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Does your job make you guilty? Comparative analysis between the US and Nordic countries on the influence of gender roles in perceived guilt and sentencing outcomes

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Abstract

Despite a global increase in gender equality, intimate partner violence (IPV) still plagues all nations. Moreover, IPV is still a heavily stereotyped crime where women are victims and men are perpetrators. Due to the gendered nature of IPV, information that either conforms or deviates from gender expectations can change the perceptions of perpetrators and victims of IPV. The present study investigated the potential influence of implicit gender bias through gendered occupations on intimate partner homicides. Participants ($N = 173$) read four vignettes that detailed two intimate partner homicides where a man killed a woman and two “regular” homicides where a man killed another man. Then, they rated how guilty they perceived the defendant, what punishment they believed he deserved, what punishment they believed he would receive in a real court, and if they believe that punishment was fair. The results show that defendants with feminine-coded occupations were seen as more guilty and given harsher sentences in regular homicides than defendants with masculine or neutral-coded occupations. Nordic participants viewed defendants as more guilty and gave them harsher punishments than American participants in general. Finally, women gave defendants harsher punishments and viewed defendants in intimate partner homicides as more guilty than men. Results imply the potential that subtle information regarding gender roles may be influential in judgement and decision-making processes within legal contexts. Future studies should further examine the potential for gender stereotyped traits to influence perceptions and judgements in criminal cases.

Keywords: IPV, gender stereotypes, gender roles, implicit bias, criminal justice

Does your job make you guilty? Comparative analysis between the US and Nordic countries on the influence of gender roles in perceived guilt and sentencing outcomes

Despite the numerous developments within gender equality and criminal justice, intimate partner violence continues to plague nations around the world. Intimate partner violence (IPV) describes sexual, physical, and emotional abuse which is perpetrated by one's spouse or partner (World Health Organization, 2012). In the United States, 15% of all violent crime stems from intimate partner violence (Black et al., 2011). Even in societies that have more gender equality (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2018) and less crime (Lappi-Seppälä & Tonry, 2011) struggle with IPV. Nordic countries are often propped up as models for other nations to emulate in relation to their policies and culture around equality, criminal justice, education, wellbeing, and a myriad of other things (Stende, 2017).

Despite Nordic countries having lower crime rates (Lappi-Seppälä & Tonry, 2011) and high gender equality (OECD, 2018), their rates of IPV are often higher than other EU nations (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights [FRA], 2014). Moreover, IPV has a massive effect on society both on individual health and creating economic consequences (Campbell, 2002; Peterson et al., 2018). Individuals who experience IPV often suffer from numerous injuries and can develop chronic pain as well as various mental health issues such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (Campbell, 2002; Devries et al., 2013). Due to frequent abuse, victims of IPV regularly miss work and seek professional medical treatment which has an economic toll costing trillions of dollars (Peterson et al., 2018; Rothman et al., 2007). However, one of the worst outcomes of IPV is the escalation of violence into homicide. Globally, it is estimated that of all homicides against women, 38.6% were committed by a woman's intimate partner (Stöckl et al., 2013). With the prominence and the

detrimental effects of IPV, it is critical to understand the various factors which influence perceptions of perpetrators and ultimately the potential for justice.

IPV is often considered to be a gendered form of violence where men control their partners as an extension of the patriarchy (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Walby & Towers, 2018). Due to the framework which portrays IPV as inherently patriarchal, male victims and female perpetrators are often not considered (Douglas & Hines, 2011). Furthermore, the inherent gendering of IPV creates biases surrounding who can be victims and who are perpetrators (Bates et al., 2019). Likewise, information that contradicts common stereotypes of IPV can have dire consequences such as victim-blaming and people perceiving perpetrators as innocent. As there is evidence that gender incongruent information can influence perceptions and decision-making in various forms of gendered violence, I seek to investigate the relationship between gender, implicit bias, and gendered violence through more subtle forms of gender roles.

Gender and Gender Roles

Gender remains one of the most important factors that influence perception, judgement, and decision-making. Societies' conception of gender, gender roles, and gender stereotypes continue to be informed by gender essentialism (Prentice & Miller, 2006). Gender essentialism describes the belief that the differences between men and women are inherent, biological, and constant rather than stemming from environmental factors (Smiler & Gelman, 2008). Gender essentialism has been widely criticized for being inaccurate (Joel et al., 2015; Joel, 2012), but the belief in inherent differences between genders remains, whether explicit or implicit (Edison & Coley, 2014). Essentialist beliefs can be seen in what traits have been deemed masculine and what traits have been deemed feminine.

