

8-30-2018

Men's Voices: Masculinities, Companion Animals, and Intimate Relationships

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Men's Voices: Masculinities, Companion Animals, and Intimate Relationships

By

Rochelle Stevenson

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2018

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Men's Voices: Masculinities, Companion Animals, and Intimate Relationships

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

Companion animals are increasingly becoming part of our families, and the majority of homes in North America now include at least one companion animal (American Pet Products Association, 2018; Oliveira, 2014). One body of research has shown that both men and women have close relationships with companion animals (Irvine, 2013; Prato-Previde et al., 2006; Ramirez, 2006; Sanders, 1993), while another body of research shows that companion animals are the targets of threats and harm in connection to IPV perpetrated by men (Ascione et al., 2007; Barrett et al., 2017; Flynn, 2000a; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007). Most of the research at the intersection of IPV and animal abuse has used the perspective of the women survivors in the abusive relationships. This perspective is essential to establish effective programs and services for survivors of IPV, to understand the impacts of the abuse of a companion animal on their human companions, and to begin to understand the complexity of relationships with IPV. However, it is one perspective – the perspective of the abuser in the relationship is generally missing in this literature. The current study addresses this gap in the literature through focusing on the men’s perspective.

Active interviews were conducted with 21 men, eight of whom had no reported perpetration of IPV recruited from the community, and thirteen who had been abusive towards an intimate partner and who were incarcerated or court-mandated participants in a domestic violence intervention program. Relationships with companion animals fell along a continuum with disinterest in the pet at one end and a cherished family member at the other. There was no discernable difference in how the companion animals were conceptualized between men who had been abusive towards an intimate partner and those with no reported abuse. Relationships with animals were characterized by unconditional love, loyalty, and trust, contrary to how most

participants described their intimate relationships. Companion animals featured in the performance and construction of masculinity, from a ‘tough guy with a tough dog’ to a nurturing father. Companion animals enabled men to do a ‘softer’ masculinity in which sensitivity and emotional vulnerability were more acceptable, as well as do their masculinity in accordance with hegemonic norms of authority, power, and control. Men in this study evidenced varying acceptance of aggression towards people, including towards intimate partners, however, there was a clear consensus that aggression against animals was not acceptable. No participant reported abusing an animal in the context of IPV, which challenges the essentialization of abusive men in the literature by showing that men who abuse their partners do not necessarily engage in animal mistreatment, and in fact may have positive relationships with animals.

The value of this research lies in its contribution to a better understanding of the perspectives of men who commit IPV, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of IPV. The findings show companion animals, who are increasingly being considered members of the family and with whom relationships are highly valued, hold important roles in intimate relationships with both with and without IPV. These findings have important policy implications, namely in the modification and improvement of domestic violence intervention programs to reflect these positive relationships with companion animals through a strengths-based approach.

DEDICATION

For Star, Tane, Coco, and Gabrielle who started this journey with me,
and for Piper, Egon, and Quinn, who helped me through the final run.

For Bob,

you are my sounding board, my proof reader, my test audience,
my cheering squad, and my shoulder.

Your support, love, and understanding are the reasons why I can do what I do.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people who have helped me through this process, without whom this research would not have been possible.

Firstly, the organizations and staff who supported my research, who saw the value in my questions, and gave me their valuable time and energy in sharing my project with interested men, thank you. Confidentiality requires that you not be named, but you were integral to the success of this project.

To the men who shared their stories, their emotions, their opinions, and their experiences with me, thank you. This research truly would not have been possible without your candor, and above all, your time.

My dissertation committee, Betty Jo Barrett, Ruth Mann, and Danielle Soulliere, you provided me with constructive feedback and unwavering support and trust in my research decisions. Thank you for letting me make my way through the process while learning through my challenges. To my external examiner, Catherine Simmons, your constructive critiques, suggestions on how to shape publications from this work, and ideas on future research directions were gracefully given and very much appreciated. You have all helped me to become a better researcher and scholar.

To my amazing PhD advisor, Amy Fitzgerald, my thanks do not seem sufficient for the brainstorming sessions, the pep talks, the honest and gentle critiques, the freedom to work at my own pace, and your confidence in me. You are a role model, setting an example I aim to follow. Thank you for being my mentor in every wonderful sense of the word.

This research was supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Joseph-Armand Bombardier Doctoral Scholarship..

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration of Originality	iii
Abstract	iv
Dedication	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
List of Tables	xii
List of Figures	xiii
List of Appendices	xiv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Violence Against Women	2
Companion Animals and IPV	4
Masculinities Theory	7
The Current Study	9
Outline of the Dissertation	10
Chapter 2: Literature Review	13
General Overview of Violence Against Women	13
The Connection between Interpersonal Violence and Animal Abuse	27
The Connection between Intimate Partner Violence and Animal Abuse	32
Motivations for Violence	42
Men’s Accounts of Violence	46
Chapter 3: Masculinities Theory	52
Roots of Masculinities Theory	52
Hegemonic Masculinity and Multiple Masculinities	56

Different cultural, social, and material resources for doing of gender	59
Masculinities and Violence as Resource	60
Masculinities and Intimate Partner Violence	63
Masculinities and Animals.....	67
Chapter 4: Methodology	77
Major Concepts Defined	77
Participants.....	79
Recruitment.....	81
Incarcerated Participants.....	82
DVIP and Anger Management Program Participants.....	85
Non-Abusive Community-Based Participants.....	88
Data Collection and Analysis.....	89
Active Interviews	93
Narrative Analysis	96
Ethical Considerations	100
Limitations	103
Chapter 5: Conceptualization of the Human-Animal Relationship	109
Conceptualization of the Human-Animal Bond	110
Hierarchy of animals.....	117
Function	117
Gender.....	118
Species	119
The End of the Human-Animal Relationship	122

Companion Animals as Resources for Masculinity	127
Tough Guys and Big Dogs.....	127
Control and Companion Animals	130
Fatherhood and Companion Animals	133
Non-traditional Masculinities	135
Love and Loyalty	139
Trust	142
Chapter 6: Aggression and Conflict.....	148
Pets in Conflict.....	149
Aggression Towards Humans	153
Men as Victims	154
Aggression Towards Companion Animals	157
Boundaries between Aggressions	164
A ‘Changed Man’	167
Pets and ‘Staying out of Trouble’	168
Future Companion Animals.....	169
Chapter 7: Discussion	173
The Continuum of Companion Animal Relationships.....	173
Companion Animals and Masculinity	178
Aggression and Conflict	187
Aggression and Companion Animals	190
Companion Animal Masculinity.....	195
Implications of the Current Study.....	197

Limitations of Current Research.....	201
Future Directions	205
Chapter 8: Conclusion.....	208
References.....	213
Appendix A: Schedule of Interview Questions	248
Appendix B: Recruitment Script (Community Non-Abusive Group)	252
Appendix C: Recruitment Letter (DVIP and Anger Management Program)	253
Appendix D: Recruitment Script (Incarcerated Participants)	255
Vita Auctoris.....	257

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Participant Demographics	92
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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Power and Control Wheel (Domestic Abuse Intervention Project)	34
Figure 2: Continuum of Relationships with Companion Animals	110

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Schedule of Interview Questions 248

Appendix B: Recruitment Script (Community Non-Abusive Group) 252

Appendix C: Recruitment Letter (DVIP and Anger Management Program) 253

Appendix D: Recruitment Script (Incarcerated Participants) 255

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Companion animals, or pets, are an important part of life for many people. General pet ownership estimates for North America indicate that about 60 percent of households have at least one pet (American Pet Products Association, 2018; Oliveira, 2014), and pets are increasingly being considered family members (Cain, 1985; Kurdek, 2009). Companion animals are often viewed as children or siblings and anthropomorphized (Stevenson, 2012; Veevers, 1985) and genuinely grieved when they die (Donohoe, 2005; Turner, 2005). However, the status of companion animals as family members also creates a vulnerability for being victimized along with the human family members in situations of intimate partner violence.

A small but growing body of research in the area of intimate partner violence (IPV) is focused on examining the inclusion of companion animals in the violent dynamic. Much of this literature has used reports from the abused female partners in the relationships with samples drawn from women's shelters and domestic violence services (Allen, Gallagher, & Jones, 2006; Ascione, 1998; Ascione et al., 2007; Faver & Strand, 2003; Fitzgerald, 2005; McIntosh, 2004; Volant, Johnson, Gullone, & Coleman, 2008). What this literature shows is that a substantial proportion of survivors of IPV who have companion animals, from about 50% (Ascione et al., 2007; Volant et al., 2008) to almost 90% (Barrett, Fitzgerald, Stevenson, & Cheung, 2017), report that their pets were threatened or harmed by their abuser. These studies focus on commission of abuse against companion animals in situations of IPV, and rarely address the absence of animal mistreatment. The combination of the focus on the perspective of female survivors and the lack of attention to relationships with IPV where the pets were not mistreated leads to the impression that men who abuse their intimate partners also abuse their companion animals. Given that there are very few studies with abusive men to provide another perspective

on the abuse of pets in situations of IPV, this image of abusive men becomes essentialized. While research shows that men can have healthy and loving relationships with their companion animals (Beck & Madresh, 2008; Cain, 1985), this research has not been extended to include relationships with IPV. So, do men who are abusive have different relationships with companion animals than men who are not abusive towards their intimate partners? Using masculinities theory as a conceptual framework, the current research explores this question, by asking both men who have not committed IPV and men who have engaged in violence against their intimate partners.

Violence Against Women

According to the 2014 General Social Survey conducted by Statistics Canada, approximately 4% of women in in Canada reported that they had been victims of physical or sexual abuse from their intimate partner in the previous five years (Burczycka & Ibrahim, 2016). However, DeKeseredy (2011) argues that limiting IPV to only physical or sexual abuse misses the breadth of the abuse experienced by survivors:

Women targeted by intimate interpersonal violence are rarely only victimized by one type of assault. Rather, they typically suffer from a variety of injurious male behaviours that include physical violence, psychological abuse, economic blackmail, the denial of money even if the woman earns a wage, harm to pets or possessions to which she has an attachment, coercive control, or stalking behaviour (p. 11).

DeKeseredy's (2011) definition of IPV highlights the diversity of forms that IPV can take and the premise that men are the primary aggressors in situations of IPV, and women are predominantly the victims. This assertion is supported by a substantial body of research (e.g., R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979; R. P. Dobash & Dobash, 1995; Dragiewicz, 2011; Eckstein, 2016; Hearn, 1998; M. P. Johnson, 2008, 2011; Stark, 2007). For researchers and advocates who hold

the gender asymmetry position on IPV, the patriarchal social structure is at the heart of most explanations for violence against women, including male power, privilege, and sense of entitlement (Adams, 1994, 1995; DeKeseredy & McLeod, 1997; R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1998). Men commit violence against women because they can, and this violence is either legitimized or ignored.

The opposite position taken on IPV is that of gender symmetry in which men and women are equally abusive in intimate relationships. Proponents of this perspective point to broad population surveys, and predominantly use the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979) or the revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) to support the assertion that women are just as aggressive in intimate relationships as men (Corvo & Johnson, 2003; D. G. Dutton, 2006; Straus, 2009b). Unlike victimization surveys and qualitative interviews in which the context of the abuse against the intimate partner is explored, the CTS simply measures the frequency and occurrence of specific abusive actions. While the prevalence of IPV is supported by studies using the CTS, what is missing from this body of work is attention to the context. The motivation behind the aggression, and the justification for the violence, cannot be gleaned from a simple tally of actions. For example, mere counts of abusive acts cannot reveal whether the aggressive acts were committed in self-defence or as a tactic to obtain control over the partner, nor any justifications or excuses given for the violence. Understanding *why* abuse happens from the perspective of the abuser in the relationship is necessary to formulate effective approaches to *stop* IPV.

In one way, the current research sits at the nexus of the gender symmetry/asymmetry debate, in the recognition that men in intimate relationships can be aggressors and victims, a fact that is not ignored by the feminist position (Dragiewicz, 2011). Participants in the current study

spoke about their own physical and verbal victimization at the hands of their female partners, which necessitates the acknowledgment that women, as well as men, can be assaultive in relationships. However, the attention to gendered notions of power and the use of violence as a resource in the construction and performance of masculinity situates this research on the side of gender asymmetry in the broader literature. DeKeseredy's (2011) definition of IPV above calls attention to the central roles of gender and power in the commission of IPV. DeKeseredy's definition also points out the fact that companion animals, or pets, can be included in the dynamic of IPV.

Companion Animals and IPV

While the exact prevalence of companion animals who are victimized in relation to IPV is difficult to gauge, abused women consistently relate that their companion animals have also been victimized. Threats to harm or actual harm to companion animals reported by women with pets ranges across studies. Twenty-five percent of the women in studies by Flynn (Flynn, 2000b) and Simmons and Lehmann (2007) reported their animals had been threatened or harmed, whereas approximately 50% of participants in Faver and Strand (2003), Ascione et al. (2007), Carlisle-Frank, Frank and Nielsen (2004), and Volant et al. (2008) shared threats and harm to their companion animals. In a recent study, Canadian women in domestic violence shelters were surveyed about their experience of animal maltreatment at the hands of their intimate partner, and 89% of the women with companion animals stated that their partner had mistreated or abused their pets (Barrett et al., 2017).

In addition to illustrating the victimization of companion animals in abusive relationships, studies also consistently show how important the pet can be to the human family members. Women will delay leaving abusive relationships out of concern for their pets, keeping

themselves in positions of risk in order to protect their pets (Faver & Strand, 2003; Fitzgerald, 2005; McIntosh, 2004). In their study of 41 women attending a domestic violence shelter, Faver and Strand (2003) asked if concern about the pet's welfare affected the women's decision to leave or stay in the abusive relationship. Twenty-five percent of the women delayed leaving the relationship because they did not feel that the pets would be safe if left with their partner (Faver & Strand, 2003); again, this approximate proportion is consistently reported across studies of women in domestic violence shelters. This is an indication of the strength of the relationship between the woman and her pet. Companion animals provide emotional support and comfort for women who are in abusive relationships, and some women are reluctant to place the animals at risk by leaving (Fitzgerald, 2005; Flynn, 2000b). This literature focuses on the woman's experience, and the strength of her relationship with her companion animals. The men who abuse the companion animals, as well as the men who may have very close relationships with the pets and do not engage in animal mistreatment, are not addressed.

The majority of studies conceptualize abuse of the companion animal as a tool to be used in the emotional and psychological abuse of the partner. Much like threatening to destroy a favoured possession, threats to harm or actual harm serves the same purpose – manipulation, control, and an exercise of power over the woman (Fitzgerald, Barrett, Stevenson, & Cheung, n.d.; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007). The Power and Control Wheel (Pence & Paymar, 1993) has been instrumental in intervention programs for men who have committed abuse against their partners in delineating the types of abuse that can, and do, occur. Under the category of Intimidation, the behaviour of “abusing pets” is placed in between “destroying her property” and “displaying weapons,” clearly framing the harm to the animal as a tool. The reason that threats to

harm or actual harm to companion animals are such an effective form of abuse is because of the close relationships that women may have with their pets.

Even though these studies report that half (or more) of the men who are abusive towards their partners are also abusive towards the companion animals, the focus is on those who do abuse animals rather than on those who do not. The motives for the violence towards the pets raised by the women are to hurt, control, retaliate against, and manipulate the female partner in the relationship (Fitzgerald, 2005; Flynn, 2000a). The motivations for the lack of abuse of the companion animals are rarely explored, or even mentioned. Fitzgerald (2005) is a notable exception, and cited pet ownership status as a factor in the lack of abuse insofar that the male partner would not abuse his own animals.

Much like women who are survivors of IPV are not a unitary group, research has shown that not all men who abuse their partners are the same (e.g., Dutton, 2006; Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2003, 2009; Holtzworth-Munroe, Meehan, Herron, & Stuart, 1999; Holtzworth-Munroe, 2000; Outlaw, 2009). While the idea that there are different types of abusers is firmly rooted in the general literature on IPV, this is missing from the literature surrounding the connection between IPV and animal abuse. It is generally not acknowledgment that abusers are heterogeneous, with differing relationships and rationales for their abusive behaviour, and this tends to generate the impression that all men who abuse their partners also abuse the animals in the home. While this essentialization may be unintentional, with the lack of the male perspective on their relationship with animals, this is the picture that emerges.

My previous work began to address this limitation in the existing literature. I focused on the general treatment of pets in abusive relationships from the perspective of ten abusive men incarcerated at the time of the interview (Stevenson, 2012). Out of the ten, only one participant

reported engaging in abuse of the family pet. The participants' relationships with their pets ranged from one with abuse and disinterest to viewing the pets as children in the family. Even though some of these men were convicted of murdering their partner, most had a very positive relationship with their pets (Stevenson, 2012). This challenges the implicit (if unwitting) essentialization of abusive men prevalent in the literature composed from the women's perspectives. The current research is an extension of Stevenson (2012), and expands the sample to include men who have committed violence yet are still in the community (e.g., in a community based intervention program) and men who have not been violent towards a partner at all. The different groups of participants are explicated further in Chapter 4: Methodology. The current research also expands on the theme of masculinity that arose in Stevenson (2012) by employing masculinities theory as the conceptual framework.

Masculinities Theory

Gender, according to masculinities theorists, is an action and a process (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Part of 'doing gender' is exerting dominance over weaker others (i.e., women, children, animals, and other men) as required by the hegemonic masculine ideal of strength, power, and control. Conceptually, masculinities theory is rooted in the structural entitlement to male power, privilege and domination, but acknowledges that individuals do gender differently according to the resources they have available, resulting in multiple masculinities (Connell, 2002; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kimmel, 2007).

Violence is one such resource, and masculinities theory has been used to explain IPV. Men can use violence against women to do masculinity, to feel powerful, in one sphere of life when they experience an inability to do masculinity in other spheres of life (K. L. Anderson, 2009; K. L. Anderson & Umberson, 2001). Moore et al. (2010) found that inability to achieve or

maintain the hegemonic masculine ideal was associated with IPV. Specifically, they found that performance failure in the areas of employment and sex, feelings of physical inferiority compared to other men, and feelings of intellectual inferiority to women were related to the commission of IPV. The perceived inadequacy compared to the hegemonic masculine ideal of an attractive, strong, successful, intelligent man who is sexually desired and skilled leads to stress and anger. This stress is alleviated by re-establishing power in a way that engenders masculine traits of power and strength: physical and psychological domination of women (Moore et al., 2010).

Umberson, Anderson, Williams, and Chen (2003) note that “an important element of ideal masculinity is control – successfully masculine men are expected to have control over themselves, their intimate partners and children, and their environments” (p. 236). When such control is threatened, violence may be a way to regain it. Control is a central explanatory concept in the literature on IPV; women report that control is a primary motivation for violence, including threats or harm towards their pets (Allen et al., 2006; Faver & Strand, 2003; Quinlisk, 1999). Violence can be used by the male partner to try to regain control while at the same time regaining a sense of masculinity by enacting the aggression and strength inherent in the hegemonic masculine ideal (Hattery, 2009; Salari & Baldwin, 2002).

Hegemonic masculinity has been used to explain animal abuse in ways similar to explanations of IPV. According to Adams (1995), pets have low status in relation to the patriarchal male head of the family and abuse of the animals simply serves as an instrument of control of the female partner. Adams (1994) also argues that patriarchy implies a value hierarchy, in which women and animals are at the bottom, which increases their vulnerability and justifies their abuse by the male in the relationship.

In other ways, the treatment of animals, companion animals in particular, is a site for a culturally rooted performance of both attempts at hegemonic masculinity and subordinate masculinities. Animals can be used to increase a man's outward signs of masculinity, such as owning a 'dangerous' and powerful dog as an indication of his own aggressiveness (Lie, 2017; Maher & Pierpoint, 2011). Other men may have very expensive or unique pets, such as rare breeds of dogs or horses, presenting the animals as indicators of their financial success (Veevers, 1985). The element of control can be realized through having a completely obedient and well-trained pet, for example, having a dog that does not need to be on leash and walks perfectly next to his male owner (Stevenson, 2012).

Relationships with pets can provide opportunities to do masculinity according to the cultural ideals, though perhaps in subordinate ways. For example, the expression of emotion is not a part of hegemonic masculinity, as emotions represent femininity. Yet, showing emotion and affection to a pet may be acceptable in a masculine context, as ideas like 'a dog is a man's best friend' permeate Western culture. This 'softness of emotion' is associated with a more effeminate, and thereby subordinate, masculinity. Leaning on a pet for support and comfort could be perceived as within the boundaries of doing masculinity, as unlike human partners, the animal is inherently unable to judge any emotions or disclosures (Stevenson, 2012). The ability to be a good economic provider for one's family is an aspect of masculinity, and being able to provide for all the needs of a pet can be another way of doing masculinity.

The Current Study

Using masculinities theory as a conceptual framework, the current study aims to address the relative absence of the men's perspective in the literature on IPV and companion animals.

Using qualitative interviews with 21 men, 13 of whom have been abusive towards their intimate partners, and 8 who have not, this study sought to address four research questions:

1. What is the role of companion animals in the lives of men?
2. What is the role of companion animals in the construction and performance of masculinity?
3. Do abusive men hold different attitudes towards and have different relationships with companion animals than non-abusive men?
4. Does the presence of a companion animal aggravate or mitigate the violence towards the partner?

The voices and experiences of the women are critical in putting in place programs and services for women leaving abusive relationships, making sure that all family members are safe, as well as raising the profile of how endemic family violence is in our society. However, if we want to stop violence against women and animals, we must intervene with the abusers themselves; we must stop the violence at its source. To that end, it is critical to get the perspectives of the abusers themselves, to hear their experiences and their perspectives on relationships both with their partner and with others in their lives.

Outline of the Dissertation

The next chapter locates the current study in the context of the broader literature on violence against women, IPV, and the connection between IPV and animal mistreatment. It discusses research on motivations for and accounts of men's violence, both against women and animals, as well as theories of the abuse of animals. Chapter 3 lays out the conceptual framework used in this dissertation. The interplay between masculinity and relationships with animals as

currently presented in the literature is also included there. The methodology and research design are described in Chapter 4.

The findings of this research are divided into two chapters. Chapter 5: Conceptualization of the Human-Animal Relationship deals with the way that the men in this study conceptualized the role of their companion animals in their lives, including how the companion animals were used and constructed in the performance of the men's masculinities. Chapter 5 focuses on the more positive aspects of the men's relationships with their companion animals. Chapter 6: Aggression and Conflict centres on the role that companion animals played in situations of conflict between the participant and his intimate partner. Chapter 6 addresses the cases of animal mistreatment, along with general attitudes towards the use of aggression and violence against both human others and companion animals. Chapter 7 contextualizes the findings within the literature on masculinities, IPV, and the human-animal relationship. The practical and theoretical implications of the research are discussed and limitations of the current study are also presented in that chapter.

This research focuses on the perspective of men in intimate relationships, both with IPV and without abuse, and explores the differences among and connections between men's relationships with both their intimate partners and their companion animals. The value of this research lies in its contribution to a better understanding of the perspectives of men who commit IPV, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of IPV. Understanding how companion animals can present an added layer of complexity within a situation of IPV can help domestic violence service providers who support the victims of intimate violence structure better responses and programs. Specifically, this study can contribute to existing treatment programs for intimate partner violence offenders within both correctional settings and in the community.

Highlighting positive ways of doing masculinity using relationships with animals, and building on the bond between the abuser and his pet (or animals in general), may be able to illustrate a more pro-social way to deal with the frustration or negative emotions arising from conflict without resorting to violence or psychological aggression.

Violence against women is never acceptable, and the current research certainly does not condone such behaviour via its focus on the men's perspective. Hearn (1998) states that a focus on men's voices in the context of IPV does not remove the focus on the experience and voice of survivors:

An important task in studying, changing and abolishing men's violence is to make connections between different kinds of men's violences, whilst simultaneously recognizing their specific and special form in different situations. To adopt this focus is not to play down women's experience but rather it is to *name* and *focus on* the problem (p. 5).

Understanding the differences and diversity of men's experiences moves us closer to what is important in all violence against women research: stopping the violence. However, just as describing women as 'victims of violence' misses the complexity of their lives, essentializing abusive men ignores the complexity of their lives. Through exploring the role of companion animals in the lives of men – through the men's own narratives – the unintentional essentialized image of men can be revised to one that better reflects their individual lives and experiences.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, two bodies of literature are reviewed. The first is the literature regarding the prevalence and different positions taken on violence against women, mainly intimate partner violence (IPV). There are two main positions on violence against women (VAW): the gender symmetry position argues that men and women are equally as abusive in intimate relationships whereas the gender asymmetry position argues that men are the primary aggressors in situations of IPV. The current research sits at the nexus of this body of literature between gender symmetry and asymmetry, addressing a gap in that the voices of men have tended to be minimized in VAW research. I do not take the position of gender symmetry in VAW, but I do acknowledge that in order to end men's violence against women, men need to be included in the solutions. The voices of the men interviewed in this study contribute to the knowledge base leading to more effective solutions.

The second body of literature reviewed focuses on the intersection of violence against people and animal abuse, including motives for and accounts of men's violence against women and animals. This body of work illustrates a clear connection between IPV and animal abuse, with most studies utilizing samples of women survivors of IPV. Within this research, the experiences of men related to companion animals in the abusive relationship have not been solicited. The current study aims to address this gap by asking men directly about their relationships with companion animals, both in the context of human relationships with IPV and in relationships with no reported abuse.

General Overview of Violence Against Women

Violence against women has been on the agenda of policy makers, activists, and everyday women for decades. Nearly 7 out of every 10 women worldwide will experience

physical or sexual violence in her lifetime according to the United Nations (2018). The 2014 General Social Survey on Victimization conducted by Statistics Canada found that approximately 4%, or 342,000 women, reported that they had experienced physical or sexual abuse from their intimate partner in the previous five years (Burczycka & Ibrahim, 2016). Moreover, only 19% of victims of IPV reported their abuse to the police (Burczycka & Ibrahim, 2016). To be counted by the police and included in official statistics, the actions must be considered a criminal offence. Insults, threats to harm companion animals, and intimidation are not considered criminal offences and therefore are not counted. That said, many who have been the victim of psychological abuse would argue that the damage inflicted by these actions are far worse than the impacts of the physical abuse (Arriaga & Schkeryantz, 2015; Flynn, 2000b; Velonis, 2016).

There is a debate within the literature on IPV centring on the gendered nature of perpetration and victimization. The question at the centre of this debate is: are men and women equally violent or abusive in relationships? This debate has two opposing positions, the gender asymmetry position which argues that men are the aggressors and women the victims (DeKeseredy, 2011; R. P. Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992; Eckstein, 2016; Hester, 2013; H. Johnson, 1996; World Health Organization, 2014), and the gender symmetry position which states that in the general population women are just as violent in relationships as men (D. G. Dutton, 2006, 2012; Straus, 2005, 2011). Differences in language and referents should ideally draw clear lines between the positions. Those in the gender symmetry camp are careful to avoid gendered language in their referents, while the gender asymmetry position makes gender a central factor in the explanation for violence. Generally, the gender asymmetry takes a feminist perspective, and refers to violence against women (VAW), intimate partner violence (IPV), and

domestic violence. Using ‘violence against women’ states clearly that women are the victims of violence, and by extension, men are the aggressors. The gender symmetry perspective uses partner violence, family violence, and IPV. Both the gender symmetry and asymmetry positions use IPV, which DeKeseredy (2011) claims is problematic in that the term IPV is gender neutral, akin to ‘family violence’ used by scholars who argue that women are just as violent in relationships as men (e.g., D. G. Dutton, 2006; Straus, 2005, 2009a, 2011; Straus et al., 1996). DeKeseredy (2011) argues that since gender is central to IPV, gender should be highlighted in terminology and referents to the issue.

DeKeseredy (2011) raises a good point about terminology, however, IPV and intimate partner abuse (IPA) are terms used interchangeably within the current study for two reasons. One, the focus is on the abuse and violence that takes place between intimate partners, with the descriptor of the relationship and the context of the abuse contained within the referent ‘intimate partner abuse’. Two, while this study does approach the issue of IPV from a gender asymmetry perspective, there remains the acknowledgement that women can and do engage in IPV. The feminist perspective recognizes the agency of women; placing boundaries around potential self-defence and closing the possibility of active perpetration of IPA on the part of women undermines this agency. Remaining open to this possibility reported by the male participants in this research means being open to hearing their experience and voice, which may include experiences of abuse from their female partners. Hearing the voice of the men is a key purpose of this study.

Though both sides of the debate use IPV as a core referent, the overlap in terminology is not an indication of overlap in explanations for violence within intimate relationships. The position largely held by feminists, the domestic violence shelter sector, and many academics is

that men are violent towards women in relationships because the patriarchal social structure condones and even encourages such violence (Adams, 1995; R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979; H. Johnson & Dawson, 2011). Men hold positions of power in politics, law, business, and education, and patriarchal society is organized to uphold this male power and privilege. Socio-economically, women are positioned as disadvantaged and subordinate to men, and this continues into a family or intimate relationship dynamic. According to those who hold to patriarchy as an explanation for IPV, violence against women is either legitimized or ignored (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979). This is but one position coming out of feminist theorizing about VAW, and to assume that all feminisms are the same in their explanation of IPV is flawed.

Still firmly in the feminist camp, other scholars point to the fact that not all men benefit equally from the patriarchal dividend (Connell, 2005), meaning that the benefits of male power are not distributed equally to men throughout the social structure. In the context of IPV, men may use violence against women as a way to gain and maintain power and control in their relationships, often when they may feel powerless in other aspects of their lives. Others point to the power of hegemonic gender norms, both a heteronormative masculinity and an emphasized femininity as circumscribing gender performance and creating stress which begets violence (Baugher & Gazmararian, 2015; Bozkurt, Tartanoglu, & Dawes, 2015; Mahalik, Aldarondo, Gilbert-Gokhale, & Shore, 2005; Moore et al., 2010). For example, a woman who earns more money than her partner may threaten her male partner's hegemonic masculine role as the primary breadwinner in the family. The threats to the masculinity of the male partner in the relationship may result in stress and the perception of a lessening of power in the relationship, for which violence may be a resource used to regain a feeling of power (Atkinson, Greenstein, & Lang, 2005; Hattery, 2009).

George and Stith (2014) argue against essentialist single-factor explanations for IPV, whether that be patriarchy or gender role stress, and instead suggest an intersectional feminist approach which pays attention to factors present in each unique relationship. George and Stith (2014) do not discount patriarchy and point to the power differential between men and women, yet also argue that attention to cultural, sexual orientation, and racial differences *among* women, and by extension *among* men, need to be considered in addition to gender in understanding IPV. Along the same lines, McPhail, Busch, Kulkarni, and Rice (2007) argue for an integrative feminist model which maintains the feminist connection between the personal and the political, incorporates intersectionality, and opens space for the inclusion of alternative theories and factors that contribute to IPV. McPhail, et al. (2007) and George and Stith (2014) take the middle road between gender asymmetry/asymmetry, in that the alternative theories of IPV must incorporate the acknowledgement that men can be victims of IPV, and women can be perpetrators. George and Stith (2014) note that “accepting the fact that some violence is symmetrical does not mean that we ignore the fact that some violence is, indeed, asymmetrical” (p. 185), with the recognition of the many gendered influences on interpersonal relationships, which include intersections with culture, race, nationality, sexual orientation, class, age, and (dis)ability. The underpinning concept of the gender asymmetry position on VAW is gender. While this may seem simplistic, gender permeates every aspect of social structure and interpersonal relations, and thus provides a grounding to the myriad contexts in which VAW may occur. However, while other relationships may be considered in some of the explanations, such as relationship to culture or family relationships, what is missing from many explanations is attention to companion animals.

The opposite view to gender asymmetry in IPV is the gender symmetry position, held by men's rights organizations and family violence scholars who argue that the feminist position on gender asymmetry is overstated (Dragiewicz, 2011; Mann, 2000). That IPV occurs is not debated or discounted by those on this side of the debate; what is in question is the gendered nature of such violence. Researchers like Murray Straus (1979, 2005, 2009a, 2011) and Donald Dutton (2006, 2007, 2012) argue that women commit just as much violence and abuse in relationships, and in fact, may be more abusive, thus negating gender and patriarchy as an explanation for IPV. Instead, scholars offer explanations for IPV such as psychological and psychiatric disorders (D. G. Dutton, 1994; D. G. Dutton & Bodnarchuk, 2005; Ehrensaft, Cohen, & Johnson, 2006), communication difficulties (Elmquist et al., 2014), or substance abuse and addiction (Costa et al., 2015; de Bruijn & de Graaf, 2016). More extreme positions on this side of the debate hold that the political climate favouring the feminist explanation that men are the problem in IPV disadvantage and unfairly vilify men, in essence, arguing that IPV is vastly overstated and that this is used for political gain benefitting women (Corvo & Johnson, 2003; D. G. Dutton, 2012; Hoff, 2012).

Methodology and populations of study contribute to the differences in evidence used to support both positions. Researchers arguing for gender symmetry in IPV rely for the most part on the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979) or the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2; Straus et al., 1996). Designed to be used with large general population samples, the CTS2 measures the presence and frequency of five sets of behaviours: negotiation, psychological aggression, sexual coercion, physical assault, and injury (Straus et al., 1996). Absent from the instruments are questions about the context in which these behaviours occurred, the motivations behind these actions, and any emotional or mental outcomes. Physical outcomes, including injuries, are

measured, but again only whether they occurred and how many times the injuries happened. The CTS2 is designed to be gender neutral, without assumptions about the direction of the violence (i.e., man-to-woman or woman-to-man). For example, a question set on the CTS2 would include both perpetration and victimization aspects: “I pushed or shoved my partner,” with the question immediately following “My partner did this to me” (Straus, 1979; Straus et al., 1996). Notably absent from the comprehensive list of actions is abuse of a pet. According to Straus and colleagues (1996), while considered for inclusion in the CTS2, this item was eliminated because “although torturing a pet can be an important form of psychological abuse, ...this can only happen if the couple has a pet” (p. 290). This is true, but the CTS2 also asks about using a knife or gun against a partner, and guns are not present in every home either. Given that over 60% of Canadian homes have a pet (Oliveira, 2014), and companion animals are present in nearly 70% of American homes (American Pet Products Association, 2018), the rationale for exclusion of pet abuse from the CTS2 is weak. While appearing to be a comprehensive measure of abusive behaviours, the CTS2 is missing an important element of psychological abuse that is captured much more frequently in the body of research adhering to a VAW perspective.

Those following a VAW orientation draw research participants from domestic violence shelters and service agencies in addition to larger general population samples. Qualitative interviews, surveys, and instruments designed to capture a range of victimization aim to uncover not only the myriad acts of abuse and violence, including abuse to animals, but also the perceived motives, contexts, and impacts of such actions (D. K. Anderson & Saunders, 2003; Fitzgerald, 2005; Flynn, 2000b; Meyer, 2012; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007; Velonis, 2016). Following the influential Duluth Model (Pence & Paymar, 1993), there tends to be more of a focus on the concepts of control and domination informed by patriarchy. Women’s voices,

especially the voices of survivors of IPV, are the main data source for the gender asymmetry literature. When the near exclusive focus on the perspective of women is combined with a power and control theoretical underpinning of the research, this skews the evidence towards the conclusion that gender asymmetry is the more reasoned explanation for IPV. Men's voices are generally not included in this body of research, and where they are included, it is as perpetrators asking for explanations for their motives and behaviour or in the assessment of domestic violence intervention program success (Heckert & Gondolf, 2000; L. Kelly & Westmarland, 2016; Moore et al., 2010; Wood, 2004).

There are large population surveys which do not use the Conflict Tactics Scale which offer evidence to support gender symmetry, for example, the General Social Survey (GSS) conducted by Statistics Canada. Conducted every five years, the survey asks both men and women about crime victimization among other behaviours and experiences. In 2014, the most recent cycle of the GSS, an approximately equal proportion of men and women, 4%, self-reported experiencing physical abuse at the hands of their intimate partner¹ in the previous 5 years (Burczycka & Ibrahim, 2016). From this statistic, gender symmetry in IPV seems apparent, however additional data from the same survey provide a more nuanced analysis. According to the 2014 GSS, women were more likely to report physical injury than men from their intimate partners (40% versus 25%), but men were slightly more likely to experience emotional abuse from their partner (15%) than women (13%) (Burczycka & Ibrahim, 2016). Scholars on both sides of the gender symmetry/asymmetry debate would agree that this result makes sense. Men are generally physically stronger than women, so an increase in injury for female victims of IPV

¹ A drawback to this analysis is that both heterosexual and homosexual relationships are counted together in the same category of 'intimate partner' as opposed to being analyzed individually.

is an expected result (Hester, 2013; Sinha, 2013); whereas women more often aggress verbally rather than with physical means (Corbally, 2015; Entilli & Cipolletta, 2017; Morgan & Wells, 2016).

On the other hand, the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) which records crimes reported to the police, provides evidence for gender asymmetry in IPV. In 2015, IPV was the most common category of victimization reported to the police for women (Burczycka & Conroy, 2017). This coincides with other research from the United Kingdom (Hester, 2013), the United States (Breiding, Chen, & Black, 2014; Durose et al., 2005), and other countries around the world (World Health Organization, 2014) showing IPV against women are more likely to be brought to the attention of police than IPV against men. Further, nearly 80% of reported incidents of IPV involved a female victim and male perpetrator, and women were much more likely to be abused by a spouse or partner than another family member (Burczycka & Conroy, 2017). In some ways, especially thinking about the gender norms of men as strong and women as (relatively) weak, the reluctance to report male victimization at the hands of a female partner makes sense (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Douglas & Hines, 2011). Taken together, the Canadian GSS and the UCR data illustrate that the gender symmetry/asymmetry debate is both philosophical as well as methodological. The data, the sample, and the measurement instruments matter. That said, there is little debate over the degree of injury women sustain at the hands of their male partners is greater than the inverse (e.g., DeKeseredy, 2011; D. G. Dutton & Nicholls, 2005), and that there is a continuing need for more research and established services for the survivors of IPV, regardless of the gender of the victim (Douglas & Hines, 2011; McPhail et al., 2007; Walters, 2011).

A drawback to the near exclusive focus on women's victimization at the hands of male partners is that it tends to overshadow the fact that IPV occurs in same-sex relationships as well (Baker, Buick, Kim, Moniz, & Nava, 2013; Messinger, 2011; Murray & Mobley, 2009). Johnson (2008) acknowledges that IPV occurs in same-sex relationships, and that power imbalances likely play a role in the abuse, though focuses most of his attention on heterosexual relationships. Renzetti's (1992) exploration of IPV in lesbian relationships also called attention to imbalances of power in abusive relationships, revealing that women were subjected to both physical and psychological abuse at the hands of their female partners, and that these abuses were similar abuses in heterosexual intimate relationships. Though the idea that women can be abusive in intimate relationships would seem to support the gender symmetry position, for the most part research exploring same-sex IPV sits within the gender asymmetry perspective as a product of the anti-oppression feminist stance that informs much of this work (Frankland & Brown, 2014; Messinger, 2011; Renzetti, 1992; Walters, 2011).

There is another body of work that spans the gender symmetry/asymmetry divide, blending the language of IPV, largely looking at abuser typologies (Ali, Dhingra, & McGarry, 2016; Carlson & Jones, 2010; Friend, Cleary Bradley, Thatcher, & Gottman, 2011; Hamel, Jones, Dutton, & Graham-Kevan, 2015; Holtzworth-Munroe, 2000; Jasinski, Blumenstein, & Morgan, 2014; M. P. Johnson, 2008). The most commonly used typology, especially among those in the gendered violence arena is the work of Michael Johnson (M. P. Johnson, 2007, 2008; M. P. Johnson, Leone, & Xu, 2014; J. B. Kelly & Johnson, 2008). The typology has shifted slightly over the years, but the core four types of IPV perpetration developed by Johnson centre around patterns of coercive control: intimate terrorism, violent resistance, mutually violent control, and situational couple violence (M. P. Johnson, 2008, 2011; M. P. Johnson et al., 2014).

Johnson argues that the two different sides of the IPV gender symmetry/asymmetry debate are measuring different kinds of violence, and therefore both sides have merit and both in fact are correct. Situational couple violence, the most frequently occurring in Johnson's typology, is where both partners are equally abusive and reactive in situations, using violence as a conflict resolution technique. It is this type that is captured in the large sample surveys using the CTS (M. P. Johnson, 2006; Myhill, 2015). This does not mean that women are just as violent as men, but that the conflict resolution strategies can include physical tactics. Communication deficits or difficulties are cited as why both partners may use violence, a feature of the situational couple violence type (M. P. Johnson, 2008; J. B. Kelly & Johnson, 2008). Intimate terrorism (previously patriarchal terrorism), in which one partner actively uses physical and emotional abuse to control, manipulate, and dominate their partner, is the type most often seen in domestic violence shelter samples (M. P. Johnson, 2006, 2008; J. B. Kelly & Johnson, 2008). As this population likely represents the most serious and injurious forms of IPV, the overrepresentation of coercive controlling violence among this group of women is not surprising.

Typologies provide a useful heuristic to begin to understand the complicated nuances of IPV. Typologies suggest direction on areas of focus in interventions for IPV, whether that be a focus on control as with Johnson's typology, or with a more mental health diagnosis and treatment approach as with the typology defined by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994). However, the multitude of typologies also lead to concerns and questions about categorizing IPV. For example, physical violence tends to be the focus of the typologies, even where the motivation of control is central, as in Johnson's typology. Some, like Winstok and Sowan-Basheer (2015), argue that a focus on psychological abuse does not contribute to the understanding of IPV, and the focus should be physical abuse. Conversely, Strauchler,

McCloskey, Malloy, Sitaker, Grigsby, and Gillig (2004) found that elements of psychological abuse like humiliation and blame along with control were frequently conceptualized as part of IPV alongside physical abuse by abuse survivors. There has been an increasing focus on psychological abuse among IPV scholars, recognizing that the emotional violence perpetrated has drastic and lasting harm on the survivors of such abuse, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and general psychological distress (Arriaga & Schkeryantz, 2015; Burczycka & Ibrahim, 2016; Hines & Douglas, 2015; Morgan & Wells, 2016). This indicates that typologies founded primarily on physical violence are missing key components of IPV, which limits their usefulness for intervention and treatment programs.

