An Examination of the Combined Impact of Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence and Child Abuse or Neglect on Juvenile Delinquency

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE COMBINED IMPACT OF EXPOSURE TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT ON JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

by

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B.S. May 2003, The University of Virginia’s College at Wise

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculties of Old Dominion University and Norfolk State University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of MASTER OF ARTS APPLIED SOCIOLOGY

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY AND NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY
May 2009

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The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between children’s exposure to intimate partner violence and child abuse or neglect on juvenile delinquency. Much of the research on this topic suggests that a disturbed home life can have a significant impact on delinquency among children. This study explores patterns of delinquency among a large group of children in the Seattle Washington area (n=877). Gender differences in violent and nonviolent delinquency are examined as well as the impact of witnessing intimate partner violence in the home is tested. Analyses reveal that gender, race, and exposure to intimate partner violence are significant predictors of violent crime offending as detailed in the regression, however, exposure to intimate partner violence was not a significant predictor of property crime.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would personally like to thank my thesis committee, Dr. Dianne Carmody, Dr. Ruth Triplett, and Dr. Michael Fischer for their support, devotion and leadership. A special thank you to Dr. Carmody, my thesis chair, who always provided me with the encouragement and motivation to complete my thesis on time. Your knowledge and passion has truly been an inspiration to me. Thank you most for being a friend and mentor to me.

I would also like to thank my wonderful family for your support and believing in me. With your help, I realize anything is possible. Thank you for allowing me the chance to continue my education, I feel truly blessed to have you all in my life.

Finally, a very special thank you to my fiancé who has been my biggest supporter. The last few years have been tough, but with your support, love, and encouragement I am here today. Rob, you are my strength and my confidant, I will forever be grateful to you.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Intimate partner violence is a societal problem that affects millions of people each year. It is estimated that between ten and twenty percent of children in the United States are exposed to intimate partner violence annually (Carlson 2000). During childhood and adolescence, observations of how parents and significant others behave in intimate relationships provide a child with an initial model of behavioral patterns that may be internalized and repeated. If the parents handle stresses and frustrations with anger and aggression, the child who has witnessed or experienced such an environment is at a greater risk of exhibiting those same behaviors as an adult. Family dysfunction in the home, including children and adolescents witnessing intimate partner violence and being victims of abuse or neglect remains a major concern in today's society and continues to be a significant determinant of delinquency (Siegel, Welsh, and Senna 2006).

Research suggests that the short and long-term

This thesis follows the format requirements of the American Sociological Review.
effects of a child’s exposure to intimate partner violence may vary considerably. Studies have shown exposed children are more likely to demonstrate conduct disordered behavior and aggression, and engage in criminal activities than non-exposed children (Herrera and McCloskey 2001). The home is where children learn values, develop their personality and build self-esteem. According to Musick (1995), effective delinquency prevention comes “from a warm, loving, stable family where the child learns that people are friendly, worth knowing and can be depended on” (p.137). Clearly, childhood experiences can influence how youth manage their frustration and anger.

While each child’s response to exposure to intimate partner violence and being a victim to abuse or neglect is different, research suggests that gender plays an important role. In most cases, males tend to direct anger outward while females tend to focus anger inward (Miller 2005). It has long been apparent that the crime rate for male juveniles is many times higher than that for female juveniles (Rutter, Giller, and Hagell 1998). Siegel et al. (2006) explain that gender differences are a result of the interaction of socialization, learning, and enculturation. Boys and girls may behave differently because they have been exposed to different styles of socialization, learned
different values, and had different cultural experiences. Past research has examined the significant gender differences in delinquency offenses and noted that males tend to commit more violent offenses than females. According to Siegel et al. (2006), gender differences in the delinquency rate may be narrowing, but males continue to be overrepresented in arrests for violent crimes. This paper explores these differences by comparing abused or neglected male and female responses to witnessing physical abuse in the home.

Family problems such as abuse or neglect within the home can be risk factors for antisocial and delinquent behaviors amongst youth. In this study, two theories are utilized to help understand this relationship. Burgess and Akers (1966) social learning theory is used to examine the role between modeling behavior and delinquency. Sandra Bem’s (1993) gender-schema theory helps us further explore the relationship between gender roles and deviant behaviors. This study explores patterns of delinquency among a large group of children in the Seattle, Washington area (English and Widom 2002). First, gender differences in violent and nonviolent delinquency are examined. Then the impact of witnessing intimate partner violence in the
home is tested, controlling for both the race and gender of the child.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It is extremely important to understand the family context involved in cases of intimate partner violence. Children and adolescents may experience anger and frustration when witnessing intimate partner violence and research suggests that exposure to violence in the home may increase the risk of later delinquency (Loue 2001). This chapter reviews the literature on this topic and outlines two theoretical approaches used to explore the association between family violence and subsequent criminal behavior.

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Historically and in some cases still today, women have been viewed as the property of their husbands. It was not until the 1960's and 1970's, with the explosive growth of the women's movement, that women began to be viewed as equal to men (Wallace 2002). During this time, women began to seek help and protection from abusive spouses, and the first shelters for battered women opened. In 1974, a feminist organization known as Women’s Advocates opened Women’s House in St. Paul, Minnesota. This was the first unrestricted shelter for abused women and children in the
United States (Wallace 2002). From this humble beginning, women’s shelters have sprung up in every major metropolitan center in the United States. Today, it is reported that the number of agencies providing services to battered women and children surpasses 2,000 (Saathoff and Stoffel 1999).

