Typology of Intimate Partner Homicide

Personal, Interpersonal, and Environmental Characteristics of Men Who Murdered Their Female Intimate Partner

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Fifteen inmates from Ayalon prison, a maximum-security prison in Israel, who were convicted of murder, attempted murder, or manslaughter of their female intimate partner, have participated in a study designed to examine integrated variables—personal, interpersonal, and environmental–familial—connected with this phenomenon. Analyses of the in-depth interviews demonstrate that despite the different motivations the perpetrators displayed with regard to the murder, they share some common themes. On the basis of these themes, three primary types of female intimate partner murderers have been identified; each of them represents a personal narrative as follows: the betrayed, the abandoned, and the tyrant. The proposed typology might be used for establishing a common language among researchers, scholars, and workers in this field. It can also contribute to the existing clinical tools in terms of prediction, prevention, and treatment initiatives that currently focus on violence.

Keywords: *spousal homicide; typology; murderer characteristics*

The study of men who murdered their intimate partner, also called spouse homicide or uxoricide, has developed during the past 30 years following the increasing growth of these incidents in the United States, Canada, England, New Zealand, and Australia (Mercader, Houel, & Sobota, 2003; Palermo, 2002; Polk & Ranson, 1991; Wilson & Daly, 1992).

The most prevalent cases of murder within the family are murders of women by their spouses: In most countries, the number of women murdered by their husbands is 2 to 5 times higher than the number of men murdered by their wives (Esteal, 1994; Stack, 1997). This also includes cases of multivictim murders, that is, the murder of a spouse and child (or children), which is sometimes accompanied by the murderer's suicide, or the murder of a woman and her lover (Stark & Flitcraft, 1996). It was found that the number of men who murdered their spouse and then committed or attempted to commit suicide was much higher than the number of cases of murder-suicide outside the family (Starzomski, 2000). This resulted in the hypothesis that women are at a higher risk of being murdered when their spouses have suicidal intentions or tendencies (Block & Christakos, 1995). It was also found that violence against women in dating relationships is as common as violence against married women (Koss et al., 1994). Moreover, research reveals that a spouse killer can be of any age, origin, social class, or level of education; might have never used physical violence against his intimate partner; and also that the couple was not necessarily known to the police or the welfare authorities (Aldarondo & Mederos, 2002). Actually, there are no established data indicating that such murder necessarily occurs following the man's violence escalation (Dutton & Kerry, 2002), despite the fact that violence that gradually escalates between intimate partners is perceived to increase the risk for committing such a murder (Campbell, 1995).

Police data in Israel reveal that during 1994 to 2004, 146 women were murdered by their male intimate partner (an annual average of 14 women). Although this rate could be considered to be low compared with that in countries such as the United States, Canada, England, and Australia, yet it is higher than that in other Western countries such as Switzerland, Portugal, Austria, or Germany.

Intimate Partner Homicide: Theoretical Explanations and Empirical Findings

Interviews conducted with Israeli inmates who murdered their female intimate partner from a psychological–emotional perspective surprisingly revealed that the common feeling they expressed was mainly love (Cohen, 2004; Gosinsky, 2002). This finding, with regard to the association between love and violence, also emerged from other studies conducted in different countries that reported high levels of emotional dependency on the intimate partner among violent men and murderers of their intimate partner (Holtzworth-Munroe, Bates, Smutzler, & Sandin, 1997; Mercader et al., 2003; Wilson & Daly, 1993). This ambivalence, which involved mixed feelings of love, anger, and hatred in intimate relationships, is explained through psychodynamic theories. Environmental theories further explain this by referring to the interaction between environmental–familial experiences alongside emotional and personality development, which affects the individual's attachment to others, especially to his intimate partner in his mature relationships.

Attachment Theory

According to Bowlby (1969, 1979), the early attachment to the primary care provider during childhood crucially affects the nature and quality of his romantic relationships in adulthood. When the primary care provider (usually the mother) is consistent, stable, trustworthy, and sensitive to the baby's needs, the child will develop a sense of confidence and feel comfortable in intimate relationships. However, when the primary care provider is not such and abandons or rejects the baby, the individual is bound to develop, as an adult, anxiety and/or ambivalence with regard to love or he might choose to utterly avoid the risks involved with intimate relationships (Malach-Pines, 2002).

Empirical findings reinforce these theoretical assumptions. It was found that violent men are distinctly characterized by insecure attachment patterns when compared with nonviolent men and that these patterns are noticeably associated with feelings of rage, hostility, anger, and jealousy alongside excessive dependency (Babcock, Jacobson, Gottman, & Yerington, 2000). These feelings can be explained as resulting from early problematic parental attachment, such as rejection or hostility (Dutton, 1995; Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997) and emotional abandonment or physical abuse (Meloy, 1992). It was also found that expressions of violence among men with anxious attachment patterns occurred in response to the woman leaving or expressing her intent to separate from the man, whereas avoidant men used violence to confirm supremacy and gain control over their intimate partner (Babcock et al., 2000).

Some studies consistently indicate that violent men experience prominent feelings of anger and hostility, specifically directed at their intimate partners (Dutton, 1995; M. P. Johnson, 1995). Violent men were distinguished from nonviolent men also by a lack of interpersonal communication skills, which led them to obtain power and control through aggressive means (Prince & Arias, 1994). An additional emotional characteristic was found to be associated with their low self-image; that is, to increase their self-esteem they used violence, which portrayed them as powerful in the eyes of their intimate partner (Redden-Reitz, 1999).

Psychopathological Impairments

The classic psychopathological approach views violent behavior that ends up in murder as a consequence of personality and emotional deficiencies resulting from impaired development of the ego and early object relationships (Bowlby, 1969, 1988). Abnormal development in the early phases of life may lead to pathological narcissism, distrust, and lack of empathy, which may result in problematic social and interpersonal relationships in the future and the development of various disorders (Kohut, 1971). Narcissistic fixations may also lead to substance abuse (drugs, alcohol) as a way to cope with personal and interpersonal difficulties (Russel & Harmes, 2001).