While calling attention to the variation within relationships with IPV and abuser behaviour is a step forward in understanding IPV, typologies can also obscure the diversity of abusers as a group. Typologies can hide or overwrite the individuality of the perpetrator and his relationships, reducing his behaviour and motivations to a level of control. Research has shown that abusers are a diverse group, and while they may share some commonalities, there is a large degree of heterogeneity among abusers (Cavanaugh & Gelles, 2005; D. G. Dutton, 2006; Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2003, 2009; Holtzworth-Munroe, 2000; Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1999; Outlaw, 2009). Typologies, by necessity or by design, reduce the abuser to the single relationship in his life – the relationship with his intimate partner whom he had abused. Even as they provide a tool for illuminating heterogeneity among abusers, typologies essentialize men to a simple master status: abuser of their partner. This is not the (stated) goal of researchers like Johnson (2006), Jacobson and Gottman (1998), and Gondolf (1988), however when interventions are built around these typologies, the essentialization can be an unfortunate by-product. Other relationships, such as those with non-romantic others are ignored unless they play a role in or are

a target of the abusive behaviour. For example, in Jacobson and Gottman's (1998) typology, violence towards others was used one criterion to differentiate between vicious and cold 'cobras' who would be abusive outside of the intimate relationship and the emotionally labile and quick to anger 'pitbull' whose violence was mostly contained to the intimate relationship.

Relationships with animals tend to fall into this trap as well, being seen as outside of the dynamic of intimate abuse. In the limited cases where animals are mentioned, threats or abuse to companion animals are placed in the category of psychological or emotional abuse (e.g., M. P. Johnson, 2008), alongside behaviours like breaking a favourite possession in an effort to establish or maintain control, or as an indicator of general antisocial behaviour external to the intimate relationship (e.g., Gondolf, 1988). In this light, pets are treated as tools of the abuse, rather than as separate victims in their own right.

Notwithstanding the limitations of the above abuser typologies, the work of Johnson and colleagues, Jacobson and Gottman (1998), and Holzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) call attention to the fact that men are the more common perpetrators of violence and that while women can also be aggressors, their violence is more often in resistance to the coercive control and violence of their male partner (Bates, Graham-Kevan, & Archer, 2014; Hardesty et al., 2015; Jasinski et al., 2014). Other typologies (and measurement tool development research) are positioned more firmly on the side of gender symmetry (Friend et al., 2011; Hamel et al., 2015). Reviewing the different typologies on IPV, Ali, Dhingra, and McGarry (2016) note that the typologies focusing on IPV perpetrated by women generally fall into three categories: women who use violence in self-defence, women who use violence to gain or maintain power and control in relationships with abusive partners, and women who are the primary aggressors. In this

way, the typologies of women perpetrators are not dissimilar from other abuser typologies in the categories of self-defence, mutual aggression, and active instigators.

While discussions of the gender symmetry/asymmetry debate and abuser typologies may seem like ancillary literature to research on IPV and cruelty to animals, there is a clear connection to the current research, which sits at the nexus of this debate. The men involved in the current study had been in a heterosexual intimate relationship, and many of these relationships contained physical IPV, emotional IPV, or both. Asking men about their perpetration, as well as exploring any victimization that arose as part of their relationships acknowledges the possibility that women can engage in and initiate IPV in relationships outside of a self-defence context. In this way, a degree of parity in abusive actions is recognized in these individual relationships. The reality that some women are abusive in relationships is not discounted by the feminist position, and in fact is openly acknowledged by many feminist scholars (Dragiewicz, 2011). Interviewing men exclusively about their relationships addresses a gap in the literature in that the voices of men tend to be overshadowed by the voices of women in the VAW research. This is not to say that I take the position of Straus, Dutton, or others firmly in the gender symmetry camp, but instead acknowledge that seeking solutions to men's violence against women requires that the voices of men be included in the development of those solutions.

What is consistently absent in the literature reviewed above on IPV is attention to the connection between interpersonal abuse and companion animal maltreatment. While it is mentioned in passing as an issue that is overlooked or should be included in scales measuring IPV (Strauchler et al., 2004), animal abuse in the context of IPV tends to be an aside to the core issue of violence between intimate partners. There is a growing body of work focused largely in

the gender asymmetry perspective, which places maltreatment of companion animals in a central position in theory, research, and policy.

The Connection between Interpersonal Violence and Animal Abuse

The connection between violence directed at animals and violence directed at humans has long been on the minds of artists, anthropologists, philosophers, and sociologists (e.g., Hogarth's *The Four Stages of Cruelty*; Mead, 1964; Unti, 2008). The McDonald Triad of bedwetting, firesetting, and cruelty to animals was thought to be a marker for later cruelty to humans (Hellman & Blackman, 1998). The violence graduation hypothesis, where one begins with abusing animals and 'graduates' to abusing humans, is rooted in case histories of serial murderers and retrospective childhood histories (Arluke & Madfis, 2013; Kellert & Felthous, 1985; Leibman, 1998; Merz-Perez & Heide, 2004). The Humane Society of the United States named this "The Link", and uses this assumption as the foundation for much of its programming, with the idea that if cruelty to animals can be stopped, so can cruelty to humans.

Research into the violence graduation hypothesis (VGH) largely uses retrospective accounts either from the perpetrator themselves (Kellert & Felthous, 1985; Merz-Perez, Heide, & Silverman, 2001) or others (Leibman, 1998). Retrospective reports are not always reliable, memory fails or is reimagined based on who the respondent is or wants to be. The near exclusive use of incarcerated populations (Henderson, Hensley, & Tallichet, 2011; Hensley, Tallichet, & Dutkiewicz, 2009; Merz-Perez et al., 2001; Tallichet & Hensley, 2004) support the VGH, but questions still arise about the prevalence of cruelty to animals in the general population and how it ties to the commission of interpersonal violence. There is also the difficulty of measuring the temporal aspect of the theory, in other words, the animal abuse must occur prior to the interpersonal violence for the theory to be correct. Most of the research exploring the VGH uses

incarcerated populations, which means that testing the temporal aspect is often not possible. If a person is incarcerated, while they may be able to still commit interpersonal violence, they are not able to commit violence against animals as their access to potential victims is restricted. Given that the core of the theory is desistance from cruelty to animals and subsequent graduation to human targets, removal of the opportunity to commit animal abuse means that the conclusion that the VGH is a solid explanation for both interpersonal and interspecies violence, when based on incarcerated samples, is fallacious. With an incarcerated population, there is no way to test whether the person would again engage in animal cruelty upon their release in addition to interpersonal abuse.

Opposite to the VGH is the generality of deviance hypothesis, which argues that animal abuse is part of a constellation of antisocial behaviours which include both violent and non-violent offences. Levitt, Hoffer, and Loper (2016) and Gullone and Clarke (2006) both surveyed the criminal histories of individuals with animal abuse records, and found that these individuals also engaged in offenses against property, offences against people, drug offences, and other offences (disorderly conduct, probation or parole violations, etc.) illustrating a generality in their offending behaviour. Lucia and Killias (2011) also looked at the connection between animal cruelty and a range of offences using the Swiss National Youth Survey, finding significant correlations between animal mistreatment and a variety of offences, including acts of minor violence (group fights), serious violence (robbery, assault), property offences (break and enter, auto theft), and vandalism. This indicates support for animal cruelty being part of a larger spectrum of deviant and antisocial behaviours, rather than being a predecessor to interpersonal violence. Using records from the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to identify animal cruelty offenders, Arluke, Levin, Luke, and Ascione (1999) matched animal

cruelty offenders with community controls (demographics based on age, neighbourhood, and gender), and followed up on the criminal histories of individuals in both groups. They found that there was a connection between general deviance and animal abuse, in that those who had been prosecuted for animal abuse were more likely to commit violent acts, property offences, drug offences and general disorderly conduct than the community case controls. Though their research found support for the generality of deviance hypothesis, Arluke et al. (1999) did not discount the VGH, and proposed that the graduation may not take place on an inter-species and linear progression, but on an intimacy continuum, where the offender may graduate from more remote targets for aggression (such as stray animals) to more intimate targets (such as a companion animal or an intimate partner). In their analysis of the criminal histories of 150 animal cruelty offenders using data from the FBI, Levitt et al. (2016) found that nearly half (46.7%) of the cruelty offences were against the offender's own animal, which could be considered a more intimate target, versus the 4 percent of offences against wildlife or stray animals. Evaluating the temporal order of offending, the majority of the interpersonal violence (e.g., assaults) occurred *before* the animal cruelty, and that arrests for assault diminished after the arrest for animal cruelty (Levitt et al., 2016). This directly contrasts the VGH and provides support for the generality of deviance hypothesis.

An alternative theory underpinning the link between violence against humans and animals is the desensitization thesis, which assumes that the lack of empathy and callousness with which animals are treated will lead to the same lack of empathy towards harm to humans (McPhedran, 2009; Nik Taylor & Signal, 2008). Lucia and Killias (2011) found, not surprisingly, that 48 percent of youth who reported intentional mistreatment of an animal in the Swiss National Youth Survey also responded that hurting animals is fun, or that the animals deserve the

mistreatment to the question “how do you feel about people hurting animals?” Interestingly, high percentages of youth who reported engaging in vandalism (32%) and shoplifting (23%) also selected the non-empathetic responses to the question about hurting animals (Lucia & Killias, 2011). Taken together, this could be seen as a pattern of disregard for the impact of one’s actions on others. While both vandalism and shoplifting are property crimes, they still have human victims (the business or property owner) who may feel violated by the criminal actions. A major critique of this particular body of work is that the cruelty to the animals is treated as a predictor of additional deviant behaviour, as a risk factor that requires intervention when observed to prevent future criminality. The animals themselves are absent from the conversation, models, and theorizations. In some ways, the research is necessarily anthropocentric as the goal is to intercede and inhibit criminal behaviour whenever possible. But by treating the animals as absent, as a simple representation of one aspect of criminality or a predictor, the victimhood of the animal is lost.

Connected to the desensitization thesis is the intergenerational transmission of violence thesis, where pro-violence values and behaviours are ‘passed down’ from parent to child (Ehrensaft et al., 2003; Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2015; Godbout, Dutton, Lussier, & Sabourin, 2009; Gullone, 2014; Knight, Ellis, & Simmons, 2014; Thornberry, Knight, & Lovegrove, 2012). There is strong evidence that witnessing or experiencing domestic violence in childhood is a risk factor for abusive or aggressive behaviour, including abuse against animals (Ascione, 1998; Ascione et al., 2007; Baldry, 2005; Currie, 2006; K. S. Miller & Knutson, 1997; Volant et al., 2008). Baldry (2003) surveyed adolescents in Italy about their exposure to violence and animal abuse in the home, finding that boys who witnessed physical violence between their parents were 2.6 times more likely to engage in animal abuse, and girls were 2.2 times more likely than

students with no exposure to physical violence between their parents. Becker, Stuewig, Herrera, and McCloskey (2004) conducted a 10 year longitudinal study with mothers who had been abused by an intimate partner and their children. Using a community control group who had not experienced IPV, Becker et al. (2004) found that children who were exposed to domestic violence were 2.3 times more likely to engage in animal abuse as reported by their mothers. Knight et al. (2014) obtained a similar result with their research utilizing the longitudinal National Youth Survey Family Study, finding that children whose parent engaged in partner violence were 2.65 times more likely to engage in animal cruelty, retrospectively reported by the children at a subsequent wave of the survey.

Two key studies using domestic violence shelter samples together with control groups provide additional support for the connection between witnessing or experiencing domestic violence in childhood and the commission of animal abuse. Volant et al. (2008) found that women who had experienced domestic violence were more likely to report that their children had committed pet abuse than the community group who had not experienced IPV. Ascione and colleagues (2007) interviewed both mothers and children attending a domestic violence shelter, and found that children in the shelter group reported committing abuse of pets at a much higher rate than children who were not exposed to IPV. A particularly interesting finding was that just over half of the children (51%), intervened to protect the animal in the home from being abused, placing themselves at risk (Ascione et al., 2007). This contradicts the assumption of the desensitization thesis that exposure to violence desensitizes one to violence, and decreases empathetic responses. This also challenges the intergenerational transmission of violence theory, in that children may respond with a directly opposite behaviour to the violence they have witnessed.

The Connection between Intimate Partner Violence and Animal Abuse

When defining and researching IPV as well as creating abuser typologies, the focus tends to be on physical abuse. This is what can be documented, bruises photographed, evidence collected. Contrary to psychological abuse,² physical violence is considered a criminal offence. Psychological abuse, which includes intimidation, threats, insults, and blame, also includes the abuse of others knowing the harm that this act will cause to another person. This is where scholars and practitioners locate threats and harm to animals. While women who have experienced both physical and psychological abuse will often state that the psychological abuse was more harmful (Arriaga & Schkeryantz, 2015; Velonis, 2016), some such as Winstok and Sowan-Basheer (2015) argue that psychological violence is a methodologically flawed category of partner violence and should be reduced to a “heuristic backdrop for a set of genuine non-physical categories of partner violence” (p. 13). In essence, Winstok and Sowan-Basheer (2015) dismiss insults, verbal threats, and control as background noise to the ‘real problem’ of physical violence.

One conclusion made by Winstok and Sowan-Basheer (2015) is that the outcomes of such mundane acts as threatening looks or words of criticism should not be the main criterion of categorizing an act as psychological violence. This position is problematic when the context of IPV is considered; the intent of the abuser is to inflict harm, whether that harm is to physically hurt the victim, or psychologically harm to provide an incentive to the victim to acquiesce to the commands or desires of the abuser (control). Women who are abused by their partners become sensitive to the micro-expressions and verbal cues that abuse is forthcoming (Adams, 1995;

² There are few exceptions in the Canadian legal context, namely uttering threats and criminal harassment (stalking), both which would fall under the category of psychological abuse.

Stark, 2007), and these cues can elicit fear and apprehension in the woman. Part of the definition of psychological abuse is the element of fear, so even the mundane actions to which Winstok and Sowan-Basheer (2015) refer, can and do constitute psychological abuse.

Where pets enter into the definition of psychological abuse in the literature is mainly through an instrumental perspective in that abuse of or threats to the animal are used as tools in the abuse of the partner. Essentially, threatening to harm or kill a beloved companion animal is framed as destruction of property, as is noted in the Power and Control Wheel (*Figure 1*) developed by Pence and Paymar (1993). DeKeseredy (2011; 1997) explicitly includes cruelty to or abuse of pets in his definition of intimate violence against women, however, pets are again counted as property: “harm to pets or possessions to which she has an attachment” is part of the behaviours that constitute intimate violence (2011, p. 11). Johnson (2008) also includes harm to animals in his definition of intimate terrorism in a similar way, conceptualizing pets as akin to property: “Intimidation, through destruction of property or through attacks on pets, makes it clear that the intimate terrorist is not only willing but able to use violence. A damaged wall or a destroyed piece of furniture demonstrates the physical ability to do serious damage” (p. 88). Dutton and Goodman (2005) categorize animal mistreatment as a relationship that can be exploited, arguing that psychological abuse can include “abuse of the children, other relatives, or even pets” (p. 743). Dutton and Goodman (2005) highlight abuse of important others, including pets in this category, as a tactic that the abuser can utilize. Regardless as to whether the pet is conceptualized as property or an important other, abuse of pets is routinely viewed by scholars as a tool of the abuser, used instrumentally to abuse their intimate partner.

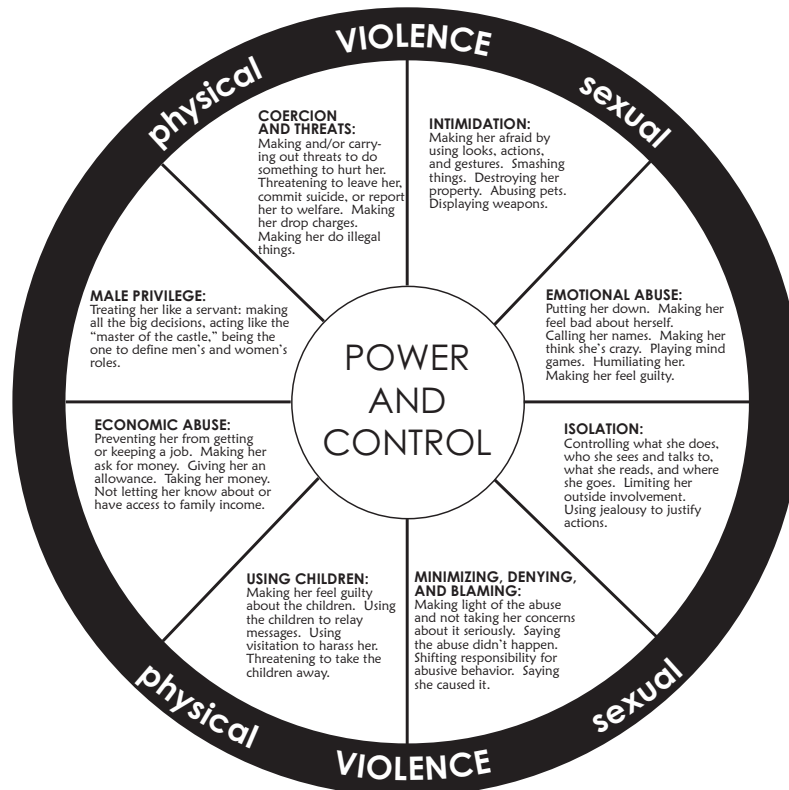


Figure 1: Power and Control Wheel (Domestic Abuse Intervention Project)

In Faver and Strand's (2003) study of 41 women attending a domestic violence shelter, approximately half reported that animals in the relationships had been threatened or harmed by the male partner. This is a fairly consistent proportion reported across a variety of studies (e.g., Allen et al., 2006; McIntosh, 2004; Volant et al., 2008). A notable exception to this is Barrett et al.'s (2017) study which documented 89% of their sample of women with pets reported that their partner had abused or mistreated their pets. Most studies ask women questions like 'did your partner abuse or threaten your pets?' (Ascione et al., 2007; Volant et al., 2008) to determine the presence or absence of animal maltreatment. Such general questions require the woman to accurately conceptualize the partner's treatment of the pet as abusive, and may result in underreporting of animal mistreatment. To address this limitation, Fitzgerald, Barrett, Shwom,

Stevenson, and Chernyak (2016) developed the Partner Treatment of Animals Scale (PTAS), which is a scale composed of 40 behaviours ranging from “intimidated and scared a pet on purpose to “refused to feed a pet” to “killed a pet,” and provides a more nuanced measure of animal maltreatment. Barrett et al. (2017) used the PTAS to assess animal abuse, which resulted in a more accurate and higher proportion of women reporting that their partner mistreated animals.

Not only are pets viewed as tools of abusers, but abuse of companion animals is also broadly conceptualized as a risk factor for more severe IPV (Ascione, 2007; Barrett et al., 2017; McFarlane, Campbell, & Watson, 2002; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007; Walton-Moss, Manganello, Frye, & Campbell, 2005). Walton-Moss et al. (2005) were explicit about their objective to “identify risk factors for abuse and IPV related injury” (p. 377). Rather than utilizing a domestic violence shelter sample, Walton-Moss et al. (2005) used random digit dialing to garner a general population sample. Using a modified version of the CTS, both a sample of women who had experienced IPV in the previous two years and a control group who had not experienced IPV were identified. Four significant partner-related risk factors for abuse perpetration were not graduating from high school, poor mental health, problems with alcohol or drugs, and threats or abuse of a pet. In fact, threats or abuse of a pet presented the highest odds ratio, with abusers almost 8 times more likely to threaten or abuse pets than men who had not perpetrated IPV (Walton-Moss et al., 2005). Again, the harm to the animal is conceptualized as a risk marker for IPV perpetration, and the victimization of the animal is not acknowledged.

Another area of literature where companion animals appear as a risk factor is in the research on exiting abusive relationships. Women will delay leaving abusive relationships out of concern for the safety of their companion animals, keeping themselves in positions of risk in

order to protect their pets (Ascione et al., 2007; Faver & Strand, 2003; Fitzgerald, 2005; Flynn, 2000b; Kogan, McConnell, Schoenfeld-Tacher, & Jansen-Lock, 2004; McIntosh, 2004). Many women stay in abusive relationships for a variety of reasons, including financial constraints (abuser maintains control of money, no job or low-pay job that inhibits independence from abuser), lack of resources or support (having been isolated from family and friends), emotional attachment to the abuser (in love with the abuser), staying for the sake of the children (he's a good father), or fear of the repercussions of leaving (Khaw & Hardesty, 2015; Leone, Lape, & Xu, 2014; Thomas, Goodman, & Putnins, 2015). Many women who do leave may return to the abusive relationship for the same reasons, including hope that the abuser will change. Meyer (2012) and Thomas et al. (2015) both argue that these decisions to leave or to stay, rather than reflecting passivity, reflect an active and rational choice on the part of women in these relationships, balancing the negative repercussions of leaving or staying with their abusive partner.

Meyer (2012) draws on Gilligan's (1982) notion of care-based rationales for decision making, in terms of weighing the costs (potential retaliatory violence to both self and others including animals in the home) as well as benefits (continued financial support and relative stability). While many of Meyer's (2012) participants explicitly stated that they stayed with their abuser for the sake of their children as well as for financial reasons, the argument could be made that the same kind of rational choice and strategic decision making occurs regarding the safety of the companion animals. Women will balance the threat and risk to themselves with the threat and risk to those that they care about – animals included. Thomas et al. (2015) explored "safety-related trade-offs" through the perspective of survivors of IPV, and a prominent theme was loss of emotional and physical safety for both the survivors themselves and those they cared about (p.

174). Sometimes the rational calculation about whether to stay or leave means staying in the relationship until all family members, including the animals, can get out safely. This may be especially salient in cases where the abuser has made direct threats against the pets or where he has harmed animals in the past.

Faver and Strand (2003) asked their sample of survivors if concern about the pet's welfare affected the women's decision to leave or stay in the abusive relationship. Twenty-five percent of the women delayed leaving the relationship because they did not feel that the pets would be safe if left with their partner (Faver & Strand, 2003). This proportion about the same as the 23% reported in Ascione et al. (2007), but is lower than the 48% of women who delayed leaving in Carlisle-Frank, Frank, and Neilsen (2004), and the 33% of women who delayed leaving in Volant et al.'s (2008) sample. Women's reluctance to leave their abuser without their pets is rooted in the fear of their companion animals being the targets of retaliatory violence, or that the emotional abuse will continue using harm to the pets as a tool of the abuser. Again, the abuse of the animals is instrumental in the abuse of the woman. The fact that women will keep themselves in a physically and psychologically dangerous situation is an indication of the strength of the relationship between the woman and her pet. Companion animals provide emotional support and comfort for women who are in abusive relationships, and some women are reluctant or will refuse to place the animals at risk by leaving (Fitzgerald, 2005, 2007; Flynn, 2000b).

Many people, not just survivors of IPV, see their companion animals as very important individuals in their lives, and many see their pets as family members (Beck & Madresh, 2008; Cain, 1985; Sable, 1995; Veevers, 1985). In their study looking at grief following the loss of a companion animal, Adrian, Deliramich, and Frue (2009) developed the 21-item *Human*

Experiences, Perceptions, and Beliefs Regarding Pets/Animals questionnaire. All but one of the 106 participants counted the animal as a companion, and 103 participants stated that their pet always or often brings them happiness. While this may seem instrumental in terms of the value for humans of the human-animal relationship, the fact that the animals are not perceived as possessions or mere ‘pets’ but framed in more emotional and relational terms indicates both the shift in the perception of companion animals as well as their importance to their human companions. Adrian et al.’s (2009) study is unique in that one of the questions frames the relationship as reciprocal with two active participants – human and animal. Sixty-eight percent of the participants responded ‘often’ or ‘always’ to the item “feel pet can sense human sadness,” implying an awareness by the human of an active emotional engagement on the part of the animal (Adrian et al., 2009). It is this understanding of the reciprocity in the human-animal relationship that survivors of IPV will often state as a rationale for not leaving their pet behind and in danger (Fitzgerald, 2007; Flynn, 2000a; Newberry, 2017).

Most of the research on the connection between IPV and animal abuse uses female survivor samples drawn from domestic violence shelters to assess the prevalence of cruelty to animals in relationships with IPV. The literature on the violence graduation hypothesis and intergenerational transmission of violence tends to be where the most male participants are seen. Even studies assessing gender symmetry, which for the most part include a substantial male cohort, rarely ask about animal abuse in the relationships. There are very few studies which sample abusive men which assess the co-occurrence of IPV and animal abuse.

Ascione and Blakelock (2003) surveyed 42 incarcerated men with histories of IPV about their treatment of animals. IPV was measured using the CTS2 (Straus et al., 1996), and animal abuse was measured using the Reports of Animal Care and Abuse (RACA). The RACA is a 30-

item scale developed by Ascione (2002) which assessed treatment of animals including threats to harm and actual harm to the animal, animal care, and sexual contact with animals. Fifty-five percent of men reported hurting or killing pets while in an intimate relationship, which is about the same proportion reported by women survivors of IPV. When the self-reports of animal cruelty were compared to the self-reports of relationship violence measured by the CTS2, Ascione and Blakelock (2003) found that men who reported hurting or killing a pet were more likely than men with no pet abuse to report that they had engaged in severe violence such as using a weapon, burning or scalding their partner, and forced sexual contact.

To assess the connection between animal abuse committed specifically in adulthood (as opposed to childhood or adolescence) and IPV, Febres et al. (2014) distributed questionnaires to 307 men who were in a batterer intervention program following an arrest for domestic violence. In addition to the CTS2 to measure prevalence and severity of IPV, Febres et al. (2014) used the Aggression Toward Animals Scale (ATAS), composed of 13 questions and which was adapted by Gupta and Beach (2001) from the CTS2 to reflect treatment towards animals. Of the total sample, 41% of the men reported engaging in animal abuse in adulthood, with 80% of these men reporting physical abuse, 71% reporting threats to animals, and 12% reporting neglect (Febres et al., 2014). Animal abuse was significantly and positively correlated with both perpetrating severe physical assault ($r = 0.15, p < .01$) and severe psychological aggression ($r = 0.18, p < .01$) as measured by the CTS2. While Febres et al. (2014) did not address motivations for violence, they suggest that the reason for the connection between animal abuse and IPV may be due to “maladaptive coping strategies” which transition across different contexts, or antisocial personality disorder in which low empathy and a variety of criminal behaviours feature prominently.

Unlike Ascione and Blakecock (2003) and Febres et al. (2014) who assessed relationship violence and animal mistreatment as discrete categories, Haden, McDonald, Blakelock and Ascione (2018) specifically analyzed the commission of animal cruelty *during* an argument or conflict in a relationship in their sample of 42 incarcerated men. Like Ascione and Blakelock (2003), Haden et al. (2018) used the CTS2 and the RACA to assess IPV and animal abuse. The RACA offers two questions about animal abuse in the context of IPV, one asking about threats to hurt or kill pets, and the other asking about actually hurting or killing pets (Haden et al., 2018). Thirty-eight percent of the men reported threatening their partner's pet during an argument, with 52% reporting that they actually harmed or killed their partner's pet (Haden et al., 2018). Furthermore, men who threatened or hurt pets during an incident of IPV were more likely to have engaged in animal cruelty at another point in their lives (Haden et al., 2018). Animal abuse was related with severe psychological aggression and severe physical assault scores on the CTS2, echoing the results in both Ascione and Blakelock (2003) and Febres et al. (2014).

While the idea that there are different types of abusers is firmly rooted in the general literature on IPV, this tends to be missing from the broader literature surrounding the connection between IPV and animal abuse. The studies above all used established measures to assess the prevalence of IPV (i.e., the CTS2) and animal mistreatment (i.e., RACA or ATAS). While this provides a balance to the studies who exclusively sample survivors of IPV, the limited response options and the relative lack of attention to the context in which the abusive behaviour occurs in survey instruments like the CTS2 or the ATAS (the two questions on the RACA regarding pet abuse during arguments between intimate partner being a notable exception) make the diversity and voice of the men in the relationships difficult to discern. It is generally not acknowledged in this body of work that abusers are heterogeneous, with differing relationships and rationales for

their abusive behaviour, which leans toward the impression that men who abuse their partners also abuse the animals in the home. While this essentialization may be unintentional, with the lack of the male perspective on their relationship with animals, this is the picture that emerges.

To begin to address this particular limitation in the existing literature, Stevenson (2012) focused on the general treatment of pets in abusive relationships from the perspective of ten abusive men incarcerated at the time of the interview. Out of the ten, only one participant reported engaging in abuse of the family pet. The participants' relationships with their pets ranged from one with abuse and disinterest to viewing the pets as children in the family. Even though some of these men were convicted of murdering their partner, most had a very positive relationship with their pets (Stevenson, 2012). This challenges the implicit (if unwitting) essentialization of abusive men prevalent in the literature composed from the women's perspectives.

Risley-Curtiss, Holley, and Kodeine (2011) also show that men can have positive relationships with animals in their lives, and that men conceptualize their companion animals as family members just as women do. Interviewing 12 non-abusive men about their relationships with their pets, Risley-Curtiss et al. (2011) found that the majority (10) considered the animals as family members. However, five of these men qualified the categorization of the animals, stating that the animals were part of the family, but not equal to the human family members. This may reflect adherence to social norms (i.e., a dog is a part of the family) while placing a reduced social or emotional value on the animal, such as a functional value in protection, companionship for the human, or emotional support for the human. While not explicitly focusing on the relationships men who have committed IPV have with companion animals, Risley-Curtiss et al's

(2011) mirrors the results in Stevenson (2012). The value and relationship is framed in terms of what the companion animal provides to their ‘owner’.

Even though research shows that concern for pets impacts women’s decisions to leave, and that half (or more) of men who are abusive towards their partners are also abusive towards the companion animals, the focus is on those who do abuse animals rather than on those who do not. Fitzgerald (2005) is a notable exception, and cited pet ownership status as a factor in the lack of abuse insofar that the male partner was less likely to abuse his own animals. But again, this was from the perspective of the women in the relationship, not from the perspective of the men who had committed the abuse. While motivations for the lack of abuse of the companion animals are rarely explored, or even mentioned, motives for the violence towards the pets are often raised by survivors of violence. Survivors perceive their partners’ abuse of their companion animal as intended to hurt, control, retaliate against, and manipulate the survivor (Fitzgerald, 2005; Flynn, 2000a). Such motives cluster around issues of power and control, and mirror motivations for violence found in the literature on IPV.

Motivations for Violence

Regardless of the gender symmetry/asymmetry debate, power and control as motivations for IPV are central in the literature (Elmquist et al., 2014; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, McCullars, & Misra, 2012; Tanha, Beck, Figueredo, & Raghavan, 2010). Stark (2007) discriminates between coercion and control, in that “coercion entails the use of force or threats to compel or dispel a particular response” (p. 228), whereas control is “comprised of structural forms of deprivation, exploitation, and command that compel obedience indirectly” (p. 229). In this way, control is the motivation for violent acts, and coercion includes a collection of tactics used to obtain and maintain control.

Motivations for violence in the context of IPV can also be separated into two categories, expressive and instrumental. Expressive violence includes violence born of frustration, anger, lack of control over emotions, and the inability to communicate this emotion without resorting to violence. Rationalizations for physical abuse that ‘she pushed me to my limit’ or ‘I was so frustrated that I hit her’ would be examples of expressive motivations for violence. The object of such violence is to relieve the tension or negative emotional state, and is accomplished through the expression of these emotions in a harmful or abusive manner. On the other hand, instrumental violence is calculated and strategic with the direct purpose to control and manipulate the partner. Examples of instrumental motivations can be seen in statements like ‘I kicked the dog so she would know that I could do the same to her’ or ‘I will kill myself if you leave me’ where the object of the psychological abuse is to communicate power, or to establish control. Hamel, Desmarais, and Nicholls (2007) explain how expressive and instrumental violence are not necessarily distinct categories:

Someone who aggresses initially out of frustration (i.e., an expressive motivation) by swearing at his/her partner for not providing attention, for example, is likely to continue to act in this manner if he/she succeeds in getting the attention sought, however negative that attention may be. Thus, aggressive behaviour that is repeated has an inherently coercive dimension because, whether available to the perpetrator’s consciousness or not, a large part of the motive is to change the other person’s behaviour (p. 571-572).

Hamel et al. (2007) also illustrate how coercion and control function together as both motivation and tactic in line with Stark’s (2007) differentiation, in that swearing at the partner is the coercive tactic, with the overarching motivation of control, i.e., changing their partner’s behaviour. However, in Stark’s (2007) conceptualization of coercion and control there is no room for expressive violence as all IPV is understood as instrumental.

Adams (1995) highlights the instrumental nature of abuse, both against women and animals. Contrary to an expressive motivation for violence, Adams (1995) argues that “when a man hits a woman, he has not lost control – he achieves and maintains control” (p. 57). This rationale of control applies to abuse towards animals as well in the context of IPV, as Adams (1995) provides nine reasons why animals may be targets of abuse: to demonstrate his power over his human and animal victims; to teach submission; to isolate the victim from support and relationships though severing her relationship with the pet; to continue to terrorize the victim; as a form of separation violence or incentive to stay in the relationship; to punish her for leaving; to undermine her sense of self though involving her in the abuse; and to feel powerful himself. The only reason Adams (1995) mentions that comes close to having an expressive foundation is abuse of a pet “because he is enraged when he sees self-determined action on the part of women and children” (p. 72), however she still ties this back to control as the point of expressing the rage is to regain control, much like how Hamel et al. (2007) understand the interaction between expressive and instrumental motivations.

While Adams (1995) argues for the recognition of the victimhood of companion animals abused in violent relationships, as mentioned above, most studies place abuse of the companion animal as a tool to be used in the emotional and psychological abuse of the partner. Much like threatening to destroy a favoured possession, threats to harm or actual harm serves the same purpose – manipulation, control, and an exercise of power over the woman. Velonis (2016) shared the story of one of her participants in which the woman’s boyfriend “tossed her dog outside by the scruff of its neck after it had an accident in the house,” which the woman understood as exploiting her vulnerabilities though psychological abuse (p. 1043). The relationship with the pet is perceived as a point of weakness in the woman, which provides a

non-physical route to control. The survivors surveyed by Fitzgerald, Barrett, Stevenson and Cheung (n.d.) understood threats to harm, neglect, and emotional abuse of their companion animals as instrumental in nature, aimed at controlling and manipulating the survivor, whereas physical abuse against the animals was not predictive of controlling behaviour on the part of their abuser. In their discussion, Simmons and Lehmann (2007) suggest that there is a limit to the level and kinds of abuse that abusers will use against a pet, and will use a different level and kind of abuse against their partner. It could also be that violence against the partner is not necessary when violence against the animal is used for power and control. It is likely easier to hide the violence against the animal than violence against a partner – bruises do not show, whereas ‘accidents happen’ to animals and they cannot speak for themselves. This not only recognizes the different relationships and vulnerabilities, but also supports an instrumental approach to understanding motives for abuse – targets of the abuse and the tactics used are deliberately chosen to be most efficient for obtaining and maintaining control.

Several studies have looked at motives for animal abuse separate from IPV. From their sample of 152 incarcerated offenders, Kellert and Felthous (1985) discerned nine motives for the abuse of an animal: control of an animal; retaliation against an animal; retaliation against a person; displacement of aggression from person to animal; breed or species prejudice; expression of aggression; enhancement of own aggressiveness; shock others for amusement; and non-specific sadism which included abuse of animals ‘for fun’. Merz-Perez, Heide, and Silverman (2001) explored both prevalence and motivation for animal cruelty, finding that in their incarcerated sample of violent and non-violent offenders, violent offenders were significantly more likely to engage in acts of cruelty to animals. Violent offenders more frequently reported that their acts of cruelty to animals had no effect on them, and that the cruelty resulted in an

emotional release or thrill (Merz-Perez et al., 2001), supporting an expressive orientation for their motives. Only one violent offender cited remorse as his response to his cruelty. Common responses to the commission of animal cruelty from the non-violent offenders were remorse for the behaviour and that the behaviour was not cruel. Merz-Perez et al. (2001) qualify the latter response from three non-violent participants however, in that dog-fighting was not viewed by participants as cruelty, but instead was seen as a socially acceptable pastime which influenced the non-violent participant responses. Regarding the other responses to violence against animals, power and control and sadism were the least frequently appearing responses among the entire sample (Merz-Perez et al., 2001), which tends to contradict the instrumental approach to animal abuse in general.

Interestingly, several of the motives found by Kellert and Felthous (1985) are mirrored in the general literature on motives for IPV. For example, in a comprehensive literature review on motivations for IPV, Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al. (2012) found that there were six commonly cited motives: power and control; self-defence; expression of negative emotion; communication difficulties; retaliation; and jealousy. Other non-specific motives appearing in the review included substance abuse and childhood experiences of abuse or violence (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2012). The motives of power and control, expression of emotions, retaliation, and displacement of aggression are certainly seen in much of the literature on IPV and animal abuse.

Men's Accounts of Violence

Michael Johnson (2008) observes the inherent challenge in discerning motives for violent behaviour, and that there may be multiple motives, or reasons for the abusive acts ranging from the instrumental to the expressive. However, Johnson (2008) also notes that if all the actions lead to the same end, i.e., control, then motives can be inferred. It is not often that an abuser will be

explicit about his motivations, though motivations are often implicit in an abuser's accounts of his violence. Winstok, Weinberg, and Smadar-Dror (2017) differentiate between motives for violence and accounts of violence, explaining accounts as explanations or justifications that offenders offer to rationalize or minimize their violence (e.g., alcohol, communication difficulties) whereas motives are perceived as direct benefits obtained through violence (e.g., control, retaliation, self-defence). Hearn (1998) states that "when men account for violence, they are often both giving an explanation and constructing a rationale for that violence" (p. 105), and like Ptacek (1998), sees the overlap between excuse and justification in accounts of violence. Denial and minimization, together with justification and excuse, comprise the four major ways that abusers account for their violent behaviour (Dragiewicz, 2011; Stamp & Sabourin, 1995).

The personal narratives of abusive men are a source of rich data from which to discern the accounts used to understand and justify their actions towards their intimate partners. Most of the studies using personal narratives employ small samples, ranging from around 15 men (Ptacek, 1998; Scott Tilley & Brackley, 2005; Stamp & Sabourin, 1995; Whiting, Parker, & Houghtaling, 2014) to 50 or more participants (Hearn, 1998; Mansley, 2009), a sample size which is uncommon in this area of work. Studies such as these also mainly sample men who are currently in or have been involved with the criminal justice system either through court-mandated attendance at a domestic violence intervention program or incarceration (Hearn, 1998; Mansley, 2009; Stamp & Sabourin, 1995; Stevenson, 2012; Whiting et al., 2014).

Denial of the abuse is a common tactic of abusers. Heckert and Gondolf (2000) combined the physical aggression subscale of the CTS with a narrative style intake interview which asked abusers referred to treatment to describe the abusive incidents in detail. These accounts were compared with their female partner's accounts, and both partners were interviewed at 3-month

follow-up intervals for a year. Additional data was gathered from the police reports pertaining to the abusive events. Heckert and Gondolf (2000) found that men were more likely to minimize the severity and level of violence than the women, and that men were more likely to deny that the violence occurred. In fact, at the 12-month mark, 79.6% of men denied any assaultive or violent behaviour towards their partner. The interesting component of Heckert and Gondolf's (2000) study is that they also assessed the female partner's qualitative reports of violence, finding that women also denied and minimized the assaults, and the authors propose that this may be an attempt to salvage the relationship or maintain custody of children in the home. The denial and minimization on the part of the men was attributed to an attempt to reduce potential sanctions for their actions.

Research shows that in addition to denying that the violence occurred, minimization of the severity and frequency of abusive behaviour is common among abusive men (Cavanagh, Dobash, Dobash, & Lewis, 2001; R. P. Dobash et al., 1992; Hearn, 1998). In Ptacek's (1998) research, participants routinely minimized the injuries borne by their partners with statements like "women bruise easily" or "I never beat my wife. I responded physically to her" (p. 188-189). Stamp and Sabourin (1995) observed that several of their 15 participants qualified their accounts of violence with words that obscured the severity of the violence and phrases like "I pushed her off me" or "I'll slap her or something" and never used direct referents for severe abuse like 'punch' or 'beat' (p. 296). Using words like 'only' and 'just' not only serve to minimize severity and frequency of the abusive behaviour, but also the culpability of the abuser. Stating that the abuse 'only happened once' and 'it was just a push' allows an abuser to avoid the label of an abusive man (Stamp & Sabourin, 1995). Both Hearn's (1998) and Wood's (2004) participants

used a similar minimization to try to avoid the abusive man label, with statements like ‘I didn’t mean to do it’ or ‘I’m not a violent person.’

Even though some identify alcohol and drug use or addiction as a motive for IPV (Elmquist et al., 2014; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2012), others like Ptacek (1998) and Dragiewicz (2011) categorize substance use as an excuse for or a denial of the abusive behaviour. In accounts with excuses, the abuser admits that the act occurred, but offers a rationale as to the absence of culpability or responsibility in the action (Fenton & Rathus, 2010; Stamp & Sabourin, 1995). For example, in Ptacek’s (1998) interviews with 18 men, excuses centred around the loss of control due to drugs or alcohol or frustration. In essence, the men blamed the substances entirely for their abusive actions, which was apparent when they related that they would not abuse a women when not under the influence (Ptacek, 1998). Using the influence of alcohol and drugs to erase their responsibility for the actions offered by many abusive men (Fenton & Rathus, 2010; Hearn, 1998; Neal & Edwards, 2017; Wood, 2004).

