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## Intimate Partner Violence and Revictimization: Factors Involved in Occurrence and Severity

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Intimate Partner Violence and Revictimization: Factors Involved in Occurrence and  
Severity

by  
Dunia Sarwary

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and  
School of Criminal Justice in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
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## **Abstract**

Intimate Partner Violence and Revictimization: Factors Involved in Occurrence and Severity, Dunia Sarwary, 2020: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. Keywords: Civil Legal Services (CLS), Civil Protective Orders (CPO), Domestic Violence (DV), Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), Legal Aid.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a growing, complex, and silent social problem across the United States. Victims of IPV are known to be at a greater risk for revictimization. However, the relationship between revictimization and IPV has not been extensively studied. There have been few attempts to synthesize, compare, and contrast findings regarding the factors involved in IPV victimization and revictimization. This study utilized data from existing research involving 250 females seeking civil legal services from Iowa Legal Aid. The archival data explored the long-term influence of civil legal services on female victims of IPV. This study identified the relationships between civil protective orders (CPO) and IPV revictimization by measuring severity and occurrence of threats made by the perpetrator, financial instability and IPV victimization, and demographic characteristics and the severity of victimization. The results further defined variables that contribute to the severity and occurrence of IPV victimization and revictimization.

The findings indicated that victims of IPV are at a moderate risk for revictimization at least once within six months of filing for a civil protective order. The study also found a significant relationship between the victim's financial instability and IPV victimization, indicating that victims are at a greater risk if they are financially unstable or if they are financially dependent on their abusive partner. The study produced no significant findings that predict the severity of victimization as it relates to the victim's demographic characteristics. The findings support the continued need for further research to explore the longitudinal factors that contribute to IPV victimization and revictimization.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Intimate partner violence (IPV), commonly referred to as domestic violence (DV), can include a number of acts of violence including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, aggressive and controlling behaviors (Dobash et al., 1999; Dutton, 2005; Fritsche, 2014; Johnson 2008; Stark, 2007). Although all genders are impacted by IPV, females, as compared to males, have reported a history of IPV at least once in their lifetime (Durose, 2006; Jewkes, 2002; Johnson, 2008). The long-lasting impacts of IPV have detrimental effects on the victims' psychological well-being and causes significant damage to their mental health. Studies have not concluded a specific time when someone becomes a victim of IPV (Durose, 2006; Jewkes, 2002; Johnson, 2008). Instead, anyone can become a victim at any stage of a partnership or intimate relationship including dating, marriage, and with former partners. Young individuals tend to report shorter relationships and the pattern of violence in that relationship may differ than one experienced in a long-term partnership, still research has found similarities among the two types of violence (Dutton, 2005; Lee & Backs, 2018).

### **Nature of the Research Problem**

Approximately 1.5 million individuals in an IPV relationship are assaulted physically and/or sexually every year in the United States (Violence Policy Center, 2010). The perpetrator is someone who uses, but is not limited to, physical, emotional, sexual, and economic abuse to harm their partner (Okun, 1996; Saunders, 2014; Sullivan, 2005). This individual also uses other behaviors to assert control and power over the relationship (Ptacek, 1999; Samosin et al., 1995; Wilson, 2004). Understanding factors such as the psychosocial well-being, revictimization,



victim's economic background, and age of first abuse can lead to a better understanding of IPV and patterns leading to abuse.

IPV is linked to both immediate and long-term health concerns along with social and economic consequences (Brewster, 1998; Burks, 2006; Fritsche, 2014). Factors at all levels contribute to IPV due to its high prevalence and the numerous acute and chronic mental and physical health conditions associated with the abuse. Individuals impacted by IPV often need intensive legal services to help address their physical, emotional, and financial suffering (Burks, 2006; Lee & Backs, 2018). Civil legal services (CLS) can help inform policy and build long lasting approaches to improve the lives of victims.

Civil legal services can provide victims of IPV with legal support in filing civil protective orders (CPOs), addressing immediate safety of the victim relating to housing, employment, and economic self-sufficiency (Civil Legal Services, 2019). Victims of IPV are connected to legal, financial, and emotional support through CLS. Ultimately, CLS are a critical component in response to IPV; though it is currently understudied and unrecognized as an important module of IPV (Civil Legal Services, 2019). The correlations between CLS and IPV revictimization have not been extensively studied and lacks a profound understanding. This study explored the relationship between 1) violation of CPOs and revictimization, 2) victim's financial instability and victimization, 3) victim's demographic characteristics and the severity of IPV victimization, and 4) the relationship between the quality of alliance with attorney and victim's financial stability.

## **Background and Significance**

Legal Aid is a nonprofit legal organization that provides legal services in almost every state to individuals who could otherwise not afford legal assistance. Legal Aid has developed a progressive stance in advocating and providing CLS to victims of IPV. Due to the lack of research and legal services for victims of IPV; Iowa Legal Aid (ILA) worked with Dr. Carolyn Hartley (University of Iowa School of Social Work) and Dr. Lynette Renner (University of Minnesota School of Social Work) to determine the advantages of receiving civil legal services with those experiencing IPV (Hartley & Renner, 2016). Legal Aid provides assistance with CPOs, divorce, and custody. CLS also helped with child custody orders to remove the victim and child from the relationship, providing employment assistance, and addressing housing and financial problems so that the victim can safely leave the abusive relationship. The services attempted to improve the participant's long-term psychological well-being and economic self-sufficiency (Hartley & Renner, 2016).

The Iowa Legal Aid team conducted a two-year panel study focusing on revictimization among IPV participants receiving CLS. The study also focused on psychological well-being, economic self-sufficiency, quality of the alliance with attorney, and sense of empowerment. The study conducted by Hartley and Renner (2016) used quantitative methodology in a non-experimental correlational approach with an explanatory design. This study identified the relationships between civil protective orders (CPO) and IPV revictimization, financial instability and IPV victimization, and demographic characteristics and the severity of victimization. The results further defined variables that contribute to the severity and occurrence of IPV victimization and revictimization.

Violence by an intimate partner is associated with both immediate and long-term health concerns, as well as social and economic consequences. Factors at all levels; individual, relationship, community, and societal influences contribute to the violence. Ongoing IPV can cause long-lasting mental health concerns even after the abusive relationship has ended. This can eventually lead to depression, anxiety, and phobias among those who have been victimized by a partner (Finkelstein et al., 2004; Walker, 2009). IPV has also lead to emotional distress and thoughts of suicide. In the past decade, there has been an increase in attempts of suicide among women who fall victim to IPV (Abortion Law Reform Association of NZ, 2010; Lipsky & Caetano, 2011). The long-term effects resulting from IPV are linked to severe post-traumatic stress disorder, substance use disorders, severe depression, and eating disorders with suicidal ideation being a fundamental symptom.

Victims of IPV have been found to be at a higher risk for revictimization than those who obtained a protective order (Walker, 2009). Understanding the fundamental reasons of revictimization among victims of IPV will inform better intervention strategies in response to IPV. Victimology theory has focused on the victim-related lifestyle factors that explain revictimization such as the proximity to the perpetrator, the victim's risk-taking behavior, and being away from relatives or social circles (Logan, 2012). However, victimology theory has not held true for victims of IPV and therefore requires a reevaluation to determine factors contributing to IPV victimization and revictimization (Cohen, 2001; Logan, 2012; Margolin, 2004; Miller et al., 1996). For that reason, there were multiple factors relevant in explaining IPV victimization used in this study.

## **Purpose of the Study**

This secondary analysis study expanded on the findings of Hartley and Renner (2016) to explore the involve of occurrence and severity among victims of IPV. Hartley and Renner's (2016) study sought to determine the psychological well-being, economic self-sufficiency, and the alliance with attorney among adult female victims of IPV. These cases were then accepted for services by Iowa Legal Aid. In contrast, this study identified the relationships between civil protective orders (CPO) and IPV revictimization, financial instability and IPV victimization, and demographic characteristics and the severity of victimization. The results further defined variables that contribute to the severity and occurrence of IPV victimization and revictimization.

