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Exploring Typologies of Domestic Violence Perpetrators: Insights into Male Patterns and Behaviours

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	2
DESCRIPTION OF THE DATASET	2
DEFINING TYPOLOGIES OF DV PERPETRATORS	4
TRAJECTORIES BY TYPOLOGY	5
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MALE PERPETRATORS OF DV	7
Age	9
Neighbourhood and Income	9
Relationship Status and Living Arrangements	10
DISCUSSION	10
LIMITATIONS	12
CONCLUSION	12
REFERENCES	14
ABOUT THE AUTHORS	19
ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY	20

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research into domestic violence has typically focused on the victims, who are usually female. However, shifting the focus to the male perpetrators creates opportunities for earlier intervention to stop the violence. By recognizing the early warning signs, police, community-based supports and governments can target interventions to prevent domestic violence before it escalates or even occurs.

This policy brief examines the 10-year history of Calgary Police Service interactions with 934 Calgary men, aged 18 and above, who were eventually charged in domestic violence incidents in 2019. Based on their criminal and domestic encounters with police, the perpetrators fell into four typologies. Of the four groups, one had no history with police and the second had a criminal history but no non-criminal domestic encounters before the 2019 charge. The third group had a history of non-criminal domestic encounters, but no criminal history with police, while the fourth group had a record of both criminal charges and non-criminal domestic encounters with police. Only 27 per cent of the men in this study had no previous interactions with police.

These trajectories and typologies reveal discernible increases in criminal activity and domestic encounters with police culminating in domestic violence charges. This information can help to focus legislation, policies and practices which can lead to preventing domestic violence, thus improving on the current model in which police and community organizations often respond to domestic violence only after the fact. Increased police interactions prior to a criminal conviction involving domestic violence mean there is a point at which early intervention may prevent a criminal incident of domestic violence from happening.

Interventions can include providing access to counselling and supports while making online resources accessible to men at risk of becoming perpetrators and who are struggling with their behaviour in their intimate relationships. Other prevention efforts could include school-based programs and targeting male-dominated workplaces with domestic violence prevention efforts in order to avert potential first offences.

The approach to domestic violence must shift. The victims' responsibility to keep themselves safe needs to be augmented by a focus on stopping the individuals who perpetuate harm. Our ongoing research agenda is investigating the extent to which police, government and policy-makers may be able to use information about the behaviours and trajectories of offenders to intervene proactively and so prevent incidents of domestic violence from happening.

INTRODUCTION

In Canada, the lack of robust and consistent information on male perpetration of domestic violence (DV) limits our ability to prevent and reduce this form of violence effectively. To address this gap, this policy brief is the second in a series of papers designed to enhance our understanding of the trajectory and patterns of perpetrators of domestic violence and to investigate potential responses that could prevent and stop male domestic violence against women.

Rather than focus on incidence rates or the characteristics of victims of domestic violence, our research program concentrates on the background of male perpetrators of this form of violence against women. Specifically, we analyze their criminal history and other contextual data from the 10 years preceding a domestic violence criminal charge. Our goal is to examine if the timing and frequency of prior interactions with police can identify earlier points of intervention and inform supports needed to prevent the escalation and an eventual charge involving domestic violence. By examining perpetrator trajectories and typologies, we aim to inform legislation, policies, police and community practices with information that can be used to prevent domestic violence rather than simply respond to it.

In our first report in this series, we showed the existence of an overall upward trajectory in the number of criminal incidents and police interactions with men during the 10 years prior to those men being charged with a criminal offence involving domestic violence (Wells et al. 2024). The current report shows that not all perpetrators share a common upward trajectory in criminal behaviour or police interactions. For some, the act that results in a criminal charge involving domestic violence occurs without a prior history of police interaction, while for others, the act is preceded by a long record and increasingly frequent interactions of different types of police interactions.

In the following section, we outline the police data used in our study to categorize male perpetrators of domestic violence into four distinct typologies. We then delve into an analysis of these classifications, examining the patterns of perpetration, the frequency of violence and key demographic factors. Finally, we explore the findings and discuss their broader implications for shaping policies and practices aimed at reducing the occurrence and prevalence of male-perpetrated domestic violence.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DATASET

We used the same data in this report as the first report in this series (Wells et al. 2024). The data described municipal police interactions with perpetrators of domestic violence in Calgary, Canada. In Calgary, municipal policing is the responsibility of the Calgary Police Service (CPS). CPS records criminal and non-criminal incidents involving police using an in-house information management system. This includes incidents related to domestic violence. After anonymization, to ensure no possibility of identification of individual perpetrators, CPS provided the data to us.¹

¹ An anonymous identifier was created and used to track individual perpetrators. No consistent identifier was provided for victims. Ethics approval was obtained from the University of Calgary (certificate REB21-1980) and research approval was received from CPS.

