performance of feminist theory-informed programs⁴ in actually developing or implementing successful interventions to prevent men from perpetrating abuse (Babcock, Green, & Robie, 2004; Feder & Wilson, 2005; Stover, Meadows, & Kaufman, 2009). This narrative of the emergence, politicization, systematization, and reflexive self-critique evident in the history of the domestic violence movement illustrates that domestic violence indeed fits Beck's definition of a late modern risk, as both a hazard induced by modernization processes and systematically dealt with through application of competing systems of modern expertise to mitigate this hazard. Based on the above description of domestic violence as a social problem arising in late modern contexts, it is possible to examine the effects of the risk of intimate partner violence on a micro-level using the language and concepts of the risk society theory.

⁴ The power and control portion of the "Duluth Model" (Pence & Paymar, 1993) is the primary batterer intervention favored by feminist political activists, who have accomplished the widespread acceptance of this model through state law in 95% of states with laws regarding batterer treatment (Maiuro & Eberle, 2008). However, research has repeatedly shown only minor benefits from these treatments. Some scholars now argue that while these laws have raised awareness of domestic violence as a serious political and social issue, the restrictions within the framework of the legal and criminal justice system which allow only one treatment model may inhibit the testing of new, potentially more effective intervention strategies (Cramer, 2005; Feder & Wilson, 2005; Gondolf, 1997; Maiuro & Eberle, 2008).

Risk of Intimate Partner Violence as Global in its Consequences

For Beck, risks define modern hazards with three unique characteristics, the first of which is that risks are not new hazards; rather, they are increasingly *global* rather than *personal* in their consequences. Forty years ago, questions about a husband physically, sexually, or psychologically abusing and controlling his wife within the confines of the home might have been difficult to cast as a global issue. Today, however, violence against women in any form is a globally recognized human rights issue with political, social, and criminal implications for perpetrators (and also for victims, witnesses, and bystanders). In making the case for a micro-level concept of risk, however, it is inadequate to leave the notion of a “global” impact to a general social awareness of the problem.

To utilize risk as a micro-level construct capable of informing our understanding of violence, the threat posed by intimate partner violence needs to be examined in light of the risks that partner violence poses to the lives of those involved. To describe the risk of intimate partner violence as a "global" problem does not necessarily make sense on a micro-level but to describe the threat of intimate violence as doing harm globally, or comprehensively, to one's life does. In other words, the threat posed by intimate violence is ubiquitous and pervasive throughout one's experiences, social roles, and identities. Sometimes being a "rape victim" or "battered woman" threatens to become a person's unwanted master status via a variety of psychological or physiological effects. For example, intimate partner violence can shape one's sense of personal well-being by affecting long-term physical and mental health (Perrin & Miller-Perrin, 2011; Stryker, 1968), sexual health (Day, Kay, Holmes, & Napier, 2011), aggravating or inducing stress-related chronic illness (Carbone-Lopez, Rennison, & Macmillan, 2011), and can exacerbate many other unrelated health conditions (Elizabeth, 2001). Arguably, involvement in intimate partner violence presents a type of global threat to one's identity, through its clear and potentially extensive consequences for many other areas of a victim's or perpetrator's life. The consequences for an individual's identity are often associated with material outcomes related to

violence, but it is also true that individuals' interpretations of love, trust, purpose, and personal self-worth are also extensively shaped by the experience of intimate violence.

Risk of Intimate Partner Violence as "Invisible" and Expert Dependent

If one continues to view risk on the micro-level through the lens of identity, then re-casting the risk of intimate partner violence as an *invisible and unseen* risk, knowable only through modern and contested expert knowledge is also possible. In Beck's conceptualization of a risk society, it is this "invisibility" which allows late modern risks to become socially constructed, since their riskiness cannot be defined by the layperson. In a strictly realist sense, one cannot know with certainty the thoughts or intentions of others, or how a specific person's internal, psychological processes lead to behaviors. Even so, there is a large body of research that attempts, on aggregate, to do just that with respect to a number of behavioral phenomena across the social and behavioral sciences. The promises of early psychologists like Wilhelm Wundt to systematically understand the inner workings of the mind have been very successfully investigated by the sciences over the past century. And yet the growing emphasis on science also lead to critiques of epistemology, and have guided post-realist thinkers to recognize that science, by the limitations imposed by its own assumptions and by indeterminate practical contexts, will forever remain imprecise, incomplete, and subject to error (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1994; Habermas, 1984, 1987, 1999; Renzetti, 1997). In practical terms, and for the individual actor in society, late modernity presents a situation where the epistemologies of pre-modernity (e.g., intuition, tradition, belief), *and of* modernity (e.g., positivism, scientism, the infallibility of logic) have both been discredited by science, the former by direct critique and the latter by cannibalistic reflexivity.

It is enmeshed within this epistemological uncertainty, whether she knows it or not, that the victim of intimate partner violence finds herself. If violence by a partner universally initiated a course of escalating harm leading eventually to homicide, both the scientist and the layperson would undoubtedly be well equipped to identify the proper course of action to avoid such an outcome. Instead, one finds a

multiplicity of outcomes, each well enough supported in research and anecdote to (perhaps) justify a number of defensible perspectives on the proper response to the threat posed by partner violence. Consider the range of possible "knowledges" which inform a person of their risk of intimate partner violence: a personal history of conflicts with a current or past partner, advice from friends or family with specific knowledge of the couple, probabilities and study findings disseminated by public health officials, the teachings of a clergyperson, stereotypes and narratives implicitly (or explicitly) presented by media sources, the experience-based opinion of a responding law enforcement officer, the policies of prosecutors or judges, the advice of an advocate or shelter personnel, the clinical opinion of an evaluating mental health professional, the example set by one's own parents or family, wishful thinking, and even the promises or proclamations of love by one's intimate partner. In considering the global sum of information available to a victim of partner violence, one can readily see what feminist activists have long asserted: the victim herself may indeed be in the best position to evaluate her own situation and needs (Perrin & Miller-Perrin, 2011).

In practice, however, a victim of violence is denied ownership of this risk knowledge, which is unequivocally the purview of the expert, and forced instead to adopt a corresponding identity that is systemically defined. The social construction of intimate partner violence denies victims ownership of risk knowledge in several ways. First, intimate partner violence is formally defined by researchers and legal professionals and codified into law, such that certain acts or behaviors, often regardless of context are considered to be or not to be acts of intimate partner violence. Second, victims of intimate partner violence are frequently viewed under a mental health paradigm which medicalizes distressed behaviors as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or other mental illness which, while well intentioned, also imputes irrationality and inhibited judgment skills to them.⁵ Third, victims of violence are often not

⁵ A classic example of the way a mental health approach has unintentionally undermined the agency of battered women is the debate over "battered woman syndrome" which continues to impact criminal and civil court cases,

granted agency until they cooperate with the systems of justice, mental health, and other advocacy to follow prescribed self-help actions and through this process "become" recognized as empowered "survivors." It is thus the expert that controls the definitions of violence and abuse, the credibility of the victim's perspective, and the most appropriate response to manage the risk of additional intimate partner violence. These social constructions help to define the risk of intimate partner violence via the knowledge of experts who can "see" the situation more clearly than the victim of abuse, thus rendering the risk of intimate partner violence symbolically *invisible* to the participants themselves. Moreover, these external social constructions have implications for how individuals involved in relationship conflict are able to see themselves (e.g., men seeing themselves not as an abuser but as a jealously dedicated husband, or women seeing themselves as a submissive wife instead of a marital rape victim), and how they must construct their social identity vis-à-vis the situation of intimate partner violence (e.g., victim or survivor, a case of troubled but true love or a lovestruck fool, a better-or-worse spouse or a going-gets-tough divorcee).

Modern "Abundance" of Risks and Identity

Finally, a micro-level construction of the risk of intimate partner violence using the risk society theory must correspond to Beck's notion that late modern problems arise out of *abundance of risk* rather than *scarcity of wealth*. For this assertion to hold true at the micro-level, the threat to identity must be conceptualized as a mechanism through which risk of intimate partner violence operates in late modernity. It is important here to clearly distinguish between the concepts of a "risk factor" which describes an objective fact known through observation and correlation, and the term "risk of intimate partner violence" which, as used here, describes a subjective assessment of the likelihood of a specific danger. Economic disadvantage, a form of wealth scarcity, is undoubtedly a risk factor for the occurrence of intimate partner violence. Financial strain is a causal risk factor for the perpetration of any

despite the fact that significant validity questions have been raised about its use by decades of subsequent research (for example, see Dutton, 2009).

violence, and poverty is a key risk factor for most forms of violence against women (Logan, et al., 2006; Renzetti, Edleson, & Bergen, 2011). To use the terminology from Beck's risk society model, we might say that *scarcity of wealth* is a risk factor for the occurrence of intimate partner violence, much in the same way that *scarcity of wealth* increases one's chances of dying from cancer or being exposed to environmental hazards. For Beck, the late modern shift to a risk society is also a gradual erosion of the ability of economic advantage to completely protect people from these types of hazards. He contends that while wealth may somewhat insulate a person from hazards, modern risks by their nature become an equalizer for all social classes who must breathe the same polluted air or are indiscriminately poisoned by radioactive fallout from a nuclear accident (Beck, 1992). To put it in the form of a concrete example, early modern dangers like starvation and homelessness can be almost completely avoided by having enough access to wealth, yet wealth cannot completely insulate a person from the late modern danger of exposure to industrial carcinogens (though certainly wealth can still moderate exposure or survivability). The danger of violence perpetrated by one's intimate partner is likewise not a problem abated by wealth, though certainly access to financial and social resources can again moderate the consequences.

If the threat of intimate partner violence is therefore not a problem arising from *scarcity of wealth*, can it instead be understood as a problem arising from an *abundance of risk*? Recall once again that risk is defined as a "systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself" (Beck, 1992). The "insecurities" of modernization that threaten the realm of intimate relationships are not the technological hazards with which many late modern risk scholars are preoccupied, but rather the *social and identity-related* innovations of modernity. In sociological theory, a thread can be drawn through sociology's principal theorists from Marx and Weber to Habermas and Giddens, which traces the evolution of individualization as a critical process in the emergence of rationalized society (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. xxi). Life in modern, industrialized societies is

increasingly characterized by finding one's place within a highly differentiated, organic social structure rather than embodying and replicating a specific and pre-defined social role. Modernization of social systems gives rise to new and deceptively mundane questions like "what do you want to be when you grow up?" which, in practice, turn out not to be so simple. Sociologists have intensely examined the social structures, for example the nuclear family, which arose as an adaptation to the abundance of living options opened up by education, urbanization, and population mobility fueled by modernization processes. To the extent that a risk society is emerging, the intimate relationship between two partners as the fundamental building block of the early modern family is being opened up and radicalized in late modernity by an abundance of individual options: with whom, when, why, where, how, and for how long do I engage in an intimate relationship? Structural change in the organization of households, in particular the emerging distinctions between married and cohabitating couples, is frequently cited by risk scholars as evidence that individuals are rejecting existing social structures in various practical, creative and idiosyncratic ways (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Vogler, 2005). Along with the emergence of options for organizing one's own life, there comes a myriad of risks to the individual. The social construction of the intimate relationship and associated risks is today tied inextricably to the notions of "identity" and "institutionalized individualization" which shall be explored further in the next section.

PART III: Identity and Institutionalized Individualization

Defining one's identity under the conditions of a risk society is problematic; identity no longer simply denotes a complex of social locations rooted in modern social structures such as gender, class, race/ethnicity, sexuality, nation, or place. Instead, identity for some people is becoming a status in-and-of-itself; to be at once cultivated, displayed, and also protected. Identity in a risk society, I argue, is not a means to meet one's *objective/instrumental needs*, but is alternatively a domain in which *subjective/identity needs* must themselves be met. The growing importance of identity in a risk society corresponds with risk society's theorized shift in dominance from a *distribution of wealth* to new social

realities emerging from the *distribution of risks*. If *objective/instrumental needs* are the individual-level threats of a modern society predominantly shaped by the *distribution of wealth*, then *subjective/identity needs* are analogous threats within a late modern, risk society that is coming to be defined by the *distribution of risks*. Consequently, understanding the role of identity processes and how they emerge within a risk society context through "institutionalized individualization" is critical to this discussion.

Defining Identity

The term "identity" as a social science concept traces its origin to the works of psychologist Erik Erikson, who in the 1940's and 1950's used "group identity" and "ego identity" to describe a person's sense of self in relation to others (Vryan, et al., 2003). Within sociology, symbolic interactionist scholars built upon and theoretically developed distinct concepts of the "self" and "identity" as they worked to understand the interactions between individuals and society. Some scholars, like the early "Chicago School" theorists (e.g., George Herbert Mead, Herbert Blumer, W.I. Thomas, and later Erving Goffman) focused almost exclusively on concepts of "self" as a means of collectively negotiating a self-concept for the purposes of guiding social behavior, while others like the "Iowa School" sociologists (e.g., Manfred Kuhn, George McCall and J.L. Simmons, and Sheldon Stryker) took a more structural approach that began to distinguish "identity" as a combination of social roles and self-concepts. Given the wide range of approaches to identity, the observation by David de Levita in his 1965 book *The Concept of Identity* may still hold true today: "it is possible that in every particular set of statements that deserves the name 'theory' we could define a concept of identity which has a meaning for that theory, and that theory alone" (quoted in Vryan, et al., 2003, p. 367). Therefore, rather than representing my own usage of the term "identity" within a specific theoretical framework and providing what could easily be a long and an in-depth critique worthy of its own dissertation, I will for the sake of brevity present a definition of

"identity" which derives from my own understandings and readings across various symbolic interactionist theories.⁶

Identity, in my conceptualization of the term, can be generally understood as *the public aspects of one's self, as defined against: 1) social structures* (including group memberships, statuses, and social roles), *2) other people* (through process of interaction and other communications); *and 3) history* (in terms of an individual's biography and cultural background/traditions). By "public aspects of one's self" I mean that identity is not simply the personal, psychological self-concept known only to an individual that guides behavior (i.e., one's *self*); identity is a negotiated, *public* presentation of self that results from an interaction between the way an individual sees himself and the way others see him. To put it another way, identity is a dynamic and mutually-constitutive combination of how you wish to be seen and the way in which others appear to see you. Identity is an abstract concept intended to describe contact between an individual's self-concept and the reactions of other people to that individual. The real-world behaviors (by self and others) that result from this abstraction are the consequences to the individual due to his or her particular identity, and are the sociological phenomena being examined in this dissertation.

One's publicly-defined yet personally-relevant identity is constructed through interaction, but not completely malleable. A person's sense of self is extremely negotiable as a sort of situational, temporally-bound, or mutually shared meaning (e.g., Goffman, 1959; Mead, 1934), but identity is more stable in that it is bounded by social structures and contexts which render varying parts of the self more or less salient, or more or less stable (e.g., A. L. Strauss, 1959; Stryker, 1968). Identity is defined against *social structures*, for example, by identifying one's self through the institution of education as a college

⁶ My own understanding of identity owes a great debt to the excellent, clear, and detailed history of symbolic interactionist approaches to identity by Kevin D. Vyan, Patricia A. Alder, and Peter Adler (2003) in the *Handbook of Symbolic Interactionism*, and to the insights gained across several graduate seminars taught by Scott Hunt.

student, through the institution of gender as a man or woman, or through the institution of family by participating in a household or marriage.

