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Controlling Violence Against Women: A Research Perspective on the 1994 VAWA's Criminal Justice Impacts

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Overview

The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (VAWA)¹ stands as an extraordinary model for legislation imbedding research and evaluation in an urgent response to crime. The Act changed laws and promoted legal interventions at the same time that it called for research to inform policy and to evaluate practices meant to prevent violence against women. This report examines the research side of the original legislation, with particular attention to the current state of knowledge on violence reduction through criminal justice interventions based on what we have learned from evaluations fostered by VAWA. We focus on the Act as passed in 1994 to allow time for the implementation of key provisions and for the evaluation of their impacts. We write from the perspective of critical researchers seeking evidence of preventive impacts. Our goal is to review the state of research on VAWA impacts and to render commentary informed by what we already know and what we can expect to learn from rigorous research on criminal justice interventions to prevent violence against women.

Our discussion begins with an overview of VAWA's criminal justice components and expectations for their preventing violence against women. We discuss ways in which VAWA has fostered research and how it has helped to advance our knowledge on violence against women and its prevention. We review research findings on VAWA's preventive impacts, in particular. We conclude with a discussion of VAWA's continuing promise for advancing research on effective controls and how research to date can guide policy makers and practitioners in dedicating future resources to prevent violence against women.

It is not our purpose to duplicate major reviews and syntheses of research literature either pre-dating VAWA (Crowell & Burgess, 1996) or forthcoming (Worden, Carlson, van Ryn, forthcoming). Instead, we consider how extant research contributes to advances in a knowledge base on violence against women. We discuss expectations for VAWA "success," agendas for research, and funding in support of VAWA research and evaluations. We also note issues in measuring violence against women that confound our understanding of VAWA's impacts. We document the growth of research under VAWA before focusing on a

¹ Title IV of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (PL 103-322).

few major evaluations of policies intended to have direct preventive impacts on violence against women.

The 1994 VAWA initiated a process whereby the implementation of evaluation research follows the development and implementation of criminal justice policies designed to protect victims of violence against women. It emerged from a relatively short history of research, most of which has not been rigorously evaluated. Writing about domestic violence in 1995, without explicit reference to the recently enacted Violence Against Women Act, Fagan (1996) noted that

...research and evaluation on arrest and prosecution, civil or criminal protection orders, batterer treatment, and community interventions have generated weak or inconsistent evidence of deterrent effects on either repeat victimization or repeat offending. (p. 1)

Fagan (1996) argued that most research conducted by 1995 had not addressed questions about the effectiveness of legal interventions in controlling violence. Not surprisingly, most policy research attends to how practitioners implement policy and enact their responsibilities. But today we expect more. We want to know the consequences of those activities for preventing crime and protecting victims. Congress recognized this need in 1996 when it required the Attorney General to “formulate and publish a unified national crime prevention research and evaluation strategy ... regarding the impact and effectiveness of the crime and violence prevention initiatives...” (H.R. 2076), a mandate addressed in a Report to Congress by Sherman et al. (1997, 1998). Using standards for assessing “whether a program has succeeded in causing less crime” (Sherman 1997, p. 6), the authors argued for rigorous impact evaluations. With respect to programs funded under VAWA, the traditional concern for detecting and punishing crimes in the interest of justice should go further to evaluate the effectiveness of criminal justice policies in protecting victims.

Of course, after just five years, research spawned by VAWA is only now beginning to appear in reports or articles likely to have an impact on policy. Indeed, apart from what guidance might be offered by research, policy makers and practitioners have barely had time to implement what they hope will be effective criminal justice programs initiated under VAWA’s grants for local initiatives (U.S. Attorney General, 1999, II-18). Thus our report

gives at least as much attention to where research is going as to what it has accomplished in evaluating policy.

We begin with a brief review of the history of the violence against women movement and recent research in support of advocacy for the passage of VAWA. We highlight the justice components and the popular expectations for their preventive impacts on violence against women. Next we outline what we call a “research perspective” on VAWA impacts, followed by a description of VAWA’s criminal justice components subject to research and evaluation. We then proceed to describe first, VAWA’s influence on research – its agenda and the growing knowledge base on criminal justice interventions – and second, what VAWA research to date tells us about the impact of those interventions in reducing violence against women. We conclude with a discussion of what research might tell of VAWA’s promise for reducing violence against women in American society.

Part 1: The Convergence of Advocacy, Research, and Law

I. Background

The Violence Against Women Act was signed into law in 1994 as a federal response to violent crimes against women, a response that lent exceptional political authority against gendered violence. As part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, VAWA unequivocally criminalized acts of domestic violence and violations of protective orders for women, irrespective of their personal circumstances or geographical situation. At the same time it sought to strengthen criminal justice responses to all violent crimes against women, including sexual assaults and stalking. VAWA is the culmination in political action of advocacy and research, particularly with respect to intimate partner violence against women. It came into law on the heels of almost three decades of advocacy from the women’s movement for criminal justice interventions and 15 years of attention to research on domestic violence reinforcing the belief that law enforcement deters abusive men. Thus while VAWA brought the problem of violence against women to the forefront of federal crime control concerns, the Act built on a significant recent history of advocacy and research already attuned to the problem.

The movement to prevent domestic violence against women has roots in Colonial America, found new attention in the late Nineteenth Century, and was rediscovered in the early 1970's in political company with reforms against child abuse (Pleck, 1987). Concurrent with the movement against wife-beating, the Women's Liberation Movement responded against rape and sexual assault (Schechter, 1982). But while the political response to rape and sexual assault has centered on victim services, on enforcement of existing laws, and on protecting victims from system abuses, domestic violence against women commands attention as a crime of repetitive violence against a specific victim and subject to control through traditional criminal justice interventions.

Research has played a significant part in reinforcing advocacy for government action against gendered violence. Straus (1974) noted that family violence was slow to gain recognition as a social problem, as opposed to a form of individual pathology, because it was regarded as something other than "violence." In 1970, it was reported that 25% of American men and 16% of women could imagine a circumstance in which they would approve of a husband slapping his wife, based on a national survey conducted for the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (Stark & McEvoy, 1970). A reader on family violence compiled by Steinmetz and Straus (1974) brought together a handful of articles speculating on patterns and causes of violence in marriage but with no prevalence data other than those provided by the Stark and McEvoy report. Gelles' (1974) description of violence in 80 New Hampshire families piloted the way to national surveys, including an NIMH-funded Family Violence Survey in 1976 (Straus, 1978; Straus, Gelles, Steinmetz, 1980), the first nationally representative survey designed to uncover the prevalence of family violence in the American population. These "early" accounts documented domestic violence as a social problem and found a receptive audience for their quantified data in the growing movement against women abuse (e.g., Martin, 1975).

Early in 1978, the United States Commission on Civil Rights sponsored a Consultation on domestic violence against women. Its report, *Battered Women: Issues of Public Policy* (1978), was introduced with data from the Family Violence Survey (Straus, 1978). In the same year, a subcommittee of the United States Senate Committee on Human Resources (1978) conducted hearings in Los Angeles and Washington, DC, on Domestic Violence for the purpose of learning from victims, advocates, agencies, and researchers what

role the federal government should assume in response to the problem of domestic violence, as demonstrated in research, including again the national survey by Straus and associates.

Another significant data source, the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), began in 1972 as an alternative to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports to provide an official set of indicators for crime victimization, including violence against women.² Early screening instruments used in the NCVS, however, did not directly ask respondents about victimizations perpetrated by known offenders or about rape victimizations. In the early 1980's, the NCVS began a redesign process to more accurately measure these victimizations. The new survey instrument began implementation in 1989 and procedures from the redesign were fully implemented into the survey by 1993. The BJS reports, *Violence Against Women: Estimates From the Redesigned NCVS*, (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995) and its predecessor, *Violence Against Women*, (Bachman, 1994) came to be widely cited by advocates of VAWA.

Also in the late 1970's and early 1980's, the Department of Justice began funding research to investigate the preventive impacts of criminal justice interventions. One, a major evaluation of the Family Violence Program funded in 1978 by the Law Enforcement Assistance Agency, was the first to analyze criminal justice interventions to prevent family violence, including domestic violence against women, in the context of coordinated community services for victims (Fagan, Friedman, Wexler, & Lewis, 1984). It demonstrated an apparent reduction in the prevalence of violence following criminal justice interventions, at least for cases with more severe histories of violence. Other more rigorous domestic violence research soon followed with support from the National Institute of Justice.

When NIJ funded a 1980 proposal for a field experiment to evaluate the impact of arrest in deterring domestic violence in Minneapolis, it set in motion an extraordinary program of research on the police response to domestic violence with a profound impact on

² The most enduring source of statistical information about violent crime in the United States, the FBI's Uniform Crime Report (UCR), has collected information about criminal incidents of violence that are reported to the police since 1930. However, using police reports to estimate incidence rates of violence between intimates and family members is problematic for several reasons. Perhaps foremost of these is the fact that a large percentage of these crimes are never reported to police. For example, based on comparisons with national survey data, it is estimated that only about 40 to 50 percent of crimes become known to police. An even higher percentage of intimate partner violence and sexual assaults are never reported to police (Crowell & Burgess, 1996; Reiss & Roth, 1993). In addition, except for the crime of homicide, the current UCR program does not include information on the victim/offender relationship within its reports. Thus, using UCR data, it is not possible to determine the magnitude of violence against women by specific offenders, including assaults

policy, including VAWA. The Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment reported that domestic offenders were less likely to reoffend when arrested on the scene of their violence than if “advised” or sent away for several hours (Sherman and Berk, 1984a,b). The research findings were released with a concerted effort to garner as much publicity as possible (Sherman and Cohn, 1989), and they found receptive audiences. Findings reinforced advocates’ demands for an aggressive law enforcement response to domestic violence. That arrest was an effective means of crime control made the research attractive to those in politics and the public advocating for law and order through tough, punitive interventions. Other researchers found the study of special interest as an unusual field experiment on deterrence meriting publication in the top sociology journal, the *American Sociological Review*. Above all, it filled a gap in the knowledge base on which police policy might be based if domestic violence was to be treated as a crime.

In 1984 the U.S. Attorney General’s Task Force on Family Violence published its *Final Report* calling for the criminalization of family violence with a coordinated community response to intervene and deter continuing violence. The *Report* was prompted by advocates, supported by tough-on-crime politics, and buoyed by the recent publication of findings from the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment in support of on-scene, warrantless arrest for misdemeanor domestic assault (Sherman & Berk 1984a,b). The *Report* increased attention to domestic violence as criminal behavior while stimulating changes in law and criminal justice policies. VAWA built on traditional notions of crime control and accountability in enacting new federal laws and in encouraging local criminal justice activities against gendered violence.

A. VAWA’s Criminal Justice Components

VAWA includes components meant to prevent violence against women, to hold offenders accountable, and to protect victims through criminal justice or related legal remedies. It criminalized a number of interstate offenses, including, for example, cases of interstate domestic violence and interstate violations of protective orders. It required each state or Indian tribe to give full faith and credit to protection orders issued by other states or

perpetrated by intimates.

tribes. VAWA further provided funds for implementing local criminal justice initiatives and encouraging community collaborations intended to prevent rape and domestic violence or to provide services to victims of violence, including grants targeting special populations such as Indian and rural women, and women on college campuses.

VAWA's criminal justice components are notable as reactive interventions customarily invoked against men who have already committed a crime. Under these policies, the criminal justice system can hold an offender accountable, and with punishment it should deter that specific offender from further crime.³ As we shall see, however, even more is expected of VAWA.

B. VAWA Goals and Expectations

The Violence Against Women Act was passed with confidence that legal remedies exist to solve the problem of violence against women. By criminalizing certain actions, by calling for punishments and treatments, and by providing funds for local programs meant to enhance the criminal justice response, policy makers saw promising means to control the violence (Biden, 1999). To the extent that VAWA could insure that all elements of criminal justice are in place to respond to violence against women, policy makers hoped the Act would change the attitudes of people who have traditionally been insensitive to crimes of violence against women and who view those crimes as less serious than others.

Today, policy makers can point to some important advances that indicate new attitudes among agents of criminal justice: VAWA's extraordinary success in underwriting a proliferation of local initiatives; changes in state laws consistent with new federal laws; and unprecedented training of law enforcement and judicial agents. It is expected that the visibility of all such VAWA-related reforms will in turn help to change societal attitudes and bring about lower rates of violence (Biden, 1999).

VAWA repeatedly cites "prevention" and "crime reduction" as goals of its various legislative and funding initiatives. These goals are consistent with an outcome of general prevention – keeping men who have not yet committed violent crimes against women from

³ In identifying “offender accountability” as an area for research in its FY2000 Solicitation for *Research and Evaluation on Violence Against Women*, NIJ defines “offender accountability factors” as “those that punish

doing so in the first place. Such goals invite VAWA impacts to be assessed using rates of violent crime against women at the community, state, or national level. But herein lies a problem. General prevention activities are not a major part of VAWA.⁴ The Act's key laws and funding opportunities target men already identified as criminal offenders. Rather than attempting to prevent first-time crimes of violence against women, the Act attempts to prevent known offenders from reoffending. Thus there is a mismatch between the expectation that VAWA will prevent violence against women in general and what the Act supports as interventions targeting specific offenders.

It could be that the enhanced criminal justice interventions brought about by VAWA will serve as a general deterrent to violence against women or will change popular attitudes that tolerate such violence. We caution, however, that a general reduction in violence against women entails a cultural change that will not be obvious in the short term. It is asking too much of VAWA to show an immediate impact on *rates* of violent crime against women. VAWA's short-term impacts are better indicated by measures of its success in protecting specific victims from known offenders.

II. VAWA Impacts: A Research Perspective

Practitioners and researchers typically have different views of policy impacts. Practitioners, those entrusted with implementing policies, properly believe that what they do will, in fact, help to control violence against women. From their perspective, the impact of policy is taken to be the immediate outputs of their practices.⁵ For example, if policy makers mandate warrantless arrests of batterers to prevent domestic violence, the impact of the arrest policy, from a law enforcement perspective, may simply be compliance with policy and an increase in arrests. Similarly, a rigorous prosecution program may be deemed a success with

offenders, prevent re-offending, and lead to changes in offender behavior” (p. 4).

⁴ VAWA (1994) did authorize funds by amendments to the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act to be granted by the Department of Health and Human Services for rape prevention and education, for domestic violence education, and for demonstration grants “to establish projects in local communities involving many sectors of each community to coordinate intervention and prevention of domestic violence” (42 USC 10418). Three sections of VAWA authorized funds for what criminologists classify as “situational crime prevention” – capital improvements to prevent crime in public transportation and in public parks, but funds were never appropriated.

⁵ See, for example, the discussion of STOP impacts in Burt, Zweig, Schlichter, & Andrews (2000, Chap. 3), where they discuss as impacts, agency changes, victims served, or agency staffs’ perceptions of how they have

respect to, say, its increasing victim participation or conviction rates without considering whether such success truly impacts victim protection in a positive way.⁶ This view can be found, for example, in the report, “The Violence Against Women Act: Breaking the Cycle of Violence” (1996), where the Violence Against Women Office reports on the “Impact” and the “Success” of various provisions of VAWA. Impacts and successes are described in terms of outputs, such as laws enacted and applied in policies, programs, or legal actions.⁷

Consistent with this perspective, researchers may conduct evaluations to assess the extent to which programs and policies were implemented as intended. Questions answered under this type of "process evaluation" include whether a program or policy is reaching the target individuals or groups, whether it is actually operating as expected, and what resources are being expended (Bachman & Schutt, 2001). As described by Burt, Harrell, Newmark, Aron, & Jacobs (1997), a process evaluation involves “a thorough documentation and analysis of activities of the program...and how it is viewed from the perspectives of staff, participants, and the community” (p. 61). Process evaluations may be undertaken by researchers to assist practitioners and policy makers in determining compliance with policy.

In contrast to those whose first responsibility is to implement policies as intended, violence researchers are more inclined to assess policy *impacts* in terms of outputs consistent with policy makers’ expectations for policy to effectively control violence. Did the program and/or policy have the intended consequences? It is from this question that we focus our assessment of the criminal justice components of VAWA. It is also a perspective Congress embraced when it mandated, as part of VAWA, that the National Academy of Sciences through its National Research Council develop a research agenda to increase understanding and control of violence against women. The NRC Panel on Research on Violence Against Women, after reviewing the relevant research literature, concluded in 1996 that “significant

met the needs of victims.

⁶ This is not to say that some, especially in the advocacy community, have not asserted the primacy of victim safety and well-being. Hart (1995), for example, notes the paucity of research on preventive impacts and its need in support of advocacy projects: “Each undertaking should include an evaluation component, measuring whether safety, autonomy and restoration (or quality of life) of victims has been improved by advocacy and whether perpetrators have stopped their violence, divested themselves of their perceived “ownership” of victims and acted accountably in light of the sanctions or restraints imposed by the courts” (p. 13).

⁷ NIJ distinguishes between “outputs” and “outcomes” as a methodological consideration in their research solicitations: “Study designs must make a clear distinction between outcomes such as safety and accountability, and ‘outputs’ or intervention. For example, arrest, prosecution, or treatment may be considered outputs that

gaps existed in understanding ... the impact and effectiveness of preventive and treatment interventions” (Crowell & Burgess, 1996: 2). The Panel did not explicitly define its use of the term “impacts,” but it was apparent in the Panel’s recommendations that research should focus on preventive outcomes of programs (pp. 2-3).

The question of VAWA impacts, from a research perspective, concerns both its direct effect on research, as well as what research has found regarding VAWA’s impact in controlling violence against women. For present purposes we avoid using the unqualified term, “impact,” to describe the implementation of criminal justice policies and programs in a manner consistent with the goal of preventing violence against women. There are currently underway major evaluation studies mandated under VAWA to examine the successful implementation of these initiatives, some in the name of “impact evaluation.” Indeed, some very important research has been undertaken recently in previously unexplored areas where understanding outputs under unique justice structures and processes is a first step toward later research on outcomes. For example, Luna et al. (2000) described their evaluation of STOP Grant Programs for Reducing Violence Against Women among Indian Tribes as an “impact” evaluation because it examined the success of tribes in implementing promised criminal justice interventions—a system impact. Apart from noting the significance of these studies to the expected success of VAWA, we limit our attention here to impact evaluations of projects with outcomes promising to protect women.

A. Conceptualizing VAWA Impacts

Exhibit 1 depicts our conceptualization of VAWA’s criminal justice impacts. It shows VAWA's direct effect both on criminal justice interventions and on research and evaluation. Research, in turn, helps to inform interventions through the accumulation of relevant knowledge and its synthesis for practitioners. Process evaluations further help to insure that prescribed interventions are implemented and function as expected. Finally, Exhibit 1 shows what is intended to be a preventive impact of interventions by controlling violence against women. Impact evaluations test the actual effectiveness of preventive interventions on violence against women.

influence outcomes” (NIJ 2000, p. 4).