Masculinity and femininity are core concepts which are intertwined with gender roles and gender essentialist rhetoric. A gender role describes the behaviors, attitudes, and traits for a specific gender as well as defining masculinity and femininity within a culture (Amanatullah

& Morris, 2010). Masculinity is often conceptualized through hegemonic masculinity where men should be physically strong, emotionally stoic, successful, and in control (Connell, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity can be understood as the desired masculinity of society and therefore of individuals (Connell, 2005). Femininity, on the other hand, is often conceptualized as an “other” to masculinity (Connell, 1987). However, more modern analyses conceptualize femininity as complementary to masculinity with traits such as being compliant, physically weak, emotionally intelligent, and nurturing (Schippers, 2007). Masculinity and femininity are ultimately based on cultural and historical context (Dellinger, 2004; Schippers, 2007), so these conceptualizations of masculinity and femininity are from primarily white, Western spheres of influence (Schippers, 2007). While gender roles are heavily based on context (Dellinger, 2004), there remains gender essentialist rhetoric in the justifications of these roles.

One gender role which often is essentialized is occupation. For example, gender essentialism argues that women are best suited to childcare since women are supposed to be biologically more inclined to rear children (Park et al., 2015). Due to the stereotyping of women as inherently more nurturing and subordinate, many occupations for women historically fit these traits. The idea that these occupations are “woman’s work” continues into modern times as can be seen in the nursing profession. Men in the nursing field are either stereotyped as incompetent for failing to be the “right” gender for the occupation or have their gender and sexuality called into question, therefore essentially attempting to “reassign” their gender to woman (Clarke & Arnold, 2018; Juliff et al., 2016; Stott, 2007; Zamanzadeh et al., 2013). The ridged structure which gender encompasses under gender essentialist thinking does not allow for deviations to the norm. The beliefs and reactions to people who either conform or deviate from their expected gender norms can have serious consequences (Ahola, Hellström & Christianson, 2010; Miller & Grollman, 2015; Zhao & Rogalin, 2017).

Implicit Bias and Gendered Violence

While every criminal justice system is built upon the premise of objectivity, implicit biases often influence judgment and decision-making. Implicit bias describes automatic and unconscious associations towards a specific social group (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006; Schneider & Shiffrin, 1977; Vuletic & Payne, 2019). Implicit bias continues to be prevalent despite numerous attempts to address prejudicial thinking (Cameron et al., 2012). People internalize countless biases as children (Pirchio et al., 2018) and maintain those biases into adulthood (Baron & Banaji, 2006). The various beliefs that people internalize come from cultural and historical contexts (Fiske, 2017). Being a member of the same group does not prevent judgement either, as people can be negatively biased towards their own social group (McKinnon & O'Connell, 2020). Even word choice alone can trigger biases and influence peoples' perception (Ashford et al., 2018). Due to the varied nature of implicit bias, there are numerous possible consequences for being biased.

The judgements and ultimately the decisions that people make are informed by implicit bias. The prejudicial thinking that stems from implicit bias often culminates into discrimination (FitzGerald et al., 2019). For instance, across gender, age, ethnicity, and nationality, the idea that women are less brilliant than men persists (Storage et al., 2020). The underlying belief that women are less intelligent is one of many explanations for the underrepresentation of women within careers that are built upon intellectual abilities (Bian et al., 2018). Likewise, people of color often have worse health than their White counterparts, which may be attributed to healthcare professionals' implicit biases and discriminatory behavior (FitzGerald & Hurst, 2017). Discrimination has various psychological and medical consequences (Hackett et al., 2020; Williams et al., 2019), but discrimination within criminal justice systems can be fundamentally life-altering.

Criminal justice systems are built upon the premise of scientific fact and objectivity to attain justice. Despite these ambitions, implicit bias continues to exist societally and thus within criminal justice systems. A meta-analysis examining 272 studies found that there are

various defendant characteristics that were associated with guilty judgements (Devine & Caughlin, 2014). One of those characteristics was gender. Gender roles incorporate various traits and behaviors which means that conformity to or deviation from those traits and behaviors can have various outcomes. For instance, people who upheld traditional gender roles through appearance such as women having long hair, women wearing makeup, and men maintaining a beard were viewed more positively in criminal cases (Ahola, Hellström & Christianson, 2010). Sometimes breaking gender roles can be rewarded. Men who had more emotional displays of distress received more lenient sentencing, but women who displayed the same emotions did not (Zhao & Rogalin, 2017). However, some implicit biases are related to the crime themselves rather than the individual involved. There are many unconscious beliefs surrounding gendered violence.

Gendered violence describes violence that disproportionately affects a specific gender (FRA, 2014). There are various forms of gendered violence including forced marriage, female genital mutilation, sexual harassment, online violence, and IPV (FRA, 2014). While IPV at its core describes violence between two people with an intimate relationship, the crime is viewed as heavily gendered (Walby & Towers, 2018). To clarify, men make up the majority of homicide victims worldwide, but women are the majority of homicide victims perpetrated within the home (UNODC, 2021). As such, the most common stereotype about IPV is that women are always the victims and men are always the perpetrators (Walby & Towers, 2018). However, it is estimated that 3.4% to 20.3% of men have experienced IPV (Kolbe & Büttner, 2020).