Research has demonstrated that violent men and men who murdered their intimate partner are characterized by a wide range of personality and emotional deficiencies

(Palermo, 2002). Men with sociopathic, psychopathic, or antisocial personal disorders were found to be represented excessively among those who used violence toward their intimate partners before the murder (Gondolf & Fisher, 1988; Kalichman, 1988). In these cases, the intimate partner homicide was perceived as an escalation of the violence that previously existed in the relationship rather than as a response to the woman's leaving or separation from the man (Wilson & Daly, 1994).

Another category of men who rarely or never used physical violence toward their intimate partner murdered women as a response to their willing to leave them. These men were characterized by a strong emotional dependency on the woman, and it appears that they used this dependency, rather than the violence, to control her and prevent her from leaving (Ellis & Kerry, 1994). Moreover, these men were characterized by symptoms associated with dependence and passive–aggressive personality traits (Dutton & Kerry, 2002; Ellis & Kerry, 1994). In cases of murder and suicide, findings indicate the man's emotional dependency on the woman along with depressive symptoms (Polk, 1994); most of them were characterized by borderline–dysphoric personality disorder (Belfrage & Rying, 2004). Several researchers (e.g., Stark & Flitcraft, 1996) view such murders as an act that releases the man from his ambivalent emotions involved with the significant person (the woman) whom he is dependent on but who has disappointed him; therefore, the loss of the woman is perceived as a releasing solution.

The above review shows that the murderer has no single personality profile and that along with personality deficiencies there are also various psychological and environmental processes that must be taken into consideration as part of the factors related to this phenomenon (Dutton & Kerry, 2002).

Sociofeminist Theories

From a sociofeminist perspective, violence toward women is perceived as a common and acceptable occurrence, which derives from the sociocultural establishment supporting male dominance and men's control over women (Russel & Harmes, 2001). Feminist researchers refer to intimate partner homicide as a local form of violence within the family (Crawford & Gartner, 1992; Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992). Other explanations, derived from variations of this subject, claim that this kind of homicide is motivated through the man's possessiveness and his need to achieve patriarchal control (M. P. Johnson, 1995; Nicolaidis et al., 2003). Threatening a woman with murder is therefore perceived as a tactic to impose terror and coercion over the woman, to keep her under the husband's control (Polk & Ranson, 1991).

However, critics of this theory argue that it does not explain why there is only an extremely small percentage of men who actually use violence against their female intimate partner and a much smaller percentage who eventually murder her (Aldarondo & Mederos, 2002; Serran & Firestone, 2004).

Social Learning and Intergenerational Transmission of Violence

One of the risk factors consistently associated with violence and intimate partner homicide is the man's having experienced or witnessed violence in his family of origin (Bandura, 1973; S. L. Johnson & Grant, 1999). According to social learning theory, also called intergenerational transmission, violent behavior is learnt during socialization within the family (O'Leary, 1988; Straus, 1976). An individual who experienced or witnessed violence in childhood within his family learns that violence is a way of obtaining various things (Addad, 1983). The parental family interactions shape the child's development and identity formation because the family is the first, main sociopsychological environment. Healthy interactions enable personal and interpersonal growth and development, whereas impaired interactions create negative symptoms (Mak, 1994).

Researchers have found that men who were exposed to violence in their family of origin tended to use violent behavior within the families they created as adults (Campbell et al., 2003; Crawford & Gartner, 1992; M. P. Johnson, 1995). Similarly, women who were exposed to violence in their families were more submissive and tended to remain in abusive relationships (Doumas, Margolin, & John, 1994). Their families teach them and expose them to the notion that those who hit you love you the most (Straus, 1976). Although the rate of intergenerational transmission is only approximately 30% among those who were exposed to violence (Gondolf, 1999; Kaufman & Zigler, 1987), research from the social approach continue to claim that persons who were exposed to or witnessed violence within their families are at a higher risk of engaging in violent behavior as adults (Straus, 1991).

Stress Factors

Some studies found a correlation between external stress factors, such as poverty, unemployment, immigration, or war, and an increase in the cases of violence and murder within the family (Landau & Roelf, 1998; Straus, 1991). Other studies indicated personal and interpersonal stress factors as leading to violence, such as separation and conflicts, emotional disorders, and drug and/or alcohol abuse (Nicolaidis et al., 2003; Wilson & Daly, 1992). It was also found that violent men frequently experience high levels of stressful life events, which they have difficulty coping with (Straus, 1976). However, the accepted assumption is that the individual's feeling regarding the stressful life event is more significant than its occurrence per se (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

In summary, in spite of the comprehensive research conducted during the past three decades, mostly in the United States, Australia, and England, this issue has not been investigated sufficiently in Israel. Because the Israeli population is remarkably unique in terms of population variety (natives, immigrants, origin, religion, etc.), it was expected to reveal some new aspects that can add to the existing knowledge.

Moreover, none of the above-mentioned research took into consideration the various variables involved in this type of murder while trying to find possible links between them, as the current study suggests. By observing this phenomenon through the murderer's eyes, it was expected that cases could be understood and categorized into a unique typology of men who murdered their female intimate partners.

Method

Participants

Fifteen male inmates from Ayalon prison, a maximum-security prison in Israel, were recruited for this study. Of the 15, 10 were convicted of murder, 3 manslaughter, and 2 attempted murder of their female intimate partners. With regard to the 3 cases of manslaughter, the original offense they were charged for was murder, which was converted to manslaughter following a plea settlement during the juridical process (because of the prosecution's difficulty in proving intent). Because it is a terminological–juridical difference, which is not relevant to the final outcome (woman's killing), they were included in the current study. The 2 cases of attempted murder were also included in the study because the woman's death was avoided simply because of others' assistance (neighbors and/or policemen who arrived at the crime scene following the woman's screams and arrested the man). It was evident that the man intended to kill her.

