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**Gender entrapment: An exploratory study of the link
between gender-identity development, violence against women,
race/ethnicity and crime among African American battered
women**

Richie, Beth Elaine, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1992

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GENDER ENTRAPMENT:
An Exploratory Study of the Link Between
Gender-Identity Development, Violence Against Women
Race/Ethnicity and Crime Among African American Battered Women

by

Beth E. Richie

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1992

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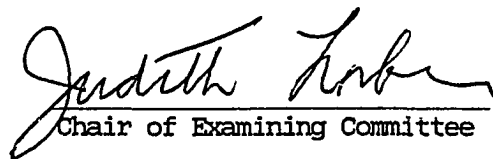
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Approval Page

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

GENDER ENTRAPMENT:
An Exploratory Study of the Link Between
Gender-Identity Development, Violence Against Women,
Race/Ethnicity and Crime Among African American Battered Women

by

Beth E. Richie

Advisor: Professor Judith Lorber

This dissertation describes a theoretical model that explains how some African American battered women are lured, coerced or forced into crime in response to violence in their intimate relationships. The theoretical model, which is called Gender Entrapment, explains how some battered women are penalized for activities they are involved in even when those activities are logical extensions of their gender-identities, the culturally constructed gender roles, and the violence they experience from their male partners. These women are arrested and detained in correctional facilities, labeled "criminals" rather than "victims of a crime."

Using the life-history interviewing method of data collection and the grounded theory method of qualitative analysis, this exploratory study linked the subjects gender-identity development in their households of origin, the culturally constructed loyalty to African American men, and the nature of violence in their intimate relationships to their involvement in various crimes. The sample was comprised of 26 African American battered women detained at the Rose M. Singer Jail on Rikers Island Correctional Facility in New York City. Two comparison groups were used to refine the theoretical model. Five White women were interviewed to isolate the impact of race/ethnicity and six African American women who were not battered were interviewed to isolate the effects of violence. A distinct pattern existed in the three subgroups, indicating how the African American battered women were uniquely vulnerable to the dynamics of gender entrapment.

In addition to exploring the link between the aforementioned factors, the dissertation reports on the impact of deteriorating social conditions on the African American community, the increased incarceration rate of women, the impact of illegal drug use on family life, and the lack of culturally sensitive crisis intervention services for African American women who are battered. The biased practices of police and other criminal justice institutions furthered their gender entrapment. The dissertation concludes with a discussion of the legal implications of gender entrapment and a proposal to incorporate a feminist perspective into the analysis of problems facing the African American community.

Acknowledgments

Among other things, the women who shared their life histories with me taught me that we are able to face the challenges, endure the hardships, and accomplish our life goals because of the people around us. Surrounding me during this project were many wise, strong women and supportive men. I gratefully acknowledge their contributions to this dissertation.

My colleagues at Hunter took an active interest in and offered encouragement for this work. The members of my dissertation support group read drafts, argued ideas, and shared the "ABD Blues" with me. Several employees of the Montefiore Rikers Island Health Service facilitated access to the Rose M. Singer Jail and the women detained there.

My dissertation committee, Professor Catherine Silver and Professor Leith Mullings, and my chair, Professor Judith Lorber guided this study from its inception through completion. Each in their own way influenced my academic growth far beyond the scope of this research. Their intellectual support and their commitment to me and this project were essential elements of my success.

This project would never have been possible without my families. My family of choice, Catlin, Suzanne and Jane took my work very seriously but never let me take myself too seriously. They brought joy and distractions just when I needed them.

I come from people, my family of origin, whose proud traditions, strong loyalty, and deep sense of justice set the foundation for this

work. Among them my grandmother, Ruth, parents Winston and Beatrice, sisters Laurel, Anne and Charlotte, brothers Winston and Louis, and my nieces and nephew formed a close web of support around me. They gave generous amounts of optimism, praise and encouragement to keep me going. I feel lucky to have family that cared deeply about me and understood my passion for this work.

There was one very special muse whose life inspired me at the most trying moments during this project. Liz came often to remind me that having a chance to work hard towards something that I believe in was, after all, a privilege. Her life reminded me that I have a responsibility to use my privilege well.

At the end of each day, I had a gentle, loving heartmate; my life-companion, Val. She read every word, helped me overcome every obstacle, and believed at every moment in this work. Her commitment to me; offering me her hands to hold while she gave me room to dance, has been nothing less than a gift to my life.

Last, but certainly not least, the 37 women who shared their stories with me while they were being detained at the Rose M. Singer Jail at Rikers Island Correctional Facility are among the most generous souls that I have known. I hope that this project will dignify them by contributing to the effort to end violence against women.

My life history will forever be changed by the lessons the women at Rikers Island taught me, and I respectfully dedicate this dissertation to them.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to explore the link between culturally constructed gender-identity development, violence against women in intimate relationships, and women's participation in illegal activities, and to describe the social process that constitutes the link among them as a theoretical explanation of battered women's criminality. I have called this paradigm gender entrapment.

The term gender entrapment is borrowed from the legal notion of entrapment, which implies a circumstance whereby an individual is lured into a compromising act. In this dissertation, the gender-entrapment theoretical paradigm is conceptualized as a dynamic process of cumulative experiences that begins with the organization of the individual's gender-identity development in her family of origin, then leads to her experiences of violence in her intimate relationships, and culminates in forced involvement in illegal activities. In this constructed process, battered women are penalized for behaviors they engage in and emotions they express because those emotions and behaviors are a logical extension of their gender identities, their culturally expected gender roles, and the violence they experience in their intimate relationships.

The theory of gender entrapment assumes that social relationships and institutional practices are organized in such a way as to regulate the behavior of social actors according to their gender. It also assumes that there is a dynamic interaction between the public and private spheres of human life, and that historical and

ongoing cultural practices influence and are influenced by internal psychological processes. Emotional expression, identity development, and the meaning social actors give to family life play an important role in gender entrapment by influencing the ways in which women establish and maintain intimate, social, and institutional relationships.

The gender-entrapment theoretical model incorporates four levels of analysis. First, on the social level, the model explores how social structures, institutional practices, and dominant ideology influence human behavior. Second, on the individual level, the theoretical model of gender- entrapment considers how human behavior is influenced by the dynamics and meaning of intimate relationships. Third, the model suggests that the dynamics of gender entrapment operate at the community level, where historically specific norms influence and are influenced by the behavior of social actors. Forth, the gender-entrapment theoretical model incorporates the influence of the intrapsychic level to explain how internal psychological processes affect the meanings social actors give to experiences and the circumstances of their lives. Based on these four levels of understanding, the gender-entrapment theory developed in this study describes a complex social process that incorporates not only the combined effect of gender role, violence against women, cultural determinants of behavior and crime, but the intersectionality of these factors: the ways that the aforementioned factors influence each other in dynamic and dramatic ways.

The study attempted to counter the misinterpretation of the battered women's behavior by looking beyond the superficial, unidirectional explanations that prevail in the social science literature to a deeper analysis of how the intersectionality of gender, race/ethnicity, and violence creates a subtle, yet profoundly effective system of organizing women's behavior into patterns that leave them vulnerable to private and public subordination, to violence in their intimate relationships, and in turn to incarceration for the illegal activities in which they may subsequently engage. As such, the gender-entrapment theory helps to explain how some women who participate in illegal activities do so in response to domestic violence, the threat of violence, and other forms of coercion by their male partners. This study showed how these battered women were invisible to mainstream social service programs, legal advocacy groups, and feminist anti-violence projects because the nature of their abuse resulted in their being labeled "criminals" rather than "victims of crimes."

The particular focus of this study was the population of African American battered women incarcerated at Rikers Island Correctional Facility. This group was chosen because I believed they were uniquely vulnerable to the social process of gender entrapment for a number of reasons, including: 1) culturally determined gender roles; 2) prevailing social conditions in African American communities; 3) hierarchal institutional arrangements in contemporary society based on race/ethnicity; and 4) biased practices within the criminal justice system.

The experiences of the African American battered women interviewed for this study were compared to two other groups of women detained at Rikers Island: African American women who were not battered and White battered women. The comparative analysis of the life-history interviews of these three groups of women helped to refine the gender-entrapment theory by isolating the effects of race/ethnicity and violence in an intimate relationship in order to highlight the ways that these particular variables influenced some women's experiences. (See Appendix A. for the demographic summary.)

Gender entrapment, as a theoretical concept, could potentially be applied to various subgroups of women and their experiences. However, the particular mechanisms of gender entrapment would vary for any group depending on where women are located in the hierarchy of social structure and on the various historical and cultural factors that influence the development of their identities. The primary focus for this study was on understanding the experiences of African American battered women using the life-history interview method, and then on comparing them to the other two groups. As such, the epistemological decision to focus on African American battered women as the primary sample population and to contrast their experiences with smaller numbers of non-battered African American women and White battered women intentionally privileged the experience of the incarcerated African American battered women and the specific meaning of their experiences in order to answer the research questions under examination in this study.

BACKGROUND

I proposed and undertook the research for this dissertation in the midst of a number of academic and social trends that captured both my intellectual and political attention. I was exhilarated by the new scholarship on the intersection of race/ethnicity, gender, and class that was beginning to influence the social sciences. In particular, I was interested in feminist epistemological approaches to research on African American women and the Black family that suggest that in order to produce accurate knowledge about an understudied, marginalized group, an "interested" standpoint must be assumed (Collins, 1990). Secondly, I was interested in critiquing the burgeoning movement to end violence against women in which I had been a participant observer for the past ten years. In my view, this grass-roots feminist movement has had limited success in creating the necessary social changes to end violence against women partly because it has failed to address the needs of those whose lives are most marginalized (Dobash, 1992). Finally, like many others, I was deeply troubled by the increasing rate of imprisonment of women in this country, especially low-income, African American women, and was therefore interested in exploring the causes and consequences of more stringent criminal justice policies and practices (National Commission on Crime and Delinquency, 1989). While seemingly unrelated, the intersection of these intellectual, social, and political trends, and, more specifically, my concern for the population of the women whose life experiences led them to this intersection, stimulated my interest and

informed the theoretical development of the gender-entrapment theory that is the basis for this dissertation.

THE RATIONALE OF THIS PROJECT

A review of the literature, as presented in the following chapter, revealed a considerable gap in social science research on the relationship between culturally constructed gender-identity development, violence against women in intimate relationships, and crime. This research project was designed to fill the empirical and theoretical gaps that I believe explain the convergence of the aforementioned trends.

The social science research on emotions and the corresponding theoretical questions concerning gender-identity development have been the subject of inquiry from various academic and disciplinary perspectives. Psychoanalytic psychologists, developmental theorists, linguists, and social psychologists have been interested in the particular mechanisms of women's identity formation and the factors that influence the experience and expression of emotion and behaviors. Anthropological research has explored similar questions from a cross-cultural perspective, focusing on the concepts of identity, gender, and emotional expression within the context of kinship, community life, and other social relationships (Gertz, 1984; Lutz 1987). More recently, a sociological perspective has raised questions about gender and emotions as descriptive variables that influence most social relationships, institutional arrangements, and the overall organization of society (Cancian, 1987; Thoits, 1989;

Kemper, 1990). Feminist scholars from these and other disciplines have developed theories and conducted research on emotions and identity development in order to explain gender inequality and the inferior position of women in contemporary society (Brody, 1985; Jagger, 1989; Scheman, 1980).

The theoretical and empirical work in the area of emotions and gender identity has not, however, been adequately applied to theories of women's criminality, violence against women, institutional marginalization of women based on their subordinate status, or women's consequent vulnerability in intimate relationships. Nor have issues of cultural variance in emotional expression, the role of race/ethnicity and culture in the construction of gender roles, and the impact of institutionalized discrimination on African American women's behavior or their social expression of gendered emotions been adequately explored.

The research on violence against women in intimate relationships has also been limited by conceptual and methodological oversights. While the extent of the problem of intimate violence has been well documented in the social science literature, the research on battering has either been limited to quantitative findings of incidence rate or focused on the motivation for men's violent behavior (Straus and Gelles, 1986). The victim's perspective is typically explored from a psychological but not a social or institutional perspective. Research that has been conducted from the standpoint of the battered woman has been overwhelmingly concerned with the experiences of White women (Hampton, 1987).

The anti-violence movement, a loosely formed network of feminist rape crisis programs, battered women's shelters, and grass-roots women's centers, has, in fifteen brief years, grown to constitute a distinct area of social service program delivery in this country. Currently, there are at least six national and international organizations specifically addressing the issue of domestic violence, and more than 2,000 programs providing crisis-intervention services for battered women. Violence against women has entered into public discourse as a pressing social problem, as reflected by the media attention to highly sensationalized and celebrity cases of sexual abuse and battering, as well as the proliferation of "self-help" books and "survivor's stories," and legal reform designed to more adequately protect women against violence in intimate relationships. Whereas prior to the mid-1970's, violence against women was considered a private aberration of family life, fifteen years later many more women in this country reach out for help to the vast array of available services (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 1991).

However, while some battered women are safer in the 1990's than they were in the 1970's, few of the programs are sensitive to cultural differences or address cultural issues that give particular meaning to violence in intimate relationships for women of color (Burns, 1986). Furthermore, those whose lives are complicated by drug use, prostitution, illegal immigrant status, low literacy, and a criminal record continue to be underserved, isolated, and, therefore, in serious physical and emotional danger (Giobbe, 1992).

A related and deeply troubling social trend is the growth in the criminal justice system and the mass incarceration of women of color during the late 1980's. Each day 1,500 people enter jails or prisons in the United States, which has one of the highest incarceration rates in the world. According to the National Institute of Justice, the prison population is rising by 13 percent each year, with women representing one of the fastest growing cohorts in the criminal justice institutions. In 1980, for example, there were approximately 13,000 women in federal and state prisons; by the end of 1989, that number had more than tripled. In 1989 alone, the female prison population increased by 25 percent, compared to a 13 percent rise in the male prison population (National Commission on AIDS, 1991).

Criminal justice institutions include federal and state prisons, probation and parole systems, and nearly 3,000 county or municipal jails. As distinguished from prisons where individuals who are convicted of a crime serve their sentences, jails are detention centers for those individuals who are arrested and charged with a crime, but have yet to have a court ruling by a judge or jury on their innocence or guilt. Jails serve a unique role because they are the entry point into the correctional system and characteristically resemble a "revolving door" between poor communities of color and prisons. In 1987, for example, 12.7 million arrests led to 8.7 million jail admissions, yet only 580,000 people were serving sentences in state or federal prisons. The vast majority of people who spend time in jail are released on bail, allowed to plea bargain or are moved into the parole or probation systems (Gerstein and

Harwood, 1990).

Social science research has virtually ignored jails as a research site, although more than 30 times as many people pass through jails as prisons (Irwin, 1985). Studies of battered women in jail, as a distinct and different population, have been particularly scarce; however, the findings from a few recent studies of battered women in prison suggest that there are numbers of battered women detained in correctional facilities like Rikers Island. Most notable was a survey conducted by the Correctional Association that found that over half of all female inmates were victims of physical abuse, and 35 percent had been sexually abused (Correctional Association of New York, 1991). The statistics corroborate the findings from legislative hearings held at the Bedford Hills Maximum Security Correctional Facility for Women in New York State (New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 1985). This study, therefore, was designed and undertaken to fulfill these various empirical, theoretical, and methodological gaps in the social science literature, and led me to the Rose M. Singer Center at Rikers Island Correctional Facility where, from June 1991 to February 1992, life-history interviews were conducted with women who were detained there.

THE SETTING

Rikers Island Correctional Facility

Rikers Island Correctional Facility in New York City is the largest detention center in the United States. More than 125,000 inmates come through the system every year, with an average daily

census of more than 16,000. More than 80 percent of inmates in custody of New York City jails are detainees awaiting adjudication. The remainder are incarcerated because they have violated their parole, been convicted of a misdemeanor and sentenced to less than one year in a city facility, or are convicted of a felony and awaiting transfer to the New York State prison system.

Similar to the national trend, the population of women on Rikers Island has risen precipitously in the last few years. In 1987, women made up seven percent of the inmate population; presently, they constitute 12 percent of the population, an average daily census of 2,000. There are twice as many women incarcerated at Rikers Island now as there were three years ago. The women who make up the population typically come from New York City's most destitute neighborhoods, where violence, poverty, and lack of health and human services have come to symbolize the institutional and governmental neglect of inner cities in this country. The fact that a disproportionate number of the women inmates at Rikers are people of color is related to the general rise in crime, more stringent criminal justice policies, and biased practices in the criminal justice system (Currie, 1985). Some criminologists suggest that the purpose of jails in contemporary society has become to "manage the underclass in American society" (Irwin, 1985).

The Rose M. Singer Center

The Rose M. Singer Center, also known as The East Facility, is the women's jail on Rikers Island. Under the supervision of a Warden, two Deputy Wardens, and approximately 400 correctional officers,

civilian staff, health care providers, and outside voluntary agencies, custodial care is rendered to almost 2,000 inmates held in custody there.

Half the population are released from the system within seven days and the average length of stay is only sixty days. Yet all the inmates are subject to the same demeaning procedures. Women enter the facility through the receiving area, where they wait in one of twelve cells to be showered and given a routine medical screening. The physical arrangements allow for virtually no privacy: the cells are open on three sides, there is a steel toilet in one corner, and narrow benches along the other. "New admissions" must surrender their clothing and don hospital gowns or, when supplies run short, wrap themselves in cotton bed sheets. Inmates describe the process of being arrested and incarcerated as extremely traumatic. Arrests are usually unexpected, interrupting the activities of daily life: work or other income-producing activities, caring for children or meeting family responsibilities, and, indeed, being arrested interrupts the criminal activity. Women usually arrive at Rikers Island exhausted, upset, and sick after being held in police custody for up to 36 hours during which they are indicted and charged, and bail is set. The arrest process is characterized by long periods of waiting and by having to respond to police, court, and correctional officers who, usually male, treat the women detainees with disgust and contempt. Once arrested, their identities abruptly shift from "free persons" to "detainees," effectively stripping the women in custody of the rights, privileges, privacy, and respect they may have been accorded on the outside.

Once admitted to the facility, the women are assigned to one of two basic types of inmate housing based on space availability (which is complicated because the facility generally operates above capacity), the nature of the women's charge, and their health status, including pregnancy, communicable diseases, and mental health problems. There are five segregated housing areas where women live in cells. One is the nursery, with a capacity for 20 women who give birth while detained at Rikers (if they fit the screening criteria). The second is the Administrative Supervision Area and Protective Custody Area for inmates who are at or who pose risk to the population due to the nature of their charge. The third is the drug treatment program for 100 women that is modeled on a therapeutic community. The fourth is "the bing," a punitive unit of solitary confinement for infraction of rules. The fifth is an infirmary that houses women who are sick or those assigned to "medical lock" for refusing the medical examination. Approximately 80 percent of the population are housed in barrack-style dormitories of 100-120 women each.

The inmates are entitled to a variety of services. Health services on Rikers Island are provided through a contractual relationship between the New York City Department of Corrections and Montefiore Medical Center. The clinic, which operates 24 hours a day, serves approximately 300 inmates each week for routine and emergency medical and psychiatric care, with Elmhurst Hospital providing backup inpatient care. Rosewood High School, one of 40 alternative high schools under the auspices of the New York City Board of Education, offers courses that lead to the General Educational Degree (GED) for

high school equivalency, courses in English as a second language, and basic literacy training to those inmates who are interested and eligible for enrollment.

An assortment of legal advocacy and prisoners' rights groups offer information and counsel to the inmates. They operate the law library where women can investigate their specific charges and a Legal Aid office, which is staffed by attorneys and legal assistants four mornings each week. Social services are offered through the Department of Corrections Counseling Unit and a number of nonprofit counseling and advocacy groups who visit Rikers Island weekly to assist inmates with a variety of human needs, such as retaining custody of their children. During the time this study was conducted, there were two full-time social workers employed by the Department of Corrections, and four outside programs that came to the Rose M. Singer facility. Members of religious organizations were the most consistent group of service providers, notably the Catholic Church and Muslim organizations. Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous meetings were held sporadically, as were other drug abuse and drug education programs.

The availability of these services and resources distorts the image of daily life for the majority of women who are incarcerated on Rikers Island. Only a very small proportion of the population are able and/or willing to avail themselves of services. Most are categorically excluded by eligibility requirements, and some are simply unaware of the services and resources in the facility. For most women detained at Rikers Island, everyday life is centered around meal time, commissary visits, recreation time, and long waits for

access to the two public telephones in each housing area. Only seven percent are enrolled in the school, and less than 12 percent ever see a social worker. The services offered by Legal Aid have been cut by 50 percent due to city budget problems, and support groups are frequently closed or canceled due to space limitations in the facility. In reality, the women detained in the Rose M. Singer Center pass the days sitting and waiting for their court dates, filling their time by watching television, talking with one another, anticipating their next visit from families, and sometimes trying to get into a program or make an appointment for social service assistance. Since movement within the facility is regulated, accomplishing even a small task, such as keeping follow-up appointments for daily medication, is difficult.

The amount of idle time has important consequences for daily life at Rikers Island. The relationships that emerge between inmates and officers, the role of civilian employees in this bureaucratic setting, and the implementation and findings of this research project were affected by the impact of incarceration and the nature of life for women in jails. The women experience an extraordinary level of alienation, frustration, and de-personalization, as well as fear, apprehension, and powerlessness. While this experiences serves the jail system's goal of custody, confinement, and control, it poses a serious barrier to delivering services and conducting research. The mere fact of being interested in hearing from women about their experiences, perceptions, and needs while in custody, like the concept of providing services to incarcerated women, is paradoxical, given the

social function of a jail in the correctional system.

An Ethnographic Note on The Setting

There are a series of institutional processes and environmental characteristics that influence the emotional atmosphere and interpersonal relationships at the Rose M. Singer Center on Rikers Island, rendering it consistent with Goffman's conceptualization of a total institution (Goffman, 1961). Although this was not a study of the facility per se, exploration of its institutional and social characteristics was important for establishing the broader empirical context of the study.

Most routine activities for women at Rikers Island are done in groups, including showering, eating, visiting relatives or meeting with attorneys. There is a rigidly enforced set of demands for compliance to security-based standards of behavior. The women must stand or sit quietly before privileges are granted; they walk through the institution in lines, and very few conversations are confidential, despite professional "privileged communication" statutes. The inmates have come to expect very little privacy, an expectation that is reinforced by the spontaneous "raids" of their living spaces, along with bodily searches for contraband (hairpins, rubber bands, chewing gum, drugs, sharp instruments, etc.), and unpredictable "alarms" when all movement in the facility stops for an indefinite period of time.

In addition to the loss of privacy and predictability, the loss of personal autonomy has important and lasting implications for women inmates' sense of identity. Most of the inmates are known by the aliases they gave when they were arrested, institutional nicknames, or

by their identification numbers printed on plastic bracelets (like hospital bands) that they are required to wear on their wrists.

Even their physical appearance is regulated. As detainees, they are not legally required to wear institutional uniforms; however, if they choose to wear civilian clothing, they are only allowed two sets from the "clothing bin." The clothes are often ill-fitting, for the wrong season, and not suited to institutional wear. Most clothes are donated from used clothing programs, such as the Salvation Army, and are soiled and torn; shoes are likely to be mismatched. This has serious implications for the women inmates' ability to present themselves in court, with their families, or with others in the institution itself in a dignified manner.

The most obvious and perhaps most serious institutional issue for women in jail on Rikers Island is the loss of freedom and privilege concomitant with arrest and incarceration. Immediately upon entry into the criminal justice system, they are reduced to a dependent, powerless status where authority is used indiscriminately, and physical abuse or humiliation are common. By most accounts, the consequences of being arrested and incarcerated result in marginalization and feelings of alienation, even if the accused individual is acquitted (Feely, 1979). The detainees must ask for everyday items like toilet paper, and they must get permission for such simple, everyday activities as turning their lights on or off.

A telling symbol of the profound effect their lower status has on women at Rikers Island is that those who have a "good" relationship with the officers refer to them as "Mommy" or "Daddy" (Mommy Smith,

Daddy Jones). They have learned that the best way to interact with the correctional officers and other authorities in the institution is by bargaining for extra privileges through elevating the officers' status, seeking approval through assuming a self-effacing demeanor, and a childlike tone of voice, and sometimes resorting to depicting a highly sexualized persona.

Their identities in flux, their freedom limited, and their integrity demeaned, women detained in jail are caught in an ambiguous, disorientating place between "the free world" and prison. Ironically, their tentative status leaves them more vulnerable to being ignored and underserved by both the Department of Corrections and those outside groups who typically advocate for sentenced prisoners. Indeed, being in jail -- having to respond to arbitrary authority, being isolated from their families and social support, experiencing the stigma of institutionalization, and having their sense of themselves threatened by their change in identity and status -- is very similar to the experience of being battered, which made this research setting particularly well suited for the study of the social process of gender entrapment.

CONCLUSION

Despite, or perhaps because of, the limitations of the setting, 37 women willingly agreed to participate in this study, and many more requested an opportunity to talk with me during my tenure at Rikers Island. As the findings from this study showed, the combination of factors that influenced women's gender-identity development in their

families, the nature of abuse in their intimate relationships, and the social circumstances in their communities that influenced the values and attitudes about women's roles and men's violence all influenced their pathways to illegal activities.

In addition to the focus on women and their internal processes, relational issues, cultural practices, and decisions about crime, this dissertation reports on the established practices of social institutions such as health care, family services, and criminal justice organizations. It suggests that these practices have reinforced the subordinate status of all women. For the battered women in this sample, these practices contributed to maintaining a complex system of simultaneous public and private patriarchal control of their lives.

The intent of this research, which developed the gender-entrapment theoretical model of women's criminality, is to influence contemporary social scientists, feminist scholars, and public policy makers whose academic and professional work so profoundly influence the lives of women who are battered in their intimate relationships, and who are detained in correctional facilities across the country.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

The research undertaken for this dissertation was informed by four bodies of sociological literature: 1) the sociology of the family; 2) research on violence against women, with an emphasis on African American women; 3) theories of women's criminality; and 4) the sociology of emotions. In this chapter the classical theoretical paradigms from these four areas is reviewed as well as the relevant contributions from the more contemporary sociological literature. In this way, the review of the literature serves as the point of departure and the background for the contextualized analysis of the life-history interviews that were conducted for this study of women who were detained at the Rikers Island Correctional Facility.

At the outset, it is important to note that while the theory of gender entrapment developed in this study attempts to integrate an analysis of race/ethnicity, culture, class, gender, violence, and crime, the empirical and theoretical work that has dominated the sociological literature has not generally addressed the intersection of these sociological variables (Collins, 1990). Therefore, in this chapter, each body of literature is initially reviewed separately, so that a more integrated epistemology is possible in the subsequent discussions.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY

There are four theoretical approaches that dominate the

sociological literature on the family, each offering a distinct epistemology of the organization of gender relationships in contemporary society.

The Functionalist Perspective

The functionalist school, most commonly associated with the early work of Talcott Parsons, has dominated classical sociological approaches to the family (Parsons, 1955). This perspective assumes social equilibrium, emphasizes the static nature of the social order, and believes that all societies are organized around the nuclear family (Goode, 1964). Based in part on Freudian psychoanalytic psychology, the functionalist perspective assumes the nuclear family is the universal family form. It is based on a clearly defined, biologically determined division of labor between genders and generations, where the universal functions of the family are assumed to be reproduction, consumption, organization of sexual activity, transmission of norms and values, and gender socialization. While the functionalist perspective has been criticized for these universalistic assumptions about family structure and function, it has served as an important point of departure for theoretical explanations of family life in contemporary society that are more applicable to the theory of gender entrapment.

In a recent treatise on the Black family, for example, Robert Staples uses a functionalist argument to support the social-exchange explanation of the relationship between family structure and gender ideology of African American families (Staples, 1985). Staples

argues that, in general, African American women and men hold traditional "American" values about marriage, motherhood, child-rearing practices, and gender roles. However, he notes that a demographic analysis of the actual household composition of African American families suggests that, despite ideological adherence to the "mainstream" values, less traditional family forms are common; e.g., sexual activity at an early age, higher divorce rates, female participation in the labor force, and more single-headed households (National Research Council, 1989). Staples concludes that Black family structure and function are more deeply influenced by social conditions, material circumstances, and economic trends than dominant ideology about family life.

The Historical Materialist or Class-Based Perspective

Staples' work is influenced by a second important epistemological approach that is commonly found in the sociological literature on the family: the historical materialist or class-based perspective. From this perspective, the historical shifts and the large-scale changes in the economic structure provide the context for analysis of the structure and function of the family. From the early classic, The Origin of Family, Private Property and The State, by Engels to more recent feminist work, the historical materialist approach considers how the nuclear family became the basic economic unit of society as class relationships became exploitative, and workers became alienated from their labor (Engles, 1942; Laslett, 1989; Rapp, 1987; Sacks, 1983; Zaretsky, 1986). The accumulation of

capital became the goal of labor rather than production for family subsistence, and that led to a shift in the role and meaning of the family in the social order.

A gender-specific analysis that emerges from the historical materialist perspective explains how this shift in the meaning of productive labor created new household arrangements that required women to maintain the intimate family relationships of the reproductive sphere while men produced wages from work in the public sphere. (Laslett, 1989; Sacks, 1983). As the world of production was separated from the world of reproduction, women's primary social role became defined as monitors of humanity, love, and happiness who attended to "personal" feelings to compensate for the feelings of alienation associated with men's work under capitalism (Zaretsky, 1986). This analytic approach to understanding gender roles in family life assumes that because women in a class-based society were affected by the material bases to which they no longer directly contributed, they became vulnerable to domination as homemakers. Theorists from the historical materialist perspective would argue that as women became more isolated from the labor force and lost their economic autonomy, they became subservient to men in the private sphere, and hence vulnerable to men's abuse. Male-dominated public institutions and the ideology of patriarchy reinforced these social arrangements.

The utility of the historical materialist perspective for understanding the gender entrapment theory is enhanced when it is

examined with closer attention to racial/ethnic, cultural, and class differences (Rapp, 1987). Leith Mullings (1986) asserts, for example, that the nature and meaning associated with Black women's forced work as slaves contradicted the dominant gender ideology. And while this ironically led to greater gender equality within the slave family, it had a devastating long-term impact on the position of Black women in modern American society (Davis, 1981).

Bonnie Thornton Dill's work explores the dialectic of racial and ethnic ideology and African American women's roles in their families (1988). Her argument, like Mullings', is that contrary to the prevailing ideology about gender and work, nineteenth-century women of color were treated primarily as units of individual labor and not as members of families. They often worked to maintain, sustain, stabilize, and reproduce families while simultaneously working in public (productive) roles, usually as domestic workers in other (White) households. During the period of industrialization, while White working class women were involved in accumulating the economic means to leave the work force and enter the "cult of domesticity" of the privileged class, African American and other women of color in this country were struggling to maintain family subsistence through enhancing their status in the productive sphere.

By considering how class affects this gendered and cultural interpretation of the historical analysis provided by Rapp, Mullings and Thornton Dill explains some of the differences between the African American women and the White women who were interviewed for

this study. Even in those cases where they were deeply committed to the dominant ideology about gender roles, because of their subordinate social position, most of the African American women in this study had very little control over either their productive or their reproductive lives. Typically, the structure and function of their family lives were less dramatically affected by the structural conditions created by capitalism, as explained by the historical materialist perspective, than that of White women. However, the dialectic of Black women's historical experience, as explained by Mullings, Thronton Dill and Davis, is central to understanding contemporary gender relationships and the gender-entrapment theory. Most African American and low-income women are not "protected" by the dominant patriarchal family form as economically privileged, White women theoretically are. The African American women in this study, like their foremothers, actively participated in the labor force, albeit in marginalized positions. Their reproductive work included not only responding to the pressure to conform to the hegemonic family ideology, but withstanding the cultural assaults to the dignity of their families.

The Dysfunctional View

Departing from the preceding classical epistemological approaches is the dysfunctional view of family life that is at the center of the current sociological debate regarding the study of the African American family in particular. Represented in the landmark work of E. Franklin Frazier, the dysfunctional view is based in part

on the functionalist approach as previously described. It assumes that the divergence of Black families from the hegemonic norm signifies Black families' inherent instability and disorganization, and creates the problems faced by the Black community (Frazier, 1966). The infamous work of Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1981) was influenced by Frazier's linear historical analysis. In his policy statement, "The Negro Family: The Case For National Action," Moynihan focuses on marital dissolution, illegitimacy rates, and welfare dependency, concluding, like Frazier, that problems in the Black community are the result of a dysfunctional family structure, particularly female-headed households. This analytical theme influenced other work, such as Leibow's Tally's Corner, which attempts to demonstrate the negative effects of matriarchy on African American men, and Rainwater's work, which focuses on the ways children are affected by family structures headed by Black single women (Leibow, 1967; Rainwater, 1967).

This body of sociological literature overemphasizes African American women's strength and attributes African American men's unemployment, for example, to a dysfunctional family form. While it has been widely criticized for its over-generalizations, the dysfunctional view continues to influence public opinion, to inform the creation of social policy, and therefore to contribute to the stigma that Black families experience in contemporary society. In the case of violence against women, for example, the dysfunctional view has contributed to society's failure to accept Black women's

vulnerability to male coercion, control, and abuse in their intimate relationships. This view has also influenced the cultural construction of gender and the self-perception of African American women in a way that leaves some African American women vulnerable to gender entrapment.

The Role of Culture

Countering the dysfunctional approach to the study of the African American family are a group of theorists who consider the role of culture more central to understanding the structure and function of family life. While these approaches differ in terms of their specific epistemological assumptions, their contributions to the understanding of how culture interacts with historical, economic and social circumstances to affect gender relationships and different African American family forms is significant, with important implications for the gender-entrapment theoretical model.

Herbert Gutman, for example, attempted to counter the dysfunctional approach in his work The Black Family in Slavery And Freedom (1976). His analysis shows how nineteenth-century slave families in the United States expressed several aspects of African culture, such as reestablishment of kinship patterns and the linking of household units to perform routine reproductive tasks. In some ways, Gutman's work is seen as a critique of Frazier's, presenting new data (e.g., that the female-headed household was not the dominant form in African American families) and a different structural analysis of family life. His work also offers an important

methodological contribution to the study of the family by using a dialectical approach to understanding the African American household structure, including a close examination of how the African American family has changed over time, a feature that many studies have neglected to consider.

A group of theorists who subscribe to the culturally relative view of family life and gender relationships offer another useful counter to the dysfunctional approach. From the culturally relative perspective, contemporary Black culture has historically distinct antecedents in Africa and is not simply a "bad imitation of the dominant White Anglo culture" (Sudarkasa, 1981). There is little agreement about the extent of the influence African culture has had on contemporary Black family life, but the theorists who proceed from ~~this~~ perspective agree that the cultural norms of African Americans encourage the emergence of different family forms than do the cultural orientations of people of European descent (Mathis, 1978).

The culturally relative viewpoint is also reflected in the analysis of Wade Nobles (1978), who uses Merton's theoretical framework to suggest an insider/outsider approach to the study of the Black family, much like the approach this study represents. Nobles' work emphasizes those elements of African culture that are particularly influential in the contemporary African American family form, most notably the centrality of blood relationship in African families that leads to the emphasis on kinship bonds. Nobles argues

that in African families, the core unit is more likely the adult siblings and children than the spousal relationship, and hence co-residence with extended families and shared child-rearing are common and valued. The household, rather than the marriage dyad or nuclear family, is the key unit for meeting instrumental needs in African American families. This feature emerged as a key element in the gender entrapment of the African American battered women in this study.

Carol Stack's ethnographic study of African American women's families and social roles, All Our Kin (1974), provides a vivid illustration of how the combination of historical conditions and material circumstances affects the experience of African American woman in contemporary society. In contrast to the functionalist work of Parsons and Moynihan, and the historical materialist analysis of Engles, Sacks, and Zaretsky, Stack work assumes a dialectical approach to understanding the Black extended family in contemporary society that is useful to this study. Her work has been used by others to point to the influence of African cultural patterns on contemporary African American families where women are the nodes of flexible network groups, providing a vast array of resources and services including child-keeping, exchanging resources, reciprocal gift-giving, communal living through combining households, and elastic household boundaries. In this way, Stack's work and the work of others who predated her provide rich ethnographic evidence to contradict the negative stereotye that suggests that Black families

are disorganized, matrifocal and unstable because of Black women's roles.

The advantage of considering a culturally specific analysis of gender relationships is illustrated by Jacqueline Jones (1985) in her historical analysis of Black women, their work, and their families. While most studies of women's roles in industrialization focus on the experiences of White women, Jones' work firmly establishes that Black women have played a critical role in the increased consumerism and leisure activities of the middle classes, and in the recent increase in White women's participation in the paid labor force. Her basic premise is that through poverty and vulnerability, Black people experienced economic transformations in fundamentally different ways when compared to the experiences of White families, regardless of class. Jones adds that, historically, as members of the American working class, Black women shouldered uniquely female burdens at home and endured racial discrimination in the changing workplace. While Jones does not discuss the role of culture, per se, she does explore social, historical and economic circumstances that distinctly influence African American communities, and thus affect Black women's experiences and patterns of behaviors in particular ways. As such, Jones and other theorists who include culture in their analytical framework establish that because Black women are often forced to balance the harsh demands of their employers with the needs of their own families, distinct cultural patterns have emerged in the African American community (Boyd-Franklin, 1983; Dubois, 1990, Hooks,

1981). The theorists who look specifically at African American women in a cultural context point to the tremendous amount of physical and emotional work that African American women perform to counter ideological, historical, economic, and social assaults that, when combined with the physical assaults they experience in their families, lead to the distinct and dangerous gender-entrapment process, as the findings from the life-history interviews illustrate.

The African American Feminist Perspective

The past ten years have seen an important expansion of the sociological literature on the Black family from the African American feminist approach. Bonnie Thornton Dill (1988) was one of the first African American feminists to explicitly challenge the dominant epistemological framework underlying the scholarship on the Black family. Her early analytical project is an attempt to establish a more dialectic framework, offering important critiques of existing methodological approaches. Thornton Dill contends that the value differences that often characterize the relationship of "researcher" and "subject," and the culturally bound concepts that prevail in the literature (like "legitimacy" or "illegitimacy" of children), result in a skewed analysis of African American women. Instead, she argues for a dialectical approach that emphasizes the contradiction between experience and ideology as the most interesting and relevant sociological question. In this way, Thornton Dill's work substantiates several of the theoretical and methodological

assumptions in this study of gender entrapment.

