

**AN ANALYSIS OF MALE AND FEMALE SUSPECTED OFFENDERS
OF INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE**

A Doctoral Research Paper

Presented to

The Faculty of Trinity College of Graduate Studies

in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Psychology

By

Julio Carlos Reyna

Anaheim, California

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Jesus Reyna Muñoz and Mrs. Julia López de Reyna, whose unshakeable faith provided me with the inspiration to achieve my goals. To my wife and best friend, Linda Reyna, who provided me with encouragement and emotional support throughout this journey. Most of all, I would like to thank The Lord Jesus Christ who has always been my rock.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

An Analysis of Male and Female Suspected
Offenders of Intimate Partner Homicide

By

Julio Carlos Reyna

Doctor in Clinical Psychology

Trinity College of Graduate Studies, Anaheim, 2005

Professor Randall C. Rheinheimer, Chair

The purpose of this study was to identify and compare the differences and similarities between male and female suspected offenders of intimate partner homicide (IPH). The California Vital Statistics and Homicide Data [CVSHD], 1990-1999 (Jason, 2002), was used for this study. The CVSHD contains data from victims of homicide in California from 1990 to 1999. The understanding of intimate partner violence and intimate partner homicide were explored using four different theoretical approaches. Consistent with previous research, the results of this study suggest that suspected offenders involved in the killing of an intimate partner are more likely to be male. The results also indicate that IPH is for the most part a male-to-female and female-to-male event. The primary weapons of choice used to perpetrate the intimate partner homicide by

both genders were handguns, but women were more likely than men to use knives or other kind of stabbing instrument. Based on population percentages, it was determined that those identified as boyfriend/girlfriend were at the highest risk for IPH. Secondly, African-Americans were found to be overrepresented as both suspected offenders and victims of IPH. African-American females were more likely to be the offenders compared to African-American males. This study was concluded by discussing the implications of these findings, and by identifying several areas for future research, including the effects separation and legal divorce may have on intimate partner homicide.

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INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence, whether lethal or nonlethal, continues to be a significant social problem in our society. Consequently, various sections of society have intervened to stop the domestic violence. Several programs have been developed to protect the victims and new laws against domestic violence are being enforced. Police departments, family and criminal courts, and victim witness programs, are examples of various systems working to decrease domestic violence and protect the victim. Domestic violence research is another important component in the search for answers and the cessation of violence. Researchers add theory to the analysis of the causes of domestic violence. Through theories and research studies we can learn early detection and develop preventive programs. Lethal and non-lethal cases of domestic violence continue to negatively affect the lives of many people, and any contribution to its understanding and prevention is instrumental to the prevention of such societal malady.

Searching for the most reasonable and likely cause of domestic violence, researchers have focused on several probable areas, including the intergenerational transfer of violence, genes, hormones and neurotransmitters, and the effects of what is often perceived as male-dominated societies. Within those areas, researchers have employed several theoretical frameworks in an attempt to explain the origins and causes of domestic violence. Some of the most salient views include the social learning theories, the behavioral-genetic theories, and the feminist theories. Less explored but relevant view

on domestic violence is the psychoanalytic perspective. Because of their importance in the field of domestic violence, this study explored those theories.

This study reviewed and analyzed domestic violence cases in which one of the intimate partners was killed. This study, however, focused on the suspected offenders of intimate partner homicide (IPH) as opposed to the victim. In addition, the study focused on both male to female lethal domestic violence, and female to male lethal domestic violence. The California Vital Statistics and Homicide Data [CVSHD], 1990-1999 (Jason, 2002), was used for this study. The CVSHD dataset contains data from victims of homicide in California from 1990 to 1999.

This study focused on the differences and similarities of intimate partner homicides (IPH) involving both males and females intimates. Intimates were defined as wife, husband, common-law wife, common-law husband, boyfriend, girlfriend, ex-wife, and ex-husband. The CVSHD dataset used for this study did not contain information about ex-boyfriends and ex-girlfriends. Thus, those categories were excluded from the study. The similarities and differences on how males and females kill their intimate partners were explored.

CHAPTER I

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review was divided into several sections. First of all, a definition of domestic violence was provided, which included the California Penal Code definition. In the second section, four theories exploring domestic violence were proposed. The third section covered religious factors as they apply to domestic violence research and intervention. The fourth section outlined characteristics of male batterers and female batterers. Lastly, studies on males and females identified as suspected offenders of intimate partner homicide (IPH) were explored. The body of literature was then used as a bridge to introduce the topic of this research study.

This literature review has strengths and limitations. The literature on domestic violence provided the framework of this review. However, the richness in literature on domestic violence tends to focus on male batterers and male-caused homicides in domestic violence incidents. Consequently, some areas of this study are heavily focused on male perpetrators of domestic violence, including the exploration of theories on domestic violence. Nevertheless, an effort was made to indicate and explore the significance of such research studies in relation to the domestic violence perpetrated by intimate partners.

Defining Domestic Violence

Domestic violence can be defined as physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, or economic abuse of people who are, or have been, intimate partners (“Domestic Violence,” 2000). Physical abuse includes slapping, punching, choking, and hitting with objects or weapons, throwing out of cars, stabbing, and shooting. Psychological abuse includes verbal abuse, playing mind games, humiliation in front of others, monitoring the person’s movements, and undermining self-confidence. Sexual abuse includes forcing sex, rape, and sexual assault. Economic abuse includes withholding money, denial of economic independence, and denial of opportunity to work (“Domestic Violence,” n.d.).

The Penal Code 2004: Unabridged California Edition (2004) defines battering as “any willful and unlawful use of force or violence upon the person of another” (§243(c) (1), p64). Under section §273.5(a), it stipulates that:

Any person who willfully inflicts upon a person who is his or her spouse, former spouse, cohabitant, former cohabitant, or the mother or father of his or her child, corporal injury resulting in a traumatic condition, is guilty of a felony, an upon conviction thereof shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for two, three, or four years, or in county jail for no more than one year, or by a fine of up to six thousand dollars (\$6000) or by both that fine and imprisonment (p78).

Batterers come from a diverse socioeconomic and ethnic background, including doctors, judges, lawyers, and police officers (O’Dell, 1996). Although men are also

victims of domestic violence, women sustain more than 95% of the injuries during incidents of domestic violence (Lloyd, 2000).

Domestic violence has a detrimental effect on people of all ages and marital status. Marital status has a positive correlation to female abuse. More specifically, cohabiting women have a higher likelihood of being beaten by the men they live with (Ellis, 1989). Young women witnessing domestic violence in childhood experience a negative impact on their long-term adjustment. They appear to experience more violence in dating relationships, seem to experience more depressive symptoms, and seem to exhibit more antisocial behaviors and trauma symptoms (Maker, Kimmelmeier, & Peterson, 1998). Children exposed to domestic violence tend to experience hypervigilance, distressing thoughts and memories, conscious avoidance, and sleep difficulties (Mertin, & Mohr, 2002). They also exhibit problematic behavior at clinical levels more frequently than children from nonaggressive couples (Jouriles, Murphy, & O'Leary, 1989).

In their research study, Elliot, Avery, Fishman, and Hoshiko (2002) concluded that young adolescent females were three times more likely to engage in risky sexual activity if they had either witnessed domestic violence between their parents or experienced direct physical violence from a parent. Poverty did not have any effect on risky sexual activity. A different research study on college students and lifetime exposure to domestic violence indicated that exposure to interparental physical violence was associated with interpersonal problems, anxiety, depression, and trauma symptoms. Interparental verbal aggression was a stronger predictor of all symptom areas than interparental physical violence (Blumenthal, Neemann, & Murphy, 1998). Moreover, adolescents who have witnessed parental domestic violence report higher levels of dating

violence, dating frequency, and the perceived likelihood of dating violence. They report lower levels of parental attachment and parental monitoring than do their peers who have not witnessed parental domestic violence (Chapple, 2003).

Diamond and Muller (2004) investigated the relationship between witnessing domestic violence during childhood and later psychological adjustment among college students. The researchers concluded that witnessing physical domestic violence and major psychological domestic violence perpetrated by the subjects' parents during childhood showed higher levels of current psychopathology than the subjects who experienced low levels of domestic violence or no domestic violence.

As this introduction to the literature review has demonstrated, domestic violence is a significant societal problem that is evident in all socioeconomic levels and ethnic groups. Domestic violence has also major impact on the lives of the individuals affected by it, including the children of the victims and perpetrators of the violence, and of course, the victims themselves. This literature review will now shift to the theoretical approaches as they relate to the understanding of domestic violence.

Theoretical Perspectives on Domestic Violence

Social Learning Theories:

Social learning theory describes violence as a learned behavior, and as such, exposure to violence during childhood increases the likelihood of domestic violence during adulthood (Mihalic, & Elliott, 1997). Sex-role theory, a subtype of social learning theory, describes violence as an early and appropriate sex-role socialization, which teaches women to accept male dominance, and teaches men to be the dominant partner (Barnett, Fagan, and Booker, 1991).

Some research findings indicate that violent individuals have witnessed and experienced abuse as children by their parents. In their research study, Bevan and Higgins (2002) concluded that physical abuse of spouse was significantly correlated with maltreatment during childhood, childhood family adaptability and cohesion, parental divorce, alcohol abuse, and income. However, They asserted that neglect during childhood solely predicted physical spousal abuse. The same study determined that witnessing family violence (but not physical abuse) during childhood was uniquely associated with psychological spousal abuse

Other research studies have concluded that harsh punishment in childhood seems to have direct effects on problem behaviors in adolescence and young adulthood, which, in turn, has a direct effect on later intimate aggression (DeMaris, Cernkovich, & Giordano, 2000). In other words, abusive discipline in childhood indicates later intimate violence by increasing the risk of antisocial behavior, starting in adolescence. A research

study determined that fathers' harsh physical punishment and fathers' violence against mothers during childhood significantly increased psychological aggression during adulthood. However, the same study concluded that mothers' physical punishment and mothers' violence against fathers produced no such effects (Avakame, 1998). Straus and Yodanis (1996) determined in their study that corporal punishment in adolescence by the individual's parents was associated with an increased probability of condoning violence against one's spouse.

O'Hearn and Margolin (2000) observed in their research study that severe violence in the family of origin was strongly correlated with intimate partner abuse by males against their female intimates. Their study showed that 49% of the men who reported severe violence in the family of origin reported physical abuse against their intimate partner, and 90% reported engaging in emotional abuse against their partners. The researchers discovered that most men would condone slapping a wife under certain circumstances, including self-defense or in defense of a child, or in the case of sexual transgressions. Furthermore, O'Hearn and Margolin (2000) determined that men who condone physical aggression showed an association between abuse during childhood in their family of origin and actual physical and emotional abuse toward their female intimates, in comparison to men who oppose such aggression. For those men who view violence against women as unjustifiable, exposure to family of origin violence did not account as a risk marker for violent behavior against their intimate partners.

These research studies attempt to explain the social learning theory of domestic violence. These studies acknowledge that social learning indeed has an important effect on violent behavior. However, as compelling as social learning might be, the behavioral-

genetic theories offer a different yet persuasive point of view as to how biology triggers domestic violence-like behaviors in individuals.

Behavioral Genetic Theories:

The effect of biology on behavior has received its share of attention to describe violent behavior. Within the behavioral-genetics view, particular areas have received significant attention: Testosterone and serotonin levels and possible brain dysfunction.

High levels of testosterone seem to be found in physically aggressive men (Gibbs, 1995). Choi, Parrot, and Cowan (1990) studied the effects of anabolic steroids (testosterone-like substances) on male athletes. They concluded that self-rated aggression increased significantly during the on-drug periods. Furthermore, the researchers discovered that severe hostility/aggression was evidenced in multiple steroid use, explaining that one subject disclosed attempted murder during a previous steroid-taking event. Soler, Vinayak, and Quadagno (2000) studied the relationship between testosterone levels and male aggression on a group of men. They discovered that higher levels of testosterone were associated with higher levels of self-reported verbal and physical abuse against the female intimate partners.

Dabbs, Riad, and Chance (2001) conducted a research study on testosterone levels on male inmates who had been convicted of committing violent crimes. They determined that among the inmates who had been convicted of homicide, the inmates with high testosterone levels more often killed acquaintances than the inmates with low testosterone levels. In addition, those inmates more often intended and planned their crimes ahead of time. A previous study by Dabbs, et al. (1988) demonstrated that testosterone concentrations in women were related to criminal violence, as well. Highest testosterone

levels were evidenced in unprovoked violence incidents (avg. 2.63 ng/100 ml.) than in defensive violence incidents (avg. 1.48 ng/100 ml.). Unprovoked violence included homicide, assault and robbery. Defensive violence included behaving violently after being physically attacked.

van Honk et al. (2001) studied the effects of testosterone on young women. Some female subjects were administered a single dose of testosterone (0.5mg) prior to the study, and some female subjects were given a placebo. When exposed to angry faces, the female subjects who were administered testosterone had a significant increase in their cardiac response (avg. 4 BPS) in comparison to the placebo group (avg. less than 1 BPS). van Honk et al. (2001) concluded that such response by those women was due to an increased inclination toward aggression and dominance in social challenges.

Research on animals has also resulted in findings supporting the link between testosterone and violence. A research study on male rats concluded that testosterone propionate, an anabolic androgenic steroid, causes the animals to respond with dramatic increase in aggression when provoked. The researchers explained that testosterone propionate heightens the animals sensitivity to their surroundings and lower the threshold for aggression and dominance when provoked (McGinnis, Lumia, Breuer, & Possidente, 2002).

In addition to testosterone, serotonin has been studied to try to find its effect on violent behavior. Serotonin, a neurotransmitter, seems to have a direct effect on mood, irritability and aggression. Lower serotonin levels result in more negative mood and behavior, and increased serotonin levels have the inverse effect (Young, & Leyton, 2002). A research study concluded that perturbing the neurotransmission of serotonin in the brain of hostile men, those men were prone to negative aggressive behavior change,

compared to non-hostile men (Dougherty, Bjork, Marsh, & Moeller, 1999). Constantino, Morris, and Murphy (1997) discovered in their study that infants whose parents had history of antisocial personality disorder had significant lower levels of the serotonin metabolite 5-hydroxyindoleacetic acid (5-HIAA) than infants whose parents did not have history of antisocial personality disorder (avg. 735 pmol/ml. vs. 827 pmol/ml.).