Renzetti and Bergen (2005) note that shelters have grown from individuals sharing private apartments and space in their homes to agencies that buy and build their own facilities. These facilities offer a multitude of services, including children’s therapeutic programs, help in obtaining restraining orders, job training and violence prevention programs for families. While private and public shelters and other social service assistance have increased dramatically over the years, many problems still exist. Not only does intimate partner violence directly affect its victims, it also affects the children that witness these attacks.

Wallace (2002) defines intimate partner violence as any intentional act or series of acts that cause injury to the victim. These acts may be physical, emotional, or sexual. According to Feerick and Silverman (2006) the extent of intimate partner violence is difficult to measure accurately due to imprecise definitions of the phenomenon and underreporting. Population-based studies over the past
several decades suggest that 8 percent to 12 percent of women experience some form of intimate partner violence in any given year (Humphreys, Parker, and Campbell 2001; Wilt and Olson 1996). Violence against women also produces long-term health effects. According to Wallace (2002), approximately one third (31 percent) of all women have been kicked, hit, punched, choked, or otherwise physically assaulted by a spouse or intimate partner in their lifetime. In 2001, more than one half a million women and slightly more than 100,000 men experienced some form of intimate partner violence. About 85 percent of these victimizations were against women (Rennison and Welchans 2003).

CHILD WITNESSES OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Children who witness violence between adults in their homes have been called the “silent,” “forgotten,” and “unintended” victims of adult-to-adult domestic violence (Groves et al. 1993). Studies of archived case records from social service and governmental agencies provide ample evidence that violence has long occurred at levels similar to those measured today. The evidence also shows that children are frequently present during violent incidents. Researchers estimate that between 3.3 million and 10
million children per year witness a violent incident at home (Edleson 1991; Peterson, 1991; Gordon 1988; Pleck 1987). This can leave lasting impressions on a child. Because very young children may not be able to get out of harm’s way and adolescents often try to intervene to protect a parent from being abused, these two groups are believed to be the most at risk of physical injury (Christian et al. 1997). Children may see the violence or be used as part of it, but more often they hear the violent event and experience its aftermath (Edleson 1999).

In their national curriculum for child protection workers, Ganley and Schechter (1996) highlight several additional ways that children experience intimate partner violence. These include hitting or threatening a child while in his or her mother’s arms and taking the child hostage to force the spouse’s return to the home. In addition, some children are forced to watch assaults against the mother/father or participate in the abuse. Sometimes the child is used as a spy or interrogated about the parents’ activities. Edleson (1999) also states that in addition to seeing, hearing, or being used directly in a violent event, some mothers and their children describe additional trauma associated with the aftermath of intimate partner violence. Edleson (1999) asserts that the
aftermath can include a mother who is injured and in need of help, a father who alternates between physical violence and loving care, police intervention to remove a father from the home, or moving to a shelter for battered women. The damage associated with children and teenagers witnessing intimate partner violence in the home is clearly a cause for concern.

PREVALENCE OF WITNESSING INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Estimates concerning the number of children or teenagers who witness one parent abusing another vary. Carlson (1984) estimated that at least 3.3 million children yearly are exposed to parental violence. More recent studies reveal that prevalence rates for children exposed to intimate partner violence range from 10 million to 18 million children and adolescents (McDonald et al. 2006; Silvern et al. 1995; Straus 1992). Straus (1992) concludes that at least a third of American children have witnessed repeated instances of violence between their parents. These findings were supported by two larger studies. Fantuzzo et al. (1997) performed secondary analysis of police arrest data from five United States cities. They concluded that children were directly involved in adult intimate partner violence incidents from 9 percent to 27 percent of the
time, depending on the city studied. They also found younger children were disproportionately represented in households where domestic assaults occurred. It is clear that many children and teenagers are being exposed to violence between their parents. It is also likely that this exposure occurs repeatedly and may be present over the course of a child's development (Edleson 1999).

Socolar (2000) suggests the impact of witnessing parental violence varies with the frequency and severity of abuse, the amount of time elapsed since witnessing the violence, the quality of parent-child relationship, the presence of child abuse, and the presence of protective factors (e.g., community supports, positive adult role models). According to Feerick and Silverman (2006), the degree to which children experience negative effects from witnessing intimate partner violence is influenced by contextual as well as individual factors. Contextual stressors such as poverty, job and family instability, residential instability, parental stress and social isolation may impact a child's health. Multiple risk factors may increase the negative effects for children.
According to Siegel et al. (2006), most experts believe a disturbed home environment can have a significant impact on delinquency. The family is the primary unit where children learn the values and attitudes that guide their actions throughout their lives. Cummings and Davies (1994) report that family disruption can have a long-lasting effect on children. Family conflict has been associated with externalizing problems such as conduct problems, aggression and antisocial behavior in children. Internalizing behaviors can exist as well; they include depression, anxiety, suicide attempts and low self-esteem (Carlson 1991; Stagg, Wills, and Howell 1989).

Generally, studies using the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach and Edlebrock 1983) and similar measures have found that child witnesses of intimate partner violence exhibit more violent and rebellious behaviors than other children. They are also more likely to show fearful and inhibited behaviors and have lower social competence than other children. Children who witnessed violence were found to show more anxiety, depression, trauma symptoms, and temperament problems than children who did not witness violence at home (Hughes 1998; Maker, Kemmelmeier and
Greater behavioral problems have been reported in younger versus older children who have experienced violence (Hughes 1998); however, adolescents have been studied less than children of other age groups (Edleson 1999).