[Exhibit 1 about here]

As displayed in Exhibit 1, VAWA's outputs include both research and justice components. Exhibit 2 provides greater detail on each. The criminal justice components are at the core of VAWA's intent to protect women. Here we list those of special interest for research that might focus on criminal justice controls of violence against women. First, in 1994, VAWA included new federal laws meant to supplement state and tribal codes such that law enforcement jurisdiction is not limited by state or tribal boundaries. It also extended or enhanced federal laws on evidence for criminal trials, and on sentencing to demonstrate a federal commitment to legal proceedings for remediation of violence against women. Second, VAWA encouraged local initiatives to bring criminal justice to bear on violence against women via training, coordination, aggressive law enforcement, and vigorous prosecution. VAWA explicitly encouraged these activities for traditionally underserved populations, such as women on Indian lands, other minority women, and women in rural areas. The largest of all these programs is the STOP Grant program,⁸ described below. The last of the legal/policy impact areas shown in Exhibit 2 covers justice-related initiatives, that is, funded activities closely related to criminal justice interventions and perhaps supporting criminal law enforcement. Among these are both grant-driven activities and changes in laws or policies to protect immigrant women and their children from detrimental government action upon disclosure of their victimization.

[Exhibit 2 about here]

Laws and policies constituting VAWA's criminal justice interventions may be informed by research findings at the same time that they invite evaluations of their processes and preventive impacts. Exhibit 2 lists some of the significant research activities explicitly identified by VAWA as relevant to preventive interventions against the violent victimization of women. First, in 1994, VAWA required several reports on surveys, databases, and measurement. Second, it called for evaluations of specialized programs under VAWA, including national and local evaluations of STOP Grant activities. The latter have generally been process evaluations, but VAWA invites impact evaluations of local efforts, in particular—

⁸ Chapter 2 of VAWA (1994), Law Enforcement and Prosecution Grants to Reduce Violent Crimes Against Women, authorizes what are called, "S*T*O*P (Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors) Violence Against Women Grants" or simply "STOP grants."

an opportunity formalized in NIJ solicitations, as described below. Third, it called on the National Academy of Sciences to determine a research agenda for violence against women.

B. A Critical Perspective on Research and Evaluation

In considering advances in research relevant to controlling violence against women, we offer a few caveats. First, criminal justice research on violence against women involves varied and complex systems of intervention. We commonly recognize these as law enforcement, prosecution, courts, corrections, and victim services. How these function either separately or together as a *system* differs in ways that can have different impacts on victim behavior and ultimate protection. For example, arrest, perhaps the most straightforward of justice interventions, can produce different outcomes depending on how it is effected (Paternoster, Brame, Bachman, & Sherman, 1997), if at all (Ferraro, 1989). Prosecution, in turn, can be even more complicated by alternative policies and discretionary practices (e.g., Davis & Smith, 1998; Ford, 1993; Ford & Breall, forthcoming). Clearly, evaluations of justice impacts call for rigorous research.

Second, not all research has value in the search for policies that work to prevent violence. We shall see that there has been a remarkable growth in published research since VAWA's enactment. But much, if not most, of that research fails to meet criteria for scientific rigor that would justify taking its findings as more than ideas in support of policy. To accept research findings uncritically is to risk implementing policies that might do more harm than good in protecting women (Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino, & Finckenauer, 2000). The National Research Council Committee on the Assessment of Family Violence Interventions' publication, *Violence in Families* (Chalk & King, 1998), identifies "(i)mproving the standards of evidence used in the evaluation of family violence" as "one of the most critical needs in this field" (p. 59). The Committee reviewed over 2,000 evaluation studies conducted between 1980 and 1996 and found just 33 designed and implemented with sufficient scientific rigor "to provide insights on the effects of specific interventions" in the area of domestic violence (pp. 67-68), that is, evaluations that "employed an experimental or quasi-experimental research design, used reliable research instrumentation, and included a control or comparison group" (p. 68).

It is not our purpose here to engage in the depth of critical review that characterized the assessment of literature by the National Research Council's Committee on the Assessment of Family Violence Interventions (Chalk & King, 1998) or the University of Maryland's review of crime prevention programs (Sherman, et al., 1997, 1998). But we embrace their cautioning against adopting policies that have not been evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs with comparison groups (Chalk & King, 1998). Because the causal link between preventive policy and victim protection is best analyzed by experimental design, we take the position that the experimental method is the gold standard for rigorous evaluation (Bachman & Schutt, 2001; Chalk & King, 1998; Crowell & Burgess, 1996; Dunford, 2000a, Reiss & Roth, 1993; Weisburd, 2000). That being said, arguments for qualitative detail raise important issues concerning the diversity of justice interventions and the effects of these interventions in one jurisdiction versus another (Dobash & Dobash, 2000; Gondolf, 2001). The conclusiveness of findings, and particularly the assessment of how research findings may generalize to other settings, requires simultaneous investigation of process details essential to comprehensive understanding.

Third, regardless of the research design, one should expect policy-relevant research to meet fundamental standards of scientific inquiry. Empirical measures should be clearly defined and operationalized, and in use should meet acceptable standards of reliability and validity. Samples must be drawn to represent the relevant population. Data collection and analysis must be undertaken with care and with tools appropriate to the problem and the subjects under study. And any findings reported or conclusions rendered should not reach beyond the data and logic of analyses. Research findings on violence against women have been challenged on questions of measurement, including the effects of instrumentation on estimates of the prevalence of violence against women in the general population – issues we address in the next section.

Finally, there are no simple solutions to gendered violence. Following results of the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment, for instance, it seemed that arrest would play a major part in controlling domestic violence. One early criticism of the Minneapolis research was that it had been released without benefit of replication and without adequate notice of its limitations for generalizing beyond Minneapolis (Lempert, 1984). But Minneapolis was a rigorous experiment with findings that appealed to a number of audiences including

committed advocates and law-and-order policy makers. Policy makers nationwide rushed to eliminate legal restrictions on misdemeanor arrests and to implement pro-arrest policies. In a sense, the Minneapolis Experiment raised expectations that research would confirm that popular policy actually controls crime. As we would learn in subsequent replications, the impact of arrest is not so certain. The convergence of historical events that brought the Minneapolis findings to the attention of policy-makers nationwide was unusual (Garner & Maxwell, 2000; Sherman & Cohn, 1989). It is a mistake to expect every experiment either to capture the attention of so many or to demonstrate impacts of seemingly simple and straightforward policies to prevent violence against women.

C. The Need for Baseline Measures

Despite over three decades of research, the magnitude of most forms of violence against women, including intimate partner violence, rape and sexual assault, and stalking, is still subject to dispute among researchers. Valid and reliable statistical data on violence against women are essential to formulating policies and procedures likely to prevent this violence and to ameliorate its consequences when it occurs. Not only are valid estimates important for informing policy and allocating service resources, but without solid baseline rates of violence both nationally and locally, we cannot assess the effectiveness of interventions at those levels. Indeed, two of the major evaluations of VAWA funded by NIJ have noted the absence of baseline data as a major hindrance to their evaluation efforts (Burt, Zweig, Andrews, Van Ness, Parikh, Uekert, & Harrell 2001; Chaiken, Boland, Maltz, Martin, & Targonski 2001). Burt and her evaluation team state, “(q)uantitative evidence of differences in justice system outcomes or other outcomes attributable to receipt of STOP funding remain elusive, except for scattered examples in which a project keeps good statistics..... In addition to the lack of statewide justice system data, a distressingly low percentage of STOP projects themselves are able to document changes in justice system activities from before to after STOP” (2001, p.8). Why are data on incidents of violence against women so elusive? Chaiken’s cross-site evaluation of selected VAWA outcomes reports, “(w)hile many of the agencies and organizations participating in our study were eager to implement systematic data collection and analysis, for the most part fiscal and technological constraints had prevented collecting specific impact data or analyzing data to show impact” (2001, p.16).

Without accurate baseline data from which to monitor changes in incidents of violence against women, attempts to evaluate the general impact of VAWA are tentative at best. At the national level, information on the prevalence and incidence of violence against women does exist, but there is no consensus on whether these data capture the true magnitude of violence against women. What we know about the magnitude of violence against women in the U.S. derives from a few disparate surveys – the National Family Violence Surveys (NFVS) conducted in 1976 and 1985 by Straus and associates (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980; Straus & Gelles, 1990); the National Women’s Study (NWS), a telephone survey conducted in three waves between 1989 and 1993 (Kilpatrick, Edmunds, & Seymour, 1992); the annual National Crime Victimization Survey of the Bureau of Justice Statistics with its redesigned instrumentation for violence by intimates in 1992 (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995; Rennison & Welchans, 2000) and the VAWA-supported National Violence Against Women Survey conducted in 1995-1996 (Tjaden & Thoennes 2000).

Differences in methodologies across surveys have yielded considerable differences in estimates of violence against women. The point is well-illustrated for intimate partner violence in estimates of annual *prevalence* rates as measured by the four national surveys. Estimates of physical violence, for example, range from less than 2 per 1,000 (Tjaden & Thoennes 2000) to 116 per 1,000 (Straus & Gelles, 1990). Such differences, while dramatic, simply confirm the lack of agreement on how best to measure violence against women – by what instrument, with what definitions of violence and victim-offender relationships, and for what age groups. More generally, there is substantial variation in survey methodologies, including such differences as the context of the survey, the sampling frames, the estimation procedures, and perhaps most importantly, the questions asked of respondents. Clearly, the ways in which women are asked about their victimization experiences will impact the magnitude estimates obtained. As a result, published estimates of violence against women from each of the surveys above should not be compared without using sufficient methodological modifications. Nevertheless, policy makers and researchers alike frequently make these comparisons. When you ask, “How many women experience violence each year?” the answer you obtain is inextricably linked to survey methodologies.

Given the importance of these estimates for assessing the justice impacts of VAWA, the NRC VAWA Research Panel concluded that knowing “the ‘true’ prevalence of violence

against women may be less important than understanding the methodological differences that resulted in various estimates” (Crowell & Burgess, 1996:39). The Appendix charts the similarities and differences among the national violence against women surveys that have been conducted to date.

Is it possible to compare incidence rates of violence against women across surveys? The answer is yes and no. Because of the methodological differences among surveys, some comparisons using published estimates of violence against women are invalid. For example, it is not valid to compare estimates of intimate partner violence generated from the NFVS, which interviewed only married and cohabiting couples, with estimates generated from the NCVS and NVAWS that relied on national probability of samples of women in general, regardless of marital status. After controlling for several sample differences, however, it is possible to make comparisons across the NCVS and NVAWS. When these procedures are performed (e.g. by including incidents of adult women only, including lone male offenders only, etc.), magnitude estimates of violence in general do converge across the two surveys (Bachman, 2000). Estimates for rape from the NVAWS, however, are still significantly higher compared to the NCVS. This is not surprising given the more graphic behavioral specific screening questions used by the NVAWS to uncover these victimizations (Kindermann, Lynch, & Cantor 1997). In addition, compared to the NCVS, the NVAWS results in a larger proportion of intimate perpetrated rapes and physical assaults. Again, the more specific screening questions used by the NVAWS regarding assaultive behavior perpetrated by “husbands,” “boyfriends,” and former intimate partners are certainly related to this finding (Bachman, 2000). Importantly, however, is the fact that both surveys unequivocally demonstrate that women are more likely to experience violence at the hands of people they know rather than strangers.⁹

Another important contribution of VAWA regarding measurement is that the Act assured that historically invisible female victims of violence, such as women of color and the elderly, would be given the attention they deserve. As a result, the NVAWS made special efforts to collect information from these groups. For example, if a respondent to the NVAWS was determined to be Spanish-speaking, the interview was administered in Spanish. In

addition, unlike the majority of U. S. Justice Department publications that typically report findings for whites and African-Americans, and/or Hispanics and non-Hispanics, the NIJ/CDC report, *Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence* (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000) presents incidence rates of violence against women for other groups as well, including American Indian and Asian American women. Just as baseline data are needed to track change in violence against all women, acknowledging the victimization of special populations is essential to tracking differential trends in rates of violence against women in those populations. We will return to measurement and data issues throughout this report as they relate to assessing the impacts of VAWA in general, and on mandated studies in particular.

III. Research Opportunities Under VAWA

We saw in Exhibit 2 some of the criminal justice interventions encouraged by VAWA, interventions that reflect policy makers' belief in the effectiveness of criminal justice for crime prevention. Still, policy makers recognized the need to evaluate interventions. As noted above, some of the VAWA evaluations were mandated as process and system impact studies. The research community for its part decides by its response to solicitations which, if any, of the justice policies and practices should be evaluated for preventive impacts or for other contributions to knowledge on violence against women. This section briefly describes the key criminal justice components of VAWA that are amenable to evaluation, either by legislative mandate, by NRC/NIJ research agendas, or by researcher interest.

A. Legal Impact Evaluations

VAWA sought to bring consistency to state efforts to control violence against women by making federal crimes of acts that might otherwise have avoided criminalization under state law. Its new criminal laws offer a unique opportunity for legal impact studies by researchers interested in whether violent men who might have previously skirted state laws with impunity will desist in the face of new federal laws. For example, prior to VAWA, the battered woman who secured a protective order and left her state to escape abuser would

⁹ See, for example, Bachman (2000), Gelles (2000), and Tjaden & Thoennes (2000) for discussions of issues in

likely discover that once he found her, he could violate the original state's PO with impunity in another state. Congress recognized this problem and introduced provisions in VAWA that made it a federal crime to cross state lines or to enter or leave Indian country with the intent to injure, harass or intimidate a spouse or intimate partner and such an action involves a crime of violence by which the victim is injured. VAWA also made it a federal crime for an abuser to cross state lines or to enter or leave Indian country and violate a valid protective order. In addition, VAWA required states and Indian tribes to enforce qualifying protection orders from other jurisdictions as if the order was from their own jurisdiction, thereby extending "full faith and credit" to orders issued in states from which battered women have fled.

Besides the creation of new offenses regarding interstate domestic violence, VAWA also introduced law to combat gender-based crime, including stiffer sentences for repeat sex offenders and additional rape shield evidentiary protections. Are these new statutes having their intended effect? Unfortunately, this remains an empirical question. There have been attempts by a few researchers to delineate the difficulties that such legislation may present when implemented at the state level. For example, an analysis of state statutes and procedures for dealing with the "full faith and credit" provision of VAWA revealed that states were developing policies and procedures on how to handle protection orders from other states (Websdale & Johnson, 1998). To date, however, there has been no empirical research initiated to explore the preventive impacts of these new federal laws. As Websdale and Johnson conclude, "Ultimately, the successful implementation of the VAWA's full faith and credit guarantees will depend in large part on the willingness of state criminal justice agencies to accommodate foreign orders in the spirit intended by the VAWA" (1998: p.7).

B. Evaluations of Local Interventions

VAWA authorizes grants to states, Indian tribal governments, and local governments to reduce violent crimes against women by developing and strengthening "effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies" (Subtitle A, Chap. 2, Sec. 2001). What have come to be known as STOP (Services*Training*Officers*Prosecutors) Grants are allocated either as formula grants to states, the District of Columbia, and territories for use in local initiatives

comparing rates across surveys.

supporting criminal justice responses to violence against women or as discretionary grants in support of tribal law enforcement and prosecution to reduce violence against native women. Under the 1994 Act, STOP Grants were limited to initiatives consistent with the seven purpose areas listed in Exhibit 3. Another program of grants to local governments funds efforts to encourage arrest policies for the specific purposes also listed in Exhibit 3.

[Exhibit 3 About Here]

Other grants were available to support special populations or special needs. Rural states, tribal and local governments, and other entities were eligible for Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Enforcement Grants. These funds were to be used to improve victim services and to implement coordinated community responses to domestic violence and child abuse. Eligible entities were those that offer victims of domestic violence legal services in civil matters such as protection orders, divorce, support payments, custody issues, etc., including those that could carry criminal sanctions such as violations of protection orders.

VAWA's program of STOP grants redistributes state funds as subgrants to units of local government and nonprofit victim services programs. STOP subgrants have underwritten thousands of projects designed to impact violence against women, as documented in evaluations by Burt and her colleagues (1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000). About half of the STOP subgrants targeted domestic violence only, another fifth addressed sexual assault in combination with domestic violence, and just 12% addressed sexual assault exclusively (Burt et al., 2000). Fewer still focused on stalking. With respect to the purposes of STOP Grants, two thirds of all subgrants provided victim services, one third were training programs, and one fifth were special criminal justice units. Just 15% of STOP subgrants funded policy and procedure development (Burt, 2000).

While all of these subgrants are subject to some level of evaluation, few attempts have been made to conduct rigorous "impact" evaluations at the local level. In fact, the national level evaluation of the STOP grant program concluded that only a small number of states could even supply basic statistics describing their activities (e.g. arrests, case dispositions, etc.) using STOP funding (Burt, et al., 2001). Even so, what we learn from the implementation of local initiatives gives insight into the diversity of criminal justice

interventions and promises to inform designs for impact evaluations, given the opportunity. We will return to this problem later in the report.

Part 2: VAWA's Influence on Research and Evaluation

As illustrated in Exhibit 1, VAWA (1994) directly influenced research on and evaluations of criminal justice initiatives and outcomes addressing violence against women. It determined a course for research by setting an agenda, mandating national studies and reports, and by providing funds for local research and evaluation, thus creating opportunities begging researchers' attention. VAWA specified research activities to both inform and evaluate preventive interventions. Each of the research activities listed in Exhibit 2 is a directive to the Attorney General to study and report with whatever assistance may be needed from others. Chapter 9 of VAWA (1994) Subtitle B specified "Data and Research," including a research agenda, explicitly requested of the Attorney General.

I. Mandated Studies

VAWA initially called for several studies in support of its objectives and independent of the research agenda requested of the National Research Council (discussed below). These included surveys to identify baseline data, studies of record keeping, and evaluations of how official policies and practices violate the confidentiality of victim addresses and communications. Among NIJ's VAWA solicitations are calls for proposals to carry out studies required by Congress (see the Research list in Exhibit 2), including evaluations of major programs authorized in 1998 and administered by the Violence Against Women Office—Grants to Combat Violent Crimes Against Women on Campuses Program and the Domestic Violence Victims' Civil Legal Assistance Program.

A. Surveys

Prior to VAWA, there were only three sets of nationally representative surveys with estimates of annual rates of violence against women: 1) the NIMH sponsored National Family Violence Surveys (NFVS), which were conducted in 1975 (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980) and 1985 (Straus & Gelles, 1990); 2) the annual Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), and the National Women's Study (NWS), funded by

the National Victim Center and the Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center (Kilpatrick, Edmunds, & Seymour, 1992). As noted earlier, each has problems concerning who is represented and how violence is measured. Moreover, none includes measures of stalking.