The perceptions of gendered violence are mostly based on scientific facts, but the inability to acknowledge the deviations from the stereotype is damaging. Women are often portrayed as perpetual victims, but in situations where men are the victims of IPV, the perpetrators are often women (Douglas & Hines, 2011). The stereotypical perception of women being the sole victims of IPV also means that men who have survived IPV often

struggle to receive support from official systems created to provide support to survivors (Douglas & Hines, 2011). Moreover, IPV perpetrated by men is often perceived as more coercive than IPV perpetrated by women (Hamel et al., 2007). Likewise, IPV between gay and lesbian couples is often deemed as less serious than between heterosexual couples (Russell et al., 2015). The conceptualization of IPV as an extension of patriarchal control (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Walby & Towers, 2018) erases the fact that IPV is ultimately a method of control and power that can be exercised by anyone on anyone (Stewart et al., 2021). The stereotype of IPV reflects a clear gender bias which has detrimental effects on victims and their ability to gain justice due to biased thinking.

Present Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between gendered occupations and people's judgment and decision-making in situations involving gendered violence. There is a plethora of literature examining the complicated relationship between gender bias and the criminal justice system (Bolger & Lytle, 2018; Bontrager et al., 2013; Cox et al., 2022), but these studies have neglected to examine the way in which gender stereotyped occupations may influence the decision-makers within the criminal justice system as well as the role of gendered violence. If a defendant being employed within a gendered field influences decision-making, there would be tremendous implications as to what information should be mentioned in criminal cases. Moreover, the present study investigates male victimization due to both its prevalence (Kolbe & Büttner, 2020) and underrepresentation in IPV research (Scott-Storey et al., 2023). To further understand the influence of gender stereotypes on judgement and decision-making and the importance of considering the gendered nature of violence, this study aims to investigate how gender stereotyped occupations influences perceptions of guilt and sentencing within intimate partner homicides (IPH) and "regular" homicides (RH). The hypotheses:

- Participants with the masculine occupation will perceive defendants as more guilty and give harsher punishments than participants with neutral or feminine occupations.
- Participants with feminine occupations will perceive defendants as less guilty and give softer punishments than participants with neutral or masculine occupations.
- Gendered occupations will have more influence on the IPH scenarios than the RH scenarios. Participants will give defendants in IPH scenarios harsher punishments and perceive them as more guilty than defendants in the RH condition.
- Female participants will give defendants in IPH scenarios harsher punishments and perceive them as more guilty than male participants.
- There will be a smaller difference between perceived guilt and punishment between all occupations for Nordic participants than American participants.
- Nordic participants will give defendants in IPH scenarios softer punishments than American participants.

Method

Participants

From March 5th to April 4th of 2023, 231 people were recruited into the study. Participants for the present study were recruited through two methods: social media and the author's social circle. The social media sites ranged from Facebook, Reddit, and Survey Circle. Participants were only included in the sample if they were over 18 years old, were from either the United States or a Nordic country (Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Iceland), and completed the survey in its entirety. Based on these criteria, the final sample included 173 participants: 55 participants did not complete the study, one participant did not take the survey due to lack of consent, and one participant was under 18. Over half of the American participants (52.5%) came from Texas. The demographic makeup of the study can be found in Table 1.

Table 1*Demographic characteristics of participants*

Characteristics	<i>n</i>	%
Age		
18-24 years	35	20.2
25-34 years	60	34.7
35-44 years	22	12.7
45-54 years	24	13.9
55-64 years	23	13.3
65+ years	9	5.2
Gender		
Female	109	63.0
Male	53	30.6
Non-binary/third gender	8	4.6
Prefer not to say	1	0.6
Prefer to self-describe	2	1.2
Country of Origin		
Denmark	27	15.6
Finland	4	2.3
Iceland	0	0
Norway	5	2.9
Sweden	16	9.2
United States	121	69.9

Note. *N* = 173.**Materials**

For each vignette, participants indicated their perception of the defendant's guilt on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *not guilty of any crime*; 5 = *guilty of premeditated murder*). Then, participants indicated what punishment, if any, the defendant should receive from 7 options (1 = *No punishment (not guilty)*, 2 = *1-3 years*, 3 = *4-7 years*, 4 = *8-12 years*, 5 = *13-18 years*, 6 = *20+ years*, 7 = *Life sentence (imprisoned until death)*). Next, participants indicated what they believed the defendant would receive as a sentence within a real court with the same 7 options from before (no punishment to a life sentence). Finally, participants were asked whether they believed that the sentence that the defendant received in a real court was fair with 3 options (yes, no, unsure). After reading the four vignettes and answering these questions, participants were then asked how they believed the criminal justice system should

be run with 5 options and an option to explain their answer. For the final question, participants could choose from supporting restorative justice, supporting punitive justice, both regardless of the crime committed/criminal, both but dependent on the crime/criminal or unsure.

