

# Partner Violence as *Female-specific* in Aetiology

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*Male-specific self-inhibition of violence towards women, corresponding to an evolutionarily highly-conserved male-specific dedicated neural pathway, and a female-specific actual preference in a couple context for physically violent expression of aggression, prompted by oxytocin (the very hormone underpinning pair-bonding): these findings together indicate that a new theory of partner violence [PV] is required, with a female-specific aetiology. This anyway is apparent from the great disparity between the actual and predicted sex-differential in PV injury rates; the only plausible inference from which is overwhelming female compared to male perpetration. It is conceivable that what male-perpetrated PV there may be is by aberrant (psycho-pathological) individuals, with the remainder of male-on-female violence rather than being PV per se – directed as such, with intent to cause harm – is better understood as by displacement from male intra-sexual aggression. The basis of a female-specific PV aetiology is that pair-bonding is now known to have evolved in the female interest to maximise female fertility, and therefore at root women have a stronger interest in preventing partner defection – man-*

*ifesting in ‘controlling’ behaviour which may become violent — whereas at root men would have little to lose if not something to gain. Reviews and studies for decades have shown that PV is perpetrated at least as much by women; but now evident in data is that this is predominantly so – in many and the most important respects by multiples. This new understanding of PV is a reversion to what in former times would have been the intuitive, popular view of the phenomenon, before the imposition of an extreme ideological conception of a supposed ‘patriarchal’ [sic] ‘terrorism’ [sic] of exclusively or predominantly male perpetration. Though now comprehensively discredited, this persists, as it was created, through a need within the political-Left mindset to salve cognitive-dissonance regarding the failure of Marxist theory. In blaming ‘the workers’, envisaged as being all-male; they were replaced, as the supposed new ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘oppressed’ in need of ‘liberation’, by the generic category of all women. Consequently, it became imperative both to deny the extent and even the existence of PV that is female-on-male, whilst inflating levels of male-on-female PV and falsely ascribing to it a special perniciousness. Being in line with deep-seated pro-female and anti-male prejudice rooted in the biological imperative to control male access to sex, what would otherwise be seen as arcane political posturing, instead has appeared plausible.*

**Keywords:** Partner violence, female-specific aetiology, male-specific self-inhibition, female-perpetrated, sex differential, pair-bond, cognitive dissonance

Rather than to be violent towards women, it has long been commonly observed and assumed that men typically ‘hold back’ or ‘back off’. Just such self-inhibition is fully to be expected from an obvious biological / evolutionary principle: that the female is the ‘limiting factor’ in reproduction. Whereas the loss of most or even nearly all males through violence would still leave enough males to impregnate all the females in the reproductive group, any loss of females through violence would directly impact on reproductive output. [Note that this reproductive-group perspective does not invoke ‘group’ (‘multi-level’) selection; there being several mathematically equivalent models of mutualism, deciding between which is not an empirical question but one in philosophy of biology.] Violence that is male-on-female would be a serious risk in potentially reducing reproductive output, given the enormous hitting power of males that has evolved through male intra-sexual competition, together with the fragile female body-frame. For any individual male, it is paramount that he does not compromise his personal reproductive potential by damaging his own pair-bonded sexual partner; and therefore ‘holding back’ from violence would be particularly appropriate in this of all contexts.

There was no research to investigate whether or not such male ‘holding back’ was a real phenomenon until, a decade ago, Felson, Ackerman & Yeon [2003] discovered that men are self-inhibited from being violent specifically to their partners – and that there was no such self-inhibition in women. The significance of this not well-known study has emerged retrospectively when it was additionally found that women are not merely by contrast uninhibited, but actively choose physical violence as their preferred mode of aggression in an intimate-partner context (and that male self-inhibition applied in any situation where a woman otherwise would be the target) [Cross, Tee & Campbell 2011; Cross & Campbell 2012]. There is, then, a perfect contrast, with males being inhibited and females *disinhibited* when it comes to physical aggression within their sexual relationships. It was then further discovered that whereas men are far less violent to intimate partners than to other men, women are *more* violent to intimate-partners than to other women, with three times as many women as men perpetrating PV in the absence of showing violence to same-sex non-intimates [Bates,

Graham-Kevan & Archer 2014]. The great disparity here between the sexes shows up in the data regarding inter-sexual violence as a whole: although women generally do not physically aggress against men, and males in general are by far the more violent sex; nevertheless there is three times as much inter-sexual violence by women [Morse 1995]. A further window on what is going on is the data from same-sex couples: PV rates are significantly higher, with good evidence that rates are highest of all in not male but female same-sex couples [West CM 2012]. The data entirely contradicts the 'gender paradigm' model [Canon & Buttell in press], and has prompted a book specifically on the problem [Kaschak 2002]. PV in lesbian couples has been known for some time to be two to three times the rates for heterosexuals [Coleman 1990, Bologna, Waterman & Dawson 1987, Lie et al 1991]. Female *disinhibition* from being violent within a couple context, apparently, then, is not through the partner being male but because of the context of an intimate partnership. Male inhibition, by contrast, is dependent on the partner being female, as is shown by the rates of PV in 'gay' couples being intermediate between those for heterosexuals and lesbians.

The neural circuitry responsible for male-specific self-inhibition of violence to females has now been discovered by neuroscientists looking for crucial, evolutionarily highly conserved neural pathways as the basis of human aggression. This is a three-tier neural pathway (all of which is found only in males) thought to be common across species to include humans, producing a general near elimination of aggression, triggered by close physical contact of any kind with a female [Yuan et al 2014]. The neural pathway does not utilise other learning and memory circuitry, appearing to have evolved just for this function, indicating that this is a major adaptation. The obvious usefulness of this mechanism is to obviate the risk of any impact on a female sexual partner of displacement from common and serious male-male violence.

The hormonal basis of female preference for violence over other forms of aggression in a couple context has been revealed to be oxytocin: the very hormone underpinning pair-bonding. This prompts women (though not, or much less so, men) to perpetrate PV, notwithstanding that the effect depends on high trait aggressiveness (which generally is a quality of males much more than of females) [DeWall et al 2014]. As DeWall points out and others had found: in males, although oxytocin also prompts violence, it's against a different kind of target: out-group members – stranger males. The link between oxytocin and partner violence is particularly revealing in that it also underpins in other species maternal aggression, which, in being the evolutionarily-ancient key form of female violence appears to be homologous to PV perpetration. Supporting this conclusion is the completely different neuro-hormonal basis of maternal aggression than that of intra-sexual aggression [Gammie et al 2008], and that it is fearless, just as is female-perpetrated partner violence (in being actively preferred over employing other modes of aggression, even though the male target has huge potential to respond with far greater hitting power, and against the far weaker female body frame and facial bone structure).

Evolutionary theorists have posited that oxytocin is associated with mate-retention behaviour; and maternal aggression in defence of offspring obviously is not far removed functionally from female aggression in defence of the means of producing offspring (that is, attempting to retain the male partner). Its co-option in the evolutionary process would be a simple, minor instance of this common sort of development. With of course no male equivalent of maternal aggression, then all this strongly suggests that there is not a male-equivalent aetiology regarding PV perpetration. [Note

that this of course does not mean that there is no such thing as male-perpetrated PV, but that it is likely not PV per se: either not directed at a female target and/or not with intent, and instead is by displacement – presumably, often alcohol-fuelled. Exceptions, clearly, would be psychopathic male-on-female violence and that by otherwise psychologically abnormal males, which self-evidently indeed is PV per se, but not by ‘normal’ males.]

This begs the question as to why would women rather than men be so concerned with retaining a partner? It’s clear that women indeed do value pair-bonding much more than do men: they seek close relationship generally and in particular intimate partnership much more than men [Schmitt et al 2003], and wish a pair-bond to last twice as long as do men (on average for fourteen years as against seven), and to begin pair-bonding several years earlier [Palchykov et al 2012]. Women are twice as likely as men to develop the extremely persistent pathological courtship behaviour known as de Clérambault’s Syndrome [Brune 2001] — the attempt to insist on pair-bonding irrespective of whatever resistance there may be by the individual targeted. Correspondingly, they are also much more concerned than are men by the prospect of partner infidelity [Shattuck et al 2012], and consequently are better than are men at detecting cues re infidelity (being more alert, quicker and more accurate in this regard, and unlike men closely monitoring potential rivals) [Ein-Dor et al 2004], and, compared to men, do this more covertly as well as overtly, using such as surreptitious commitment tests [Li, Chan & Law 2012]. This is despite the fact that only the male partner is at risk of cuckoldry – the source of female concern is uncovered by examining what triggers jealousy. Whereas for men this is a partner engaging in sex, for women it is a partner forming an emotional attachment with another woman [eg, Sagarin et al 2012], because it is this rather than merely extra-pair sex which is likely to herald the male partner’s desertion.

