

# **Violence against Women**

Criminological perspectives on  
men's violences

**Nicole Westmarland**

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men's violences

*Nicole Westmarland*

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# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women is an enduring problem around the globe, yet very few books look at the full range of men's violences against women – perpetrated in relationships, in the family, in public spaces, and in institutions. While books that look at different types of violence, such as domestic violence, 'honour'-based violence and rape in isolation are useful for depth, it is only by looking across these different spheres that the true extent of men's violences against women becomes clear. This book usefully covers all of the main forms of violence against women, looking at them from a research, policy and practice perspective.

Including discussion of 15 different types of violence against women, this book is original in offering an introduction to such a broad range of topics, and for including chapters on violences that have rarely been written about, as well as those that are more commonly discussed and those that have been sidelined in recent years. By bringing together work on violence against women committed by partners, family members, strangers, acquaintances, institutions and businesses, this book widens the lens through which we view men's violences against women.

*Violence against Women* is essential reading for criminologists and sociologists who want to be up to date with the latest knowledge on this topic. It is also an invaluable text for those training to enter or become qualified in the specialist domestic and sexual violence sector.

**Nicole Westmarland** is Professor of Criminology at Durham University and Director of the Durham Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse. She has held a number of policy, practice and activist roles alongside her academic career, including Chair of Rape Crisis (England and Wales) and Special Advisor to the House of Commons Joint Committee on Human Rights for its Inquiry into Violence against Women and Girls.

'Nicole Westmarland's book *Violence Against Women* is clear, systematic, practical and devoted: it comprises the researcher's intensive experience in the field both as an academic and as an activist. Therefore it is able to offer the most recent, detailed research information, as well as descriptions about the policy-relevant "best practices". The book is very suitable both for students in the field of criminology and those interested in the phenomena more generally. Its systematic character also makes it of value to researchers and PhD students.'

**Suvi Ronkainen**, *Professor in Research Methodology, University of Lapland, Finland*

'*Violence against Women* documents the extent and dynamics of male violence across a broad spectrum of private, family and public life. In 15 chapters, each devoted to a form of male violence, Professor Westmarland makes a convincing case that the same gender analysis that guides our response to physical, psychological and sexual violence by partners applies equally well to child sexual abuse, violence against parents and the elderly and to the abuse cultivated by celebrity culture, in residential care homes and in educational institutions.

Drawing on the latest research, Westmarland documents the oft-noted gap between the extent of male violence and the current policies, laws and programs she describes. Like the best of feminist criminology, the book is as passionate as it is scholarly. Westmarland puts flesh on the barebones data through heart-rending accounts from victims. Meanwhile, her analyses of current events such as the Jimmy Saville crimes and the massive abuse of adult and child residents at Nottingham and Rotherham makes the book as current as the latest headlines. I know no better introduction to violence against women in modern life.'

**Evan Stark**, *Emeritus Professor of Public Affairs and Public Health, Rutgers University, USA*

'An invaluable resource for those starting work in the sexual violence sector.'

**Lee Eggleston OBE**, *Chairwoman, Rape Crisis England & Wales, UK*

'Working and thinking with Nicole Westmarland is a challenging pleasure, she is always ready to make a leap outside feminist orthodoxies whilst fiercely maintaining a feminist perspective. This book will help you think about, and possibly re-think, what we know and do not know about violence against women and girls.'

**Liz Kelly**, *Roddick Chair on Violence Against Women, London Metropolitan University, UK*

'*Violence against Women* offers an excellent, informative overview of the types of gendered forms of violence and the environments in which they occur. The cutting-edge content underscores the importance of understanding the many facets of violence and invites each of us to act on it. Westmarland stresses the point that violence – in all its forms – is damaging not only to individuals but also to many components of the affected systems of support and protection. The didactic exposition of the material will be appreciated by its primary audience – university students and scholars. However, the book's clarity and accessibility will also make it a captivating resource for anyone interested in learning about the disconcerting variety of men's violence against woman, or anyone affected by its existence in their life.'