Staner et al. (2002) researched the function of tryptophan hydroxylase (TPH) and its association with impulsive-aggressive behavior in men and women. TPH is involved in the biosynthesis of serotonin. The researchers concluded that the TPH genotype may be associated with impulsive-aggressive behaviors in men and women.

Similarly, brain dysfunction seems to predispose the individual to severe aggressive behavior (Lindberg, et al., 2003). Researchers have noted that repetitively violent people with mild mental impairment show abnormalities in the amygdalo-hippocampal complex and the prefrontal lobe. The same researchers concluded that within that group of people, frequency of interpersonal aggression was associated with abnormality of the prefrontal lobe. The researchers asserted that damage to the amygdalo-hippocampal complex and the prefrontal lobe may be related to violent behavior in repetitively violent people with mild mental impairment (Critchley, et al., 2000).

Furthermore, a research study concluded that significant similarities exist between genetically selected aggressive male mice and men persisting in antisocial behavior. The genetically selected aggressive male mice seem to resemble human intermale aggression and domestic violence incidents, in addition to excessive alcohol intake. The same study concluded that substantial similarities existed between genetically selected male mice with low-aggressive behavior and men who have never manifested aggressive behavior (Sluyter, et al., 2003).

The above-mentioned research studies provide with credible findings supporting the link between behavioral genetic theories and domestic violence. Testosterone, serotonin, and brain dysfunction are persuasively described as having a direct or indirect effect on violent behavior, including domestic violence. However, despite the credible research data and findings linking behavioral genetic theories to violence, a completely different point of view discards all other theories to argue that domestic violence results from genders-related conflicts. Those points of view are associated together under the umbrella of gender-based theories.

Gender-Based Theories:

The gender-based theories primarily focus on how men try to abuse, oppress, or otherwise control women in society. Such theories do not focus on female batterers, and if they do, their focus falls within the context of women trying to escape men's oppressive behavior. Thus, this review on gender-based theories did not identify females battering men within the context of this view.

Power inequality theory, a subtype of gender-based theory, asserts that some of the main reasons for domestic violence are males' need to exert power and control in the relationship. It indicates that power inequalities in the relationship causes domestic violence to exist. According to the power inequalities view, a person who controls the access to the resources needed by another person takes advantage of the other person by creating the power inequalities (Handwerker, 1988). Dempsey (2002) has contended that women's attempts to negotiate successfully for change are often thwarted by men's refusal to yield some of their power and change their feelings and attitudes. Dempsey (2002) based such assertion on findings from a research study which evidenced that 4 out

of 5 women voiced perceived marital inequity, including unfair domestic workload and lesser personal autonomy. A majority of men agreed that domestic tasks should be divided between husbands and wives, but some argued that their wives having a greater workload was the result that went with being women.

Feminist theory, another subtype of gender-based theory, asserts that the effect of patriarchy, or the domination of men over women, is a significant factor that perpetuates domestic violence against women. Feminist theory views male patriarchal system as the dominant force in Western society, in which men are the rulers, and women the followers (Stephenson, 2003). Feminist theory suggests that wife battering results from husbands adhering to an ideology of familial patriarchy. Smith (1990) tested such hypothesis in a research study, and concluded that men who embraced beliefs and values in the home supportive of patriarchy were more likely to have assaulted their wives at some point in the relationship than men who did not espouse such beliefs and values. The research findings suggested that husbands with low-job status, relatively low incomes, and low educational attainments were more likely to embrace such an ideology. Other people have argued that women are socialized through a covert curriculum that educates them in gender roles that maintain the oppression of women in all aspects of life (Bierema, 2003).

Some feminists have asserted that fundamentalist religious movements try to reinstate rigid patriarchal control over women, in addition to hostility toward women's equality, autonomy, and the right to make their own decisions about their sexuality and fertility. The extreme Christian right, the Vatican, and the Muslim fundamentalism are identified as being part of such movements (Ruether, 2002). Woodman (2000) argued that many religions perpetuate gender hierarchies, restricting church leadership roles to men and often providing religious justification for maintaining men as the leaders of their

families. By doing so, Woodman (2000) contended that such religions provide men who have extreme controlling attitudes a sanctioned approval for their behaviors. Wilson and Daly (1993) postulated that “men take a proprietary view of women’s sexuality and reproductive capacity” (p 276). Male proprietariness is the name these researchers used to describe such attitude and behavior.

The gender-based theories provide with a credible approach to the understanding of domestic violence. Power inequalities between men and women exist for the most part in all societies. To give a few examples, it is common knowledge that most world leaders are men, most religions have men as their spiritual guides, and the majority of economic wealth is in the hands of men. This monopoly on leadership positions and economic wealth gives men tremendous control over decision-making. Nonetheless, to try to understand complex issues without bringing the human psyche into the discussion leaves the factors half-explained. Psychoanalytic views help to explain how the human psyche influences the development of domestic violence.

Psychoanalytic Views:

Researchers are increasingly applying psychoanalytic explanations to the understanding of domestic violence. Such views are essential to the understanding of this complex societal problem. Psychoanalytic views, such as object relations, contribute to the understanding of domestic violence. A view influenced by psychoanalytic views, attachment theory, has been grouped together in this study within the psychoanalytic views to explain domestic violence dynamics.

Object relations theory focuses on how individuals develop in relation to the people around them. It is an intrapsychic and interpersonal concept that focuses on

emotional interactions. It emphasizes the importance of internalization and externalization of relationships in development. Consequently, it emphasizes the importance of all psychological change (Hamilton, 1989). In his book, "Self and Others: Object Relations Theory in Practice," Hamilton (1990) provided with a definition of what an object is:

An object is a person, place, thing, idea, fantasy, or memory invested with emotional energy (love or hate or more modulated combinations of love and hate).

An external object is a person, place, or thing invested with emotional energy. An internal object is an idea, fantasy, or memory pertaining to a person, place, or thing (p 7).

From an object relations point of view, the primary caretakers must facilitate the infant's gratification of primary narcissism to foster a sense of trust and security in the self and the object world. Differentiated boundaries between the self and other must gradually develop in the infant, and the infant must be able to relate to others as separate objects, not as an extension of the self. Representations of self and object must in time become integrated and experienced as whole objects, rather than split objects of good and bad. If during this critical development period, the infant did not receive emphatically attuned nurturance, unmet dependency needs will continue to be experienced on a primitive level as an adult. These deficits in personality development will continue to manifest in adult relationships. For example, if the individual as a young child never experienced unconditional love, such an individual cannot access positive self-representations to restore a sense of well being during conflict or anxiety. The individual often tries to restore a sense of soothing from external objects, including a partner. Domestic violence may then be the result of the inability of the partner to provide such

self-regulating functions, causing a core injury to the abuser, and perhaps resulting in narcissistic rage (Zosky, 1999).

Similar to object relations, attachment theory provides additional insight into the relational interactions between people. Attachment theory is based on the work of John Bowlby and Mary Salter Ainsworth. Bowlby was a psychiatrist and a psychoanalyst who undertook training at the British Psychoanalytic Institute. He was supervised by Melanie Klein, an object relations theorist; Ainsworth's research was influenced by Bowlby's work (Bretherton, 1992).

Attachment theory is a theory of interpersonal relationships that emphasizes the predisposition of human beings to develop strong emotional bonds with others, beginning in infancy and continuing through adulthood (Bowlby, 1982). Consequently, the influence of earlier relationships has a direct effect in shaping the foundation of future relationships. Violence-prone individuals may be dealing with attachment issues stemming from their own childhood (Kesner, Julian, & McKenry, 1997).

The adult mind, whether consciously or unconsciously, automatically turns to representations of attachment figures [the objects in object relations] when threatened. This becomes the initial step in a process that often results in searching for these figures and increasing physical and/or psychological closeness to them. The attachment figures with whom the individual has mutual relationships are likely to be the attachment targets and the first ones to come to mind when needs become significant. This is a protective function that increases reassurance in the psychological reality of the attachment system (Mikulincer, Gillath, & Shaver, 2002). How this relates the domestic violence becomes clear when analyzing the research studies on attachment and partner violence.

In their research study, Kesner and McKenry (1998) concluded that violent males showed a fearful attachment style, and were more likely to be insecurely attached, which may indicate that their violent response could be a consequence of their insecurity. According to such research, fearful individuals want intimate relationships, but are distrustful and expect rejection. A stressed individual influenced by a fearful attachment style may misunderstand the conduct of his female intimate and resort to the only coping mechanism to deal with stress he feels he has, such as violence. Holtzworth-Munroe, Stuart, and Hutchinson (1997) described similar findings indicating that violent men experience attachment difficulties. According to the researchers, their study showed that compared to nonviolent men, violent men were more anxious about abandonment, both in relationships in general and in their marriage. They needed more nurturance from their wives and were more jealous of other men. The research also characterized violent men as more avoidant of dependency and increasingly uncomfortable with closeness in relationships and less trusting. Holtzworth-Munroe, Stuart, and Hutchinson (1997) indicated that such ambivalence of both the desire for, and the discomfort with, closeness and dependency may demonstrate why violent men feel jealous of other men and feel anxious about possible abandonment.

Security and trust are needs inherent in object relations and attachment theory. The literature review on male batterers will parallel some of these concepts. However, before continuing on that section, an exploration of religion and domestic violence will now be covered. Religious factors as they relate to domestic violence are an area of research that comes to mind when looking for additional answers.

Religious Factors and Domestic Violence:

Scarcity of literature on religious factors and domestic violence is surprising, given the seriousness of the problem and the notable amount of literature on domestic violence. However, there are some research studies that address this topic.

A study based on data from a national survey showed that religious attendance is negatively associated with domestic violence for both men and women (Ellison & Anderson, 2001). Another research study demonstrated that men who had frequent religious attendance had significant lower rates of domestic violence than the men who had infrequent attendance. The same study found that alcohol problems were associated with higher risk of domestic violence, but alcohol problems were significantly lower among those men and women who had frequent religious attendance, and for men who rated religion as being an important element in their lives. Men belonging to liberal religious groups had the highest rates of alcohol problems (Cunradi, Caetano, & Schafer, 2002).

The clergy can play a significant role in the lives of women who seek help for domestic violence-related problems. Results from a research study indicated that 43% of victims of domestic violence and 20% of batterers sought clergy help. Taking steps to protect the victim were some of the clergy responses to the violence. In addition, the clergy recommended marriage counseling to the victims and the batterers (Rotunda, Williamson, & Penfold, 2004). Therapists can also help women who leave domestic violence situations explore their spiritual resources to promote a new way of living that would advocate and support nonviolent relationships (Senter & Caldwell, 2002). Thus, spirituality and religion can also play an important role in therapy (Sabloff, 2002).

At this point, the focus of this literature review will discuss and describe characteristics of male and female batterers. This review will then examine the literature on domestic violence resulting in fatalities. Research studies on men and women as perpetrators of intimate partner homicide (IPH) will be explored.

Studies on Domestic Violence Resulting in Non-fatalities

Male Batterers vs. Female Batterers:

Males and females perpetrate domestic violence, and researchers try to understand the reasons for such violence. In examining research studies on male batterers, male batterers ordered to attend batterer's treatment programs offer insight into their abusive behavior toward their intimate partners. Those research studies suggest that male batterers share similar characteristics. Male batterers tend to be more nervous and impulsive than the general population; they tend to have a more depressive mood, and tend to be hostile and dominant (Bersani, Chen, Pendleton, & Denton, 1992). They appear to be excessively jealous, try to isolate the victim from family and friends, and tend to blame others for their shortcomings (Amber, 1997). Research also seems to indicate that male batterers have a tendency to feel inadequate and unhappy with themselves, and appear to have dependency problems with their wives and in their interpersonal relationships (Hale, Duckworth, Zimostrad, & Nicholas, 1988). Other research indicated that male batterers suffer from low self-esteem, but cover it with a display of arrogance (Berlinger, 1998). Maiuro, Cahn, and Vitaliano (1986) concluded in their study that men who engaged in domestic violence seemed to have deficits in social skills that are related to their hostility and anger. According to those researchers, men who engaged in domestic violence had significant problems positively expressing their wants and needs in an assertive way.

Financial problems and substance abuse seem to precipitate incidents of domestic violence. Several studies support that claim: Sirles et al (1993) concluded that financial problems and alcohol abuse seem to be significant predictors of domestic violence episodes. Another research study indicated that perhaps up to fifty percent of all batterers attending a batterer's treatment program had alcohol abuse problems (Tolman, & Bennett, 1990). Furthermore, Brookoff, O'Brien, Cook, Thompson, and Williams (1997) also noted in their study that a majority of the male perpetrators of domestic violence reported having used alcohol the day of the assault, and two thirds of them reported having used alcohol and cocaine the day of the assault. Moreover, Statistics by the Bureau of Justice Statistics Factbook (1998) show that more than half of the batterers convicted on charges of domestic violence had been drinking alcohol or using drugs the day of the incident.

Research indicates that male batterers who complete batterer's treatment programs (BTP) differ from those who drop out before completion. A study determined that male batterers who completed a BTP appeared to have a higher level of education than the ones who did not complete the program, appeared to have higher levels of employment, and reported fewer indirect threats of violence (Grusznski, & Carrillo, 1988). A different study corroborated similar findings: men who completed the treatment program were better educated, had better economic conditions, and had a more stable family life than the men who dropped out. In addition, the study found that the men who completed the treatment program had been in a relationship for a longer period of time, had more children with their spouse, showed more commitment, and had a better relationship with the therapist than the men who dropped out of the program (Rondeau, Brodeur, Brochu, & Lemire, 2001). Moreover, another study concluded that higher use of drugs by male

batterers increased the likelihood of them dropping out of the batterer's treatment program (Faulkner, Cogan, Nolder, & Shooter, 1991).