Cognitive functioning and attitudes have also been examined by researchers focused on intimate partner violence and its impact on children. Edleson (1999) reports that a number of studies have measured the association between cognitive development problems and witnessing intimate partner violence. One consequence of witnessing violence may be the attitudes a child develops concerning the use of violence and conflict resolution. Jaffe, Wilson, and Wolfe (1986) suggest that children’s exposure to adult intimate partner violence may generate attitudes justifying their own use of violence. Spaccarelli, Coatworth, and Bowden’s (1995) findings support this association by showing that, among a sample of 213 adolescent boys incarcerated for violent crimes, those who had been exposed to family violence believed more than others that acting aggressively enhances one’s reputation or self-image.

Most studies examine immediate issues associated with witnessing intimate partner violence but long-term problems
can develop as well. For example, Silvern et al. (1995) studied 550 undergraduate students and found that witnessing violence as a child was associated with adult reports of depression, trauma related symptoms and low self-esteem among women and trauma related symptoms among men. In addition, Henning et al. (1996) found that among 123 adult women who had witnessed intimate partner violence as a child, greater distress and lower social adjustment existed when compared to 494 nonwitnesses. Widom (1989) also reports that children from violent families carry violent behaviors and violence-tolerant attitudes into their adult intimate relationships. For example, Rosenbaum and O’Leary (1981) reported that male batterers were much more likely than others to have grown up in homes where adult intimate partner violence was occurring. Riveria and Widom (1990) have reported strong associations between childhood victimization and later adult violent and criminal behavior. Widom (1989) found that physical abuse was associated with the highest risk of arrest for violent crime, but neglected children were also at a higher risk. Witnessing adult violence and being abused and/or neglected, independently or in combination, were significantly associated with adolescents’ use of violence.
In regards to race and ethnicity, O'Keefe (1994) has reported ethnic differences in behavioral problems of children exposed to intimate partner violence. He reported that white children, especially boys, exhibit greater externalizing behavior problems than African American children and African American mothers reported greater social competence in their children than mothers of Caucasian and Hispanic groups.

Characteristics of ethnic minority children may also influence the impact of exposure to intimate partner violence on their health and well-being (Feerick and Silverman 2006). Although, in general racial background does not appear to be associated with different outcomes for children (Edleson 1999), one study found that children from lower income groups, primarily ethnic minorities, showed poorer performance on the Child Behavior Checklist than other children (Achenbach 1991). However, such factors as maternal depression and the use of drugs and alcohol may confound these results.

In one particular longitudinal study of 574 children followed from age 5 to age 21, researchers examined the links between early physical abuse and violent delinquency on race. According to Lansford et al. (2007), physical abuse in a child's first five years of life was more
strongly related to negative outcomes for African American than European American adolescents and young adults for violent offenses documented in juvenile court records, nonviolent offenses documented in juvenile court records, any offenses documented in juvenile court records, self-reported arrests, any court of self-report evidence of arrest, not graduating from high school, being a teen parent, and being pregnant or impregnating someone in the past year without being married. The study also reported that African American youth who had been physically abused were twice as likely to have court records for violent offenses, almost 3 times as likely to have court records for nonviolent offenses, and almost 5 times likely to self-report arrests (Lansford et al. 2007).

In addition to this study, African American youth are more likely than European American youth to experience other problems unexplored in the present study such as racism, residential instability, and living in a violent neighborhood (Coard et al. 2004). According to Lansford et al. (2007), it may be that multiple risks exacerbate the negative effects of experiencing physical abuse (and/or make youth more violent, depressed, etc., regardless), perhaps because they offer fewer supports for treating the effects of abuse.
An indirect factor may also influence child outcomes. Huth-Bocks and Hughes (2007) note that several studies have found an association between women’s experiences of intimate partner violence and their parenting stress, defined as negative feelings and stress related to the self and to the child in the context of parenthood. Holden et al. (1998) found parenting stress is significantly higher among battered mothers compared to non battered mothers. Parenting stress has also been related to more negative and less positive parenting behaviors, as well as more child behavior problems in these studies (Ritchie and Holden 1998). Conversely, Hughes, Graham-Bermann, and Gruber (2001) found that resiliency in violence-exposed African American children was related to less parenting stress, which was not the case for Anglo children. It also appears that boys and girls differ in what they learn from being exposed to violence.

GENDER DIFFERENCES AND THE RISK OF DELINQUENCY AMONG YOUTH WITNESSING INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Research suggests that male and female child witnesses of intimate partner violence respond differently. In general, boys have been shown to exhibit more frequent behavioral problems that are categorized as externalized,
such as hostility and aggression. Girls generally show evidence of more internalized problems such as depression and somatic complaints (Carlson 1991). Males also seem less likely to form attachments to others and view aggression as an acceptable way to gain status. According to Siegel et al. (2006), girls are shielded by their moral sense, which directs them to avoid harming others. Their moral sensitivity may counterbalance the effects of family conflict. Females also display more self-control than males, a factor that has been related to criminality (Burton et al 1998). Carlson (1991) found that in a sample of 101 adolescents, boys who witnessed intimate partner violence were significantly more likely to approve of violence than were girls who had also witnessed it.

Much research literature focuses on delinquency among boys, while few researchers focus on girls' delinquency (Carmody, Triplett, and Plass 2009). There is reason to believe that delinquent behaviors vary for male and female youth. According to Browne, Miller, and Marguin (1999), some investigators tie female crime directly to women's victimization. Chesney-Lind and Sheldon (1998) contend that girls growing up in abusive households develop unique tactics of self-preservation, including running away, that ultimately increase their risk of to criminal exploitation.
Their heightened delinquency, therefore is an indirect result of acting out against or escaping a violent home environment.

