

# **Intimate Partner Violence Among Gay Men and Its Consequences in a Separation Context**

**Valérie Roy, PhD**

*Université Laval, Québec City, Canada*

**Sylvie Thibault, PhD**

*Université du Québec en Outaouais, St-Jérôme, Canada*

**Cécily Tudeau, MSW**

*Université Laval, Québec City, Canada*

**Claudia Fournier, MSc**

*Université Laval, Québec City, Canada*

**Claudia Champagne, BSW**

*L'Accord Mauricie, Trois-Rivières, Canada*

Intimate partner violence (IPV) affects gay men in a particular way with regard to its prevalence, forms, and consequences. There are still many aspects of the problem that require research. We know for example that the separation of the partners does not always put an end to IPV. It is not however known how it evolves in relationships between separated men, since our knowledge has been developed mainly with couples in heterosexual relationships. Based on the results of a qualitative study conducted in the Province of Québec, this article describes IPV and its consequences in a separation context. We initially conducted individual semi-structured interviews with 23 men who had experienced violence in the overall separation context of their intimate relationship with another man. We then conducted two discussion groups with 14 practitioners from related fields. These results showed that the partners' union and separation were not binary and that the separation instead follows a three-phase process. Different acts of psychological, sexual, physical, and economic

violence and their consequences were reported during these different phases. This study allows us to deepen our understanding of the IPV experienced by gay men in a separation process. It particularly sheds light on acts of violence rooted in a heterosexist social context and in the context of different types of sexual agreements. Implications for practitioners working with gay men who are subjected to or perpetrate IPV as well as for educators and state policymakers are discussed.

**KEYWORDS:** intimate partner violence; IPV; gay/homosexual men; separation; masculinities; sexual agreements

Studies conducted in the last few years on intimate partner violence (IPV) among gay men<sup>1</sup> have shed light on several particularities of this problem. Even though its prevalence is difficult to establish, several studies indicate that it is equally or more widespread than that reported by people in a relationship with a different sex partner. In Canada, data from the 2014 General Social Survey on Victimization revealed that people who identified themselves as lesbian, gay, or bisexual were two times more likely than those identifying as heterosexual to declare themselves as IPV victims (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2016). Among police-reported incidents of same-sex intimate partner violence from 2009 to 2017, more than half (55%) involved male partners. Furthermore, IPV might be particularly underestimated among men, who are less likely than women to report violence (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2016; Whitehead et al., 2020), and even less so when it is perpetrated by a partner of the same sex (Oliffe et al., 2014; Oringher & Samuelson, 2011).

According to Canadian data from 2009 to 2017, major assault (e.g., assault with a weapon or assault that wounds or endangers the life of the victim) was more common between male partners (18%) than female partners (12%) (Ibrahim, 2019). IPV between men, as in heterosexual relationships, is not only physical; it also has psychological (e.g., name-calling, stalking), sexual (e.g., sexual assault), and economic (e.g., forcing the partner to give money) forms (Bartholomew et al., 2008; Bosco et al., 2020; Jaffray, 2021; Kay & Jeffries, 2010; Stults et al., 2020). IPV can also be perpetrated through technology, such as cyberstalking or harassing by texting, emailing, or using social media (Jaffray, 2021; Stults et al., 2020; Trujillo et al., 2020). Research on cyber IPV among gay men is still scarce however. In a recent national survey in Canada, the most reported form of IPV by gay and bisexual men was psychological abuse, followed by physical abuse (Jaffray, 2021), a result which echoes other studies (Bartholomew et al., 2008; Bosco et al., 2020; Stults et al., 2020). There are likewise

<sup>1</sup>We use the term gay to refer to men who are mainly attracted by other men sexually or affectively. This term can be understood as a sexual orientation or an identity, and be associated with certain cultures and communities developed by people who share these identities (Eribon, 2012). Even though this social category is of current and practical use, it has some limitations in representing the sexual and affective relationships between men with different cultures and personal experiences. For example, a man may not define his attraction for other men in terms of identity.

certain particularities due to the heterosexist<sup>2</sup> and mononormative<sup>3</sup> social context, which influences the way gender roles, intimate and romantic relationships, and violence are regarded and experienced.

First, certain expressions of IPV are more specific to gay men. These include, among other things, belittling the partner for behavior, attitudes, or traits considered to be effeminate (Kubicek et al., 2015) and outing, which consists in revealing or threatening to reveal the partner's sexual orientation without his consent (Kubicek et al., 2016). Second, IPV can have specific consequences for gay men. For example, in a comparative study by Dickerson-Amay and Coston (2019), male IPV survivors reported a higher number of post-victimization, negative mental-health outcomes, on average, than straight men did, which could be due to the double impact of victimization and minority stress.<sup>4</sup>

Gay men, who are more often involved in non-monogamous intimate or romantic relationships than are individuals in a relationship with a different sex partner (Levine et al., 2018), also encounter a number of relationship issues that may influence their IPV experience, particularly with regard to the negotiation and breaking of sexual agreements, that is agreements related to sexual or romantic exclusivity or non-exclusivity (Hoff & Beougher, 2010; Philpot et al., 2018). In a study by Pruitt et al. (2015), men that had an open sexual agreement with their main male partner were less likely to report physical IPV as compared with those having a monogamous agreement. That being said, the relationships between IPV and sexual agreements about extra-dyadic relationships have gone largely unexplored in the literature (Sharma et al., 2020).

We currently ignore how IPV in relationships between men evolves during and after separation. Studies have concentrated more on IPV during relationships and, to our knowledge, research on post-separation IPV has only been conducted among people in a heterosexual relationship, thereby limiting the transferability of the results to gay men. These studies nonetheless highlight the fact that IPV does not necessarily come to an end when partners separate (Lindsay, 2014; Rinfret-Raynor et al., 2008; Romito, 2011; Vasselier Novelli & Bosquet, 2018). For example, in Canada in 2009, close to a third of the people who declared that they had been subjected to violence by an ex-partner mentioned having been subjected to it after separating, indicating that there had been an increase in its frequency and intensity in 35% of the

<sup>2</sup>An ideology embedded in institutions, social practices, and daily interactions that, on the one hand, systematically privileges heterosexuality and makes it an ideal which must be adhered to and that, on the other hand, sees masculinity as superior to femininity (Chamberland & Lebreton, 2012).

<sup>3</sup>Dominant and generally uncriticized assumption that monogamy and the exclusive dyadic structure are the ideal that intimate and loving relationships should adhere to (Pieper & Bauer, 2005).