Concerning female batterers, several research studies have offered insight into the causes of their violent behavior. Contrary to popular belief, female batterers seem to exhibit similar behaviors as their male batterers counterparts. A study based on female volunteers who were identified as frequently and severely physically aggressive concluded that those women were in relationships where conflict was responded to with significant amount of accusing, criticizing, threatening, blaming, name calling, etc. These actions were done at times by both partners, and at other times by each partner unilaterally, meaning only one of the partners engaged in those actions (Ridley, & Feldman, 2003). A study on men and women arrested on domestic violence charges found that the women arrestees were more likely to be younger than their victims, and were more likely to be unemployed. In addition, their male victims were less likely to report having minor children in the home than the female victims of male arrestees (Henning and Feder, 2004).

Another study on men and women arrested for domestic violence and ordered to a batterer's treatment program found no difference in the percentage of men and women who inflicted severe to extreme injury levels on their partners. The injuries included broken bones, bruises, and knife wounds (Busch, & Rosenberg, 2004). The study found that 20% of men and 13% of women had committed at least one violent crime prior to the arrest for domestic violence, and the majority of them had criminal record. Women were found to be as violent toward non-intimates as men. Furthermore, 67% of the women appeared to be using alcohol or drugs at the time of the arrest. The same study found that almost 50% of men and women arrested for domestic violence were using

methamphetamine (“speed”) at the time of the arrest. Women had on the average one prior substance abuse-related arrest. Moreover, almost one-third of the women had been previously arrested for domestic violence.

Sauders (1986) conducted a study on women identified as “battered women” and who sought help from either shelters or a counseling agency, and found that seventy-five percent of those women had engaged in the past in some type of nonsevere violence against their partner; about half of the women engaged in throwing something or slapping their partner; slightly more than half reported having pushed, grabbed, or shoved their partner; more than half reported having kicked, bit, or hit their partner with their fist; and about 8% admitted having beat up their partners or having used a knife or gun. Furthermore, about 12% of them admitted having threatened their partners with a gun or knife. However, about 40% of the women using severe violence against their partners reported that their use of violence was in self-defense; a third of them reported that the severe violence against their partners was fighting back. Moreover, about 30% of the women who used nonsevere violence stated that they acted in self-defense, and 23% said they were fighting back.

Summarizing this section, it appears that studies on males and female batterers point to certain predictors of domestic violence: Male batterers have a more depressive mood, are hostile and dominant, and exhibit nervousness and impulsive behavior more often than the general population. They have social deficit skills that are related to their hostility and anger. They appear to be excessively jealous and feel inadequate and unhappy with themselves. They have dependency problems with their wives and in their interpersonal relationships. Male batterers suffer from low self-esteem, but cover it with a

display of arrogance. Moreover, financial problems and substance abuse appear to be significant predictors of domestic violence episodes.

Alcohol, cocaine, and methamphetamine abuse may be as high as 50% for male batterers. Accordingly, over 50% of male batterers may be under the influence of drugs or/and alcohol during the battering incident. Moreover, men who complete batterers treatment programs are more likely to have a higher level of education, family stability, and less likely to have substance abuse problems.

Female batterers are more likely to be younger than their victims, and are more likely to be unemployed. They are more likely to be in relationships where conflict by both partners is responded to with significant amount of accusing, criticizing, threatening, blaming, name calling, etc. One in ten female batterers arrested for domestic violence is likely to have committed at least one violent crime prior to the arrest for domestic violence. In addition, a significant number of female batterers arrested for domestic violence are likely to have criminal record, and are as violent toward non-intimates as men. More than half of female batterers arrested for domestic violence are likely to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the arrest. Furthermore, about half of them are likely to be under the influence of methamphetamine (“speed”) at the time of the arrest.

Moreover, a significant number women self-identified as “battered women” have engaged in physical violence against their intimate partner, including throwing something or slapping their partner, pushing, grabbing, or shoving their partner, kicking, biting, or hitting their partner with their fist. Furthermore, about 1 in 10 female batterers may have beat up their partners, have used, or have threatened to use a knife or gun. Overall, this

literature review on female batterers points to the conclusion that women in intimate relationships are more aggressive than previously thought.

Studies on Domestic Violence Resulting in Fatalities:

Men and Women as Perpetrators of IPH:

Research studies on lethal cases of domestic violence consistently show evidence of distinctive characteristics. Highly conflictual situations precede the majority of homicides (Johnson, & Hotton, 2003). Such conflictual situations involve a history of domestic violence.

A research study on female victims of partner homicide in North Carolina revealed that two thirds of the victims of partner homicide were known to have been victims of domestic violence. In addition, nearly half of the victims of domestic violence had had previous contact with law enforcement officers regarding the domestic violence (Moracco, Runyan, & Butts, 1998). Although men and women commit intimate partner homicide, Lund and Smorodinsky (2001) found in their research study on intimate partner homicide and homicide-suicide that men and women perpetrated intimate partner homicide, but only the men perpetrated intimate partner homicide-suicide. In addition, the study found that firearms played a greater role in homicide-suicide than in homicide alone. Furthermore, the study found that homicide-suicide was more likely when the victims were Caucasian or Latino/Hispanic than when the victims were African-American.

Concerning the reason why men kill their intimate partners, researchers have identified several reasons as to why men engage in such destructive behaviors. According to such research, men are often motivated by jealousy, particularly in an estranged

intimate relationship. Men are more likely to kill their intimate ex-partners in their own homes. They are also more likely to target friends and new dating partners of the victim. In addition, extreme attempts to control the victim's contacts with others, even in death, can be indicated by the high rate of suicide (Johnson, & Hotton, 2003).

Stalking seems to precede domestic violence homicides. A research study found that 76% of women killed by an intimate partner and 85% of women whose intimate partners attempted to kill them had experienced stalking during the twelve months preceding the homicide or the attempted homicide (McFarlane et al., 1999).

Assertion of control by men over women, and the response of men to women's autonomy in intimate relationships, has also been explained as compelling factors of why men kill their intimate female partners. Women who have greater latitude to stay or leave the relationship, such as unmarried women, may increase the motivation of men to engage in domestic violence against the female intimate in an effort to prevent her from leaving, or as a form of retaliation against the abandonment (Browne, & Williams, 1993).

Campbell, et al. (2003) concluded in their study that male batterers owning a gun were much more likely to use the gun in the worst incidents of domestic violence, and in some cases, in the actual murder of their female intimate partners. The researchers also identified lack of employment by the male batterers as a significant risk, increasing the risk of intimate partner homicide 4-fold compared to the male batterers who were employed.

A research study involving partner homicide-suicide involving female homicide victims found that in ninety-five percents of the homicides or suicides a firearm was used. The same study found that more than half of the homicides-suicides were perpetrated in front of others, and most of the witnesses were family members of the homicide victim.

In addition, family members of the victim were most likely to be injured in cases where other people besides the primary victim were injured (Morton et al., 1998).

Daly and Wilson (1988) contended that domestic violence homicides are fueled by male sexual proprietariness. These researchers asserted that:

Such homicides are best interpreted as the dysfunctionally extreme manifestations of violent inclinations whose lesser expressions are effective in coercion, for although uxoricide [the murder of a wife by her husband] may seldom serve the interest of the killer, it is far from clear that the same can be said of sublethal wife abuse” (Wilson, & Daly, 1993, p. 281).

In addition to research studies that attempt to identify why males kill their intimate partners, the reasons why women kill their intimate partners have been explored by several research studies, as well. In a study to examine how unrestricted unilateral divorce laws influenced the prevalence of spousal homicides in the U.S., Dee (2003) concluded that the unintended effect of those laws was the significant increase of the number of husbands killed by their wives. Dee (2003) described unilateral divorce as the dissolution of marriage without the mutual consent of the husband and wife. The research study concluded that unilateral divorce laws increased the spousal murders of husbands by approximately 21%. This study found an increase in murdered husbands in states where marital property laws favored husbands over wives. The author indicated that economic deprivation of wives was an essential determinant of the increase in homicides committed by wives against husbands. The author concluded that the same laws had a statistically insignificant effect on husbands killing wives.

Another research study compared incarcerated self-identified battered women who killed/seriously assaulted their abusers and self-identified battered women incarcerated

for other offenses. Over 75% of the women from both groups reported having been beaten and 60% reported having been sexually assaulted by their partners. The majority of the women reported having sustained serious injuries as a result of the violence, including head injuries, broken bones, and black eyes. In addition, almost one-half of the women from both groups reported having experienced abuse during childhood, and reported having witnessed interparental violence. The women who killed/seriously assaulted their partners were more likely to believe that their lives were in danger.

Concerning substance abuse, both groups of incarcerated self-identified battered women reported high rates of substance abuse, but the women incarcerated for other offenses had higher drug abuse rate than the women incarcerated for killing/seriously assaulting their partner. Overall, approximately 25% of women in both groups reported alcohol abuse, and about 38% reported drug use. Furthermore, 80% of the women self-identified as battered and who killed/seriously assaulted their partners had no previous arrest record, but 57% of the women self-identified as battered and incarcerated for other offenses had previous arrests. Moreover, the findings did not support the assumption that the self-identified battered women evidenced learned helplessness, or the inability to perceive alternatives to lessen the danger, seek help, or attempt to escape. According to the study, the majority of women took steps to lessen the danger or escape, including calling the police, seeking protective orders, filing charges, or filing for divorce/separation. However, the women voiced dissatisfaction with police responsiveness (O'Keefe, 1997).

In summary, studies on men and women who kill their intimate partners evidence interesting points. A significant number of female victims of IPH are likely to have been known as victims of domestic violence prior to the homicide, and a significant number

may have had previous contact with law enforcement officers regarding the domestic violence. It appears that men are more likely to perpetrate homicide-suicide, and their motivation to kill their intimate partner includes jealousy. Men stalking their intimate partner often precedes the homicide, and they tend to kill their intimate partner at the partner's residence. Furthermore, men may kill as a form of retaliation for having been abandoned by their intimate partner. Moreover, firearms seem to be a weapon of choice for both men and women.

Women kill their intimate partners for a variety of reasons. They may have killed in self-defense, or they may have done it as a response to being subjected to domestic violence by their male intimates. Economic deprivation of wives may be a determinant in the increase of homicides against their husbands. In addition, women who kill their intimate partner are likely to have a lower incidence of drug and alcohol abuse history in comparison to women who only batter their intimate partners. A woman with substance abuse may batter her intimate partner, but lesser substance abuse problems are associated with fatal attacks.

This literature review included an exploration of four theoretical views on the possible causes for the violence, and explored the characteristics of male and female batterers. Furthermore, the characteristics of male and female perpetrators of intimate partner homicide (IPH) were also explored. Paradoxically, the review of the theoretical views on domestic violence reveal that researchers do not agree on the reasons of why individuals perpetrate domestic violence. The apparent lack of consensus makes it even more necessary to continue searching for answers to such societal malady. Research studies, such as this, help close the bridge between research and practice. The following section will focus on this study's hypotheses and actual research results and findings.

CHAPTER II

HYPOTHESES

1. It was hypothesized that the suspected offenders of intimate partner homicide were more likely to be male.
2. It was hypothesized that the weapon of choice for both male and female suspected offenders of intimate partner homicide (IPH) was a firearm.
3. In regard to marital status, it was hypothesized that most at risk had a boyfriend/girlfriend marital status.
4. It was hypothesized that the percentage of males suspected of IPH was higher in all categories than the percentage of females suspected of IPH.

CHAPTER III

METHOD AND ANALYSIS

Data Source:

The data presented in this study was taken from the California Vital Statistics and Homicide Data, 1990-1999 (Jason, 2002). The California Department of Health Services, Epidemiology and Prevention produced the dataset for the Injury Control Branch, Violent Injury Surveillance program (CDHS: EPIC). The California Vital Statistics and Homicide Data [CVSHD], 1990-1999 (Jason, 2002) includes homicides in California from 1990 to 1999. The homicide population studied was based on the period covered by the reports (1990 to 1999).

The CVSHD data set file is comprised of two linked data files: the Department of Justice (DOJ) Homicide File and the California Department of Health Services Vital Statistics Death Record File. Researchers at the CDHS: EPIC performed linkage of the two files. The DOJ Homicide File was used as the base to do the linkage. The computer software Integritytm was used to perform the linkage. Information common to both data sets was used to link the two files. The variables used in the linking process were last name, first name, middle name, social security number, age, sex, date of homicide, date of injury, date of death, and county.

The CVSHD data set is comprised of one data file, SAS data definition statements, SPSS data definition statements, and documentation in Portable Document

Format (PDF) format. The PDF format was developed by Adobe Systems and can be accessed using PDF reader software, including the Adobe Acrobat Reader®.

Data Analysis:

The data analysis was performed using the SPSS statistical software. Chi-square procedures were used to test sex differences in victims, the victim's relationship to the suspected offender, the victim's race, the suspected offender's race, the weapon used, the location of the incident, and the most prominent precipitating event. T-tests were used to investigate differences in age of the victim and the suspected offender. In addition, a sequential logistic regression analysis was performed to assess prediction of the sex of suspected offenders (male or female) in domestic homicide cases.

Using the relationship of victim to suspected offender, eight "intimate relationship" groupings were created: husband, wife, common-law husband, common-law wife, boyfriend, girlfriend, ex-husband, and ex-wife. A new variable was created to group those categories ("xintim"). A data reduction was performed using the "intimate relationship" variable. The data set did not contain variables on ex-girlfriends and ex-boyfriends; thus, those variables were not included. A frequency distribution using the "xintim" variable as the criterion ("intimate relationship") reduced the total number of cases from 34,542 to 2,243. These cases represented 6.5% of the total number of homicides in California from 1990 to 1999 identified in the data set. The data reduction identified 1742 suspected male offenders of homicide against an intimate partner (77.7%), 479 suspected female offenders of homicide against an intimate partner (21.4%),

and 22 unknown (.9%). The data reduction identified 480 male victims (21.4%), and 1763 female victims (78.6%).