To fill this gap and add to our knowledge about the epidemiology of violence against women, VAWA (1994) called for the Attorney General to report on the incidence of stalking and domestic violence (Section 40610). While a national survey had already been funded by NIJ to measure the extent of stalking victimizations nationally, CDC used VAWA money to boost funding for this study in order to increase sample sizes sufficiently to allow comparisons across subgroups of the population. The survey was conducted by the Center for Policy Research and has become known as the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) (Tjaden, 93-IJ-CX-0012). Findings were first reported in the Violence Against Women Grants Office's publication, *Stalking and Domestic Violence: The Third Annual Report to Congress* (VAWGO, 1998). Stalking data alone are highlighted in a NIJ Research in Brief, *Stalking in America: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey* (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Complete survey findings are published in a report, *Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence* (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

Apart from the survey of women in the general population, VAWA mandated a survey of sexual assaults against women on college campuses. Research predating VAWA demonstrated an increased risk college women have to sexual assault (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987). National data are available in the form of crime reports under the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act of 1990, which requires higher educational institutions to collect and make public all campus crime statistics, including sexual victimizations. VAWA sought more specific representative data in calling for a National Baseline Study on Campus Sexual Assault "to examine the scope of the problem of campus sexual assaults and the effectiveness of institutional and legal policies in addressing such crimes and protecting victims" (Section 40506). In accordance with this, NIJ and BJS funded the National College Women Sexual Victimization (NCWSV) study (Fisher, 95-WT-NX-0001, 97-MU-MU-0011, see the NIJ/BJS Research Report, *The Sexual Victimization of College Women*, Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). In addition to completed and attempted rape, the survey also measured the extent of unwanted sexual contact, stalking, and visual and

verbal forms of sexual victimizations. BJS has also added questions to the NCVS screening instrument to more reliably identify victimizations that occur on college campuses. These questions will now allow victimizations to be placed in the context of “school and/or campus” along with the identification of victims as students and/or employees of universities.

There are several important contributions these VAWA mandated surveys have made to the state of knowledge regarding violence against women. The most obvious, of course, is that they are the only estimates of stalking available, both nationally and at the college level. Moreover, since the NVAWS collected information about all previous victimizations, it is the first of its kind in the United States to permit a glance at the interconnections among women’s experiences with violence over a lifetime.¹⁰ Victimizations experienced by women, regardless of when they occur, can have a profound effect on perceived levels of fear. The one-year reference period used by the NCVS, while avoiding problems of memory recall, discounts the effects of victimizations which occurred beyond this time frame. The NVAWS used a greater range of questions with sensitive lead-in questions to be asked, thereby increasing the willingness of women to disclose victimizations. As Johnson states, this added information can “help place women’s experiences of sexual assault and wife battering into a broader social context and can significantly enhance discussions about the correlates of women’s fear” (Johnson, 1996:46).

These surveys have advanced not only our knowledge on the prevalence of violence nationwide but also our understanding of several important methodological questions regarding estimates of violence against women in general, and rape in particular. For example, as noted earlier, only two national surveys have utilized behaviorally specific questions to uncover rape victimizations, the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) and the National Women’s Study (NWS).¹¹ The NCVS does not utilize this methodology. Some researchers have contended that screening questions that are not behaviorally specific are not detailed enough to identify all women who have experienced a rape or some other type of sexual assault (Eigenberg, 1990; Koss, 1993). To determine

¹⁰ The Canadian Violence Against Women Survey also collected information on all previous victimization experiences (Johnson, 1996).

whether survey questions, in fact, influence estimates of rape, the Bureau of Justice Statistics funded a comparison component of the College survey (NCWSV). Importantly, this is the only time this question has been investigated in a controlled quasi experiment. In the NCWSV, two large samples (sample sizes over 4,000) followed the same survey procedures, except one sample was given the NCVS rape screening questions and the other was given the NCWSV rape screening questions. Not surprising to many researchers, the behaviorally specific screening questions uncovered a significantly higher incidence of all forms of sexual victimization compared to the NCVS screening instrument. The estimated differentials between methodologies was dramatic. For example, the percentage of the sample that reported experiencing a completed rape in the NCWSV was 11 times larger than the NCVS component to the college survey. Thus, although others have postulated that this would be the effect, only now is there sufficient empirical evidence confirming this speculation.

B. Other Research-Related Reports

VAWA requires a number of specific reports relevant to its goals, as listed in Exhibit 2. Together, they constitute a set of study priorities subsequently incorporated into the VAWA research agenda. The first group of studies pertains to official records that might be used in lieu of surveys as baseline indicators for violence against women. The next is directly related to the surveys just described – Section 40610 calls for an evaluation of state anti-stalking efforts in addition to incidence data. The final group of studies concerns unique circumstances that might befall individual victims of violence – the confidentiality of addresses, the use of the “battered women syndrome,” and the confidentiality of victim communications with counselors.

1. State Databases and Record-Keeping Relating to Domestic Violence

As noted earlier in this report, policies and programs meant to prevent violence against women are often challenged to demonstrate their effectiveness without adequate data from official records. Policies at the state level generally have more of a direct impact on the lives

¹¹ The rape screen questions used by the NWS, the NVAWS, and the NCWSV are virtually identical. Instead of asking a respondent if they “had been raped,” for example, questions describe an incident in graphic language that covers the elements of a criminal offense (e.g., someone “made you have sexual intercourse by using force or threatening to harm you..... by intercourse, I mean putting a penis in your vagina.”

of women, so establishing baseline state data for monitoring violence against women is extremely important. But because survey research is costly, official police report data will remain the first option for this monitoring in most states. As such, VAWA required the Attorney General to report to Congress on the “problems of record keeping of criminal complaints involving domestic violence,” with specific information on “(1) the efforts that have been made by the Department of Justice, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to collect statistics on domestic violence; and (2) the feasibility of requiring that the relationship between an offender and victim be reported in Federal records of crimes of aggravated assault, rape, and other violent crimes” (Section 40509). It also specified that “(t)he Attorney General shall study and report to the States and to Congress on how the States may collect centralized databases on the incidence of sexual and domestic violence offenses within a State” (Section 40292). Responsibility for Section 40292 rested with NIJ, while BJS had responsibility for Section 40509. Because of the overlap, BJS joined NIJ in funding the Justice Research and Statistics Association (Weiss, 95-IJ-CX-0010) for studies of both sections under a single Project to Assess State and Federal Data on Domestic Violence and Assault. JRSA published its study findings in a joint NIJ/BJS research report, *Domestic and Sexual Violence Data Collection* (JRSA, 1996). It also published findings on state data collection as a table describing the systems in place for each state (Orchowsky & Weiss, 2000).

2. Domestic Violence Data Collection under NIBRS

In 1988 the FBI announced data standards for its National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which many believe to be the most promising source of uniform State level statistics on incidents of violence against women reported to police, although fewer than half of the states comply with the NIBRS reporting system. NIBRS does not include a specific domestic violence offense code, but it is still possible to estimate intimate partner violence from NIBRS data because victim/offender relationships are collected for crimes against persons and robbery. Using this information, intimate and other family violence estimates can be calculated for any offense category. One problem with NIBRS, however, is that the coding scheme for relationship categories does not include the relationships of “ex-boyfriend/ex-girlfriend,” “child in common,” and “shared domicile.” Thus, a significant proportion of intimate partner violence against women would be misclassified and ultimately undercounted.

Of course, the NIBRS data collection method shares the major problem inherent in the UCR program – when victimizations are not reported to police, they are never counted in either data collection effort in the first place.

Despite these problems, NIBRS remains the data system that holds the most promise for capturing information on incidents of domestic violence known to police. As such, Congress took the opportunity to require that the Attorney General, “in accordance with the States, shall compile data regarding domestic violence and intimidation (including stalking) as part of (NIBRS)” (Section 40609). JRSA continued its earlier work on data collection with a grant from NIJ (Orchowsky, 96-IJ-CX-0057), which resulted in the report, *Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Data Collection Systems in the States* (Orchowsky, 1999a).¹²

3. State Anti-Stalking Efforts

In addition to information on the incidence of stalking, VAWA calls for the Attorney General to submit an annual report to Congress that “evaluates the effectiveness of State antistalking efforts and legislation” (Section 40610). McEwen and Miller (97-WT-VX-0007) will provide an assessment of anti-stalking efforts nationwide along with a detailed evaluation of how they are being implemented in two local sites.

4. Confidentiality of Domestic Violence Victims’ Addresses

In the interest of protecting women who have left abusive relationships from pursuit by their abusers, VAWA mandated that the Attorney General prepare a report on the confidentiality of addresses for victims of domestic violence based, specifically on a “study of the means by which abusive spouses may obtain information concerning the addresses or locations of estranged or former spouses, notwithstanding the desire of the victims to have such information withheld to avoid further exposure to abuse” with an “analysis of the feasibility of creating effective means of protecting the confidentiality of information concerning the addresses and locations of abused spouses to protect such persons from

exposure to further abuse while preserving access to such information for legitimate purposes” (Section 40508). The National Criminal Justice Association received a grant (Holden, 95-IJ-CX-0009) to conduct the study. Its results are published in a report, *Confidentiality of Domestic Violence Victims’ Addresses* (NCJA, 1995).

5. Battered Women Syndrome

The battered women’s syndrome holds increasing legal attention as grounds for arguing self defense in criminal cases, particularly for women accused of killing their intimate partners. Though not an issue directly related to protecting women from violence, it is one that protects women from criminal justice systems that cannot readily count defensive acts by battered women among those covered by traditional self-defense statutes. VAWA called on the Attorney General along with the Secretary of Health and Human Services to provide Congress with “a report on the medical and psychological basis of ‘battered women's syndrome’ and on the extent to which evidence of the syndrome has been considered in criminal trials” (Section 40507). In addition to documenting the nature of the syndrome and how it has been used in criminal trials, VAWA called for “an assessment by State, tribal, and Federal judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys of the effects that evidence of battered women's syndrome may have in criminal trials.” The State Justice Institute managed a project (Thurston, 95-IJ-CX-A025) to prepare information for a joint report by NIJ and NIMH, *The Validity and Use of Evidence Concerning Battering and Its Effects in Criminal Trials* (NIJ/NIMH, 1996).

6. Study on Confidentiality of Communications Between Sexual Assault or Domestic Violence Victims And Their Counselors

With concern for victim privacy and recovery, VAWA required the Attorney General to “study and evaluate the manner in which the States have taken measures to protect the confidentiality of communications between sexual assault or domestic violence victims and

¹² According to the FBI UCR Program Office, a minority of States have been approved as capable of producing NIBRS-compliant data. While the majority of states are trying to implement the data system, there are still approximately 7 states that have no intention of NIBRS participation. The problem with compliance is primarily related to the lack of resources; changing an entire data collection procedure is time consuming and costly. Because both UCR and NIBRS participation is voluntary, complying with the switch is burdensome to most agencies.

their therapists or trained counselors” (Section 40153). The Violence Against Women Office conducted the study and issued a report, *Study on Confidentiality of Communications Between Sexual Assault or Domestic Violence Victims And Their Counselors* (1995).

7. VAWA Grant Evaluations

The Violence Against Women Act requires the Attorney General to report annually to Congress on the distribution of grant activities and funds under the STOP Grant program, by state, along with “an evaluation of the effectiveness of programs funded...” (Section 2004). In 1995, NIJ funded the Urban Institute to undertake a multi-year national evaluation of STOP Grants (Burt & Harrell, 95-WT-NX-0005) with responsibility for its key report components. In 1999 the Urban Institute was awarded another grant (99-WT-VX-0010) to undertake a national impact evaluation of the STOP Grant program to address the required effectiveness component of Section 2004.

Other evaluations of special areas addressed by STOP Grants have been funded through NIJ over the years since the start of the Urban Institute evaluations. Three, awarded in 1996, address STOP Violence Against Indian Women Discretionary Grants (Luna, 96-WT-NX-0006), grants for victim services (Smith, 96-WT-NX-0003), and grants for law enforcement and prosecution (McEwen, 96-WT-NX-0007). Another multi-site impact evaluation awarded in 1998 addresses questions of victim safety and offender accountability attributable to VAWA grants (Chaiken, 98-WT-VX-K013). Four other national evaluations inform the Attorney General on the status of the Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies (Uekert & McEwen, 98-WE-VX-0012), on the Rural Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Enforcement Assistance program (Dutton, 98-WR-VX-K002), on Grants to Combat Violent Crimes Against Women on Campus (Uekert & DuPree, 00-WA-VX-0001), and on the Domestic Violence Victims’ Civil Legal Assistance (CLA) Program (Connors, 00-WL-VX-0002).¹³

VAWA also provides opportunities for more focused evaluations of local initiatives. Each of the grants awarded to advance VAWA purposes carries a requirement for a minimal self-evaluation—generally a report on program implementation with numbers of clients served

or cases handled. More rigorous impact evaluation is beyond the capabilities of a typical agency grantee, although encouraged and supported by the Urban Institute's *Evaluation Guidebook* (Burt, Harrell, Newmark, Aron, & Jacobs, 1997). Support for independent evaluations of STOP Grants has been a fundamental part of NIJ's annual VAWA research program since its inception in 1995.

II. Setting a Research Agenda

Apart from mandated studies, VAWA has contributed to several special opportunities for setting a national agenda for research on violence against women – it required that a panel of experts set a research agenda, it stimulated NIJ to develop its own strategic plan for VAWA research, and it allows for researcher-defined investigations into various aspects of VAWA initiatives.

A. NAS/NRC VAW Panel

VAWA called for the National Academy of Sciences, through its National Research Council, to empanel a group of experts to establish a research agenda for violence against women and to report to the Attorney General within one year. The NRC undertook the work with joint funding from NIJ and CDC. The product of that effort is the book, *Understanding Violence Against Women* (Crowell & Burgess, 1996), which recommends priorities both for needed research and for organizing researchers to investigate them. Notably, pursuant to its charge to review the state of research, the panel concluded “that significant gaps exist in understanding of the extent and causes of violence against women and the impact and effectiveness of preventive and treatment interventions” (p. 2).

The NRC panel went on to recommend a research agenda to fill the gaps with special attention to the following four areas:

- Preventing violence against women
- Improving research methods
- Building knowledge
- Developing the research infrastructure

¹³ More complete information on the STOP Grants Program, including developments since the original 1994 Act, can be found at the Violence Against Women Office website, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/vawo/about.htm>.

Exhibit 4 displays the detailed recommendations of the NRC Panel under each of these areas.

[Exhibit 4 about here]

1. Preventing Violence Against Women

The panel took seriously VAWA's many references to preventing violence against women to question what it might take to actually reduce levels of violence. It concluded that prevention should be a priority response and that a better understanding of violence against women calls for both basic research on the causes of violence and evaluations of "preventive intervention programs" (p. 3). To this end, the panel recommended, among other things, longitudinal research on the development of violent behavior, research on risk factors, and rigorous evaluations of programs to prevent violence against women.

2. Improving Research Methods

Noting a long-standing concern over research in the fields of domestic violence and rape, the panel made six recommendations for improving the quality of research. It called for clear definitions operationalized with valid and reliable measures. It called for theory to guide analyses and to interpret findings. And it recommended the use of both qualitative and quantitative research, including, especially, randomized experiments to evaluate program outcomes for alternative interventions under different community settings and for different populations of offenders.

3. Building Knowledge

Under this rubric, the panel recommended needed research to fill gaps in understanding violence against women, per se, with attention to how multiple forms of violence are experienced by women in general and by special categories of women, in particular. Among the special victim populations cited are underserved populations – women of color, disabled women, lesbians, immigrant women, and institutionalized women. To these we note others that were specifically identified throughout VAWA as needing special consideration – Indian women, rural women, women on campuses.

4. Developing the Research Infrastructure

Research cannot be conducted without basic supports, beginning with input and guidance from peers on the formulation of research problems and designs. It also requires money. Significant, large-scale research on social science problems is costly, just as is medical or public health research.¹⁴ In the judgment of the NRC VAW Panel, one way to insure guided, long-term support for violence against women research is to create interdisciplinary centers for research as part of a coordinated government strategy in support of research. The research centers would stand “to support the development of studies and training programs focused on violence against women, to provide mechanisms for collaboration between researchers and practitioners, and to provide technical assistance for integrating research into service provision” (p. 153).

B. Strategic Planning

Even before the NRC Panel reported its recommendations, NIJ took the lead in organizing a research plan for studying VAWA’s justice components, both as required to inform the Attorney General and to pursue its traditional mission of responding to crime problems in need of research. NIJ developed its first VAWA research solicitation with guidance from established researchers and practitioners, including contributions from those who participated in a 1995 Strategic Planning Workshop (NIJ, 1995). Under less formal circumstances, researchers and practitioners have continued to shape the NIJ VAWA agenda by the nature of their submissions and the evaluations of those who serve on review panels.

NIJ’s plan for violence against women research also built on projects already in progress under its Violence Against Women and Family Violence (VAW&FV) research program or in immediate response to VAWA mandates. Among those underway in 1994, for example, was the NIJ-CDC National Violence Against Women Survey (Tjaden, 93-IJ-CX-0012), secondary analyses of arrest experiment data (Fagan, 93-IJ-CX-0021), an experimental evaluation of a specialized substance abuse/domestic violence court (Goldkamp, 93-IJ-CX-0028), an experimental evaluation of mandated batterer treatment (Davis, 94-IJ-CX-0047),

¹⁴ The NRC Panel on the Understanding and Control of Violent Behavior makes this point in the context of describing the underfunding in 1989 of violence research (\$31 million) relative to funds for research on other threats to life, including cancer (\$794 million), heart, lung, and blood diseases (\$441 million), and AIDS (\$697

and a pilot process evaluation in anticipation of an experiment on enhanced police interventions against domestic violence (Jolin, 92-IJ-CX-K037).

C. NIJ Research Solicitations

NIJ has responded to the VAWA agenda for research by developing solicitations inviting proposals for research consistent with VAWA mandates, with grant evaluation requirements, with the agenda developed by the National Academy of Sciences, and with its internally-developed strategic plan. Funding in support of NIJ VAWA research from 1995 through 1997 derived principally from transfers negotiated with the Violence Against Women Office to support evaluations and to a very limited degree, from NIJ's base funds. In 1998, in addition to transfer funds, NIJ received its own VAWA research allocation from Congress in the amount of \$7 million. That allocation dropped to \$5.2 million in subsequent years.

NIJ's 1995 *Solicitation for Research and Evaluation on Violence Against Women* set the parameters for funding an initial round of VAWA research that built on NIJ's existing family violence research plan. The solicitation invited research proposals in three areas. First, it called for proposals to conduct a national evaluation of the STOP Grant Program, as required by VAWA in support of the Attorney General's annual report to Congress. The Urban Institute subsequently assumed responsibility for that project. Second, it sought proposals to evaluate specific STOP Grant projects under VAWA's (1994) seven grant purpose areas, as listed in Exhibit 3 – training for police and prosecutors; specialized criminal justice units; policies, protocols and services for preventing, identifying and responding to violent crimes against women; local data collection and communications systems; victim services programs; programs addressing stalking; special programs of Indian tribes. The 1995 solicitation also invited proposals for research addressing other aspects of violence against women, especially research problems identified in the Strategic Planning Workshop. However, it admonished applicants to reserve for later joint announcements from NIJ and NIH, proposals on batterer treatment, on impacts of witnessing violence on children, and on the developmental course of abusive behaviors, among others.

million) (Reiss & Roth 1993, p. 346).

The 1995 solicitation explicitly cited as a goal support for impact evaluations. It funded three proposals for research on victim impacts – one a field experiment on the effects of an enhanced police response to domestic violence in Portland (Jolin, 95-IJ-CX-0054), a second quasi-experimental evaluation of the impacts of alternative court dispositions on the likelihood of rearrest for domestic violence in Cincinnati (Wooldredge, 95-IJ-CX-0102), and a third study comparing victim impacts under alternative community coordination models for Domestic Violence in New York State (Worden, 95-WT-NX-0006).