With women valuing pair-bonding more than men, then it must be that pair-bonding has evolved more in the interests of the female than the male. This is what has been found in recent reviews. Hitherto it had been assumed that ‘marriage’ was crucial for the provisioning of offspring, and therefore also to enable the male to have control over the female’s fertility, so as to ensure he is the father of the offspring he’s provisioning; but neither of these related contentions are supported by evidence [Chapais 2008, 2011; Winking 2007, Moxon 2013] – provisioning by males was a development *in the wake* of pair-bonding. Instead, evidence points to human pair-bonding having evolved as a means of maximising / optimising female fertility [Winking 2007], and through mate-guarding [Chapais 2008], though what form this took had been unclear. As previously outlined [Moxon 2013], mate-guarding hardly can function to enable a male entirely to monopolise a female, because there is evident far too much extra-pair sex. Dunbar [2012] alternatively conceives mate-guarding in terms of a ‘body-guard’ (‘hired gun’) to assist the female in keeping at bay undesirable (low mate-value) males, as previously has been recognised [Norscia & Borgognini-Tarli 2008, Lumpkin 1983]; but this is to envisage mate-guarding as a defence against sexual aggression – serious harassment and/or assault – when social sanctioning against such behaviour ancestrally would have been so pronounced as to have been internalised in males to implicitly inhibit males from sexually aggressing in the first place. Therefore, a female hardly requires a pair-bond partner to dissuade other males from sexual aggression.

Mate-guarding instead seems to be more nuanced. There is a considerable problem for females in excessive male attentiveness – even if merely social rather than explicitly sexual, and non-

aggressive. Simple male (over-)attentiveness is recognised to have costs for attractive females even in 'lowly' species [Partridge & Fowler 1990, Long et al 2009]. In displacing attentiveness by low mate-value males, there would be facilitated access by / to males of high mate-value (that is, higher than that possessed by the 'body-guarding' male himself), who would be desirable to the female as extra-pair sex partners. Mate-guarding could not have evolved to prevent such extra-pair sex because of escalation to agonistic contest with a more dominant male, which the male 'body-guard' would anyway likely lose. Therefore, there would be no point in the male monitoring potential rivals, which is just what is found in the afore-mentioned research by Ein-Dor et al [2014]. This arrangement allows the female the flexibility to maximise her overall fertility according to circumstance.

The benefits of pair-bonding to human females do not end there. It allows a woman, in effect, to project forwards in time the peak in her mate-value, circumventing the problem of female mate-value decline with age. A woman at or close to her peak in fertility in her youth, when correspondingly she is at her most attractive, is best placed to secure a high-mate-value male. In retaining him for subsequent conceptions she can produce collectively higher quality offspring than through the alternative of promiscuous sex, where the quality of the male genes she could obtain likely would decline with each successive conception as she assortatively mates with males of mate-values corresponding with her own rapidly falling one. Given that males, by contrast, typically rise in mate-value with age (as their intra-sexual competitiveness is more fully realised in status, and thereby is revealed the true quality of their genetic complement); then in effect the female also brings forward, as it were, the peak mate-value of the male she chooses. She thus retains for herself as an exclusive sexual partner a male who would become more and more attractive to her still more fertile rivals, by whom otherwise she would be usurped in her mate choice.

The male can exploit the advantages to the female of pair-bonding in terms of this 'sex-differential mate-value trajectory' and selective 'body-guarding', only through being able to offer pair-bonding in exchange for a higher fertile female than he could hope to obtain through promiscuous sex. He acquires regular sex with the same attractive female, instead of – or, rather, in addition to – occasional sex with various less fertile females. This is not a benefit as clear as the benefits of pair-bonding to females, and anyway it is a further extension of the costs males incur in obtaining sex, in that the willingness and ability to provide and sustain a pair-bond is an additional dimension of 'good genes' the male is required to exhibit in order to sufficiently impress a prospective female partner.

With pair-bonding being of much more importance to the female than to the male partner, then it would be expected that the female would be the keenest party, with mate-guarding as formerly conceived actually how the *female* behaves; not the male. This is the basis of the 'nagging wife', who exists less in a supposed prejudicial imagination than as a 'rule-of-thumb' conclusion from repeated and shared observation. The female rather than the male would be expected to be the one trying to prevent him from straying, by exerting proprietorial control – and it is a well-researched finding that such 'control' in some circumstances manifests as physical violence [eg, Dasgupta 1999, Felson & Outlaw 2007].

So it is that women themselves report perpetrating significantly more 'controlling' behaviour than do men [Bates, Graham-Kevan & Archer 2014], echoing findings that the woman typically is the 'controlling' partner [Vogel et al 2007], and that this is the case in 90% of couples [Coleman &

Strauss 1986]. The Bates, Graham-Kevan & Archer study reveals a telling contradiction between self-reported perpetration and victimisation: whereas there was a considerable sex differential in respect of self-reported perpetration, self-reported victimisation was sex-symmetric. This is likely due to a combination of males being far less likely than females to report any victimisation they sustain (see below) and 'control' being understood only in how it typically manifests as practised by males. What is measured in studies is the occurrence of male forms of 'control' irrespective of whether this was by the male or the female partner, thereby excluding any forms that are specifically female, as would be expected to be exhibited by females (and not by males). Some studies explicitly measure 'control' in this way [eg, Graham-Kevan & Archer 2009], and all will do so implicitly. This would explain why several studies hitherto have contradicted other research in reporting a sex-symmetry in 'control': such a finding is likely to be artefactual.

The nature of pair-bonding as here outlined explains the patterns commonly observed in whether or not couples split. The woman partner's extra-pair sex simply provokes the man to abandon the pair-bond because of the high risk that the extra-pair sex had resulted in conception; which, of course, for the male would render subsequent sex with this particular female a waste of time. [Note that as an evolved implicit psychological response it is unaffected by the woman's use or not of modern contraception for her extra-pair sex.] The male thus far would not have sustained any cost, and would do so only by remaining; but furthermore, in deserting he likely benefits in then being able to acquire a replacement pair-bond partner actually of higher fertility, because a male typically enjoys rising status (mate-value) with age. The reverse is the case for the female, who would have difficulty replacing her partner with a male of an equivalent mate-value given her declining mate-value with age. Of course, this would be compounded by pregnancy (with ensuing lactation) through the extra-pair sex, for the same reasons that prompted the male partner to desert. All this serves further to make the female keen to retain her pair-bond partner. So it is that when couples are tested by infidelity, the man tends to desert whilst the woman tends to 'stand by her man'.

This sex-dichotomous pattern self-evidently translates into a corresponding pattern of the possibility of PV – PV clearly being more likely at a time of the extreme relationship stress of discovered infidelity. The male usually takes himself out of the relationship and its domestic setting, thereby greatly reducing what likelihood there was of his physically aggressing against his (now ex-) partner; but by contrast the female most often stays within the relationship and its domestic setting, thus maintaining the close proximity that may precipitate into PV the anger she very likely feels. Not only is PV by males here less likely because no significant costs are incurred by the male partner in the case of partner infidelity provoking him to terminate a pair-bond, but in any case, male anger will tend to be directed towards the cuckolding male rival, given that sexual usurpation is the ultimate in male intra-sexual competitiveness. Thus, the partner of a cuckolded male is at risk at most of merely displacement aggression, but then male-specific self-inhibition re violence towards what would be a female target means that any aggression usually would be in some form other than physical violence.

From this proper understanding of pair-bonding, thus is explained the findings above indicating that PV is in essence a female-perpetrated phenomenon. But how is it that this has not been apparent, such that the common understanding has been that PV is predominantly male-perpetrated? This has not always been the case. A mere few decades ago, the vernacular perception of the reality

of PV was encapsulated in the one non-'saucy' topic of those colourful British bawdy seaside postcards: the wife wielding some heavy kitchen utensil chasing the hapless husband. There has been a sea-change in perception through a top-down political imposition feeding usual pro-female/ anti-male prejudice. Regardless of what can properly be concluded from data, it has been systematically seriously misrepresented, and the current voluminous research by the scientific community attacking the ideological contra-factual line is still subject to blanket denial by women's advocacy organisations and the media – notably the BBC. But before an examination of the data, it is most important to fully establish how the ideology arose and developed to underpin and create the misrepresentation. Previously this has been given only a brief account with a vague history [Moxon 2011, 2008], but given how crucial is an understanding of it to appreciating how, why and the extent of the distortion of PV data, and given that there is no proper history hitherto available; then here there is a detailed, lengthy exposition – re which I make no apology for its taking up most of the remainder of this paper — before a return to the topic of PV itself.

