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## The Relationship of Violence to Gender Role Conflict and Conformity to Masculine Norms in a Forensic Sample

*This study examines violent men and utilizes gender role conflict theory and conformity to masculine norms as a framework to understand why men continue to victimize others through violence. The sample consisted of 258 detainees and prisoners located in New England. Multiple regression analyses compared violence, gender role conflict, and conformity to masculine norms and hierarchical regression analyses were conducted examining violence as the criterion variable. In all analyses, violence remained statistically significant and gender role conflict and conformity to masculine norms were statistically significant as predictor variables in each analysis. Race, age, religious affiliation, and family history of crime were statistically significant in some regression analyses and predictors of violence. Implications for practice are discussed.*

**Keywords:** men, violence, prisons, gender role conflict, conformity to masculine norms

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Acts of violence claim a multitude of victims from both genders and all ages, racial groups, and socioeconomic levels (Matson & Klaus, 2008; Rand, 2009). Violence is a persistent, complex and intricate phenomenon not only to understand, but also to study and prevent. Researchers, theorists, therapists, parents and teachers have reported that boys and men are more aggressive and violent than women (Archer, 1994; Garbarino, 1999; Meehan & Kerig, 2010; Pollack, 1998, 2006; Simon & Baxter, 1989). This observation is statistically supported by the large number of men who initiate violence toward women, children and other men (Nisbitt, 1995; West & Sabol, 2009; U.S. Department of Justice, 2009b).

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“Violence refers to acts, intentional or not, that result in physical harm to another person or persons” (Chasin, 1997, p. 4). This definition does not take into account the psychological harm that is inflicted on people who become victims of violence. A more complex definition by Chasin (1997) includes structural and interpersonal definitions of violence. Structural violence includes day-to-day activities that deny people resources needed to live a more comfortable life. Institutional violence is more insidious and harder to detect, but the results can be as devastating as those of interpersonal violence. Finally, Kruttschnitt (1994) states that violence is an interpersonal act committed by one or more human beings that “threaten, attempt or actually inflict physical harm” (p. 294) to another human being.

The United States criminal justice system is inundated with cases stemming from violent crime initiated by men. In 2007, police arrested 597,447 people for committing violent crimes. Men comprised 81.8 percent of this number. This number represents nearly one fourth of the total number of arrests for that same year (U.S. Department of Justice, 2009a). More than half of the men incarcerated in state and federal prisons in 2005 committed violent crimes (West & Sabol, 2009). While the average American (male or female) has a 6.6 percent chance of being incarcerated in a state or federal prison, the rate for men is higher at 11.3 percent (U.S. Department of Justice, 2009a). According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2009b) violent crimes in the 1990s and into the twenty-first century can, in fact, be attributed to men. Archer (1994) writes that male violence is the primary source of human suffering in our world. Violence associated with men has become a major health problem in the U.S. especially when directed toward women and children (Archer, 1994; Goodman, Koss, Fitzgerald, Russo, & Keita, 1993; Greene, 1999; Harway & O’Neil, 1999; Mahalik, 1997; Silverstein, 1999). Violent crime had been decreasing in the latter part of the 1990s and into the twenty first century, but the numbers still remain high. In 2010 the estimated number of violent crime offenses totaled 1,246,248—a rate of 403.6 per 100,000 people (U.S. Department of Justice, 2012). Victims of violent crime numbered 4.9 million in 2008 (Rand, 2009). In addition to the emotional and physical toll violence takes on people, violence is also very costly. According to Matson and Klaus (2008), victims of all crime lost approximately \$1.5 billion in 2006. Victims of violent crime lost nearly \$1.5 billion in the same year. Over 25 percent of the victims of violent crime lost at least six days from work.

Gender role conflict theory (GRC) has been used to examine the causes of violence (Mahalik, 1997; Pleck, 1981, 1995). Gender role conflict theory examines the socio-psychological factors and influences on men and the notion of masculinity in a sexist and patriarchal society (O’Neil, 1981a & b). O’Neil, Good, and Holmes (1995) define gender role conflict as follows:

Gender role conflict is a psychological state in which socialized gender roles have negative consequences on the person or others. Gender role conflict occurs when rigid, sexist, or restrictive gender roles result in personal restriction, devaluation, or violation of others or self. The ultimate outcome of this kind of conflict is a restriction of the human potential of the person experiencing the conflict or a restriction of another’s potential. (pp. 166-167)

O'Neil (1990) proposed that men with higher levels of gender role conflict may be at risk for maladaptive behaviors including abandonment of children and families, addictive behaviors, obsessions with work, power and control, sexual harassment, and violence. Building on Pleck's theory (1981) which examined gender role strain, O'Neil developed a series of assumptions which focus on men's fear of femininity that leads to a series of maladaptive and restrictive behaviors. O'Neil developed the Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS) to measure gender role conflict. The GRCS has been administered to men since 1981 to determine levels of gender role conflict and has been used in over 230 empirical studies (O'Neil, 2008).