The mean age of the participants at the time of the study was 41.9 years (ranging between 26 and 56 years, $SD = 9.1$). The mean age of the participants and female victims at the time of crime was 36 and 34 years, respectively. Of the 15 participants, 13 are Jewish, 1 Muslim, 1 Christian, and 1 Jewish–Muslim. Nine of the participants are native Israeli, 5 immigrated to Israel at a late age (18+ years) from different countries (ex–Soviet Union states, Ethiopia, Iran), and 1 immigrated to Israel from Morocco with his parents during his early childhood. The mean years of participants' education was 10.2 years (ranging between 5 and 16 years, $SD = 3.1$; see Table 1). With regard to the couple's relationship status before the crime, 9 of the participants were married (6 had mutual children), whereas 6 were separated or were going through divorce proceedings; 4 of them were intimate friends who lived together before the crime at least for a few months; the remaining participant was divorced from the female victim. At the time of the crime, 11 of the participants were separated or about to separate from the victim. The mean prison sentence served by the participants at the time of the study was 6.1 years (ranging from 1 to 12 years, $SD = 3.1$; see Table 2)

Apparatus

The study was carried out according to a qualitative phenomenological approach, which aims to understand a subject from the perspective of the people who experienced the investigated phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). The primary tools of the study were

Table 1
Participant's Characteristics in Terms of Age, Ethnic Origin, Religion, Education, Military Service, and Personality Disorder

Participant	Age	Origin	Religion	Education	Military Service	Personality Disorder (PD)
1	53	Morocco	Jewish	7	Refused	Antisocial
2	43	Israel	Jewish	12	Completed	Narcissistic
3	37	Israel	Jewish	12	Completed	Dissuasion syndrome
4	33	Ukraine	Christian	16	Dismissed	Does not suffer from PD
5	53	Israel	Jewish	12	Completed	Borderline
6	41	Ethiopia	Jewish	12	Completed	Does not suffer from PD
7	43	Israel	Jewish	7	Completed	PTSD
8	46	Israel	Jewish	8	Dismissed	Antisocial
9	26	Israel	Muslim	8	Refused	Not diagnosed
10	41	Iran	Jewish	13	Dismissed	Passive–aggressive
11	54	Israel	Jewish	8	Completed	Narcissistic
12	56	Georgia	Jewish	5	Dismissed	Does not suffer from PD
13	30	Israel	Jewish	12	Released	Narcissistic
14	36	Uzbekistan	Jewish–Muslim	8	Dismissed	Not diagnosed
15	37	Israel	Jewish	14	Released	Borderline
M	41.9			10.2		
SD	9.1			3.1		

Note: Military service includes that in the Israel Defence Force (IDF). Personality disorders listed are as determined by the district psychiatrist who diagnosed the participant prior to the trial following a court order, as it happened in most cases. Completed = completed full military service in IDF; Refused = refused to serve in IDF; Released = released from IDF after short service because of a physical or mental problem; Dismissed = dismissed from IDF military service because of migration at late age (23+ years); PTSD = posttraumatic stress disorder.

in-depth interviews and analysis of the participant's verdicts, which provided additional information for each case. The analysis and coding of the interviews were based on qualitative content analysis designed to identify patterns and meanings and gather and organize them into general categories and themes (Shkedi, 2004). The guide questionnaire for this research consists of the following open, broad questions: (a) "Tell me about your life from childhood until today, including the incident which brought you here"; (b) "What do you think today about the offense you have committed?" and (c) "What do you think today about the victim?" The questions were purposely phrased in an open-ended way so that they were not perceived as judgmental or critical. This enabled the participants to feel free to tell their stories openly as much as possible.

Procedure

After receiving the official approval from the Research Committee of the Israel Prison System (IPS) for performing this research at Ayalon prison, the researcher

Table 2
Offense Characteristics in Terms of Conviction, the Couple's
Status Relationship Prior to the Crime (Intimate Friends, Married,
or Divorced), Sentence, and Time Served in Prison

Participant	Couple's Status	Conviction	Sentence[a]	Time Served
1	Divorced + 3	Murder	Life sentence	4
2	Married + 4	Murder	Life sentence	5
3	Friends + 1	Attempting to murder the woman and her boyfriend	22 years	6
4	Married + 1	Attempting murder	12 years	1
5	Married	Murder	Life sentence	12
6	Married + 3	Murder	Life sentence	1
7	Friends + 1	Murder	Life sentence	4
8	Married + 2	Murder	Life sentence	5
9	Married	Manslaughter[b]	15 years	6
10	Married + 1	Woman's murder + attempting to murder their child	Life sentence + 6 years	11
11	Married + 2	Murder	Life sentence	8
12	Friends	Manslaughter[b]	20 years	5
13	Friends	Murder	Life sentence	8
14	Married	Manslaughter[b]	14 years	9
15	Friends	Murder	Life sentence	7
M				6.1
SD				3.1

a. In Israel, the mandatory sentence for murder is a life sentence, the actual meaning of which is usually 30 years' imprisonment (not including early release after two thirds sentence service, referred to as a parole, following the offender's good behavior).
b. Offense converted from murder to manslaughter following a plea settlement.

conducted several meetings with the commander officer, the psychologist, and the social workers in Ayalon prison. The purpose of these meetings was to describe the research in general and recruit them to participate for the benefit of the research. Following the meeting, the decision was made that the psychologist and the social workers would assist the researcher to search for and locate inmates convicted of female intimate partner homicide. Fifteen inmates expressed willingness to take part in the research. This list included only the names of the 15 inmates who were actually interviewed; at no point were any data about other men convicted of murder who refused to participate released by the prison authorities (for security reasons or an inmate's incapacity to be interviewed because of his mental or physical condition). As for the 15 inmates who participated in the research, I managed to locate their verdicts via an Internet Web site. In the few cases in which I could not access the inmate's verdicts, I received permission (from the prison's psychologist) to read their verdicts from their personal files. These data enabled me to achieve broad and comprehensive information about each case and also to compare the participant's

stand versus the "objective" data as they were revealed during his trial, including data of the personality disorder he was labeled with as a result of the district psychiatrist's diagnosis (in case he was asked for or required to, following a court order).