As in the first report in this series, our focus was on 934 men aged 18 years or older charged in 2019 with a criminal offence involving domestic violence against a current or former female intimate partner (such as a wife, girlfriend or ex-partner).² Information on police interactions with these 934 men was pulled for a 10-year period prior to the domestic criminal charge made in 2019 (2010–2019).

We classified two types of police interactions to create the perpetrator (used synonymously with offender) typologies for this paper. The first type of police interaction involved criminal charges. Perpetrators with criminal-charge histories were those who had committed one or more offences that resulted in charges filed by CPS. These charges included:

1. Crimes against property (e.g., break-and-enter, possession of stolen property, theft)
2. Crimes against persons (e.g., various types of assault, robbery, uttering threats that may include threats or assaults against an intimate partner)³
3. Criminal drug offences (e.g., possession of cocaine or methamphetamines)
4. Criminal traffic offences (e.g., driving while disqualified, impaired operation)
5. Other Criminal Code offences (e.g., being at large, failure to comply with appearance)

The second type of CPS interactions analyzed were domestic conflict encounters. These are non-criminal incidents that meet the threshold for police involvement but do not result in a criminal offence charge. These included:

1. Domestic information (e.g., when a party, an acquaintance or a neighbour makes a call to police regarding a potential domestic situation)
2. Domestic standbys (e.g., when police are present in a potential domestic situation, such as a woman moving away from a perpetrator)

In the next section, we use perpetrators' criminal and non-criminal histories to place them in one of four typologies. Following this, we describe the perpetrators in each of these typologies by his age, his neighbourhood of residence at the time of the 2019 domestic violence charge and the percentage of households living with low income in that neighbourhood.⁴ We also investigate how men in the four typologies may differ in terms of to whom they direct their violence; namely, wife, ex-wife or girlfriend.

² CPS defines domestic violence as “physical violence, verbal abuse, emotional abuse, stalking and harassment between family members or persons in a relationship or related by virtue of children, marriage, or adoption,” with perpetrators or victims being any gender (Calgary Police Service 2023). The criminal charges were for crimes committed when aged 18 years or older. Criminal data from non-CPS sources were not included.

³ The data made available for this research did not clearly identify for all years of our sample whether crimes against persons involved intimate partners. Clarity on this issue would allow for an investigation of recidivism and the potential for this knowledge to help police and the justice system to time and design interventions intended to prevent future incidents. This is an issue we hope to investigate in future research.

⁴ The perpetrator's residence was determined by identifying the forward sortation area (FSA) he lived in at the time of police interaction. A forward sortation area is a way of designating a geographical area based on the first three characters of the postal code. During the period of our analysis, there were 35 FSAs in which at least one man charged with a criminal offence involving domestic violence in 2019 lived. Some perpetrators who were charged in 2019 (n=284, 30 per cent) did not have residence information and were excluded from analyses in tables that included neighbourhood and income characteristics. The percentage of households in a perpetrator's neighbourhood living with low income is measured by the percentage of households with incomes below the after-tax Low-Income Measure (LIM-AT) as determined by the Canadian Census of 2021 (Statistics Canada 2023).

DEFINING TYPOLOGIES OF DV PERPETRATORS

To develop typologies, we looked at the types of individual police interactions, both criminal and non-criminal, that took place in the 10 years leading up to the 2019 DV charge. This led to four categorizations of perpetrators:

- Group A had **no prior history with the police**. The 2019 DV-related charge was the first interaction recorded by police in the previous 10 years.
- Group B had **a criminal history, potentially including prior domestic violence, but no non-criminal domestic encounters involving police** before the 2019 DV charge.
- Group C had **a history of non-criminal domestic encounters, but no criminal history with police**.
- Group D was **offenders with a history of both criminal charges and non-criminal domestic encounters with police**.

Table 1 below summarizes descriptions of the four typologies of male perpetrators and the number of the 934 perpetrators in our dataset defined by each.