<sup>4</sup>According to Meyer's (2003) minority stress model, members of a stigmatized group experience additional and unique stressors that are both internalized (e.g., openness / concealment of sexual orientation, perceived discrimination, and internalized homophobia) and externalized (e.g., actual experiences of violence, discrimination, and harassment).

cases (Lindsay, 2014). Even though some authors argued that post-separation IPV was generally of the same nature as that before the separation (Romito, 2011), others noted that there had been changes in the form and gravity of the acts perpetrated (Rinfret-Raynor et al., 2008). Authors note moreover that separation can be an evolving process in which partners leave each other and get back together (Vasselier Novelli & Bosquet, 2018). Up till now however, studies on IPV have not taken much account of these “back and forths” in relationships and, in order to include the IPV that can occur there, we have employed a broader term, namely “separation context”.

Finally, there is still work to be done to better recognize and understand IPV among men (Gehring & Vaske, 2017; Oliffe et al., 2014). The efforts of feminist movements since the 70s have helped to make IPV a genuine social, political, and scientific issue. However, IPV was mainly seen as perpetrated by a man against his female partner. Even though the scope and consequences of violence perpetrated by men against women remains considerable (Secrétariat à la condition féminine, 2018), this view of IPV hides the reality of gay men, thereby limiting knowledge development. The normalization and even the naturalization of violence among men, in addition to the social expectation that a man should be able to defend himself, has also hindered the recognition of IPV among gay men, particularly with regard to its nonphysical forms (Rollè et al., 2018). Likewise, whereas the roles of IPV victims and perpetrators are often presented as mutually exclusive, including among male partners (Rollè et al., 2018), studies on IPV among gay men suggest that these roles can evolve and be shared (Bacchus et al., 2018; Oliffe et al., 2014; Stanley et al., 2006; Stults et al., 2020; Suarez et al., 2018).

The Province of Québec is no exception to this under-recognition of the problem. IPV has been recognized and addressed by the Government since 1985 through different policies and action plans (Secrétariat à la condition féminine, 2018). There are references to sexual diversity and abused men since 1995 but they have not led to concrete actions, either in services or in research. To our knowledge, no recent studies have looked at IPV among gay men in Québec. This knowledge is however important if we wish to develop prevention, awareness, and intervention strategies that take into account the realities and needs of LGBT populations (Calton et al., 2016). To bridge this gap, a study<sup>5</sup> was conducted to better understand IPV between men in Québec, especially by taking in consideration the separation process. The present article focuses on describing IPV and its consequences as experienced by men.

<sup>5</sup>The research team included seven researchers (two specialized in IPV, two in sexual diversity, and three in masculinities) and four partner organizations (one organization working in IPV, two in sexual diversity, and one with men with psychosocial difficulties). Close to 20 other organizations, in these three sectors and others (e.g., police force), were also periodically involved in the different research activities, from the development of the data collection to the data analysis.

## **METHOD**

Given this objective and the growing interest in the actors' perspectives so as to better comprehend IPV in LGBT communities (Calton et al., 2016), a qualitative design was chosen (Padgett, 2008).

### **Sampling and Recruitment**

The study population was composed of gay men who had experienced IPV with another man in a separation context and practitioners from different organizations who were likely to provide services to this population. The sample was formed in two steps. In the first phase, we recruited gay men through ads posted on the Facebook pages of our research partner organizations, on a classified ads site, on a dating app, with a university email distribution list, and through media interviews. The practitioners from the partner organizations and people in contact with the target population likewise presented the project to people likely to meet the participation criteria, namely to identify as a man and to recognize that they have experienced IPV with another man in a separation context. The type of relationship (monogamous or not) was not a criterion and, beyond their own evaluation of IPV in this relationship, there was no assessment of the violence (e.g., number, kind, severity). Men who were interested contacted the research team by email or phone, which then provided the men with more information about the project and set up a meeting for the research interview. Each man signed a consent form at the beginning of the interview and an incentive of \$20 (CAD) was provided.

A second sample of 14 practitioners was recruited to participate in one of two focus groups to refine the findings from the first sample. An email invitation to participate was sent to the different partner organizations in the study. Practitioners were free to participate or not in the activity and those who were interested contacted the research team by email or phone. Interested practitioners signed a consent form at the beginning of the group, ensuring the confidentiality of their discussions. They received an allowance, proportionate to the distance traveled, to defray their travel expenses<sup>6</sup>. The research process received ethical approval from the research ethics committees of Université Laval and of the Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux (CIUSS) du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal.

### **Participants**

At the time of the data collection, the 23 gay men of the first sample ranged from 26 to 72 years old, with a median age of 37. All of them identified as cisgender gay men, except for one who identified as heterosexual and another who was questioning about his gender identity and sexual orientation. The participants lived in various regions, though most

<sup>6</sup>Organizations were located in five of Québec's 17 administrative regions and some participants had to travel more than 150 km to take part in the focus group.

lived in urban centers and some in towns of smaller sizes or semi-urban areas. Twenty were born in Québec, two in Latin America (Brazil and Mexico) and one in southern Africa (Zimbabwe). Nine were in a relationship with an intimate or romantic partner, including three with the person with whom they experienced the IPV described in this article. Only one was a parent. The socio-economic status of the sample was diversified but generally high: the majority ( $n=16$ ) had university degrees (bachelors or masters) and twelve earned more than \$40,000 (CAD) per year. Fourteen were employed, three were students, four were retired or semi-retired, and two were unemployed.

The practitioner sample was composed of eleven men and three women. They had an average of nine years of professional experience working in services for LGBT populations ( $n=7$ ), for men perpetrating violence ( $n=4$ ), for victims of criminal acts ( $n=1$ ), and in the police force ( $n=2$ ).

### **Data Collection**

In the first phase, each gay man participated in an individual, semi-structured interview from 1½ to 2½ hours long, each interview being conducted by either one of the two researchers or one of the three research assistants. Except for one, research assistants had previous experience in conducting interviews with gay men or IPV victims and perpetrators. They were trained by the two researchers (e.g., on IPV among gay men, practice interviews) and a few interviews were listened to and discussed together. Open-ended and flexible questions were favored so as to encourage spontaneous answers by the respondents (Roulston & Choi, 2018). The interview guide was developed in collaboration with the partner organizations, drawing inspiration in particular from those used by the Los Angeles Young Men's Relationships Project (Kubicek et al., 2015, 2016) and from other IPV research with gay men (Lavoie, 2014; Thibault, 2001). As regards the focus of this article, participants were asked to describe their relationship with their partner, its evolution, and the acts of violence suffered or perpetrated before, during, and after the separation.

After the interviews were completed and analyzed, two focus groups were conducted with the 14 practitioners. Each one was led by one of the two first authors, who began the meeting by presenting the findings from the individual interviews. The participants were then asked their opinions about these findings and shared their professional experiences and observations about IPV in gay men. These focus groups made it possible to triangulate different sources and data collection methods and helped to refine findings (Tracy, 2010).