According to the instructions given by the Research Committee of the IPS, the interviews were conducted inside the jail in a separate room that usually serves social workers. During all the interviews I stayed in the room alone with the participant. At the beginning of each session, I explained to the participant the research purpose in general ("The purpose of this research is to explore the intimate partner homicide phenomenon through the men's eyes"). After that I asked him to sign a certificate that confirmed his willingness to be interviewed for the current research. In addition, I asked him to answer some questions that referred to his sociodemographic background (e.g., age, education, ethnic origin, sentence, number of years in the jail). After that the interview began with the first opening question as mentioned above. Each interview lasted about 3 to 5 hours, which allowed the participants to tell their stories in detail, while I recorded the details by hand, word by word (I was not permitted to use a tape recorder or any other electronic tool). After each interview, I fed the information into a computer and sent it to my guides, who also functioned as external readers, for their reference. All the interviews were conducted during a period of 5 months (March-July 2006). Afterward I read each of the interviews again several times and summarized them with regard to the typology variables (e.g., childhood experiences, familial–environmental background, the relationship between the man and his intimate partner-victim before the incident, the motive of the murder from the participant's point of view, the location where the offense occurred, the participant's behavior after the offense). At the end of the content analysis process, I identified separate and also mutual variables referring to all or some of the participants, which contributed to building a unique typology of intimate partner murderers.

Results

The central themes that emerged through the participant's interviews include their perceptions regarding themselves, the relationship with their intimate partner, and their current attitudes toward the victim and the crime they committed.

The Personal Context: "I Am the Actual Victim in This Story"

The narrative that emerged throughout most of the participants' stories ($n = 9$) was *a self-perception of being a victim*, mostly of their intimate partner and sometimes also of the institution and/or society in general. These participants described their intimate partners as clearly immoral, unfaithful, abandoning, insubordinate, or as dysfunctional as mothers and wives. Examples: *The insubordinate woman*—"She

started behaving badly. If she hadn't, I would have stopped. But she brought it on herself by going with another man kicking me in my butt. That's how it started." *The disloyal woman*—"I felt very much deceived. After we broke up and all that, I suddenly found out about all the things; and it was not one or two incidents, it had been happening for years. I felt like such an idiot; she had betrayed me so much." *The manipulative woman*—"She had a lot of power over me. She knew how to manipulate me like a puppet on strings. She got what she wanted. I was like puppet in her hands." *The disturbed woman*—"She had a mental problem. It's a fact; even as a mother she was no good."

This blame projection on their spouses provided the participants, as they perceive it, the moral authority and the social justifications to punish her through imposing their will and using violence toward her or preventing claims of money (alimony) from her in case they were going through divorce proceedings. This led them to the "final solution," which was referred to as a final resort from the overwhelming emotions and the harsh conflict that they no longer were able to cope with (Dutton, 1995). The participants gave the murder various meanings; however, the common one was the idea that through eliminating the woman they would be able to overcome their sense of helplessness and regain control of their lives.

The Interpersonal Context: "She Didn't Let Me Leave and I Didn't Leave Her"

Another outstanding theme emerged from the participants' stories, related to their difficulty with *separation*. Frequently, the man's inability to separate from his intimate partner translated as her inability to do so. An additional prominent characteristic among them was their strong need for control, mostly of the woman. It was also found that despite the dependency and the desperate love these men declared, it seems that none of them actually treated his intimate partner as a separate person with her own desires and needs. Instead, they perceived her mostly as a supplier—of their needs, total love, or a family frame. Examples: "It continued for about a year and she didn't leave me. I used to hear from her once or twice in every day. . . . She used to drive me crazy when she called." Or "As much as I tried to detach, she didn't let this relationship end. She always tried to make me feel guilty with regard to the children. I mean, she always knew how to use my weaknesses. As much as I tried to be strong outward, it didn't help." And "Most of our conflicts related to the children's education; when I would say one thing she would always say the opposite. . . . I became angry and didn't agree with this." In addition, "I forgot all about the world when I was with her. What happened to me with her will never happen again. It came from both sides: she didn't let me leave and I didn't leave her."

Generally, all the participants described their intimate partner often in a negative manner. It seemed that the quality of the relationship was less important to them as long as their basic needs were satisfied. When the woman stopped doing it or

disappointed them (usually after her expressing her desire to leave or after discovering her betrayal), these men felt frustration, which translated into rage toward the woman. Later, these feelings converted to the desire to dispose of the woman to release himself from these unbearable feelings.