Identity is defined against *other people* more specifically, through personal interactions and communications wherein social roles may be enacted or violated. This includes embodying and interacting on the basis of social roles, such as discussing homework to live up to a student role, being faithful to a spouse to embody one's role within a marriage, or challenging gender roles by rejecting gender-appropriate clothing styles and behavioral norms.

Finally, identity is defined against the *history* of an individual person or of the cultures to which that person belongs. A key part of others accepting one's self-identification as a student, for example, is having a personal biographical history of actually attending a school day after day. Identity defined against history can also be cultural, such as knowing and participating in rites, rituals, and other activities that are appropriately consistent with one's sense of self. For example, an African American woman who purposively sits at the front of a bus is presenting herself relative to a cultural rather than a personal history, yet is simultaneously communicating to others a great deal about her personal identity, knowledge, and beliefs.

So to succinctly recap, *identity* as I use it henceforth is the public aspect of one's self defined against social structures, other people, and history. This sociological conceptualization of identity is grounded in symbolic interactionist theory, and recognizes the roles of macro-level society (i.e., social structures and institutions), micro-level interpersonal interactions, normative historical/cultural traditions, and personal biographies in shaping a person's identity. An individual has only partial control of her identity, which is continuously mutually constructed by interactions between self and society, and yet in a risk society (as I will argue) the individual bears the full weight of its consequences.

Institutionalized Individualization

While Beck's *Risk Society* focuses primarily on risks emerging from industrial hazards on a macro-level, elsewhere with Beck-Gernsheim he describes the broader impacts that societal-level risk discourses have on individual actions and interpersonal relationships (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995, 2002). In outlining the risk society theory's "individualization thesis," Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) argue that an "institutionalized individualization" (*individualisierung*) has emerged as a micro-level consequence of living in a risk society. According to Beck, all sociological theory has at its core some concept of individualization which "(a) is a structural characteristic of highly differentiated societies and (b) does not endanger their integration but actually makes it possible" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. xxi).⁷ Early modernization is all but synonymous with rationalization; the express purposes of modern institutions are to systematically critique, manage, and deconstruct the hazards which face human societies. Weber's *Protestant Ethic* (M. Weber, 2002 [1930]) precisely describes the symbiotic confluence of individualization and the rationalization of society, such that individuals' identity and material needs were one and the same, and could therefore serve as a foundation for the rise of capitalist social structures. In other words, if material success became evidence of "a good life", then the emergence of institutions designed to increase material productivity was both necessary and legitimate.

"Institutionalized individualization" is the late-modern consequence of institutions that are geared towards the person rather than the group, where the *individual* rather than the *social role* becomes "the basic unit of social reproduction for the first time in history" (xxii). Building on the classical sociological foundation described above, Beck postulates that the "paradox of 'institutionalized

⁷ Beck is careful to contrast his sociological concept of *individualization* as distinct from governmentality approaches to risk employing the neoliberal use of the term, which describes the individual as a completely self-sufficient rational actor calculating actions based on individual interests. Beck problematizes the "false image of autarky" inherent in the neo-liberal notion of the individual, claiming that it fails to acknowledge that individualization has integrative functions as well (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. xxi). In contrast to social constructionist view of risk favored by culturalist approaches, Beck relegates the social construction of risk to a secondary role; since for Beck the emergence and proliferation of real, uncontrollable hazards is what underpins the individualized re-examination of other more mundane risks that were previously unproblematic.

individualization" results because "the expansion of the nation-state produced and affirmed individualization, with doctrines of socialization and institutions of education to match" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. 23). He argues that because institutions are designed around providing rights and benefits to individuals instead of groups, the new norm of modernity is an individual responsibility to organize one's own life, which "means that standard biographies become elective biographies, 'do-it-yourself biographies', risk biographies" (p.24). We are dependent upon institutions because we live in a highly differentiated society, and yet the burden of managing personal risk is placed upon individuals. Reflexive modernization gradually begins to undermine industrial society's norms and institutions, since the shift to a risk society represents a self-critical recognition that individuals must now contend also with the risks *created by* modern technologies, institutions, and norms. Where industrialization for early sociologists was replacing tradition with the new certainty of industrial society's rational norms and emerging social roles, people today are "expected to live their lives with the most diverse and contradictory transnational identities and risks" and participate in "a life lived in conflict between different cultures" (p.26). In short, individualization is both the freedom to choose a life of one's own, and simultaneously the active and constant responsibility (and peril) of evaluating the viability of one's options in the absence of any institutionalized guarantees.

The process of institutionalized individualization leads to micro-level consequences as individuals take up the responsibility of determining their own place within social structures that increasingly tolerate diverse ways of life. Beck argues that in a risk society the "nationally fixed social categories of industrial society are culturally dissolved or transformed" and "become 'zombie categories', which have died yet live on" (p.27). By "zombie categories", he is referring to categories such as social class, religion, ethnicity, gender, and the nuclear family. These categories, in his view, are gradually losing the power to single-handedly determine a person's life chances. In a risk society, "even traditional conditions of life become dependent on decisions; they have to be chosen, defended and

justified against other options and lived out as personal risks" (p.27). The individual in a risk society is an active creator of a multi-faceted identity, such that it is problematic to assume that a particular combination of ethnicity and gender, for example, necessarily correlates to specific attitudes or activities. Individuality "may therefore be understood as 'radical non-identity'" wherein culture is no longer a set of traditions bound by old categories like ethnicity or gender, but rather "the field in which we assert that we can live together, equal yet different" (p.27). The resulting individual is not defined by categories, but rather prioritizes and then protects those identity categories which she deems critical to her place within the world.

Risk, Uncertainty, and Intimacy

One of the underlying premises of the risk society perspective is that late modernity is shifting the responsibility for dealing with uncertainty away from institutions and onto individuals. This transition represents both a structural and ideological change. Structurally, the shift of responsibility to individuals can be seen within global economic changes since the 1970's, particularly in the Anglo-influenced West. The growth of "precarious work" during this time highlights the ways in which structural changes including neoliberal globalization, the decline of labor unions, the shift from manufacturing to information-based work, and the rise of the political right in the 1980's contributed to the general rise in instability and risk discourses in day-to-day life (Kalleberg, 2009). Employers began to envision labor as a variable cost necessary for economic flexibility, and re-conceived worker compensation away from employer-guaranteed, definite benefits to benefits based on employee-contribution plans, effectively shifting the risks of economic instability to workers (Kalleberg, 2010; Osterman, 1999; Vallas, 1999). Effects of these changes include declining wages, growth in the contingent and part-time work sectors, increased women's participation in the labor market, and a consequential shift in the economic organization of families. These changes have effectively made multiple-income households the norm in the United States, climbing from only 35.9% of households in

1970 to 59.5% of households by 1997 (Jacobs & Gerson, 2001). In 2010, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that 53.9% of married households had multiple earners (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011), decreasing by almost 3% from 2009 corresponding with a 4.2% rise in overall unemployment that same year (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). Risk society scholars argue that these types of economic structural changes have been accompanied by changes in families that result in new forms of intimate partnership and flexible household organization (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995, 2002; Giddens, 1994; Howard, 2007).

Beck describes this individual level process of rejecting social structures in practice as “disembedding without re-embedding” (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. xxii). In the United States, not only is this phenomenon evident in demographic family trends, but appears explicitly in recent public opinion research on marriage. Polling conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2010 clearly illustrates a public perception of the obsolescence of institutions in contrast to the social values which they are intended to embody (Pew Research Center: Social & Demographic Trends, 2010). On one hand, the Pew report highlights a growing class-based gap in marriage rates found in the 2008 American Community Survey (ACS) data, with 64% of college graduates marrying compared to only 48% of those with a high school diploma or less, with financial stability nearly twice as important to the less educated group when considering marriage (p. i). And yet, their 2010 survey found that married and unmarried people ranked as “very important” reasons to marry: love (93% and 84%, respectively), lifelong commitment (87%, 74%), and companionship (81%, 63%) far ahead of having children (59%, 44%) and financial stability (31%, 30%) (p.22). Taken together with the fact that the declines in marriage rates are offset by increases in cohabitation, the trend appears not to be a rejection of long-term intimate coupling or even the importance of economic concerns within an intimate partnership, but rather a growing rejection of marriage as the institutionalized “best” way of managing personal life.

Unlike economically-focused scholars of work and organizations, proponents of the risk society perspective argue that significant ideological changes underlie these structural shifts in late modernity (Lash, 1994; Lupton, 2006a). Driven by the theoretical works of Giddens and Beck, risk society scholars locate within intimate relationships not only empirical evidence of economically-driven social change, but also see evidence that the risk society's pressure toward self-responsible individualization is dramatically reshaping more personal family outcomes as well (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Henwood, Pidgeon, Sarre, Simmons, & Smith, 2008; Vogler, 2005). Vogler (2005), for example, found that ideals about gender equality in combination with each partner's economic viability shaped the ways in which cohabiting couples in Britain organized household finances in contrast to traditionally married couples. Decisions whether to marry and the organization of bank accounts were both linked to a woman's economic status, a finding consistent with previous qualitative and quantitative research that individuals are increasingly decoupling the meaning of marriage from a committed sexual relationship or child-bearing (Edin & Kefalas, 2005; White & Rogers, 2000). Beck-Gernsheim (2002) argues that the individualization of risk has opened opportunities for women to have more autonomy with respect to work, education, childbearing, and sexual relations, but at the same time forces women to handle the risks associated with these transitions (p.54-77). Women must decide if these emerging opportunities for education, emotional fulfillment or "a personal life of their own" (i.e., a self-determined identity) is worth the very real identity and economic risks associated with things like poverty, divorce, single-parenthood, and associated social stigmas (p.72-73). In other words, the individualization of responsibility for risks corresponds to an increasing prioritization of identity concerns within areas of life once predominantly dictated by structurally-defined certainties.

Some scholars, however, are critical of the scope of the risk society's individualization thesis, characterizing it as an attempt to "mirror classical social science theory in that it makes generalizations about modernization and the development of modernity" (Brannen & Nilsen, 2005). Bagnoli and

Ketokivi (2009) point out that "the extent to which people actually feel disembedded from traditional structures, and the degree of reflexivity and ability to self-reconstruct which they may exert in their everyday lives may considerably vary in relation to their position in the social structure, which continues to be central in people's lives" (315). These scholars point to a number of empirical studies which find that forms of embeddedness in social relations (or social networks) may be changing, but that these structures are still highly influential in organizing and determining life's opportunities (Brannen & Nilsen, 2005; Christakis & Fowler, 2009; Mason, 2004; Roseneil & Budgeon, 2004). Despite their tendency to over-generalize the potential impact of the risk society, proponents argue that society is *coming to be* organized by a risk-driven logic of personal responsibility, rather than expecting a clean and universal break from the institutions and ideals of modernity. Beck (2002) likens the duality of emerging alternative ways of organizing life alongside still influential but diminishing traditional forms to "zombie categories" or "zombie institutions", referring to modern institutions which are largely obsolete but do not yet cease to operate (203). Kalleberg (2010) invokes a similar concept of "institutional layering" to describe the emergence of new institutions which exist simultaneously alongside those institutions they will eventually come to replace.

Regardless of this on-going debate over the scope and impact of the risk society, the empirical evidence discussed above does seem to support claims that structural social changes and the discourses of risk which accompany them may have an effect on individuals' thinking about intimate partnerships. Marriage or coupling today may no longer be an arrangement that pivots solely upon economic security, but increasingly a process that participants expect will meet identity needs as well as (or in lieu of) instrumental needs (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Where the social and psychological functions of interpersonal relationships become intertwined, the diffuse risks and pressures placed upon the individual by society take on new meanings between intimate partners. Not only does an intimate partnership continue to affect one's social status and economic stability, it seems to increasingly affect a

person's self-concept, happiness, and sense of personal worth in a world full of diverse and risky possibilities.

Conclusion

In the next chapter, I examine the implications of identity as an increasingly important part of individual life. In my view, this possibility gives rise to new forms of "identity risk" which uniquely threaten the self-concept of an individual living in a risk society differently than instrumental threats to the self. While the present chapter has explored the implications of a risk society within institutional and political contexts, the next chapter will review extant literature on dating violence, with attention to notions of self-efficacy and risk assessment. I argue that it is possible to rethink our conceptualization of risk in intimate relationships in ways that also consider how identity risks may drive individual decision-making, risk-avoidance behaviors, and may meaningfully affect experiences with violence. Together, these chapters will outline an argument that violence in intimate relationships, to a greater or lesser extent, may be shaped by the pressures and processes of a risk society.

Chapter Three

Risk in Dating Relationships

Introduction

This chapter reviews the extant literature on dating violence, risk, and relationship formation as it may pertain to individuals' management of risks. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight some of the ways in which an individual's assessment of risk has been previously addressed (directly or indirectly) with respect to the specific topics of relationship formation and dating violence, and to derive from this literature a sense of the gaps in our collective knowledge which may begin to be addressed by this dissertation. The notion that macro-level changes described in risk society theory may influence perceptions and experiences of dating violence on a micro-level is a novel theoretical contribution of this dissertation; however, the notion that risks are weighed, managed, and otherwise influential in dating choices or in the experience of violence is not new. Research relevant to this study's primary question is located in several distinct areas of empirical work spanning a number of disciplines. Echoing the influential critique by Jordan (2009) regarding the violence against women field as a whole, the sub-area of dating violence also currently exists in "silos of research" and as such we lack an overall understanding of the social and political contexts which underlie this phenomenon. This review is organized with the intention of beginning to span these various areas of research, and as such explores the possibility of building a theory of dating violence which incorporates perspectives on late modern social change.

Dating Violence

Risk Factors and Intimate Partner Violence

Within the extant literature on intimate partner violence, researchers often examine risk factors related to violence or abuse. Logan, Walker, Jordan and Leukefeld (2006) identify "lifestyle factors" associated with adult women's victimization which include participation in risky behaviors (e.g.,

drug/alcohol abuse, involvement in crime, frequenting high-risk environments like bars), engaging in sex with multiple partners or sex-exchange (e.g., prostitution), or holding certain expectancies about interpersonal behavior (e.g., traditional gender norms). They also identify "social factors" which shape an adult woman's chances of victimization such as low socioeconomic status (e.g., education, income, occupation) which is associated with substance use, mental health problems, and physical health problems; family of origin problems (e.g., parental violence, substance abuse, or child abuse); childhood sexual victimization; cultural tolerance of domestic violence; and peer norms (e.g., attitudes about sexual violence for college men). Studies exclusively examining teen dating violence identify similar risk factors which relate to the likelihood, forms, or severity of violence. These factors include demographics, prior exposure to violence, attitudes about violence, peer influence, personality and relationship variables, or other problem behaviors like alcohol use (see review by O'Keefe, 2005).