**Aisha K. Gill**, *Associate Professor in Criminology, University of Roehampton, UK*

This book is dedicated to the 148 women in the UK who have been killed through suspected male violence in 2014.

### **January**

Elsie Mowbray, aged 87.  
Sameena Zaman, aged 34.  
Sarah O'Neill, aged 22.  
Jacqueline Oakes, aged 51.  
Caroline Finnegan, aged 30.  
Elizabeth Thomas, age unknown.  
Milena Yuliyarov, aged 27.  
Karen Wild, age unknown.  
Maria Duque-Tunjano, aged 48.

### **February**

Clara Patterson, aged 82.  
Anon. for legal reasons, aged 47.  
Karolina Nowikiewicz, aged 25.  
Hollie Gazzard, aged 20.  
Leanne Meecham, aged 26.  
Christine Lee, aged 66.  
Lucy Lee, aged 40.  
Donna Graham, aged 51.  
Georgina Drinkwater, aged 30.  
Tracey Snook-Kite, aged 53.  
Mairead McCallion, aged 24.  
Sheila Wild, aged 49.  
Angela Humphrey, aged 48.

### **March**

Patricia Anne Durrant, aged 65.  
Sara Al Shourefi, aged 28.  
Becky Ayres, aged 24.  
Amandeep Kaur Hothi, aged 29.  
Kirsty Wright, aged 21.  
Rivka Holden, aged 55.  
Cherylee Shennan, aged 40.  
Naudel Turner, aged 42.  
Shereka Marsh, aged 15.  
Hazel North, aged 19.  
Tracy Walters, aged 48.  
Shirley Mercer, aged 43.  
Kanwal Azam, aged 35.  
Masha'al Albasman, aged 25.  
Val Forde, aged 45.

### **April**

Doreen Walker, aged 75.  
Senga Closs, aged 47.  
Kayleigh-Anne Palmer, aged 16.  
Sandra Boakes, aged 70.  
Yvette Hallsworth, aged 36.  
Isabelle Sanders, aged 51.  
Judith Nibbs, aged 60.  
Edna Fisher, aged 74.  
Pauline Butler, aged 61.  
Angela Smeaton, aged 50.  
Doreen Webb, aged 64.  
Elaine Duncan, aged 46.  
Malgorzata Dantes, aged 54.  
Ann Maguire, aged 61.  
Carol Dyson, aged 53.  
Susan Ashworth, aged 47.

### **May**

Natsnet Tekle Nahisi, aged 20.  
Angela Ward, aged 27.  
Jessica Watkins, aged 21.  
Tamara Holboll, aged 67.  
Hayley Stringer, aged 29.  
Emma Siswick, aged 37.  
Emma Mansell, aged 37.  
Eileen Glassford, aged 60.  
Wendy Ambrose, aged 77.  
Mary Craig, aged 43.  
Dorothy Beattie, aged 51.  
Tahira Ahmed, aged 38.  
Helen Dillon, aged 42.  
Rui Li, aged 44.  
Barbara Hobbs, aged 79.

### **June**

Yvonne Fox, aged 87.  
Margaret Evans, aged 69.  
Rebecca Bamber, aged 42.  
Madina Landsberg, aged 31.  
Francine Clark, aged 70.  
Jane Bartholomew, aged 39.

Denise Dunlop, aged 32.  
Nahid Al Manea, aged 31.  
Mingzi Yang, aged 29.  
Una Dorney, aged 87.  
Sheila Crout, aged 65.  
Luan Leigh, aged 42.  
Cynthia Beamond, aged 80.

### **July**

Sally Campion, aged 45.  
Quoi Chang, aged 50.  
Sharon Wall, aged 53.  
Sharon Winters, aged 39.  
Helen Dawson, aged 48.  
Susan Lancaster, aged 67.  
Michaela Heaton, aged 38.  
Bei Carter, aged 49.  
Nonita Karajavait, aged 24.  
Tia Kounota, age unknown.  
Eleanor Whitelaw, aged 85.