The Environmental–Family Context: "It's Like a Tower of Cards That Falls Down, One Card After Another"

Many of the participants ($n = 8$) revealed their early childhood experiences, which included abandonment, neglect, or physical abuse along with parental rejection, hostility, lack of supervision, or lack of boundaries. With regard to the rest of the participants who described growing up in normative families with good and loving parents, it became clear from their statements that they too experienced rejection and/or parental neglect, either as a result of excessive indulgence, lack of supervision, and lack of boundaries, or as a result of their parents' inconsistent attitude (overprotection alongside emotional neglect). All the participants described their parents as self-concentrated and/or as mostly busy with their work, as preferring another sibling to them, or as criticizing them extensively. This is where they developed inner feelings of discrimination and inferiority, which their intimate partner was supposed to compensate for (Malach-Pines, 2002). When the woman refused to or stopped doing so, they felt disappointment, frustration, and despair, which translated into violence. Examples: *A battered child*—"My Dad sometimes used to hit my Mom and she used to run away from the house to her parents for 2 to 3 weeks. There were times I used to go and get her back. He used to hit her; he used to hit me too." *Father's abandonment*—"All my efforts were due to the fact that I grew up mostly without my Dad. I knew that a child has a lot to learn from his father, and I was so careful that my son will have a father. That's also what stopped me from leaving the family: that my son will have a father. I knew the importance of a complete family." *Lack of parental supervision*—"Since the age of 12, I was outside. I used not to come home on time. I spend time with friends in the neighborhood, in the cinema at night, coffee shops. No one used to ask anything. My parents were busy, working." *Neglect*—"We were sent to school without food. When we used to come back home there was nothing to eat either. That's why I left school when I was 10, went to work. I worked to have something—to eat, to learn, to wear. I didn't have a choice."

Moreover, many participants said that before the incident they were overwhelmed with feelings of distress and loneliness because of the crisis in their intimate relationship. However, they claimed that not only did they not receive any institutional or social support (from the police, court, or welfare workers, who were involved in some of these cases) but they even escalated their condition because of their tendency in favor of the woman while ignoring the man's distress. They argued that the combination of their complex mental condition, along with additional stressful life events (immigration, unemployment, financial difficulties), worsened their physical and

mental condition. Examples: "I was worried about everything, about the child, all kinds of thoughts. . . . I realized that suddenly all the plans I had collapsed one after another. . . . I didn't think that something like that could happen." Or "I didn't eat, didn't drink, I even got as far as nicotine poisoning. I used to smoke all the time, two-three boxes of cigarettes a day." And also, "Our juridical struggles continue; all dirt comes up. She complains to the police that I threatened her. I told her: 'Why did you do it?' She said: 'My lawyer told me it is fashionable nowadays.' During those three months I was extremely tense, nervous. I didn't have night or day." And even "I had several attempts then . . . for instance I took my friend's car, trying my luck. I was fed up with my life. I used to drive up to Jerusalem and then drive all the way down at 200 km/hr, like Russian roulette. I became crazy, maniac." And later on: "I told her that I will end up with her, it will be a world war till the end; I was thinking of killing her or myself."

In the absence of any support—from the intimate partner, authorities, or family members—their feelings of alienation, despair, and disappointment escalated and directed toward the woman, whom they perceived, as previously mentioned, as primarily responsible for their condition.

Typology of Intimate Homicide

At the end of an integrative and complex process, which included analysis of the participant's stories and verdicts, identifying the main themes that emerged from the interviews and examining the links between various factors in their life stories, three main types of men who murdered their intimate partner were identified, each of them representing unique narratives. Each of the three categories represents approximately one third of the participants. The following typology includes the relationship between the couples before the offense, the crime's motive, and its characteristics.

The betrayed husband. The participants in this category ($n = 5$) murdered their intimate partner following their discovering of her ongoing sexual betrayal during their marriage, which led to the collapse of the family frame. The woman's betrayal in these cases was real, as it could be learnt through their verdicts. Discovering that, the man began to feel cheated and deceived by his wife. However, the direct motivation for the murder in these cases was not sexual jealousy but the loss of the family frame resulting from her betrayal, which was a central issue in their life. Losing the family frame, which the husband had been deprived of in his childhood, symbolized for him the loss of his entire world. Therefore, and as an act of revenge, he decided to hurt his wife back, because she caused the family to fall apart.

These cases involve married couples who had mutual children. Their lifestyle was normative; the participants held regular and stable jobs and did not act violently toward the women. Yet the clues and suspicions regarding the wife's unfaithfulness emerged from the early stages of their relationship; however, the man chose to

ignore them because of his refusal to break the family frame. Finding out, however, that his wife was having an ongoing love affair and that she desires to leave their relationship because of it, the man felt that his dream of a complete family—which was very important to him—collapsed. The murder in these cases took place during a short period (several weeks up to a few months) after discovering the betrayal. Examples: "I remember she told me about the trip she had with him in Romania, all that story. . . . The next thing I remember is that I stabbed her in her throat." Or "We argued. I remember the pain I felt when she told me that she slept with someone else. I broke the glass in the sink, I pushed her away and then she took a knife and stabbed me. That's it; from here I don't remember anything. Today I am trying to recall what happened afterwards, but I can't."

Two of the participants in this category attempted to commit suicide following the murder act, which resulted in severe injuries that required hospitalization. Most of the participants in this category were not diagnosed as having a personality disorder, except for one who was diagnosed as having a passive–aggressive personality disorder, and who reported childhood experiences of physical abuse at the hands of his father. The other four participants reported of childhood experiences of neglect and/or father abandonment in their early childhood, usually because of parental divorce. Another remarkable point is that four of them immigrated to Israel at a late age (18+ years). Some of them attributed the murder to the additional difficulties they had to deal with (e.g., cultural gaps, lack of social support), which enabled them to cope with the familial crisis properly.

The abandoned obsessive lover. These participants ($n = 4$) murdered their intimate partner following her intention to leave them. The relationship of these couples was classified from the beginning as pathological love (intense, symbiotic, and ambiguous boundaries between the couples; Cohen, 2004; Mintz, 1980). When the woman expressed her desire to leave, these participants perceived this as severe abandonment and rejection. The loss of the woman's exclusive love, which was the main issue in their life, was perceived as a loss of their entire world. Therefore, and as an act of revenge, they decided to hurt back the "abandoning and bad."