Karen Dugger (1988) also critiques the dominant research on the African American family by empirically challenging the prevailing assumption that gender ideology for African American women is solely or even primarily influenced by their labor and productive status. Instead, she suggests that social location -- factors such as age, race, and class -- influence gender role attitudes as much as public productive roles. In contrasting the attitudes of African American women and White women on the issue of work, she concludes that the meaning and expression of gender must be constructed relative to historical and current socioeconomic contexts. African American women's commitment to their families and loyalty to men in their communities (a critical feature of the gender-entrapment model) may indeed be an activist or progressive position rather than, according to the dominant feminist rhetoric, a "traditional or conservative" characteristic. Through Dugger's work, the experience of women in relation to the members of their households must be assessed from their perspectives, as the gender-entrapment model does, rather than by applying a model developed on the experiences of other populations.

Patricia Hill Collins (1989) also offers a useful critique of the dominant approaches to understanding Black women and their family life. By comparing the earlier work of Moynihan with a recent profile of the Black family presented by Bill Moyers, Hill Collins argues that the current scholarship and literature are limited by the same

epistemological limitations that characterized the social science research on the Black family in the 1960's. The subsequent public and scholarly perceptions are discrediting, value bound, and historically and methodologically flawed. In particular, Hill Collins' work illustrates that most social science research ignores class and household variations, focusing only on one type of Black family, thus, giving scant attention to the variety of ways that, historically and at the present, racism and institutionalized discrimination influence Black family structure and functioning in contemporary society.

Finally, Maxine Baca Zinn (1990) offers a detailed analysis of the consequences of the under-emphasis on gender as an analytic category in the historical materialist perspective and the misinterpretation of women's roles from the dysfunctional approaches to the study of the Black family. In particular, she criticizes the literature that considers gender roles of Black women the primary explanation of social pathology and the problems of Black men, calling instead for a new approach that explores how women's roles provide a source of strength in family life. The works of Baca Zinn and other feminist scholars, like Patricia Morton in Disfigured Images (1991), suggest that despite the negative images that emerge from social science research, many Black women maintain dignified family lives, taking care of their own children while "mothering" the community through participation in clubs, churches, and neighborhoods.

The review of the literature on the sociology of the family conducted for this dissertation considered the functionalist, historical materialist, theorists who discuss culturally-specific patterns, and African American feminist perspectives on family life in contemporary society. While each approach offers important epistemological elements to an overall explanation of the factors that influence family structure and function in African American communities, the understanding of the particular process under study -- women's vulnerability to the gender-entrapment process -- requires an analysis of how, for some women, family life is primarily organized by men's violence, the threat of violence, and society's ineffective response to women's vulnerability to abuse.

RESEARCH ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

From the late 1970's to the present, sociological interest in the incidence and prevalence rates of violence against women in intimate relationships has grown from a few sporadic studies in obscure journals to the study of "domestic violence" as a major area of social science research (Schechter, 1982). Initial empirical work focused on physical abuse only and revealed that what was once considered an idiosyncratic "private" problem actually affected millions of women in this country (Stark, 1977). FBI statistics, generally considered conservative in their estimates, indicate that each year approximately ten million women are battered by their boyfriends, husbands, former husbands, live-in lovers or other

intimate male partners (FBI, 1982). Evan Stark (1977), a leading health researcher on violence against women, finds that in the United States, 30 percent of all visits to hospital emergency rooms by women trauma victims were a result of injuries caused during domestic assaults, and battering was a causal factor in at least 25 percent of all suicide attempts by women. Other statistical crime reports indicate that one-third of all homicide victims died at the hands of male batterers, and 24 percent of all women who were battered sustained serious injury as a result of marital rape (Russell, 1982). More recent studies indicate that the quantitative findings about the rate of physical violence towards women has remained consistent (Straus and Gelles, 1990). By the mid-1980's even conventional social science research and mainstream organizations like the President's Commission of Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, the United States Attorney General's Office, and the American Medical Association recognized that domestic violence was a major social problem (Ward, 1986).

The research on the emotional consequences of abusive intimate relationships was conducted soon after the initial studies on physical abuse, establishing the critical link between women's subordinate social status and their vulnerability to emotional abuse and physical violence, indicating a much more complex and pervasive social problem than was previously understood. This set the stage for the emergence of feminist social science research on violence against women, beginning with Del Martin's seminal book, Battered

Wives (Martin, 1976). Martin and her contemporaries argued that the private nature of the family and the gendered division of labor, as set forth by the historical materialists' analysis of family life, were at the root of violence against women by family members. This perspective was later substantiated by feminist psychologist Lenore Walker (1989), the research team of Dobash and Dobash (1992), and psychologist Angela Browne (1987). As the contemporary women's movement grew in this country, so did the feminist research on violence against women, leading theorists such as Elizabeth Stanko to describe the link between patriarchal privilege and violence against women like this:

The physical and/or sexual abuse of women is a manifestation of male domination itself; so often characterized as typical, it has been seen to be a natural right of men. According to women's experiences, much of male sexual and physical aggression towards them is not prohibited; it is regulated. Fathers have the right to use their daughters as they please; husbands, their wives; bosses, their female employees; even men unknown to us act as if they have the right to comment or abuse any woman's body. The fact that all men do not exercise the right is irrelevant to the power afforded to men as a gender over women as a gender (1985 pg. 75).

Stanko and other feminist scholars, such as Kelly (1988) and Blackman (1989), have made important contributions to the research on violence against women, documenting its nature and extent and the

social arrangements that tolerate and/or condone it. However, by the mid-1980's, both the feminist and the mainstream research on physical and emotional abuse were being criticized for their universalistic claims. This critique set the stage for work that specifically focused on violence against women of color (Rios, 1985; White, 1985). In six empirical studies where the incidence rates of violence against Black women were compared with White women, it was found that the rates, per se, did not vary significantly (Lockhart, 1985). However, factors such as income, occupation, use of public facilities (where most domestic violence data is collected), and the decision to terminate the violent relationship were more likely to influence the incidence rates and experiences of violence in their lives than race/ethnicity alone (Coley, 1988).

So while the empirical data suggests that there is little difference in the amount of violence, there is a growing body of literature that suggests that the nature of abuse, the effects of being battered, and the social response to violence against women varies by women's social locations and their social characteristics in contemporary society (Burns, 1986).

While noting this expansion of the prevailing paradigm to include an analysis of cultural variables, racial discrimination, and ethnic patterns, the research on violence against women does not include specific analysis of the extent to which women who experience violence in their intimate relationships are coerced into illegal activities, except by inference. The review of the literature

conducted for this dissertation uncovered some anecdotal accounts that established the fact that battered women commonly report that they "have to do things they do not want to do," ranging from preparing specific foods to performing certain sexual acts (NiCarthy, 1987).

The literature supports the notion that the effects of "required behavior" in their intimate relationships may include a minimization of the battered women's own interests, neglect of employment obligations, a sense of detachment from physical and emotional drives, and isolation from children, other family members, and friends. These tactics increase women's isolation and vulnerability to violence and enhance abusive men's ability to establish and maintain power and control over the women with whom they have intimate relationships (Emerge, 1981). The consequences of noncompliance with violent men's demands, no matter how "irrational", unpleasant, or self-effacing, can be life-threatening to women in violent relationships. Even though crime, per se, has not been introduced as a variable in the empirical research on violence against women, it is reasonable to infer that in addition to being required to perform routine tasks in specific ways, some battered women are also forced to participate in illegal activities as an extension of men's violence, domination and control. As such, the gender-entrapment theory that links violence or the threat of violence to women's crime, as described in this dissertation, offers an alternative explanation of women's involvement in illegal behavior

and their subsequent incarceration.

THEORIES OF WOMEN'S CRIMINALITY

Of the numerous sociological approaches to the study of criminal behavior, relatively few are gender-specific, nor do they seriously evaluate the impact of culture or racial positions as variables that influence crime. Consequently, the conventional theoretical explanations of women's criminal activities are characterized by the universalistic assumptions of gender, race/ethnicity, and class that characterize much other social science research (Morris, 1989). In the past ten years, however, there has been new research conducted by feminist scholars in the field of social deviance that offers a more enlightened view of women's participation in illegal activities, to which the theory of gender entrapment will hopefully contribute.

Ruth Morris (1964), in one of the first studies of female juvenile delinquency, concludes that illegal behavior of adolescent girls is the result of failing to accomplish their primary developmental goal: to formulate satisfying personal relationships. She explains that delinquency is caused by sexual and emotional frustration that results when intimate relationships falter. Ward (1986) offers a different explanation. Her findings suggest that women commit crimes in a supportive or accomplice role to men rather than initiating the illegal activity themselves. While both of these theorists consider women's behavior from the context of their social and intimate relationships with men, neither of these early feminist

theorists examines the extent to which women's participation in crime is unwilling or coerced.

Ward's work, in particular, has been challenged recently by the work of Kempinen (1983). In her longitudinal study of differential sentencing by gender, she suggests that women are no more likely to be the accomplice (as opposed to the primary offender) than men. Her findings, which represent a significant shift in the heretofore assumed leniency towards women in the criminal justice system, indicate that women actually got harsher sentences in 1975 than in 1970 on six offenses: involuntary manslaughter, robbery, minor fraud, weapons possession, drug charges, and child abuse. Kempinen concludes that the discrepancy that once existed in the sentencing pattern of women offenders is decreasing rapidly. Her study is particularly important for this research because these six crimes were frequently associated with the arrest of the battered women in this study. Prostitution, another common illegal activity into which battered women may be coerced, unfortunately is not included in Kempinen's study (Giobbe, 1992).

Some feminist researchers on women's criminality suggest that rather than focus on formal outcome of sentencing, it is actually more illuminating to understand gender and racial bias in the criminal justice system by examining the informal decisions and court processes. Their impression is that treatment in the criminal justice system and sentencing outcomes are increasingly prejudicial against women based on their race/ethnicity, their demeanor, their

marital status, their having been arrested for crimes that fall outside of culturally prescribed gender roles (Lewis, 1981).

Klein (1973), another feminist criminologist, approaches the problem of women's crime from a more psychological perspective, concluding that the rise in women's illegal behavior is related to their dissatisfaction with their femininity, to psychosexual deviation or to other indicators of "mental illness." Her writings, and those of Barbara Bunch (1983), attempt to study female gender-role conformity by comparing prison inmates to women who are "homosexuals", varsity athletes, scientists, and high school students according to androgynous, masculine, feminine, and undifferentiated gender characteristics. The research findings, while seriously problematic, are widely accepted by criminologists.

The biological perspective serves as the point of departure for Clement, et al. (1973), who attempt to associate biological factors, such as neurological disorders, and social factors, such as maternal loss before age ten, to women's criminal activity. While interesting, her conclusions are not explanatory. Cochrane (1976) uses classical sociological deviance theory to explain female criminal behavior, computing "deviance" by administering a life-style and value scale. Eileen Leonard (1982) uses another classical sociological approach to understand the problem by applying Merton's theory of anomie to women who commit crimes, concluding that women's crimes are reactions to being unable to achieve their ambitions. While the findings from the work of these theorists have relevance to

the experiences of some women who commit crimes, it ignores the elements of force and coercion that this study of gender entrapment emphasizes.

Freda Adler (1975) offers one of the most infamous and controversial explanations of women's crime. She posits that crime is something that women "aspire to" as a result of newly acquired social roles. That is, the increase in women's social, economic, and political choices that have emerged since the evolution of the feminist movement has created a desire in women to enter into the "exciting life of crime" previously reserved for men. Adler's theory is perhaps the most glaring example of how recent work in the field has discounted and trivialized the experiences of all women, particularly those most vulnerable, such as low-income, African American, and battered women.

By overstating the impact of the women's movement in improving the sense of equality of women's experiences in the public and private spheres, the feminist literature on women's criminal behavior has failed to recognize the pervasiveness of violence in intimate relationships or coercion as factors that influence some women's participation in illegal activities. The theories assume that all women who are criminals have agency and free will and intend to commit crimes. In so doing, the conventional sociological approaches and feminist criminologists alike have ignored the experience of women who are arrested and incarcerated for illegal activities they engage in as an extension rather than as a rejection of their gender

roles.

Equally problematic, the prevailing analyses ignore the overt and ongoing racial discrimination in the criminal justice system that was an important factor in this study of gender entrapment. Lastly, the literature on women's criminal behavior overlooks gender dynamics in the family, structural factors like poverty, and emotional issues such as the need to create and maintain intimacy, which compel some women to participate in illegal activities. These variables, typically omitted in the theories of women's participation in illegal activities, informed the development of the gender-entrapment theory in this study.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF EMOTIONS

The sociology of emotions literature is reviewed in this dissertation as a way to bring a distinct focus to the analysis of the shifts in identity the women in this study experienced from being girl children in their households of origin to incarcerated women, as reported in the life-history interviews. Traditionally, sociologists study emotions and the related concepts of feelings, interaction, identity, character, and even alienation and consciousness in order to explain how structural arrangements and social organization are influenced by and/or influence affective human experience and behavior. The sociology of emotions, as a distinct sub-area in the discipline, attempts to link the macro levels of analysis, as described in the previous sections, with the micro levels in order to

trace the full reach of social order into private experiences. Integrating concepts from psychology, anthropology, social psychology, and biology, sociologists have begun to explore the relationship between social actors, private affective states, public behavior, and the social order (Thoits, 1989). While the epistemological approaches to the sociology of emotions have varied over time and among different theorists, there is growing agreement among sociologists that the study of emotions is an important aspect in sociological understanding of social life (Franks, 1989).

A review of the sociological literature on emotions was particularly important for this research project because, as illustrated in the review of literature on research about violence against women, the role that emotion assumes in women's vulnerability to abuse has been largely ignored. Similarly, the research on the African American family has not adequately explored the concepts of gender identity or the interaction of emotions and social structure. Finally, those theories of women's criminality that address emotions do so from a perspective of deviance rather than from a social constructionist or interactionist approach. Therefore, this project used the sociological literature on emotions to construct a more integrated, complex, and dynamic analysis of the gender-entrapment process in order to more accurately interpret the experience of African American and other women who are battered and who participate in illegal activities. In this way, the final sections of the literature review chapter will help to: 1) explain how battered

women, as social actors, constructed meanings about the violence in their intimate relationships; 2) how those meanings influenced their identities, and 3) and how their emotional and behavioral responses to violence were influenced by other sociological variables, such as cultural ideology, race/ethnicity, social status, and stigma.

The Psychological Approach

The psychoanalytic model of emotions uses Freud's theories of object relations and identity development to explain how emotional life is organized within the family structure, and to explain how social reproduction of gender roles is based on early psychological processes. Freud argued that all behavior is not conscious and, in fact, that the unconscious processes of internalization and reaction formation influence each individual's emotional experiences and social actions (Parsons, 1970). Infants who are psychologically disorganized become motivated subjects through early relationships with their primary caretakers, usually their mothers. Male and female children grow up with distinctly gendered personalities because their boundary experiences and inner object worlds are based on this fundamental relationship with an adult of their same sex or opposite sex, respectively. As a result, they are preoccupied with different relational issues as adults.

Nancy Chodorow's (1978) more contemporary work is based on the psychoanalytic approach to the study of emotions and uses Freudian analysis as the point of departure for her work on gender-identity development. In her conceptualization of "the reproduction of

mothering," she attempts to move beyond descriptive generalizations about socialization to analyze how gender asymmetry and inequality are constituted during childhood, reproduced in families, and ultimately changed. Chodorow argues that the reproduction of mothering occurs through a socially and structurally created psychological process and is a fundamental feature of the sexual division of labor in contemporary society.

Jessica Benjamin (1988) also uses the psychoanalytic object relations paradigm to discuss women's lack of subjectivity and agency, and, ultimately, the ways that women's lack of desire emerges from early psychological processes. Like Chodorow, she asserts that women's mothering is a cultural institution that is highly influenced by dominant gender ideology. Benjamin believes that femininity is glorified through the mothering role and is simultaneously devalued as a sexual role. From her perspective, what Freud describes as penis envy is really fear of women's power -- dangerous maternal omnipotence that could subvert the struggle for male independence. The implication of this aspect of Benjamin's analysis -- that gender inequality is at least in part due to men's fear of women's power -- is important for the development of the gender-entrapment theory being explored in this study. While the psychoanalytic model has been criticized for its male bias and positivistic assumptions, the framework is an important point of departure for other approaches to the study of identity development and emotions that are more directly relevant to this study of gender entrapment.

The Interactional Model

One such approach, the interactional model, views emotions as the joint product of generalized physiological arousal and specific sociocultural factors (Thoits, 1989). One of the best known interactionists, C. Wright Mills (1951), illustrates how character and personality are connected to social institutions and historical transformations. In his early work, he argues that social structure shapes the character of individuals, concluding that emotions displayed during social interaction are directly related to psychological changes.

G. Herbert Mead (1962), another social psychologist, developed the influential "self" theory as an attempt to explain the process by which humans become rational social actors. His theoretical approach suggests that reflexive role-taking leads to the creation of a generalized other, which ultimately becomes transformed into ongoing social organization. In this way, Mead's contribution to the sociology of emotions is the detailed account of how one's identity (i.e., being a loyal wife) is related to maintaining the social order (not disrupting the family unit).

Erving Goffman's well-known works Stigma (1986) and The Presentation of Self In Everyday Life (1959) offer additional insights from the interactionist perspective into emotions and identity development that lead to gender entrapment. Goffman uses performance as a metaphor to explain that individuals take on identities or roles during social interaction, emphasizing the

importance of people presenting themselves to others, the ways actors guide and control others' impressions, and the kinds of things actors do to sustain an image. Goffman's analysis is useful in explaining how social actors, including battered women, women who are incarcerated, and poor women of color, attempt to control interactions by assuming roles that infer higher status, conceal negative images, and create the appearance of harmonious relationships.

Susan Schott's work (1979) explains how emotions are affected by the real or imagined outcomes of social relationships. As the identity of an actor is continually being constructed during social interaction, both internal states (like fear of abandonment) and external circumstances (like violence) influence behavior. She shows how, in effect, social institutions need not monitor every social actor; actors monitor themselves through their interactions with others.

Thomas Scheff's (1988) empirical work on shame is also useful for this study of gender entrapment. From his perspective, shame serves the social function of creating real or imagined rejection that leads to social withdrawal. Conformity, on the other hand, leads to pride, satisfaction, and a more pleasurable physiological experience. As applied to this study, as women may feel ashamed of being battered or committing an illegal act, they may strive for greater conformity to gender-role expectations in their abusive relationships. They, therefore, monitor themselves through their emotional responses to the men who abuse them and in social

interactions with their families and peers, so that institutions need only assume symbolic, rather than actual social-control function.

The Constructionist Model

Social constructionists shift the analysis of emotions from emphasizing interaction, role-taking, and physiological factors to a more explicit focus on the role of social institutions in shaping emotions. In this model, human feelings are understood as cultural artifacts, determined by social norms and institutional requirements, disconnected from biological or psychological processes.

The work of Francesca Cancian (1987), for example, suggests that emotions are outcomes of the changes in social life that resulted in the split in the productive and reproductive spheres according to gender. Another social constructionist, Claire Armon-Jones (1986) discusses the social function of emotions in terms of their significant role in endorsing and sustaining hegemonic beliefs and values by internalizing "appropriateness." From this perspective, emotions serve a regulatory function, promoting attitudes that support accepted practices within the existing social order, including the maintenance of gender inequality. Candance West and Don Zimmerman (1987) propose an ethnomethodological approach in their work on emotions and gender to explain how gender as a recurring social practice is regarded if accomplished according to hegemonic social standards. For them, gender is considered a complex set of socially guided, interactional, and micro-political activities. As this study of gender entrapment demonstrates, some women "do" gender

with detrimental consequences to themselves.

The social constructionist who most influenced this study and the development of the gender-entrapment theory is Arlie Hochschild. In The Managed Heart (1983) and The Second Shift (1989), Hochschild discusses the concept of an emotional management system whereby individuals induce or inhibit feelings so as to render them appropriate to a given situation. This framework allows Hochschild to examine ideology and the ways emotions are socially constructed according to gender and class position. She concludes that the organization of society is maintained through emotional life in families that strive to function in accordance with the dominant social order. In this view, emotions and identity are deeply social, and they are also rooted in ideology, as the life-history interviews bore out.

The Relational Model

The fourth theoretical approach to the study of emotions that informed the analysis of the life-history interviews is the relational model associated with the work of Drew Westen (1985). Like the constructionist approach, Westen's work contends that emotions are essentially a mechanism to manage the inevitable tension between individual desires and collective needs. Simultaneously explaining an individual process and a social process, Westen argues that emotions serve as defense mechanisms that enable social actors to manage the discrepancies that arise between their experiences, actions, and community standards. Emotions, from this view, smooth or

prevent individual discomfort and manage social conflict when behaviors and values are incongruous. The relational model allows for an analysis of illegal or inappropriate tension-producing emotions more than the aforementioned theoretical models of emotions.

Westen's theory describes the inevitable conflict between the needs of the individual (self-interest, egoism, practical, and instrumental choices) and the needs of the collectivity, like families (public interests, social cohesion). From this perspective, culture, tradition, and ritual are viewed as ways to indoctrinate individuals into collectivities like families and to create rewards for conformity to established social arrangements and practices. When a discrepancy occurs, such as the onset of violence against women in the family, the individuals respond by changing their identities, denying their individual needs, and emphasizing their sense of membership in a collectivity, all towards the goal of reestablishing equilibrium in social life, even when there is underlying tension (like violence or illegal activity).

CONCLUSION

Each of the four bodies of sociological literature offer insight into the theoretical model being explored in this dissertation project. The psychoanalytic model of emotions helps to explain how early psychological processes lead to gender division of labor in nuclear families, which in turn is reproduced in other social institutions. The work of Chodorow and Benjamin demonstrates how, in

the personalities of women and men, there are deeply embedded, qualitatively different relational needs and, therefore, why a woman might comply with the wishes of a man who abused her. Angela Browne describes the dynamic created by these early psychological processes in her book, When Battered Women Kill (1989). While the psychoanalytic research and literature is not adequately attentive to cross-cultural issues and alternative family structures and functions, the basic theoretical premise has some relevance to the development of the thesis that is the basis for this study.

The interactionist approach, particularly Mill's and Goffman's work on identity, is also theoretically relevant for this empirical work. Women who are battered develop and change their identities in relationship to their interaction with social institutions, which are commonly organized according to a gender and racial hierarchy. From other interactionist theorists of "self" and "identity," it can be seen that women acquire gender roles through ongoing interaction with social structures that are based on both the dominant ideology of male superiority and cultural hegemony regarding appropriate social roles for women. This perspective offers more opportunity for an analysis of race/ethnicity and class than the psychoanalytic approach. Using Mead's model, for example, the identity of African American women may include 1) occupational roles based on subordinated racial status; 2) family-based gender roles linked to the idealized notion of the middle class cult of domesticity; and, 3) the attempt to conceal or change their stigmatized status if they

are battered and arrested for illegal activities. The life-history interviews conducted in this study explored the subject's multiple and indeed contradictory identities from the interactionist perspective.

Finally, the social constructionist and relational models of emotion also informed this project. In particular, Hochschild's work on feeling rules and emotional work, and Westen's concept of managing the discrepancy of idealized notions of expectations and reality are useful. Applying Hochschild's conceptualization to the emotional experiences of African American women in their families, it becomes evident how the subjects of this study might be so deeply engaged in the ongoing tasks of social reproduction that their needs for safety and legal protection might be overlooked. The hegemonic ideology of "The Family" is a compelling force and, as West and Zimmerman note in their work, the family organization requires women's compliance with gender behavior, even if they are battered.

Westen's work also helps explain what happens when African American women and other battered women with lower social status may, in fact, never be able to achieve the mainstream cultural ideal of domestic life. Even so, their emotional and financial commitment to their intimate partners, their children, and their extended families and communities mitigate their frustration and keep them engaged in attempting to meet the ideological norm. Westen's model explains how, when they were battered, the women may have felt compelled to maintain social and cultural equilibrium, and therefore

participated in forced illegal activities.

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature from the sociology of the family, the research on violence against women, the theories of women's criminality and the sociology of emotion. Taken together, the empirical and theoretical conclusions provided a framework for the design of the study, as described in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This study, designed to explore the link between gender-identity development, violence in intimate relationships, and crime, used the life-history interview technique to elicit data on the ways that women detained at the Rose M. Singer Center on Rikers Island thought and felt about their experiences within the private spheres of their families and, subsequently, how they acted in the public sphere of social life. From the data that emerged from the subjects' frames of reference, their participation in criminal activities was analyzed using the grounded theory approach to data analysis in order to develop the gender-entrapment theory of women's illegal activities.

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study explored the following research questions:

1. How were the subjects' gender identities socially constructed in response to the combined effect of their emotional developments in their households of origin and their interpretations of the cultural norms and values?
2. How was the gender identity, and the consequent emotional work, of the sample population influenced by: a) dominant ideology, b) broader social circumstances, and c) ongoing institutional practices in a society that is hierarchically organized by gender and race/ethnicity?
3. What "emotional work" did the subjects do in response to being

abused or threatened by their male partners?

4. How did this "emotional work" represent efforts to manage the discrepancy between reality and cultural ideas, as described by Westen's (1985) theoretical model?
5. What circumstances influenced the subjects' paths from being abused to their participation in illegal activities?
6. What social, institutional, and emotional factors contributed to the subjects' being arrested and detained in the Rose M. Singer Center on Rikers Island?
7. How did the subjects feel the criminal justice system, social services and other institutional responses mediated or exacerbated their negative experiences as battered women?
8. How do the factors explored in questions 1-7 constitute a unique social experience for this particular population, heretofore referred to as gender entrapment? As discussed in Chapter 1, the concept of gender entrapment is defined as the social process whereby women's identities are organized around establishing and maintaining intimate relationships that, under specific circumstances, lead them to participate in activities for which they are arrested and detained.
9. How did the gender entrapment of African American women who were battered compare with two other populations at Rikers Island: 1) African American women who were not battered, and 2) White women who were battered?

THE LIFE-HISTORY INTERVIEW METHOD

The principal research method used in this study was the analysis of the findings from the life-history interviews obtained through use of the interview schedule of open-ended questions found in Appendix B. The life-history method was selected for this study because it is particularly useful in gathering information about stigmatized, uncomfortable or difficult circumstances in subjects' lives (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). Compared to other, more structured qualitative methods, conducting life-history interviews offered a more intense opportunity to learn about subjects' backgrounds, opinions, feelings, and the meanings they give to the mundane events and the exceptional experiences in their lives (Mishler, 1986; Watson, 1985). Given the objectives of this research, the life-history interview method of data collection was selected, although it is an unusual choice, since intimate violence is typically studied quantitatively.

A review of the literature on other, more structured, quantitative data-collection methods revealed that there are three measurement tools that are commonly cited in the research literature on intimate violence. The first is the "Index of Spouse Abuse," which is actually two sub-scales that measure physical abuse and non-physical abuse (Hudson and McIntosh, 1981). It is limited by vague categories and culturally bound concepts of abuse (Straus and Gelles, 1990). A second commonly used measurement of domestic violence is the National Crime Survey, which is administered annually to 60,000 households. While this survey is the most extensive data collection

tool on crime statistics in the United States, tests of its reliability indicate that it suffers from a serious under-reporting on domestic violence because many respondents do not consider abuse by a family member to be a crime (Straus and Gelles, 1990). The "Conflict Tactics Scale" (CTS), developed in 1973 by Murray Straus, Professor of Sociology and Co-Director of the Family Research Laboratory at the University of New Hampshire, is by far the most widely used instrument to measure the nature and extent of violence in intimate relationships (see Appendix C). The CTS consists of 19 fixed-response categories that measure violence in terms of its frequency and severity. Critics of the instrument, including leading experts in the field and other social scientists, note that the CTS counts acts of violence in isolation from the context within which they occur. These critics also note that the lack of attention to the differential effects of the various acts of violence on the lives of the victims could be misleading (Okun, 1986). While each of the aforementioned data-collection instruments has contributed to legitimizing the study of abuse in intimate relationships, both are widely criticized by feminist scholars for being too quantitative and for de-contextualizing the experience of violence against women (Yllo, 1988). Their limitations strongly support the use of a different, more qualitative methodology; however, the CTS instrument was used in this study as a screening tool. The life-history interview technique was used as the primary research instrument in this study.

A review of the sociological studies of similar populations that have successfully utilized the life-history methodology further establishes the advantages of this particular qualitative methodology. Joyce Ladner's (1972) study of the life of Black adolescent girls revealed findings that significantly shifted the sociological understanding of life in the Black community in the late 1970's. Ladner's findings were based on systematic open-ended life-history interviews about the attitudes and behaviors of 30 subjects. Her study was concerned with their choices of role models and the influences of values, customs, and traditions of the Black community on their gender identities. In Ladner's analysis, she included a consideration of structural variables such as kin relationships and the subjects' access to institutional resources. Of particular interest to this study of incarcerated battered women were Ladner's questions about perceived "disparity between the resources she has with which to achieve her goals in life and the stated aspirations" (pg. 81). For her study, as for this study, it was important to learn from the subjects themselves rather than approach the interviews with rigid preconceived notions -- especially in terms of normative and deviant behavior. Ladner's work is credited with providing a "thought-provoking analysis of the relationships between methodological, theoretical, epistemological, political and ethical dimensions of social science research" (Harding, 1987) and, as such, strongly influenced the decision to use the life-history methodology for this study.

Another landmark study, conducted by Carol Stack (1972), of urban kinship networks also used an open-ended interview schedule designed to detect and describe the most meaningful elements of daily life for Black women in their communities. In her book, All Our Kin, she characterizes her interviews as "informal conversations" based on general theoretical issues of interest to her sample, including social and domestic relations, gossip (informal community-building networks), kinship and residence patterns, and child-rearing/parenting. Like Ladner's methodology, Stack's approach closely resembled the life-history interview method that was used in this study.

Judith Rollins's book, Between Women (1985), documents the relationship between domestics and their employers using a similar interview method. Rollins states that her choice of unstructured, open-ended interviews was based on the premise that the ideas, attitudes, thoughts and emotions of people must be examined and understood in order to develop policy and programs that rearrange the exploitative nature of social relationships. As in this study, Rollins was interested in the ways that gender and race influence interpersonal and social relationships, and how access to institutional resources are central issues in women's lives. Rollins's methodology was particularly helpful in capturing the complexities that arise in relationships of domination that are influenced by emotional and social bonds, such as marriage. Rollins's epistemological approach was based on the assumption that

the ideas of women who have experienced the phenomenon under study are the most important to understand. She thus entered into the research process with intellectual openness, allowing patterns to emerge during the interviews (Smith, 1987). While her 40 focused interviews followed a guide, Rollins encouraged the subjects to elaborate on the aspects of their lives that were most important to them, as was done in this study of women detained at Rikers Island.

Of those studies of women that used the life-history method, Eleanor Miller's (1986) population most closely resembles this study. Her life history interviews of 70 women who were involved in criminal activities yielded detailed accounts of the paths women took from their families of origin to "street life." In her study, Miller was able not only to describe individual cases, but also to document a general pattern that incorporated individual differences, structural influences, and cultural factors that were critical to interpreting the criminality of the women in her sample. By her own account, Miller's life histories "were not complete life histories," but rather were "topical" life histories based on themes gleaned from a review of the literature that was relevant to her study. While none of the aforementioned research focused on the same type of population that I interviewed, the methodology that was used in these studies -- in-depth interviews and analysis according to themes from the literature -- served to establish the rationale for using the life-history approach in this study.

In sum, the life-history method was appropriate and effective in

discovering the complex interactions of events and the ongoing social process that were associated with gender-role development (Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979), intimate violence (Maguire, 1987), and the circumstances that led to arrest (Miller, 1986). The approach allowed for a focus on both a gender-specific analysis to social analysis of the population (Harding, 1987), as well as attention to the nuances that varied across racial/ethnic or cultural categories (Cannon, 1987), as discussed in the following chapters as key elements of the gender-entrapment theoretical model.

SAMPLE POPULATION

Operational Definition of Intimate Violence

The methodology selected to measure the effects of domestic violence was dependent upon the operational definition of the concept under study. The authors of the CTS scale, as well as other experts in the field, define violence as "an act carried out with the intention or perceived intention of causing physical pain or injury to another person" (Straus, 1990, p. 76). The concept of "assault" that is often used in the legal literature suggests "unlawful intention of inflicting or attempted, threatened inflicting of injury upon another person" (FBI, 1989). Here it is important to note that the current legal scholarship on domestic violence has expanded the definition from an injury-based concept to include psychological abuse. According to the Encyclopedia of Crime and Justice and also the Uniform Crime Reports, "...attempts and threats are included in

the tabulation of aggravated assault, it is not necessarily that an injury result" (Straus, 1989, pg. 80). Some social scientists who study intimate violence make the distinction between "instrumental" and "expressive" violence. Instrumental violence connotes abusive or threatening activities that are a means unto an end, whereas expressive violence serves as an end unto itself. It is generally agreed in the literature that most male-to-female violence in intimate relationships is characteristically not expressive abuse, but is typically instrumental in nature (Straus, 1990).

While there is considerable ambiguity in the legal and social science conceptualization and, therefore, the measurement of the concepts, these definitions informed the operational definition of intimate violence used in this study. For the purposes of this study, intimate violence was the intentional, willful infliction of physical assaults, the threats of assaults, emotional abuse, or coercion from one partner in an intimate relationship towards the other.

Selection of Sample

Based on this definition of intimate violence, the selection of the sample population for this study was purposeful and deliberate. Initially, any African American female inmate detained at the Rose M. Singer Center at Rikers Island was eligible for this study if she:

1. self-identified as a battered woman or had a history of violence in her intimate adult relationship(s) or had been physically and/or emotionally abused by a husband, boyfriend, or

live-in partner;

2. responded affirmatively to 12 out of 19 items on the Conflict Tactics Scale;

3. was psychologically fit for interview and not in need of acute medical or psychological intervention, as determined by the Montefiore/Rikers Island Prison Health Service; and

4. signed the informed consent form (Appendix D).

Later, it was decided to expand the sample in order to contrast the experiences of African American battered women with two other groups detained at Rikers Island: 1) African American women who had not been battered and 2) White women who were battered. While the expanded sample still did not reflect the universe of experiences, by including racial/ethnic and experiential variations, a more complex and textured analysis could be conducted. The process of expanding the sample is consistent with grounded theory, where the analysis occurs concurrently with the data collection, and the themes that emerge drive subsequent interviews (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Recruitment

Subjects for this study were recruited from four sources. All recruitment efforts emphasized the voluntary and anonymous nature of the study. First, those respondents in a study being conducted in the same time frame titled "Risk Factors for Sexually Transmitted Disease, Cervical Dysplasia and Tuberculosis in Incarcerated Women" who self-identified as battered women were asked to volunteer for this study. Second, the Montefiore Mental Health Service and

Department of Corrections Social Service staff were asked to publicize the study among their clients who might fit the criteria. Third, the Inmates' Council was contacted to assist in volunteer recruitment. Fourth, inmates who attended the weekly Domestic Violence Support Group sponsored by the Department of Corrections were also asked to volunteer for the study. Informed consent (see Appendix D) was obtained from each participant prior to the life-history interview. Due to the low literacy rate of many volunteers and the complex nature of consent, the researcher read and explained the purpose of the study, the implications of signing the form, and the process of anonymity. A dated record of the consent form was signed by the principal investigator and a copy given to each subject.

The enrollment process for volunteers included a brief screening interview at which time the CTS was administered. Real names, aliases, and book and case identification numbers were kept in a log book and used only to locate subjects who had been referred to the study. A study number was assigned to each set of field notes and, in this and future references to the study, the names and numbers will not be associated with any particular set of field notes. The list of subjects was destroyed once the data from each interview had been coded, thus ensuring the complete anonymity of the respondents.

Field notes from the interviews were assigned a study identification number and stored off-site in a secure file to which only I had access. As described below, the results of the life-

history interviews were coded according to themes that emerged from the review of the literature, and analyzed in aggregate form. In discussing the study and writing the analysis chapters of this study, where any individual case was cited, a pseudonym was used and identifying characteristics were disguised or omitted to protect subjects' anonymity.

DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected using the interview schedule found in Appendix B. It guided, rather than defined, the life-history interviews that were conducted with 37 subjects over a nine-month period in a private space in the health clinic or one of the housing areas in the Rose M. Singer Center at Rikers Island Correctional Facility. Each interview lasted approximately three hours. In keeping with this type of qualitative research that the life history method represents, the specific content of the interview was determined, to a great extent, by the responses from each subject. At a minimum, the interviewer asked each subject to describe her family background and home environment, the history, nature, and extent of violence in her intimate relationship(s), and, to a lesser extent, her involvement in the criminal justice system. Each subject was given an opportunity to reflect on and interpret her own experience through the open-ended questions asked during the interview. At the data collection phase of this study, I was interested in each subject's own version of her experiences (Marshall and Rossman, 1989).

The data collection for this study involved more than conducting the life-history interviews. Prior to developing the interview schedule, I spent five months at the Rose M. Singer Center on Rikers Island meeting with women inmates in focus groups, talking with them informally, observing the daily operations of the facility, and attending a series of conferences sponsored by the Rikers Island Women's Committee, where women detained in the facility presented testimony about the conditions of their lives before coming to Rikers Island. Additionally, I served as a consultant on another study where I interviewed women as they entered the facility in the receiving area of the jail.

The combination of these experiences in the setting prior to initiating the research for this study afforded me an opportunity to become familiar with the everyday lives of the women detained there and to hear, from their perspectives, what their overall experiences had been. I recorded my observations, key terms and phrases, the names of individuals who might facilitate my access in the facility, and my general reactions to the setting and the subjects in a field journal. This process of spending time in the research setting conducting a situational analysis (Merton, 1956) was extremely valuable to the data collection phase of this project. My interview schedule and the research design were thus informed by firsthand knowledge of the population and the setting, as well as the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and my past experiences in the field. Once I began to conduct the interviews, the research

relationship was facilitated by my knowledge of the subjects' language, as well as my understanding of the pacing of life in the institution, the meaning the subjects gave to external and internal events, and the places in which the subjects had found themselves.

The data collection was affected by a number of institutional factors that shaped the research design and process, as described in the ethnographic note in Chapter 1. Most notable was the fact that the Rose M. Singer Center is a temporary detaining institution where inmates' legal status and, subsequently, their identities are in the process of being determined. The women I interviewed never knew when they would be summoned to court, whether they would be released to the "free" world, transferred to another institution, convicted of a crime and/or sentenced to become a ward of the New York State Correctional System for an indefinite period of time. This created a series of subjective experiences for me as a researcher that affected the data collection for this study (Hunt, 1989).