### **Data Analysis**

All the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and anonymized (pseudonyms were used in the study), and then coded by thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2008) with QDA Miner software. The code tree was constructed in three steps. The first version was produced after the first three authors and two research assistants had

summarized six interviews. They also took into account the themes emerging from the interviews, the data arising from the literature review, and the research objectives. The summaries and the first version of the code tree were then discussed by the research team, which allowed us to specify and adjust the coding procedures and to propose a second version of the code tree. The first six interviews along with four others were then coded by the two research assistants. It is important to mention that the identification of IPV in the participants' narratives depended primarily on that which they recognized themselves, in addition to that which met the World Health Organization definition (2017), namely behavior which, in the relationship, and during or after the separation, results in physical, psychological, or sexual harm or suffering. In keeping with the current state of knowledge (Bosco et al., 2020; Kay & Jeffries, 2010; Stults et al., 2020), economic violence was also considered. Two interrater agreements were conducted, initially for the first third of three interviews (68% agreement), and then for all the material of another interview (80% agreement). If there were disagreements, the two assistants discussed them. A third version of the thematic code tree was then agreed upon after discussion with the two researchers. All of the interviews were then coded accordingly by one of the two assistants. During these different stages, the research team met regularly to refine and improve the coding.

The discussions of the two focus groups with practitioners were transcribed and codified using the same thematic tree as for the interviews with the participants. In the analysis, we focused on the convergent and divergent elements between, on the one hand, their professional viewpoints and experiences and, on the other, those of the participants. Overall, these viewpoints generally agreed, and certain shared experiences were useful in qualifying some of the analyses. These data are included in the results presented below.

## RESULTS

We questioned the participants about violence suffered or perpetrated during the relationship with their partner and the separation process. All of them considered that they had been subjected to violence, and close to three quarters said that they had also used violence, presenting it above all as an immediate or delayed reaction to the other person's violence. Some men said they had used non-reactive violence, for example, as part of their mutually violent relationship dynamics or in an effort to control the other person. These results are in line with the professional experiences of the practitioners. Without denying the experiences reported by the participants, it should be noted that some episodes of violence may have been omitted due to recall bias, social desirability, and the difficulty of identifying the harmful aspect of certain acts. Since our data on perpetrated violence was limited, we focused on the violence endured by the participants. We start here by presenting the phases in the overall separation process that emerged from our data, while sketching a general portrait of the violence suffered. We then describe the experiences of IPV during these different

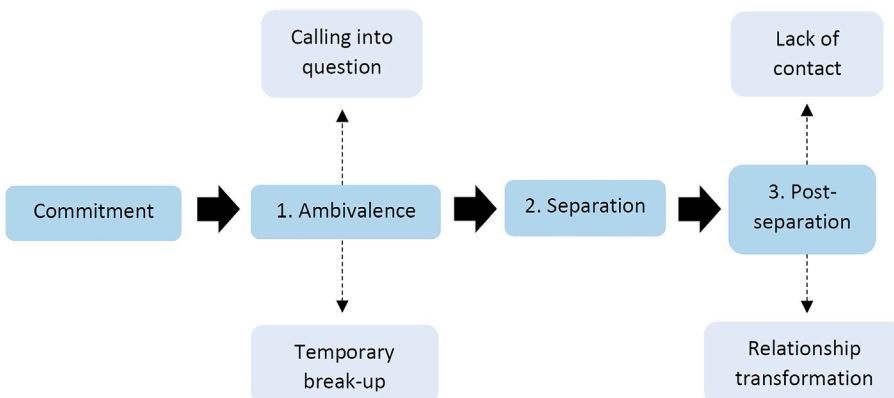
phases. We likewise integrate some of the consequences reported and focus on the specificities of IPV between men and its links with separation.

### IPV in Gay Men in a Separation Context

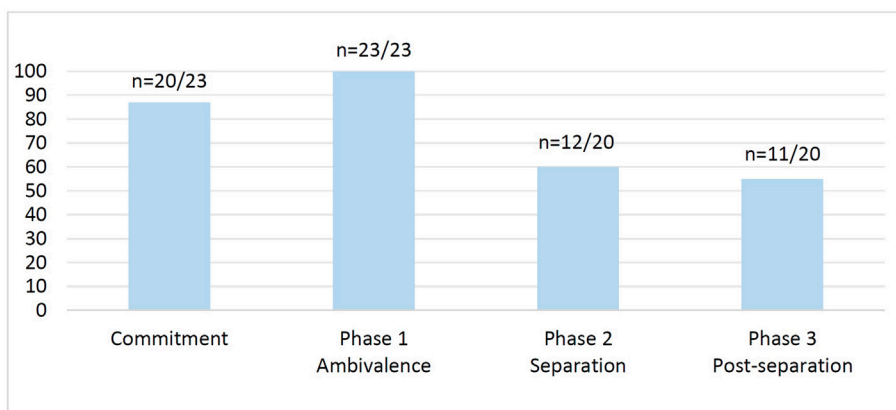
Given our research objectives, we asked the participants to tell us about their IPV experiences in the overall separation context. Their accounts led us to distinguish three phases: *ambivalence*, *separation*, and *post-separation* (Figure 1). These phases were preceded by a *relationship commitment period*, that corresponded to a time when the partners considered that their relationship was stable and had a future. In our sample, most of the participants lived with their partner and the vast majority reported already having been subjected to one or several forms of IPV during this phase (Figure 2).

The first phase of the separation process, *ambivalence*, began when the stability of the relationship started to weaken; it took two different forms. For half of the men interviewed, their relationship was called into question, explicitly or implicitly, without necessarily breaking up. The other half reported having experienced from one to ten temporary break-ups (mean=3), that is breaks in the relationship that sometimes involved moving out but with the possibility of getting back together. All of them reported violence during this phase, meaning that some relationships ( $n=3$ ) which were not initially violent became so at this time. It was moreover difficult to clearly distinguish the transition from the commitment period to the ambivalence phase. For the respondents, the combined length of these two phases varied considerably, ranging from 11 months to 5 years for half the participants, and from 7 to 18 years for the other half. At the time of the interviews however, three men were still in the ambivalence phase and had not yet experienced the two following phases.

The *separation* phase involved a definitive termination to the relationship. Of the 20 participants who went through it, 11 initiated it themselves. The decision came from the partner in seven other cases, and was of common accord in two other cases.