Table 1. Typologies of Domestic Violence Perpetrators, N=934

Typology	Domestic encounter (no charge)	Criminal charges	N (%)
Group A: No prior history with police	No	No	254 (27%)
Group B: Criminal history, but no non-criminal domestic encounters involving police	No	Yes	85 (9%)
Group C: Non-criminal domestic encounters but no criminal history with police	Yes	No	228 (25%)
Group D: Offenders with both criminal and non-criminal domestic encounters involving police	Yes	Yes	367 (39%)

From our sample of 934 male perpetrators who were charged with a DV-related offence against a female intimate partner in 2019, 254 (27 per cent) were DV offenders who had no prior interaction with police. The remaining 680 (73 per cent) had at least one interaction with police, either as a criminal charge or as a non-criminal domestic encounter. The largest of the four typologies was Group D. These perpetrators interacted with police in both receiving criminal charges and being involved in non-criminal domestic encounters prior to the 2019 DV charge.

27 per cent of perpetrators had no interaction with police prior to their 2019 charge while 39 per cent had extensive interactions with police.

These four typologies were broadly defined, and within each, there was some heterogeneity in terms of perpetrator interactions with police. In Table 2, we report the mean and standard deviation of the type of police interaction for each typology during the 10 years prior to the 2019 criminal charge.

Table 2. Distribution of Police Interactions by Typology, n=934

Typology	Mean number of domestic encounters (SD)	Mean number of criminal charges (SD)	N (%)
Group A: No prior history with police	–	–	254 (27%)
Group B: Criminal history, but no non-criminal domestic encounters involving police	–	4.4 (7.4)	85 (9%)
Group C: Non-criminal domestic encounters but no criminal history with police	2.8 (2.7)	–	228 (25%)
Group D: Offenders with both criminal and non-criminal domestic encounters involving police	5.7 (6.8)	5.6 (6.2)	367 (39%)

The perpetrators in Group D had a higher number of average charges and a higher number of average domestic encounters than the other groups. Examination of the means between Groups B and D did not reveal a statistically significant difference in the number of criminal charges ($p>0.05$); however, a statistically significant difference in the number of non-criminal domestic encounters existed between Groups C and D ($p<0.01$).

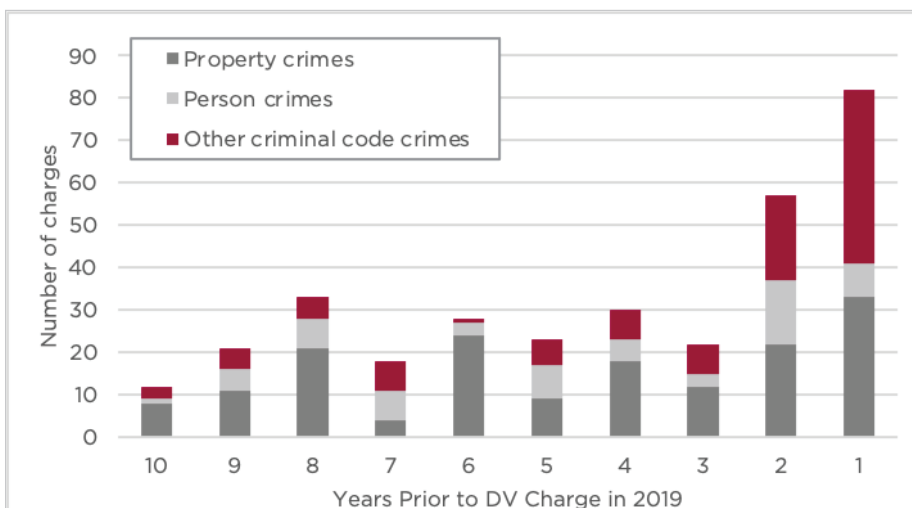
TRAJECTORIES BY TYPOLOGY

Our emphasis in the first paper in this series (Wells et al. 2024) was on the trajectory of police encounters during the 10 years before perpetrators were charged with a criminal offence involving domestic violence in 2019. We return to that issue, focusing on how these patterns differed for perpetrators defined by each typology. We defined perpetrators in Group A, comprising 27 per cent of our sample, as having had no history at all with police prior to their charge in 2019 and were not considered here.

Group B: History of Criminal Charges but No History of Non-Criminal Domestic Encounters (nine per cent of the sample)

Figure 1 reports the total number and type of criminal charges over the 10-year history of the 85 perpetrators defined in Group B. An upward trajectory in the total number of criminal charges became more apparent two years before the 2019 domestic violence charge.

