

(Continued)

The Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment had a tremendous policy impact:

Within 1 year of the study's first publication, almost two thirds of major police departments had heard of the Minneapolis experiment, and three quarters of the departments correctly remembered its general conclusion that arrest was the preferable police response. Similarly, the number of police departments encouraging arrests for domestic violence tripled in 1 year from only 10% to 31%.⁴³

It has also been suggested that the Minneapolis experiment was favorable among policy makers given the emerging support for deterrence theory. Due to the major policy impact of this experiment, the National Institute of Justice funded six experimental replications of the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment; these have been collectively referred to as the "Replication

Studies."⁴⁴ Essentially, these replications failed to confirm the earlier findings of the Minneapolis experiment. Buzawa and Buzawa contend that there may be a "middle ground." Specifically, deterrence may result for some offenders but not all offenders.⁴⁵

To further highlight key aspects of deterrence theory, we apply this perspective to the crime of simple assault, specifically domestic violence. Doug and Emily have been living together for more than three years. They have a two-year-old son and are expecting their second child in a few months. Throughout their relationship, Doug has become increasingly violent toward Emily. At first, he would shout at and belittle her; soon after, he was pushing and shoving her. Now, Doug has started to hit, slap, and kick Emily. One evening, the violence became so overwhelming, Emily called the police. Following department policy, the officers arrested Doug for simple assault. Doug was convicted and sentenced to probation and mandatory counseling.

Doug's arrest incorporates the concepts associated with deterrence theory. For instance, the certainty of punishment is supported by the departmental policy to make an arrest in such instances of domestic violence. The concept of swiftness is also evident, with Doug being arrested soon after Emily called the police. One may ask, however, whether the punishment of probation and counseling was too severe or not severe enough. Also, one might consider whether such punishment will deter Doug from assaulting Emily again.

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. How do the rates of simple assault vary between males and females?
2. What did the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment show regarding different ways to deal with cases of domestic violence?
3. What did the replication studies of domestic violence reveal about the original Minneapolis study on domestic violence?