**Figure 1. Relationship commitment period and separation phases.**



**Figure 2. Participants (n) subjected to IPV during the relationship commitment period and separation context.**

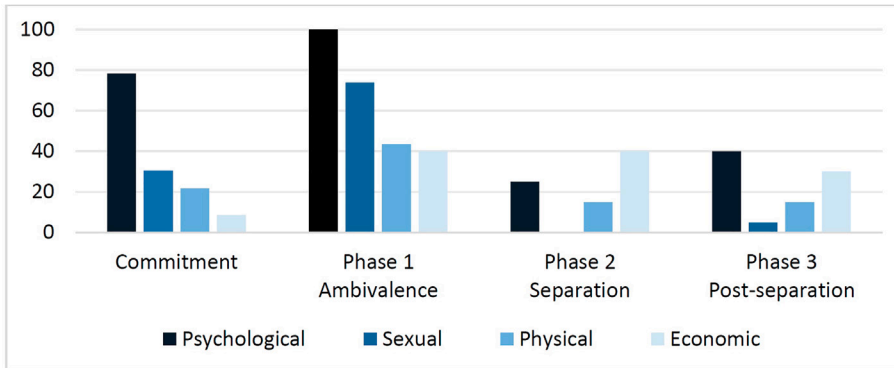
Among the reasons given for separating, about half mentioned a point of no return or an awareness of the increasing accumulation of violence or of its consequences, such as no longer loving the partner: “He insulted me. [...] I mean, it went way too far. I said, ‘This can’t be love’” (Gilles, age 29). Whereas all the participants said they had experienced violence in the ambivalence phase, three-quarters reported experiencing it in the separation phase. The practitioners were nevertheless surprised that there was not greater violence during the separation phase, as their observations pointed to an increased violence at this time.

The last phase was *post-separation*. It involved a reduction in or *absence of contact* between the ex-partners, with a *change in the nature of the relationship* in which some amicable or intimate contact was nonetheless maintained. The proportion of participants who reported violence in this last phase decreased slightly with respect to the preceding phase (from 12 to 11).

### IPV Between Men and Its Consequences

In their narratives, the participants described their IPV experiences throughout the commitment period and the three-phase separation process, as well as their consequences. We report them here in terms of their four main forms, namely: psychological, sexual, physical, and economic. Figure 3 presents the relative significance of these four forms during the different phases.<sup>7</sup> While this breakdown of the data is useful for reasons of simplification, it does require some nuance since these categories are not mutually exclusive. Accordingly, we can often discern the interaction of more than one form of violence in the same reported episode. It is likewise

<sup>7</sup>The relative significance refers to the number of participants who reported violence and not to the number of violent episodes or their severity. For example, an “increase in violence” between two phases indicates that a greater number of participants reported having experienced violence, and not necessarily that they individually experience it more often or that it was more severe.



**Figure 3. Participants (%) subjected to different forms of IPV during the relationship commitment period and separation context.**

noteworthy that almost all the participants experienced more than one form of violence during their relationship.

**Psychological Violence.** This first form of IPV was the most common among our participants; indeed, all of them affirmed that they had been subjected to it. Already present in the case of more than three quarters of the participants during the commitment period, it increased during the ambivalence phase in which all the participants said they had experienced it. Some participants even noted a greater frequency and severity during this phase. There was also an increase in threats and manipulation, often to keep the participants in the relationship. Psychological violence decreased markedly during the separation phase, but increased slightly once again in the post-separation phase.

From the outset, a large majority of the participants said they had been subjected to criticism, belittling, and humiliation of all sorts from their partner.

*When we were in a throuple, I asked him, “What do you think of Arnaud? Do you find him more attractive?” He didn’t hesitate to tell me the cold, hard truth. He said, “Yeah, I find Arnaud a lot more attractive, he’s got the kind of body I like. Yours doesn’t do it for me.” (Vincent, age 28, ambivalence)*

Most of the participants mentioned control, where for example the partner told them what to wear, forced them to take part in certain activities, or were jealously possessive. Several reported that their partner used various technologies to forcibly stay in contact with them, keep track of them, and threaten them. “After we separated, the emails kept on coming and coming. [...] He threatened to tell people at work some not very nice things about me” (Alexandre, age 36, post-separation). It is noteworthy that, contrary to other forms of psychological violence, which tend to decrease after the separation, cyber violence was reported by a greater number of respondents in post-separation. Nonetheless, some practitioners found that cyber violence was not greatly acknowledged by men whereas they saw it often in their practice, especially among younger clients.

Several participants reported that their partner used silence, pouting, manipulation, and threats, sometimes going so far as to insinuate they might end the relationship, commit suicide, or block the participants' immigration process.

*He started to shout at me, "That's it, it's over for us. I'm gonna call the government, I'm stopping the [immigration] sponsorship. Fuck off, get outta here." [...] He was keeping me on edge. (Kevin, age 36, ambivalence)*

*I trusted him when we bought our tickets. Then I learned that [in that country], homosexuality was illegal. [...] For me it was "no way, we can't go to there, we have to go somewhere else." Then he said to me, "Forget it, if we don't go [there] together, our relationship is over." (Thierry, age 29, ambivalence)*

The previous quote likewise indicates how the heterosexist social context can influence different forms of IPV. In wishing to force Thierry to travel in a country where homosexual relations are penalized, his partner was forcing him to put his safety in danger and to possibly be arrested and subjected to homophobic violence if ever his sexual orientation was discovered. It was a risk he was not ready to take.

Likewise, Julien (age 52, commitment) told us how his partner outed him, thereby exposing him to stigmatization in his social environment:

*I didn't want everyone to get flustered, it's a small village, about 450 inhabitants. It's frowned upon. [...] He drove me to work and gave me a kiss. Then I went inside, and everyone was looking at me.*

Émile (age 47, commitment), who identified as heterosexual, described how his partner would torment him about his sexual orientation, repeatedly calling into question his attraction for the said partner. "He would say, 'I know that deep down you like women, you don't think I'm good looking.'" Julien likewise associated the IPV his partner subjected him to with relationships between men, which led him to wonder about his sexual orientation:

*I didn't want anything to do with him, or with anybody else for that matter. I said, "Damn, I was better off with women. I didn't have these kinds of problems with women." [...] I kept asking myself, "Do you prefer men or not?"*

Finally, two participants reported having been belittled by their partner because of characteristics or roles associated with femininity and submission, such as the fact of adopting the receptive position during anal coitus or seeing oneself as a victim of IPV.

*I always had the passive role and there is a ... bias attached to that. Let's say that the one who plays the passive role is the weakest one, the least... masculine. [...] He's like a woman, the man who is penetrated. And he isn't worth as much as the other man. [...] We joke about it, but the jokes aren't always funny. (Jacob, age 46, ambivalence)*

*He would say to me, "It's a good thing there is no association for battered men, you would have went and cried to them." [...] He said that to me several times*

*when we were separating. "Oh, the poor little guy, he's a battered man." (Julien, age 52, separation)*

It is worth noting that the practitioners we interviewed expected more homophobic and sexist violence in the participants' comments, since that is what they often heard in their practice.