### **August**

Carol Bland, aged 62.  
Anayat Bibi, aged 39.  
Elizabeth Knott, aged 70.  
Sandra Talman, aged 62.  
Elaine Flanagan, aged 57.  
Shana Cover, aged 34.  
Rukshana Miah, aged 35.  
Lynn Howarth, aged 43.  
Alice Gross, aged 14.

### **September**

Meryl Parry, aged 81.  
Leighann Duffy, aged 26.  
Pennie Davis, aged 47.  
Glynis Bensley, aged 48.  
Palmira Silva, aged 82.  
Serena Hickey, age unknown.  
Karen Catherall, aged 45.  
Hannah Witheridge, aged 23.  
Dorothy Brown, aged 66.  
Nicola McKenzie, aged 37.  
Davinia Loynton, aged 59.

Lorna McCarthy, aged 50.  
Catherine McDonald, aged 57.

### **October**

Mariam Njie-Jallow, aged 37.  
Maria Mayes, aged 67.  
Melissa Mathieson, aged 18.  
Donna Eastwood, aged 26.  
Raheela Imran, aged 45.  
Daksha Lad, aged 44.  
Trisha Lad, aged 19.  
Nisha Lad, aged 16.  
Magdalena Welna, aged 23.

### **November**

Leann Foley, aged 32.  
Ann Cluysenaar (Jackson) aged 78.  
Clare Munro, aged 47.  
Margaret Tate, aged 63.  
Mary Tear, aged 88.  
Cerys Yemm, aged 22.  
Eni Mevish, aged 20.  
Jane Khalaf, aged 19.  
Deborah Ruse, age unknown.  
Nicola Langtree, aged 44.  
Valerie Davison, aged 59.  
Lydia Pascale, aged 26.  
Gillian Kettyle, aged 54.  
Brenda Davidson, aged 72.

### **December**

Sannah Javed, aged 26.  
Andrea Carr, aged 23.  
Luciana Maurer, aged 23.  
Yvonne Tapp, aged 58.  
Carol Ruddy, aged 54.  
Alison Morrison, aged 45.  
Michelle Grey, aged 42.  
Carol-Anne Taggart, age unknown.  
Julie Mercer, aged 47.  
Sameen Imam, aged 34.  
Hawa Mohamed Abdullah, aged 40.  
Sandra Brotherton, aged 60.  
Nadine Aburas, aged 28.

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When I started this book – too long ago to admit to – my lovely husband Scott was still alive. He was my rock – he stayed home to care for our baby so I could return to work, he cooked my tea for me and he got me un-lost on too many occasions to remember. I wish he were here to see it completed.



# FOREWORD

In beginning this book, my intention was to join up some of the dots between different forms of men's violences against women. There are many existing books that deal with different forms of violence against women, but there are few recently published books that explicitly make visible the connections between them. It is only through making these connections that the full extent of men's violences against women becomes clear. This book is based on men's violences against women in England and Wales – if this were extended regionally or globally the connections would be seen even more boldly, and even more connections would emerge.

## Invisible connections and the deafening silence

Italian scholar Patrizia Romito has highlighted the invisibility of these connections in her 2008 book *A Deafening Silence*, and this and her theorization of how men's violences can continue to be endemic in modern society act as the foundations to this book. She describes six 'tactics' that are used to support two 'strategies' that operate to hide male violence against women and children. She does acknowledge that talk of 'tactics' and 'strategies' makes male violence sound more 'organized' and less complex than it actually is, and explains that she is not suggesting that these strategies are followed consciously but rather that they are institutionalized in a range of ways.