## **Barriers & Issues**

The study had similar limitations to the original study along with new anticipated restrictions due to using archival data. First direct impact was foreseen from the participants. The data collection was limited to the participant's recall of information and social desirability as the data was based on the participant's self-reports. Second, the sample size was impacted due to poor retention rates in Hartley and Renner's study. Lastly, this study was constrained to the archival data collected by Hartley and Renner, limiting the analysis and overall findings.

## **Statement of the Problem**

The majority of research conducted on IPV revolved around the criminal justice system and little examined the importance and need of CLS. Organizations like Legal Aid can provide victims of IPV with legal support in filing CPOs and ultimately reduce revictimization rates. CLS can also address the immediate safety of the victim as it relates to housing, employment, and economic self-sufficiency as it is a vital foundation in supporting victims (Civil Legal

Services, 2019). Ultimately, CLS are a critical component in response to IPV; as victims of IPV are connected to legal, financial, and emotional support through CLS (Civil Legal Services, 2019). This study identified the relationships between civil protective orders (CPO) and IPV revictimization, financial instability and IPV victimization, and demographic characteristics and the severity of victimization.

## **Definition of Terms**

*Civil Legal Services (CLS)*: Provides no-cost legal assistance to low- and middle-income individuals who have civil legal problems (DOJ, 2019).

*Civil Protective Orders (CPO)*: Court ordered document intending to help protect victims of domestic violence and children who have been abused by restricting the abuser from contacting the victim (The Legal Aid Society, 2019).

*Domestic Violence (DV)*: Violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim (DOJ, 2019).

*Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)*: Physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse. This type of violence can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples and does not require sexual intimacy (CDC, 2018).

*Legal Aid*: Provides legal assistance to people who are unable to afford legal representation and/or have access to the court system. Legal aid ensures that all individuals get equal access to justice (Legal Services Corporation, 2019).

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

More than 30 percent of women in the United States are physically victimized by an intimate partner at least once during their lifetime (Black et al., 2011). Since IPV occurs within the context of intimate relationships, the victims are at high risk of revictimization by the same perpetrators. Over 40 percent of IPV victims also report repeated victimization by the same partner after attempting to intervene.

### **Intimate Partner Violence**

In the past, IPV have been explained by four theories: psychological impairment, poor impulse control, conflict resolution deficits, and gender dominance as it relates to patriarchy and misogyny (Durose, 2006; Fritsche, 2014; Walker, 2009). Other theories explain the reasons behind IPV by examining the offenders as antisocial, maladaptive, or otherwise psychopathic (Dobash, 1999; Gondolf, 2006; Holtzworth-Munroe, 2004). Though there is no sufficient correlation that links perpetrators with a distinct trait (Lee & Backs, 2018), many offenders might show symptoms of mental health concerns though this is not the sole reason as to why perpetrators become abusive.

Black et al. (2011) followed 580 convicted domestic violence offenders over a 15-month timeframe concluded that around 11 percent of repeat assaulters exhibited primary psychopathic disorders, and secondary psychopathic disorders were not found among participants. The study found that about 60 percent of the offenders had a subclinical or low levels of personality dysfunction and a smaller percentage presented with a multitude of personality types. Rarely are abusers of IPV linked with psychopathic disorders (Black et al., 2011; Silverman, 2001; Varcose, 2011; Wilson, 2004; West, 2000). Current research has linked 10 percent of perpetrators with a

mental health disorder; the most common being Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Violence Policy Center, 2018).

### **Violence Against Women Act**

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was originally enacted in 1994 to address concerns about violent crimes against women. VAWA enhanced sentencing of federal sex offenders and any other type of violence against women (Tjaden, 2000; Varcose, 2011; Violence Policy Center, 2018). VAWA authorized grants to state, local, and tribal law organizations to prosecute violent crimes against women. VAWA programs generally address domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. These types of violent crimes are highest among female victims (Violence Policy Center, 2018). VAWA grant programs address the criminal justice system, how the community responds to these crimes, and prevention methods. Over the years VAWA created a number of grant programs, including programs aimed at (1) preventing domestic violence and sexual assault services; (2) encouraging collaboration among law enforcement, judicial personnel, and public/private sector providers to better support victims of IPV and related crimes; (3) investigate and prosecute abusers of IPV and related crimes; (4) enforcing that all states, tribes, and local governments must address IPV as a serious crime and implement arrest policies; (5) fund investigations and prosecutions of domestic violence and child abuse in rural states; and (6) prevent crimes that take place in the public such as public transportation and national parks (Violence Policy Center, 2018).

A smaller amount of IPV victims happen to be young adults or adolescents. VAWA created reauthorized grants under the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) to include grants to provide education on youth domestic violence as well as grants for community



intervention and prevention programs for youths. VAWA authorized grants to be used for the National Domestic Violence Hotline while also authorizing funds for battered women's shelters (FVPSA, 2018). With the funded VAWA programs, rates of IPV has decreased. VAWA reports that partner violence victimization has declined by 70 percent among females from 5.7 victimization per 1,000 females in 1993 to 1.7 per 1,000 females in 2017 (Violence Policy Center, 2018). Over the years, VAWA has been an important aspect in reducing violence against women.

The National Violence Against Women Survey attempted to develop predictive models of abusive behavior using logistic regression in order to understand the reason why IPV occurs (Klein, 2005). The model found significant positive associations between abuse and unmarried, abuse and cohabitating couples, and abuse linked to abuse as a child. Some offenders in IPV relationships had already experienced PTSD from sexual abuse as a child (Black et al., 2011; Klein, 2005; Stark, 2004). Scholars argued that in most cases individuals who have been psychically or sexually abused as a child will carry out that same abusive nature towards their partner. The abuse they encountered as a child left a long and damaging effect leading perpetrators to normalize these actions (Black et al., 2011; Klein, 2005). Some perpetrators struggling with childhood abuse could re-experience symptoms, flashbacks, nightmares of the experience, and avoidance and numbing symptoms, which, according to the American Psychiatric Association, are correlated with individuals who suffered abuse and abused their partner (American Psychiatric Association, 2018).

### **Civil Legal Funding**

Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA) created the VOCA assistance funds. VOCA assistance funds were put in place to protect and provide funding to the states to support two important types of programs: Crime Victim Compensation and Victim Assistance (Victims of Crime Act, 2018). Currently, almost 4 million victims a year are served by more than 4,000 local and state victim service agencies that are funded by VOCA (Victims of Crime Act, 2018; White & Smith, 2014) VOCA assistance grants support programs that provide assistance to victims of all kinds of crime including victims of assault, robbery, gang violence, intoxicated drivers, fraud, elder abuse, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, sexual assault, stalking and survivors of homicide, tribal victims, and many others (Victims of Crime Act, 2018). On August 8, 2016, the Justice Department issued a new rule expanding the ways victim service agencies can use VOCA assistance funds (White & Smith, 2014). The new VOCA assistance allows administrators to use the funds in innovating ways to further support victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking.

The new VOCA assistance funds included a number of changes that positively affect victims of violence against women. These changes included: (Victims of Crime Act, 2018, pg. 44526).

1. The expansion of legal services. The expansion allows for victims to receive legal services beyond the immediate aftermath of the abuse. These services seek to protect safety and privacy that can lead to criminal proceedings directly related to the victimization. The funds also allow victims to seek comprehensive legal assistance in custody proceedings, divorce hearings, immigration cases, and housing negotiations.

2. Department of Correction institutions can work directly with rape crisis centers. Rape crisis centers can use VOCA assistance funds to provide services to victims who are incarcerated. The number of victims of IPV or other forms of gender-based violence are incarcerated each year and charged with felony-level crimes due to their abusive partner. This change in the VOCA assistance funds allows victims to be better represented while receiving services.

3. Forensic interviews with victims and children. Law enforcement officers and prosecutors can use VOCA assistance funds to interview vulnerable victims such as children and adults. VOCA assistance funds are used to hire professionals who can interview this population without retraumatizing them.

4. Increased services. VOCA assistance funds can be used to increase capacity and reach a greater population of victims by strengthening and enhancing interagency and multidisciplinary responses.