This first NIJ VAWA solicitation built on an established commitment to violence against women research and marked the beginning of a substantial portfolio of research projects explicitly responsive to VAWA in diverse areas of inquiry. NIJ's 1996 solicitations called for 1) proposals to evaluate impacts of programs in four areas – Law Enforcement and Prosecution, Victim Services Programs, Data Collection and Communication Systems, and Programs Among Indian Tribes – together addressing the seven STOP Grant purpose areas as they existed in 1994; 2) proposals to evaluate VAWA's arrest policies program; and 3) proposals for research and evaluations on other areas consistent with the VAW&FV plan but determined by investigator submissions. Apart from its internal plan for violence against women research, in 1996 NIJ joined eight other federal agencies as part of an interagency consortium that solicited proposals for research on the causes, course, treatment, management, and prevention of family violence and violence against women, as well as on their health and legal consequences. Among the 1996 grants awarded were two domestic violence impact studies – one a secondary analysis of the Milwaukee arrest experiment data (Paternoster, 96-IJ-CX-0058), and the other a randomized field experiment on the effectiveness of court-mandated treatment in Broward County, Florida (Feder, 96-WT-NX-0008).

The 1997 NIJ solicitation for proposals sought to encourage research on agenda priorities yet to be addressed, to encourage more practitioner-researcher partnerships for program evaluations and for the development of practical measures to indicate program outcomes. Specific areas identified for funding priority were state anti-stalking efforts, welfare reform and domestic violence, victim advocacy, and media campaigns to reduce violence against women. Three victim-impact projects received funding in 1997 – a study of the impacts of legal advocacy on intimate partner homicide (Nagin, 97-WT-VX-0004), research on the effectiveness of the King's County, NY, felony domestic violence court

(Sviridoff, 97-WT-VX-0005), and a quasi-experiment evaluating victim advocacy as part of a team approach in prosecuting domestic violence offenders (Weisz, 97-WT-VX-0006)

In 1998, NIJ received its first allocation of VAWA research money allowing for freer pursuit of research priorities. The 1998 NIJ VAWA program requested proposals under a number of solicitations covering secondary data analyses, a national evaluation of VAWA's arrest policies program, a collaborative writing effort by teams of researchers and practitioners to synthesize research for practitioners, a national evaluation of the rural domestic violence and child victimization program, and researcher-practitioner partnerships to evaluate VAWA's pro-arrest grants. The 1998 solicitations included a call for research proposals under a joint NIJ-CDC Program to continue targeting research priorities identified by the NAS/NRC Panel (Crowell & Burgess, 1996). NIJ and CDC committed to a five-year collaborative research program "to better understand the extent of violence against women, why violence against women occurs, how to prevent it, and how to increase the effectiveness of legal and health care interventions" (NIJ 1998, p. 2). The 1998 program included a solicitation for research to advance "understanding of violence against women and accompanying theory; support theory testing and development; and improve policy and practice" (NIJ 1998, p. 3). To these ends, it requested proposals for practitioner-researcher collaborations, experimental designs to evaluate policies and programs, longitudinal studies, and basic research identified by applicants.

Projects funded under the 1998 program hold promise of meeting its general goals, including contributions to general knowledge on violence against women through tests of theory and explorations of hypothesized causes of violence. In addition, a number of studies received support with the expectation that they would inform policy on the preventive impacts of general community crime prevention initiatives (Block, 98-WT-VX-0022), of involving social workers in the police response to domestic violence (Greenspan & Weisburd, 98-WT-VX-0001), of batterer treatment during pre-trial detention (Barnes, 98-IJ-CX-K014), of enhanced victim advocacy (Havens, 98-WE-VX-0031), of interventions for women leaving shelters (Sullivan, 98-WT-VX-0013), and of no-drop prosecution policies (Smith & Davis, 98-WT-VX-0029).

NIJ outlined a course for research in 1999 with another set of solicitations inviting proposals furthering its agenda and other recent solicitations: evaluation of policies,

procedures, and programs addressing violence against women, including in particular judicial training, prosecution strategies, and intervention strategies to control offenders; basic research on violence against women; and researcher- practitioner partnerships to evaluate grants to encourage arrest policies. Funded proposals on preventive impacts will study no-drop prosecution and victim empowerment (Finn, 99-WT-VX-0008), court-mandated treatment of batterers (Eckhardt, 99-WT-VX-0012), and protective orders for victims of domestic violence (Rivara, 99-WT-VX-0014). Another set of solicitations for new directions in research and evaluation invited proposals 1) to evaluate the Domestic Violence Victims' Civil Legal Assistance Program; 2) to conduct a National Impact Evaluation of the STOP Grants Program; 3) to conduct research on violence against Indian women; and 4) to evaluate a multi-site Demonstration for Enhanced Judicial Oversight of Domestic Violence Cases.

The NIJ Research Program for FY2000 again invited proposals for research and evaluations in several solicitations. The first, "Research and Evaluation on Violence Against Women," encouraged proposals for research on justice outcomes with respect to victim safety, offender accountability, and system accountability, the latter including evaluations to insure that women are not victimized by the system. Among those funded are impact evaluations of protective orders (McFarlane, 00-WT-VX-0020), of a joint police-social service family violence crisis intervention program (Davis, 00-WT-VX-0007), and of specialized domestic violence courts (Alpert, 00-WT-VX-0015; Hotaling & Buzawa, 00-WT-VX-0019), including one with enhanced victim advocacy (Lyon, 00-WE-VX-0014).

Other FY2000 solicitations called for evaluations of specific programs. One called for research to evaluate a multi-site demonstration of collaborations to address domestic violence and child maltreatment that are being funded jointly by the Office of Justice Programs and the Department of Health and Human Services. One solicited proposals for a National Evaluation of Grants to Combat Violent Crimes Against Women on Campuses. Another called for an evaluation of the Domestic Violence Victims' Civil Legal Assistance Program.

For its part in determining the course of research on justice interventions against violence against women, NIJ has remained reasonably faithful to the agendas set by the National Research Council and its own Strategic Plan while making difficult choices on how best to allocate very limited research dollars. Of course, that important research is solicited, proposed, and funded is not sufficient to generate findings to be applied with confidence in

policy and practice. Its significance to a body of practical knowledge still depends on how well it can be designed and implemented with available allocations, a point noted below in our review of impacts.

III. Synthesizing Research for Practitioners

Developing a knowledge base to inform policy has little value if the knowledge is not accessible to practitioners. Aware of this as an issue that would loom larger with expanding research, in 1998 NIJ solicited proposals for “Research on Violence Against Women: Syntheses for Practitioners,” a project calling for researcher-practitioner pairs to collaborate in synthesizing research and writing findings accessible to policy makers and practitioners for use in their work with women victimized by violence. Forthcoming papers relevant to criminal justice practitioners include: syntheses of research for criminal justice policy makers; advocacy organizations; offender intervention programs; task forces, coalitions, and local partnerships; law enforcement; prosecutors; judges and court officials; and correctional officers (Worden, Carlson, & van Ryn, 98-WT-VX-K011). The Synthesis promises practitioners guidance for implementing policy based on research. The project will also provide a base to which practitioners can look for accumulating new information.

IV. Beyond VAWA’s Direct Effects on Research

In addition to VAWA’s explicit calls for and support of research, it has influenced the growth of knowledge, principally by engaging more researchers in studies of violence against women, by increasing recognition of the field by those outside, and by stimulating research activity beyond what is funded through government programs.

A. Developing a Critical Mass of Researchers

Philosophers of science describe a number of competing models for the growth of scientific knowledge. Crane (1972) notes, however, that whatever the model, one can see knowledge developing through social processes that engage researchers in the pursuit of a research area, marking changes in knowledge and in the community of scholars committed to that research. In short, the growth of knowledge entails the formation of networks of interested scholars, including or capable of recruiting productive scientists to set research

priorities and to train students who will eventually be collaborators in the network. The NRC Panel on Research on Violence Against Women acknowledged the need for such a community of scholars to study violence against women, noting how small the community of researchers was at the inception of VAWA (Crowell & Burgess, 1996).

VAWA has played a significant part in encouraging and enabling the development of a critical mass of researchers to build knowledge on violence against women by attracting productive scholars with contributions from their own research and by creating training opportunities for students likely to pursue violence against women research in their professional careers. Not only is funding available for research, but violence against women research now has attained status as a mainstream pursuit, thus making it easier for graduate students and new faculty to commit to the field without fear of diminished status or uncertainty over future opportunities for research support. Any field of inquiry will be more attractive to prospective researchers if it is seen as having legitimacy as an intellectual pursuit among peers. At a minimum, scholars steeped in disciplinary tradition will not be readily dissuaded from pursuing research problems defined as appropriate by peers.

Violence against women research has no unique disciplinary niche; it is inherently multi-disciplinary. Within a discipline, however, it may have standing as a specialty area for inquiry associated perhaps with a theoretical approach or simply with an applied interest in bringing a disciplinary focus to solving a social problem. Questions about the preventive impacts of criminal justice place violence against women research squarely in the realm of criminology and criminal justice—interdisciplinary fields that have come to accept violence against women as criminal activity worthy of study. Prominent criminologists have conducted research in the field for almost two decades.

The quantity and quality of publication outlets further signifies recognition of specialized research. We noted earlier that the *American Sociological Review* first published the Minneapolis Police Experiment—a sure sign that research on one aspect of violence against women, at least, had a place in the mainstream of a traditional discipline, if only as a substantive area for theory-testing. Subsequent changes in police policies nationwide invited more evaluation research suited for publication in journals with an applied focus.

A number of victim-oriented journals appeared in years before VAWA, and all have been receptive to research on violence against women. One journal, *Violence Against Women*,

began in 1995 as a quarterly publication dedicated exclusively to violence against women. Beginning with Volume 3 in 1997, the journal expanded to six issues per year, and in 1999 it started publishing monthly. In just 5 years the journal has responded to the demand for a publication outlet for violence against women scholarship to 12 issues per year. It is tempting to speculate that the increase in research attributable to VAWA created a demand for more publishing outlets. But despite the growth of journals in which to publish violence against women research, the traditional “top” journals in criminology and criminal justice have not increased their articles in the field. There is no change in the pattern of violence against women research published in *Criminology*, for example, over the past decade.

The NRC VAW Panel included a call for legal research among its recommendations. Although it is more typical for empirical research to inform legal research, law review articles constitute a rich source of ideas for empirical researchers. While some focus entirely on points of law, many argue issues amenable to empirical research and begging tests as research hypotheses (e.g., Mills, 1999; Coker 2000). That violence against women has captured the attention of the legal community is reflected in the growing number of articles in law reviews. A year-by-year raw count of justice-related articles on violence against women found by a Lexis-Nexis search reveals an extraordinary increase in publications. A search on “violence against women” uncovered just 15 articles in 1990, but that number increased 23.5 times to 386 in 1999, as displayed in Exhibit 5. A second search using more key terms¹⁵ reveals an even greater increase in legal articles, as shown for the “Full Search” in Exhibit 5.

[Exhibit 5 About Here]

B. Growth in Research on Violence Against Women

Research on the criminology of and criminal justice responses to violence against women has grown over the past five years thanks in part to the money available for research from the Violence Against Women Act. However, the number of publications on violence against women far exceeds the products of recently-funded research. Exhibit 6 charts the growth in scholarship on violence against women over the 10 years from 1990 to 1999. It

¹⁵ The following search terms for the “full Search” on Law Reviews: ((violence against women) OR (domestic violence) OR (wife battery) OR rape OR (sexual assault) OR stalking OR (intimate partner violence)) AND

shows the approximate numbers of publications on criminal justice and VAW that are found indexed under several computer databases for academic searches.¹⁶ The count for each year is displayed with partitions for coverage of domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, and other categories of violence (e.g., violations of protective orders, stalking, homicide). These within-year data are not, incidentally, based on mutually exclusive sets – a single publication on both domestic violence and rape counts twice in the indication of proportionate coverage. Thus, the representation of literature on rape and sexual assault may appear inflated to those who equate rape with stranger or acquaintance assaults, as Exhibit 6 counts coverage of sexual abuse within domestic relationships.

[Exhibit 6 About Here]

It would be a mistake to attribute the increase in literature solely to the enactment of VAWA. As we noted earlier, a great deal of activity was already underway when VAWA was passed, and it is probably closer to the truth to see VAWA as one of the many outcomes of research and advocacy in progress over the previous two decades. It is also likely, on the other hand, that VAWA gave additional impetus to research and advocacy that has produced dramatic indications of growth in research. In short, VAWA has stimulated the expansion of knowledge by defining the importance of inquiry, by underwriting research, by ensuring that a research agenda gives direction to research, and by bringing more researchers to the field.

In summary, VAWA, as passed in 1994, continues to drive a research movement. It has infused money into local initiatives and designated funds specifically for research consistent with a consensus agenda. VAWA's effects on research promise developments in knowledge. It remains to be seen, however, if the growth of research translates into practical findings to prevent violence against women. In the next section we consider its short-term influence toward realizing that objective.

(police OR arrest OR prosecution OR court OR (criminal justice) OR probation OR (mandated counseling)).

¹⁶ We searched *Criminal Justice Abstracts*, *Sociological Abstracts*, *PsychLit*, and *Social Work Abstracts* using the search criteria: ((violence against women) OR (domestic violence) OR (wife battery) OR rape OR (sexual assault) OR stalking OR (intimate partner violence)) AND (police OR arrest OR prosecution OR court OR (criminal justice) OR probation OR (mandated counseling)).

Part 3: Research on the Preventive Impacts of Criminal Justice

The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 has supported significant research to evaluate the impacts of criminal justice interventions to prevent violence against women. Not only has it provided funds for research under the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) plan, it has also stimulated research interest by requiring the development of a research agenda, by requiring specific studies including national surveys on the victimization of women, by funding local justice initiatives, and by requiring evaluations of grants programs. It is clear that VAWA has had an extraordinary influence on research and evaluation *per se*; it remains to be seen how research stimulated by VAWA will contribute to our understanding of policy as preventive interventions to reduce violence against women.

We turn now to a review of where we stand today with respect to *preventive* impacts of VAWA research. Our focus is primarily on research that has been funded by NIJ in accordance with its research agenda and the existing body of research on controlling violence against women. Our discussion includes research in progress that is likely to produce findings relevant to the quest for preventive criminal justice policies targeting either known offenders or prospective offenders in the general population. We first consider research on the preventive impacts of policies or practices associated with law enforcement, prosecution, courts, corrections, and other coordinated community responses. We conclude this section with a discussion of criminal justice and general prevention.

I. Preventive Interventions

We have seen that VAWA stimulated extensive research and evaluations relevant to criminal justice and violence against women. Only a limited number of those studies, however, directly inform preventive policy. That is, relatively few studies have reported findings that policy makers might find useful in altering policies and practices to help protect women from continuing violence. Research relevant to this task would show comparatively lower rates of recidivism by violent men as indicated in official records and especially as indicated by victim disclosure in research interviews. Here we note some of the significant research and evaluation activities recently reported or underway.

A. Police

Pre-VAWA police research on domestic violence was largely responsible for focusing attention on the potential for criminal justice interventions to reduce violence against women, including VAWA's grants for encouraging arrest. Experiments on arresting domestic batterers in Minneapolis, Omaha, and other "spouse assault replication program" (SARP) sites raised interest in the possibility that arrest might be an effective deterrent, although non-consistent findings from different jurisdictions preclude an unqualified declaration that arrest works (Hirschel & Dawson, forthcoming). Despite the labeling of arrest experiments following Minneapolis as replications, differences in case characteristics and outcome measures have allowed misleading comparisons and inconsistent findings, and NIJ committed to continuing analyses under the VAW&FV program (Fagan, 93-IJ-CX-0021).

Reanalyses of the police arrest experiments continued under VAWA through CDC with supplemental support from NIJ (Jones [95-IJ-CX-A032]; Maxwell, Garner, & Fagan, 1999). The reanalyses have brought clarity to issues that confused earlier interpretations of the experimental findings. For example, they have taken care to identify women battered by male partners as the victims of domestic battery in the studies (Maxwell, Garner, & Fagan, 1999). Their most recent analysis of the SARP data leads Maxwell, Garner, & Fagan (1999) to conclude that arrest has a modest deterrent effect on reoffending, broadly defined to include property damage and threats of violence along with actual bodily assaults.

The police experiments were initiated under a program for research on crime control theory (Garner & Maxwell, 2000). Researchers have not been shy in advocating for findings with relevance to policy, even though they may exasperate policy makers and practitioners by sending ambiguous or mixed messages on impacts. Whatever the impact of arrest, research needs to go farther to test other propositions about arrest (e.g., signifying a society's condemnation of criminal behavior) and other police activities. It is important, too, that researchers not miss opportunities by ignoring the mistaken primacy given to police behavior as a primary means of crime control.

Writing for practitioners, Hirschel & Dawson (forthcoming) recently synthesized the research literature relevant to police policy for responding to incidents of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. With respect to domestic violence, they note that one of the unintended consequences of mandatory arrest policies has been the unreasonable arrests of

women, typically in the context of a dual arrest of “mutual combatants.” NIJ has sought to address this concern by soliciting research on dual arrest (NIJ, 2000a) and most recently by exploring what is broadly characterized as “gender symmetry” in domestic violence offending patterns (NIJ, 2000b).

High profile police impact experiments belie the obvious principal role of police in delivering offenders to prosecutors. Thinking about the overall processes of criminal justice, whether arrest deters is an interesting but academic question. Unless arrest truly aggravates a dangerous situation, for most jurisdictions, it is an indispensable first step in the overall process. Still, all arrests are not the same. It may be that the manner in which arrest is effected could help reduce the chance of aggravating the situation and might add to whatever preventive impact subsequent processing might have. For example, Sherman and Berk (1984a) first reported in their Minneapolis experiment that among arrested offenders, those who reported that police took time to listen to what the offenders had to say were less likely than other arrestees to reoffend within six months. An analysis of offender interviews in the Milwaukee (SARP) experiment similarly found that when police were seen as having treated the suspect fairly, he was less likely to again batter the same victim within 12 months of his arrest (Paternoster, Brame, Bachman, and Sherman, [96-IJ-CX-0058] 1997).

Beyond questions of arrest, it is of interest to know how effective police are in bringing cases to prosecution and whether the police actions vis-à-vis prosecution will contribute to a later reduction in reoffending. Jolin, Feyerherm, Fountain, & Friedman ([95-IJ-CX-0054] 1998) conducted a randomized field experiment to evaluate the impact of a Domestic Violence Reduction Unit in Portland (DVRU), Oregon. This police unit was designed to enhance a prosecutor’s preparation for trial and to empower victims under the assumption that victims will thereby be more inclined to participate in the justice process, at the same time that they exercise safety plans as instructed by the police DVRU. Jolin et al. found an increase in prosecutions under the DVRU although they calculated an extraordinarily high rate of new violence (61%) reported by Portland’s victims in interviews six months following arrest. Nevertheless, the Portland Experiment found a significant reduction in victim reports of new violence for DVRU-treated cases (54%) than those subject to mandatory arrest with no further intervention prior to prosecution (67%).