Building on O'Neil's concept of gender role conflict, Mahalik et al. (2003) explored the connection of social norms, gender role norms, and masculine norms and how they impact male identity and behavior. The authors describe conformity to masculine norms functions on a continuum. Mahalik et al. posit that dominant groups in society help shape and mold the societal expectations and norms. In the U. S., these powerful messages affect both men and women on affective, behavioral and cognitive levels such that men and women conform or do not conform to these expectations with various associated consequences. Mahalik et al. describe conformity and non-conformity in relation to masculine norms as follows:

Thus, conformity to masculine norms is defined as meeting societal expectations for what constitutes masculinity in one's public or private life. Conversely, non-conformity to masculine norms is defined as not meeting societal expectations for what constitutes masculinity in one's public and private life. (2003, p. 3)

These authors developed a measure using a sample of undergraduate students to measure conformity and non-conformity to masculine norms (Mahalik et al., 2003). The Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI) is a 94-item, 4-point scale with 11 subscales. The individual subscales include winning, emotional control, risk taking, violence, power over women, dominance, playboy, self-reliance, primacy of work, disdain for homosexuality, and pursuit of status.

This study explored the following hypotheses to test the relationships between violence initiated by men and gender role conflict and conformity to masculine norms.

- Men who are violent will tend to have higher gender role conflict. When controlling for other variables, violence will remain significant.
- Men who are violent will tend to have higher conformity to masculine norms. When controlling for other variables, violence will remain significant.
- Variables found in the literature associated with violence, including race/ethnicity, age, education, religious affiliation, marital status, and family history of crime, will significantly predict detainees' and prisoners' self-reported violence.
- Higher gender role conflict scores will explain unique variance in detainees' and prisoners' violence.

- Greater conformity to traditional masculine gender roles will explain unique variance in detainees' and prisoners' violence.

## METHOD

### Participants

In 2005, prisoners and detainees from a correctional facility in New England were sampled to test the hypotheses in this study. The correctional facility houses approximately 1,600 men. The population of the facility is racially mixed; approximately 40 percent are white, 30 percent African-American, 20 percent Latino and 10 percent from "other" racial and ethnic groups. The men who participated in my study identified as Caucasian/White ( $n = 144$ , 55.8%), Hispanic/Latino, ( $n = 39$ , 15.1%), African American/Black ( $n = 35$ , 13.6%), Cape Verdian ( $n = 15$ , 5.8%), and the remaining participants identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, Bi-racial and "other" ( $n = 25$ , 9.7%). Participants ranged in age ( $M = 32.6$  years, age range 18 – 63,  $SD = 10.5$ ).

### Measures

The following instruments were distributed to the detainees and inmates at the correctional facility.

1. Prison Inmate Inventory (PII) violence subscale
2. GRCS
3. CMNI

**Prison inmate inventory, violence subscale (PII).** Initially developed in 1990, the PII is used extensively in U.S. prisons (Risk & Needs Assessment, Inc., 2004). The violence subscale is one of ten subscales and is designed to "measure the tendency of an inmate to use physical force to injure, damage or destroy, and identifies inmates who are dangerous to self and others" (Davignon, 1998, p.8). The other subscales measure truthfulness, antisocial behavior, adjustment to incarceration, self-esteem, judgment, distress, alcohol related problems, drug abuse, and stress coping abilities. Alpha coefficients for the violence subscale were .89 ( $p < .001$  significance level (Risk & Needs Assessment, Inc, 2004). The PII is helpful in assessing a detainee's or an inmate's level of danger and ability to adapt to the prison environment.

The violence subscale has 21 items divided into 17 true/false questions and four ordered questions ranging from "rare or never" to "very often or always." The questionnaire is self-administered and structured in the following manner: answers are considered either "deviant" or "not deviant." Each item can only produce one point for deviance. The total number of deviant points is 21. Each subject is then assigned a risk category; low, medium, problem and severe. The determination of risk is calculated by percentage of respondents in each risk category (see Table 1).

People who fall in the problem or severe range on this scale are considered the most dangerous and at greatest risk to harm others or themselves. Numerous violence scales

Table 1  
*Prison Inmate Inventory Risk Ranges, Violence Subscale*

Risk Category	Risk Range Percentile	Total Percentage
Low Risk	0 – 39	39
Medium Risk	40 – 69	30
Problem Risk	70 – 89	20
Severe Risk	90 – 100	11

were examined for use in this study . The PII Violence subscale would determine whether a subject met the criteria for “violent” as indicated in the definitions of violence and in the hypotheses. The creator of the scale, Lindeman (personal communication, September, 2000) agreed with this rationale and provided the scoring information and a release for use of the scale. Validation research on the PII was conducted with the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and polygraph examinations. The PII reliability and validity research is based on a variety of subjects including substance abuse inpatients and outpatients, college students, job applicants, defendants, diversion program attendees, probationers, inmates and counseling patients (Davignon, 1998). Studies conducted in prisons since 1994 have yielded reliability alpha coefficients between .86 and .88 at the  $p < .001$  levels for the Violence subscale on the PII. Davignon (1998) reports that the PII scales have good discriminant and predictive validity. Additional studies at the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections and the Arkansas Department of Corrections corroborate the reliability and validity findings reported from earlier studies (Davignon, 1998).

**Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS).** The GRCS contains 37, 6-point items ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The scale contains four subscales or “concepts” for gender role conflict experienced by men (O’Neil et al., 1995). These concepts are success, power, and competition. Success is defined as having persistent worries about personal achievement, competence, failure, status, upward mobility and wealth, and career success. Power is described as obtaining authority, dominance, influence, or ascendancy over others. Competition is described as striving against others to gain something or comparing oneself with others to establish one’s superiority in a given situation. Restrictive emotionality is defined as having difficulty in and fears about expressing one’s feelings and difficulty in finding words to express basic emotions. Restrictive affectionate behavior between men is defined as having limited ways to express one’s feelings and thoughts with other men and difficulty touching other men. Conflict between work and family relationships is defined as experiencing difficulty balancing work-school and family relationships, health problems, overwork, stress, and a lack of leisure and relaxation (O’Neil et al., 1995). Results from subsequent studies indicated alpha coefficients ranged from .75 to .85. A 4-week test-retest reliability analysis yielded a range from .72 to .86 (Good et al., 1995; O’Neil et al., 1995;

Thompson & Pleck, 1995). In this study, the alpha coefficients ranged from .71 to .82 for the Gender Role Conflict subscales.

**Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI)** . Mahalik et al. stated “the CMNI was developed as a tool for use by clinicians and researchers to examine masculinity issues with individuals by assessing conformity to an array of masculinity norms” (2003, p. 22). In this study , the 11 subscales were used with 10 as predictor variables. Analyses using the CMNI overall score dropped the subscale designed to measure violence in the CMNI scale, due to redundancy and overlap with the PII Violence subscale. The alpha coefficients range from .44 to .83 for the 11 subscales and .90 for the total CMNI. The amended CMNI (without the violence subscale) was labeled “CMNI-corrected.”

### **Procedure**

Prisoners and detainees at the correctional facility were asked to voluntarily participate in the survey and given a paper version of the PII, Violence Subscale, GRCS, CMNI and a series of demographic questions asking about age, race/ethnicity, marital status, religious affiliation, educational level, marital status, and family history of crime. Administrators at the correctional facility granted the researcher clearance after a criminal background check. Several dates were selected to enter the correctional facility to gather data. Once inside the correctional facility , several units were selected to conduct my research. The administrator on the unit assembled the detainees and prisoners and briefly introduced the current study. The purpose of the study was explained and potential benefits for the participants, the correctional facility the U.S. criminal justice system, and mental health professionals. The detainees and inmates were told that they did not have to participate in the study and could choose to terminate the study at any point. They also were told that their participation in the study was voluntary . Participants who were illiterate or unable to grasp the terminology of the questionnaire were released from the study. Once the detainees understood the purpose of the study and chose to participate, they were given a consent form. The consent form was read and signed by each participant, placed into a sealed envelope, and returned to me separately from the completed questionnaire. After the consent forms were returned, the questionnaires were distributed. Spanish speaking participants were given a Spanish version of the questionnaire. Participants were allowed to complete the questionnaire in the public areas or in their rooms. I remained available to answer and clarify any ambiguous terms, words, or questions on the survey. The completed questionnaire was sealed in an unmarked envelope by the participant and placed into a slotted box that was monitored and controlled during the entire session.

### **Analyses**

Based on a power analysis with an effect size of .25, the desired sample size was  $N = 200$  (Cohen, 1988). A goal of 300 completed surveys was established in the event that some completed surveys had to be removed from the sample. Following three separate

visits to the correctional facility, 291 surveys were collected. After completing the data collection phase, questionnaires were examined and sorted - accounting for missing data and ambiguous responses. Questionnaires with missing demographic data including race/ethnicity, marital status, religion, highest level of education achieved, and family history of crime were omitted from the final calculations. This left 258 cases in the data set, well above the 200 needed for analysis and to maintain power . In some instances, 252 cases were used due to missing data in the demographic variables. In one analysis, 220 cases were used on the final multiple regression analysis. This lower number was due to missing data in the variable entitled "family history of crime." Data were then re-coded and transformed into scales that measured PII violence, gender role conflict and conformity to masculine norms.

Preliminary analyses were conducted to determine if the data met assumptions of normality and how the criterion variable inter-correlated with gender role conflict and conformity to masculine norms. Selected bi-variate analysis explored relationships between the criterion and predictor variables. A comparison of alphas, means and standard deviations to other samples using the scales and subscales in my study were compared to other normative measures of the PII Violence subscale, GRCS and the CMNI. The alpha score in this study was .91 compared to .89 in Davignon's (1998) study. Mean scores were 7.96 and 10.93, respectively. A standard deviation score could not be obtained from Davignon's study (see Tables 2 and 3).

## RESULTS

To determine the relationship between the criterion and predictor variables, three, three-step multiple regression analyses were conducted. The multiple regression analyses examined the strength of the predictor to the criterion variable. The following hierarchical multiple regression analyses determined if the hypotheses could be accepted or rejected. For Step 1 in the first two analyses, race/ethnicity, age, education, religious affiliation and marital status were entered in all three steps of each equation along with the predictor variables, gender role conflict and CMNI-corrected. In two of the equations, both subscales for the GRCS and the CMNI-corrected were used instead of the total scale scores. In the third and final analysis, race/ethnicity, age, education, religious affiliation, marital status and family history of crime were entered into all three steps of the equation. In Steps 2 and 3 the GRCS and CMNI-corrected were added into the final step.