5. Housing services. A great number of IPV victims are left without assistance or support and recognizing the critical need for shelter is one way to reduce revictimization. VOCA assistance funds can be used to provide transitional housing and relocation.

### **IPV and Civil Protective Orders**

A critical area of legal support funded by VOCA is the expansion of legal services. A primary component of legal services is CPOs. A growing number of studies have demonstrated the positive outcome CLS can have on the victim. These services allow access to social services and legal assistance. This all essentially reduces the probability of future abuse (Frohmann, 2003; Klein, 2004). It's curial to expose victims of IPV to these services as early as possible as

most victims have been previously abused. Most victims endure several years of abuse before seeking any sort of assistance (Black et al., 2011; Hartley & Frohmann, 2003; Klein, 2004). Victims unable to afford legal representation have a higher chance of staying in the abusive relationship than those who have access to legal representation. Several studies have concluded that a very small percent of victims seek CPOs (Black et al., 2011; Hartley & Frohmann, 2003; Klein, 2004). Further victims choose not to seek CPOs because they are unaware of such services (Black et al., 2011; Hartley & Frohmann, 2003; Klein, 2004; Ptacek, 1999; Wilson, 2003). Scholars suggests that knowledge of CPOs is extremely limited among certain populations of victims. One particular study found that among a sample of immigrant women who sought services for domestic violence, over 60 percent had no prior knowledge of protective orders (Hathaway et al., 2003).

Multiple scholars have agreed that victims generally don't seek CPOs after the first abuse incident. Victims will attempt to "solve" the abuse before seeking resources and services (Albin, 2008; Hathaway et al., 2003; Ptacek, 1999). In a multi-court study involving both minority jurisdiction and a suburban non-minority city, prior to petitioning the court for an order, victims had tried to protect themselves in a variety of other ways (Albin, 2008). More than 60 percent of victims have left their abusive partner at least once prior to petitioning for an order (Ptacek, 1999; Smalarz et al., 2016). Perhaps most significantly, over two-thirds of victims attempted to deescalate the abuse themselves before seeking legal assistance (Albin, 2008). Researchers from the District of Columbia found that only about 10 percent of victims sought protection orders after the first abusive encounter, 15 percent experienced abuse for one to two years, and almost a quarter of victims had endured abuse for more than five years before petitioning for an order

(Hartley and Renner, 2016). Harrell and Smith's (1996) study found that the average petitioner suffered numerous abusive attacks by their partner in the months prior to filing for a protective order. More than half of the victims described severe violence that included strangulation, forced sex, and repeated beating (Harrell & Smith, 1996). The range of the abuse as reported by the victims has ranged anywhere from once to 31 years with a median of 2.4 years (Harrell & Smith, 1996; Fritsche, 2014; Smalarz et al., 2016). Other barriers to seeking CPOs included fear of retaliation from the abuser or the abuser's family members, lack of resources, lack of financial/emotional support, feeling guilt/embarrassment, fear of being blamed, and the fear of child protective services involvement (Fritsche, 2014).

Studies that have followed victims of IPV over a period of time have found substantial evidence that CPOs may reduce revictimization. Scholars suggest that CPOs may deter some abusers from future violence while providing victims with services they otherwise might have not received. In a study of 150 women seeking CPOs, majority reported that they experienced "lower levels" of abuse following their application (McCarroll et al., 2004). Police incident reports from Seattle conveyed that victims who obtained orders were less likely to be physically abused than those who did not (McFarlane et al., 2004). Multiple studies have shown that most victims express satisfaction from filing CPOs. A study conducted in Massachusetts reported that over 85 percent of victims who obtained CPOs expressed that the order either stopped the violence completely or reduced the abuse (Zlotnick, 2006). While other petitioners reported a feeling of "safety" and "well-being" shortly after filing for proactive orders. Almost half of petitioners in a study conducted in Colorado felt "empowered" after their petition (Logan et al., 2006).

## **IPV and Financial Instability**

Economic abuse is common in an intimate partner relationship. Studies have shown that economics are one of the leading factors in why victims stay in an abusive relationship (Durose et al., 2006). This type of abuse allows the perpetrator to gain control over the victim's ability to acquire, use, manage, maintain, and dispose of economic resources (Adams & Sullivan, 2008; Tolman, 2011). Klein and Wilson (2005) studied sheltered women and found that over 90 percent of victims indicated that they have experienced one or more forms of economic abuse. Abusers used a number of tactics to gain economic control over their victim: prevention and disruption of education or employment, interference with transportation, failure to provide childcare, compromise of housing, deprivation of food and medicine, and limitation of communications with economic support networks (Tolman, 2011).

Low-income victims seeking CLS report that their abuser was the cause of their economic hardship (Durose et al., 2006). Victims with a higher family income can also be affected by economic abuse. In both cases, perpetrators tend to limit their victims from gaining access to assets, refusing to include them in co-ownerships, denying access to cash, and controlling all bank accounts and investments (Adams et al., 2008; Tolman, 2011). Perpetrators also deprive their victims of economic resources that create opportunities to leave the relationship. Without economic support and assets, victims are financially unstable to successfully leave the abusive relationship (Allard, 1997; Anderson et al., 2003; Curcio, 2000; Sable, 1999; Wilson, 2004).

Domestic violence shelters are a vital resource for victims and their children. Some victims turn to shelters when they have no other alternative housing or support. Nationwide,

more than 80 percent of homeless mothers with children have experienced IPV at least once in their lifetime (Bell & Goodman, 2001; Stainbrook, 2006; Tucker et al., 2005; United States Conference of Mayors, 2007). A study conducted in Connecticut in 2010 reported that 41 percent of homeless women seeking emergency shelter reported a history of IPV that had forced them to seek shelter (Brewster et al., 2011). The same study reported that IPV was among the top three reasons as to why Connecticut residents were seeking shelters (Brewster et al., 2011). A study conducted in upstate New York found that women seeking housing reported experiencing IPV within the last 3 months of requiring shelter (Fritsche, 2014). A number of women reported a fear of losing their housing if they left their abusive partner (Fritsche, 2014). At times, victims of IPV are forced to stay in the relationship as they believe they have no other way out.

### **Demographics and Severity of IPV Victimization**

IPV victimization does not discriminate and can happen to anyone at any given time. Victim characteristics, other than gender and age, have not been found to be a leading factor in the likelihood of abuse (Brewster et al., 2011). There are a number of factors that can increase the risk for future victimization. Factors such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual identity, residence, marital status, immigration status, and age can contribute towards victimization (Church et al., 2014; Roodman & Clum, 2001). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that 43 percent of women in multiracial non-Hispanic households suffered partner violence, while 26 percent of women in White non-Hispanic households suffered partner violence. Further, 29 percent of women in Black non-Hispanic households suffered partner violence (CDC, 2015). Another survey, conducted in the state of California, found that 33 percent of Indian/Alaskan Natives reported partner violence, followed by 24

percent of African American females, 20 percent of White females, 13 percent of Latino females, and 8 percent of Asian females reported partner violence (CDC, 2015; Roodman & Clum, 2001). Smith and Farole (2009) conducted a study in California and found that higher rates of women who were born in the United States reported a history of partner abuse than women who were not born the United States. Another study found that those who were divorced, separated, or previously widowed experienced the highest rates of partner abuse compared to victims who were married or single (Brewster et al., 2011). In terms of children, 38 percent of women with children experienced partner abuse compared to 18 percent of women without any children (CDC, 2015).

Scholars have produced mixed results in terms of geographical location of the victim and history of abuse. There were little differences between victims in rural, urban, and suburban locations (Catalano, 2006). The Bureau of Justice Statistics have reported urban areas among the highest rates of partner violence (Smith & Farole, 2009). However, Fennison et al. (2012) reported that rural women were among the highest to report partner violence by partners rather than spouses. Additionally, victims in rural areas also had a higher rate of fatality due to an abusive partner when compared to urban and suburban communities (Fennison et al., 2012). Studies in Iowa discovered that victims in rural communities' experienced higher rates of isolation, physical abuse, and emotional abuse by their abusive partner than victims in urban and suburban communities (Lanier & Maume, 2009; Logan et al., 2012; McCarroll, 2004; Rennison et al., 2012). Some scholars suggested that abusers choose rural areas to reside as it allows them to isolate their partner while allowing them to control the abuse (Logan et al., 2006; Margolin et al., 1998; Smalarz et al., 2016). Isolating the victim has been consistent factor among abusers.