Additional research has revealed a detailed relationship between child maltreatment and female delinquency. In one study, researchers found that abused and neglected girls showed a tendency for increased risk of arrest for violent juvenile offending; moreover, this trend was not found for abused and neglected boys (Rivera and Widom 1990). Because females tend to engage in violent offending at a much lower rate than males, it has been suggested that those who do engage in violence are responding to their own victimization, whereas boys may be engaging in aggressive acts for a wider variety of reasons (Peters and Peters 1998).

Children, especially boys, may adopt the attitude that violence is acceptable and may learn to use it in their own relationships and girls may learn not to question violence against them (Campbell and Parker 1999). In support of this view, Wolak and Finkelhor (1998) cited several studies that noted gender differences in relation to behavioral responses of children exposed to family violence. In these studies, boys who witnessed severe violence tended to demonstrate more aggressive behaviors, while girls tended
to withdraw or become more introverted. Clearly, the cumulative effects of witnessing violence may be devastating for both boys and girls.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis utilizes two theoretical approaches: social learning theory and gender-schema theory. Each theory provides a unique basis for examining the relationship between witnessing intimate partner violence and violent delinquency.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory as an explanation of delinquent behavior was first developed by Burgess and Akers (1966) then subsequently modified by Akers (1985). This theory uses a person's learning and social experiences combined with one's values and expectations to determine behavior. Akers (1998) suggests that all human behavior arises from learning, primarily through the mechanisms of differential reinforcement, imitation and stimulus discrimination. These all operate within the process of differential associations which include direct and indirect, verbal and nonverbal communication, interaction and identification with others. Thus, social learning theory suggests that
children's observations and memories of intimate partner violence will have a strong influence over a child's subsequent behavior.

Bandura and Walters (1963) suggest that children will model their behavior according to the reactions they receive from others, either positive or negative. If children observe aggression and see that the aggressive behavior, such as slapping or punching someone during an argument, is approved or rewarded, they will likely react violently during a similar incident. Carlson (1986) states that the family may serve as a training ground for violence because a child may come to perceive physical abuse as the norm during conflict situations with others.

According to Bandura and Walters (1959), adolescent aggression is a result of disrupted dependency relations with parents or caregivers. Parent-child dependency relations are disrupted when parents provide poor role modeling or hold back affection and nurturing. Bandura and Walters (1963) argue that children who lack close dependent ties to their parents may have little opportunity or desire to model themselves after them or to internalize their standards of behavior. In the absence of such internalized control, the child's aggression is likely to be expressed
in an immediate, direct, and socially unacceptable fashion such as violence and aggression.

Gelles (1997) contends that the family is one key place where children learn how to cope with stress and frustration. The family is also the place where people are most likely to first experience violence. Gelles (1997) does note that not all individuals who witness or experience violence during childhood grow up to be violent themselves, however, a history of abuse and violence does increase the risk that an individual will be violent as an adult. Straus (1990) found that men and women who had witnessed violence between their parents were three times more likely to abuse their own partners than those who had not. Therefore, the behavior can be passed from one generation to the next through imitation and modeling. By testing the social learning theory, this study further examines the relationship between witnessing parental violence as a child and later delinquency for both males and females.

**Gender-Schema Theory**

One theory that addresses why boys and girls may behave differently when exposed to intimate partner violence in the home is Bem’s gender-schema theory.
According to Bem (1993), the gender-schema theory states that our culture polarizes males and females by forcing them to obey mutually exclusive gender roles, or scripts which provide the basis for deviant behaviors. Girls are expected to be feminine, exhibiting traits such as being sympathetic and gentle. In contrast, boys are expected to be masculine, exhibiting assertiveness and dominance. Bem asserts that children often internalize these scripts and accept gender polarization as normal (Bem 1993).

Children’s self-esteem may become wrapped up in how closely their behavior conforms to the proper sex role stereotype. When children begin to perceive themselves as either boys or girls, (which occurs at about age 3), they search for information to help them define their role; they begin to learn what behavior is appropriate for their sex (Bem 1993). Bem (1993) stated that girls are expected to behave according to the appropriate script and to seek approval of their behavior and males look for cues from their peers to define their masculinity. Aggressive male behavior may be rewarded with peer approval, whereas sensitivity and empathy are viewed as nonmasculine. In addition, recent research by Jean Bottcher (2001) found that young boys perceive their roles as being more dominant than young girls. Male perceptions of power and
independence may also help explain the gender differences in delinquency.

Maccoby (1999) argues that gender differences are not a matter of individual personality or biological difference. She contends that it is the way children are socialized and how their relationships are structured that influences behavior. Despite the best efforts of parents who want to break down gender boundaries, children still segregate themselves by gender in their playgroups. According to Maccoby (1999), children take on different roles depending on whom they are with and who is being exposed to their behavior. A boy may be hypermasculine when he is with his peers, but may be a loving and caring big brother when asked to babysit his little sister. Likewise, little girls are not passive as a result of some ingrained quality. They have learned to be passive only when boys are present (Maccoby 1999). Therefore, Maccoby claims that gender distinctions arise mainly in social interactions and that peer groups are highly influential in shaping behavior.

Child gender may also influence the frequency of externalizing versus internalizing behaviors exhibited by child witnesses of intimate partner violence. Many researchers contend that externalizing behavior problems
are manifested in children’s outward behavior and reflect the child’s negative actions on the external environment (Campbell, Shaw, and Gilliom 2000). Two key externalizing behaviors include aggression and delinquency. In contrast to externalizing behaviors, children may also develop internalizing behaviors such as being withdrawn, anxious, inhibited and feeling depressed. According to Campbell et al. (2000) internalizing problems centrally affect the child’s internal psychological environment rather than the external world. The present study tests the gender-schema theory by examining how young males and females differ in their response to exposure to intimate partner violence.