In these bodies of research, the term "risk factor" usually refers to an association between an independent variable and a certain outcome. However, when individuals consider their own risks when seeking a potential mate, these academically validated risk factors may not be directly considered. For example, one might not rule out a potential dating partner because that person had been exposed to violence between other people; however, research has found that exposure to family violence (Foshee, Bauman, & Linder, 1999), community violence (Malik, Sorenson, & Aneshensal, 1997; O'Keefe, 1997), and peer violence (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004) are all significant predictors of a young person's likelihood of both perpetration and victimization. The study of associations between contextual risk factors in intimate partner violence research is important and well-established in the literature. However, this type of positivistic approach to identifying risk factors may not always appropriately contextualize or identify the factors which directly influence an individual's actual decisions or behaviors.

Understanding the subjective ways in which individuals interpret their experiences is critical for developing a more complete understanding of intimate partner violence. Within the intimate partner

violence literature, examinations of either behaviors or perceptions alone have produced disconcerting or problematic results when measured and interpreted in isolation from contextual or subjective variables. For example, research on violent behavior within dating relationships reveals that teen girls are more likely to use physical violence against a partner than are teen boys (Foshee, 1996; Gray & Foshee, 1997; O'Keefe, 1997). Yet, when subjective perceptions of such conflicts are considered, female victims of partner violence express “emotional hurt” or “fear” as a result of physical aggression, while male victims commonly report feeling only that “it was funny” or “anger” in response to the violence used against them (O'Keefe & Treister, 1998). Likewise, one of the primary survey instruments for measuring family violence, the Conflict Tactics Scale or CTS (M. A. Strauss, 1979) has been broadly criticized for measuring violent behaviors by both partners in relationships without appropriate attention to the context of such violence (DeKeseredy, 1995; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2001; Desai & Saltzman, 2001). Feminist scholars have criticized some interpretations of the CTS as essentially victim-blaming; aptly critiquing the assumption that a criminal motivation for using force against partner is ever-present given the much greater likelihood that men use physical violence for control while women many who engage in physical violence often claim to do so in self-defense (M. A. Strauss, 1999). This is not to say that specific behavioral measures should not be used; many types of violent victimization experiences, most notably rape and sexual assault, are grossly underestimated if victims are only asked if they had been abused or raped, rather than being asked if anyone had committed specific acts of violence against them (Desai & Saltzman, 2001; Fisher, 2009; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Scholars point out that there are many contexts which mitigate a person’s interpretation and reporting of abuse against them, including their religious faith (Fortune, 2001), cultural norms (Bograd, 2005; Campbell, 1992; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Jasinski, 2001), psychological trauma and its physiological side effects (Crofford, 2007; L. E. Walker, 1984) and even complications like pregnancy after a partner rape (McFarlane, 2007). Hence, there are compelling reasons to also consider behavioral, cognitive, and

subjective measures of an individual's experiences of risk and victimization in order to avoid an incomplete understanding of the contexts of intimate violence.

Research on risk factors generally associated with the experience of intimate partner violence also identifies several psychological or contextual risk factors which may also be relevant in dating violence. Logan, Walker, Jordan, and Leukefeld (2006) identify literature that highlights several internal factors which influence a woman's risk for victimization: her appraisals and expectancies about sexual aggression, particularly with regard to alcohol use and rape myth acceptance; reduced levels of psychological arousal and vigilance due to lifelong exposure to violence; correlations between a belief in a "just world" and self-blame for victimization; traditional gender relationship norms; tangible or emotional support by peers or family; response appraisals in which the costs of leaving a relationship are seen as greater than the risk of staying (e.g., situations involving children, finances, obsessive offenders); or impaired decision-making ability due to long-term stress or ongoing victimization. Among men, certain psychological disorders such as antisocial personality disorder or depression have been linked with involvement in intimate partner violence (Holtzworth-Munroe, et al., 1999; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994). For both college men and women, relational aggression appears to be linked to perceived peer acceptance and self-esteem (D. Weber & Robinson Kurpius, 2011). Psychological research on couples has identified certain emotions as protective against relationship violence (e.g., empathy, intimacy) and other emotions as risk factors (e.g., anger, jealousy, negative affect) for violent conflict within married, dating, or cohabiting couples (Marcus & Swett, 2003).

Key similarities exist between dating couples and married couples with respect to intimate partner violence. A critical review by Shorey, Cornelius, and Bell (2008) notes across multiple studies that certain demographic factors (e.g., alcohol use, low socioeconomic status, community of residence) and relationship contextual factors (e.g., poor communication, high relationship investment, presumed right to control a partner) are associated with violence for both married and dating couples. The authors

argue that "marital relationships are likely characterized by greater familial and economic attachment, making investment and enmeshment in the relationship greater" (Shorey, et al., 2008, p. 191) and suggest that the level psychological investment may thus be a more influential predictor of violence among dating couples. Several studies have indeed found that attachment style, relational power and control dynamics, anger, jealousy, and fear of rejection are all significantly associated with dating violence (Buelna, et al., 2009; Downey, et al., 2000; Follingstad, et al., 2002; Follingstad, et al., 1999).

Among college students, dating violence is associated with multiple health risk behaviors like alcohol abuse and sexual risk-taking (Buelna, et al., 2009; DuRant et al., 2007; Gidycz, Orchowski, King, & Rich, 2008; Roudsari, Leahy, & Walters, 2009). These risk behaviors have also been linked to harsh parenting or childhood abuse as risk factors for subsequent college dating violence (Rich, Gidycz, Warkentin, Loh, & Weiland, 2005; Simons, Burt, & Simons, 2008). A few studies, notably Gonzalez-Mendez & Hernandez-Cabrera's (2009) research on aggressive play and simulated jealousy and Marcus's (2008) research on "fight-seeking motivation" suggest that there may be a direct link between dating violence and thrill-seeking behaviors. Mutual aggression (Harned, 2002) and prior involvement in violence (Gidycz, Warkentin, & Orchowski, 2007) are also related to a higher likelihood of victimization for college students.

Risk Assessments in Dating

Previous research directly examining assessments of personal risk for violence in dating relationships reveals a noteworthy bias towards optimism about one's own relationship risks. While optimism about dating partners may be beneficial for building and sustaining normal relationships, in potentially violent relationships this same optimism might contribute to accepting or overlooking aggressive behaviors. Helweg-Larsen, Harding, and Kleinman (2008) found that past experiences with violence as well as depressive symptoms increased an individual's cognitive perception of personal risk for dating violence. However, these same variables had no effect on an individual's "comparative

optimism”, that is, they assessed their own risk of experiencing dating violence as lower than others’ risk. In other words, despite acknowledging their own external risk factors, participants in this study still felt that they would be less likely than their peers to experience future dating violence.

Physical attractiveness has been found to be an important concern for dating partners, sometimes having the potential to factor more heavily into an individual’s thoughts about a potential partner than some objective risks (Eastwick & Finkel, 2008; Hennessey, Fishbein, Curtis, & Barrett, 2008). Hennessey, Fishbein, Curtis, and Barrett (2008) found that both males and females prioritized seeking information about physical attractiveness over sexual risk-taking behaviors when learning about potential dating partners. Analysis revealed a “confirmation bias” leading to more positive assessments of those individuals rated as more attractive, despite the information available about STD risk factors. Physical attractiveness is commonly considered to be more influential in short-term romantic partnerships, such as casual sexual encounters, than when one is seeking a long-term partner; and in fact, seeking different qualities in short-term and long-term relationships can be found in both boys and girls as early as adolescence (Regan & Joshi, 2003). In contrast to conventional thinking, Jackson and Kilpatrick (2007) argued that it is inappropriate to categorize dating strategies exclusively into dichotomous short-term and long-term desires. They advocate a multidimensional approach to understanding partner selection. Their statistical analysis indicated that short-term and long-term dating tactics are not opposite poles on a continuum; rather, these strategies operated independently and correlated differently with both attitudes and behaviors, depending largely upon situational contexts and opportunity structures. Thus, it may be inappropriate to assume that one’s attitudes about relationships or strategic dating behaviors are necessarily indicative of an individual’s goals or concerns when choosing a partner. If long-term and short-term dating strategies are indeed inter-related, then risk assessments across both immediate concerns (i.e., partner attractiveness, having fun) and future

concerns (i.e., potential for marriage, healthy lifestyle) might both be relevant with respect to partner choice.

Rethinking Risks in Intimate Relationships as Identity Risk

The research literature reviewed here illustrates a range of influences from external and internal sources that may shape an individual's subjective risk judgments about dating violence. While structural and contextual "risk factors" are still important in understanding the prevalence and likelihood of experiencing intimate partner violence, the underlying rationale behind risk decisions in the context of dating is not illuminated by these findings. Selection of a long-term intimate partner is a choice with critical material consequences, and yet much of the decision-making process with regard to partner choice also appears to involve more subjective concerns. Following the thinking and recommendation of Jackson and Kilpatrick (2007) on dating partner selection, it makes sense to consider a variety of influences that impact judgments of the potential risks of dating partners as well.

Objective or instrumental risks in a relationship are relatively easy to describe. Evaluating the riskiness of long-term commitment to potential partners on the basis of educational attainment, current employment, or other financial resources is fairly straight-forward and rational. Often, these characteristics can be evaluated in terms of one's own *objective/instrumental needs* relative to another person. A person who is or intends to be adequately employed on their own may consider a long-term relationship with a partner with lower economic earning potential more viable (Vogler, 2005). A couple with plans to have children raised by an at-home parent, for example, may consider a single-earner arrangement which increases the importance of economic stability in one partner while decreasing it as a priority for the other. Likewise, social networking or wealth may make a marriage between two professionals more economically attractive.

And yet the above research on priorities among potential partners seems to highlight a very different set of concerns more closely aligned with predominant ideologies about intimate relationships.

Research finds that subjective concerns like physical and sexual attraction (e.g., Hennessy, et al., 2008) and appeals to love, commitment, and companionship (e.g., Pew Research Center: Social & Demographic Trends, 2010) are often very important in assessments of potential long-term partnerships. In social psychology, system justification theory (Day, et al., 2011; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004) has been proposed as a means by which individuals cognitively embrace a culture's systemic ideology, in order to explain how individuals faced with uncertainty and inequality maintain faith in traditional institutions. Day and his colleagues (Day, et al., 2011) recently conducted a series of studies linking the belief in committed, romantic relationships to a system justification motivation. Specifically, they found that subjects more strongly defended committed relationships as a source of certainty when subjects were primed with information about sociopolitical instability (p. 299). Notably, they found that "when system justification motive is heightened, both men and women increase their identification with their personal romantic relationship" and that "when one's own romantic relationship identity is threatened, support for committed relationship ideology increases" (p. 304). There were minor gender differences; men were more sensitive to systemic threat while women were more sensitive to personal identity threat.

Bringing in the Risk Society

The risk society perspective, and in particular the paradox of "institutionalized individualization" can help to conceptualize the interrelationships between the seemingly disparate components of instrumental and identity risks in the study of dating risk. If long-term intimate partnership is viewed in the context of an identity-based adaptation rather than an economically-based mode of living, the integration of subjective or ideological constructs in risk assessment of potential partners becomes easier. Certainly, there remains a practical component of household organization that provides some level of material well-being. However, the intimate relationship also provides for a number of *subjective/identity needs* which extend beyond material concerns. Once again, *identity* is the self

defined against institutions, others, and history. This means that one's sense of a meaningful self is tied to finding one's place among each of these three aspects of the construction of a social identity. In other words, a long-term intimate partnership is *at the same time* an economic survival strategy and a source of identity for the individuals involved. In the form of marriage, this partnership embodies a social identity vis-à-vis legal and religious institutions, a social role by which one's interactions with other people are understood and interpreted in day-to-day situations, and a sense of one's place within a cultural and biographical life narrative.

The ability to clearly define one's identity within each of these domains is a key facet of social life, and particularly in today's multicultural world where legitimate ways of life are rapidly multiplying. *Subjective/identity needs*, seemingly, are also increasingly distinct from *objective/instrumental needs* as a basis for human behavior, and yet the two can be (and have traditionally been) intertwined, such that behaving in ways that meet economic needs provided a sense of identity. In a reflexive and radically individualized world, identity may be becoming increasingly decoupled or disembedded from economic roles, such that individuals must now make an effort to meet *subjective/identity needs* distinctly from their *objective/instrumental needs*, where prior to this historical moment a person's place in an economic social order easily dictated an entire social location that dominated interpersonal relationships and one's identity within an ongoing historical and biographical narrative. If a risk society perspective is to be utilized in understanding the roles of these competing needs in assessing a potential long-term intimate partnership, a distinction between individuals' handling of *subjective/identity needs* and *objective/instrumental needs* must be demonstrated. This project tests this premise, by assessing the extent to which individuals' perceptions of the balance of *subjective/identity needs* and *objective/instrumental needs* varies when considering public risks versus risks within a long-term intimate partnership.

Conclusion

The study of dating violence is an emerging area of research, most often examined as a special population within the study of intimate partner violence. The literature above describes several recent review articles, most of which conclude that the risk factors for marital violence are similar to those for dating violence, particularly with regard to demographic and social/contextual factors. However, if we broaden our concept of risk beyond looking at "risk factors" and instead begin to incorporate subjective risk assessments made by individuals participating in romantic relationships, a different picture emerges. There is some evidence to suggest that dating relationships may initially lack many of the structural and material barriers which prevent many victims from easily leaving abusive relationships, leading some to conclude that psychosocial factors may be particularly relevant in explaining dating violence (Shorey, et al., 2008). Social psychological research, for example, notes a strong bias by individuals towards minimizing risk information when making attributions between one's own sociodemographic risk factors and the same risk factors for other people (Helweg-Larsen, et al., 2008), and a confirmation bias effect of physical attractiveness on minimizing information on sexual health risks (Hennessy, et al., 2008). Subjective bias in the consideration of romantic partners has also been linked to internalization of broader systemic ideologies, and specifically the ideology that intimate relationships are a source of certainty in an uncertain world (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Day, et al., 2011).

Building on risk society concepts introduced in the previous chapter, I have argued here that these subjective components which contribute to intimate partner violence indeed stem from uncertainties in the broader social system. Day and colleagues (2011) have linked identity risk in intimate relationships to a system justification motivation, wherein defense of Western romantic ideologies are consistent with efforts to maintain a status quo under cognitive threat. By contextualizing this social psychological phenomenon within risk society theory, I am building upon this research. In

particular, risk society theory suggests that living in a late modern industrial society is becoming *inherently* threatening to the status quo of widely accepted institutional ideologies. Therefore, I expect that among young adults considering their risks and priorities for intimate partnership, we should see a similar tendency to value and defend identity-based, romantic ideals in the face of material uncertainty.

Chapter Four

Design and Methodology

Introduction

The present study is designed to investigate how growing general uncertainty theorized by a risk society perspective shapes the weighing of different forms of risk when considering a long-term intimate partner. This research applies theoretical constructs from the risk society perspective, which argues that reflexive critical discourses undermine modern institutions' ability to guide individual life choices. On a micro-level, the reflexive critiques on modern institutions undermine the certainty and stability of institutionalized ways of living for individuals, who must increasingly bear the responsibility and consequences for adjudicating risks in their own lives. One consequence of the risk society for individuals is a sense of identity which becomes disembedded from these embattled social institutions and structures, and must be validated through the successes or failures of personal choices. In other words, social changes within a risk society result in the decoupling of institutional roles and personal identity which in the past sheltered identity from direct threat. In a context of broader systemic uncertainty, previous research has suggested that individuals will vigorously defend personal and romantic identities. This dissertation argues that in a risk society, two competing types of risk are now distinct but both are critical to the individual: 1) decisions about *objective/instrumental needs*, such as education, employment, and physical well-being; and 2) decisions about *subjective/identity needs*, which define one's sense of self and purpose. It is further argued that these two types of risk operate differently with respect to involvement in dating violence, such that elevated concern with identity risks may increase vulnerability to victimization and likelihood of perpetration among dating individuals.