Responses to provocation by the victim is another common justification given by abusive men, where the violence is presented as “appropriate, reasonable, necessary, within the actor’s right, or that the action was not as bad as perceived” (Wood, 2004, p. 562). Fenton and Rathus (2010) note several participants who blame the violent incident either on verbal abuse or physical abuse from their partner, as does Ptacek (1998) and Stamp and Sabourin (1995). Provocation from a partner is often couched in terms of self-defence against their female partner, in that the violence was justified to stop the verbal or physical attack. Wood (2004) interviewed 22 incarcerated men enrolled in a domestic violence intervention program, and every participant cited provocation as a justification for their violence. Descriptions of verbal provocations often include references to bickering, nagging, saying hurtful things, refusing to end an argument, and

pushing his buttons (Ptacek, 1998; Wood, 2004), while physical provocations entail kicking, pushing, or slapping (Ptacek, 1998; Stamp & Sabourin, 1995).

The idea of challenges to masculinity is present throughout many abuser narratives and their accounts for violence (K. L. Anderson & Umberson, 2001; Dragiewicz, 2011; Peralta & Tuttle, 2013). Hearn (1998) concludes that

Men's accounts and explanations of violence take place in the context of men's power and generally reflect, indeed *reproduce*, these power relations. Not only may acts of violence be understood in terms of power and control, but so too may accounts and explanations given by men in interviews, conversations and other forms of talk. Men's account of violence are themselves usually both *within* and *examples* of patriarchal domination and male domination. Justifications given are part of the way in which women are talked about generally by men. The general ways in which women are constructed by men are reproduced, referred back to and invoked by the individual man, as, for example, when he sees those constructions *not* being conformed to by the woman (p. 144).

Being disrespected as a man, and the idea that men had the right to control 'their women' were two justifications offered by the men interviewed by Wood (2004), as from their perspective, women were supposed to be deferential, obedient, and know their place. Violence was an appropriate and legitimate response to perceived challenges to male power and dominance. Ptacek (1998) found that themes of male entitlement ran through over three quarters of the accounts his participants provided. Wrapped under the theme of 'not being a good wife,' transgressions that justified violent action included not being available sexually, infidelity, talking back or talking too much, and lack of deference (Ptacek, 1998). In other words, the non-conformity to the ideal of femininity was a direct challenge to masculinity, and the men needed to prove they were in control and dominant in the relationship through violence. The connection between masculinity and violence is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Conclusion

The debate over whether men and women are equally abusive in relationships (the gender symmetry position), or whether women are predominantly the victims of IPV (the gender asymmetry position), is but one area in the breadth of research into IPV. Some of this research looks at the inclusion of companion animals in relationships with IPV. Within the IPV literature, animals are conceptualized in two ways: as a tool for the abuser to utilize in his abuse of his partner, or as a barrier to exiting an abusive relationship due to the close relationship between a woman and her pet. However, the overwhelming perspective presented is that of the survivors, a perspective which is critically important, but presents a partial view. The perspective of the abuser is also needed.

The current study fills a gap in the literature by asking men, both abusive and non-abusive, about their relationships with their intimate partners as well as any pets in the relationship. To stop violence, regardless as to the justification or excuse offered, we must intervene with the abusers themselves; we must stop the violence at its source. To that end, it is critical to get the perspective of the abusers themselves, to hear their accounts of their actions, their perspectives on relationships both with their partner and with others in their lives, to find the openings through which change can truly occur.

CHAPTER 3: MASCULINITIES THEORY

Raewyn Connell (2000) states that “gender is one of the major organizing structures of modern social life” (p. 181). The influence of gender permeates every aspect of daily life, from our identities to our relationships, including relationships with animals. However, according to Connell and others (Butler, 2004; Connell, 1987, 2000, 2002, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; West & Zimmerman, 1987), gender is not a thing or a predetermined identity; instead, gender is an action, a performance, and a construction. A man is not something that one is, it is something that one does, as Pascoe and Bridges (2012) explain, “‘Man’ refers to a state of being; ‘masculinity’ refers to much more: identity, performance, power, privilege, relations, styles, and structure. In other words, masculinity is what makes one a man” (p. 3). While there is a dominant and normative version of masculinity – hegemonic masculinity – there are a multitude of ways to do masculinity, which results in plural masculinities. This is the heart of masculinities theory.

The current research takes masculinities theory as the theoretical framework to understand the participants’ relationships with their intimate partners as well as with the companion animals in their lives. This chapter reviews the theoretical roots of masculinities theory, and discusses the concepts of hegemonic masculinity and multiple masculinities. A key component of Connell’s (2002, 2005) theory is the differential access to material and cultural resources to use in the doing of one’s gender, which is discussed as it applies to IPV as well as companion animals in relation to masculinity.

Roots of Masculinities Theory

Masculinity is unique in that it is often defined by not being feminine; the definition of what it means to be a man rests in the absence of being a woman. While society and social theory has moved to the recognition that gender is not binary (Butler, 1990, 2004; Kuper, Nussbaum, &

Mustanski, 2012; Richards et al., 2016), those with a non-binary gender identity are marginalized. The dualism of masculine/feminine is still the predominant way that gender is perceived, understood, and internalized. While masculinities theory also recognizes the expansion of gender beyond a binary, the central focus is on the masculine and the multitude of ways that masculinity is performed and embodied.

Masculinities theory was born out of the critiques of sex role theory. Sex role theory, popular from the 1930s to the early 1990s, assumes that the socialization of young boys and girls emphasizes characteristics and behaviour reflective of their biological sex (Connell, 1987, 2005). Young girls were socialized by their mothers to be calm, demure, polite, nurturing, and emotional with interests and an identity centred around home and child-rearing. Young boys were socialized by their fathers to be strong, tough, emotionally hard, assertive, with interests that centred around academic, athletic, and professional achievement. Connell (2005) describes sex roles as “the cultural elaboration of biological sex differences” (p. 22). These gendered constellations of characteristics were considered to be the ‘natural’ and independent states of males and females, stable features of masculinity and femininity which could be objectively measured, for example, via the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1974). The 60-item BSRI was devised based on a “conception of the sex-typed person as someone who has internalized society's sex-typed standards of desirable behavior for men and women, these personality characteristics were selected as masculine or feminine on the basis of sex-typed social desirability” (Bem, 1974, p. 155); in other words, the hegemonic norms for masculinity and femininity.

While Bem (1974) did note an ‘androgynous’ category on the BSRI with ‘neutral’ adjectives such as friendly, sincere, moody, and theatrical, within the sex role theory literature,

gender is viewed as distinct and binary, rather than as on a continuum. Anyone who contravened this binary was viewed as deviant. Under sex role theory, parents held primary responsibility for properly shaping their children into the biologically determined gender. Overly emotional boys were blamed on an absentee father, or an overly protective mother. Girls who were aggressive or overly sexual were products of a disinterested or dysfunctional mother, or a father who was too involved with child rearing. While some sex role theorists acknowledged the wider influences of cultural institutions like schools, the mass media, and peer groups as children aged (Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1987), the responsibility for shaping appropriately gendered children lay with the parents.

There were two primary critiques of sex role theory that led to a rethinking of gender and the evolution of masculinities theory. Sex role theory had a deterministic undertone in the stability of traits as they were associated with either male or female biological sex. With the theoretical turn to social constructionism and postmodernism, the idea of static and ascribed identity was incongruent with how individuals were increasingly being theorized as active agents in their own production (Butler, 2004; Connell, 1987; Haraway, 1988; Latour, 2005; West & Zimmerman, 1987). The second critique was the absence of attention to the relations of power within and between genders in sex role theory (Carrigan et al., 1987; Connell, 1987, 2005). The taken-for-granted ascription of a masculine or feminine gender identity to the appropriately sexed body ignored the relations of power, agency, and socio-historical context within which the gender identity was actively and selectively internalized by the individual. In response to these critiques of sex role theory, a group of scholars instead saw gender as an active performance. These theorists acknowledged the socialization aspect of shaping gender identity in sex role theory, but critiqued the determinism embedded in the theory and added a nuanced analysis of

power relations. To theorists such as West and Zimmerman (1987), Butler (1990, 2004), and Connell (1987, 2002, 2005), gender is performed differently in different contexts. The resources available to 'do gender' varies along cultural, social, and structural axes, and results in multiple opportunities to perform one's gender.

Gender, according to masculinities theorists, is an action and a process (West & Zimmerman, 1987). In each interaction with another, gender is enacted and performed. The process of gender is the repeated and reproduced norms through gendered performances, often in relation to the gendered performances of others. According to Connell (2000), "gender is a social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do, it is not social practice reduced to the body" (p. 27). The embodied nature of gender performance means that all aspects of one's presentation is a part of the doing of gender. For example, components of a feminine performance may include wearing of makeup and a soft-spoken voice. Components of a masculine performance may include a sprawling seated position to take up physical space and talking over others. In both examples, the norms associated with hegemonic masculinity and femininity are being performed in conjunction with how the individual internalizes the normative aspects of gender. It is also important to point out that the gender of the performer may be opposite to the performance in that a woman may choose to do a more masculine gender, and a man may perform in a more feminine manner. Rather than viewing gender as a rigid trait dichotomy of male/masculine and female/feminine, the idea of gender as action allows for the transgression of hegemonic norms. That said, actions that contravene the culturally accepted masculine and feminine performances of gender are still that: transgressive. These transgressive performances against hegemonic gender norms, or adoption of alternative ways of performing

gender given the material or cultural resources available, lead to the production of multiple masculinities.

Hegemonic Masculinity and Multiple Masculinities

According to Raewyn Connell (1990, 2000, 2002, 2005), hegemonic masculinity is a foundational concept in masculinities theory, useful to understand the nuances of gendered performances. The oft cited definition of hegemonic masculinity was provided by Connell (2005) as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (p. 77).

Patriarchy and masculinity are intertwined, as Knuttila (2016) points out in his definition of patriarchy:

Patriarchy descriptively refers to a gender order in which men are dominant and masculinity tends to be esteemed, and in which major social institutions, practices, and ideological frameworks tend to support, legitimize, and facilitate male and masculine domination and the oppression and exploitation of many women and the concomitant devaluation of femininity (p. 31).

Knuttila’s (2016) definition of patriarchy highlights the systemic way in which male domination is produced and reproduced, and in so doing, norms around masculinity are produced and reproduced. Hegemonic masculinity is the idealized form of masculinity, focusing on “male status, power, control, and domination” (Knuttila, 2016, p. 32). However, it is not the only form of masculinity; there are multiple ways that men construct and perform their masculinity resulting in multiple masculinities.

Though the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been the subject of critiques and reformulations (e.g., Connell, 2002; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Demetriou, 2001; Hearn,

2012; Jefferson, 2002; Schippers, 2007), it remains a central concept in the theorizing of gender and gender performances. At its core, hegemonic masculinity is composed of four definitional tenets: it represents the culturally dominant or normative version of masculinity which may or may not actually be achievable; it calls attention to hierarchies of power inherent in gender relations between and among men, as well as relations between men and women; it is embodied and reproduced through social practice and interaction; and it is dynamic with its own historicity.

Hegemonic masculinity is a cultural ideal of what a man ought to be, and yet few men can actually enact all aspects of the ideal. Instead, as Connell (2005) explains, exemplars of hegemonic masculinity serve as normative symbols, either in whole or in part. For example, a professional athlete may be an exemplar of strength, physical prowess, determination, success, and wealth. A corporate executive may exemplify intelligence, wealth, and power, while a father figure in a popular movie may embody responsibility, stability, and respect. What is common among the exemplars is that the public face and performance presents an aspect of hegemonic masculinity, though often incomplete. The private lives of the athlete and executive may be drastically different from the public face, and the character of the father is fictional, a representation of an idea. The value of hegemonic masculinity rests in its position of cultural dominance, establishing norms around gender practice that shape multiple masculinities.

Aboim (2010) uses “bricolage of masculinities” to describe the plurality of masculinities (p. 10). This is a striking conceptualization of how each performance of masculinity is cobbled together from the diverse resources at hand (which may include another’s performance of gender), and is uniquely located in time and space. The idea of bricolage also brings the interconnectedness of masculinities to the fore – each performance is constructed in relation to others and cannot be understood in isolation from the masculinities or femininities of others,

something that Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue is key to the concept of hegemonic masculinity.

In differentiating how multiple masculinities arise, as well as the primacy of hegemonic masculinity, Aboim (2010) explains that

men's power and the unequal distribution of this power among different men is dependent on both systemic differentiation (power is unevenly distributed across institutional and social settings) and a conception of masculinities as configurations of historically generated and embodied practice (p. 45).

It is in the differences of power, of access to resources, where complicit, subordinated, and marginalized masculinities are enacted (Aboim, 2010; Connell, 2005), lending a strong intersectional element to masculinities theory. Complicit masculinities, defined by Connell (2005), “have some connection with the hegemonic project but do not embody hegemonic masculinity [and] are constructed in ways that realize the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy” (p. 79). Men who enact complicit masculinities benefit from the general socio-cultural advantages of being men, while at the same time may have equitable, balanced, and respectful relationships with the women in their personal and professional lives. Subordinate or marginalized masculinities are those where the performance of masculinity is in line with the dominant norm, but is delegitimized in some way; Connell's classic example is homosexuality and the stigmatization based on contravening heteronormativity of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). In her intersectional analysis of intimate partner violence, Mansley (2009) points to Black masculinity as a further example of the hierarchy of hegemonic masculinity and power, arguing that the systemic disadvantages in education and financial opportunity impact the doing of gender on the part of Black men. Not being able to access wealth, educational attainment, and social capital to do their masculinity,

Black men redefine what is masculine within their particular cultural location, often through placing toughness and physical aggression in a central place in their masculinity (Mansley, 2009).

It is through the evolution of multiple masculinities that the dynamic nature of hegemonic masculinity becomes visible. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) noted that hegemonic masculinity is a dynamic contextual concept, located in historical and social spheres. The definition shifts based on time and locale – what is considered the cultural ideal of the masculine in one place is not necessarily what is considered the cultural ideal of the masculine in a different context. Exemplifying the shifts over time, Victorian hegemonic masculinity encompassed a “flight from domesticity” in a deliberate lack of connection to children and family (Heathorn, 2004; King & Shephard, 2012), contrasted with the current aspect of hegemonic masculinity that includes being a loving, supportive, and involved father (Buschmeyer & Lengersdorf, 2016; Westwood, 1996). Connell (2005) reiterates the dynamic nature of masculinities and femininities which “are configurations of practice generated in particular situations in a changing structure of relationships” (p. 81). Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994) also point out the cultural particularity of masculinities and that “masculinities imported from elsewhere are conflated with local ideas to produce new configurations” (p. 12). Given that the socio-cultural conditions within which configurations of practice occur shift and blend over time, it is logical that hegemonic masculinity also shifts. Part of what drives this shift is the challenges to hegemonic masculinity presented by multiple masculinities and femininities.

Different cultural, social, and material resources for doing of gender

Connell (2005) calls attention to the structural conditions that constrain the ability of men to construct their masculinity. Embedded within the hegemonic masculine norm is an assumption

of the availability of cultural, social, and material resources to draw upon in the performance of gender and the construction of a gendered identity. However, not all men have the same access to the same resources, and differential access leads to different ways to do masculinity, which leads to multiple masculinities. Not everyone can be a professional athlete or a successful corporate executive, but may express the ideas of athleticism and success in different ways. A man may engage in watching a specific sport, enacting athleticism by proxy through dedication to a team and intensive knowledge about the sport. Success may be redefined by a working-class man by seniority in a labour union representing a higher degree of employment security. Some men may also use violence as a resource to do their masculinity.

Masculinities and Violence as Resource

Hearn (2004) states that “men’s power and dominance can be structural and interpersonal, public and/or private, accepted and taken-for-granted and/or recognized and resisted, obvious or subtle. It also includes violations and violences of all the various kinds” (p. 51). Kaufman (1987) theorizes that men’s violence comprises a triad, with violence against women, violence against other men, and violence against one’s self as the components. In two of the three aspects of the triad, violence against (arguably weaker) others is key, bringing power into the analysis of violence and masculinities. Part of doing masculine gender is exerting dominance over weaker others (i.e., women, children, animals, and other men) as required by the hegemonic masculine ideals of strength, power, and control, though Connell (2005) and Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) note that violence is a less desirable alternative to coercion. The gendered practices which continually reproduce the primacy of hegemonic masculinity and the gender hierarchy cannot all be negative and harmful, as hegemony requires active acceptance and participation of both recipients of the patriarchal dividend as well as the marginalized and

subordinate groups (Comack, 2008; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Nevertheless, violence can be counted as a resource which can be used in the absence of other resources to do masculinity (Comack, 2008; Krienert, 2003; Messerschmidt, 1993, 1999; Monaghan, 2002; Mooney, 1998).

Testing Messerschmidt's (1993) theory of violence as an alternative resource to the traditional resources of education, employment, and family, Krienert (2003) hypothesized that men were more likely to be violent in situations involving other men when they were less able to perform masculinity in accepted ways. Krienert (2003) used the Masculinity-Femininity Scale of the Minnesota Multi-Phasic Inventory (MMPI-2 MF) to measure traditional traits associated with masculinity, as well as a composite scale measuring "noncriminal, traditional, means that men could use to show or prove their masculinity" in education, income, employment, marital status, and children (para. 26). Krienert (2003) does acknowledge the critiques of the MMPI-2 MF in measuring gendered stereotypes (as opposed to more fluid notions of gendered performance), however the scale was appropriate as assessing the internalization of masculine stereotypes was a central part of the research hypotheses. Two groups were created: a 'high risk masculinity' group of men who scored low on traditional resources to accomplish masculinity and who scored high on masculinity on the MMPI-2 MF scale, and those who scored high on traditional means and lower on the MMPI-2 MF. Krienert (2003) found that men in the high-risk masculinity group were significantly more likely to engage in violent interactions compared to their counterparts, though did note a limitation in the lack of situational factors included in the analysis, such as alcohol use or presence of additional people. Krienert's (2003) work does provide support for the idea that some men may use violence as a resource to do masculinity when other resources are not accessible, at least in the context of male-to-male violence.

Comack (2008) incorporated a more dynamic and relational conceptualization of masculinity in her interviews with 19 incarcerated men. Drawing on Messerschmidt's theorization of crime/violence as a resource for doing masculinity, and incorporating a strong intersectional focus, Comack (2008) found that the men noted being the recipients of violence as well as committing violence against others. In the face of poverty, abuse, violence at home, as well as racialized abuse experienced outside of the home, some men in Comack's study turned to violence and crime as ways to do masculinity in very non-traditional ways. For example, one participant reported that as a youth he was "paid to beat up other boys, to solve other kids' disputes" as a way to make money (Comack, 2008, p. 35), combining the masculine ideals of strength, aggression, monetary gain as well as being seen as a 'tough guy'. Being perceived as a bully or tough guy allowed for feelings of power and control which were in direct contrast to the victimization that participants received at home, and engendered a degree of respect from peers based on physical prowess. In this context, Comack's (2003) participants "utilized their bodies as resource to achieve a particular kind of masculine agency" (p. 46) in the absence of legitimate resources to accomplish masculinity.

Rather than the relational approach taken by Comack (2008), Bozkurt, Tartanoglu, and Dawes (2015) subscribe to a men/masculine and women/feminine dichotomy, reiterating the hegemonic masculine norm. Bozkurt et al. (2015) surveyed 516 college students using the Bem Sex-Role Inventory and a 9-item scale measuring violence endorsement and exposure (ranked from strong agree to strongly disagree), finding significant support for their hypothesis that violence is positively associated with masculinity and negatively associated with femininity. Students who scored higher on masculinity on the BSRI were significantly more likely to agree with items endorsing violence such as 'violence can be used to solve disputes' and 'to exert

violence is sometimes normal' (Bozkurt et al., 2015). Those who selected more feminine aspects on the BSRI were significantly less likely to endorse violence as indicated through stronger agreement with the item 'I am against all kinds/types of violence' and disagreeing with items supportive of violent behaviour (Bozkurt et al., 2015).

Taylor, das Nair, and Brahams (2013) conducted a literature-based meta-analysis guided by the question of how masculinity was viewed as a risk factor for violence by both the perpetrator of the violence as well as the victim. Using search terms related to masculinity and violence, and focusing on qualitative research, 10 studies were included in the final analysis which mainly utilized the perpetrator's perspective (Nadine Taylor et al., 2013). Socialization into masculine ideals, specifically the use of violence to evidence power and gain respect, was a key theme reported in seven of the reviewed studies. Six of the studies contained the theme of using violence as a resource to do masculinity, particularly when other resources such as education, sexual activities, and employment were limited or unavailable (Nadine Taylor et al., 2013). Other themes discerned from the small sample included misogynistic views, the idea of 'masculinity in crisis', substance use, and minority identity (Nadine Taylor et al., 2013). Approximately half of the studies reviewed by Taylor et al. (2013) centred on intimate partner violence or contained references to violence against women.

Masculinities and Intimate Partner Violence

As noted above, masculinities theory has been used to explain IPV (Gilchrist, 2009; Moore & Stuart, 2005; Peralta & Tuttle, 2013). Men can use violence against women to do masculinity, to feel powerful, in one sphere of life when they experience an inability to do masculinity in other spheres of life (K. L. Anderson, 2009; K. L. Anderson & Umberson, 2001).

One way that masculinities theory has been used in the literature on IPV is through the idea of masculine discrepancy stress.

According to Reidy, Berke, Gentile, and Zeichner (2014), masculine discrepancy stress³ occurs “when a man believes that he *is*, or believes that he *is perceived* to be insufficiently masculine [emphasis in original]” in relation to the social ideals of what it means to be a man (p. 160). Using measures to assess discrepancy stress, beliefs about men and women, and adherence to a traditional notion of masculinity as well as the CTS2 to assess IPV, Reidy et al. (2014) explored the connection between masculine discrepancy stress and IPV in a sample of 357 heterosexual men. The authors found that discrepancy stress predicted physical, psychological and sexual aggression as measured by the CTS2, and moreover, having a hypermasculine self-image also predicted the three types of IPV. Reidy et al. (2014) suggest that “an amplified sensitivity to perceived threats against one’s masculinity [may be] a precipitant of violence in intimate relationships” (p. 163), though they do not say what those threats may be.

Connected to masculine discrepancy stress, Moore et al. (2010) also found that inability to achieve or maintain the hegemonic masculine ideal was associated with IPV. Unlike Reidy et al. (2014), Moore et al. (2004) did measure particular areas in which threats to masculinity may occur and conditions under which masculine discrepancy stress could arise. Specifically, they found that performance failure in the areas of employment and sex, feelings of physical inferiority compared to other men, and feelings of intellectual inferiority to women were related to the commission of IPV. The perceived inadequacy compared to the hegemonic masculine

³ Masculine discrepancy stress (Reidy et al., 2014) is also referred to as masculine gender role stress (Baugher & Gazmararian, 2015; Moore et al., 2010). While the concepts simply differ in nomenclature, language matters. ‘Masculine discrepancy stress’ provides a clearer connection to hegemonic norms of gender, and the ways that differing from culturally accepted performances of gender may induce stress in the individual.

ideal of an attractive, strong, successful, intelligent man who is sexually desired and skilled leads to stress and anger. This stress is alleviated by re-establishing power in a way that engenders masculine traits of power and strength: physical and psychological domination of women (Moore et al., 2010). Even though men may not make explicit reference to the dominance of men and the concordant inferiority of women, their actions and how they account for their abusive behaviour offers indications that these are beliefs that are held and shape behaviour in intimate relationships (Dragiewicz, 2011).

Umberson, Anderson, Williams, and Chen (2003) note that “an important element of ideal masculinity is control – successfully masculine men are expected to have control over themselves, their intimate partners and children, and their environments” (p. 236). When such control is threatened, violence may be a way to regain it. Control is a central explanatory concept in the literature on IPV; women report that control is a primary motivation for violence, including threats or harm towards their pets (Allen et al., 2006; Faver & Strand, 2003; Quinlisk, 1999). The traditional gendered expectation for the male partner in a relationship is to be “dominant, strong, authoritarian, aggressive, and [the] rational provider for the family” whereas the female partner is typically “dependent, passive, submissive, [and] soft” (McCue, 2008, p. 15). When the female partner steps outside of the hegemonic feminine ideal (for example, by having a higher income than or challenging decisions made by the male partner), this can be perceived as a threat to his control, and by extension a challenge to his masculinity (K. L. Anderson, 2009; Hattery, 2009; Mullaney, 2007; Salari & Baldwin, 2002). Violence can be used by the male partner to try to regain control while at the same time regaining a sense of masculinity by enacting the aggression and strength inherent in the hegemonic masculine ideal (Hattery, 2009; Salari & Baldwin, 2002).

There is a contradiction in the connections between masculinity, violence, and control, resting in the difference between instrumental and expressive violence. Men can and do use violence instrumentally to establish control and assert power in intimate relationships (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979; M. P. Johnson, 2008; Pence & Paymar, 1993). In one way, this flows from the construction of the strong, powerful, controlling head of the family who ‘disciplines’ when necessary, which is embedded in hegemonic masculinity. On the other hand, there is equal evidence showing support for the ‘I just lost control’ account of IPV (Gilchrist, 2009; Whiting et al., 2014), leaning towards an expressive rationale for violence. Jefferson (2002) argues that this loss of control explanation is antithetical to hegemonic masculinity, and therefore using hegemonic masculinity to explain IPV is flawed. Jefferson (2002) points out that abusive men often minimize or deny their violence, and that these men are not viewed in a positive light:

While they may get away with such violence more than they should, this is not because such men are looked up to as exemplars of hegemonic masculinity. Far from ‘being a man’, the resort to violence against women is commonly regarded as a failure of manhood...since it displays both a (feminine) inability to control emotions and cowardice in attacking someone (usually) weaker than oneself (p. 71).

From Jefferson’s (2002) perspective, the masculinity enacted through the abuse of women is flawed, as it departs from the hegemonic norm in a marked way through the lack of control and cowardice.

Most men do not abuse their partners and find other ways to demonstrate masculinity (Umberson et al., 2003). Social context matters – most men do not use violence if it is not status enhancing (H. Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Messerschmidt, 1993). In most social contexts violence is not an acceptable way to do masculinity, and instead methods like educational attainment, sport, financial success or sexual prowess are favoured. That said, not all men have access to the same resources with which to do their masculinity, and violence may be one resource readily

available (Kimmel, 2007). Moore and Stuart (2005) offer an explanation for the variance in commission of IPV as it connects to masculinities theory:

A man may describe himself as tough, powerful, and in control, but these characteristics may only be relevant to partner violence when considering the extent to which he feels that toughness and power are important to him and the extent to which he experiences stress or conflict when he perceives a challenge to his toughness and power (p. 56).

This speaks directly to the plural and cultural aspects of masculinity, and the multiple masculinities that are possible. Messerschmidt (1993) argues that there is a “complexity in which gender (masculinity) is situationally, and therefore differently, accomplished throughout society” (p. 45). It is this complexity, the varying cultural and historical contexts of hegemonic masculinity, that results in differential masculinities which are subordinate to the hegemonic ideal yet always striving for the ideal.

Masculinities and Animals

In the broader literature exploring the human-animal relationship, gender as a demographic variable features prominently in research looking at differences in human-animal relationships. Some studies report that women have closer relationships with and have stronger attachments to companion animals than men (Cohen, 2002; Kellert, 1980; Perrine & Osbourne, 1998; Poresky & Daniels, 1998; Nik Taylor & Signal, 2009), and that women experience grief more deeply after the death or loss of a companion animal (Brown, Richards, & Wilson, 1996; Planchon, Templer, Stokes, & Keller, 2002), though other research shows no gender difference in relations with companion animals (Faver & Cavazos Jr., 2008; Irvine, 2013; Sable, 1995). On the other hand, research consistently shows that men are more likely than women to engage in acts of animal cruelty (Arluke & Luke, 1997; Flynn, 1999; Gerbasi, 2004; Henry, 2004) as well

as other acts of animal domination such as hunting (Kellert & Berry, 1987; Luke, 2007). A much smaller body of literature incorporates how these relationships with animals, and attitudes towards animals, feature into the performance of gender (e.g., Adams, 1995; Luke, 2007; Mäenpää, 2016; Stevenson, 2012).

Most of the literature connecting masculinities and violence against animals is rooted in ecofeminism, in the links between hunting, carnism, and general domination over the natural world (Adams, 2000; Kheel, 2008; Luke, 2007). In the same way that masculinities theory can explain the presence and absence of IPV, it can also be used to explain both the positive and negative treatment of, and relationships with, companion animals. To Kaufman's (1987) conceptualization of the triad of men's violence, an additional component could be added: violence against animals. Categorized as violence against weaker others, violence against animals can be seen as a masculine expression of power and dominance.

In an early study, Kellert and Berry (1980, 1987) assessed attitudes towards animals in a large American sample of 3,107 respondents, including attitudes towards the use and abuse of animals. While a majority of respondents were opposed to cruel treatment of animals (moralistic) and held great affection for their companion animals (humanistic), the dominionistic attitude was strongly held by a relatively small proportion of the sample. Those that adhered to the dominionistic attitude were more likely also engaging in hunting as recreation, and were significantly more likely to be male (Kellert, 1980; Kellert & Berry, 1980). Kellert and Berry (1987) suggest that this "indicated a greater tendency among males to derive personal satisfactions from the mastery and control over animals" (p. 366). Luke (2007) also draws on notions of control and domination, arguing that hunting is a resource to be used in the performance of masculinity. Luke (2007) asserts that domination over the wild animal via

hunting is “an emblem of independent masculinity” (p. 107). Kheel (2008) agrees with Luke (2007) in that the hunting and killing of an animal is a common marker of the transition from boyhood to manhood; the act of killing represents the performance of a masculinity independent of the sphere of women, and the establishment of control over both self and others via the ultimate control over life. For Luke (2007) and Kheel (2008), the socially sanctioned violence of hunting is an expression of the power and domination embedded in hegemonic masculinity.

Masculinity is constructed in opposition to femininity, and Kellert and Berry’s (1980, 1987) work revealed distinct attitudinal differences between male and female respondents. Female respondents were significantly more likely than males to hold humanistic and moralistic attitudes, reflective of closer relationships with companion animals, greater concern over cruelty to animals, and lower support for exploitation of and dominance over animals (Kellert & Berry, 1980, 1987). In fact, Kellert and Berry (1987) described the gender differences in attitudes towards animals as “dramatic,” and suggested that “gender is among the most important demographic influences on attitudes toward animals in our society” (p. 365). While masculine attitudes towards animals reflected norms of hegemonic masculinity, such as dominance and control, feminine attitudes towards animals reflected ideals of emphasized femininity in increased emotional attachments to animals, caretaking, and compassion. Overall, men indicated a greater willingness to engage in violence, albeit sanctioned violence like recreational hunting and exploitation of animals than women (Kellert, 1980; Kellert & Berry, 1980, 1987).

Kellert and Berry’s (1980, 1987) study did not just examine attitudes towards animals, but also the relative valuation of different species. Out of 33 species, dogs were ranked highest followed immediately by horses, with cats placing 11th on the list. The lowest ranked were rats, cockroaches, and mosquitos. These rankings point to a hierarchy in the conceptualization of

animals, with companion animals near the top and vermin animals near the bottom. Arluke and Sanders (1996) term this hierarchy the sociozoological scale, which ranks 'good' animals like pets above 'bad' animals like rats. Companion animals rank high on the sociozoological scale because they "seem to love their place in the social order" and "are regarded as almost human," thus their position just below humans (Arluke & Sanders, 1996, p. 170). Those animals that "stray from their place, cross human-drawn boundaries, and threaten to contaminate individuals or the environment" are at the bottom of the sociozoological scale (Arluke & Sanders, 1996, p. 178). Rats and other vermin would be at the bottom, as are animals who have been demonized. Arluke and Sanders (1996) offer the example of pitbulls as an animal who had been demonized and constructed as a threat to the safety of humans. Even though the pitbull is a dog, and as a 'good' companion animal should be therefore placed near the top of the sociozoological scale, the construction of the breed as dangerous killers moves the specific dog to the bottom as a 'bad' animal, thus indicating the relative fluidity of a hierarchy of animals.

The positioning of humans at the pinnacle of the sociozoological scale represents the domination over all other animals, including companion animals, which opens room for exploitation and victimization of those holding a subordinate position. In this way, the concept of hegemonic masculinity can be used to understand animal abuse in ways similar to understandings of IPV. According to Adams (1995), pets have low status in relation to the patriarchal male head of the family and abuse of the animals simply serves as an instrument of control of the female partner. Adams (1994) also argues that patriarchy implies a value hierarchy, in which women and animals are at the bottom, which increases their vulnerability and justifies their abuse by the male in the relationship. As discussed in the previous chapter, threats and abuse of companion animals is a tactic used by abusive men to control, dominate, and

manipulate their partners. The power and control accomplished by harm to animals may be perceived as accomplishing the control and domination required by the hegemonic masculine ideal.

In other ways, the (relatively) positive treatment of animals is a site for a culturally rooted performance of both attempts at hegemonic masculinity and subordinate masculinities. Research has found that Hispanic men are less likely to have their male animals neutered (Poss & Bader, 2008), as this could be seen as a reflection of their own sexuality and sexual abilities. Having an obedient and well-trained pet can be a way to evidence control and dominance over others in the man's life, an aspect of hegemonic masculinity (Stevenson, 2012). The ability to be a good economic provider for one's family is an aspect of masculinity, and being able to provide for all the needs of a pet can be another way of doing masculinity. Other men may have very expensive or unique pets, such as rare breeds of dogs or horses, presenting the animals as indicators of their financial success. Veevers (1985) notes that

although pet owners may not be conscious of a status function, or may be unwilling to admit such motives, it is clear that having a pet, particularly an expensive, exotic, or difficult pet, proclaims the owner as a person of privilege. A companion animal, other than a guard dog, a seeing eye dog, or a hearing-ear dog, is an indulgence. Time spent with companion animals is one option for the use of leisure time; resources spent on them are one alternative for disposable income. An expensive and attractive animal is a personal accessory as surely as an expensive car or a cashmere sweater (p. 15).

Companion animals can be used as a resource for the performance of masculinity, such as owning a 'dangerous' and powerful dog as an indication of his own aggressiveness (Arluke & Sanders, 1996; Maher & Pierpoint, 2011; Veevers, 1985), versus cats which are perceived as more feminine (Budge, Spicer, Jones, & St. George, 1996; Mitchell & Ellis, 2013). Budge et al.

(1996), Mitchell and Ellis (2013) and Perrine and Osbourne (1998) explored the hypothesis that there was an association between the gender of the individual, including perceptions of masculinity and femininity, and particular species.

Budge et al. (1996) presented pictures of an individual person (man or woman) either alone, with a cat, or with a dog to 542 undergraduate students, who were asked to rate how well each of a list of 36 adjectives applied to the individual. The adjective list included masculine and feminine as descriptors, along with positive adjectives like cheerful, relaxed, playful, active, confident, and attractive, and 'nasty' descriptors like uncaring, unpleasant, and unfriendly. Budge et al. (1996) hypothesized that women would be perceived in a more positive light when pictured with the cat, and the man rated more favourably when appearing with the dog. However, the results revealed the opposite effect. Men were rated more positively when pictured with the cat than the dog, whereas women were rated more positively when pictured with the dog than with the cat. The species of animal had no effect on the ratings of femininity of the woman in the image, although men were significantly more likely to be perceived as masculine when pictured with the cat than with the dog, and significantly less likely to be described as masculine when with the dog versus alone (Budge et al., 1996). This contradicted the more subtle masculine and feminine perceptions by participants, in that women were seen as more confident, professional, and self-assured with a dog, while men were perceived as warmer, more gentle, and more loving with a cat than with a dog or alone. Given confidence and self-assurance as components of hegemonic masculinity, and caring and gentleness as characteristic of a traditional femininity, Budge et al.'s (1996) results generally support the masculine/dog and feminine/cat stereotype.

The research by Mitchell and Ellis (2013) and Perrine and Osbourne (1998) supported the association of dogs with men and masculinity, and of cats with women and femininity. Perrine

and Osbourne (1998) surveyed 126 undergraduate students about their own preference for dogs or cats, as well as rating their perceptions of themselves using a modified BEM Sex-Role Inventory (Bem, 1974), with 12 feminine and 12 masculine adjectives. Women were significantly more likely than men to describe themselves as 'cat people', but there was no significant gender difference among participants who considered themselves 'dog people' (Perrine & Osbourne, 1998). Examining self-ratings of masculinity and femininity independent of gender, Perrine and Osbourne (1998) found that 'dog people' rated themselves as more masculine than 'cat people', however there was no significant difference in self ratings of femininity. Mitchell and Ellis (2013) found similar results in the division between 'dog people' and 'cat people' with perceived masculinity and femininity. They presented a video of two men playing a board game to 445 undergraduate students, and provided a questionnaire about the video which included the description of the men as either 'cat people' or 'dog people'. As hypothesized, when the actors in the video were identified as dog people, the participants rated them as more masculine than when they were identified as cat people (Mitchell & Ellis, 2013).

The research by Budge et al. (1996), Perrine and Osbourne (1998), and Mitchell and Ellis (2013) illustrates that specific companion animal species can be perceived to enhance or detract from a particular gendered performance. Dogs, as a species, tend to be associated with doing masculinity, and cats are more associated with a less masculine performance. In this way, the choice of species of companion animal can be a resource to be used in the performance of masculinity, whether that choice is conscious or subconscious, as Veevers (1985) points out above.

In addition to mere possession of a companion animal, forming relationships with companion animals can provide opportunities to do masculinity according to the hegemonic

ideals, though perhaps in subordinate ways. For example, the expression of emotion is not a part of hegemonic masculinity, as emotions represent femininity. Yet, showing emotion and affection to a companion animal may be acceptable in a masculine context, as ideas like ‘a dog is a man’s best friend’ permeate Western culture. In her historical analysis of companion animals on sailing ships, Mäenpää (2016) points out that hegemonic masculinity proscribes physical and emotional intimacy between men, and that companion animals can provide “a safe channel for [men] to show as well as receive affection” (p. 485). The emotional security of companion animals is widely supported, for both men and women (Beck & Madresh, 2008; Evans-Wilday, Hall, Hogue, & Mills, 2018; Irvine, 2013; Kurdek, 2009; Risley-Curtiss et al., 2011; Sable, 1995).

Evans-Wilday et al. (2018) asked dog owners (n = 286) about how willing they were to talk to their dogs about a variety of situations, as well as their willingness to talk to an intimate partner and a close friend about the same situations. The situations were organized around emotional responses, such as “times when you have felt fearful” or “times when you have felt discouraged” (Evans-Wilday et al., 2018, p. 355). Interestingly, men were just as likely as women to disclose to their dog situations in which they felt jealous, anxious, depressed, angry, or fearful. Evans-Wilday et al. (2018) conclude that that companion animals act as a secure and trusted confidant, as well as providing comfort in situations of upheaval or negative emotions. The expression of emotion, especially emotions associated with vulnerability or weakness like depression or anxiety, is associated with a more effeminate, and therefore subordinate, masculinity. Leaning on a pet for support and comfort could be perceived as within the boundaries of doing masculinity, as unlike human partners, the animal is inherently unable to judge any emotions or disclosures, which does not compromise the masculine performance.

Irvine's (2013) work with homeless people and their companion animals illustrates the positive aspects of human-animal relationships. Companion animals were conceptualized as lifesavers, as supportive and trusted confidants, and as protectors (Irvine, 2013). Irvine (2013) does not analyze the narratives of her participants with a gendered lens, and yet the similarities between the men's and women's relationships with their companion animals are striking. While the participants conveyed experiences of judgement and criticism from other people, they never felt judgement from their companion animals. One of the ways the participants managed the stigma of being homeless with a companion animal was through highlighting, if only to themselves, the positive and responsible caretaking of their companion animals (Irvine, 2013). Both men and women frequently referred to their companion animals as their children, and seeing themselves as a competent and responsible parent could be seen as doing the caretaking of femininity and embodying the responsible provider/breadwinner of masculinity. Companion animals provided support and unconditional love for Irvine's (2013) homeless participants, and both men and women were not shy about conveying the depth of the love and support they reciprocated to their companion animal, representing an emotional engagement characteristic of femininity, but counter to hegemonic masculinity.

Conclusion

Masculinities theory can be used to explain intimate partner violence in the use of violence to do masculinity, as well as the absence of such violence. In the same way that masculinities theory can explain the presence and absence of IPV, it can also be used to explain both the positive and negative treatment of, and relationships with, animals. Masculinities theory highlights the structural entitlement to male power, privilege and domination, but acknowledges that individuals do gender differently according to the resources they have available, including

the use of violence, resulting in multiple masculinities (Aboim, 2010; Connell, 1987, 2000, 2002, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kimmel, 2007; Mansley, 2009). Such multiple masculinities include both positive and negative gender performances, which can include healthy relationships as well as abusive ones.

Within the broader literature on the human-animal bond, there is a marked absence of research that combines men's accounts of their relationships with their partner as well as their accounts of relationships with companion animals. As noted above, the performance of masculinity is complicated and messy. Doing masculinity in the context of one relationship does not equate to the same performance in the context of another relationship. Men may do their masculinity differently with their intimate partners and their companion animals. The unique theoretical contribution of this work is the combination of masculinities theory with IPV *and* the human-animal relationship.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

The research questions guiding this study are informed by the theoretical literature on masculinities as well as the literature linking IPV and animal abuse. The overarching research question guiding this study is:

1. What is the role of companion animals in the lives of men?

There are three more specific research questions, each aiming to address a different aspect of the relationships (or lack thereof) with companion animals.

2. What is the role of companion animals in the construction and performance of masculinity?
3. Do abusive men hold different attitudes towards and have different relationships with companion animals than non-abusive men?
4. Does the presence of a companion animal aggravate or mitigate the violence towards the partner?

A fifth research question was initially included in the project: Is there a relation between the severity of abuse against the female partner and the commission of abuse against companion animals? However, as no participant shared that they had mistreated animals in the context of their intimate relationship, this question was dropped from the analysis as it was unanswerable from the data collected.