Figure 1. Criminal Trajectory of Perpetrators in Group B (n=85)

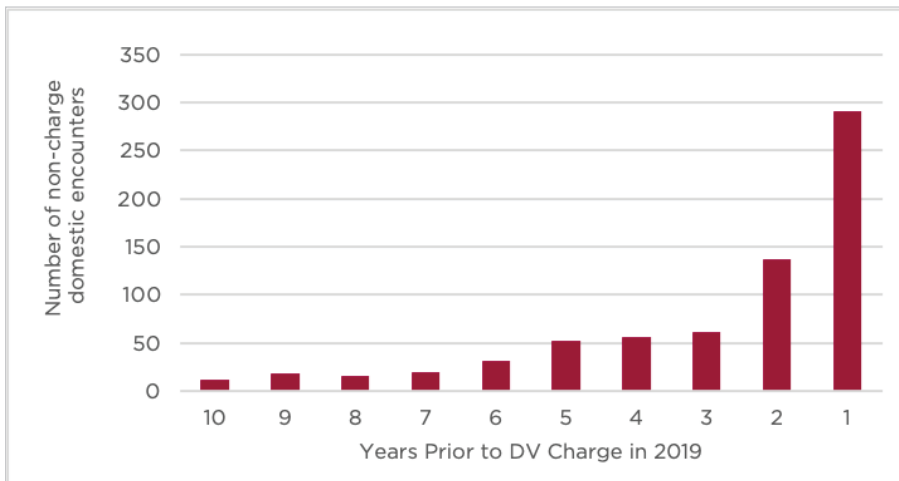


Most of that upward progression resulted from a significant increase in Criminal Code offences involving property crimes ($p < 0.01$). Property crimes included theft, break-and-enter, possession of stolen property and the related offences of failing to appear, failing to comply with an order to appear or recognizance related to the crimes they had been previously charged with.⁵ In the two years leading up to their DV-related charge, 30 of the 85 perpetrators (35 per cent) accounted for 148 of the 189 (78 per cent) criminal charges levied against these men.

**Group C: Non-Criminal Domestic Encounters but No Criminal Charges
(25 per cent of the sample)**

The 228 perpetrators in Group C were those whose only prior interaction with police was one or more non-criminal domestic encounters. Figure 2 presents data on these interactions during the 10 years prior to being charged with a crime involving domestic violence in 2019.

Figure 2. Non-criminal Domestic Encounter Trajectory of Perpetrators in Group C (n=228)



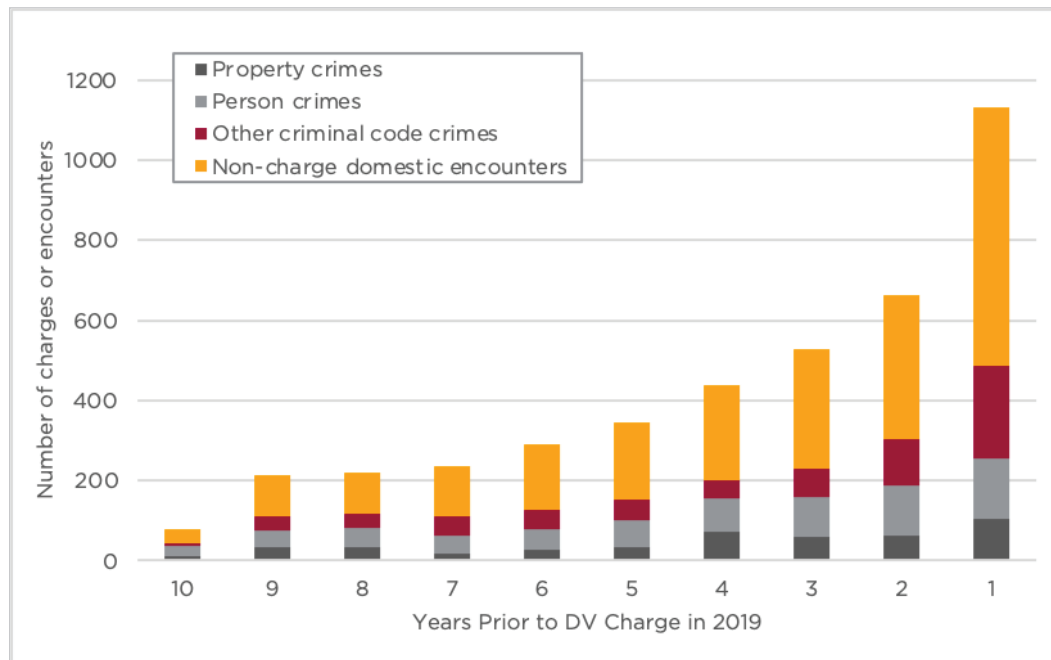
The figure shows a clear upward trajectory in the number of encounters, particularly in the two years before the charge in 2019. Within this group, 147 of the 228 perpetrators (64 per cent) had one or two domestic encounters in the 10 years prior to the DV-related charge in 2019, while 81 perpetrators (36 per cent) had three or more such encounters.