First, the nature of the questions and the length of the interviews created a certain intensity in my relationship with the subjects. We talked for a long time about topics that many had never talked about in such detail. Most of the subjects expressed an appreciation for the attention and the non-judgmental approach I used in the interviews. Their appreciation was an important incentive to me to endure the sometimes difficult obstacles to conducting the interviews as well as the tedious and troubling content. On some days I would wait three or four hours for an officer to release an

inmate to the area in which I was scheduled to interview her. Other times, I would travel to Rikers Island only to be denied access to the facility because there was an "alarm." Usually I could only locate women a few times after I interviewed them to follow up, as most were transferred, sentenced, or "lost" in the system within a few days. Mostly, I was affected by my own sense of frustration and anger as I observed how the women were treated, and learned of the legal and bureaucratic barriers to the expeditious resolution to their cases.

Since I assumed multiple roles in the institution (field worker, consultant, outside service provider) my work sometimes included facilitating access to health, legal, and social services at the Rose M. Singer Center for subjects who were in need. I also had relationships with several "outside programs" (as described in Chapter 1), and at times I made referrals for women to be seen by an agency once they were released to the community. Similarly, I had visited Bedford Hills (the maximum security prison for women in New York State, through which all women who are sentenced eventually pass) and I had a relationship with the Bedford Hills Family Violence Program, and could make referrals to that program for those women who might be sentenced and transferred there. There were several instances when I felt an ethical conflict between my role as a researcher and as an advocate. At many times, it was difficult for me to remain detached, and I found it impossible to avoid becoming invested in the outcome of their cases. At times, I failed to

conceal my own emotional responses to their stories.

It helped that, for the most part, I was able to distinguish myself from the subjects because, indeed, the events of my life story, so far, had been very different from theirs. However, there were moments that I felt the distance between us narrowing. I have encountered two of the women I interviewed for the study on the street in the community in which I live, another has a sister who is a member of an organization with which I am affiliated, and several have written me letters, finding my address on various institutional mailing lists. My "closeness" to the inmates became personally problematic on several occasions. During the data collection phase of the research, I was mistaken for an inmate three times by correctional officers. Once when a prosecutor learned about my study, she threatened to subpoena my field notes to use against a subject whom I had interviewed. Fortunately, this threat was never realized. However, it illustrates how the nature of the data-collection process that enabled me to use myself and my experiences to be close to the subjects also posed a series of dilemmas for my role as a researcher. Overall, it did not interfere with my ability to effectively focus the interviews on the research questions designed for this study. On the contrary, my physical and emotional "closeness" enhanced my data-collection ability and experience.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

This project was a descriptive study designed to develop an alternative model of women's illegal activities. Through the life-

history method of qualitative research, the subjects' life stories were recorded in their own words for the purpose of developing an understanding of the population under study. The analysis of data from this type of non-experimental, qualitative study seeks first and foremost to capture the subjects' own feelings and views and the meanings they give to the events in their lives. The specific process of data analysis used in this study was based on the grounded-theory approach to qualitative research. Developed by Barney Glaser and Ansel Strauss in the early 1960's, grounded theory is influenced by the tradition of the Chicago School of sociology that utilized field observations and intensive interviews as data-collection techniques in order to grasp and emphasize the social actor's point of view of social reality and social change (Glaser, 1967). According to Strauss, "the goal of grounded theory is to generate a theory that accounts for a pattern of behavior that is relevant and problematic for those involved" (Strauss and Gelles, 1990, p. 43). The grounded theory method of data analysis was, therefore, considered particularly well suited for this study designed to develop the theory of gender entrapment.

The data analysis was undertaken simultaneously with the data collection. After each interview was conducted, the field notes were transcribed and intensely reviewed to identify and name the key elements of the findings: the critical events, emotions, factors that influenced their behaviors, and the conditions in their households and communities that the subjects described in response to questions

on the interview schedule. This process of reviewing the research questions and studying the field notes led to the initial coding schema.

As the coding of the interviews was progressing, common themes began to emerge, which allowed for constant comparisons from one interview to another. Gradually, broader categories were conceptualized, and ultimately, I was able to look at the relationship between three core categories: gender-identity development, violence in intimate relationships, and participation in illegal activities. It was the organization of these relationships, explaining direction, sequence, and properties of the categories, that served as the theoretical underpinnings of the gender-entrapment process being studied.

The analysis continued until the data was "saturated," meaning that the findings from the life-history interviews no longer contributed new information about the three categories or properties of the categories under study (Strauss, 1990). Two months into the analysis of the data, several techniques commonly utilized by qualitative researchers were added to the process of developing the gender-entrapment theoretical model. First, a diagram was drawn to provide a visual image of the integration of gender-identity development, violence in intimate relationships, and the subjects' involvement in illegal activities. Later, theoretical memos were written as a way to keep track of the coding results, to stimulate hypotheses, and to refine the generation of the theory of gender

entrapment.

One of the outcomes of the theoretical memos was the addition of two comparison groups to the original sample population. The practice of "theoretical sampling" was used to select other women to interview. This decision was methodologically consistent with grounded-theory analysis, permitting me to choose a sample based on my interest in developing theory rather than choosing a more random sample upon which generalizations to the overall population could be made (Strauss and Gelles, 1990). In this study, African American battered women detained at Rikers Island Correctional Facility were selected as the original sample based on the broader sociological and epistemological trends in which I was interested, as discussed in Chapter 1. In the service of generating theory, two comparison groups were used to stimulate theoretical sensitivity as distinct and different from using a "control group" for comparison in other types of research. Both comparison groups were also women detained at Rikers Island, one was African American women who had not been battered, and the other was White women who had been battered. By analyzing the interview data from these other two groups, the role of race/ethnicity was highlighted in the overall gender-entrapment process as it related to women's participation in illegal activities.

The final stage of data analysis and theory development was to discuss the findings within a broader sociological context established by the review of the literature. This process of

contextualization involved conceptualizing the sequence of events that generally constituted the subjects' life patterns in order to systematically sort the themes into categories that illuminated the social processes of gender entrapment (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). After the raw data was edited, the findings were put into the broader sociological context. While the contextualized life-history interviews were intended to illustrate some of the social processes that had influenced this particular group of women, the analysis and documentation of the life histories that begin in Chapter 5 stress each subject's own version of her experiences (Marshall and Rossman, 1989).

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

"All research must respond to canons that stand against which the trustworthiness of the project can be evaluated" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 290). While the strength of qualitative research, in general, is that it provides in-depth information about the particular complex interactive variables of the lives of the subjects under study, there are conspicuous weaknesses inherent in the method that are important to note. The particular limitations of the life-history method used in this study fall into three categories: 1) ethical and logistical dilemmas; 2) the validity of the information presented; and 3) the generalizability of the research findings.

As previously mentioned, the jail setting itself, wherein this research was conducted, posed significant obstacles to conducting any

type of research, especially in-depth interviews that are sensitive in nature. As discussed, the lack of privacy, the restrictions on movement of civilians and inmates alike, and the distractions such as unexpected family visits, court dates and spontaneous releases significantly limited the researcher's ability to locate, interview, and follow up any particular subject. Additionally, since most of the subjects in the study were charged but not yet convicted of the for which crimes they were arrested, their legal situations were precarious, and the implications of disclosing information were significant, especially since many of the subjects were arrested for serious and sensitive crimes, such as felonious possession of an illegal substance or child endangerment. Because of their pending legal cases, most of the the subjects of this study were uniquely vulnerable, and some might have felt a vested interest in distorting information that they felt might discredit their legal cases or affect their treatment in jail.

A second limitation of the study was related to the overall question of validity that surrounds qualitative research. Most self-reporting methods of data collection in social science research raise questions about validity and reliability of findings. Especially on sensitive topics such as violence, intimate relationships, and criminal behavior, these considerations loom before any researcher and her audience. At best, all self-reports are subject to memory errors and unconscious distortions of what is reported (Strauss, 1990). However, it has been generally accepted that because of the

shame associated with battered women, distortions that minimize the violence are more common than those that exaggerate the extent of violence in intimate relationships (Arias and Beach, 1987).

A third limitation of the methodological approach used in this study was the scope of generalizability of the findings. As previously noted, the literature on qualitative analysis suggests that while life-history interviews provide in-depth information about those subjects who are interviewed, the tendency to "miss the forest for the trees" is notable. In the analysis phase of the project, it was therefore important to avoid perceiving an explicit or implied pattern in the overall population when, in fact, the findings may only represent the particular subjects who were interviewed for this study. Just as generalizability is compromised by the subject-driven nature of the life-history methodology, the ability to replicate the study may also be limited by the unstructured nature of the interview schedule.

The final limitation is related to the use of a model group and smaller comparison groups. While this approach is consistent with the methodology selected for this study, it could result in a misinterpretation of the findings to conclude that African American battered women are more negatively affected by the circumstances in their households of origin, their racial/ethnic identities, violence against women, or the pull towards illegal activities. It is therefore important to emphasize that the analytical approach used in this study intentionally privileged the experience of African

American battered women, and less so the African American women who were not battered and the White battered women in order to develop the theory of gender entrapment.

These limitations, while no doubt significant, are balanced by the rich multi-textured data that emerged from the life history-interviews, as presented in the following chapters, and by the overall purpose of the study, which was to explore and explain a particular group of women's experiences well.

CHAPTER 4: GENDER-IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT:**Families, Childhood Roles and Construction of A Female Identity**

"They can tell that their mama is not like other mothers. They can see that she is working hard to give them more than food, shelter, and clothes to wear; that she wants to give them a taste of the delicious, a vision of beauty, a bit of ecstasy. Even so, she is obsessed with the latest products. She is moving away from her awareness of the deeper inner things of life and worrying about money. I watch these changes in her and worry. I want her never to lose what she has given me — a sense that there is something deeper, more to this life than the everyday" (Hooks, 1991, p. 150).

INTRODUCTION

The gender-entrapment theory explains the social, emotional and cultural dynamics that link gender-identity development, violence against women in intimate relationships, and women's participation in illegal activities. In this chapter, findings concerning the first series of circumstances — gender-identity development in the subjects' households of origin — are reported. The particular focus is on the nature of the everyday experiences and the significance of the critical events that the subjects associated with growing up as female children in their families, and how their gender-identity was influenced by social circumstances,

cultural norms and values, and dominant ideology.

As one of the principal organizing units of society, the family or household serves several functions: to socialize its members, to provide a vehicle for meeting basic material and emotional needs, and to transmit social norms and values. It is also considered a key determinant in the development of individual identity and the subsequent behavior of social actors. Cultural forces influence household units by interjecting ideology, thereby providing a "frame of reference through which people attempt to deal with the circumstances in which they find themselves" (Mullings, 1986, p. 13). From a broader sociological perspective, the organization of households and the ordering of their members by gender and generation serve as a mechanism of social control, enforcing a division of labor that shapes public as well as domestic relationships. As such, the ideological, cultural, and social construction of the household establishes a foundation for the reproduction of hegemonic roles with regard to gender and generation. Even those social actors whose experiences fall outside of the dominant family form because of historical circumstances, cultural beliefs, race/ethnicity, or class are influenced by family ideology and the organization of society around a generalized (albeit rarely practiced) notion of the family.

Findings from the life-history interviews conducted for this study showed that the structure and function of the subjects' households, their cultural frames of reference, the gendered and generational division of labor, and the positions of their families

in the dominant social order had a significant and varied influence on their adult lives. Beginning with a discussion of the subjects' positions in their households of origin, this chapter will trace their gender-identity development by describing their images of and relationships with adults in their households, including the extent to which the subjects experienced and/or observed abuse in their domestic sphere. Those factors that influenced the subjects' vulnerability, the extent to which they were engaged in risk-taking behaviors, their role models, and the gender differences between male and female childhood roles in their households of origin are also discussed as they constituted a distinct pattern. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the relationship between racial/ethnic identity and family loyalty, which, when taken with the other factors, created the particular dynamic of gender entrapment for the African American battered women in this study.

The analysis of the findings indicated that for the African American battered women, growing up as privileged girls was ultimately burdensome; as their childhood experiences, their optimistic expectations, and their relatively high sense of self esteem made them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse in the public and private spheres. The African American women who were not battered had a different set of experiences in their families of origin --growing up poor in a society stratified by race/ethnicity and gender with- out high expectations of themselves or their future. While their experiences posed numerous difficulties, they

made them less vulnerable to men's violence in their intimate relationships. The White battered women in this study typically grew up in destitute, isolated families where generational and gender roles were rigidly controlled and dominated by adult men. The combination of their extremely exploitative and abusive childhoods, and the privileged position of White men in the public and private spheres led them to create emotionally distant, cautious adult intimate relationships. While these conditions did not protect the White women from abuse, they did result in them being less socially and emotionally trapped by the abuse.

These findings, as discussed in this chapter, show how the African American battered women's vulnerability to gender entrapment began as their gender-identity was constructed in their households of origin, and was later influenced by the social positions of their African American families in the public sphere. When compared to the experiences of the other two groups in this study, a pattern that began in the African American battered women's households of origin led to the creation of intimate relationships that were particularly vulnerable to abuse, which, in turn, set them on unique paths to illegal activities and incarceration at Rikers Island Correctional Facility.

THE SUBJECTS' POSITIONS IN THEIR HOUSEHOLDS OF ORIGIN

When they compared themselves to other children in their households, the subjects in this sample held one of three distinct

positions that were associated with the three subgroups in the overall sample population. The first group of subjects received extra privileges, attention, and resources, indicating the families' emotional and material investment in these particular children meeting high standards for success. The second group of responses consisted of subjects who felt like average children. They considered themselves of equal value or importance to other members of their households. The third group of subjects had relatively low status when compared to other children, being routinely assigned extraordinary responsibilities for household maintenance and receiving significantly less interest and resources from the adult members of their households.

Findings from interviews with African American battered women indicated that almost all of them held privileged positions in their families of origin. Describing the benefits of their privileged status in very concrete ways, they reported having more clothing and other possessions, a disproportionate amount of discretionary spending money given the relatively low household income, and they were included in social activities and cultural events outside the home more frequently than other children. The relative privilege that the African American battered women described was an initial factor that left them predisposed to gender entrapment. As Sebina, a 32-year-old African American battered woman detained on a co-conspiracy to murder charge, said:

I grew up as the favorite girl in a close-knit,

conservative family. We were poor, but I had it all: dancing lessons at the YMCA, ice skating in Central Park, library books, toys and lots of other stuff. Real feminine. I went to Catholic school on a scholarship and was the nuns' best student. I was my church debutante, a perfect Girl Scout. I believed that I was really their special something, and my folks went out of their way to prove how special I was — every day in a different way.

Similarly, April, a 30-year-old African American battered women awaiting trial on an arson charge, said:

All the adults in my family worked hard to meet the needs of the children. My mother was a day worker during the day, and a cook in a local restaurant at nights and weekends. My father was a custodian during the day and worked as the superintendent of our apartment building. I didn't want for anything. My parents gave me all of the money I wanted, while at the same time showing me how important working hard was. Everything I had was better than what my siblings or friends had, and since I always shared with them, I always had lots of friends. I guess you could say that from my earliest days I had lots of people interested in me.

Lynne's experience also fit this pattern. She was a 28-year-old African American detainee facing a mandatory sentence of two to four years if found guilty on a felonious drug charge. She said:

I was raised in a house with my mother, a brother and a

sister. I was the favorite, the youngest, the one who was my family's pride and joy. I was only smarter because they thought I should be, and I had the most energy. Actually, my mother identified with me because I pushed her to have fun, to be alive rather than just working all of the time. I was always looking for a man to take care of her. I was always playing jokes on my family and I brought more spirit to the house. I was rewarded with the gifts of more food, money, clothes, and chances to be "in the world."

For most of the subjects in this group, the privileged position in their households included an affective component as well as a material one: Their elevated status had an emotional or expressive quality. The subjects in this group recalled the adults in their households or extended families verbalizing appreciation for their personal qualities, articulating hopes for their futures, and using them as positive examples for other children. Letisha, a 37-year-old African American battered woman detained on a forgery charge, reported:

I grew up in a household with my mother, father, five brothers and four sisters. It was the second marriage for both my folks. They each brought children to the household, but I am the only child born of the union between them...I am the only real daughter they have. They loved each other so much that I got pulled into

my mom and dad's close circle of loving, while the other children did not. They really treated me like a princess. I got lots of extra attention and encouragement, because they put all of their stock in me as a girl because they felt that I had a better chance of making it than the boys. My mother worked for the government and my father worked on and off as a night worker at a newspaper. When they were gone, I got to be in charge. When they were home, I was the one they doted on. I really think they liked, loved and believed in me best.

Their privileged status in their households created a dialectic for this subgroup that ultimately became a critical element in gender entrapment. While they developed a sense of themselves as "unique" or "extraordinary," being "special" brought with it a feeling of being "different." In retrospect, the subgroup of African American battered women expressed ambivalence about their childhood positions, recalling how with the privileged status came responsibilities for caring for younger siblings, pressure to do extraordinarily well in school, and the burden of being their caretakers' confidantes. In addition to the concrete and emotional benefits of their elevated positions in their households, these subjects reported having felt burdened by the pressure to meet the expectations that would maintain their privileged status. Some described how the fear of losing their privileges propelled them into constant attempts to further heighten their status in their

households. Letisha continued:

I remember not knowing what was harder, being perfect or trying to stay perfect. I got all of the extras in my household. Sometimes I tried to reject all of the attention or share it with my brothers and sisters. It made me feel too different from them when actually I wanted to be around the other kids, not separate from them. My parents counted on me to be perfect and it really cut down on my fun. Actually it was a lot of work to be the favorite. And in the end, look at where I am now.

The sense that Latisha and other women in this subgroup got about the conditional love, affection, and respect and the need to constantly work to maintain status in relationships was a recurring theme from early childhood. This dynamic had a particularly gendered aspect. As young girls, the African American women who were battered saw themselves as critical family members, upon whom many people depended. They felt they were in distinctly different roles than the male children in their families. They had high self-esteem and felt very powerful, and yet their identities were wrapped up in pleasing and accommodating to the needs of others. The subjects described feeling a sense of responsibility to "make good" on themselves for their families' emotional and, to a lesser extent, material investments in their futures, even when their social options for education, work, and a traditional family life were

limited. The dialectic of being relatively privileged and feeling burdened by that status is an essential element of gender entrapment.

The pattern that emerged among the five African American women who were not battered was distinctly different from the African American women who were battered. In this group, the subjects reported feeling like "average children," with similar status to the other members of their household. Their positions in their family units were not distinguished from other children by significant differences in privileges, possessions, or attention. As the following case illustrated, the African American women who were not battered felt like they were generally treated fairly, not specially, relative to other female children in their families or extended households.

Karen, a 20-year-old African American woman who was pregnant with her fourth child, was detained in the prenatal dormitory at Rikers Island on charges of prostitution. She grew up with her mother, father, and three siblings in a small apartment in public housing. Her mother worked at a fast food restaurant. Her father worked sporadically as a gardener. Financially, they were comfortable, typically sharing resources with other units of the extended family. Karen said:

My parents were not so into us. My brothers were into themselves, and I was pretty much alone. I grew up in the middle of things, without any company. They were truly

overprotective of me. I mean it's not like they really cared about me. They said they kept me inside so that I wouldn't get hurt, but I think it was so that no one had to be bothered watching me. I stayed in the house most of the time, and so I would cook and I had to clean up for the whole family. When my niece came to live with us, it got better because no one cared too much for her either. At least we shared the work between us. I'd say it wasn't good for me in my family, but I guess it wasn't bad either.

The interviews with the African American women who were not battered indicated that they were no more or less privileged than the other children in the households. The findings did, however, reveal a difference between their households and the households of other children in their neighborhoods. The subjects' descriptions of the differences suggested that their families were more economically and socially marginalized than others in their neighborhoods or communities. Yet, without the expectation, the position or the means, they did not feel the pressure to maintain status, and they did not try to affect the nature of their households by their behavior. As such, they typically described more carefree, less burdened childhood experiences than the African American battered women for whom their privileges became their vulnerabilities.

Anita, age 35, detained on a drug charge, grew up in a large,

lively, warm household occupied by lots of young people who assumed caretaking roles for each other because the adults were usually absent. She recalled:

Sometimes our folks just left because there were just too many kids...they were outnumbered. Money-wise we were a very poor house, living in too small a space living off other families and friends, usually without enough food or clothes, certainly no extras. Getting an education, hard work and religion were given lip-service, but none of the children in my family graduated from high school, and no one made any money to give anyone else. We were the neighborhood charity case...but it wasn't too bad on most days. At least there were lots of people around to hang out with. It was kind of fun, no pressure and no pleasure and no pain — just getting through the day in a real kid-like way.

In sum, the five African American women who were not battered were economically and socially disadvantaged compared to the battered African American women. They were more likely to have low or no stable income, to have been raised in larger households, and to be less attended to by the adults in their lives. They were left to themselves, highly influenced by peers rather than adults, and did not expect to accomplish the dominant society's measures of success.

The findings from the life-history interviews of the six White

women who were battered also revealed a different pattern from that of the battered African American women. They too were not materially or emotionally privileged, but in comparison to the African American women who were not battered, they were even worse off when growing up. They generally felt deprived, undervalued, and, in some cases, scapegoated when compared to other children in their households. They described ways that their caretakers habitually slighted them in terms of material resources, attention, and, most importantly from their perspective, affection. The subjects experienced this relative deprivation most acutely in comparison to their male siblings. Childhood for these subjects was characterized by weighty responsibilities for ongoing household duties without reward, recognition or privilege. In contrast to the African American battered women, the White battered women grew up expecting lower status in intimate relationships and ironically were, therefore, less vulnerable to gender entrapment. As Shirley said:

Basically, I didn't really have any kind of childhood. I had to do everything from taking care of the house to taking care of my sister and brother. It was more than regular household chores...like I mean from the time I was seven I cooked dinner every night, which was hard since we hardly had enough food, and I washed the clothes so we could go to school. I was the one who woke everyone up, who put everyone to sleep and who tried as best I could to

keep everyone as happy as possible. I felt like I was having to take care of everything, like it was expected of me and that I couldn't stop and just be a little girl.

As is true for most low-income families, all of the subjects in this study described working hard as young female children in their households, symbolizing for some a strong family work ethic that was gender-specific. For others, working hard was related to the families' significant need for the female children's ongoing contributions to the functioning of the households. In those instances where the male children contributed at all, it was generally during adolescence through wage-producing activities outside the home. Not surprisingly, the subjects reported that the boys' involvement in the labor force brought high esteem for their male siblings. This pattern was more common in the White families than either subgroup of African American subjects.

For the development of the gender-entrapment theoretical model, it is important to distinguish between the three subgroups in this study on the meaning of childhood work in their households. The African American battered women initiated household tasks, felt appreciated and rewarded for their work, and believed that their heightened status was reinforced when they assumed family responsibilities. Their work included emotional work — providing support, encouragement, and comfort to other children as well as to the adults in their households. Again, this pattern reappeared in their abusive adult relationships. For the other two groups,

household work was obligatory and tasks were assigned to them as punishment. These subjects recalled that their efforts brought them negative or critical attention rather than rewards, a sense of accomplishment, or privileged status. When they compared themselves to other children in their families or neighborhoods, the White battered women, in particular, felt as if they had a disproportionately high amount of responsibility that resulted in an unhappy, stressful childhood that they described as void of peer relationships, pleasure, and interest from adults.

It is important to emphasize that the amount of material and emotional privilege and the degree to which the children were required to work in their households of origin did not vary by household income or number of siblings, as might be expected. On the contrary, the concept of position within the household was relative to the other children in the same household. The significant finding was that the African American battered women were more likely to be favorite children (especially as girls), and the comparison groups of African American non-battered women and White women were either average or had relatively lower status than their siblings. This distinction illustrates the ironic aspect of gender entrapment: The African American battered women's identities as competent, resourceful, potential-filled girl children, which was constructed and reinforced early in their household relationships and arrangements, ultimately left them exposed to harsh reality in a more vulnerable way than the other subjects in this sample.

IMAGE OF AND RELATIONSHIP WITH FEMALE CARETAKERS AND MALE INFLUENCES

A second pattern of responses that varied by subgroup in this study was the subjects' image of and relationship with their female caretakers, and the influence that adult men had on their childhood experiences. In all of the cases in this study, the subjects' primary caretakers were women or groups of women. In 16 of the 37 cases, the subjects were raised in households where both parents lived, with the male partner assuming the role of secondary caretaker, in the model of "traditional fatherhood." Whether an adult man was present or absent was a significant factor in shaping the subjects' identities and future experiences, and varied by subgroup in this study.

In retrospect, the African American battered women, as children, had an idealized notion of who their mothers or adult women caretakers were. They recalled having deep respect for the women's personal attributes: They admired the people their mothers were, and, even as children, they had a keen sense of the sacrifices the older women made for their families. The subjects characteristically used terms to describe their mothers or female caretakers that demonstrated reverence: "perseverance," "disciplined," "strong sense of morality." As Crystal, a 27-year-old African American battered woman arrested for arson, said:

My relationship with my mother was never very close, although I always knew she was in my corner. She worked for some wealthy White people, and that took a lot of her

energy away for me. She stayed with them during the week. I couldn't believe that she was so generous about that. She never missed a day of work. They disrespected her, but she never complained. She was like the perfect, loyal, hard-working maid. And on weekends she was the servant of the Lord; spending all weekend involved with the church. I know she must have been tired, but she never let on. To me she was a wise women who everyone could depend on.

However, when these subjects described the actual relationships they had with their female caretakers, they described conflicted feelings and experiences. Crystal continued:

Even though everyone depended on my mother, none of us were able to be really close to her. She was kind of distant, like she really lived in her own world; working and praying as hard as she did, she didn't let herself be open to anyone else. Whenever I tried to talk with her, she was distracted by something else. She influenced me a lot, but it wasn't because she was around me very much. I resented her perfection and the lack of mothering she gave me. It was hard to live with her moralistic judgement staring me in the face all the time.

The data from the life-history interviews revealed that most of these subjects described periods of distance and tension with their mothers that resulted in painful memories of episodic interruptions in their contact with their families. Selma, age 30, detained for

murder, said:

In my family, everything was very organized. Everyone knew the rules. We did what was needed to be done. I did better in school than anyone else. My parents were stable and reliable employees, and I became the most stable and reliable child. Most of all, our family believed that we should stay in good standing with each other; it was a moral obligation I in particular had. But I started to feel rebellious, wanting more passion and emotion, not just talk but real love. I got pregnant in 11th grade by my first boyfriend who was totally irresponsible, but he treated me like precious candy. Now that sure got my family's emotion going...they didn't talk to me, their "favorite child," for six months!

The subjects' images of and relationships with their fathers or adult male household members were distinctly different from their relationships with the adult women in their lives. The findings indicated less reverent feelings, less idolizing, and more affection towards the adult men than towards the women in their households. Instead, the subjects described interactions with their fathers or father figures that had a more "peer-like" than parental quality. For some, the impressions of adult men contained references to the subjects' feeling superior to them. Even as children, some subjects recalled feeling sorry for their fathers' inability to assume more socially acceptable roles. Janet, age 36, arrested on a murder

charge, said:

I grew up with my mom, dad, and four other kids. My dad actually lived across the street, and I moved back and forth between the two households. I was his favorite, which was hard for my mom, because I was her favorite too. While my folks were still all involved in each other's lives, they really didn't get along so well. Daddy continued to support the household so mama didn't have to work. We were comfortable. We had a car and a nice apartment, especially for the projects. I was born with polio, which meant I had to spend a year in an iron lung. My mom almost died when I was born. She was real sick, too. My dad took care of me during that first year. He did everything — as if he was my mother. It must have been a hard time, because there are no baby pictures of me... it was as if I was never born. When my dad passed, I was 23 and part of me died with him. Part of my heart is gone forever, because the best thing that ever happened to me was that I was my dad's daughter. He really let me in on his life, like when he admitted to me that he couldn't read, I taught him how. I was his teacher, and his helper. It was sad for him to have to depend on his kid for things like dealing with the landlord, but he taught me about the good life in return. He was a gangster, and I only learned after he died that

he made his money as a big-time drug dealer. It's too bad that this was the only way that he could make it, and I felt sorry for him. It hurt me to not know the truth because he must have been too ashamed to talk about it with me. Now look at me, an addict. Still, to me, my dad was the kindest, best friend I'll ever have.

In these families, the perception was that men were disproportionately negatively affected by racial inequality and discrimination which, for the subjects, explained their fathers' inabilities to provide economic or social support for their families. Melanie, age 27, arrested for murder, said:

We grew up knowing that the Black man had a hard way to go and so we didn't expect much from them. My dad was just gone, like he couldn't face not being a real man in our household. It's not like we were mad at him, but we felt sorry for him. You should have heard the sad stories about what used to happen to him. Once he was even accused of jumping a cop who didn't even live in the same city. It was awful. Black men -- they just have it hard, and we knew it. He just couldn't do any better by us.

In sum, the 26 African American battered women grew up believing that the women and girls in their households were in better positions than the men. They recalled thinking that women were able to get a job more easily than men or at least they could apply for public assistance to support their families.

They witnessed the emotional benefits of women's friendships and experienced the advantages of resource-sharing and concrete support that characterized relationships among the adult women they knew. Here again, the irony of privileged status emerged as a contradiction, setting in motion an interpretive and experiential process that left them vulnerable. For example, having the "privilege" of receiving public assistance included a series of degrading experiences with bureaucracy, just as having the ability to secure employment meant the "privilege" of working two and sometimes three jobs. Furthermore, the sense of being privileged brought with it the responsibility of caring for those who weren't (e.g., men, older family members, and children), usually with inadequate resources. This dialectical meaning of "privileged status" and "being advantaged" and the organization of private relationships in response to African American men's marginalization in the public sphere is a fundamental underpinning of the gender-entrapment theoretical model.

Less vulnerable to gender entrapment, the African American women who were not battered recalled their mothers less idealistically and provided a more realistic account of who their mothers were during the life-history interview. Their retrospective descriptions were less glorified, and they did not describe feeling in awe of their mothers' personal qualities. They expressed a more accurate and specific awareness of and sensitivity to the social circumstances that typically had limited their mothers' lives.

Toni, age 33, detained for violation of parole on a drug charge, said:

We were just a regular family of poor Black folks trying to survive. I was raised with my aunt, my four siblings, and two cousins. My mom tried to hang in there with us, but she just drank too much for her own good. Sometimes I was mad at her, especially when she would be gone for a long time; then I would forgive her and try to understand how hard her life had been. At least she did right by us by hooking us up with my aunt who really took good care of us. My mother worked hard to send money back to the house even when she wasn't there. I think that was pretty good of her. I learned to adjust quickly to the circumstances in our household, which changed a lot. I think she taught me to take care of business.

These subjects not only understood their mothers' plights, but they identified more with them. They typically remembered growing up believing that they would face obstacles that were similar to those their mothers had faced, and that they would probably respond to problems in similar ways. The subjects in this group discussed their mothers in terms that recognized both their strengths and their character flaws. Their life stories did not indicate as many periods of tension with their female caretakers as the African American battered women's did.

The fathers of the African American non-battered women were

typically physically and/or emotionally absent during most of their childhoods, and the subjects did not recall close or significant relationships with them. This led to feelings of resentment for some. When compared to the African American battered women, these subjects tended to incorporate their mothers' disdain rather than tolerance for their fathers' irresponsibilities, and at a very early age they generalized it to include the notion that, categorically, men were not trustworthy. Toni continued:

In some ways we were real old-fashioned Black folks. The women in my house always took care of business because men just weren't any use to us. Like my mother at least kept trying to work and take care of us while my father was running away. He only came around when he wanted something and when we wouldn't give it to him...whatever it was, he would try to take it. I think he used to take sex from my mother like that, and if she wasn't around, he'd take it from my aunt. I hated him for that. We'd lock the house when we saw him coming. When I got older, I used to do that to my boyfriends too. None of them are any good.

For other African American women who were not battered, it was as if the male adults in their families were almost irrelevant to daily life in their households. Men did not occupy a significant emotional, practical, or symbolic place in their early or later lives. Men's absences were accepted with indifference. As such,

they were less concerned about men's lack of social options and less invested in taking care of them in the domestic sphere than the African American battered women were.

Contrary to either group of African American women, the White battered women in this study described families that were ideologically, and in practice, hierarchal according to generation and gender. There was very little breach of the "adult-child" distance traditionally associated with the dominant family form. Because activities were highly segregated by gender and generation, these subjects generally did not describe intimate relationships with adults of either gender. While their mothers were typically the primary caretakers for material needs, they were not described as nurturers of the children's emotional development, but rather as distant and/or preoccupied. The White women did not recall confiding in adults or understanding adult life circumstances, and they tended to avoid contact with the adults. In particular, the subjects in this subgroup feared their fathers. Gwen, age 33, detained for sexual abuse of a minor and sodomy charges, said:

I wasn't very loved while I was growing up. I was alone, never included by my brother and sisters, and, as the oldest, I had to do all of the housework. I cooked for the family, washed and ironed our clothes, and cleaned the house. As I got older, I got even more work to do, especially when my mother's health got bad. The other kids were yelled at a lot to work hard, but they knew they

didn't really have to listen. They would disobey and run out of the house and come back late. I would try to run outside too, but my father would grab me, beat me up, and sometimes lock me in. I don't know why they picked on me so much except that it just became the family habit to have me do everything for everyone. I was very lonely, I was never praised, and no matter what I tried to do, I was always told "no." I really felt bad about myself during those days. All I did was work, even though my parents worked on and off. My mother was a waitress and my father was a taxi driver. Actually, they had and lost lots of jobs, so we were always worried about money around my house. They seemed taken up by a life that did not include us. My mother was mad at my father because of his other women, and my father hated my mother because she was always complaining. They didn't fight, but they didn't really get along. And we were best off to just stay out of their way. A few times they sent us away to live with our grandparents, because they couldn't afford to keep us. I was the one who held it together for my two sisters and my brother. But once we got separated, my parents were like strangers to us; they lived in another world and we were on our own.

The White women remembered an image of the adult women in their families as characteristically tired, busy, or sad. They recalled

their mothers' lives as being full of drudgery, and that for the most part they were emotionally unavailable. As female children, these subjects did not work outside their homes to contribute to the family resource base, despite the fact that families were sometimes very poor. Gwen continued:

When I graduated from high school, I stayed at home and continued to take care of the house. I really wanted to get a job, but they needed me at home. We had boarders, so I had to do their dirty work too. I hated how mean they were to me, so when I met the boy who packed the groceries, I went to live with him at his house. My family was furious and began to chase and beat me, especially my father, who had to pick up some of the work around the house. I tried to explain that I would work and give them money, but they hated that I left. That's where I got this scar, from my father beating me up with a pipe when I refused to come home.

When all three groups were compared, the subjects' perceptions of the relationships between adult women and men in their households and/or community fell into a distinct pattern. Almost all of the subjects in the three sample groups felt as if their mothers or female caretakers considered their families havens from the harsh world of poverty and/or hard work, even those families whose domestic lives were characterized by economic difficulties, emotional distance, and/or physical abuse. As such, the adult women

consistently attempted to create the image of a complete split between the public sphere and their private world, which, in many cases, influenced the gender roles of the subjects within their households of origin, making them more rigid and segregated. The pattern of images the African American battered women recalled stand apart as being more complex than the other groups. They were less realistic, and they experienced a greater degree of contradictions between their thoughts and feelings. The subjects had more difficulty justifying their experiences with their desires than the other two groups.

EXPERIENCE OF AND OBSERVATION OF ABUSE DURING CHILDHOOD

Early childhood victimization clearly emerged as a significant factor for a number of subjects in each of the three subgroups in this study, with eight women experiencing ongoing physical abuse as children, 13 sexual abuse, and 20 observing their mothers being abused. On this item, the subgroups had some experiences that were similar. In each case where there was violence in their childhood homes, the subjects were profoundly affected in some way. For example, those who were abused as children internalized the effects of childhood victimization, the feelings of worthlessness and betrayal, and the anxiety that resulted from living in constant fear. Some recalled blaming themselves for the abuse and/or disdain from their abusive parent. Other subjects described feeling shamed by the stigma associated with criticisms of their families from

neighbors and their traumatic involvements with child-protection services and juvenile-justice institutions.

Witnessing maternal violence in their households of origin also affected the subjects in each subgroup of the sample. While some described concrete effects, like homelessness, others described psychological consequences, like depression. Most of the subjects who were abused as children and who witnessed maternal abuse believed that it significantly affected the nature of their self-definition and their attempts to create and maintain intimacy in their adult intimate relationships. Angel, a 22-year-old African American battered woman detained on a drug charge, said:

I grew up with my brothers, my father and my stepmother (who was much younger than my father) in public housing. We were very poor; my mother's public assistance and my father's disability weren't really enough to cover his medical care for his diabetes and amputated leg. It was a bad scene, lots of arguing and fighting. My father was a terror and my brothers learned how to follow his lead -- all of the men beat up females. When the boys dropped out of school and started selling drugs out of the apartment, my stepmom tried to get them to stop by calling the police. That's when they almost killed her. As for me, they used me for sex. At first it was only that they let their friends who used drugs in the house have me, but then they began to rape me themselves. My stepmother was

afraid of them, and my father was getting sicker and stayed in bed drunk. I was only 12 years old. Oh yes, lots of people knew what was going on, but everyone was so afraid of my brothers that they didn't help. I was ashamed and embarrassed. I quit school at eighth grade and started hanging out. When one of my brothers was killed in a bad drug deal, my stepmother skipped town. With all of my protection gone, I ran away myself and started living on the streets, boosting [shoplifting] with a group of girls that one of my brothers had introduced me to. They were the closest thing to family I ever had. We took care of each other, but drugs just ran us into the ground. Still, it was the closest thing to family I ever had. Some of the girls are in [jail] with me now; it's good to be with them again.

As Angel's case illustrated, experiencing or witnessing violence during childhood influenced the subjects' criminal activities, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6. Here, the particular short-term effects that distinguish the three subgroups from one another are discussed.

Of the 26 African American battered women, 12 had been victims of sexual abuse and four were physically abused as children. This relatively low rate of physical abuse may be related, in part, to the subjects' privileged positions in their households, as previously described. Paradoxically, their vulnerability to and

response to the sexual abuse, in particular, was related to feeling "special" as Melanie, a 27-year-old African American battered woman detained on a murder charge, said:

I felt terrible about my uncle fondling me. It made me feel like dirt. But the way he described it, it was supposed to make me feel special. I tried to think like that, but there was such a gap between how I felt and what he was doing to me that I couldn't stand it. But who could I tell? I knew that it would completely tear my family apart, and that their opinion of me would change. How could strong, smart, pretty me get myself into this mess? It started out with him touching my privates, and putting his fingers inside of me. Then he began to have sex with me in the butt [anal intercourse]. The things he did to me were so bad that there was no explanation that they could accept. So I just tried to avoid him, but he didn't stop for the seven years that he lived in our house. I was his "special friend," which means he raped me on a regular basis; at least once a week.