In regard to ethnicity/race, four groupings related to victim's ethnicity/race were created using the CVSHD data set: White, Hispanic, African-American, and Other. "Other" consisted of a combined category of Asians and other ethnicity/races due to the small total number of cases comprising the Other category. A new variable was created ("xxVicRHBW") and included those categories. A similar approach was used to group the race/ethnicity of the suspected offender. The new variable ("xxSusRHBW") included the same categories: White, Hispanic, African-American, and Other.

In order to analyze the data, the first suspected offender of intimate partner homicide identified in the data set was used (SUS1AGE, SUS1RACE, SUS1SEX). The reason for such decision was based on the more sound quality of this group of variables, which included 99% of the total number of "intimate relationship" cases. A secondary motive for such decision was that the groups of variables identifying the other potential suspects were either a duplication of the first group of variables, or were for the most part lacking data. The variables that identified the second suspected offender of intimate partner homicide accounted for 2.4% of the "intimate relationship" cases (SUS2AGE, SUS2RACE, SUS2SEX). The variables that identified the third suspected offender of intimate partner homicide accounted for 0.7% of the "intimate relationship" cases (SUS3AGE, SUS3RACE, SUS3SEX). The variables that identified the fourth suspected offender of intimate partner homicide accounted for only one of the "intimate relationship" cases (SUS4AGE, SUS4RACE, SUS4SEX).

In regard to precipitating event, the variable identifying the first most likely precipitating event was used (PRECIP1) because of its robust data quality in comparison

with the other two variables (PRECIP2, PRECIP3). Whereas the variable PRECIP1 contained 100% identifiable precipitating events (2243 cases), the variable PRECIP2 contained only 16 identifiable precipitating events, and PRECIP3 contained zero identifiable precipitating events.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The present study investigated potential similarities and differences between male and female suspected offenders of intimate partner homicide (IPH). Chi square tests and t-tests were used to analyze the differences and similarities between male and female suspected offenders. In addition, a sequential logistic regression analysis was performed to assess prediction of the sex of suspected offenders (male or female) in domestic homicide cases. A one-sample chi square test indicated that there were considerably more male suspected offenders ($n = 1742$) than female suspected offenders ($n = 479$) from 1990 through 1999, $\chi^2(1) = 718.22, p < .001$, suggesting that suspected offenders involved in a homicide killing of an intimate partner are more likely to be male, and this results validated the first hypothesis.

Chi square procedures were used to test for: 1) differences in the sex of the victim (male, female) 2) the victim's relationship to the suspected offender (husband, wife, common-law husband, common-law wife, boyfriend, girlfriend, ex-husband, or ex-wife) 3) the victim's race (Caucasian, Latino/Hispanic, African-American, or Other) 4) the suspected offender's race (Caucasian, Latino/Hispanic, African-American, or Other) 5) weapon used in domestic homicide (unknown, handgun, rifle, shotgun, knife/stabbing instrument, blunt object, personal weapon, ropes/garrote, or other) 6) location of domestic homicide incident (unknown, victim's residence, shared residence, suspected

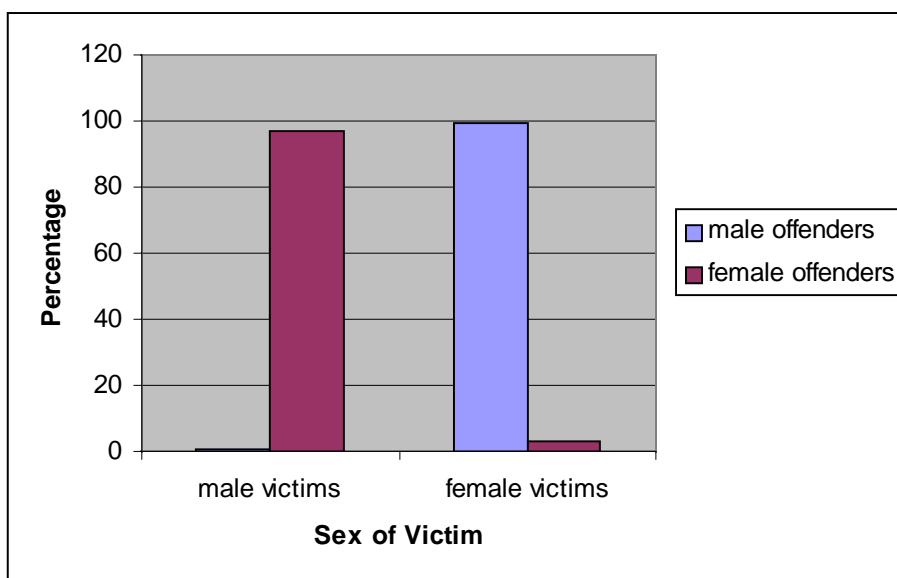
offender's residence, other residence, public place, vehicle, or other) and 7) the most prominent precipitating event (domestic violence, lover's triangle, other arguments, brawl due to alcohol/narcotics influence, other non-felony mercy killings/suicide, or other).

T-tests were performed to investigate differences between male and female suspected offenders in age of the suspected offender, age of the victim, and education level of the victim. Due to the use of multiple tests, a conservative alpha level of .01 was used to assess significance. Cases with missing data points relevant to an analysis were excluded on an analysis by analysis basis.

A series of chi square tests revealed significant differences between male and female suspected offenders in: i) the victim's sex, $\chi^2(1) = 2069.56, p < .001$, ii) the victim's relationship to the suspected offender, $\chi^2(7) = 2069.76, p < .001$, iii) the victim's race, $\chi^2(3) = 89.28, p < .001$, iv) the suspected offender's race, $\chi^2(3) = 59.68, p < .001$, v) weapon used in domestic homicide, $\chi^2(8) = 107.69, p < .001$, vi) location of domestic homicide incident, $\chi^2(7) = 54.92, p < .001$, and vii) the most prominent precipitating event, $\chi^2(5) = 51.24, p < .001$.

Figure 1.

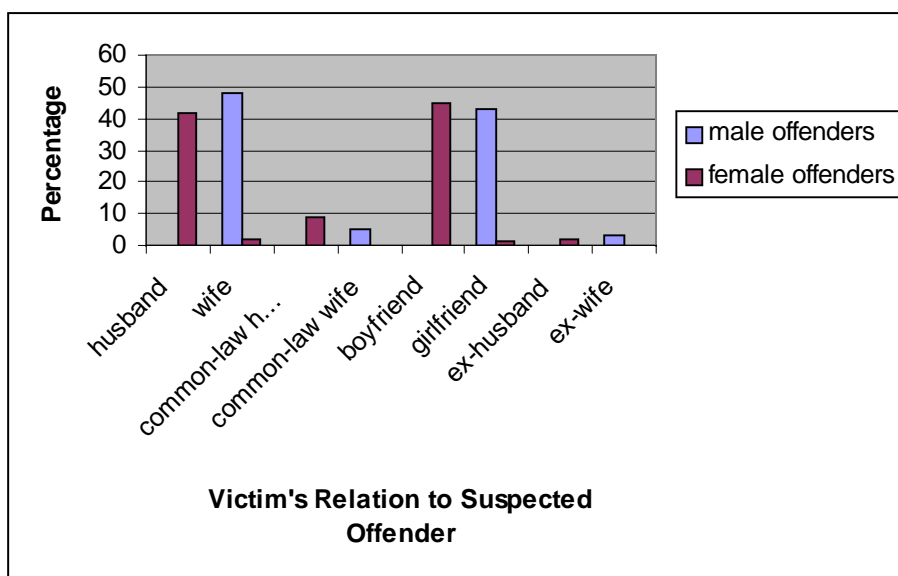
Percentages of Male and Female Offenders of Intimate Partner Homicide Suspected of Killing Male or Female Victims



In regard to gender, male suspected offenders of intimate partner homicide (IPH) were more likely to kill female victims whereas female suspected offenders of IPH were more likely to kill male victims. 99.4% of male suspected offenders of IPH were accused of killing female victims, and 96.9% female suspected offenders of IPH were accused of killing male victims. These results showed that IPH is for the most part a male-to-female and female-to-male event (see figure 1).

Figure 2

Percentages of Male and Female Offenders of Intimate Partner Homicide Suspected of Killing Victims by Victim's Relation to Suspected Offender

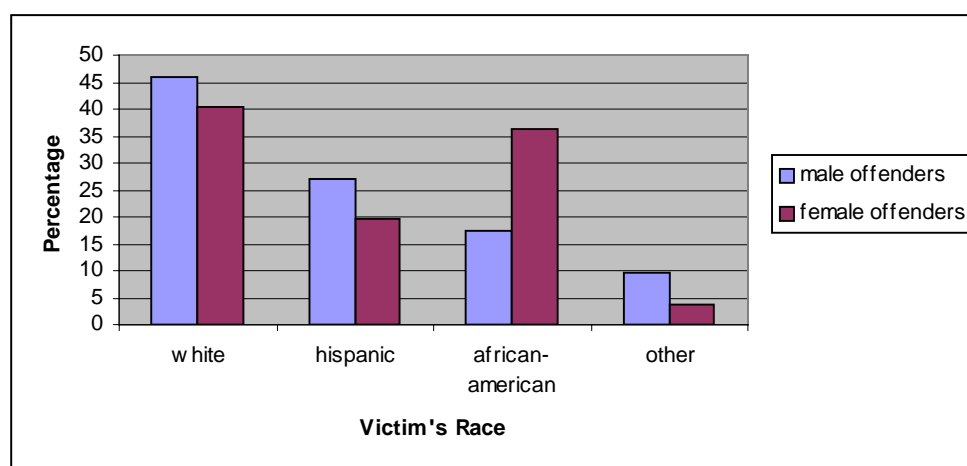


Male suspected offenders of IPH were more likely to kill victims who were their wives (48.2%), girlfriends (43.1%), common-law wives (5.1%), or ex-wives (2.9%). Female suspected offenders of IPH were more likely to kill victims who were their boyfriends (44.9%), husbands (41.5%), common-law husbands (8.8%), or ex-husbands (1.7%). The remarkable results were that contrary to popular belief about women being at a higher risk when they leave their marriage, the results from this study suggest the contrary. Separating and divorcing an abusive husband significantly decreases the risk of death to women. This conclusion is based on the fact that ex-wives had the lowest percent of IPH compared to the other marital status categories for women. Furthermore, the results from this study indicate that men whose marital status was identified as ex-husbands had the lowest risk of IPH compared to men in the other categories. However,

these conclusions are based on the data available. It is unknown at what point the attacks occurred to the men and women whose marital status was classified as “ex-husband” and “ex-wife”. Without having the actual date/timeframe of the separation and divorce, one cannot know for certain the killing could have been the result of separation and the threat of divorce. In other words, the separation and divorce/threat of divorce could have become the precipitating factor (see figure 2).

Figure 3

Percentages of Male and Female Offenders of Intimate Partner Homicide Suspected of Killing Victims by Victim's Race

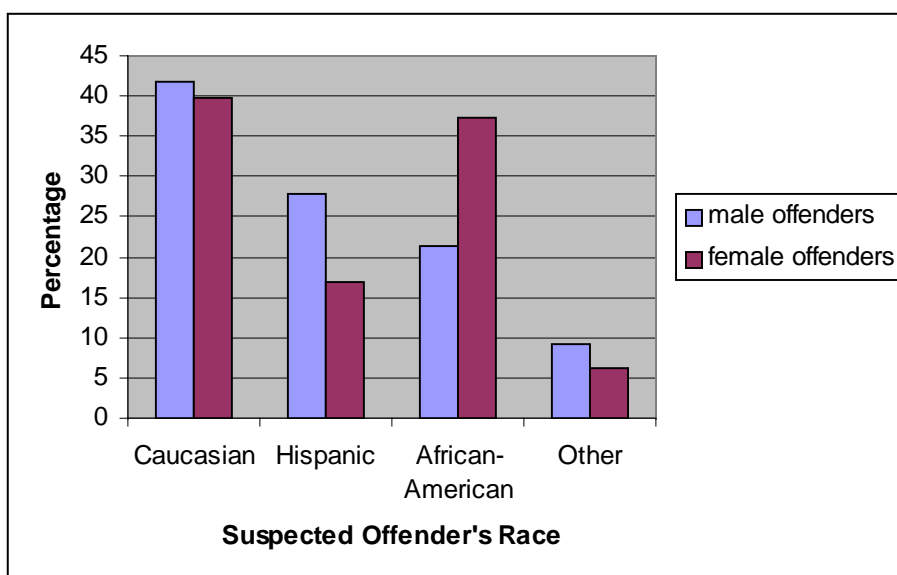


Male suspected offenders of IPH were more likely than female suspected offenders to kill Caucasian victims (45.9% of male suspected offenders of IPH killed Caucasian victims compared to 40.4% of female suspected offenders of IPH). In addition, results indicate that male suspected offenders of IPH were more likely than female suspected offenders of IPH to kill Latino/Hispanic victims (27.1% of male suspected offenders killed Hispanic victims compared to 19.7% of female suspected offenders).

However, the results reveal that female suspected offenders of IPH were more likely than male suspected offenders to kill African-American victims (36.4% of female suspected offenders killed African-American victims compared to 17.5% of male suspected offenders). In other words, there was a strong likelihood that the victim was either Caucasian or Latino/Hispanic female if the suspected offender of IPH was male, but there was also a strong likelihood that the victim was an African-American male if the suspected offender of IPH was an African-American female (see figure 3).