In the first three-step equation, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine violence by using the PII Violence subscale as the criterion score with race/ethnicity, age, education, religious affiliation, and marital status as predictor scores. In the second step of the analysis, the Gender Role Conflict total score was added as a predictor. In the third step, the Gender Role Conflict total score and CMNI-corrected total score were added as predictors. Results indicated that the variables in the first step accounted for 12 percent of the variance ( $p < .001$ ) with age ( $b = -.26, p < .001$ ), and religious affiliation ( $b = -.15, p < .05$ ) as two predictors. Consistent with the two-step models, younger prisoners not affiliated with a religion reported higher scores of violence on the PII Violence subscale. When the Gender Role Conflict total score

Table 2

*Alphas, Means and Standard Deviations Comparing a Forensic Sample (Amato, 2006) with the PII Violence Subscale (Davignon, 1998), CMNI (Mahalik et al. 2003) and the GRCS (Good et al. 1995)*

	MALE VIOLENCE STUDY (AMATO)			DAVIGNON		
	<i>alpha</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>alpha</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
PII Violence subscale	.91	7.96	5.80	.89	10	.93
	MALE VIOLENCE STUDY (AMATO)			MAHALIK ET AL.		
	<i>alpha</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>alpha</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
CMNI SUBSCALES						
Winning	.73	15.40	4.16	.88	16.91	5.10
Emotional Control	.70	16.07	3.95	.91	14.89	5.66
Risk Taking	.74	15.45	3.99	.82	16.58	3.61
Violence	.76	11.93	4.00	.84	12.38	3.96
Power over Women	.74	10.30	3.69	.87	10.59	4.46
Dominance	.63	5.69	2.02	.73	5.84	1.88
Playboy	.75	15.26	4.97	.88	12.06	6.05
Self-Reliance	.76	7.49	3.02	.85	6.63	2.81
Primacy of Work	.64	11.57	3.30	.76	8.97	3.28
Disdain for Homosexuality	.83	18.67	5.63	.90	17.74	6.65
Pursuit of Status	.48	10.71	2.19	.72	11.85	2.43
CMNI total score	.90	138.45	22.53	.94	134.45	24.64
	MALE VIOLENCE STUDY (AMATO)			GOOD ET AL.		
	<i>alpha</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>alpha</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
GRCS SUBSCALES						
Success, Power & Competition	.82	49.89	11.21	.85	53.15	9.87
Restrictive Emotionality	.82	32.68	9.58	.82	31.42	8.66
Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men	.82	30.05	9.11	.83	31.93	8.64
Conflicts Between Work & Family	.71	20.90	6.06	.75	23.35	5.80
GRCS total score	.90	133.53	27.50	.91	139.84	22.43

Table 3  
*Inter-Correlations of PII Violence, Gender Role Conflict and Conformity to Masculine Norms*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. PII Violence	—								
2. GRCS	.34*	—							
3. CMNI	.60*	.37*	—						
4. SPC	.33*	.77**	.36**	—					
5. RE	.24**	.80**	.29**	.41*	—				
6. RAM	.29**	.74**	.31**	.37**	.50**	—			
7. CBWF	.10	.73**	.09	.47**	.54**	.38**	—		
8. Winning	.36**	.25**	.66**	.39**	.15*	.08	.07	—	
9. Emotional									
Control	.25**	.33**	.57**	.10	.42**	.31**	.16*	.22**	—
10. Risk	.43**	.19**	.60**	.21**	.04	.22**	.06	.30**	.29**
11. CMNI									
Violence	.55**	.10	.67**	.15*	-.00	.16**	-.05	.37**	.32**
12. Power over									
women	.29**	.25**	.61**	.21**	.32**	.15*	.02	.35**	.31**
13. Dominance	.36**	.29**	.66**	.31**	.17**	.55**	.30**	.29**	.30**
14. Playboy	.36**	.10	.65**	.08	.15*	.05	-.03	.29**	.38**
15. Self-Reliance	.40**	.22**	.53**	.11	.24**	.24**	.05	.24**	.44**
16. Work	.02	.11	.11	.26**	.09	-.13*	.05	.17**	-.17**
17. Disdain for									
homosexuals	.29**	.31**	.54**	.21**	.17**	.42**	.12	.25**	.23**
18. Status	.21**	.11	.28**	.23**	-.06	.09	.02	.28**	-.13*

  

Variable	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
10. Risk	—								
11. CMNI									
Violence	.48**	—							
12. Power over									
women	.18**	.27**	—						
13. Dominance	.29**	.43**	.45**	—					
14. Playboy	.31**	.37**	.52**	.37**	—				
15. Self-Reliance	.39**	.35**	.25**	.33**	.28**	—			
16. Work	-.11	-.09	.06	.10	-.01	-.09	—		
17. Disdain for									
homosexuals	.22**	.29**	.20**	.27**	.12	.14	-.06	—	
18. Status	.21**	.18**	.06	.10	.06	-.07	.10	.18**	—

Note. SPC = Success, Power and Competition, RE = Restrictive Emotionality, RAM = Restrictive Affection Between Men, CBWF = Conflict Between Work and Families.