Group D: Offenders with a Criminal History and a History of Non-Criminal Domestic Encounters (39 per cent of the sample)

The 367 perpetrators in Group D had a history with police involving both criminal charges and non-criminal domestic encounters. Figure 3 presents the number of domestic encounters and the number of criminal charges by type during the 10 years prior to their criminal charge in 2019. In Group D, we see a clear upward trajectory in both non-criminal domestic encounters and in criminal charges throughout the 10-year history of police interactions with these men. We observe this upward trajectory in all types of crimes and non-criminal interactions with police. Perpetrators in Group D presented a well-established history with police.

⁵ The offence of failing to appear is found in Section 145 of the Criminal Code of Canada and can occur either: (1) when you are required to attend court and you fail to do so without lawful excuse, or (2) you are required to attend for fingerprinting, and you fail to do so without lawful excuse. Failure to comply means when an accused is let out on bail to await trial, the judge may place conditions on the release. Failure to comply with these conditions can lead to a charge of “failure to comply with condition of undertaking or recognizance.” This is a separate offence from the original criminal charge.

Figure 3. Criminal and Non-criminal Domestic Encounter Trajectory of Perpetrators in Group D (n=367)



Examination of the charges incurred by this group revealed a high number of theft-related crimes and a significant number of property crimes, such as possession of locally stolen property, break-and-enter residence, mischief-destroys or damaged property. Other Criminal Code crimes that followed from a previous charge, such as failing to appear, failure to comply with a condition of an undertaking or recognizance, breach of probation order and failure to comply with an appearance for fingerprinting or attending court, often occurred.

The police interaction history for 64 per cent of perpetrators in our sample indicates a clear upward criminal trajectory culminating in a criminal charge involving domestic violence.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MALE PERPETRATORS OF DV

A risk factor for domestic violence is a characteristic or condition that increases the likelihood of someone becoming a perpetrator or victim of domestic violence. These factors can be found at various levels, including individual, relationship status, community and societal (CDC 2024). Understanding these risk factors is crucial for developing prevention strategies and interventions.

Research has identified that demographic factors significantly influence male perpetration of domestic violence, including:

- Age: (Abramsky et al. 2011; Daigneault, Hébert and McDuff 2009);
- Economic status (Assari and Jeremiah 2018; Jasinski 2001; Napier et al. 2023);
- Relationship status (Roberts, Auinger and Klein 2006; Sutton and Dawson 2021) (as well as relationship status acceptance (Crane et al. 2013), its quality (Kaura and Allen 2004) and length (Luthra and Gidycz 2006));
- Living arrangements (Benson et al. 2003; Guedes et al. 2015); and
- Neighbourhood (Beyer, Wallis and Hamberger 2015; Pinchevsky and Wright 2012).

For example, younger age is a known risk factor for male domestic violence perpetration, with younger men showing higher rates of violent behaviour compared with older men (Daigneault, Hébert and McDuff 2009; Thompson et al. 2006). Age gap between intimate partners, with men being older than their female partners, is associated with intimate partner violence, particularly coercive control (Catalozzi et al. 2011). Strain, for example, due to academic pressures (Mason and Smithey 2012), immigration and acculturation experiences (Caetano et al. 2007), financial instability (Barnawi 2017; Benson et al. 2003; van Wijk and de Bruijn 2012) or unemployment (Campbell et al. 2003; Fuller-Thomson, Sawyer and Agbeyaka 2021; van Wijk and de Bruijn 2012), have been strongly linked to increased domestic violence in relationships.