The survey was taken online through Qualtrics. Before participating in the present study, participants read and signed an informed consent document. Within the consent document, participants were informed about what the study entailed, how all their responses were confidential and that they would remain anonymous, and that participants could withdraw consent at any time without penalty. No incentives were offered for participation in the study. To ensure that participants were blind to the true hypothesis, participants were only informed that they were participating in a study researching perceptions about criminal justice. At no point in the study were participants informed that the occupation of the perpetrator was being manipulated across surveys. Moreover, participants were not informed that their own gender was a variable of interest. Keeping participants unaware of the research goals and hypotheses would reduce the likelihood that responses were influenced.

The participants first answered demographic questions. Then, participants read vignettes that detailed four altercations that ended in someone's death. Two of the vignettes detailed intimate partner homicides where the defendant was male, and the victim was female. The other two vignettes described a homicide between two men without being in a romantic relationship. In all four scenarios, the defendant recalls their side of the story and claim that the killing was in self-defense. Each vignette described a verbal altercation between two people that escalated into physical violence, before the defendant claims that they used deadly force to protect themselves.

Vignette 1. The first vignette described the claim of a man called Jacob. Jacob claims he came home from work only to be greeted by his upset girlfriend, Sophia. He claims that his girlfriend complained about the amount of time he spent outside of the house and eventually accused him of cheating. He denied cheating, but he claims his girlfriend pulled out a gun and

threaten his life regardless. Then, he claimed that he struggled with his girlfriend for the gun and eventually successfully took it from her. However, he then claims that Sofia got a knife from the kitchen and attacked him. Jacob ultimately claims he shot Sophia in self-defense as she attacked him with a knife.

Vignette 2. The second vignette described the claim of a man called Michael. Michael claims that he and his girlfriend, Anna, had been fighting for weeks until he decided to breakup with her one day after work. Then, he claims that Anna went into a fit of rage that ultimately made him decide to stay with a friend. Michael then claims that as he was packing Anna took a knife from the kitchen and threatened him to prevent him from leaving. The two of them fought over the knife and Michael claims that after he took the knife from her, she kept attacking him. Michael claims that he instinctively defended himself with the knife when she kept attacking him and killed her in self-defense.

Vignette 3. The third vignette described the claim of a man called Lucas. Lucas claims that he was helping his friend pay rent the last few months because his childhood best friend, Erik, lost his job. However, Lucas claims that instead of seeking a new job with the intent of paying him back, Erik used the money to live off and did not actually seek a new job. He claims that an argument broke out between the two of them and Erik attacked him. Lucas then claims that he got a knife from the kitchen and stabbed Erik in self-defense.

Vignette 4. The fourth vignette described the claim of a man called Peter. Peter claims that he got into a fight about sports in a bar. As the verbal fight got increasingly aggressive, the two of them went outside to avoid the hostile responses from other patrons of the bar. Peter claims that the other man became physically aggressive and pushed him. When Peter pushed back, that was when a fight broke out between the two. Peter claims that the other man grabbed a piece of wood and in defense, he grabbed an old pipe to protect himself. Peter claims he hit the other man with the intent of protecting himself and claims it was self-defense.

The vignettes themselves can be found in the Appendix. In each vignette, the defendant was assigned to one of three occupations. There were three levels of the occupation variable: masculine, neutral, and feminine. The occupations chosen for each level were based on data from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (2023). Occupations that were over 80% one gender were assigned to masculine or feminine while occupations around 50% gender split were used for the neutral condition. It was unnecessary to provide stereotypical descriptions of occupations as a job title alone is enough to trigger stereotypical thinking within people's minds (Basfirinci et al., 2019).

Each participant was randomly assigned to one level. All the vignettes were written so that it is possible to see the crime as either self-defense or murder depending on what the participant believes. After reading each vignette, participants answered 4 questions. First, they rated how guilty they perceived the defendant. Second, they chose what punishment they believed the defendant deserved. Then, they chose the punishment they believed a real court system would give the defendant. Finally, participants were asked whether they thought that the punishment that the defendant would receive in a real court case was fair. After the four scenarios, participants were then asked what they believed a criminal justice system should be geared towards and were given an option to write their reasoning. Afterwards, they were debriefed regarding what the original purpose and objective of the study was.

