



**Exploring the victim-offender overlap at  
the intra-individual level:  
Reimagining justice for crimes of  
interpersonal violence**

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# Outline

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Victim-Offender Overlap

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Research Literature

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Our Study

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Implications

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Reimagining Justice





# VICTIM- OFFENDER OVERLAP

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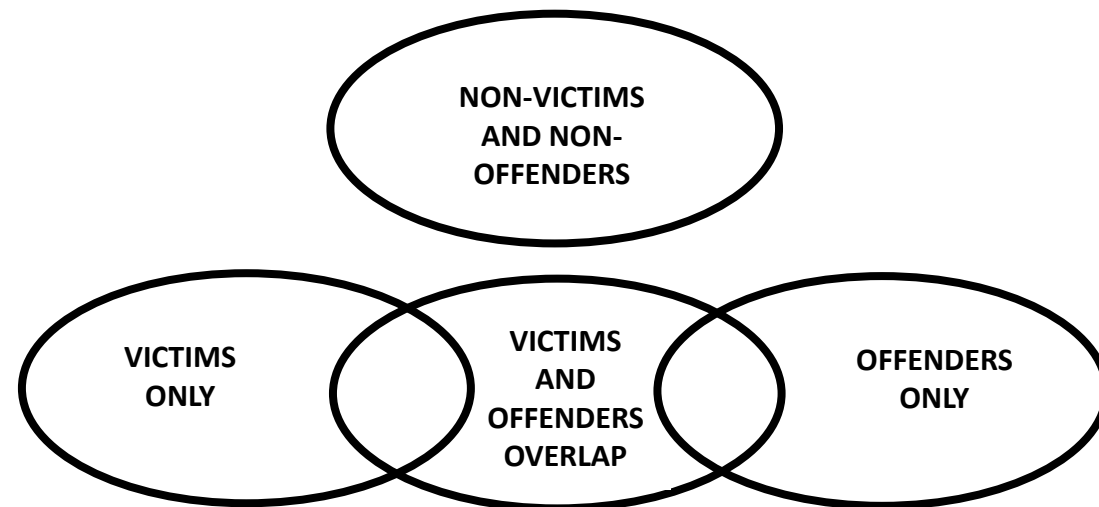
What  
descriptors  
would you use  
for this picture?



What descriptors would you now use for this picture?

# BACKGROUND

- The victim-offender overlap has been discussed since the 1940s (von Hentig, 1948) with recognition of the “doer-sufferer” yielding the contentious term of “victim precipitation” (Wolfgang, 1967)
- Of course, there is recognition of differentiated groupings (victims only, offenders only, both, and neither) so it should not be seen as deterministic or absolute (Jennings et al., 2012)
- Yet the discourse – public, political, and scholarly – maintains the bifurcation which can influence public attitudes generally and justice processes specifically (Kearon & Godfrey, 2007)



Source: Jennings, Piquero, & Reingle (2012)