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

was entered into the second step of the regression, age ( $b = -.31, p < .001$ ), and religious affiliation ( $b = -.17, p < .01$ ) remained significant predictors and gender role conflict ( $b = .39, p < .001$ ) accounted for significant and unique variances in predicting PII violence scores ( $R^2 = .27, p < .001$ ). Younger prisoners scoring higher on the GRCS and not affiliated with a religion reported higher levels of violence on the PII violence subscale. When the Gender Role Conflict total score and the CMNI-corrected total score were entered into the third step of the regression, age ( $b = -.16, p < .01$ ), and religious affiliation ( $b = -.12, p < .05$ ) remained significant predictors while Gender Role Conflict total scores ( $b = .19, p < .001$ ), and CMNI-corrected total scores ( $b = .46, p < .001$ ) accounted for significant and unique variances in predicting higher scores on the PII violence subscale ( $R^2 = .42, p < .001$ ). Younger prisoners scoring higher on the GRCS and CMNI-corrected who were not affiliated with a religion reported higher levels of violence on the PII Violence subscale (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting PII Violence in a Forensic Sample (N=252)*

Predictor	B	SE B	<i>b</i>
STEP 1			
Race	1.40	.72	.12
Age	-.14	.04	-.26***
Education	-.34	.24	-.09
Religious affiliation	-2.24	.95	-.15*
Marital status	.20	1.02	.01
STEP 2			
Race	.93	.67	.08
Age	-.17	.03	-.31***
Education	-.28	.22	-.07
Religious affiliation	-2.63	.87	-.17**
Marital status	.29	.93	.02
GRCS	8.254E-02	.01	.39***
STEP 3			
Race	.76	.60	.07
Age	-9.202E-02	.03	-.16**
Education	-.18	.20	-.05
Religious affiliation	-1.90	.78	-.12*
Marital status	.18	.83	.01
GRCS	4.044E-02	.01	.19***
CMNI-corrected	.12	.02	.46***

Note.  $R^2 = .12$  for Step 1,  $R^2 = .27$  for Step 2,  $R^2 = .42$  for Step 3.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

In the second, three-step hierarchical multiple regression analysis, the PII Violence subscale was used as the criterion score with race/ethnicity, age, education, religious affiliation, and marital status as predictor scores. In the second step of the analysis, the Gender Role Conflict subscales were added as predictors. The subscales included success, power and competition, restrictive emotionality, restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and conflicts between work and family relations. In the third step, the CMNI-corrected subscales were added as predictors. They included winning, emotional control, risk taking, power over omen, dominance, playboy, self-reliance, primacy of work, and disdain for homosexuality. Results indicated that the variables in the first step significantly accounted for 12 percent of the variance ( $p < .001$ ) with age ( $b = -.26, p < .001$ ), and religious affiliation ( $b = -.15, p < .05$ ) as two predictors. Prisoners and detainees who were younger and not affiliated with a religion reported higher scores on the PII Violence subscale. In Step 2 of the analysis, the Gender Role Conflict subscale scores were entered into the second step of the regression, age ( $b = -.29, p < .001$ ), religious affiliation ( $b = -.17, p < .01$ ), success, power, and competition ( $b = .23, p < .001$ ), restrictive emotionality ( $b = .20, p < .01$ ), and restrictive affectionate behavior between men ( $b = .14, p < .05$ ) accounted for significant and unique variances in predicting PII Violence scores ( $R^2 = .29, p < .001$ ). Prisoners and detainees who were younger and not affiliated with a religion tended to pursue power, restrict their emotional expressions in general and with other men, and reported higher scores on the PII Violence subscale. When the Gender Role Conflict subscales and the CMNI-corrected subscales were entered into the third step of the regression, age ( $b = -.15, p < .05$ ), and religious affiliation ( $b = -.14, p < .05$ ) remained as significant predictors while the Gender Role Conflict subscales success, power and competition ( $b = .14, p < .05$ ), and CMNI-corrected subscales, risk taking ( $b = .23, p < .001$ ), and self-reliance ( $b = .16, p < .01$ ) accounted for significant and unique variances in predicting PII Violence scores ( $R^2 = .43, p < .001$ ). Younger prisoners and detainees, not affiliated with a religion tended to pursue power, took more risks and were self-reliant, and reported higher scores on the PII Violence subscale (see Table 5).

In the third and final three-step equation, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine violence by using the PII Violence subscale as the criterion score with race/ethnicity, age, education, religious affiliation, marital status, and family history of crime as predictor scores. In the second step of the analysis the Gender Role Conflict total score was added as a predictor. In the third step, the Gender Role Conflict total score and CMNI-corrected total score were added as predictors. Results indicated that the variables in the first step accounted for 20% of the variance ( $p < .001$ ) with race ( $b = .14, p < .05$ ), age ( $b = -.22, p < .01$ ), and family history of crime ( $b = .26, p < .001$ ) as three predictors. Younger white prisoners and detainees who had a family history of crime reported higher scores of violence on the PII Violence subscale. When the Gender Role Conflict total score was entered into the second step of the regression, age ( $b = -.27, p < .001$ ), religious affiliation ( $b = -.14, p < .05$ ), and family history of crime ( $b = .24, p < .001$ ) remained significant predictors and gender role conflict ( $b = .37, p < .001$ ) accounted for significant and unique variances in predicting PII Violence scores ( $R^2 = .33, p < .001$ ). Younger prisoners and detainees with a family history of crime scoring higher on the GRCS and not affiliated with a religion reported higher lev-

Table 5  
*Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Violence in a Forensic Population (N = 252)*