Major Concepts Defined

A few of the terms embedded in the research questions need to be defined for the purposes of the research. The use of the word 'role' presumes a presence in the life of the participant, but does not presume the form that the role may take. Using 'role' rather than 'relationship' or 'bond' leaves the participant open to define the meaning of the connection (if

any) between the man and the companion animal(s) in his life. The terms 'pet' and 'companion animal' are treated as interchangeable for this research, and are broadly defined as a domesticated animal who is primarily kept for companionship and enjoyment of the human family member(s). Within this definition, there is room for the lack of companionship and enjoyment, thus allowing the men to define what constitutes a companion animal for themselves. The conceptualization of pets is deliberately broad with regards to the species of animal that may be considered a companion animal. Although dogs and cats were the most common companion animals in this study, previous research has shown companionship relationships with livestock animals like goats and pigs as well as with wild animals like squirrels and raccoons (Fitzgerald, 2005; Stevenson, 2012).

IPV is also treated quite broadly, defined as physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and/or financial abuse perpetrated by one partner against the other in an intimate relationship. While IPV does occur within same-sex relationships (Renzetti, 1992; Walters, 2011), this sample was limited to heterosexual relationships. All the participants in the study identified as heterosexual, and no one revealed being in a same-sex relationship in the past. This is not surprising as the prison culture, and to an extent, domestic violence intervention program group dynamics, discourages same-sex relations in the adherence to a rigid heteronormative masculinity (Comack, 2008; de Viggiani, 2012; Schrock & Padavic, 2007). The combination of official statistics, self-report data, and domestic violence shelter surveys shows that IPV is gendered: women are more often the victims and men are more often the abusers (H. Johnson, 1996; H. Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Outlaw, 2009).

This research specifically focuses on partner and pet directed behaviour, and excludes child abuse, for two reasons. First, there would be a difficulty in identifying and recruiting men

who would be willing to speak about engaging in child abuse that exceeds the difficulty in recruiting men who have committed IPV. Second, the ethical concerns regarding harm of others, and requirements surrounding mandatory disclosure about the abuse of children mean that assurances of confidentiality would be severely limited. This would very likely inhibit open and honest conversations with the participants, and therefore compromise the research process overall.

Participants

Addressing the research questions necessitated interviewing two groups of men: men who had committed violence against an intimate partner, and men who had not had abuse within their intimate relationships. The common criterion among all participants was the presence of a companion animal during the romantic relationship. Potential participants in the abusive group were identified through three channels: conviction of an offence for which they received a sentence of incarceration at a provincial correctional facility; court mandated attendance at a domestic violence intervention program (DVIP) in the community; or attendance at an anger management program. This latter group is mainly comprised of men who have committed less serious IPV.⁴

The use of a DVIP to recruit the abusive groups presented several benefits. The primary benefit was one of convenience due to the relative ease of identification of those who have

⁴ The qualification of less serious and more serious IPV is based on the perception of the criminal justice system of the behaviours that result in incarceration in a federal institution (such as homicide and aggravated assault) versus those that may result in short carceral or community-based sentences. This is not meant to imply that the violence is any more or less serious or traumatic for the victims of violence. It should also be noted that prior convictions, recanted testimony, unwillingness to proceed with charges, the desire to keep families together, and plea bargains play a role in community-based sentencing, all of which impact the perceived seriousness of the offence by the criminal justice system.

committed IPV. Participation in a DVIP is a solid indication that the men have in fact committed IPV versus men who may have but could minimize or deny their behaviour, something that is quite common among abusive men (Hattery, 2009; Schrock & Padavic, 2007). Most participants in a community-based DVIP are court mandated to attend. While there is the possibility that men voluntarily attended the intervention programs, previous research into the composition of intervention groups shows that this was unlikely (Gondolf, 2002; Stuart, Temple, & Moore, 2007). In contrast to the DVIP, attendance at the anger management program was a mix of voluntary and mandated attendees. For some attendees, completion of an anger management program was a component of their probation; for others attendance was an effort to salvage relationships in their lives. Abuse in an intimate relationship was not the criterion for participation in the anger management program, but many attendees did have a history of abuse in their relationships.

Through their participation in the DVIP and anger management program, the men in these groups had spoken about their experiences, but may have wished to tell someone outside of the group or criminal justice system ‘their side of the story,’ and this may have contributed to the likelihood of participation. Another benefit of using DVIP and anger management attendance as a criterion is the minimization of risk to the participants. The men had spoken about their violence and relationships to others in the context of the group, so sharing their experiences again may not have had the same intense emotional impact. If there was any negative emotion that arose through the course of the research interview, the men had ostensibly been provided with the cognitive tools and support networks through participation in the programs to deal with the emotions that came up.

The use of an incarcerated sample also presented clear benefits for the research. It can be

difficult to get men from the DVIP to volunteer for an interview in which they are asked to talk about behaviour for which they may feel shame or guilt. Men in the community also have other time commitments such as work or family that make interview participation less attractive. Incarcerated participants, on the other hand, expressed interest in the interview because I was a novel person in an otherwise regimented environment, and the interview presented an opportunity to do something different, breaking up the monotony of the daily routine.

One of the critiques of studies on abusive men is that there is often no control group utilized (Dixon & Browne, 2003). While much of the research reviewed by Dixon and Brown (2003) was quantitative psychological research validating typologies, the same critique could be levelled at some qualitative studies. As Dixon and Brown (2003) note, “a comprehensive study should ideally include a wide array of domestic violent offenders and nonoffenders from volunteer groups” (p. 123). The current research addresses this critique by including a non-abusive group of men, to explore the widest range of attitudes and motivations of men for their behaviour towards their partners and their pets, not simply looking at the men who have engaged in abuse, but others as well. This group is composed of male participants who have not committed IPV based on their own self-identification, however, participants were screened for the commission of IPV throughout the interview.

The use of different groups of men, incarcerated abusive men, abusive men in community programs, and a non-abusive group, aids in elucidating whether men who abuse their intimate partners hold a substantively different attitude towards companion animals as well as yielding diversity in the treatment of pets, both positive and negative. The broad sample offers the ability to examine themes that may arise within and between sample groups.

Recruitment

Each group of participants required its own recruitment procedure to address both the uniqueness of the physical environment and confidentiality of the participants themselves.

Incarcerated Participants

Approval to recruit from provincial correctional institutions was sought and granted from the Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS). Approval was also requested and granted by the Superintendent of the specific institution prior to attending the institution for recruitment.

Incarcerated participants were invited to listen to an information session given by the researcher. The physical environment of the institution was such that the information session took place in a common area of each housing unit, and therefore all inmates of the unit could listen to the information being presented about the study if they wished. This presented two advantages. One, in asking them to listen to the researcher, it offered a degree of agency to the inmates which compelling their attendance at an information session in another area of the institution (which would require that the correctional guards physically escort them to another room) would not. Two, through presenting the research to all who wanted to listen, it could be that men who may not have been screened in through a simple case file review (which would have been time consuming for correctional staff to undertake) were made aware of the research and their eligibility to participate. There was one drawback to the openness of the information session: approval from MCSCS was limited to sentenced inmates (versus those held on remand awaiting trial). Allowing all inmates to listen to the session resulted in many inmates being interested in participation, however, these men were not eligible, and subsequently disappointed.

Information sessions were arranged in the evening to minimize any conflicts with regular institutional programs. The sessions were also scheduled around the evening news as this tended

to be important to most of the inmates who did not want to be disturbed during this hour. The information session started with the correctional officers requesting the attention of the men in the unit, including turning off the television. In two cases, we waited for a commercial break in the television programming to minimize disruption to the activities of the men. I then introduced myself, detailed the criteria for participation (i.e., companion animal in the home or relationship) as well as explained the research and the risks of participation. The voluntariness of participation was emphasized. In an environment where autonomy is limited, clearly explaining the decision to participate as resting in the hands of the inmates is a way to demonstrate respect for their time.

The language used to describe the intimate relationships was also deliberately chosen. Rather than describing the relationship criterion as one with violence or abuse, the criterion was phrased in the information session in the following way: “My study looks at the at the role of pets in the context of relationships – with your girlfriend, fiancée, or wife – with conflict. This could be physical conflict involving things like hitting, or verbal conflict where you had a lot of fights. I’m particularly interested in learning about any pets or any animals that you may have had while in this relationship prior to coming to jail.” Given the sensitive nature of IPV, and the hierarchy of offenders in an incarcerated population, using ‘conflict’ was chosen to be descriptive rather than presenting an assumption about the relationship. The phrasing surrounding the criterion of abuse was also arranged to avoid an accusatory tone, insofar that the direction of the behaviour was not specified, which allowed the potential participants to save face if their history or offences were not known to their fellow inmates.

Interested inmates were invited to sign up at the guard desk, and then interviews would be coordinated by the unit social worker. Given the criterion that incarcerated participants be sentenced (which represented a low proportion of the population of the institution), the unit

social worker followed up with each sentenced inmate with an individual letter from the researcher reiterating the research details shared in the information sessions. Interested inmates were invited to let the unit social worker know of their desire to participate in the study, and interviews were scheduled for a subsequent date. Interviews with seven participants were arranged, though one was cancelled due to the inmate's unit being locked down (meaning no programs and no access by non-correctional staff). This interview was unable to be rescheduled, so the incarcerated sample comprised six men.

Interviews took place in the multipurpose room of the inmate's respective housing units. The room provided a confidential space without institutional recording equipment, but the occupants were still visible to the correctional staff for safety purposes. However, this also meant that the interview was visible to other inmates in the housing unit. That said, disruptions from other inmates were minimal during these interviews.

A limitation to anonymity as a factor of the design of the research is worthy of note. Within a prison environment, anonymity can be very difficult to guarantee. As institutional staff support was required in identifying potential participants and scheduling the interviews, the identity of the participants was known to others. Security features, such as windows in the multipurpose room allowed the occupants to be visible to others passing by, thus limiting anonymity of the participant. This limitation to anonymity was emphasized in both the information session and at the beginning of the interview by through stating that even though correctional staff knew that the inmate and I were speaking, they did not know what we were saying to each other, and that anything shared with me (except disclosure of intent for self-harm or harm to others) would remain confidential. Efforts were made to protect against participants being associated with their responses via pseudonyms, both for the participants themselves as

well as for named individuals and companion animals. Additionally, potentially identifying information, such as workplace and cities of residence, were removed in the transcripts and the finished research.

DVIP and Anger Management Program Participants

Considerations of confidentiality of program participants dictated that a different recruitment strategy be used for this aspect of the research. Because participation in the group was confidential and identities of the men in the group were not to be shared, an information session provided directly to the program attendees was not an available recruitment strategy. Instead, the program facilitators briefly presented the research to program attendees and distributed a letter of invitation. The letters included details about the research pertaining to confidentiality, what would be asked of participants (hour long interview), risks of participation (possible feelings of upset due to talking about a sensitive subject), compensation for participation in the form of a \$20.00 gift card to a local coffee shop, and instructions directing interested men to contact me directly to arrange an interview.

Prior to the commencement of recruitment from the DVIP and anger management groups, I attended an agency staff meeting with the program facilitators to explain my research, describe what I was asking the facilitators to do, and answer any questions that the facilitators may have. Facilitators were instructed to emphasize that participation in my study was voluntary and that I was interested in hearing about the men's experiences. Facilitators were also asked to distribute the letters of invitation towards the end of the program for several reasons. One, it allowed for the building of rapport between the facilitator and program participants, which may result in a more favourable response to the request for participation. However, this may also have had an opposite effect in that a negative relationship may have developed, thus inhibiting

volunteering for the study. Two, program attendees would have had opportunities to speak about their relationships and so speaking to me about their experiences could be less intimidating. Finally, program attendees would have acquired (or at least been given the opportunity to acquire) skills to deal with emotional distress or upset which may result through recounting their experiences with IPV. The primary drawback with this recruitment strategy is that I was not in the room, so I was not able to vet the consistency with which the study was presented, nor the language that was used to describe my research.

Recruitment from the DVIP attendees encountered a challenge in that one year into recruitment, the community agency that had been offering the court mandated DVIP relinquished the provincial contract for provision of the program. The awarding of the new contract for provision of the program was not known until after the contract with the current agency ended. As such, it represented nearly a year-long gap in recruitment while a new agreement was negotiated between the new agency and the researcher. The initial community agency began a small voluntary program similar to the provincially mandated program, and recruitment continued in this group.

Response to the request for participants was slow, even with the offered gift of a \$20.00 gift card to a local coffee shop. In an effort to increase participation, the letter of information was redesigned to resemble a flyer and put on brightly coloured paper. The flyers highlighted the \$20.00 gift card and that participation would take only an hour of their time. A larger poster version of the flyer was also posted in the community agency that offered the anger management program to remind men of the research study, and attract clients of the community agency who may not have taken the anger management program but met the inclusion criteria for participation.

A possible reason for the slow recruitment could have been the inability to attend a group session in person to explain the research study, and put ‘a face to the research’ to interest men in volunteering for an interview. Others, such as Mansley (2009), report the same difficulties in recruitment from DVIP in the inability to present the research themselves. To address this possible reason for slow recruitment, I created a private three minute YouTube video verbalizing the information in the letters of information/flyers. By adding a video component to the recruitment, men who were interested could view the video and see me explain the research in my own words, thus putting a ‘face to the research.’ The YouTube video was hosted on a video channel created for this express purpose. The video itself was ‘unlisted’, meaning that only those individuals with the web address could view the video. The video was not searchable through the YouTube site or other internet search engines. This allowed me to limit video access to those who get the address from the flyer or poster, which also limits the geographic area from which the participants were recruited. Geographic location was an important limitation to ensure that the list of resources provided for the participants at the end of the interview was useable. The limited access to the video also served to restrict the potential for spam email and phone calls.

The web address for the video (www.tinyurl.com/rsresearch) was chosen because it was easy to remember and record for potential participants. YouTube video addresses are composed of a random order of letters and numbers, which can be difficult to remember and easy to mistake. The tinyurl address provided to participants was simple and coincided with my research email address. The QR code was placed on both the flyer and poster to make access to the video easier and faster. Scanning the QR code with a cell phone took the person directly to the video on YouTube. Unfortunately, this recruitment strategy did not appear to be successful, as the views were low (seven views), and the two men who participated following the posting of the

video had not seen the video. In total, seven men from the DVIP and anger management program participated in the research study. Interviews with eight men were scheduled, however, one participant did not show up for the interview, and did not respond to my phone call or email inquiring about rescheduling.

Non-Abusive Community-Based Participants

The non-abusive community participants were recruited through two different pathways: use of my personal network of acquaintances and colleagues to distribute the request for participants to men who may be interested, and a request for participants posted on an internet classifieds website (kijiji.ca).

The first recruitment pathway began with a request being sent out via email to my colleagues and friends asking them to forward the email and letter of invitation to men in their social circles who may be interested in participating in my research. It was made explicit that the assistance in distributing my request for participants was voluntary. The email and the letter of information noted the participation criteria of having a pet while in an intimate relationship and the absence of abuse against their partner, as well as details about the rationale of the research, the benefits and risks of participation, the requirements of participation, the voluntariness of participation, and the limits to confidentiality. Using a dispersive approach helped to create an arm's length social distance between myself and the participant, meaning that participants in this group were men that I did not know in a social capacity. Suggestions by colleagues to interview their male partners were met with appreciation but refused as the close social connection could result in an uncomfortable future relationship between myself and the participant due to the intimate nature of the information asked about and shared during the interview.

The email and letter of information contained contact information (phone and email) and

the direction that interested men contact myself directly. The colleague who forwarded my initial request was not involved in any communication between myself and potential participants who contacted me. It was also not revealed whether the individual men participated or not, protecting the anonymity of research participation to everyone except myself. Queries from colleagues regarding if a particular person contacted me were met with appreciation for helping to disseminate my request for participants, but with the reiteration that I could not say who contacted me.

The second recruitment pathway used was an advertisement requesting participants placed in the online classifieds on kijiji (kijiji.ca). The posting invited men who were interested in participating to contact me for more information. The posting was designed to be necessarily short so that the entirety of the posting appeared on a computer screen, and worded so that the participation criteria appears in the first few lines (having a pet while in an intimate relationship and the absence of abuse against their partner). This was geared to catch the interest of people scrolling through the listings on kijiji as the first few lines of advertisements appear as an abbreviated description of the posting.

Upon first contact from interested participants, a reply email was sent with more detail about the rationale of the research, the benefits and risks of participation, the requirements of participation, the voluntariness of participation, and limits to confidentiality. In the email, I offered to answer any questions that the potential participant may have had about the research. If the men were interested in participating at this point, a date and time for a confidential interview was scheduled. Interviews were scheduled with nine men, though one participant cancelled and the interview was unable to be rescheduled, resulting in eight non-abusive men in the sample.

Data Collection and Analysis

There are certainly many methods that could be used for this research, such as surveys or content analysis of the case files, but these methods have inherent limitations that hinder the ability to comprehensively address the research questions. Surveys, or structured questionnaires, have prescribed responses to questions, often developed from a particular theoretical stance. This limits what the men can say about their relationships in both the questions asked as well as the answers. It does not allow for the men to express their own explanations for their behaviour, instead providing a list (either explicit or implied) from which to choose a motivation or justification that may or may not reflect their true feelings. There is also the extremely limited amount of research in this area, and so there is not a strong foundation from which to develop survey questions. Surveys do not allow for the unanticipated, and often very fruitful, directions that interviews can take. The progression of the research encounter, whether mediated through a paper survey or administered in-person, is predetermined which places primacy on what the researcher feels is important as opposed to the participant's views and perspectives.

Content analysis of participant case files was another option for this research, however, the voice in the files is not that of the subject of the file. Instead, the perspective in the case file is that of the criminal justice system actors – parole officers, the victim through impact statements, case workers, prosecuting attorneys, and judges. The abusive man – the subject of the file – is being spoken about, analyzed and interpreted through the various perspectives of others. His voice is missing or overwritten. It is also unlikely that the case files would contain information about the treatment of and relationship with companion animals, instead the focus is on their criminal acts. While potentially valuable as an added component to this research, content analysis of case files alone does not help to address the research questions in this study. As the research questions focus on the experiences of the men, the use of an active interview format was

a logical choice.

Semi-structured, qualitative, active interviews were conducted with 21 men: eight non-abusive, seven abusive (program), and six abusive (incarcerated). The participant demographics are presented in Table 1. The interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants, with the explanation that audio-recording allowed me to focus on the conversation rather than taking notes. After the recording was started, the letter of consent was reviewed verbally to ensure understanding of the participant's rights and the limits to confidentiality. Verbal review of the letter of consent also ensured that any literacy concerns on the part of the participants were mitigated. It was emphasized that the transcripts would be anonymized through pseudonyms and the removal of any identifying information like place of residence, dates of important events, and names of significant others and pets. Confidentiality was also explained as subject to few limitations: revelations of intentions of self-harm; revelations of intended harm to others (human or animal); and revelations of past or present abuse of a child. Participants were informed that in the event that this information was revealed, only the information pertinent to the harm would be communicated to the appropriate authorities. Prior to signing the letter of consent, participants were asked if they had any questions about the research before continuing. Once the letter was signed, the interview began with the question "tell me about yourself" allowing the participant to select his own narrative position. Interviews were between one and two hours in length.

Table 1: Participant Demographics

Group	Age	Offence(s)	Relationship Length(s)	Relationship Status	# of Pets	Type of Pet
<u>Community (Non-abusive)</u>						
Noah	22	n/a	Short term	Single	5	Cats, dogs **
Vince	24	n/a	7 months	Girlfriend	3	Cats **
Darin	27	n/a	7 years (married 1.5)	Married	2	Cat, Dog
Cyril	59	n/a	23 years	Cohabiting	2	dog
Walter	59	n/a	37 Years	Married	3	cats
Stuart	52	n/a	7 years; short term	Divorced; Single	Many	Cats
Roger	38	n/a	4 years	Cohabiting	2	dogs
Eddy	26	n/a	Short term	Single	2	Dog **
<u>Program (Abusive)</u>						
Lawrence	52	Assault	Short term	Single	5	Cats, dogs
Hector	40	Assault	15 years; 2.5 years	Divorced; Cohabiting	Many	Cats, Dogs
Mark	35	Assault	4.5 years	Cohabiting	1	Cat
Drew	39	Assault	16 years	Divorcing	many	Cats, dog, budgies
Jesse	38	Assault; Criminal harassment	2.5 years	Single	2	Cats
Grant	22	Assault	2 years	Cohabiting	2	Cats
Elton	65	Assault	14 years; 17 years	Divorced; Cohabiting	3	Dogs
<u>Incarcerated (Abusive)</u>						
Tyson	41	Assault with weapon; Mischief	7 years	Single	4	Cats, rabbit
Archie	28	Auto theft;* impaired driving*	7 years; 3 years	Single	3	Dogs
Rudolpho	53	Assault	27 years; 1.5 years; 3 years	Divorced; Single	many	Cats, dogs
Cliff	26	Drug possession*	7 years	Cohabiting	many	dogs
Barry	29	Drug offences*	5 years	Single	4	Dogs
Omar	49	Assault; uttering threats; robbery*	10 years	Divorced	1	Dog

*Offence unrelated to intimate partner violence.

**Companion animals were owned by partner in dating relationships.

At the conclusion of the interview, participants were asked if there was anything that I had not asked about that they would like to share, or if there was anything that they would like to discuss further. They were also invited to ask questions about my research. Participants were thanked for their time. Community-based participants were given a list of free and low-cost resources in the event that they experienced any emotional distress after the interview as well as a \$20.00 gift card to one of two local coffee shops (their choice).⁵ Incarcerated participants were reminded that they had an established network of mental health resources in the institution, and to contact their unit social worker in the event that they needed someone to talk to about any emotional distress. Institutional and MCSCS regulations prevented any compensation being offered to incarcerated participants. All participants were advised that my contact information was contained in the letter of information given to them at the beginning of the interview. I reiterated their ability to withdraw from the research study, and invited them to contact me with any questions. No participant contacted me subsequent to their interview, and no participant withdrew their participation.

Post-interview field notes were created immediately following each interview, noting information such as non-verbal communication like postures, visible emotions, and initial thoughts on the interview. Post-interview notes were also a reflexive exercise, reflecting on how I performed as an active participant in the interview, questions that were well or poorly received, as well as critically evaluating emotional reactions on my part to information shared by the participant.

Active Interviews

⁵ Interestingly, one participant refused the gift card, commenting that the interview process had been beneficial to him and supporting my research was reward enough. This participant was also the only one to ask who was funding the gift cards.

The epistemological underpinnings of the active interview merge well with the constructionist approach in this research. The active interview treats all narrators as active subjects having the narrative competence to speak for themselves and to engage in their own meaning making of their experiences (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). This constructionist approach to knowledge matches well with the direction of the research questions in the focus on the meaning that the participants place on their experiences and relationships with others, including animals. Where the active interview differs from other interview styles is in the overarching goal “to systematically activate applicable ways of knowing – the possible answers – that respondents can reveal, as diverse and contradictory as they might be” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 37). Rather than looking for the most correct answer, or the most truthful answer, the focus is on the participant as an active narrator of his or her own story and constructor of his or her own meanings. This opens up possibilities for challenging existing discourses or conceptualizations, for example, the essentialized image of the abusive male. Approaching the interview with abusive men from this epistemological position allows for diverse identities to be narrated, identities that could conflict with each other, such as an abusive partner but a loving and caring pet owner.

As active subjects, the participants can avail themselves of a number of narrative positions, and it is through activating these differing positions that the stock of knowledge is expanded and clarified. Still, such active subjects use cultural resources, like discourses of masculinity, in the narration of their stories. The active interview also treats the interviewer as an active participant in the process of creating meaning in the interview. Part of the active interviewer’s responsibility is to “promote the visibility of [narrative] linkages and horizons [of meaning]” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 58) by remaining alert to narrative shifts in the

interview, identifying the different positions that the participant may take up, and following up on these positions. Holstein and Gubrium (1995) assert that the active interviewer is critical in this process:

In actively encouraging respondents' narratives, the interviewer invites the respondent to fashion stories that, in their content and connections, reveal how the respondent structures experiential meaning. By manipulating emergent horizons – suggesting subjective relevancies, orientations, and connections – the interviewer interpretively challenges the respondent to make sense of the experience in relation to various subjective possibilities (p. 59).

The different ways of doing masculinity, the connections between relationships, and the roles that others (including companion animals) take in the lives of the participants, is information that could not easily be gleaned through a traditional interview format. With an active interview, the meaning of these connections and relationships is made visible through the different narrative positions that the participant can take. It is this subjective meaning that this research seeks.

One way the active interviewer activates the different narrative positions, making horizons of meaning visible, is through questions and probes. The questions are treated “more like framing devices that the respondent might follow” in narratively situating themselves or as a theme around which they can share experiences (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 29). Each thematic block aims to set out a general stock of knowledge about the ways in which the participant constructs himself and his experiences. Though the focus of the proposed research is really the role of the companion animal in the participant's life, questions and probes are used to guide the participant to alternative narrative positions, such as family and employment, which broaden the stock of knowledge that the participant can draw upon. Including questions about the romantic partners is important, as for many men, their romantic or sexual relationships form a large part of doing masculinity (Hattery, 2009; Hearn, 1998).

Beginning the interview with questions like ‘tell me about yourself’ to set out an initial narrative position did work with some participants, but this question also made others uncomfortable in having to make the decision about where to begin. This discomfort or defensiveness could have been a barrier in creating rapport between myself and the participant, however a list of prompting follow-up questions were available for participants who appeared stumped by the grand tour question. Prompts drawn from the cultural discourse of masculinity (e.g., employment or leisure activities like sport) were used in these cases to provide a starting point, with the goal of manoeuvring the interview through the different narrative positions that the prompts may engender.

Interviews were transcribed by myself, verbatim, and entered into a qualitative data analysis software program (MaxQDA) for analysis. The inclusion of pauses and utterances like ‘uh’ and ‘um’ provided a level of detail useful for analysis, such as indicating a participant’s struggle with a certain narrative position, or taking time to reflect on a question. In combination with the comprehensive debriefing notes composed after each interview, and reflexive memos created during the transcription process, verbatim transcripts were subjected to a narrative analysis.

Narrative Analysis

Narrative is defined as “a distinct form of discourse: as meaning making through the shaping or ordering of experience, a way of understanding one’s own or others’ actions,...of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time” (Chase, 2011, p. 421). It is this narrative that the active interview is uniquely placed to elicit. Both narrative analysis and active interviews see meaning as being constructed through the narrative by the participant. The focus is not on the correctness of the story or experience, but on the meaning-making and

cultural resources used to make meaning of their stories (Chase, 2011). In this research, the cultural discourse used to enter the narratives is masculinity. Given the multitude of narrative positions that the participants could take, the analysis remained open to the numerous other cultural resources and discourses that could be and were drawn upon by the participants. For example, Miller's (1996) narrative analysis of a Guatemalan woman's experience illustrates how she drew upon cultural discourses of childhood, family, religion, and transformation. These same narrative resources may be used by others, but may be culturally situated in different ways.

The narrative analysis examined the broad context of the participants' stories as well as how they were communicated. The broad context focused on what was being talked about, what cultural resources were being drawn upon, and the contradictions coming out of the different narrative positions that the participants were using. For example, an incarcerated participant might draw on resources to do masculinity specific to the prison setting, such as valuing the respect of other inmates over financial accomplishments. This need for respect could be mirrored in conversations about the role that his companion animal played in his life. A participant from the community may employ his position as a loving partner to evidence his masculinity, but may use the same reasoning to explain the complete lack of relationship with the companion animals in his life. The challenge of narrative analysis in this research is to make sense of the contradictions that arise through the course of the active interview. Masculinities theory offers the conceptual tools to make sense of such contradictions.

The smaller details of the actual interaction, such as tone of voice, emotion, and body language, compose part of the narrative. Detailed post interview field notes and personal debriefing notes were useful in augmenting the narratives in the transcripts. Lempert (1994) argues that "by attending to *how* the story is related, narrative analysis seeks to uncover the

multiple meanings that reflect the connections between and individual's life and problems and public, historical, social structures" (p. 438). The mechanics of the narrative in the language choices, descriptions, and referents are part of the resources used by the participant to make meaning of and construct the experiences he is relating. If the sole focus was on what was being said, much of the participant's story would be left out.

In narrative analysis, as well as active interviews, the importance is placed on *the participant's* truth and reality, subjectively constructed and defined, rather than on objective assessments. It does not matter whether the researcher believes that the story is true, what matters is that the participant feels it is true. Constructivist epistemology embraces the idea of multiple realities constituting multiple knowledges, and argues against a single or objective truth (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Miller (1996) offers a compelling rationale for this epistemological standpoint: "If we claim that the life stories people offer us from other cultural contexts are myths, beliefs, or untrue, we invalidate the person's (and culture's) humanity, rationality, and integrity" (p. 116). Given that the purpose of the proposed research is to understand the lived experiences of men, invalidating their stories by claiming they are untrue directly contradicts and undermines the trustworthiness of the research.

Validity in narrative analysis, then, is assessed on criteria like trustworthiness, transparency, and authenticity (Lincoln et al., 2011; Olesen, 2011). Being open about research decisions and presenting evidence supporting the claims that are made is a way to address validity (Chase, 2011). Reissman (2008) suggests that "narrative researchers can strengthen their arguments by discussing cases that don't fit their claims and by considering alternative interpretations" (cited in Chase, 2011, p. 424). For example, inherent in hegemonic masculinity is pride in fatherhood (Eckstein, 2011; Kimmel, 2008). An assumption would be that if a man

does not have children, then he cannot access the narrative position of fatherhood. Hegemonic masculinity as a theoretical concept implies a distant and dominant relationship with animals and the natural world, and so the alternative interpretation of fatherhood in taking a parenting role in the lives of his companion animals or providing care for stray animals runs counter to the (theoretically) expected cases. Actively looking for examples that may not fit expectations, and seeking alternative interpretations of concepts were part of the analytic process of this research.

In describing her analytic approach to narrative analysis, Irvine (2013) wrote “I have less interest in narrative as the *mode* of analysis than as the *object* of analysis” (p. 27), with the focus on how her participants used the stories told to create and convey meaning. This research takes the same stance, in that the narratives are the object of analysis, with the focus on how the men constructed and performed their masculinity in their relationships, both with their intimate partner and with (and through) their relationships with their companion animals. To that end, the data were analyzed paying attention to the themes and narratives emerging from the participants’ stories.

The analysis proceeded in three stages. First, the transcripts were read several times prior to coding to get a sense of emerging patterns and trends throughout the data. The practice of memoing as a component of this stage of the analysis helped to make sense of the different emerging patterns, and in recording ideas about possible contradictions and connections between themes. Memos also offered a space for recorded reflexive practice on my part, and afforded a way to engage with the emotions raised in response to the participants and their narratives in an analytic way.

Guided by the broad concepts of masculinity, intimate partners, and companion animals, via a line-by-line reading of each transcript, an exhaustive list of codes was created in the second

phase. As pieces of the narrative could be representative of several different codes, multiple codes were applied as applicable to the same passage. The second phase again involved repeating readings of the transcripts in the coding process, and following the suggestions of Hennink, Kaiser and Marconi (2017), this proceeded in a more ordered way with one transcript from each group being read and coded in sequence. One transcript from the non-abusive group would be coded, followed by the coding of a transcript from the DVIP group, and then a transcript from the incarcerated abusive group. This helped in assessing that data saturation was achieved in that by the fourth round of coding (meaning that 12 interviews had been coded, four from each group), no new codes had been created.

The third phase involved using the constant comparative method from grounded theory (Charmaz, 2010; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), in which each instance of a particular theme was compared to other examples of the same theme to assess and enhance validity. Through multiple iterations of this comparative process, the initial list of codes was condensed as themes were combined into meaningful analytic categories. For example, each passage coded for 'trust' was compared to each other to assess similarities and differences, and the same process was undertaken for the code of 'honesty'. As trust and honesty were related concepts, the codes were compared to each other to determine whether they were unique themes, or could be combined into a larger analytic unit. The results of this analysis are presented in the following two chapters.

Ethical Considerations

Some of the ethical considerations have been discussed above, such as confidentiality and anonymity and the limits to these inherent in the research design. While none of the participants were anonymous to me, efforts have been made to ensure anonymity of the participants in the finished research via cleaning the transcripts of potentially identifying information and providing

pseudonyms for each participant. Anonymity for the incarcerated participants during the course of the research was limited by the physical environment of the prison (e.g., spaces have windows so the occupants are visible to those walking past) as well as by the manner of recruitment of participants. Anonymity was more easily achieved for the non-abusive community group of participants as they contacted me to indicate interest in participation; their identities were not known to any individuals outside the research.

The assurances of confidentiality help to balance the limits to anonymity. Confidentiality was guaranteed insofar as was possible given the legal responsibilities of the researcher in reporting intended harm to self or others, or harm of a child. Given that the subject of the research was to explore the relationship of the participant with his partner and his pets, this carried the potential disclosure of previous criminal behaviour, for example abuse of an animal or a previously undisclosed assault on a partner. The information was kept confidential (i.e., not reported to relevant authorities), as doing otherwise would have undermined the trust in researcher-participant relationship critical to the research.

It must be noted that incarcerated individuals and those under the purview of the criminal justice system are considered a vulnerable population, just as it must be noted that these individuals also have agency. Free and informed consent is one key way that addressed this vulnerability and respected agency at the same time. A clear and comprehensive description of the project was provided in the information sessions to give individuals a good base on which to make their decision to participate or not. Given the low level of education of incarcerated populations relative to the general public, the informed consent form was read aloud to each participant to ensure that he understood the scope of his participation. To maintain an equal approach, this procedure was maintained for each participant regardless of whether he was

incarcerated or in the community at the time of the interview. The freedom to withdraw from the study at any time was emphasized to each participant, as well as the provision of my contact information should they wish to withdraw after the interview had concluded.

Connected to potential psychological risks, the subject matter may have been upsetting for some participants. Essentially, I was asking them to relate and think about their relationships where they have (in the case of the two abusive groups) committed violence against their partners, and in some cases, possibly the animals in the home. Feelings of guilt, sorrow, regret, embarrassment, and grief were possible, and often appeared through the course of the interview. However, as most of the participants had already talked about their intimate relationships in the course of either the DVIP or other programs, the risks were reduced for negative consequences of these emotions. In addition, the participants were given resources (i.e., cognitive tools, understanding and awareness of their behaviour, support resources) to deal with any negative emotions. Finally, I was asking them to share their perspective on their relationships without judgement on my part, and this served to ease any negative emotions that may have arisen during the interview.

There were also some potential social risks for the participants, though these were low. It could have been assumed that the men have abused an animal by virtue of their participation in the study, creating a negative social stigma. While this would not be a risk (or at most a very low risk) for the non-abusive and abusive community groups given the confidentiality and anonymity afforded them via the recruitment process, this could have been a risk for the incarcerated participants as the anonymity was limited by the nature of recruitment. The social risk was minimized by structuring the description of the study presented in the information sessions and by program facilitators so that there was no assumption that those who participate have abused

animals. All men with companion animals (past or present) were invited to talk with me about their relationships with their partners and about their pets, with the emphasis on hearing their perspective and their voice. This statement made clear that I did not, nor should others, have any preconceived ideas about the nature of the relationship between the man and his companion animal. This was effective in the previous research conducted to minimize this potential social risk in an incarcerated population (Stevenson, 2012).

Methodological Limitations and Strengths

The research methodology used in this project has associated limitations, as well as strengths. I may have heard a very different perspective as a woman interviewing men about IPV and the role of their companion animals than a man would have heard. Given the epistemological stance of the active interview and narrative analysis methods, this does not present a limitation per se, but rather presents an opportunity to challenge and reveal contradictions in the narratives of the men. My gender may also have constituted a strength in that men may have felt more comfortable with displays of emotion with a woman than they would have with a male interviewer. Comack (2008) also noted her gender as a potential methodological strength in generating rapport and comfort with her male participants, several of whom cried during their interview.

Many of the classic purported 'limitations' of qualitative research, like lack of rigour and subjectivity, can be addressed through transparency of research decisions and open reflexivity, which contribute to the trustworthiness of the study. The constructionist epistemological stance of this research embraces subjectivity rather than brackets it out. Rubin and Rubin (1995) argue that in interview research, "the researcher is not neutral, distant or emotionally uninvolved. He or she forms a relationship with the interviewee, and that relationship is likely to be involving" (p.

12). In essence, objectivity is not possible or even desired in conducting an interview, as attempts to distance oneself would present a barrier to rapport. Rubin and Rubin (1995) also advocate for a balanced reflective process on the part of the researcher, between respect for the participant and recognition of the researcher's own bias. This was the path taken in this research, and where the reflexive memos created in the first phase of the analysis became part of the analysis itself.

Being open about my own position and biases is a critical component to reflexive practice. In no way do I condone violence against women, and hearing the men's accounts of physical and verbal abuse against their intimate partners was difficult. I also have a deep love for and a close relationship with my own companion animals, and so any mistreatment related by the participants was upsetting. Monitoring my own reactions in the interview was a constant and deliberate practice, and I needed to control my emotional reactions during the interview. In most interviews this control was maintained, and I found this easier when I was hearing about the human relationships than when men were sharing their sorrow and grief over the loss of their companion animals. For example, in my interview with Stuart, he was relating his heartbreak over the death of one of the stray cats he cared for, and I started to tear up. While I quickly reestablished emotional control (and no tears fell), Stuart did take notice of my reaction and made a joking comment about the interviewer needing to be impartial. The interview with Stuart continued with no further mention of my reaction, however, there is no telling how my reaction shaped Stuart's disclosures after that point.

It was during the transcription phase where I had an ability to engage more freely with emotions that arose in the course of the research, whether it was empathy-driven sorrow and grief, or anger at the participant's words or attitude. Allowing myself the time and space during transcription of the interviews to engage in the emotions raised meant that some interviews took

much longer to transcribe than others. For instance, several interviews I was able to transcribe in a few sessions, whereas there were a few interviews where I could not transcribe more than ten minutes at a time because of my personal reactions. Writing reflexive memos at every stage of the process, especially during transcription, was a critical component of my reflexive practice.

The purpose of the reflexive memos was to record not only my own personal reactions, feelings, and thoughts about the research and the narratives of the men, but also to allow for a critical analysis of my reactions. Reflexive memos were records of my feelings about participants I disagreed with, disliked, or had more intense emotional reactions to either during or after the interview, and enabled a check against the analysis of their transcripts. The memos provided a resource that I used in the second and third phases of the analysis against which I could gauge my biases. For example, the memos enabled me to critically assess whether I was being too critical of a participant with whom I did not like, or being too favourable in my analysis of a participant's narrative for whom I felt more empathy. In short, using the constant comparative method in a reflexive capacity with attention to subjectivity in the analytic process minimizes concern about rigour through an open reflexivity.

Another point in the reflexive process was recognition of the potential for the reification of typologies when dealing with IPV. The need to maintain caution when dealing with the groups of more/less severely abusive men as categorized in this research is ever present. These groups represent a continuum rather than discrete categories of abusers. Typologies and categories can be helpful in illustrating that not all abusers are the same, but can also present a unified view within the groups that can be problematic to acknowledging the heterogeneity of abusive men. Consistent cognizance of the groups as part of a continuum, and the social construction of the concept of 'seriousness' was maintained throughout the research process to avoid reification of

the categories of abusive men.

Adams (1995) also raises an important point about research with abusive men that could present a limitation for this research. She asserts that men are not likely to admit to animal abuse because it shows the instrumentality and deliberateness of the violence against the partner. The men could hide a portion of their violence by denying any mistreatment of animals, but by asking open questions and allowing the men to select their own narrative positions, this limitation was minimized insofar as is possible. The current research sought the men's perspective on their relationships, whatever their interpretation of that relationship may be. Probing and offering differing narrative positions that could be taken helped to provide a breadth of perspectives and contradictory relationships on the part of the part of the participants.

The relative racial homogeneity of the participants was an additional limitation. Most participants identified as Caucasian, mainly of European descent. Only one of the participants was Black, and one participant identified part of his racial heritage as Indigenous. The lack of diversity in the sample precluded an analysis incorporating race as a thematic factor in both constructions of masculinity and relationships with companion animals.

A final limitation of this research was the small sample size of 21 men, however this sample size is comparable to other in-depth qualitative studies, such as Comack (2008) and Scott Tilley and Brackley (2005). As this research was not aimed at determining the proportion of men who abuse their companion animals, a large sample was not required. The goal of this research was exploring the men's perspectives on their relationships with their partner and their companion animals rather than generalization to a wider population, and thus a smaller sample was appropriate to address the research questions. While a larger sample would have been preferred, the case can be made for saturation in that after 12 interviews, no new codes had been

created.

The current study also presents many methodological strengths, many of which balance the limitations noted above and contribute to the trustworthiness of the research. Shenton (2004) proposes that credibility in qualitative studies can be established through a variety of means, including the use of different types of participants or groups, and the inclusion of a reflective commentary from the researcher. The use of separate groups of participants offered a broader range of experiences, relationships, and opinions than would have potentially been available in a sample composed exclusively of men who had engaged in IPV, thus constituting a form of data triangulation recommended by Shenton (2004). The detailed reflexive discussion above offers transparency about my research decisions, the struggles and emotionality of the research process, as well as the methodological steps taken to manage my own bias in the analytic process. Again, openness about researcher decisions and subjectivity is a way to illustrate the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

Member checking is often used in qualitative research to ensure trustworthiness, which ideally occurs after the interview is complete and the interview transcribed. While the recruitment process and access permissions inhibited follow up contact with participants, a form of member checking did take place during the interviews. At the conclusion of the interview, participants were invited to ask questions about my research, if there was anything that I had not asked about, or if there was anything else that they wanted to share. Participants were universally interested in my research study, and offered their opinions on the general areas of animal mistreatment and IPV as well as the intersection of the two. This allowed participants to place additional context around their experiences and attitudes, and the opportunity to clarify or revisit anything they had shared with me to that point, essentially checking with the participant that they

were satisfied with all they had shared with me.