Figure 4

Percentages of Male and Female Offenders of Intimate Partner Homicide Suspected of Killing Victims by Suspected Offender's Race



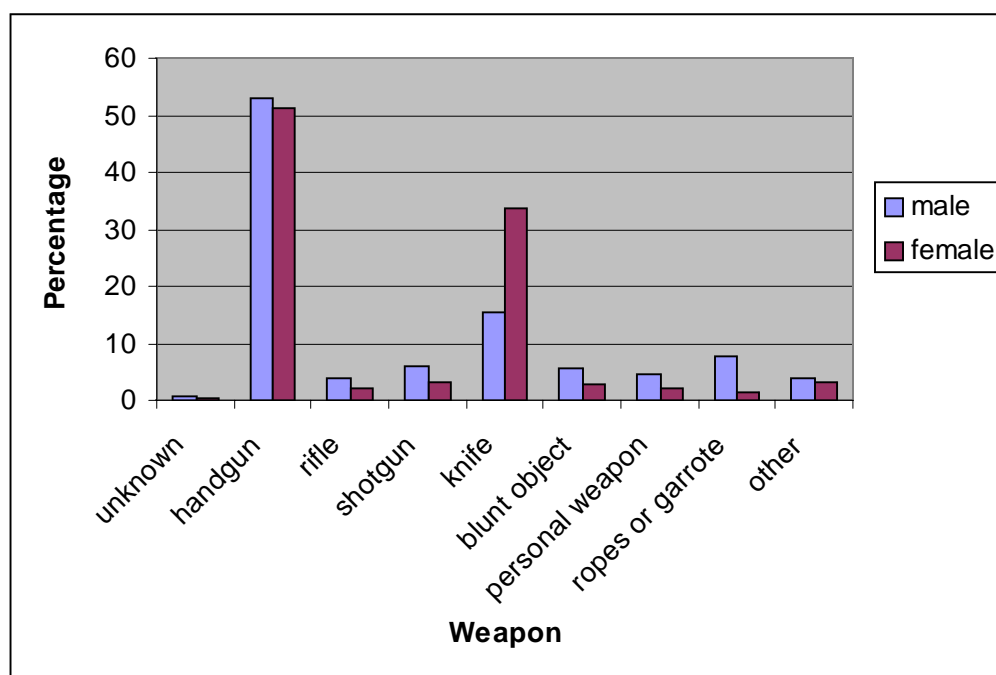
In terms of race, the majority of male suspected offenders of IPH and their victims were classified as Caucasian (41.7% of male suspected offenders were Caucasian).

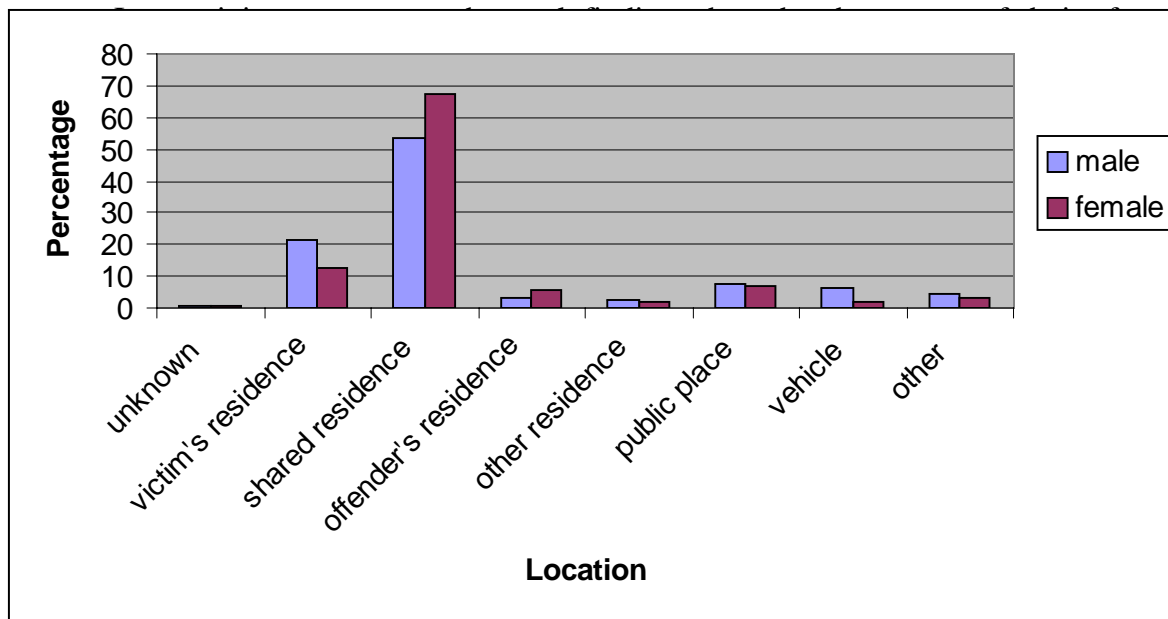
Hispanics/ Latinos males suspected offenders of IPH comprised 27.8%. African-American males suspected offenders of IPH comprised 21.4%.

In addition, the majority of females suspected offenders of IPH and their victims were classified as Caucasian (39.9% of female suspected offenders of intimate partner homicide were Caucasian). Latino/Hispanic females suspected of IPH comprised 16.9%. However, 37.2% of female suspected offenders of IPH were classified as African-American, significantly higher than African-American males (see figure 4).

Figure 5

Percentages of Male and Female Suspected Offenders of Intimate Partner Homicide by Weapon used in Homicide Killing





female suspected offenders used ropes or garrote to murder their victims by strangulation. This finding may be related to the general discrepancy in physical strength between males and females. In other words, strangling their victim could have been more difficult for females than for males (see figure 5).

Figure 6

Percentages of Male and Female Offenders of Intimate Partner Homicide Suspected of Killing Victims by Location of Homicide Killing Incident

The majority of both male and female suspected offenders IPH committed the homicide at a shared residence or the residence of the victim. This was by far the most common places where the incidents of IPH occurred. Within this finding, a substantially important factor emerges: most female suspected offenders killed their intimate partners in their shared residence, compared to male suspected offenders of IPH (67.6% of female offenders compared to 53.4% of males). However, male suspected offenders were more likely than females to commit the homicide at the victim's residence (21.2% of male

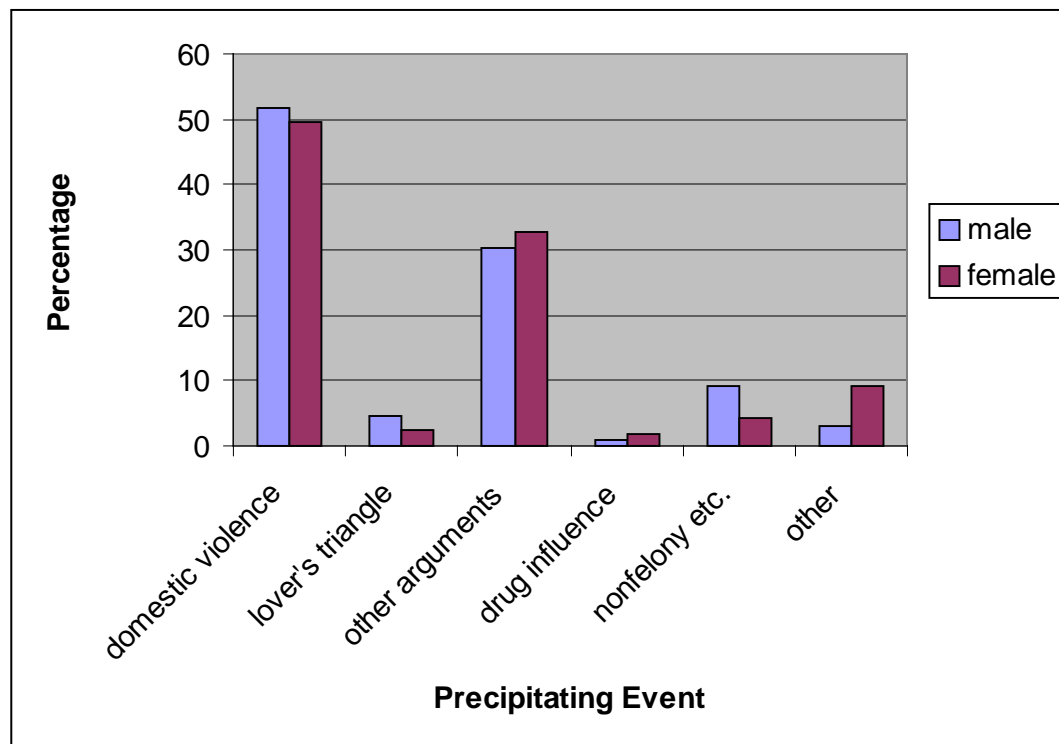
suspected offenders compared to 12.5% of female suspected offenders). Furthermore, males suspects also appeared more likely than females suspects to murder their victims in a vehicle (6.5% of male suspected offenders compared to 1.7% of females). Moreover, male and female suspected offenders of IPH were likely to kill the victim at a public place (7.7% males vs 7.1% females).

The picture that emerges from these findings is that, in order of significance, the most likely places to be killed in an IPH if the offender is a male is: 1) the shared residence 2) the victim's residence 3) a public place 4) a vehicle 5) the offender's residence 6) other residence. Males who have access to the victim in their shared residence or the victim's residence are more likely to perpetrate IPH.

Concerning the most likely place to be killed in an IPH if the offender is a female, 1) the shared residence is the primary location 2) followed by the victim's residence 3) a public place 4) the offender's residence 5) other residence 6) a vehicle. Females are significantly more likely to murder the victim in their shared residence and to a lesser extent in the victim's residence (see figure 6).

Figure 7

Percentages of Male and Female Offenders of Intimate Partner Homicide Suspected of Killing Victims by Most Prominent Precipitating Event



Domestic violence or other arguments were the precipitating events in which the majority of both males and females suspected offenders murdered their victims. It appears that male suspected offenders may be more likely than females to murder their victim after a non-felony mercy killing or suicide pact (9.3% of males compared to 4.4% of females). Lover's triangle was the cause of 4.5% of the male perpetrated IPH, and 2.3% of the female perpetrated IPH. Female suspected offenders of IPH were more likely to murder their victim while under the influence of drugs than males do (1.7% vs 1.0%, respectively). These results show that domestic violence and other arguments were the main precipitating events preceding the IPH. A remarkable finding is that, despite the highly publicized cases of males murdering their intimate partner during a lover's triangle, the actual number of these precipitating events are small (see figure 7).

Table 1

Evaluation of Differences Between Male and Female Suspected Offenders on Suspect's
Age, Victim's Age, and Victim's Education Level

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
Suspect's Age			4.15***
Male Suspects (<i>n</i> = 1720)	39.62	16.09	
Female Suspects (<i>n</i> = 479)	36.33	12.29	
Victim's Age			3.68***
Male Suspects (<i>n</i> = 1735)	36.86	15.53	
Female Suspects (<i>n</i> = 479)	39.73	13.51	
Victim's Education Level (years)			.20
Male Victims (<i>n</i> = 1611)	11.80	2.74	
Female Victims (<i>n</i> = 442)	11.77	2.74	

*** $p < .001$

In regard to the age of suspected offenders, independent-sample t-tests confirmed significant differences between male and female suspected offenders in terms of age of the suspected offender, $t(2197) = 4.15$, $p < .001$, and age of the victim, $t(2212) = 3.68$, $p < .001$. These effects for differences between male and female suspected offenders were relatively small, however, accounting for less than 1% of the variance in age of the suspected offender, $r = .09$, $r^2 = .008$, and age of the victim, $r = .08$, $r^2 = .006$.

Male suspected offenders ($M = 39.62$ years, $SD = 16.09$) were significantly older than female suspected offenders ($M = 36.33$ years, $SD = 12.29$). In addition, male suspected offenders murdered victims who were significantly younger ($M = 36.86$ years, $SD = 15.53$) than the victims who were murdered by suspected female offenders ($M = 39.73$ years, $SD = 13.51$). Education level of the victim did not significantly differ between male ($M = 11.80$ years, $SD = 2.74$) and female ($M = 11.77$ years, $SD = 2.74$) victims, $t(2051) = .20$, $p = .84$.

To describe these findings in a simpler form, male suspected offenders of IPH tended to be older than the female offenders. In addition, male suspected offenders of IPH tended to murder younger victims than females. Furthermore, the victims murdered by both males and females during the intimate partner homicide had about a high school education (see table 1).

In addition to using chi square and t-tests to analyze the data, a sequential logistic regression analysis was performed to assess prediction of the sex of suspected offenders (male or female) in intimate partner homicide (IPH) cases, first on the basis of three homicide description predictors, followed by the addition of two victim description predictors, and then the addition of two suspected offender description predictors. Homicide description predictors were: 1) weapon (unknown, handgun, rifle, shotgun, knife/stabbing instrument, blunt object, personal weapon, ropes/garrote, or other), 2) location (unknown, victim's residence, shared residence, suspected offender's residence, other residence, public place, vehicle, or other), and 3) precipitating event (domestic violence, lover's triangle, other arguments, brawl due to alcohol/narcotics influence, other non-felony mercy killings/suicide, or other).

Victim description predictors included age and race (unknown, Caucasian, Latino/Hispanic, African-American, or other). Lastly, suspected offender description predictors also included age and race (unknown, Caucasian, Latino/Hispanic, African-American, or other). An alpha level of .05 was used to assess statistical significance. After the removal of 49 cases with missing data points on one or more predictor variables, data from 2,194 suspected offenders were available for analysis: 1,715 males and 479 females. Evaluation of adequate expected frequency counts for all categorical predictor variables was satisfactory, revealing no need to restrict model goodness-of-fit tests. The sample size was more than adequate to accommodate the number of predictors in each regression model. The logistic regression outcome (sex of suspected offender) was coded as follows: females were coded as the event outcome while males were coded as the non-event outcome (female = 1, male = 0)

The test of the model based only on homicide description predictors against the constant-only model was statistically significant, $\chi^2(20) = 226.91, p < .001$, indicating that the composite of homicide description predictors reliably discriminated between male and female suspected offenders of IPH. The Hosmer and Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test revealed a good model fit, H-S $\chi^2(8) = 4.58, p = .80$, with a Nagelkerke R^2 of .15 and Cox and Snell R^2 of .10. According to the Wald criterion, location, Wald $\chi^2(7) = 56.99, p < .001$, weapon, Wald $\chi^2(8) = 91.49, p < .001$, and precipitating event, Wald $\chi^2(5) = 58.77, p < .001$, all reliably enhanced prediction of suspected offender's sex.