Melanie, like other children in this sample who were sexually abused, felt a heightened desire to please the adult members of her family. Because of her feeling pity for adult men in particular, and her sense of herself as a powerful and privileged child, she was ironically laden with a feeling that the sexual abuse was, as Melanie stated, "my burden to bear," an interpretation that

furthered the subjects' vulnerability to gender entrapment.

When the African American battered women observed violence towards adult women in their families, it was seldom spoken about, and was more tolerated than in the other groups of subjects. The response to abuse was significant since in most other instances, the children and adults openly discussed their feelings and problems. Unlike their other childhood experiences, in this situation, the subjects described feeling helpless, not powerful. For instance, Kim, a 37-year-old African American battered woman detained for prostitution, said:

I could never understand why my mother didn't just ask me for help. I helped her with everything else she couldn't handle. It wasn't as if I didn't know what was going on; it was more like she didn't think it mattered that this man was beating her. I felt sorry for her, and I also felt helpless as a child. After a beating, she would hold me and cry and say things like "you must remember that your father loves you and that we are a family." It was like she just couldn't leave him.

Only one subject whose mother was abused recalled her parents' relationship ending. The others felt that their mothers, aunts, and sisters who experienced violence felt compelled to tolerate it and respond in a non-critical manner that was consistent with the value of being loyal to, and hence trapped within, their families.

The childhood abuse experiences of African American women who

were not battered as adults fell into a household pattern: All of the children were abused rather than it being an isolated experience for a particular child, as was true for the African American women who were battered. While the effects were significantly traumatic, they did not have the paradoxical effect of the child's privileged status or unique role working against her, as Gloria reported:

As kids, we were all abused. It was just the way it was in our house. It was usually when he was drunk, and he would hit us with his belt or crack our heads against the wall. He was known for throwing things — big things across the room at us when he got mad or upset about something. My brothers, sisters and I were really very scared of my father, but we could at least stick together when he came after us. When my brothers got older, they would fight back at him, and eventually he stopped abusing even us younger kids.

In the group of African American women who were not battered, the subjects reported that they witnessed their mothers being emotionally abused by the male adults in the families more than physically abused. In those cases where maternal physical abuse did occur in their households, the pattern suggested less tolerance and more rapid resolution because their mothers terminated the relationship. Gloria, a 42-year-old African American woman detained for drug sales, said:

One thing I learned from my mother was to never let a man

touch me. I'm telling you, when he went upside her head, she went right back at him with a frying pan. It was really scary because he was so much stronger than she was, but she knew how to use anything she could get her hands on as a weapon. After a few months of that mess, she just packed us up and left him. It was hard for awhile because we had to move around a lot, but I knew that we had to go. My mama told me that she would have killed him otherwise.

All of the White battered women in this study were physically and sexually abused as children. They described experiences that were particularly horrific; the violence was more severe and the families were more isolated. They were also neglected as children, as Clara, a 45-year-old woman detained on a drug charge, said:

I was the oldest kid in my family. Both of my parents were drunks, so that meant I had to take care of my brother and sister from the time I was about six. I loved them and remember pretending like I was their mother. They were very attached to me, and I liked that they depended on me. I did the best I could to protect them from the life my parents were leading. They were very abusive; beatings happened on a regular basis in my house. My mother beat us and my father beat everyone. It was common. Also there was never enough food. My relationships with my brother and sister was the best

relationship I have ever had...nothing has ever felt like love to me except that. But I had no friends or support. I was a twelve-year-old adult, and it all fell apart one day when my sister turned over a pot of boiling water and was burned over 90% of her body. I was supposed to be watching her. My parents were out drinking and my brother was wet, but we were out of diapers. I was trying to figure out what to do, and I left her too long in the kitchen alone. I just couldn't be everywhere at once. When my mother came home, they had taken all of us away. My sister was in the hospital, where she stayed for over a year, and my brother and I were at the police station. I was put in a foster home, but I kept running away to find my brother and sister. I ended up in a state facility. My mother never got custody back. I don't really know if she ever tried. I lost contact with my brother, and I've seen my sister once in the past thirty years. I was a big fat disappointment to every one who needed and loved me. I've been looking for a family ever since.

These subjects observed their mothers both physically and emotionally abused and, like the African American women who were battered later in life, the White women's mothers generally did not terminate their abusive relationships. However, these subjects explained their mothers' tolerance for the abuse not in terms of

their mothers' isolation and limited options, rather than loyalty, as the African American battered women did. A few of the White women's mothers even left, but eventually returned to the abusive relationships because they could not manage on their own, given the lack of services available to battered women prior to the 1970's. Chris, age 24, detained on a robbery and possession of stolen property charge, said:

Where would my mother have gone? Yes, he was awful to her and to us. She was beaten so badly that she would have black eyes all of the time. He'd tie her to a chair and if she cried he'd stuff a rag in her mouth. We'd try to help but then he'd beat us too. She'd try to make us not get involved, but we were the only one's who could have save her at that time...she didn't have any family or friends...he made sure of that. And she could have never taken care of us alone. For her, I guess staying was the only option she thought she had. There was no such thing as a battered woman those days...only some women had bad home lives, that's all.

As the previous accounts illustrate, the incidence and response to experiences or observation of abuse during childhood are significant for gender entrapment. The findings indicated that the meanings, rationalizations, and explanations the adult women offered about abuse to their children both influenced and were influenced by their loyalty to their families, particularly to the social position

of men. The extent to which they chose to leave or stay, their willingness or ability to use public services, and where they placed the blame for abuse influenced the subjects' patterns of response to violence as adults. The African American battered women were most often socialized to excuse or tolerate violence from men, and learned that loyalty and stability, in most instances, were paramount to their own safety and satisfaction.

VULNERABILITY, RISK-TAKING AND FEAR OF SUCCESS

The life-history interviews revealed that many of the subjects in all three groups described themselves as "risk-takers," but the context and result of their risk-taking differed in ways that are important to the theoretical model of gender entrapment. As previously noted, some of the African American women who were battered recalled feeling ambivalent about the public and household recognition that accompanied being exceptional. Subsequently, some behaved in ways that limited or denied opportunities for their advancement so that they would not "stand out" or lose relationships with their siblings, peers, and potential mates. The manifestation of this ambivalence was different for the subjects in this group, indicating a variety of ways that being a child with a sense of personal power, self-pride, and opportunity was compromised by the effects of growing up as a girl, poor, and African American in contemporary society. For, despite their sense of self-esteem that originated from their positions in their

families or households, they encountered obstacles in the public world that left them feeling out of place or "weird" as Blondie, a 21-year-old African American battered woman detained on a felonious drug charge, stated:

When I was young, I thought I'd have a great life. I felt like I was going to be able to run with the wind, to take risks and succeed -- surprising the world with myself. I dreamed that I would have a companion relationship with someone like my mom. She and I were very close, and I liked the kind of person that she was. When she got sick with a bad heart, I had to leave school to work. Our church was helpful to us for a while, but we became poor very fast. I started working at a clothing store and taking care of my two baby sisters. At work they treated me like a slave, which I just wasn't used to. I kept trying to act like I was as honest, hardworking and important as my family taught me I was, but when they accused me of stealing, it was over. They said someone had seen a Black girl leaving the store with some boxes of merchandise, and it had to be me or one of my friends. I quit that job, but things like that just kept happening to me. I'm not saying I was perfect, but I am no thief. I got real depressed real fast. I lost my way when I realized that I couldn't risk just running with the wind.

The frustration of "bumping up against limits" resulted in the

subjects "holding themselves back" in order to be more acceptable. Some of the subjects in this group began engaging in activities that they knew would result in negative sanctions when, having emerged from their protected households, they were told or treated in school as if they could not excel. Others felt that sexual abuse or harassment in their workplace, limited their options for success in the world. Blondie continued:

I was much too energetic, too smart and too good for the people I worked for. And when one of my bosses tried to get it on with me [have sexual relationships], I quit. He followed me one night, and raped me in his car just before I left. I was hurt, but I wouldn't let him stop me. Instead, I stopped myself. I started hanging out with a group of people who were no good for me. Actually, they were fun and smart too, but they weren't into anything positive. But I thought it was easier not to try and fail again. It was a control thing...like no one was going to get me down but myself. Not to mention the fact that the money selling drugs was good, fast, and it helped me take care of my mom until I got into heavy using.

Blondie's story illustrates a common theme that was significant to the gender entrapment of the African American battered women: Their families had very high expectations, and the subjects were afraid of failing them. For them, the risk-taking was associated

with behavior that seemed to sabotage their success. As a result of this frustration, some became emotionally detached teenagers. In each of these cases, the subjects felt the limiting boundaries of expected gender behavior very clearly, and most modified their childhood aspirations and subsequent behavior to stay within these boundaries. For example, Beverly, a 33-year-old woman detained for burglary said:

It was clear to me very early that the only way to have a man was to be a superwoman, but not let the man know. It happened over and over. In some ways, it was like acting. My mother gave my father her paycheck so it looked like he had a job. In school, I acted like I wasn't so smart and like I needed boys' help to fix my bicycle. I stopped playing sports when my father stopped taking me fishing with him because I was a girl...that hurt me. I also started to act like I liked having sex then I didn't and then I got pregnant because he wanted a son. It has all been a big act, but I felt pressured into it because I didn't know any other girls like me, and my family expected me to be perfect...to become the perfect lady.

The African American women who were not battered described similar behaviors that could be considered risk-taking, only with more obvious negative consequences. However, unlike the African American battered women, the subjects in this subgroup reported that

they did not temper their actions based on a sense that they needed to fit into a standardized gender role. They felt that their behavior was less regulated by social or family expectation, emphasizing instead the importance of peer relationships as a key source of their identities. Even though the subjects in this subgroup anticipated negative social consequences for both acting out and assuming entitled positions, they did not let the fear of negative sanctions inhibit their positive or negative activities. Letoya, age 26, detained on a drug charge, said:

I never felt like I could be the kind of girl my friends were anyway, so I just decided to be myself. I watched my two sisters and two brothers, and I watched my mother and father. I realized that the best way to get out of the house was to act like a boy, which meant doing boy-like things...not listening, fighting, breaking rules in school. I got a job after school packing groceries, and that was my ticket to freedom. Oh, I liked pretty dresses and to have my hair done, but I knew that would never get me anywhere. I just had to follow my own lead, even though it landed me in some bad places...like Rikers Island.

Like Letoya, the subjects in this subgroup were generally active in their risk-taking behavior, initiating socially unacceptable activities and offering leadership in such activities to their peers. In this way, the African American women who were

not battered reported a pattern of behavior that was not within conventional gender-role expectations.

The White battered women in this study described behavior intended to avoid taking risks, choosing instead to behave in ways that characteristically were attempts to survive as female children with lower status in their families. They worked to avoid rejection of parents, siblings, and peers, indicating a more passive or compliant motivation for entering into relationships and engaging in certain activities. Shirley, a 43-year-old woman detained on a drug possession charge, said:

I was never a risk-taker, except to please others. We had very clear rules in my family. But we were also very poor, and I thought that it would help if I could bring in some money. I had a lot of different schemes. I would lie about my age and get a job until my parents found out that I wasn't at school. Or I would steal clothes and sell them...or sometimes I'd keep some for my brother and I to wear to school. At one point, I thought that helping my brother do well in school would be the way to help us out, so I started doing all of his homework for him. I always had a plan, but, in the end, it didn't seem to help me or my family very much.

For different reasons, the White battered women and the African American battered women characteristically had few close friends and were driven to behave in ways that they felt were in concert with

social values and expectations. The African American women who were not battered were more interested in peer-defined success and were less vulnerable to parental or social rejection. In this way, the three subgroups in this sample were distinctly different from each other; the African American battered women were most likely to self-censor and in some instances to sabotage their chances of success in response to social and/or peer rejection. As Blondie said:

I dropped out of the world because the world wasn't ready for me yet. Dropping out was better than falling off or being thrown away. At least I could fool myself into thinking I was still in control of my family life. So I dropped out and into my man's lap -- ready to live out my dreams there instead.

DREAMS ABOUT MARRIAGE, FANTASIES ABOUT ADULT FAMILY LIFE AND

ROLE MODELS

As previously discussed, most of the families of the subjects in all three subgroups in this study were not structurally or functionally consistent with the dominant hegemonic norm of the heterosexual, nuclear, middle-class family. Even so, the subjects were influenced by the broader ideology of the social world outside of their families, and their experiences were shaped by social structures and values beyond their communities. This influence was most evident in the subjects' dreams about marriage and family life, their role models, and the distinct ways that the three groups

responded to their divergence from the ideological norm.

The pattern of findings from the life-history interviews with African American battered women revealed that most of the subjects strongly desired a traditional nuclear family. Even though this did not necessarily reflect the reality of their childhood experiences, most desired a life as adult women that included a "very romantic" relationship with a man (Grace, age 38), "lots of affection and attention" (April, age 21), and "to stay at home with my children" (Vernice, age 43). Lynne, age 28, detained on a drug charge, said:

I remember wanting a kind, sweet husband when I grew up; someone who I could reach out for my dreams with, just the two of us. It would be very different from my mother and father. I wanted more romance, intimacy and affection. A fuller, more loving life. He'd be in charge and I'd follow his lead. I was a king-maker at heart, it was my life dream to support a strong man.

On the one hand, the subjects' descriptions of their desires sounded conventional in nature. On the other hand, it included a subtext that was centered on an awareness of structural barriers to them achieving this goal. Lynne continued:

That would mean that racism would have to end so that my man would be able to get a job. If I stayed at home I would not have been an average housewife. I planned to go to school and get a degree so that I could teach my kids at home. That would be better for them than the

lousy schools in this city that do everything they can to keep Black folks down, dumb and depressed.

The role models identified by the African American battered women were consistent with these fantasies. "I'd be a tough cookie, only loving, sexy and funny, like Mae West" (Kim, age 37) or "I'd be like Nina Simone because she's dark, strong and beautiful...most strong, dark women aren't considered beautiful in this culture, but I grew up thinking I would change that" (Sylvia, age 28).

The African American women who were not battered were the most likely of the three subgroups in this study to identify their mothers or other female caretakers as their role models, not with reverence, but with a sense of realism. They generally expressed a closer, more compassionate feeling for the adult women in their lives, and felt like they wanted to and, in fact, would grow up to be very much like them.

The subjects in this group did not feel that marriage to a man would necessarily provide positive rewards for them. They expressed the hope that they would meet someone and fall in love, but they denied the expectation that they would actually be and/or stay married. They did not feel that a relationship with a man would produce structural changes from the lives they knew as children. For some, their discussion took on a distinctly feminist tone, like Jackie, age 37, who said, "I don't need a man to make me happy." Two subjects in this group were identified as lesbians or expressed an interest in establishing long-term relationships with women.

Terry, a 26- year-old African American woman detained on a drug charge, said:

The best, or I should say the only good relationship that I have ever had was with my current lover...she's waiting for me on the outside. I tried being with men because I thought I was supposed to, but I've known for a long time I was sexually interested in women, not men. Once I came to realize that men couldn't even provide for me in the world, I asked myself, "Why even try to be with men?" I might as well be happy with a woman, which I am.

The White battered women had the most difficulty identifying women role models. Their life stories were markedly void of women whom they admired. The White subjects identified men as role models even though the question was posed in gender-specific terms. Four did not answer the question or responded like Shirley, age 43, detained for drug possession: "I just wanted a chance to be myself or I thought I was going to be different from everyone I knew." The White women from the most violent families responded with some version of "I didn't look up to anyone."

The subjects in this group strongly identified with the values and hegemonic images of marriage, but their memories of childhood did not characteristically include a sense of their abilities to imagine such a life for themselves. They reported feeling worried and frustrated about not knowing how to attain their dreams for the

future; most felt like marriage should offer an escape from the dreary life to which they were accustomed. They felt pressure to "find the right man," which, according to their accounts, few of the women they knew, including their mothers, had been able to do. Margaret, a 27-year-old White woman who was battered for three years by her boyfriend and then arrested for harassing him, said:

In some ways the problem was that I chose the wrong man. How he turned things against me so fast, I don't know. But I do believe that somewhere out there is a man who will deliver me to that spot where I'd be well taken care of at last. He'd be different from my father, and different from any boyfriend I've had so far...but he must be out there somewhere. It's a constant search for women like me to find the right man. It's just part of our life as females.

HOW LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT IF THEY'D BEEN BORN BOYS

Most of the subjects in each of the three groups felt that their lives would have been very different if they'd been born boys. All of the respondents felt that, in retrospect, being female children in their families and in the world outside of their households was a significant factor in creating negative experiences in their lives. The distinction between the three subgroups was that this awareness came to them at distinctly different times in their lives.

The African American battered women characteristically responded to this question in abstract, philosophical terms: "I would have had the freedom to choose my life path more freely" (Melanie, age 27). Almost all of them answered this question hesitantly, and with considerable ambivalence, especially those who had higher levels of privilege in their households, as previously described. In most cases, awareness of the social liability that gender created for them was associated with critical negative experiences that came later in the subjects' lives, from the world outside of their families of origin. Most of these felt that they would have been able to take fuller advantage of their relative household privilege, actualizing their identities as "favored children" into being powerful, successful adults if they'd been boys. Lois, age 54, detained for prostitution, said:

If I'd been born a boy, I would be more aggressive than I am, and I wouldn't have to hold in the pent-up energy I can't express. I would have taken better care of myself because I would have demanded more. I would not have had as much work to do just to stay alive. I would have worked to make myself successful. You know what? I wouldn't have been arrested for prostitution. First of all, I wasn't soliciting when the cops picked me up, and second of all, if I was, I sure would make more money as a male prostitute than a female! I'd be an all-around more successful person no matter what

I did.

The responses from the African American women who were not battered varied, but typically were concrete in nature. "I would not have the nine children that I do" (Lenore, age 27) or "I'd have had more flexibility to work in a high-paying job, like as a plumber" (Gloria, age 42). Like the African American women who were battered, they seemed to have a more recent awareness of gender liability based on adolescent or adult experiences rather than circumstances of their childhoods. They made a distinction between being a girl -- a neutral category for them -- and being a woman, a member of a dominated group whose status was precarious. Anita, age 35, detained on a drug charge, said:

In general being a girl was a breeze. It was nice...I liked it a lot. But being a grown lady is a total drag. All it means is working much more than men, having to please others rather than yourself and being left. I'm telling you, things need to change for it to be alright to be a woman today. But being a girl was as good a way to grow up as any.

The battered White women, who characteristically experienced less privileged status within their households, informally felt that the burden and limitations associated with being "female" began for them with the burden of being girls in their households of origin. Linda, age 33, detained on a felonious drug charge, said:

My mother and I would just look at each other with sad

eyes. Sometimes we'd hold hands, but we didn't talk much. I think it was because we were both just so tired for all we had to do. It was the one female connection, being sad together. The boys had a good life, and, yes, if I'd been a boy I would not have been so tired then or so sad just like I am now.

While all the subjects described how their current lives would be different if their early childhood experiences had been similar to that of their male siblings, all also initiated comments during the life-history interview that indicated that they enjoyed some aspects of being female. Most of them felt compelled to clarify a misconception that I as an interviewer might come to: that they had wished they were boys and would become boys if they could. Indeed, while most of them believed that being a woman was an impediment to their life chances as children and/or adults, they reported that they were glad to be women. They generally appreciated women more than men, and those who had daughters liked them better than their male children. "My girls are my pride and joy; the boys are too rough for me" (Carolyn, age 30). "I'm pregnant now and I hope I have a girl, I never want to have a son" (Kim, age, 37). "Whatever you do, get a woman lawyer and judge; they are just more honest" (Aisha, age 26). "Some of the girls here are great. Even though I'm mad as hell at my co-defendant for turning me in, she and the other girls I worked with on the outside are the best family I have ever had, and we hang tough with each other" (Blondie, age 21). "I love women. We

are stronger and more honest. As soon as I get out of here, I'm going to be a woman again - that means staying off drugs" (Toni, age 33).

RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY AND CONSEQUENT FAMILY LOYALTY

The African American subjects in the sample, regardless of whether they had been battered or not, used repeated references to their race/ethnicity during the interview as a way to establish a frame of reference about community norms, family values, and their experiences in the social world. Their ideas and behavior were shaped by an awareness of the position of their particular racial/ethnic group within the larger social structure, currently and historically, in the following ways.

For the African American battered women, a sense of racial/ethnic identity and family loyalty had a contradictory effect on their identities similar to the contradiction of gender and role privilege, all key elements of gender entrapment. Feeling what could be described as an almost universal connection to African American people and a deep sense of cultural pride was empowering and helped to create a cohesive family unit for these subjects.

Sebina, age 30, detained on an co-conspiracy to murder charge, said:

We were one of those proud Black families. No one in our family went without if we had something to share. And by family I mean lots of people who we loved, for you see, it was drilled into us that we had to take care of our own

and that is the only reason we are around as Black people today. I loved that feeling about us. You should have seen holidays around our place, cooking for days, lots of people, looking at photo albums and remembering Aunt what's-her-name.

Or, as Carolyn, age 30, detained on a murder charge, said:

Black people are the best. You know, we are strong, honest and will overcome any obstacle in our way. Sometimes we lose our way, but as people we are solid as a rock.

At the same time, this phenomenon sometimes served to limit the subjects' self-determination, independence, and autonomy, leaving them vulnerable to the gender entrapment that resulted in violence from their male partners and subsequent participation in illegal activities. In retrospective descriptions, the African American battered women excused the negative actions of adult men in their lives because of the harsh realities of African American life in this country, while they held the women, including themselves, to a higher standard. Family loyalty took on an exaggerated meaning because the subjects felt that African American families historically were discredited because of the power of African American women. In many cases, the subjects in the target group felt that in contemporary social life it was actually African American men who were the scapegoats of the historical legacy of slavery and, as such, they were the "true sufferers of racial

inequality" (Melanie, age 27). "Our families are only as strong as the weakest member, who today is the Black man," said Letisha, age 37. Historically-based loyalty to family, therefore, got constructed as contemporary loyalty to men.

The responses from each of the non-battered African American women differed from the battered women in that their loyalties were less focused on their families, per se, but more on African American people in general. The nature of their expressions of their racial/ethnic identities did not have the same element of pride or historical references. Rather, they took on a more contemporary, fatalistic tone. The elements of cultural solidarity they emphasized were the experiences of mutual oppression that women and men faced. For example, they felt like Toni, age 33, who said:

It's bad for Black people -- men women and children.

Nothing can help, not with all the drugs and crime. My family has been poor forever, and we always will be.

The White battered women in this study did not reveal strong racial/ethnic identities, even when probed. In each case, their family loyalties were expressed in more obligatory than prideful ways, and did not include a consideration of historical circumstances or general community solidarity. Linda, age 33, detained on a sexual harassment charge, said:

Well of course I have a strong identity to my family. No matter how bad it was, they are still my family, and I must have gotten something from them. We did not really

have a race or anything like that. I know that sounds funny, but we were just regular Christian White people...and we weren't either proud nor ashamed of that. Until now, I never really thought about it.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there are several features that generally characterize all of the families of origin of the three subgroups in this study. Despite slight variations in income level, all of the subjects' families lived close to the social and economic margin. Even those subjects who described their lives as "comfortable" experienced their economic status as fragile. For example, most of the families often depended on multiple incomes from unstable jobs to support the family, and, as several cases illustrated, even those who accumulated extra material possessions were vulnerable to changes in employment status, health problems, and other unexpected family crises. In both subgroups of African American women, the subjects' mothers worked outside of the homes, while the White women did so only on occasion. In all of the families, the women were primary caretakers of the children, and all of the subjects worked in their households, performing routine household tasks that were usually organized around gender. Only the White families were highly organized by generation; in the African American families the distinctions between children and adults were less rigid.

Of the seven themes that emerged about the families, childhood

roles, and the construction of female identities, the findings indicated that the three subgroups interviewed in this study were distinct. The findings highlighted the racial/ethnic variation as well as distinguishing between the early childhood experiences of the African American women who were ultimately battered and those who were not. It is the variation on these seven features that illuminates the gender entrapment that the African American battered women experienced.

In terms of their positions in their households, the African American battered women described childhoods that were distinguished from other childhoods by extra privileges, material possessions, and attention. As some of the cases illustrated, with this elevated status came a symbolic burden on the subjects to maintain the privileged status through emotional, academic, household, and other "work." This unusual position and their efforts to maintain status was the initial circumstance that left the African American battered women vulnerable to gender entrapment. In contrast, the African American women who were not battered recalled being "average" children, feeling a sense of commonality with the other children with whom they grew up. As such, they were less concerned with differentiating themselves from others. Of the three groups, the White children typically described childhood experiences that were the most deprived relative to other children in their families. They tended to be scapegoated and ignored, and their burdens were more concrete than emotional in nature. They almost came to expect

degrading treatment and recognized it quickly as such.

The second theme that emerged from the data as an important finding for the gender-entrapment theory was the images the subjects had of adult women and men. The African American battered women tended to have a paradoxical relationship with their female caretakers. On the one hand, they tended to idealize them, and, on the other hand, they described feeling distant and, at times, disappointment in their mothers' lack of emotional and physical availability to them as children. The African American battered women adopted their mothers' tendency to feel sorry for adult men in their lives, tolerating their irresponsibility, their limitations, their indiscretions, and, ultimately, their violence, as the following chapter will show. The African American women who were not battered had a more realistic sense of who their mothers were. This subgroup tended to identify with their mothers in more ways than the African American battered women, including taking on their mothers' dismissal and/or disdain for adult men. Their mothers were less generous with their tolerance and more discounting of men's roles in their lives. In this way, they were significantly less vulnerable to men's violence as adults. The White women were generally more distant from adults as children than the other two groups, and they tended to feel sorry for their mothers and to avoid much interaction with their fathers. However, as children, the White battered women developed an understanding of the relative power that men and boys held in their families and, indeed, in the

world.

The findings from this theme were related to a third theme that emerged from the data as relevant to gender entrapment: The subjects' experiences and observation of abuse during their childhoods. In each subgroup, the subjects tended to internalize and draw meaning from their mothers' responses to abuse if they observed it. The African American battered women's mothers who were battered themselves tended not to leave abusive relationships, while the African American non-battered women's mothers tended to resist and leave right away. The White women's mothers' responded to being abused by planning to leave and attempting to leave. However, in the end, they were not able to stay away permanently for a number of reasons. In each case, the decision to stay or to leave was related to the mother's sense of herself in relationship to the man by whom she was abused, as well as to her sense of options.

For those subjects in this study who themselves experienced abuse as children, the effect was significant, albeit different, for each subgroup. The African American battered women were less often physically abused as children and more often abused sexually, which is a significant element in their gender entrapment. The role of protecting the adults who committed this heinous act was added to the burden of being "special" children and had, therefore, a particularly confusing and troubling consequence for the abused children. The African American non-battered women experienced some physical and sexual abuse, but were not targeted as victims any more

than other children in their families, as the African American battered women were. All of the White women in this sample were abused as children, and, like the African American battered women, internalized some of the consequences. For them, the situation was compounded by serious childhood neglect.

The findings from the life-history interviews indicated that as the African American battered women grew up and began to encounter the subtle messages and overt pressures from the social world to conform to "appropriate" gender and racial/ethnic roles, they began to engage in self-limiting behavior in order to more consistently fit within their sense of expected behaviors. The African American battered women were surprised that they did not command the same respect from teachers, employers, and peers that they did from their families, and they began to work even harder to please others rather than themselves. They tended to avoid risks, and some even sabotaged their opportunities for social advancement. Instead, they focused on their domestic relationships, becoming overconfident of their abilities to effect change there. This is the fourth thematic element of gender entrapment.

At the other extreme from the African American battered women, the African American non-battered women in the sample were the most likely to ignore expectations and to take symbolic and concrete risks while they were growing up. When they felt discriminatory treatment in the public or private sphere that limited their choices or constricted their behavior, they defied regulations despite the

threat of punishment. The women in this subgroup were much more peer-identified than the other two groups, and they did not censor themselves. Instead, they acted uncautiously and created negative sanctions. The White battered women in the sample tried to avoid rejection, as did the African American battered women, but they had come to expect it and had learned to cope more effectively with it. As children and young women they broke rules only to advance their status in their families, motivated by external rather than internal sets of interests and needs.

All of the women in this study initially desired traditional, heterosexual nuclear families, especially the African American battered women. In this subgroup, the subjects' motivations were, in part, in response to their sense of family loyalty, their sense of family life needing strong women, like they thought they would become, and their desire to "rest and be taken care of" in response to negative experiences in the public sphere that they felt was hostile towards them. The African American women who were not battered also wanted family lives that were consistent with the dominant form; however, they expressed a pessimistic view of the likelihood that they would be able to accomplish this goal. The non-battered African American women abandoned their desire to fit the ideological norm at a very early age. They were prepared to have their relationships fail and were open and willing to establish alternative family forms. The White women remained highly attached to the dominant ideology about family, and they imagined that the

hegemonic family would answer the problems they faced as relatively deprived children. The dreams of the subjects in this subgroup had an escapist tone. This finding is relevant to the gender-entrapment theoretical model in as much as the African American battered women worked the hardest and the longest, indeed, with the most conviction, to create and maintain a hegemonic nuclear family, even when the violence began, and they were involved in illegal activities.

The meaning of the subjects' gender roles, as expressed through the question, "How would your life have been different had you been born a boy" was consistent with the overall patterns that emerged from the three subgroups. Whether they were battered or not, across racial/ethnic lines, all of the women felt that their lives had been negatively influenced by the constraints of their gender. The differences among the three subgroups lay in the developmental stage and in the social moment that the subjects felt the gender constraints. The African American battered women felt vulnerable as women but not as girls. Their experiences of gender were distinguished from the other groups as more abstract. This finding was ironic given the extent of sexual abuse they experienced. It suggested how significant denial was to their gender entrapment, for even as young girls the subjects sensed that by sacrificing themselves, they were serving a greater cause in their families — the sexual satisfaction of adult men or preserving the families' integrity by not disclosing the heinous experience of sexual abuse.

The African American women who were not battered expressed

awareness of a more concrete set of limiting factors that were gender related. The White battered women also acknowledged their gender liability in concrete terms; however, their consciousness of limitations began much earlier in their lives than for either subgroup of African American women.

The last theme that emerged from the life-history interviews about the subjects' families of origin that is relevant to the gender-entrapment theoretical model was the importance of ethnic identity in the subjects' overall sense of themselves. As the cases illustrated, the African American women in both groups expressed a keener sense of their racial/ethnic identity than the White battered women. However, for the African American battered women, loyalty was directed to their families and, by their implications, to African American men in their families. This factor was a key element in their emotional interest, everyday work, and changing identities as Black women with Black men as opposed to "battered women" or "female offenders." In contrast, the African American women who were not battered constructed their racial/ethnic identities more in terms of the African American community as a whole, including African American women and the contemporary issues that limit women's lives as central. Their identities were less gender-bound and relationship-bound. The White battered women did not indicate that race/ethnicity was a critical element of their identities, and it did not overtly influence their behaviors, thoughts, or feelings as much as it did the African American

battered women.

These seven themes comprise the significant elements of gender entrapment in terms of identity development. The experiences and perceptions of the subjects in the three subgroups varied considerably, indicating three distinct patterns in the overall sample population. The emphasis on the childhood experiences of the African American battered women: their relatively privileged household status, their culturally constructed loyalty, their families' expectation of them, their dreams, and their vulnerabilities as they grew up as African American girl-children in contemporary society, point to the ways they were uniquely positioned to experience gender entrapment.

CHAPTER 5: VIOLENCE IN THEIR INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS:**Vulnerability to and the Consequence of Abuse****INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the subjects' experiences of violence in their adult intimate relationships are presented and discussed as the second category of critical experiences in gender entrapment. The findings reported in this chapter primarily concern the experiences of two subgroups: the African American women who were battered and the White women who were battered. The third subgroup that comprised the sample for this study -- African American women who were not battered -- will be discussed to illustrate a contrast where relevant. By comparing these subgroups, the emotional, cultural and social factors that distinguish the African American battered women's experiences as gender entrapment are illuminated. While it is important to reiterate that the literature on battering does not indicate a significant discrepancy on the rate of violence within different racial/ethnic groups, there are experiential nuances that vary by race/ethnicity. The nature of these differences form a distinct pattern that becomes an essential element in the theoretical model of gender-entrapment being developed in this study.

The pattern that emerged from the findings consisted of variation on three sequential aspects of the subjects' experiences: 1) the circumstantial and emotional factors that created the subjects' vulnerability to abuse from their male partners, 2) the

consequences of the physical, emotional and sexual abuse in their intimate relationships, and 3) the subjects' response to the violence. The variations constitute a pattern that created the opportunity for intimate violence and explains why, when it occurred, some women could not or chose not to leave their intimate relationships, despite the horrific consequences of abuse. The analysis of the findings showed that the African American battered women, in particular, stayed in abusive relationships until it was too late and they were virtually trapped by the gender-identity, their socially constructed loyalty to the African American men, and ultimately by the violence itself.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL AND EMOTIONAL VULNERABILITY TO ABUSE

The subjects in this study described a range of characteristics and experiences that left them more or less vulnerable to physical, emotional and sexual abuse in their intimate relationships. The distinctions between the subgroups revealed a pattern that varied by race/ethnicity, pointing to the paradoxical ways that the gender-identity development in their household of origin of the African American battered women converged with their socially constructed loyalty to African American men, and their disappointing experiences in the public sphere, to create a particular set of circumstances and emotional vulnerability to abuse. The circumstantial and emotional vulnerability was an essential element in their gender entrapment. The findings indicated that the White battered women and the African

American non-battered women in this study had other experiences and a different set of emotional responses to their adult relationships with men. Consequently, their relational circumstances were different, rendering their experiences and the meaning they attached to events in the private sphere of their lives inconsistent with the gender entrapment theoretical model.

The Early Circumstances and Emotions

For most of the African American battered women, their intimate relationships with the men who later abused them were initially positive and mutually satisfying. Typically the violence began after the second year of being together. The African American battered women denied to themselves and others that a dangerous pattern was emerging in their domestic lives; they generally considered the violent episodes an aberration of their male partners' otherwise tolerable -- and sometimes even pleasant -- behavior. Cheryl, a 32-year-old African American woman detained on a prostitution charge, was abused by her husband for 12 years. She said:

It was hard to figure out what was going on at first. He was the father of my kids, and seemed very proud to be with me. Everything was so wonderful in the early days; our life was beautiful. I was so happy that he chose me because he had lots of ladies around him. We were real sweethearts; he gave me gifts, and showed a lot of respect for me. By being with him, I became softer, although he first fell for my assertive, funny, more strong side. He

gave me a chance to be quiet and taken care of, and that was real nice for me. He was working at Con Edison and I was at the phone company at the time. Our little apartment in Harlem was a sweet, quiet place. We'd have my family over and they envied me...they didn't believe that I'd ever make such a gentle wife. I think our problems started when he lost his job. He acted like I was the one who was out of work. He blamed his failure on me, that I was putting too much pressure on him and all. But it was really him. Maybe I smothered him too much. Or maybe he went crazy. All I know is that there was something that turned this dream into the biggest nightmare of my life. The only thing I can say now is that trying to change for someone else is a very big mistake.

As Cheryl's story illustrated, the shift in the nature of the relationships was typically gradual. In some cases, the African American battered women realistically attributed the shift to external events, like the man's loss of a job, a change in the household's financial status, or the onset of alcohol or drug use. Given their marginalized social status, events like these were common for the young African American men, and served to mask the emerging abusive nature of their relationships. Pre-occupied with the negative social circumstances, and deeply loyal to the African American men, the African American battered women felt compelled to "comfort,

advise and support their men like any good wife would." The combination of a pleasant early relationship, the gradual nature of the onset of abuse, and the discouraging incidents in the couples' lives left the African American battered women distracted, and hence vulnerable to accelerating male violence.

In contrast, the White battered women felt less initial satisfaction from their relationships. They typically recalled fewer pleasant experiences even in the beginning, and they felt generally less emotionally engaged with their male partner than the African American battered women did. The White battered women had a pessimistic outlook; they did not expect that their relationships would provide them a sense of personal fulfillment or satisfaction. They entered relationships with men to be socially acceptable, not for their own happiness or sense of purpose. Their male partners did not experience as much failure in the public sphere as the African American men did, and the White battered women did not expend energy providing reassurance and/or emotional support to them. These circumstances and the White battered women's emotions were important factors that protected them from gender entrapment; for even at the onset of the abuse, they were more detached from their relationships with the violent men in their lives than the African American battered women were.

Rationalization and Tolerance

The African American battered women initially felt sorry for the men who abused them. Their historically superior status as

privileged girls led them to rationalize and deny the seriousness of their upsetting domestic realities. The African American battered women were initially unable to incorporate their vulnerability to violence from their male partners into their self-perceptions and, thus, their vulnerability increased. They optimistically relied on their sense of personal power that resulted from their high status in their families of origin to "get them through," and they maintained a commitment and loyalty to their African American men who were becoming abusive. Their initial tolerance and rationalization for their male partners' violence, and their generous, sympathetic responses led some of them to "pity" their abusers rather than being fearful, resentful, or becoming angry towards them, as Beverly's story illustrated. She was a 33-year-old African American woman who was detained for burglary and was battered for 14 years by her common-law husband. She said:

He was one of those pitiful men. He would really lay into me, and hurt me bad. It wasn't every day, but at times it was as much as once a week that he'd jump on me and start pushing, hitting, scratching and insulting me. He was out of control, and I'd just try to stay calm. Honestly? I felt sorry for him. He was a real loser under it all. He couldn't keep a job, he didn't have no family to speak of or another place to go. He'd call me up crying his eyes out, begging me to let him in, and I'd forgive him. He needed me, and I knew that. Not only didn't he

have any money, he didn't have any sense. He was insecure, no skills, and actually very pitiful. He comes from a troubled family, no sense of home training or pride. He's smart, but hasn't had much chance for improving himself. His father was a loser, his brothers are all crack-heads, and his mother really hated herself and her life. When you get a start like that, what can you do? That's why I was trying to bring him along...and this is the thanks I get! At first I really cared about him with real sweet, tender feelings. I sure learned to close that side of me down. Caring wasn't worth it anymore. He was using me as his punching bag all the time. He's totally pitiful, and I feel sorry for him. I can't even really hold it against him. He's just screwed-up.