The emotive, entrenched position of ideological PV 'advocates' in their unshakeable attachment to the bogus conceptualisation of PV as predominantly or exclusively male-perpetrated, is a stance derived from Marxian thinking [Dutton 2007, MacKinnon 1991]. It is from the ideology that came to be termed 'identity politics', which has an origin and development well documented in scholarship (see below) as a re-shaping of Marxist 'theory' that over time has become the principal feature of contemporary politics. This was generally recognised two decades ago, though written off by some as already as dead as the Marxism that had spawned it; being kept alive, supposedly, mostly in the imagination of conservative counter ideology [Hughes 1993]. This has proved to be the opposite of the case. 'Identity politics' all too apparently has grown to be accepted and predominant everywhere – not least amongst conservative politicians (whole parties, such as the Conservative Party in the UK), police forces, judiciaries, and entire government administrations — such that it is now a totalitarian quasi-religion. Critique of it had been mocked in the media in the early 1990s by the repetition ad nauseum of the jibe, 'political-correctness gone mad', to misrepresent critique as the inventing of a new 'red peril', on the assumption that the reality of the claims of 'identity politics' was self-evident and no exaggeration. 'Political correctness' has often and popularly been the ideology's tag, used not least by some scholars, but this is rather to confuse the ideology itself with what perhaps is better understood as its surface manifestation, mode of enforcement and expression of its fervency: the seemingly absurd 'speech codes' and blanket gratuitous charges of 'sexism', 'racism' and homophobia [*sic*] ubiquitous in the media, politics and the workplace. 'Political correctness' is a term with a history that although inter-twining with the history of the ideology of 'identity politics' is a separate one, with a different and slightly earlier origin – in the need to maintain a strict Party line within the Soviet state after 1917 – with its use (in more than one near-identical translation) from the 1920s [Ellis 2002]. The term quite suddenly became prominent in 'Western' politics at the turn of the 1990s when 'identity politics' started to become predominant. Having escaped the confines of academia, it had by then been in the ascendancy for over two decades (see below).

It is well understood that the replacement by 'identity politics' of what by contrast may be dubbed the politics of 'commonality' was through the realisation that 'the workers' were not going to bring about a Marxist 'revolution': "the failure of western working classes to carry out their 'proper' revolutionary (class) interests", as Somers & Gibson put it [1994 p54]. According to Cohen [2007 p196], the political-Left "despised the working class for its weakness and treachery, and condemned

its members for their greed and obsession with celebrity. In Liberal-left culture the contempt was manifested by the replacement of social democracy by identity politics". Gitlin [1993] concluded: "In large measure, things fell apart because the center could not hold, for chronologically, the break-up of commonality politics pre-dates the thickening of identity politics".

This has quite a long history. Almost a century ago, in the late 1920s, it was already becoming apparent that Marxist 'theory' did not work in practice, as evidenced by the absence of revolutionary overthrow of regimes in Europe according to Marxian prediction and prescription, even though just such a revolution had occurred in Russia a generation previously. The cognitive-dissonance [Festinger 1957, & eg, Tavis & Aronson 2007] this must have produced within the mindset of the European and Anglophone intelligentsia could only persist and grow with the continued complete failure of a political-Left ethos anywhere to effect real change in its own terms. This became especially pointed with the unprecedented rapid implosion of the Soviet Union in 1989 and the de facto capitulation to a rampant 'capitalist' model by the People's Republic of China, together with exposure of Cuba, the sole significant vestige of the 'communist' world, as a state-impooverished museum-piece which functions at all only through turning a blind eye to mass entrepreneurial activity; leaving only the embarrassing survival of the ultra-Stalinist gulag-nation North Korea. All this still further intensified cognitive-dissonance. The former dissident Soviet, Vladimir Bukovsky [2009] points out that the Soviet demise coincides in date with the almost as sudden emergence in the 'West' of the notion of 'political correctness', in a transferred resurgence of essentially the same ideology.

With the cognitively-dissonant mindset here being in common across a large group, then it functioned as an in-group marker, and as such became still more strongly driven, receiving so much investment that any intrusion of reality into the ideology would be ever more strongly denied. And the intrusion of reality would be great, given that ideology is in essence a highly partial view of reality emphasising a particular dimension over others, which inevitably is exposed as a mismatch with reality, obliging further ratcheting up of the ideology to try to transcend what becomes a vicious circle; and the only way this can be achieved is to assert an internal consistency to the exclusion of contact with reality in a tautological loop. The ideology becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy [Bottici & Challand 2006], that in groups is subject to a 'synergistic accumulative effect' [Madon et al 2004]. Seemingly with no end, the prospect is, of course, of a catastrophic implosion when finally the end arrives; but in the meantime the stress on the belief system can lead to 'shifting the goal posts', with superficial changes over time perhaps to the extent of transmogrifying the whole ideology in effect to subvert itself – potentially so far as even to adopt an opposing position, if this can be passed off either as not incompatible or as the position actually held all along. All of this is in the service of saving face.

To try to salve their cognitive-dissonance, adherents to an ideology can try to save face by admitting neither their own gullibility nor the falsity of the ideology and instead blame others. In this way the failure of the ideology can be regarded and misrepresented as merely temporary, and the final reckoning postponed apparently indefinitely. In the present case, those blamed – the fall guys, as it were – were those perceived to have 'let the side down': 'the workers'. Collectively intended to benefit from the predicted Marxist 'revolution' (or, at least, the furthering of 'the progressive project'), 'the workers' had been designated the 'agents of social change'; but they did not respond actively in this regard [Raehn 2004, 1997].



The first attempts to explain this failure to act according to prescription and prediction were by Marxian academics working in the late 1920s onwards in Frankfurt and then New York [see eg, Lind 2004, 1997; Jay 1973]. They devised a fantasy aetiology in terms of Freud's notion of 'repression', which though now comprehensively discredited along with the rest of Freud's 'theory' [eg, Webster 1995, Loftus & Ketcham 1994] at the time it was the only framework in psychology available to them. Freudianism is as unfalsifiable as is Marxism, and therefore is in no sense science, and has long been superseded and abandoned by academic psychologists; yet readings and mis-readings of Freud persisted over the decades in being central to all manifestations of a neo-Marxism, including for all of the 'post-structuralists' and not least Foucault [Zaretsky 1994]. Consequently, as these 'theories' took firm hold across academia and 'trickled down' via the graduate professions to society at large through the enormous expansion in student numbers, there was an enormous popularity from the 1950s onwards of 'Freudian-Marxism' – as most notably in the books of Erich Fromm.

The central 'theory' was a development of the anti-family rhetoric of nineteenth century socialists taken up and further radicalised by Marx and particularly Engels [Weikart 1994, Engels 1884, Marx & Engels 1848] to conceptualise the family as an aberration resulting, it was imagined, from 'capitalism' somehow 'repressing' 'the workers', to the extent that supposedly they become psychologically dysfunctional [Cerulo 1979]. Marxism per se was supplanted by a theory of culturally based personal relations [Burston 1991], popularised later most notably by Marcuse [1955] amongst many others. The aim was to eliminate what were seen as the mere 'roles' of the mother and father, so that, it was envisaged, all distinction between masculinity and femininity would disappear, taking with it the 'patriarchy' [sic] supposedly the foundation of 'capitalism' [Raehn 1996]. This culminated in the popular Penguin book, *The Death of the Family* [Cooper 1971], from the school of a politically extreme academic psychology/sociology calling itself 'existential psychiatry', which advanced the falsehood that schizophrenia is acquired as a result of certain dynamics in a family upbringing. The early/mid-1970s was the time when the works of such as Marcuse and Fromm reached the height of their popularity with students, and as Cohen remarks: "strange ideas that began in the universities were everywhere a generation later" [Cohen 2007 p 375].

[This 'theory' re the family lacked even internal consistency. With the family mistakenly considered a product of 'capitalism' (when the family has clear homologues throughout the animal kingdom, and therefore clearly has a phylogenetically ancient evolution), then merely removing the family hardly thereby removes 'capitalism', which by the rationale of the 'theory' surely would manifest in other ways to either 'oppress' or somehow 'fool' 'the workers'. In any case, 'capitalism' ('free enterprise') is itself an empty 'bogeyman' notion in that it is merely trading (in however complicated a form), and this includes the relationship between the worker and his employer. In even its most simple, prehistoric mode, through the economic 'law' of 'comparative advantage' trading entails both parties acquiring the 'surplus' problematised in Marxism as being somehow antithetical to the interests of those supplying their labour. 'Surplus' is inherent in the market value of any labour: there is little if any labour which does not itself benefit from organisation and/or technology to be value-added sufficient to be competitive in the market pertaining. In other words, 'surplus' necessarily is of genuinely mutual advantage.]

As the head of the family, the man (husband/father) was held to be the incarnation of 'oppression' from which the woman (wife/mother) needed to be 'liberated'. So it was that 'the workers'

as formerly considered ‘the agents of change’ and the group destined to be ‘liberated’, were replaced in Marxian imagination by women, heralding the ‘feminist Marxism’ we see today [Kellner nd] – the centrality to neo-Marxism of ‘third-wave’ feminism.