One element of Jolin's "empowering" interventions was referral to victim advocacy services, an increasingly common but little-studied intervention. Weisz (97-WT-VX-0006) focused on advocacy services within Detroit police precincts in an evaluation of coordinated responses to domestic violence. Based on telephone interviews with a sub-sample of predominately African-American victims served in the study precincts and identified by police incident reports, the research found that those who received advocacy found it helpful; but advocacy services did not increase victim participation in prosecuting offenders nor did it increase victim's feelings of safety (Weisz, Canales-Portalatin, & Nahan, 2001).

Two other impact evaluations of enhanced police services are currently underway. The first, conducted by the Police Foundation (Greenspan & Weisburd [98-WT-VX-0001]) in Richmond, VA, will compare the effectiveness of services provided by a social worker-police officer partnership in reducing incidents of new violence against victims in one precinct against the rates of new violence in a matched precinct with no special services. The second evaluation involves a secondary analysis of data from previous experimental evaluations of New York City's Domestic Violence Intervention Education Project, a multi-disciplinary team followup to initial police responses to domestic violence (Davis, 00-WT-VX-0007) (see Davis & Taylor, 1997).

There is no counterpart to the DV police research for the police response to sexual assault or stalking. Police actions with respect to rape or sexual assault have long been subject to critical scrutiny for inaction, insensitivity, disbelief, and victim-blaming. What research has been conducted on police and rape seeks to understand barriers to action and to evaluate training to change attitudes and encourage an appropriate response. At issue, in particular, are those cases where police action appears contingent on the victim-offender relationship, on the victim's sexual history, or on police attributions of risky victim behavior prior to the assault. Hirschel and Dawson's (forthcoming) synthesis for practitioners has little to offer police to prevent rape or sexual assault beyond the obvious – for their part, police need to participate as effective investigators and to pursue rapists as criminals whose further assaults may be prevented ultimately by prosecution and incarceration.

Many important questions, already raised in NIJ solicitations, remain to be addressed. Of particular significance are impacts of policies with potentially negative consequences for victims such as, for example, dual arrests or victims deterred from calling the police. We

cannot now say whether research under grants to encourage arrests or to explore gender symmetry will yield additional findings on impacts of these events. And while police should not violate civil liberties of victims or offenders by tailoring interventions to categories of people, we need to know more about the effects of police actions to prevent violence against women on underserved populations, in particular. It may be, for example, that there is no difference in the preventive impact of two interventions for the majority of victims, but one policy might be especially harmful or helpful to members of a minority underserved population, thus dictating a general policy based on its differential impact for the minority.

B. Prosecution

Despite the centrality of prosecution in criminal justice, and despite the remarkably wide domain of prosecutorial activity, it has not received the attention from researchers accorded police and warrantless on-scene arrests. Prosecution of domestic violence against women, in particular, is a complex process allowing for far more variation in policy than found in police work. Questions of impacts reach beyond whether to prosecute or not. They involve prosecutorial charging decisions, decisions on diverting defendants from prosecution, issues surrounding victim participation and control of the process, plea-bargaining, and sentencing recommendations, to name a few (Ford and Breall, forthcoming). It happens, however, that prosecution invites more attention than it has received from the research community. Prior to VAWA, research on prosecution impacts on domestic violence was limited to a survey by Fagan, Friedman, Wexler, and Lewis (1984), a randomized field experiment in Indianapolis (Ford, 1993), and a quasi-experiment by Davis, Smith, & Nickles (1997) in Milwaukee.

Pre-VAWA prosecution raises more questions about policy impacts than it answers (Ford & Breall, forthcoming). At best, it would seem that prosecuting has a preventive impact but that despite the array of specific policies for tracking cases through the process, none is more effective than another in protecting victims from subsequent violence. The single prosecution policy found to protect victims in Indianapolis was to permit victims who initiated their complaints at the prosecutor's office to drop charges, a finding that has been interpreted as evidence of victim empowerment for self-protection (Ford, 1993). While this finding may be irrelevant to cases originating with warrantless on-scene arrests, it has sparked

interest in the possibility that popular no-drop policies may not be the best strategies for preventing continuing domestic violence against a woman.

Both the NRC Panel and the NIJ Solicitations point to a need for prosecution research. The available options for prosecution policy and prosecutorial discretion invite impact evaluations to discover protective practices for domestic violence that will not harm victims. Mandatory prosecution and no-drop policies, for example, need evaluation. Still, there have been very few studies of prosecution funded under VAWA and none that evaluates preventive impacts under an experimental design. This is not to say, however, that research in progress will not contribute to the design and implementation of more rigorous future evaluations.

Davis and Smith [98-WT-VX-0029] recently completed an evaluation of no-drop policies for domestic violence as implemented in four jurisdictions, three of which had received VAWA grants to encourage arrest and one – San Diego – that was well-known for a public commitment to a hard no-drop policy (Davis, Smith, & Davies, 2001).¹⁷ The research lends insight into problems of conducting evaluation research on prosecution, not the least of which is the disjunction between what is announced as policy versus what happens in practice. Although this study planned to present findings on victim impacts, difficulties in locating victims and obtaining interviews lead the authors to assert that they could not say that the management of prosecutorial decisions in these jurisdictions would benefit victims.

It remains to be seen how other prosecution evaluations underway succeed in enhancing understanding of impacts on victim protection associated with alternative domestic violence prosecution policies. Finn [99-WT-VX-0008] is evaluating the effects of no-drop prosecution strategies on victim empowerment and self-efficacy, on the risk of further violence, and on the chance of victims not reporting new incidents of violence to the police. Belknap's [98-WT-VX-0024] current research seeks to learn of victims' perceptions of their prosecution experiences in three different sites, including what factors may influence their continuing participation in the process. This study should yield insights into victim perceptions of justice impacts on their future safety. Hotaling and Buzawa [00-WT-VX-0019]

¹⁷ The distinction between a "hard" and a "soft" no-drop policy is one of degree, that is, on how adamant the prosecutor is in denying victim requests to have a case dismissed. Following a public proclamation denying victims the right to drop charges, a soft policy calls for exceptions in individual cases, particularly when she believes that pursuing prosecution will put her in jeopardy. In contrast, a hard no-drop policy makes no exceptions and may subpoena reluctant victims with a threat of arrest for those who fail to appear in court.

are analyzing data previously collected for domestic violence cases in the Quincy, MA, District Court. Their goal is to learn what factors might influence victim participation in the criminal justice process, including prosecution, and what factors are associated with further victimization. We cannot now say that any of the projects currently underway will make a significant contribution to our confidence in preventive policies. Each, however, will contribute to prosecution knowledge with important information on victim decisions and behavior in the prosecution process.

There is little to add regarding prosecution's preventive impacts for rape and sexual assault or for stalking and violations of protective orders (Ford & Breall, forthcoming). Although NIJ has funded research on charging decisions with respect to sexual assault as affected by victim-offender relationships (Spohn, 98-WT-VX-0003), the significant question of how charging decisions may impact on an offender's subsequent criminality toward women remains unanswered. And despite the fact that the number of convicted sex offenders sent to prison in recent years has increased more rapidly than any other category of violent criminal (Greenfeld, 1997), there has been no research to determine whether VAWA is related to this increase of rape and sexual assault cases in the courts.

There are no projects since VAWA to evaluate either the specific or general preventive impacts of prosecuting *violations* of protective orders. We discuss the issuance of protective orders under Courts, below. Their preventive impact is assumed to be a function of deterrence, that is, the threat that a violator will be punished, particularly through criminal prosecution. There is no recent research to bolster that claim, however. Nor is there research on the impacts of anti-stalking laws. Stalking poses a special challenge to prosecutors in jurisdictions where the prosecutor's office takes responsibility for assembling evidence necessary to make the charge, especially where anti-stalking laws simply enhance existing laws on patterns of documented harassment (Spohn, 1994). Current research by McEwen and Miller (97-WT-VX-0007) examines the implementation of state anti-stalking laws and may broaden our understanding of the prosecutor's role in applying those laws to protect victims. An assessment of preventive impacts expected of prosecuting stalkers has yet to be undertaken.

NIJ-VAWA funds support both evaluations of local prosecution policies and specific requests for research consistent with the NRC Agenda. It has contributed to interest in

empirical tests of issues surrounding victim participation in determining the course of prosecution and no-drop policies, in particular. It remains to be seen how research in progress will address and hopefully provide guidance on how prosecution may better protect women, including members of minority and underserved groups, from violence.

C. Courts

Judicial and prosecutorial policies intertwine in what might appear to be either a single set of legal responses to violence against women, or a web of what Worden (forthcoming[a]) terms, “low-visibility discretionary decisions.” Prosecutors may recommend pretrial detention, but a judge approves it; prosecutors exercise discretion in filing a case, but judges then exercise their discretion in finding probable cause or deciding the suitability of the case for further judicial action; a prosecutor requests a warrant, and a judge approves it; prosecutors make requests for or against continuances on which the judge rules; the prosecutor recommends a sentence, but a judge metes it out. Courts, then, have ultimate authority over cases the prosecutor commits to judicial processing. So while judicial policies and practices overlap some prosecutorial policies, judicial activities are unique from the point of adjudicating innocence or guilt and sentencing.

Very little has been reported on the pre-VAWA impacts of courts (Crowell & Burgess, 1996; Worden, forthcoming[a]). There has been interest in specialized courts for prosecuting domestic violence (see Keilitz, Guerrero, Jones, & Rubio, 2000), but prior to VAWA just one domestic violence court had been evaluated for its preventive impacts. Davis, Smith, and Nickles (1997, Smith [94-IJ-CX-0052, 95-IJ-CX-0105]) found in Milwaukee that a court designed to speed up time to adjudication reduced opportunities for new violence during the court process. The researchers found no evidence, however, that rates of post-conviction violence improved with a specialized court.

Here we note research funded under VAWA that should further inform preventive policies for violence against women. As in other areas of criminal justice research, however, there are no impact evaluations of preventive court policies for rape and sexual assaults or for stalking. Virtually all of what follows describes research on interventions against domestic violence.

NIJ currently funds a number of studies promising to inform court practices that could have preventive impacts. However, none of these projects appears to use an evaluation design that is likely to yield convincing findings on preventive impacts. Each should nonetheless contribute to knowledge on selected elements of court impacts. Havens [98-WE-VX-0031] is evaluating the effects of specialized domestic violence court sessions with enhanced victim advocacy. The research will describe court processes while focusing on how court is experienced by a sample of 225 defendants and 60 domestic violence victims of different ethnic backgrounds. Hartley [00-WT-VX-0003] is evaluating a specialized domestic court in Cook County, Illinois. Under a quasi-experimental design, the research will present evidence of preventive impacts associated with the special court, with a court using vertical prosecution, and with a general domestic violence court with no special activities. Alpert [00-WT-VX-0015] has undertaken an evaluation of a special domestic violence court in Lexington County, South Carolina, to discover its impacts on incidents of violence. The research appears likely to yield a detailed description of the court and its outputs, although lacking comparison courts, the design appears unlikely to confirm attributions of preventive outcomes to court activities.

The most ambitious of VAWA court projects underway evaluates a three-site demonstration – the Judicial Oversight Demonstration – initiated by the Violence Against Women Office (Harrell 99-WT-VX-K005). The project calls for enhanced judicial oversight with extensive graduated sanctions for domestic violence offenders and with comprehensive services for victims in order to increase both defendant and system accountability, to lower recidivism, and to insure victim safety. The evaluation will compare incidents of reoffending for samples of cases before and after project implementation at each site.

Whether specialized for violence against women or not, all courts processing cases of domestic violence may take concrete action against offenders, including addressing the risk they pose while in the system. Offenders who fail to be controlled by arrest may continue to threaten victims, even while in the judicial process and awaiting imminent punishment from a court (e.g., Davis, Smith, & Nickles, 1997; Ford, 1993). Efforts to control these men through pre-trial detention, protective orders, electronic monitoring, and judicial oversight are some of the strategies currently subject to evaluation with VAWA funding. Taylor and Barnes (98-IJ-CX-K014) have implemented an experimental design to evaluate a pre-trial domestic violence

and drug treatment education program for detainees in the Sacramento jail. If implemented as designed, this research will provide evidence on the potential for protecting victims by early post-arrest intervention, where that may be possible.

Other than adjudicating guilt and imposing sentences, issuing protective orders (POs) is the most common judicial action intended to protect women from violence during criminal proceedings or at any other time when requested. Available research evidence suggests that protective orders have limited value, in general, as a means of preventing violence against a petitioner. Pre-VAWA research presents mixed findings suggesting that women with protective orders may suffer less violence than expected, given their prior history, but that POs may not be uniquely effective relative to other interventions. They have no apparent effect on especially dangerous offenders or those with extensive criminal histories (Harrell, Smith, & Newmark 1993; Keilitz, Hannaford, & Efke 1997). That some batterers are not deterred by protective orders may be a function of how, if at all, they are enforced. Harrell, Smith, and Newmark (1993) found, for example, that even when violations were enforced as criminal offenses, violators faced a low risk of being sanctioned by the criminal justice system. When orders were enforced, victim reports indicate that they had greater protection from severe violence. There remains a significant need to implement more rigorous designs to evaluate the preventive impacts of protective orders. Modest next steps toward that end are underway.

NIJ currently supports two promising studies on protective orders. One, a quasi-experimental impact evaluation of protective orders, will determine their long-term outcomes with respect to new incidents of violence, including levels of injury and need for medical care (Rivara, 99-WT-VX-0014).¹⁸ The research compares two cohorts of women who either did or did not obtain civil protection orders following an incident of domestic violence. Outcomes will be noted for up to two years after the incident. Another study, a randomized field experiment proposed by McFarlane (00-WT-VX-0020), evaluates the preventive impacts of protective orders with enhanced advocacy for victims in the form of an initial, in-person, 15-minute intervention, and followed by six 15-minute telephone calls over the next eight weeks.

¹⁸ This is the second phase of a study initiated under the VAW&FV Consortium with NIH in 1996.

One other area of concern for preventive court interventions against domestic violence is the use of electronic monitoring devices. Despite commercial ventures marketing alarms for victims and tracking devices for defendants, just one evaluation study has been funded under VAWA. Phillips [97-IJ-CX-K014] is evaluating a domestic violence electronic monitoring program in San Diego to determine, among other things, its preventive impacts for continuing violence against victims.

D. Corrections/Treatment

Once a court finds a defendant guilty, he may be sentenced to any number of options for punishment or treatment with expected preventive impacts. Just one pre-VAWA experiment evaluated a range of possible court interventions for domestic violence, although its design focused on prosecutors' tracking cases toward particular settlements, as opposed to the experiences of offenders under the actual court interventions delivered (Ford, 1991, 1993).¹⁹

Post-VAWA, Wooldredge (95-IJ-CX-0102) conducted a multivariate analysis of domestic violence arrest records in Cincinnati to assess the impact of three alternative court dispositions (probation only, jail only, jail and probation) on the likelihood of rearrest. In particular, he and his colleagues found that the likelihood of rearrest was lowest when offenders experienced both jail and probation, and the jail-probation sentence was most effective in reducing the chance of rearrest for those offenders with high stakes in conformity (Thistlewaite, Wooldredge, & Gibbs, 1998).

VAWA stimulated considerable interest in using criminal courts to coerce treatment for violent men. Even before VAWA, the research literature on post-conviction processing of violent offenders had come to be dominated by studies of domestic batterer counseling programs.²⁰ Evaluations of court-mandated batterer programs encounter methodological challenges that may so qualify findings as to render them useless for policy. For example, findings are commonly reported for program completers only, thus biasing outcomes to show

¹⁹ We are most concerned here with treatment programs in which offenders participate under court order. Evaluations generally begin at the point an offender is convicted, although pretrial detention and diversion programs may also mandate treatment.

²⁰ See, for example, reviews by Eisikovits & Edleson (1989), Tolman & Bennett (1990), Hamberger & Hastings (1993), Saunders & Hamill (forthcoming).

the success of those already committed to change. Further, although a recent review of the treatment outcome research reports more than 30 studies, with experimental evaluations increasingly common (Saunders & Hamill, forthcoming), few employ designs adequate to draw causal conclusions. Focusing on experimental or quasi-experimental evaluations of court-mandated programs, Feder and Forde (2000) count just four quasi-experimental evaluations using matched control groups and five randomized field experiments (including their own [96-WT-NX-0008]). Of these, three were funded just prior to VAWA and one was proposed and funded post-VAWA by NIJ.

The NRC Panel concluded its review of the pre-VAWA research on the effectiveness of court-mandated treatments for violent abusers stating, simply, “(m)uch remains unknown” (Crowell & Burgess, 1996, p. 122). Published studies report inconsistent findings that are not easily explained due to differences in program content, study designs, sample sizes and selection biases, outcome measures, follow-up period, and success in data collection. Notably, however, the Panel did not have at hand findings of several important batterer intervention studies underway prior to VAWA.

In a study of a special domestic violence court in Dade County, Florida, Goldkamp ([93-IJ-CX-0028], 1996) conducted an experimental evaluation of a “hybrid” batterer-substance abuse treatment program. Substance abusing batterers who had been diverted from prosecution or sentenced to treatment as a condition of probation were randomly assigned to either the hybrid program or to a substance abuse only program. Analysis of official records of same-victim violence during a seven-month follow-up period, including time in treatment, showed the hybrid treatment to result in fewer rearrests than the substance abuse-only treatment. Unfortunately, the relatively short follow-up and dependence on official records limit the value of these findings for other jurisdictions.

In 1994, Gondolf initiated a four-city, quasi-experimental evaluation of batterer treatment programs with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (#R49/CCR310525). Most (618) batterers in his sample had been arrested on the scene of a violent intimate partner assault and referred to treatment either before (diversion) or after court adjudication. His research used victim interviews to assess outcomes in follow-up periods of up to 30 months (Gondolf 2000). Analyses of six-month follow-up data for the arrest sample indicate that the overall recidivism rate of 24% following some level of court-

mandated treatment is generally lower than rates found from victim interviews in the SARP experiments and the Indianapolis Prosecution Experiment. Batterer programs differed from city to city in both duration of treatment and services provided, yet cross-site comparisons for a 30-month follow-up period show small, non-significant differences in rates of renewed violence against the same partner. Consistent with expected impacts, program drop-outs were more likely than completers to re-batter their partners, regardless of batterers' demographic, personality, or behavioral traits.

One pre-VAWA experiment stands apart from others as it evaluates what we might characterize as a pseudo-criminal justice intervention involving military personnel coerced into treatment by institutional authority. In 1991, Dunford initiated a field experiment to evaluate alternatives for batterer treatment available for Navy personnel in San Diego. His "Navy Experiment" involved the random assignment of 861 married Navy servicemen to one of four treatment conditions – a cognitive-behavioral treatment men's group, a conjoint group calling for victim inclusion in the intervention, a rigorous monitoring condition without therapeutic treatment, and a control condition void of any form of batterer intervention. By victim accounts to interviewers one year following treatment, the prevalence of new violence was less than what was recalled in the six months prior to treatment, but no statistically significant differences were found among the alternative interventions. In short, none of the experimental treatments resulted in significantly less repeat violence than the control condition (Dunford 2000a,b).

