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The Association Between Sex Ratio and Domestic Violence Against Women in New York State

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THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SEX RATIO AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN NEW YORK STATE

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INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence against women is a serious public health issue. Every year approximately ten million people face violence at the hands of a current or former intimate partner, with 85% of incidences being perpetrated against women. 72% of all murder-suicides involve an intimate partner, and 94% of the time, the victim is a woman. This study examined the association between sex ratio (the number of men to the number of women in a county) and rates of domestic violence committed against women in New York State.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Two conflicting theoretical predictions have been proposed: 1) when there are more males in a region, heterosexual males may use intimate partner violence as a means to control their mate or 2) when there are more males in a region, heterosexual females have greater bargaining power and males engage in behaviors that are more desirable to women.

METHODS

This study analyzed the rate of domestic violence incidents reported per 10,000 men in a given county compared to the sex ratio. The types of incidents analyzed were aggravated assault, simple assault, sex offenses, and the violation of a protection order.

My controlling variables were median household income, percent of people who obtained a high school degree or less, unemployment rate (ages 20-64), poverty rate (ages 18-64), and median household income (thousands). I conducted a backwards stepwise regression which included all my control variables and sex ratio.

Data was collected from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services and included female victims of intimate partner violence reported in 2017 by county. Population data was taken from the CDC Wonder Compressed Mortality Database. The controlling variables data was obtained from the United States Census Bureau American FactFinder Database.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The sex ratio and male-on-female intimate partner violence D’Alessio and Stolzenberg 2010 Supports Prediction 1 NIBRS for 134 cities in 24 states during 2005

RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unstandardized</th>
<th>Standardized</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Standard Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>232.578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Ratio</td>
<td>-157.310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income (thousands)</td>
<td>-0.594</td>
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</tbody>
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Domestic violence rates are calculated using the following equation:

Rate of domestic violence (per 10,000 men) =

232.578 – 157.310*sex_ratio – 0.594*median_income(thousands)

DISCUSSION

There are some limitations to researching sex ratio. First, the unit of analysis is at the population level, even though domestic violence occurs at the individual level. Second, there is not an even distribution of different sex ratios. New York State is heavily female-biased, with two thirds of the counties being female-biased. Thirdly, there is a self-selection bias of where to live. Evidence has shown that females are more likely to migrate to urban centers when living in economically depressed areas.

Limitations to studying domestic violence are that not all instances of violence are reported. I only analyzed incidents reported to law enforcement agencies.

FUTURE RESEARCH

I have collected data from the state of California in 2017 for reported domestic violence incidents by county. I will analyze the data in the same manner and compare these findings to New York State. I plan to find more data from other states to have a wider base of analysis.

REFERENCES