Variables of Interest

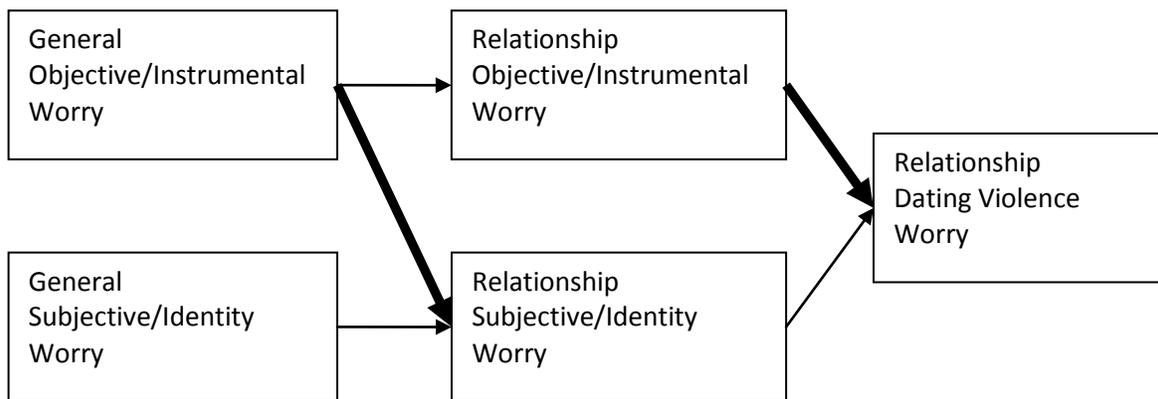
Operationalizing Risk

The risk society theorizes a growing tension in efforts to simultaneously meet both *objective/instrumental needs* and *subjective/identity needs*. I argue that among the places this tension will manifest is in individuals' decisions about intimate relationships. Intimate partnerships are widely accepted in Western societies as one of the most impactful personal choices (Day, et al., 2011), and as such shape one's economic well-being as well as one's sense of psychological well-being and self-worth. The challenge in operationalizing risk is effectively distinguishing between *objective/instrumental needs* and *subjective/identity needs* within the complexity of an intimate romantic partnership that also doubles as the basis for the family as an economic unit. This is done by measuring perceptions of risk across two dimensions which are described below.

This study considers risk perceptions across the nexus of *generalized individual worry* versus *relationship worry*. In a society where *objective/instrumental needs* and *subjective/identity needs* are more-or-less merged, one might reasonably expect a person's generalized worries to roughly correspond with their relationship worries. For example, a person highly concerned with economic stability will more highly value a potential partner with good career prospects. However, in a risk society this relationship becomes problematic and contingent, since any intimate partnership represents a choice among options no longer protected by traditions or social norms. For example, obtaining wealth by marrying a successful partner may be different from achieving wealth through one's own career, and with decreasing stigmatization of divorce it may be inherently more risky in the long-term. Consequentially, in a risk society individuals may have goals or expectations for their own lives which differ from their goals within a romantic partnership. A risk society perspective would suggest that relationships which allow flexibility for the self would become increasingly valued in an uncertain world, as opposed to relationships which fit traditional expectations of economic stability (e.g., economic

breadwinning, willingness to marry, intent to have children).⁸ Therefore, rather than expecting a strong correspondence between *generalized worry* and *relationship worry* with respect to *objective/instrumental* and *subjective/identity needs*, I instead hypothesize a transposed effect. That is, high *generalized worry* about *objective/instrumental needs* will correspond with higher *relationship worry* about *subjective/identity needs*. This hypothesized relationship is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Hypothesized relationship between perceptions of general risk, relationship risk, and dating violence risk.



Second, this study considers the different effect that *relationship worry* with respect to each type of *need* may have on perceptions of and experiences with dating violence. The hypothesized inverse relationship between the effects of *generalized worry* and *relationship worry* on *objective/instrumental needs* and *subjective/identity needs* creates a unique situation within a risk society, where emphasis is shifted subtly towards *subjective/identity needs* for considerations of risk within dating relationships. If worry about dating violence (termed *dating violence worry*) is more strongly associated with *objective/instrumental needs* within a relationship, then the impact of broader social instability and uncertainty is to indirectly increase vulnerability to dating violence by increasing

⁸ This fits with Day and colleagues (Day, et al., 2011) findings suggesting that uncertainty in the broader social system increases individuals' defense and investment in intimate partnership. In their studies, personal relationship identity concern was similarly elevated by systemic threat. Thus, while defense of the ideology of intimate partnership may be defense of a traditional Western ideology, this should not be mistaken for defense of traditional manifestations of that ideology. A risk society perspective holds that defense of personal identity becomes more important *within* a romantic relationship, rather than in lieu of it.

individuals' attention to *subjective/identity needs*. Therefore, the second step of this study examines the association of each form of *relationship worry* with *dating violence worry*.

Finally, this study examines the impact of *relationship worry* on actual experiences with dating violence victimization and perpetration. Since it is well known within social psychology that attitudes do not always predict behavior, this analysis also directly examines the effects of *relationship worry* about *objective/instrumental needs* and *subjective/identity needs* on violence outcomes. In line with this study's theoretical approach, I hypothesize that higher *relationship worry* about *subjective/identity needs* will more strongly predict involvement in dating violence as a victim or perpetrator.

Measuring Risk

This study measures risk using two survey instruments designed to examine levels of worry about a number of identity and relationship issues. Each of these instruments takes into account the two dimensions of risk described above, such that hypotheses related to risk society concepts can be examined. The first instrument used to measure risk is an adapted version of the Things I Worry About Scale (Millar & Gallagher, 1996) and the second risk instrument, created for this study, is called the Dating Identity Risk Scale (DIRS).

The Things I Worry About Scale (TIWAS) is a 138 item instrument initially developed to examine worry about life changes among adolescents as they transitioned from high school to college. The TIWAS measures perceptions of individual risk, and contains items which measure levels of worry about identity issues (i.e., acceptance by peers) and instrumental concerns (i.e., employment or finances). The TIWAS measures a broad range of social risk factors readily applicable to college students, since studies using this scale have generally agreed with prior research findings that both adolescents and young adults may have heightened levels of worry during and about these transitional stages of life (Esters, Tracey, & Millar, 2007). Since the present study examines a sample of undergraduate college students and not high school students in transition, TIWAS items relating to worry about family/home life, high

school, and college admissions were removed from the instrument. The modified TIWAS used in this study consisted of 74 items, measuring 10 of the instrument's 14 validated factors. Minor adjustments to the language were made to adapt the instrument to American English, since the original instrument was developed in Britain (e.g., changing "getting on with friends" to "getting along with friends"). Answers to the question "please indicate how often you worry about each of the following" are recorded on a four-point scale (1=Never, 2=Sometimes worry, 3=Often worry, and 4=Always worry).

I created the Dating Identity Risk Scale (DIRS) in order to examine perceptions of risk specific to the choice of a potential intimate partner. Items created for the DIRS were based on concerns mentioned in qualitative and quantitative research studies which examined statements about risk in dating relationships, and revised and refined through consultation with my dissertation advisory committee members. The DIRS examines perceptions of risk relating to intimate relationships, including the importance of risk feelings when choosing a potential partner, and the importance of certain risk characteristics when choosing a potential partner. All instruments are included in the Appendix.

Measuring Violence

Experiences with relationship violence are measured by adapting items from the National Violence Against Women Survey (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000), which was used to estimate the national prevalence of physical and sexual victimization among men and women. The NVAWS is based on elements of the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996; M. A. Strauss, 1979), a widely used and valid instrument in interpersonal violence research when used properly and interpreted in conjunction with other contextualizing instruments (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2001; Desai & Saltzman, 2001; M. A. Strauss, 1999). For the present study, only the NVAWS physical violence items are used to inquire about perpetration and victimization, for both current and former intimate partners. The involvement of alcohol in these conflict incidents is also recorded, in order to provide further context. Both of these modifications are adapted from Wilcox, Jordan and Pritchard (2007) who had

previously adapted the NVAWS question to a college sample by combining the violence instrument with items measuring current or prior relationship context and the co-occurrence of alcohol.

Other Measures

In addition to risk and violence variables, information about dating relationships and alcohol use were also recorded in order to better contextualize the results of the study variables. For instance, relationships between victimization and alcohol use can be evaluated against a general measure of the frequency and quantity of regular alcohol consumption. Students were also asked whether or not they had ever dated, how many serious romantic relationships they had, and about their current relationship status. These variables dictated the skip pattern of victimization instruments, and were used in subsequent analysis to explore potentially meaningful configurations of variables.

Methodology

Sampling Rationale

The sample for this study consists of male and female undergraduate students at a large, Southern, state university. University students were chosen for both theoretical and practical reasons. This study seeks to examine the impact of diffuse, societal level risk discourses on individual level behavior. College-aged young adults are uniquely affected by risk and social change because they are beginning to make important decisions about their lives as adults. Assessments of opportunities and risks are particularly salient to young adults, who are negotiating education and career issues at the same time as many are beginning to engage in more serious intimate relationships. For these reasons, young adults are an ideal sample for examining the role of risk in social change, identity formation, and dating relationships.

College-aged young adults are also a relevant sample for examining perceptions of violence risk in dating relationships. First, college women are a frequently studied sample of young adults in areas of victimization. Research suggests that college women may be at a heightened risk of dating violence, and

sexual victimization in particular, most often perpetrated by a known offender (Fisher, Sloan, Cullen, & Lu, 1998). Understanding risk assessment processes among college students with respect to potential dating partners can make an important contribution to this literature. There is also research to suggest that there are only minor differences between college students and other populations with respect to criminal attitudes and behaviors, meaning that college samples can provide valid results which may generalize to other populations (Wiecko, 2010).

Unlike many studies which examine risk factors related to victimization or perpetration among married or cohabiting adult samples, college students in dating relationships are less likely to be limited by structural covariates. For example, adult couples in long-term relationships may share family ties, may be economically codependent, or may have children in common which could affect a person's assessment of the relative importance of violence in their lives versus other practical risks. Dating couples have far fewer structural ties, so understanding how the relative weighing of risks corresponds to violence experiences may reveal how individuals begin the path into a troubled relationship that later becomes further complicated by structural constraints.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected using an anonymous online survey through the web-based survey company Qualtrics, and surveyed students at the university. A college student sample at a large university has known and frequently used email accounts, so are readily accessible by online survey methods. A random sample of 2,000 email addresses for young adult, undergraduate students (ages 18-26 at the time of the request) was acquired from the university through an Open Records request. Arrangements were made with university information technology personnel to assure that the university's email spam filters did not block the email survey invitation. The subject line read: "What do you worry about when dating? Tell us in this study!" The email invitation described the study as dissertation research examining "what risks college-aged men and women consider when choosing

whether or not to date someone, and how the possibility of intimate partner violence figures into that decision", assured participants that responses were anonymous, provided a URL link to the survey, and provided contact information for me and my faculty advisor. Students were also informed that after completing the study they had the option to enter into a drawing for a \$50 Best Buy gift card. Entry into this drawing was optional, and contained in a separate database provided at the end of the research instrument, so that survey responses could not be linked back to individual email addresses.

The invitation email was first sent on February 1, 2011 on a Tuesday at 11:00 AM, and follow-up reminders were emailed only to non-responders on Friday at 5:00 PM, and then Wednesday afternoon at 2:30 PM. This timing strategy was aimed at improving survey participation: the initial email was sent at the beginning of Spring Semester when student workloads might be lower, on a Tuesday to avoid a full "post-weekend" Monday inbox, and sent on varied days and times so that students with classes on different days or on different schedules might receive one of the three invitation emails at a convenient time. Of 1,996 valid email addresses in the sampling frame, there were 116 responses after the initial email, 107 responses after the first reminder, and 77 responses after the third reminder. In all, 323 students clicked through to the survey consent page (16.2% response rate). Of those clicking through to the survey site, 298 consented to participate and began the survey (92.3% cooperation rate). Ultimately, 235 subjects finished the survey (72.8% participation rate).

Protection of Human Subjects

The survey was designed with the protection of human subjects in mind, and the protocol was approved by the University of Kentucky Institutional Review Board. Because students were being asked to report victimization and perpetration which may have included self-incrimination, anonymity was sought for survey participants. Thus, informed consent was not directly obtained, but was administered anonymously as the landing page for the online survey before a student could access the rest of the survey. Qualtrics was consulted regarding security of potential identifying information (e.g., IP

addresses) and certified to the IRB that IP addresses were maintained separately from data results, only used for survey administration purposes, and were scrubbed when the survey was closed. The response data available to the PI never contained any identifying information.

Recent research finds that participation in dating violence questionnaires is not particularly distressing to most college students (Shorey, Cornelius, & Bell, 2011). However, because this survey asked about experiences with physical and sexual victimization that could be traumatic or upsetting to participants, contact phone numbers for university counseling and victim services were provided at the bottom of pages with sensitive questions, and assured that this information would also be available at the completion of the survey. The final thank you page of the survey contained phone numbers, links, and operating hours to university and non-university crisis and counseling information.

Sample Description

After raw data were initially examined, cleaned, and coded into analysis variables, there were 234 participants who provided complete, valid responses for all risk measures. Thus, all reported results and analyses are based these 234 subjects.

The sample contained 168 female and 66 male subjects, with a mean age of 20.89 years old. Approximately 87.1% of the sample was white, which was significantly higher than the proportion of white students reported by the university (82.2%) for the academic year given a 95% confidence interval (87.1% +/- 4.3%). Most students were heterosexual (96.1%).

The majority of students in the survey reported that they had gone on a date or been in a relationship at some point in their lives (94.0%). The students reported being involved in an average of 2.53 serious romantic relationships over their lifetimes. The majority of the sample was currently involved with at least one romantic partner (62.0%), with 2.6% reporting being romantically involved with multiple people. A few students in romantic relationships were cohabiting (7.7%) or married (1.3%).

On average, the number of months a student had been in their current relationship was 24.38 months, but ranged widely from 0 to 85 months.

Some alcohol use was reported by most students in the sample (65.4%), however only 30.7% reported consuming alcohol once per week or more frequently. The only significant sex difference among any of these descriptive measures was the number of drinks consumed when drinking, which was 4.95 drinks for men, and 3.54 drinks for women (3.90 overall).