Another recent field experiment on batterer treatment in Brooklyn (Davis, 94-IJ-CX-0047) assessed treatment effects for a subset of convicted offenders (N=376) who were determined to be suitable for and willing to enter treatment – "a small percentage of cases" with a likely overrepresentation of men motivated to receive counseling. Those men were then randomly assigned to either a Duluth-style program or to community service. At twelve months following sentencing, victim interviews report recidivism rates averaging around 18% with no significant differences among treatments and controls (Davis, Taylor, & Maxwell, 2000).

Among the more rigorous of impact studies on corrections conducted post-VAWA is Feder's Court-Mandated Batterer Counseling Experiment in Broward County, Florida ([96-WT-NX-0008]; Feder & Forde, 2000). Designed as a randomized field experiment, the

research compared men assigned to a Duluth-style counseling treatment against men who received no mandated treatment. Outcome measures included official records (violations of probation and rearrests), offender reports of their likelihood of committing further violence, and victim accounts of new violence to interviewers. Results indicate that treated batterers were no less likely to reoffend than men who received no counseling. As with other recent studies of battered women reported here, interview response rates were low (22% for the one-year followup), although the consistency of findings across multiple indicators of treatment failure lend confidence to the overall conclusion that court-mandated counseling for batterers in Broward County is no more effective in preventing recidivism than was probation without counseling (Feder & Forde, 2000).

Experimental evaluations of court-mandated interventions to prevent reassaults by men officially acknowledged as batterers suggest that while any action by the courts will reduce expected rates of violence by habitual offenders, the *type* of intervention likely to be more effective than others has not been identified. However, recent experiments join other batterer studies in moving our understanding of treatment impacts from a presumption that violent men are beyond rehabilitation to a realization that learning more about batterers and implementing more rigorous evaluations may yet help inform effective treatment tailored to batterer attributes (e.g., Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994).

Other research on court-mandated treatment has continued under VAWA, although it has not been a significant part of the NIJ portfolio, and current research is not designed to evaluate preventive impacts, *per se*. Lyon [00-WE-VX-0014] is conducting a descriptive study of a 26-week batterer treatment program to learn more about how its participants and their victims feel about its impacts on recidivism and victim well-being. Just one other study involving batterer treatment impacts in any form is underway in Dallas County, Texas. Eckhardt [99-WT-VX-0012] will describe stages in the readiness to change of batterers sentenced to treatment and will ultimately seek to understand how batterer characteristics are related to differences in outcomes. This study will not contribute to general policy on whether or not to offer batterer treatment, but will contribute to understanding who is suitable for what treatment. Beyond these, there is reason to hope that research on batterer treatment programs is receiving sufficient attention from researchers outside of criminal justice settings, that we

will learn more about what works better for whom, information that may be applied in court-mandated placements (Saunders & Hamill, forthcoming).

Research addressing court impacts on forms of violence against women other than domestic battering are all but non-existent. Concurrent with an increase in rape and sexual assault cases prosecuted, record numbers of sex offenders are sentenced to probation and parole (Greenfeld, 1997). In addition, community-based supervision has changed over the past 10 years. For example, 85% of the nation's probation and parole departments have now implemented special conditions for offenders convicted of sex crimes (English, Pullen, & Jones, 1996). However, there are no empirical evaluations of the impacts of these policies.

A recent review of research on programs designed to control sex offenders by Saunders and Hamill (forthcoming) cites meta-analyses of program outcomes showing that sex offender treatment programs lower recidivism rates for men who complete the programs. But the research foundation is weak. There is a decided lack of rigor in design and inconsistency in what constitutes recidivism. As with domestic batterer interventions, a crucial factor in rehabilitating a sex offender could be his "readiness to change" – an indicator of offender receptiveness to intervention of any sort. If true, studies of program completers may be selecting out those who would have changed by any intervention.

As research continues on how best to treat domestic batterers and sexual offenders, it will be important to discover how alternative interventions impact on different types of offenders, including members of underserved populations. Screening and tracking of offenders for specialized treatment tailored to individual differences is feasible post-conviction because differential treatment is less likely to be challenged by concerns over equal protection such as affect police activities. Instead, there is a need to design and evaluate programs meant for underserved populations, especially culturally-specific treatments appropriate to men of color.

E. Other Coordinated Justice Responses

The lack of dramatic impacts from specific components of criminal justice systems may come as less of a surprise to practitioners who understand *all* processes of criminal justice as essential to offender accountability than it does to researchers attuned to isolated pieces and clean designs. Practitioners have long urged agents of criminal justice to

coordinate their efforts to function as a system of intervention that might ultimately protect women from gendered violence (Worden, forthcoming[b]). In the 1980's several well-publicized "coordinated community responses" to domestic violence linked batterer treatment with justice interventions in hope that there might be a preventive system impact from the combined effects of criminal justice punishments and coerced rehabilitation (e.g., Pence, 1983; Brygger and Edleson, 1987).

VAWA built on the history of such coordinated responses as it promoted community efforts under its grant program and in calling for evaluations of those programs. Responding to the mandate for an evaluation of the STOP Grant program, Burt et al. (1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001) produced a series of annual reports documenting the distribution of grant money with evidence of successes in implementing local initiatives. In their 1999 Report, Burt et al. (1999) present evidence that a majority of practitioners, at least, believe that STOP funding is principally responsible for improving community coordination. In a special study of victim services, Burt et al. (2000) report that STOP funding has helped private nonprofit victim service programs enhance their offerings to victims of violence perpetrated against women. However, they cannot assess the impact of those services on victim safety, and they conclude with a call for research to compare outcomes of STOP-funded versus agencies against those with no STOP funding.

NIJ's research and evaluation plan includes solicitations for research designed specifically to evaluate the impact of coordinated community interventions, and a number of important studies have been proposed or initiated. In an evaluation of VAWA influences on steps taken in four states to reduce violence against women, Chaiken et al. (2001) found that the "primary overall strategic impact of VAWA in all four states and counties was to catalyze cooperation and coordination among agencies with very different perspectives of victims of violence," in keeping with the aims of VAWA and its STOP Grant program (p. 17). There are, however, relatively few impact evaluations of coordinated justice responses that attend to the system and not outcomes associated with specific components (such as court-mandated batterer treatments). That is, most evaluations do not assess the full context of community interventions. VAWA has stimulated a number of research projects evaluating coordinated system processes, and to a lesser degree, impacts.

Buzawa, Hotaling, Klein, & Byrne ([95-IJ-CX-0027] 1999) studied the Quincy, MA, District Court as a central agency in a coordinated system to address domestic violence in order to describe its operations and victim impacts. Examination of official records and follow-up interviews with victims led the researchers to conclude that while the system operates as intended, its impact on recidivism is “problematic” (p. 17). The authors characterize rates of recidivism as “quite high,” particularly in the month following arrest, while the case was still in the system. Unfortunately, the research design does not allow for a rigorous evaluation of program impacts. In particular, without benefit of a comparison group, no general conclusions can be drawn about the overall impact of the coordinated system versus other, presumably typical, systems of criminal justice.

Worden ([95-WT-NX-0006]; 2000) has reported on a comprehensive description of alternative models of coordinated community responses to domestic violence but without evidence of preventive impacts for victims. Although communities with greater levels of collaboration and agency engagement had higher rates of apprehending and processing batterers, all communities failed to see cases through to conviction and thus lost whatever protective function might be attributed directly to the system.

Orchowsky ([95-WT-NX-0004], 1999b) evaluated the impact of a coordinated community response to domestic violence – the Alexandria (VA) Domestic Violence Intervention Program – by comparing outcomes, including those reported in victim interview data, with case outcomes in the Virginia Beach, VA, criminal justice system. Official records show that the coordinated system intervention resulted in greater arrests and prosecutions. Victim accounts reveal greater satisfaction with services of the DVIP. Nevertheless, there was no difference in recidivism between the two cities.

A number of other NIJ-VAWA impact studies are in progress. The Green Book Initiative is an ambitious demonstration and evaluation project to address child abuse and domestic violence through community collaborations among social service agencies, criminal justice, and community groups (Kracke, 2001). Its goals include protecting battered mothers from further abuse (Schechter & Edleson, 1999). Caliber Associates is leading a national evaluation of six sites that have committed to implementing the Green Book Initiative (Griffith, 00-MU-MU-0014). Among other goals, the evaluation promises to assess the project’s impact on preventing continuing domestic violence.

Interest in coordinated community interventions extends to underserved populations with VAWA support. Krishnan, for example, is implementing a research project on “Domestic Violence in Multi-Ethnic Rural Communities” [97-WT-VX-0003] to discover whether a coordinated response against domestic violence will protect women in underserved communities.

II. General Prevention

We use the term, “general prevention,” in the present context to mean keeping potential offenders from committing first acts of violence. In criminology, the term, “general deterrence” – making an example of punishing one offender so that others will choose not to offend – is thus a means of prevention and a goal of criminal sanctioning (Blumstein, Cohen, & Nagin, 1978). The essence of the deterrence process is a potential offender’s fear of criminal sanctions – an issue addressed in perceptual studies of deterrence (Williams & Hawkins, 1986, 1989). The more comprehensive processes of general prevention encompass programs designed to keep any man from perpetrating violence against women, regardless of whether he had done so in the past.

The NRC Panel discussed three mechanisms of prevention – school-based programs, mass media campaigns, and general deterrence (Crowell & Burgess, 1996). School programs show promise for prevention by virtue of changes in knowledge and attitudes, although the Panel found a need for more rigorous research to examine community-level impacts, that is, a community-wide reduction in rates of violence. Similarly, the literature on general deterrence allows for the possibility of prevention through fear of sanctions, but here too research is needed on community-level impacts. Perhaps the most significant recent mass media campaign to prevent domestic violence against women is the Family Violence Prevention Fund’s *There’s No Excuse for Domestic Violence* national, public education effort. National public opinion polling suggests slowly changing American perceptions of the problem in positive directions, although attributing the change to the *No Excuse* campaign is a methodological challenge beyond the reach of evaluations to date (Klein, Campbell, Soler, & Ghez, 1997).

If one takes the proliferation of justice initiatives together as functioning for primary prevention, it remains to be evaluated by criminologists. But while NIJ stands ready to

support evaluations of prevention efforts, there are no major studies of general deterrence underway. Indeed, in the absence of consensus on baseline data appropriate to the task of tracking rates of violence against women, little can be said of even the possibility that VAWA is having a general preventive impact.

The evaluation of general prevention impacts under VAWA begins with the availability of reliable and valid data to track trends in violence against women. Earlier, we discussed the several national surveys that have been conducted, their unique problems and collective comparability, and the value of the National Crime Victimization Survey and the Violence Against Women Survey for indicating the prevalence and incidence of violence against women. To date, at the national level, only the NCVS, reported annually, allows us to monitor changes in incidence rates of violence against women over time. Unfortunately, as evidenced by the comparison of NCVS data with those of other surveys, such as the NVAWS, the NCVS may not be the most accurate estimate of violence against women. Particularly troubling is its undercount of rape and sexual assault victimizations, along with the absence of stalking victimizations altogether. The ability to monitor violence against women at state and local levels is even more problematic, although the Bureau of Justice Statistics now has available a packet for community victimization surveys comparable to the NCVS.²¹

Apart from national surveys to track violence against women, one official measure stands as an alternative indicator of the most serious of violent crimes – the FBI-UCR Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR). To the extent that VAWA prevents any crime, one would hope that it might ultimately prevent men from killing women. Homicide is tracked from year to year, and researchers have been able to chart the incidence of homicide victimization against women for several decades using UCR SHR data. Intimate partner homicide refers to the murder or non-negligent manslaughter of a person by his/her current or former spouse or current or former boy/girlfriend. A recent report released by the Bureau of Justice Statistics provided a longitudinal analysis of intimate partner homicide from 1976-1999 (Fox & Zawitz, 2001). The report concluded that intimate murder has declined for both males and females since 1976. The rate of decline was greatest in African American populations; the per capita rate of African American intimate murders was 11 times that of

²¹ BJS Community Victimization Survey information is published online at

whites in 1976 but only four times that of whites in 1999. The sharpest decrease occurred among African American male victims. Similarly, the rate of decrease was more evident for white males compared to white females. Since VAWA, the number of all females killed by their intimate partners declined until around 1998 when rates leveled off through 1999 when the most recent data are available. In 1999, four years after VAWA's implementation, there were 1,218 females killed by their intimate partners compared to only 424 males.

As these numbers indicate, the decline in national intimate homicide is more apparent for male victims killed by their female partners than female victims killed by their male partners. Why have rates of female perpetrated homicide against their partners dropped in recent decades? Research indicates that the killing of an intimate male partner by a woman is often the culmination of ongoing violence against her and may be the only option she sees for saving herself. Accordingly, some researchers have hypothesized that factors facilitating a woman's escape from an abusive relationship may protect her abuser from being killed by her. The result is a declining rate of male victimization in intimate partner homicide. For example, Browne and Williams (1989) discovered that states with more resources for abused women, such as shelters and other services, had significantly lower rates of female-perpetrated partner homicide. They state, "(b)y offering threatened women protection, escape, and aid, such resources can engender an awareness that there are alternatives to remaining at risk for further violent interactions" (1989:91). These findings are supported by a VAWA-funded research project that found cities with more services available to victims of intimate partner violence such as hotlines and legal services have significantly lower rates of female perpetrated homicide against male partners (Dugan, Nagin & Rosenfeld ,1999; Nagin [97-WT-VX-0004]).

VAWA funds programs to deliver victim services, presumably to protect, to empower, and in any other way to assist victims in escaping violence. Ultimately, victim services offered as part of a coordinated community response to violence against women should have a protective impact. Ironically, however, it is perpetrators, not victims, who have received the greatest benefit in the form of protection from lethal violence. But even as men are protected, why are not women? We can speculate that men who kill act more often out of a desire to

maintain control over their female partners. That desire may drive some men to stalk and persist in efforts to control, even after their partners have fled. Perhaps programs and services that help a woman escape an abusive situation inflame the insecurities of abusive men (Alvarez & Bachman, 2002; Dugan, Nagin, & Rosenfeld, 1999). Research currently underway may help to further explain the relationship between services and intimate partner homicide. Wells [00-WT-VX-0012] is analyzing data available on intimate partner homicide in California to assess the relative effects of victim support services, offender accountability, and system accountability.

Part 4: VAWA Impacts: What We Know, Where Research Can Take Us to Control Violence Against Women

Our concluding assessment of VAWA outcomes draws not only from our review of research activities, but also from the knowledge and perceptions of others, particularly researchers with whom we engaged in discussions of VAWA's effects on research to prevent violence against women in the course of this project. We sought to learn of alternative expectations for and perspectives on VAWA's preventive impacts and of evidence in support of those positions. Additionally, we sought researchers' ideas for methods and data to fill gaps in our knowledge about VAWA impacts. Our ideas have certainly been shaped by our colleagues. We hasten to note, however, that while we sense considerable agreement among researchers in the field on advances and limitations in violence against women research, we do not claim to speak for a consensus of researchers here.

We focus on the Act as passed in 1994, allowing time for the implementation of some key provisions and for the evaluation of their impacts. We write from the perspective of critical researchers seeking evidence of preventive impacts. Here we reflect on the state of research on VAWA impacts and render commentary informed by what we already know and what we can expect to learn from rigorous research on criminal justice interventions to prevent violence against women. As we turn our attention to some key questions motivating this review, it is important to note that most studies on justice impacts under VAWA were not initiated until 1999. There is much work in progress (Rosen, 2001).

I. Has VAWA helped to advance our knowledge on

violence against women?

The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 focused attention on a social problem directly affecting over half of the population. It thrust the weight of law on presumed causes and controls. But has the Act helped to advance knowledge on violence against women and its preventive policies? We believe it has, first by giving direction to research, then by funding a substantial portfolio of research, and finally by giving impetus to research independent of government funding.

VAWA has contributed to a consistent line of empirical inquiry by calling on the National Academy of Sciences, through its National Research Council, to empanel experts to develop an agenda for research. It funded research and evaluations, and, in general, increased the opportunities for new researchers to enter the field. The Act itself mandated research on the incidence of stalking and domestic violence in the general population and on sexual assaults on campuses. It additionally called for reports on data collection at the state and national levels to indicate the incidence and prevalence of intimate partner violence, in particular.

VAWA went further in promoting research by requiring evaluations of activities under the seven (1994) purpose areas for which money was allocated through its program of block and formula grants to states, tribes, and territories. Although relatively few evaluations of preventive impacts of local initiatives have been published, the various reports mandated under VAWA, including annual evaluations of grant programs, have contributed to general knowledge on violence against women while providing valuable information that may facilitate research on policy impacts. Most significantly, VAWA supported the development of knowledge directly by allowing funds specifically for grants by the National Institute of Justice for research and evaluation. NIJ, for its part, has funded research attentive to the NAS/NRC agenda and its own strategic plan for violence against women.

As a direct consequence of VAWA requirements and support for research, NIJ-funded research on violence against women has increased dramatically in recent years. We believe that the corresponding growth in published knowledge in the field can also be attributed in large part to VAWA, although clearly that increase, like VAWA itself, is rooted in an already expanding nexus of research and advocacy.

VAWA has helped to bring legitimacy to an area of research established by a few distinguished researchers who are now joined by others in what we characterize as a critical mass of scholars. Their organized common interests in research on violence against women and their ability to attract new investigators to the field by intellectual interest should sustain continuing advances in knowledge well into the future.

In short, VAWA has paved a way for advances in knowledge on controlling violence. Absent research with the policy impact of, say, the Minneapolis experiment on warrantless arrests (Sherman & Berk, 1984a,b), VAWA nonetheless underwrites a dynamic agenda for research. While there remains a need for similar impact evaluations to inform criminal justice policy, VAWA, in the meantime, has shown us how much is yet to be learned about criminal justice interventions, victim services, and the needs of underserved populations.

II. What have we learned about the impacts of VAWA in preventing violence against women and what gaps in understanding persist?

VAWA allocated 1.6 billion dollars to protect women from criminal violence, including a small portion for research to evaluate what works or to conduct research relevant to new preventive strategies. But for all the policies and programs implemented under VAWA, what do we know today about actually controlling violence against women? Sadly, not enough. While VAWA has stimulated considerable research shaped by policies already in place, it has not yet stimulated more than a handful of major impact evaluations of innovations developed in collaboration with practitioners. There is much research to be done before policy makers should feel confident in advocating one policy over another. Nevertheless, research to date can help us identify some promising outcomes with policy implications. There is evidence that criminal justice interventions prevent many batterers from reoffending, although we do not know what specific policies are most effective among those in place. Alternatively, there is also research evidence that questions the effectiveness of some popular policies in preventing violence against women.

