

## The Gender of Violence (Kimmel, chapter 12)

Men commit most violence, but this fact doesn't enter into many news stories or analyses. The most violent people in the industrialized world are young American men.

Explanations that focus on hormones or evolutionary psychology don't take into account cross-cultural variations.

Kimmel sees gender inequality as a significant cause of violence. The less gendered differentiation between men and women, the less gendered violence there is.

Crime may be a way of doing gender: stickup for men and shoplifting from women. Girls' indirect aggression (e.g., gossip) is a consequence of gender inequality—girls aren't supposed to engage in the types of aggression that boys are.

Kimmel gives examples of how military decision-making may also be a result of doing gender.

“The United States has a long and bloody history of specifically gendered violence, in which both individual men and Americans as a nation have demonstrated and proved manhood.” Our “code of violence” is descended from ideas about “honor,” “reputation” and “respect.” Men aren't supposed to start fights, but are encouraged to retaliate disproportionately.

“Men learn that violence is an accepted form of communication between men, and between men and women.”

Rape is “the all-American crime,’ engaged in by normal all-American guys.” Survey show large percentages of men reporting they would commit rape if they knew they wouldn't be caught (or that they have already committed rape or coercive sex).

Rapists are “overconformists—exceptionally committed to a set of norms about masculinity that makes every encounter with every woman potentially, even inevitably, about sexual conquest, that turns every date into a contest, and that turns a deaf ear to what a woman might want because, after all, women aren't men's equals to begin with.”

Kimmel argues that rape is a result of feelings of entitlement (to women's bodies) and powerlessness (in the face of rejection by women). “Women's beauty is experienced by men as an act of aggression: it invades men's thoughts, elicits unwelcome feelings of desire and longing, makes men feel helpless, powerless, vulnerable.”

Kimmel argues that changing our images of masculinity can create a less violent society.