When the woman asked to leave the relationship that apparently began to limit her, the man, who usually did not use physical violence toward her before, began to feel threatened and anxious. These men's obsessive behavior reinforced over time, manifesting itself in stalking, harassing, and threatening the woman. The participants in this category were diagnosed as having borderline personality characteristics, which define the tendency to symbiotic romantic relationships, a strong emotional dependency, and difficulties in coping with separation, frustration, and stressful situations (Cohen, 2004; S. L. Johnson & Grant, 1999). When the woman expressed her willingness to leave, these participants' feelings reversed from total love to a strong hatred (splitting and projection; Mintz, 1980). The murder in these cases took place

a short time after the separation: a day to several weeks after. Example: "She went to the bedroom and started to pack her things, while I began to feel more and more threatened. My anxiety was increased, all my body was shaking. I've seen her as a threat, as someone who's hurting me and can kill me. I've seen her as someone who came to take my life, and I strangled her."

The tyrant. These men ($n = 6$) murdered their intimate partner following an ongoing confrontation with her, which gradually escalated until they decided to kill her as a way to beat her. These couples were married for years and have mutual children, yet their relationships were characterized from the beginning with asymmetry and exclusive control by the man. Whereas the woman was supposed to serve him and satisfy all his needs, the man on his part felt a low commitment to her and used psychological, emotional, physical, and sexual violence toward her to control her. Example: "There were screams at home but no violence; they simply exaggerate it during the trial. When I was nervous, I could break everything. Instead of hitting someone, I was breaking all the things around me. That was my relief."

A relatively long period before the incidence, these couples separated and usually were involved in long, exhausting divorce proceedings that lasted months or even several years. Their divorce seemed as a struggle that included mutual accusations, low prosecutions, and also police order and/or an arrest warrant against the man following his violent behavior and/or refusal to pay alimony. However, the detention did not deter him, but it intensified his desire to take revenge on the woman and encouraged him to prove to her that not only did he not lose the battle but also that he will eventually beat her. In fact, when she expressed her desire to leave him after years of oppression, and when she began to fight back, his rage increased. The longer the conflict between them continued, the more the level of violence increased until the man decided to kill her. The murder's meaning in these cases was removing an annoying obstacle.

The murder in these cases took place a long period after the breakup: several months up to several years. What triggered it was usually a financial conflict (e.g., anger on the woman for confiscating the man's accounts after not paying alimony). Example: "I told to my wife: 'Why are you doing all these confiscations against me? Let's fix up everything between us, I feel sorry for the children.' She said: 'Who are you at all?! I will destroy you.' I hit her, she fell down and yelled: 'I'll call the police so they will incarcerate you for several years.' I said: 'I won't incarcerate you just for several years but for life sentence.' Then I strangled her and put a plastic bag on her face."

The participants in this category are characterized by an unstable, violent, and criminal lifestyle, most of them diagnosed as having narcissistic and/or antisocial personality disorder ($n = 5$). Moreover, they all tend to use violence as the main tool for obtaining material and emotional gains. From this perspective, the murder can be

viewed as another aspect of their antisocial behavior and as an escalation of the violence that was previously existent in their relationships. Most of the participants in this category experienced poverty and neglect in their childhood, usually because of growing up in large, poor families. Some of them also reported experiencing physical abuse, and most of them were substance abusers or addicted (drugs and/or alcohol). However, since their early years they demonstrated conduct disorders, which they explained as a consequence of learning disabilities and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), resulting in their expulsion from school and since then their behavior deteriorated into criminal activity.

In summary, three central motivations for female intimate partner homicide were identified through analysis of the participants' stories. Although they sometimes appeared integrated, usually one central motivation stood out as follows: (a) *Betrayal:* Punishing the intimate partner following discovering her sexual betrayal, which was perceived as cheating and abandonment that led to the family breakdown. (b) *Abandonment:* Punishing the woman following her leaving or willing to separate from the man, which was perceived as severe rejection and abandonment. (c) *Control:* Punishing the woman following her refusal to accept the man's authority and control, which was perceived as a challenge to his power. The common denominator of these three motivations is the man's desire to punish the woman by eliminating her because of the loss and intimidation that she has caused him. The distinction among them was related to the source of this loss: loss of the family frame, the woman's exclusive love, or the control over her.

Discussion

The study's presumption was that intimate partner homicide can be understood and explained through examining integrated variables—personal, interpersonal, and environmental–familial—related to the murderer. Another premise was that the motivation for such murders might vary between the murderers and therefore a unique typology can be constructed for them.

The Personal Context ("I Am Actually the Victim in This Story")

The common theme that emerged from the participants' stories in the personal context was their egocentric tendency, which rendered them unable to perceive their intimate partner's perspective, feel empathy to her, and recognize their contribution to the relationship's deterioration. Other main themes related to their self-perceptions as helpless victims (especially of the victim woman but also of the society) are negative feelings of anger, hostility, self-pity, alienation, and social isolation, which reinforced their egocentric tendencies; inability to cope with stressful and frustrating situations; and using primitive defense mechanisms, such as repression, denial, projection, splitting, and minimization (regarding the crime and its implications). These

findings are supported by the personality disorders they were diagnosed with, which reveal that the most common personality disorders among them were narcissistic, borderline, and antisocial ($n = 7$), whose primary characteristics are pathological narcissism and lack of empathy (Kohut, 1971).