This tactic has a profound impact on the victim's mental health to a degree to which the victim will experience thoughts of wanting to end their life in order to escape the abuse (Smalarz et al., 2016).

### **IPV and Mental Health**

On average, five times as many victims commit suicide due to an abusive relationship than homicides by their abusive partner (Margoin et al., 2004; Smalarz et al., 2016). The Washington State Domestic Violence Fatality Review (2017) reported far more deaths due to suicide than homicide in an abusive relationship. Multiple other studies around the United States concluded that victims of IPV had one or more suicide attempts compared to those who were not abused (Cohen, 2001; Logan et al., 2006; Miller et al., 1996; Rennison et al., 2012). Extensive research on the victim's mental health found that women who used positive coping skills to manage with the abuse were less likely to attempt suicide than those without any coping skills (Brewster et al., 2011). The importance of mental health services tends to get left behind among victims. In most cases, the priority is to take the abused victim out of the relationship. However, not all victims are able to easily leave an abusive relationship and not all have a choice to leave (Lipsky & Caetano, 2011; Smalarz et al., 2016). Providing mental health services to victims who are currently in or recently got out of an abusive relationship are crucial and desperately needed. Multiple studies have shown that developing good problem-solving skills while encouraging social supports and self-empowerment through therapeutic methods decrease the chances of suicide attempts than those who receive no mental health services (Fritsche, 2014; Lipsky & Caetano, 2011).

It is widely agreed that IPV can create serious and long-lasting psychological and emotional injuries for many victims but not all victims are affected equally. Overwhelmingly, a high number of victims have reported symptoms of depression and anxiety due to their abusive relationship (Gielen et al., 2005). Victims who experienced long durations of abuse were severely depressed and had considered suicide at least once (Reviere et al., 2007; Stark, 1996). Victims also experienced low self-esteem, hopelessness, anger, and feelings of distrust that can all lead to several long-term mental health problems. A survey conducted in the State of California among IPV victim participants concluded that more than half of victims report acute psychological distress that lead to excessive drinking or suicidal ideation (Houry et al., 2008).

Power and control have long been linked to IPV (Church et al., 2016; Jewkes, 2002; Johnson, 2006; Stark, 2007). Controlling behaviors by the abuser is usually associated with an increased risk of physical and sexual abuse (Hathaway et al., 2000; Johnson, 2006; Jordan, 2004; Lipsky & Caetanp, 2011). Majority of abusers tend to have an understanding that they have the “right” to control their partner. Some abusers ultimately do not see anything wrong with their behavior. At times controlling behaviors can be as, or more, threatening than physical abuse (Burks, 2006; Coker et al., 2006; DeKeseredy, 2000; Schwartz, 2005). A study among 600 women in New York reported that two-thirds experienced one or more episodes of controlling behavior (Catalozzi et al., 2011). More than half of the women also reported that the controlling behavior lead to physical and sexual victimization. Furthermore, women who grew up witnessing abuse, had gotten pregnant at least once, and women who recently suffered physical or sexual abuse were at a higher risk to experience controlling behaviors by their partner (Catalozzi et al., 2011). The study concluded that victims of IPV are at a greater risk for physical and sexual abuse

if their partner uses controlling behaviors. Types of controlling behaviors that were studied included: 1) insisting on knowing their partner's location at all times (45.9 percent); 2) becoming angry if their partner spoke to the opposite gender (40.8 percent); 3) being suspicious of infidelity (40.5 percent); 4) attempting to keep their partner from seeing friends (26.5 percent); 5) ignoring or treating their partner indifferently (24.7 percent); 6) restricting their partner from contacting family members (6.3 percent); and 7) expecting their partner to ask for permission before seeking health care (3.7 percent). These controlling behaviors left a profound impact the victim's mental health. The victim showed symptoms of depression and anxiety which negatively impacted their self-esteem leading to long-term acute psychological distress.

### **Revictimization and Behavioral Psychology of Victims and Perpetrators**

Exposure to IPV at a young age has been linked to a chain reaction of anti-social behaviors (Margolin & Gordis, 2004). These behaviors can regulate the child's emotional response to conflict and essentially increases the chances of the child to engage in violent relationships as adults. Ehrensaft and Cohen (2005) conducted a longitudinal study following over 600 parents and their children over three generations for 25 years. They reported that parents that were engaged in an IPV relationship influenced replications of anti-social behaviors. The second generation of children exposed to IPV reported significant risks for conduct disorder and behavior problems as an adolescent and anti-social behaviors as an adult. Lastly, children exposed to IPV predicted higher levels of emotional expressivity, aggression, hostile reactivity, and depressive mood in offspring (Ehrensaft & Cohen, 2011). Ultimately, they concluded that children that were exposed to IPV were at a greater risk for impulsive and aggressive behaviors long before they form their own adult intimate relationships. Once those adult intimate

relationships were formed, they were at a higher risk for conducting in violent behaviors as adults. Eventually, exposure to IPV among victims doubled the risk of adult revictimization (White & Smith, 2014). Furthermore, males who were exposed to IPV as children were 3.8 times more likely than other males to fall victim to IPV or become a perpetrator of IPV (White & Smith, 2014).

Studies have provided an understanding into why childhood victimization repeats itself in adulthood. Scholars suggest that abusers who have been psychically or sexually abused as a child will carry out those same abusive actions towards their partner (Desai et al., 2002; Walker, 2009). The abuse they encountered as a child left a long and damaging effect on them as adults. Research that highlights the behavioral psychology of batterers have concluded that a majority of batterers became abusive as adults due to being physically abused as a child by people they loved (Houry et al., 2008; Sullivan, 2005). Their abuse tended to be an intimate family member, often mother or father, and sometimes both. By experiencing this type of abuse early on, the abuser learns that violence is an acceptable way to deal with their emotions and at times can be an effective way to dominate others in order to protect themselves.

A child who constantly struggled with emotional and sexual abuse from a family member will develop PTSD as they age (Black et al., 2011). These young victims tended to develop addiction problems as an adult, which describes avoidance and numbing symptoms in their behavior—all linked to PTSD (American Psychiatric Association, 2018). Furthermore, this behavior could then lead to emotional consequences and triggers from past abuse. Eventually this victim will become the perpetrator in their adult relationships or have a high risk of IPV victimization. They do not know how to identify why their actions were not acceptable as they

have worked all their life trying to normalize the abuse they experienced as a child (Black et al., 2011). This essentially places victims of childhood abuse at a higher risk of responding with violent acts as adults especially towards the people they love.

Very few perpetrators are linked to distinct personality traits. The few perpetrators that are linked to personality traits include passiveness, dependency, insecurity, and severe jealousy (Gondolf et al., 2001). These traits come from a place where the perpetrator finds it difficult to express their emotions without acting with violence. Displaying such personality traits could be explained by their upbringing (Gondolf et al., 2001). Often, perpetrators become violent towards their partners because they never established a stable relationship with either their parents or other close individuals (Black et al., 2011; Gondolf et al., 2001). Family history, social settings, and the environment that the abuser was raised under, brings forward a major understanding as to why individuals become abusive over time (Black et al., 2011; Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 2004).