Classification was considerable, as the model classified 79% of all cases correctly. However, cases were overclassified into the largest group: male suspected offenders. On

the basis of the three homicide description predictors alone, correction classification rates were 99.1% for males, but only 6.9% for females. This suggests that this model had strong specificity (correctly classifying non-events) but weak sensitivity (correctly classifying events), as the model highly underclassified female suspected offenders.

A second model test with the inclusion of the victim description predictor variables revealed a reliable improvement in the overall model with the addition of these two predictors, $\chi^2(5) = 82.10$, $p < .001$. Results also revealed a reliable overall model against a constant-only model, $\chi^2(25) = 309.01$, $p < .001$, and a good model fit based on the composite of homicide description predictors and victim description predictors, H-S $\chi^2(8) = 7.49$, $p = .49$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .20$, Cox and Snell $R^2 = .13$. Classification was also improved with an overall classification rate of 79.1%, which reflected 96.2% and 18% classification rate for male and female suspected offenders, respectively.

On the basis of homicide description predictors and victim description predictors, the classification rate for female suspected offenders improved by about 11%. However, cases were still overclassified as male suspected offenders. Using the Wald criterion within this second model, location, Wald $\chi^2(7) = 46.22$, $p < .001$, weapon, Wald $\chi^2(8) = 73.32$, $p < .001$, precipitating event, Wald $\chi^2(5) = 63.05$, $p < .001$, victim's age, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 30.01$, $p < .001$, and victim's race, Wald $\chi^2(4) = 47.81$, $p < .001$, all reliably enhanced prediction of suspected offender's sex.

Lastly, a model test with the inclusion of the suspected offender description predictor variables also revealed a reliable improvement in the overall model with the addition of these final two predictors, $\chi^2(5) = 166.71$, $p < .001$. Results also denoted a reliable overall model against a constant-only model, $\chi^2(30) = 475.73$, $p < .001$, and a

good model fit based on all of the possible predictors, H-S $\chi^2(8) = 11.34$, $p = .18$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .30$, Cox and Snell $R^2 = .20$. Table 2 presents the logistic regression results for the full model with all predictors, including the contribution of significant individual predictors and levels of predictors in the final model.

After the addition of the suspected offender description predictors, classification was again improved with an overall classification rate of 81.8%, which reflected 95.6% and 32.4% correct classification rate for male and female suspected offenders, respectively. Inclusion of all the predictors yielded an improvement in classification rate for female suspected offenders of about 14%. Although cases were still overclassified as male suspected offenders, a considerable third of the female suspected offenders were classified correctly by the final model.

Within this final model including all predictor variables, the Wald criterion indicated that location (vehicle), weapon (knife/stabbing instrument and ropes/garrote), and precipitating event (domestic violence, lover's triangle, other arguments, or other non-felony mercy killings/suicide), victim's age, victim's race (Caucasian, Latino/Hispanic, or African-American), suspected offender's age, and suspected offender's race (Latino/Hispanic or African-American) all reliably enhanced prediction, $p < .05$, of suspected offender's sex (see Table 2).

Notably, suspected offenders were 2.68 times more likely to be female if the weapon used in the homicide was a knife/stabbing instrument (95% CI: 1.32-5.46). Furthermore, suspected offenders were 6.46 times more likely to be female if the victim's race was African-American (95% CI: 2.68-15.54), 4.19 times more likely to be female if the victim's race was Latino/Hispanic (95% CI: 1.86-9.43), and 2.58 times more likely to be female if the victim's race was Caucasian (95% CI: 1.19-5.60). In addition, suspected

offenders were about one times more likely to be female for every year increase in the victim's age (95% CI: 1.09-1.12), as well as for every year decrease in the suspected offender's age (95% CI: .89-.92). Female suspected offenders were also less likely than males to be Latino/Hispanic. Female suspected offenders were less likely than males to commit the homicide in a vehicle, less likely than males to use ropes/garrote as a weapon in the homicide, as well as less likely than males to commit a domestic homicide after domestic violence, lover's triangle, other arguments, or other non-felony mercy killings/suicides.

The final model that included the homicide description, victim description, and suspected offender description variables proved to be the most reliable model in predicting the sex of a suspected offender, as the inclusion of all predictors yielded considerable improvement of both the strength of the model and classification. All variables were found to be significant predictors within the model, as the overall model exhibited a strong effect and a good model fit on the current data.

Table 2

Logistic Regression Analysis of Homicide Description, Victim Description, and Suspected Offender Description Predictor Variables on Suspected Offender's Sex

Predictor	Parameter Estimate	Wald χ^2	df	O.R. (95% C.I.)
Location		49.46***	7	
Vehicle	-1.32	6.92**	1	0.27 (0.10-0.71)

Weapon		71.87***	8	
Knife	0.99	7.38**	1	2.68 (1.32-5.46)
Ropes/Garrote	-1.41	7.01**	1	0.24 (0.09-0.69)
Precipitating Event		40.75***	5	
Domestic Violence	-1.42	26.58***	1	0.24 (0.14-0.41)
Lover's Triangle	-1.56	13.08***	1	0.21 (0.09-0.49)
Drugs Influence	-1.19	18.53***	1	0.31 (0.18-0.52)
Other non-felony	-2.27	36.10***	1	0.10 (0.05-0.22)
Victim's Age	0.10	144.03***	1	1.10 (1.09-1.12)
Victim's Race		20.35***	4	
Caucasian	0.95	5.70*	1	2.58 (1.19-5.60)
Latino/Hispanic	1.43	11.93**	1	4.19 (1.86-9.43)
African-American	1.87	17.34***	1	6.46 (2.68-15.54)
Offender's Age	-0.10	129.64***	1	0.91 (0.89-0.92)
Offender's Race		12.08*	4	
Latino/Hispanic	-1.04	7.73**	1	0.35 (0.17-0.74)
Test		χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall Model Test		475.73	30	< .001
Goodness-of-fit Test				
Hosmer & Lemeshow		11.34	8	0.18

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

O.R. = Odds Ratio; C.I. = 95% Confidence Interval

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study analyzed intimate partner homicide (IPH) by incorporating several variables into the analysis, including gender, marital status, race/ethnicity, age, education, weapon used, location of incident, and precipitating event. Consistent with previous research, the results of this study suggest that suspected offenders involved in a homicide killing of an intimate partner are more likely to be male. The results also indicate that intimate partner homicide (IPH) is for the most part a male-to-female and female-to-male event.

When IPH is analyzed through marital status, the results appear to indicate particular trends. For instance, when the suspected offender of IPH is a male, the results from this study demonstrated that women whose marital status was classified as wives were at high risk of IPH (48.2%). Women whose marital status was identified as girlfriends were also at high risk of IPH (43.1%). Common-law wives and ex-wives were at the least risk of IPH, compared with women in the other two categories (5.1% and 2.9%, respectively).

On the other hand, when the suspected offender of IPH is a female, the results from this study showed that men whose marital status was identified as boyfriends were at the highest risk of being the victims of IPH (44.9%). Men categorized as boyfriends were at the greatest risk of being killed in IPH than men in other categories; the women categorized as their girlfriends being the perpetrators. The percentage of women who

killed their boyfriends was greater than the percentage of men who killed their girlfriends. Husbands were a closely second in regard to IPH risk (41.5%). Men identified as common-law husbands were significantly less likely to be the victims of IPH (8.8%) compared to the men in the other two categories. However, common-law-husbands were at a greater risk of being killed by their common-law-wives, compared to the risk common-law-wives face of being killed by their common-law-husbands (8.8% common-law-husband killed by their common-law-wives vs. 5.1% common-law-wives killed by their common-law-husbands). Men identified as ex-husbands were a distant risk category (1.7%).

The US Census (2001) provided the following population percentages in the state of California as recorded based on marital status (15 years and over): married individuals, 52.4% (males = 26.7%, females = 25.7%); never married, 30% (males = 16.6%, females = 13.4%); separated, 2.5% (males = 1.0%, females = 1.5%); divorced, 9.5% (males = 3.9%, females = 5.6%); and widowed, 5.6% (males = 1.1%, females = 4.5%). [Ratios for males: married = 54.2%; never married = 33.7%; separated = 2.0%; divorced = 7.9%; and widowed = 2.2%. Ratios for females: married = 50.7%; never married = 26.4%; separated = 3.0%; divorced = 11.5%; and widowed = 8.9%]. Comparing these numbers with the overall percentages of IPH based on marital status, girlfriend and boyfriend are the categories identified in this study that deviate the most from the US Census population percentages in terms of IPH. If we compare the US Census percentages for never married vs. this study's intimate partner homicide risk for boyfriends or girlfriends, this study showed those categories significantly higher than those of the US Census. This indicates that, in terms of the population percentages, the

individuals whose marital status is defined as either girlfriend or boyfriend appear to be at the highest risk for intimate partner homicide than other individuals identified in any other category, and this validated the third hypothesis.

Furthermore, by analyzing the results, it becomes clear that women who separate or divorce an abusive husband significantly decrease their risk of death. These results challenge the widely held belief that women who divorce and leave their husbands are at great risk of murder. Without minimizing the great risk divorce and separation causes to the female victim, these findings suggest that as a general rule women in abusive relationships are safer divorcing and leaving the relationship than staying married and continued being abused. This assumption is supported by the fact that ex-wives had the lowest risk of IPH than any other marital status for women (again, 2.9%). Previous research studies have indicated that women who leave the intimate relationship are at high risk of IPH. This apparent inconsistency may indicate that perhaps what decreases the risk of IPH is both the separation and the divorce, not just the separation. Separating but remaining married to the abusive husband possibly creates a sense of possession by the husband, thus the controlling behaviors characteristic of domestic violence.

As in the case of ex-wives and their significantly decreased risk of IPH compared with the other categories for women, men whose marital status was described as ex-husbands had the lowest risk of being murdered during an incident of intimate partner violence. This analysis demonstrates that male and female intimate partners who decided to divorce each other decreased the potential for homicide by their intimate partner.

Controlling behaviors in the relationship directed at the intimate partner have been used to mainly describe abusive men. Therefore, females who may be prone to engage in

IPH pose the least risk to men whose marital status was identified as ex-husbands. Also, it would appear as if the mere fact that intimate partners – male and female - have access to and communicate with one another is a significant predictor of intimate partner homicide (IPH).

To investigate this issue in more depth, the patterns of interaction between the ex-spouses have to be explored. It would be judicious to examine whether the ex-spouses have children in common, and if they do, whether visitation with the children occurs. If there are children in common and if visitation occurs, an analysis of the rate of intimate partner homicide (IPH) vs. the children/no children visitation could assess whether such factor is present. It is possible that an ex-spouse has moved out of the area and the potential access to the victim has been minimized. However, if interactions between the ex-husbands and ex-wives exist, then that would indicate that the access to the victim is not the only variable that could potentially cause the intimate partner homicide (IPH), and that would indicate that a shift in conceptualization takes place in the mind of both male and female potential perpetrators of intimate partner homicide. Severing the intimate relationship through a legal divorce changes how both men and women perceive the relationship with their intimate partner. These are sobering points that need to be taken into account when trying to protect the victims of domestic violence.

Nonetheless, it is important to point out that this study did not establish whether the risk of IPH was decreased as a result of the legal divorce or as a result of other unknown variables. Thus, this information needs to be carefully weighted before assuming that the mere fact a legal divorce was obtained decreased the risk. Furthermore, there is no information on when the attacks occurred to the men and women whose

marital status was identified as “ex-wives” or “ex-husbands”. Therefore, missing from this viewpoint are the situational factors that contributed to the murder of those men and women.

With regard to race, Caucasian males and females comprised the greatest percent of both suspected offenders and victims of intimate partner homicide. The results from this study indicate that 41.7% of male suspected offenders of IPH were Caucasian and 39.9% of female suspected offenders of IPH were Caucasian. In addition, this study also showed that 49.5% of male suspected offenders of IPH killed Caucasian victims and 40.4% of female suspected offenders of IPH killed Caucasian victims.

Concerning African-Americans, the analysis clearly points to the likelihood that the percentage of African-American females suspected of intimate partner homicide (37.2%) is greater than the percentage of African-American males who are suspected of intimate partner homicide (21.4%). Another remarkable finding from this study reveals that female suspected offenders of IPH were more likely than male suspected offenders of IPH to kill African-American victims (36.4% vs. 17.5%, respectively). Suspected offenders were 6.46 times more likely to be female if the victim’s race was African-American. Based on these results, it would appear that, in general terms, African-American females are more likely to engage in intimate partner homicide in greater percentages than African-American males, and their violence seems to be directed for the most part at African-American males. Seeing it from a different angle, African-American females appear to be more violent than African-American males when analyzing their behavior through the lens of intimate partner homicide.

With regard to the Hispanic/Latino population, this study showed that 27.8% of the male suspected offenders of IPH were Hispanic/Latino. It also showed that 16.9% of the female suspected offenders of IPH were Latino/Hispanic. In addition, results indicate that male suspected offenders of IPH were more likely than female suspected offenders of IPH to kill Latino/Hispanic victims (27.1% of male suspected offenders killed Hispanic victims compared to 19.7% of female suspected offenders). However, the percentage of Latino/Hispanic males suspected offenders of IPH was smaller than that of Caucasian males suspected of IPH but higher than that of African-American males. On the other hand, the percentage of Latino/Hispanic females suspected offenders of IPH was significantly lower than that of both Caucasian and African-American females suspected offenders of IPH.