The participants avoided negative moral self-perception by using distorted inter-pretation (cognitive distortions) to justify their abusive behavior (moral reasoning), reduce their responsibility for their actions, and enable them to continue with their abusive behavior (Barriga & Gibbs, 1996; Idisis, 2001; Palmer, 2003; Timor, 1988). These perceptions were sometimes backed up by cultural accounts that permit the use of violence against women (M. P. Johnson, 1995; Russel & Harmes, 2001) to maintain the man's control over the woman and to prevent her association with other men (Nicolaidis et al., 2003; Polk & Ranson, 1991). Thus, for example, some par-ticipants (all of them Middle-Eastern) interpreted their partner's unfaithfulness as an offense against their "cultural codex" ("An unfaithful woman can have only one possible ruling: to die. From my perspective, from my home, from the mentality I came from"). However, a much more complex explanation arises from their verdicts comparing to their stories (for instance, that they themselves were unfaithful or that they were aware of their spouse's betrayal for a long time before the murder, but chose to ignore it until the woman expressed her willingness for final breakup). It seems they chose this "acceptable" excuse to reduce their responsibility by project-ing the blame on others, mostly onto the woman (Aldarondo & Mederos, 2002).

The Interpersonal Context ("She Didn't Let Me Leave and I Didn't Leave Her")

The common themes identified among the participants in the interpersonal con-text were insecure attachment patterns (anxious and avoidable), choosing an inti-mate partner who corresponded with a problematic parent (violent, neglect, abandon; Malach-Pines, 2002), and lack of interpersonal coping skills, which did not allow them to cope efficiently with stressful situations, such as separation and/or interper-sonal debates.

An additional main theme identified among the participants was their *strong need for control along with excessive dependency* on the intimate partner or on the rela-tionship with her. This dependency is perceived as desperate or pathological love (Mintz, 1980). However, analysis of the participant's stories regarding their relation-ships with the victim woman reveals that in most cases ($n = 11$) the man's depen-dency was not on the woman's love per se but on what she provided them (basic needs satisfaction, home and family frame). Only in four cases, in which the rela-tionship was characterized by the participants as total and heavenly love from the beginning ("I forgot everything with her; she was the center of my life. We did not separate even for one day"), the murder can be viewed as being derived through obsessive, desperate, or pathological love.

The Environmental–Familial Context ("It's Like a Tower of Cards That Falls Down, One Card After Another")

The main themes identified among the participants with regard to the environmental–familial context were connected to several factors that led them to overall feelings of despair and loss, which later converted to the desire to kill the intimate partner as an act of revenge and rage. Along with certain childhood experiences (neglect, abuse, abandonment, or lack of boundaries), problematic personality characteristics (self-centeredness, impulsiveness, negative feelings, or incapability to cope with stressors and frustrating events) and the crisis with the intimate partner (separation, betrayal, or confrontation) gradually led them to the notion of a general collapse of their world and that they had nothing to lose. In some cases, there were additional stressors in the men's life, which worsened their mental and physical condition, such as migration, financial difficulties, or unemployment. However, in the absence of interpersonal, social, and/or institutional support, they felt that the only way they had to regain some sort of control was to kill the woman. Because they perceived the woman as extremely significant in their lives, for good and for bad as well, all the rage and frustration were targeted to her through lethal violence (the murder). These findings reinforce the assumption that women are at a higher risk of being murdered when their intimate partners have suicidal intentions (Block & Christakos, 1995).

Moreover, consistent with previous studies the findings suggest that many violent men and men who murdered their intimate partner experienced or witnessed violence in their families of origin (Campbell, 2002; S. L. Johnson & Grant, 1999); this study found that three of the four participants who reported being exposed to parental violence in their childhood used violence against their spouses and/or children. However, this pattern of violence was demonstrated only among some of the participants, whereas other participants used violence despite reporting no exposure to violence in their childhood. Therefore, this can be only a partial explanation.

However, despite the above-mentioned similarities, there were other characteristics that distinguished the murderers in this study. This study identified three main types of intimate partner murderers, which represent unique narratives for each of them as follows: (a) the betrayed husband, (b) the abandoned obsessive lover, and (c) the tyrant. The participants in the first category ($n = 5$) killed their partners after discovering her ongoing sexual betrayal that led to their family breakup. For these participants, the loss of the family frame (which they were deprived of during their childhood) was perceived by them as the loss of their entire world. Therefore and as an act of revenge they decided to hurt the woman back. Participants in the second category ($n = 4$) murdered their intimate partner following her expression of her willingness to separate from them. These are couples whose relationship was categorized from the beginning as pathological love (intense, symbiotic, and ambivalent; Cohen, 2004; Mintz, 1980). They perceived the woman's wish to leave them as

severe abandonment and rejection. The loss of her exclusive love, which was the main and central theme in their life, was perceived as the loss of their entire world. Therefore, they decided to hurt her back. Participants in the third category ($n = 6$) murdered their intimate partner following an ongoing confrontation with her, which gradually escalated until they decided to kill her. These are couples whose relationship was characterized from the beginning with the man's exclusive control over the woman, and she was supposed to serve him and satisfy all his needs. The man on his part felt low obligation to her and used violence to enforce his authority on her. When the woman expressed her desire to leave him after many years of oppression and began to fight back, he became more angry and violent. The longer the conflict between them continued, the more the level of violence escalated between them until the man decided to beat her by killing her.