Analysis

Creation of Scales

The two scales used in this study to measure risk were a priori coded according to the question's content into either *objective/instrumental worry* or *subjective/identity worry* subscales. Additionally, the Dating Identity Risk Scale (DIRS) was coded into a third scale measuring *dating violence worry*. All of these created scales are mutually exclusive with respect to which items are included. All scale values were standardized to a range of 0-1 using the formula $(x-x_{\min})/(x_{\max}-x_{\min})$ such that direct, proportionate comparisons could be made across scales. The Dating Identity Risk Scale (DIRS) items were summed into sub-scales as follows:

- 1) DIRS-IN (objective/instrumental) : 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.9
- 2) DIRS-ID (subjective/identity) : 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.9, 1.10, 2.8, 2.10
- 3) DIRS-V (dating violence) : 1.8, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.11

Each scale was evaluated for reliability using Cronbach's alpha (DIRS-IN: .804, DIRS-ID: .731, DIRS-V: .821) and all three scales reached values indicating good reliability across items. The DIRS-IN and DIRS-ID scales were normally distributed, while the DIRS-V scale was significantly, negatively skewed (most subjects rated the possibility of violence near the maximum importance).

Items for the Things I Worry About Scale (TIWAS) were grouped according to the factors identified and validated by the scale's creators (Millar & Gallagher, 1996). However, since some items

were not included (see *Measuring Risk*, above) only 10 of the 14 factors were utilized. All 10 factors were reliable in the present dataset, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from .705 to .913. The TIWAS factors were a priori sorted into two groupings corresponding with *objective/instrumental worry* and *subjective/identity worry*. The TIWAS risk measures were summed as follows:

- 1) TIWAS-IN (objective/instrumental) : F1, F4, F5, F6, F10
- 2) TIWAS-ID (subjective/identity) : F2, F8, F9, F11, F12

Both of these groupings were evaluated using Cronbach's alpha (TIWAS-IN: .771, TIWAS-ID: .840) and showed good reliability. Both scales had an approximately normal distribution.

Data Analysis

This dissertation primarily utilized techniques of regression analysis to investigate specific hypotheses related to the risk variables described above. Because most constructs in this analysis are new, theoretically-driven concepts, specific hypotheses involving primarily main effects were preferred over more complex multivariate models in order to avoid specification errors such as "overfitting" the models to the present data. Therefore, I recognize and acknowledge the limitations of the present analysis as a first tentative step towards incorporating viable conceptualizations of *objective/instrumental risk* and *subjective/identity risk* into the study of dating violence. The hypotheses presented below describe the pattern expected to emerge from the present data given this dissertation's theoretical and empirical background reviewed in the previous chapters.

First, risk society theory would suggest that with respect to generalized individual worry (measured by the TIWAS), concerns about *objective/instrumental needs* (TIWAS-IN) would be greater than concerns about *subjective/identity needs* (TIWAS-ID). This is due to uncertainty about the stability and validity of social institutions amidst reflexive, late modern social critique narratives. By contrast, personal concerns should be perceived as more controllable and thus less worrisome.

I also expected generalized individual worry to affect relationship worry. In keeping with risk society theory, the specific relationship between generalized individual worry and relationship worry would operate primarily through higher worry about *objective/instrumental needs* (TIWAS-IN) increasing both types of relationship worry (DIRS-IN and DIRS-ID). This relationship, however, should be more strongly positive for *subjective/identity worry* within relationships (DIRS-ID) than for *objective/instrumental worry* (DIRS-IN), since risk society theory predicts that worry about one's inability to meet *objective/instrumental needs* will shift a person's focus to *subjective/identity needs* within a relationship context.

Next, I examined the relationship between *relationship worry* and *dating violence worry*. I have proposed that increasing societal uncertainty and risk narratives impact people's actual experiences of dating violence, operating through the increased importance of identity when individuals consider their dating risks. If relationship *subjective/identity worry* (DIRS-ID) is increased disproportionately more than relationship *objective/instrumental worry* (DIRS-IN) by a risk society in the manner hypothesized in the first step of this analysis, then the risk of victimization is only increased if relationship *objective/instrumental worry* (DIRS-IN) is more positively associated with prioritizing the risk of dating violence over other relationship factors. Therefore, I hypothesize that the effect of DIRS-IN will be greater than the effect of DIRS-ID on *dating violence worry* (DIRS-V).

Finally, this study examined whether or not levels of *relationship worry* are predictive of actual experiences with dating violence. Not only was high relationship *subjective/identity worry* (DIRS-ID) expected to be associated with more *dating violence worry* (DIRS-V), it was also expected to increase the odds that an individual will experience dating violence victimization or perpetrate dating violence against a partner. This hypothesis, if true, would be consistent with the dating violence literature that suggests a relationship between high emotional investment and involvement in violence. In other words, the extent to which a relationship is expected to meet *subjective/identity needs* is directly related

to an individual's likelihood to commit or endure violent acts in the course of controlling their own intimate relationship. This analysis added control variables for age and sex, given that perpetration and victimization experiences may become more likely as students progress through college or may have distinctly gendered patterns.

Chapter Five

Results and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter presents analyses of the relationships between the four risk scales described previously and their effects on college students' perceptions of and experiences with dating violence. As detailed in the previous chapter, these scales represent these students' perceptions of risk with respect to their *objective/instrumental needs* and their *subjective/identity needs*. Levels of worry about each type of need are compared in general ("general"), and within the context of choosing a potential long-term intimate partner ("relationship"). The hypotheses investigated in this analysis are derived from a micro-level adaptation of risk society theory, which posits individual level consequences for growing uncertainty about social institutions. It is the premise of this dissertation that increased general uncertainty about one's ability to meet *objective/instrumental needs* in a prescribed, predictable, and normative manner results in detrimental consequences within intimate relationships. Specifically, theory and empirical literature presented in previous chapters suggest that individuals may prioritize personal identity or romantic relationships whenever worry about general instrumental needs is heightened. It is my view that the increased importance placed on subjective meanings (e.g., happiness, sense of existential self), combined with the ideology that romantic relationships are a controllable refuge amid uncertainty, renders individuals more likely to tolerate less-than-ideal dating partners. In some cases, these external pressures originating in historical social changes may increase a person's likelihood of involvement in dating violence.

This dissertation tests several specific hypotheses about the relationships between perceptions of risk and dating violence. The following hypotheses, described in detail in the previous chapter, are tested here:

- 1) In a risk society, students' general worry about *objective/instrumental needs* (TIWAS-IN) will be elevated, and will be greater than general worry about *subjective/identity needs* (TIWAS-ID).
- 2) *General objective/instrumental worry* (TIWAS-IN) will be positively associated with both types of *relationship worry* (DIRS-IN and DIRS-ID), but will this effect will be greater for *relationship subjective/identity worry* (DIRS-ID).
- 3) *Relationship objective/instrumental worry* (DIRS-IN) will have a stronger positive association with *dating violence worry* (DIRS) than will *relationship subjective/identity worry* (DIRS-ID).
- 4) *Relationship subjective/identity worry* (DIRS-ID) will have a stronger positive association with experiences of dating violence victimization and perpetration than *relationship objective/instrumental worry* (DIRS-IN), even when controlling for sex.

Each of these hypotheses corresponds to a direct comparison of the main effects of two or more independent variables on a dependent variable. Because key variables have been standardized to a common scale range, beta coefficients in the regression models can be directly compared in the interpretation of these results. Descriptive statistics for variables measured in this study are provided, followed by detailed examination of the above hypotheses.

Descriptive Statistics

A general description of the 234 students included in the sample is provided in the previous chapter. A comparison across sex for demographic, relationship, and behavioral variables is presented in Table 1. No significant demographic or relationship experiences distinguished male and female survey participants. The only significant difference across sex was the number of alcoholic drinks consumed when participants used alcohol, which was also significant on Levene's test for homogeneity of variance. In lay terms, this means that there is significantly more variability in the number of drinks consumed at one time by male students than females.

Table 1. Comparison by sex across demographic, relationship, and behavioral variables.

Variable	Male (n=66)	Female (n=168)	Total (n=234)
<u>Demographic Variables</u>			
Age	m=21.00 (sd: 1.617)	m=20.85 (sd: 1.669)	20.89 (sd: 1.653)
Race			
White	62 (93.9%)	142 (84.5%)	204 (87.1%)
Black/African-American	0 (0.0%)	11 (6.5%)	11 (4.7%)
Asian/Pacific Islander	2 (3.1%)	8 (4.8%)	10 (4.3%)
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2 (3.1%)	1 (0.6%)	3 (1.3%)
Hispanic/Chicano	0 (0.0%)	4 (2.4%)	4 (1.7%)
Other	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.2%)	2 (0.9%)
Sexual Orientation			
Heterosexual	62 (93.9%)	162 (97.0%)	224 (96.1%)
Homosexual	2 (3.0%)	3 (1.8%)	5 (2.1%)
Bisexual	1 (1.5%)	2 (1.2%)	3 (1.3%)
Transgendered	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.4%)
<u>Relationship Variables</u>			
Gone on a date or been in a relationship	61 (92.4%)	159 (94.6%)	220 (94.0%)
Relationship Status			
Single, not involved	28 (42.4%)	61 (36.3%)	89 (38.0%)
Single, involved with multiple people	1 (1.5%)	5 (3.0%)	6 (2.6%)
Single, romantically involved apart	29 (43.9%)	89 (53.0%)	118 (50.4%)
Single, romantically involved cohabiting	7 (10.6%)	11 (6.5%)	18 (7.7%)
Married	1 (1.5%)	2 (1.2%)	3 (1.3%)
Length of current relationship (months)	m=22.38 (sd: 16.567) n=30	m=25.22 (sd: 19.257) n=72	24.38 (sd:18.471) n=102
Number of serious relationships	m=2.62 (sd: 1.160)	m=2.50 (sd: 1.100)	m=2.53 (sd: 1.116)
<u>Behavioral Variables</u>			
Frequency of alcohol use			
5-6 days per week	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.4%)
3-4 days per week	5 (7.6%)	11 (6.5%)	16 (6.8%)
1-2 days per week	18 (27.3%)	37 (22.0%)	55 (23.5%)
2-3 days per month	8 (12.1%)	30 (17.9%)	38 (16.2%)
Once a month or less	7 (10.6%)	36 (21.4%)	43 (18.4%)
Never	27 (40.9%)	54 (32.1%)	81 (34.6%)
Number of drinks when drinking*	m=4.95 (sd: 2.714) n=39	m=3.54 (sd: 1.668) n=114	m=3.90 (sd: 2.070) n=153

* Significant on ANOVA ($F=14.575$, $p<.000$), and significant on Levene's test for homogeneity of variance.

Key variables in this study were the scales measuring *general individual worry* about *objective/instrumental needs* (TIWAS-IN) and *subjective/identity needs* (TIWAS-ID), *relationship worry* about *objective/instrumental needs* (DIRS-IN) and *subjective/identity needs* (DIRS-ID), and *dating violence worry* (DIRS-V). These variables have been standardized to a 0-1 scale, and the means and standard deviations are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Standardized means on risk scale variables.

	Mean	s.d.	N
TIWAS-IN	.422	.179	234
TIWAS-ID	.273	.148	234
DIRS-IN	.636	.209	234
DIRS-ID	.641	.146	234
DIRS-V	.847	.221	234

Finally, experiences with physical dating violence victimization and perpetration were measured. Those students who reported at least one serious relationship were asked to report any physical violence between themselves and their current partner, or between themselves and any former romantic partner (Table 3).

Table 3. Percent who experienced victimization and perpetration by sex.

	None	Current Partner Only	Former Partner Only	Both Current and Former	Total
<i>Victimization (n=149)</i>					
Females	69 (63.3%)	16 (14.7%)	20 (18.3%)	4 (3.7%)	109
Males	30 (75.0%)	8 (20.0%)	2 (5.0%)	0 (0.0%)	40
<i>Perpetration (n=168)</i>					
Females	79 (64.2%)	24 (19.5%)	14 (87.5%)	6 (4.9%)	123
Males	36 (80.0%)	7 (22.6%)	2 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)	45

Risk Society Hypotheses

The first two hypotheses above describe the expected relationships between general and relationship-specific *objective/instrumental worry* and *subjective/identity worry* that are predicted by a risk society approach. The first hypothesis proposes that in a risk society, general worry about *objective/instrumental needs* (TIWAS-IN) will be elevated, and will be greater than general worry about *subjective/identity needs* (TIWAS-ID). A one-tailed T-test was used to compare the mean score on TIWAS-IN to TIWAS-ID ($t=9.81, p<.000$), revealing that *general objective/instrumental worry* was significantly higher than *general subjective/identity worry* as expected.

Notably, there are no significant differences within *relationship worry* (DIRS-IN=DIRS-ID: $t=-0.30, p=.764$). This suggests that uncertainty about *objective/instrumental needs* is limited to general or public contexts, and that risk thinking about *objective/instrumental needs* within intimate relationships is isolated from general worry about these same needs. This finding is consistent with theory and previous literature, which claims that private identities and intimate relationships are seen as a stable refuge from general institutional uncertainty.

The second hypothesis proposes that *general worry about objective/instrumental needs* (TIWAS-IN) will not only be significantly positively associated with both forms of *relationship worry* (DIRS-IN, DIRS-ID), it will be more strongly associated with *relationship subjective/identity worry* (DIRS-ID) than *relationship objective/instrumental worry* (DIRS-IN). Under traditional marriage and family norms this would be a counterintuitive finding; in a more traditional interpretation, we would expect that the importance of *objective/instrumental needs* would be the same generally as within a relationship, since marriages or long-term partnerships could be expected to play an important economic role in alleviating concerns about general material well-being.

The influence of TIWAS-IN and TIWAS-ID on *relationship worry* was examined by fitting two regression models: one using DIRS-IN as the dependent variable, and one using DIRS-ID as the dependent variable (Table 4).

Table 4. Regression models examining effects of general worry on relationship worry.

Model 1			Model 2		
<u>DIRS-IN</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>Std. Error</u>	<u>DIRS-ID</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>Std. Error</u>
TIWAS-IN	.184*	.108	TIWAS-IN	.271**	.074
TIWAS-ID	-.027	.130	TIWAS-ID	-.027	.089
Constant	.556	.035	Constant	.596	.020
R ² = .027			R ² = .064		
n=234					

*significant at .05, ** significant at .01

Though there is a strong correlation between TIWAS-ID and TIWAS-IN (R=.712), the variable inflation factor (VIF) which tests for multicollinearity effects was well under the recommended threshold of 10 (VIF=2.029), suggesting that this result is valid. Some in social science recommend a VIF<4, but even under this stricter standard there does not appear to be significant multicollinearity to impact model validity (O'Brien, 2007). The results of these regression models show that *general objective/instrumental worry* has a significant, positive relationship to *relationship objective/instrumental worry* and *relationship subjective/identity worry*. The hypothesis that this relationship would be greater for dating identity worry is supported given that the beta coefficient for TIWAS-IN in the dating identity model (.271) is larger and more highly significant than in the dating instrumental model (.184). The negative direction of the association between TIWAS-ID and both DIRS variables indicates a moderating effect by TIWAS-IN. Additional models were run including an interaction term, but the interaction was non-significant, and thus only the above models are presented.

Zero-order correlations further support that TIWAS-IN is significantly correlated with both types of dating worry, but more so to identity risk (Table 5). Meanwhile, TIWAS-ID is only significantly associated with DIRS-ID risk. This pattern of associations is in line with expected risk society hypotheses.