This study restricts its attention to children who have already been identified as abused or neglected. Since the literature clearly links both abuse and neglect to delinquency, it is appropriate to focus on this group. Among this high risk group, the relationship between exposure to intimate partner violence and subsequent delinquency is examined. This study tests the following six hypotheses.

HYPOTHESES

1. Among abused and/or neglected children, males will commit more violent offenses than females.
2. Among abused and/or neglected children, males will commit more property crimes than females. Research shows that there is a strong positive correlation between abuse and juvenile delinquency (Kakar 1996; Scudder et al. 1993; Doerner 1987). It has long been apparent that the crime rate for male juveniles is many times higher than that for female juveniles (Rutter, Giller, and Hagell 1998).

3. Among abused and/or neglected children, non-Caucasians will commit more violent offenses than Caucasian children.

4. Among abused and/or neglected children, non-Caucasians will commit more property crime offenses than Caucasian children.

In regards to hypotheses 3 and 4, O'Keefe (1994) has reported ethnic differences in behavioral problems of children exposed to intimate partner violence. His research suggests that white children, especially boys, exhibit greater externalizing behavior problems than African American children. However, in another study, it was reported that African American youth who had been abused were twice as likely to have court records for violent offenses, almost 3 times as likely to have court records for nonviolent offenses, and
almost 5 times likely to self-report arrests (Lansford et al. 2007).

5. Among abused and/or neglected children, those exposed to intimate partner violence will commit more violent offenses than those not exposed to intimate partner violence.

6. Among abused and/or neglected children, those exposed to intimate partner violence will commit more property crime offenses than those not exposed to intimate partner violence.

These hypotheses are consistent with the Social Learning Theory that suggests children’s observations and memories of intimate partner violence will have a strong influence over a child’s subsequent behavior.
DATA SET

The data set used in this study was retrieved from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, study number 3548: "Childhood Victimization and Delinquency, Adult Criminality and Violent Criminal Behavior in a Large Urban County in the Northwest United States". This was an extension of an earlier study on how childhood victimization relates to delinquency. The sample was comprised of 877 abused and neglected children who were dependents of the Superior Court in a large urban county in the Northwest. All petitions filed between 1980 and 1984 on children aged from birth to 11 years were included in the initial sample. The study also consisted of a matched control group who resided in the same target area. The county courthouse released the dependency records (See Appendix) and the control group criteria were obtained from the Department of Health's birth records. Department of Health's birth records were searched until each abuse and/or neglect case in the study had a corresponding matched control based on age, gender, ethnicity, and approximate socioeconomic status.
The type of abuse or neglect precipitating the dependency petition was collected and coded using a modified version of the Maltreatment Classification Coding Scheme (MCS). Types of maltreatment included are physical abuse, that is abuse on a child’s body and neglect which includes failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, medical treatment, or hygiene, lack of supervision, educational maltreatment, involving the child in illegal activities and whether the child used drugs/alcohol (English and Widom 2002). Data on juvenile arrests from juvenile court records, including both the number of offenses and the different types of offenses, were collected for each abused and/or neglected youth and each matched control subject. Adult criminal arrests, excluding routine traffic offenses, for all abused and neglected subjects and matched controls were collected from local, county, state, and federal law enforcement sources. Each jurisdiction had its own coding system for crimes, so a coding scheme was developed for this study to allow arrest comparisons across jurisdictions. Duplicate charges were removed from the data set through individual examination of each case and comparison of charges from each data source. It is noted that some crimes were not attributed to an individual due to matching issues (English and Widom 2002).
The study had four major goals. The researchers hoped to document the frequency of delinquency among a new group of abused and neglected children compared to the control group, and to explore gender and ethnic differences in the correlation between childhood victimization and violent offending. The researchers also wanted to verify if different forms of child maltreatment are linked with an increased risk of delinquency and adult criminal offending. Finally, the study hoped to determine if placements for juvenile offenders intercede delinquent and criminal consequences. A collection of data on juvenile arrests was obtained on each of the abused or neglected children and the control subjects while adult criminal arrests records were also collected for all subjects (English and Widom 2002).

In the current study, a central variable of interest is the child’s exposure to intimate partner violence in the home. Unfortunately, this information was only collected for the abused and/or neglected sample, not the matched controls drawn from the larger community. For this reason, the data analysis was limited to the abused/neglected sample only (n=877).
VARIABLES OF INTEREST

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable of interest for hypotheses 1, 3 and 5 is the number of violent crimes committed by the subject. This continuous variable was collected from criminal records. This variable has a mean of .86 and a standard deviation of 2.136.

The dependent variable associated with hypotheses 2, 4 and 6 is the number of property crimes committed by the subject. This continuous variable was collected from criminal records. This variable has a mean of 1.66 and a standard deviation of 4.567.

Independent Variables

There are several independent variables utilized in this study: gender, race and exposure to domestic violence. Detailed information on each abused and/or neglected child in the sample was collected in the dependency records and data on these three variables were drawn from these records.

