



Violence and Gender Reexamined (Law and Public Policy: Psychology and the Social Sciences)

Richard B. Felson

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This work challenges one of Western culture's most deeply-held assumptions: that violence against women is different from violence against men. Richard Felson argues that this type of violence is rarely the result of sexism or hatred against women and that sexism may actually inhibit violence against women. He cites research suggesting that the motives for violence against women are similar to the motives for violence against men: to control, to gain retribution, and to promote or defend self-image. These motives play a role in almost all violence, regardless of gender. Using a comparative method to determine how violence against women differs from violence against men, Felson illustrates not only that violence against women is less frequent than violence against men but also that our culture and legal system treat it more harshly. Contrary to the claims that the courts "blame the victim" in cases of violence against women, the author shows that the tradition of protection of women sometimes produces the opposite effect, and that it is due process and not sexism that makes, for instance, rape cases seem biased against women. The work seeks to encourage all readers to question preconceptions about gender and violence.

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