Table 5. Zero-order correlations between general worry and relationship worry.

	TIWAS-IN	TIWAS-ID
DIRS-IN	.164*	.104
DIRS-ID	.251**	.165*

*significant at .05, ** significant at .01

Dating Violence Hypotheses

For the third hypothesis, I examine the relationship between *relationship subjective/identity worry* (DIRS-ID), *relationship objective/instrumental worry* (DIRS-IN), and *dating violence worry* (DIRS-V).

I hypothesize that DIRS-IN will have a larger positive association with *dating violence worry* than will DIRS-ID. Once again, this relationship was tested using regression analysis (Table 6).

Table 6. Regression model examining effects of relationship worry on dating violence worry.

DIRS-V	Beta	Std. Error
DIRS-IN	.406**	.072
DIRS-ID	.206**	.103
Constant	.375	.039
R ² = .307		
n=234		

** significant at .01

In this model, *relationship subjective/identity worry* and *relationship objective/instrumental worry* were significantly, positively related to *dating violence worry*. The beta coefficient for DIRS-IN was nearly twice as large as for DIRS-ID. Because the original scales and the beta coefficients are both standardized, a direct comparison between these two betas can be interpreted to mean that DIRS-IN is more influential than DIRS-ID on *dating violence worry*.

The final hypothesis is that *relationship worry* impacts actual experiences of dating violence victimization and perpetration. This study records the experience of physical violence in a current and/or former relationship. Since not all subjects have current and/or former relationships, this analysis includes only subjects reporting that they have ever been in a serious relationship and completed the victimization or perpetration questions (see Table 3). Moreover, high positive skew in the numbers of

victimization experiences makes it preferable to reduce the range of victimization data to binary (1=experienced victimization, 0=no victimization).⁹ The same is true for perpetration data, which is also coded as binary. Also, DIRS scales for the victimization and perpetration models were re-coded from a 0-1 scale to a 0-100 scale so that interpretation of odds ratios in terms of percentages would be easier. Finally, an interaction term is included for DIRS-IN and DIRS-ID, in order to control for the possibility that overall heightened level of relationship worry increases violence, rather than some effect of either *objective/instrumental worry* or *subjective/identity worry* alone. No other interactions are hypothesized.

Victimization

I hypothesize that subjects with higher *relationship subjective/identity worry* (DIRS-ID) will be more likely to have experienced victimization. This effect is expected to be larger than for *relationship objective/identity worry* (DIRS-IN). Because the dependent variable is dichotomous, binary logistic regression was used (Table 7). Again, preliminary tests for multicollinearity between DIRS-IN and DIRS-ID result in a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) well below the common collinearity thresholds (VIF=1.549). This model controls for subject age and sex, since victimization experiences may be influenced by these factors. In particular, likelihood of victimization is expected to increase with age due to increasing opportunities to have dated, and women are expected to be more likely to report victimization. In the present sample, 40 women (36.7%) reported an experience of victimization, compared to 10 (25.0%) men ($Z=1.34, p=.090$). A more detailed comparison of victimization was presented in Table 3.

⁹ Square root and logarithmic transformations were attempted in order to retain the full range of information of a continuous scale, but neither transformation brought the variable to within normal parameters.

Table 7. Binary logistic regression model examining the effect of relationship worry on the experience of physical victimization.

	B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Exp(B)
DIRS-IN	.077	.051	2.317	1	1.080
DIRS-ID**	.141	.052	7.254	1	1.151
Age*	.249	.106	5.513	1	1.283
Sex* (0=female, 1=male)	-.709	.462	2.353	1	.492
DIRS-IN x DIRS-ID*	-.002	.001	4.297	1	.998
Constant**	-12.964	4.029	10.352	1	.000

Nagelkerke R^2 =.173

$n=149$

*significant at .05, ** significant at .01

In this analysis, DIRS-ID was significantly and positively related to the experience of victimization, increasing the odds of victimization by a factor of 1.15 for every 1% increase in worry about dating identity when controlling for other variables. The impact of DIRS-IN did not significantly impact likelihood of victimization; however the interaction between DIRS-IN and DIRS-ID was significant. This model supports the hypothesis that *relationship subjective/identity worry* is a more important influence than *relationship objective/instrumental worry* on the likelihood of intimate victimization, as DIRS-ID is significant and DIRS-IN is not. Sex was not significant in the victimization model; however age had a positive impact on the odds of experiencing victimization by a dating partner.

The significant, negative interaction term suggests that greater imbalance between DIRS-IN and DIRS-ID increases victimization risk. The interaction between DIRS-IN and DIRS-ID results in a reduction in the likelihood of victimization, but more pronouncedly when DIRS-ID was the highest. Table 8 presents the odds of victimization against mean nominal levels of dating worry corresponding with the four-point scale of the original questions.

Table 8. Odds of victimization for median-aged student.

DIRS-IN\DIRS-ID	1=not	2=a little	3=fairly	4=very
1=not	.000	.027	1.000*	1.000*
2=a little	.004	.047	.526	1.000*
3=fairly	.067	.082	.099	.120
4=very	1.000*	.141	.018	.002

Note: Odds calculated as $\text{Exp}(z)$ of the logit (z) using the median age value of 20.5 and levels of dating worry entered as not=0, a little=33.3, fairly=66.6, very=100. This table represents odds of victimization from a model excluding sex (since overall logits cannot be created when there is a dichotomous covariate included). The logistic regression equation for the model used to generate this table is $z = .083(\text{DIRS-IN}) + .139(\text{DIRS-ID}) + .249(\text{age}) - .002(\text{DIRS-IN} * \text{DIRS-ID}) - 13.332$ with Nagelkerke $R^2 = .153$.

* Odds greater than 1 are adjusted down to 1.000 for the table.

Perpetration

I also hypothesize that subjects with significantly higher *relationship subjective/identity worry* (DIRS-ID) will be more likely to have perpetrated victimization. This relationship is tested using binary logistic regression (Table 9). Again, sex and age are controlled, because perpetration opportunities are expected to increase with age while women are expected (based on previous literature) to be more likely to report perpetrating physical violence.¹⁰ In the present sample, 44 women (35.8%) and 9 men (20.0%) reported perpetrating physical violence against a current or former partner ($Z=1.95, p=.026$). These data were presented in detail in Table 3.

¹⁰ Dating violence literature (e.g., Foshee, 1996; Gray & Foshee, 1997; O'Keefe, 1997) finds that teen girls are more likely to report utilizing minor forms of physical violence against a partner. However, they also note that women's use of violence seems to be more closely related to mutually aggressive conflicts, termed "common couple violence" Johnson (1995), rather than unidirectional physical abuse.

Table 9. Binary logistic regression model examining the effect of relationship worry on the perpetration of physical dating violence.

	B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Exp(B)
DIRS-IN*	.116	.054	4.629	1	1.123
DIRS-ID**	.157	.056	7.743	1	1.170
Age	.183	.099	3.385	1	1.201
Sex (0=female, 1=male)*	-.952	.457	4.336	1	.386
DIRS-IN x DIRS-ID*	-.002	.001	6.425	1	.998
Constant**	-13.051	4.182	9.739	1	.000

Nagelkerke's R^2 = .147

$n=168$

*significant at .05, ** significant at .01

This model reveals that both DIRS-IN and DIRS-ID are significantly associated with the perpetration of physical violence against a dating partner. Main effects of DIRS-IN indicate that DIRS-ID has a slightly larger influence on the odds of perpetrating physical violence, increasing these odds by a factor of 1.17 compared to only 1.12 for DIRS-IN. However, the interaction between these terms is negative and significant. This again suggests that imbalance between these two forms of worry increases the odds of perpetration. Age is not significant in this model; however sex differences do appear to be significant, with females perpetrating significantly more physical violence against any partner. Tables 10 and 11 present the odds of perpetration by men and women, respectively, against the mean nominal levels of dating worry which correspond to the four-point scale of the original questions. Physical violence by males appears to be more strongly associated with very high levels of both forms of dating risk, while female physical perpetration is much more likely at moderate-to-high levels on the DIRS-ID scale.

Table 10. Odds of perpetration for median age male.

DIRS-IN\DIRS-ID	1=not	2=a little	3=fairly	4=very
1=not	.000	.007	1.000*	1.000*
2=a little	.002	.034	.692	1.000*
3=fairly	.080	.177	.390	.864
4=very	1.000*	.920	.220	.052

Note: Odds calculated as $\text{Exp}(z)$ of the logit (z) using median age of 20.5 and sex of male ($\text{sex}=1$). Levels of worry were entered as not=0, a little=33.3, fairly=66.6, very=100.

* Odds greater than 1 are adjusted down to 1.000 for the table.

Table 11. Odds of perpetration for median age female.

DIRS-IN\DIRS-ID	1=not	2=a little	3=fairly	4=very
1=not	.000	.017	1.000*	1.000*
2=a little	.004	.088	1.000*	1.000*
3=fairly	.207	.458	1.000*	.569
4=very	1.000*	1.000*	.569	.135

Note: Odds calculated as $\text{Exp}(z)$ of the logit (z) using median age of 20.5 and sex of female ($\text{sex}=0$). Levels of worry were entered as not=0, a little=33.3, fairly=66.6, very=100.

* Odds greater than 1 are adjusted down to 1.000 for the table.

Additional binary logistic regression models were run which included full factorial interaction effects for sex, DIRS-IN, and DIRS-ID, but no additional interaction terms were significant. The models presented in this analysis therefore only include the main effects and DIRS-IN x DIRS-ID interaction term. Because only the interaction effect hypothesized turned out to be significant in these ad hoc analyses, the reliability of the included models is bolstered.

Discussion

All analyses conducted to test this study's hypotheses support a pattern expected based on a risk society approach. With respect to the first hypothesis, the level of *general objective/instrumental worry* was found to be significantly higher than levels of *general subjective/instrumental worry*. While this in itself may not be surprising, the lack of a similar pattern for the two measured forms of *relationship worry* certainly suggests a divergent pattern of thinking with respect to these two forms of risk when considered for one's life in general versus within a potential long-term romantic partnership.

General objective/instrumental worry significantly increased both forms of *relationship worry*, but had a larger effect on *relationship subjective/identity worry*. This is contrary to the "traditional" expectation that concerns about instrumental or material well-being would remain important whether thinking about an intimate partnership or life in general. One might have reasonably expected higher *general objective/instrumental worry* to increase the importance of *objective/instrumental needs* within a relationship, to the detriment of meeting one's *subjective/identity needs*. In other words, a person who has higher levels of worry about financial stability would be expected to consider financial responsibility a more important characteristic in a potential mate. However, these data suggest that *general objective/instrumental worry* instead significantly elevates the importance of *subjective/identity worry* when choosing an intimate partner.

The finding that higher levels of *general objective/instrumental worry* is more strongly associated with increases in *relationship subjective/identity worry* becomes important for understanding relationship violence when one considers how concerns about dating violence correspond with the other measured forms of relationship worry. The model in Table 6 finds that when considering a potential intimate partner, *objective/instrumental worry* has a stronger effect on *dating violence worry* than does *subjective/identity worry*. Practically, this means that increased worry about *relationship objective/instrumental needs* more strongly influences students' ratings of the importance of avoiding dating violence. This finding suggests that avoiding dating violence may be considered by many to be more closely associated with *objective/instrumental needs* than *subjective/identity needs*. Combined with the previous analysis, a pattern begins to emerge: increased *general objective/instrumental worry* disproportionately increases *relationship subjective/identity worry*, which results in significantly less worry about dating violence than if individuals' concerns about *relationship objective/instrumental worry* had increased. In other words, these findings are consistent with the interpretation that within a

risk society context dating violence may be de-prioritized through a subtle shift in the balance of relationship concerns towards *subjective/identity needs* and away from *objective/instrumental needs*.

These subtle effects on risk priorities within intimate relationships do not necessarily equate to involvement in dating violence. So, the final models in this analysis directly test the influence of *relationship objective/instrumental worry* and *relationship subjective/identity worry* on actual experiences with violence within intimate relationships. With respect to victimization (Table 7), only higher *relationship subjective/identity worry* significantly increases the odds of having experienced dating violence by a former or current partner. This analysis finds that higher levels of *relationship subjective/identity worry* may indeed be associated with an increased likelihood of experiencing victimization.

A similar finding appears for reported perpetration of physical violence, however for perpetration both *objective/instrumental worry* and *subjective/identity worry* significantly, positively increase the odds of perpetrating physical violence against a dating partner. The fact that higher levels of both forms of worry increase aggression against a partner is not surprising; both economic (e.g., poverty, unemployment) and psychological factors (e.g., codependency, jealousy) have been previously linked to conflict in relationships. What is interesting in the present analysis is that *subjective/identity worry* has a slightly larger impact on the odds of perpetration. Paired with a similar finding with respect to victimization, this result suggests that individual's identity stake in a relationship may be a source of strain that more strongly contributes to relationship violence than *objective/instrumental needs*. While *objective/instrumental worry* does significantly contribute to the odds of perpetration, it does not contribute significantly to victimization in the present analysis. This distinction may be indicative of a difference in risk-related motivations to perpetrate versus tolerate relationship violence, or may be a reflection of gender differences in relationship priorities that should be explored further. For both

victimization and perpetration, however, *subjective/identity worry* emerges as the most significant risk influence on involvement in dating violence.

Conclusion

This exploratory study provides tentative empirical evidence of a pattern proposed by risk scholars like Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995, 2002), where overwhelming concerns about meeting *objective/instrumental needs* in the late modern world may be redefining the relationship between public (e.g., economic) and private (e.g., personal) life. As the public sphere becomes increasingly uncertain, individuals may seek meaning and stability within their intimate lives. The data in this study suggest that higher levels of *general objective/instrumental worry* do, in fact, significantly increase levels of worry about *subjective/identity needs* within an intimate relationship context. By applying the implications of this idea, I have suggested that there are associated implications for dating violence outcomes. The exploratory analyses presented in this chapter give credence to the possibility that identity issues are an important consideration for individuals considering a long-term intimate relationship. Not only does higher *relationship subjective/identity worry* subtly divert attention away from prioritizing dating violence as a form of relationship risk, high levels of *relationship subjective/identity worry* are also significantly associated with increased odds of victimization and perpetration involving physical violence. These results suggest that examining the role of risk, and in particular individuals' perceptions of *subjective/identity risk*, may help to contextualize and explain individuals' involvement in dating violence in a manner not previously considered by researchers.

