

Law & Social Inquiry

Journal of the American Bar Foundation
Volume 27, Number 3, Summer 2002

The University of Chicago Press

Law & Social Inquiry

Journal of the American Bar Foundation

Dedicated to the Study of Law,

Legal Institutions, and Legal Processes

Published by The University of Chicago Press

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Law & Social Inquiry 2003 Graduate Student Paper Competition

The editors of *Law & Social Inquiry* are pleased to announce a competition for the best journal-length paper in the field of socio-legal studies written by a graduate student. The winning paper will be published in *Law & Social Inquiry*, and the author will receive a cash prize of \$500. Submissions will be judged by the editorial board, and the winning submission will be internally reviewed for publication. The author must be a graduate student or law student at the time of submission. Entries should be received by March 1, 2003. The winner will be selected by May 1 and the prize will be awarded at the annual meeting of the Law and Society Association.

Law & Social Inquiry publishes both empirical and theoretical studies of sociolegal processes from a variety of disciplinary perspectives.

Please send your best work to:

The Editors, *Law & Social Inquiry*, American Bar Foundation, 750 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60611. For further information send e-mail to lsi-abf@abfn.org, or call (312) 988-6517.

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The American Bar Foundation (ABF) is an independent research institute committed to sociolegal research. Consistent with its mandate to create and disseminate knowledge about law, the legal profession, and legal institutions, and individuals' interactions with legal systems, *Law & Social Inquiry: Journal of the American Bar Foundation* invites the submission of manuscripts that make original contributions to the understanding of sociolegal processes. *Law & Social Inquiry* publishes both empirical analyses and theoretical studies from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. The analyses, conclusions, and opinions presented in *Law & Social Inquiry* are those of the authors alone.

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Law & Social Inquiry does not accept multiply submitted articles. The Editors endeavor to make decisions promptly, usually about three months after submission.

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Annual U.S. subscription rates:

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Individual	\$39	\$71.75	\$99.45
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Single copies: \$21.00 for institutions, \$13.75 for individuals. Checks should be made payable to *Law & Social Inquiry*, University of Chicago Press, Journals Division, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, Illinois 60637. (Fax: 773-753-0811; E-mail: subscriptions@press.uchicago.edu) Volumes 1-12 available from William S. Hein & Co., Inc., 1285 Main Street, Buffalo, New York 14209. (800) 828-7571.

Volumes available in microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

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Law & Social Inquiry: Journal of the American Bar Foundation (ISSN: 0897-6546) is published quarterly—winter, spring, summer, and fall—by The University of Chicago Press, 1427 S. 60th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637-2954. Subscription agent for Japan: Kinokuniya Company, Ltd. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, Illinois and at additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: *Law & Social Inquiry*, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, IL 60637.

The 2002 LSI Graduate Student Paper Prize

In this imaginative, innovative paper, Wendie Ellen Schneider explores the consequences of seeking truth in legal settings. She studies the activities of the Queen's Proctor, the government official assigned to detect collusion in divorce cases in late nineteenth-century Britain. It turns out that late Victorian Britons wishing to escape disagreeable marriages regularly resorted to inventing respectable tales to explain the breakups of their unions. They knew, however, that certain truths—adultery and bigamy, most notably—were not recognized as legal justification for changing spouses, so they devised cover stories that they hoped would persuade the state. As Schneider tells us, few petitioners to the Queen's Proctor succeeded in procuring a legitimate divorce, a result that kept both men and women trapped in marriages that had long since ended, with all the social and economic consequences that resulted.

As Schneider insightfully observes, the Queen's Proctor represents "the legal system's flight from narrative." Hers is an account that runs counter to what legal scholars have traditionally seen as the relationship between law and narrative, a relationship that rests on a fear of deliberately told untruths. Schneider makes a compelling argument for reassessing legal scholarship's skepticism of the value of narrative and story-telling theories for explaining what happens in trials. Her model, based on the example of an investigator whose sole mission was to challenge the factual assertions made in party-controlled narratives, indicates that it is possible to go too far—to be too skeptical of the stories parties tell in court—and to skew the relationship between truth and justice even further.