This origin and development has tended to be forgotten in favour of another (though related and complementary) and later rationalisation which subsumes it in a more general conceptualisation that is also the legacy of Engels: ‘false consciousness’. [The term was first recorded in an 1893 letter from Engels to Franz Mehring.] Cohen [2007 p158] sums up that: “The Marxists of the early twentieth century took it up to explain away the discomfiting fact that the workers of the most advanced societies were not organising social revolutions as Marx had insisted they would.” Cohen elaborates [p374]: “To explain the catastrophic collapse of their hopes they have revived the false consciousness conspiracy theory, which has been present in socialist thought since the early defeats at the turn of the twentieth century, and given it an astonishing prominence. They hold that the masses rejected the Left because brainwashing media corporations ‘manufactured consent’ for globalisation”. This transparently paranoid weak ‘conspiracy theory’ – which wilfully refuses to accept the very basis of marketing in reflecting people’s actual needs and desires – is familiar still today (albeit less in favour than it was), being that it is presentable in vague sociological terms in the wake of sociology eclipsing psychoanalysis as the popular pseudo-science from the late 1960s/ early 1970s. The incorporation of Freud’s bogus ‘repression’ notion to posit a thin conceptualisation of psychological ‘brainwashing’ became less plausible – not least in its being in the narrow context of the family, from which confines anyway it was taken that everyone was escaping – and it gave way to a nebulous pan-societal conceptualisation of a sociological kind of ‘brainwashing’. Both are highly implausible (even as to mechanism, let alone efficacy), but the latter appeared less so than the former. It is lost on the Left that the notion of a society-wide ‘false consciousness’ created by an economically dominant group is precisely the basis of the Nazi notion of ‘Jewish conspiracy’ (as Cohen points out [2007 p375]).

Notions of ‘repression’ and ‘false consciousness’ were enough of a dressing-up of a volte-face from eulogising to blaming ‘the workers’ to prevent it appearing too transparently to be holding ‘the workers’ directly culpable, and it was also sufficient a departure from orthodox Marxism that its origin in Marxism was hidden, thereby aiding its acceptance. This would have been important in the USA crucible of these politics when in the aftermath of McCarthyism the political-Left was obliged to present itself differently. With purging of ‘communists’ having proved resoundingly popular with the American working classes, a far sharper sense of an ‘us and them’ vis-à-vis ‘the workers’ was experienced by the US political-Left, reinforcing its antipathy.

Here we have the core of what became ‘identity politics’, but it was not known as such until the early 1970s [Knouse 2009]. As Hobsbawm points out [1996], even in the late 1960s there was no entry at all under ‘identity’ in the *International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*. This is for the very good reason that until this time there was no multiplicity of ‘identity’ labelled as ‘disadvantaged’ / ‘oppressed’. The decisive development to spur such a complete change in political discourse was the co-option by neo-Marxist ‘theory’ of a movement with which it had no connection at all. As with any fervent ideology, a hallmark of the political-Left is interpreting anything and everything in its own ideological terms to claim as a manifestation of the ideology and its prophecy – jumping on a bandwagon, so to speak; though here only to hijack it. The bandwagon here was, of course, the American civil rights movement, which though enjoying ubiquitous support within black communities – to the

point often of various forms of extremism – featured virtually nil endorsement of socialism (and even in the rare exceptions, any endorsement was equivocal). It is from the time of this co-option that ‘identity politics’ dates [Kauffman 1990]; many considering that the movement was incorporated into the Left in the wake of King’s assassination in 1968 – the major turning-point year in political-Left politics generally with the near-revolution in France and the sustained violence between student demonstrators and the army at the Chicago US Democratic Convention; both taking heart from the onset of the Chinese ‘cultural revolution’ at this time. Maoism was aped by the rapidly growing US student politics movement in its becoming militantly extremist in the huge opposition to the compulsory draft for the ‘anti-communist’ Vietnam war. This vibrant student radicalisation functioned as a melting-pot to facilitate incorporation of movements hitherto entirely separate, to be brought under the umbrella of what was more widely the ‘counterculture’. A movement famously setting itself against ‘middle-class’ norms, this was not a rebellion against their parents – which was the dynamic of a near generation before, when the young were newly prosperous and the culture was widely perceived as stultifying. It was an attack on the aspiration by ‘the workers’ to become anything else, when the goal of ordinary people was very much economic advancement (‘the American dream’). ‘Civil rights’, as the first great ‘single-issue’ campaign, served not least to provide an acceptable cloak for the Left to avoid provoking a resurgence of McCarthyism. The major social upheaval of ‘civil rights’ with its large-scale and widespread rioting was easily the nearest thing in then recent US history to look like the promised Marxist ‘revolution’, and obviously was just the practical application the ‘theory’ was seeking. Moreover, the protagonists (black Americans) were eminently separable from the now despised ‘workers’ per se, in being presentable as a new ‘group’ from outside of the former fray of ‘boss’ versus ‘worker’.

This accident of history served to add ‘black’ to ‘woman’ as ‘the new oppressed’ without any intellectual shift or much if any cerebral effort: it was on a ‘gut’ level, so to speak; implicit rather than explicit cognition. ‘The worker’ in effect was retrospectively stereotyped as both ‘man’ and ‘white’. With the inverse of this stereotype of ‘white’ being not just ‘black American’ but ‘black’ — that is, ethnic-minority generically; then notwithstanding that many ethnic groups are far from ‘disadvantaged’ let alone ‘oppressed’ – some (eg, Chinese, Indian) actually out-performing ‘whites’ in all key measures — so it was that the new ‘agents of social change’ / ‘disadvantaged’ / ‘oppressed’ were extended from women to also include all ethnic minorities. It is only with the knowledge of how this developed that sense can be made of why ethnicity is held above the myriad other possible differences that could be utilised as in-group markers, when in fact there is nothing inherent in ethnicity as an in-group marker to produce inter-group prejudice that is particularly more pernicious. Indeed, the worst inter-communal conflicts nominally between different ethnicities usually are between different cultural heritages with no discernable ‘racial’ differences of any kind – and what (non-ethnic) differences there are can be minimal; the lack of contrast actually fuelling the intensity of conflict, such is the need for groups to feel distinguished from each other. Furthermore, ethnic prejudice is anything but restricted to or even predominantly ‘white’ on ‘black’: inter-ethnic (eg, ‘black’ on Asian) and ethnic-on-‘white’ ‘racism’ can be, often is and may usually be the greater problem; and a negative attitude to a certain ethnicity does not imply a similar attitude to other ethnicities. The specific US experience, given the highly divisive politics in the wake of the American Civil War over the basis of the Southern US economy in African slavery, does not translate to elsewhere; notably not to Europe – as was starkly evidenced in the experience of World War II ‘black’ American GIs stationed in England in how they were favourably received by locals, who sided with them when they were discrim-

inated against. ‘Racial divides’ in European ‘white’ host countries are the result not of mutual antipathy but affiliative forces, principally within migrant enclaves and secondarily within the ‘host’ community; in both cases being through in-group ‘love’, not out-group ‘hate’ [Yamagashi & Mifune 2009].

Given the template of a successful incorporation of another political movement, then it naturally followed that the next cause generating nationally prominent protest similarly would be ripe for co-option. The opportunity arrived the very next year with the 1969 ‘gay’ Stonewall riots, again prompting in effect a retrospective stereotyping of ‘the worker’ by contrast as ‘heterosexual’. And just as ‘black American’ was broadened generically to ‘ethnic minority’, so ‘gay’ was broadened generically to ‘homosexual’ – to also include ‘lesbians’. This anyway was bound to ensue given that women were already an identified new class of ‘the oppressed’. Thus, ‘lesbians’ were added even though the draconian criminal discrimination and associated harassment by police had been a problem only for male homosexuals, who were the ones raising a grievance. Female homosexuals merely hung on their coat-tails, since ‘lesbians’ did not themselves have a basis for grievance as a discriminated-against, ‘oppressed’ or ‘disadvantaged’ ‘group’. ‘Homophobic’ [*sic*] bullying is fully part of group male (but not female) socialisation [Pascoe 2013], and consequently is a problem suffered far more by males than by females [Poteat & Rivers 2010], and which would be even more marked if rumour-spreading was taken out of consideration, with this – rather than direct confrontation – accounting for the great bulk of what female manifestation there is [Minton 2014]. Males in any case are more visible as homosexuals, in that male homosexuality, it is generally agreed, is roughly twice as prevalent as female; and ‘gay’ behaviour can contrast markedly with that of male heterosexuals (whereas female behaviour intra-sexually is often physically close, resembling in some respects behaviour in heterosexual intimacy).

What everyone has missed is that it was not homosexuality per se that had led to a ‘disadvantage’ and severe discrimination, but being male: the combination of being male and exhibiting an extreme difference (differences between males being amplified in male dominance contest, with such an extreme difference as a same-sex preference sending a male to the bottom of the hierarchy, and rendering him a candidate for the unusual occurrence for males of exclusion from the in-group). This calls into question not just the identification of ‘homosexuality’ *generically* as a ‘disadvantaged’ / ‘oppressed’ category, but it prompts checking of the presumption that women constitute such a category. And the conclusion upon examining all issues male/female is that not the female but the male is clearly the more ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘oppressed’ sex [see Moxon 2008, 2012 for summaries: this is a topic far beyond the scope of the present text]. This anyway has to be more than a mere suspicion given the bogus basis on which women came to be regarded as ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘oppressed’, merely as a forced replacement for ‘the workers’.