Chapter Six

Limitations, Possibilities, and Conclusions

Introduction

This dissertation has presented theory, hypotheses, and exploratory analysis linking social change in late modern societies to perceptions of individual risk within the context of dating relationships. Chapter 2 presented the theory of an emerging "risk society" which characterizes industrial societies towards the end of the 20th century as becoming increasingly shaped by discourses about the *distribution of risks*, in contrast to the earlier part of the century during which time social changes were driven by inequalities in the *distribution of wealth*. In late modern societies, new forms of risk emerge as a consequence of *institutionalized individualization* processes, are understood as uniquely accessible to experts, and arise paradoxically from an abundance of options for individuals (in contrast to problems emerging from the *distribution of wealth* which arise from scarcity). I argued that the emergence of a societal discourse about intimate partner violence in the late decades of the 20th century can be characterized as an example of this type of late modern risk, emerging as a challenge to institutionalized social systems which have been deeply threatened by the abundance of options opened up by the women's movement and by new discourses about sexuality, marriage, work, and family. In turn, individualization processes stemming directly from macro-level narratives about risk have implications for individuals' increasing reliance on private life and intimate relationships for meeting identity needs, such that overwhelming pressure is put on romantic relationships to provide meaning and stability in an increasingly unstable world. Chapter 3 made the case that some evidence for this theorized effect could be found within research on dating relationships, identifying threads within the dating violence literature that suggested the ways in which individuals assessed their own risk of violence could be better understood by considering a concept of "identity risk."

Chapters 4 and 5 proposed and tested an empirical measure of these abstract risk influences on individuals' worries, both in a general life context and when considering a potential long-term romantic partner. A specific pattern was proposed: high levels of uncertainty about general, extra-individual factors (termed *objective/instrumental risk*) was expected to increase individuals' concerns about meaning and personal identity (*subjective/identity risk*) when considering risk priorities in a potential partner. This counterintuitive effect, supportive of a risk society interpretation of individualization processes, was expected to subtly divert attention towards relationship identity issues and away from objective concerns like the risk of dating violence, and thereby increase the odds of involvement in dating violence. The data analysis supported all hypotheses describing this pattern, and provided tentative evidence that *subjective/identity risk* may be an important factor in understanding initial or ongoing involvement in intimate partner violence.

This study breaks new theoretical ground in the substantive research area of intimate partner violence, a field that has been largely applied and interdisciplinary. Given the novelty of the present study's approach and hypotheses, it is important to acknowledge the limitations in the present research study. In this dissertation, I do not claim to explain the causes of dating violence or to challenge previously established risk factors or other important research. Rather, I have proposed here an examination of a well-known and frequently-studied problem through a new theoretical lens. The current paradigms in domestic violence research are based on theories of gender and power, mental health models, or on criminal justice perspectives. All of these approaches are strongly associated with and ingrained within modern political, legal, and social institutions. Risk society theory proposes a radical and reflexive critique of the institutionalized logic of industrialized societies, and as such gives us a new paradigm within which to also examine the social problems which appear or persist in this late modern social context. Intimate partner violence is certainly not a new problem; but persistent and alarmingly high levels of intimate physical and sexual violence against women across recent decades

which have also seen dramatic progress in related social contexts for women should leave researchers wanting for answers to this vexing problem. This dissertation is an attempt to find a different answer, by asking a different question.

This chapter discusses the substantial limitations in the present study, in hopes of sparking an honest dialogue about how important concepts like identity, subjectivity, and risk can be better measured and incorporated into our understandings of individuals' decisions in violent relationship contexts. In challenging the assumptions of existing paradigms, it is also worthwhile to acknowledge the assumptions that were left unchallenged, and to consider whether or not incorporating these additional challenges might open new avenues for inquiry. Like any theoretical project, this dissertation raises far more questions than it answers. I offer this chapter with the caveat that it presents merely my own thinking about this research, the rationale behind it, and the possibilities raised.

Methodological Limitations

The findings from this dissertation are limited due to a number of methodological factors. First and foremost, this study explores abstract theoretical constructions of risk which are measured indirectly through the use of quantitative scales. The Dating Identity Risk Scale (DIRS), which measured *relationship worry*, was created for this dissertation, and thus has not been examined or validated across other samples. However, preliminary analysis of the a priori subscales showed good internal reliability in the present data. The Things I Worry About Scale (TIWAS) has been previously validated across multiple large samples of adolescents (Esters, et al., 2007; Millar & Gallagher, 1996), and the previously identified factors showed good internal reliability in the present sample. However, this instrument was modified slightly in the present study and used to create additional subscales which have not been tested outside of the present data. Conventional statistical wisdom recommends starting with literature-driven constructs whenever possible, since deriving scales from exploratory factor analysis methods can be suspect even with very large samples (Costello & Osborne, 2005). While the internal reliability of these

scales was good and there was not significant covariance in the models utilized, other constructions of risk perception certainly can and should be created, examined, and compared to the exploratory constructs used here.

Second, there are some limitations in the sampling method used. This study was conducted using an anonymous, online survey of college students. College students appear to not differ significantly from the general population with respect to criminal justice measures such as rates of interpersonal violence (Wiecko, 2010), and are generally receptive to survey questions about dating violence (Shorey, et al., 2011). Still, dating violence experiences among college students are likely to substantively differ from dating violence among older couples, or from married couples in the same age categories (Shorey, et al., 2008). This study utilized a random sample of email addresses, but participation was elective. This may introduce a self-selection bias; for instance, women were more likely to complete the survey than were men. This dataset is based on a single university, and may not generalize to other college student population. Additionally, many of this survey's questions required participants to disclose their own involvement in violent acts, so it is possible that social desirability effects are present within some of the study's measures.

There are also important limitations in the data analysis. The sample size was adequate for the present analysis, however the sample size was ultimately too small for a more thorough analysis of some outcome measures (e. types of victimization experienced, alcohol involvement) or comparisons across specific sub-groups (e.g., sex, race, current versus prior relationships). For the analyses that were conducted, this also this meant that only main effects could be examined in regression models, since adding additional multivariate terms or testing additional interaction effects would be detrimental to model fit and validity. Most notably, victimization and perpetration measures had to be reduced to binary variables, so no contextualizing distinctions in the severity or forms of violence could be examined.

Conceptual Limitations

This study was conceived as an empirical test of hypotheses about how social changes associated with risk society theory might affect decision making within intimate relationships, and in turn the odds of experiencing dating violence. The use of risk society theory dictated several key assumptions that underlie the present analysis. Key theoretical assumptions associated with Beck's risk society approach include the idea that ubiquitous risk narratives throughout society create uncertainty for individuals above and beyond that which has been historically present, and that individuals respond to these narratives by instilling more meaning in romantic love relationships which unproblematically (it appears) remain a fundamental building block of Western private lives.

In this dissertation, these theoretical assumptions underlie how relationship risk constructs are measured. It is assumed, for instance, that contemporary society is more reflexive and that risk discourses intrude upon citizens' day-to-day lives. As the theoretical critique of risk society theory in Chapter 2 demonstrates, this is far from given. However, adopting a risk society stance dictates the hypothesis that *general objective/instrumental worry* will be more influential upon *relationship subjective/identity worry* than its presumably logical counterpart of *relationship objective/instrumental worry*. This may, as I have chosen to interpret such a pattern throughout this dissertation, be a consequence of a risk society. However, it is also reasonable to argue that high levels of worry and uncertainty have always been present and disproportionately slanted towards identity issues among college-aged youth. In other words, this result may be a life-course finding rather than a risk society finding. This raises a critical alternative interpretation that must be addressed if risk society is to be used to describe the role of identity risk in intimate relationships. Is it possible that a risk society interpretation is unnecessary in describing how *subjective/identity worry* affects relationship priorities, or even intimate partner violence? I do not believe so. In the way of a justification for this belief, I refer the reader to Chapter 2, which argues that the emergence and social construction of domestic violence

as a social problem *at this specific historical moment* necessitates a broader sociological explanation rather than a more generic, life-course approach as implied by this critique. I return to and elaborate further on the implications of continued use of a risk society perspective in the next section of this chapter.

The other major conceptual limitation associated with Beck's risk society approach is the assumption that an idealized, traditional marital relationship remains a model or goal of long-term, intimate relationships. While the literature reviewed in Chapter 3 demonstrates that couples and households are organizing themselves in new and idiosyncratic ways, this intellectual deconstruction of the family does not necessarily break out of the Western notion of long-term partnership as a romantically involved dyad. Perhaps this assumption is not problematic for the present sample of mostly heterosexual, predominately white, college students. However, if a risk society is indeed characterized as a social context in which risk arises from a proliferation of options, even unproblematic assumptions about love and relationships may begin to normatively unravel. Breaking out of these assumptions raises interesting questions about how "identity risks" associated with dating violence might change for different groups of people. For instance, are committed singles less vulnerable to controlling forms of physical abuse, but more susceptible to sexual violence? Or, does the possibility of "falling in love" become a risk (rather than a sanctuary) in a social context where freedom, mobility, and hook-ups are the norm? In other words, do we miss important details about subjective perceptions of risk when we make normative cultural assumptions or attempt to generalize? This conceptual limitation, it appears, could benefit from qualitative approaches to derive, validate, or support future measures of identity risk.

Possibilities and Implications

Notwithstanding the limitations described in this chapter, this dissertation provides tentative evidence justifying further inquiry into the possibilities for using risk society theory for describing

individuals' identities, social perceptions, and experiences. Presently, this approach has been used to better understand the problem of dating violence. However, the theoretical questions about the nature of the relationship between macro-level social change and individual-level identities may well apply to other empirical domains. This project is essentially an attempt to carry out the type of inquiry described in C. Wright Mills' "The Sociological Imagination" (1959) by using societal-level historical change to describe experiences in individual biographies. Just as industrialization and modernization provided the theoretical foundations for sociology throughout the 20th century, it is possible that reflexive knowledge, unprecedented proliferation of public information and discourse, and emerging risk biographies will define the theoretical terrain of the 21st century. This section will describe the possibilities that I see with regard to the potential of a risk society perspective within the study of intimate partner violence as an empirical area, and then more broadly as a general sociological approach.

Within the study of intimate partner violence, the incorporation of subjective perspectives has been both a strength and weakness. On one hand, feminist political and academic perspectives have found a common cause in problems related to violence against women. Together, these perspectives have embraced the subjective experiences of oppressed individuals and voices through grassroots actions and qualitative methodologies with great success. On the other hand, these political and academic partnerships have also conceptualized violence against women as a pressing problem which demands immediate, practical solutions based on the experiences and opinions of key agencies and advocates. As such, certain official perspectives including law, criminal justice, or mental health practice have dominated the landscape of knowledge.

As I argued in Chapter 2, I believe that the field can benefit from a broader conceptualization of intimate partner violence that takes a more "global" approach to these types of problems. It is without doubt that problems of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and other forms of violence against

women have been perpetuated by social structures. For instance, women's historically oppressed legal status (McCue, 2008) and the long road to adequate criminal justice protections (Buzawa & Buzawa, 2003; Miller, Iovanni, & Kelley, 2011) demonstrate an ongoing need for institutions to address this issue. Likewise, social structures like gender continue to have impacts on partner violence through appropriate feminine and masculine gender norms (e.g., Schwartz, Magee, Griffin, & Dupuis, 2004). However, domestic violence remains a major social problem despite many structural changes increasing protections and resources for battered women over the years; the latest national data from 2010 reports that 1 in 4 U.S. women have experienced severe physical partner violence (Black et al., 2011). Some research even shows that increasing domestic violence resources may have a greater impact on reducing homicides of men than of women, possibly due to women having alternatives to violent self-defense (Dugan, Nagin, & Rosenfeld, 1999). The persistence of high levels intimate partner violence in spite of dramatic social, legal, and judicial changes in this country is vexing and seems to hint at the need for a new explanatory model.

The risk society approach that I have utilized in this dissertation is an attempt to find a new way of understanding the causes of this perplexing problem. This dissertation examines dating violence precisely because dating violence defies the conventions which have historically been considered barriers to women's getting help for intimate violence such as resource dependency, high levels of relationship commitment, and legal entanglement through children or marriage. If dating violence occurs in the absence of the structural barriers and risk factors identified for more committed intimate partnerships, then we must consider the possibility that whatever explains dating violence may also be present in more structurally entwined relationships. In other words, it is possible that the causes of dating violence are also present among married couples, and married couples *in addition* experience structural risk factors and barriers. Prior research offers a very incomplete picture of what these more universal risk factors might be. Certainly there has been research on psychological effects and correlates

associated with abuse and its consequences (Briere & Jordan, 2004; Logan, et al., 2006; Madsen & Abell, 2010), and on the connections between psychological disorders and intimate violence (Holtzworth-Munroe, et al., 1999; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994). And yet, very little research has attempted to locate the causes of intimate violence in larger sociological constructs, with the exception of general criminological research drawing correlations between disadvantageous social conditions and crime (e.g., Vest, Catlin, Chen, & Brownson, 2002). A risk society perspective suggests that beyond specific psychologies, sociodemographic factors, neighborhoods, and social categories, there exists something more fundamental to late modern society which may indirectly drive micro-level interpersonal conflicts precisely because the tension between the individual and society is the defining feature of late modern social change. Where Max Weber saw the social problems of modernization arising out of rationalization processes, Ulrich Beck's risk society theory suggests that the social problems of reflexive modernity arise out of individualization processes.

Evidence for effects of individualization and identity within the study of intimate partner violence is presently indirect, at best. However, I believe there are a few promising areas of research which demonstrate the utility of considering how identity shapes violence. For instance, Neil Websdale's recent examination of male perpetrators of homicide-suicide against family members (Websdale, 2010). In his book, he notes themes similar to those found in this dissertation. In describing the background of the creation of homicide death review teams, he opines that the process reflected a prevailing notion that "it was supposedly experts who made sense of these cases... [and] at times, these players had their own turf to protect and their own understandings of what lay at the root of domestic violence" (p.3). After careful analysis of socialization histories, emotional isolation, and how perpetrators did or did not fit into the social order, he concludes that familicide is a historically recent phenomenon which follows as a consequence of what he calls "modern emotional formations" characterized by "the increasing value attached to controlling one's own emotions and one's interactions with others" (p.217). If issues of

identity and the emotional pressures of modern life are associated with this particular manifestation of family violence, it is likely that these issues may be influential in other forms of intimate and family violence as well.

A second area where a more inclusive concept of identity may be helpful is in the area of batterer intervention. A recent meta-analysis examining the troubling and long-term ineffectiveness of batterer treatment programs has highlighted the variability in domestic violence offenders' motivations and receptiveness to what has historically been criticized as a one-size-fits-all form of treatment (Jewell & Wormith, 2010). The feminist assumption that power and control via patriarchal gender norms is the root cause of domestic violence offending is being increasingly challenged in favor of more inclusive, holistic treatment methods which take into account the couple's dynamics, stresses caused by racial prejudice, financial stress, men's histories of childhood abuse, and violence-promoting cultural norms (Cramer, 2005; Mankowski, Haaken, & Silvergleid, 2002; Saunders, 2008; Stover, et al., 2009). Many of these innovative interventions address broader issues like racial tension or substance abuse, and the limited research which is emerging appears to validate the effectiveness of this approach over institutionalized, criminal justice oriented treatment models (Cramer, 2005). These community-oriented responses to the perpetration of violence are, at their core, addressing issues of identity. A sociological framework like the risk society approach may eventually help researchers to better contextualize individual identity issues within a combined structural and personal intervention model.