Predictor	B	SE B	<i>b</i>
STEP 1			
Race	1.40	.72	.12
Age	-.14	.04	-.26***
Education	-.34	.24	-.09
Religious affiliation	-2.24	.95	-.15*
Marital status	.20	1.02	.01
STEP 2			
Race	.93	.67	.08
Age	-.16	.04	-.29***
Education	-.22	.22	-.06
Religious affiliation	-2.59	.87	-.17**
Marital status	.10	.93	.01
SPC	.12	.03	.23***
RE	.12	.04	.20**
RAM	9.273E-02	.04	.14*
CBWF	7.833E-02	.07	-.08
STEP 3			
Race	.25	.63	.02
Age	-8.546E-02	.03	-.15*
Education	-.28	.21	-.07
Religious affiliation	-2.08	.82	-.14*
Marital status	.23	.86	.01
SPC	7.361E-02	.04	.14*
RE	8.227E-02	.05	.14
RAM	4.481E-02	.04	.07
CBWF	-2.677E-02	.06	-.03
Winning	.14	.09	.10
EMCNTRL	-6.962E-02	.10	-.05
Risk taking	.33	.09	.23***
POW	3.4809E-02	.10	.02
Dominance	-6.914E-03	.19	-.00
Playboy	.14	.08	.12
Self reliance	.31	.12	.16**
Work	-5.083E-02	.10	-.03
Disdain	6.175E-02	.06	.06

Note.  $R^2 = .12$  for Step 1,  $R^2 = .29$  for Step 2,  $R^2 = .43$  for Step 3.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

els of violence on the PII Violence subscale. When the Gender Role Conflict total score and the CMNI-corrected total score were entered into the third step of the regression, age ( $b = -.14, p < .01$ ), religious affiliation ( $b = -.12, p < .05$ ), and family history of crime ( $b = .23, p < .001$ ) remained significant predictors while Gender Role Conflict total scores ( $b = .17, p < .001$ ), and CMNI-corrected total scores ( $b = .46, p < .001$ ) accounted for significant and unique variances in predicting higher scores on the PII Violence subscale ( $R^2 = .46, p < .001$ ). Younger prisoners and detainees with a family history of crime scoring higher on the GRCS and CMNI-corrected who were not affiliated with a religion reported higher levels of violence on the PII Violence subscale (see Table 6).

Table 6  
*Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting PII Violence in a Forensic Population (N = 220)*

Predictor	B	SE B	<i>b</i>
STEP 1			
Race	1.69	.76	.14*
Age	-.12	.04	-.22**
Education	-.469	.25	-.12
Marital status	-1.542E-02	1.02	-.00
Religious affiliation	-1.90	1.00	-.12
Family history of crime	3.10	.74	.26***
STEP 2			
Race	1.19	.70	.10
Age	-.15	.04	-.27***
Education	-.43	.23	-.11
Marital status	.17	.94	.01
Religious affiliation	-2.19	.92	-.14*
Family history of crime	2.79	.68	.24***
GRCS	7.842E-02	.01	.37***
STEP 3			
Race	.92	.63	.08
Age	-8.1666E-02	.03	-.14*
Education	-.31	.21	-.08
Marital status	-2.567E-02	.85	-.00
Religious affiliation	-1.90	.83	-.12*
Family history of crime	2.74	.61	.23***
GRCS	3.488E-02	.01	.17**
CMNI-corrected	.13	.02	.43***

Note.  $R^2 = .20$  for Step 1,  $R^2 = .33$  for Step 2,  $R^2 = .46$  for Step 3.  
 \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

In all analyses, no multi-collinearity was evident. Tolerance and VIF scores were examined to determine multi-collinearity and were both within acceptable values according to Pedhazzer and Schmelkin (1991) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2001).

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine if traditional masculine norms in American society contribute to violence in men. Specifically, this research was designed to determine if gender role conflict and conformity to masculine norms directly impact the way men express their violent urges or behaviors in a variety of situations. O'Neil (2002) wrote, "I wanted to explain why men were violent, interpersonally rigid, sexist, homophobic, unemotional and unhappy with themselves" (p. 2). Not all men possess these characteristics. However, many men do and have endured great pain and caused others great pain as well. O'Neil's desire to explain men's gender role conflict and the connection to violent behavior is shared by many therapists who work with men in therapeutic settings. Researchers continue to join in this pursuit and have either built on O'Neil's work or broken new ground. Mahalik et al. (2003) added to the gender socialization paradigm and expanded into a new area addressing a conformity/non-conformity model of understanding men's struggles and adaptations.

Given the significance levels of violence with gender role conflict and conformity to masculine norms, the following hypotheses can be accepted.

- Men who are violent will tend to have higher gender role conflict. When controlling for other variables, violence will remain significant.
- Men who are violent will tend to have higher conformity to masculine norms. When controlling for other variables, violence will remain significant.
- Variables found in the literature associated with violence including race/ethnicity, age, education, religious affiliation, marital status, and family history of crime will significantly predict detainees' and prisoners' self-reported violence.
- Higher gender role conflict scores will explain unique variance in detainees' and prisoners' violence above and beyond that accounted for by the variables in the first and second hypotheses.
- Greater conformity to traditional masculine gender roles will explain unique variance in detainees' and prisoners' violence above and beyond that accounted for by the variables in the first and second hypotheses.

In the first two hypotheses, violence remained significant in all multiple regression analyses when controlling for gender role conflict, conformity to masculine norms, and various demographic variables. This indicates a relationship between violence, gender role conflict, and CMNI-corrected. In the third hypothesis, race, age, religious affiliation, and history of family crime predicted detainee and prisoner violence. Education and marital status failed to predict violence in the sample. In the final two hypotheses, variances were partially explained by higher gender role conflict scores and greater conformity to masculine norms. The following sections explain the connection of the variables in the study and their specific relationship to the criterion variable, violence.