For some of the African American battered women, this sense of tolerance and forgiveness that Beverly's story illustrated caused them to become detached from their previously lively lives. The African American battered women typically sacrificed their desires, denied their feelings, and withdrew from aspects of their lives that gave them pleasure, including making optimistic plans for the future. In a sense, they began to give up on their lives — feeling confused and disoriented. Some displaced their negative emotions onto their employers or members of their families of origin. Renee, a 27-year-old African American women was detained on an arson charge. She was battered for six years by her boyfriend. She said:

Being abused by my man taught me that no matter what I may have thought about myself when I was growing up, I am really a piece of shit. The way I see it, it was a cruel joke that my family played on me. How could they let me think that I really had a chance in this world? When I got hip to [understood] the truth, I got real angry at the world. I started doing the bad things that led me here. Why shouldn't I steal when I wanted something if that was the only way to get it? My motto became, "a worthless person can do worthless things and it won't matter so much." How's that for a way to live!

In contrast, the White battered women's initial emotional responses and conceptualizations of the abuse were almost opposite from the African American battered women's. Typically, they were less likely to rationalize or deny the seriousness of the abuse, and they recognized the pattern of abuse for what it was much more quickly than the African American battered women did. They did not seem to engage in as much self-evaluation or analysis of external causes of the early abusive episodes, and, given that they were already isolated, they did not go through a process of social withdrawal. Their stories illustrated that they were less disappointed because they were less initially satisfied and had lower expectations. Linda, a 33-year-old White woman detained on a drug charge, was battered by her common-law husband for nine years. She said:

I was a real typical battered woman from the time we got together. He was in control of everything: money, sex, our friends, how our house looked. Even though most men are like that, he was worse than how most men are. And do you know why he beat me? Because he was a crazy brute, not a man. He got some kind of sick pleasure out of hurting me with his hands and his words. I think he felt sorry at times, but he never apologized for his meanness. I realized early on that I couldn't really change him. What woman could ever change a man? What did I expect anyways? I only got together with him in the first place because I thought I was supposed to. He really never cared about me -- no one did. I barely cared about myself! But I decided I'd better get out of this mess. I did things like took the pill behind his back so I wouldn't get pregnant. I started selling drugs to make money for an apartment, and I told everyone that if I was found dead it was because he had killed me. I don't really think that he would, but it was my way to let people know that I was in real trouble.

Self-Blame

A third characteristic of the African American battered women's experiences that contributed to their vulnerability to abuse was a sense of shame and inadequacy that emerged when they first realized that the abuse symbolized their failure to accomplish their romantic dreams in their intimate relationships much as they had failed in

the public sphere. The subjects in this subgroup became involved when they were relatively young with the men who later abused them and had planned to establish a hegemonic, traditional, nuclear family form. Having had the privilege of extra attention and resources, they recalled believing that as they were growing up, their dreams (as influenced by dominant ideology) were within their reach. Even as they began to feel disenfranchised in the public sphere, the subjects recalled feeling like the one arena in which they could exercise power was the private sphere, as they had done as children. When they realized that their domestic power was being limited by the abuse, the African American battered women responded by working harder to establish a sense of order and control over their households, as opposed to deciding to leave them.

Their desperate attempts to make their violent marriages "work," lest their identities be completely shattered, led to the profoundly immobilizing feelings of failure and self-blame, which resulted in increased vulnerability. Inca, a 31-year-old African American woman detained on a burglary charge, was battered by her husband for seven years. She said:

What was I to do? I was scared, ashamed, had tried everything I could think of. I lost 25 pounds, I moved with him, I learned what he wanted in bed, I spent time with his creepy friends. He got every single thing he asked for from me. I was constantly running around him, trying to make the world a good place for him. Hell, it was an awful

place for me too. But I still was more worried for him than myself. I even got him a job. And what did I get? I got beaten for trying to control his life, stabbed for trying to steal his friends, teased for showing off how much money I had when I bought him clothes, raped for having sex with other men. And then I would try to cool it, and I got beaten again for being "cold." I just couldn't seem to win. But did I stop trying? No!

Inca's statement, and the other stories of the African American battered women in this sample, illustrated the pattern of circumstances and emotional responses that led to vulnerability to abuse that characterized gender entrapment. Their initial denial and rationalizations led to a sense of displaced self-blame as they began to feel ashamed of their failure to accomplish their dreams of harmonious, protective family lives that were shaped by the dominant ideology. At the same time, their childhood pattern of using their selves to enhance difficult situations and the few remaining optimistic aspects of their personalities led them to become even more vulnerable to abuse in their intimate relationships by trying harder. This pattern was a notable feature of gender entrapment for the African American battered women who attempted to stop, modify, and cope with the abuse instead of leaving the relationship. Typically, the violence escalated, they became more emotionally desperate, and the outside world became increasingly judgemental and suspicious of the African American battered women who would not reach

out to protect themselves and/or their children.

In contrast, the White battered women blamed themselves less and came to a more realistic awareness of the danger in their relationships sooner than the African American battered women did. Since their relationships were more likely to be violent from the beginning, and because they felt more inadequate in general, the White battered women had a more immediate sense of themselves as emotionally and socially vulnerable to abuse and mistreatment from their male partners than the African American battered women. The White battered women in this study were not conflicted by a sense of failure to meet the ideological norm because, with the exception of the violence, their lives mirrored it. They did not internalize responsibility for their failed relationships to the same extent that the African American women did, for they did not have the expectation that it was really possible for them to have happy, mutual adult relationships with men. With one exception, Clara, a 45-year-old White woman detained on a felonious drug charge who was battered for 18 years by her African American husband, the White battered women denied feeling sorry for the men who abused them. Clara said:

I got involved with this man as a way to have a place to live, having run away from the foster home because of physical and emotional abuse from the men there. I took a bus to New York City and was hanging around Port Authority. I was 17 and he was much older than I was. When we met he was convinced that I was a hooker, which I

wasn't at the time. This set me up for lots of emotional abuse and sexual insults. All I wanted was intimacy and a place to call home...I was still looking for a family. We were together for 21 years. He could be really sweet or really awful. But, I admit, I thought he was really cool because he was Black. My family was really racist, and I thought this was a good way to get back at them. Besides, the other girls I was hanging around with were Black, and they were the first people I knew who had any culture. I became very dependent on him, and he basically was the one who took charge of everything. The physical abuse began in the third year of our relationship and got progressively worse. I was dragged by the hair, locked in the house; he decided what I would wear and whom I would see. He used to tell me, "I got you off the street, so I can treat you like I want to." It got pretty bad after a while. But, as a White girl, I couldn't rat on him. He had a job that supported us, and I sure didn't want him to lose it. I also learned from the girls I used to hang around with that it was really wrong to call the police on a Black guy because of how they were treated. We were living in Harlem, and I had seen what they did when they arrested Blacks. So what could I do? I felt like, as a White, I had to be really careful, just like the Black girls did.

Chris, a 24-year-old White woman detained on an assault charge was battered by her husband for eight years. Her story was more typical of the White women's responses. She said this:

Hell no, I didn't feel sorry for him. He was a true monster, bully, son of a bitch. He did whatever he wanted and, like every other man I've ever known, he was arrogant and nasty. I should have known...well I sure found out quickly! It may have been my fault for marrying him in the first place, but he's the one to blame for my loss of hearing, my headaches, and my emotional breakdown. I'm not any more sad or depressed than I ever was. I'm just facing reality -- men are scum, but since they have all of the power, they can do whatever they want to do.

In sum, the comparison of the relational circumstances and the emotional responses of the African American battered women and the White battered women in the early stages of abuse in their intimate relationships indicated how the White women's sense of vulnerability actually protected them from gender entrapment. Whereas the African American battered women were less realistic, more tolerant and conciliatory, and more conscious of the pressures on their African American male partners from the social world, the White women were less so. The White battered women did the physical work of caring for their families and their households, but they did less emotional work on their male partners' behalf, in part because the White men had fewer negative events in the public sphere that would have required

their women's protection and/or support.

The African American non-battered women's relationships were different from both subgroups who experienced abuse from their male partners. First, they typically did not form monogamous, future-oriented relationships with men as early in their lives. Instead, their sexual and romantic partners changed more rapidly and they did not establish households with the men with whom they were involved. The African American non-battered women tended to have more peer-like or social relationships with men, and their young adult lives were not organized towards the goal of creating nuclear, heterosexual families. They were not disinterested in men, but rather they did not expect personal fulfillment, as the African American battered women did, or social fulfillment, as the White battered women did from their intimate relationships. As such, the African American non-battered women were not vulnerable to gender entrapment.

It is important to note, however, that each of the five African American non-battered women in this study had experienced at least one episode of male violence in their lives. There are two significant factors that distinguished their experiences from the other two subgroups; the violence was not part of an intimate, long-term domestic relationship and if it was, the African American non-battered women were less emotionally and symbolically attached to the relationship. Karen, a 20-year-old African American woman detained on a prostitution charge, said:

Sure I've been hit. Who hasn't? I got into fights all the

time with the brothers [African American men] I hang out with, but I never let no man beat me up. Hell no! And they will if you let them, that's for sure. I know lots of them who slap their old ladies [female partners] around, and they are real strong so they hurt them too. That's why I will never let a man live in my house. I have to have somewhere to send him when he starts to act stupid. I grew up with crazy men, and I learned that it's better to be with them from a distance than live with them. I like it like that I go to my man when I want to, but my home is mine. I'd live with a sister [African American woman] any day before I'd let a brother move in with me no matter what he promises. And as far as being a battered woman goes, I will just keep my distance, 'cause you don't know when any man might go off on you for no reason. There is nothing any woman can do to stop them...except have a way out. That's what I always try to do, have a way out.

From this and other accounts from the African American non-battered women, it can be seen how they were less vulnerable, in part, because of the circumstantial and emotional factors in their adult households that resulted from a different gender-identity development and relational expectations that were created in their households of origin. They had very different senses of themselves, they desired different types of relationships with men, and were less invested in creating ideologically defined households. Two of the

African American non-battered women had been in long term intimate relationships with women.

Even when the African American non-battered women were assaulted by their husbands or boyfriends, they were not as symbolically or emotionally attached to the relationships. Anita, a 35-year-old African American woman who was arrested on a drug charge recounted the following story:

I was beaten bad by this boyfriend I had once. I wasn't surprised; he beat his other women before me. But I hit him back immediately, pulled out my piece [gun] and left the party right away. When I moved in with my mother the next day, she told me that she thought that man was "no good" anyways, and that I could crash [stay] at her place for awhile. There was no room for me, but I knew that I wasn't going back to that fool ever again. I'll face my danger on the streets, but not at home. He knew better than to come after me again.

While her life was by no means safe or comfortable given the dangerous environment she lived in, Anita was not affected by ongoing abuse from her intimate male partners. She experienced one other episode of domestic assault, was raped by a stranger, and was regularly harassed by men on the street. She did not experience the type of ongoing, expressive domestic abuse (as operationally defined in Chapter 3), that characterized gender entrapment. She described the incidents as fights that were more mutual in nature; she had more

social support, and she did not have as much at stake in the relationship. The African American non-battered women were distinguished from the other group of African American women in particular by less loyalty to African American men and lower interested in and less able to take care of men. They did not grow up with a sense of relative privilege that made them feel like they could change or control men's behavior.

This finding is important because it distinguishes the potential risk that all women face of male violence from the type of ongoing abuse that battered women experience and that characterizes the gender-entrapment theoretical model. Most of the women in this study --- including the non- battered African American women --- lived with the threat of violence everyday. While this is not a study of the abusive men per se, it can be inferred that the differences in these women's experiences of male violence were not solely their intimate male partners, inclination to use violence (since, statistically, at least 25% of all men regardless of racial/ethnic group or socioeconomic status are so inclined). Rather, this finding suggests that the variations between the subgroups are related to the dynamics between 1) gender-identity development; 2) early relational circumstances; 3) cultural loyalty to men; 4) women's response to male violence; and 5) social conditions. All of these factors, and the relationship between them, affect the consequences for women who are battered, and are incorporated into the gender-entrapment theoretical model of African American women's participation in

illegal activities.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF MALE VIOLENCE

The previous discussion links the subjects' gender-identity development to the circumstantial and emotional factors that created some women's vulnerability to violence from their intimate partners. The subsequent pattern of violence, which typically included physical attacks, emotional abuse and, for some women, sexual assaults, created a situation of terror in the battered women's domestic sphere. This situation, which was created and controlled by the violent men, had significant long-term consequences that varied by subgroup of abused women.

Physical Injury

The Conflict Tactics Scale, described in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, was administered to each of the 37 subjects in the study to determine if the subjects fit the operational definition of a "battered woman" set forth in the study design. The CTS score was also used to measure the extent of the physical violence in the abused subjects' relationships, and to compare the population interviewed in this study to other national samples. The results of the CTS confirmed that all but six of the 32 African American women in this study were battered, and all five of the White women experienced violence in their intimate relationships. The average CTS score of the 26 African American battered women was considerably higher than the national average. While this finding indicated the

extreme nature of the abuse in a quantifiable way, a deeper appreciation of the women's experiences emerges through their descriptions in their own words of the insidious and profound nature of the abuse in their intimate relationships. Juanita, a 26-year-old African American woman detained as a co-defendant on a homicide charge, was battered by her common-law husband for three years. She said:

I was with a man for three years until I was arrested. He's a cruel, sick, mean man who tortured me, doing any and everything he could to keep my body and heart in pain. He beat me bad: hit me in the eye, cut me with a blade, made me stand on the hot plate that I used for cooking and slowly turned it up so my feet would burn up. You can't imagine the pain. My feet are ruined. The other thing he used to do was try to throw me out the window. He would tie me up and drag me over to the window laughing. Then he'd lean me out really far. I felt like I was going to fall the six stories to the ground. My ribs still hurt from leaning out. The next thing I knew he was pulling me back in, slugging me, kicking me and twisting my arm behind my back. But the burning of my feet on the hot plate was the worst.

As Juanita's story illustrated, most of the African American subjects who were battered described heinous abuse that was extreme both in nature and extent. The violent assaults were characteristically

routine, following a distinct temporal and sequential pattern, and they tended to escalate over time. Typically, the women in this subgroup were physically much weaker than their batterers, and they were very seriously hurt by their partners' use of bodily force, by weapons such as guns and knives, and by household objects such as telephone wire, matches, or irons. For some women the violent episodes would last for hours or even days. Inca, a 31-year-old African American woman detained for burglary and possession of stolen property, was abused by her husband for seven years. She said:

When I got it, I got it good. He would start out by staring at me, and then he'd follow me around the apartment. The breaking of dishes was my sign that I was next. He'd shove me, and I would land up on the floor where he'd use a broken bottle, dish, or kitchen knife to scratch me, lightly at first and then harder. He was very strong and used his weight to hold me down. If I'd try to resist, he'd use a belt to tie me to the bed, the couch or the oven door. Then he'd start the real abuse...the hitting, kicking, the punching, slapping and all the rest. Afterwards he'd lock me in the closet or bedroom. I'd just sit there in pain wondering when he'd come at me again.

A particularly significant finding from the subjects' perspective is the extent of permanent injury and disfigurement that resulted from the abuse, including facial scars, loss of fingers,

blindness, baldness, and burns. The disfigurement served not only as constant reminders of their suffering, but it created public humiliation. Many of the subjects found that when they were asked about the cause of their disability, they felt compelled to disclose information about their abusive relationship, and that outside people found it "unbelievable." The public manifestation of this disreputable private event had important implications for gender entrapment. The shame and loss of dignity that accompanied the disfigurement was significant; the African American battered women's sense of failure to accomplish their goal of creating an "ideal family" was permanently embedded in their consciousness through the obvious, long-term injury. Karen, a 20-year-old African American woman detained for prostitution, was battered by her common-law husband for three years. She said:

We were together for five years. It was a nightmare by the time he was arrested. The abuse got so bad I lost my mind. And that's not all; I lost my pride, my hope and my fingers. See this hand? I lost these fingers one night when he went real crazy. We'd been out at a party, and I was talking to this guy. He started on me right away. I was just having fun, but I knew I was in trouble by the look in his eye. He suddenly went and grabbed me and we left. All the way home, he was holding my hand too tight and yelling at me. After a real good beating in the head, back and neck, I was starting to pass out. That really made

him mad, and so he took the meat cleaver and chopped it down on my hand. I passed out completely then, and woke up in my bed with a towel around my bleeding hand. I'll never forget the pain or that crazy look of pleasure he used to get in his eye. This hand reminds me every single day that I can't use it on account of how he treated me. One part of my life is ruined forever. I'll never have it back. How do I explain that to my kids? They ask, just like everyone else. If I tell the truth, they think I'm the crazy one. If I don't, he still keeps me in his power.

A related set of issues for many of the African American battered women was chronic physical pain, drug and alcohol addiction, miscarriages and long-term emotional disorders that were the consequence of being abused. More than half of the African American subjects who were battered were denied medical attention by their abusive partners for injuries they caused during an assault, and some "medicated" themselves with drugs or alcohol -- typically supplied by their batterers. In 12 cases, the subjects in this subgroup associated the onset of abuse with their first pregnancy, which is consistent with the literature on battering. Johnetta, a 36-year-old African American detained on a felonious drug offense, had been married for 12 years, during the last nine of which her husband battered her. She said:

Spanking was his thing. They started when I got pregnant. He thought I was pregnant by someone he introduced me to

when we were getting high. It was impossible, but he was just so jealous! He would follow me and jump me when I was walking down the street, and knock me down. I never had any time alone, and he wouldn't let me go to my mother's house anymore...not that she wanted anything to do with me since I started using drugs. He tried to tell me the spankings were for my own good, to get me to stop using drugs so the baby wouldn't get hurt. What he didn't know that being beaten up was just one more excuse to get high. The worst was when he started punching me in the stomach or kicking my breasts. That's why I lost the baby, not because of the drugs.

From years of being severely assaulted on a regular basis, some of the subjects complained of chronic headaches, backaches or limited range of motion in their limbs, as Lila's story illustrated. She was a 32-year-old African American woman who was battered for eleven years by her husband. While being detained on a burglary charge, she said:

I've been hit, stabbed, had bones broken...all of that. He would come home at night when I was asleep, and I would wake up with a gun pointed to my head just because he was hungry or with a knife at my back because I was moaning in my sleep and he wanted to know who I was dreaming about. I was afraid to say anything...it was hard to tell what would tip him off. I started drinking to numb the pain. I was

braver, slept better, and I could raise my arms to braid my daughter's hair when I was drunk. Sober, I was just a bunch of nerves. When he put my back out, I thought I was going to die from the pain. Even now, I can't stand or sit for too long. Since I've been sober, I can only raise my arms half way.

The life-history interviews with White battered women revealed that compared to the African American battered women, they typically experienced less severe physical abuse. Their CTS scores were closer to the national average, and while they too were seriously hurt, their descriptive accounts of the nature and extent of abuse were less extreme than the African American battered women. The assaults were frequent and routine, but they did not escalate with the same speed. Most significantly, the abusive episodes were less degrading and humiliating in nature than what the African American women described. Clara, a 45-year-old White women detained on a drug charge, was married to the man who abused her for 21 years. She said:

It was hard to be beat by a man who you loved for 18 years. I knew he was kind of off when I met him, but I didn't ever think he would use his body against me. He was very strong, and would punch me, slap me and shove me around the house. He never used a weapon against me, and he knew when to stop. It was as if he really let himself, he would kill me, and he didn't want to go to jail...and now look at who

is here! I guess he knew just what he was doing...what the limits were and how to stay just enough inside of them to not hurt me so bad that I'd ever really have a case against him. The only scars are places no one would see. He even cut himself just to make it look like the fighting was equal. Now that I think of it, it is what really makes me feel stupid. He outsmarted me over and over!

Emotional Trauma

Both the African American battered women and the White battered women described the emotional consequences of the abuse as particularly painful, compounding their vulnerability to violence in their intimate relationships. Whereas the physical abuse led to pain, fear and, for some subjects, embarrassment, the emotional abuse created a sense of powerlessness, inadequacy, and alienation for most of the subjects who were battered. The combined effect of being insulted, discredited, and teased, and being beaten up was a deadly one -- some women came to feel that they deserved to be battered (sometimes the women referred to the violent episodes as being "punished") for being "poor," "bad mothers," "ugly," "drunks," "stupid," or "sluts." Typically, as the emotional abuse escalated, the battered women became less likely to defend themselves or to reach out for help, becoming more isolated and, therefore, much more vulnerable. As the research on domestic violence indicates, it is indeed the emotional wearing down of a woman's hope and self-worth that is a major factor in a man's ability to maintain dominance and

control over a battered woman, once fear and injury is established through physical violence. This combination of emotional and physical abuse helps to explain why some women do not leave violent and abusive relationships.

For the African American women who were battered, the effects of emotional abuse and private humiliation factored into gender entrapment in a particularly profound way. In addition to the ongoing degradation described above, six subjects reported being made to beg for food, and one was forced to eat human feces. Two of the African American battered women reported being locked out of their apartments all night nude or semi-nude, eight were routinely locked in rooms or closets, four were denied sleep for days at a time, and three reported that they were restrained and forced to consume excessive amounts of alcohol until they became physically ill. Renee, a 27-year-old African American woman detained on an arson charge, was abused by her boyfriend for six years. She said:

The abuse started slowly and, at first, I felt like he was just moody. I would soothe him any way I could, and he seemed to respond. Those days people still thought that I was lucky to have him, and I never told how badly he really treated me. I would clean up from his rages, put makeup on my bruises, and make up stupid excuses for the injuries he caused. Usually, I was really strong about it. But when I would break down and cry, which wasn't very often, he would take me into the bathroom and push my

head under the water in the toilet. He'd act like he was going to flush it, but I don't remember that he ever did. But what made it worse was that he would then tell his friends about it...calling me "toilet head" and "shit-eater." Once he really made me eat shit right in front of our children at the table. I thought I was just going to die. Who would ever have imagined that this man would be able to make me to stoop so very low! Being hit...well, that hurt. Being made to feel like a fool, that almost killed me.

In most cases, the emotional abuse served to disorient the African American battered women, for in addition to making them afraid of the batterer (whom they thought they could love and trust), the emotional abuse decreased the level of confidence that was created by their privileged positions in their families of origin. Therefore, being humiliated in front of their children and other family members was a particularly painful and insidious aspect of gender entrapment. Sebina, a 32-year-old African American woman detained on a murder charge, was married to a man who abused her for four years. She said:

For me the worse thing was the shame I brought to my family. Here I was, the prize child, working in a good job with two lovely children. I was very happy and successful, and I still had the admiration and respect of my family. They loved to come to my house and see how well I was

doing. My family didn't know, at first, that this man was such a tyrant. They knew that he had some problems keeping a job and that he was not very responsible around the children; however, they felt like since he had been with me, he was doing much better..."if anyone could turn Keith around, Sebina could!" I believed that too, but it just wasn't working out so well. He was battering me pretty badly, using his fist and anything else he could find to hit me with: punching me in the face, hitting me all over my body with lamps, banging my head against the table...stuff like that. I couldn't seem to work my charm the way I usually could. Deep-down inside I thought there was something wrong with me or I'd be able to stop this abuse. I was starting feeling like a complete failure since I couldn't get it together even with all the extras I was given in life. The day he threw me across the room at my parents' house was the worst. I got all caught up in protecting him from them, protecting them from him, trying to get the kids to go into the yard. I thought I was going to die from the humiliation, not the abuse! Suddenly, I couldn't keep a job, I stopped taking an interest in my kids, and church didn't mean as much to me. It was like I was wilting under the pressure to keep up a front and the put-downs were working to make me feel like shit.

As Sebina's story indicated, the abuse had a particular

significance for gender entrapment for those African American subjects who had a relatively privileged status in their households of origins, as described in the previous chapter. These subjects described how their self-esteem plummeted as a result of the emotional abuse and physical assaults. The simultaneous lack of success in the public world that some of the African American battered women began to experience reinforced their newly acquired sense of shame, failure, and vulnerability in their private relationships.

The White battered women in this study also experienced emotional abuse as a traumatic and complicating factor in their violent relationships. Their experiences were distinguished from the African American battered women in several ways. First the White battered women tended to be more isolated from the onset of the relationships and, as such, the emotional abuse created a more immediate, private suffering, and yet they recovered from it more rapidly. Gwen, a 33-year-old White woman detained on a sexual abuse and sodomy charge, was abused by her husband for seven years. She said:

This man had a sick kind of control over me. As soon as I met him, I felt my small world getting smaller. I was losing the few friends I had, and it was as if he was controlling every side of my life. When the abuse started, actually it was before I was married, he kept me inside, watched my every move and never let me out of his sight.

Of course there was nowhere I could go anyways since I left my family to be with him, and they lost interest in me like that. I was his punching bag. He broke my nose twice, and I lost count of the black eyes he gave me. But what was worse was the yelling, the laughing at me when I cried, and the nasty things he'd say to me. To keep me inside he would cut up my clothes. When I cooked, he would make me feed the children first to prove I wasn't poisoning him. If I gave the children a bath, he would rush in and hassle me, saying that I was touching them nasty, when actually it was him that was doing that. But I just couldn't win with him. So I just gave up trying. It was less trying on me that way, and I felt relief.

A second distinguishing feature is that the White battered women blamed themselves for the abuse to a lesser extent than the African American battered women. As they told their stories, they seemed to have been less confused by the violence; as if it was not as inconsistent with their expectations and experiences of relationships between women and men. They understood that the physical abuse was a sign to get help and, as such, the emotional abuse did not claim as much power over their thoughts about themselves, the decisions they made, their identities, or their relationships within their families. Gwen continued:

I knew as soon as the hitting started that I was in a heap of trouble. He was the devil — beating

me silly every day almost. It got so I was almost used to it. I thought he was going to kill me if I didn't do something. Even though it took me a long time to figure out what to do about it. I knew that eventually I would have to do something. I'd seen it too many times before, and I knew in my heart that it would be over one day. I knew that he'd never leave, so that I'd just have to figure out a way to get the hell out of this marriage. I decided that I'd get away as soon as my kids were grown.

The findings on this item suggested, ironically, that because the White battered women did not have the same inflated sense of power or self-confidence, their self-esteem and expectations for the future did not serve as such a barrier to their reaching out for help when they really needed it. While the White battered women's responses demonstrated some degree of denial, as a group they did not seem to be as profoundly immobilized in the face of the abuse as the African American battered women were. So while the White men were not less emotionally abusive, per se, the emotional abuse had a different meaning for the White women, which differentiates their experiences from the gender entrapment that characterized the experiences of the African American battered women in this study.

Sexual Abuse

The amount and nature of sexual abuse, including marital rape, emerged as perhaps the most insidious and traumatic aspect of the abuse for both the African American battered women and the White

battered women in this study. Certainly the sexual abuse was the aspect of their relationships that was the most difficult for the subjects to talk about during the life-history interviews. In most aspects, the findings about sexual abuse did not vary significantly by race/ethnicity. All of the White subjects and 17 of the 26 African American women who were battered reported marital rape. The pattern that emerged in both populations indicated that typically these subjects were usually sexually abused soon after the physical assaults, when the women were hurt, bruised, bleeding, and emotionally distraught. The sexual abuse included forced intercourse, rape using objects like hairbrushes or broomsticks, and being forced to perform degrading sexual acts while viewing pornographic material. The subjects reported a range of psychological consequences that characterize sexual abuse that included a detachment from their bodies, subsequent self-neglect or self-abuse, and a sense of shame that furthered their isolation and stigma. Letisha, a 37-year-old African American women detained on a forgery charge who was abused for 13 years by her husband, said:

As a Black woman, there is nothing more awful than being used by my man for sex. Such disrespect! It is like they say women were treated on the plantation: to have our bodies used and abused, to have our hearts broken, and then to be forced into sex with the very person who stole our dignity. Of all the things that I couldn't stand, having him all over me after beating me up was the worst.

It made me feel like I was a true "nigger," and he, of all people, was my master.

Linda was a 33-year-old White woman detained on a felonious drug charge. Her husband of nine years abused her, and she said:

The sexual part of our relationship was the most tense. It was the way he hurt me the worst. Right after he'd attack me and threaten me with one of his guns, he would start in on my body, telling me that I was too messy and too smelly to have sex with him. He would send me to the shower, and then he would follow me, throw me on the bathroom floor and rape me, including putting himself in my butt, then in my mouth. It was awful and it hurt. I was really starting to go crazy. After he broke my ribs, he stopped the bathroom routine...but the rapes continued in the bedroom.

For some of the African American and the White battered women interviewed in this study, a sexual assault was the final violent act of each abusive episode; ironically, in this way, being raped came to symbolize relief. For others, as the following case illustrated, a sexual encounter was the only way the subjects felt they could avoid a violent episode: a cruel, ironic twist on the meaning of sexuality in their intimate relationships, as Jeanne, a 33-year-old African American woman charged with robbery, described. She was battered by her boyfriend for seven years. She said:

No, he didn't really rape me, but I remember feeling like

when he was getting tense that the best way to avoid being hit was to seduce him into bed with me. That way, he could put his bad energy into sex rather than abuse. Sure it hurt sometimes, but the pain was not as bad as when he'd whip my ass. Seducing him still makes me feel ashamed of myself. I never had an honest desire for sex with him after I started doing this. In fact, I don't think I'll ever have a desire for anyone again. I can't seem to think about sex without the fear. It's slimy and makes me feel like a real slut.

In addition to the immediate physical and emotional consequences of marital rape, most of the subjects like Jeanne described the long-term impact of sexual abuse by their adult male partners. Several of the women who were forced to be sexual either immediately after or during an assault felt at the time of the interview as if they would never be able to experience the enjoyment of an intimate sexual relationship again. Some who became pregnant as a result of being raped felt as if their relationships with their children would always be tainted by the violence, which had led two to surrender custody of their children to child protective services. Selma, a 30-year-old African American woman detained on a murder charge, was battered for six years by her husband. She said:

I have three of my four kids because he raped me. He's used his gun, the plunger, or anything he could get his dirty hands on. Sometimes he used himself...funny, that

was the worst. I was either pregnant, miscarrying, or having babies all the time. Even when the physical abuse would let up, he would keep this nonsense up. Now that I am in here (at Rikers), I don't really even want to hear about or see my kids. They are only a reminder of the things he used to do to me. When he brings them to visit me, I know he is trying to hurt me. Because he knows how I feel. Even in the visit room he is always trying to feel me up.

On the impact of sexual abuse, there was some divergence between those battered women who had been sexually abused as children or raped by strangers, and those who had not. Generally it was found that both the White battered women and the African American battered women felt that the sexual abuse from their husbands or boyfriends created a particularly painful loss of identity, confidence and self-esteem; it was extremely difficult for them to reconcile the feeling of having their sense of themselves as both sexual beings and wives "ruined" by constant forced sexual acts. Margaret, a 21-year-old White woman detained on a harassment charge who was battered by her boyfriend for three years, said:

As a woman you come to expect certain things from living on the streets or if you come from a home like I did. You couldn't ever tell who you'd meet, and you couldn't control your grandfather's roaming fingers up inside of you. But I never, ever imagined that I'd be raped by the man I chose

to marry. For a while, I didn't even know it was rape. I thought it was my problem with sex or something from my past. All I knew was that it felt wrong, it hurt and it made me feel really like the piece of ass the men who raped me earlier told me I would become.

Of the nine African American subjects who were battered but denied that sexual abuse was part of their adult intimate relationships, a significant pattern emerged. The findings revealed that this group typically felt that the sexual aspect of their relationships was, in fact, the best part of the relationships. All of these subjects were involved with men who were substance abusers, and who used drugs and/or alcohol during their sexual encounters. This finding contradicted the current literature in the field of substance abuse that suggests that drug abuse heightens violence against women; indeed, for those women who were physically battered but not sexually abused by their intimate partners, drug and alcohol abuse during sex seemed to serve as the one mechanism that would successfully establish intimacy in their relationships. Johnetta, a 36-year-old African American woman detained on a drug abuse charge, was battered for nine years by her husband. She said:

The one thing he didn't do was abuse me in bed. In fact, we had very wild, hot sex. Looking back, sometimes it was rough, but at the time it was the only good part of our life. When we had sex when we were high together is when it was best for me because he was less strong, it was over

faster, and he was more romantic. He'd really talk about his feelings and how he wanted us to be better and closer. That's one excuse I used for getting high — to have good sex.

THE SUBJECTS' RESPONSES TO THE VIOLENCE

The findings indicated that the subjects' vulnerability to the violence, and the severe physical, emotional and sexual consequences influenced their behaviors and the concrete action they took. As previously noted, one of the key findings was how strongly the African American battered women were impacted by their expectations, family pride, and loyalty to men, which led to disbelief, denial and rationalization. They were much more likely to publicly deny the abuse when questioned, to cover up signs of an assault or their unhappiness, and to avoid discussion about the problems of their private lives with outsiders. Carolyn, a 30-year-old African American woman detained on a homicide charge, was battered by her husband for 12 years. She said:

My family didn't know about the abuse in the beginning. They have told me since that they wondered why I stopped coming around so much, but they didn't really have time to worry about me. I used to wear long-sleeved blouses even in the summer, and I got real good at using foundation to cover up a black eye or two. I really did a great job. Once, though, my neighbors called the police, and when they came, he made me peek through a very small opening in

the door and tell the police I was okay. That shows how really dumb the cops are. I was smiling through my tears, my hair was a mess, and the kids were screaming because they were so afraid. All the officers cared about was getting on with their coffee break. Just because I could smile, they left. As soon as they left, he started beating me again, and that's when I learned that it was better not having people involved because when they didn't help, all that did was to make him feel more powerful. He said, and I'll never forget this, "See, everyone knows that this is between you and me, and since you are mine, you'll do what I say."

Carolyn and the other African American battered women in the sample gradually became very isolated. They stopped visiting their families, lost or changed jobs, stayed indoors more, and interrupted social and religious participation. The degree to which they were able to "disappear" without families, friends, or community groups questioning and/or objecting was significant. It is illustrative of their families' sense of the subjects' independence, the relatively fragile nature of their social networks, and the fact that their families were more concerned with their relatives whose lives were more obviously in crisis. As Juanita, a 26-year-old African American battered woman detained on a homicide charge who was battered by her common-law husband for three years, said:

I guess for them, my problem was small. I'd always taken care of myself before, so why should they worry. Here's

one brother in jail, the other strung out on drugs, my sister is pregnant again and she has AIDS, my mama is trying to keep a job when her hospital is laying people off...what's a little abuse to them? At least I had a place to sleep. But what they didn't know was that I was passing out from the blows to my head. With them trying to hold it together — trying to keep folks alive and out of jail, how could I lay this on them? Go to counseling? Call the police? Come on, let's be real. I was not anywhere near the top of the list of people I knew who needed help. And since my family and friends always thought I could take care of myself, they never even thought that my problems would be so bad as they were. No, there was so much suffering around, everyone thought mine was lightweight.

As Juanita's story illustrated, the African American battered women were less likely than the White women to use social services, battered women's programs or to go to the hospital. Some African American women recalled not feeling like the problem warranted outside intervention, that they could "handle it" by themselves. Others tried to reach out to services only to find out that they were categorically excluded because of their drug use or other circumstances. One African American battered women who disclosed that she was sexually attracted to a woman, which was the excuse her boyfriend gave for beating her, was denied assistance from a religious-based program. Most felt, for one reason or another, that

their experiences did not fall within the category deserving of services. Being a "battered woman" did not fit into their identities either because they fought back or because they felt that the men in their lives were not more powerful than they were. Johnetta, a 36-year-old African American woman detained on a drug charge, was battered by her husband for nine years. She said:

Part of my problem is that I am a strong Black woman. I am angry, and some people think I am too loud. So even though he beat me almost to death, I beat him too. If I had been as strong as he was, we'd both be in trouble. But since I wasn't as strong, he got away with almost murdering me. It's as simple as that. The broken bones, the scar where he cut my face...all of those are because he was stronger outside, and I was stronger inside. By that I mean, I'm no regular battered woman because he got his share of licks. It wasn't until he started playing the mind games on me that I was really vulnerable to him. And how do you call the police and admit that he is making you crazy, making you drink, sticking the works (needles) in your arm? Don't forget, drugs are against the law.

Other reasons that the African American battered women reported not reaching out for help included a general mistrust of social services based on previous experiences, the batterers' control of their mobility and phone use, and, as described in the following chapter, their involvement in criminal activities. It is important to

note the particular avoidance of criminal justice intervention. Kim, a 37-year-old African American woman arrested for prostitution who was battered by her husband for 12 years, said:

Call the police? Never! Everyone I knew spent all of our time running from the police! The cops are the worst people to get involved in a family problem, probably because they beat up on women too! I know it because my girlfriend's old man is a cop and he is an abuser himself. The station house is full of drug-using, prostitute-using, woman-hating men...that's why they are called pigs. Seriously though, I just never could really trust that they would help me and not just use my 911 call as one more excuse to beat up a Black man. They were never that decent to me or anyone I knew. I just couldn't do it. I learned early in my life that the cops were dangerous to my people, and were to be avoided at all costs.

As Kim's story illustrated, not using police or other public services was a conscious decision that most of the African American battered women made. For them, it is consistent with the extent of police brutality that existed in their communities and the subsequent social construction of loyalty to one's community — particularly men, as previously described. The conceptualization that social services are oppositional forces — especially the police — created isolation, vulnerability and public scrutiny of the African American

battered women. This is a central aspect of gender entrapment.

Janet, a 46-year-old African American battered woman who was battered for 10 years and detained on a homicide charge, said:

When I finally went for help they asked why I waited so long. There was no police record, no counselor to testify and no family witness. I could tell that the judge didn't believe me, especially because he went on and on about how I "seemed so smart and all." Now what's that supposed to mean? That he's dumb? I don't want any White judge talking about my man that way. Or did he mean that the sisters (African American women) are dumb? Either way, it was a put-down that I didn't appreciate at all. To answer him, that's why I didn't go for help sooner.

The White battered women were typically more isolated from the beginning of their relationships than the African American battered women were. As such, the violence did not create isolation, as it did for the African American battered women. Rather the isolation and dependency created their vulnerability to men's violence. With her face still swollen from the broken jaw, and with two of her teeth missing, Linda, a 33-year-old White woman detained on a drug possession charge, said:

I really think it would have been different if I had had some outlets. All I had was him, and he was so bad to me. If I had someone to talk to or to notice, it would have helped me sooner. But, being the loner in the world

that I am, I had no one to help me. Actually, I had to have my jaw broken and my two front teeth punched out before anyone would believe me that I was battered. Of course, I answered yes, and that was the beginning of the end. She gave me some phone numbers, and I was just getting ready to call when I got arrested for drugs. Oh, well, at least I am safe from him here.