The accumulation of violent episodes, especially in their psychological form, had several consequences for the participants' mental health, for the most part feelings of sadness, guilt, and shame, as well as a drop in self-esteem. Eight of them had psychological problems, including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, eating disorders, and suicidal ideations: "He put me down so much, I had really bad thoughts and began humiliating and hurting myself." (Baptiste, age 31). This state of mind, in addition to the control exercised by their partner, resulted in social isolation and a decrease in their independence for several participants:

*I didn't want to talk about it to [the members of the organization I was part of]. That was a mistake on my part. I should have told them before. He wouldn't have stayed a month at our place, because the members would have kicked him out. [...] But I didn't talk about it. I wasn't able to. [...] For all those years, I was always there excusing myself, it was always me, the mean one. I had zero confidence in myself, absolutely none. (Jérôme, age 72)*

For some participants, this shame and decreased independence also affected their ability to deal with the separation and led to behavior that put their health at risk:

*The day he told me it was over, well, I did something that was pretty self-destructive. I went to the sauna. And I fucked with a whole bunch of guys without any protection. [...] You come out of there feeling even more disgusted with yourself. (Christian, age 61)*

Finally, five participants mentioned that they used their experience to make people aware of IPV among gay men and to help them discuss the problem. They were involved, for example, with support groups or worked in awareness campaigns through different media.

**Sexual Violence.** Sexual violence was the second most reported form of IPV. Present during the commitment period of almost a third of the men interviewed, it rose to three quarters during the ambivalence phase before almost disappearing during the separation phase.

A few participants noted the control that their partner exerted on their sexuality by limiting their access to pornography, imposing certain practices, deliberately holding back on sexual relations or, on the contrary, insisting on having them. Four others said they were subjected to sexual aggression where their partner forced them to have sexual relations or partake in certain practices despite the harm:

*Sometimes, penetration was really painful. [...] I would tell him, "Stop, you're hurting me." He'd say, "Shhh, shut up." Like ... "What do I care?" I let him do ... what he wanted to. Even when it was painful for me. (Jacob, age 46, ambivalence)*

For three of the participants, these non-consensual experiences led to a loss of interest in sexual activity and a rejection of coitus in particular, which had become a source of aversion. This traumatism and others related to all the various forms of IPV encountered sometimes lasted for several years. For example, five participants said they did not want to commit to a new relationship because they were afraid of being subjected to violence once more, like Gilles (age 29): "I meet men, but it's as if I sabotage the new relationship all the time. I keep thinking that it's going to finish the same way as before."

A majority of the participants reported IPV related to the breaking of agreements that were reached implicitly or explicitly with their partner and that concerned sexual and romantic exclusivity or non-exclusivity. Even though the IPV described in these circumstances was similar to psychological violence, it was always linked with the partners' sexuality. This led us to include it under sexual violence. Among those who were expecting to be exclusive, two forms were reported. The main one involved the harm ensuing from their partner's breach of their agreement.

*When you are meeting people and in some cases getting all infatuated and having sexual contact, I don't think that works anymore. [...] I told him that I didn't agree, that it hurt me. (Thierry, age 29, ambivalence)*

The second form concerned violence endured by a participant who had not respected the exclusivity agreement.

*He got jealous for the one hundredth time and asked me, "Have you ever cheated on me?" I said, "Yes, in 2000." [...] He said, "Did you like it?" [...] I said, "You bet I liked it." And then he punched me right in the face. (Samuel, age 56, ambivalence)*

Among participants who agreed not to be exclusive, the forms of IPV identified here involved the partner ignoring conditions that were decided upon in the non-exclusivity agreement, according to two scenarios. In the first, when he met another man, the partner did not respect, for example, the expected level of discretion, the measures to be taken to protect himself from STIs, or the places where these relationships were supposed to take place:

*I'd forgotten a document [at my place], so I turned around. When I opened the door, this guy was standing there nude in the living room. [...] My home was "sacred" to me. And now, he'd broken that rule. I no longer felt at home in my own house. (Jérôme, age 72, ambivalence)*

In the other scenario, when the participant met another man, his partner prevented him from talking about this third person as agreed upon, displayed a possessive jealousy, and humiliated him.

*He would like, let's say, "Ah, you went and met another guy. You're disgusting, and then you come and see me after!" [...] He liked meeting other guys. [...] But if I did it, if I wanted to see other guys, that bothered him. (Antonio, age 36, ambivalence)*

In addition to exposing some to STIs, the breaching of these agreements led the participants to lose confidence in themselves and in their partner, and to feel alienated. The practitioners we met with likewise said they had witnessed these situations and their consequences for their clients. Moreover, they pointed to the conditions in which these agreements were discussed, defined, negotiated, and included. Their concerns were furthermore in keeping with those of several participants regarding the more or less consensual nature of these agreements, and the possible harm that may ensue.

*At the beginning of our relationship, he admitted that he would've really preferred an open relationship [...]. I didn't know what to think because I come from a rather traditional family which believes in being faithful and all that stuff. At the same time, I was in a gay relationship and I didn't really know what to expect. And since I wanted to get to know him, I accepted. [...] I can't say that it was my style. [...] I know that he allowed me to go elsewhere too, but the few times I tried it, I didn't feel very good about it. (Pierrot, age 43, engagement)*

*He was very possessive. We hadn't even known each other two months and he wanted an exclusive relationship because he was feeling insecure. That type of request always made me feel wary and step back. But it was as if I didn't want to lose his support. [...] Our lousy relationship, in air brackets, started at that precise point where I didn't respect myself because I accepted it. (Francis, age 33, engagement)*

**Physical Violence.** The third form of IPV endured by the participants was physical violence, which was reported by more than half. Present in the commitment period, it doubled in the ambivalence phase, with some participants mentioning that it also became more severe, particularly when the breakup was announced or when the relationship started up again. Most of the participants who said they feared for their lives spoke of incidents that occurred during the ambivalence phase. It decreased and stabilized as of the separation phase.

Our participants reported mainly having been pushed, held, and hit, as well as having been cut and strangled in some cases. Several endured physical injuries that sometimes required hospital care, and some feared for their safety and their lives. "He grabbed me, [...] pulled me into my room and onto my bed. The next thing

I knew, he was on top of me and had his hands around my throat.” (Pierrot, age 43, separation)

It is worth noting that the fear of dying had different effects on the decision to end the relationship. Whereas Francis (age 33) was afraid that he would be killed by his partner if he left, Samuel (age 56) saw it as the catalyst to leave his partner. In addition to the physical injuries and the fear for one’s life and physical well-being, this form of violence also had long-term consequences. For example, after the separation, Samuel mentioned looking for a new partner who was smaller and therefore less dangerous: “I chose a tinier model, he was rather small. I told myself that this one couldn’t hurt me.”

***Economic Violence.*** Half of the participants mentioned having been subjected to the fourth form of IPV, that is, economic violence. It was moreover the form that increased the most once the relationship was called into question, quadrupling from the commitment period to the ambivalence phase. We likewise noted the sizable increase in economic violence, particularly threats and manipulation linked to the participant’s revenue so as to keep him in the relationship. This was the most present form of IPV during the separation phase.