Although most previous studies revealed that the main motivations for female intimate partner homicide related to sexual jealousy (*betrayal*) or the woman's desire to leave the man (*separation*; e.g., Crawford & Gartner, 1992; Goetting, 1995; Koss et al., 1994; Wilson & Daly, 1993), the current study identified an additional motivation that relates to *control* and was found to be the most common one. A clue to this motivation can be found in the typology of battering men in Holtzworth-Munroe and colleagues' studies (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994) relating to the "generally violent" whose violence was targeted toward others in general and toward their intimate partner specifically because she was supposed to serve him and accept his unquestioned authority. The third motivation exposure was revealed in this study following the author's reading and analysis of the participant's verdicts. Thus, for example, although during their interviews all participants in this category explained that the murder resulted from the woman's unfaithfulness, analyses of their stories and verdicts demonstrated that the real motivation was actually associated with their desire for control. What these participants called "betrayal" was no more than the woman's association with other men *after* they separated, whereas these murders occurred a long time after discovering the "betrayal" (whether it was real or imaginary). Furthermore, these men were involved with other women at the time of the murder (and usually also before the breakup). Similar to the men in Holtzworth-Munroe's typology (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994), the participants in this category used violence and were coercive toward the woman from the beginning of their relationship; indeed, it seems that this was an escalation of previous violence that characterized the man's behavior in general, whereas these participants chose the "betrayal" excuse for their crime, because it is deemed as more "accepted" socially (Wilson & Daly, 1993).

Indeed, the study's presumption that there is no single explanation to these murders and therefore there is no single theory that can explain this phenomenon is reinforced. Yet unlike previous studies suggesting that the most common feeling among these murderers was desperate love for the woman (Cohen, 2004; Gosinsky,

2002), the current study found out that the most common feelings among the participants was overall negative (e.g., victimization, hostility, anger, anxiety, hatred, rage, revenge). Even in the cases where the murder was explained to be a result of pathological and desperate love, the common terms the murderers used to express their feelings toward the woman were much more negative than positive. The main component that arose from the participants' stories with regard to their attitude toward their intimate partner was referring to her as a "needs provider" (for control, love, or a family frame), instead of seeing her as a distinct and independent individual. Their inability to distinguish between their needs led them to punish her for disappointing them.

In summary, like previous studies, this study reveals that most cases of intimate partner homicide occurred following the woman's leaving or her intention to separate from the man; however, this is not a direct or an exclusive correlation. The potential for committing this kind of murder is associated with various factors, which increases the risk of its occurrence. Moreover, contrary to the impression some of the participants attempted to generate during the interviews, most of the homicide incidents were not impulsive, unplanned, or uncontrolled. The murder was preceded by a phase of emotional willingness to kill, murderous thoughts, and murder planning. Most of the participants revealed that they felt anxious, confused, depressed, and hopeless before the murder, which led them to the notion of killing the woman. The murder itself was carried out following marginal confrontation between the couples, which generally was a continuation of previous confrontations; however, sometimes no confrontation preceded the murder.

Research Limitations

One of the limitations of a qualitative study concerns the difficulty of generalizing the findings from a small sample on a larger population (Zabar Ben-Yehoshua, 2001). The current study was composed of participants who agreed to participate in this research. Therefore, the findings are limited by the offender's voice. That is, this is their rendition of events. However, to try to verify their tale regarding the incident, the researcher read their verdicts (see the procedure section). No other cross data checks were conducted to verify information. Also, because of the directives of the Research Committee of the IPS, no access was allowed to the personal files of inmates who were not included in this research. As a result, it was not possible to learn about a broader population, which might have revealed additional aspects. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the main themes that were identified in this study—through the personal, interpersonal, and environmental–family context related to the participants—are supported by earlier studies. Another limitation is that the current study was based on research carried out in Western countries only. However, to increase the validity of the study's findings, it is recommended to conduct continuation studies that will examine the suggested typology on broader

populations of intimate partner murderers (e.g., Dixon, Hamilton-Giachritsis, & Browne, 2008), including in non-Western countries (e.g., Adinkrah, 1999, 2008; Chimbos, 1998) and also on various samples of murderers (e.g., those who killed other family members, strangers, or acquaintances).

Applied Aspects

Generally, researchers and workers in this field search for signs of abuse, dependent relationships, jealousy, possessiveness, and also threats for murder. This is usually done through clinical diagnostic tools such as the Danger Assessment (DA), which is designed to identify risk factors connected to the man's attitude toward his intimate partner (Campbell, 1995). However, this tool is efficient mostly for evaluating violent men who impose terror and intimidation on his spouse. However, as the current study indicates, not all these cases included previous violence or signs of disturbed behavior on the part of the man (Nicolaidis et al., 2003; Stith, Smith, Penn, & Ward, 2004). Therefore, considering other risk factors is recommended, such as the man's desire for general control, along with expressions of despair, depression, alienation, and isolation.

Although many women receive social and institutional support, including the assistance of law enforcement agencies, especially in cases of domestic violence, men lack these resources. However, most of the participants in this study complained that not only did they not receive any social or institutional support (e.g., social workers, police, or court) but sometimes they were treated unfairly and were condemned, which caused them to be more hostile and revengeful. Moreover, distancing violent men through arrest or imprisonment does not prevent further violence, as some researchers suggested (Campbell et al., 2003) but enhances their anger and desire for revenge. The recommendation is to assist violent men shortly after their arrest (as it happens in some of these cases prior to the murder), or even before that, by providing them supporting services that will teach them to acquire efficient coping skills while reducing their violent behavior (Babcock et al., 2000) as well as developing empathy skills, especially toward their intimate partner (Scott & Wolf, 2000). This should be done instead of just arresting them without providing them better choices. The impression given through the participants' interviews was that if they were to receive some social or institutional support at the time of their interpersonal crisis, it would be possible to prevent at least some of these cases.

The proposed typology might be used for establishing a common language among researchers, scholars, and workers in this field and also for practical purposes such as identification, prevention, and treatment initiatives. Especially it can be useful for social workers, policeman, lawyers, and judges who are exposed to and are dealing with domestic violence and/or couples who are not capable of properly managing their interpersonal problems, which often lead them to conduct a long, harsh, and exhausting divorce process. For instance, instead of treating those men as one

solid group, it is recommended to try to identify their specific "type" and as a result to implement an appropriate means to reduce their hostile and desperate feelings (e.g., offer the man a personal, social, or group intervention) and to diminish the danger of their murdering their intimate partner.

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