## Predictor Variables

**Race/Ethnicity.** Race/Ethnicity was statistically significant in Step 1 of one analysis. In all other hierarchical regression analyses, race/ethnicity showed no relationship to violence. In the instance where race was significant and indicated a relationship to the criterion variable, the relationship was the weakest of all the significant variables. Whites and non-whites report similar levels of violence.

**Age.** Unlike race and ethnicity, age correlates to violence very strongly in all studies that were examined. Younger men and women are more violent and aggressive than older adults. Furthermore, they are arrested and incarcerated more often than their older counterparts. After the age of 30, the correlation between age and violence diminishes. This study supports this finding and indicates that older men scored lower in the PII violence scale while younger men consistently scored higher in the PII violence scales. In addition to age and violence, there was a relationship between age and gender role conflict and age and CMNI-corrected. In both instances, younger men scored higher on the GRCS and the CMNI-corrected. Age remained significant in all multiple regression analyses. In many instances, however, age possessed the strongest relationship to the criterion variable. Perhaps younger men have more energy and possess a greater amount of strength. As people age, reflexes slow, eyesight and hearing weaken, and impulse control tends to improve (Berk, 2008).

**Marital status.** There is a growing field of literature connecting marital status to violence. The information that exists indicates that both married and unmarried men can be violent. Married men and men in committed relationships can assault, rape, and murder their partners (Buzawa, 2007; Rand, 2009). Unmarried men also victimize women, children and other men as well (Gelles, 1999; Rand). Some men only victimize their spouses and partners while other men victimize anyone. In a study reported by Sampson and Lauritsen (1994), 78 percent of prison inmates were either divorced or separated. In this study 80 percent of the inmates and detainees were either divorced or separated. The meaning of these data from this study is inconclusive. Marital status showed no statistical significance in all the hierarchical regression analyses conducted.

**Education.** Research on education and violent crime is mixed. Most studies examine social class or socioeconomic status, which is often comprised of education, employment status and income. Ferguson (2010) attributes the causes of crime to socioeconomic status and states that people from low-income status may be envious of people from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Harlow (2003) examined the educational levels of people in prison and found that 41 percent had never completed high school, while 46 percent had completed high school. Only 12.7 percent possessed a post-secondary degree. This study found that 39 percent of the men had not completed high school. Approximately 43 percent had completed high school and the remaining 23 percent had at least some college. In all the analyses, education was not significant in any of the hierarchical regression formulas. A post-secondary educational degree can provide an array of opportunities for many men and increase their odds of obtain-

ing a satisfying, well-paying job. However, an advanced degree does not preclude men from acting violently.

**Religious affiliation.** Religion and spirituality are often interchanged, but a distinct difference exists between them. Religious affiliation often provides the rules and structure of an organized religion. These rules can prevent or limit people from doing undesirable things toward each other or themselves. For example, Sue, Sue and Sue (1997) found suicide rates lower in some organized religions. The authors compared Roman Catholics to people who didn't practice a religion where suicide was a "sin." Gilbert (1994), however, provides a different scenario suggesting that since religions may differ in their core beliefs and value systems, violence may erupt between different religious groups. Sumter (2000) found no difference in recidivism rates among "religious" and "non-religious" people who had been incarcerated. Rather, his study found that people who attended religious programs and believed in a supernatural power were more likely to adjust better in their communities upon release from prison. Statistically significant relationships in this study were reported between religious affiliation and violence in several regression analyses. It is possible that men who tended to identify with a religion were less likely to score higher on the violence subscales compared to their non-religious counterparts. Given the inconsistency of the significant findings of religion, it is difficult to say why these findings occurred, but their existence needs further exploration.

**Family history of crime.** Numerous studies have linked anti-social and deviant behaviors with family history of aggression, crime and violence (Gilbert, 1994; Gordon, Jurkovic, & Arbuthnot, 1998; Hoffman, Ireland, & Widom; 1994; Laub & Lauritsen, 1995; Meyer, 1992; Quinsey, Harris, Rice, & Cormier, 1998; Sadock & Sadock, 2007; Sampson & Lauritsen, 1994). Gordon, Jurkovic, & Arbuthnot (1998) state, "It is now accepted as fact that the roots of adult criminal behavior can be traced to hostility and aggression in childhood, which, along with other antecedents of criminal behavior are socialized in and controlled by the family" (p. 375). There is debate regarding precisely how families influence future violent and criminal behaviors in children. The results indicate that there is a relationship between family history of crime and violence in the inmates and detainees who participated in this study. In each step of the hierarchical regression analysis using family history of crime the results were definitive and showed a distinct relationship, thus supporting the existing literature noted above. The actual etiology of the family history of crime and the respondent's reported violence remains unclear. The results of this study cannot conclusively determine that the respondent's reported violence was a result of genetics, biology, learned behavior or a combination of the three.

## **Gender Role Conflict**

Gender role conflict was applied in this study in two ways. The overall scale score was examined with the criterion variable, CMNI-corrected. In the second instance, the GRCS was broken down into its subscales and added to one of the hierarchical analy-

ses. When examining gender role conflict and its relationship to the criterion variable significant conclusions can be made regarding this relationship. Gender role conflict had a positive relationship to the criterion variables in all analyses. In some instances gender role conflict had the strongest relationship to violence. In the analyses where gender role conflict was broken down into the subscales of success, power and competition (SPC), restrictive emotionality (RE), restrictive and affectionate behavior between men (RAM) and conflict between work and family (CBWF) the findings were not as conclusive. The SPC subscale was the most consistently significant subscale among all the subscales, followed by RE and the RAM subscale. The CBWF subscale failed to achieve significance in all hierarchical analyses. The relationships of the subscales to the criterion variable were consistently weaker than all the other variables in each analysis.