It is fair to say that the most significant research affecting policy on violence against women was the set of pre-VAWA domestic violence arrest experiments.²² There have been few similarly rigorous experiments on preventive interventions since VAWA took effect. We count just four randomized impact evaluations of criminal justice policies initiated since 1995, including one in progress. All assess interventions with intimate partner violence. If extant violence against women research is judged by the standards of rigor expected of significant policy research cited by various authorities,²³ the paucity of experiments gives little reason to celebrate an otherwise growing body of literature expected ultimately to inform policies to control violent men. On the other hand, there is a much larger body of quasi-experimental and correlational studies underway that may point to promising practices worthy of more rigorous follow-up evaluation in the future.

Recognizing the value of *any* finding, whether positive or not, we find cause for optimism in what research has already revealed about controlling violence against women. With respect to domestic violence, for example, we can assert, based both on research published pre-VAWA and what has been funded since 1995, that criminal justice interventions reduce the chance that men who repetitively batter their partners will continue their violence against the same victim, at least in the short term. That is, given reports of pre-intervention violence, levels of violence following criminal justice interventions are lower than expected. This may be due to the specific deterrent impacts of punishing experiences in the justice system, or it may be due to informal control mechanisms associated with interventions that may or may not be unique to criminal justice. On the other hand, apart from locking up offenders so that they have no immediate opportunity to reoffend, we cannot say with confidence that one criminal justice intervention will be more effective than another in preventing new violence. No other policy is known to prevent all men from battering.

NIJ/VAWA-supported research has continued to inform our understanding of the preventive impacts of warrantless police arrests for domestic violence against women. In addition, under VAWA, research has expanded in the areas of post-arrest treatment and

²² See the summary of experiments conducted in Minneapolis, Omaha, Charlotte, Colorado Springs, Dade County, and Milwaukee in Maxwell, Garner, & Fagan (1999).

²³ For example, Boruch (1994); Chalk & King (1998); Crowell & Burgess (1996); Fagan (1996); Reiss & Roth (1993); Sherman et al. (1998).

prosecution of domestic batterers, court-mandated treatment of batterers, victim advocacy, and coordinated, multi-agency interventions for violence against women.

VAWA has a major investment in police action against domestic violence through its Program of Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies. The latest round of reanalyses of data from the Minneapolis and SARP experiments argues that arrest does indeed have a specific deterrent impact on batterers, albeit little better than alternatives and not consistently so across all jurisdictions (Maxwell, Garner, & Fagan, 1999). Most important, these analyses show that arresting batterers is unlikely to place victims in jeopardy relative to other common police practices. We stand to learn more about the conditions under which arrest works from impact evaluations of grants to encourage arrest.

Three of the NIJ/VAWA-supported experiments address the effectiveness of enhanced criminal justice practices. The single study on pretrial program interventions, beginning shortly after an arrest, called for a special domestic violence police unit to investigate thoroughly and to empower victims by providing them with information on safety plans and how to prosecute. Analyses show the intervention to be effective in reducing the chance of battering for six months following arrest, relative to no intervention (Jolin, Feyerherm, Fountain, & Friedman, 1998).

Two other experiments on court-mandated batterer counseling found no protective impact for victim-witnesses. Research in Broward County, Florida (Feder & Forde, 2000), and Brooklyn, New York (Davis, Taylor, & Maxwell, 2000), indicate that counseling under Duluth-style protocols are no more effective than probation without counseling. These findings add to those of other recent field experiments in finding no special preventive impact for court-mandated batterer interventions. On the other hand, they reinforce a call by many researchers for discovering what “types” of batterers might be receptive to rehabilitative counseling.

It is important to note that “ineffective treatment,” as indicated in these studies, does not necessarily mean that treatment is detrimental or even undesirable. Counseling may work, but no better than other criminal justice interventions. Moreover, battered women often want little more of criminal justice than that their abusers get help they would not receive without the persuasive power of criminal justice. In fact, mandated counseling may fit into a victim

strategy for transition to a life without the abuser; his failure in treatment may be needed proof of his unwillingness or inability to change.

We know less about preventing other, non-domestic, forms of violence against women. Criminal justice interventions against sexual offenders make investigation, apprehension, adjudication, and incapacitation possible. Interventions may also help women to recover from their victimization. But apart from incarcerating offenders, there is no empirical evidence that criminal justice protects women from sexual predators.

Will VAWA reduce overall levels of violence against women in the general population? We cannot say based on research to date. If, by holding offenders accountable, criminal justice serves to lower the propensity of the typical man to batter, rape, or otherwise abuse women, then the plethora of VAWA justice initiatives should reduce the odds that a typical woman will be victimized. But we should not expect policies that reduce the chance of recurring violence to necessarily solve the bigger problem of violence in the population. VAWA's laws and policy initiatives target men who have already offended. And although VAWA supports limited prevention programs outside of criminal justice, it remains to be discovered whether any general prevention program will reduce the threat of violence facing women in American society.

Major gaps remain in research that might better inform policy on preventing violence against women. We need to learn more about the causes and general means of controlling violence; we need annual surveys to measure the prevalence and incidence of violence against women at both the national and regional levels with continuing assessments of measurement instruments for reliability and validity; we need research on all forms of violence against women, including crimes by strangers; we need rigorous impact evaluations of community responses to violence against women; we need to explore criminal justice impacts as they affect violent men and their victims in underserved populations; and, in general, we need theory-based, experimental and quasi-experimental impact evaluations of any justice policy, alone or in combination with others, that could either protect or harm women by their effects on violent men.

These and other research needs have been identified in the past and progress is being made to address them. But there is much to be done with limited resources – insufficient money has been available for the most rigorous evaluations; research sites to accommodate

impact evaluations have yet to be identified; researchers have not stepped forward to conduct the needed research. It is important to remember, too, that there has not yet been time to complete relevant research currently underway. We elaborate on recommendations for filling gaps in the last section of this Brief.

III. Given barely five years of activity under VAWA, what promise does it hold for further advances in knowledge on effective controls?

VAWA has encouraged research contributing to an expanding knowledge base, one from which we expect refinements in current interventions and new ideas for yet untested interventions that hold promise for controlling violence against women. The pace and outcomes of research under VAWA to date portend modest advances in knowledge as it continues to support research and evaluations of preventive policies. Agendas for research are in place; solicitations for research have respected the agendas while inviting investigator-initiated studies; numerous process evaluations undertaken over the past five years should help to identify sites where impact evaluations might be implemented with success and give guidance for their design; baseline data collection mechanisms for tracking local changes in the prevalence of violence against women should encourage researchers to design studies of preventive impacts at a community level.

We have every reason to believe that practical knowledge to inform criminal justice controls will continue to accumulate with VAWA support. A key element of support is an infrastructure to attract researchers from multiple disciplines in a common research agenda, to train researchers and practitioners, and to fund their coordinated investigations. The NRC Panel proposed an infrastructure built with government leadership and coordination around regional research centers. A small step has been taken toward this end with CDC support for the *National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Center*. However, until there is a far more substantial infusion of money for research in this field, it is unlikely that research initiated at new centers will result in greater advances in knowledge than will research being conducted through established research centers already committed to the field.

Fagan concluded his 1996 report, *The Criminalization of Domestic Violence*, with a pointed challenge applicable to the whole field of violence against women research:

Without meaningful change in the structure of research and evaluation in domestic violence, a reviewer 5 or 10 years from now will likely reach the same conclusions reached in this review: “We just don’t know, the evaluation data aren’t very good.” ... Let’s not be embarrassed or embarrass ourselves by continuing on this frustrating path of fad-driven and nonsystematic policies with weak after-the-fact evaluations. Collaborative research to develop and test theoretically driven interventions and policies will make a significant contribution to the development of policies for legal interventions to protect battered women. A continuation of the research efforts of the past two decades will not. (p.48)

Five years later, with support from VAWA, we cannot say much more. We still lack an abundance of good evaluation data on policy impacts, due in part to the small number of experimental impact evaluations and compounded by shoestring budgets for some enormously challenging studies. As for fad-driven policies with after-the-fact evaluations, VAWA gets mixed grades. On the one hand, by granting money for as many local initiatives as it has, the Act may be reinforcing the adoption of popular, but untested policies that seem to abound. On the other hand, the proliferation of policies monitored by an increasingly well-informed body of advocates, other practitioners, and policy makers, in collaboration with evaluation researchers, allows for more opportunities than ever to assess preventive impacts.

IV. What guidance can VAWA research to date give policy makers and practitioners for the dedication of future resources to prevent violence against women?

Policy makers and practitioners need to draw on what research exists to inform their activities, realizing that they will often be frustrated by unanswered questions and significant gaps in practical knowledge that might guide effective policy. That questions go unanswered concerning policy impacts does not mean that “business as usual” is the appropriate intervention. Research should sensitize those in the field to the potential for policy backfires that do more harm to victims than good. Without definitive guidance from research, practitioners must act within gaps, certain that at least their activities will not place those who expect protection at greater risk.

Advances in our understanding of what works to prevent violence against women will require continuing support and guidance for rigorous impact evaluations. We encourage policy makers to invest in collaborative projects between researchers and practitioners to

evaluate innovative criminal justice policies, using experimental and quasi-experimental designs whenever possible. The value of policy experiments is that they give as clear a picture of impacts as can be had, other things being equal. But knowing that in practice other things are not equal, it is the task of continuing research to discover the scope of policy impacts, to investigate how policies interact, and ultimately to learn how an ideal system can function to protect victims. Practitioners, as those who implement policies, bring key insights into how researchers might best implement their evaluations (Crowell & Burgess, 1996, pp. 144-145).

In sum, major advances in understanding VAWA impacts call for identifying critical policy questions associated with local criminal justice initiatives (e.g., no-drop prosecution policies or mandatory arrest for violations of protective orders), carefully selecting sites and researcher-practitioner partnerships, and providing funds adequate to implement a full-blown research design.

V. Recommendations for Research to Advance VAWA's Preventive Impacts

VAWA-funded initiatives need guidance from research on which of alternative policies to promote and underwrite in communities throughout the country. Grants for promising practices implemented in one jurisdiction will do no good for others if the practices cannot be shown to be effective and applicable in other settings. What knowledge might be gained from one community's experience will be lost without research findings to document its value. In this final section, we draw further on what we take to be important lessons for policy makers that will help to fill gaps and advance knowledge on the preventive impacts of justice interventions for violence against women.

A. Impact Evaluations

The single greatest need in formulating policy to protect women from violence is guidance from impact evaluations to insure that one policy prevents violence more effectively than alternatives and to be certain, in particular, that it does not harm victims in its quest for perpetrator accountability. Preventive impact evaluations must be especially attentive to unique policy impacts on women of underserved populations.

In keeping with this view, we would argue against continuing major investments in process-only evaluations unless they are designated as pilot studies for later impact evaluations. Put bluntly, it does victims of violence little good to learn that a criminal justice official has successfully implemented a policy or practice if what is implemented is ineffective, or worse, harmful to victims.

This is not to argue against the value of the major process and limited impact studies that have been conducted to date. A number of reports describing VAWA-supported activities nationwide and in special populations provide insight into community needs, their assumptions and expectations for criminal justice impacts, and what interventions have been implemented to effect prevention. Luna et al. (2000), for example, have provided rich and essential descriptive materials on violence against women among Indian tribes in their evaluation of STOP Grants awarded. Though not a preventive impact study, it is a necessary first step toward more rigorous impact evaluations. Similar contributions can be noted for descriptions of local initiatives in evaluations of the STOP Grant Program (e.g., Burt et al., 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001; Uekert, Miller, and DuPree, 2000) or other VAWA evaluations (e.g., Chaiken et al., 2001).

It may be, of course, that policy makers are more amenable to cooperating in research that supports what they are doing, or advises on how better to implement what they want to do, than they are toward research that explicitly questions their actions, as do impact evaluations (Lazarsfeld & Reitz, 1975; Suchman, 1967; Leighton, 1949). All the more important, then, that researchers bring an independent, appropriately critical, perspective to policy evaluations.

Significant and rigorous policy impact evaluations depend on motivated and competent researchers, motivated and perhaps courageous practitioners, and adequate funding. The absence of recent field experiments to evaluate policy and practices reflects the difficulty in joining researchers, practitioners, and funders in a collaborative effort to insure successful implementation of well-designed research. Researchers who have enjoyed access to criminal justice agencies to conduct process evaluations should use that access for impact evaluations, realizing that an impact evaluation necessarily embodies some degree of process evaluation.

B. Theory-Based Evaluations

Kurt Lewin's oft-cited dictum that "there is nothing so practical as a good theory" holds greater currency in the realm of evaluation research than generally appreciated (Marrow, 1969). Evaluations of preventive interventions that are not grounded in theory can help advance knowledge quickly on effective policies for reducing violence against women in the study site. But such atheoretical research is limited in its capacity to inform policy elsewhere, as it focuses on specific program effects rather than the effects of key variables that distinguish one jurisdiction from another and allow generalization beyond a single study site. Put differently, in evaluations without theory, "the number of variables over which one has control decreases appreciably, while the number of contingent factors increases" (Suchman 1967:76). In short, policy can be advanced without theory, but theory is essential to understanding and critically assessing policy (Paternoster & Bachman, 2001).

We join Fagan (1996) and others (Crowell & Burgess, 1996; Chalk & King, 1998) in calling for theory-based, collaborative research and evaluations as a key component of efforts to generate definitive knowledge on policy impacts. The value of theory coupled with rigorous research designs is an increased understanding of preventive mechanisms, greater confidence in the applicability of research findings, and an increased likelihood that what works in one jurisdiction may generalize to another.

C. General Prevention Research

The NRC Panel called for prevention research and, to that end, recommended longitudinal research on the development of violent behavior, research on risk factors for violence, and rigorous evaluations of programs designed for preventing violence against women, including laws enacted to deter violent behavior. For criminal justice researchers, general prevention means reducing rates of violence against women in general, not just those who are subject to revictimization by previously identified offenders. It may be that a vigorous, certain, and well-publicized criminal justice response will result in general deterrence serving to reduce overall levels of violence against women. Or, perhaps, as expected, VAWA will result in attitudinal changes in the population and will bring about cultural change valuing non-violent interactions. However, VAWA's main justice interventions are explicitly geared toward keeping known perpetrators from reoffending, and,

absent other prevention mechanisms, a general reduction in violence is unlikely to follow initiatives geared toward stemming new violence by those already identified as perpetrators by the criminal justice system.

Nonetheless, VAWA's support for local initiatives does open opportunities for significant general prevention research worthy of support. Because some communities have implemented vigorous criminal justice interventions to combat violence against women and others have been virtually untouched by such activity, researchers can design natural experiments to determine the efficacy of these interventions in preventing violence against women in general. Researchers should be encouraged to take advantage of such research opportunities.

As we recommend research on general prevention, we note that general prevention impacts are difficult to evaluate using rigorous methods likely to yield unambiguous findings (Blumstein, Cohen, & Nagin, 1978). Furthermore, research activities that might demonstrate general preventive impacts over time call for routinely-collected baseline data. Data ideally suited to this task do not currently exist.

D. Precision and Consistency in Baseline Data

We cannot demonstrate the impacts envisioned for general reductions in violence against women without sound baseline measures. VAWA has contributed to filling this need by mandating surveys and by seeking reports addressing the need for routine monitoring.

Measurement issues confound information in several ways at both the national and local levels and for both survey methodologies and official police report data. Although we have made progress in how we measure and define particular incidents of violence against women, inconsistent definitions and measures still plague this area of research.

Regarding survey methodologies, research funded under VAWA clearly demonstrates that both numerous and behaviorally specific survey questions are needed to uncover the most accurate estimates of violence against women, including intimate partner violence, rape and other sexual assaults, and stalking. Screening questions found to be effective should be adopted by the Justice Department's ongoing National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). Since the NCVS is currently the only victim survey conducted annually, it allows for more

accurately measuring and monitoring levels of violence against women over time at the national level. Research should continue to determine whether these preferred measures accurately identify incidents of violence against women of traditionally underserved populations. Ultimately, refinements to the NCVS will insure accurate baseline data for the nation and its unique subpopulations of victims.

Second, because the most valid estimates of violence against women call for sample survey methodologies, wherever possible, surveys should be conducted at the local level as an alternative to police records. This is particularly important if the impact of a new policy or procedure is being investigated. Using police report data to determine the efficacy of new policy is problematic for several reasons. For one thing, fluctuations in reports to police by female victims of violence can be influenced by a number of factors in addition to the new policy being evaluated, including procedural changes in the department, a current event such as a local or national case that attracts significant media attention to the issue of violence against women (e.g. the murder trial of O. J. Simpson), or even another initiative implemented at the local or national level. Given these and other problems with police data, evaluations of policy impacts on the true magnitude of violence against women in a given community call for surveys to monitor the extent of violence both before and after the policy has been implemented.

Having said that, the typically high cost of random sample surveys makes them prohibitive for many communities, and official data from police reports will likely remain the principal means to monitor levels of violence against women. It is therefore essential that efforts continue to improve the official data bases that exist at the local level, including NIBRS—the National Incident-Based Reporting System, as anticipated by VAWA. Those States which do not intend to comply with NIBRS standards should be encouraged to collect enough information about incidents of violence against women (e.g. the victim/offender relationship, age of victim and offender, etc.) to allow comparisons to be made across data sources. At the same time, there needs to be uniformity of definitions across state lines. For example, state definitions of what constitutes a “domestic violence incident” differ dramatically from state to state. Some include same gender partners and intimates not living together within their definitions while others do not. Efforts at the federal level can guide states in adopting uniform codes and definitions that might facilitate this process.

A cautionary note is particularly relevant to differences among states in official classifications of incidents of sexual assault, as illustrated in studies of reform legislation of the 1970's that typically used police-classified global measures of "forcible rape" from UCR data (Bachman & Paternoster, 1994). "Forcible rape," as used by most jurisdictions, is an aggregate measure of rape including without further specification such incidents as incest and other sexual offenses against minors, sodomy against a male, and rape against an adult female (Langan & Harlow, 1994). Obviously, using an undifferentiated measure of sex offenses to monitor the effects of programs and policies implemented under VAWA will make evaluations difficult, at best, as program or policy outcomes cannot be identified with specific crimes.

E. Evaluations of Policies and Programs against Sexual Assault

There are significant gaps in our understanding of VAWA's effect on protecting women from sexual assault. The Urban Institute's evaluation of the STOP formula grants program found that relative to resources for domestic violence, sexual assault receives considerably less funding and has fewer dedicated agencies (Burt et al., 2001). The report calls for wider use of criminal justice interventions, including the use of sexual assault response teams (SARTs) and sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) programs to enhance the detection and successful prosecution of sexual assault perpetrators. The next steps, sentencing and possibly coercing treatment of sexual offenders as a means of reducing recidivism, are in need of evaluation for guidance on how best to deal with these men once under control of the criminal justice system.

There is evidence that some forms of sex offender treatment can reduce the risk of recidivism, but there remains a need for rigorous evaluations of preventive impacts (Saunders and Hamill, forthcoming). Researchers are challenged to find designs to evaluate preventive impacts, recognizing that most cases of sexual assault are felonies for which fewer options to process convicted offenders are tolerated. VAWA's requirements for enhanced sentencing and victim restitution have not been evaluated to discover their impact on victim safety and recovery or on offender recidivism. There is an additional need for research in this area to be sensitive to the possibility that alternative interventions will differ in their impacts according

to different types of sexual offenders, that is, differences in personality and motivation as well as by age, education, or cultural background, for example.