The relationship status of individuals (Johnson et al. 2015; Wong et al. 2016) – whether married, common-law or recently separated – along with their living conditions (DeMaris et al. 2003), significantly influences the risk of perpetrating domestic violence. Research also shows neighbourhoods with higher poverty rates have higher rates of domestic violence (Cunradi et al. 2000), which may be due to a lack of resources (Mears et al. 2001), support services (Dawson 2015; van Wyk et al. 2003) and exposure to violence (Gover et al. 2011), parental (Kim, Choi and Emery 2014), non-parental (Malik, Sorenson and Aneshensel 1997) and peers' violence (Arriaga and Foshee 2004), as well as community violence and crime (Reed et al. 2009; Stueve and O'Donnell 2008).

Limited social support networks (Jewkes, Levin and Penn-Kekana 2002; Park and Kim 2018; Yan, Chan and Tiwari 2015) further increase the likelihood of violence. Community and social norms that reinforce hegemonic masculinities (Krug et al. 2002; Sasseville et al. 2022; Schwartz, Kelley and Kohli 2012) and condone violence against women (Browning 2002; Fleming et al. 2015; Sabri et al. 2018), along with limited access to mental health (Ackard, Eisenberg and Neumark-Sztainer 2007; Banyard and Cross 2008) and substance use (Brown et al. 2009; Skinner et al. 2021), educational (Banyard and Cross 2008) and support services (Helfrich et al. 2001) contribute to higher rates of domestic violence.

In what follows, we examine the four typologies, considering five identified risk factors. It is important to stress that these conditions do not operate in isolation. Age, relationship status, living arrangements, neighbourhood and income can interact in complex ways. For example, a young man living in a low-income neighbourhood with high crime rates might be at a greater risk of engaging in domestic violence due to the compounded effects of age-related impulsivity, financial stress and a violent environment that reinforces and normalizes this behaviour. In recognition of this complexity, our findings should be understood to be preliminary. Future research will seek to measure each of these influences on incidents of domestic violence separately as they are perpetrated by men in the four typologies.

AGE

Table 3 shows age categories for our sample across the four typologies. For this exercise, age was determined at the time of the criminal charge involving domestic violence laid in 2019.

Table 3. Age of Perpetrators at Time of DV Charge by Typology (N=934)

Age	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
18-30	73 (29%)	35 (41%)	63 (28%)	119 (33%)
31-40	87 (34%)	32 (38%)	73 (32%)	132 (36%)
41-50	56 (22%)	11 (13%)	61 (27%)	81 (22%)
51-60	32 (13%)	6 (7%)	21 (9%)	31 (8%)
61+	6 (2%)	1 (1%)	10 (4%)	4 (1%)
Total	254	85	228	367

The majority of the men in all four typologies were 40 years of age or younger (n=614, 66 per cent) in 2019. Men aged 18-30 years were more frequently found in Group B than in the other typologies. While this difference can be noted, it is not statistically significant, and the distribution of ages is relatively similar within all four typologies.⁶

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND INCOME

To define a neighbourhood by income, we compared the percentage of households with incomes below LIM-AT to the city average (Statistics Canada 2023). The first row in Table 4 reports the number of perpetrators who, in 2019, were living in a neighbourhood with a greater share of population below this measure of poverty than in the city as a whole. The second row shows the opposite: the number of perpetrators living in a neighbourhood with a smaller share of population living below this measure of poverty than in the city as a whole. We interpret the calculations presented in the table as showing there is not an important difference in the number of perpetrators reported as living in neighbourhoods with higher or lower average household incomes than in the broader city. In our sample, neighbourhood income effects were not correlated with the 2019 criminal charges.

Domestic violence perpetrators can be found in every neighbourhood and come from all income levels.

Table 4. Low-income Status in Neighbourhood by Typology of Perpetrator (N=650*)

	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Neighbourhood low-income rate lower than city average	53%	43%	52%	42%
Neighbourhood low-income rate higher than city average	47%	57%	48%	58%

*Note: In our sample, no information on location of residence was available for 284 of 934 perpetrators (30 per cent). Therefore, calculations in this table are based on 650 cases.

⁶ Another way of considering the role of age in perpetration is to observe, for each age cohort and regardless of typology, whether there is an upward trajectory of police interactions. We find this to be true for all age groups.