The six tactics Romito identifies that operate to hide male violence are:

- 1 *euphemizing* – using language to hide the centrality of male violence against women and refusing to make the male visible in male violence;
- 2 *dehumanising* – allowing people to distance themselves from acts of cruelty and suffering;

- 3 *blaming* – for example the way some forms of therapy shift the blame on to women, the way that women are taught from an early age to mediate their behaviour to prevent men from doing ‘stupid things’ and the way mothers are blamed for failing to protect their children;
- 4 *psychologising* – where a political issue is personalized and individualized, for example by saying that a perpetrator is ill and in need of treatment rather than punishment;
- 5 *naturalizing* – put forward by some socio-biologists and evolutionary psychologists, for example the suggestion that rape is the product of hormones that men cannot suppress; and
- 6 *separating* – by separating and distinguishing between different forms of men’s violences against women the continuity of the acts is hidden; in particular the group of perpetrators is hidden.

The two strategies that these hiding tactics support are *legitimizing* and *denying*. Legitimizing works by not defining an act or behaviour as violence, meaning that it is visible and does not need to be hidden. Romito uses the example of male violence being tolerated when it is against women that are seen as the man’s property, including crimes of ‘honour’ and prostitution. Denying is used when a society no longer allows the legitimizing strategy. Denying can take many forms, but ‘[t]he most direct form consists simply of not seeing the violence and its consequences’ (Romito, 2008: 95). Romito gives the example of attributing another meaning to what has happened – so, it is denied that rape is violence and instead it is seen as ‘seduction, passion, hot sex and so on’ (p. 95). It is denial that Romito puts forward as the most important, as the ‘strategy *par excellence* ... the principal social strategy to hide male violence’ (p. 122).

## The importance of feminism

In the 1970s a series of national conferences were held near the beginning of the resurgence of organized feminism – the ‘second wave’ women’s liberation movement. ‘Seven demands’ started their development at a conference in Oxford in 1970 and were extended to include violence against women at the National Women’s Liberation Conference in 1978 in Birmingham. The ‘second wave’ asserted women’s right to define their own sexuality and demanded:

- 1 equal pay for equal work;
- 2 equal education and job opportunities;
- 3 free contraception and abortion on demand;
- 4 free 24-hour community-controlled childcare;
- 5 legal and financial independence for women;
- 6 an end to discrimination against lesbians; and
- 7 freedom from intimidation by the threat or use of male violence, and an end to the laws, assumptions and institutions that perpetuate male dominance and men’s aggression towards women.

As Fairbairns (2002) points out, these demands did not represent the only feminist activity at the time, and not all feminists necessarily agreed with them all. However, they did provide a useful, coherent list of demands that could be presented to the rest of the world about what the women's liberation movement wanted to achieve. She argues that they serve as a useful reminder of what it meant to be a feminist at the time, and provided structure to what was (and still is) an otherwise unstructured movement.

The seven demands of the women's liberation movement are relevant here for two reasons. The first is perhaps the most obvious – that demand number seven refers to freedom from intimidation by the threat or use of male violence. Four decades on, this demand certainly has not yet been met, as men's violence against women continue to be a serious, life-limiting, global, social problem. However, the demands are also relevant because the previous six overlap the continuing epidemic of men's violence against women. The demands all seek gender equality through an end to discrimination against women – as mothers, as lesbians, as employed workers. Although progress has undoubtedly been made, all of these forms of gender discriminations continue today, and serve to maintain a society in which male violence against women is implicitly condoned and upheld, and sometimes overtly supported and promoted.

## **The global adoption of feminist analysis of men's violence against women**

Feminist theories of violence against women link men's violence to the systematic global discrimination against women and girls, and a world gender order that privileges certain dominant (hegemonic) masculinities (Connell, 2005). Feminist analysis of men's violence against women, as being explicitly linked to the unequal position of women and girls, has now been officially adopted by some of the world's most powerful institutions.

The 1993 United Nations Declaration on Violence Against Women confirmed that violence against women acts as an obstacle to the achievement of equality, development and peace:

Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and ... violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.