The dichotomous variable gender was coded male=0 and female=1. The variable for race was recoded as a dichotomous variable, with white being 1 and 0 being other
which includes African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Americans. An identified child problem at dependency variable DV50 (Domestic Violence) is also used. This response is dichotomous, which is coded 0-1 (no or yes) to the question “has the child experienced domestic violence” which is another question asked on the dependency form.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data is analyzed using the statistical package SPSS 16.0 for Windows. Descriptive statistics are used to examine individual variables. Numerous t-tests were conducted to examine the bivariate relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables. Linear regression analyses were then used to explore the relative contribution of each independent variable to delinquency. The following chapter will present the results of the analyses as they pertain to the hypotheses provided in Chapter II.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings pertaining to the relationship between children’s exposure to intimate partner violence and its impact on violent delinquency. Descriptive statistics are first reviewed to provide information on the sample.

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

The demographics of the sample (n=877) reveal that 47.3% (n=415) of the sample were male, 52.7% (n=462) were female, 70.4% (n=617) were Caucasian, 22.1% (n=194) were African American, 5.8% (n=51) were Native American and 1.7% (n=15) were of other race.\(^1\) Lastly, the table reveals that 9.6% (n=84) of the sample have been exposed to intimate partner violence as a child.

\(^1\) Census data for 2000 reveals that within the state of Washington, 72% of the population were Caucasian and within the entire nation, 61% of the population were Caucasian. Therefore it appears that the current sample closely resembles the racial population pattern for the state of Washington but is less similar to the overall national pattern.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child’s Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child’s Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exposure to Domestic Violence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>90.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIVARIATE ANALYSIS

The first hypothesis in the study states that males who have been abused or neglected will commit more violent offenses than females who have been abused or neglected. Of the males included in the sample (n=415), the mean value for violent crime offending was 1.45 while the mean for females (n=462) was .34 as shown in Table 2. The relationship was statistically significant, supporting hypothesis 1. The data clearly reflects that males commit more violent crimes than females.

The second hypothesis states that males who have been abused or neglected will commit more property crimes than females who have been abused or neglected. The mean value for males who committed property crimes was 2.85, while the mean value for females who committed property crimes was only .59 as shown in Table 3. The relationship was statistically significant, supporting hypothesis 2.

The third hypothesis states that among the abused or neglected children in the sample, non-Caucasians will commit more violent offenses than Caucasian children. The results of the t-test, shown in Table 4, indicated that the rate of violent offending was higher among non-Caucasian subjects supporting hypothesis 3. The mean value for
Table 2. T-test for Number of Violent Crime Offenses by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violent Crime</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d.f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>2.710</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>7.955*</td>
<td>875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>1.221</td>
<td>462</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05
Table 3. T-test for Number of Property Crime Offenses by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Crime</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d.f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>6.010</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>7.544*</td>
<td>875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>2.184</td>
<td>462</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05
non-Caucasian children was 1.59, while the mean value for Caucasian children was .56. The data clearly suggests that non-Caucasian children who have been abused or neglected commit more violent offenses than abused or neglected Caucasian children.

The fourth hypothesis states that among the abused or neglected children in the sample, non-Caucasians will commit more property crime offenses than Caucasian children. The results of the t-test, shown in Table 5, indicates that the findings do support the hypothesis, noting that children of other races who have been abused or neglected commit more property crimes than abused or neglected Caucasian children. The mean value for non-Caucasian children was 2.60, while the mean value for Caucasian children was 1.26. It is evident that non-Caucasian children engage in more property crime offending than do Caucasian children.

The fifth hypothesis states that among the abused or neglected children in the sample, those exposed to intimate partner violence will commit more violent offenses than those not exposed to intimate partner violence. The findings, shown in Table 6, do support the hypothesis, noting that those exposed to intimate partner violence are
Table 4. T-test for Number of Violent Crime Offenses by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violent Crime</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d.f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>2.963</td>
<td>260</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>1.575</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>6.725*</td>
<td>875</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05
Table 5. T-test for Number of Property Crime Offenses by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Crime</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d.f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>5.685</td>
<td>260</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>3.941</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>4.026*</td>
<td>875</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05
at a greater risk of committing violent crimes than those not exposed to intimate partner violence. The mean value for those exposed to intimate partner violence and who have committed a violent crime was 1.36, while those children not exposed to intimate partner violence and who have no violent criminal record was .81 which clearly indicates that exposure to intimate partner violence does increase the chances of later criminal behavior.

Hypothesis 6 states that among the abused and neglected children in the sample, those exposed to intimate partner violence will commit more property crimes than those not exposed to intimate partner violence. The results of the t-test indicated no significant relationship between those exposed to intimate partner violence and those who have not been exposed to intimate partner violence in relation to committing more property crimes. Table 7 shows the comparison of exposure to intimate partner violence and property crime offending in regards to the entire sample. Hypothesis 6 was not supported.
Table 6. T-test for Number of Violent Crime Offenses by Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violent Crime</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d.f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>2.019</td>
<td>793</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>2.997</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>-2.234*</td>
<td>875</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Crime</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d.f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>4.643</td>
<td>793</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>3.792</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>-0.450</td>
<td>875</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05
MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

A linear regression analysis was performed to examine the relative impact of each independent variable on the number of violent offenses. The overall model explained 12% of the variance in violent offending. In addition, the relationship of each independent variable with the number of violent offenses is statistically significant and in the predicted direction (see Table 8).