In the bringing together of these disparate strands of sex, ‘race’ and sexual orientation there was not just insulation from further McCarthyism, but a much-desired restoration of the lost sense of universalism of the political-Left ethos, now possible through demonising ‘the worker’. As Gitlin pointed out [1993], ‘identity politics’ is a “spurious unity”, and that “whatever universalism now remains is based not so much on a common humanity as on a common enemy – the notorious White Male”.

From then on, anyone 'belonging' to a 'group' according to any of the inversions of one or more of the now supposed hallmarks of 'the worker' as male / 'white' / heterosexual, was deemed automatically to belong to the newly identified 'vanguard' of 'agents of social change', and deserving of automatic protection and definition as 'disadvantaged' and 'oppressed'. These three abstracted generic groupings of 'woman', 'ethnic-minority' and 'homosexual', naturally were considered additive in conferring 'victim' status, so that a permutation of two out of the three — or, best of all, the full house — was a trump card in what has been dubbed 'intersectionality'. Given the 'grave train' this spawned, then just as would be expected, further extensions again in effect by inverting 'the worker' retrospective stereotype have since been made. Added were the disabled and the elderly; trans-sexuals, and even the obese — but on such dubious grounds as to reveal further the incoherent basis of 'identity politics' other than as a protracted agitation against 'the workers'.

The disabled suffer neither discrimination nor any prevailing negative attitude towards them (if anything the contrary): they simply have a hard life, irrespective of how they may be treated. The absence of provision such as ramps to public buildings cannot constitute discrimination, because this would be special treatment, not equitability. Indeed, it could be argued that disabled-access denudes the lives of disabled people, in that in becoming less reliant on others they have still less social interaction, when the lack of this perhaps is the key difficulty in most disabled persons' lives. The elderly likewise necessarily have a harder life, through being physically incapable of some tasks which formerly they carried out with ease; but this is an inevitability for everyone that no form of intervention can reverse or significantly ameliorate. There is compensation in usually being relatively in a good financial position, and without the onus of having to go to work to sustain it: the elderly commonly are better-off than when they were younger, and without the large expenses of younger life. They are hardly 'disadvantaged'. Far from being in receipt of any discrimination or opprobrium, the elderly usually are at worst ignored, and likely to be afforded genuine consideration. [The real phenomenon of age discrimination in employment impacts only on 'the workers', of course: it cannot apply to those over retirement age.] The only sense that can be made of the inclusion within 'identity politics' of both the disabled and the elderly is that they are non-'workers' (if not thus by definition, they are only unusually in employment).

Trans-sexuals are rare enough (roughly one in 20,000 pooled across sex) as to be effectively an irrelevance, but from the perspective of the basis of 'identity politics' their inclusion is an extension of the homosexuality category in that they revive the mantra of 'homophobia' [*sic*], and may be thought to challenge male-female dichotomy, along the lines of 'non-essentialist' feminist complaint, and the goal as above outlined; but they do not. '*Trans-sexual*' is a misnomer in that these individuals simply wish for their somatic sex to match what they strongly feel their sex to be (their 'brain sex', as it were), which usually they accomplish through surgery. [The only actual 'cross-sex' individuals are those possessing an extra sex chromosome: this is the 'intersex' condition, which is vanishingly rare.] Just as for homosexuality, only males suffer any significant 'disadvantage'. Male-to-female (but not, or much less so, female-to-male) trans-sexuals are those enduring opprobrium, and this is because they are regarded as being essentially and irredeemably male, whereas female-to-male trans-sexuals are considered to be females exhibiting gender [*sic*] flexibility. Opprobrium is most notably from (feminist) lesbians, who are at the core of 'identity politics' activism, and naturally this would be falsely 'projected' on to males as supposedly a generic prejudice. As with homosexuals, the quality attracting any 'oppression' is *maleness*, not trans-sexuality per se. Again, this is obscured in that

most trans-sexuals are male – that is, male-to-female: one in 10,000, as against 1 in 30,000 female-to-male (according to recent APA figures averaging across studies).

The obese constitute an obviously unjustifiable category within ‘identity politics’, in that being fat is not fixed and irreversible, being hardly an inescapable condition, and one which is not acquired without complicity – a failure to make a better lifestyle choice. That obesity is a ‘serious’ addition to the ‘identity politics’ cannon is shown by the actual academic ‘discipline’ of ‘fat studies’. It might be thought that sense is made of this in terms of the ‘non-workers’ basis of ‘identity politics’ categorisation, in that non-working, sedentary very-low-income lifestyles are particularly associated with sugar-rich poor diets driving obesity; but the emergence of ‘fat studies’ was not (or not primarily) a pragmatic inclusion given the very high incidence of obesity in the USA. It arose as a subsidiary of ‘women’s studies’. It would seem more pertinent that lesbians – as previously pointed out, the keenest activists within ‘identity politics’ – are more than twice as likely to be obese as heterosexual women [Boehmer, Bowen & Bauer 2007]. ‘Valourising’ the obese would be in line with the extreme-feminist notion that a female should not be judged according to her attractiveness (the female-mate-value criterion of fertility) – notwithstanding that there is no issue raised about correspondingly judging a male in terms of male attractiveness (the male-mate-value criterion of status or stature). [This may drive obesity in extreme-feminists, though for lesbians it may be based in not having to face the mate-choice criteria of males, leaving them freer to eschew the usual female concern with weight.]

The several abstracted faux groups, in entering political centre stage displaced ‘class’, because with ‘the workers’ now considered collectively persona non grata, then being ‘working class’ was no longer recognised as a disadvantage. Class distinction was jettisoned from the neo-Marxist ‘progressive project’. The upshot is that a woman who is highly-educated, upper-middle-class and/or belonging to a high-achieving ethnic minority (such as Indian or Chinese), and/or is (or declares herself to be) ‘lesbian’, is eligible for various forms of state and employer assistance through ‘positive action’ (an unwritten but effective quota system). By contrast, an ‘underclass’ ‘white’ male from a poor family background with neither a job nor the educational qualifications needed to acquire one, is not only offered no assistance but is actively considered an ‘oppressor’ of all those (apart from other males) far better placed than is he.

Given that Marxian ideological belief has always been in terms of a ‘power’ [*sic*] struggle between one bloc and another within society — formerly the ‘bourgeoisie’ versus the ‘proletariat’ — such that the ‘powerless’ [*sic*] are set to overthrow the ‘powerful’ [*sic*]; then it was not a large adjustment to re-envision the underlying dynamic of society as conflict between a more abstract but still supposedly dominant ‘group’ of generically men – anyone male / ‘white’ / heterosexual / non-disabled / non-elderly / non-obese – as the one *with* ‘power’ [*sic*], against the one without, being a cobbled-together melange of abstractions – supposedly generically women, ethnic minorities, homosexuals, trans-sexuals, the disabled, the elderly and the obese. Indeed, the adjustment has been seamless, as would be expected from the benefits accruing in terms of saving face. With reality held to result from whichever ‘group’ is deemed to hold ‘power’ [*sic*] [Green 2006], then it follows in internally-consistent imagination that reality is changeable in the mere assertion that a ‘powerless’ [*sic*] ‘group’ somehow is set to take the place of a ‘powerful’ [*sic*] ‘group’. This self-fulfilling prophecy is the imperative driving ‘identity politics’ that has come to be dubbed ‘political correctness’, with

its draconian fervency and focus on empty forms of words as if they have inherent efficacy.

In the absence of any external validity to 'identity politics' reasoning, there was the need for a novel intellectual underpinning, which was supplied in the confused strands of philosophy grouped together as 'postmodernism' (a term that did not share an earlier origin with that denoting a reversion to traditional or classical style in art), that in more concrete guise has a firm grip of the humanities and social sciences in the various forms of 'cultural studies' / 'critical studies' / 'theory'. The incoherence of theory in 'postmodernism' is ascribed, in an excoriating analysis by Gross & Levitt [1998, 71-92], to its being "more a matter of attitude and emotional tonality" [p71]. This is just as would be expected of what is an attempt to obscure the sophistry of 'identity politics'. At root 'postmodernism' is a taking-the-ball-home defensive ruse; a simple declaration that any and every criticism of 'identity politics' is inadmissible. As is widely and well understood, the 'postmodernist' stance is that any text is held to have no significant surface (ostensible) meaning, but an actual meaning supposedly specific to local context: meaning is said to be 'situated'. This is the 'identity politics' contention that given everything concerns 'power' relations, then all depends on someone's vantage point in respect of these — in terms of their own 'oppressed' status. Whilst all individuals from one particular 'oppressed' 'group' perspective (eg, ethnic-minority female) are deemed to have an identical experience espoused in the same 'narrative', these particular perspectives are sanctified as being entirely opaque to anyone else with a different perspective, even if from what might be considered a parallel one in 'power' relations (eg, ethnic-minority 'gay'), let alone from a non-'oppressed' angle, which in any case is held not to be worthy of taking into account. The perspective of a 'group' 'narrative' is considered to be trapped in the sub-text, rendering it decipherable only through the special technique of 'deconstruction'.