The main expressions of violence reported by the participants could be seen in the partner’s attempts to control the finances, borrowing money without paying it back, stealing, vandalizing, and making threats based on differences in income:

*He wanted to take control... “It’s my game. I’m the one with the salary. I’m the one with this and that.” He became very macho. [...] [When we separated], I met somebody. He would say, “If he comes here and he sleeps here, I’m going to increase the rent.” He was always like that. (Paul, age 61, ambivalence and separation)*

As can be seen in Paul’s account, threats based on differences in income between partners sometimes gave rise to heterosexist dynamics, acting as another kind of domination between the two men. The practitioners we met with also observed the role of economic violence in their practice. They specified moreover that they encountered this type of violence more often among older men, thus drawing attention to another power dynamic. This recalls, for example, Jérôme’s case (age 72, ambivalence and separation), whose younger partner ran up debt on his credit cards without him knowing it: “When we separated, I received a call from my bank. [...] They showed me three credit cards. All told, [my partner] owed me \$27,000.

## DISCUSSION

The goal of the present article is to describe the IPV that gay men in the Province of Québec are subjected to in an overall separation context and to identify the different consequences. To our knowledge, this is the first study on IPV in a separation context

with LGBT populations, and the only recently financed study on IPV in gay men in Québec. This project helps us to take sexual diversity and gender into account in our understanding of the complex phenomenon of IPV. Several observations emerge from our analyses.

Above and beyond the idea that the partners' union and separation were not binary but rather a process, our data led us to a more detailed understanding of the separation process, presented in a three-phase model. During the interviews, three of the participants stated that they were not in the final separation phase with their partner, but considered nevertheless that they were in a separation process. This is a novel contribution that reinforces the suggestion of certain authors to the effect that there may be some coming and going during the separation process (Vasselier Novelli & Bosquet, 2018). It would be important for researchers to examine whether the model that we have proposed here can be seen in younger gay men, as our youngest participant was 26 years old, and other contexts involving both LGBTQ and individuals in a relationship with a different sex partner. This seems especially important given the evolution of IPV during these phases.

Regarding violence, we observed that, in most cases, it was already present in the commitment period but, in rare cases, it was during the ambivalence phase that it was noted for the first time. Nonetheless, none of the participants reported having begun to experience violence during or after the definitive separation. In the literature, it is not clear whether IPV can actually begin after the relationship has ended (Hotton, 2001), or whether it is instead the continuity of violence that was already present during their relationship. Our results seem to support the latter case and are in keeping with a study by Rinfret-Raynor et al. (2008). The mothers in this study were subjected to post-separation violence which had already been present earlier in the relationship. It bears repeating that the practitioners interviewed here were surprised that we found a decrease in violence during the separation phase. This difference might be due to the fact that researchers and practitioners do not distinguish between temporary break-ups and definitive separations; or that the violence already present before the separation was not recognized at that time. Even though it is difficult to know in advance whether the relationship's ending will be definitive or not, future research should nonetheless take into account the fact that a definitive separation can be confused with a temporary break-up.

Our results show that it was during the ambivalence phase that the violence was particularly pronounced and showed an increase in severity. The considerable number of back and forths and the length of the ambivalence phase for some of the participants made this a critical period that increased the risks of more severe and longer victimization. It would be worthwhile to go further and deepen our understanding of IPV at this specific phase as studies usually focus on post-separation IPV. Also, in several situations during the ambivalence phase, our results suggest that IPV would seem to be used to enforce the continuation of the relationship. This result may be linked to the increase in cyberviolence during the post-separation, notably to forcibly stay in contact. As research on cyberviolence among gay men is still scarce, and as

practitioners found that it was probably underestimated by men, it would be useful to further document the uses and motives of cyberviolence.

More broadly, the specificities of the IPV participants' experiences point to violence that is rooted in a heterosexist social context. Take for example outing, observed by, among others, Kubicek et al. (2016), which makes gay man more vulnerable to marginalization by undermining the presumption of heterosexuality attributed to them at the outset, a concern that is particularly present in rural environments (Lépine et al., 2017). We also noted that IPV between men could take the form of debasing the roles and characteristics associated with women, particularly at the sexual level. Our results are in keeping with those of other authors who have shown that sexual positions during coital relations can be used as a gendered power marker in a relationship between men. In a study by Kubicek et al. (2015), the participants explained that adopting the receptive position often meant being less powerful, describing this position as being more "submissive," "weaker," and the "female" in the relationship. The authors noted that these gendered comparisons were frequently made by their respondents, who seemed not to have the language needed to characterize the roles gay men take on in relationships. Vasquez Del Aguila (2014) noted moreover that regardless of their sexual orientation, men are socialized to be heterosexuals and reject homosexuality, in particular receptive practices which limit their access to the power associated with masculine capital. Kay and Jeffries (2010) even suggest that both men in a same-sex relationship can try to refuse their subordinate position as gay men, resulting in forms of IPV that come from attempts to gain masculine domination. This is in keeping with the minority stress model and, more specifically, how internalized homophobia, that is the internalization of society's negative attitudes about sexual minorities, could influence IPV in gay men (Gehring & Vaske, 2017; Meyer, 2003)

In addition to the usual consequences associated with IPV such as physical injuries and mental health disorders, our participants' experiences likewise pointed to consequences that were more specific to gay men. These ensued from a heterosexist social climate and do not seem to have been previously documented in the scientific literature, such as questions about one's sexual orientation and the development of an aversion to coitus. It is moreover noteworthy that the practitioners interviewed here expected the participants to give a greater number of heterosexist IPV accounts. It is possible that some of the violence escaped the participants' attention and thus reflects the impact of internalized homophobia which can be seen in the normalization and trivialization of violence against sexual minorities (Meyer, 2003), and even that of the research team. Despite a serious effort to avoid heterosexist bias in the conducting of this project (Blair, 2016), it is important to recognize that heteronormativity has very deep roots, particularly in IPV construction, and that it structures everyone's perceptions to various degrees, including those of LGBTQ people (Pollitt et al., 2019).

Our study helped us to better understand how discrepancies in a sexual agreement about extra-dyadic relationships influenced IPV events. IPV that occurred in

the context of an exclusivity agreement that was not respected by a partner harmed the other person, whether it be psychological harm, STI, or violent reactions to the non-respect of the agreement. As regards acts of IPV that occurred in the context of a non-exclusivity agreement, they arose when the conditions agreed upon by the partners were not respected, such as the degree of discretion or the expected protection measures. It is also worth drawing our attention to the way in which these agreements are established. We were not able to know through our participants' narratives whether or not these agreements were decided upon in a climate of violence, but it would seem that some men complied to their partner's desire for exclusivity or non-exclusivity. Though they did not establish a clear relationship with IPV, Hoff and Beougher (2010) nonetheless pointed to the importance of parity, that is the mutual comprehension and respect of what is expected in these explicit or implicit agreements. They showed that non-parity presents a potential for miscommunication and distrust, and that breaches in an agreement often constitute a violation of trust and intimacy that can lead to emotional breaks. Even though they are exploratory, our results contribute to academic efforts to fill a gap in the literature that was likewise noted by Pruitt et al. (2015) and Sharma et al. (2020). They also help us to better understand how having discrepant agreements might influence the likelihood of being subjected to or perpetrating violence in a relationship. Further studies on the subject are nonetheless necessary.