The US Census (2001) places the Caucasian population at 59.5% of the total population in California, Latinos/Hispanics at 32.4%, and African-Americans at 6.7%. Correlating the US Census population percentages in relation to IPH and basing it on race/ethnic group, both Caucasians and Latinos/Hispanics appear to perpetrate intimate partner homicide (IPH) at lower rates than their total population percentages for California would suggest. However, using the same analogy, African-Americans are overrepresented in IPH for both male and female suspected offenders of IPH. When comparing male vs. female African-Americans, African-American females suspected of IPH are significantly overrepresented over African-American males suspected of IPH. Furthermore, African-American males who are the victims of IPH are significantly overrepresented in comparison with the US Census percentages for African-Americans in California.

These results indicate important points: Latinos/Hispanics and Caucasians have a lower incidence of IPH than their population percentage in California would suggest. However, excluding African-Americans from the race/ethnic background perspective, Latinos/Hispanics and Caucasians appear to show significant levels of intimate partner homicide (IPH). Remarkably, Caucasian males and females appear to be significantly more violent when analyzing their rate of IPH when excluding African-Americans, but only moderately violent when taking into consideration their percentage population to the total population. The overall conclusion on IPH and race/ethnicity indicate that there is a strong likelihood that the victim will be either Caucasian or Latino/Hispanic female if the suspected offender of IPH is male, but there is also a strong likelihood that the victim will be an African-American male if the suspected offender of IPH is an African-American female.

In terms of weapon of choice used to commit the IPH, this study showed that handguns were the primary weapons of choice used to perpetrate the intimate partner homicide, and this validated the second hypothesis. Firearms comprised a disproportionately number of type of weapon used to kill the intimate partner by both males and females suspected of IPH. Specifically, handguns comprised over half of type of weapon used by both males and females suspected of IPH (53% for men and 51.1% for women). Males and females suspected of IPH were almost equally likely to use a handgun to commit the intimate partner homicide. Rifles and shotguns comprised 9.5% of the type of weapon used by males suspected offenders of IPH, and by 5.4% of the females suspected of IPH. Although the use of rifles and shotguns during incidents of IPH is significant, the use of handguns dwarfs these numbers. Given the above-mentioned

findings, we can conclude that limiting the availability of handguns could reduce IPH.

This certainly is a topic of debate that needs additional research.

Knives or other type of stabbing instrument were the second leading cause of IPH by males (15.3% of males used such type of weapon). Although this is a significant number, female suspected offenders of IPH were considerably more likely than their male counterparts to use a knife or other kind of stabbing instrument to murder their victims. About one-third of the females suspected of IPH used a knife or other kind of stabbing instrument to commit the murder (33.6%). Notably, suspected offenders were 2.68 times more likely to be female if the weapon used in the homicide was a knife/stabbing instrument.

Based on these research findings, it is relevant to point out that handguns and knives seem to be the two main weapons of choice to commit intimate partner homicide by both males and females. Generalizing these findings, it would appear that 68 out of 100 men use either handguns or knives/other kind of stabbing instrument to murder their victims. However, the surprising finding is that by generalizing these results it would suggest that 85 out of 100 women use either handguns or knives/other kind of stabbing instruments to commit the intimate partner homicide. More surprisingly, if these findings are generalized, then it would appear that women use knives/other kind of stabbing instrument on an average of 120% more often than men (33.6% vs. 15.3%, respectively). This study conclusively demonstrated that women are significantly more likely than men to use a knife or other kind of stabbing instrument to kill their victims. The significance that these findings have in the area of intimate partner homicide is a topic that needs further research and analysis.

In examining other type of weapons used to perpetrate the IPH, men are more likely than women to use ropes or garrote to strangle their victim. This was evidenced by the 7.6% of men suspected offenders of IPH who used such means to commit the homicide. On the other hand, only 1.5% of female suspected offenders used ropes or garrote to murder their victims by strangulation. This finding may be related to the general discrepancy in physical strength between males and females. In other words, strangling their victim could have been more difficult for females than for males.

Furthermore, the percent of males who used a blunt object or personal weapons to kill their victims was greater than the percent of females who used such means (personal weapons include hands, feet, etc.). However, this category was small compared with other type of weapons used (4.5% of male suspected offenders of IPH used blunt objects or personal weapons, whereas 2.1% of females suspected offenders of IPH used similar type of weapon). Again, the discrepancy in physical strength between males and females may have contributed to the lower percentage of women using such type of weapon.

The location where the intimate partner homicide was committed brought up significant findings. The shared residence and the victim's residence were the primary locations used by both males and females suspected offenders of IPH to commit the murders. These were by far the most common places where the incidents of IPH occurred. Interestingly, 74.6% of males suspected of IPH committed the homicide either at the shared residence or the victim's residence (53.4% of males murdered their intimate partners at the shared residence and 21.2% at the victim's residence). On the other hand, 81.1% of females suspected of IPH did likewise (67.6% of females killed their intimate partner at the shared residence and 12.5% at the victim's residence).

Within that context and generalizing those findings and breaking them into further analysis, it would appear that 75 out of 100 men suspected of IPH committed the homicide at either the shared residence or the victim's residence. Furthermore, using the same analogy, the findings would suggest that 81 out of 100 women suspected of IPH committed the homicide at the residence where both she and the victim lived or at the victim's residence. An additional breakdown in percentages would indicate that 53 out of 100 men committed the IPH at the shared residence, but 68 out of 100 women committed the IPH at the residence they shared with the victim. Moreover, these findings would indicate that 21 out of 100 men committed the IPH at the victim's residence, but only 12 out of 100 women did likewise.

Males are significantly more likely to murder the victim in their shared residence and to a lesser extent in the victim's residence. Furthermore, it appears that females who have access to the victim in their shared residence or the victim's residence are more likely to perpetrate IPH. Within this finding, a substantially important factor emerges. The shared residence becomes a focal point for the IPH. The majority of both male and female suspected offenders committed the homicide at a shared residence or the residence of the victim. However, male suspected offenders were more likely than females to commit the homicide at their victim's residence, and female suspected offenders were more likely than males to commit the homicide at a shared residence with their victims.

When looking at other possible locations where the IPH was committed, males suspected offenders of IPH appeared more likely than females suspected offenders of IPH to murder their victims in a vehicle (6.5% of male suspected offenders compared to 1.7%

of females). Moreover, male and female suspected offenders of IPH were likely to kill the victim at a public place (7.7% males vs. 7.1% females).

In terms of precipitating event, domestic violence or other arguments were the incidents that lead to the majority of both males and females suspected offenders to murder their victims. The majority of both males and females murdered their victims after some sort of domestic violence or other arguments. This was a clear conclusion after discovering that 82.2% of male suspected offenders of IPH and 82.5% of female suspected offenders of IPH committed the homicide after domestic violence or other arguments. Based on these findings, it is safe to assert that both male and female intimate partners had engaged in domestic violence or other arguments just prior to the homicide. A remarkable finding is that, despite the highly publicized cases of males murdering their intimate partner during a lover's triangle, the actual number of such precipitating event was small. Lover's triangle was the cause of 4.5% of the male perpetrated IPH, and 2.3% of the female perpetrated IPH.

Further analysis of the precipitating events indicate that female suspected offenders of IPH were more likely to murder their victim while under the influence of drugs (1.7% vs. 1.0%). Moreover, it appears that male suspected offenders of IPH may be more likely than females to murder their victim after a non-felony mercy killing or suicide pact (9.3% of males compared to 4.4% of females).

When analyzing this study through education level, the victim's education level did not significantly differ between male and female victims. It appears that male and females who are the victims of intimate partner homicide tend to have, on average, a high

school education. The dataset did not have information on the education level of suspected offenders of IPH, thus, that information is not included in this study.

In terms of age of the victim and the suspected offender, male suspected offenders of IPH tended to be older than the female offenders. Stated differently, male suspected offenders of IPH tended to murder younger victims than females suspected offenders of IPH. Thus, it appears that male suspected offenders appear to be older than their female counterparts and murder younger victims in comparison to female suspected offenders who appear to be younger than their male counterparts and murder older victims. Female suspected offenders were younger than male suspected offenders of IPH and murdered older victims. Suspected offenders were about one times more likely to be female for every year increase in the victim's age, as well as for every year decrease in the suspected offender's age. In addition, suspected offenders were about one times more likely to be female for every year increase in the victim's age, as well as for every year decrease in the suspected offender's age.

Summarizing this section and findings from this study, several key facts emerged. Male suspected offenders of intimate partner homicide (IPH) were more likely to kill female victims and female suspected offenders of IPH were more likely to kill male victims. The majority of male and female suspected offenders of IPH and their victims were classified as Caucasian. Furthermore, the weapon of choice was clearly a handgun for male and female suspected offenders of IPH. The majority of both male and female suspected offenders used some type of handgun to commit the homicide. That most of the homicides were caused by the use of a handgun indicate that the choice of weapon cannot be seen as a random act of violence. This was a very obvious pattern that needs to be

explored in greater detail. A probable explanation is that handgun ownership may significantly increase the likelihood of an intimate partner homicide (IPH) for both genders. In other words, the likelihood of owning a handgun by either males or females increases the risk of IPH for both sexes.

The use of handguns and knives in the intimate partner homicide poses several debatable questions. The first question would be, was the intimate partner homicide perpetrated in an act of self-defense or in an act of deliberate and calculated violence? Adding to the previous question: was the use of handguns a calculated action and the use of knives an impulsivity-related action? Or vice-versa? Furthermore, were the events that led to the IPH a situational event or an internal character of both male and female suspected offenders of IPH? These questions can only be hypothesized because the data set does not reveal whether a conviction was obtained. But even when such information were available, it is difficult to state with accuracy and confidence the true reasons for the homicides.

Marital status revealed interesting facts. The majority of males and females suspected offenders of IPH murdered their intimate partners whose marital status was identified as either girlfriend/boyfriend or married. Individuals whose marital status was identified as ex-wives or ex-husbands comprised the smallest percent of the victims of IPH. It was inferred that separation and divorce decrease the risk of IPH by creating a shift in conceptualization of how men and women perceive the relationship with their intimate partner. However, this assumption was not supported by the present study and it was just a hypothesis that needs testing.

In terms of location where the IPH occurred, the majority of both male and female suspected offenders IPH committed the homicide at a shared residence or the residence of the victim. Female suspected offenders were less likely than males to commit the homicide in a vehicle, less likely than males to use ropes/garrote as a weapon in the homicide, as well as less likely than males to commit a domestic homicide after domestic violence, lover's triangle, other arguments, or other non-felony mercy killings/suicides.

In regard to age, this study suggested that male suspected offenders appear to be older than their female counterparts and murder younger victims. Concerning education level, the victims murdered by both males and females during the IPH had, on average, about a high school education.

Constructing profiles of victims and perpetrators of intimate partner homicide (IPH) and using population percentages, four profiles can be deducted from this study:

1. The female victim of IPH is for the most part murdered by a male. She is likely to be in a dating relationship with the perpetrator and, to a lesser extent, is likely to be married to the perpetrator. She is more likely to be murdered with a handgun, during a domestic violence argument, and in the shared residence or to a lesser extent in her own residence. She tends to be younger than the perpetrator, her intimate partner.
2. The male victim of IPH is for the most part killed by a female. He is likely to be in a dating relationship, and to a lesser extent, married to the offender. He may be older than the perpetrator, his female intimate partner. He is more likely to have been killed with a handgun or a knife and be murdered during a

domestic violence incident, and at the shared residence where he and the offender lived.

3. Male perpetrators of IPH are for the most part, in this order, (a) African-American, (b) Latino/Hispanic, or (c) Caucasian. They are more likely to use a handgun to murder their intimate partner and to a lesser extent, they use a knife. They are likely to murder their intimate partner during a domestic violence argument or during other type of argument.
4. Female perpetrators of IPH tend to be, in this order, (a) African-American, (b) Caucasian, or (c) Latino/Hispanic. They are very likely to use a handgun to commit the homicide, and to a lesser but significant extent, a knife. They are likely to murder their intimate partner during incidents of domestic violence or during other type of arguments.

This concludes the discussion section of this study. The information described here was derived from the statistical analysis of the dataset from the California Vital Statistics and Homicide Data [CVSHD], 1990-1999 (Jason, 2002).

Limitations

The Linked Homicide File (the CVSHD data set) contained significant strengths. The linking of the two files made possible to combine in one data set the strengths of law enforcement reporting and medical reporting. The Death Record File contains more information about the victim, whereas the Department of Justice Homicide File contains more information on the suspect and incident. The strengths of the CVSHD data set carried over to this research study by allowing the ability to extract specific information

relating to actual homicides in California. This assertion gives significant credibility to the statistical analysis of this study. The CVSHD data set provides the unique ability to use all available homicide cases in California from 1990-1999, and to extract the variables needed for this study.

However, the Linked Homicide File has some limitations. Alleged suspected offenders' data was based on police identification of the suspect as the offender, and each case had four columns to identify up to four potential suspects. Consequently, there is considerable duplication of the same information for the four variables identifying suspects in the homicide, including sex, age, and race. In addition, the data set contains three different variables identifying the most likely precipitating event that lead to the homicide. Again, there is considerable repetition in the value labels from all three variables.

Furthermore, the Linked Homicide File did not address whether a conviction was obtained. This lack of information on whether a conviction was obtained decreases the validity of the dataset because the results of this study were obtained under the assumption that both males and females identified in the dataset had indeed caused the intimate partner homicide. Moreover, there was no control over data collection and no control over discrepancies in data collection. With thousands of records compiled by the original researchers, it is difficult to know whether at any point in the data entry process mistakes were made. Errors in data entry could have included cross-referencing the wrong data or adding mistaken data to the fields. With tens of thousand of fields recorded, it is just difficult to accept the dataset as 100% error free.

In regard to the selection of the population involved in intimate partner homicide (IPH) for this study, only intimate partners by marital status in the homicide were identified. Other victims of the violence were not included, such as the children of the perpetrators/victims, their relatives, including in-laws, or other people, including neighbors or friends. In other words, the selection of the cases for this study created a narrow area of analysis within the total number of homicides related to the domestic violence incidents. Victims of domestic violence include other individuals besides the intimate partners, but this information was not included in this study. This choice of analyzing the dataset may give the false impression that only intimate partners are murdered during incidents of intimate partner homicide (IPH). This is a fact that needs to be taken into consideration when evaluating the scope and reach of domestic violence lethality.