Conclusion

There is much work to be done by researchers and advocates in understanding and addressing the problem of intimate partner violence. In accordance with risk society theory, I believe that most of the structural issues and risk factors associated with intimate partner violence are well understood. And yet, underlying these known correlates there are more ubiquitous issues such as the pressures of individualization processes which may contribute to intimate partner violence and to a number of other

seemingly unrelated social problems. This dissertation has examined the problem of dating violence within a pattern of individual risk perceptions predicted by theorizing about the predominant social discourses of our society. There are, of course, many other potential explanations for how individual concerns can sometimes relate to undesired behaviors. The purpose of this inquiry has been to investigate only one such possibility. My hope is that this dissertation demonstrates the potential for creative thinking about how individual and society shape each other, and points the way to new questions or answers which can help to explain and eliminate intimate violence in our society.

APPENDIX

Instrument

- 1) What is your sex?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
- 2) What year were you born? _____
- 3) What racial category best describes you?
 - a. White/Caucasian
 - b. Black/African American
 - c. Asian/Pacific Islander
 - d. American Indian/Alaskan Native
 - e. Hispanic/Chicano
 - f. Black Hispanic/Caribbean
 - g. Other (Please Explain)_____
- 4) What category best describes your sexual orientation?
 - a. Straight/heterosexual
 - b. Gay or Lesbian/homosexual
 - c. Bisexual
 - d. Transgendered
- 5) Have you ever gone on a date or been in a romantic relationship with another person?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 6) What category best describes your current relationship status?
 - a. Single, not romantically involved with anyone
 - b. Single, romantically involved with multiple people
 - c. Single, romantically involved but NOT living together
 - d. Single, romantically involved and living together
 - e. Married
- 7) If you are currently romantically involved, how long have you been in your current relationship?
_____ Years _____ Months
- 8) How many prior romantic relationships have you been in that you considered serious?
- 9) In the past 3 months, how often do you usually drink alcohol?
 - a. Never
 - b. Every day
 - c. 5-6 days per week
 - d. 3-4 days per week
 - e. 1-2 days per week
 - f. 2-3 days per month
 - g. Once a month or less
- 10) If you drink, how many drinks do you usually have on such occasions?
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - ~
 - c. 9
 - d. 10 or more

Adapted Version of the Things I Worry About Scale

Please indicate how often you worry about each of the following items.

(1=never worry, 2=sometimes worry, 3=often worry, 4=always worry)

F1	1	Making new friends at work/college	1 2 3 4
	2	Getting along with other workers/students	1 2 3 4
	3	Whether I will like my job/course and do well	1 2 3 4
	4	Taking responsibility at work/college	1 2 3 4
F2	5	Starting a conversation with the opposite sex	1 2 3 4
	6	Making or accepting a date	1 2 3 4
	7	Discussing a problem with the opposite sex	1 2 3 4
	8	Letting someone know I like them	1 2 3 4
	9	Telling someone about my feelings	1 2 3 4
	10	Not having a boyfriend or a girlfriend	1 2 3 4
	11	Whether to get married or not	1 2 3 4
	12	Making friends with others	1 2 3 4
F4	13	Being under pressure from schoolwork	1 2 3 4
	14	Coping with the stress of exams and coursework	1 2 3 4
	15	Having enough time to do my homework	1 2 3 4
	16	Getting down to studying	1 2 3 4
	17	What will happen if I do not do well enough in school	1 2 3 4
	18	Not getting good enough grades to get a job/degree	1 2 3 4
	19	Failing at what I might do in the future	1 2 3 4
F5	20	Deciding which type of job/degree I would like to do	1 2 3 4
	21	Finding out what I am interested in	1 2 3 4
	22	Finding out what I would be good at	1 2 3 4
	23	Choosing a job/degree	1 2 3 4
	24	Thinking about jobs/degrees I would like	1 2 3 4
	25	Not knowing what I want in the future	1 2 3 4
	26	What kind of work I will end up doing	1 2 3 4
	27	What to do after my exams	1 2 3 4
	28	Being afraid to make the wrong decisions	1 2 3 4
	29	Finding out what kind of person I am	1 2 3 4
F6	30	Worrying about meeting new people	1 2 3 4
F8	31	People making fun of me	1 2 3 4
	32	What others think of me	1 2 3 4
	33	People talking about me when I am not there	1 2 3 4
	34	Being alone, left out, or ignored	1 2 3 4
	35	The way I look	1 2 3 4
	36	Being embarrassed too easily	1 2 3 4
	37	Not having enough confidence in myself	1 2 3 4
	38	Standing up for myself	1 2 3 4
	39	Feeling different from other people	1 2 3 4
	40	About the past	1 2 3 4
	41	Refusing people when I do not want to do something	1 2 3 4

F9	42	Not being able to talk to someone about my problems	1	2	3	4
	43	Being confused about my life at present	1	2	3	4
	44	Not being able to solve the problems that I have	1	2	3	4
	45	Changing my mind too much	1	2	3	4
F10	46	Having enough money	1	2	3	4
	47	Never having any money	1	2	3	4
	48	Looking after my money	1	2	3	4
	49	Paying my debts	1	2	3	4
	50	Having enough money to keep myself when I am older	1	2	3	4
	51	Having to work to earn enough money	1	2	3	4
	52	Having to ask friends/parents for money	1	2	3	4
	53	Not making anything out of my life	1	2	3	4
F11	54	Getting friends into trouble	1	2	3	4
	55	Other people deciding about jobs for me	1	2	3	4
	56	Other people making decisions for me	1	2	3	4
	57	Falling out with close friends	1	2	3	4
	58	Becoming pregnant or making someone pregnant	1	2	3	4
	59	Being blamed unfairly for something	1	2	3	4
	60	Telling someone something that might hurt them	1	2	3	4
	61	Breaking off a relationship	1	2	3	4
	62	Discouraging someone of the opposite sex	1	2	3	4
	63	Never finding a job	1	2	3	4
	64	Becoming addicted to drugs or alcohol	1	2	3	4
	65	Saying the wrong thing	1	2	3	4
	66	Falling out with my parents/guardians	1	2	3	4
	67	Not being able to start work or college	1	2	3	4
F12	68	Leaving friends and family to move away from home	1	2	3	4
	69	Not knowing anyone if I moved away	1	2	3	4
	70	Leaving home	1	2	3	4
	71	Whether I will be able to live by myself when I am older	1	2	3	4
	72	Moving to live in a different place or country	1	2	3	4
	73	Keeping my closest friends forever	1	2	3	4
	74	What's going to happen to me in ten years time	1	2	3	4

Factors:

- F1 Starting work or college
- F2 Opposite sex
- F4 Academic schoolwork
- F5 Choosing a job or degree
- F6 Verbal communication
- F8 Myself
- F9 Communication
- F10 Money matters
- F11 Social efficacy
- F12 Change and transition

Dating Identity Risk Scale

How important are the following *feelings you have* when choosing whether or not to date someone?
 (1=not important, 2 = a little important, 3= fairly important, 4 = extremely important)

Feeling like you have emotional support or companionship with this person.	1	2	3	4
Feeling like you will be alone if you do not date this person.	1	2	3	4
Feeling like this person will be able to provide for you financially.	1	2	3	4
Feeling like you will be free to pursue your individual goals while dating this person.	1	2	3	4
Feeling like you can have satisfying sex with this person.	1	2	3	4
Feeling like you will be fulfilled by your relationship with this person.	1	2	3	4
Feeling like you will always find this person physically attractive.	1	2	3	4
Feeling like this person will respect my decisions about if or when to have sex.	1	2	3	4
Feeling like this person shares your values or beliefs.	1	2	3	4
Feeling like you will have fun while dating this person.	1	2	3	4

How important are the following *characteristics of the other person* when choosing whether or not to date someone?

(1=not important, 2 = a little important, 3= fairly important, 4 = extremely important)

Dating someone you think will be successful.	1	2	3	4
Dating someone you think your friends or family will approve of.	1	2	3	4
Dating someone you think will someday want to marry you.	1	2	3	4
Dating someone you think will someday have or raise children with you.	1	2	3	4
Dating someone you think will never cheat on you.	1	2	3	4
Dating someone you think will never physically abuse you.	1	2	3	4
Dating someone you think will never make you angry enough to harm them.	1	2	3	4
Dating someone you think will not become less physically attractive over time.	1	2	3	4
Dating someone you think is healthy and takes good care of them self.	1	2	3	4
Dating someone you think is unlikely to break up with you.	1	2	3	4
Dating someone you think will never force you to have sexual activities when you don't want to.	1	2	3	4

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Physical Violence Questions Adapted from National Violence Against Women Survey

- 1) How many times *with your current dating partner* have you engaged in or experienced any of the following behaviors?

I have done this to a partner...

(Never, 1 time, 2 times, 3 times, 4 times, 5 or more times)

My current partner has done this to me...

(Never, 1 time, 2 times, 3 times, 4 times, 5 or more times)

Was anyone using alcohol or drugs when any of these incidents occurred?

(N/A, Neither one of us, Only my partner, Only me, Both of us, Don't know)

- 2) How many times *with any former dating partner(s)* have you engaged in or experienced any of the following behaviors?

I have done this to a partner...

(Never, 1 time, 2 times, 3 times, 4 times, 5 or more times)

A former partner has done this to me...

(Never, 1 time, 2 times, 3 times, 4 times, 5 or more times)

Was anyone using alcohol or drugs when any of these incidents occurred?

(N/A, Neither one of us, Only my partner, Only me, Both of us, Don't know)

HAVE YOU OR A PARTNER...	ME	PARTNER	ALCOHOL
Thrown something at the other that could have hurt them?			
Pushed, grabbed or shoved the other?			
Pulled the other person's hair?			
Slapped or hit the other person?			
Kicked or bit the other person?			
Choked or attempted to drown the other?			
Hit the other person with some object?			
Beat the other person up?			
Threatened the other person with a gun?			
Threatened the other with a knife or other weapon?			
Used a gun on the other person?			
Used a knife or other weapon on the other person?			

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Education

Master of Arts, Sociology, 2005
University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, Magna cum Laude, 2003
Maryville College, Maryville, TN

Academic Experience

Research Coordinator,
University of Kentucky Center for Research on Violence Against Women,
Carol E. Jordan, Director
July 2010 – June 2012

Research Assistant,
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May 2004 - July 2010

Part-Time Instructor,
University of Kentucky, Department of Sociology
May 2008 – May 2009 [3 classes, 3 semesters]

Teaching Assistant,
University of Kentucky, Department of Sociology
August 2003 – May 2004

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

Jordan, C.E.; Clark, J.J.; Pritchard, A.J.; and Charnigo, R. (2012). Female Intimate Partner Violence Offenders: Disentangling Gender and Context. *Crime & Delinquency*, 58.

Jordan, C.E.; Pritchard, A.; Duckett, D.; Charnigo, R. (2010). Criminal Offending Among Respondents to Protective Orders: Crime Types and Patterns that Predict Victim Risk. *Violence Against Women*, 16(12): 1396-1411.

Jordan, C.E.; Pritchard, A.; Duckett, D.; Wilcox, P.; Corey, T.; & Combest, M. (2010). Homicide of Women Across the Lifespan: A Research Note. *Homicide Studies*, 14(2): 181-192.

Wilcox, P., Jordan, C.E., Pritchard, A., & Randa, R. (2008). Rurality-Urbanism and Protective Order Service: A Research Note. *Journal of Crime & Justice*, 31(2): 65-86.

Jordan, C.E., Pritchard, A., Wilcox, P., & Duckett-Pritchard, D. (2008). The denial of emergency protection: Factors associated with court decision-making. *Violence and Victims*, 23(5): 603-616.

Jordan, C.E., Wilcox, P., & Pritchard, A. (2007). Stalking acknowledgement and reporting among college women experiencing intrusive behaviors: Implications for the emergence of a 'classic stalking case.' *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 35(5): 556-569.

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Wilcox, P.; Jordan, C.E., and Pritchard, A.J. (2006). Fear of Acquaintance Versus Stranger Rape as a "Master Status": Towards Refinement of the "Shadow of Sexual Assault." *Violence and Victims*, 21(3): 357-73.

Conference Presentations

Place of Origin and Reactions to Crime among Women at College. Pritchard, A.J., Jordan, C.E., and Wilcox, P. 73rd Annual Meeting of the Southern Sociological Society, Atlanta, GA, 2010.

Risk Assessment in Youth Romantic Partnerships. Pritchard, A.J. Advancing the Study of Violence Against Women: Is It A Science? A National Scientific Meeting. Lexington, KY, 2009.

Subjective Action and the Study of Agency. Pritchard, A.J. 70th Annual Meeting of the Southern Sociological Society, Atlanta, GA, 2007.

Examining Space-Based Class Consciousness in Appalachia. Pritchard, A.J. and Duckett-Pritchard, N. D. 30th Annual Appalachian Studies Association Meeting, Maryville, TN, 2007.

An Examination of the Domestic Violence Protective Order System in Kentucky. Jordan, C.E., Pritchard, A.J., and Duckett-Pritchard, N. D. Presented at 69th Annual Meeting of the Southern Sociological Society, New Orleans, LA, 2006.

Fear of Acquaintance Versus Stranger Rape as a "Master Status": Towards Refinement of the "Shadow of Sexual Assault." Wilcox, P.; Jordan, C.E., and Pritchard, A.J. Presented at 68th Annual Meeting of the Southern Sociological Society, Charlotte, NC, 2005.

Invited Guest Lectures

Spring 2012 "Gender and Lethal Violence."
Sociology 335: Sociology of Gender, Dr. Ana Liberato, University of Kentucky

Fall 2010 "Violence Against Women: Women's Experience of Crime in Context."
Sociology 339: Intro to Crime, Law & Deviance, Dr. Matthew DeMichele, University of Kentucky

- Fall 2007 "Fear and Violence Against Women: Culture and College Women's Experiences"
Western Kentucky University
- Fall 2005 "Communicative Action: The Social Theory of Jürgen Habermas."
Sociology 319: Sociological Theory, Dr. Dean Bolden, Maryville College
- Fall 2003 "Strain Theories of Crime."
Sociology 437: Criminology, Dr. Pamela Wilcox, University of Kentucky

Professional Service

- 2010-2011 Research & Grants Committee, Department of Sociology, University of Kentucky.
- 2010-2011 Advisory Board Member, Sociology Graduate Students Organization, University of Kentucky.
- 2007 Conference staff; "Research to Advocacy: Making Science Come to Life in the Hands of Advocates." Feb. 8-10, Lexington, KY.
- 2006 Conference staff; "Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society, Aug. 10-13, Louisville, KY.
Conference staff; "National Scientific Meeting on the Health Implications of Violence Against Women, June 6-8, Lexington, KY.
- 2005-2006 Personnel Committee, Department of Sociology, University of Kentucky.

Honors & Awards

- 2007 Appalachian Studies Association Scholarship, \$105
- 2003-2006 James Still Fellowship for Graduate Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Kentucky, \$15,000 annual stipend plus tuition.
- 2003 Alpha Gamma Sigma Honor Society, Maryville College
- 2000 Alpha Lambda Delta Freshman Honor Society, Maryville College
- 2009 Student Support Award, University of Kentucky, \$400
- 2007 Student Support Award, University of Kentucky, \$400
- 2006 Student Support Award, University of Kentucky, \$400
- 2005 Student Support Award, University of Kentucky, \$400

Professional Memberships

American Sociological Association (ASA), Southern Sociological Society (SSS), Appalachian Studies Association

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April 16, 2012