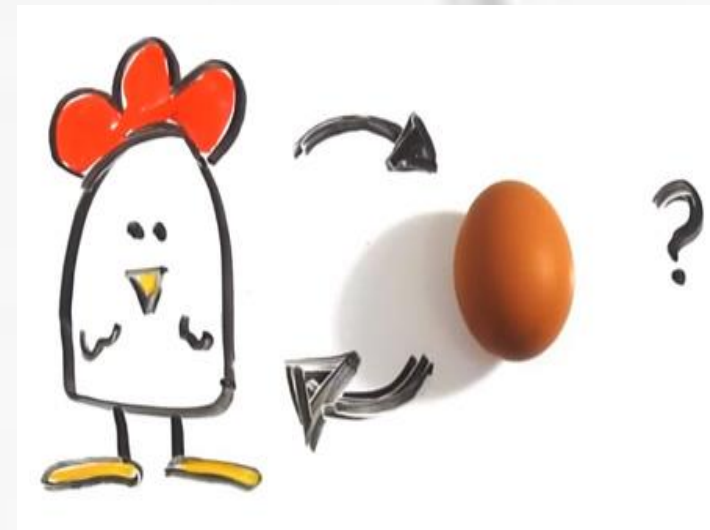


# RESEARCH LITERATURE

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# RESEARCH LITERATURE

- The empirical literature on the victim-offender overlap has grown in sophistication over the last two decades and has utilized large-scale national datasets (Jennings et al., 2012)
- These examinations have been carried out in a range of countries – China (Ren et al., 2017), UK (Sandall et al., 2018), Australia (Baxter, 2019), with most emanating from the USA
- Research studies are often conducted with youth cohorts to endeavor to address the ‘chicken vs egg’ question about directionality (Posick, 2013)





# RESEARCH LITERATURE

- It identifies this concordance for a range of crime types from minor offences (Posick, 2017) to serious violence (Tillyer & Wright, 2014)
- Victims and offenders share demographic factors such as gender, age, race, socio-economic background – majority being young unmarried minority males (Muftic & Hunt, 2013)
- The phenomenon appears to possess stability over the life-course, but there remain problems in determining the temporal sequence (Mulford et al., 2016)
- It has shown to be underpinned by theories such as routine activity, self-control and general strain (Hindelang et al., 1978; Holtfreter et al., 2008; Schreck et al., 2008; Turanovic & Pratt, 2014)



# RESEARCH LITERATURE

- There are few studies that address the psychological correlates of victimization even though they have long been associated with examinations of offending (TenEyck & Barnes, 2018)
- Some explorations of individual-level factors such as impulsivity and low self-control that could explain risk for both offending and victimization (Johnson et al., 2016)
- This type of inquiry is particularly relevant to crimes of interpersonal violence as this offence type is one where the bifurcation has been most apparent (Tillyer & Wright, 2014)



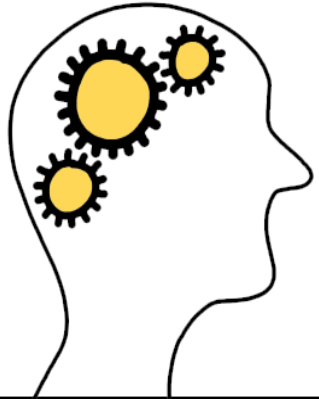


# OUR STUDY



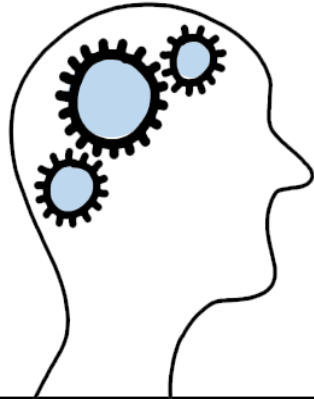
# METHODOLOGY

Step 1



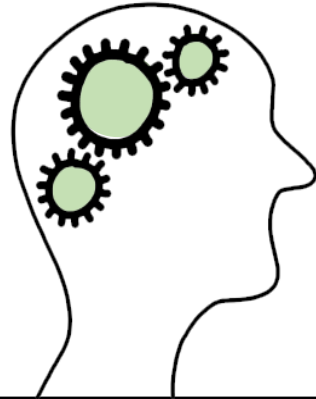
**1 victim &  
3 offender  
typologies**

Step 2



**24  
key  
features**

Step 3



**13  
behavioural  
11  
personality  
variables**

- online 488-item survey
- 160 self-identified victims in the final sample
- transform the scales
- PCA analysis
- examine factor loadings
- correlate crime types
- chi-square analysis of types
- victim typology (5 types)
- offence category associations

# KEY SETS OF VARIABLES

## **Behavioural elements**

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risk-taking, aggression, anti-social, rage/revenge, domination, self-efficacy

## **Personality elements**

impulsivity, anger, self-esteem, reassurance needs, empathy, social anxiety

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# SELECTED ATTRIBUTES IN DETAIL