Furthermore, substance abuse, a very important area of research as it relates to domestic violence and intimate partner homicide, cannot be properly explored in this study due to the limited information in the dataset analyzed (the CVSHD data set). The literature review clearly indicated that alcohol abuse and drug abuse play a central role in the violence against an intimate partner. The dataset analyzed showed that 1.7% of the female suspects and 1.0% of the male suspects were under the influence of drugs when they committed the homicide. However, up to what extent alcohol abuse and drug abuse played a role in the deaths of the victims of IPH identified in this study is unclear. There is no prior history of alcohol and/or drug abuse in the dataset analyzed.

Another area of interest, stalking of the victim, cannot be explored in this study because such information is missing from the dataset. The literature review clearly

indicated that stalking often precedes the killing of an intimate partner, but how much it influenced the homicides analyzed in this study is unknown. Moreover, socioeconomic variables as they influence IPH cannot be explored due to the lack of information in the dataset analyzed.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Understanding the causes of intimate partner homicide (IPH) poses significant challenges to the researcher. For one, there is no unified consensus on the reasons why intimate partners engage in such extreme acts of violence. The explanations are many, but true motivations are often times unknown. A wide array of variables complicates the proper understanding of IPH, including what is going on through the perpetrator's mind during the homicide act.

Many factors play a role in intimate partner homicide (IPH). Just prior to the homicide, anger with deadly destructive qualities appears to play a primary role, but what triggers such anger is unclear. A contributing factor preceding IPH may be the need to exert power and control over the victim, or using more colloquial terms, a need to show an upper hand over the other person. Other possible explanations may be the perpetrator's feelings of abandonment followed by feelings of rejection, betrayal, and rage. Perhaps the availability and ownership of handguns, coupled with the use of drugs and/or alcohol further facilitates such acts of violence.

Other factors, including a dysfunctional childhood such as lack of warmth and detachment by the primary caretakers may be partly responsible for IPH. Another factor contributing to IPH may be growing up witnessing or experiencing abuse, or both. The perpetrator's inability to express emotions appropriately may be an additional factor. The

end of a tumultuous dysfunctional and hectic lifestyle, mental illness, including clinical depression, or just plain lack of remorse, may be precursors of IPH, as well. As it is obviously inferred, the causes leading to intimate partner homicide are wide and diverse.

This brings up the topic of theoretical frameworks and their application to the understanding of intimate partner homicide (IPH). Theoretical frameworks are often used to describe intimate partner violence and intimate partner homicide. Consequently, the results from this study can be analyzed through the lens of several theoretical frameworks. Social learning theory postulates that experiences shape our way of behaving. Behavioral-genetic theories assume that biology has a significant influence on behavior. Gender-based theories assert that male domination over women is the main cause of intimate partner violence, and as an extension, of intimate partner homicide. Psychoanalytic views, on the other hand, postulate that internal character is the driving force for human behavior, including violent behavior.

Social learning theory would indicate that violence is a learned behavior, and consequently, exposure to violence during childhood would increase the chances of intimate partner violence during adulthood. Harsh punishment and maltreatment during childhood has been postulated as an event that increases the risk of violent behavior in adulthood. Family of origin is often identified as the source of the maltreatment, and the psychological and physical maltreatment during childhood in the family of origin has been described as the precursor to the violent behavior in adulthood. However, a difficulty in accepting such view is that explaining the family-of-origin's interactions as the cause for the violent behavior in adulthood could minimize the responsibility of the homicide to argue that the perpetrator is not completely responsible for the murder. Concerning this study, it is difficult to infer that the intimate partner homicides were the

direct or indirect result of the family of origin on males and females suspected offenders of IPH. In other words, due to a lack of historical information in the dataset analyzed, one cannot assert whether the perpetrator learned the violence early on by being exposed to it as either a victim or a witness.

Social learning theory also asserts that socioeconomic variables have a significant influence in later violence, and race/ethnicity comes into play when making such analysis. Social learning theory would assert that the reason for domestic violence is in part the result of socioeconomic variables, including low-educational attainment, poverty, gang affiliation, etc. However, all three main groups analyzed in this study (Latinos/Hispanics, African-Americans, and Caucasians) showed significant percentages of IPH. Only African-Americans showed a higher percentage of IPH in relation to their population percentages in California. But one cannot assume that such discrepancy is due to low socioeconomic status. The dataset analyzed did not contain information on socioeconomic variables. Furthermore, Latinos/Hispanics showed moderate levels of IPH in comparison to their population percentages. Caucasians also showed moderate levels of intimate partner homicide in relation to their population percentages, but their rate of IPH was still very significant. Caucasians represented the highest percentage of IPH in relation to the total number of intimate partner homicides in California, but a moderate percentage when compared with their population percentages for California. Nonetheless, such figures discredit the view about low socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity and its supposedly direct effect on IPH.

Other theories, such as gender-based theories, are used to explain intimate partner homicide. These theories characterize men as the aggressors and women as the victims. Accordingly, they conclude that when women kill their male intimate partners, they do it

in self-defense. Gender-based theories assert that patriarchy, or the domination of men over women, is a direct cause of violence against women, and as an extension, of intimate partner homicide against women. Gender-based theories would assert that men kill their intimate partners in an attempt to exert power and control.

However, when analyzing this study by gender and race/ethnic group, it becomes clear that the percent of African-American females suspected of IPH is significantly higher than that of their African-American male counterparts (37.2% vs. 21.4%). In line with those findings, the results revealed that female suspects were more likely than male suspects to kill African-American victims (36.4% vs. 17.5%). This discrepancy does not support the gender-based theories, because it appears that women are also aggressors and not just victims, although gender-based theoreticians may assert that the IPH act was done in self-defense. The literature reviewed in this study seems to support the view that women also engage in violence against their intimate partners. This statement is corroborated by the literature review describing that even women who seek help from shelters or counseling agencies, and define themselves as the victims of intimate partner violence, have engaged in physical aggression against their partners, and their numbers and involvement is significant. Name calling, accusing, threatening, and criticizing, to name a few, were ways in which both the men and the women responded to conflict, according to the literature review undertaken in this study. Furthermore, results from this research study indicate that the percentage of Caucasian females suspected of intimate partner homicide were almost equal to that of their Caucasian male counterparts (39.9% vs. 41.7%). Latino/Hispanic females were the only segment that showed significantly lower levels of IPH compared to all the other groups (16.9%).

Behavioral-genetic theories would indicate that people are predisposed to violence, which is passed through their genetic makeup/composition. This study concluded that men perpetrate intimate partner homicide in significantly greater numbers than women. Behavioral-genetic theory would assert that several factors contribute to intimate partner homicide (IPH), including high levels of testosterone in men, inadequate serotonin levels, and possible brain dysfunction. However, it cannot be concluded in this study that biological factors contributed to the killing of an intimate partner when the data analyzed does not contain references to biological factors as contributing factors to the IPH.

Whereas social learning theories, gender-based theories, and behavioral-genetic theories focus on the external variables that created the potential for intimate partner violence and, as an extension, intimate partner homicide, the psychoanalytic view focuses on the internal character of the individual. In other words, the psychoanalytic view asserts that the individual introjected early childhood experiences that later influenced their actions. Psychoanalytic views include object relations theory. Attachment theory, a view influenced by psychoanalytic views, has been grouped together in this study within the psychoanalytic views to explain domestic violence dynamics.

From an object relations' perspective, if the adult individual never experienced a sense of unconditional love during infancy, as an adult the person cannot restore a sense of well being during conflict or anxiety because such individual cannot access positive self-representations. The primary caretakers, who for the most part were either the parents or a parental figure, failed to facilitate the infant's gratification of primary narcissism; thus, the sense of trust and security in the self and the world was arrested. The infant was not able to relate to others as separate objects (i.e., "you are you, and I am I.") but as

extension of the self. Representations of the self and objects stayed as split objects, not experienced as whole objects. The infant did not receive emphatically attuned nurturance, and unmet dependency needs continued to be experienced on a primitive level as an adult. These are deficits in personality development that continued to be manifested in adult relationships. During times of conflict or anxiety, the adult person often tries to restore a sense of soothing from external objects, including the intimate partner. Unable to provide self-regulating functions, the adult person may experience a core injury resulting in narcissistic rage. Thus, narcissistic vulnerability and high degree of defensive splitting may be at the heart of the intimate partner violence, and as an extension, of intimate partner homicide.

In addition, attachment dysfunction beginning in childhood and continuing through adulthood may contribute to violent behavior. Once an adult, the fearful individual longs for intimate relationships, but is distrustful and expects rejection. Under stress-provoking circumstances, the individual influenced by a fearful attachment style misperceives the behavior of the intimate partner and copes by resorting to violence.

The literature review discussed in this study describes male batterers with several traits and behaviors that support attachment and object relations theories. The literature review on male batterers characterize them as being excessively jealous, more depressed than the general population, regularly blame others for their shortcomings, and feel inadequate and unhappy with themselves. They seem to have dependency problems with their wives and in interpersonal relationships and often suffer from low self-esteem. However, literature review on female batterers did not have significant descriptors of female personality traits and behavior, compared to male batterers.

Results from this study can be analyzed through psychoanalytic views. The splitting between good and bad objects, the inability to access self-soothing schemas and the fearful attachment disposition that adds to the misunderstanding of the behavior of the intimate partner may contribute to the intimate partner homicide. The weapon of choice for both men and women suspected of IPH was a gun. Guns tend to indicate a more deliberate plan to kill the intimate partner. Gun use by both genders needs a greater analysis to differentiate between the impulses of the self-survival to the impulse of the object annihilation (the killing of an intimate partner). Women using knives to kill their intimate partner may be due to the impulse to save their own lives from men whose narcissistic rage has taken over their common sense. However, it is important to mention that these are just assumptions and inferences without the appropriate statistical analysis to support them.

Nonetheless, it is imperative to analyze this study through the lenses of several theories. It gives the researcher a roadmap into the possible emotional and psychological mental state experienced by the offender of IPH before the murder is committed. In providing pros and cons on each theoretical framework and correlating them with the outcomes of intimate partner homicide (IPH), one can take stances that resonate with one's way of seeing things. However, there is also risk involved in taking such approach. A researcher who is inclined to accept the behavioral-genetics theory can easily be drawn into accepting such theory as the main cause of intimate partner homicide (IPH). Another individual who believes gender-based theories clearly conform to the reasons why intimate partner homicide (IPH) occurs in our society can be blinded to other possible alternatives. Likewise, an individual whose theoretical leanings are psychoanalytic will view intimate partner homicide (IPH) from a psychoanalytic perspective only. Moreover,

individuals who believe social learning is the main precursor of intimate partner homicide (IPH) would likely minimize the influence of other theoretical frameworks.

Thus, it is important to point out that theories are just viewpoints that make intimate partner homicide (IPH) a better-understood and hopefully predictable event. However, human beings are more complex than mere theoretical postulates and what can be accepted as a truism based on a theoretical perspective can be easily discarded as an error in time by future researchers.

It is no surprise that people want to understand the causes of destructive violence. Intimate partner homicide's harm goes beyond the identified victim. It also affects the extended family, the friends of the victim and possibly the friends of the perpetrator, and to a great extent, society as a whole. Every time the community watches helplessly when an individual who promised to respect and to protect an intimate partner murders an innocent victim, the sense of safety becomes thinner.

Societal open-mindedness is what can keep domestic violence research fresh and our interventions effective. We as researchers have a duty to continue finding plausible explanations as to why an individual murders an intimate partner. This we owe to the victims of the intimate partner violence. Thus, it is the hope of this researcher that this study contributed to the understanding of intimate partner homicide.

Future Research

This research study identified several areas for future research in the field of intimate partner homicide (IPH). The use of handguns and knives in the intimate partner

homicide poses debatable questions. For example, was the intimate partner homicide perpetrated in an act of self-defense or in an act of deliberate and calculated violence? Or, was the use of handguns a calculated action and the use of knives an impulse-related action? Furthermore, were the events that led to the IPH a situational event or an internal character of both male and female suspected offenders of IPH? These questions can only be hypothesized because the data set does not contain whether a conviction was obtained. But even if such information were available, it is difficult to state with accuracy and confidence the true reasons for the homicides.

Handgun ownership as it relates to IPH has to be studied in more depth to evaluate its effect on intimate partner homicide and the consequent risk to victims of IPH. Handguns in the home clearly represent a significant danger. Society cannot turn their eyes to the fact that having handguns in the home is potentially dangerous for the victims of intimate partner violence. In addition, the topic of separation and legal divorce as it relates to its significance to IPH has to be explored. A point to evaluate is whether a legal divorce causes a shift in conceptualization in the mind of the potential perpetrator of IPH in comparison to separation alone.

The percentage of African-American females suspected offenders of IPH and who kill their intimate partners is greater than the percentage of African-American males suspected offenders of IPH who murder their intimate partner. This is a significant finding that needs to be further explored. Likewise, the issue of religion as it relates to intimate partner violence needs to be further explained. If religious attendance indeed decreases the risk of intimate partner violence, clinicians and advocates against intimate partner violence need to incorporate such interventions into their safety

recommendations. Moreover, the analysis of different data sets to compare lethal vs. non-lethal cases of domestic violence can provide additional insight into the domestic violence dynamics that leads from battering to the murdering of an intimate partner.

But, at the end, the research and the understanding of intimate partner homicide (IPH) need to go beyond numbers and discourse. It has to uncover new ways of understanding the roots and causes of IPH with specific goals to clearly predict at what point an individual, in a moment of rage, may attempt to harm the very person he or she promised to protect. This is something that the researcher and society as a whole owe to the murdered victims and to the potentially future victims of intimate partner homicide. If discourse on intimate partner homicide does not produce a clear understanding and significant decrease in IPH, then we as researchers cannot call ourselves experts in the field. Such label, although impressive, would be an insult to the victims of intimate partner homicide and to the families they leave behind.

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