In addition, a second linear regression analysis was performed to examine the relative impact of each independent variable on the number of property crime offenses. Two of the three independent variables, gender and race, have an impact on property crime offending, however the variation is relatively small, the overall model only explains 7.5% of the variance in property crime offending. Exposure to intimate partner violence is not a significant predictor of property crime offending.
Table 8. Linear Regression Model Predicting Violent Crime Offenses Among Abused or Neglected Subjects (n=877)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-1.041</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>-.987</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to IPV</td>
<td>.698</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R Square = .117

Table 9. Linear Regression Model Predicting Property Crime Offenses Among Abused or Neglected Subjects (n=877)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-2.174</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>-1.183</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to IPV</td>
<td>.427</td>
<td>.400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R Square = .075
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

This study examines patterns of delinquent behaviors among abused and/or neglected children. It explored the impact that exposure to intimate partner violence has on children, demonstrating that in some cases, this exposure is associated with increased delinquency. In addition, variations in delinquency related to gender and race were studied.

Child maltreatment is an urgent public health problem for many reasons and researchers have consistently identified the negative effects of early maltreatment on later social and psychological functioning (Lansford et al. 2007). Of particular concern is the extent to which early physical abuse leads to later aggression and violence, that is, the extent to which "violence begets violence" (Widom 1989). These factors coupled with being exposed to intimate partner violence are risk factors that could increase the likelihood that abused and/or neglected children will engage in violent delinquency.

It is important to note the majority of the abused and/or neglected children in this study have never
committed a violent crime (only 27% of the sample reports committing a violent offense). It does appear that among those who did commit violent offenses, the child’s gender, race and exposure to intimate partner violence were important predictive factors.

The results of the study indicated that for hypotheses one and two, gender differences with regard to violent and nonviolent offending were important but somewhat predictable. Males were shown to commit more violent offenses and more property crime offenses than females. This finding is consistent with previous research on juvenile delinquency. As reported by Siegel et al (2006), males engage in delinquent activity at significantly higher rates than females. The teenage gender ratio for serious violent crime is 4:1 and 2:1 for property crime. Therefore, for every violent offense committed by a female, four are committed by males.

While the literature is mixed with regard to race and violent delinquency, the bivariate results of the study resemble those of Siegel et al (2006). Official statistics show that minority youths are much more likely than Caucasian youths to be arrested for serious criminal behavior. The present study reveals that non-Caucasians who have been abused and/or neglected committed more
violent offenses and property crime offenses than Caucasian children. Lansford et al (2007) indicate as well that African American youth who have been victims of abuse were twice as likely to have court records for both violent and nonviolent offenses. Therefore, the results of the study do support both hypotheses.

This study revealed a statistically significant relationship between exposure to intimate partner violence and violent crime offending. This is consistent with Edleson’s (1999) review of 31 studies, where children who witnessed intimate partner violence exhibited more behavioral and emotional problems than non exposed children. Witnessing violence may influence children’s attitudes about violent behavior (Feerick and Silverman 2006). This finding is consistent with Social Learning Theory. Parents are important role models and a child exposed to violence between parents may imitate this aggression in later interactions.

It is interesting to note that while the relationship between intimate violence exposure and violent offending was clear, a similar relationship did not appear for property offending. Social Learning Theorists would predict a stronger association between exposure to intimate partner violence and violent crime than property crime.
Many property offenses lack the level of interpersonal confrontation associated with violent crimes.

A multivariate analysis was conducted to examine the relative impact of each independent variable on the number of violent offenses. With regard to the overall model, gender, race and exposure to intimate partner violence were significant predictors of violent crime offending, although only explaining a relatively small amount of variance in violent offending.

An additional multivariate analysis was also conducted which examined the impact of the independent variables on the number of property crime offenses. Of the three independent variables included in the model, gender and race were the only variables that were significant. Being exposed to intimate partner violence was revealed not to be an important predictor of property crime offending.

LIMITATIONS

While this study expands our understanding of the relationship between abuse and/or neglect and exposure to intimate partner violence and later violent and non-violent delinquency, it does have certain limitations. A significant drawback to the data set utilized was the fact that all children in the sample were abused or neglected.
Although the original data set included a matched control group from the community, it did not include data on intimate partner violence exposure for these children. Because intimate partner violence exposure was of central interest, the current analysis was limited to only the abused or neglected sample.

Although the analysis revealed a clear relationship between race and delinquency, other factors such as poverty and family stress may actually account for these differences. Higher rates of offending were found among non-Caucasian children. Unfortunately, the current data set did not permit examination of this relationship in greater detail and complexity.

An additional limitation relates to the fact that on the dependency code form, the intimate partner violence exposure question was only a simple yes or no answer; no measure of frequency was provided. Only 10% of the sample reported being exposed to intimate partner violence. One would certainly expect that children repeatedly exposed to intimate partner violence in the home would exhibit greater behavioral problems, but the current data set did not permit an examination of the question and this may have been due to the particular wording of the question.
There are also limitations related to the measurement of the dependent variables: violent and property crime offending. The data on juvenile offense measures were based on juvenile court records, which clearly underestimate juvenile offending. In essence, these measures simply reflect crimes known to the authorities - "the tip of the iceberg." In addition, the data also focuses specifically on a very vulnerable group of children, those who are already in the system. We simply do not know if the response of an abused or neglected child to intimate partner exposure is stronger or weaker than we might find in a non-abused/neglected group of children.

Finally, the data set did not include a measure of negative internalized effects, such as depression and anxiety, which some researchers argue are common responses of female children exposed to violence in the home (Carlson 1991; Stagg, Wills, and Howell 1989). If measures of internalized behaviors had been included, it may have explained other potential negative outcomes resulting from abuse and exposure to intimate partner violence.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The results of this research as well as previous research indicate a connection between abuse, exposure to
intimate partner violence and violent delinquency. The findings in the research are clearly consistent with both theories utilized in this study. Bandura (1973) suggests that violence is learned, through role models provided by the family, either directly or indirectly, and reinforced through childhood and continued in adulthood as a coping response to stress or a method of conflict resolution. As for the gender-schema theory, Bem (1993) states that our culture polarizes males and females by forcing them to obey mutually exclusive gender roles or scripts which provide the basis for deviant behavior. Given the higher rates of offending for males, the findings were consistent with gender-schema theory.