Thick, rich description is another key component of the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. Shenton (2004) argues that “detailed description...can be an important provision for promoting credibility as it helps to convey the actual situations that have been investigated and, to an extent, the contexts that surround them” (p. 69). It is this thick and rich description through the extensive use of verbatim quotes which is presented in the following pages. Detailed description of the data – the voices of the men in this study – supports the analysis and conclusions through providing context for each theme discerned from the data, thus contributing to the trustworthiness of this study.

Conclusion

The research questions guiding this research centre around the conceptualization of companion animals in the lives of men, the role of companion animals in the performance of masculinity, and the role that companion animals may play in relationships with IPV and those without IPV. Twenty-one interviews were conducted men from two groups: men who had abuse in their relationships composed of six incarcerated men and seven men from an intervention program, and men from the community with no reported abuse in their relationships (n = 8). All the men had pets in their intimate relationships. The findings and analysis are divided into the following two chapters. Chapter 5 addresses the findings related to the first two research questions in exploring the role of companion animals in the lives of men as well as how the companion animals factor into the performance of masculinity. Chapter 6 discusses the inclusion of companion animals in the theme of Aggression and Conflict, exploring the role of pets in the conflict with the intimate partner as well as attitudes towards animal mistreatment.

CHAPTER 5: CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE HUMAN-ANIMAL RELATIONSHIP

The chapter begins with addressing the broad research question ‘what is the role of companion animals in the lives of men?’ with a focus on how the relationships with pets were contextualized and understood by the participants. This discussion provides a context for the how the participants used their companion animals in the construction and performance of their masculinity.

This chapter is organized around the following three themes. Under *Conceptualization of the Human-Animal Bond*, the differences in relationships with companion animals among the participants are presented and hierarchies among animals as they arose through the narratives are discussed. This theme also includes the responses of the participants to the end of their relationship with their companion animal, whether it was through the death of the companion animal or as part of the conclusion of their intimate relationship. *Companion Animals as Resources for Masculinity* delves into the more specific ways that companion animals, and the relationships with companion animals, functioned as a resource for the doing of a more hegemonic masculinity as well as more ‘non-traditional’ masculinities. The theme of *Love and Loyalty* highlights the points of connection and disjuncture between the men’s relationships with their intimate partners and their relationships with companion animals were most clear.

One of the other key research questions is whether abuse and non-abusive men have different relationships with animals. The abusive or non-abusive group membership of participants is detailed in Table 1 in the previous chapter. In the current chapter, participants’ pseudonyms are accompanied by the relevant group referents of incarcerated-abusive (IA), domestic violence intervention program-abusive (PA), and community-not abusive (NA). Using these referents highlights the fact that there were no appreciable differences between the groups

of men either in their conceptualization of companion animals, their relationships with companion animals, or how they used companion animals as a resource for doing their masculinity. Overall, the men in this study all report positive relationships with the animals, mainly dogs and cats, in their lives. Only a few participants shared that they had mistreated or abused a companion animal, though this mistreatment was not directly related to the IPV. The findings related to Aggression and Conflict regarding both the intimate partners and the companion animals are presented in detail in the following chapter.

Conceptualization of the Human-Animal Bond

The men in this study had varying conceptualizations of their individual relationships with companion animals. These conceptualizations appeared on a continuum, from a disinterested and burdensome relationship in Tyson's (IA) case to a child-parent style relationship in the experience of Hector (PA) and Stuart (NA). Figure 2 illustrates the continuum of relationships.

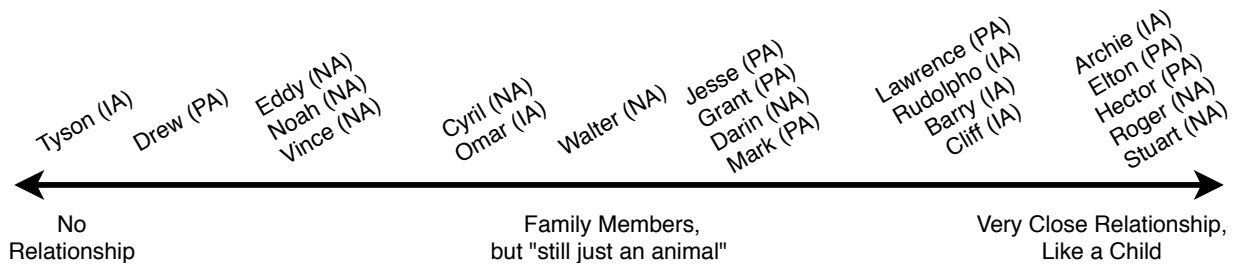


Figure 2: Continuum of Relationships with Companion Animals

Tyson (IA) and Drew (PA) represented one extreme end of the relationship continuum, having little or no connection to the animals in their lives. Tyson viewed the two cats in his relationship as just one more thing to worry about and clean up after. He did not want the cats, and his partner brought them home over his objections. Tyson had no relationship to speak of

with the animals in his life; the level of disinterest evidenced by the fact that he could not even recall the names of the cats when prompted. However, he did talk about playing with the cats, dragging a string or encouraging the cats to chase a laser pointer, though this was placed in the context of playing with his children as well. Drew had a similar distant relationship with the cats in his life, describing them as “cool and fun” but not evidencing any meaningful attachment to them. Drew said that he liked his current cat in that she provided “a level of therapy,” but he also viewed the cat as a burden, given the financial constraints he was experiencing. Drew felt like getting the cat was required in order to appease his children during the family upheaval caused by divorce proceedings, that he had no control over whether to have an animal in his life, and this contributed to the distant relationship with the cat.

For the three youngest participants, Eddy (NA), Noah (NA), and Vince (NA), their experiences with companion animals in relationships had been in the context of relatively short-term dating relationships which inhibited building a close bond with the animals. All three men had friendly relationships with the animals in the lives of their partners, and enjoyed spending time with the animals, but did not describe their relationships with the animals as close or meaningful. Noah said he liked animals, but that allergies kept him from spending too much time with them, though he did want to get a companion animal in the future. He was looking for a companionship relationship, but described it with a degree of emotional distance, reflective of the relationships that he had with the cats in his girlfriends’ lives. Vince enjoying spending time with his girlfriend’s cats, but did not have a “personal relationship” with the cats as they were “her cats.” For Vince, the notion of ownership of the companion animals seemed to inhibit the closeness of his relationship with the cats.

Eddy (NA) enthusiastically talked about the dog in his relationship, how he and his girlfriend used the dog's love of balls to pass love notes to each other, inserting a note in a tennis ball for the dog to bring to the other person. For Eddy, the dog was not what initially attracted him to his girlfriend, but in Eddy's words, the "dog made our relationship more beautiful, in that sense, you were, like, attracted to the same thing and you loved the same thing, and you don't think of two, you think of three now, so that was something really good." Unlike Vince, Eddy did not let his lack of ownership of the dog affect his desire to have a good relationship with him, and spoke of including the dog in many of the activities that he and his girlfriend engaged in. For Eddy, his desire to spend time with his girlfriend's dog was more reflective of his general love of dogs rather than a very close relationship with the specific companion animal.

Seven men participants described their pets as family members, but with the caveat that the pet was 'still an animal' placing the animal at a lower status than the human family members. Cyril (NA) described his dog as a family member, but also said that "a dog is just a dog." When asked to explain the difference, Cyril replied,

It means I had to control her like... I had to feed her. I had to walk her. I had to see... She had a mind of her own, but she couldn't do things on her own. [...] I mean, she was part of the family but honestly, she was still just a dog. She had four legs, a tail.

Rather than seeing the dependence as child-like, Cyril saw the lack of independence as somehow different and therefore 'less than' the human family members.

Serving a specific purpose, such as protection, was a way in which this near-family member status was explained. Omar (IA) was clear that his Rottweiler was a great dog, but that he "trained her to be a dog, not part of the family, it's a dog." Omar delineated the boundary between a human family member and an animal that was sharing space with the family and serving a purpose. For Omar, that purpose was protection:

So when we get home it's like perimeter check, and she'd go all throughout the house. Then she goes outside and she does a perimeter check. If you're walking this way, that's fine, but you put your foot on the grass! And she's up, she watches the house. She watched the kids. You know what I mean? Bring your kids, neighbours bring their kids to the yard, everything's okay, they're jumping on her and she's just, oh boy, really... Then the parents come and try to get the kids, oh boy. Just show some teeth, you know? She was very protective like that.

Despite referring to the dog as simply a protector of his home and family, and as 'just a dog and not part of the family', she had her own room in the house. Later in the interview, Omar talked about telling the dog that "daddy was going to work but would be home later" when leaving the house. Using a referent for himself that implied a parent-child type of relationship was an indication of Omar's conflicted construction of his companion animal relationship. Omar tried to distance himself from the conceptualization of his dog as equal to a family member in favour of the 'tough dog, tough guy' image that he constructed throughout his interview. Conceptualizing himself as the dog's "daddy" was a much softer version of masculinity than the more powerful and aggressive form of masculinity embedded in the conceptualization of the dog as a fierce protector under Omar's control.

Four of the men, while stating that they had close relationships with their companion animals, also viewed the relationships as placeholders or substitutions for relationships with human others. For example, Jesse (PA) described his cats as being "like family" but not the same as having his human family around: "It's better than living by myself. Well, I am living by myself, but I have two good pets, two nice pets, so that works good." Even though Jesse had a very close relationship with his cats, who were a good support while going through the breakup of his relationship, they were still perceived as less than human family members. Mark (PA) said that his cat had been there for him through every relationship, and was his best friend. Mark had

a close relationship with his cat, and though his cat gave him solace and love, there was a limit to what his cat could provide: “I’ve found that when [cat] cuddles up during the nights, that, my arms are out like I would be holding a partner, but they’re still empty. So, ...he definitely fills a void to some degree.” However, Mark immediately followed with a statement that the cat is more reliable and forgiving and less judgemental than his intimate partner. In a particular way then, Mark sees his cat as almost a better companion than his partner.

Grant (PA) viewed his cats as children and loved them very much, but he qualified this description with the statement that he loved his son more. For Grant, his relationships with his cats were also filling a void while he was separated from his son, serving as a substitute for the father-child relationship: “at least I’m continuing what I feel is some way of nurturing, I guess [...] at least trying to continue to be a dad even though I don’t have a kid around me anymore.” Similar to Grant, Darin (NA) saw the dog that he and his wife brought home as good practice for when they had children. He considered his dog and cat as family members, like children, but distinct at the same time:

I treat dogs and cats so differently from the way I would treat a child. Like I treat a child thinking, okay, as an adult in this situation, you know, I want you to have fun, I want you to be able to make decisions and pick what you want to do, and it’s always built towards getting you up to be an adult. Whereas dogs and cats, I’m not trying to... I’m just trying to make sure their behaviours are, you know, acceptable and that’s it. But beyond that I just want them to be around and hang out.

Darin also differentiated the status of his dog and cat through the referent to himself in relation to his companion animals. The referent of “daddy” to reflect his relation to his companion animals “never set in his brain,” and Darin saw himself as a caring and responsible guardian rather than filling a parent role.

Some participants described very close relationships with specific companion animals, but distant ones with other companion animals in their lives. For example, Walter (NA) had a close relationship with his current cat and his “grand-dog,” but not with his previous cats. He attributed this to the ‘trouble’ that the other two cats had given him, one by spraying everywhere, so they gave her back to the humane society, and the other with trying to ‘escape’ every time either Walter or his wife opened the door to the house. Walter said he “never really bonded with the other two,” attributing the lack of relationship with the relative disinterest that the cats showed in him. With his current cat, Walter said the cat “just kind of bonded with us” and proactively interacted with him and his wife, whereas his other cats had not. The same idea arose when talking about his “grand-dog” in terms of how much the dog interacted with and actively solicited attention from Walter. For Walter, the limitation on being considered a family member seemed to rest on how much the companion animal would voluntarily engage with the family.

Some men had very close familial relationships with their companion animals, and did not present the ‘just an animal’ qualification to their conceptualization of the relationship. For example, Lawrence (PA) described his dogs and cats as therapeutic, comforting, and just like children in the unconditional love he had for them. Rudolpho (IA) had shared his life with many animals over the course of his intimate relationships, and he had a very close relationship with most of his pets. Rudolpho described his Chihuahua as his best friend, someone who was always there for him and they did everything together. He spoke of his cats as being full of personality, communicating their needs clearly to him, and the closeness of their relationship meant that Rudolpho could understand what they were ‘saying.’ Barry (IA) described his close relationship with one of his previous dogs as a “big relationship” and “precious” stating he treated her better than some of the people in his life at the time. He smiled and got more animated when talking

about his American Bulldog, describing all the fun things they would do together, like walks, bike rides, or just relaxing watching movies.

The depth of Barry's (IA) relationships with the animals in his life was evidenced when he talked about how his elderly dog was having mobility issues, and how that factored into the decision to move to an apartment without stairs to make his dog's life easier and the whole family could live together. Cliff (IA) also talked about doing what was best for the dogs, which was sometimes in contrast with what he wanted for his relationship with the animals:

He was out on the farm for the whole year that I was in jail last year, so we didn't want to take him off the farm after that because he got in that pack mentality with the rest of the dogs and takin him from the farm woulda been harder on him than leavin' him there. So we never brought him back into the city.

For Barry and Cliff, being able to prioritize the needs of their companion animals reflected how they saw themselves as men, being good providers and caring for their families.

Other participants, such as Archie (IA), Elton (PA), Hector (PA), Roger (NA), and Stuart (NA) actively described their companion animals as family members equivalent to children. Stuart (NA), though technically he had no companion animals of his own, counted the stray cats he took care of as his family, developing close relationships with each cat, giving them names and caring for them as deeply as if they were children. Roger (NA) took his dogs to doggie daycare, and referred to them as his children. Hector (PA) described his dogs and cats as "just like little kids, but they listen!" Archie (IA) described his dogs as his best friends, laughing as he said how he and his girlfriend "babied the hell out of" his Shih Tzu. Archie said "people don't have dogs they have kids. That what they say. Me, my mom, my girlfriend, everybody's like 'you guys don't have dogs, you have kids.' Which is cool. One's a furbaby, that's all

(laughing).” Elton (PA) described his three dog as spoiled and loved children, whom he called to check on while he was in a rehabilitation centre for substance abuse.

There were no discernable differences between the abusive and non-abusive groups in their relationships with companion animals. Rather than clustering on one end of the continuum or the other, both men who had engaged in IPV as well as men with no reported abuse in their intimate relationships had relationships with animals ranging from disinterested to incredibly close. There appeared to be more diversity among the abusive and non-abusive groups than between the groups. Rudolpho (IA), for example, shared how he blackened both of his girlfriend’s eyes during an argument, laughing about his girlfriend’s attempts to punch him which justified “knocking her out.” Yet Rudolpho described his relationships with his cats and dogs as incredibly close, meaningful, and irreplaceable relationships in his life. On the other hand, Tyson (IA), who had stabbed his intimate partner’s lover in the abdomen after catching them in bed together, had no relationship with his cats and did not care about them at all. The same variation in relationships occurs among the men who have no reported abuse in their intimate relationship. Noah (NA) had an ‘animals are nice to have around’ affection for his girlfriend’s cats, with no close connection, as opposed to Roger (NA) who worried about what would happen to the dogs and who would get custody of them should he and his partner split up.

Hierarchy of animals

Much like the variation in the conceptualization of relationships with companion animals, participants also evidenced a hierarchy of companion animals. The hierarchy tended to fall along three lines: function, species, and gender.

Function

Hector (PA) and Cliff (IA) provided examples of a hierarchy of companion animals regarding the function of the relationship. In Hector's case, the hierarchy was multilayered. At the bottom of the hierarchy were the farm cats, who received basic veterinary care but whose function was primarily to keep the rodent population under control at the farm. Next in Hector's hierarchy were the 'shop cats' who lived at the equipment repair shop where he worked. Shop cats were nice to have around, but were more like co-workers than true companions as they again served the function of managing rodents around the building. House cats, who were exclusively indoor cats, were much closer to Hector in terms of relationship for companionship. At the top of Hector's hierarchy were his two dogs, who were closer to him than his own children. Similarly, Cliff (IA) had inside dogs and outside dogs, akin to farm dogs and family dogs, but described his relationship with the dogs regardless of their categorization.

Gender

One of the unique things to arise from the discussions about pets in the interviews was the gender of the companion animal as part of the hierarchy. Both Omar (IA) and Rudolpho (IA) offered rationales for wanting a female versus a male dog. Female dogs were more desirable because they were easier to control and train, with better maternal and protection instincts versus male dogs. This attitude about the controllability of females also permeated their relationships with their respective partners, in expecting obedience and respect from their partners as well as their dogs. On the other hand, Cyril (NA) did not want another female dog, he preferred male dogs. When questioned as to what he saw as the difference between male and female dogs, Cyril explained:

Females have moods. I've had... Before her I had seven male dogs. This one, she gets bitchy. I mean, it's like she has a period although she's been spayed a long time ago. I don't know, she gets bitchy at times, she... I don't know. Just... Maybe it's just her.

But I would just prefer to go back to another male dog. I'll... He'll be neutered and won't have to worry about that kind of thing. But just male dogs seem more steady. By describing his dog as getting "bitchy" and referencing her "period," Cyril is drawing on notions of women as overly emotional and unstable, especially around the time of menstruation, a uniquely female biological function. In doing so, Cyril is presenting men as superior to women because they are more stable and reasonable (even if they are neutered as Cyril was due to testicular cancer earlier in life). This same general notion permeated Cyril's relationship with his partner as well as his presentation of his own masculinity, in that he was more intelligent, more rational, more logical than others.

Species

When it came to species, the hierarchy of companion animals split with participants tending to fall into one of two categories: dog people or cat people. The rationales for preferring one species over another as a companion animal followed similar tracks regardless of abusive/non-abusive group membership or relationship status.

Jesse (PA), Mark (PA), Darin (NA), and Grant (PA) preferred cats as companions over dogs. The intelligence and independence of cats were the most mentioned qualities that made them attractive as a companion animal. Cats offered companionship without the amount of responsibility required by dogs in terms of physical and time needs. Jesse mentioned as long as his cats had "lots of water and food [...], they can take care of themselves" for a few days, allowing a degree of freedom versus the daily care requirements of having to walk and pick up after a dog. Prominent among reasons for preferring cats was they were quieter than dogs and more relaxing. While Darin was a cat person, his wife preferred dogs, so they had one of each. Darin described the cat as "more his animal," and how nice it was to "sit on the floor for a couple

of minutes and just relax” with the cat after a long day at work. He contrasted this with the energy and activity of their dog, which he enjoyed, but was not always relaxing.

Dogs were the preferred companions for Omar (IA), Cliff (IA), Archie (IA), Eddy (NA), Roger (NA), and Vince (NA). Reasons for preferring dogs over cats included activity, loyalty, desire to be with their people, and intelligence. Vince and Cliff liked the activity and interaction of dogs, as compared to cats “who take care of themselves” and are more aloof; having an active and engaged companion animal was important to both men. Vince was also drawn to dogs because “they had more personality” than cats, were more of a companion and interested in spending time with him than cats would be. The affection and availability to spend time with him were two things that Vince commented he liked most about his current girlfriend as well.

Eddy (NA) described his preference for dogs due to their intuitive nature, in that they did not need to be told how he was feeling. Eddy described dogs as good companions:

They’re like true friends to you, you know? Whenever way you want them to be, I mean, whenever way you need them, they are there, you want their help if someone is attacking you, they are there. If you are feeling sad, you want to play, they are there.

Omar (IA) also referenced the instinct and intuitiveness of dogs as reasons for his preference, describing cats as “useless.”

Others, like Hector (PA), Walter (NA), Rudolpho (IA), and Noah (NA) counted themselves as both cat and dog people. Hector, Walter, and Rudolpho spoke of the dogs and cats in their lives with equal affection and joy, not privileging one species over the other in a hierarchy. Valuing the intelligence of both dogs and cats, Noah offered distinct reasons as to what he liked about each species. Noah noted the agility and athleticism of cats along with their independence as desirable qualities. One of the things that drew him to his previous girlfriend

was that she was independent and “not needy.” Noah laughed when he realized that the qualities he found attractive in cats “mirrored” the qualities that he looked for in an intimate partner, as well as the adjectives that he used to describe himself as a man. The affectionate and protective nature of dogs was what Noah liked about them as a companion animal, which again reflected how he described himself as a partner, which was as someone who was free with affection and compliments, as well as someone who would “step in front of [his girlfriend] and protect them from whatever is happening.” While Noah was the most explicit about the similarities between what he valued in a companion animal and what he valued in himself and his intimate partner, there was a trend of the qualities of companion animals and intimate partners mirroring each other; for example, finding intelligence attractive in their partner and then describing intelligence as what was loved most about their companion animal.

Relating to the species hierarchy, several participants raised the human-animal hierarchy, though in a critical way. Noah (NA) did not view humans as better than animals, and criticized the general arguments supporting that assertion:

Pets are living beings and humans are living beings and, who's to really say that we have more value than them. It's like a lot of people just think that we're at the top and like all other animals are just like, we could just kill them whenever we want. Who's to say that just because we're able to talk and like we have a prefrontal cortex where we couldn't make more, we can process things better like. All that means that we're better than them? Like, I don't know.

Noah saw humans and animals as deserving of the same respect, empathy, and compassion, and one should not be placed above the other in a value hierarchy.

Rudolpho (IA) argued for the placement of animals above humans in the hierarchy. Speaking in the context of euthanizing animals at an animal shelter at which he used to volunteer, Rudolpho stated

I think the animals are more important than people, as far as I'm concerned... They're dedicated to each other, you know. People don't even get it. They help each other all the time. They know when shit's happening, like when it's storming out they cuddle. They all run together, they all help each other. I know, bears will eat... Lions will eat a gazelle, that's life. We're animals too, though. We're just fucking domesticated. Big fucking deal, we're still animals. We're no different than... Just because we came from a cave, now we got a house. I suppose we can still kill people. We're killing animals right and left. They don't deserve it, you know.

Rudolpho saw the compassion and support shown by animals towards each other as evidence that they are better than humans, which is compounded by the fact that humans are actively killing animals than for no other purpose than they were inconvenient to their owners. This attitude that other people are relatively unimportant permeated Rudolpho's descriptions of his intimate relationships and interactions with others.

The End of the Human-Animal Relationship

Participants also spoke about the end of their relationships with their companion animals. In some cases, death of the companion animal was the end of the relationship. In other cases, the termination of the relationship with their intimate partner also included the termination of their relationship with their companion animal, though some participants undertook actions to ensure that was not the case.

Like the differences in relationships with companion animals, the men differed about how they viewed and responded to the (potential) end of the relationship with their pets. Drew (PA) was matter-of-fact, bordering on callous, as he described how one of his cats just simply never came home, and laughed about the smell when his other cat passed away underneath his front porch. Tyson's (IA) only concern regarding whether his girlfriend "got rid of" the cats and rabbit when the relationship ended was the impact on his children who loved the animals. Noah

(NA) and Eddy (NA) were not affected by the loss of the companion animals when their relationships with their respective girlfriends ended.

Hector (PA) took deliberate actions to ensure that the end of his intimate relationship was not the end of his relationship with his dog. Upon his incarceration for breaching one of the conditions of his probation, Hector had his mother return to his home to retrieve his dog, as he was concerned that the dog would not be cared for by his partner or his children. In fact, it seemed more important to him that he maintain his relationship with his dogs than with his children. The concern that Hector showed for the happiness of his dogs in his current living conditions stood in stark contrast to the casual way that he spoke of not seeing his adult children for years and not knowing where they lived. The termination of the relationship with his children caused Hector no grief, whereas the possibility that he would lose his dogs was unacceptable, and mandated action to prevent that from happening. In contrast, Omar (IA) was conflicted in terms of leaving his dog behind when his marriage ended, stating that he was lonely when leaving his family – including his dog – but that leaving the dog “had to be done. You know, I couldn’t take her. Her job was to be there” to protect his family.

For the few men whose relationships were still intact or precarious, there was some concern about what would happen to the animals if the relationship ended. For example, Roger (NA) said:

I’ve thought about, before, about whether, what would happen, hypothetically, if we were to get broken up, what would happen with the two dogs, like, would we each take one? I wouldn’t want to do that, necessarily, I’d want to keep them together, you know, and so it would just be a mess. They feel like kids, though, you know, we have to be concerned about them.

Roger’s concern, like Omar, was what was best for his family members, though in Roger’s case he was referring to the best living situation for his dogs.

Grief was a common reaction to the end of the relationship with the animals either through a natural death or through having to make the decision regarding euthanasia. The emotional expression of the grief differed among the men. Walter (NA) mentioned that if they lost their cat now, he would be upset for much longer than with other animals he had owned due to the closeness of their relationship. Archie (IA) talked about being very upset when his childhood dog got so lonely she ran away, especially because he felt like he had let her down by not visiting her enough. Omar (IA) was not there when his aged dog was euthanized as he was in jail at the time, and it “really hurt.”

Rudolpho’s (IA) 21-year-old Chihuahua was euthanized while he was serving an earlier sentence of incarceration, and his family did not want to tell him for fear that his reaction would be so negative that he would kill somebody in jail. He replied to his family, “no, I said I'm pretty sure that I could have handled the dog [dying],” but yet when talking about his cat passing away recently, Rudolpho broke down in tears, openly sobbing about the loss of the relationship with his beloved cat. Barry (IA) shared that his dog had been hit by a car, saying “it really hurt me, more than I thought,” later getting tears in his eyes as he expressed feeling responsible and substantial guilt over how she died, as he should have kept her leashed so she would not have had the opportunity to run across the road. The grief and loss of their companion animals was strong enough to breach the ‘men don’t cry’ ethos of hegemonic masculinity for Rudolpho and Barry.

Lawrence (PA) spoke of having to take his elderly dog, who was suffering with arthritis and age related debilitation, to be euthanized. He recalled stopping at the store to get her some chocolate ice cream as a “final treat,” and “crying his eyes out” as he stayed with her in her final moments. Lawrence felt it was his obligation and responsibility to be there for both his dog and

his cat, and not let them pass away alone without someone who loved them there. Lawrence related this to his emotional strength as the other women in his life (his mother and current intimate partner) would not have been able to handle the death of the animals, yet his tears illustrated the depth of his relationship and the grief that he felt at the loss of his companion animals.

While Vince (NA) did not have a close relationship with his girlfriend's cats, he recognized the closeness of the bond and the grief his girlfriend experienced when one of the cats passed away:

I was sad for her. I just tried to comfort her. When she found out, her mum called her, and she started crying at my house so I just kind of treated it like it was a family member that died. It was more based on her reaction to it, that's why I responded that way. It wasn't because the cat died.

While not experiencing his own grief, Vince was empathetic to the grief of his girlfriend, evidencing understanding and compassion. Stuart (NA) said he did not want to care for any more animals, as he could not handle the heartbreak of watching them grow up and then losing them. His sense of loss was so profound at the death of one of the stray cats that he called his own, that it was part of the impetus for him to move to a different area of the city:

One of the main reasons I left there was there was a cat named B. She was a beautiful alpha female and she had green eyes, the perfect jet black fur and I'd seen her have babies and so forth and one day I got home and [neighbour], he said to me, you know B's dead, right? I said, what are you talking about? And I'd known her like three, three and a half years. And I said, no. And I froze. I saw the body in the road, of B, and I froze. I was in denial. [...] I couldn't process. I was devastated. And I still write... I have like a thing on the refrigerator. It's like a list of to-dos and I still put... On the top right-hand corner I put "to B and all the forgotten cats, I love you." [...] When I buried her, I cried so much I don't remember... Last time I cried that much is when my brother died and that was a delayed reaction too. It didn't happen

at the funeral. Then I just... The waterworks, it was uncontrollable. But I would be putting her in the hole at the... back at the... near the shed in... where I lived and it was just pure convulsion, as if the wounds from my brother or other sadness in life were all coming out for B.

Stuart connected grief over the death of his brother to the grief he felt over the death of one of his favourite stray cats for whom he cared deeply. Stuart described himself as sensitive and caring, and so the expression of his emotion through tears was not out of character for his performance of masculinity.

Cyril's (NA) interview took place the same day that he euthanized his dog. He explained his rationale for his decision:

She couldn't... She couldn't lift herself up. Her back end was so bad. It didn't hurt her. And I always said, I'll keep her along, alive as long as it doesn't hurt her. But it got to be to the point where we had to lift her hind end up. Then she could walk fine. But that's not a dog, that's not a thing, that's just... To me that's cruel. I knew the needle would put her asleep and she'll... And she's 15 years old. Like for that dog that's a long, long time. So just put her on the truck, said goodbye. Cried this morning for a bit. And went to sleep. Had about three drinks, actually.

Cyril's decision was based on the quality of life of his dog, and as she started to decline due to age, he made the difficult decision to euthanize her. Unlike other men, such as Lawrence, who felt a responsibility to be with his companion animals to the last moments of their lives, Cyril evidenced no distress over not being with his dog at the end of her life. His sorrow was solely centred on the death of his beloved dog.

Six men shed tears in relation to the death of their companion animals, either in the interview like Rudolpho (IA) and Barry (IA), or related as part of the men's reactions such as Cyril (NA) and Stuart (NA). Openly crying and expression of emotion shows expressions of

weakness rather than the strength and emotional control, running counter to the norms of hegemonic masculinity.

Companion Animals as Resources for Masculinity

Many of the men had close relationships with their companion animals, and their pets were a resource in doing their masculinity. Through their relationships with their companion animals, men could evidence key features of their masculinity, such as success, control, dominance, power, authority, responsibility, and fatherhood.

Expensive or unique companion animals were a marker of masculinity for the men in the study, to differentiate themselves from others and mark themselves as more successful and ‘better than’ other men. One of Jesse’s (PA) cats was a unique and rare colour, evidenced by the veterinarian’s comments “this is a really rare cat, make sure you keep him!” Rudolpho (IA) illustrated his relative wealth through purchasing an expensive purebred dog for his girlfriend as a Christmas gift: “She’s a good dog. She's a white one, very rare. You always see the orange ones or...but she's a white one. Really nice. \$2,000 for her....She was expensive little bugger.” Not only was he able to purchase an expensive dog, but established himself as ‘better than’ others because his dog was rare – he had something others desired but few others had. In this way, Rudolpho also established himself as a better partner and provider than other men in being able to give his girlfriend expensive gifts. However, other men viewed purebred animals with a degree of derision, such as Hector (PA) who said “I don’t get no purebreds. They cost too much.” In Hector’s mind, a dog should be a ‘rough and tumble mutt’, which evidenced more of a ‘tough guy’ and working class masculinity.

Tough Guys and Big Dogs

The use of big dogs to illustrate power, domination, and control, or being a ‘tough guy’ was related by eight participants. Omar (IA) did not want a small dog for his next companion animal, instead he wanted a big dog like a Pitbull or Bull Mastiff because “big dogs are just more, you know, more intimidating.” In Omar’s mind, big dogs make you feel like a “big man walking down the street.” Eddy (NA) wanted “furious dogs,” a Doberman Pinscher and a German Shepherd, to make him appear more aggressive when walking down the street. Eddy described himself as very protective and possessive of his former girlfriend, so even though he was protective of his girlfriend, he desired a dog to offer him protection. Eddy saw the dogs as a tool to project the masculine image he wanted:

Interviewer: Tell me a little bit more about when you say it reflects your attitude when you have a Doberman on one side and a German Shepherd on the other.

Eddy: Yes, gee, walking on an open street and, you know, your beasts are with you, so no one will have, I mean, first of all I don’t have, like, mostly everyone is friendly to me, but, still, if someone thinks of, like, stealing from me or, like, beating me, so they will know, like, he's got beasts with him, let’s not go there into that area. Yes, even if I’m not tough, but these are, I’ve got those, I’ve got those [dogs].

Eddy acknowledged that he did not currently have the ‘tough guy’ masculinity that he wanted, and that some men may view him as weak or a potential victim. Eddy saw “beasts” as a resource to do his desired masculinity, which was one much closer to the hegemonic ideal than he felt he was able to achieve at the time of the interview.

For the most part, big dogs were associated with masculinity and small dogs were associated with femininity. Cliff (IA) laughingly said he loved all dogs big and small, though he did state that “All my dogs are big. Always big. The smallest dog is the Shih Tzu, and that’s hers,” differentiating between ‘his’ masculine German Shepherds and ‘her’ feminine Shih Tzu. Later in the interview, Cliff elaborated on the difference between big and small dogs:

Little dogs just aren't for me. She likes them. I'll get them, I still have little dogs, I don't mind them, I'll walk them around, put spiked collars on them and stuff, make them look funny (laughing) but, they're not for me, they're for her. My dogs are big, and thick headed, and stubborn, and (laughing)...They have so much more personality I think, than little dogs. Little dogs are hyper and stuff, but big dogs each have their own personality. ... And every little yappy Shih Tzu that I've ever had is the same little yappy Shih Tzu (laughing).

Cliff speaks about 'masculinizing' a small dog with a spiked collar, whereas that is not necessary with the larger dogs that Cliff prefers. Also embedded in his conceptualization of big versus small dogs is character differences. The more masculine dogs Cliff described as "thick headed and stubborn," drawing on the trope of 'never back down' embedded in hegemonic masculinity, whereas the more feminine dogs were described as "yappy," the canine equivalent of negatively perceived feminine 'nagging'.

Like Cliff's separation between 'his dogs' and 'her dogs', Walter (NA) differentiated between a dog that was appropriate for his wife to walk down the street, such as a Pomeranian, and a dog that was appropriate for him to walk down the street, like a Boxer. Walter described the town he lived in as 'redneck', drawing on a conceptualization of frontier-style masculinity which adheres to rigid norms about gendered behaviour in which loud and tough 'real men' hunt and fish and women are expected to stay within the domestic sphere (O'Sullivan, 2016). Walter described Pomeranians as "yippy little things" and his choice was a quieter and smarter dog, with more personality, like a Boxer. To Walter's mind, ridicule would follow if he was to appear in public with a small feminine dog as opposed to a big, muscular masculine dog. The local cultural expectations around masculinity consciously influenced Walter's choice of companion animal, shaping his own performance.

Hector (PA) compared his ‘big mutts’ to small dogs, feminizing the owners in the process:

They’re 90 pound dogs. They’re not little, oh yeah. Not those little lapdogs (rolling his eyes). Put in your pocket or purse or something. [...] Those aren’t dogs. No, those are more like cats and cats are probably bigger.

By referencing purses, traditionally an accessory worn by women, Hector directly associated small dogs with femininity, and by extension, men who owned small dogs were not masculine. He went beyond mere association with the feminine however, in claiming that small dogs “aren’t dogs” and likely not even cats. In Hector’s disparagement of small dogs as an appropriate companion animal in general, he conveyed the disdain with which he viewed people who owned small dogs.

Others, like Rudolpho (IA) and Archie (IA), did not overtly associate small dogs with femininity. Archie initially wanted a big dog because he viewed smaller dogs as ‘yappy’ but that “eventually the dog grew on” him, to the point that he wanted a small dog like a Jack Russell Terrier for his next companion animal. Rudolpho loved his Chihuahua, mainly because she was smart and so attached to him. Lawrence (PA), while initially wanting a German Shepherd, was “over the moon in love with” his Chihuahua, and did not see her any differently than a larger dog.

Control and Companion Animals

Regardless of the size or species of companion animal, well-trained animals were an indication of control and dominance for some of the participants. Omar (IA) explained how he was able to shape the maternal and protective instincts of his dog to act as a protector for his family as well as neighbourhood children through strong verbal commands, stating “Like when I talk to my dog, oh come here [phrased as a request], I don’t talk like that. Commands. She knows

commands. She knows what to do.” Rudolpho (IA) never had to walk the dog he bought for his girlfriend on a leash, stating that the dog would not leave his side, even though his girlfriend required a leash for the dog. Cliff (IA) related the same thing, that even though his dog was wild and energetic, that “he’s never on a leash, we walk him right through downtown, no leash, nothin. And he doesn’t leave, doesn’t go away from the side of the stroller or wagon or whatever [daughter]’s in.” The degree of control that Rudolpho, Omar, and Cliff could exert over their dogs, without the need for physical restraint was an indication of their strength of will and the respect that the animals had for that strength of will. This also communicated to others their ability to exert total control.

Cliff (IA) trained his German Shepherd well, and the dog listened to him better than anyone else resulting in a high degree of control. However, Cliff recognized that there were limits to his control over the dog. If he got angry, or the dog perceived a potential threat or harm to one of his family, the dog would instantly switch from perfectly obedient to protector, placing himself between Cliff and his intimate partner. Instead of seeing the dog’s actions as undermining his control and authority, and thus his masculinity, Cliff perceived this as a positive aspect, almost as if the dog was there to keep him in line and being a good man rather than a man that would physically hurt his partner. The dog, through his protective actions, provided a resource and support for Cliff to maintain control over his own emotions and actions, and thus Cliff’s masculinity.

Contrary to Rudolpho (IA) and Omar (IA), who viewed unrestrained control as a measure of domination, Roger (NA) saw restrained control (i.e., though the use of a leash) as part of being responsible and intelligent in relation to animals. Roger placed his ability to control the smarter and more active of his two dogs in direct contrast with his girlfriend’s inability to do so.

The control and strength of will that Roger evidenced enabled him to control and maintain the training lessons, whereas the dog would simply take advantage of his girlfriend's weaker physical and mental strength. The same attitude also came up when Roger was talking about an incident when his dog was attacked by another dog, who was accompanied by a "stupid woman" who was not smart, aware, or responsible enough to put her dog on a leash. In relation to his girlfriend and the other dog owner, Roger drew on the strong-powerful-responsible man/weak-irresponsible woman division which is a key component of a hegemonic masculine performance.

Along similar lines to Roger (NA), Barry (IA) and Archie (IA) both saw control as much more closely attached to responsibility, in that taking care of the animal who is in his possession and under his control is a marker of being a responsible person and provider. For Archie, he took care of the dog more than his girlfriend did, even though she was the one who wanted the dog in the first place. Archie took pride in the control over and training of his dog so that she was not "yappy" and was well behaved. Training his dog to not defecate within the bounds of his property equated to being respectful of the elaborate landscaping performed by his landlord:

She was a really good dog, you'd never, you wouldn't even use the bathroom like in our yard, because like um, our landlord, um, like he had a real green thumb I guess, like and our yard was like a maze. It was all flowers and fountains and stuff everywhere. It was like pretty uh, kinda neat or weird, cuz like most dogs would just run outside and take a crap whatever wherever. But she wouldn't, she would never do it. ... I'd always take her for a walk like up the sidewalk down the street a couple blocks or whatever. So she got used to that and then that's where she would always use the bathroom.

Archie saw walking and training as part of his responsibility to his dog as well as to the people around him.

Lack of control when it came to companion animals also featured into performances of masculinity. For instance, Grant (PA) felt a lack of control when it came to the misbehavior of his two cats. Discipline was useless, and the ‘bad’ behaviour was simply something to get used to, mirroring the sense of victimization that Grant felt at the hands of the criminal justice system. Drew (PA) also felt a lack of control when it came to the companion animals in his life. Rather than viewing animals as a way to establish his own masculinity, Drew saw the animals as more of a tool to assault his masculinity, to emasculate his authority and decision-making power as the man of the house. He felt that his wife brought budgies home solely to annoy him and make his life miserable. Drew felt that he was forced to get a cat for his children in order to prove that he was a good father, a part of his identity and masculinity under attack during his divorce proceedings. Drew also reported that his resistance to getting a cat his partner wanted was the trigger for being assaulted and falsely accused by his partner; in the end, Drew “caved” and they got the cat. Drew perceived animals as resources used by his intimate partner to undermine his control, rather than resources available to him to effect control.

Fatherhood and Companion Animals

Fatherhood as a feature of masculinity featured prominently in the narratives of eight participants. Whether it was the idea of “furbabies” in Archie’s (IA) case, or in the contrast between the respect given by dogs and the disrespect offered by children in Hector’s (PA) case, companion animals were interwoven in discussions of fatherhood. Hector had not seen his children in several years at the time of the interview, and this did not appear to bother him at all. Hector would roll his eyes and relate how lazy and disrespectful his children were, offering the example of paying his neighbour’s children to perform yardwork rather than getting his own children to help him. This disinterest and derision towards his children was the complete

opposite of how he spoke about his companion animals. When Hector was incarcerated overnight after being charged with assault, his priority was retrieving his dog (his other dog lived with his parents) because his wife and children “weren't going to take care of the dog. They couldn't take care of anything, couldn't take care of themselves.” For Hector, the relationship he had with his dogs was closer and more meaningful than the relationship he had with his children.

Grant (PA) had expressed frustration at being separated from his son, as well as a sense of victimization at the hands of an unfair criminal justice system. In Grant's mind, he was doing everything he could to regain access to his son, but was being stymied at every point through disinterested child protection workers and policies that unfairly benefited the female partners in the relationship. Grant's cats helped him cope with the separation from his son:

I'll hold my cats like I do my son and I'll just... I don't know, like nurture them. I don't know. I don't know. It's weird; I've noticed it, but I don't know how to explain it, really. Just how I talk to my cats is like how I would talk to my baby. And it's weird; it's the only thing that keeps me sane because if I didn't have my cats, I would literally just be talking to random inanimate objects like it's my son. Which is really weird in my head, like that to me. I haven't told anybody this and to me it just seems really foreign to do that. [...] I've never been in a situation where I've been so lonely that I talk to animals. And now that I am it just seems off, but it's something that I'm kind of doing subconsciously.

Grant was quick to point out that he knew the difference between a cat and a baby, but that the cats provided solace and comfort.

Using the cats as a proxy for his son allowed Grant to continue performing the father role in his son's absence, as he stated “I had something taken away and I'm trying to replace it with something. And I'm replacing it with my cats.” That said, Grant was also aware of the possible negative perceptions of his outlook when it came to the assessment by the child protection agency. He was concerned that coping via care for his cats would be misconstrued and have

repercussions on how and when he would be able to see his son again. In this way, Grant recognized the subversive form of masculinity he was performing, and how conforming to the hegemonic masculine norms would be more beneficial in his dealings with both child protection and the criminal justice system.