F. Evaluations of Policies and Programs against Stalking

VAWA put stalking on equal footing with other crimes of violence against women. It was paired with domestic violence under Subtitle F as a crime targeted for reduction under VAWA. The sixth purpose area of VAWA 1994 Stop grants specifically designated stalking as a crime for which funds should be allocated, i.e., for “developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs addressing stalking.” A grant for a study of state anti-stalking efforts was awarded to the Institute for Law and Justice (McEwen and Miller, 1997). Yet, for all the attention paid to stalking, there have been no evaluations of the preventive impacts of policies or programs specifically designed to prevent stalking. Of course, studies of protection orders may cover stalkers. But there remains a need for evaluations of policies unique to stalking, such as whether there are consequences for victims from differences in the criteria used to determine when successive acts of harassment rise to the level of stalking in one jurisdiction versus another.

G. Situational Crime Prevention

The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 included provisions for grants for capital improvements to prevent crime in public transportation and in public parks. Though rarely discussed by advocates and researchers in the field, improvements to prevent crime in these areas, particularly those specifically targeting areas in national parks with high rates of sexual assaults, are of considerable interest as what criminologists call, “situational crime prevention initiatives.” Unfortunately, funds authorized under VAWA for such capital improvements were never appropriated. Nevertheless, we view situational prevention of violence against women as an important area of inquiry worthy of research funding.

H. Context and Comprehensiveness

Whatever the nature of research on violence against women, it should account for the context within which the criminal acts and preventive actions take place. Criminal justice research typically has very little control over contextual factors affecting policy. Generalizing

from findings in one jurisdiction to formulate policy in another calls for an understanding of how context may impinge on transplanted policy or practices. Simply stated, what works in one setting may fail in another. Conversely, what research shows to be relatively ineffective in one setting may be the answer to controlling violence in another. In short, not only is a “one size” intervention unlikely to fit all cases within a single jurisdiction (Worden, 2000, p. 23), what “fits” in one jurisdiction may not fit in another. Research designs must be attentive to contextual factors, and effort should be made to replicate research in sites nationwide.

I. Oversight, Synthesizing, Agenda Setting

One of VAWA’s most significant contributions has been to spawn collaborations between researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers. From a research perspective, the mix has helped to define problems, as anticipated by the NRC panel. It has also enhanced the sophistication of non-researchers as consumers of evaluation research, and conversely, it has sensitized researchers to the reality of service delivery issues. There is now a need for oversight in converting collaborations into opportunities for needed research, for that research to be conducted with rigor, for the findings of all policy research to be synthesized for practitioners, and for it to contribute to a dynamic agenda-setting process. A regular NIJ proposal review panel might attend to all of these needs, although we envision oversight as a task for a special standing panel working with NIJ and VAWO to review their respective grants for opportunities to conduct rigorous preventive impact evaluations. The oversight panel should look for work consistent with current research agendas, but should also make recommendations for agenda revisions consistent with its view of essential research needs.

J. Funding in Support of Research

Significant policy evaluations using experimental or longitudinal designs require substantial funds and methodological expertise to insure successful implementation and long-term follow-up. Rigorous research is costly, and much of the research we have reviewed in the first five years after VAWA seems obviously underfunded. For example, the three experiments completed under VAWA together cost a total of just over \$660,000 in comparison to the \$750,000 grant for just one of the domestic violence arrest experiments in 1986. Randomized experiments promising significant policy impacts cannot be fully

implemented without substantial funding. The tradeoff, typically, is in researchers cutting costs by relying on practitioners for critical aspects of design implementation, such as sampling, randomization, and data collection. Limited funding also results in research with less effort devoted to concurrent process evaluation and qualitative observations, limited types of outcome measures, low interview response rates, and truncated follow-up time.

We recognize that research is needed in many areas besides preventive impacts to fully understand all means of controlling violence against women in diverse regions and cultures. However, without a substantial infusion of needed money for research and evaluation of criminal justice interventions, NIJ will need to confront the difficult decision of continuing to support many studies, including a handful of underfunded preventive impact studies, or cutting back on the number of grants to insure funding is adequate for the most rigorous evaluations likely to have significant policy implications. We believe that the former strategy holds less promise for important advances, but we recognize that the latter strategy could undermine the success of VAWA in building a critical mass of researchers with practitioner involvement to conduct violence against women research.

Final Thoughts

We began our inquiry into VAWA's criminal justice impacts by describing VAWA as a remarkable event in the movement to prevent violence against women, a movement that engaged researchers and found support in research findings. Indeed, experimental confirmation of arrest as an effective police practice for domestic violence no doubt reinforced the assumption underlying VAWA that criminal justice interventions can at least protect women from repeat offenders, if not from violent offenders in general.

We share the view that criminal justice interventions against violent men can work to protect women, at least to the extent that they prevent most repeat offenders from revictimizing specific victims. But strong evidence that one policy is more effective than another in addressing recidivism is elusive. We still have much to learn about differences in offenders and differences in populations of victims to justify advocating one policy over another without qualification. We have even more to learn about effective community responses to violence against women in all its forms

Indeed, as researchers inclined to take a critical and skeptical stance toward claims of policy impacts, we are concerned that evidence mustered in policy debates should meet the standards expected of rigorous evaluation research. Policy makers and practitioners should feel confident that research findings, properly contextualized, can be used in decision-making on preventing violence against women. Above all, they need to know that their policies and practices will not endanger women. Unfortunately, there are too few preventive impact evaluations of policies already in place, and fewer still that approach methodological standards insuring sound data for shaping policy.

VAWA's programs to protect women from violence have presented the research community with exceptional opportunities to evaluate preventive impacts and hopefully to lend scientific authority to criminal justice policies. Research continues to make modest contributions to our understanding under current agendas for research under VAWA. While conclusive findings await rigorous research, the increasing numbers of researchers studying violence against women promises continuing growth in the body of knowledge on violence against women as it enhances the legitimacy of research in a field still seeking a regular place in mainstream criminology.

As we conclude our review, we remain convinced that VAWA can make a difference in preventing violence against women, even though the specific nature of its impacts have yet to be revealed by research evaluations to date. We look to VAWA to support experimental and quasi-experimental preventive impact research to better inform the promising initiatives designed to control all forms of violence against women. Finally, we look forward to the implementation of rigorous preventive impact research consistent with needs identified in extant research agendas.

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Smith, Barbara [95-IJ-CX-0105] Domestic Violence Cases: What Happens When Courts Are Faced with Uncooperative Victims?

Smith, Barbara [96-WT-NX-0003] Impact Evaluation of Victim Service Programs: STOP Grants Funded by the Violence Against Women Act

Spohn, Cassia [98-WT-VX-0003] Prosecutors' Charging Decisions in Sexual Assault Cases

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- Worden, Alissa [98-WT-VX-K011] Research on Violence Against Women: Synthesis for Practitioners

Appendix

Methodological Differences Across National Surveys Intended to Measure Violence Against Women.				
Methodology	National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)	National Women's Study (NWS)	National Family Violence Survey: Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS)	National Violence Against Women Study (NVAWS)
Sample	National Probability sample of individuals age 12 and over. May result in lower estimates due to decreased risk of victimization for younger and older respondents.	National probability sample of women 18 years of age and older.	National probability sample of married or cohabiting heterosexual couples 18 years of age or older. May result in high estimates.	National probability sample of women 18 years of age and older.
Asks specifically about violence perpetrated by current and former intimate partners (e.g. husbands and boyfriends)	No. Asks about victimizations perpetrated by "friends" and/or "family members."	No. Asks about victimizations perpetrated by "friends" and/or "family members."	Asks only about victimizations perpetrated by "current partner."	Yes. Asks about victimizations perpetrated by current and former partners.
Behaviors included in screening questions asking about violence	Were you attacked or threatened, attacked or threatened with any weapon, with anything like a baseball bat, frying pan, scissors, or a stick, by something thrown such as a rock or bottle, any grabbing, punching, or choking, any rape or sexual attack, any face to face threats, any attack or threat or use of force.	Attacked with a gun, knife, or some other weapon, or attacked you without a weapon, but with the intent to seriously injure you.	Threw something at partner, pushed, grabbed, or shoved, slapped, kicked, bit, or hit with fist, hit or tried to hit with something, beat up, choked, threatened with a knife or gun, used a knife or fired a gun.	Threw something at you that could hurt, pushed grabbed or shoved, pulled your hair, slapped or hit you, kicked or bit you, choked or attempted to drown you, hit you with some object, beat you up, threatened you with a gun, threatened you with a knife or other weapon, used a gun, knife or other weapon.
Asks behavior specific questions about sexual assaults	No. Asks about "rape," "sexual attacks" and "unwanted sexual intercourse."	No questions about sexual assaults are asked.	Yes. (e.g. asks specifically about types of unwanted sexual activity including "a man or boy putting his penis in your vagina," "mouth," or "anus."	Yes. (e.g. asks specifically about types of unwanted sexual activity including "a man or boy putting his penis in your vagina," "mouth," or "anus."
Asks about stalking victimizations	No.	No.	No.	Yes.

Context of the Survey	Questions asked in context of “crime survey.” Since some may not view assaults by intimates as crimes, this may decrease estimates.	Questions asked in context of “stressful events” experienced.	Questions asked in context of “personal conflicts” between family members.	Questions asked in context of issues related to “personal safety.” continued
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Methodology	National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)	National Women's Study (NWS)	National Family Violence Survey: Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS)	National Violence Against Women Study (NVAWS)
Number of Times Respondent Interviewed and Bounded	Respondents interviewed multiple times including bounding first interview. This has been shown to produce lower estimates.	Respondents interviewed twice. Although report states incidents are bounded, repeat incidents mentioned are not thrown out of estimates and therefore remain unbounded.	Respondents interviewed only once. Unbounded.	Respondents interviewed only once. Unbounded.
Number of Household Members Interviewed	Interviews all household members; this may prevent some respondents from disclosing incidents of violence perpetrated by other family members.	Interviews only one adult household member.	Interviews only one adult household member.	Interviews only one adult household member.
Identifies Injuries resulting from violence	Yes	No	No	Yes
Identifies Context of Violence	Yes. Asks questions to distinguish acts of self-defense.	No. Does not distinguish acts of self-defense.	No. Does not distinguish acts of self-defense.	Yes. Asks questions to distinguish acts of self-defense.

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**EXHIBIT 1. Conceptualizing VAWA's Criminal Justice Impacts:
A Research Perspective**

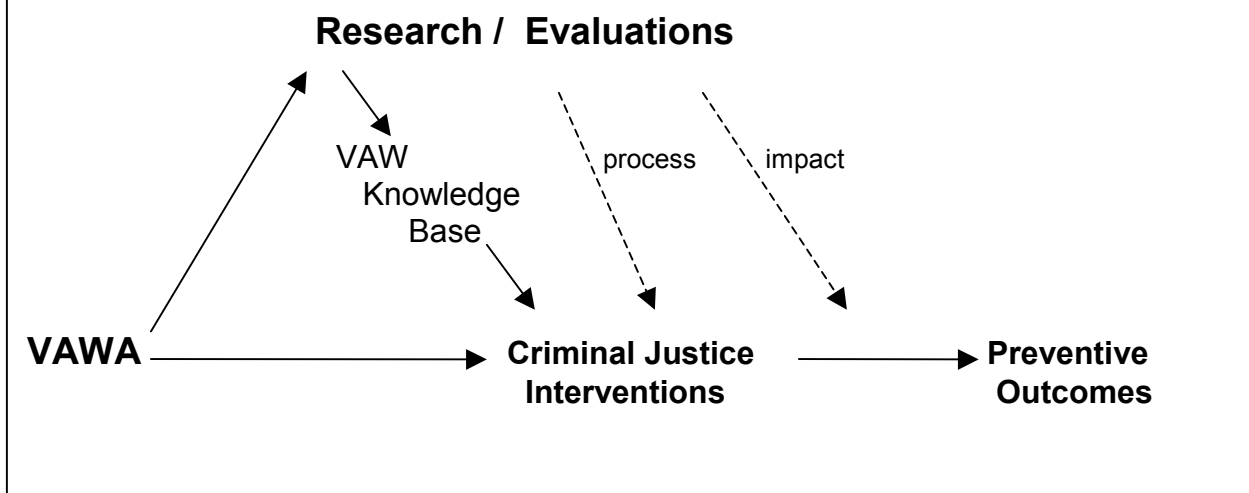


EXHIBIT 2. VAWA Impacts: Research and Selected Justice Components (1994)

Research

Surveys:

Baseline Study of Sexual Assaults on Campuses
Incidence of Stalking and Domestic Violence

Other Research-Related Reports:

Report on State Databases
Study on the Number and Cost of Injuries from Domestic Violence
Report on Recordkeeping Relating to Domestic Violence
Domestic Violence Data Collection under NIBRS
Report on Stalking and Domestic Violence and on Anti-Stalking Legislation
Study on Confidentiality of Domestic Violence Victims' Addresses
Report on Battered Women Syndrome
Study on Confidentiality of Communications Between Sexual Assault or Domestic Violence Victims And Their Counselors.

Evaluations:

STOP Grants To Combat Violent Crimes Against Women Evaluation
STOP Violence Against Indian Women Grants Evaluation
Grants to Encourage Arrest Evaluation

NAS/NRC Research Agenda:

Understanding Violence Against Women

Criminal Justice

Federal Law:

Interstate Domestic Violence
Interstate Violation of a Protection Order
Full Faith and Credit Given to Protection Orders
Enhanced Sentences for Repeat Sex Offenders
New Evidentiary Rules for Sex Offense Cases
Procedures to Encourage Victims to Prosecute (rape shield, prohibition on filing costs, etc.)

Local Initiatives:

S.T.O.P. (Services*Training*Officers*Prosecutors) Grants
COPS Grants for Community Policing to Combat Domestic Violence
Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies
Violence Against Indian Women Discretionary Grants
Grants to Address the Needs of Underserved Populations
Grants for Rural Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Enforcement

Justice-Related Initiatives:

National Domestic Violence Hotline
Funds for Shelters for Battered Women
Grants for Coordinated Intervention and Prevention Activities to Stop Family Violence
Protections for Battered Immigrant Women and Children

EXHIBIT 3. VAWA Grant Purpose Areas (1994)

STOP Grants to Combat Violent Crimes Against Women: To provide personnel, training, technical assistance, data collection and other equipment for the more widespread apprehension, prosecution, and adjudication of persons committing violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence, and specifically, for the following purposes:

- 1) To train law enforcement officers and prosecutors to more effectively identify and respond to violent crimes against women.
- 2) To develop, train, or expand units of law enforcement officers and prosecutors specifically targeting violent crimes against women.
- 3) To develop and implement more effective police and prosecution policies, protocols, orders, and services specifically devoted to preventing, identifying, and responding to violent crimes against women.
- 4) To develop, install, or expand data collection and communication systems, including computerized systems, linking police, prosecutors, and courts or for the purpose of identifying and tracking arrests, protection orders, violations of protection orders, prosecutions, and convictions for violent crimes against women.
- 5) To develop, enlarge, or strengthen victim services programs; to develop or improve delivery of victim services to racial, cultural, ethnic, and language minorities; to provide specialized domestic violence court advocates in courts where a significant number of protection orders are granted; to increase reporting and to reduce attrition rates for cases involving violent crimes against women.
- 6) To develop, enlarge, or strengthen programs addressing stalking.
- 7) To develop, enlarge, or strengthen programs addressing the needs and circumstances of Indian tribes in dealing with violent crimes against women.

Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies: To encourage States, Indian tribal governments, and units of local government to treat domestic violence as a serious violation of criminal law, in accordance with the following purposes:

- 1) To implement mandatory arrest or proarrest programs and policies in police departments, including mandatory arrest programs and policies for protection order violations.
- 2) To develop policies and training in police departments to improve tracking of cases involving domestic violence.
- 3) To centralize and coordinate police enforcement, prosecution, or judicial responsibility for domestic violence cases in groups or units of police officers, prosecutors, or judges.
- 4) To coordinate computer tracking systems to ensure communication between police, prosecutors, and both criminal and family courts.
- 5) To strengthen legal advocacy service programs for victims of domestic violence.
- 6) To educate judges in criminal and other courts about domestic violence and to improve judicial handling of such cases.

EXHIBIT 4. NRC VAW Panel Research Agenda

Preventing Violence Against Women

- longitudinal research to study the developmental trajectory of violent behavior against women and whether and how it differs from the development of other violent behaviors;
- the inclusion of questions about violent behavior against women in research on the causes of other violent behavior;
- the examination of risk factors, such as poverty, childhood victimization, and brain injury, for sexual and intimate partner violence in studies of at-risk children and adolescents;
- rigorous evaluation of both short- and long-term effects of programs designed to prevent sexual and intimate partner violence, including school-based education programs, media campaigns, and legal changes intended to deter violence against women; and
- the inclusion of intimate partner and sexual violence outcomes in evaluations of nonviolent conflict resolution programs and other programs designed to prevent delinquency, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, gang involvement, and general violence.

Improving Research Methods

- clear definition by researchers and practitioners of the terms used in their work;
- the development and testing of scales and other tools of measurement to make operational the key and most used definitions;
- improvement in the reliability and validity of research instruments with guidance from subpopulations with whom the instruments will be used, for example, people of color or specific ethnic groups;
- clarification of theory and the outcomes expected from the intervention in evaluation research;
- the use of randomized, controlled outcome studies to identify the program and community features that account for effectiveness (or lack thereof) of legal and social service treatment interventions with various groups of offenders;
- both qualitative and quantitative research to recognize the confluence of the broad social and cultural context in which women experience violence, as well as individual factors, with attention to such factors as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, and sexual orientation in shaping the context and experience of violence in women's lives.

Building Knowledge

- the development of both national and community-level survey studies using the most valid instrumentation and questioning techniques to measure incidence and prevalence of violence against women (both victimization and perpetration), with particular attention to surveys of racial and ethnic minorities, and other underrepresented population subgroups;
- the inclusion of questions pertaining to violence against women in national and community surveys of topics such as women's mental or physical health or social or economic well-being;
- identification and secondary analysis of existing data sets with respect to violence against women;
- research on the consequences of violence against women that includes intergenerational consequences, effects of race and socioeconomic status on consequences, and costs to society, including lost productivity and the use of the criminal justice, health, and social service systems;
- studies that describe current services for victims of violence and evaluate their effectiveness;
- studies to investigate the factors associated with victims' service-seeking behavior, including delaying seeking of services or not seeking services at all, in order to identify barriers to service seeking and alternative approaches and settings for service provision; and
- studies that examine discretionary processes in the criminal and civil justice systems, including legal research on the theory and implementation of new laws and reforms, police and prosecutorial decision making, jury decision making, and judicial decision making.

Developing the Research Infrastructure

- development of a coordinated research strategy by government agencies; and
- establishment of a minimum of three to four research centers, within academic or other appropriate settings, to support the development of studies and training programs focused on violence against women, to provide mechanisms for collaboration between researchers and practitioners, and to provide technical assistance for integrating research into service provision.