Data Analysis

The software Jamovi version 2.2.5 was used to analyze the data. It was hypothesized that masculine occupations would be perceived more negatively, and feminine occupations would be perceived more positively, so composite scores were created by adding all the responses together to create a mean score for each variable (perceived guilt and given punishment). Likewise, since it was hypothesized that gendered occupations would have a stronger influence on IPH scenarios over RH scenarios, composite scores were created by adding the responses of both IPH answers and RH answers into two separate scores.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics for study variables

Variable	Masculine			Feminine			Neutral		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
IPH Perceived Guilt	63	2.52	0.97	58	2.76	1.01	52	2.54	0.91
RH Perceived Guilt	63	2.91	0.94	58	3.23	0.90	52	2.94	1.05
All Perceived Guilt	63	2.72	0.82	58	3.00	0.79	52	2.74	0.83
IPH Punishment	63	2.34	1.20	58	2.54	1.23	52	2.60	1.26
RH Punishment	63	2.88	1.24	58	3.39	1.17	52	3.10	1.42
All Punishment	63	2.61	1.07	58	2.97	1.00	52	2.85	1.12

Note. $N = 173$ participants. The masculine/neutral/feminine refers to what gender-coded occupation participants had.

Defendant Occupation

To explore the impact of defendant occupation on perceptions of guilt and punishment, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVAs) was conducted with defendant occupation as the independent variable and the ratings of perceived guilt and given punishment as the two dependent variables. For perceived guilt across all scenarios, there was no significant effect of defendant occupation, $F(2, 112) = 2.14$, $p = .123$. For given punishment across all scenarios, there was no significant effect of defendant occupation $F(2, 111) = 1.70$, $p = .188$. The means and standard deviations can be found in Table 2.

Defendant Occupation and Type of Crime

To explore the impact of defendant occupation on perceptions of guilt and punishment, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVAs) was conducted with defendant occupation as the independent variable and the ratings of perceived guilt and given punishment for IPH and RH scenarios as the four dependent variables. For perceived guilt in IPH scenarios, there was no

significant effect of defendant occupation, $F(2, 112) = 1.02, p = .363$. For perceived guilt in RH scenarios, there was no significant effect of defendant occupation, $F(2, 110) = 2.10, p = .127$. For given punishment in IPH scenarios, there was no significant effect of defendant occupation, $F(2, 111) = 0.71, p = .493$. For given punishment in RH scenarios, there was a significant effect of defendant occupation, $F(2, 110) = 2.68, p = .07, \eta_p^2 = .03$. Defendants with feminine occupations were given significantly harsher punishments in RH scenarios than masculine or neutral occupations. The means and standard deviations can be found in Table 2.

Gender of Participant

Only participants who identified as either male or female were included in the analysis of participants gender resulting in a final total of 163 participants from the original 173 participants. To explore the impact of participant gender on perceptions of guilt and punishment, a mixed analysis of variance (ANOVAs) was conducted with participant gender as the independent variable and the ratings of perceived guilt and given punishment as the two dependent variables.

Perceived guilt. There was a significant main effect of type of crime, $F(1, 161) = 31.96, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .166$. Overall, participants perceived defendants in the RH scenarios as more guilty ($M = 3.05, SD = 0.96$) than defendants in the IPH scenarios ($M = 2.63, SD = 0.96$). There was no significant main effect of participant gender, $F(1, 161) = .454, p = .501$. There was a significant interaction effect between type of crime and participant gender, $F(1, 161) = 4.68, p = .032, \eta_p^2 = .028$. Women ($M = 2.67, SD = 0.95$) perceived defendants in IPH scenarios as more guilty than men ($M = 2.57, SD = 0.98$), but in RH scenarios men ($M = 3.23, SD = 1.00$) perceived defendants as more guilty than women ($M = 2.96, SD = 0.92$). The means and standard deviations can be found in Table 2.

Punishment. There was a significant main effect of type of crime, $F(1, 161) = 42.99, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .211$. Overall, participants gave harsher punishments to defendants in the RH scenarios ($M = 3.13, SD = 1.26$) than defendants in the IPH scenarios ($M = 2.49, SD = 1.21$).

There was a significant main effect of participant gender, $F(1, 161) = 4.99$, $p = .027$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. Women ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.12$) gave defendants harsher punishments than men ($M = 2.55$, $SD = 0.92$). There was no significant interaction effect between type of crime and participant gender, $F(1, 161) = 0.479$, $p = .426$. The means and standard deviations can be found in Table 2.

Nationality of Participant

Participants in Nordic countries were grouped together. There was a total of 173 participants with 121 American participants (70%) and 52 Nordic participants (30%). To explore the impact of participant nationality on perceptions of guilt and given punishment, a mixed analysis of variance (ANOVAs) was conducted with participant nationality as the independent variable and the ratings of perceived guilt and given punishment as the two dependent variables.