The obvious fatal flaw in this thin reasoning is that there is no reflexivity in the 'theory' in respect of the texts of the 'postmodernists' themselves. *Their* own texts uniquely are deemed to be legitimately understood according to their surface meaning; so that within this 'discipline', where it is held that no text is 'privileged' over any other, necessarily a complete exception is made for texts concerning the 'theory' itself; otherwise the 'theories' of 'postmodernism' (and its subsidiaries re 'deconstruction') could not exist. The irony is that if 'postmodernist' principles were applied to 'postmodernism' itself, then the 'theory' would become apparent as being entirely based in the very principles of 'power' relations it purports to reveal. A tautology, the 'theory' is without foundation. 'Postmodernism' is naked special pleading, amounting to a claim that there is a magic unavailable to the uninitiated, which is practised by a priesthood of the political-Left. This is raw elitist-separatism: the very attitude and behaviour that a political-Left ethos purports to be fighting against and deems immoral.

By way of an absurd extension of the circularity in 'postmodernism': with language being deemed to convey nothing but 'power' relations, by an elementary failure of logic, conversely 'power' is regarded as nothing more than language; and from this is deduced that all that is needed is a change in language to bring about a wholly new set of 'power' relations. This is a flimsy dressing-up of the self-fulfilling prophecy in 'political correctness' and 'identity politics'. Language is an explicit communication form with no access to the vast bulk of cognition, which is implicit (non-conscious); and therefore it cannot possibly be of the nature ascribed to it by 'postmodernists'. The refusal to be 'found out' on this score is, of course, through denial that there is a scientific way of acquiring knowl-

edge about implicit psychology; but this is an argument no less circular than is everything in 'post-modernism'. Gross & Levitt [1998 p75] sum up: "American postmodernism is often accused, with considerable justice, of being little more than mimicry of a few European thinkers, mostly French, who rose to prominence in the midst of the bewilderment afflicting intellectual life when the proto-revolutionary struggles in the late sixties in France, Germany and Italy fizzled out without having produced any real impact on bourgeois society." In other words, 'postmodernism' sprang from the very same place as did 'identity politics' – its symbiotic twin; or, rather, its offspring.

In the transition to 'identity politics', the quintessential form of 'oppression' [sic] in Marxian imagination changed with the family replacing the workplace as the putative key locus of conflict; transferring from 'the boss' lording it over 'the worker' to the man 'dominating' the woman. This was a politics in line with natural prejudice (see above), easy to get a handle on, and which mobilised in particular women hitherto sidelined in political party organisations, as it did people in general in these bodies – with anti-'racism' joining feminism in the new thrust of politics to fragment into related but 'single issue' campaigning — in the wake of the poor prospects for political-Left parties electorally after the 1970s. So the politics readily hit 'the pavement' where once it was mostly confined to universities.

The belief system was most apparent within the social work profession [McLaughlin 2005]. Political-Left-minded individuals seeking escape from work in commerce found not only a shelter in the burgeoning state, but a niche where they were able to act according to 'identity politics' principles. Social work became a locus of problematising social issues, most especially intimate-partner violence [PV], which was ripe for portraying as the supposed exemplification of male/female 'power' [sic] relations in the only portion of PV that anyone is concerned about – that by males against females. As PV in the female-to-male direction contributes significantly to undermining the neo-Marxist rationalisation of why 'the revolution' never materialised, then the occurrence and concept of 'non-gendered' [sic] PV had to be resolutely denied whatever the strength of the evidence. This is just as has been found to be the case [see eg, Dutton & Nichols 2005, Moxon 2011].

Facets of human psychology are fertile ground for this ideology to take hold and become entrenched. From the afore-mentioned biological principle that the female is the 'limiting factor' in reproduction: whereas she is treated as being privileged, prejudices evolved against the male through both the differential allocation of reproduction within male hierarchy [Moxon 2009] (and 'policing' associated with this) and, obviously, the close scrutiny of males by females to exclude most males in their mate choices. Making still more plausible the political developments here outlined, is the male reluctance to reveal PV against them – discussed below. There is also the self-serving utility of the contemporary political-philosophical mindset in salving cognitive-dissonance (and providing within-group status gains, not least through driving in-group-/out-group competition), which further serves as reinforcement. All of this works on the level of implicit as well as or rather than explicit cognition, given that the stronger the motivation the more *implicit* we might expect to be the associated cognition [Di Conza et al 2006].

The ideology of 'identity politics' was so readily accepted not least because it is a recapitulation of ideation from Christianity, where the future is deemed inevitable in ending in 'the promised land'. Social development is taken to be teleological: as if 'pulled' towards a 'utopia'(/'dystopia') of



equality-of-outcome. This is a secular religion, transferring the notion of a 'god' from being in man's image, via the humanistic deification of mankind, to worship of a supposed mechanism of social development, which is in no way scientific; merely an assumption that it is akin to a mode of reasoning – the 'dialectic'. After Rousseau, the individual is taken to be in essence 'good', but contaminated by 'capitalism'. This contamination is regarded as superficial yet irredeemable without the assistance of the ideology. That all this is very much a residue of Christian thinking is outlined at length by the philosopher John Gray [Gray 2007], who cites (neo-)Marxism as being the apotheosis of humanist political-philosophies, which all spring from an ostensible opposition to religion, that actually itself is a still more entrenched religiosity. This new quasi-religion seems to be as pathological as the closely related former quasi-religious 'revisionist' Marxisms as espoused by Stalin and Hitler (see below). Bukovsky [2009] warns that just as the ideological progenitor of (what he terms) 'political correctness' imprisoned him as a Soviet dissident simply for not being an active supporter, so it will be in the 'West'; the ideology building unstopably from excess to ever greater excess as adherents to the ideology refuse ever to admit they are wrong.

In sum, it is no surprise that what began as a desperate rearguard notion in academic political-Left circles to attempt to save face, has evolved over many decades into a mainstream 'given', with supporting notions, such as the previously prevailing theory of intimate-partner violence, resolutely data-proof. This is notwithstanding 'identity politics' notions as to who is 'oppressed' / 'disadvantaged' and why, having no objective plausibility and being deeply at odds with perennial common-sense from any vantage outside of the ideology itself.

With the long development of 'identity politics' over almost a century, its origin had been lost sight of, and some commentators still lazily assume it arose in the wake of well-intentioned championing of women, ethnic minorities and gays; rather than this championing being instrumental in attacking 'the workers'. Others imagine that it is merely some result of the experience of modernity; but this is merely to cite symptoms of the cynicism behind which 'identity politics' plays no small part. Commonly credited is post-colonial guilt, even though this hardly squares with the emergence of 'identity politics' initially in the USA rather than in the ex-colonial power that is England, nor the centrality of women rather than or alongside ethnicity; and in any case it would be a moral sensibility rather too rarefied to account for the emotive intensity of the politics. Also suggested is an absence of meaning [Furedi 2013], as if this had not been a major issue at the time of Marx and before; or simply a feeling of anonymity [Calhoun 1994], which, again, does not explain the fervency of the politics when a more resigned or a diffuse political stance would be expected, as in 'existentialism'.

Based on his mistaken analysis, Calhoun argues retrospectively that nationalist movements should be subsumed under the 'identity politics' umbrella, and that therefore 'identity politics' is nothing new; but nationalism could not better exemplify the politics of 'commonality'. Nationalist movements both contemporary and historical are instances of perennial assertions of in-grouping at the most obvious fully autonomous level of social organisation. This reality was the basis of the early-20th century nationalist revolutions as pragmatic modifications of Marxian 'internationalism'. As such they do share roots with 'identity politics' in that this too is a pragmatic modification of Marxian 'theory'. Indeed, on this basis, 'identity politics' or 'political correctness' could be dubbed 'fascist', as a use of that label to better reflect what actually it is. Stalin engineered "socialism in one country" for Russia in the 1920s to try to keep at bay the rest of Europe in the wake of the failure

there of early attempts at 'proletarian' revolt. This exactly paralleled the shift in position by Mussolini (who was the editor of the newspaper of the Italian socialists) a few years before, at the outbreak of World War One, in asserting the Italian 'proletariat' against that of the Austro-Hungarian empire, which it was feared was intent on swallowing Italy. 'Fascism' was 'national socialism', as explicitly labelled in the German copying of the Italian model: a Marxian splintering, not a political-Right manifestation. Revolution overthrowing elites in favour (ostensibly) of the masses was hardly any form of conservatism – and neither was 'fascism' 'racist': the 'racism' of the Nazis was bolted on as an historically deep-rooted aberration peculiar to Germany, which was not shared by Italy. That 'fascism' is the bogeyman of Marxism/socialism is through the former being derived from the latter, leaving little to distinguish them, which on the political-Left famously leads to fierce internecine conflict. All nationalism – whether emerging as a bastardisation of Marxist 'theory' or otherwise – clearly is in essence a politics of commonality, whereas 'identity politics' concerns sub-division of society into abstract categories to constitute faux 'groups' in supposed opposition to the 'group' with 'power'.