The women in this subgroup tended to tell more people about the abuse, to reach out for emergency assistance, not to be as concerned with concealing the signs of abuse as the African American battered women were. They identified as "battered women" and sought out the range of services that were becoming available. In particular, the White battered women were much more likely than the African American battered women to use criminal justice agencies or other public services, although they were not necessarily any more likely to get an effective response. Margaret was a 27-year-old White women detained on a harassment charge. She was battered for three years by her boyfriend. She said:

Calling the police was a routine event in my house. Eventually even the kids learned to call, but it never really helped. They would come, eventually, but I could tell that they were afraid to come into my building. They would stay downstairs and ask my husband to come down. Can you believe it? It was that typical "Come on, pal, let's take a walk around the block so you

can cool off" routine. Like they really understood why my husband would batter me, and like I had no needs or opinions. Oh yes, I tried to get help a lot of times, but I guess my problems just weren't important enough to anyone but me and my kids.

CONCLUSION

By comparing the two subgroups of battered women in the study, important features of gender entrapment are illuminated. The findings indicate that the African American battered women entered into their intimate relationships with optimism that resulted from their heightened status in their households of origin. As their experiences in the public sphere were disappointing, they became more strongly committed to establishing a respectable and successful domestic life which, for them, included arranging their households in accordance with the dominant ideology about gender roles in nuclear families. This desire and effort posed a particular challenge for them; their African American male partners were excluded from opportunities that characteristically lead to male privilege (like earning more money than women), and the African American battered women themselves felt forced into the public domains. Feeling sorry for their men, they denied their vulnerability, the women tolerated the abuse, which in turn became worse while the women disbelieved that they were being hurt and humiliated by the men for whom they were caring. When they realized that their domestic lives were

failing them, they isolated themselves out of shame and embarrassment and in order to protect the image of their family. The African American battered women were, therefore, increasingly vulnerable to the abuse and domination of their violent male partners.

The circumstantial and emotional factors that characterized the White battered women's adult households were different. They entered their intimate relationships with lower self-esteem and fewer expectations. That their relationships were unsatisfying and, indeed, abusive from the onset did not surprise or confuse them. Ironically, their identity was not as damaged by the abuse, and they did not become as immobilized as the African American battered women. When they were hurt, afraid, and humiliated, they planned to and/or attempted to get help. Even when their attempts were unsuccessful, they felt less trapped by the abuse and their conflictual feelings about the men whom they were involved.

These differences in vulnerability led to different consequences for the African American and the White women who were battered. First, the findings indicated that there was considerable variation according to race/ethnicity, not in the presence or absence of abuse per se, but in terms of the effect and meaning the abuse had for women from different racial/ethnic groups in this sample. The CTS scores and the subjects' personal accounts indicated that the African American women suffered particularly degrading forms of physical abuse from their male partners while the White battered women's CTS scores and accompanying accounts of abuse were more consistent with

the national average; the abuse was of a more "controlled" nature. An important difference between the two subgroups on this item was the degree to which the African American battered women were permanently disfigured and suffered chronic pain from the physical abuse they had endured. This overt, public manifestation of being abused had a profoundly effective role in the gender entrapment process -- it furthered the African American women's deep loss of dignity, given their previously heightened sense of themselves.

In terms of emotional abuse, the subjects in both subgroups described the horrific, damaging effect of regular psychological victimization. When combined with physical assaults, both groups of battered women were made further vulnerable by the damage caused by the insulting, dishonest, controlling behavior of their male partners. Subjects from each group described how the isolation, shame, loss of dignity and the fear created an interlocking pattern of vulnerability and violence that kept many women immobilized in the abusive relationships. The African American battered women experienced this pattern as far more disorienting than the White battered women, most of whom were quicker to recognize it as abusive. In some ways the White battered women were more pessimistic and were emotionally hurt earlier in their lives, and, therefore they were less affected by the emotional abuse of their adult intimate partners. Furthermore, the social and familial stigma that the African American battered women anticipated or experienced was a complicating factor for them given their privileged status in their

households of origin and the family loyalty issues. In contrast, the White battered women were more estranged from their families of origin. In this way, the emotional abuse had a more powerful effect on the African American battered women than the White women in this sample and, as such, indicated a particular aspect of the gender entrapment theme.

In terms of those subjects who experienced sexual abuse, the life-history interviews revealed little difference between the two subgroups. Both the African American battered women and the White battered women found the marital rape and other forms of sexual violence extraordinarily difficult to bear, and they suffered long-term negative consequences. This finding was not affected by the presence or absence of sexual abuse as children.

The subjects' increased vulnerability to violence from their intimate partners and the consequence of the abuse affected their practical responses, influencing a distinct pattern of concrete behavior from the two subgroups of battered women in this study. The African American battered women attempted to conceal the abuse and avoided use of public services, while the White women tended to reach out to more individuals and to social service programs. This finding is particularly noteworthy in terms of use of the criminal justice system for crisis intervention services given that the subjects were, indeed, victims of a crime. Unlike most of the White women, the African American battered women had a distinct and vehement opposition to calling the police; they avoided pressing criminal

charges against their abusive partners or otherwise becoming involved in a criminal justice solution to the violence. The extent to which mistreatment by law enforcement officials, biased criminal justice practices, and the knowledge of the disproportionate incarceration rates of men of color consciously influenced the African American battered women's response, to the abuse in their intimate relationships was significant. This intentional avoidance was obviously a very important finding for the study of the gender-entrapment theoretical model, and helps to explain how women were forced or lured into compromising, illegal activities.

CHAPTER 6: SIX PATHS TO ILLEGAL ACTIVITY:

The Relationship between Gender-identity Development, Violence and
CrimeINTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the six paths that the subjects took to the illegal activities that resulted in their incarceration as the final category of events that constituted gender entrapment. Drawing on the findings from the previous two chapters, the discussion here emphasizes how the variations in gender-identity development led to distinct types of vulnerability and abuse in intimate relationships that, for some women, skewed their behavior towards illegal activity. The findings are again discussed by subgroup to highlight the unique sets of circumstances that the variables of race/ethnicity and intimate violence created for the population of women interviewed in this study.

It is important to note that the framework used in this chapter to describe the subjects' experiences — the six paths to illegal activity — was not organized around legal definitions or criminal justice concepts. Nor does the chapter focus on women's experiences once they were in the correctional system. Rather, as the study was designed to explore the link between gender-identity, violence and crime as a way to explain some women's illegal behavior, the six paths serve here as a framework for analysis of this particular population's experiences. Therefore, the women's own versions of their charges, the factors that they

believed influenced their arrests, and the details of their cases are presented from the subjects' points of view. These were then organized into the six paths to illegal activities and presented here as conceptual categories that emerged from the data in order to explain the remaining aspects of the gender-entrapment theory being developed in this dissertation.

It is also important to note that the coding of the findings into these six paths was a conceptual exercise consistent with the methodology described in Chapter 3. It involved collapsing and renaming some illegal activities. So, for example, the crimes that the women in this sample were arrested for did not necessarily represent all of what they actually did, and in many of their cases, there was considerable overlap in crimes — drug users may have been involved in illegal sex work and women arrested for theft may have also been charged with child abuse. The central factor in the categorization process was how the subjects interpreted, reported, and ultimately understood their involvement in criminal justice activities and how the findings from the life-history interviews revealed six distinct paths.

SUMMARY OF ANTECEDENT EVENTS

Prior to discussing the six paths that the women took to Rikers Island, the key issues that characterized each subgroup and influenced their involvements in illegal activities are reviewed. This summary is intended to provide a framework that

will emphasize the aspects of each pathway that constitute gender entrapment. For the African American battered women, a central factor in the gender-entrapment explanation for their participation in illegal activities was the series of shifts in their identities. Their sense of being competent and desirable African American children, created by their positions in their households of origin, was first threatened by their limited social success as African American young women in the public sphere. They began to feel occupationally, educationally, or economically ineffective as their social options were limited. As they felt their social position becoming marginalized, their public identity became more fragile. Still, they continued to believe that "successful" family life was within their reach and held to their childhood dreams of ideologically defined relationships. Their longing for intimacy, respect, and a sense of accomplishment that they had been led to believe was possible at home was heightened as they became more socially disenfranchised. The nature of the trauma associated with onset of violence in their intimate relationships effectively began to destroy their sense of themselves and their abilities to establish and maintain an ideologically "normal life" in an extraordinarily profound way. As the subjects were traumatized, threatened with constant emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, seriously injured, permanently disfigured, and fearful that the batterers would kill them, their identities were seriously shaken.

As their sense of themselves was shifting, the African American battered women began to feel betrayed and abandoned by their families and other helping institutions, having grown up with extended, albeit fragile, networks that they had expected would support them. Even though few reached out directly for emergency assistance, and most went to great extent to conceal the abuse initially, as the abuse became more severe, they reported over and over again in the interviews, they felt as if someone should have helped them. While seemingly contradictory, the reporting of these beliefs assumed a certain logic. It was as if the African American battered women's sense of entitlement, which had been buried deep below their loyalties to men, their commitment to ideology about family life, and their tolerance of the abuse in their intimate relationships, resurfaced, and they became genuinely frustrated at the lack of assistance or lack of recognition that their victimization received from the police, health care providers, and other helping agencies. So the African American battered women came to resent the isolation that they, in part, created; they were frustrated by their inability to change the situation because of the extreme nature of the violence or because of feeling loyalty, stigma, and lack of power in the public sphere. These subjects' resistance to turning to the criminal justice system in particular when they were battered and breaking the law cemented their gender entrapment and led them on one of the six paths to Rikers Island Correctional Facility as

"criminals" and "victims of crimes."

In contrast, the precipitating circumstances that influenced the African American women who were not battered and their participation in illegal activities were dramatically different. These subjects grew up in more marginalized households that were not as rigidly organized around dominant ideology as the African American battered women's households. Their identities were less influenced by family expectations, pressure to please adults or to live up to a culturally constructed image of womanhood. As young children and as adult women, they saw the public sphere as an inhospitable, alienating environment, and they perceived people other than their peers — their parents, the police, social service workers, health care providers — as their adversaries.

The African American women who were not battered were not surprised by their lack of social success when they entered the public sphere. Their limited educational attainment or occupational instability, for example, was consistent with their childhood images of adult life, and they did not grow up expecting to create a particular family form. So, as adults, they did not engage in redundant activities to enhance the images of their domestic life or intimate relationships.

Obviously, the most significant difference between the African American battered women and the African American women who were not battered was that they were not regularly assaulted, fearful, degraded, or injured by their husbands or boyfriends. The

non-battered African American women's paths to illegal activities were, therefore, influenced less by violence, the threat of violence, identity shifts, and the lack of social support. More often, they committed crimes because of drug use and addiction, poverty, peer relationships, and a sense of hopelessness that came to characterize their lives, which they perceived as being void of options for social success. As such, the gender-entrapment theory as described in this dissertation does not apply to their experiences.

The influential events for the White battered women were comprised of a third contrasting set of factors rendering their experiences also inconsistent with the gender-entrapment theory. First and foremost, the subjects in this subgroup were less burdened by privilege status and loyalties to men than the African American battered women. On the contrary, the White women in this sample felt inferior and subordinate to the people around them from a very early age. They had a low self-esteem and felt personally ineffective from a very young age. Second, in contrast to the African American non-battered women, the White women did not perceive the world as a fundamentally hostile place that was organized in such a way as to limit their success. The White women came to understand their lack of social success as the result of individual negative experiences or, for some, their own character flaws, rather than categorical alienation based on their race/ethnicity. They believed that the effects of being poor and

victimized female children created their marginalized status and shaped their identities as adult women. Their identities did not shift as they were growing up in response to critical external events as the African American battered women's identities did.

Therefore, for the White battered women, being battered did not create a discrepancy between their expectations and their experiences. Their sense of themselves remained consistent with the identities that were constructed in their childhoods. So, for example, feelings of vulnerability to men's authority and being powerless in the face of brutal violence were not unusual or new experiences for them, and subsequently, the White women in this sample did not put as much effort into understanding, coping with, or changing their abusive relationships. Instead, they put energy into trying to leave their batterers. Like the African American battered women, they were frustrated and felt mistreated by unresponsive helping institutions; however, they did not report feeling betrayed, stigmatized, or confused. The White battered women's path to illegal activities were, therefore, influenced by fear and injury, like the African American battered women, and poverty, like the African American non-battered women, but were distinctly void of the loyalty-nihilism dialectic that emerged among the groups of African American women in this sample.

These antecedent events and precipitating circumstances distinguish the three subgroups in this sample from each other and illustrate how the broader context of personal history, cultural

values, dominant ideology, economic circumstance, and social location combined to create the gender entrapment that influenced the African American battered women's experiences along their paths to illegal activities.

THE SIX PATHS TO ILLEGAL ACTIVITY

Path 1. Women held hostage: "I knew he'd eventually kill one of us."

Perhaps the most heinous path to Rikers Island is represented by those subjects who were arrested and detained for the death of one of their children. In this study, all four subjects detained on this path to crime were African American battered women who were abused by the men who murdered their children. These women were arrested as co-defendants, conspirators, or on homicide charges and, at the time of the interviews, were facing sentences in state correctional facilities of eight years to life in prison. In some ways, these cases illustrated gender entrapment most vividly. They were the most severe cases of abuse, had the highest CTS scores, the most insidious emotional abuse, and the most extreme isolation. Sebina, a 32-year-old African American women who was battered by her husband for four years, was arrested on a homicide charge for the death of her four-year-old son. She said:

What happened was my co-defendant wanted me to stop caring for my boy, who was only four years old. He was

jealous of him and tried to take over from me and be his father. At first I was glad because it made us seem more like a real family, but my son was very close to me. So when we would fight, he would cry and run to me, even when I tried to keep him back. Sometimes he got hurt by trying to cover me. My husband didn't know anything about raising kids, and I did. I kept trying to tell him that a child has to learn slowly. So like when I was trying to teach him letters, he would just scream at him and say, "You are a stupid boy," and treated him really bad if he spilled his milk or cried. My husband started abusing my son when I wouldn't have sex. When he started hurting my son, I started trying to fight back and protect my son, but that only made things worse. He beat both of us worse than ever. He told me that he would call my welfare worker and say that I was the one hurting my son if I told the police. He sounded really convincing, and I believed him. He did things like burn my son with hot water in the bathtub while I was tied up on the bed. I lied to the neighbors sometimes, but I think they knew. I was really afraid to let anyone know because I believed that I would lose my son...and now look. I lost him for good. My welfare was cut off because I missed my face-to-face because I was so badly beaten. My son was

sleeping a lot and acting like a robot around the house; he was terrified. We didn't have any money, and he was beating us every day. I was so sad; I really wanted to call the police, but I didn't think it would help. We'd steal food from the store downstairs, but that was the only time I was outside of the apartment. One day we were all hungry, and my son was crying. He beat him so badly I was really scared. He tied him up and made me have sex while my son was under the bed. When it was over, I rushed to get my son, but he wasn't breathing. He screamed, "Look what you did, you killed him." That's all I remember. I was crying and screaming for what seemed like a day. The next days were a blur. He moved the baby from room to room, and tried to hide the body in the closet. He was battering me the whole time. I had a breakdown. I didn't eat, sleep or move for almost a week. When I threatened to tell the truth he went to my grandmother's house and beat her almost to death as a way to keep me quiet. Eventually he took the body outside to bury it, and we went to the police to report my son missing. They didn't believe us for a minute. I was so badly battered that they knew something was up, plus they had the report from my grandmother. At last the police did something...they arrested us, and I haven't seen my

husband since. I was charged with second degree manslaughter for failure to protect my child.

As the previous case illustrated, the subjects described a pattern of severe physical abuse that escalated over time. All four subjects whose children were killed fit the characteristic gender-entrapment pattern of the African American battered women in the sample. Their lives had begun with relatively privileged childhood positions in their households of origin. Although two were from economically marginalized families, the four women who shared this path to illegal activities grew up with the sense that as adult women their "family life" would be a source of pride; it would be within their power to control. As young women, they were confronted with circumstances that created a sense of disenfranchisement and failure in the public sphere, and they began to put more emphasis on their domestic lives. The onset of abuse from their partners had a disorienting effect on them. Initially, out of loyalty to the men who were abusing them, and later, because of their extreme isolation, only one of the subjects reached out to her family for help, only one telephoned the police, and each sustained chronic injuries that were exacerbated by medical neglect. In each of the four cases, the violence escalated to a very dangerous level. All of these subjects were convinced they they would ultimately be killed by their batterers. Instead, their children were murdered while the subjects were virtually held hostage in their homes, with no

access to the outside world — to a telephone, to a hospital, to their families, or to any social or public services. Carolyn was a 30-year-old African American woman who was battered by her husband for 12 years. Like Sebina, she was arrested on a homicide charge related to her husband's having murdered her child. She described her situation this way:

I never did anything illegal, even when I was hungry. My charge is homicide in the first degree, which I am trying to plea down to second degree manslaughter. I'm here because my husband wanted to kill me, and since he couldn't, he killed my baby instead. He knows that I'd rather be dead than have my child dead, so this worked out better for him. I have lost all of my children now, and it will be a slow death for as long as I live knowing that he took the one thing I've ever had as my own. It started one afternoon when I was sleeping in a very deep sleep because he had kept me up for two days in a row. I hadn't been out of his sight for almost three years. Can you imagine that? He locked me in when he went out, and mostly we stayed home. The beatings were a regular part of our life, so when he called me, I was trained to jump up and run to him. This day he told me that our son had fallen and hit his head on the edge of the table. I took one look at him

and knew that he hit him with something, and that my son was in serious trouble. He died waiting in the same emergency room that I had been in two nights before after my husband tried to kill me. He wouldn't even let me hold my son as he died. I don't remember what happened after that except that I was screaming that my husband killed my son and that the hospital let him die. My husband was arrested there, and four days later, at my son's funeral, I was arrested and brought to Rikers Island. He told the detectives that I hit my son on the head with a hammer, that the police found in the trash can in our kitchen. They said both of our finger prints were on it. Maybe they were, but I did not kill my son! Now he has taken everything from me. I've spent my life running from one hit to another. I've been beaten up since I've been here too...everyone hates a woman who sleeps while her child is being killed. The only reason I don't hate myself is because I don't even exist anymore after 12 years of being abused.

In only one of these cases did the abuser use drugs and alcohol, and he was not using them at the time of the murder. All of the men were employed at the time of the crime, although marginally, and thus maintained public images of strict, harsh, but "hard-working men." Even while they were privately

brutalizing their families, they appeared to be close to the ideologically normative family types that the women were so deeply committed to and were reinforced for having accomplished. One household was deeply involved in a religious organization, and Carolyn's husband assumed a leadership role in several community organizations. Carolyn continued:

My husband was no drug user or anything. He worked in an auto shop below our apartment and made a small but regular living. He was a member of the social club in the neighborhood, and we went to the local church almost every week if I wasn't looking too bad. He'd even go so far to have his friends over for cards, and I'd be locked in the bedroom, but they didn't think it was unusual. No one really liked him, but he was out in our community doing things that people respected, and that's what fooled them. It also meant that he had more support when it was his word against mine. Since I hadn't talked to anyone in years, they all thought I had gotten weird or snooty. It was easy to blame me. Even my family had given up trying to stay in touch with me since he would never let me see or talk to them. I must have seemed so changed to them; no longer the bubbly, good girl I used to be. Even they didn't know what to believe.

Gender entrapment immobilized these women. In these

extraordinarily abusive relationships they committed crimes initially because they misinterpreted their partners' jealous control over them as the type of affection that was consistent with emotional experiences from their younger lives. The subjects felt as if they gained additional status from their steady relationships and "stable" family lives, especially compared to other members of the household. As Nicole, a 31-year-old African American woman who was arrested on a homicide charge after being battered for 4 years, said:

I was the only girl in my family to settle down and get married. From the outside, it looked like things were going as planned...June Cleaver, here I come. My folks loved it, especially having grandchildren. I thought to myself...well, if I have to take a little abuse, it's worth it. My family respected me because I got a "good man"...little did they know! I was getting really scared. The beatings were getting really rough, and he was getting us into illegal stuff but since I'd lost contact, there was no one to tell. Besides who'd believe he made me rip people off? Not me, no never. He had the phone taken out, and cut my contact with my folks. He went everywhere with me, which they thought was cool -- like he was being a good man. I didn't have a single chance to run from him; he watched my every step.

As Nicole's account suggests, the subjects whose lives took this path to illegal activities felt that the combination of family expectations, fear for their lives, extreme physical trauma, and the constant control of mobility left them too isolated and afraid to reach out for help. However, being implicated in the death of their children was, by far, worse than any direct assault or shame they experienced. They may spend the rest of their lives in prison, living with the legacy of the death of their children for which they felt, in part, responsible. Their accounts indicated that this knowledge was the most traumatic form of abuse they endured.

Path 2. Projection and Association: "I'll never let a man touch me again."

The findings from the life history interviews revealed a second path that was only associated with the gender entrapment of the African American battered women in this study: being arrested for violent crimes directed at men other than the batterer in a symbolic or projected retaliation for past abuse. Four of the subjects' accounts of their participation in illegal activities centered on the theme, "I'll never let a man touch me again." Their stories illustrated the anger, humiliation, acute physical injury, emotional damage, and, for this population, long-term legal consequences that resulted from abuse by an intimate partner. Janet, a 46-year-old African American woman, was arrested on a homicide charge. Having been battered by her husband for 10

years, she described the following sequence of events:

It took me a long time to get angry, but my anger is actually what got me in big trouble. I decided that no man would ever hit me again like that. Never. So one night when I was visiting my grandmother, my cousin accused me of stealing some money from her. My cousin was drunk, and he was blaming me because he took it. I think he was picking on me because I was always the favorite child in the family, and he was jealous. I was so mad that I left the apartment, and he chased me into the street, pushed me, yelled at me, pulled my hair and eventually he started beating me, trying to pick a fight. He hit me in the head, and I lost consciousness. He was still hitting me when I came around, and I just lost my mind, flashing back to when my husband used to sit on my stomach and slap my face. I took a metal stick I always carry in my bag and beat him in the head over and over again. I really didn't mean to kill him; I just lost my mind and this terror came over me. There were witnesses and everything, but no one came to help until I really started hitting him. Did they try to help me? No! They knew that he was my little cousin, so I guess that they thought I didn't need help. I might not have flashed if they had helped me. The judge uses the witnesses' lack of help

as evidence that I was beating him more than he was beating me..."undue force" they call it. I'm very sorry that I killed him. I know it was my fault, but it was also the fault of my husband. What about his undue force? That's where I learned. They found my grandmother's money in my cousin's jacket pocket later that night.

Melanie is a 27-year-old African American women who was battered by her husband for six years. She was also detained on a homicide charge. Her story had elements in common with Janet's. She said:

I was arrested for attempted murder. A man was on my fire escape outside my bedroom window one night and I shot him. I thought it was my husband returning after three months. He had used weapons to threaten the children, he tried to suffocate me, and raped me almost every other day. I have this big scar on my arm from his throwing knives at me. He left after I finally reported him to the police, and that's when the threats started. He'd follow me, stalk my children, call and threaten us on the phone; he broke in my mother's house and drained my bank account. I had to quit my job, because he would show up there and cause trouble with my co-workers. I was broke and late on my rent, and my super was harassing me, wanting me to have sex with him

for the back rent. I was getting scared of all men, and when I saw the man on the fire escape, I thought it was one of them trying to get me. As it was, it was the phone man. I don't know what he was doing there after dark, but it doesn't matter. I shot and killed him, and since he was White and I am Black you know what the detectives thought about that! I'm here because I was scared into thinking that any man on the fire escape was trying to get me. It may sound wacky, but it is true that I thought my life was about to end. My husband made me that crazy.

As in the stories of African American women whose partners killed their children, the gender entrapment that began with the gender-identity development as privileged children in their families resulted in these African American women being vulnerable to violent African American men in intimate relationships as adults. Their sense of themselves shifted after the women came to understand that their intimate relationships had, indeed, betrayed them. In the five cases of women who violently assaulted men other than their abusers, their identities shifted again: from a sense of loyalty to men to humiliation and fear to feelings of anger and frustration. Ironically, in the end, they felt more like their younger, more self-assured, entitled selves. As Selma's story illustrated, however, this confidence did not work in their favor in the criminal justice system. She was a 30-year-

old African American woman awaiting trial on a weapons and aggravated assault charge after being battered by her husband for six years. She said:

I shot a man who was trying to steal my jacket. But I couldn't prove it, and I didn't act sorry enough when the police arrived. No, he was wrong, not me, and I wasn't going to put on any sorry act in front the cops. I'm through with that act. I'm involved in a grievance here now. It's against an officer who threatened me when I wouldn't take my Quamria off. He said, "Take that rag off your head, darkie." I tricked him into repeating it so that other guards and inmates heard him. Now I'm on the bad list for stepping out of line... but I won't let my dignity be questioned by anyone again, especially someone who is not my family. I am through with compromising myself for some man's sense of power. Even my male lawyer tried to get me to not wear my Quamira to court. He told me that I should not say that I am a Muslim. No, I won't deny myself anymore...you can't live that way. I won't change for any man ever, ever again. I learned my lesson through the "school of hard knocks," as my mother would say. From perfect child to battered wife to outspoken prisoner...this has been quite a journey.

From these and the other three accounts that fit this

pathway, it can be seen how, when some women were the constant victims of abuse, after years of denial, rationalization and trying to change the abuser, they responded almost instinctively in a way to protect themselves from other men. Even though none of the five women fought back in their abusive relationships and none had committed violent crimes before the abuse from their intimate partners, the abuse they experienced led to the subjects acting aggressively or violently towards men who threatened or attempted to hurt them. This created a particular problem for the gender entrapment of the African American battered women whose paths to Rikers Island were non-domestic assault because: 1) nowhere in the legal code or in the social consciousness is there allowance for this type of crime, 2) the women were likely to encounter potentially violent men on a fairly regular basis given the random violence in communities they lived in and the general rate of street violence and harassment of women, and 3) that racial stereotypes of African American women as aggressive and unfeminine fed into a biased response from the criminal justice authorities.

The stories of women whose experiences fit this pattern revealed how the early message from their families about the importance of taking care of themselves resurfaced and was incorporated into their adult consciousness after being battered. The findings indicated that two of these women described attempts to secure help while they were being battered and were directly or

indirectly informed that their experiences were relatively unimportant. The subjects ultimately felt that the best way to resolve their problems was to "take care of their own business," which is why, during the later attempted assaults, they responded in ways that, from the judicial perspective, seemed like extreme uses of violence on their part. Selma continued:

When I tried to explain to the court about how afraid I was and why I shot the phone man on the fire escape, they seemed to think that I was crazy! My lawyer didn't even bring up the fact that I was battered for six years. He said it didn't have anything to do with what happened. But, for me, it explains why I shot that man. I would have never done anything like that if I wasn't well trained by my family to take care of myself and if I hadn't learned from my husband that men will do anything to get me, and I'd better to try to protect myself when a man was coming to hurt me.

Path 3. Sexual Exploitation: "He used my sex as a weapon against me."

The third path that characterized a pattern in the population interviewed for this study were those women who were arrested and detained for crimes associated with illegal sex work. It is important to note that the life-history interviews revealed that many women in the overall sample were or had been prostitutes, call girls, or had had sex for drugs. Some women

felt compelled to use their sexuality as a bargaining strategy with police officers, probation officers, or employers — sex being the only source of commerce that they felt they had. Indeed, the sex industry, in all its forms, is a multi-million-dollar, international industry, and the women interviewed for this study had a wide range of experiences in it. However, factors such as age, race/ethnicity, class, and the type of sex work form a distinct hierarchy that dictates which women are vulnerable to arrest for sex work and, once arrested, who is actually charged and detained in correctional facilities for these crimes.

Nine battered women interviewed for this study had experiences that led them on this path to illegal activities. There was little distinction by race/ethnicity. Six were African American women charged with prostitution or loitering with intention to prostitute and three were White women: one charged with sexual harassment, one charged with prostitution, and one with sexual abuse of a minor. At the time of the interviews, they were facing a range of sentences, determined in part by their previous records and the nature of the crime. Doreen, a 26-year-old African American woman who was arrested for prostitution, was battered by her boyfriend for five years. Her account was typical of the battered women who were arrested for illegal sex work. She described her experience this way:

In addition to being battered, he used to rape me.

Then he'd say that I was such a good slut, that I might as well get paid for it, and he'd bring men home and ask them for money to have sex with me. About a year after that started, he took me out to work the street. When I'd get home, the only thing that would stop the abuse was if I brought in lots of money from hooking. Sometimes I would go to work even though I was in pain just so that he would stop beating me for a while. My body hurt all over, but I had to try to make enough money to please him. I was sick a lot, but he'd never let me see a doctor. My life was hell. I was raped by my husband, then forced to prostitute, raped while waiting for a john, had my money stolen by other girls, with frequent infections, cold, drugged out...it was the worst life you can imagine. Since I've been here I found out I have HIV, PID and lots of other problems. I'm an addict and an alcoholic. I didn't start out this way. My life was supposed to be very different from this. I was going to go to college to become a teacher — he's stolen my dreams. I've lost my family, my eyesight in one eye, and my outlook on the world as a good place to live. I hope I die soon.

As discussed in the previous chapters, the findings from the life-history interviews confirmed that sexuality was indeed a vulnerable spot for the African American and the White battered

women since many had been sexually abused as young girls and also raped by the men with whom they lived. All but one of the women in this study who were arrested for illegal involvement in the sex industry had a history of sexual abuse as children or as adults by other men in addition to being abused by their husbands or boyfriends. For five of them, the initial violation was by an adult male relative in their families of origin. The other six of the women were raped by strangers, three by more than four different men. Kim was a 37-year-old African American women detained on a prostitution charge. She was battered by her husband for 12 years. She said:

I was gang raped by three men in the lobby of my building when I was coming in from work late one night. It was my third time; the first was when I was nine. I think my husband set the whole thing up, because he wasn't the least bit sorry for me. No, he beat me for being raped. Somehow from there he started thinking that I should make money having sex with lots of men, so I became a prostitute in our own apartment. It was a good way to make money, but it was almost my death sentence because he used being a prostitute as an excuse for beating me. Working the streets was really safer for me because at least I'd be away from him -- across the street trying to get picked up for a while. I didn't care who did what to me; other men

using my body became a way to get a break from him. But he used my sex against me in the end. I think he turned me in to the undercover in exchange for them letting him slide on a drug bust.

When the women were sexually abused and then forced into prostitution, pornography or other sex work, it served as a particularly insidious form of violation, especially when it was criminalized and punished by detention for the battered women and not for their pimps (usually the batterer) or their "johns" (the customers), both groups of men who are in a position to profit from forced sex work. Gwen, a 33-year-old White woman who was battered by her husband for seven years, was detained on a charge of prostitution and sexual abuse of a minor. She described her risks and her husband's benefits this way:

The hitting of me wasn't the worst part for me; it was filming my daughter dancing naked. At first I didn't get what was going on, because he didn't let me see the films. But then I saw them, and he was making her act like she was dancing in a club, inserting a carrot into her vagina, squeezing her small tits together to make them look bigger, and he made her act like she was masturbating while he filmed her. I don't know for a fact that he was having sex with her. I do know that her gonorrhoea must have come from somewhere! He told the cops that I knew what was going on, that I was a

hooker and so they arrested me because I am her guardian. He was just a man making money in the porn business, and I was a prostituting mother who "let" her daughter be filmed. So who goes to jail? I do. I didn't "let" her do anything! He was trying to kill me every day. I was trying to stay alive so that I could protect my kids. When I told him I was going to tell, he'd hold a knife to my neck and say that I would be the one to blame...and look, he was right.

The accounts of women whose path to criminal activities was forced sex work illustrated a commonality between the African American and the White battered women. The 12 women who were involved in the criminal justice system because of being pressured into prostitution, forced involvement of their children in pornography or sexual harassment felt a sense of alienation from their bodies and an internalization of the degradation associated with early and/or repeated sexual victimization. Their treatment within the criminal justice system and, indeed, in the correctional facility mirrored the rape and abuse they experienced on the outside. The factor that distinguished the African American battered women from the White women was the degree to which the White women had somewhat more control over their working conditions and their income. They tended to be more episodic prostitutes than the African American battered women who felt forced into illegal sex work on a regular basis -- usually

nightly.

The gender-entrapment theory that links women's identity development in their households of origin and violence in their intimate relationships to their participation in illegal activities provides a context for understanding how both the African American and the White battered women could be forced into working illegally in the sex industry, how they could become exploited by the men who profit from their illegal activities, and how they might end up detained in a correctional facility for this "criminal" behavior. Sexuality became a course of vulnerability for these battered women, and when that vulnerability was taken advantage of, the subjects felt very little control over one of the most basic aspects of their selves, their physical beings.

Path 4. Accidents, Property Damage and Non-intentional Injury.

The fourth path to criminal activities was exemplified by the subjects whose crimes were arson, other property damage, and assaults of their batterers during an abusive episode. While these subjects described the incidents as "accidents," they did not deny their involvement with the crimes for which they were charged. The three African American women and two White woman whose experiences fit into this category were all battered, and their experiences most closely approximated the experiences of "battered women defendants": battered women who fight back and sometimes kill their batterers in self-defense during or directly following an assault. April, for example, was a 30-year-old

African American woman who was battered by her husband for six years. Detained on an arson charge, she said:

We were living on the train waiting for a HFD apartment. He had cooled out a bit, wasn't hitting me so much and I thought things were getting better. When we finally got assigned an apartment, we moved in even though it wasn't finished. We didn't have any electricity, and the construction wasn't complete, so there were holes in the walls and rats running everywhere. It was so upsetting; we were broke, scared, and the tension started building. Of course, he started in on me again. It was bad; I was really getting it. My nose was broken, my body was all bruised, and he was using weapons like he was crazy. One night he was really on me and I yelled to him that I would kill him if he didn't leave me alone. The neighbors upstairs heard me, and that was the evidence they used to arrest me for arson after we knocked a candle over during the fight. I was not trying to set the apartment on fire at all. I was just trying to kick him and kicked it over instead. We both got out and a few hours later the cops picked me up in the park. No one was hurt in the fire, but they said I intentionally set it and then fled...they must have seen the "Burning Bed" or something. They could tell

I'd been hit, given my black eyes and the scars on my face, but it didn't matter in my case. He's on the outside, and I'm facing a trial on an arson charge just for trying to get him off my back.

Both the African American and White subjects who were arrested for personal or property crimes that occurred during an assault on them by their batterers. The factors that distinguish the African American battered women's experiences is the series of negative experiences with social services or their families leaving them feeling isolated, which led them to believe that they would not be protected by outsiders, and so they felt compelled to protect themselves. The White women did use public services and, hence, had documentation of the abuse. The African American battered women were treated more harshly in the criminal justice system once arrested for these crimes than the White women who were more likely considered victims defending themselves. The African American battered women acted in a more aggressive, self-protective manner, and therefore they were not considered "real" battered women or treated as "victims of crimes." The African American battered women were thus trapped by their gender now in a reverse way than in their early life — they were no longer "good girls." Comments from the judges and jurors and advice from their lawyers illustrated this point. April continued:

I was told to act like a little White girl...to look sad, to try to cry, to never look the jury in the eye.

It didn't really work for me because the judge took one look at me and said, "You look pretty mean; I bet you could really hurt a man."

When compared to the other groups of battered women, the African American and White battered women whose experiences fit this profile were the least severely abused. This group of African American battered women felt that privileges in their households of origin were more material and less emotional and that their commitment to meeting the dominant ideological gender role was less intense, although it was still influential in their sense of themselves. The relevant point for the gender-entrapment theory is that the African American women who were arrested for accidental injury inflicted during an assault were closest in gender-identity development and abuse profile to the African American women who were not battered, and the White battered women were generally treated more like the "real" battered women than the African American battered women.

Path 5. Poverty: "I needed the money and the things."

The fifth pathway towards the subjects' involvement in illegal activities was characterized by those women who were arrested for property crimes and other economically motivated crimes. All of the subjects in this study that were detained on the charges of burglary, robbery, possession of stolen property, and forgery were African American. Five were battered and forced into illegal activities, and one was not battered. The five

battered women whose experiences fit this profile had startling similar stories, represented by Inca, a 31-year-old African American woman who was detained on a burglary charge. She was battered by her husband for seven years. Inca said:

The abuse got so bad that it was getting hard for me to keep going to work. Since we needed the money, this only made him more upset, and I was getting really desperate. I started working for a White family who had more than enough things, so I started lifting food and clothes. They would just leave money around, and once he came there to finish an attack he started the night before and he saw the money and took it and some jewelry. He said he had no respect for me being a maid and all, and that he'd think more of me if I put my "slave work" to use for us. So I began to move from job to job every few months to steal stuff. He'd sell it and keep the money. He was beating me and harassing me and teasing me all the while, unless I made a good boost. It was like we were working together for the first time. The only time I felt really good was when he was spotting for me. It was like he was acting like a real husband for the first time, and I got sucked into feeling protected and taken care of. Since I was the one stealing, I've served time twice before for possession of stolen property and burglary. But he

was the one who set it up; he was the one who beat me if I didn't get the goods; and he never even visits me when I'm here. My pride is hurt more than my body. All of my dreams have been ruined forever, and I don't think very much of myself anymore. I went from a winner to a thief really fast.

The life-history interviews with African American battered women arrested for economically motivated crimes revealed that one of the ways that the men coerced the women into crime was to portray themselves as more vulnerable to law enforcement and to portray the women as better situated to commit crimes. This key aspect of gender entrapment fits into the frame of reference established in the subjects' households of origin. The African American men used the fact of their over-representation in the criminal justice system and other racial rhetoric to strike a chord of sympathy with the African American battered women. So that in those families where someone "needed" to steal, the women felt like it should be them instead of their male partners. Most of the subjects recalled that they knew, on some level, that they were being manipulated by cultural ideology, but their clarity and judgement were impaired by the truth in the statistical picture on which their batterers were depending as well as their family loyalties, the emotional consequences of abuse, and the fear of physical assault. This paradoxical set of circumstances is at the core of the gender-entrapment theoretical model, as Jeanne's story

illustrated. She was a 35-year-old African American women detained on a burglary charge. She was battered by her boyfriend for seven years and described her situation in these words:

The first time I got arrested I actually felt proud. The cops caught us running out of the store with the goods in my bag. I was six months' pregnant because he had raped me, and I knew that if they took him, he would surely get time and the baby wouldn't have a father...so much for the perfect family I wanted. Also I believed what he told me, "They'd never keep a pregnant woman in jail." Well, that was one of the many lies he told me. Yes, they've kept me here and, no, they haven't treated me any better than anyone else. I slept on the floor of the bull pen the first night, I never get any milk, and the clothes they gave me don't fit. And speaking of the courts, they don't treat Black women any better than Black men! I guess I knew what the deal was, but since I couldn't understand why I was allowing myself to be battered, at least his "lines" made it easier to take the abuse. It was as if I talked myself into believing that the hitting, the punching, the put-downs and even the crime made sense since he was a Black man. Like I somehow owed this to him because of how my life had been easier than his. Was it really? Well, yes and no. Now it isn't, that's for sure.