As has been observed by other authors in studies on IPV in gay men (Bacchus et al., 2018; Oliffe et al., 2014; Stanley et al., 2006; Stults et al., 2020; Suarez et al., 2018), our results seem to indicate that IPV among gay men can be uni- or bi-directional, and that the dynamics can evolve throughout the relationship. However, we must be careful about this observation given that our data on the violence perpetrated by the participants were limited. Rollè et al. (2018) also warn that this idea of mutual violence could contribute to the invisibility and minimization of violence in same-sex couples, particularly by reinforcing the popular perception that same-sex partners "fight equally." This aspect should be further explored in future research, in particular by questioning both partners in the dyad as was done by Suarez et al. (2018). It would be likewise worthwhile to take into account the heterogeneity of complex situations and relational dynamics between partners, which sometimes require that we go beyond the usual notions of victim and aggressor (Stults et al., 2020), as was observed by researchers in other sociocultural contexts, such as Brassard et al.'s (2019) work with indigenous men in Québec.

### **Limitations**

Though it has some limitations, the present study strategically contributes to our knowledge of what gay men subjected to IPV go through in a separation context. First of all, even though some participants signalled an increase in IPV in the ambivalence phase, the nature of our data does not allow us to properly assess the evolution of the gravity or intensity of this violence. We likewise had to limit the results presented

in this article to the experience of the violence that the participants were subjected to without taking into account the violence that they perpetrated. Accordingly, the breakdown of our results did not allow us to take in consideration the IPV dynamics that nonetheless characterized some people's experiences. Finally, though it is not the goal of qualitative studies to generalize findings, it is important to take into account the sample size and composition so as to convey the transferability of the results. On the one hand, given that the number of participants was limited, the numerical tendency concerning the reported violence must be interpreted cautiously. On the other hand, the sample was composed primarily of white Québécois men, without children, and with relatively high education levels. Despite a broad range of ages, income, and regions, our sample was less diversified regarding education, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnocultural identity, and family situation. It is thus possible that our results are less representative of trans or genderqueer people, immigrant or racialized men, less educated men, and men who have a male partner but who do not identify as gay. Our results suggest moreover that sexual orientation and migratory status can influence IPV experiences. Future research should thus try to include more of these populations so as to better reflect the variety of experiences and social dynamics related to IPV among men.

### **Practice Implications**

This study points to several implications for practice. First, practitioners must be aware that an initial break-up between men in an IPV context can be temporary, that the partners may get back together, and that this may indicate a greater risk of violence. Second, we recommend an IPV prevention specific to gay communities. It is thus important to accompany gay men in the development of healthy relationship dynamics and constructive communication skills that foster trust, relationship satisfaction and shared investment in a sexual agreement (Mitchell & Gamarel, 2018; Pruitt et al., 2015; Sharma et al., 2020). We also point to the willingness of some gay men who have experienced IPV to act as therapeutic agents and thereby help other gay men, as reported by Oliffe et al. (2014). Third, it is necessary that we promote healthy sexual or romantic relationships from an inclusive and non-oppressive perspective. The present study shows how the heterosexist and mononormative social context shapes the IPV experiences of gay men. We must take this into account if we are to encourage their inclusion, but also to deconstruct these ideologies and prevent the ensuing forms of violence. Furthermore, our data supports the importance of a general sexual education that takes a critical stance on heterosexist presuppositions instead of unthinkingly reproducing them (Richard, 2019), particularly by proposing other sexual and identity models than those based on the supposed male-female complementarity and phallo-vaginal coitus as the gold standard. Finally, we highlight the need for greater awareness among practitioners of the various relationship structures and for the incorporation of related content in educational programming (Levine et al., 2018).

## REFERENCES

- Bacchus, L. J., Buller, A. M., Ferrari, G., Brzank, P., & Feder, G. (2018). "It's Always good to ask": A mixed methods study on the perceived role of sexual health practitioners asking gay and bisexual men about experiences of domestic violence and abuse. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 12*(2), 221–243.
- Bartholomew, K., Regan, K. V., White, M. A., & Oram, D. (2008). Patterns of abuse in male same-sex relationships. *Violence and Victims, 23*(5), 617–636. <https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.23.5.617>
- Blair, K. L. (2016). Ethical Research With Sexual and Gender Minorities. In A. E. Goldberg (Ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of LGBTQ Studies* (pp. 375–380). Sage.
- Bosco, S. C., Robles, G., Stephenson, R., & Starks, T. J. (2020). Relationship power and intimate partner violence in sexual minority male couples. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 1*–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520916271>
- Brassard, R., Spielvogel, M., Ellington, L., & Montminy, L. (2019). Au-delà des identités de genre et ethnoculturelle: Resituer la violence conjugale et familiale vécue par les hommes autochtones au Québec dans une approche globale et systémique. In J.-M. Deslauriers, M. Lafrance, & G. Tremblay (Eds.), *Réalités masculines oubliées* (pp. 317–347). Presses de l'Université Laval.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2008). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101.
- Calton, J. M., Bennet Cattaneo, L., & Gebhard, K. T. (2016). Barriers to help seeking for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer survivors of intimate partner violence. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse, 17*(5), 585–600.
- Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. (2016). *Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014*. Statistics Canada.
- Chamberland, L., & Lebreton, C. (2012). Réflexions autour de la notion d'homophobie: Succès politique, malaises conceptuels et application empirique. *Nouvelles Questions Féministes, 31*(1), 24–43.
- Dickerson-Amaya, N., & Coston, B. M. (2019). Invisibility is not invincibility: The impact of intimate partner violence on gay, bisexual, and straight men's mental health. *American Journal of Men's Health, May–June*(3), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1557988319849734>
- Eribon, D. (2012). *Réflexions sur la question gay*. Flammarion.
- Gehring, K. S., & Vaske, J. C. (2017). Out in the open: The consequences of intimate partner violence for victims in same-sex and opposite-sex relationships. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 32*(23), 3669–3692. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260515600877>
- Hoff, C. C., & Beougher, S. C. (2010). Sexual agreements among gay male couples. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 39*(3), 774–787.
- Hotton, T. (2001). Spousal violence after marital separation. *Juristat, 21*, 1–19.
- Ibrahim, D. (2019). *La violence entre partenaires intimes de même sexe, affaires déclarées par la police au Canada, 2009 à 2017*. Statistique Canada.
- Jaffray, B. (2021). Intimate partner violence: Experiences of sexual minority men in Canada, 2018. *Juristat, 1*–16. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00004-eng.htm>
- Kay, M., & Jeffries, S. (2010). Homophobia, heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity: Male same-sex intimate violence from the perspective of Brisbane service providers. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law, 17*(3), 412–423. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13218710903566953>