Perceived guilt. There was a significant main effect of type of crime, $F(1, 171) = 20.474$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .107$. Overall, participants perceived defendants in the RH scenarios as more guilty ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.97$) than defendants in the IPH scenarios ($M = 2.61$, $SD = 0.97$). There was a significant main effect of participant nationality, $F(1, 171) = 21.2$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$. Nordic participants ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.71$) perceived defendants as more guilty than American participants ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 0.80$). There was no significant interaction effect between type of crime and participant nationality, $F(1, 171) = 0.901$, $p = .344$. The means and standard deviations can be found in Table 2.

Punishment. There was a significant main effect of type of crime, $F(1, 171) = 35.206$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .171$. Overall, participants gave harsher punishments to defendants in the RH scenarios ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.28$) than defendants in the IPH scenarios ($M = 2.49$, $SD = 1.23$). There was a significant main effect of participant nationality, $F(1, 171) = 4.04$, $p = .046$, $\eta_p^2 = .023$. Nordic participants ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.99$) gave harsher punishments than American

participants ($M = 2.69$, $SD = 1.09$). There was no significant interaction effect between type of crime and participant nationality, $F(1, 171) = 0.166$, $p = .684$.

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of participant nationality and gendered occupation on perceived guilt. There was no statistically significant interaction between the effects of participant nationality and gendered occupation on perceived guilt, $F(2, 167) = 1.75$, $p = .178$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. While not statistically significant, there were larger mean differences between gendered occupations for Nordic participants but not American participants. Between masculine and neutral occupations for Nordic participants there was a mean difference of $-.47$ but for American participants the mean difference was $.16$. Between masculine and feminine occupations for Nordic participants there was a mean difference of $-.41$ but for American participants the mean difference was $-.08$.

Another two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of participant nationality and gendered occupation on given punishment. There was no statistically significant interaction between the effects of participant nationality and gendered occupation on given punishment, $F(1, 167) = .583$, $p = .559$, $\eta_p^2 = .007$. While not statistically significant, there were larger mean differences between gendered occupations for Nordic participants but not American participants. Between masculine and neutral occupations for Nordic participants there was a mean difference of $-.53$ but for American participants the mean difference was $-.13$. Between masculine and feminine occupations for Nordic participants there was a mean difference of $-.61$ but for American participants there was a mean difference of $-.16$.

Given Punishment vs Court Punishment

To explore participant views on their criminal justice system mixed analysis of variance (ANOVAs) was conducted. The differences between participants' own rated punishment and what they believed a court system would sentence the defendant between scenario types was examined as well as in general.

There was a significant main effect of general punishment, $F(1, 172) = 13.2, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .071$. Participants believed that a court system ($M = 3.04, SD = 1.26$) would give defendants harsher punishments than they personally rated ($M = 2.80, SD = 1.07$). There was a significant main effect IPH punishment, $F(1, 172) = 10.5, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .058$. Participants believed that a court system ($M = 2.77, SD = 1.45$) would give defendants harsher punishments than they personally rated ($M = 2.49, SD = 1.23$) in IPH scenarios. There was a significant main effect RH punishment, $F(1, 172) = 10.2, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .056$. Participants believed that a court system ($M = 3.32, SD = 1.40$) would give defendants harsher punishments than they personally rated ($M = 3.12, SD = 1.28$) in RH scenarios.

Views on Criminal Justice

The frequency of responses about what type of criminal justice system participants wanted can be found in Table 3. There were no Nordic participants who wanted to have a punitive/retributive criminal justice system.

Table 3

Frequency of preferred criminal justice system by country of origin

Type of Criminal Justice System	United States		Nordic	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Restorative	22	18.18	19	36.53
Depends on crime/criminal	75	61.98	19	36.53
Mixed regardless of crime/criminal	14	11.57	13	25.00
Punitive/Retributive	9	7.43	0	0
Unsure	1	0.83	1	1.92

Note. $N = 173$ participants, $N = 121$ American participants, $N = 52$ Nordic participants.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to further understand the relationship between implicit gender biases and judgement. The results of this study provide some potential evidence to the idea that gendered occupations may influence judgement and decision-making.

Gendered Occupations

First, it was hypothesized that participants would perceive defendants with masculine occupations as more guilty and give them harsher sentences. The results of the study provide counterevidence to that hypothesis as defendants with masculine occupations were usually seen as less guilty and given softer sentences than other gender-coded occupations. Adherence to masculine gender roles is often associated with more aggression and a higher risk of perpetrating IPV (Reidy et al., 2014; Santana et al., 2006). It is possible that defendants with masculine occupations were perceived as less transgressive and thus, participants were less surprised in their violence toward their partner. Another possibility is that participants disregarded the occupation information, either entirely or since it conformed to gender norms it did not factor into their decision-making.