Some scholars have argued that social forces play an essential role in shaping a perpetrator's values and attitudes (Lipsky & Caetano, 2011). Studies have argued that, being raised in locations with high crime rates and witnessing violence in their neighborhood could be a factor in why individuals become abusive (Dondolf et al., 2001; Lipsky & Caetano, 2011). Some research has explored that social disorganization variables are associated with increased IPV (Benson & Wooldredge, 2004). Benson and Wooldredge (2004) concluded that high unemployment, poverty, family fragmentation, economic hardship, and isolation from conventional society was correlated with increased intimate partner abusive behaviors. However, correlation is not the same thing as causation. Still, limited research has shown a significant positive association between the individual's upbringings and IPV (Dondolf et al., 2001; Lipsky

& Caetano, 2011). Still, The National Survey of Families and Households (2018) reported that, the rate of intimate violence is highest in the most disadvantaged communities and lowest in the least disadvantaged communities. NSFH (2018) argued that neighborhood/environmental risk factors have a strong significant association among IPV relationships.

### **Revictimization and Violation of COP**

Abusers who reoffend tend to do so relatively quickly. Survivors who successfully leave their abusive partner without a CPO are at a higher risk to falling victim once again (Brewster et al., 2011). A misdemeanor arrest study conducted in Massachusetts and New York showed that a majority of defendants arrested for a domestic violence dispute already had a domestic violence case pending in court (Mohandie et al., 2006). Domestic violence probationers in Rhode Island were rearrested for domestic violence within the first two months of being placed under probation supervision (Desai et al., 2002; Silverman et al., 2001). Out of all abusers in the state of New York, more than half were arrested within six months of their domestic violence case settlement (Desai et al., 2002).

The study hypothesized that civil protective orders would reduce IPV revictimization and would increase financial instability overtime. The study also expects that demographic characteristics of victims of IPV will increase chances of revictimization. Essentially, seeking CPOs and CLS will overall decrease revictimization.

## **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

RQ1) What is the relationship between the abuser violation of CPOs and IPV revictimization?

RQ2) What is the relationship between financial instability and IPV victimization?

RQ3) What is the relationship between demographic characteristics of victims of IPV and severity of victimization?

RQ4) What is the connection between the quality of alliance with attorney and victim's financial stability?

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

Hartley and Renner (2016) conducted a two-year panel study identifying how the receipt of CLS provided by Iowa Legal Aid (ILA) influences safety, psychological well-being and economic self-sufficiency outcomes for female victims of IPV. This study identified the relationships between civil protective orders (CPO) and IPV revictimization by measuring the severity and occurrence of threats made by the perpetrator. The participant's financial instability and IPV victimization was also measured along with demographic characteristics and the severity of victimization.

#### **Participants**

The participants were self-identified by reaching out to ILA seeking CLS related to child custody, divorce, and/or CPO. All accepted participants who agreed to be part of the study were women, 18 years of age or older, with a history or current experiences of IPV, had at least one child in the household, and were seeking CLS. A total of 383 women agreed for ILA staff to pass their contact information to the study recruiters. The sample of the study consisted of non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and Other. The women reported education levels of less than high school, high school degree, some college/trade school, bachelor's degree, or higher (Hartley & Renner, 2016). Out of the total number of participants, over two-third identified as white non-Hispanic with a mean education level of 2.72. Indicating a well-educated group of women who all reported a history or current experience of IPV. During the recruitment process, ILA staff members conducted an intake with all possible participants to screen for IPV. The screening contained the following partner abuse screening items (Hartley & Renner, 2016):



1. Has your spouse or partner ever physically abused or threatened to harm you or your children? Has your spouse or partner ever done any of the following to you or your children: pushed, hit, slapped, kicked, choked, threatened to hit you, threatened you with a weapon of any kind, thrown something at you, or grabbed you and stopped you from doing something?

2. Has your spouse or partner ever forced you to have sex or unwanted sexual touching?

3. Has your spouse or partner ever done any of the following: threatened or attempted to kill himself/herself; destroyed your personal belongings; kept you from friends and family; told you where you are allowed to go; made you afraid of him or her; stopped you from leaving your house; or hurt your pets?

4. Has your spouse or partner ever done anything to make you feel that you were being stalked such as: following or spying on you; waiting for you outside of home/school/work; or making unwanted contact such as phone calls, mail, e-mails, or leaving gifts?

Out of the 150 women from Wave 1, 112 women were retained and completed Wave 2, 85 completed Wave 3, 62 women were retained and completed Wave 4, and 32 were retained and completed Wave 5. However, the women were not recruited as a single cohort and therefore the retention rates were not calculated based on the Wave 1 sample (Hartley & Renner, 2016). Instead, the study's recruitment process was ongoing and continued throughout the entire study. Due to the ongoing recruitment, it is unclear how many of the original participants completed Wave 2 through Wave 5.

## **Design**

The study conducted by Hartley and Renner used quantitative methodology in a non-experimental correlational approach with an explanatory design. All participants during each

wave were interviewed in one of seven locations around the state of Iowa. The in-person interviews were first done at the initial stage for an initial assessment and followed by 4 additional interviews done at 6, 12, 18, and 24 months creating Wave 1 through Wave 5. In appreciation for participation, the women were offered a \$75 Walmart gift card for the first initial interview and a \$65 Walmart gift card for each follow-up interview.

### **Instruments**

Multiple survey instruments were used to collect data at each wave. This study exclusively used data from Wave 1. Below is a description of the measures used in this study. The Index of Spouse Abuse explores the history of prior and current physical and non-physical violence (IPV) (ISA; Hudson & McIntosh, 1981). The ISA is a 30-item, self-report scale that measures 11 forms of physical abuse (ISA-P) and 19 types of non-physical abuse (ISA-NP). Participants were asked to report how frequently each item occurred by using a five-point scale from ‘never’ to ‘very frequently’ during the span of their relationship. Higher scores indicated that there was a greater amount of abuse in the relationship. The clinical cut-off score for the ISA-P is 10 and 25 for the ISA-NP. Out of the ISA scale, a total of four variables were used to measure revictimization. 1) perpetrator damaged your new partner’s property within the last six months; 2) perpetrator threatened your new partner within the last six months; 3) perpetrator harmed your new partner within the first six months; 4) tried to contact you through others within the last six months.

The Domestic Violence-Related Financial Issues Scale (DV-FI; Weaver, Sanders, Campbell, & Schnabel, 2009) was also used to measure the participant’s negative impact of economic factors and their sense of future financial security. The seven-point scale ranged from

“completely disagree” to ‘completely agree’ with higher scores indicating a greater economic abuse. The scale also measured the impacts of women wanting to leave their relationship with their current economic factors. The scale identified how financial insecurities caused or increased levels of abuse in the relationship. Out of the scale, a total of four variables were used, 1) financial worries impacted decisions about leaving A, 2) A prevented you from acquiring skills, 3) A hurt your credit rating, 4) A negatively affected your debt.

The quality of the alliance with attorney was measured by the Bond Scale of the Working Alliance Inventory (WAI-Bond; Horvath & Greenberg, 1989). The scale was used to measure the alliance with attorney. The Bond Scale used a 12-item scale to measure concepts relating to the degree of trust, liking, and attachment between client and the attorney. The participants reported their satisfaction with their attorney and the services that were offered to them. The items included, “My attorney and I respect each other” and “I am confident in my attorney’s ability to help me” and response options ranged on a seven-point scale from “never” to “always.” Higher scores indicated a greater relationship between the participants and their attorney.

During Wave 1 survey instruments collected demographic information, history of IPV, violation of CPOs, and measures of revictimization. The history of abuse and revictimization of IPV was collected during Wave 1 through Wave 5. The participants’ psychological well-being, quality of the attorney- client relationship, and empowerment were all collected during Wave 1 through Wave 5. Demographic variables that impacted the abusive relationship were measured by the various demographic variables that were collected during Wave 1 and throughout the study. These demographics included; age, number of children, race/ethnicity, highest education level, employment status, length of the relationship, and living situation.