*(UN General Assembly, 1993: 2)*

The United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has been unwavering in his assertion that violence against women is not inevitable, and that it could be radically reduced and eventually eliminated if the necessary political will and

resources were made available (see for example United Nations Secretary-General, 2006).

The United Nations and a range of other global institutions now declare violence against women to be a cause and consequence of gender inequality. ActionAid (2010), for example, names violence against women and girls as 'one of the starkest collective failures of the international community in the 21st century' (p. 1), describing it as a means of social control that maintains unequal gender power relations and reinforces women's subordinate status.

## **The Istanbul Convention**

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence – known as the Istanbul Convention because of where it was opened for signature – was introduced in 2011. The Istanbul Convention takes as its starting point the link between women's inequalities and the violences committed against them. It recognizes that violence against women is a

manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men, which have led to domination over, and discrimination against, women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women.

*(Council of Europe, 2011: 1)*

Hence, the Convention recognizes violence against women as being structural in nature and as one of the social mechanisms that forces women into a position subordinate to men. It requires parties ratifying the Convention to put in place a broad range of measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, to promote substantive equality, to empower women and to develop a comprehensive framework to protect and provide assistance to all victims of violence against women and domestic violence. At the time of writing, the United Kingdom had signed but not yet ratified the Convention.

## **Links and overlaps with other systems of oppression**

Not all women are equal, and not all women have the same access to safety and freedom, or the resources or ability to leave a context of violence. The United Nations recognizes that some groups of women are especially vulnerable to violence, giving the following examples:

women belonging to minority groups, indigenous women, refugee women, migrant women, women living in rural or remote communities, destitute women, women in institutions or in detention, female children, women with disabilities, elderly women and women in situations of armed conflict ...

*(UN General Assembly, 1993: 2)*

Where gender-based inequalities intersect with other systems of inequality and/or oppressions, contexts may exist that are more conducive to violence, and empowerment routes may be more restricted. For example, the police might be reluctant to intervene in partner or family violence within an Asian family, believing that such violence is culturally condoned. Women's support organizations might not be accessible to a physically disabled woman, to a woman who does not speak English or to a Black woman who does not want to use an organization that has only white workers. For women with insecure immigration status, accessing resources such as refuge accommodation is particularly difficult.

## **A note on violences against men**

Violence happens to men as well as women. Men mostly experience violence from other men, but women also perpetrate it. Women use violence against men, against children and against other women – within intimate partner relationships, within the family, against strangers and acquaintances, in public spaces and private spaces and within institutions. Women may condone, support or promote the use of violence and abuse within institutions. Nearly all of the violences described in this book can also be committed against men by women or by other men. The fact that this book is about men's violences against women is not to suggest that any of these things do not happen, or are any less traumatic because they happen, to a boy or man.

In England and Wales and across the world, women and girls are killed, raped, attacked, harassed, sexually abused, threatened, mutilated and regulated in their everyday lives at a far higher rate than men and boys. As explained above, this is linked to the systematic global discrimination against women and girls, and a world gender order that privileges certain dominant (hegemonic) masculinities (Connell, 2005). For this reason, it is necessary to join the dots between violences that are linked to women's gender inequalities in order to make visible the connections and to increase understandings. Doing this does not negate men's experiences of violence, nor women's or men's violences that are linked to other systems of power, such as racist hate-crimes, violence against disabled people or the physical chastisement of children. All of these are violences, and are committed and perpetrated by men and women, but they are not the focus of this book. The system of power that is the focus of this book is that based on gender.

## **Overview of this book**

Part 1 is about men's violences against women as (intimate) partners who are in or have been in relationships. Starting with the most extreme – men's fatal violence against women – domestic homicide is discussed in Chapter 1. This is followed by other forms of men's violences against women as partners – physical violence (Chapter 2), sexual violence (Chapter 3) and psychological abuse (Chapter 4).