RELATIONSHIP STATUS AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Our dataset contained information on the self-reported type of relationship the 934 men were in and their living situation with the victim at the time of the criminal charge levied in 2019. Relationship status and living arrangement can work as both a protective factor (healthy and stable relationships) as well as a risk factor (relationships marked by conflict and where the couple live apart). The calculations reported in Table 5 show that the victim associated with the domestic violence charge levied in 2019 was either the perpetrator's wife or ex-wife in 61 per cent of the cases. Across our four typologies, the most noticeable difference in relationship status was in terms of victims of perpetrators in Group B, where victims were a wife or ex-wife only 38 per cent of the time and a girlfriend or someone with other status being the victim 62 per cent of the time, a result essentially the opposite of what we found for the other typologies.

Table 5. Relationship of Perpetrator to Victim at Time of Domestic Violence Charge by Typology of Perpetrator

Victim in 2019 criminal charge	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Total
Girlfriend or other status	72 (29%)	54 (62%)	77 (33%)	161 (45%)	364 (39%)
Ex-wife	20 (8%)	5 (6%)	34 (15%)	66 (18%)	125 (13%)
Wife	162 (63%)	26 (32%)	117 (52%)	140 (38%)	445 (48%)
Total	254	85	228	367	934
Were victim and perpetrator living together?	187 (74%)	51 (60%)	167 (73%)	202 (55%)	607 (65%)

Finally, when we examined the reported living situation (illustrated in the last row of Table 5), we see that overall, 65 per cent of the sample were living together at the time of the DV charge. For Groups A and C, nearly 3/4 of victims and perpetrators were living together at the time of the domestic violence charge, and for Groups B and D, a little more than half (60 per cent and 55 per cent, respectively) were living together.

DISCUSSION

This paper categorizes male perpetrators of domestic violence into four typologies based on their interactions with police over the 10 years leading up to a 2019 DV-related criminal charge. Within three typologies (Groups B, C and D), there is a discernible pattern of increased interactions with police prior to an eventual domestic violence charge. For men identified in Groups B and C, the pattern of increased police interactions is most noticeable in the two years prior to the criminal charge in 2019. For men in Group D, whose history with police involved both criminal charges and non-criminal domestic encounters, the upward trajectory of police interactions is much longer and is evident throughout the 10-year period prior to the 2019 criminal charge.

A pattern of increased police interactions prior to a criminal conviction involving domestic violence presents the possibility of identifying a point at which an early intervention may prevent the criminal incident of domestic violence from ever occurring. This possibility is perhaps greatest for the 39 per cent of men in our sample in Group D.

Previous research examining the merits of identifying those at risk for re-offending shows the likelihood increases with each subsequent offence or police call-out (Morgan, Boxall and Brown 2018). This is what we see in Groups C and D, where there is a pattern of behaviour that escalates over time, resulting in the police repeatedly being called out for a domestic encounter.

An important contribution to this literature is our result showing there is potential for identifying those at risk of re-offending earliest when police involvements include both criminal charges and non-criminal domestic encounters, the pattern of behaviour exhibited by the Group D typology.

The smallest of our four typologies is Group B, representing only nine per cent of our sample. For Group B, which consists of men with a history of criminal charges prior to the charge in 2019 involving domestic violence, the upward trajectory in police interactions is not as clear outside the two years immediately preceding the 2019 criminal charge. This suggests their criminal behaviours may, as Boxall, Payne and Rosevear (2015) suggest, serve as an impetus for a subsequent domestic violence incident. It is also noteworthy that this group has more individuals in the 18-30 age range (see Table 3) and their crimes were predominately theft, break-and-enter and possession of stolen property – crimes others have found to be significant risk factors for future domestic violence perpetration (Kernsmith 2005).

It is noteworthy that 27 per cent of our sample fall into typology Group A. These are men with no police interactions in the 10 years prior to their criminal charge in 2019 and represent cases that are unpredictable using analyses of police interactions. These cases may nonetheless reflect ongoing discord with their intimate partners, one of which culminates in a violent response. As is well-documented, a large proportion of domestic violence and abuse goes unreported to police and does not appear in police statistics (World Health Organization 2021). Importantly, the large size of this typology of perpetrators speaks to the importance of watching for signs of intimate partner violence other than tracking police interactions. This may include making online resources (such as those provided through [Men&](#)) readily accessible to men struggling in their relationships. It also suggests the need for other prevention efforts, including school-based prevention efforts (Hahn et al. 2007) and targeting male-dominated workplaces with gender-based violence prevention efforts to stop first-time perpetration of domestic violence (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health 2006).