There has been wide discussion within academia that it is difficult to understand the nature of 'identity politics', but this is as would be expected of a system of thought which is not what it purports to be. Calhoun [1994 p29] reveals 'identity politics' to only ostensibly concern actual 'oppression' / 'disadvantage', when he asks: "... rather than being surprised by the prevalence of identity politics and seeking to explain it, should we not consider whether it is more remarkable and at least as much in need of explanation that many people fail to take up projects of transforming shared identities or the treatment afforded them?" The reason is that the identities in 'identity politics' do not arise within 'groups' themselves but are conferred according to what can be posited in opposition to 'the workers'. Thus are ignored actually 'oppressed' and 'disadvantaged' categories wholly or mainly comprising males, whilst included are those not in reality comprising the 'oppressed' and 'disadvantaged'; and inasmuch as 'groups' in any way are, as they purport, indeed 'oppressed' and 'disadvantaged', this is overturned either through being stretched in their inclusiveness beyond credulity (as with 'ethnic minority') or narrowed to the point of absurdity (as with the minuscule minority that is trans-sexual).

Another window on 'identity politics' as being not what it seems is a fatal contradiction that is the major criticism in academic discourse today, highlighted by many, perhaps first by Gitlin [1994]: "For all the talk about the social construction of knowledge, identity politics de facto seems to slide towards the premise that social groups have essential identities. At the outer limit, those who set out to explode a fixed definition of humanity end by fixing their definitions of blacks and women". The paradox is that the insistent political demand that all individuals are the same – not least so as to establish entitlement to equal treatment – itself negates the very purported *non*-equivalence that supposedly establishes any need that there may be for redress in the first place. And if instead it is held that there *are* major differences – as those on the 'essentialist' side of the debate contend — then equality would be better realised not by providing treatments that are the same, but by ones that are accordingly different. Yet, the firm belief that all is socially constructed pretends no difference that is not an arbitrary and merely temporary playing out of 'power' interactions, which equal treatment is intended (supposedly in time) to nullify. The circle of 'reasoning' is vicious. The feminist core of 'identity politics' is a mess of self-contradiction in just this manner: simultaneously holding that women and men are quintessentially different whilst insisting that they are exactly the same. Recognised generally by theorists of feminism as a serious and seemingly intractable problem, it is

the source of long-standing internecine fractious debate showing little sign of diminishing.

These distinct absences of internal consistency in the 'theory' are the direct consequence of its origination and development as an attempt to hide uncomfortable truths within academic political-Left politics; not to address issues in the real world. That it is hopelessly contradictory is beside the point to the ideologues, who rely on the contradictions to keep their juggled clubs in the air; but the lack even of internal (let alone external) consistency is a confirmation of the non-sustainability of 'identity politics' 'theory', contributing surely to its eventual demise. Yet there is the distinct possibility that this may not arrive until after 'identity politics' (or however else it is tagged, and whatever else to which it morphs) has grown unstopably to become yet another recapitulation of 'the terror'. The totalitarianism continues to ratchet upwards. 'Identity politics' is now so entrenched across 'Western' society that it has a life of its own well beyond the latter-day now quite intense critique of it from within the academia that spawned it. Such critique does not, however, extend to uncovering the actual origin and function of the ideology, indicating that this is just another phase in the endless attempted face-saving by the political-Left intelligentsia.

Underlying the more proximal explanations of 'identity politics' and 'postmodernism', ultimately are the wellsprings of politics in general: what might be termed 'competitive altruism' masking perennial universal status-striving. Bidding for social pre-eminence is a combination of trying to acquire rank within society and also to be part of a pre-eminent in-group – one that is almost as separate from society as it is at its apex. Elitist-separatism. Implicitly (that is, beneath any conscious awareness, or in only dim awareness) this is what the political-Left foundationally, if unwittingly, is concerned with achieving. Through the ideological conceptualising of society in terms of cooperation, with any competition considered aberrational, those with a political-Left ethos are left peculiarly blind to their own competitiveness. Indeed, their ideology is very much a displaced expression of it, and explains the peculiarly vehement bigotry of its adherents, and why supposed 'proletarian' revolution invariably produced a tyranny, and one that is actually directed towards the 'proletariat', not by it. The politics espoused of egalitarianism is a competitive-altruistic feint to assist the otherwise standard status-grab. Functioning to deny the legitimacy of any rival elitist-separatists and their ethos, it dupes not only others aspiring though as yet failing to be part of an elite, but precludes even self-awareness of their own elitist-separatist aspirations by political-Left adherents themselves. It is in respect of this, ultimately, that are deployed the intense and protracted attempts to salve cognitive-dissonance so prominent a part of political-Left experience. The great paradox here is that in their strident efforts somehow to transcend human nature, the political-Left confirm its reality. Any such philosophically illiterate notion that we can ever 'transcend' ourselves is unlikely again to so easily hold sway, given the insulation to such a self-evidently foolish idea the political-Left in the end inadvertently looks set to gift us. A related, supreme irony is that the very charge made against 'the workers' of a psychological dysfunctionality in supposedly not being able to see what is in their own best interests, boomerangs back on political-Left adherents as actually *their* myopia in respect of the psychology of their own ethos. It is not that Neo-Marxism/ 'identity politics'/ 'political correctness'/ 'postmodernism' is an altruism that is in fact disguised self-interest: it's nothing of the sort. In the service of its own ends, the political-Left ethos adopted a deception designed to fail to identify the actually 'disadvantaged' / 'oppressed', expressly so as to make their condition still worse, as a form of revenge on those regarded as ungrateful for past efforts on their behalf (though not that anyway these efforts were other than 'competitive altruism'). It is hard to think of a political fraud as

great (as deep, wide, successful and sustained) as this in history, or even to devise one in mischievous imagination.

To return now, after a long detour, to PV, it should be obvious why the long detour was necessary. It is only with the nature of the ideology underpinning the non-scientific 'gender paradigm' model having been fully outlined that it can be seen why there has been and continues to be systematic serious misrepresentation of the topic and that it is so deeply entrenched. Being anyway in sync with perennial and ubiquitous pro-female/anti-male prejudices, it is fully to be anticipated that even data showing clear separation between the sexes in the female-on-male direction in the propensity to perpetrate PV is not going to end the misrepresentation that PV is a wholly or predominantly 'patriarchal' [*sic*] phenomenon. As previously outlined [Moxon 2011], the feminism-based 'theory' shifts to try – pretend – to accommodate findings, but never more than as a re-hash of the same notions of 'patriarchy' [*sic*], to go round in circles to posit notions already debunked. It has been hypothesised that female-perpetrated PV is unlike that by the male in being self-defence; then, when this didn't square with data, 'expressive' versus 'instrumental'. This gave way to a simple re-assertion of 'non-patriarchy' [*sic*] versus 'patriarchy' [*sic*] – despite there being no cogent theory of 'patriarchy' [*sic*], nor of a 'power' [*sic*] relation between the sexes [Moxon 2012] – in a still blunter guise: 'violent resistance' versus 'intimate terrorism'. All have been easily discredited by research directly investigating the claims, which in any case were contrary to pre-existing data that had been simply ignored. Moving further towards an unfalsifiability, the last resort of the ideologues is the notion that there is some essence peculiar to female experience of PV, of a supposed special fear and/or a special impact (notably of that reliable stand-by for victim-stancing, PTSD); but the data in no way supports either contention [see the brief review in Moxon 2011]. In addition, the ideological 'researchers' employ a variety of underhand ruses in breach of the most elementary standards and ethics in science to suppress evidence. As well as deliberate misuse of statistics [as highlighted by Graham-Kevan 2007], there is: simply not citing studies which include data on female perpetration; harassing, threatening or penalising researchers; obstructing publication; forming conclusions that do not reflect results; and not conducting studies the results of which might contradict a 'patriarchal' [*sic*] model [Straus 2007]. A case in point re this last is the complete absence of research into male restraint of (attempted) female PV – an unsurprising lacuna in the field, given that it likely accounts for a large part if not the bulk of what is taken to be male-perpetrated PV.