Darin (NA) counted the dog and cat as his family members, but did not use the ‘daddy’ referent applied to himself in reference to his companion animals. He evidenced fatherhood in a bit of a different way, drawing on the protective and stable base that a father (in Darin’s mind) should provide for his children, using these behaviours in relation to his dog. Darin mentioned that his dog was often apprehensive when first going to a dog park:

She’s actually pretty reluctant with other, like people she doesn’t know and dogs she doesn’t know, even though she’s generally really friendly with people she does know. So she can be a little bit shy at the dog park when she first walks in, which is pretty cute. I don’t really do anything with her, I just let her... She can stand by me, I don’t... Like it’s not important to me. I prefer that if she’s going to have an issue socializing with other dogs that she’s back off and doesn’t like to be... Like as opposed to being more aggressive about it or worried. So she is... I just let her stand by me and eventually she wanders off and starts... Usually I just need to start throwing a ball around and she can’t kind of resist and she’ll run with the other dogs and go do that, so... So yes, she’s good.

Just like a parent would provide a secure foundation for his children in a new or anxiety-inducing situation, Darin allowed his dog to take comfort from his presence, gather her confidence, and then go explore and play.

Non-traditional Masculinities

Several participants evidenced a non-traditional or subordinate masculinity in relation to their companion animals. Barry’s (IA) midwifery actions when his American Bulldog was

having difficulty giving birth exemplify a subordinate masculine performance. Barry had to assist his dog in birthing two puppies, one of which he “had to get out himself” and the other he had to revive as it was not breathing when born. Given that childbirth is generally considered the province of women, the fact that Barry refused to leave his dog during her labour and actively assisted in the birthing of her puppies resulted in a unique concatenation of gender performance. He enacted the protective father role (as the dog’s ‘father’), as well as a more supportive feminine performance through the active participation in the context of birth.

Tyson (IA) also presented a different performance of masculinity in the context of pets. Tyson actively described himself as a ‘stay-at-home dad’ with primary childcare responsibilities for his stepdaughter and son along with all the domestic work. A component of that work was taking care of the two cats, whom Tyson did not want and were brought home by his partner over his objections. Voicing why he did not want the cats, Tyson stated

Just because like I had two kids that I was full time taking care of every night and day and two more cats was more, more to clean up and more food and, cats running up and down the hallways at night. Like I was always home alone by myself so like cats running around the house, it was bad enough that I had to worry about who was running around outside and in the neighbourhood and stuff like that right. But I, but I, but I went with it, whatever. I’m mean I love animals, so whatever.

Not only were the two cats an increased burden on his care responsibilities, but he also connected them to other larger worries about safety. There was a vulnerability, a perception of lack of power and security, and of needing safety and support from others in Tyson’s references to being home alone all the time and concerns about potential threats outside the house. The cats were an example of one more thing that challenged the safety and security of his home. Tyson’s construction of his more vulnerable masculinity stands in contrast to others, such as Omar (IA)

and Hector (PA) who saw their animals as evidence of their masculine power and control, thus illustrating the diversity of masculine performances.

Archie (IA) illustrates the contradictions inherent in doing masculinity. He embodied control through the training of his Shih Tzu, responsibility and respect through training her to not defecate in his landlord's garden, yet complicated this performance through "dress[ing] her up, buy all different clothes, put little clothes on, little outfits and stuff, and take her for walks," a more feminine activity reminiscent of playing with dolls and dressing them in different outfits. Archie also took a great deal of pride in his skill and enjoyment in grooming his dog, especially when complimented by an experienced dog groomer who suggested that he "should really look into going to do a, be a dog groomer, because there's no male dog groomers and a lot of dogs only take to males and stuff." Dog grooming as an occupation is more associated with the feminine, yet the idea of being unique and 'better than' others due to a special skill speaks to the competition that is a component of hegemonic masculinity.

Stuart (NA) described himself as "sensitive, loving nature and loving animals" as well as being "community-minded" with an orientation towards volunteering and helping others. He also described himself as shy, humble, and modest for whom material things like "money, cars boat, career" held less appeal than serving his church and community. Stuart did not have any cats of his own, but counted the stray cats that he fed and cared for as 'his', in line with his community and service oriented masculine performance. He saw himself as a caretaker and protector, in spite of his very shy demeanour with women. Stuart was in touch with his emotions, especially as they related to companion animals and intimate relationships, and did not feel the need to prove himself "in terms of like on the street or, machismo" through having big dogs on short leashes or being a bully to other people or animals. Stuart referenced respect for the 'cool

authority' of a John Wayne type of figure, and scorn for those who push others around to establish their masculinity. Stuart described his connection with animals and sensitive nature as "being masculine in a non-traditional way [...] as opposed to effeminate."

Cyril (NA) presented interesting contradictions in his masculine performance. Protection was a function of Cyril's most recent dogs, stating that the dogs protected 'his' women, drawing on notions of ownership and domination over his partners through claiming them as "his women." However, Cyril also described himself as submissive several times throughout the interview in reference to both his relationships with his partners and with his dog, which seemingly contradicts the domination embedded in referring the women in his life as 'his'. Despite referring to his submissive nature, Cyril did draw on elements of control and domination in other ways as well. After the first few weeks the dog was in Cyril's life, his dog was never on a leash again, and she never went farther than an arm's length away from him, no matter what was going on at the time. Cyril did not see this as control so much as the dog's desire to be with him, and free choice to be with him: "I never thought I owned her. No. I was in control of her, yes. Because she respected and loved me. But she knew where the street was if she wanted to go." At another point in the interview, Cyril directly references the need to control the dog because she was not able to feed or walk herself. Cyril constructed control as it related to his dog as control over the necessities of life, and not over the dog's love and respect for him.

Cyril described his common-law relationship as companionable but not romantic, akin to the relationship between siblings, rather than a spousal relationship with sexual intimacy. In constructing his relationship with the dog as "her choice to stay with him" and that she was "free to leave," Cyril gained a measure of feeling desired, even in a non-sexual interspecies way. It also enabled him to hold a 'more evolved' notion of the human-animal relationship, falling in

line with how he described himself in other ways, such as having an incredibly high IQ and three post-graduate degrees. For Cyril, his notions around the human-animal relationship were evidence of how much better he was than other men, who had to keep their dogs on leashes to control them, and described himself as a “very different person than most dog owners” because he did not believe in the concept of ownership. It was also a way for Cyril to perform a ‘better than’ masculinity in the face of not being able to compete with other men in the area of sexual prowess. “Dog love him, women don’t” was a comment made by Cyril at a few points during the interview, backed up by the sexless relationship he currently was in and how his previous intimate partner had left him for another woman.

Love and Loyalty

While closeness of relationships with companion animals and unconditional love arose in the context of the continuum of the human-animal relationships, it was in the theme of *Love and Loyalty* where the comparisons between the intimate partner and the companion animal occurred. Part of the draw of having companion animals in their lives was the unconditional love, loyalty, and support that the men received from their pets, which often stood in direct contrast to the love and support received from their intimate partners. Cliff (IA) talked about what he loved about his dogs:

Loyalty maybe, their unconditional love, the fact that no matter what happens they’re there. Come home from work in a bad mood, and the wife doesn’t want to say hi to ya and the kid’s too busy in her room playin with her dolls and ‘oh my god nobody cares that I just worked for 12 hours today’ and then the dog’s up on my chest licking my face. And it’s like okay, you care. (laughing).

The loyalty and unconditional love contributed to the closeness and intimacy of the relationship.

The fact that the love is perceived as unconditional means that the men can let their emotional

guards down and engage on a more intimate level than with another person or partner where they are constantly performing masculinity in a deliberate way.

According to Tyson (IA), “you gotta be there and show them love because animals, want your love and love you unconditionally, so. You have to be there for the animals for sure.” What was interesting about Tyson was that while he was aware of the emotional needs of the animals, and the potential for a close relationship, he was himself distanced from the animals in his life. He did place an element of reciprocity around the human-animal relationship, but Tyson merely referenced attention and care for their physical needs in exchange for the unconditional love.

Elton (PA) also spoke reciprocity of love in relation to his three dogs:

That’s life right there is how we bring up our children today. And I find that in animals too. It’s how you treat an animal. If that animal’s going to have more respect if you give it love and attention. It’s like little M and all my doggies at the house, you know, I give them hugs and they’re licking me all over my face, getting me all wet...But that’s their thank you. That’s the thanks that they’re giving. It’s the love that they’re showing. Appreciation. And that’s the way we want our children to be.

Elton connected raising dogs with raising children, and the idea that showing love and affection garners respect from the recipient, whether animal or child. Contrary to Tyson, Elton did not reference unconditional love, and instead implied that conditions were attached to love in that love and respect received was a reward for the love and respect given to the dogs.

Mark (PA) also conceptualized his cat’s love as conditional, but also that forgiveness for ‘transgressions’ was easily given. At the time of the interview, Mark had visitation privileges with his children every other weekend, meaning that he had to leave the cat alone (with sufficient food, water and clean litter) for a few nights. The first few weekends he was gone, Mark’s cat expressed his “displeasure” by defecating on the rug in his living room. Mark understood this as the cat communicating that he was angry with Mark for leaving him, but also noted that within a

few hours of his return home, the cat was again snuggling and giving Mark the same amount of attention as usual. To Mark, this was an indication of the love, forgiveness, and understanding of the cat, which he directly compared to his intimate partner's unwillingness to communicate and to ability to hold a grudge for weeks. While the love from the cat was conditional, Mark saw much fewer conditions in the relationship with his cat than with his intimate partner.

Similar to Mark, Roger (NA) mentioned the communication difficulties that he and his partner were experiencing, how he was feeling shut out by his partner and how he felt his feelings were minimized or ignored by his partner. Roger contrasted the lack of affection that he received from his partner with the open affection that he was able to give to and receive from his dogs: "I feel like there's a lot of times where there's a displacement there of love or affection that goes to the dogs instead of to each other. You need a hug you go and, like, hug the dog instead of hugging the other person." Roger continues and references unconditional love and acceptance that he gets from the dogs, and not from his partner:

They're going to like you no matter what, right? They're not going to look at, oh, you screwed up today or whatever, right, they're just, they're constant love and affection no matter what. Who could ever go wrong with that? Who wishes that they had that in a relationship? Obviously everybody. Who feels that? Probably not very many people, in even the best of relationships, they still feel like oh, man, I don't know if I should tell my wife that, I might get hurt or she might yell at me, you know, whereas dogs are just, no worries, man!

Barry (IA) spoke about the intimacy that he perceived in relationships with dogs, similar to the emotional intimacy of a partner:

because dogs can be, you can walk a dog, you can uh, play frisbee with a dog, go swimming with a dog, um, and they, I think it's their comfort levels. They come close to you, and they want to be with you, they give you, sometimes when you're feeling lonely, and you don't have, say your wife's on a trip somewhere, well, they cuddle

with you and you have a relationship with ...dogs are what uh, bring me, I dunno, this peace and give me this kind of love, because uh, like I said, I'm a lover not a fighter. [...] So if it came down to if I could, could say it all in 2 sentences, I would say, they give you, pets give you the comfort um, that I believe that is the only thing closest to a romantic relationship. Because of the love they possess, and because they actually like you, you know, the way they look at you sometimes.

Barry recognized the security and loyalty inherent in his relationship with his companion animal, which he compared to what he wanted in a relationship with an intimate partner. The closeness, the comfort, the trust, and the feelings of being desired and loved is what Barry sensed from his dog, all elements he wanted to nurture in his next intimate relationship.

Along similar lines to Barry, Eddy (NA) spoke about the ability of dogs to sense the emotions of their masters and offer comfort:

They understand you, I don't know, they are like God-gifted, I should say, they sense it that, yes, their owner is not right, something is wrong, that kind of thing. Sometimes you hide your, you know, emotions from your friends, like, your girlfriend, I should say, but they sense it.

While he was able to hide his emotions from his girlfriend, Eddy would not have been able to do so with a dog. Eddy drew on the emotional strength element of hegemonic masculinity which includes concealing emotions that may convey weakness. The idea that the dog could sense these emotions, and would not perceive them as weakness, instilled in Eddy a profound sense of trust in dogs as companion animals.

Trust

Rudolpho (IA) said "animals are always there for you," capturing the feeling expressed by the participants in the trust that they had for their companion animals. There was a safety and security in the relationships with the companion animals that was not present in the relationships with the intimate partners. There was the trust that the animals would not leave them, which

created a sense of stability in the relationship with the pets that they did not feel with their intimate partners.

Mark (PA) spoke of being able to cry in front of his cat, he could tell his cat anything without fear of judgement or reprisal. He did not feel that he could do these things in front of his intimate partner, as he would be ridiculed and embarrassed:

I can tell him anything. Hopes, dreams, uh, fantasies of my own house with a picket fence and two cars, American dream and such, but uh, in the end, um, I'm glad that he can't talk with others, that he is just for me kind of thing...I hope that someday my family and I will have that same amount of respect that there are vulnerable moments that you can tell somebody else without fear, without reprisal, without judgement. And I don't think the mrs and I are at that point.

Describing the cat as his "lockbox," there was a degree of trust that the cat would listen, respect, and understand his feelings. This stood in contrast to Mark's description of his intimate partner's mocking of his emotions, and dismissal of his communication attempts.

The idea of a companion animal as a 'lockbox' for their emotions and feelings, as someone whom the men could trust with their 'weaknesses' was common among participants. Omar (IA) used to talk with his dog, referencing her as a safe space to confide his thoughts and feelings. The dog was safe in that he did not feel the need to do the aggressive and tough masculinity he performed in other spaces with other people; with his dog, Omar could let his guard down and be vulnerable. Grant (PA) and Jesse (PA) also spoke about their cats as confidants with whom they could share anything without feeling judged.

Across the groups, companion animals were portrayed as honest and trustworthy, without guile or the ability to deceive in the way that people could. Cyril (NA) said, "I love animals. I mean, the one thing you get from animals is unconditional love. People will lie and steal and cheat and do anything. Dogs don't do that. Animals don't do that." More specifically, nine

participants spoke of infidelity or dishonesty as the trigger for their abuse towards their partners or the end of the relationship. The breach of trust of cheating was felt deeply by most participants, and was contrasted with the faith that their companion animals would not break their trust, and were incapable of dishonestly. Omar (IA) was “crushed” when his intimate partner started seeing another man, becoming pregnant with his child, while Omar was in treatment for substance abuse. Rudolpho (IA) caught his wife in bed with his friend, destroying the trust in both people and leading to criminal charges for assaulting both of them. When Jesse (PA) caught his girlfriend in bed with another man, it “shattered” his trust in her, which also led to charges for his assault against his girlfriend. Omar, Rudolpho, and Jesse discussed trust as being key to their relationships with their companion animals, especially since the trust had been broken by their partners.

Rudolpho (IA) was emphatic about his lack of trust in people in general, and with his lack of trust born of experience with his intimate partners in particular. His intimate relationships were permeated by his suspicion of his partners’ fidelity and jealousy over any contact with other men. Rudolpho did not seem to believe that women could be faithful, and took every opportunity to threaten “negative consequences” should his intimate partners cheat on him. Rudolpho evidenced much more faith in the genuine and honest nature of animals:

More class, more intelligence and stuff. People are stupid. You just know they're going to fuck up. Animals, you know what they're going to do, you know what they're all about. They put it right out there, just like me. I tell it how it is, and that's how they are, like, you know, hey, if you don't clean the litter box, I'm going to shit on the floor. If you don't feed me, I'll bring a rat home. Like stuff like that, you know.

Rudolpho compared himself to the animals to demonstrate his honesty and genuineness in “telling it like it is,” contrasted with the skepticism and suspicion of others, who for the most part were dishonest and untrustworthy.

In contrast to the untrustworthiness of other people, men saw themselves as trustworthy in the eyes of their companion animals. The thought of breaking that trust, or the possibility of breaking that trust, was enough to make some participants cry. Cliff's (IA) dog had been staying with his partner's parents while he was in jail and working through his substance abuse issues. Even though he said that it was a better place for the dog than living in the city, there was still some sorrow about being separated from his dog. Cliff related the depth of the dog's dedication to him, as the dog would follow him back to his house about 25 kilometres away unless he was placed in the garage or house when he and his girlfriend were leaving:

Cliff: But if he saw us leaving, like especially me, he'd follow us. He doesn't follow her, but he follows me. All the time. Cross highways and stuff, he won't stop until he gets back to wherever I'm at.

Interviewer: How does that make you feel?

Cliff: Good and bad. Like it's good that he misses me that much, but it, I don't, he, in my mind he's following me because he thinks I'm never coming back. So that sucks...(complete shift in emotion, tearing up, crying)....Same thing with my kid too.....She's always ask me where I'm livin' (crying, sniffing)... So now if I see her she starts cryin', and she's huggin' me, and uh, she doesn't ever want to leave because she knows that if I leave, then I'm gone for like months at a time. And that sucks. Because I never like that (tears rolling down his face).

For Cliff, the emotional wave, complete with tears, began with the realization that he was letting his dog down, that every time he left, he was causing his dog to doubt that Cliff would come back for him, breaking the trust that the dog had in him. Cliff immediately connected the fear of abandonment on the part of his dog with his daughter's concerns around abandonment. In his mind, he was letting both his dog and his daughter down by causing them to doubt that he would come back and be a presence in their lives.

The opposite side of feeling like one had abandoned their companion animal was the realization and trust that the animals would not abandon them, and acknowledging the love and loyalty that the men had for their companion animals. Jesse (PA) became very emotional when thinking about the love and support given to him from his two cats when his girlfriend left him:

Interviewer: Did they help you through when your partner left?

Jesse: Yes, big time. They helped me through that too. Yes.

Interviewer: How did they do that?

Jesse: How? Well, just by being there. And like, I know they're not humans or nothing, but they're animals, so... Just by being there for me, as an animal. You know, I think to myself, well fuck everybody else left me, but these cats wouldn't leave me. And then I start to think, if they don't turn their backs on me, I can't turn my backs on them. (begins crying)...Sorry, that was really deep....Yes, I love those cats.

Jesse's girlfriend had left him, which he attributed to external pressures in the relationship, namely the racism of her parents and family because he was not of the same ethnicity as his girlfriend (rather than the violence in response to her infidelity). He perceived both the infidelity and giving in to the pressure from her parents to leave him as abandonment. Jesse connected how low he felt to the broken trust and feelings of abandonment that his cats would feel should he leave them through reincarceration. The trust and loyalty of his cats meant a great deal to Jesse, and instilled a strong sense of responsibility to return that trust and loyalty.

Conclusion

Overall, participants in this study had positive relationships with companion animals in their lives, and this held true regardless of whether there was abuse in their intimate relationships or not. Within the continuum of relationships with companion animals, there was a hierarchy based on function, species, and interestingly for three participants, gender. Some men preferred dogs, others preferred cats, while some participants enjoyed having both dogs and cats in their

lives. Companion animals also featured in doing masculinity, from big dogs evidencing a masculine ‘tough guy’ performance, to ‘non-traditional’ masculinity in the shedding of tears in relation to the death or potential loss of a companion animal. Love and loyalty were raised by nearly every participant to describe their companion animals, which stood in contrast to the judgement, abandonment, and mistrust that many of the men felt for their intimate partners.

The following chapter presents additional findings in relation to the role of companion animals in the lives of men, as well as the more specific role that companion animals may play in situations of conflict between intimate partners. Centering on the theme of *Aggression and Conflict*, the following chapter also presents the few cases of aggression towards animals disclosed by four participants.

CHAPTER 6: AGGRESSION AND CONFLICT

This chapter presents additional findings related to the research question ‘what is the role of companion animals in the lives of men,’ as well as addressing the question ‘does the presence of the pet aggravate or mitigate the violence towards the partner’. This chapter also discusses the construction and performance of masculinity as it relates to aggression and conflict, both with intimate partners and companion animals.

This chapter is organized around the following themes. *Companion Animals in Conflict* focuses on the role that companion animals played in situations of conflict between the participant and his intimate partner. *Aggression Towards Humans* deals with the general attitudes towards the use of aggression in intimate relationships, and also presents findings related to men’s reports of their own victimization in intimate relationships. *Aggression Towards Companion Animals* relates the few cases of animal mistreatment disclosed by four participants, including their guilt and remorse in connection to their behaviour. The theme of *Boundaries Between Aggressions* relates the way that participants conceptualized boundaries between aggression towards humans and aggression towards companion animals. The chapter concludes with the theme of *A Changed Man*, delineating how some men used companion animals as evidence of their changed nature and as a reason to effect positive change in their lives. Chapter 6 addresses the cases of animal mistreatment, along with general attitudes towards the use of aggression and violence against both human others and companion animals.

As with the previous chapter, participants’ pseudonyms are accompanied by the relevant group referents of incarcerated-abusive (IA), domestic violence intervention program-abusive (PA), and community-not abusive (NA) in order to highlight the relative lack of difference between the groups.

Pets in Conflict

Conflict in the relationships arose for a variety of reasons, from simple misunderstandings through text messages (like Noah), to disagreements over sex (Walter) to arguments resulting in violence (such as Elton). For Elton (PA), it was disrespect shown by his intimate partner towards his faith that was the source of the conflict which ended in physical aggression. He had been showing her a scripture passage when she “smacked” the Bible out of Elton hands, to which he responded by “backhanding her.”

Participants were asked ‘when you and your partner argue, what would your pet do?’ Responses were varied, and often the men said that this was the first time they had thought about it, though a common response was that the companion animals were aware of the conflict. For example, Hector (PA) observed that his younger dog felt the tension brought on by the conflict, pacing and refusing to settle down until the argument with his intimate partner was over and resolved. Some men, like Drew (PA) and Tyson (PA), simply said they did not notice what the animals did. Given the relative lack of relationship with the companion animals in their lives, this answer was not surprising. For men who were aware of the animals during conflict with their partners, the animals generally behaved in one of two ways: siding with one partner or the other in a protective manner (most often with dogs), or avoidance of the conflict via hiding or running away.

Omar (IA) described his Rottweiler’s protective behaviour with a proudness in his voice:

Always get on her [wife’s] side. Yes, she’d kind of get in the way. She was a big dog, she was like 170-odd pounds. That’s a big dog...So we’d argue. She’d be like, boom, boom, boom. Get in between us and sits beside her and gives me the dirty look (laughing). Yes. She was protective like that. Oh yes.

Not only was the size of Omar's dog intimidating to others, but also served as an inhibition to the escalation of conflicts to physical assault. Omar viewed the protectiveness of his dog towards his wife during conflicts as an indication of his success as a provider and protector of his family. However, when relating the two physical assaults of his wife, Omar did not mention where the dog was, and in fact dodged the question.

Cliff (IA) shared that when he and his partner argued, his German Shepherd would protect his daughter, "lay[ing] in front of her door so that no one could get in the room" and later sitting near her as she got older to protect her. Cliff recognized that the dog saw him as the threat from which the other family members may need protection, stating "if I get my temper going and my voice raised, then he's right there, with evil in his eyes ready to guard everybody in the house against me. But, he's never had to." Cliff was proud of the way his dog protected his family, but qualified this protective instinct with the assertion that the arguments were only verbal, and there was no physical threat or assault that would warrant intervention on the part of the dog. Later in the interview, Cliff elaborated on the direct role that his dog played in situations of conflict:

Cliff: Having the dog in the house, definitely makes it easier to not, not to fight and stuff, because it's just one extra, one extra set of eyes looking at ya like 'why are you guys even arguing? You're arguing over the dumbest thing.'

Interviewer: So what do you mean by makes it easier not to fight? They're a reason not to fight?

Cliff: Well not even that, it just it makes like, because we don't have [daughter], because a lot of the time when [daughter]'s around we won't fight. We're like 'alright we'll talk about this later.' And then when she goes to bed, we'll talk about it and we'll argue, we'll whisper at each other (whispering noise) in the bedroom or whatever. So when she's not around there not that cushion, but when the dog's there and we start arguin' or whatever, or if I start yelling and he gets up and he growls at me or whatever, it's just that little bit of a nudge that you need to be like 'why are we

even fighting? Like we don't fight when the baby's around, so why are we fighting now?' Whatever. Or we start, or if she starts crying, he'll go right up to her and climb up in her lap, 110 pound dog climb up in her lap. She's like 5 foot, 100 pounds. Climbs up in her lap, and sits in her lap, and I just look at her, and I'm like 'that's pitiful. I did that.' (laughing) Like that's stupid. So it's just that one extra little push that either one of us needs to be like 'why are we even arguing? Let's just drop it.'

In Cliff's intimate relationship, his dog played the role of referee, inhibitor, protector, and support. Interestingly, Cliff was more affected by the dog's reaction to the arguments, and was more affected by the dogs' reaction than he was of making his partner upset.

Rather than placing themselves in the middle of the conflict, some companion animals avoided the arguments. Mark (PA), Archie (IA), Walter (NA), and Lawrence (PA) said that their companion animals would 'disappear' when during conflicts with their intimate partners. Walter (NA) had not really thought about what his cat did when he and his wife argued. He described his style of handling conflict as "quiet mode" where he emotionally shuts out his wife and refuses to speak about what may be bothering him. After reflection, Walter mentioned that his cat did not come around him when in "quiet mode," and returned once he had "shaken it off" and apologized to his wife. He appeared a little bit taken aback at this realization, and said it gave him "something to think about later" after the interview. Lawrence (PA) attributed the conflict in his relationships and the subsequent end of his relationships to his alcohol abuse. When asked what one of his dogs did when he was drinking and verbally abusive towards his intimate partner, he mentioned that she was scared and kept her distance. Lawrence was careful to convey that he never kicked his dog, and that her fear was only attributable to his verbal aggression, and there was never any physical aggression towards his dog.

Archie (IA) also noted that arguments with his intimate partner caused fear in his dog. Archie shared that his dog would run and hide when he and his girlfriend were fighting, and that

it was “just like having a kid around” in having to consider the impact of their arguments on the dog, because “the dog gets traumatized.”

Yeah, the poor thing, any time we would have a fight I felt bad, like. I wouldn't think of that, you never think of that right at the time, but soon as we were done, even if I notice, I'm like oh crap. Gotta go find the dog and pick her up. And baby her, calm her down, because she'd be shaking and stuff like that.

Like Cliff (IA), Archie stated that it was the dog's reaction that made him feel bad after the conflicts, rather than the hurtful words between his girlfriend and himself.

Mark's (PA) cat would “scamper” and try to find a hiding spot during loud arguments with his intimate partner:

Yeah, he would be hard to find. He would run under, under beds, in closets...He would try to find a corner that would help him get away from the noise...Maybe he could feel the tension or something. ...'Cause he always seemed on edge or have a cat back ready to, to, maybe not so much pounce but definitely take a swipe if needed if he thought that uh, something was going to happen.

Mark implied that his cat was scared, and that the cat was ready to defend himself if the verbal aggression between Mark and his girlfriend was redirected towards him in a physical form. Like others, Mark made sure to point out that the cat had never been harmed, and simply didn't like loud noises and tended to be “a bit jumpy.”

Roger (NA) refused to classify any conflict with his partner as arguments, instead calling them disagreements, though he did admit that they did not have “an incredibly emotionally healthy relationship.” Roger was consistently upset and frustrated to the point of tears by the “total cold shoulder” from his girlfriend:

If she's pissed off with me about something, whether it's warranted or not, she just won't talk to me, like, total cold shoulder, won't say anything for, like, two days, and I'm just, like, well, okay, if you're not going to talk me... I know there was one time

where I got so upset I just started crying, I was, like, do you realize how hurtful that is, by me just trying to speak with you?

For Roger, there was no yelling or loud arguments, only silence. The role that his dogs played in conflict with his partner was that of comfort and consolation in the absence of communication and affection from his partner. For both Roger and his girlfriend, the dogs also provided a way to avoid dealing with the problems in the relationship causing the conflict, as Roger said, “you can hug the dogs or pet the dogs or go outside with the dogs instead of dealing with what’s in front of you.”

Aggression Towards Humans

Physical and verbal aggression was seen by some of the men as an acceptable method for solving conflict, and was related to their performance of masculinity. Roger (NA) put this idea succinctly,

Men are just brought up to not show their emotions, to not be able to explain themselves in, you know, a way that is, I guess, helpless or weak, that that’s why it seems to permeate so much that men are typically aggressive in so many more circumstances than women.

In some cases, such as with Grant (PA) and Rudolpho (IA), aggression was normalized. Rudolpho chuckled as he talked about how he “beat the shit out of” his wife and the man she was cheating on him with, and commented that they should have expected that reaction from him. In Rudolpho’s opinion, physical aggression towards humans was an appropriate response to any slight. Grant saw nothing wrong with punching a wall or throwing things when he got in arguments with his girlfriend. He saw this as a better alternative than hitting his girlfriend, who he described as the instigator of the arguments, via nagging, yelling, and pushing his buttons to

the point where he would snap, resulting in the displaced aggression. Grant did not conceptualize this as abusive behaviour, but instead as normal behaviour:

What's the harm in punching my wall? It's better than some things that people do. There's some people out there that literally beat the hell out of people for looking at them wrong, you know. And I'm not that type of person. Yes, maybe I get a little angry or a little violent or whatever at times, but who doesn't?

Even as Grant normalized his physical aggression, he described himself as being 'better than others' who use aggression indiscriminately or with little provocation. Grant placed himself in direct contrast to his father who had physically abused him in stating that he had never hit his girlfriend and would never hit his son, as he refused to be like his father.

Men as Victims

In addition to Grant (PA) and Archie (IA), who related abuse in their childhood and adolescence, ten participants, shared that they were victims of physical and verbal aggression at the hand of their partners. This victimization impacted their own masculinity in different ways.

Drew's (PA) intimate partner physically assaulted him on more than one occasion, and verbally assaulted him on a regular basis. One of the assaults by his partner occurred during a disagreement over whether to get another cat:

On our walk home, she wanted this cat and I wasn't open to it, and she assaulted me in the alley. She was beating me with her purse, I was able to grab her purse and I was swinging it, backing up, and she called Rape! and Help! And somebody called the police, so the cruiser was in the alley. We were separated, and next thing you know it was done. So she said what she needed to say to make the police go away, and I moved on and just kind of swept it under the rug. With everything that happened, I caved and we had [the cat].

Drew felt that his intimate partner used the animals as part of her emotional abuse of him, relating that his partner had gotten budgies which were "always loud and annoying and messy

and just nasty” for the purpose of annoying him and making his life miserable. Drew felt victimized not only by his partner but also an unfair criminal justice system who “took her word” over his as a matter of course. Throughout the relationship, Drew’s sense of control and authority, thus his masculinity, were undermined and attacked by his partner’s actions.

Hector (PA) portrayed himself as the reasonable one in his previous marriage, and described his ex-wife as manipulative, wanting to be in control, and deceitful. He saw himself as the victim both of his partner’s lies about assault and harassment as well as of a criminal justice system that unfairly favoured the woman in the relationship:

She [ex-wife] planned it to have this argument and then to call the police and say that I'm assaulting them. And the next thing you know there's some kind of a new law that hey he's charged. And I was removed from my home, and never got half my stuff back. [...] That was three years of court. 30 grand later. Yeah, to prove my innocence. Oh, so many fictitious charges. Oh, my God. Every time you turn around, stalking her. How am I'm going to be stalking you when I'm on vacation 700 kilometers away? Now when the police pulled me over, because they run my plate. Like how can I be stalking her?

Hector was angry at the way that he was treated by his ex-wife, but he was also saddened at how the disruption in his life caused by the criminal charges and the “court drama” affected his dog. While his older dog mainly stayed at his parents’ rural home, his younger dog would come to work with him every day and lived with him and his family. With the upheaval in Hector’s life, his younger dog had “a hard time readjusting” to the new routine:

She'd mope around. Or if I left and left them both there and I left to go do something or went away for school or whatever. Oh yeah, she'd hear a noise and think it's my truck pulling in and she go to the door and wait and wait. Anyway, or she go outside and look around and wait, or go to the shop, walk around she'd look for me.

Hector pointed out that the dogs had a good time playing together on his parents' farm, but that the younger dog was feeling the separation from him as she was no longer living with him, and her sadness nothing to do with the separation from his ex-wife and children who did not care about the dog at all.

Like Hector, Mark (PA) felt victimized by a manipulative intimate partner who exploited the criminal justice system in order to exert control over him and subject him to emotional abuse. He recounted an incident where his intimate partner asked him to come to the house to assist with adjusting his child's stroller, but when he arrived she phoned the police and had him "breached" (breach of the non-contact order that was a condition of his release) in order to return him to jail. While Mark was frustrated and angered by his intimate partner's behaviour, what upset and angered him more was that she then sent his cat to the animal shelter. Mark related the persistence he used in getting his cat back:

Mark: Upon my incarceration, I find out that she puts my cat C, into, uh, an animal housing, the [local] Humane Society comes along and picks them up. Gives them 10 days if they are not bought, sold, transferred, taken away from that, uh, they will be put down, euthanized...When I was finally released from incarceration and I found out that C was on his 9th day, in there,...I fought like heck.

Interviewer: What do you mean by 'fought like heck'?

Mark: Traced down every shred of paper, went through everybody who had dealt with my cat or something similar to my cat. I, for 24 hours, was a thorn in the side of the people working at the Humane Society. Uh, their priority was to get rid of me, and the only way that that was happening was to find my cat, so (chuckled). It took them 24 hours, I left with my cat.

What was notable about Mark was that even though he said he missed his family, he offered no indications that he was 'fighting like heck' to get them back in direct contrast to the effort and perseverance in regaining custody of his cat. Mark felt little control in other areas of his life

given the manipulation he felt from his intimate partner, but felt powerful and in control when in being able to rescue his cat from potential death.

Stuart (NA) related that he had experienced both physical and verbal aggression from both his ex-wife and a previous girlfriend. Stuart's wife "would often fly off the handle in fits of rage" born of jealousy, and physical assaults included knocking his glasses off his face while he was driving and ripping a chain off his neck. At the time of his marriage, Stuart was not caring for any animals, so he channeled his hurt and anger at the treatment from his wife into karate where he could engage in sanctioned aggression. He had nothing positive to say about his ex-wife, however Stuart did comment on the "good heart" of his girlfriend who was "pushy when she drank." Even though Stuart revealed verbal and physical aggression at the hands of his previous girlfriend when she was drinking, he still said that she had a "good heart" because of her love for animals. Interestingly, Stuart had nothing positive to say about his ex-wife, and made sure to point out that they had no animals in the relationship with the implication that it was his wife's choice not to have a companion animal. In dealing with his victimization at the hands of his wife, Stuart turned to a masculine outlet in the physically demanding practice of karate. Conversely, Stuart took comfort from his care of the stray cats in his neighbourhood as a way to manage the negative emotions raised by his negative treatment at the hands of his girlfriend, a focus on service and care presenting a contrast to the masculinity of karate.

Aggression Towards Companion Animals

Even though nearly every participant related either the commission or receipt of physical or verbal aggression, reports of direct abuse of companion animals by the participants was relatively rare. Physical aggression towards animals did arise in two different ways: acceptance or use of physical discipline, and the participant's own commission of mistreatment.

Most participants did not report engaging in any aggression towards companion animals, but a few communicated that they could understand why mistreatment might happen. For example, Tyson (PA) said that he knew that “people could take out their feelings on animals and being angry or upset with animals” could mistreat them, but that most people would not do that to their “friends.” Noah (NA) offered an idea about why people may be aggressive towards animals:

When people are challenged and have their own power taken away from them, sometimes they take it out on something that's smaller. Sometimes people will use pets as like a companion if they feel like they're really being put down. [...] A lot of them have a history of being abused when they were younger. And I see it as their power has totally been taken away from them and they're translating it and trying to gain their power back by doing this to someone else.

A connection between previous victimization and the commission of abuse towards animals was commonly referenced, as was the idea that people who feel powerless in one aspect of their lives may use abuse against someone who is weaker or more vulnerable to feel powerful again.

Jesse (PA), Grant (PA), and Walter (NA) conveyed some acceptance of physical aggression towards animals in terms of discipline. Grant expressed frustration with how to discipline his cats because a “smack on the bum” does not work as the cats either do not care about the punishment, or will not remember the behaviour for which they were being disciplined. Jesse said that verbally telling his cats to stop was sufficient to cease the negative behaviour, and that he “never had to kick my cats or nothing like that, which is good.” Jesse felt that physical discipline was a last resort, and could be used against the animals, but was not needed due to the effective verbal control over his cats’ behaviour:

There's circumstances I feel like going up and smacking them, so they can shut up, you know, [...] but I don't. I just think of it, it goes through my head. I go, they're not

shutting up, maybe I should get up and slap them, but no, I never do. I just raise my voice and then they just shut up because they know I'm pissed. That's how they shut up. Just got to yell at them, and that's it, and they're good, so I don't have to do nothing. I don't have to be abusive to them or nothing, just tell them to shut the fuck up and they shut up right away.

Jesse implied a willingness to use physical aggression against his cats should it become necessary, and often used verbal aggression to discipline his cats in yelling at them.

While most of the time “a firm no” was sufficient as a disciplinary technique, Walter (NA) did engage in physical discipline of his cat when she was nipping at his wife:

When she was young she would like to nip at [wife], like really nip at her. [...] kind of rough nipping. Like not bring blood but give her a good nipping, trying to be dominant on her I think. So I said to [wife]. I said you got to put that cat down. You got to put her on the back. Put her on her back and grab her by, just grab her and hold her down on her back. And that did it and we never had a problem since.

Walter followed up by saying that the cat was quite young at the time of that incident, and that it only happened once. He also clarified that the cat never tried to nip at either him or his son, which along with the interpretation of the cat's nipping behaviour as dominant, placed him as the quintessential head of the household in a position of power and authority.

Rather than using physical discipline with his dogs, Roger (NA) used other techniques to discourage behaviour like digging and chewing such as spreading cayenne pepper in spaces they liked to dig outside. Roger refused to raise a hand against his dogs, perhaps due to the shame that he felt after his own mistreatment of his childhood dog, whom he had shaken and hit on several occasions. (Roger's treatment of companion animals is presented in more detail below.)

Physical and verbal aggression towards animals was reported by four participants: Roger (NA), Rudolpho (IA), Barry (IA), and Lawrence (PA). No definition was provided to

participants for animal mistreatment, abuse, or cruelty; these four men subjectively identified their own behaviour as abusive and constituting mistreatment of animals.

Rudolpho (IA) and Roger (NA) shared that they had been physically aggressive to other animals, however this was specifically in the context of protection of their own companion animal. Rudolpho recounted an incident when one of his cats had been cornered by three racoons, and he hit one of the racoons with a broom to protect his cat from being harmed. Rudolpho laughed when talking about how the racoon chased him back to the house and ran into the door that Rudolpho slammed in the animal's face. Given that Rudolpho had a cat that had been "gotten by the racoons" and "bit the big one" (meaning been killed by racoons) previously, he felt justified in using force against the racoons to protect his cat. This was despite his disgust of anyone who mistreated animals of any kind, whether they abandoned their pet at an animal shelter or physically hurt a wild animal.

Roger (NA) related kicking a dog who was attacking his own dog, while he felt bad about possibly hurting the other dog, he minimized his own behaviour through blame on the owner:

Roger: I could see this dog charging from, like, all the way across a school yard, and he came right up to the fence and then went around and came right back. [...] He started to maul him [Roger's dog], and I was just, like, trying to kick this dog and, like, I'd never, like, I was, like, I don't think I've ever really felt that way before, it felt like I was getting attacked, if that makes any sense, like, it's like my kid, you know, just getting, like, beat up right in front of me, you know, I'm just, I feel defenseless, in a sense, and, like, what do I do? I don't know! [...] I just kept trying to kick the dog and, like, I don't even want to kick this dog, either, right, because I'm, like, it's the stupid-arsed owner who finally comes over, and she was still being an idiot afterwards.

Interviewer: What do you mean by still being an idiot?

Roger: Well, because she stood there and said, like, is your dog okay, while her dog's sitting right in front of her and she didn't even, like, put the leash on him. I'm, like, are you kidding me right now, because she had him obviously off the leash, right? I'm, like, can you effing please put that thing on the leash, like, are you kidding me, you're just waiting for it to, like, charge again, or what? So that's what I mean by being still an idiot, in my own impression.

Roger felt forced into physically defending his own dog against the consequences of the irresponsible behaviour of the female owner of the other dog. He did report the incident to the police, but simply wanted the woman to get a warning and learn from the experience. Roger certainly did not “want her to have to put the dog down or anything,” stating that he would “fight against that” if that was the consequence. Even as Roger minimized his culpability in the incident, he engaged in a degree of self-blame as well. Roger had put a ‘training vest’ on his dog, which is a vest with weights to simulate work and increase effort while the dog is active. However, Roger stated that the weighted vest changed his dog’s posture from an assertive stance to a submissive one that was more “hunched over” and therefore “more timid.” In Roger’s mind, this non-aggressive stance was part of what incited the other dog to attack, and felt he was to blame for diminishing his dog’s own authority and dominance when dealing with other dogs.

Lawrence (PA) did not justify his mistreatment of his cat via protection; instead his justification was that he was drunk. Lawrence was forthcoming about his alcohol abuse issues, and how he was ‘not the nicest person’ when he was drinking. In one incident, his cat was the recipient of his bad behaviour:

My daughter’s mom and I had split up long before, and I’m drinking, and I got this cat now. And I’m a dog person, so I thought. I remember he was bugging me about something, and I psst, spit beer at him. And I’m sorry, but it’s the truth. And I remember, I dunno, 5 minutes later, this big cat (motioning about 2 feet with hands), and I’m not kidding you when I say this big, was right there [on my chest], looking

me straight in the eyes. And I was like ‘wow.’ I made a truce with him right then and there, and we’ve been best buddies ever since. And never mistreated an animal like that, I felt terrible spitting beer at him. You know I was drunk, and ‘get outta here! psst!’ I’m tellin ya, he was right on my chest, looking me straight in the eye, and I was like ‘wow!’