- Kubicek, K., Mc Neeley, M., & Collins, S. (2015). Same-sex relationship in a straight world: Individual and societal influences on power and control in young men's relationships. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 30*(1), 1–27.
- Kubicek, K., Mc Neeley, M., & Collins, S. (2016). Young men who have sex with men's experiences with intimate partner violence. *Journal of Adolescence Research, 31*(2), 143–175.
- Lavoie, K. (2014). *Parce que l'amour n'est pas toujours gai. Les représentations sociales de la violence entre partenaires masculins chez les hommes gais et les intervenants d'associations vouées à la diversité sexuelle en Communauté française de Belgique* [Master's thesis, Université du Québec en Outaouais]. Gatineau, Canada.
- Lépine, L., Chamberland, L., Carey, B., & Bélanger, G. (2017). *Portrait des personnes LGBT+ en Gaspésie et aux Îles-de-la-Madeleine*. Centre d'initiation à la recherche et d'aide au développement durable.
- Levine, E. C., Herbenick, D., Martinez, O., Fu, T. C., & Dodge, B. (2018). Open relationships, nonconsensual nonmonogamy, and monogamy among U.S. adults: Findings from the 2012 national survey of sexual health and behavior. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 47*, 1439–1450.
- Lindsay, M. (2014). *Violence Perpetrated by Ex-spouses in Canada*. Department of Justice Canada.
- Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin, 129*(5), 674–697. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674>
- Mitchell, J. W., & Gamarel, K. E. (2018). Constructive communication patterns and associated factors among male couples. *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy, 17*(2), 79–96.
- Oliffe, J. L., Han, C., Maria, E. S., Lohan, M., Howard, T., Stewart, D. E., & Macmillan, H. (2014). Gay men and intimate partner violence: A gender analysis. *Sociology of Health & Illness, 36*(4), 564–579.
- Oringher, J., & Samuelson, K. W. (2011). Intimate partner violence and the role of masculinity in male same-sex relationships. *Traumatology, 17*(2), 68–74.
- Padgett, D. K. (2008). *Qualitative methods in social work research. Challenges and rewards* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Philpot, S. P., Duncanb, D., Ellarda, J., Bavintona, B. R., Griersond, J., & Prestagea, G. (2018). Negotiating gay men's relationships: How are monogamy and non-monogamy experienced and practised over time? *Culture, Health & Sexuality, 20*(8), 915–928.
- Pieper, M., & Bauer, R. (2005). *Mono-normativity and polyamory* International Conference on Polyamory and Mono-Normativity. Hamburg, Germany.
- Pollitt, A. M., Mernitz, S. E., Russell, S. T., Curran, M. A., & Toomey, R. B. (2019). Heteronormativity in the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer young people. *Journal of Homosexuality*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2019.1656032>
- Pruitt, K. L., White, D., Mitchell, J. W., & Stephenson, R. (2015). Sexual agreements and intimate-partner violence among male couples. *International Journal of Sexual Health, 27*(4), 429–441.
- Richard, G. (2019). *Hétéro, l'école? Plaidoyer pour une éducation antioppressive à la sexualité*. Les éditions du remue-ménage.
- Rinfret-Raynor, M., Dubé, M., Drouin, C., Maillé, N., & Harper, E. (2008). Violence conjugale post-séparation en contexte d'exercice des droits d'accès enfants. In S. Arcand,

- D. Damant, S. Gravel & E. Harper (Eds.), *Violences faite aux femmes* (pp. 211–234). Presse de l'Université du Québec.
- Rollè, L., Giardina, G., Caldarera, A. M., Gerino, E., & Brustia, P. (2018). When intimate partner violence meets same sex couples: A review of same sex intimate partner violence. *Frontiers in Psychology, 9*(1506). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01506>
- Romito, P. (2011). Les violences conjugales post-séparation et le devenir des femmes et des enfants. *La revue internationale de l'éducation familiale, 29*(1). <https://doi.org/10.3917/rief.029.0087>
- Roulston, K., & Choi, M. (2018). Qualitative interviews. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data collection* (pp. 233–249). Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526416070.n15>
- Secrétariat à la condition féminine. (2018). *Government action plan on domestic violence 2018–2023*. Gouvernement du Québec.
- Sharma, A., Kahle, E., Sullivan, S., & Stephenson, R. (2020). Sexual agreements and intimate partner violence among male couples in the U.S.: An analysis of dyadic data. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 1–19*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-020-01783-y>.
- Stanley, J. L., Bartholomew, K., Taylor, T., Oram, D., & Landolt, M. (2006). Intimate violence in male same-sex relationships. *Journal of Family Violence, 21*(1), 1–13.
- Stults, C. B., Brandt, S. A., Hale, J. F., Rogers, N., Kreienberg, A. E., & Griffin, M. (2020). A Qualitative study of intimate partner violence among young gay and bisexual men. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 1–37*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520936365>
- Suarez, N. A., Mimiaga, M. J., Garofalo, R., Brown, E., Bratcher, A. M., Wimbly, T. et al. (2018). Dyadic reporting of intimate partner violence among male couples in three U.S cities. *American Journal of Men's Health, 12*(4), 1039–1047.
- Thibault, S. (2001). *La violence conjugale chez les couples gais* [Master's thesis, Université Laval]. Québec, Canada.
- Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight “big-tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*(10), 837–851. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121>
- Trujillo, O., Cantu, J. I., & Charak, R. (2020). Unique and cumulative effects of intimate partner cybervictimization types on alcohol use in lesbian, gay, and bisexual emerging adults. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 1–9*. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2019.0773>
- Vasquez del Aguila, E. (2014). Masculine Capital, Homophobia and Homoeroticism. In A. Amodio & P. Valerio (Eds.), *Hermer: Linking Networks to Fight Sexual Gender Stigma* (pp. 9–23). Liguori Editore.
- Vasselier Novelli, C., & Bosquet, C. (2018). Séparation, violences conjugales et parentalité: l'expertise psychologique familiale, une aide à la décision. *Cahiers critiques de thérapie familiale et de pratiques de réseaux, 2*(61), 73–92.
- Whitehead, J., Dawson, M., & Hotton, T. (2020). Same-Sex Intimate Partner Violence in Canada: Prevalence, Characteristics, and Types of Incidents Reported to Police Services. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260519897342>
- World Health Organization (2017). *Violence against women*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>.

**Disclosure.** The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

**Acknowledgment.** We would like to thank Camille St-Louis, David Guilmette and Gabriel Giroux, as well as the members of the research team, for their contribution to the research project that led to the production of this article.

**Funding.** This research was supported by grants from the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et Culture (FRQSC: 2018-VC-205930), and from the Équipe Violence conjugale: acteurs en contexte et pratiques novatrices.

Correspondence regarding this article should be directed to Valérie Roy, Université Laval, Pavillon Charles-De Koninck, office 6443 Québec City, Québec, Canada G1V 0A6. E-mail: [valerie.roy@tsc.ulaval.ca](mailto:valerie.roy@tsc.ulaval.ca)