This paper brilliantly realizes the potential of its subject. Rich theoretical insights illustrate the historical narrative woven from archival and newspaper sources, written with beauty and skill. This is a story with a moral: the law's insistence on truth had the ironic effect of creating a much harsher divorce law regime than even conservative law-makers had intended. This piece at once alerts us to the need to handle truth and storytelling with analytical care and serves up an example of scholarship at its best: original, insightful, and relevant beyond its own topic. This paper justifiably earns the 2002 *Law & Social Inquiry* Graduate Student Essay Prize.

—The Editors

ERRATUM

In Volume 27 Number 2 of *Law & Social Inquiry*, errors were introduced into two figures that appeared in articles in the Eighth Circuit Gender Fairness Study Symposium. In “Understanding the Judicial Role in Addressing Gender Bias: A View from the Eighth Circuit Federal Court System,” by Kimberly A. Lonsway, Leslie V. Freeman, Lilia M. Cortina, Vicki J. Magley, and Louise F. Fitzgerald, Figure 2 on page 219 was inadvertently replaced by a duplicate of Figure 1. The correct figure appears as follows:

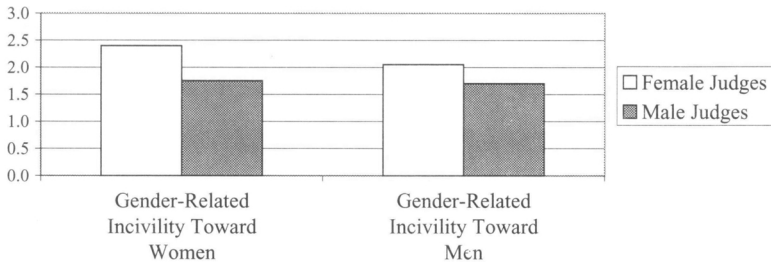


FIGURE 2.

Average scores on the Gender-Related Incivility toward Women and the Gender-Related Incivility toward Men scales. Values are provided on the original response scale of 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived incivility.

In “What’s Gender Got to Do with It? Incivility in the Federal Courts,” by Lilia M. Cortina, Kimberly A. Lonsway, Vicki J. Magley, Leslie V. Freeman, Linda L. Collinsworth, Mary Hunter, and Louise F. Fitzgerald, part of Figure 2 appearing on page 245 is mislabeled. The piechart on the right, for “b. men,” should read, “general incivility alone, 67%.” The correct figure appears as follows:

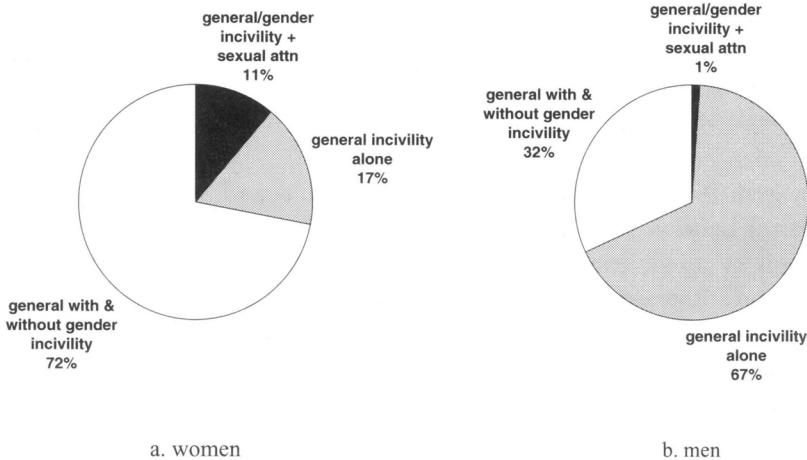


FIGURE 2.

Incidence rates of types and combinations of interpersonal mistreatment among targeted respondents only.

Stickers reflecting the correct figures were mailed with this issue and should be affixed to the appropriate pages.

The editors regret the errors.