<b>self-esteem</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relates to reassurance, fear of rejection, feelings of inadequacy, fear of failure</li><li>• Familiar frame of the passive victim, however the data showed nuances</li><li>• Reflects tendency to narcissism and includes some evidence of high self-esteem</li></ul>
<b>impulsivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relates to low-level of self-control</li><li>• Reflects impulsive and present-oriented perspective</li><li>• Engagement in risky behaviours</li></ul>
<b>anger</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relates to both behavioural characteristics and personality traits</li><li>• Characteristic of anger manifests as aggressive behaviours</li><li>• Highly correlated with rage/revenge attributes</li></ul>

# TYOLOGY OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE

Reassurance-Oriented	Anger-Oriented	Assertive-Oriented	Risk-Taking-Oriented	Self-Preservation-Oriented
Low self-esteem	Anger	Narcissistic	Masochism	Strike-back behaviours
Fear of rejection	Aggression	Use of domination	Sadism	Self-defence behaviours
Fear of failure	Impulsivity	High self-efficacy	Risky behaviours	Financial abuse
Social anxiety	Rage/Revenge	Feeling self-satisfied	Self-harm	
Use of projection	Use of anti-social behaviours	Socially confident	Anti-social behaviours	
Feelings of inadequacy	Risky behaviours	High self-esteem		
Low self-efficacy	Self-defence			
Use of self-harm behaviours	Use of humiliation			
Need for reassurance	Less likely to suffer financial abuse			
Submission	Narcissistic			
Extreme empathy				

# SELECTED TYPES IN GENERAL

<b>REASSURANCE-ORIENTED</b>	Submissive, low self-esteem, anxiety, weakness, poor social skills likely to relate to interpersonal conflict scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Familiar frame of passive victim type</li><li>• No significant link to an offence type</li></ul>
<b>RISK-TAKING ORIENTED</b>	High risk anti-social and self-harming behaviours, low self-control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage in property offences, fights, use drugs/alcohol and have anti-social peers</li><li>• Link with poly-victimisation</li></ul>
<b>ANGER-ORIENTED</b>	Angry, aggressive behaviours, short temper, impulsivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reflective of the notion of victim precipitation</li><li>• Link with physical, sexual assault and poly-victimisation</li></ul>



# TYOLOGICAL COMPARISON

OFFENDERS	VICTIMS
Groth, Burgess, & Holmstrom (1977)	Brotto (2018)
(4 types)	(5 types)
Power Reassurance	Reassurance-Oriented
Power Assertive	Assertive-Oriented
Anger Retaliation	Anger-Oriented
Anger Excitation	Risk-Taking-Oriented
	Self-Preservation-Oriented



# LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

## Internal Challenges

- Sample size and recruitment
- Self-identified victims
- Mostly female
- Length of survey
- Few details of victim/offence experience



## External Challenges

- Critique of typologies in general
- Causality dilemma
- Temporality question
- Recidivism/repeat victimisation in IPV
- Transactional nature of IPV crime events




# IMPLICATIONS



# IMPLICATIONS

- Research on the V-O overlap be extended to further consider psychological and biological factors as there are factors that relate more predominantly to one over the other (Webber, 2020)
- Tease out the specific links between the overlap and certain crime sub-types within the interpersonal violence realm (Reid & Sullivan, 2012)
- Re-engagement with the “dangerous” notion of victim precipitation for a critical appreciation of the dynamics of interpersonal violence (Kuijpers et al., 2012)

# IMPLICATIONS

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- Policy and program reinvention that addresses the assumptions about victims and offenders as well as being reflected in more nuanced public discourse (Posick, 2017)
  - Victim assistance programs to consider the diversity of victim types and their justice needs and that these may change over time (Holder & Daly, 2017)
  - Offender rehabilitation or correctional programs benefit from acknowledging that many clients have experienced victimization (Maldonado-Molina et al., 2010)

# REIMAGINING JUSTICE



**DEMONSTRATE  
VICTIM COMPLEXITY**

**RE-IMAGINE  
VICTIMOLOGY**

**ACKNOWLEDGE THE  
OVERLAP**

**REFRAME THE  
DISCOURSE**



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Questions or  
comments  
please!



Thank you!