Even though many may not categorize spitting beer at a cat as mistreatment, Lawrence subjectively saw his behaviour as such. The ‘wow’ moment Lawrence described as realizing that the cat was a being deserving of respect, partly because of the intelligence and emotion, but also because of the physical strength and ability to hurt Lawrence should he mistreat the cat again. Lawrence stated that in that moment, he knew that the cat “could have ripped [him] apart” with sheer size and sharp claws. It was the mutual respect following that moment of mistreatment that was the foundation for their relationship.

Barry (IA) in the first few minutes of the interview, without prompting, related that he had mistreated the puppy that he had immediately before coming to jail:

Um, so before I came here I had a dog, I bought, just a puppy, and um, wasn’t really in the right state of mind, uh, I was very mean. Very angry with uh, pee or poop on the floor, I would yell and put it outside for like an hour, or two, and then it would run away, and I’d find it, next couple days. You know, I loved pets at a time but I was just, it just goes to show you how, and if I’m treating my dog like that, just how bad was I treating others around me. And if you’re going to treat a dog, or somebody that’s so um, you know, they’re so, what would I call em, innocent, something so innocent, you know, they don’t do nothin’ wrong really, other than they need to be trained, you know what I mean...[...] I never laid a, just the same thing with the dog, I never laid my hand on it but just yelling, and that’s just, that’s just, sometimes worse, you know, than actual physical abuse. Physical abuse only goes on so long, verbal goes on, and it’s emotional, and it’s, the dog was scared a lot, so was my ex. That’s two birds, one stone as they would call it. Because I’m yelling at the dog, she’s scared, the dog’s scared, the whole house is scared.

Barry felt shame and guilt about his treatment of the puppy, and attempted to distance himself from the abuse at least somewhat using impersonal referents like ‘it’ and avoiding using the puppy’s name versus more personal pronouns like ‘she’ when discussing his previous dog who had been hit by a car. Barry was also cognizant (retrospectively) of the harm that verbal and emotional abuse can cause, as opposed to physical which he viewed as more finite in nature. While never explicitly connecting his verbal abuse of the puppy with the verbal abuse perpetrated against his partner, Barry did note the effects on the others in his life, recognizing that all the family members were scared, including the dog, and that he was not treating anyone in his life at that time in a positive manner. Barry engaged in the same justification that others used in relation to the violence committed against their intimate partners. He said that he was “really messed up,” blaming the mistreatment on feelings of frustration and misery of having to go to jail. In another way though, Barry was crystal clear about his own responsibility for his actions, connecting the lack of respect for others and animals with his mistreatment of both his partner and his puppy, proposing that treating others (including animals) with respect means that you will get respect back.

In addition to the physical aggression shown to a neighbourhood dog to protect his own dog from attack, Roger (NA) related additional mistreatment of a companion animal. Roger shared that he had been physically and emotionally bullied by his older brother for “a lot of years” during adolescence. It was at this time in his life when he had engaged in abusive behaviour towards their family dog:

I never really fought back or anything [against his brother], and there was a time where I used to take it out on the dog, I mean, I think I was just so frustrated at the time and just didn’t know how to feel any other emotion. [...] I remember even still to this day, like, every time that I thought about that, like, I still felt bad about doing

it. So it was never anything, like, so harmful to the dog, but I just remember, like, picking him up and, like, shaking him, like, just picking him up and putting him down on the ground, like, more vigorously than just you would do it naturally, right, like, just more of a quicker motion. And then I remember also, like, this is bringing up a lot of emotions I didn't really want to feel, but then I remember also, like, spanking him on the butt. But I still remember going through my head, like, I don't want to hurt him because he's a nice dog but I just don't know how else to feel this emotion or to get it out. Obviously since then I've grown up and I've learned that that's obviously inappropriate to do, [...] like, that was my only outlet because, you know, he's picking on me because he's bigger, I'm smaller, and I was, like, okay, well, he's smaller than me and, like, I guess that was about the only thing that I ever did. Obviously I don't feel good about it or anything, luckily he was never hurt, but, you know, it still brings me shame, I guess, to this day that I ever would do that to anybody.

Like Barry (PA), Roger referenced feelings of frustration and loss of control over emotions when he talked about the mistreatment of his dog. The need to feel powerful in one sphere when feeling powerless and victimized in another is a common thread between Barry's and Roger's accounts of their abuse, as is feelings of guilt and shame. Both Barry and Roger were open about their past behaviour, including how it influenced their current attitudes that physical and verbal aggression towards companion animals is unacceptable.

Boundaries between Aggressions

An interesting distinction arose between acceptance of aggression towards people, both intimate partners and others, and aggression towards animals. Regardless of whether the participants had engaged in abuse against their partners, abuse or aggression towards animals was not acceptable.

Several participants connected violence against people with aggression towards animals, and neither action was acceptable to them. Stuart (NA) offered his opinion, stating “I don't think someone that loves animals and nature is likely to hurt people, you know, in a bar, knock someone out or slap their wife.” Eddy (NA) became quite agitated when thinking about violence against women and violence against animals, especially because in his culture “we generally don't harm animals for our taste, we don't believe in that, because it's, like, they are also living beings and why do you harm that soul?” Grant (PA), who saw displaced aggression as acceptable and normal, was really clear in saying “I'm not going to punch my girlfriend, or my son, or my cats.”

Lawrence (PA), who had relationships with verbal abuse but no admitted physical abuse, used vulnerability of the victim as his line:

I just wanna grab the guy that does it, you know. I'm 5 foot 6, I got a bad back, I'm 52 years old, and I want to go beat up some great big guy that picking on a dog or a girl! [...] In my opinion, the person that's abusive, the husband, he's a coward. A coward hits a kid, hits a dog, hits somebody that is less, uh, more vulnerable, is that the word? That person is a coward, really. Bully. I used to beat up bullies, I was always the little guy. So yeah, I'm honestly, I'm not bragging, but I'm on the opposite end of the spectrum.

Aggression to protect those more vulnerable, such as women, children, or animals is more acceptable to Lawrence, though at a different point in the interview he claimed adherence to a non-violent attitude towards others. Size of the ‘bully’ did not matter to Lawrence, what mattered to him was standing up for those who, in his perspective, could not stand up for themselves, with violence if necessary.

While not related to his intimate relationship, Archie's (IA) experiences as an adolescent provided a lived example of this boundary. He reported calling the local animal protection

agency and reporting his mother's neglect of the dogs in her care. Archie was very angry at his mother for the poor treatment of the dogs, however he brushed off the emotional and verbal abuse received from his mother. He also recounted an incident of physical abuse at the hands of his father who broke Archie's nose among other injuries. At the time, a family friend was encouraging him to report the incident to the police, but Archie refused as he did not want "that kind of trouble" with the criminal justice system. However, when Archie's father beat his dog for protecting Archie during another assault, Archie threatened to call the police to report the abuse of the dog. When questioned about why he was willing to involve the police when his dog was being abused but was reluctant when he was the victim of the beating, Archie replied "I felt bad for the dog, but I dunno, I guess I could take it. The dog couldn't really speak for herself or do anything. And she didn't know no better, she was just tryin' to protect me." Not only did this speak of Archie's sense of responsibility to protect his dog from harm, but also the vulnerable nature of animals in that they could not speak of their own victimization. Archie's experiences and subsequent actions speak loudly of the boundary between the acceptance of abuse against a person in the form of his own victimization, and the complete lack of acceptance for mistreatment of animals.

Ideas of discipline permeated this boundary between interpersonal and interspecies abuse. Hector (PA) said "you don't hit your animals, oh no. They're not going to listen anymore," and even yelling at his dogs when they did something wrong was not acceptable. Rudolpho (IA) laughingly shared a story about his dog having puppies, and "coming home one day they had shit on the floor behind the couch, they were running back and forth. There was shit all over the place." He saw the incident as humorous, and contained no disciplinary consequences. Oppositely, the penalty for his girlfriend talking back to him and nagging was a smack or a slap

to “shut her up.” Violence against his partner was normalized, whereas physical discipline of his companion animals was not acceptable, even though Rudolpho stated at another point in the interview “I don't go around smacking women, and I don't hurt animals.” There was a reason to hit his girlfriend, but never a reason to hit an animal.

Barry (IA) connected physical discipline to ‘being mean’ to his puppy:

I remember one time I ground it's face in its mess. I shouldn't have done that. But people say that's what you're supposed to do. That's not what I personally, what I should do, I don't believe that kind of, do that. That's something I did do, one time, but it doesn't matter, that one time, I wanna learn and I now know that if I'm gonna treat my dog like that, I should probably, I should pay attention to what I am doing around to others, how I'm treating others.

For Barry, the connection between aggression towards his puppy and how he was treating other people in his life was striking. The feelings of shame were part of the impetus for a shift in attitude where aggression, against people or animals, was unacceptable in the life he wanted to create after leaving jail.

Rudolpho (IA) rationalized potential aggression towards his fellow inmates while talking about avoiding harm to animals:

I get mad if they step on a spider in here. What the hell are you guys doing? It ain't bugging you, you step on it? What, are you crazy? ... You catch it, throw the damn thing outside, that's what we would do. There's a gap underneath the door, let him out the door... You don't have to go step on him. How about if I step on you? I wonder if you'd like it. Probably not.

In the same way that Rudolpho felt justified in using physical means to protect his cat from raccoons, he felt that he would be justified in using physical aggression against people to protect animals. Even spiders were worthy of protection in Rudolpho's opinion.

A ‘Changed Man’

Participants, especially those who were incarcerated at the time of the interview and those who were in the domestic violence intervention programs, expressed the change that they had made in themselves for the better. For several of the men, companion animals factored into their construction of themselves as ‘changed men’, either as an incentive to avoid behaviour that would result in continued contact with the criminal justice system, or in how they intended to treat their companion animals in the future.

Pets and ‘Staying out of Trouble’

A particular sentiment expressed by participants who had contact with the criminal justice system, whether incarcerated or via court-mandated attendance at the DVIP, was the companion animals as an incentive to stay away from away from drugs, stay ‘out of trouble’ with the criminal justice system, and ‘behave’ themselves. Omar (IA) said that a dog would help to keep him out of jail:

Omar: I don’t plan on coming back to this place once my charges are all done and stuff. Yes.

Interviewer: You think a dog will help with that?

Omar: I think a dog will help a lot.

Interviewer: How so?

Omar: I’ll have something to do...I’m going to hustle less, you know what I mean? Do my work during the day time. I’ll have my dog walking with me, you know what I mean?

Interviewer: Somebody to stay clean and stay out [of jail] for?

Omar: Yes.

According to Omar, having the responsibility and companionship of a dog would be enough to keep him away from doing and dealing drugs (the hustle) and keep him on a better path. Archie (IA) had viewed his Shih Tzu as a reason to “stay clean” and away from drugs, though he did wind up getting arrested for drug related offences, leaving his dog in his landlord’s care when he

went to jail. However, Archie also spoke of the programs he had availed himself of while incarcerated, and felt that he would be able to avoid drugs on his release. For Archie, the responsibility of caring for a dog, and the unconditional love received, would be motivation to stay sober.

Jesse (PA) said that without the love that he had for his two cats, he would have “done something really stupid” and that his cats had kept him from “hurting” a person who had ripped him off during a drug deal. At the very beginning of the interview, Jesse stated quite plainly:

The way I think they play a big role in my life is, a lot the time when I want to beat the shit out of somebody, and it's not... I don't mess... I don't hit girls... But guys, like sometimes I want to beat up some guy or whatever, and it's like, the only thing that stops me from beating that person up is I think about my cats. I go, fuck, where are my cats going to end up? And shit like that. Am I going to lose them? And then I'm like, okay, I'd better calm down. That saves me from a... From a charge, you know. So I'm kind of glad I got them.

Jesse saw himself as the stability for his cats, and one of the reasons that he wanted to stay out of jail was concern for what would happen if he was forced to abandon them if charged with another offence:

It's like they're family. It's like, if I can't take care of them, I don't know who will. I don't want them to get separated, and stuff like that, so... I want them to be together because they've been together since they were little kittens. If they're in a changed atmosphere and they're with other pets they're going to fucking be scared and they're going to hide under the bed and... I don't want them to go through that.

Jesse's concern was not his own incarceration, but the well-being of his cats should he be forced to return to jail, evidencing responsibility and desire to change his behaviour for the better.

Future Companion Animals

Almost all participants expressed an interest in future companion animals, and here is where the incarcerated participants and the community participants shared the most common ground. This is also the area in the interviews where resources like respect, trust, and intimacy appeared most clearly in how companion animals contributed to the participant's ideal masculine performance.

For incarcerated participants, and the younger participants from the community, the issues of responsibility and stability were key factors in decisions to begin a relationship with a companion animal. For example, Omar (IA), Archie (IA), and Barry (IA) said they were going to wait until they were more situated and established with a job and stable place to live before getting another animal. Omar said that "there was no good reason to get a dog if you were homeless too" and Archie said that he wanted to get a dog but was going to wait until he was more stable, as he did not even know where he was going to be living upon release from jail.

Barry (IA) said that he "would think twice" before getting another companion animal, because he would want to be aware of how he was treating the animal, and not repeat the mistreatment of his puppy. He had learned from his guilt and shame, and wanted to take that awareness into a new relationship with a companion animal. Barry said that he wanted the same kind of amazing bond he had with his previous dog, but that he was going to wait until he had a nice house and resources to take care of a dog. For Barry, time was a key resource: "Time is most important in anything. You can't just get a dog and then leave him home by himself all day. And with my line of work, I can't take care of a dog on my own unless I have somebody at home with me." Barry wanted to make sure that he had the time to dedicate to the relationship with his new companion animal to build the same intimate bond that he had with his previous dogs, the bond that gave him so much comfort.

Like Barry, Tyson (PA) wanted to wait until he was in the “right living situation” before getting a dog. However, unlike Barry, Tyson viewed a future pet as a placeholder for a better relationship: “like if I get out, I go get a dog at least I’d have my friend or somethin’ like that. You know, I’d go out for a walk, ... it’ll make up what you lost. It’ll fill in like for a while.” Tyson understood that relationships with companion animals entailed a great deal of time and energy, and he seemed only mildly interested in such a relationship.

Financial stability was a concern when talking about future companion animals. Financial stability, if not wealth, is a feature of hegemonic masculinity, and comments such as those from Noah (NA) and Eddy (NA) made it clear that they had internalized, at least in part, to a hegemonic masculine ideal. Noah was interested in possibly getting a hypoallergenic cat, though he acknowledged that the cost may be prohibitive as the cats were “really expensive, like \$1500 or more.” The cost of the animal necessitated a certain degree of financial security. Eddy also raised financial security before getting a dog, recognizing that veterinary care, pet food, and “all the toys and things” represented a monetary outlay that he was not prepared for at the moment.

Even participants that currently had companion animals pulled on the same ideas of responsibility when talking about their decision to get their animals. Roger (NA) had waited to get a dog until he could properly care for it, citing that with his work schedule and small apartment (at the time) it would be unfair to a dog to leave them alone for so long and not provide the life the dog deserves in the form of attention and activity. Walter (NA) recognized that his cat was an appropriate companion animal for him prior to retirement given the amount of time and care that cats require as opposed to dogs. Now that Walter was retired, with more time, he felt that he had more to time and energy to give to a dog, and so was interested in adding a canine companion animal to his family.

Conclusion

Overall, most of the men in the study reported positive relationships with the companion animals in their lives, with the companion animals serving as protectors, confidants, surrogate children, best friends, and therapists. By and large, the relationships with companion animals, including the choice of companion animal, were resources for the performance of different masculinities of the men, from an aggressive tough guy masculinity to a sensitive modern man masculinity. What the relationships with the companion animals and with the intimate partners illustrate is the complicated and contradictory nature of the performance of masculinity, whether it was in the attitude that accepted aggression against people but not animals, or in the difference between the trust for an intimate partner and the trust for a companion animal.

Cliff's (IA) statement at the close of his interview sums up the sentiments of most of the participants, whether they had deep relationships with several companion animals or simply a passing association: it "doesn't matter what kind of dog [or companion animal] it is, whether they're big or little, they're just good to have around. They make you feel better, they make you just, I dunno, they're like nature's antidepressant (laughing)."

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

Four research questions guided this study:

1. What is the role of companion animals in the lives of men?
2. What is the role of pets in the construction and performance of masculinity?
3. Do abusive men hold different attitudes towards and have different relationships with pets than non-abusive men?
4. Does the presence of the pet aggravate or mitigate the violence towards the partner?

Masculinities theory, while seemingly exclusive to the second question, offered a way to understand the different conceptualizations of the relationships with companion animals, attitudes towards companion animals, as well as the role that the companion animal may have played in situations of conflict with the intimate partner. As seen through the themes of *Love and Loyalty* and *Aggression and Conflict*, the companion animal is a key actor, a resource, and a participant in a relationship through which the men in this study constructed and performed their masculinity.

This chapter begins with discussing the findings around the continuum of relationships with companion animals, including species and gender preferences for companion animals. The theme of *Love and Loyalty* is included in the discussion of findings related to companion animals as a resource for the performance of masculinity. *Aggression and Conflict* addresses both aggression against the intimate partner as well as boundaries around aggression towards companion animals. The implications and limitations of this study are presented, and the chapter concludes with ideas around future research directions.

The Continuum of Companion Animal Relationships

Within the current study, men evidenced a range of relationships with their companion animals, from no relationship to speak of in Tyson's (PA) case, to the intense love that Stuart (NA) felt for his cats. As illustrated in Figure 2, relationships appeared on a continuum from no meaningful relationship to a cherished and beloved family member, and this continuum was apparent in both the abusive group and the non-abusive group. That men had differing relationships with companion animals in this research is not surprising; however, what was surprising was the relative lack of differentiation between the abusive and non-abusive men along the continuum of relationships.

The lack of difference in relationships with companion animals along the abusive/non-abusive divide is not what would be expected based on the literature at the intersection of IPV and animal mistreatment. In Barrett et al. (2017), 89% of the women with pets in their sample of IPV survivors reported that their companion animals had been mistreated by their intimate partners. Approximately half of the women in Ascione et al. (2007) and Volant et al. (2008) reported that their companion animals had been threatened or harmed by their intimate partners. With these proportions of animal abuse reported by women who have experienced IPV, the expectation would be that at least some of the men in this sample would report negative or abusive relationships with animals. However, no participant conceptualized their relationships with companion animals as negative or abusive; the most negative relationships were ones of disinterest towards the companion animals. The two men at the end of the continuum did have abuse in their intimate relationships, and related no abuse towards companion animals. The few men who did engage in animal mistreatment, such as Roger (NA) and Barry (IA), had very close relationships with companion animals, and their mistreatment was not related to the abuse of their partner.

For the most part, the participants had positive relationships with animals, citing benefits of the relationships like unconditional love, trust, and companionship. This falls in line with the established literature on the human-animal relationship. While some research shows that men have a significantly lower connection with companion animals than women (Cohen, 2002; Kellert & Berry, 1980; Kidd & Kidd, 1980; Martens, Enders-Slegers, & Walker, 2016; Vollum, Buffington-Vollum, & Longmire, 2004), other research has shown little to no gender differences in the closeness of relationships with companion animals (Irvine, 2013; Prato-Previde, Fallani, & Valsecchi, 2006; Ramirez, 2006; Sanders, 1993). Using a sample comprised exclusively of men, the current research could not compare relationships with companion animals across gender, and nor was this the purpose. However, what studies like Ramirez (2006) and Prato-Previde et al. (2006) illustrate is that men can and do have close relationships with companion animals.

The men interviewed by Risley-Curtiss et al. (2011) also reported close relationships with companion animals. Similar to the current study, companion animals were conceptualized as family members. Again similar to the current study, five of these men qualified the categorization of the animals, stating that the animals were part of the family, but not equal to the human family members (Risley-Curtiss et al., 2011). The placement of humans above animals is consistent with the sociozoological scale proposed by Arluke and Sanders (1996), in which humans are at the peak of the hierarchy and all other animals organized categorically below them. There are a few possible reasons for the qualification of animals as family members. It could be that participants in this study were simply adhering to social norms (a dog is a part of the family) while placing a reduced value on the animal. The qualification of the human-animal relationships mainly referenced the functional value of the animal, aspects like protection, companionship, and emotional support. The function was framed according to what the

companion animal provided for the human. A central idea within the relationships with companion animals, and the embedded hierarchy, was the notion of ‘like family, with ‘limitations’. For example, Omar’s (IA) description of his dog as a family member but “still just a dog” and Grant’s (PA) use of the cats as proxies for his son are indications of the close relationship with companion animals, while at the same time qualifying said relationship. In these ways, performing a ‘softer’ masculinity of care for others, while still maintaining (or professing the maintenance of) an emotional distance.

The reinforcement of a hierarchy of animals along the lines of function and the privileging of one species over another is not uncommon (Kellert & Berry, 1980, 1987; Perrine & Osbourne, 1998; Nik Taylor & Signal, 2009). An early study by Kidd and Kidd (1980) examined preferences for companion animals (dogs versus cats) among 223 adults. Analyzing the preferences by gender, they found that the male participants were fairly evenly split as whether they considered themselves “pet-lovers, dog-lovers, or cat-lovers” (Kidd & Kidd, 1980, p. 943), analogous to the relatively equal distribution of dog people, cat people, or both in the current study. Furthermore, Kidd and Kidd (1980) also assessed personality traits of the participants on dominance, autonomy, nurturance, and aggression, drawing on the gendered assumption that men are more dominant, aggressive, and independent, whereas women are more nurturing. Supporting their hypotheses, male dog-lovers scored higher on aggression and dominance, with female pet-lovers scoring higher on nurturing. Explaining their results, Kidd and Kidd (1980) proposed that “autonomy, dominance, and aggression are stereotypically adult male traits and a boy who is a dog's master may work consciously or unconsciously toward strengthening those same qualities” (p. 946). This supports the current research in that several

participants were explicit about their choice of dogs as companions as the size and breed of dog enhanced their masculine performance, and reflected their authority and dominance.

Participants in this study also gave reasons why they preferred one species of companion animal over another that were roughly consistent with Gosling and Bonnenburg's (1998) findings. Gosling and Bonnenburg (1998) provided a list of 50 adjectives to a large sample of pet owners ($n = 1640$), and asked them to rate how well each adjective described their companion animals. The top-rated adjectives for both cats and dogs were warm, kind, energetic, and sympathetic with additional descriptors for dogs being cooperative and cats being described as complex. These descriptors reflect the general descriptions of dogs and cats provided by participants in this study, though intellect featured more prominently as a characteristic of companion animals in this study.

While the conceptualizations of relationships with companion animals in this study is reflective of the broader literature, what was surprising, and not documented in the literature on companion animals to my knowledge was the privileging of one sex over another. Where gender tends to arise in the human-animal relationship literature is in the difference in species preferences and characteristics valued between men and women, rather than the preferred sex of the companion animal (Cohen, 2002; Gosling & Bonnenburg, 1998; Kidd & Kidd, 1980; Martens et al., 2016). Three participants in this study noted a sex preference: Omar (IA) and Rudolpho (IA) preferred female animals because they were easier to train and control, whereas Cyril (NA) saw female animals as too much like the women in his life, fickle, moody, and bitchy. Omar and Rudolpho illustrated adherence to stereotypes about femininity, in that emotionally labile women need to be controlled by a stronger masculine hand, and while Cyril held these same stereotypes, he wanted no part of the 'trouble' of dealing with women.

Companion Animals and Masculinity

Connell (2005) theorizes masculinity as a contextual practice, one which is uniquely located in history and place, and shaped by the cultural and material resources available. However, hegemonic masculinity has shown itself to be a robust concept, changing little over time. In *Stigma*, Goffman (1963) provided a definition of hegemonic masculinity, “in an important sense, there is only one complete unblushing male in America: a young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual Protestant father of college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight, and height, and a recent record in sports” (p. 128). Over five decades later, this definition of a ‘real man’ is still the hegemonic ideal for masculinity. Notions of heterosexuality, virility, education, employment, strength, competitiveness, aggression, and domination are all referenced in Goffman’s (1963) description. Kimmel (2008) incorporates all the above in what he refers to the “guy code” (p. 45), but also adds emotional stoicism, control, and avoidance of any behaviour or performance that could be considered weak or feminine. Kimmel (2000) states that “through the successful manipulation of props, signs, symbols, behaviors, and emotions, we attempt to convince others of our successful acquisition of masculinity or femininity” (p. 103). Companion animals can be considered a symbol of masculinity, a prop (or tool) with which to perform masculinity, as well as a relationship through which a subordinate masculinity can be enacted.

In this study, masculine performances in relationships with companion animals were thematically divided into more traditional masculinities which drew upon hegemonic norms, and non-traditional masculinities in which performances ran counter to hegemonic norms. The term “non-traditional” was adopted from Stuart (NA), who used this term to describe his own masculinity. There is a need to be cautious regarding categorizing masculinities, as Robinson

(2002) notes, “Multiplying masculinities does not necessarily fragment the hegemonic and can often do the opposite: relegitimize the hegemonic by cordoning off difference, safely containing it within the ‘alternative’” (p. 147). Rather than using traditional versus non-traditional, or hegemonic versus subordinate masculinities, to segment and compartmentalize performances of masculinity, in this study these categories were used to show the complicated and contradictory constructions of masculinity that arise within the same individual, even within the same performance of masculinity. This is not an either/or model of masculinity that Robinson (2002) warns about, but a plus/and interpretation along the lines of Aboim’s (2010) plurality of masculinities. Categories are heuristic devices, and need to be seen as flexible, not rigid. That said, there is a hegemonic, or dominant cultural masculinity which was referenced by many of the participants and flowed through the narratives. Men used their relationships with companion animals and with their intimate partners to construct complicated and nuanced masculinities, drawing on both hegemonic norms and norms which counter the dominant masculinity to do their own version of masculinity.

Notions of domination and aggressiveness were drawn upon by Omar (IA) and Eddy (NA) wanting the big, aggressive dogs as a resource in the presentation of a ‘tough guy’ masculinity to others. This was construed either as a reflection of how he saw himself as a man, as in Omar’s case, or in the desire to affect a ‘tough guy’ masculinity, in Eddy’s case. Walter (NA) and Hector (PA) explicitly associated small dogs with femininity, and refused to have a small dog to avoid having their masculinity called into question. Veevers (1985) refers to this as the projective function of companion animals, in that the animal is an extension or reflection of their self-image, or desired image. The use of “vicious beasts” (to use Eddy’s words) to project a specific image, or masculinity, is not uncommon, especially among young men. Maher and

Pierpoint (2011) interviewed youths affiliated with gangs about their dogs and the relationship between the youth and their dog, most commonly a pitbull breed or another ‘tough’ large dog such as a Rottweiler or Mastiff. The primary function of the dogs was companionship, while the secondary functions of the dogs were as status symbols projecting a tough image, as “an extension of a youth’s masculinity – the dog can become a powerful weapon and a clear statement of aggressive intent and reflect an individual’s status (hard, tough and to be respected)” (Maher & Pierpoint, 2011, pp. 416–417). Staffordshire terriers, or pitbulls as they are more commonly referred to, have been constructed as dangerous, aggressive, and vicious animals (Arluke & Sanders, 1996; Lie, 2017; Maher & Pierpoint, 2011). Jacobson and Gottman (1998) even selected ‘pitbull’ as the label for the men who were easily angered and violent within their intimate relationships versus ‘cobras,’ who used violence both within their relationships as well as directed towards others. The relative unpredictability of anger and use of aggression by the human ‘pitbulls’ in Jacobson and Gottman’s (1998) typology of abusers is reflective of the public perception of the canine pitbulls.

For other men in the study, the size and species of companion animals did not serve a projective function, but instead domination and control were projected through the obedience of the animals. Authority and control, elements of hegemonic masculinity, were also evidenced through the men’s narratives about their companion animals, either their current companion animal or desired companion animal in the future. Largely centred on dogs, the authority and control afforded to the men by virtue of having an obedient and well-trained pet could be seen as a prosocial way to do their masculinity. It is important to note here that hegemonic masculinity, or any masculinity, is not inherently positive or negative (Aboim, 2010; Connell, 2005). It is in the expression of that masculinity, the gendered performance and the resources drawn upon to do

that gender in which the value judgements of positive and negative, or ‘good men’ and ‘bad men’ reside. Of course, as masculinity is culturally and historically situated, so too are the value judgements passed on individual or collective performances of masculinity. Aggression against intimate partners is perceived as a negative performance of masculinity (K. L. Anderson, 2005; K. L. Anderson & Umberson, 2001; Kimmel, 2008; Moore & Stuart, 2005; Wood, 2004), whereas aggression in a competitive athletic arena is a positive performance of masculinity (Connell, 2000, 2005; Kimmel, 2008). In connection to companion animals as a resource to do masculinity, well-trained and obedient dogs are seen as a reflection of their responsible and authoritative owners: men with control over their dogs and the ability to ensure good behaviour. Again, Veevers’ (1985) projective function arises as a component of companion animals as a resource for masculinity. The control over their companion animal projects their ability to exert total control over others, both other men and their own intimate partners.

Fatherhood and being the financial provider for the family remain consistent aspects of hegemonic masculinity (Comack, 2008; Kimmel, 2010; Mansley, 2009; Messner, 1993). Companion animals can serve a “surrogate function” (Veevers, 1985), allowing men to enact aspects of masculinity around the protector/provider role and fatherhood. Veevers (1985) and Maharaj and Haney (2015) note that companion animals will often serve as surrogates for other relationships, be it as proxies for children or partners. In the current study, participants used the companion animals to evidence their ability to perform the fatherhood role in the absence of children, whether via criminal justice system involvement, as in Grant’s (PA) case, or in the preference for the companion animal over human children, as in Mark’s (PA) case. While feeling unable to ‘do fatherhood’ in a human child-parent sense, the companion animals offered participants a relationship in which they could take on a father and provider role.

Gender is not performed and constructed in a vacuum – it is performed in interactions with another. Accordingly, participants reported activating different aspects of their masculinity with their partners and with their companion animals. With their intimate partners, the participants tended to reference hegemonic norms of masculinity. With their companion animals, hegemonic masculinity was still present, though in a slightly different form.

Participants felt more secure in their relationships with their companion animals, who could not contradict their masculine performance, than with their intimate partners, with whom doing their masculinity was more challenging. Comack (2008) highlights the tensions of doing masculinity in intimate relationships:

The feelings of dependency, vulnerability, and insecurity that so often accompany intimate relationships can pose a challenge, particularly because such feelings run into conflict with hegemonic notions of men as independent, assertive, and self-sufficient. Not surprisingly, when conflicts or disagreements occur in relationships with intimate partners, the men turn to what they know: violence (p. 75).

Mansley (2009) employs the concept of the ‘double bind’ to explain the contradictory nature of doing masculinity in intimate relationships:

Hegemonic masculinity idealizes male detachment, absence of emotion, and continued distance in intimate relationships. At the same time, women in their lives demand that the men are more invested, more emotional and more connected to their relationships and their families. This places men in an untenable situation. When masculinity is called into question, some men utilize violence to put aside anyone’s doubt that they are a ‘real man’. [...] The concept of the double bind in masculinity can be used to explain the difficulty that men have in forming meaningful relationships with their significant others, their children and their friends. The emotional commitments that these relationships require to function are in direct contrast to men’s conception of hegemonic masculinity. This uncertainty contributes

to problematic relationships characterized by high stress encounters that can result in the use of male violence against intimates (p. 76).

While both Comack (2008) and Mansley (2009) point to the use of violence as a resource, it is only one resource that can be used. In the current study, both men who had employed violence in their intimate relationships, as well as those who had not, used their relationships with companion animals as a way out of the double bind, or for managing the tensions of adhering to a hegemonic masculinity while at the same time opening up emotionally and having a close relationship. It was largely within the theme of *Love and Loyalty* where the contradiction between the pressure to ‘be a man’ according to hegemonic masculinity in the intimate relationships arose, and the more forgiving performances of a (non-traditional) masculinity with the companion animals were most apparent.

One of the tenets of hegemonic masculinity is, as Kimmel (2000) notes, not showing emotion or weakness. However, men in the current study did illustrate a degree of emotional connection and love for their companion animals. In the study by Randell, Jerdén, Öhman, Starrin and Flacking (2016) exploring conceptions of masculinity, they found a two-pronged normative masculinity, one with toughness and one emphasizing sensitivity, and the context (i.e., who was present) dictated which one was given primacy. Heath (2016) offers the concept of “soft-boiled masculinity,” which she defines as “a type of masculinity that provides space for men to be more emotionally connected with one another and to express themselves in a manner that can challenge the norms of hegemonic masculinity and its strict boundaries” (p. 160-161). The central idea in Heath’s (2016) definition is a more emotionally open masculinity, though she noted that this is still subordinate to the ‘hard’ hegemonic masculinity, and can only be performed in a safe environment where judgement from others (namely women) is not possible. Rather than viewing a soft masculinity as being spatially rooted, Messner (1993) argues that

emotional expression is situationally contingent, for example, male athletes who cry following a championship win is acceptable. It is in the blended context of situation and space where the relationships with companion animals are located.

For the participants in this study, unconditional love and affection was received from the companion animals whereas they perceived conditions attached to the love and affection from their intimate partners, whether it was a lack of verbal and physical aggression, staying sober, maintaining employment, or allocating time to the relationship. Sometimes these were explicit, for example Omar's (IA) intimate partner's demands that he stay away from drugs, or implicit such as Noah's (NA) perception that his girlfriend found someone else because he was not spending enough time with her. The sentiment among human companions that companion animals are more accepting and less judgemental than intimate partners is common (Cohen, 2002; Maharaj & Haney, 2015). Sanders (1993) interviewed dog owners, and noted that "caretakers defined the animal-human relationships as unique because it was free from the criticism and contingent feelings that typified relationships with human intimates. This prompted owners to feel intense emotional ties to their dogs" (p. 218). The critique and contingent feelings noted by Sanders' (1993) participants was echoed in the sense of conditionality from the intimate partners and the lack of conditions on the love from the companion animals. In this sense, it may have been 'easier' to do masculinity with their pets than with their intimate partners, due to the absence of critique and judgement.

Gender is always performed in relation to another, and it could be that the doing of masculinity with the animals was easier as the men could almost ascribe meaning to the animals' reactions that confirmed their performance, for example, pure acceptance of emotional expression or appreciation for the ways in which the man provides for his companion animal.

This stands in contrast with doing masculinity in relationships with intimate partners, where the doing of masculinity is complicated and contested via the interaction and reaction of the other. It was almost as if the men in the current study perceived that they had complete control in doing masculinity with animals, and no (or contested) control in doing masculinity with intimate partners. Intimate partners presented needs or demands around fatherhood, financial stability, communication, and emotional availability, and while companion animals had similar needs, the way in which the men could fulfill those needs, and thus perform masculinity, was not seen as challenging their masculinity. They were able to construct and perform masculinity in relation to an other (companion animal) with no judgment and only acceptance.

Sanders' (1993) observation above about his participants also speaks to the security that many participants in the current study felt with their companion animals, but not with their intimate partners. They were free to share emotions and weaknesses with their companion animals. For instance, Mark (PA) described his cat as his "lockbox," to whom he could tell anything without fear of judgement. Both abusive and non-abusive men spoke of the safety of sharing feelings with their companion animals created by the absence of criticism. There is a security in speaking emotions to one who cannot 'talk back' yet understands. Companion animals act as a safe haven for the emotions of their human owners, regardless of species (Cohen, 2002; Evans-Wilday et al., 2018; Kurdek, 2009; Veevers, 1985). The intimacy and trust inherent in the relationship with the companion animal may be increasingly important in times of trauma, loss, or upheaval (Adrian et al., 2009; Flynn, 2000b; Irvine, 2013; Morley & Fook, 2005). With the exception of two non-abusive participants, all men related some level of upheaval in their relationships, whether it was abuse perpetrated by them, their intimate partners, or the end of a relationship. For the most part, participants related that their companion animals

provided support during the breakup and a ‘lockbox’ for their feelings regarding their intimate partners. The exception was the three youngest participants, Noah (NA), Eddy (NA), and Vince (NA), whose connections with companion animals were through companion animals owned by their intimate partners. In this way, the animals were not available to help ease their emotions, however all three referenced the capacity of animals to offer support in times of trouble.

Part of this ability to be vulnerable in front of the animals meant the violation of the ‘men don’t cry’ rule of hegemonic masculinity. Elton (PA), Cyril (NA), Mark (PA), and Stuart (NA) all referenced crying in front of their companion animals, or crying when the animals passed away. In fact, the five men who openly cried in the interview did so while talking about their companion animals, and not their partners. Emotion connected to the end of the relationship with intimate partners was frustration, annoyance, derision, or apathy, whereas the emotion connected to the loss of a companion animal was presented as genuine heartbreak. Crying was deemed appropriate in response to the grief felt at the passing of their companion animals. In some ways, this is part of the finality of death, in that it is one of the (semi-)appropriate times where tears are allowable for a man (Messner, 1993). It could be that the loss of the companion animal represented the loss of a relationship with trust, as participants evidenced a large degree of mistrust of their partners, but not their companion animals. Grieving this loss may be connected to the loss of a relationship with emotional intimacy standing in stark contrast to other, more distant relationships in the man’s life.

Tears were also shed in the interviews in connection to breaking the trust of the companion animals, or letting them down, but no participant cried in response to letting their partners down. Most of the participants felt let down by their partners, via infidelity or abandonment, whereas they felt that their companion animals would never let them down. Trust

is a common theme that arises in the human-animal relationship literature. The men in Risley-Curtiss et al.'s (2011) study raised trust as a key component of the human-animal relationship, as did the participants in research conducted by Kurdek (2009), Beck and Madresh (2008), and Sanders (1993). The participants in Beck and Madresh's (2008) research reported feeling more security in their relationships with their pets than with their intimate partners, which speaks to a strong trust in the animal.

Trust also arises in the IPV literature in that abusive men feel their partners are untrustworthy, largely reflected through issues around jealousy (Kar & O'Leary, 2013; Neal & Edwards, 2017; Nemeth, Bonomi, Lee, & Ludwin, 2012; Puente & Cohen, 2003; Scott Tilley & Brackley, 2005). Both abusive and non-abusive participants referred to the ability (and tendency) for the women in their lives to be deceitful, unfaithful, and dishonest, whether it was lying about finances as in Roger's (NA) case, infidelity for Jesse (PA), Rudolpho (IA), Omar (IA), Tyson (IA), and Noah (NA), or simply general dishonesty in the relationships of Hector (PA), Mark (PA), and Cyril (NA). Conversely, the participants had trust in their companion animals, and felt that the animals were worthy of their trust. Rockett and Carr (2014) point out how animals are not subject to the same "perceptions that other people are untrustworthy or unreliable, uncaring and selfish," and the "open, unthreatening, attention-seeking natures [of animals] that offer, as well as take love, affection, and positivity" engender a greater degree of trust (p. 9-10).

Aggression and Conflict

On the other side of *Love and Loyalty*, with the embedded ideas of unconditional love and trust, are *Aggression and Conflict*. Aggression and conflict were defined as connected but distinct concepts in the current study. Aggression, including physical and verbal actions, was a resource that could be used; conflict was the context in which aggression as a resource could be

used. Conflict included disagreements and arguments between intimate partners, as well as conflict with others in the lives of participants. Thirteen of the participants (6 incarcerated, 7 DVIP) reported using aggression, either verbal or physical, in conflicts with their intimate partners, while the other eight recruited from the community did not report using aggression against their partners.

When it came to abuse against their intimate partners, provocation from the intimate partner, whether infidelity or ‘pushing buttons’, and substance abuse were part of the accounts men gave for their physical aggression, which are prevalent excuses and justifications given for IPV by abusive men as reported in the literature (Catlett, Toews, & Walilko, 2010; Fenton & Rathus, 2010; Hearn, 1998; Mullaney, 2007; Nemeth et al., 2012; Stamp & Sabourin, 1995; Wood, 2004). For the most part, abusive men saw physical and verbal aggression as resources that could be used to reassert their masculinity in the face of disrespect and perceived loss of control over an argument or situation. Disrespect and control were also prevalent in the narratives of abusive men in Wood (2004) and Catlett et al (2010), reflected in comments about their partners ‘not shutting up’ or ‘nagging’ or being verbally abusive. The same comments were made by the abusive men in this study in justifying their aggression. Infidelity was seen as a provocation in that the actions of the intimate partner provoked the violence, with the underlying attitude of ‘what did she expect?’ In theorizing masculinity and sexuality, Aboim (2010) observes that “a man whose wife was unfaithful to him would lose every scrap of male prestige” (p. 144). Thus, to maintain masculine status, an unquestionably masculine response – violence – was a legitimate course of action. In their sample of 17 couples, Nemeth et al. (2012) found that infidelity was the primary trigger for physical violence, and that jealousy and mistrust were sources of stress and conflict in the relationships. Though the men interviewed by Aboim (2010)

did not reference violence in response to infidelity, they did speak of the diminished value of women who were unfaithful, referring to them as disposable and replaceable. The attitudes of the men in Nemeth et al. (2012) and Aboim (2010) coincides with the attitudes of the men in the current research, who spoke of their intimate partners who had cheated on them as untrustworthy and ‘not worth the effort’ to salvage the relationship. Conversely, participants did put the effort into salvaging or maintaining their relationships with companion animals, whether that was retrieving his cat from the local animal shelter after his intimate partner had placed him there in Mark’s (PA) case, or in Hector’s (PA) prioritization of retrieving his dog from his marital home when he was arrested.