O'Neil (2003) struggled with the validity of the GRCS and was occasionally challenged. After carefully dissecting all the items on the scale and re-examining the subscales, he concluded that the GRCS "primarily assessed gender role conflict within the man; an intrapersonal psychological dynamic" (p. 13). He further added that the scale was designed to assess men's conflict affectively, behaviorally, cognitively and unconsciously. Given the number of behavioral items on the scale, O'Neil (2003) concluded that, "This behavioral dimension of the gender role conflict scale make it somewhat unique as a masculinity measure" (p. 12). Since gender role conflict can be expressed outwardly by inflicting pain to others, (O'Neil et al., 1995) the connection to violence from this study would support this notion. Results from this study indicate that men do act out and behave in violent and aggressive ways when they experience gender role conflict. The strength and relationship to the criterion variable, violence indicates that gender role conflict is a predictor of men's violence. The extent of this connection needs further exploration, but given the significant findings in this study, further research should continue in this area.

### **Conformity to Masculine Norms**

The CMNI-corrected showed a very strong connection to the criterion variable. Like the GRCS, the CMNI-corrected was utilized as a total score in several analyses and broken down into its subscales in other analyses. The violence subscale was omitted from the final analysis. The CMNI-corrected total score indicated a significant relationship to the criterion variable in all equations. When the CMNI-corrected was added to the hierarchical regression analyses along with the GRCS, the CMNI-corrected had a stronger relationship to the criterion variable. In some instances, the CMNI-corrected relationship was twice as strong to the criterion variable than the GRCS.

The CMNI-corrected subscales risk-taking and self-reliance reached statistical significance. Both showed a relationship to the criterion variable in each analysis they appeared. Risk-Taking had the strongest relationship to the criterion variable. It is logical that risk-taking among an incarcerated population will have a strong and consistent connection to violence. Men who commit crimes may understand that they take risks when committing a crime. The CMNI and the CMNI-corrected are comprehensive measures of conformity to masculine norms with several more dimensions and items

than the GRCS, thus somewhat more complex. Therefore, it appears that conformity to masculine norms does contribute to violence in men (Amato, 2006). Further research with this scale may draw more conclusive data from the findings.

### **Relationship of Predictor Variables to Violence**

Violence and its predictors are complex and multi-dimensional (Archer, 1994; Harway & O'Neil, 1999; O'Neil & Harway, 1997; Wilson, 1984). The results of this study provide more information regarding the predictors of violence and the specific contribution of gender role conflict and conformity to masculine norms. Specifically results indicate that the predictor variables were significant in the hierarchical analyses examining violence. Within the group of predictor variables, age, religious affiliation and family history of crime added to the statistical findings as well. Some of these findings coincide with pre-existing studies that support the connection of young men, crime and violence (Curran & Renzetti, 1996). This study discovered what appears to be another important link with violence which correlates history of family crime and violence. Other findings were less conclusive. There is little information in the literature linking religious affiliation and lower levels of violence. Both constructs (GRC and CMN) suggest that men suffer and can cause others to suffer from gender role conflict and conformity to masculine norms. This study provides empirical data that further supports this supposition. It is unclear how gender role conflict and conformity to masculine norms contribute to men's violent behaviors, but the fact that a link has been established can offer more direction and structure for future research.

This study contained some notable limitations. Given that the population surveyed consisted of incarcerated criminals and detainees awaiting trial, individuals may have tailored responses to be viewed in a more "positive" light. For example, when answering the question, "are you violent" some men answered "no," but it was clear from the rest of their responses that they were indeed violent. It was suggested that a social desirability scale be administered in addition to all the other measures. A decision was made not to add another scale due to the length of the initial questionnaire. This study was descriptive in nature thus limiting its generalizability to the greater population at large. Conclusions that are drawn can only apply to this population and cannot be extrapolated to other men. If illiterate, or undereducated, subjects may not have understood some of the questions on the questionnaire and may have responded randomly or asked a neighbor how they should answer various questions. Due to the large number of respondents at each survey site, monitoring to ensure adherence to process was difficult.

### **CONCLUSION**

Mental health professionals in numerous settings can benefit from this study by understanding the predictors of violence initiated by men, especially in terms of gender role conflict theory and men's conformity to masculine norms. In clinical practice and policy-making situations, mental health professionals constantly face situations that involve domestic violence, crime, sexual harassment, homophobia, and paternal aban-

donment, all of which are linked to men's harmful behaviors. Mental health professionals also work with men who are victims of gender role conflict and may express the conflict inwardly in the form of addiction, mental illness, sexual dysfunction, high levels of stress, suicidal ideation, and poor physical health. Men's conformity or lack of conformity to masculine norms can have both positive and, in many instances, negative outcomes. O'Neil (2008) states that more research is needed in the area of linking violence to behavioral outcomes. Finding significant relationships between violence, gender role conflict and conformity to masculine norms fulfills O'Neil's suggestion and provides much needed research into this area. Gender role conflict theory and understanding how men conform or fail to conform to masculine norms may provide human service professionals with the much-needed direction when working with violent and potentially violent men.

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