Men's violences within the family are the focus of Part 2. Although some of the

forms discussed in this Part refer to acts of violence and abuse against girls, the acts continue to have an effect into adulthood, which is the rationale for their being included. Some of the forms of violence within this section are supported by, or are even directly perpetrated by, women. For example a woman's female relatives might be involved in forced marriage or in 'honour'-based violence and killings. It is often women who arrange and perform the acts of cutting in female genital mutilation. However, these violences are all part of a system that disadvantages, further oppresses and sometimes kills women and girls. They are largely based on gender discrimination against women that operates in different ways but exists in all cultures. However, rather than 'culture' being to blame, the root is the operation of gender discrimination within different cultures that privileges men as a class and disadvantages women as a class. This is why some acts of female violence are included in a book about men's violences against women – in cases where acts by women are used to uphold men's privilege and support women's inequality. Part 2 contains chapters on men's violence against women as mothers and grandmothers (Chapter 5), forced marriage (Chapter 6), 'honour'-based violence and killings (Chapter 7), female genital mutilation (Chapter 8) and familial rape and abuse (Chapter 9).

Part 3 looks at how men as strangers and acquaintances use violences against women in public and semi-public spaces. Chapter 10 provides an overview of sexual violence and harassment in the workplace – a topic that has become subsumed more recently under headings such as 'workplace bullying' and 'respect at work', obscuring its gendered nature and in doing so erasing the connections with other forms of men's violences against women. Chapter 11 is about violence in the street and in public spaces – a topic that was very much on the agenda of feminist academics such as Liz Kelly and Betsy Stanko in the 1980s but had fallen on fallow ground until recently (in part linked to popular projects such as *Everyday Sexism* and Hollaback). The final chapter in this Part, Chapter 12, is about stranger and acquaintance rape.

The final part of the book – Part 4 – examines institutions as the space in which men's violences against women are committed, explicitly supported or implicitly condoned. As one of the most prolific sex offenders ever to come to the attention of the police, Chapter 13 is about Jimmy Savile and sexual violence, celebrity culture and public institutions (primarily hospitals). Chapter 14 considers sexual violence within residential care homes – where some girls and women are cared for at different points in (or throughout) their lives. The final chapter (Chapter 15) is about violence against women in higher education institutions – an issue that has been on the US agenda for many years but has only recently started to receive widespread attention in UK universities.

This book therefore contains a brief overview of 15 forms of, or spaces in which, men's violences against women operate. In covering such a wide range, the chapters should be classed as a starting point for further reading. It was impossible to give each form of violence the attention it deserved using this format. A further caveat is that some forms of men's violences against women are missing. Despite

covering 15 forms, there are others in England and Wales that have not been covered – such as fatal violence against women by strangers, satanic ritual abuse and prostitution.

The personal is the political. As Liz Kelly (2014) puts it, men's violence is a political act, and our political act as feminists is to speak about it. My quest in this book to join the dots is an academic one, a personal one and a political one.

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# CONTENTS

<i>List of tables</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>Foreword</i>	<i>xi</i>

## **PART 1**

### **Men's violences in relationships 1**

1	Fatal violence – partner homicide	9
2	Physical forms of partner violence	20
3	Sexual violence by partners	29
4	Psychological abuse	39

## **PART 2**

### **Men's violences in the family 47**

5	Violence against mothers and grandmothers	51
6	Forced marriage	61
7	'Honour'-based violence and killings	72
8	Female genital mutilation	81
9	Familial rape and abuse	93



**PART 3**

**Men's violences in public spaces 103**

10 Sexual violence and harassment in the workplace 107

11 Violence in streets and public spaces 120

12 Stranger and acquaintance rape 131

**PART 4**

**Men's violences in institutions 143**

13 Sexual violence, celebrity culture and public institutions 147

14 Institutional abuse in residential care 156

15 Violence against women in higher education institutions 164

*Afterword – on outrage 171*

*Index 173*