An emphasis in this line of research is that the timing and design of interventions intended to prevent domestic violence before it occurs may be most effective when tailored to the characteristics of men distinguishable by their histories of police interactions. Thus, for Group D, the largest of the typologies, interventions may be most effective if introduced early and if they include not only ongoing monitoring and assessments for further criminality and providing them access to community-based services and supports (Hilton and Eke 2016; Morgan, Boxall and Brown 2018), but also interventions such as those provided through HomeFront, the John Howard Society and probationary services provided through the Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services Parole Services to prevent further criminal and violent behaviour. The latter interventions may be inappropriate for men in Group C, who exhibit no prior criminal behaviour. For men in Group C, the upward trajectory of non-criminal police interactions occurred nearer to the time of the criminal act involving domestic violence, suggesting a different type of prevention program may be needed.

The challenge is identifying as early as possible into which typology men are likely to fall. This is the reason for examining trajectories of police interactions over the long term – in our case, for 10 years. A steady growth in the number of both criminal and non-criminal police interactions distinguishes the largest typology of perpetrators; namely, the 39 per cent of men in our sample who fall into Group D. These trajectories of interactions provide police and support groups with the opportunity to intervene early in this upward trajectory.

Last, our aim of achieving early and effective intervention led us to explore whether age, income or neighbourhood factors could help predict which typology a man might fit into, and consequently, which type of intervention would be most effective in preventing future acts of domestic violence. As previously noted, perpetrators of domestic violence exist across all neighbourhoods and income levels in this dataset. The investigation of possible predictors presented here is preliminary and highlights the need for more comprehensive data and a deeper examination of the complex interactions between age, income, neighbourhood effects and prior police interactions. These are critical issues that warrant further research.

LIMITATIONS

The CPS data provide a variety of information on perpetrators of domestic violence. We limited our attention to describing differences in police interactions by men grouped into one of four typologies. For this analysis, we did not have a control group of men who, despite having a history of interactions with police, were never charged with a crime involving domestic violence. The dataset also did not include other data on environmental factors that could help illuminate possible factors affecting the trajectories, such as substance abuse or specific economic information about the perpetrator. Adding those to the criminal and domestic encounter history would allow a more thorough look at the data and exploration of potential causative sociodemographic factors that could indicate the potential for a perpetrator to escalate up to a domestic violence charge. Last, as we did not have information on the nature of the conflict or other situational factors that were present at the time, we were unable to determine to what extent relationship status or living arrangement were contributing factors leading to a charge for a crime involving domestic violence.

Adding data describing these possible influences to our analysis and applying statistical analyses appropriate for identifying their causative effects on domestic violence behaviours are goals for the next research paper in this series.

CONCLUSION

Based on their interactions with CPS in the 10 years leading up to a 2019 DV-related criminal charge, this paper categorizes male perpetrators of domestic violence into four typologies, revealing discernible differences in patterns of criminality, police interactions and subsequent charges. A key result is that in the case of 27 per cent of the criminal charges laid against men in 2019 for a crime involving domestic violence, there was no police interaction history of any kind in the 10 years prior to the charge. On the other hand, 73 per cent of the DV-related criminal charges were by men who had contact with — and in the case of 39 per cent of our sample (Group D), had a good deal of contact with — police because of prior criminal charges and/or non-criminal domestic encounters. These findings suggest opportunities exist for well-timed engagements and interventions to prevent future incidents of domestic violence.

Very little in our dataset suggests age, income or neighbourhood play a role in perpetration. The perpetrators in our sample were found in all age categories and were living in high-, middle- and low-income neighbourhoods. This implies that what may be most important for identifying future perpetrators of crimes involving domestic violence is not the perpetrators' environment or economic circumstances, but rather a prior history of interactions with police, which is what we have emphasized here.

Historically, efforts to address domestic violence have focused heavily on supporting victims to keep themselves safe. The broader research agenda of this study emphasizes it is time to augment our approach by gaining deeper insights into the behaviours and trajectories of offenders and applying this information to our legislative, policing and service practices. By recognizing and acting upon patterns and trajectories identified in our study, police and community agencies have an opportunity to intervene proactively. This preventative approach holds promise in reducing instances of domestic violence and fostering safer communities through targeted and timely interventions and collaborations. Focusing on better understanding perpetrators of domestic violence does not detract from efforts to support victims; rather, it aims to enhance and complement the existing work being done. It is crucial to work with men to stop the perpetration of domestic violence because men are often the primary perpetrators. Addressing the root causes of their behaviour can prevent violence before it occurs, leading to safer communities and healthier relationships.

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