For some of the subjects detained for economically motivated crimes, the illegal activities were the family's only source of income. Poverty and lack of employment motivated their activities. For others, the economically motivated illegal activities provided an ironic sense of justice for discriminatory employment practices or humiliating occupational experiences. For others still, the crimes represented an opportunity for mutuality and shared power with their abusers, different from their legal, public life where she felt privileged, or their domestic life, where he was abusive. Beverly, a 33-year-old African American woman who was detained on a burglary charge, was battered by her common-law husband for 12 years. She said:

I was working in an all-White neighborhood cleaning house. I felt humiliated by people when I went shopping or when I would stand near them on the train...like I somehow looked like I was about to steal something. That's how Black men feel all the time I think. The White people I worked for may have trusted me, but their friends and neighbors "dissed" (disrespected) me all the time. It reinforced the way that my husband talked about my work. He really hated White people, and he said they hated me, which was actually true. After he started abusing me and we both lost our jobs, we started playing con games. Our only targets were White people. The only houses we broke into were rich

houses, and the only credit cards we lifted were gold cards. It was like we were on a mission. And when the cops found him beating me on the street, wouldn't you know it, they were two White guys, and so he convinced me not to press charges against him for assault.

As the gender-entrapment theoretical model suggests, the African American battered women whose experiences fit this profile rationalized the shame they occasionally felt by their feelings of being victimized by racism and poverty. Drawing on their sense of being betrayed by their limited social options, they felt entitled to the resources and property of those with more privilege. Again the theme of African American men's particular vulnerability surfaced to influence the African American women's rationalizations and tolerance of their involuntary involvements in illegal activities. In the end, however, no matter how much money was derived from these illegal activities, in each of these instances, the woman arrived at Rikers Island poor and disheartened. At the time of the interviews, the subjects were able to reflect on how they were used by the batterers and how their criminal "partnerships" were, indeed, extensions of the abusive and exploitative relationships.

The one African American non-battered woman who was detained on this path had a different experience and analysis of her involvement in illegal activities. She described stealing food,

clothing to sell, and tips from restaurant tables as sources of income. In contrast to those whose experiences fit the gender-entrapment model, this subject did not describe her identity or activity as being influenced by loyalty, culturally constructed gender roles or fear of abuse. Instead, she reported that, for her, stealing was a way to make a living that was more profitable than being part of a marginalized labor pool, which she felt was her only other option.

Path 6. Addiction: "I use drugs to numb the pain."

Demographic data of inmates' profiles of women detained at Rikers Island suggest that drug use and a more aggressive criminal justice policy on drug offenses are the primary cause of the drastic increase in the incarceration rates of women. Nine women in this sample were detained on drug-related offenses. Unlike the other five paths, drug offenses were the only charge in this study on which members from each of the three subgroups were arrested. However, the patterns of drug use and the meaning of illegal drug activities were significantly different for the African American battered women, the White battered women, and the African American non-battered women in this sample. A summary of the differences provides an important example of one of the fundamental aspects of the gender-entrapment theoretical model of women's illegal activities — how the subjects' behaviors organized by internal factors as well as social circumstance.

Of the four African American battered women arrested on drug

offenses, all of them described the battering as preceding their drug use. The women described their use of drugs as a way to establish a deeper connection with their partners, to create emotional intimacy and mutual sexual pleasure with their abusers. While they describe using drugs "of their own free will," they felt that the batterers' addiction and their desire to connect with them was a motivating force into drug use. The subjects' desire for intimacy and connection, even through the desperation of illegal activities, was a central theme in their gender entrapment. Johnetta, a 36-year-old African American woman who was arrested on a drug charge, was battered by her husband for three years. Her story illustrated this point:

I remember when I shifted from being angry at him or manipulated by him to feeling really scared of him, but my life was already bottoming out too fast for me to do anything. I started trying to calm myself down and trying to get next to him, which I thought would help him not kill me. I was really mixed up. First I thought drugging would make us close, like a real couple. But then I felt scared too. I basically didn't know what the hell I was doing except trying, trying, trying to make things alright for me and my man. I hated the taste of alcohol and how it made me feel, so I started with heroin. At first, it worked. I wasn't so scared; he was very hot for sex with me,

and then he'd sleep a lot. Even if he did beat me, it didn't seem to hurt as much when I was high, so I thought of it as "medicating" and caring for myself. I started using dope every day, and soon it was eating up all of our money. When we didn't have money for the drugs, I was in real trouble because his abuse got really out of control. So I started selling as a way to keep us supplied. We kept needing more drugs, and he stopped being able to perform sex, and so that wasn't working like it used to to calm him down. The violence continued to get worse, and I was really getting scared, but police and family help were less helpful than ever. So I'm here, safe from him at least, but addicted to heroin and trying to detox. He's probably beating up another woman, getting her addicted now too.

Like Johnetta said, some of the women in this category felt like the violence initially decreased when they were using drugs with their partners, which served as an incentive to continue using drugs in order to avoid being battered.

The other two African American women who were arrested on drug charges attributed the onset of their drug use more directly to being physically battered. One was injected with intravenous drugs the first time by their batterers who were physically restraining them. The other was forced to use drugs as her

batterer threatened her with a knife; she became addicted to street morphine when the batterer began to give it to her for pain relief. Blondie, a 21-year-old African American woman, was battered by her boyfriend for four years. Her experience of being battered, forced to use drugs, and then arrested fit the classic pattern of gender entrapment. She was detained on a drug charge, and said:

I would be in serious pain, and couldn't stop screaming. At first I denied and tried to hide the abuse, but he would beat me to keep me quiet! But sometimes I'd have broken bones, so I couldn't just be quiet. He would go out and come home with "medicine," which I think was initially legit, and I fell for his acting like he was taking care of me. He'd shoot me up with it. He started buying morphine on the street. It really helped the physical pain and the emotional pain. And soon I needed more and more to numb the pain of broken bones that weren't set, including a broken arm. Now I try to get it on my own even when he isn't beating me because I am addicted. I wanted him to care so badly! I was used to being cared for. So at first the fact that he cared enough to get the drugs was more important than that he beat me, especially because he told me all along about how he beat me because he cared. I don't really get it, but now I'm an addict

because he cared so much? I don't think so!

The four African American non-battered women who were arrested on drug charges presented a different profile. Most were introduced to illegal drugs by a peer group instead of an individual, and described their initiations to drug use as voluntary rather than coerced. But their stories were similar to the African American battered women who experienced the rapid decline into addiction that characterizes the use of crack/cocaine and heroin (the drugs of choice of most of the subjects), especially when these drugs were combined with morphine, alcohol, and methadone to create a devastating, debilitating, expensive habit. Unlike the African American battered women, however, this subgroup became involved in selling drugs for their own profit and tended to use drugs as a public and social rather than private activity, distinguishing the meaning of drug use for those subjects whose experiences fit the model of gender entrapment and those whose illegal drug use did not. The following case of Anita, a 35-year-old African American women who was not battered and was detained on a felonious drug charge, illustrated the meaning of drug use when violence was not present. She said:

Getting high for me was a way to pass the time having fun with the people who mattered most to me. We'd buy some dope, maybe buy a bottle and go to someone's house to spend the day. We were always careful to include those who were really strung out because they need the

fix more than we did, at first. I knew I was using too much and that I was probably not going to be able to stop very easily, but it was the best...maybe the only way to be connected to this group of people. And they were like family until things got really bad and I became one of the strung-out ones who was invited along out of pity. It got real bad, but it could have been worse. Dope took over my life — no I gave my life over to the dope. I wouldn't do it again, but hey, we all make mistakes. I never hurt anyone except myself. And no one ever hurt me but myself. I'm trying to get my life together now. I think I'll make it this time.

The one White battered woman who was detained on a drug-related offense was the only subject in this sample who was not addicted to the drugs she sold. Her story illustrated the complicated relationship between poverty and the economics of the illegal drug trade, even when addiction was not part of the experience. Linda was a 33-year-old White woman who was battered by her husband for nine years. While detained for possession of an illegal substance, she said:

There is one and only one reason I am here...I sold drugs to try to get an apartment. The undercovers who busted me knew that I was not an addict, but I guess they didn't care. They need a certain number of

arrests before they can go home. I had lots of drugs on me, and I was about to cop lots of money...that's all they needed to know. I tried working, but my husband found out, beat me up, and took my money. There were lots of drugs in our neighborhood, and so it wasn't hard to find customers and suppliers. I never had an identity as a dealer, but I was starting to save enough to move out. No one, so far, has believed me that I only did it as a way to get away from him. Oh well, at least being here I'm away.

The issues of addiction and battering are complicated ones for both the subjects and the social agencies designed to help them. The political economy of the illegal drug trade in this country complicates matters further. For the purposes of this study, it is important to note that drug use, poverty, criminal justice policy, and incarceration create a deeply tangled web into which many battered women in this study fell. This set of circumstances accelerated gender entrapment for some of the African American battered women and, like several of the other paths to illegal activities, will have lasting negative consequences for their lives.

GENDER ENTRAPMENT AND ILLEGAL ACTIVITY

The findings from the life-history interviews revealed that the subjects' paths to illegal activities were determined by a

multiplicity of factors, including their early childhood experiences as girls in their households, the construction of a cultural/racial identity, critical events in the public sphere, the presence or absence of violence in their intimate relationships, and responses from social institutions. These factors, described as antecedent events in this chapter, varied by race/ethnicity and experience of abuse, thereby distinguishing the backgrounds of the three subgroups and their vulnerabilities to gender entrapment.

Four circumstances that the African American battered women experienced provided the empirical illustration of the gender-entrapment theoretical model of women's illegal activities. Their criminal activities, first and foremost, were seen by them as responses to violence or the threat of violence in their intimate relationships. Letisha, a 37-year-old African American battered woman detained on a forgery charge, said:

I know it's hard for people to believe, but I really thought he would kill me if I refused to go along with his scheme. I really, really did. He had tried before, and I think he wanted to ruin my life so badly he'd resort to either death or by sending me upstate for life. I got tricked into all of this by being naive, nice and because I tried to take care of him. But you'd really have to know how brutal he was, how afraid I was of him, and how little anyone seemed to be

able to do to help. The risk of being arrested was much less scary for me than being killed by my husband. I know it's hard to believe, but it's better for me here than on the outside where I have to face him and my failed life.

Most of the African American battered women described the illegal activities as ways to postpone a violent episode in some instances, although they did not see them as ways to avoid being battered altogether. The findings from the life-history interviews indicated that the African American battered women did what they were told whether it was legal or not, because they believed that not to do so would have caused them more severe physical harm or emotional distress or, in some instances, even death. In this sense, they continued to be the good girls they had learned to be in childhood.

A second element of gender entrapment was illustrated by the ways that the African American battered women committed crimes as extensions of their internalized gender roles regardless of the paths they took. As previously noted, when they were battered, they felt disorientated and disbelieving. Their sense of failure, stigma, and shame ironically kept them in the criminal life rather than out of it. The African American battered women's experiences were complicated by feelings of loyalty towards the men who were battering them so, consistent with the gender-entrapment model, even as they were being abused and coerced into crime, they were

were working hard to create intimacy in their relationships and stability in their domestic lives. Illegal activities, for some of them, enhanced their sense of closeness, of mutuality, of being involved in shared work. Ironically, their criminal activities demonstrated their allegiance to the violent men with whom they were intimately involved. In return, they kept expecting that their relationships would be enhanced and that the violence would ultimately end. Indeed, some were rewarded by the kind of attention and gratitude they were used to for a short period of time. Shelia, a 28-year-old African American battered women detained on a burglary charge, said:

Funny, but when we were in the life was the best time of our life. It was when we were the closest, when I trusted him most, and when he needed me. I was hurt a lot by the way he treated me, especially that he took me away from my family and the dream of the family we could have had together. But when we were working together, I thought there was at least a chance. And I thought if we could just get ourselves on our feet, everything would be alright with us. It became a way to work on the dream to be in crime with him. You'd be surprised what you'd do when love and fear are put together into one home.

A third motivation for illegal activities that is a characteristic of the gender-entrapment model is that some

subjects abided by the culturally constructed perception that African American women's role was to be protective of African American men who, indeed, were vulnerable to the effects of institutionalized racism. Interspersed with descriptions of their pain and shame, some subjects proudly expressed rhetoric about the "protection of the Black family through the protection of the Black man." While sophisticated in their political and economic analysis, these subjects were the least insightful about their positions as women in the context of a racially and gender-stratified social order. Lila was an 54-year-old African American battered woman detained on a burglary charge. She said:

Through him I was becoming aware of my Blackness. I decided that part of being a race woman was having a relationship with a man who was strongly identified with Black politics, and who had paid the consequences of racism. So, as an ex-con, he was perfect. Prison taught him to be angry and my role was to soften him up again by taking on the stronger role. My goal was to make him a king, and I became his sugar mama. He was using drugs that he was introduced to while serving time. He was very violent, which he said he also learned in the slammer. But I began to work to take care of him, but it wasn't enough. He forced me into prostitution, which was the only thing he knew about women's work. The abuse got worse and worse, and I was

feeling like a failure, so I left town as a way to get away. He followed me to Florida and, away from my family and friends, I was even more badly treated by him. But I kept trying to make him better. We read Malcolm X together, went to meetings and tried to bond about political things. My first arrest was there by a judge for being battered...he said he was tired of his cops coming to my house, and so, since I refused to press charges, he arrested me. Can you believe it? It was the first sign that being a sugar mama would not work...the deck was stacked against me as a Black woman, and being a king-maker just wasn't possible no matter how I tried.

Lastly, some of the African American battered women, particularly those with a previous record, intentionally got arrested or turned themselves in as a strategy to avoid the abuse, indicating how functional their involvements with illegal activities had become. Six African American battered women described this factor as directly leading to their arrests, while other women expressed a sense of relief and recognition that in jail they were safe for the first time in many years from the violence in their intimate relationships. This indicated a troubling ironic trend of women and men using the criminal justice system to meet basic survival needs, such as food and shelter. For the population of women in this study whose experiences were

consistent with gender entrapment, jail became one of the few sources of safety from abusive male partners that they could envision. Crystal, a 27-year-old African American battered woman detained on an arson charge, said:

I would have never thought it was true, but it's much better for me here than on the outside. In addition to "three hots and a cot," I have guards to protect me from him. He tried to get to me, but since he can't call, and I can refuse visits, and they search visitors, I am as safe from him here as I have ever been. I'm not saying it's a good place to be, but for women like me, it's better than living without guards.

The African American non-battered women in this study whose experiences did not fit the gender-entrapment model committed crimes as an extension of peer relationships and addiction. Their accounts of their involvements in illegal activities suggested that they were also influenced by their identity formation in their households of origin, the construction of their racial/ethnic identities, and their perceptions of their social location in the public sphere. However, having grown up in marginalized families, they felt the limitations of poverty, racism, and lack of social opportunity at a young age, and they internalized identities that were consistent with this world view. The one way that this worked in their favor, ironically, was that the African American women who were not battered did not

compromise their own safety, health, happiness or indeed legal status for intimate relationships. As such, they were less vulnerable to abuse and not forced into the illegal activities for which they had been arrested.

Each of the White battered women in this sample also participated in one of the six paths to illegal activities in response to the threat of violence in their intimate relationships. What distinguished their experiences from the gender-entrapment model that characterized the African American battered women's experiences was that the White women were involved in crime as a way out of the violent relationships, whereas the African American battered women were trapped in the criminal activities in much the same way that they were trapped in their intimate relationships. While some of the White battered women were motivated by their early childhood experiences, their identities, and their fear of trying to separate from their batterers' illegal activities, the African American battered women were drawn to participate in crime as a way to end the violence but not necessarily the relationships.

By contrasting the backgrounds and experiences of the three subgroups in this sample in terms of the gender-identity development, violence in their intimate relationships, and, in this chapter, the paths they took to illegal activities, the key elements of the gender-entrapment process were illustrated. In the final chapter of this dissertation, the theoretical model that

I have called gender entrapment is reviewed and summarized as an alternative explanation of some African American battered women's participation in illegal activities.

CHAPTER 7: A CONTEXTUALIZED ANALYSIS OF THE GENDER ENTRAPMENT THEORYINTRODUCTION

In the past five years, three simultaneous trends have emerged that have paved the way for this exploration of the relationship among gender, race/ethnicity, violence, and crime. The criminal justice system has been altered significantly by the increase in women detainees in correctional facilities (Baunach, 1988; Moss, 1986); the grassroots battered women's movement has found an audience in the mainstream public (Dobash, 1992); and the social sciences have been challenged to expand the traditional academic discourse to include the perspectives of "minority voices," thereby encouraging scholarship that focuses more centrally on the experiences of women and people of color (Collins, 1990). These trends have raised numerous compelling political, scholarly, and practical questions. Taken together, they provided the broader sociological context for the analysis of the life-history interviews that led to the theoretical model of gender entrapment.

In this chapter, I review the theoretical model of gender entrapment by explaining how the development of a distinctly female identity in the subjects' families of origin, as described in Chapter 4, influenced the dynamics of their adult intimate relationships that left some of them vulnerable to abuse, as reported in Chapter 5. In so doing, I discuss how violence, the threat of violence, and other forms of coercion by their male partners led some of the subjects to

participate in illegal activities for which they were arrested and detained at Rikers Island Correctional Facility, as described in Chapter 6.

This contextualized analysis of the path from gender-identity development to violence in intimate relationships to illegal activities includes a focus on how the dialectic of the dominant ideology about intimate heterosexual relationships in contemporary society and the social conditions in African American communities converge to create a particular dilemma for African American battered women because of the feelings of women's loyalty, and subsequent vulnerabilities to the African American men who batter them. Gender entrapment, therefore, distinguishes the African American women who are battered from the members of the other two populations of incarcerated women included in this study -- African American women detainees who were not battered and White battered women detained at Rikers Island Correctional Facility. The chapter concludes with the policy implications of gender entrapment and suggestions for further research.

THE GENDER-ENTRAPMENT THEORETICAL MODEL

The theory of gender entrapment developed here appropriates its meaning from the legal notion of entrapment, which implies a circumstance whereby an individual is lured into a compromising act. When applied to battered women who commit crimes, I use the term gender entrapment to describe the socially constructed process

whereby women who are vulnerable to men's violence in their intimate relationships are "penalized" for behaviors they engage in even when the behaviors are logical extensions of their internalized gender identities, their culturally expected gender roles, and the violence in their intimate relationships.

The gender-entrapment theory is built upon elements of: 1) the psychoanalytically based feminist theories of identity development (Chodorow, 1978); 2) culturally relative and African American feminist approaches to the study of the family in contemporary society (Sudarkasa, 1981; Mullings, 1986); and 3) social constructionist explanations of gender-role behavior as emotional work (Hochschild, 1983). By adding violence and crime as variables, the theory enables a more precise explanation of the experiences of African American battered women -- a subset of the overall population of incarcerated women and one that has been seriously neglected by the dominant social science research (Coley and Beckett, 1988; Hampton, 1987).

During the analysis of the data, I focused on the ways that the subjects tried to assert their own desires and needs as well as how their internal psychological processes, their early childhood experiences, and the perceptions they had of their social options influenced and regulated their behaviors. The concept of gender entrapment is based on all of these forces, as well as the dynamics among them. The epistemological value of the gender-entrapment theoretical model is that it gives equal emphasis to a multiplicity

of factors (theoretical approaches and social variables) that leads to women's illegal behavior -- therefore offering a more textured analysis of the interface between gender-identity development, violence against women, race/ethnicity, and women's involvement in crime.

While gender entrapment has conceptual implications for other populations than those represented in this sample, for this study, the theoretical analysis is grounded in the experiences of African American battered women detained at Rikers Island Correctional Facility, as related by them in the life-history interviews. The patterns that emerged from the data linked the subjects' gender-identity development in their families of origin to their vulnerabilities to violence in their adult intimate relationships and, ultimately, to one of six paths to illegal activities and detention at the Rose M. Singer Center.

The findings indicated that there was a sequential and reciprocal relationship among the properties of the subjects' households of origin, the cultural contexts of their lives, their adult intimate relationships, and their gender. These relationships made one group of African American women particularly vulnerable to gender entrapment and protected the other two groups from this experience, as the following discussion will show.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF GENDER-IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF ORIGIN

The family or household is one of the principal organizing units

of society. It serves to socialize its members, provides the vehicle for meeting basic material and emotional needs, transmits social norms and values, and thus influences the development of identity and subsequent behavior of social actors. Cultural forces interact with household units by interjecting ideology and creating social meaning and generally providing a "frame of reference through which people attempt to deal with the circumstances in which they find themselves" (Mullings, 1986). From a broader sociological perspective, the organization of households and the ordering of their members by gender and generation serve as a mechanism of social control, enforcing a division of labor that influences public as well as domestic relations, and establishing a foundation for the reproduction of hegemonic roles with regard to gender, race/ethnicity, and class.

The findings from the life-history interviews established that the structure and function of the subjects' households, their cultural frame of reference, and the ways that their families were influenced by the dominant social order set the stage for the gender entrapment the African American battered women experienced. In analyzing their gender-identity development in their households of origin, the following five factors emerged from the data to form a distinct and overall pattern of gender entrapment for the African American battered women.

1. Non-hegemonic Gender Roles.

With few exceptions, the African American women in this study

grew up in households that were not organized around hegemonic gender roles. For a variety of reasons, including economic necessity, the trauma of family violence, cultural residency patterns, and deliberate decisions to compose households that were more consistent with the culturally relative view of family life (Sudarakasa, 1981), most of the battered and non-battered African American women's families of origin did not conform in either structure or function to the ideological norm. Some were from households that were comprised only of women. In other families, the older siblings or an adult man served as the primary caretaker of the children. In most of the African American women's households' the adult women worked for wages outside of their homes and reproduction was not necessarily limited to legally sanctioned unions. The factor that distinguished the African American women who were battered from those African American women who were not battered was the degree to which they aspired to the ideological norm. The distinguishing factor between the White battered women and the African American battered women was that the former grew up in a more normative family structure than the latter. The White women's families were typically more patriarchal in form and function; their mothers were seldom part of the paid labor force even though the families were very poor, and the women and girl children assumed traditional gender roles in their households.

2. Aspirations to the Ideological Norm.

Despite this apparent divergence from the heterosexual nuclear family form of their families of origin, many of the African American

battered women aspired to the ideological norm, believing that a "normal" family structure and "normal" gender arrangements would symbolically and materially improve their social status. Those subjects who grew up in comfortable or privileged positions in their households thought that a traditional nuclear family would mean that their good lives would be even better. For the subjects whose lives were characterized by extreme poverty or sexual abuse, ideologically normal families were considered a "way out" of their despair. In either case, their yearning and efforts to attain structurally traditional families were important initial elements of gender entrapment.

A deeper analysis of this apparent contradiction revealed the complex effect of ideology on the aspirations of the African American battered women in this study. Most of the subjects did not express the desire to have family lives that were different from their own because of shame, lack of appreciation for their families, or embarrassment. Ironically, most of the African American battered women in this study felt that it was because of the composition of their childhood households that they would be in the position as adults to meet the ideological norm. It was as if the family structure and functioning of their families of origin -- their mothers' working outside of the home, their extended families' contribution to the economic base of the household, and their older siblings' assumption of caretaker roles -- afforded them the emotional and material opportunity to imagine something different for

their futures. A few of those who had a more difficult existence in their households of origin considered the establishment of a traditional family structure as a way to escape their troubled homes. However, they too did not blame their family members for their problematic childhood experiences, focusing instead on the social circumstances that led to poverty, alcoholism, or other problems in their families.

In contrast, the African American women who were not battered did not aspire to or assume that an ideologically normative household would enhance the quality of their lives. Their expectations for adult intimate relationships were more consistent with their experiences as young children, and they did not desire or place as much emphasis on creating a structurally different household than the ones in which they grew up. In particular, the African American battered women did not invest energy into establishing long-term, monogamous domestic relationships with men, preferring more episodic romantic and/or peer-like social relationships.

The White women expected to replicate the structure of their households of origin. Like the African American battered women, they expected to participate in traditional gender and generational relationships. The factor that distinguished them from the other two groups in this sample was the finding that even though their households of origin were more consistent with dominant ideology, they grew up feeling ashamed of and uncomfortable in their household environments. Unlike the other two groups, the White women tended to

attribute their problems to their family background. In the life-history interviews they described ways that the organization of their households of origin was at the root cause of the negative conditions in their adult lives, yet they could not conceive of a viable alternative.

3. Lowered Social Status and Lowered Expectations.

For most of the African American battered women, neither growing up with emotional support and relative material privilege nor their optimism could mitigate the negative effects of the social world that was organized hierarchically by race/ethnicity and gender. Reality took its toll early on the African American battered women's lives as their sense of themselves and of the options available to them were limited by institutional forces. Those who did well in school as young children felt the encouragement for academic achievement end before they reached adolescence. Their employment opportunities were limited to "traditional Black women's work," those occupational choices that were consistent with the historically narrow options (Dill, 1988). Even those subjects who had less traditional jobs were discouraged by demeaning interactions in their occupational settings because of their gender and ethnicity. Some of the African American battered women felt the disgrace of overt racial and sexual harassment early in their work lives.

The African American women who were not battered also faced discrimination in the social sphere. It had a different effect on them, however, because their lower social status did not come as a

surprise to them. They did not grow up feeling special, and their treatment in the public sphere was consistent with their experiences and expectations. The African American non-battered women were more likely to interpret discouraging events and circumstances as evidence of their hopelessly marginalized positions, and they reacted in ways that symbolized "giving up" or "dropping out." In contrast to the African American battered women who began to work harder in the area where they thought they had more control -- the private sphere -- the non-battered women's pattern was to avoid the types of long-term intimate relationships that the battered women sought in order to compensate for their limited social success and mobility. To understand this central aspect of gender entrapment, it is important to distinguish the African American battered women's high expectations of their relationships from their low expectations from the men with whom they were involved. Both groups of African American women came to feel generally powerless or vulnerable in the world; however, the African American battered women felt as if they could make their intimate relationships work even without the ability, cooperation, or commitment from the African American men with whom they were involved.

On this item, the pattern for the White battered women was similar to that of African American non-battered women. While they did not experience racial discrimination, their gender and class position left them feeling alienated and outside the mainstream of social life although they felt this was a normal experience for

women. They generally had a more isolated existence, and did not have much exposure to or expectations of social privileges — the public sphere was the preview of men. Ironically, like the African American non-battered women, the White women's lower expectations of themselves, their lives, and their relationships protected them from gender entrapment.

4. Social Basis of Hegemonic Aspiration.

The degree to which the subjects' adult aspirations for a family were socially constructed has important implications for understanding the gender entrapment of the African American battered women in this study. Their aspirations about family life reflected a broader commitment to traditional Western values and dominant social sentiments than those of the non-battered African American women, and their belief that they could realistically achieve this standard distinguished them from the White battered women. Despite the contemporary conditions in their communities — increasing levels of poverty, the continued discrimination against women and people of color, health problems that have reached epidemic proportions, and a narrowing of the social policies aimed at creating equal opportunity for groups that have been historically discriminated against — many of the African American battered women in the study grew up in a generation where African American people desired and indeed felt the possibility of middle-class life (National Research Council, 1989). Their aspirations and the images of themselves as potentially having equal access to society's resources represented real gains that have

benefited historically discriminated groups in this country.

At the same time, their aspirations also represented the social pressure exerted through mainstream media, educational institutions, public policy makers, and indeed the African American community of middle-class professionals towards one standard of social success. The literature on gender attitudes, for example, suggests that in contrast to the popular notion that has arisen from the feminist movement of the 1970's, young women, including African American women, characteristically associate material comfort, professional attainment, and "successful family life" with a nuclear, patriarchal family form (Dugger, 1988). For the African American battered women in this study, a woman "on her own" was almost by definition a poor woman, an unsuccessful woman, and a bad mother. Indeed, this conventional opinion was reinforced by the reality of the social experiences with which the women were familiar. The incorporation of the dominant ideological view into the African American battered women's frames of reference and, ultimately into their sense of themselves and their futures, was profound at a very young age. The African American women who were later battered were more taken in by these aspirations because they felt privileged and special in their families, unlike the African American women who were not battered and the White battered women who were less interested and/or hopeful about attaining the benefits commonly associated with middle-class status.

5. Cultural Reinforcement of Aspirations

The African American battered women's aspirations were shaped by cultural solidarity and racial awareness as well as dominant ideology. For them, the establishment and maintenance of a nuclear family was seen as not only desirable, but as a way to provide the protective support that they perceived African American families would need against problems in the future. Some African American battered women's views had a distinctly conservative tone, similar to the rhetoric of African American scholars like William Julius Wilson, who criticizes alternative family structures in African American communities (Wilson, 1987). Another cluster of responses were from those African American battered women who articulated a neo-nationalist position, emphasizing the principles of the recent disciples of Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X (Myers, 1988).

With striking uniformity, the African American battered women in the sample expressed a loyalty to their families that included solidarity with and, by extension, protection of men towards whom racial and economic discrimination was directed. There was a distinct absence of expressed awareness of the subjects' own vulnerabilities to similar social and economic forces as African American women in contemporary society. This early solidarity with African American men was contradicted later when the African American battered women described their ambivalence towards men who abused their male privileges and misused the perception that as men they were the most oppressed sector of the community as a rationalization

for their violence.

In contrast, neither the African American non-battered women nor the White battered women were influenced by philosophical or political assumptions that led to feelings of solidarity with men. While the African American non-battered women expressed loyalty to their families and communities, their expressions did not include a sense of being responsible for creating conditions of change. The sentiments expressed by the White battered women diverged even further from African American battered women's. They were alienated from their families, estranged from men in general, and relatively powerless and detached from broader political or social issues. The non-battered African American and the White battered women's vulnerability to gender entrapment was lessened by their perception of themselves and their needs as distinct from the men in their lives, whereas the African American battered women felt more connected to and sympathetic towards men.

THE CONTEXT AND MEANING OF VIOLENCE IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

Violence against women -- particularly within the context of intimate relationships -- drastically shifts the structure and meaning of the household unit and radically alters the dynamic of adults' intimate interaction, and affects women's behavior in profound and lasting ways (Blackman, 1989). As such, the onset of violence and its ongoing effects are key factors in gender entrapment. For the African American battered women in this study,

as for most women who experience physical and emotional abuse in the domestic sphere, the onset of violence set in motion a series of complex responses that included internal processes (like denial) and concrete actions (like calling the police). These simultaneous and sometimes contradictory responses were not always in the direction of rationality because, as the analysis showed, the internal processes were influenced by their gender-identity development, and the concrete actions were regulated by ongoing institutional practices like ineffective police responses. Studies on the use of hospital emergency rooms by battered women reveal, for example, that women eventually stop using public services even though their injuries get worse over time (Stark, 1977). The literature attributed this pattern to the finding that some battered women actually feel worse when the services ignore the violence, as this experience reinforces their sense of shame, guilt, and powerlessness (Campbell, 1989).

The analysis of the findings about the physical, emotional, and social consequences of being battered and the subsequent meanings the African American battered women attached to violence in their intimate relationships can be summarized according to six factors that distinguish their experiences as gender entrapment from the other groups in this sample.

1. Pressure to Conform to Ideology

The commitment to dominant ideology and indeed the emotional work and social pressure to conform to it deeply influenced the African American battered women's adult intimate relationships.

They, like the White women, were highly influenced by the hegemonic assumptions about the appropriate public and private roles for women, and their attempts to approximate these roles were rewarded intermittently by traditional relationships with men, praise from their families, admiration of their peers, and social status as a "real family."

Most of the African American battered women and the White battered women became involved with one of the first men who expressed or demonstrated an interest in having a relationship with them; however, the African American women felt considerably more pressure because of their male partners' limited public success. Once in the relationship, both the African American and the White women assumed traditional roles in relation to their male partners: the woman was the nurturer concerned with creating intimacy and providing emotional comfort, while their male partners made most major decisions, initiated sexual activity, and led more active public lives. The constant and considered work to accomplish the tasks traditionally associated with being women in contemporary society consumed a significant amount of their emotional and social resources.

This was particularly true for the African American women who, like their men, were more likely to be structurally excluded from most opportunities to express conventional gender roles than the White women and men (Hochschild, 1989; West and Zimmerman, 1987). The African American battered women's participation in the work force

as the primary income producers for their households, for example, was inconsistent with the ideology of women's roles. Even though the African American battered women did work outside their homes, the gendered division of labor in the reproductive sphere was not affected. This included those who did the "work" of securing and maintaining public benefits and/or those who worked illegally. In each case the African American battered women in this sample characteristically assumed the burden of household tasks, usually without adequate material resources, and also a significant share of the economic burden. The literature supports the notion that working outside the home does not necessarily lead to more privileged positions in the private sphere for White women (Hoshschild, 1989). In the case of African American women, working outside the home may increase their economic independence; however, it does not decrease their emotional dependency on and/or desire for interdependency with the men in their lives. (Dugger, 1988). Quite the contrary, the African American battered women in this study indicated that the harder they worked outside their homes, the more strongly they held to their fantasies of traditional gender roles and domestic arrangements, which included emphasizing African American men's power, strength, and dominant roles in their families. This commitment later turned into a significant element of risk for gender entrapment.

The White battered women did not need to work as hard to conform to ideology since their family structures were already consistent

with it.

In contrast to the African American battered women's efforts to create an illusion of a traditional relationship, the White women's reality was that traditional relationships of male dominance were all they knew. Their risk was ironically reduced by their subordinate status to the men in their lives. The White battered women expected men to be dominant and to occasionally abuse their power, and the women were alert to their potential vulnerability when the men became violent.

2. Disbelief and Disorganization.

As is characteristic of most battered women, when the violence in their intimate relationships began, the subjects' initial reaction was disbelief (Browne, 1987). The onset of physical and emotional abuse so deeply contradicted the dominant ideology and the African American battered women's expectations of their intimate relationships that most of them initially denied the seriousness and rationalized the abuse in the hopes that it would eventually stop (Walker, 1989). Again, it is important to understand that some of the African American women who were battered as adults grew up with feelings of almost omnipotence, and when their power was threatened by school failure or being under-employed, they directed their hopes for achievement and success to the domestic sphere of their family lives. For most of them, violence simply did not fit with their expectations and hopes for themselves in relationships. Even those women who were abused as children or who saw their mothers abused

responded to the early assaults as an aberration rather than an emerging pattern of events in their intimate relationships.

As the violence in their intimate relationships escalated over time, it posed a more serious threat to their sense of self and their accomplishments in the domestic sphere of their lives. Most of the African American battered women described the precise moment when their identities changed from "successful female intimate partners working on their dreams" to "victims of a circumstance over which they could not gain control." It is significant to note that most of the African American battered women did not consider themselves to be victims of their male partners per se; rather they felt like they got "something" they neither deserved nor anticipated. Consequently, most tried to do "something" to stop the violence without leaving their relationships. This characteristic response is a key element in the gender entrapment of the African American battered women.

In contrast, the White battered women did not experience as much disbelief when the violence began. Being abused, disrespected, and humiliated was part of their previous experiences in the private sphere and was consistent with the White women's sense of themselves and their expectations of adult intimate relationships. They recognized abuse for what it was earlier than the African American battered women did, and they responded to it more quickly and effectively -- even if only to accept the abuse and not be as emotionally vulnerable to its consequences.

3. Emotional Work to Manage the Discrepancy

The discrepancy that emerged between the socially and culturally determined ideals about family life and the African American battered women's reality in their public and private worlds set in motion a pattern of emotional and behavioral responses intended to ease the tension created by the contradictions they felt (Westen, 1985). Some of the African American battered women denied the tense feelings created by the discrepancy between their reality and the ideal, while others deferred opportunities or made decisions about their lives that they knew would limit their options in order to feel more in concert with the ideological norm. A few worked emotionally, behaviorally, and socially to create public identities to disguise their private realities (Goffman, 1959). Most used a combination of these strategies to more closely approximate the hegemonic notion of a woman's role in public and private life. This contradiction between dominant ideology, their lived experiences that were inconsistent with this ideology, their hopes for the future, and their ambivalent cultural solidarity with violent men created an ongoing tension for the African American battered women. The tension was an influential and dynamic force in their lives, affecting their gender roles in their family, altering their relationships with the social world, and influencing their understanding and response to public and private events.

The White women, who did not experience a discrepancy in the same way, turned their energies and efforts to trying to leave the

abusive relationships by plotting escapes, and in some cases seeking services and attention for their plight from public agencies. They were typically less emotionally ambivalent, and they faced more practical concerns, such as how to support themselves and their children alone. This was an important distinction because while the White women had some difficulty gaining services, their abuse was visible to others and did not escalate to the horrifying levels that the African American battered women's did while they were being distracted by the discrepancy between their expectations and reality.

4. Social Stigma

Feeling unable to control events in the domestic sphere ultimately led to a profound sense of failure and guilt for the African American battered women. They described repeated attempts to stop the violence, to manage it more effectively or to conceal the consequences of the abuse. The amount of energy and resources that went into living with violence in their intimate relationships was enormous, draining them emotionally, spiritually, physically, and materially.

Simultaneously, the African American battered women were feeling the humiliation of public stigma. Their social status, which had increased because of their (assumed) permanent relationships with men, was threatened as the subjects' "dreams became nightmares." The sense of public failure and accompanying loss of social, community, and family status were important factors that reinforced the private shame and guilt many of the African American battered women felt.

Some of their families overtly blamed the women either for the abuse or for not being able to cope with it. Other African American battered women lost their jobs, were unable to adequately care for their children, and some became homeless. Their experiences confirm the research that suggests that in New York City, for example, at least 35 percent of women residing in homeless shelters report that they are there because of violence in their intimate relationships, and 40 percent of children placed in foster care have mothers that were battered.

Being a "battered woman" did not carry as much social stigma for the White women. They did not feel as invested in concealing the abuse, protecting the reputation of the abusers or as worried that their images would be tarnished if knowledge of the abuse became public. That the White women felt that they had "less to lose" was related to the racial/ethnic vulnerability to social stigma that the African American battered women felt. Unlike the White battered women, the African American battered women felt concerned about their community's response to them if they revealed that they were being battered because they were thought to have had such promise. They were also worried about society's potentially negative response to them as African American women if they disclosed negative information about their family lives. The White battered women, being less burdened by social stigma, were more protective of themselves than of the White men who battered them, and less affected by the risk of disclosing negative information about their lives.