To distinguish from the ideological line of PV being a 'gendered' (male-perpetrated) phenomenon, researchers have felt obliged to use the label 'non-gendered' [*sic*], or 'sex-symmetrical'. It may be that the use of these terms is an attempt to avoid political battle, but, a forlorn hope that this would be in any case, taking sex out of the topic is hardly much less likely to spark extreme-feminist ire than is to point to greater female perpetration. Whilst these terms understandably are used to usefully point up a distinction, it does not accurately depict the reality, which, researchers in their conclusions concerning female PV perpetration, better reveal with expressions such as 'at least as much as' or 'similar if not greater than' or 'as much or more than' male [eg, Fiebert 2010, Archer 2000, Dutton 2012]. Even where raw data exhibits only a low sex-differential or a near sex-symmetry, researchers have long been very well aware of *the* major confound in the PV field distorting data to greatly under-count male victimisation / female perpetration.

This is the far lower rate of male reporting of their own victimisation in respect of the kind

of incidents females readily report. Within the same couples, self-report of PV victimisation by the males is less than half the self-report of perpetration by the females; whereas for perpetration the reporting disparities reverse [Stets & Straus 1990]. Males sustaining PV typically do not consider themselves to be victims, and nor do men view an assault on them by a woman as a crime; and consequently fail to report victimization [Straus & Gelles 1992]. Males fully intuit that there is a real prejudice against them and in favour of women when it comes to PV. In an hypothetical PV scenario, when the victim is male, observer participants (both male and female) view the situation as less serious, with the victim as more responsible, and are more likely to ignore the situation [Sylaska & Walters 2014]; and in a similar study, women observers of PV scenarios prejudicially attribute perpetration to males much more than to females [Rhatigan, Stewart & Moore 2011]. Men fear stigma and ridicule, realise that they are unlikely to be believed, if not mistakenly arrested on the presumption of being not the victim but the perpetrator; and in general have objective good reason to fear unfair treatment in the criminal justice response at various junctures [Shernock & Russell 2012]. The most important consideration of all is that males strenuously avoid being ascribed victim status because this completely negates their efforts to acquire rank and consequent sexual access. So strong is the effect of male under-reporting that even in anonymous survey designed to avoid evoking the various reasons males have for non-reporting (eliminating 'demand characteristics'), nevertheless males still under-report [Archer 1999]. Together, these factors underpin far lower reporting to police by males (by a sex-differential factor of three according to the (UK) 2012/13 Crime Survey [ONS 2014], or up to ten [Stets & Straus 1990]); yet consistently the Home Office in the UK records that 40% of PV victims are male [eg Thomson 2010].

Notwithstanding the serious problem of male under-reporting, recent data nonetheless has revealed substantial predominance of female perpetration. Women show a threefold greater propensity to strike a partner in a hypothetical provocation scenario, and almost every woman in the sample (96%) expected no disapproval should they do so (compared to just 24% of the men) [Bartholomew et al 2013]. The female is twice as likely to initiate in reciprocal PV, and three times as likely in non-reciprocal PV [Whitaker et al 2007]; replicating previous studies/reviews of a sex-differential in unilateral PV of at least twofold [Williams et al 2001, Anderson 2002, Ehrensaft & Vivian 1999], rising with the seriousness of the violence to fully threefold [Stets & Straus 1990] or sixfold [Magdol et al 1997]. Looking at all studies examining unidirectional PV, it is always more by women in all sample types bar police reports [Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Selwyn & Rohling 2012], which last are invariably highly biased against male reporting (as above-discussed) – and correspondingly biased in favour of female reporting: not least in facilitating false accusation ploys in custody and other disputes. Overall, pooled prevalence of rates of female perpetration are significantly greater than that by males [Desmarais et al 2012b], irrespective of the type of sample or study; consistent with previous reviews. The victimisation data by contrast, as would be expected because of male under-reporting, reflects still more profound methodological issues, being inconsistent *even as to direction* according to sample type and country, with a predominance of male victimisation in all studies investigating recent PV (over just the previous year, when it would be more easily recalled); and the data is of much greater variation (the full range, from 0% to 99%) [Desmarais et al 2012a].

Perhaps the best window on the actual extent of the large preponderance of female over male PV perpetration is the enormous disparity between recorded and predicted sex-differential rates of injury resulting from PV. Intuitively, in the shadow of the ideological 'gendered' misrepresentation of

PV, injury rates would be anticipated to be several-fold greater for women compared to men, yet they are roughly equivalent: parity [George 2003], a difference too small to be statistically significant [Carpaldi & Owen 2001], or a very small difference of less than a 3:2 ratio female:male [Archer 2000, Mirrlees-Black et al 1998]. Narrowing consideration to only serious injury, it might be expected that sex-difference widens still further, but the reality is if anything the opposite. Even without controlling for the usual major factor of male under-reporting, and anti-male recording biases, according to an analysis of US data there are substantially more *male* than female victims [Felson & Cares 2005]. In another major study, albeit that males are not in the majority they are 40% of the victims [Hoff 2012]. Yet the contradiction of intuition is nothing in comparison to the contradiction of objective prediction. This would take into account the factors of female body-frame and facial bone fragility – leading to much greater susceptibility to injury — and male far superior upper-body strength and throwing velocity – affording far more hitting power. Some of the contributory factors here translate from arithmetic (linear) to geometric (exponential) impact; for example, an addition of as much again in throwing velocity produces a quadrupling in punching power. These factors multiply together to tend to push a calculation of the anticipated sex-differential to as much as twenty-fold [Dixon 2012]. That is, women would sustain 95% of all the injuries, and that is even on the assumption only that that the sexes are equally responsible for PV; but on the ideologically-driven assumption of males perpetrating far more PV than females, then the disparity in injury rates would be predicted to be far in excess even of 20:1: to two orders-of-magnitude and more.

Not merely the only plausible but the only tenable way to account for the enormous disparity between the predicted and actual sex-differential in injury rates is that in reality PV overwhelmingly is perpetrated by women – whether through men ‘holding back’ in degree and type of physical aggression, if not ‘backing off’ altogether; and/or women exhibiting ‘no holds barred’ violence. This being the case, PV clearly would have to be regarded as a female-on-male phenomenon; the male-on-female direction being an aberration. With the difference in degree so extreme, then it would appear that only female-perpetrated PV should be considered aetiologically as PV per se, leaving the relatively insignificant amount of male ostensibly equivalent behaviour as likely displacement from a different mode of violence; presumably springing from aggression in male intra-sexual competitiveness.

If focus is moved beyond even serious injury to partner murder, then intuition would be that the sex-differential would polarise still further; not least through reinforcement by the ideological endless repetition in media that each week two women are killed by their partners. [For ease of distinguishing between the sexes, and in recognition that data is mostly of spousal murder, then reference to male and female partners will be as ‘husbands’ and ‘wives’, with the collective data termed ‘spousal’.] Again, however, this is wholly contradicted. The calculated predicted sex-differential is not greater than for injury, remaining at roughly 20:1 [Dixon 2012], and not only is there similarly almost no sex-differential in the recorded data – almost half of police-recorded spousal murder victims are men [Ferguson 2003] – but many or more likely *most* male victims are missing from the data, because of a combination of the hard-to-detect modes employed by wives and police recording conventions. Whereas husbands who murder their wives often do so without attempting to conceal the crime – not least in a fit of rage and/or in conjunction with suicide — this is much less the case for wives who murder their husbands, given female indirect aggression styles serving female goals to maintain the remainder of the family otherwise intact, posthumously funded by the husband’s assets.

As is well-known, wives tend to murder either by proxy – a lover, male friend, male relative or hired ‘hit-man’ — or by subterfuge (classically by disguised poisoning or contrived accident); in both cases in effect assisted by pro-female / anti-male prejudice allaying suspicion. The subterfuge often will be successful, but even when detected, the third-party cases are recorded either as being both perpetrated and instigated by the third-party male, or – and *even if the wife is found to be implicated* – as a ‘multiple-offender’ killing without reference to a wife (this in the USA) [Farrell 1999]. Thus is mariticide under-counted to the likely extent of a small fraction of what would be the actual total. The disjuncture between data and prediction in respect of partner-murder may be considered further widened by including PV-related suicide, at least some of which can be attributable to female partner’s violence/ abuse. Taking all PV-related deaths together, then even on the wholly inadequate official data, the total number of male deaths well exceeds that for females [Davis 2010].

There is a telling shadow of male-on-female PV that may be the best of all pictures of its reality or otherwise: the implicit (non-conscious) expectation women have of the likelihood of sustaining violence from males. There are two sources of evidence for this: the content of women’s nightmares and the persecutory delusions of female paranoid schizophrenics (and sufferers of other mental illnesses featuring abnormal ideation). Both provide major insight into what women have long evolved to fear. If PV was never a significant risk for women, then neither nightmares nor delusions would be expected to feature violent males. This is just what research into nightmares reveals [Schredl 2010]; and instead of malevolent familiar males, female persecutory delusions feature familiar *females* as ogres [Walston, David & Charlton 1998]. Male violence towards women – PV or otherwise – apparently was not salient to women as a meaningful threat throughout evolutionary history, indicating that it is not part of (normal) male nature.

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