Second, it was hypothesized that participants would perceive defendants with feminine occupations as less guilty and give them softer sentences. However, the results show that participants perceived defendants with feminine occupations as more guilty and gave them harsher punishments than their masculine or neutral counterparts. The present results support the notion that defendant characteristics may be important to jurors' judgement and decision-making (Devine & Caughlin, 2014). Men in traditionally feminine occupations are often perceived as wimpy and effeminate (Clarke & Arnold, 2018). It is possible that because these men are perceived as weak that people find them perpetrating violence to be more transgressive than men with masculine occupations. Therefore, men with feminine occupations were seen as guiltier and given harsher punishments in comparison to their masculine and neutral occupation counterparts. Future research should examine how men in traditionally feminine gender roles are perceived and judged in legal settings.

Third, it was hypothesized that gendered occupations would have more influence on IPH scenarios than on RH scenarios, which would be seen in more perceived guilt and harsher punishments. However, gendered occupations did not have a stronger influence on IPH scenarios in either perceived guilt or given punishment. There was no interaction between

gendered violence (IPH) and the gender-coded occupations. Participants gave harsher sentences to defendants in the RH scenarios, particularly for defendants with feminine occupations. Previous literature has found that the general public continues to be misinformed about IPV (Stewart et al., 2021) and that even professionals are ill-informed (Sprague et al., 2010). However, all four vignettes describe a self-defense claim by a defendant, but the fourth scenario may be harder to imagine being self-defense. The fourth scenario is discussed further in the limitations.

Criminal cases are fraught with information of varying importance, and people may be unaware of how meaningless facts about a defendant or victim could have influenced their perceptions. Future research should explore more avenues on how conforming to and deviating from gender roles influences perception and decision-making, especially regarding subtle conformity and deviation. While occupations stereotyped as masculine did not have any significant effects, feminine stereotyped occupations were important when participants evaluated the testimony in front of them.

Participant Gender and Nationality

It was hypothesized that women would find defendants in IPH scenarios more guilty and give them harsher punishments than men. Women did give harsher punishments to defendants in general than men, but the type of scenario did not matter. Women did view defendants in IPH scenarios as more guilty than men. Both these findings are consistent with previous literature where women view IPV as more severe than men (Martín-Fernández et al., 2022). On the other hand, these findings could also lend credence to the fact that male victimization is not seen as serious by women (Hamel et al., 2007) which may be related to the gender stereotypes surrounding IPV (Walby & Towers, 2018). In terms of future research, it would be useful to further examine the relationship between perceptions of male victimization in IPV and gender roles.

Then, it was hypothesized that gender occupations would have a smaller influence on Nordic participants than American participants. There was no significant difference between gendered occupations between Nordic and American participants. However, while not significant there were larger mean differences for perceived guilt and given punishment between Nordic participants than American participants. There were larger differences between masculine defendants and neutral/feminine defendants for Nordic participants than American participants. Perhaps Nordic participants took the defendant's background more into account when judging their testimony than Americans did. The criminal justice system in Nordic countries is based on the restorative model which focuses on rehabilitation, reconciliation, and reintegration (Menkel-Meadow, 2007). To account for all the facts in someone's case so they are given the correct sentence and to properly rehabilitate someone, a restorative system needs to consider their background. It is possible that Nordic participants were more mindful of the defendant's occupation than Americans because they considered the vignettes from a restorative approach.

Finally, it was hypothesized that Nordic participants would give defendants in IPH scenarios softer punishments than American participants. In contrast to the hypothesis, Nordic participants in general gave defendants harsher punishments than American participants, but the type of scenario did not matter. The present finding may be explained by the nature of criminality and criminal justice in Nordic nations. Nordic nations have statistically less crime than the United States (Lappi-Seppälä & Tonry, 2011), which may make violent crimes such as homicide more shocking/transgressive to Nordic participants than American participants. Another possibility is that self-defense is a less accepted defense in Nordic criminal courts than in US criminal courts (Brottsbalken, SFS 1962:700).

Strengths and Limitations

A strength of the study was that being conducted online allowed participants to take the survey at their own pace as well as access it anywhere they would like. However, some

participants did not complete the survey. Likewise, there is a risk that some participants did not take the survey seriously. Regarding the sample, a decent portion of the sample for the study stemmed from my own social circles. Research done with convenience sampling is not necessarily unreliable or invalid (Andrade, 2020). However, it may be important to note that my own social circles could have beliefs about gender roles and criminal justice that are biased in specific ways. However, the sample size of the study was not large enough to have the proper effect size. Moreover, most of the American sample was from Texas which may not be generalizable to the United States as a whole. Likewise, with a relatively small sample from Nordic countries, the responses may not be entirely representative of Nordic nations. Another limitation was the study being presented in English. While Nordic countries have high English literacy (EF English Proficiency Index, 2022), there can still be gaps in linguistic knowledge between native speakers and English as a second language speakers.