5. Lack of Services and Isolation

The combined effect of private guilt and public humiliation led the African American battered women in this study to ultimately become very isolated as they attempted to resolve their problems with violence alone. They avoided their families either out of shame or fear for their families' safety, and they tended not to use social services and to avoid criminal justice solutions to the battering. The few who did use public services found them un-helpful. Service providers were unresponsive, they minimized the abuse, and they were insensitive to the cultural nuances and beliefs the women held about their relationships with men. Some African American battered women recounted overtly racist experiences with human service providers that led them to feel again protective of the African American men who abused them.

In addition, the overall lack of crisis intervention services in low-income communities of color meant that their attempts to reach out for help typically failed and left the African American battered women ultimately at greater risk of abuse as long police response time, lack of shelter space, and lack of safe affordable housing exacerbated their vulnerability to abuse. The African American battered women in this study were left socially isolated, physically hurt, and emotionally traumatized, and the violence escalated.

The White battered women tended to know about, to seek, and to utilize services much more readily. While they were also very isolated in terms of social networks, the White women described

feeling more entitled to the use of social services and requested public intervention when they were in crisis. Without overstating the availability of services for the White battered women in this study, when they sought assistance, service providers tended to be more responsive to their plight. The White battered women did not feel as stigmatized or as misunderstood as the African American battered women did, and they were more likely than the African American battered women to have episodic encounters with agencies or programs that were trying to help them, however inadequately.

5. Escalation of the Violence and Increased Vulnerability

Characteristically, the violence escalated over time for both the African American and the White women. However, since the White women were more likely to be connected to public agencies, they were in less danger than the African American battered women, who began to fear that the physical assaults would kill them. The African American battered women felt that no one would believe the extent and nature of the abuse or that they had not left the relationship, given their historical self-confidence and personal ability. Thus began the downward spiral into more violence, more injury, more shame, more isolation, and more abuse for the African American battered women. Even those who fought back did so with ambivalence, knowing that fighting back could escalate the violence.

Contrary to the increasingly popular notion that battered women have masochistic tendencies, all of the battered women in this study despised the violence and wanted it to stop. The distinguishing

factor between the two groups of battered women in this study was the means they chose to try to accomplish this. None of the African American battered women interviewed for this study wanted their batterer to be arrested and go to jail. Nor did they want their relationships to end. Instead, they described the various ways they worked to control their abusive partners' behavior, far beyond the limits of their abilities. The African American battered women's failure to successfully create safer households represented a serious challenge to their identities and sense of competence in the private sphere, and as their efforts to help themselves failed, the violence got worse. Ultimately, they found themselves isolated and in very dangerous situations, vulnerable to extreme forms of abuse.

In contrast, the White women's experiences fell into a different pattern. They did not distinguish the relationship from the violence, and believed that in order to escape from the violence they would have to leave the man who was abusing them. They had no illusions that their partner would stop the abuse, and felt like they would exercise any options they could to leave, including having the batterer arrested. Three of the four White battered women in this study volunteered that they had considered killing their abuser if they had to in order to get away from him. That none of the African American battered women reported that they considered this options indicates how gender entrapment had them engaged in a process of sacrificing themselves rather than "ruining" their batterers' lives.

THE ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT

The final category in the sequence of events that constitutes gender entrapment for the African American battered women in this study was the subjects' participation in illegal activities. Through the analysis of the life-history interviews, a pattern emerged that distinguished the African American battered women from the other two groups in this study and showed them to have come to criminal activities in response to violence in their intimate relationships in particular ways.

For the African American battered women, the series of shifts in their identities, the lack of social services and public support, and conflicting emotional states were central factors in their participation in illegal activities. Their sense of being powerful African American children that was created in their households of origin was threatened by their lack of occupational, educational, and economic success as adult women in the public sphere. The subjects' longing for respect and a sense of accomplishment that they were led to believe was possible was unfulfilled in the social world. However, they continued to feel that a productive family life was within the reach of their abilities, even with the onset of the initial abuse in their intimate relationships.

As the violence became more severe, the African American battered women realized that even their goal to establish and maintain domestic lives that were consistent with the ideological norm was impossible, despite their constant efforts. The trauma was

emotional as well as physical; the African American battered women were very seriously injured, their mobility was restricted and they became very isolated. Most of them were permanently disfigured. Some of the African American battered women were threatened with death if they left the relationships. The research on domestic homicide renders their fear legitimate. Homicide or attempted homicide is a more likely consequence of leaving an abusive situation than staying in one (Hart, 1988).

Faced with this situation, most of the African American battered women were not only terrified and hurt, they were frustrated and angry at the lack of assistance or lack of recognition that their victimization received from their neighbors, social service workers, and health care providers. Even though most of the African American battered women did not reach out for help, they paradoxically described feeling particularly abandoned and betrayed by their families, having grown up with extended social support networks. They resisted turning to the criminal justice system in particular out of loyalty to African American men, and yet they resented their isolation, their vulnerability, and their sense of powerlessness. It is here that their gender entrapment becomes particularly evident, putting them into a no-win psychological mind-set that left them genuinely helpless to help themselves.

The research conducted by psychologist Lenore Walker (1989), who adapted the theory of learned helplessness to the experiences of battered women, offers important insights into this aspect of the

gender entrapment theoretical model. According to Walker:

People suffering from learned helplessness are more likely to choose behavioral responses that will have the highest predictability of an effect within the known or familiar situation; they avoid responses -- like escape, for instance -- that launch them into the unknown. It is a reasonable measure of the battered women's human fear to state that she believes the demons she knows well are probably preferable to the demons she does not know at all.

For the African American battered women in this study, the private sphere of their intimate relationships was an area of their lives that was familiar, where they initially felt competent, and even though it was extremely dangerous, where they felt more secure than in the public sphere. While they felt relatively ineffective in protecting themselves and in some cases their children from the violence, at least their partners' abuse was predictable, unlike their occupational and other social experiences. While Walker's analysis of learned helplessness does not include a race-specific focus, by implication, it helps to explain how some women, especially those women who have felt betrayed by social institutions, would feel that it was indeed safer and more reasonable to participate in illegal activities than to position themselves as victims of a crime. The African American battered women were so strongly influenced by their past failure to gain access to public resources

and to accomplish social success that they felt appropriately sceptical and fearful about society's ability and/or willingness to respond to and/or protect them from the African American men who were abusing them. Hence, they remained in dangerous situations that not only threatened their physical and emotional health, but compromised their legal status as well.

The theory of learned helplessness illustrates the ways that the gender entrapment of the African American battered women was grounded in the dynamic relationship between the public and private spheres of their lives. The subjects' commitment to the dominant social ideology about family; their adherence to cultural ideology that led to loyalty to African American men; the fear, humiliation, and injury associated with violence from their intimate partners; and the stigma and marginalized status of African American battered women converged to create the circumstances of gender entrapment. The African American battered women were set up, threatened or lured into compromising acts that led to them being arrested and detained at Rikers Island Correctional Facility for one of the following six reasons.

1. Battered Women and Illegal Drug Use

Illegal drugs were readily available in most of the communities where the population of women detained at Rikers Island lived before they were arrested, and most of their families or social networks had been deeply affected by the recent epidemics of crack cocaine and the resurgence of intravenous heroin use (Lown, 1992; Rosenbaum, 1981). There are several factors that distinguished the African American

battered women's experiences as gender entrapment from the other two groups arrested on drug-related charges. The first and most significant finding was that most of the African American battered women who became addicted to drugs began seriously using in response to being battered rather than prior to the onset of the abuse. Contrary to the findings from the African American non-battered women who associated drug use with an increase of violence in their lives, the African American battered women tended to believe that using drugs enhanced their safety -- for many it was a way to create a sense of intimacy with their violent partners or to avoid a violent episode (Spunt, 1990).

The meaning or purpose that consumption or sales of illegal substances assumed for the three groups also distinguished the African American battered women's experiences as gender entrapment. Whereas the African American non-battered woman and the White woman became involved with illegal drugs for social purposes -- as a part of peer relationships or as an economic activity -- the African American battered women reported being forced into the consumption of illegal drugs by their partners, some of whom went so far as to inject them with addictive substances against their will.

The chemical dependency literature and authorities in the substance abuse treatment field have established that one of the most devastating aspects of addiction in contemporary society is the rapid decline in economic status and health (Shenson, 1990). All of the women who became addicted to drugs eventually turned to selling them

or engaged in other illegal activities to support their drug habits that sometimes reached \$600 a day. For the African American battered women who were forced or coerced into illegal drug activity by the dynamics of gender entrapment, their physical deterioration was hastened by the injuries sustained during the violence that had already comprised their health status. Their gender entrapment was characterized by the vicious cycle of using drugs as an attempt to avoid violence from their batterers, trying to numb their physical and emotional pain through the use of drugs or alcohol, looking for their next "fix," and trying to avoid the police.

2. The Relationship between Poverty, Economic Crimes and Violence Against Women

Eighty percent of all women detained at Rikers Island Correctional Facility were living at or below the poverty level at the time of their arrests. Second to drug-related offences (which have been considered a significant factor in the political economy of urban communities in contemporary society), economically motivated crimes constituted a large percentage of the arrests of women in New York City, especially those women from impoverished communities. Almost all of the women in this study lived marginally: constantly at risk of unemployment, without economic cushions, often having to provide for their extended families as well as their children.

The factor in the economically motivated crimes that distinguished some as gender entrapment is that the conditions of poverty were accentuated for the African American battered women by

their batterers' rigid control of the families' economic resources, even for the women who were the primary wage earners in the households. Unlike the White battered women and the African American non-battered women, the African American battered women typically did not control their illegally-obtained earnings or accumulate enough money to open options. Instead, they were involved in property-related crimes, they forged checks, stole credit cards, or robbed stores in response to their batterers' demands and to avoid their threatening or violent behavior. As such, the economically motivated crimes that the African American battered women committed were consistent with the theory of gender entrapment, whereas the other group's were not.

3. Violence Against Women and Illegal Sex Work

By some accounts, women's participation in prostitution and other involvement in the illegal sex industry could also be considered economically motivated. Indeed, many women who are excluded from other occupational options, support themselves, their families, and other members through occasional or casual sex work. These were not the women who were arrested and actually detained at Rikers Island on charges of prostitution. Apart from the feminist debate about whether prostitution is a source of women's sexual and economic liberation or not (Pheterson, 1989), the African American battered women in this study who were involved in the sex industry were forced into organized prostitution as an extension of their abuse, characterizing their experiences as gender entrapment. Unlike

the White battered women and the African American non-battered women who worked more independently in the sex industry, the African American battered women who worked as prostitutes had no control over the money they earned or the conditions of their work. Their batterers selected their "customers," the women worked very long hours in dangerous places for very little pay, and were forced to perform or participate in sexual acts of which they were ashamed. The violent men used the fact that the women were prostitutes to discredit them and as a reason to abuse, humiliate, and exploit them, forcing the subjects into prostitution and the shameful silence associated with gender entrapment.

4. Assaults and Property Damage by Battered Women

The theory of gender entrapment that links gender-identity development and violence to illegal activity also explains how some African American women were so profoundly affected by the abuse that their psyches, imaginations, and reactions to subsequent physical threats were characterized by "over-reacting with undue force" in their efforts to protect themselves when they perceived a threat to their safety. For some, this experience could be conceptualized as a "flashback," which is documented in the literature as a common feature of post-traumatic stress syndrome (Krammer, 1991). Others were led to commit crimes by a less organized series of thoughts and events when they were reminded of their abusers. In either case, the gender entrapment of some African American battered women in this study took the form of being criminally sanctioned for their

involvement in illegal activities that resulted from having been battered for years and left unprotected by criminal, social and familial systems. When the African American battered women took action to protect themselves (as they were socialized to do in their families of origin), they were essentially penalized for not relying on the systems that they felt had failed them in the past. In contrast, the White women who were arrested for assault or property damage did not attribute their crimes to having been battered. They tended to be emotionally detached from the abuser, to leave the violent relationships or to receive assistance from an outside agency. As a result, they were not left as vulnerable to prolonged and persistent violence, and since social service agencies could document the history of abuse, their defense could more easily be organized around "self-defense." They were ultimately less vulnerable in their intimate relationships and less likely to be involved in and prosecuted for illegal activities they committed in response to being battered.

5. Violence Against Women and Child Abuse

The research on family violence corroborates the fact that the children whose mothers are battered are at a much higher risk of abuse from accidental injury, emotional trauma resulting from observing violence, and of being abused themselves by a parent than are other children (Bower, 1988). However, contrary to the popular conception that battered women respond to being abused by retaliating against their children, battered women are much less likely to abuse

their children than their abusive husbands are. Even though they may not be the primary assailant, it is still difficult for most social scientists, legal theorists, and feminist activists to conceive of how an adult — especially a child's own mother — can observe or know about a child being hurt or killed and not intervene. The human instinct is to hold the adult morally and legally accountable for failing to protect a child without regard for how badly the adult might have been simultaneously hurt. This is particularly true if the adult happens to be the abused child's mother.

Indeed, the stories of the African American battered women who were being detained at Rikers Island for crimes of child endangerment and infanticide were, for me, the most difficult to bear. The analogy of being battered to being held hostage by terrorists, which is made by some experts on violence in intimate relationships, offers a helpful context for understanding how a battered woman could not intervene to save her child's life (Graham, 1988). As the life-history interviews with the African American battered women in this study bore out, child abuse and neglect leading to the murder of a child was in fact due to male violence and the battered women's inability to protect their children from abusive husbands. This, of all the illegal activity that resulted from violence in intimate relationships, illustrated the most disturbing and indeed the most lethal consequences of gender entrapment.

6. The Socially Constructed Loyalty of African American Battered Women and Illegal Activity

The factors that distinguished the African American battered

women's path to illegal activity as gender entrapment were complicated by the issue of socially constructed loyalty to African American men. As the literature on paternalism in the criminal justice system suggests, in the past ten years there has been a significant shift away from the tendency to arrest, charge and sentence women with more leniency than male offenders (Crew, 1991). Still, most of the African American battered women in the sample believed that if they were arrested they would be treated less harshly by the criminal justice authorities than their male partners or other African American men. Some "took the rap" for their mutual criminal behavior, using the language of ideology, cultural loyalty and ethnic solidarity to explain why they were in jail instead of their male partners. Other African American battered women in the sample reported that their male partners threatened them with violence if they did not enter a guilty plea as the primary defendant in their cases. Other abusive African American men "set up" the battered women so that they would be arrested by leaving them uncovered, by neglecting to post bail, or by planting illegal drugs or weapons on them. In either situation, gender and ethnicity became important variables in the gender-entrapment analysis because they affected how the African American battered women presented themselves in the public sphere and how the criminal justice system responded to them and African American men. This finding is particularly important to the gender-entrapment theory in light of the current research on the interface of race/ethnicity, gender and sentencing

patterns.

Diane Lewis (1981) and other African American feminist criminologists suggest that understanding the experiences of women of color in the criminal justice system requires an examination of how the stereotypical myths about Black women (e.g. they are more violent, less controllable and less feminine) contradict the dominant ideology about women's roles (passive, family-based) (Bickle, 1991). The gender-entrapment model of women's illegal activities, taken with this body of research, explains how African American battered women arrive at criminal justice institutions in this country. As this study of gender entrapment established, some African American battered women were in jail because they lost their eligibility to criminal justice protection and social support when they became involved in illegal activities as an extension of being abused by African American men who were considered more socially oppressed than they were. They were arrested because they failed in their roles as mothers, they were forced to use their sexuality as a commodity, or they were seeking comfort, intimacy and/or income through illegal drug activity. Some regained a sense of self-protection and felt like they'd "never let a man touch them again." In any case, their path to crime was complicated by the popular stereotypical image of the strength (hence, lack of feminine attributes) of African American women that erased the possibility in the consciousness of the mainstream public and the African American community (and perhaps in their own minds as well) that they could have been as brutally

battered as they were.

Being poor complicated the gender entrapment because, like most other women at Rikers Island, the African American battered women interviewed for this study did not have the economic resources to post bail, hire a specialized attorney that could incorporate issues of violence into their defense, or otherwise negotiate the class-biased criminal justice system. In the end, the African American battered women in this study were vulnerable to abuse because of the public and private conditions of their lives. They then committed crimes in response to the abuse, and they were penalized for the behaviors they were engaged in that were consistent with their gender-identity and their social positions. Their culturally constructed relationships with African American men who were vulnerable to biased criminal justice practices, among other forms of discrimination, solidified the gender entrapment of the African American battered women.

A COMPARATIVE SUMMARY OF THE THREE SUBGROUPS

While the research design for this project did not require the use of a random sample or control group, through the use of the two "comparison groups" and a "model group," as directed by the principles of theoretical sampling (Strauss, 1990), the specific mechanisms of gender entrapment with regard to race/ethnicity and violence were uncovered. Even though the comparison groups were relatively small, further conclusions about gender entrapment was

gleaned from a comparative analysis of the three subgroups that comprised the sample in this study.

The model group for this study was African American battered women. The first comparison group was the African American women who were not battered, selected to isolate the variable of violence. The second comparison group was White women who were battered. Interviewing the White women allowed a closer look at the impact of race/ethnicity and African American culture on the gender entrapment of African American battered women who committed crimes. In the following discussion, the differences between the three groups will be summarized in order to identify the key distinguishing variables of the gender-entrapment theory.

The African American Battered and Non-Battered Women: The Impact of Violence

A comparison of the African American battered women's gender-identity development to the gender-identity development of the African American women who were not battered showed that both groups were influenced in significant ways by the organization of their households of origin. However, the non-battered women were less affected by the dominant ideology, their families were more isolated from social institutions in the dominant social structure, and they had looser networks of social support in their communities. The African American women who were not battered were less likely to be influenced by hegemonic values than either of the other two groups.

Additionally, the African American women who were not battered

expressed less sensitivity to the social and economic position of African American men than the African American battered women did, and they identified more strongly with their mothers and women caretakers as members of an oppressed group. They understood that some African American men abused their experience of racial inequality as an excuse to subordinate African American women, which led them to establish an oppositional stance towards men in their lives. The African American non-battered women grew up expecting to be treated badly by men, and were therefore less likely to tolerate or excuse physical abuse.

The one area in which they did express solidarity with African American men was in the distrust of the criminal justice system. However, since the women were not victimized by the men, they did not need to depend on its agents for protection against them. Ironically, the African American non-battered women identified themselves as "victims of the system" more than "criminal" or "offenders," whereas the African American battered women had a more complex analysis of their multiple identities that had shifted over time.

In terms of the paths that African American non-battered women took to criminal activities, they were much more frequently arrested for drug-related offenses (possession and/or sales) or charged with robbery or burglary than the other groups. As such, they were more like the "typical" women detainees in correctional institutions across the country. Few of the subjects in this subgroup expected or imagined paternal tendency of criminal justice practices, and hence

were not likely to "take the bus" for the men in their lives.

The African American and the White Women Who Were Battered: The Impact of Race

Further refinement of the gender-entrapment model that was developed in this study was gained from a comparison between the African American battered women and the experience of the White battered women in the sample. For the White women, gender identity was also constructed in their families of origin; however, even though their families more closely mirrored the ideological norm in structure, they were in fact more dysfunctional. The White battered women's attempts to attain the ideologically normative family structure were characterized by less failure, and therefore created less internal tension and less ambivalence about their rights and privileges as women; however, their families were generally patriarchal, rigid, oppressive environments.

Another significant difference between the White battered women and the African American battered women was the absence of culturally constructed sensitivity to men's needs. The White women felt inferior to the men in their lives from a very early age. Unlike the African American battered women, they did not feel that they had the means, strength, or interest in protecting their men.

In terms of their relationship to the legal system, the White battered women developed mistrust of the criminal justice system after being arrested in contrast to the African American women, who felt mistrustful even before their direct involvement.

Therefore, the White women used crisis intervention programs for battered women and law enforcement services when they were victims of crimes even though they were involved in illegal activities themselves. The White women did not develop a contradictory identity (criminal vs. victim of a crime), as did the other subjects. They tended to leave the battering relationships sooner and, therefore, suffered less abuse than the African American battered women. The White battered women recognized and understood the patterns of abuse for what they were and, as such, they were less entrapped in violent situations than the African American battered women. The paths that the White women took to criminal activities were also different. They were not held hostage or terrorized in the same way, nor did they attack their batterers or other men who represented their batterers. They were less likely to be arrested for arson, other property damage, or assault of other men because they had external protection and support. Their assaults of their batterers were characterized as self-defense.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Two obvious questions emerge from this research. "How could the course of the African American battered women's lives been different?" and "What is the solution to the problem of gender entrapment?" As this study was designed to develop the theoretical model, the answers are appropriately linked to further research that would include: 1) attempting to develop a standardized instrument

to measure gender entrapment, and 2) testing the theoretical model with other populations. However, at this time, these concluding questions serve a more rhetorical purpose: to highlight three policy issues that are raised by the gender-entrapment model.

1. The Stigma of Deviance

First, the findings from this study point to the ways that gender, race/ethnicity, and violence interact with social stigma and deviance to negatively affect some social actors' life histories. In this sample, the women who experienced gender entrapment had six stigmatized identities. In the most general sense, they were marginalized as women in a patriarchal society. Second, as African American women, their identities were influenced by ethnic stigma and discriminatory treatment associated with prejudice, stereotypes, and institutionalized racism. As poor women, the third source of social stigma, they did not have access to the means by which they could reach the hegemonic standards of "appropriate womanhood" or "good parenting." The stigma of being battered women symbolized their failure to accomplish the socially constructed expectations and desires for safety and comfort in their domestic spheres. When the women became criminals, they violated still another normative standard based on the assumption of obedience and morality. This was especially significant in those cases where the subjects' crimes were associated with their roles as mothers or sexual actors. Finally, as incarcerated women, they broke the last taboo and experienced the stigma of being arrested, charged, and detained in a correctional

facility for socially deviant behaviors and/or illegal activities.

The African American battered women who are in jails for crimes that resulted from gender entrapment are among the most stigmatized group in contemporary society. While the emotional effects of their stigmatized identities and the consequences of their deviant behavior may represent mental health and/or rehabilitative concerns, the root causes of the stigma they experience and its relationship to social variables raises important sociological questions. The policy implications surround developing strategies to interrupt the social, economic, and political forces that lead to "deviance" and to reverse the long-term effects of stigma based on gender, ethnicity, and the experience of violence.

2. The Legal Implications of the Question of Agency

In this study, which was designed to develop the theoretical model of gender entrapment, I attempted to explain how dynamic and dichotomous forces (historical circumstances and contemporary social conditions, events in the public and private sphere, and both conscious and unconscious processes) influenced these women's behavior. The theoretical model of gender entrapment, which is based on the understanding that some women are "lured into compromising acts," raises the legal questions of intentionality and duress. From a philosophical perspective, the questions include: "What are the limits of free will and individual choice?" and "In what ways did the women in this study lack or exercise agency?" While involvement in illegal activities could be considered an exercise of their

agency, it may be possible to interpret their crimes in legal terms that would limit their culpability. This policy issue suggests the need for further analysis of gender entrapment from the perspective of feminist legal scholarship in order to explore the utility of the model in the defense of some battered women who commit crimes.

The Battered Women's Syndrome, which is based on the theory of learned helplessness, serves as an illustration of how legal theory can be influenced in the direction of sympathy towards battered women through a more in-depth, feminist analysis of women's experience. Expert witnesses who use the Battered Women's Syndrome have been extraordinarily successful in defending battered women who kill their abusers in self-defense. However, as yet, they have not expanded their analysis and practice to include the types of crimes included in this study, (technically non-self-defense cases) or the issues of race/ethnicity that the gender-entrapment theoretical model focuses on.

3. The Relationship between the Plight of African American Men and Battered African American Women

The third issue that the gender-entrapment theoretical model raises is related to the current debate in some parts of the African American and other progressive communities concerning the "plight of Black men" in contemporary society. The facts of the debate surround issues such as the skyrocketing incarceration and homicide rates, the troubling unemployment statistics, and the highly publicized cases of police brutality directed towards young African American men. These

issues are of legitimate sociological concern, reflecting a larger social, political, and economic crisis that is disproportionately affecting the African American community, resulting in a sense of collective devastation and individual despair. Unfortunately, in some instances, the alienation and hopelessness have led to aggression and violence turned inward. This response and the underlying causes of the crisis situation in the African American community require critical attention, policy reform and the immediate infusion of resources.

It has been my experience, however, that the framework for the analysis and the construction of the responses to the crisis is seriously flawed in its oversight of the relationship between the erosion of community services, racism and gender inequality. This oversight not only renders African American women's experiences invisible and/or insignificant, but has led to the questions being posed in such a way to position African American women as one of the sources of African American men's oppression.

At the very least, I hope that the findings from this research will not be used superficially by social scientists to further the anti-Black male sentiment in contemporary society. Instead, my hope is that the gender entrapment theoretical model will expand the terms of the debate and deepen the analysis to include a critical feminist perspective on the particular ways that gender inequality affects African American women in relation to African American men as well as how institutionalized sexism and racism have severely limited the

lives of African American people in contemporary society.

This reframing of the issues in order to broaden the context of the debate requires both a qualitative as well as quantitative assessment of the social circumstances of African American men and women, and a comparative analysis by gender. Public policies and social programs must not reproduce gender inequality as a strategy to decrease African American men's social, economic, and political inequality, but must take seriously the needs of African American women and girls as well as African American men and boys. For example, educational interventions, community services, and political organizing must not only include African American women and girls as clients or participants, but must address the ways that, despite their oppressed status, individual African American men's behavior may indeed be abusive towards women, and how social institutions — including those in the African American community — are dominated by men. The empirical, epistemological, and concrete outcomes of this broader project, therefore, take into account the intersectionality of race, class and gender oppression, as this study of gender entrapment attempted to do.

It could be said that this study of gender entrapment described the most extreme negative consequences when gender inequality, economic marginalization, violence against women, biased criminal justice practices, and racism intersect. The African American battered women whose lives served as the empirical basis for development of this theoretical model represent not only the loss of

comfort, productive potential, and opportunity for self-determination, but indeed the loss of life that results from the combination of gender violence, social inequality, and crime. Had the dynamics between the circumstances in the public and the private sphere of their lives been different, some of the African American battered women in this study might have been extraordinarily successful. Their strength, self-confidence, cultural and family loyalty, and the optimism that ultimately led to gender entrapment was potentially their greatest asset. Instead of positioning them for success, the convergence of their experiences in the public and private spheres left them vulnerable to social marginalization, violence in their intimate relationships, and ultimately to incarceration for crimes they committed in response to their gender entrapment.

My hope is that this study and the theory of gender entrapment will contribute to an understanding of their life-stories that will challenge the debate about the deadly consequences of institutionalized racism to include a gendered analysis. I also hope that the theoretical and methodological considerations will contribute to a body of feminist scholarship that privileges the voices of those most overlooked and misunderstood in the current discourse, including poor, battered, and incarcerated women of color, in order to reverse the effects of marginalization, inequality, and stigma. Finally, I hope that the findings will lead to change in legal practice and that they will influence public

policy in the area of criminal justice reform on behalf of battered women, so that fewer African American women will be battered and incarcerated because of gender entrapment.

Appendix A.

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY OF SAMPLE

	AFRICAN AMERICAN		WHITE
	Battered	Non-battered	Battered
N	26	5	6
HOUSEHOLD OF ORIGIN			
Socioeconomic Status			
poor/public assistance	18	4	3
working poor/working class	8	1	3
Composition of Household			
adult woman and man	10	2	4
woman only	11	1	1
more than one woman	4	2	0
institutional setting	1	0	1
Number of Siblings			
0	4	0	0
1-3	15	4	4
4-6	4	0	2
>7	3	1	1
Subjects' Level of Education			
7-11 grade	10	4	3
graduated high school	3	1	2
earned GED	9	0	0
1-3 years college	4	0	1
EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE			
Early Childhood Abuse			
physical only	4	0	0
sexual only	12	1	0
both	0	1	5
no abuse	10	3	1

	AFRICAN AMERICAN		WHITE
	Battered	Non-battered	Battered
Observed Mother abused	14	1	4
Battered As Adults			
physical abuse	26	NA	6
sexual abuse also	20	NA	5
Use of Services			
police/victims services	3	NA	5
health care providers	7	NA	5
battered women's program	1	NA	4
extended family/friends	5	NA	6
other services (drug programs, counseling, religious organizaions)	1	NA	6
ILLEGAL ACTIVITY			
Number of past incarcerations			
0	15	0	4
1	3	2	0
2-4	6	0	2
>5	2	3	0
Paths to Illegal Activity			
Path 1: Child Murder	4	0	0
Path 2: Assaulted other Men	4	0	0
Path 3: Illegal Sexual Acts	6	0	3
Path 4: Crime during assault	3	0	2
Path 5: Economic Crime	5	1	0
Path 6: Illegal Drug Activity	4	4	1

Appendix B

LIFE HISTORY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The following questions guided the life- history interviews conducted with women at Rikers Island Correctional Facility.

1. Demographic Information

What is your name?

What is your alias?

Which do you prefer to be called?

How old are you?

Where were you born?

What racial or ethnic group do you belong to?

Are you in a intimate sexual relationship on the outside now?

If so, are you married and/or living with that person?

Do you have any children?

How many?

How old are they?

Who is caring for them while you are here?

Where and with whom were you living when you were arrested?

How much money did you make from legal work and/or public assistance on the outside?

2. Gender Identity Development

Who lived with you in your household(s) while you were growing up?

Who took care of you? (materially, emotionally, discipline, etc.)

What was your relationship like with that person?

How did people in your household deal with their feelings?

Were emotions shown openly?

Was this different for males and females?

What parts of your personality do you think come from being raised as a girl child in your family?

Do you think your life would be different if you had been a boy?

If so, how?

What things did girls do that were different from boys in your household and neighborhood?

What do you remember about the relationship between adult women and men in your household and/or extended family unit?

How did members of the same sex get along?

When you were a child, how did you think life was for adult women?

What dreams and ideas about relationships/marriage did you get from your family?

Who were your female role models?

Why did you want to be like her/them?

Besides your family, what other people or groups influenced your ideas about women and men?

Where else, besides in your family, did you learn about what it means to be a woman?

3. Experience of Abuse in Intimate Relationships

Were you abused as a child?

If so, by whom?

What happened?

Did you ever see your mother or the person who raised you abused?

Have you been abused, hurt or afraid of being hurt by an intimate partner as an adult?

Was it a man or woman? How was that person related to you?

What happened?

When did the abuse begin?

Who long did/has it gone on?

Has it changed over time? If so, how?

Did that person who abused you ever use weapons or household objects to hurt or threaten you?

Were you treated badly emotionally? What did s/he do to hurt your feelings, put you down, or psychologically abuse you?

Who controlled the money?

Did s/he steal or ruin you things?

Did you ever have rough or unwanted sex with her/him?

Are you still in that relationship now?

How long have you been in or out of it?

Are you hurt or afraid of being hurt now or upon release?

How did the abuse affect you? Were you injured, scared, ashamed?
Did you lose a job, friends or family support?

Did you ever need medical care as a result of being beaten up? Have you developed any long term health problems?

What happened to the other person?

What did you do to try to stop the abuse?

Did you try to protect yourself?

What did you do?

Who did you tell?

Did the abuse affect your children?

How?

Were any of your other family members affected?

How?

Why do you think the abuse happened?

How did it affect your sense of yourself?

How did it change your behavior?

What would have helped you?

Are you in a relationship now?

If so, what is it like?

4. Arrest Record and Illegal Activity

Why were you arrested this time?

Have you been at Rikers or another correctional facility in the past?

How many times?

When?

For how long?

Do you think there is a connection between the abusive relationship and your being arrested?

If so, describe it.

Is there any relationship between your ideas and feelings about yourself as a woman and your arrest?

If so, how are they related?

5. Community And Institutional Responses

Describe your experiences with helping institutions; like hospitals or the police.

Did you turn to any of them when you were hurt or afraid of being hurt?

If so, how did they respond?

List the programs or services for women that you know about in your neighborhood community.

Do you think any of them deal with battering or rape?

6. Follow up

Do you have any problems associated with an abusive relationship now?

What about when you leave Rikers Island?

Would you like to have a chance to talk with a counselor or with other women who have had a similar experience?

Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about your experience?

7. Interviewer Comments

1. Overall rating of the interview:

excellent good fair poor other:

2. Percieved quality of the information presented (consistency, etc.):

excellent good fair poor other:

3. Affective state of the subject:

interested upset restless/anxious hostile

4. Logistical conditions (privacy, etc.):

excellent good fair poor other

5. Other factors affecting the interview:

The Conflict Tactics Scales, Couple Form R*1

ASK IN SEQUENCE Q35a Q36a AND (IF NEVER ON BOTH Q35a AND Q36a) ALSO Q37a. THEN ASK Q35b, Q36b AND (IF NEVER ON BOTH Q35b AND Q36b) ASK Q37b, ETC.

Q35. No matter how well a couple get along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with the other person, or just have spats or fights because they're in a bad mood or tired or for some other reason. They also use many different ways of trying to settle their differences. I'm going to read some things that you and your (spouse/partner) might do when you have an argument. I would like you to tell me how many times (Once, Twice, 3-5 times, 6-10 times, 11-20 times, or more than 20 times) in the past 12 months you (READ ITEM)

Q36. Thinking back over the last 12 months you've been together, was there ever an occasion when (YOUR SPOUSE/PARTNER) (READ ITEM)? Tell me how often (he/she)...

Q37. (IF EITHER "NEVER" OR "DON'T KNOW" ON ITEM FOR BOTH Q35 AND Q36, ASK Q37 FOR THAT ITEM) Has it EVER happened?

	<u>Q35 - Respondent</u> <u>In Past Year</u>	<u>Q36 - Spouse</u> <u>In Past Year</u>	
	1 - Once	1 - Once	
	2 - Twice	2 - Twice	
	3 - 3-5 Times	3 - 3-5 Times	<u>Q37 For items marked</u>
	4 - 6-10 Times	4 - 6-10 Times	<u>"Never" on both</u>
	5 - 11-20 Times	5 - 11-20 Times	Q35 and Q36: Has
	6 - More than 20	6 - More than 20	it Ever happened?
	0 - Never(don't read)	0 - Never(don't read)	1 - Yes
	0 - No

A. Discussed an issue calmly	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
B. Got information to back up your/his/her side of things.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
C. Brought in, or tried to bring in, someone to help settle things.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
D. Insulted or swore at him/her/you.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
E. Sulked or refused to talk about an issue.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
F. Stomped out of the room or house or yard.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
G. Cried.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
H. Did or said something to spite him/her/you.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
I. Threatened to hit or throw something at him/her/you..	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
J. Threw or smashed or hit or kicked something.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
K. Threw something at him /her/you	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
L. Pushed, Crabbed, or shoved him/her/you	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
M. Slapped him/her/you	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
N. Kicked, bit, or hit him/her /you with a fist.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
O. Hit or tried to hit him/her /you with something.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
P. Beat him/her/you up.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
Q. Choked him/her/you	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
R. Threatened him/her/you with a knife or gun.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0
S. Used a knife or fired a gun.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 0	1 0

1. The question numbers are from the 1985 National Family Violence Resurvey interview schedule as given in the appendix to Gelles and Straus, 1988. The CTS is NOT copyrighted. Anyone may therefore use or modify it without permission. However, if you are thinking of using the instrument, write for papers which might apply to your proposed use. In addition, I would appreciate copies of any reports using the CTS so that the bibliography can be updated for the benefit of other scholars.

CONSENT FORM

I have been informed that Beth E. Richie is conducting a research study about battered women; how they experienced fear of or actual violence from their husband, boyfriend, or intimate sexual partner, and how that abuse is related to their drug use, prostitution, shoplifting, forging checks or other circumstances that led to arrest and/or imprisonment. The findings of the study will be used for a PhD dissertation in Sociology at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT I DO NOT HAVE TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY PART OF THIS STUDY. I DO NOT HAVE TO ANSWER ANY OF THE QUESTIONS. IF I DECIDE NOT TO PARTICIPATE, IT WILL NOT AFFECT WHERE I GO IN JAIL, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME IN COURT, OR IN THE HEALTH CLINIC, OR MY ADMISSION INTO PROGRAMS HERE OR ON THE OUTSIDE. THERE IS NO IMMEDIATE BENEFIT FOR ME IF I DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

If I choose to answer any or all questions, The Principal Investigator will keep all information about me and my experiences confidential except if I disclose an intention to hurt myself or another person including, but not limited to, abuse or mistreatment of children. My answers will not go into my medical record, my school record or to any Department of Corrections staff. I will be assigned a study number to protect my anonymity. My name, alias, book number, and case number will not appear anywhere in association with this study. The list of subjects will be destroyed after the interviews are analyzed. There will be no report or presentation of the findings that will include information that will permit identification of me or any other person participating in this study. THE ONLY EXCEPTION IS IF I DISCLOSE INTENTION TO HURT MYSELF OR ANOTHER PERSON. SUCH INFORMATION WOULD HAVE TO BE REPORTED TO THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES.

If I agree to participate in the interview, it will take approximately two hours. I will be asked about what it was like to grow up in my family, my ideas about marriage/relationships, and what I think about women's roles in work and family life. I will also be asked to describe how I was hurt physically and/or emotionally. Some of the questions will be about how I felt, others will be about what I did in response to being abused - like who, if anyone, did I turn to for help.

I will also be asked if being abused or if the fear of being battered influenced the things I did which I was arrested for, although signing this consent form and participating in this study does not imply guilt for this or any other crime I have been charged with. If any question is uncomfortable or too hard for me to answer, I may refuse to do so. I may stop the interview at any time.

At the end of the interview I will be asked if I have any questions about domestic violence, or if I have any concerns about my safety, any feelings I want to talk about, or any problems I need to discuss. If the interview brings up hard feelings for me, I be referred to mental health, social services or another counselor for assistance.

Beth E. Richie may be reached at 718/626-3414 ext 365 with questions or problems which arise from my participation in this study. I have been told that for further information I may call the Secretary of the Institutional Review Board in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 212/920-4151, Monday - Friday, 8:30 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions I wish regarding the purposes and procedures of this study in which I will participate. I have been told that I may refuse to participate or discontinue my participation in the study at any time without in any way prejudicing my future treatment in the Health Services here.

Subject's Name _____

Date _____
(print)

Subject's Signature _____

Date _____

Name of Witness _____

Date _____
(print)

Witness Signature _____

Date _____

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