That men can be victims and women abusers in relationships is at the heart of the gender symmetry/asymmetry debate, and the current research contributes to that debate. Five of the men who were abusive reported that the aggression in the relationship was bi-directional, and that their intimate partners were abusive as well. This falls in line with situational couple violence from Johnson’s (2008) typology of IPV, as for the most part the men spoke of incidents of aggression as single occurrences rather than as part of a pattern of control and violence throughout the relationship. Two men, Drew (PA) and Stuart (NA), both revealed that their intimate partners had physically assaulted them. This was distinct from situational couple violence. Although Drew had responded physically to ‘nagging’ from his partner (resulting in his mandated participation in the DVIP), neither Drew or Stuart reported responding with violence or physical aggression to the assaults in which they conceptualized themselves as victims. Eckstein (2016) found that for the men in her sample, psychological abuse from a female partner was more stigmatizing than physical abuse. It could be that the verbal and psychological aggression received by the men in the current study was more emasculating than ‘getting

slapped' by a partner, as it was verbal abuse which some of the men cited as their trigger for physical violence. The physical aggression was a resource used to do their masculinity in terms of regaining control and establishing dominance in the situation.

There were no reports of direct abuse of companion animals by women in the intimate relationships, though companion animals did come up as factors in the men's reports of their own victimization. After Mark (PA) was arrested, his intimate partner gave his cat to the animal shelter, which Mark perceived as a vindictive act targeting him. This is consistent with reports from women survivors of IPV who relate that threats to 'get rid of' or giving their companion animals away over their objections were components of the psychological abuse at the hands of their partners (Flynn, 2000a; Newberry, 2017). Drew (PA) reported that the companion animals in his intimate relationship were used as tools to emotionally and mentally abuse him, stating that his intimate partner had brought home birds just to annoy him and make him miserable. Drew perceived that his intimate partner got companion animals, which he did not want, in order to show how powerless he was in the relationship. He conceptualized the mere presence of the companion animals as a component of the abuse he experienced. Again, this is in line with research with women survivors in the way that their companion animals are used as tools by their abuser to control, manipulate, and dominate them (Adams, 1995; Flynn, 2000a; Newberry, 2017; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007). However, differing from the literature, Drew's intimate partner did not threaten or harm the animals themselves.

Aggression and Companion Animals

This study is unique in that it asks men about companion animals in the context of conflict with their intimate partner with a focus on their narrative. While Ascione and Blakelock (2003), Febres et al. (2014), and Haden et al. (2018) did focus on the connection between IPV

and animal abuse using the perspectives of male perpetrators of IPV, their purpose was to ascertain co-occurrence of IPV and animal abuse. These three studies used established survey instruments, like the CTS2 (Straus et al., 1996) and the RACA (Ascione, 2002), which limited the respondents to categorical responses. The current research focused on the narratives and voice of the men in the relationships, seeking to understand how they conceptualized their relationships with companion animals, and how these relationships figured into their relationships with intimate partners.

No participant reported abuse or mistreatment of their companion animal in the context of an argument or abusive incident with their intimate partner. This is contrary to other research, which shows that at least a proportion of abusive men report engaging in animal abuse in connection to IPV. Half of the 42 men in Ascione and Blakelock's (2003) sample reported that they had hurt or killed companion animals, which is the same proportion reported in Haden et al. (2018). A much smaller proportion was reported in Stevenson (2012), with only one of ten participants relating animal mistreatment in the context of IPV. In the current study, where companion animals did enter the conflict in the intimate relationships was as protectors of the other family members, or as an inhibitor to escalating aggression. Animals as protectors has been reported by women survivors of IPV (Flynn, 2000a; Newberry, 2017). The survivors in Flynn's (2000a) research reported that their companion animals intervened or would place themselves between the woman and her abuser. However, unlike the women's accounts of their animals' actions, and subsequent harm to their companion animals in Flynn (2000a), the men in the current study viewed the protective actions of their companion animals as positive, and the actions on the part of their companion animals did not make them targets for aggression.

Another reaction of the companion animals to conflict between intimate partners was avoidance, which the men described as hiding or disappearing and attributed this behaviour to fear or apprehension about the argument. For example, Archie (IA) described his dog as being traumatized by the arguments, and Mark (PA) related how his cat would hide under the bed. The emotional impact of conflict between intimate partners on companion animals also comes up in research from the perspective of women in the abusive relationships, with reports of companion animals experiencing fear, shaking, and hiding (Fitzgerald, 2005; Flynn, 2000a, 2000b). The men in the current study conveyed guilt about how their actions impacted their companion animals, and appeared to have more remorse for the negative impact of their actions on their companion animals than on their partners. This may speak to the closeness of the relationship with the companion animals versus the intimate partners, or the idea about the vulnerability and sensitivity of the animals.

Only four men reported mistreating animals more generally (as opposed maltreatment of companion animals in the context of their relationship), and interestingly, one of those men was in the non-abusive group. What was interesting is that men were not asked about animal abuse, they were simply asked to describe their relationships with the animals in their lives with the invitation to “tell me about your pets.” The conceptualizations of the actions towards the companion animals as mistreatment or abuse came directly from the men themselves. While Barry (IA) did recognize the instrumental nature of the mistreatment of his puppy during his intimate relationship, he attempted to explain his behaviour via frustration and loss of control over his emotions, as did Roger (NA) when talking about the abuse of his childhood dog. Lawrence (PA) excused his behaviour with the reasoning that he was drunk at the time, whereas

Roger (NA) and Rudolpho (IA) justified their abuse of animals as necessary to protect their own companion animals.

Remorse and guilt were the prevalent emotions to the negative treatment of companion animals, and this runs counter to much of the research looking at animal abuse and IPV. While frustration and uncontrolled emotions do arise as reasons for abusive behaviour towards animals (Adams, 1995; Kellert & Felthous, 1985), instrumental motivations for abuse, such as control and manipulation, are more commonly noted in the literature linking animals abuse and IPV (Carlisle-Frank et al., 2004; Flynn, 2012; Newberry, 2017; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007). Rather than viewing the animal as a potential tool for the abuse of their intimate partner, most men viewed the companion animals as ‘theirs’, and a positive relationship in their lives. It could be that the remorse and guilt stemmed from mistreatment of someone that they loved and were close to, and the violation of the trust that the companion animals had in the men. In relation for violence against the intimate partners, remorse was limited as the trust had already been broken by infidelity or deceitful actions. Among participants, companion animals did not deserve mistreatment, whereas intimate partners were often portrayed as instigating the abuse.

The acts of animal mistreatment the five participants reported were connected to performances of masculinity, however in an unexpected direction. Rather than being perceived as performances enhancing masculinity, the actions were perceived as detracting from their masculinity – they were less of a man because they had engaged in mistreatment. The prevalence of men (as compared to women) holding a dominionistic attitude towards animals as reported by Kellert and Berry (1980), Adams’ (1994, 1995) arguments that patriarchy includes domination over women *and* animals, and Luke’s (2007) research illustrating a strong connection between the performance of masculinity and the domination over animals, all suggest that men would not

conceptualize negative treatment of animals as out of line with a masculine performance.

Instead, in the current study, remorse and guilt were the reactions to animal mistreatment, which indicate wrongdoing and the subjective perception that they were not being ‘real men’ in those particular instances.

In fact, the construction of a boundary between aggression against animals and aggression against people by the male participants is a key finding in the current study, and speaks to a form of masculinity that shuns violence against companion animals. Peralta and Tuttle (2013) argue that “men can choose to adopt or approximate hegemonic masculinity as context dictates and when strategically expedient—or, alternatively, they can distance themselves from harmful forms of masculinity expression” (p. 258). Although there are other important ways that animals can be harmed that are consistent with masculinity, such as meat eating (Adams, 2000; Sobal, 2005) and sport hunting (Kellert, 1980; Kheel, 2008; Luke, 2007), the current study focused on companion animals. All the participants saw companion animal abuse as a harmful expression of masculinity, even as some men indicated acceptance of aggression against people. This was largely organized around the ideas that companion animals were vulnerable and could not speak for themselves, and reflected the status of companion animals as ‘good animals’ per Arluke and Sanders’ (1996) sociozoological scale and therefore worthy of protection.

Similar ideas regarding animal abuse came out in the survey conducted by Vollum et al. (2004) exploring attitudes and punitiveness regarding animal cruelty. Although Vollum et al. (2004) found that women were significantly more punitive in addressing animal cruelty offences than men, as well as having more concern about animal cruelty in general, they also noted that respondents with pets were more concerned about animal cruelty and more punitive than those

without companion animals. While the current study cannot compare across genders, the results in Vollum et al. (2004) do provide context for the results of this research. The current sample was composed exclusively of men, it may be the fact that all but three of the men were companion animal owners, and had (for the most part) positive relationships with the animals, that contributed to the disavowal of any aggression against companion animals. The punitiveness referred to by Vollum et al. (2004) was centred on traditional criminal justice system responses, like fines, probation, and incarceration. However, in the current study, punitiveness arose in contacting authorities about animal neglect (in Archie's (IA) case), or in physical threats to the potential perpetrator by Lawrence (PA) and Rudolpho (IA). The boundary between aggression against people and animals expressed by the participants is a blend of aggression as a component of masculine performance and a softer masculinity in the way that the vulnerable companion animals are to be protected.

Companion Animal Masculinity

Research has supported the idea that there are particular masculinities that occur in different cultural and social contexts, and there are features that make each particular masculinity distinctive from others. For example, de Viggiani (2012) and Comack (2008) both describe a prison masculinity in which a rigid adherence to aggression, physical strength, and competition are required for a masculine performance, within a hierarchy of criminal offences. Heath (2016) offers "soft-boiled masculinity" within a men's movement to reflect firmly held patriarchal norms blended with emotion and sensitivity, which Kimmel (2010) refers to as reflective of a "kinder, gentler patriarchy" (p. 166). Other distinctive masculinities include gay masculinity (Connell, 2005; Knuttila, 2016), Black masculinity (Hattery, 2009; Mansley, 2009), sporting

masculinity (Kimmel, 2008; Parker, 1996), and working-class masculinity (Alcadipani & Tonelli, 2014; Nye, 2005).

The current research suggests a distinct masculinity enacted by the men in this study to add to the ones above: a companion animal masculinity blending emotionality with hegemonic masculinity. The companion animal, and the relationship with the companion animal, is a reflection of how he sees himself as a man, and how he wants others to perceive his masculinity. The control of hegemonic masculinity is performed through having control over a companion animal, manifested through perfect obedience, for example a dog who is under complete control off-leash, or control over the movements of an animal, such as dog on a leash, an exclusively indoor cat, or a bird in a cage. Any challenges to human control (i.e., animal misbehaviour) are dealt with through positive training and non-physical discipline, and using these, control will be regained. Unlike masculinity performed in relationships with others, within companion animal masculinity challenges are not necessarily seen as challenges to masculinity overall, but merely opportunities to perform and establish masculinity. Through this lack of challenge, there is a security in the performance of companion animal masculinity that is not present in other contexts.

Responsibility is shown through care for the companion animal and well-behaved companion animals, akin to a fatherhood role in providing care and guidance. Companion animal masculinity includes elements of being a good provider, drawing on the breadwinner aspect of hegemonic masculinity, and includes having financial means to provide quality food, veterinary care, space, and shelter. This also means being present in the companion animal's life, and actions which may result in letting down the companion animal, and breaking trust in his consistent presence, such as drug use or criminal offences, are to be avoided. Being a good

provider in this context means providing time and genuine affection, and being emotionally open in reciprocating the unconditional love and acceptance of the companion animal. Inherent in companion animal masculinity is the willingness and ability to be emotionally vulnerable and confide feelings with trust, as the companion animal places trust in their human companion.

Companion animal masculinity as a particular masculinity is evidence of the nuanced and contradictory nature of the construction and performance of masculinity. It also underscores Connell's (2002, 2005) assertions about the importance of context in the performance of masculinity, for example, what is deemed appropriate in one setting, such as crying in front of a companion animal, is deemed less than masculine in a different setting, such as in front of an intimate partner. Companion animal masculinity also stands in contrast to the perception of abusive men in the literature linking IPV and animal abuse. Abusive men are (perhaps unintentionally) portrayed as calculating, controlling, and willing to use animal abuse in the commission of their abuse of their intimate partner. Companion animal masculinity shows that while men can be abusive towards their intimate partners, it does not necessarily mean that they will be abusive towards animals in their lives; again, illustrating the complicated and contextual nature of performance of masculinity.

Implications of the Current Study

This study begins to fill a gap in the literature on IPV and abuse against companion animals in addressing the voice of the men in the relationships. This study is unique in that it does not focus exclusively on animal maltreatment. The existing literature overwhelmingly focuses on the woman's experience, the connection between IPV and animal abuse, the strength of her relationship with her companion animals, and how this relationship may represent a barrier to exiting the abusive relationship (e.g., Ascione et al., 2007; Barrett et al., 2017; Faver &

Strand, 2003; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007). The men who abuse the companion animals have been addressed in the research, though not in a focused way as the subjects of research. Men who have committed IPV and who may have very close relationships with the pets and do not engage in animal mistreatment, are not addressed at all. When men are included in this body of research, the focus is on men who do abuse animals rather than on those who do not (Ascione & Blakelock, 2003; Febres et al., 2014; Haden et al., 2018). This has resulted in an unwitting caricature of men in this specific body of research as ones who abuse both their partners and companion animals in the relationships. Through interviewing both perpetrators of IPV and non-abusive men, and focusing on their relationships with companion animals, this study further challenges the unintentional essentialization of abusive men in the literature on IPV, illustrating that men can and do have positive relationships with animals in their lives.

The fact that men who commit IPV can have very close relationships with companion animals has important policy implications, in particular, for domestic violence intervention programs. Existing intervention programs for abusive men have limited demonstrated effectiveness (Babcock, Green, & Robie, 2004; Bohall, Bautista, & Musson, 2016; Holdsworth, Bowen, Brown, & Howat, 2014; Waller, 2016). Many of the current DVIPs are based on the Duluth model, incorporating the Power and Control Wheel (Figure 1) which emphasizes male power and control as the root of IPV. Schrock and Padavic (2007) explain that the goal of Duluth-based intervention programs is “to change men from patriarchal authoritarians bent on controlling women into pro-feminist men. Doing so [...] will mitigate participants’ violence” (p. 626). However, this ‘blame and shame’ philosophy of highlighting bad behaviour and the program requirement of taking responsibility for their abuse (Bohall et al., 2016; Curwood, DeGeer, Hymmen, & Lehmann, 2011; Gondolf, 2002; Schrock & Padavic, 2007; Stuart et al.,

2007) is a negative way to approach counselling, especially if the goal is to effect substantial shifts in thinking and behaviour.

Incorporating relationships with companion animals into DVIPs may be a way to introduce a positive masculinity into the program, as a contrast to the focus on negative masculinity. Both Simmons and Lehmann (2010) and Curwood et al. (2011) argue for a strengths-based approach to intervention programs, which begins from a positive place, building on strengths to effect change as opposed to an exclusive focus on weaknesses. Simmons and Lehmann (2010) state that “although an unpopular idea with many in the family violence field, it is entirely possible that domestic violence perpetrators possess some characteristics and/or exhibit some behaviors that are, in fact, redeeming” (p. 235). In Curwood et al.’s (2011) evaluation of intake assessments for 42 men mandated to attend a DVIP, they found that 67% of the men pointed to the importance of children and family members. Positive relationships with companion animals can be considered a redeeming characteristic of men who have committed IPV, and as evidenced in this study, some men consider their companion animals family members. Some of the men who were involved with the criminal justice system cited their companion animals as reasons to change and ‘stay out of trouble’. Shifting to a strengths-based approach which includes attention to the positive relationships with animals could improve intervention program outcomes by drawing on relationships with companion animals as positive reasons to change their behaviour. Men may be more receptive to suggestions for change in their intimate relationships when they feel that they are not being shamed into change.

Citing the heterogeneity of abusers, Simmons and Lehmann (2010) also argue against a ‘one-size fits-all’ approach to intervention programs. This is a recommendation from the current research as well. The existing research on IPV and animal abuse would suggest that attention to

animal abuse be incorporated into DVIPs. Not all men have positive relationships with companion animals, and research shows that *some* men abuse both their intimate partners and their animals. However, as the current research shows, even if there is abuse in the intimate relationship, it does not mean that the man has abusive or negative relationships with companion animals in their lives. Therefore, embedding an assumption that men who abuse their intimate partners also abuse their companion animals would be inappropriate in a DVIP. Developing modules reflective of the different relationships with companion animals is one way to address the heterogeneity among abusive men. Screening for animal abuse and relationships with companion animals during the intake and evaluation process for DVIPs can help to place program participants in the most appropriate program – one addressing abusive relationships with animals in addition to partner abuse or one incorporating the positive relationships with companion animals in their lives. Simmons and Lehmann (2010) state that “incorporating ideas related to heterogeneity has the potential to accurately identify individual difference in causes of violent and abusive behavior while also helping each domestic violence offender tap into the positive aspects of themselves in a manner that can facilitate lasting change” (p. 235). Not only would having separate modules for different relationships with companion animals address animals as victims of IPV, it would also incorporate a strengths-based approach into the intervention program.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study added to the literature on masculinities in a particular context – relationships with companion animals. While human-animal relationships and masculinity have been addressed to a limited degree, this has mainly been through survey research with preconstructed dimensions of masculinity and femininity (Kidd & Kidd, 1980; Prato-Previde et al., 2006; Ramirez, 2006; Vollum et al., 2004). By soliciting the voices of men

themselves, and their narratives about their relationships, this study presents a unique contribution to the literature on masculinity and relationships with companion animals. The findings illustrate how relationships with companion animals both incorporate and transgress norms of hegemonic masculinity. Norms related to hegemonic masculinity were performed in a socially positive way, via providing the physical requirements like food, shelter, and veterinary care. The provision of emotional requirements to their companion animal, as well as breaking the 'don't cry' rule of hegemonic masculinity, provided a softer and more sensitive masculinity. Together, this shows how doing gender related to hegemonic masculine norms does not necessarily have to be negative, especially in contrast to the literature showing the damaging and harmful nature of masculinity in the IPV literature (K. L. Anderson & Umberson, 2001; Hearn, 1998; Kaufman, 1987; Wood, 2004).

Limitations of Current Research

As with any research, there are limitations to the current study. While some of the methodological limitations are discussed in Chapter 4, they bear repeating here. Inaccurate memories and difficulty with recall are inherent limitations with self-report and retrospective studies, and may have been an issue in the recounting of both incidents of IPV as well as underreporting of animal mistreatment. Subjectivity of the researcher can be considered a limitation in some studies, however, this can be addressed via transparency of research decisions and open reflexivity. Engaging in reflexive practice via memoing during transcription and analysis enabled a critical evaluation of my own subjectivity and positionality in the research process. Rather than attempting to limit subjectivity of the researcher, the active interview embraces subjectivity, and required remaining attentive to my position and perspective as an active participant in the research process.

My gender may have had an impact on the disclosures and framing of the accounts and narratives presented by the participants. It is possible that a male interviewer would have heard a different narrative from the participants in this study. While that does not present a limitation per se, the role of gender does need to be acknowledged as a component of the current study. A male interviewer may have gotten a more masculine narrative and performance from the participants, whereas they may have felt more free with me as a woman to engage in more emotional disclosures. For example, the breach of the masculine norm about crying may not have occurred with a male interviewer as Kimmel (2008) notes that men police the masculine performances of other men, which circumscribes the available or acceptable performances. The fact that I am a woman may have contributed to participants like Rudolpho (IA) and Jesse (PA) feeling comfortable enough to let their guard down and cry during the interview. Comack (2008) argues the same strength of her gender in comparison to her male participants, in reflecting that the few occasions in which men cried during the interviews would not have happened if the interviewer had been male. On the other hand, being a woman may have limited disclosures of animal mistreatment. Participants might have been more comfortable relating animal harm to another man, perhaps with the impression that the behaviour would be perceived with less judgement and more acceptance by a male interviewer than a female interviewer.

The sample size is small at 21 participants, however, this is comparable to other in-depth qualitative studies with abusive men such as Comack (2008) (n = 19), Scott Tilley and Brackley (2005) (n = 16), Wood (2004) (n = 22), and Stamp and Sabourin (1995) (n = 15). With such a small and purposive sample, the results are not generalizable to a broader population, though this was not the goal of the current research. This study was exploratory, examining an under-researched area at the intersection of IPV and treatment of companion animals – the voices and

perspectives of men. The sample in the current study was drawn from specific populations. The first population was men who had received a sentence of incarceration to be served at a provincial correctional centre, who had conflict in their intimate relationship, and who had a companion animal during their relationship. The second population was men who were completing a DVIP or anger management program for commission of IPV and who had companion animals in their relationship. The third population was much broader and consisted of men with no reported abuse in their intimate relationship and who had a companion animal during their relationship. Given the rationale of the current study, these groups, though small, were appropriate to address the research questions.

Challenges in recruitment contributed to the small sample size. The incarcerated sample was limited by the MCSCS imposed condition that participants must have been sentenced at the time of the interview. Given that the population of the provincial institution I was granted access to was primarily remand (held awaiting trial), this limited the number of potential participants. Confidentiality and privacy concerns prevented an in-person presentation to the DVIP and anger management program participants. As such, there is no way to know if the program facilitators accurately described the research study to the DVIP group members or distributed the letters of invitations to group members, which may have impacted recruitment. There is also the possibility that the program facilitator was not liked, and this may have negatively coloured any invitations distributed by him in the eyes of the participants. Other scholars, such as Velonis (2016) and Mansley (2009) have noted similar difficulties in engaging abusive men in research studies.

Another limitation is that men who volunteered to participate may be substantively different than those who did not, and given the lack of animal abuse in the sample, this is likely.

Research with women survivors of IPV suggests that at least some of my sample would have reported animal mistreatment in the context of IPV, though no one did. It could be that the only participants to volunteer were those with positive relationships with companion animals, which skewed the results. Framing the research around relationships with intimate partners and any companion animals they may have had, and deliberately leaving out any mention of animal abuse, was an attempt to mitigate the self-selection bias slanted towards those with positive relationships with companion animals. Nonetheless, there is no way to know if this strategy was effective or the degree to which those who volunteered to participate were different from those who did not.

There are also the joined issues of social desirability and underreporting of abusive acts. It is well documented that men tend to underreport frequency and severity of IPV (Hattery, 2009; Heckert & Gondolf, 2000), and low reporting rates have also been observed in regards to animal abuse (DeGue & DiLillo, 2009; Jorgensen & Maloney, 1999; Levitt et al., 2016). It may be that men underreported the extent of their own abusive behaviour towards their intimate partners and companion animals. Generally, cruelty to companion animals is an offence that warrants moral social outrage (Nik Taylor & Signal, 2009; Vollum et al., 2004), and it could be that men in the study deliberately did not reveal mistreatment of animals in order to maintain a degree of social desirability.

There is another limitation connected to underreporting of abusive behaviour. The recruitment advertisements for non-abusive community participants specifically stated a criterion for participation as the absence of abuse in the intimate relationship, but there remains a possibility that some men in this group may have engaged in IPV. The categorization of participants into the non-abusive group was done through self-report. Prompts and questions

were used to elicit verbal or physical incidences of IPV, and no participant recruited from the community shared commission of IPV. If the participant had committed IPV, omissions of abuse may have been deliberate on the part of the participant, or they may not have understood or recognized their behaviour as abusive.

Future Directions

A question that remains unaddressed in this research is whether a relation between the severity of abuse against the female partner and the commission of abuse against pets exists. Other research, such as Barrett et al. (2017) and Simmons and Lehmann (2007), would suggest that there is, though this is based on the perspective of the women in the relationships as well as from using quantitative methods. Flynn (2000b, 2000a) and Fitzgerald (2005) approached IPV and animal abuse from a qualitative framework, and both found that women perceived similarities in the motivations for the abuse against them and the motivations for abuse against their companion animals. Future research should examine differences between men who have committed IPV and abused animals and those who have not. The challenge would be identification and recruitment of the men who have been abusive towards animals, as this has proven difficult for research in the past (Stevenson, 2012).

Two men in this study, Drew (PA) and Stuart (NA) reported that they were the victims of physical abuse at the hands of their intimate partners. Women survivors of IPV note the support that their companion animals provide in dealing with their victimization as well as the instrumental nature of threats and harm to the companion animal (Faver & Strand, 2007; Fitzgerald et al., n.d.; Loring & Bolden-Hines, 2004; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007). Do these same trends in positive support and instrumental abuse hold true when the victims are male and the abusers are female? Future research should explore the experiences of male survivors of IPV

and the role that companion animals played in both their victimization and dealing with the abuse by their partner.

Based on the policy recommendations of the current study, future research should also include a comparative program evaluation between a DVIP which incorporates positive relationships with animals (a more strengths-based approach), and the traditional ‘blame and shame’ approach. Mansley (2009) suggests that focus groups, as opposed to individual interviews, could be revealing in research with abusive men, as “so much of treatment occurs in a group setting, insights obtained by listening to men interact in a group setting would be beneficial” (p. 177). A comparative program evaluation should include focus groups to capture the interactional dynamic, interviews to allow for more confidential disclosures, and recidivism measures to gauge effectiveness of the programs.

Conclusion

The value of this research lies in its contribution to a better understanding of the perspectives of men who commit IPV, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of IPV. The findings show companion animals, who are increasingly being considered members of the family and with whom relationships are highly valued, hold important roles in intimate relationships with both with and without IPV, though specifically in relationships with IPV companion animals act as protectors, inhibitors, or conscience. These findings have important policy implications, namely in the modification and improvement of DVIPs to reflect these positive relationships with companion animals through a strengths-based approach.

The current research also illustrates a companion animal masculinity, in which men access hegemonic norms as well as more transgressive sensitive and emotional masculinity in their relationships with companion animals. Sanders (1993) made this observation about the dog

owners in his research: “The chief pleasure they derived from the animal-human relationship was the joy of relating to another being who consistently demonstrated love – a feeling for the other that was honestly felt and displayed and not contingent on the personal attributes or even the actions of the human other” (p. 218). The participants in the current study, whether they were abusive towards their partner or not, would echo this sentiment.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Companion animals are increasingly becoming part of our families, and the majority of homes in North America now include at least one companion animal (American Pet Products Association, 2018; Oliveira, 2014). One body of research has shown that both men and women have close relationships with companion animals (Irvine, 2013; Prato-Previde et al., 2006; Ramirez, 2006; Sanders, 1993), while another body of research shows that companion animals are the targets of threats and harm in connection to IPV perpetrated by men (Ascione et al., 2007; Barrett et al., 2017; Flynn, 2000a; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007). Most of the research at the intersection of IPV and animal abuse has used the perspective of the women survivors in the abusive relationships. This perspective is essential to establish effective programs and services for survivors of IPV, to understand the impacts of the abuse of a companion animal on their human companions, and to begin to understand the complexity of relationships with IPV. However, it is one perspective – the perspective of the abuser in the relationship is generally missing in this literature. This study has attempted to address this gap in knowledge through asking both men who have committed IPV as well as men with no reported abuse in their intimate relationships about companion animals in their lives.

Unlike previous quantitative research with abusive men in the area of IPV and animal abuse which primarily used established survey instruments such as the CTS2 (Ascione & Blakelock, 2003; Febres et al., 2014; Haden et al., 2018), the current research sought the qualitative narratives of both abusive and non-abusive men. Active interviews were conducted with 21 men, eight of whom reported no IPV in their relationships, and thirteen men who were abusive towards their intimate partners recruited from an incarcerated population and a domestic

violence intervention program. A narrative analysis was used to address the four research questions which guided this study.

The first research question was ‘what is the role of companion animals in the lives of men?’ A connected question centred around potential differences between abusive and non-abusive men in their attitudes towards and relationships with companion animals. The relationships with companion animals ranged along a continuum from disinterest to relationships in which the companion animals were described as just like children. Interestingly, there was no discernable difference in how relationships with animals were conceptualized between the abusive and non-abusive men. Mainly under the theme of *Love and Loyalty*, companion animals offered unconditional love and loyalty to men, which stood in contrast to the perceived conditionality of the love and affection from their intimate partners. This finding challenges the essentialization of abusive men in the literature on IPV and animal abuse. The focus is overwhelmingly on men who abuse both their intimate partners and animals in the relationship (via the perspective of women survivors), with very little attention to men who do not abuse the companion animals. This limited attention unintentionally creates the impression that men who abuse their partners also abuse animals, which the current research challenges through showing that men who have committed IPV as well as men with no reported IPV can and do have very close relationships with companion animals. It also points to the potential problems associated with using the treatment of animals as a simplistic predictor of how abusive a man is: the absence of animal abuse in a relationship does not necessarily mean that IPV is absent as well.

The second question was ‘what is the role of companion animals in the construction and performance of masculinity?’ Companion animals, and relationships with companion animals, were a resource which participants drew upon in the construction and performance of their

masculinity. In the current study, a particular form of masculinity, companion animal masculinity, emerged from the narratives of participants. Companion animal masculinity draws on hegemonic norms of masculinity, for example evidencing ‘toughness’ through having a big, aggressive dog. Companion animal masculinity also incorporates a softer masculinity in which emotional vulnerability is more acceptable with the companion animal, such as crying in front of the animal and having complete trust in the animal. Hegemonic masculinity is reflected in the literature on the human-animal relationship including sport hunting (Kheel, 2008; Luke, 2007), meat consumption (Adams, 2000; Sobal, 2005), and companion animals (Lie, 2017; Maher & Pierpoint, 2011), while other research shows a more sensitive masculinity in relation to companion animals (Irvine, 2013; Sanders, 1993). Companion animal masculinity is an example of how complicated, contradictory, and nuanced the performance of masculinity can be.

Addressed under the theme of *Aggression and Conflict*, the final question focused on whether the presence of the companion animal aggravated or mitigated the abuse towards the partner, in short, what was the role the companion animals played in conflict between intimate partners? No participant reported engaging in mistreatment of companion animals in connection with abuse against their intimate partner. Instead, companion animals took on the roles of protectors of the intimate partner and other family members, and as inhibitors to the escalation to physical abuse. There were also some companion animals who would avoid the conflict between the man and his intimate partner, and participants mentioned the negative emotional effects arguments had on the companion animals. The interesting finding was that the participants tended to be more concerned about upsetting their companion animals than they were about their intimate partner being upset, illustrative of the close relationship with companion animals.

It was in relation to the question about conflict in which several participants reported being victims of IPV at the hands of their female partners. Within the broader literature on IPV there is a debate around perpetration. The gender asymmetry position, mainly held by feminist scholars like DeKeseredy (2011) and Dobash and Dobash (1979), argues that men are the primary aggressors, and that IPV is grounded in patriarchal power and control. The gender symmetry position holds that men and women are equally abusive in relationships, and is supported by scholars like Straus (2005, 2009b, 2011) and Dutton (2006, 2012). With participant revelations of verbal and physical aggression by their female partners, and the combination of their own commission of abuse against their intimate partners, this study is positioned at the nexus of this debate. The bi-directional nature of the abuse in some of the relationships situates part of this study in the gender symmetry camp, however, the narratives of the men who reference hegemonic norms around power, control, authority, and domination position another part of this research with the gender asymmetry position. The current findings raise questions about how companion animals are incorporated into relationships in which one or both partners use aggression during conflicts. Exploring how companion animals factor into these relationships is an area for future research.

A potential critique that could be leveled at the current research is that a focus on the voices of men takes the focus away from the victims in abusive relationships. Wood (2004), Hearn (1998), Peralta and Tuttle (2013), and Anderson (2005) all argue that a focus on male perspective does not detract from female perspective in relationships with IPV. In order to stop the violence, we need to understand the perpetrators of violence. Wood (2004) asserts that “more effective strategies of intervention may not be possible until and unless some effort is made to understand the perspectives of men who commit intimate partner violence” (p. 556). Peralta and

Tuttle (2013) suggest that “multifaceted efforts thus hold promise for enhancing our understanding of IPV” (p. 256); understanding relationships with companion animals in the context of IPV from the perspective of men is one of those facets.

Reflecting the sentiments of many of the men in the current study, Mark’s (PA) words sum up the importance of companion animals,

I can tell him anything. Hopes, dreams, uh, fantasies of my own house with a picket fence and two cars, American dream and such, but uh, in the end, um, I’m glad that he can’t talk with others, that he is just for me kind of thing...I hope that someday my family and I will have that same amount of respect that there are vulnerable moments that you can tell somebody else without fear, without reprisal, without judgement.

Mark’s words speak to the positive relationship with companion animals, as well as the desire to have a similar relationship with his family. It is in this space where opportunity for true change exists. Listening to the voices of men will help to facilitate this change.

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APPENDIX A: SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Demographics

1. Tell me about yourself.
 - a. Age?
 - b. Offence that brought you to jail?
 - c. Education?
 - d. Family?
 - e. Employment?
 - f. Leisure activities?
 - g. Relationship with partner?
 - h. Pets?
2. What kind of guy are you?

Romantic Partners

3. Tell me about your relationship.
 - a. How did you two meet?
 - b. How long was your relationship?
 - c. What activities did you do together?
 - d. What was something that you like(d) about your partner?
4. What kinds of things would you and your partner argue about?
5. When conflict arose in your relationship, how would you handle it?
 - a. Talk it out?
 - b. Yell and shout?
 - c. With physical violence?
 - d. With emotional or psychological aggression?
 - e. Not deal with it?
6. Have you or your partner ever:
 - a. Said things that you know would hurt your partner's feelings?
 - i. Example: fat, ugly, stupid, bad in bed
 - b. Shouted or yelled at your partner?
 - c. Pushed or shoved your partner?

- d. Hurt or threatened your pet/your partner's pet?
 - i. Example: kicked, hit, punched, burned, shot pet, threats to kill pet, to get rid of pet, to stop feeding pet, leave outside in inappropriate conditions, refuse veterinary care
 - e. Threatened your partner?
 - i. Example: to withhold money, to hurt them/others, with an object/weapon
 - f. Hit, kicked, or punched your partner?
 - g. Threw something or broke something during an argument with your partner?
 - i. Example: threw something at them, smash a favoured item of theirs
 - h. Threatened or physically forced your partner to have sex?
7. When you and your partner would argue, what would your pet(s) do?
- a. Were they around?
 - b. Did they get involved in argument?
 - i. Get in between you and partner?
 - ii. Vocalize?
 - iii. Pick sides?
8. What would you do after the conflict(s)?
- a. Go to separate rooms?
9. What would your ideal relationship look like?
10. What would your ideal partner be like?
11. Would you describe yourself as partner?
- a. Good or bad?
 - b. Why?

Companion Animals

12. What kinds of animals(s) did you have? (closed – allowing respondent to contextualize companion animals/pets for themselves)
- a. Any other animals in the home? (drawing out subjective definition of pet)
13. Tell me about your pet(s). (open – narratively positioned in the context of a relationship)
- a. Where did you get your pet?
 - b. How long did you have your pet(s)?
 - c. What did you like best about your pet(s)?

- d. What is your favourite memory of your pet(s)?
 - e. What kinds of things did you do together?
14. When your pet did something that you did not like, how would you handle it?
- a. Discipline techniques?
 - b. Yelling and getting angry?
 - c. Ignore it?
 - d. Never did anything wrong? (point to challenge)
15. If there was physical violence in your relationship with your partner, were you ever physical towards your pet? (closed)
16. If yes, describe a situation where you became physical with your pet(s). (Clarification: outside of disciplinary actions)
- a. Kicked?
 - b. Hit? Hit with object?
 - c. Thrown?
 - d. Throw objects at pet?
17. Looking back at this incident, what would you describe as your reason(s) for becoming physical (insert manner of treatment) with your pet?
- a. Frustration? With partner?
 - b. Stress relief?
 - c. Just happened to be there?
18. How did you feel after this incident?
- a. Less stressed or frustrated?
 - b. Guilty?
 - c. Powerful? In control?
 - d. Bad?
19. What did you do after this incident?
20. How did your partner react to this incident? (Clarification: were they present? How did they find out about incident if not present?)
- a. Angry?
 - b. Upset?
 - c. Indifferent?

21. What would your ideal pet be?
 - a. Why?

Closing Questions

22. Is there anything that you would like to share that I have not asked about?
23. Is there anything that you would like to talk more about?
24. Is there anything that you would like to ask about my research or your participation?

Debrief Questions

25. How are you feeling right now?
 - a. How does this compare to where you were at the beginning of the interview?
26. What are your plans when you get out (post-release plans)?
 - a. *Note:* this question has been used successfully by the researcher in previous research to focus incarcerated participants on hopeful thinking and positive future events.

APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT SCRIPT (COMMUNITY NON-ABUSIVE GROUP)**Title of Posting:** Invitation to Participate in Research

I am a PhD Candidate looking for men who have not been abusive towards a romantic partner and who currently have or had pets while in an intimate relationship with a woman to participate in a confidential interview as part of my research titled *The Role of Companion Animals in Relationships with Intimate Partner Violence*.

The interview will last approximately one hour. In this interview, you will be asked to openly discuss your opinions and attitudes about animals. You will be asked to talk about what role the animals played in your relationship with your partner.

The goal of this research is to gain a better understanding of the role pets play in relationships with intimate partner violence. By gathering the perspective of men *who have not been abusive* towards a partner, this information can be used to improve the treatment and counselling of intimate partner violence offenders.

Your participation is very important and will help in the prevention of domestic violence. I sincerely hope that you will volunteer to share your opinions and experiences with me. As a gesture of appreciation for your time, I will be giving you a \$20 gift card to your choice of Tim Horton's or Starbucks.

Please contact me for more information about the research, or to express interest in participating.

Rochelle Stevenson, PhD Candidate, University of Windsor

Phone: (226)XXX-XXXX

Email: rsresearch@uwindsor.ca

APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT LETTER (DVIP AND ANGER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM)

Invitation to Participate in Research

Conducted by Rochelle Stevenson, PhD Candidate, University of Windsor

What is the topic?

The title of the study is *The Role of Companion Animals in Relationships with Intimate Partner Violence*. I am interested in learning about your relationships with any pets or any animals that you have or had in your relationship.

Who can participate?

You can participate if you have or had an animal (or animals), owned by either yourself or your partner, during your relationship.

What would I be asked do?

Participate in a confidential interview lasting approximately one hour. In this interview, you will be asked to discuss openly and honestly your opinions and attitudes about animals. In addition, you will be asked to talk about what role the animals played within your relationship.

Participation is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate, you will not suffer any consequences. If you decide to participate, you can refuse to answer any questions during the interview. You can withdraw at any time during the interview, and anything you have said prior to that point will not be used in the research.

What about confidentiality?

What you say in the interview will remain strictly confidential, and your responses will not be linked with you in any way. Any identifying information (such as your name or names of others in your life) will be changed to protect your identity in the final report.

The only exception to confidentiality would be if you revealed that you were intending to harm yourself, another person, or an animal. In this case, only the information regarding the specific harm would be shared with the appropriate authorities. Everything else you have said would remain confidential.

What are the risks?

This can be a sensitive subject, so there is a risk that the interview may bring up uncomfortable emotions. You will be provided with a list of free and low-cost resources at the end of the interview.

What are the benefits?

Your participation is very important and will help in better understanding the man's perspective. The goal is to use this information to help prevent domestic violence in the future and improve the treatment and counselling of intimate partner violence offenders.

How about compensation for my time?

You will be provided with a \$20 gift card to your choice of Tim Horton's or Starbucks in appreciation for your participation.

Who do I contact to participate?

Rochelle Stevenson, PhD Candidate, University of Windsor

Phone: (226) XXX-XXXX

Email: rsresearch@uwindsor.ca

Please contact me directly, and we can schedule a confidential interview.

Your participation is very important and will help in the prevention of domestic violence. I sincerely hope that you will volunteer to share your opinions and experiences with me.

Rochelle Stevenson, MA, PhD Candidate (Sociology), University of Windsor

APPENDIX D: RECRUITMENT SCRIPT (INCARCERATED PARTICIPANTS)

I'd like to invite you to participate in a research study looking at the role of pets in the context of relationships – with your girlfriend, fiancée, or wife – with conflict. This could be physical conflict involving things like hitting, or verbal conflict where you had a lot of fights. I'm particularly interested in learning about any pets or any animals that you may have had while in this relationship prior to coming to jail.

What I am interested in is your perspective, your experience. I want to hear what you have to say about your relationships. My goal is to use this information to help prevent domestic violence and improve the treatment and counselling for individuals who have experience with domestic violence.

You are invited to participate in a confidential interview lasting approximately one hour. In this interview, you will be asked to discuss openly and honestly your opinions and attitudes about animals. In addition, I will ask you to talk about what role the animals played within your relationship. Your participation is very important and will help in the prevention of domestic violence.

Participation is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate, there will not be any consequences. Also, if you decide to participate, you can refuse to answer any questions during the interview. You can stop the interview at any time, and anything you've said prior to that point will not be used in the research.

I understand that this is a sensitive subject. There is a risk that the interview may bring up uncomfortable emotions.

Even though the prison staff will know that you and I are speaking, they will not know what we talk about during the interview. What we say in the interview will be confidential, and

your responses will not be linked with you in any way. An exception to this confidentiality would be if you revealed to me that you were intending to harm yourself or another person. In this case, only the information regarding the specific harm would be shared with the prison management. Everything else you have contributed would remain confidential.

I am hoping to conduct interviews with 10 volunteers. In order to be eligible to participate, you need to have had an animal (or animals), owned by either yourself or your partner, during your relationship. If you would like to participate, you may sign up at the desk and we will schedule an interview at a time that is good for both of us.

Do you have any questions about my research?

Are there any questions about my research that I have not answered?

Thank you very much for your time!

VITA AUCTORIS

Rochelle Stevenson was born in 1975 in Oakville, Ontario. She received her BA (1st Class Honours) degree in Criminology from Simon Fraser University in 2009. Rochelle was awarded the Gordon M. Shrum Gold Medal Convocation Award from Simon Fraser University, noting her high academic achievement and her involvement and leadership in the university community. Rochelle earned her Master's Degree in Criminology from the University of Ottawa in 2012, where her thesis examining companion animals in the lives of men who had committed violence against their intimate partners was nominated for an award for outstanding research. She is currently completing her PhD in Sociology at the University of Windsor, where her dissertation expands the research with men who have companion animals and who have also abused an intimate partner.