Being a child victim of abuse and/or neglect coupled with being exposed to parental violence clearly has damaging effects on children. Ideally, more intervention and prevention programs need to be implemented for families, single mothers and mothers-to-be in order to address this issue. Programs that aim to reduce intimate partner violence may also serve to limit the damage done to children in those families. Also, increasing education and awareness to identify abuse is critical for those individuals working with children in order to increase early identification of at-risk children. Widom (1998)
states that the earlier abused and neglected children are identified and treated, the less likely they will be to suffer long-term negative effects. Once identified, children who are victims of abuse and/or neglect can be provided with counseling and other support services and this may result in a decrease in subsequent delinquent behavior.

Another area that needs additional attention is how minorities are affected by abuse and exposure to intimate partner violence. There has been limited research in this area. Feerick and Silverman (2006) argue that additional research is needed to better understand the consequences of minority children’s exposure to parental intimate partner violence. This research would require consideration of the complex relationships, interactions and influences of social stratification, poverty and racism that are present in the daily lives of ethnic minority children. Thoughtful approaches to these complex relationships and interactions are necessary in our efforts to plan specific programs based on ethnic minority group membership and background experiences of children exposed to intimate partner violence (Feerick and Silverman 2006).

It is clear that the effects of abuse and exposure to intimate partner violence can be extremely harmful to a
child’s well-being and development. Prevention efforts are undoubtedly the best response but early intervention needs to also be emphasized. In utilizing these services, children can be exposed to environments where they can model nonviolent conflict resolution. New behavioral models can be made available for imitation and families can start to rebuild a strong foundation and live happier, productive lives.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

v1. Dependency Case Number
v2. Date of Dependency Petition
v3. Child’s First Name
v4. Child’s Last Name
v5. Child’s Date of Birth
v6. Child’s Gender (1=female, 2=male)
v7. Caregiver’s First and Last Name
v8. 2nd Caregivers’ First and Last Name
v9. Location (Zipcode)
v9b. Location (Address)
v9c. Location (Census Tract at Dependency)
v10. Child is Indian (yes=1, no=0)
    If yes, Tribal affiliation
v11. The child has been abandoned (1=yes, no=0)
v12. The child is abused or neglected (1=yes, no=0)
v13. The child has no parent, guardian, or custodian
    willing and capable of adequately caring for the
    child, such that the child is in circumstances which
    constitute a danger of substantial damage to the
    child’s psychological or physical development
    (1=yes, no=0)

Allegation of dependency is based on the following facts:
Physical Abuse:
v14. P/A Face
v15. P/A Torso
v16. P/A Buttocks
v17. P/A Limb
v18. P/A Handling
v19. P/A Choke
v20. P/A Burn
v21. P/A Shake
v22. P/A Nondescript

Emotional Abuse:
v23. E/Abuse 1
v24. E/Abuse 2
v25. E/Abuse 3
v26. E/Abuse 4
Sexual Abuse:
v27. Sexual

Neglect:
v28. N/Food
v29. N/Clothing
v30. N/Shelter
v31. N/Medical
v32. N/Hygiene
v33. N/Supervision
v34. N/Sup. Environment
v35. N/Sup. Sub. Care

Moral/Legal/Educational:
v36. Moral/Legal
v37. Educational

Referral Specific Drugs/Alcohol:
v38. l=yes, no=0
v39. Prep. 1 Type
v39a. Prep. 1 Gender
v39b. Prep. 2 Type
v39c. Prep. 2 Gender

Order of Dependency: It is concluded that the child is Dependent. (yes=1, no=0)

v40a. Child Abandoned
v40b. Child Abused and Neglected
v40c. No Parent Capable of Adequately Caring for Child
v40d. Child Developmentally Delayed
v41. It is further ordered that the child is placed:
   (1=With the Mother, 2=With Father, 3=With Both Parents,
   4=With Relative, 5=With Guardian, 6=With Foster Care.)

Reason for Resolution of this Dependency Case.
v42a. Reason (1=Adoption, 2=Conditions were met, 3=Custody
   Changed, 4=Foster Care, 5=Kin Care, 6=Unfounded, 7=Not
   Established, 8=Aged out of Dependency.)
v42b. Other Reason for Resolution

Child’s Final Disposition:
v43. What was the final disposition for child for this
   petition? (1=With Parent, 2=Group Home, 3=Adopted, 4=Kin,
   5=Foster, 8=Aged out of dependency.)
v43a. Other Final Disposition
v44. Date of Final Disposition
Caregiver/Child Problem List

v45. Parental Substance Abuse (yes=1, no=0)
v46. Parental Mental Health (yes=1, no=0)
v47. Parental Physical Health (yes=1, no=0)
v48. Parental Developmentally Disabled (yes=1, no=0)
v49. Assistance for Families with Dependent Children (A.F.D.C.) (yes=1, no=0)
v50. Domestic Violence (partner/Spousal) (yes=1, no=0)

Caregiver/Child Problem List (Continued):
v51. Child Behavior Problems (yes=1, no=0)
v52. Evidence of Sibling Victimization (yes=1, no=0)
v53. Social Security Number
v54. Multiple Dependencies (number of multiple dependencies)
VITA

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Prevention Specialist, Frontier Health, Duffield, Virginia, September 2003-July 2007

Professional Certifications
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