## **Procedures**

**Data Collection.** A total of 383 women were called by the ILA team to be recruited for the study. A total of 176 women were unable to be reached by phone or not recruited because no interviewer was available in their area. One woman was not recruited because they required a Spanish speaking interviewer. A total of 207 women agreed to be interviewed and 35 women declined the interview. All women were assigned to interviewers around seven locations in Iowa. All interviews were conducted in-person with the initial assessment interview taken place at Wave 1. Wave 2 through Wave 5 were contacted at 6, 12, 18, and 24 months. During Wave 1 150 women out of 207 were interviewed; during Wave 2 a total of 112 women were interviewed; at Wave 3 a total of 85 women were interviewed; during Wave 4 a total of 62 women were interviewed; and during Wave 5 a total of 32 women were interviewed. Recruitment of participants was ongoing and continued throughout the entire study. The same participants from Wave 1 might not have agreed to be interviewed in future months. This study exclusively used data from Wave 1 due to the poor retention rates.

## **Data Analysis**

The following, descriptive statistics and bivariate correlation was used to predict the relationships between civil protective orders (CPO) and IPV revictimization by measuring severity and occurrence of threats made by the perpetrator, financial instability and IPV victimization, and demographic characteristics and the severity of victimization. These variables included the participant's age, highest education level, length of abusive relationship, violation of CPO, and financial instability to understand the correlation between IPV victimization. Bivariate correlation was used to understand the relationship between violation of CPO and IPV

revictimization. Bivariate correlation was used to understand the correlation between financial instability and IPV victimization. Bivariate correlation was used to understand the correlation between demographic characteristics of victims of IPV and severity of victimization. Lastly, bivariate correlation was used to understand the relationship between the quality of alliance with attorney and victim's financial stability.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to identify the correlation between civil protective orders and IPV revictimization, the relationship between financial instability and IPV victimization, and the relationship between demographic characteristics and the severity of victimization. The goal of this study was to explore 1) the direct relationship between the abuser violation of CPOs and IPV revictimization, 2) the relationship between financial instability and IPV victimization, 3) the relationship between demographic characteristics and severity of victimization, and lastly 4) the relationship between the quality of alliance with attorney and victim's financial stability. This was done by measuring findings from the Index of Spouse Abuse (ISA), the Domestic Violence-Related Financial Issues Scale (DV-FI), and the Bond Scale of the Working Alliance Inventory.

### **Methodology Review**

This quantitative study expanded on the findings conducted by Hartley and Renner (2016) to explore factors involved in occurrence and severity of IPV victimization and revictimization. The study hypothesized that CPOs would reduce IPV revictimization and would increase financial instability overtime. The study also expected that demographic characteristics of victims of IPV will greatly impact the severity of victimization. Essentially, seeking CPOs and CLS will overall decrease victimization and revictimization.

Selected participants were invited to take part in five Legal Aid Interviews (Wave 1 through Wave 5) completed in a six-month interval. A quantitative statistical analysis was completed by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Demographic variables were measured by the participant's age, ethnicity, highest education level, financial stability, and

length of abusive relationship. Physical and emotional violence was measured by asking whether the perpetrator ever physically caused harm to the participants. To identify revictimization the participants were asked if their perpetrator ever violated the initial civil proactive order. Other variables included, measures of symptomatic response to traumatic stressors, symptoms of depression, and the quality of alliance with attorney.

### **Participant Demographics**

ILA staff tracked client cases through an intake system and all accepted participants were women, 18 years of age or older, with a history or current experience of IPV, had at least one child in the household, and were seeking CLS. Out of the 383 participants, 150 women completed a Wave 1 interview. The mean age of the respondents at Wave 1 was 32.07 years ( $SD = 7.55$ ). All of the women at Wave 1 reported having children ranging from 1 to 9, with an average of 2.59 years old ( $SD = 1.47$ ). More than half of the women at Wave 1 were non-Hispanic White. Almost three-quarters of the participants in Wave 1 reported some college, trade school, or a college degree. Indicating a well-educated group of women. During Wave 1, more than half of the women were working at least part-time. On average, the length of the abusive relationship was 7.36 years ( $SD = 5.57$ ) and over half of the women reported that they had lived with their abusive partner at some point in the relationship (Hartley & Renner, 2016).

### **Descriptive Statistics**

Out of the 383 participants, 150 women completed a Wave 1 interview. All of the women at Wave 1 reported having children ranging from one to nine, with an average of 2.59 ( $SD = 1.47$ ). More than half of the women at Wave 1 were non-Hispanic White (Table 1).

Table 1.

*Ethnicity at Wave 1*

	Ethnicity N (%)
Non-Hispanic White	80
Non-Hispanic Black	8.7
Hispanic	4.7
Asian	0
Native American	0.7
Other	2

Descriptive statistics for demographic characteristics at Wave 1 are presented in Table 2. The mean age of the respondents at this wave was 32.07 years ( $SD = 7.55$ ). Approximately 58% of participants reported some college/trade school experience. Almost three-quarters of the participants in Wave 1 reported some college, trade school, or a college degree, indicating a well-educated group of participants who were all had a history or current experiences of IPV. At Wave 1, more than half of the women were working at least part-time. On average, the length of the abusive relationship was 7.36 years ( $SD = 5.57$ ) and over half of the women reported that they had lived with their abusive partner at some point in the relationship. Of these women, 112 women completed Wave 2, 85 completed Wave 3, 62 completed Wave 4, and 32 completed Wave 5.



Table 2.

*Demographics Characteristics at Wave 1*

	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Length of Relationship (years)	150	7.35	5.575
Age at Wave 1 (years)	150	32.07	7.553
College Level Education (years)	149	2.72	.823

The most significant measures from the ISA scale during Wave 1 is presented in Table 3. Participants were asked to report how frequent each item occurred by using a five-point scale from ‘never’ to ‘very frequently’ during the span of their relationship. Higher scores indicated that there was a greater amount of abuse in the relationship. The mean total score at Wave 1 was 109.34 ( $SD = 25.75$ ). The clinical cut-off score for the ISA is 10. The mean total score for the ISA-P was above the cut-off score indicating that almost all the participants experienced severe abuse.

Table 3.

*The Index of Spouse Abuse (ISA) Scale at Wave 1*

	Occasionally (%)	Very Frequently (%)
How often A forced unwanted sex acts	16.7	19.3
How often A punched you with fists	17.3	15.3
How often A called you ugly	19.3	25.3
How often A said respondent couldn't manage without him	12	48
How often A threatened you with a weapon	16	16
How often A belittled you intellectually	19.3	39.3
How often A beat you to need medical help	12	4.7
How often A was jealous or suspicious	10	67.3
How often A slapped you in the head	24	17.3
How often A acted like he would kill you	28.7	20
How often you had sex with A because you were scared of A	18.7	18.7

Descriptive statistics for the DV-FI measures at Wave 1 are presented in Table 4. The DV-FI was used to measure the women's financial stability and their sense of future financial security with higher scores indicating a greater economic abuse ( $r = .429$ ;  $p = .000$ ). The scale also measured the relationship between of victims wanting to leave the abusive relationship and their financial factors at that particular time. Furthermore, the scale identified how financial insecurities caused or increased levels of abuse in the relationship. Not all of the 150 women at Wave 1 experienced economic abuse. However, those who did, reported that their abusive partner controlled all access to family income and that control negatively affected their debt, damaged their credit rating and prevented them for acquiring skills for better employment. About 56% of women reported that financial worriers impacted their decision to leave the abusive relationship. Another 31% of women reported that their abusive partner prevented them from accessing money. Over half of the women (85%) reported that financial insecurities influenced

the violence and 30% of women reported difficulty living solely on their current income without their abusive partner. Almost all the women perceived financial security to be vital to their future well-being.

Table 4.

*Domestic Violence-Related Financial Issues Scale (DV-FI) at Wave 1*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Economic Abuse	18.62	8.05
Perceived Financial Role in Abuse	16.80	6.49
Financial Self-Efficacy	25.41	6.60
Financial Worries impacted Decisions to Leave	5.42	2.17

The Bond Scale of the Working Alliance Inventory (WAI-Bond; Horvath & Greenberg, 1989) was used to measure the alliance with attorney. The 12-item scale measured concepts such as degree of trust, liking, and attachment between client and attorney. The participants reported their stratification with their attorney and the services that were offered to them. The items included, “my attorney and I respect each other” and “I am confident in my attorney’s ability to help me” and response options ranged on a seven-point scale from “never” to “always.” Higher scores indicated a greater relationship between the participants and their attorney. At Wave 1 the mean score for Working Alliance Inventory (WAI) was 5.86 (SD = 1.40) indicating a greater relationship between the participant and their attorney.