There are numerous possible reasons for the results of the present study. It is important that future studies examine other variables and their potential importance to the relationship between subtle gender roles, judgement, and decision-making. For instance, the present study focused primarily on the role of gender and nationality as variables of interest. It is possible that personality or political affiliation may be influencing factors. Furthermore, as IPV involves romantic relationships, defendant sexuality and participant sexuality may also have an influence on the results (Russell et al., 2015). While some conclusions may be drawn from the present results, those conclusions are ultimately limited.

A potential limitation of the study may be the use of scenarios. It is possible that scenarios are not an effective method for triggering these implicit biases. Future studies may benefit from testing through mock trials instead. However, vignettes are a widely utilized and an effective tool in various fields of research (Erfanian et al., 2020; Nygren & Oltedal, 2015). The present scenarios used were not tested prior to the study so there may be a more effective way to construct these scenarios. For instance, there is a possibility that there was a problem

with the way the fourth scenario was constructed. The fourth scenario in the study described the defendant getting involved in a barfight which ultimately escalates into a death. The scenario could have potentially skewed results regarding general perceptions of guilt and punishment without accounting for gendered occupation. Since the defendant willingly entered the barfight and assaulted another patron, some participants could have seen the claim of self-defense as less legitimate in relation to the other three scenarios where the defendant claimed to only escalate to violence in their own defense. However, since there was a significant difference in gendered occupation for the RH scenarios themselves (which the fourth scenario was part of) it should not be discounted entirely.

Conclusion

Despite the limitations of the study, the results lend credence to the potential that subtle gender roles, such as occupation, can influence judgement and decision-making. Defendants with feminine occupations were mostly seen as more guilty and given harsher punishments than defendants with masculine or neutral-coded occupations. The present study has advanced our understanding of implicit gender bias and gender roles in criminal settings. It may be important to note if a defendant is deviating from the gender stereotypes or gender roles of their respective gender as there could be consequences. Much work remains to be done to understand the extent to which gender-coded occupations can influence judgement and decision-making. Future research should further examine subtle gender roles such as occupation within various contexts including those outside of criminal cases.

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Appendix

Vignette 1

Jacob is a [construction worker/office worker/nurse]. When he returned home from the [construction site/office/hospital], Sophia was waiting in the kitchen. Jacob and Sophia had been in a relationship for just over two years. They started to argue about how much time he spends outside of the house. Their argument quickly escalated to the point where Sophia accused him of being out so late because he was cheating. Jacob vehemently denied cheating. Then, Jacob claims that Sophia pulled out gun and threatened to kill him. They struggled over the gun before Jacob ultimately took it from her hands. Sophia then grabbed a knife and rushed toward him. Jacob shot and killed Sophia. He claims he shot Sophia in self-defense.

Vignette 2

Michael has been [an engineer/journalist/florist] for over 15 years. He has been in a relationship with Anna for a couple of years. He claims that he had been arguing with his girlfriend for weeks. Ultimately, he claims that he decided to break up with Anna when he came home from work that day. Michael claims that Anna broke into a fit of rage. When it became apparent to Anna that Michael was not going to change his mind, she panicked when Michael stated he was going to leave and stay over at a friend's house. Michael claims that while he was packing some of his things, Anna took a knife from the kitchen and threatened him if he left. Michael claims that they struggled over the knife. Michael claims that Anna continued to attack him after he had taken the knife and instinctively defended himself against her. Anna ultimately died from the wounds she sustained.

Vignette 3

Lucas is a [truck driver/project manager/kindergarten teacher] who has been helping his friend pay his rent in the last few months. Lucas says that he helped Erik because they were best

friends as children. A few months ago, Erik lost his job and needed help keeping his apartment so he asked Lucas to help with rent until he could get another job. Once Erik got another job, he would pay Lucas back. However, Lucas claims that Erik did not actually seek to get another job but instead lived off the money he gave him. A big argument broke out at Lucas's house since he told Erik that he would no longer be paying his rent. Lucas claims that his refusal to pay Erik enraged him to the point where he attacked him. In the attack, Lucas claims that he grabbed a knife from the kitchen and stabbed Erik. Erik died from the stab wound. Lucas claims it was in self-defense.

Vignette 4

Peter went to a bar after working his job as [welder/photographer/hairdresser]. He wanted to relax after working all day and he decided to go to a different bar than usual. At the bar, Peter had some drinks and enjoyed watching a sports game with the rest of the people in the bar. However, Peter claims that he had gotten into a fight with another patron of the bar about sports. The argument increasingly became aggressive as the two refused to back down on their respective opinions. Eventually, Peter states that they went outside to argue since they had been getting hostile responses from other patrons of the bar. When they went outside, Peter claims that the other man became physically aggressive and started to push him. In response, Peter pushed him back. This led to a fight breaking out between the two. Peter claims that other man grabbed a piece of wood from a nearby trashcan, so he responded by grabbing an old pipe. Peter claims that when he hit the man with the pipe, he did not intend to kill him but rather prevent the man from hurting him.