### **Statistical Analysis**

**Research Question 1 : What is the relationship between the abuser violation of CPOs and IPV revictimization?**

Revictimization was measured by four variables 1) perpetrator damaged your new partner's property within the last six months; 2) perpetrator threatened your new partner within the last six months; 3) perpetrator harmed your new partner within the first six months; 4) tried to contact you through others within the last six months. A Pearson correlation was calculated to predict violation of civil proactive orders and damaging new partner's property. A weak significant association was found ( $r = .208$ ;  $p = .011$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .043. The coefficient of determination indicates that only 4.3% of the variation in damaging new partner's property in the sample can be explained by a violation of a civil proactive order. When comparing violation of a civil protective order and perpetrator threatening new partner, a Pearson correlation was calculated and found no significant association ( $r = .013$ ;  $p = .878$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .00. The coefficient of determination indicates that 0% of the variation in perpetrator threatening new partner in the sample can be explained by a violation of a civil proactive order. Similarly, when comparing violation of a civil protective order and perpetrator harming new partner, a Pearson correlation was calculated and found no significant association ( $r = .012$ ;  $p = .880$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .00. The coefficient of determination indicates that only 0% of the variation in perpetrator harming new partner in the sample can be explained by a violation of a civil proactive order. Lastly, a Pearson correlation was calculated and found a weak significant association between the violation of civil proactive orders and perpetrator contacting participant through others within the last six months ( $r = .264$ ;  $p = .001$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .064. The coefficient of determination indicates that only 6.4% of the variation in perpetrator contacting participant through others in

the sample can be explained by a violation of a civil proactive order. Indicating a significant but weak relationship between abuser violation of CPOs and revictimization.

**Research Question 2 : What is the relationship between financial instability and IPV victimization?**

A Pearson correlation was calculated to predict the relationship between financial instability and IPV victimization. A significant correlation was found ( $r = .579$ ;  $p = .00$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .335. The coefficient of determination indicates roughly 33% of the variation in financial instability can be explained by an IPV victimization. About 30% of participant's find living on their current income "extremely difficult." Another 35% of participants reported that financial insecurity played a significant role in the abusive relationship. Across 31% of participants reported that their abusive partner prevented them from any access to money. Lastly, 56% of participants indicated that financial worries impacted their decision about leaving their abusive relationship. These results suggest, a significant but weak connection. There is a certain relationship between financial factors and victimization, as this would indicate that respondents who were financially unstable were also reporting frequent and severe victimization.

**Research Question 3 : What is the relationship between demographic characteristics of victims of IPV and severity of victimization?**

The relationship between demographic characteristics of victims of IPV and severity of victimization was identified by the participant's age, length of partnership, and education level. Results of the Pearson correlation indicated a weak significant correlation between the length of relationship and age at Wave 1 indicated ( $r = .168$ ;  $p = .039$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .028. The coefficient of determination indicates that 2.8% of the variation in length of partnership can be explained by

a severity of victimization suggesting that as age increases, the severity of the violence also increases. Pearson correlation was calculated to predict the participant's age and severity of victimization ( $r = .018$ ;  $p = .824$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .00. The coefficient of determination indicates that 0% of the variation in age of partnership can be explained by a severity of victimization. Similarly, a Pearson correlation was calculated to predict the relationship between education level and the severity of IPV victimization ( $r = -.048$ ;  $p = .562$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .00. The coefficient of determination indicates that roughly 0% of the variation in education level can be explained by a severity of victimization. The results suggest that there is no association that connects severity of victimization with the victim's demographic characteristics.

**Research Question 4 : What is the relationship between the quality of alliance with attorney and victim's financial stability?**

The final research question explored the correlation between the quality of attorney-client relationship and victim's financial instability. The study hypothesized that participants would feel more financially secure after connecting with their attorney. The participants could gain child support, divorce settlements, and other financial means. Ultimately, a Pearson correlation was calculated and no significant relationship between the attorney-client relationship and financial stability was found ( $r = .001$ ;  $p = .891$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .00. The coefficient of determination indicates that 0% of the variation in quality of alliance with attorney can be explained by the victim's financial stability. However, further studies could reveal a strong correlation in future waves as respondents develop a better relationship with their attorney and have gained financial settlements.

**Summary**

Around two-third of the 150 participants in the study requested services from ILA to obtain a CPO (n = 97; 64.7%). The remaining women (n = 53; 35.3%) were represented in either a divorce or child custody matter. During Wave 1, the participants reported high levels of physical and non-physical IPV. The relationship between the violation of CPOs indicated that victims are at a moderate risk of IPV revictimization at least once within six months of filing for a civil protective order. This was identified by different ways the perpetrator either threatened the new relationship or tired contacting the victim. Furthermore, the women's financial instability increased IPV victimization rates indicating that responds with poor finances also reported high levels of revictimization. With regard to the women's demographic characteristics, the study found no relationship that would increase IPV victimization. Suggesting that severity and occurrences of victimization is not correlated with the victim's demographics. Lastly, the study found no mediating effect that connects the attorney-client relationship with the responds feeling some sense of financial stability.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses conclusions drawn from the study's research questions, hypotheses, and statistical examination relating to the factors involved in IPV occurrence and severity. The study explored the correlation between CPOs and IPV revictimization by measuring severity and occurrence of threats made by the perpetrator. Factors contributing to financial instability among victims of IPV were also addressed. Lastly, this study concluded on the relationship between the victim's demographic characteristics and the severity of IPV victimization. The study determined whether the victim's age, level of education, and length of relationship have an impact on the severity and occurrence of victimization.

### **Discussion**

This section examines the implications of findings, assessed hypotheses, and connections to scholarly literature. A primary component of CLS is CPOs. A growing number of studies have demonstrated the positive outcome of gaining a CPO. The suggestions concluded that gaining a CPO is a crucial step in deterring the abuse (Durose, 2006; Fritsche, 2014; Walker, 2009). Scholars have found substantial evidence determining that CPOs can deter perpetrators from future acts of violence towards their victims (Dondolf et al., 2001; Lipsky & Caetano, 2011). In examining the violation of CPOs and rates of revictimization, four variables were used to determine the severity and occurrence within the first six months of a CPO violation. The variables related to how often the perpetrator contacted the victim through someone else and how often the perpetrator harmed or threatened the new partner within the last six months. The study



only identified threats that was made towards the victim's new partner and none towards the victim directly.

The study hypothesized that the placement of a CPO would reduce IPV revictimization. The hypothesis would also confirm previous literature that credits CPOs for the reduce of IPV revictimization (Kepple, Epstein, & Grisham 2014). Out of the four variables only one identified a weak significant association between the violation of CPO and perpetrator contacting participant through others within the last six months. In contrast, when reviewing victimization rates prior to securing a CPO, the women reported high levels of physical and non-physical IPV, emotional and verbal abuse, psychological abuse, and coercive control that raised clinical concerns.

Conclusions that could be drawn suggests that perpetrators who appear to violate a civil protective order, are at a higher risk of revictimizing their partner by contacting them or threatening their new partner. The revictimization rates also suggest that specific factors relating to violation of civil protective order and the victim's circumstances can better account for why revictimization is happening after securing a CPO. This would also address specific and stronger predictors of revictimization and violation of civil protective orders. Additionally, the study only addressed revictimization rates as it applied to the new partner, further studies can identify specific variables that account for revictimization as it is done to the victim directly.

To address the second research question, a Pearson Correlation analysis was used to explore the relations between financial instability and IPV victimization. The results indicated a strong association. Previous studies report, nearly, 84% of victims who experience IPV will also experience some form of economic abuse (Allard, 1997; Anderson et al., 2003; Curcio, 2000;

Sable, 1999; Wilson, 2004). Scholars have determined that financial instabilities are one of the leading factors in why victims of IPV stay in an abusive relationship (Adams & Sullivan, 2008; Tolman, 2011). This type of abuse allows the perpetrator to gain control over the victim's ability to acquire, use, manage, maintain, and dispose of any economic resources (Adams & Sullivan, 2008; Tolman, 2011). In examining the relationship between financial instability and IPV victimization, the Domestic Violence-Related Financial Issues Scale (DV-FI) was used to examine several financial factors relating to the abuse the women experienced. Out of the scale a total of four variables were used that assessed the perceived financial role in partner abuse. The perceived abuse determined the women's view of how financial instability, credit card debt, and inability to save an income contributed to the levels of violence they experienced. The Index of Spouse Abuse (ISA), was used to determine the severity of physical and non-physical abuse.

The study hypothesized that financial instability would increase the risk of IPV victimization. Essentially, victims are subjected to greater violence if they are financially dependent on their perpetrator. This would also suggest that IPV is more frequent when relationships are under financial strain. Previous, studies suggest, roughly, 85% of victims reported that financial insecurity played a moderate to complete role in the violence they experienced (Adams & Sullivan, 2008; Tolman, 2011). Out of the total sample of women, 64% reported that their perpetrator negatively affected their debt, damaged their credit rating, and prevented them from acquiring skills for better employment. Another, 56% of the sample indicated that financial worries impacted their decision about leaving the abusive relationship. This would suggest that victims want to leave the abusive relationship but have no financial means to do so. The findings confirmed previous literature that proposes a higher risk of

victimization among those with limited financial stability (Curcio, 2000; Wilson, 2004). This type of abuse allows perpetrators to deprive their victims of economic resources to deter them from successfully leaving the relationship (Anderson et al., 2003; Curcio, 2000; Sable, 1999; Wilson, 2004). This is crucial in understanding factors relating to financial instability and reasons why victims stay in an abusive relationship. Ultimately, without economic support and assets, victims are financially unstable to successfully leave the abusive relationship. The study hypothesized that specific characteristics such as age, length of relationship, and level of education would increase the severity of IPV victimization. The study found no relationship between victim's demographics and severity of IPV victimization. However, the relationship between age and length of relationship produced a significant correlation, indicating that respondents are not leaving their abusive partnership as length of relationship is increasing with age. This would also indicate that the severity of victimization might be somewhat stable throughout the course of the relationship. However, out of the total number of participants, over two-thirds identified as white non-Hispanic with a mean education level of 2.72. Indicating a well-educated group of women that all had a history of IPV. This would suggest that education level is not a factor in severity and occurrence of IPV victimization. In fact, women with higher and lower education levels are reporting a similar rate of IPV victimization.

Previous research had determined that there are a number of factors that increase the risk for IPV victimization but specific demographic characteristics have not been found to have any connection with increased victimization (Houry et al., 2008; Sullivan, 2005). Despite not producing any statistically significant findings, the results provided a general understanding of the population of women that fall victim to IPV victimization and revictimization.

Two-thirds of the total sample of women requested assistance from Iowa Legal Aid to obtain a CPO. The remaining one-third of the sample were either represented in a divorce or child custody matter. The study anticipated that the quality of alliance with attorney would improve the women's financial stability. As this would allow the victim to gain a divorce, child custody, and child support. Additionally, research on the effectiveness of domestic violence services appears to support the alliance with attorney. Despite not producing any statistically significant findings, the results provided the foundations for future research. Further studies on a range of services such as domestic violence counseling, advocacy, and hotline services can better explore the relationship with IPV victimization and services received.

### **Weaknesses of the Study**

Several weaknesses of the archival data were notable. The analysis attempted to follow the participants for two consecutive years in a longitudinal panel study. However, out of the total sample of women, only one-third was represented in a divorce or child custody matter. The majority of women requested assistance from Iowa Legal Aid to obtain a CPO. A divorce or child custody matter can take a longer period of time to obtain but a CPO can be accomplished in a short period of time (Victims of Crime Act, 2018). Especially, when the victim is in an immediate danger. This ultimately impacted the study's overall retention rates.

The archival data proposed to recruit 300 participants but faced a number of barriers and delays. Due to unanticipated and unprecedented delays the study experienced poor retention rates. Out of the 150 women from Wave 1, 112 (74.7%) women were retained and completed Wave 2, 85 (75.9%) completed Wave 3, 62 (72.9%) women were retained and completed Wave 4, and 32 (51.5%) were retained and completed Wave 5. Due to the poor retention rates, the

women were not recruited as a single cohort instead, the study's recruitment process was ongoing and continued throughout the entire study. The poor retention rates essentially constrained the overall analysis.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The challenge of assessing archival data caused a number of limitations to this study. The study was constrained to the archival data collected by Hartley and Renner (2016). This process limited the overall analysis and findings. The data consisted of five different waves but only data from Wave 1 was used. As mentioned in the previous sections, the incorporated sampling strategy questioned the validity of the longitudinal study approach. For that reason, this study attempted to focus on a single point in time to limit confounding variables. Not only did the archival data attempted to recircuit the sample throughout the experiment but the study also experienced significantly poor retention rates. The sample size drastically decreased in each wave but was most significant in Wave 4 and Wave 5 making it difficult to carry out an inferential analysis. Lastly, a number of the participants in Wave 5 did not get the opportunity to be interviewed as they were not successfully retained in the study.

### **Contributions to the Field and Recommendations for Future Research**

As foundational research, the implications and recommendations for future studies are numerous. The archival data consisted of women in seven cities of Iowa who were eligible for legal aid services; future studies can explore a larger more diverse sample of IPV victims. Additional research can examine a population of victims who don't qualify for legal aid services, which can potentially lead towards a different analysis due to their eligibility. The majority of the archival data consisted of one type of CLS, CPOs with relation to Wave 1. Scholars can further

explore the full range of CLS as it relates to IPV. This would include CPOs, divorce, and child custody matters. Studying the impacts of gaining a divorce or child custody can significantly impact the analysis. A number of studies point evidences to a deterrence in violence if the victim is granted a divorce and full custody (Fritsche, 2014; Walker, 2009). As addressed in pervious sections, majority of victims leave an abusive relationship without a stable income, future research can explore additional services outside of legal support that can provide victims with resources that will deter them from revictimization.

This study strictly worked with low-income women and those who met the income means test for legal aid services. Scholars exploring IPV victimization should include more diverse samples that is a representation of women in other locations. Past studies have provided an understanding into why childhood victimization repeats itself in adulthood. Scholars suggest that abusers who have been psychically or sexually abused as a child will carry out those same abusive actions towards their partner (Gondolf & Jones, 2001). The abuse they encountered as a child left a long and damaging effect on them as adults. Multiple scholars agree that fundamental research is needed to better understand and explore the behavioral psychology of batterers to deter the violence. Lastly, this study strictly used data from Wave 1, future studies can explore multiple or different waves to address the longer-term implications of CLS.

## **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to assess factors leading to intimate partner violence. Archival data was used to explore the relationship between CPOs and IPV revictimization by measuring severity and occurrence of threats made by the perpetrator. The three broad outcomes of this study were revictimization, financial instability, and contributing factors relating to

victim's demographic characteristics. The study concluded that victims of IPV are at a moderate risk of revictimization at least once within six months of filing for a CPO. The study also found a relationship between financial instability and IPV victimization. The results indicated that victims are at a greater risk if they are financially unstable or if they are financially dependent on their abusive partner. The study produced no significant findings that predicts the severity of victimization as it relates to the victim's demographic characteristics.

Weaknesses of this study included the challenge of assessing archival data. The study was restrained to the first wave. The overall incorporated sampling strategy at each wave questioned the validity of the longitudinal study approach. This essentially impacted the conclusions that could be drawn from the study. In order to limit confounding variables, the study solely used archival data from Wave 1. This approach was a fundamental strength and weakness in the overall study. In order to fully draw a conclusion, further research is needed. Research should explore the longitudinal factors that contribute to IPV victimization in multiple or later waves. Finally, recommendations for future research such as effective interventions and legal aid assistance will benefit not only academicians, but it will raise awareness and knowledge for victims.

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