KILLING THE ONE YOU LOVE: EXAMINING CASES OF INTIMATE PARTNER
HOMICIDE OCCURRING IN DALLAS, TEXAS BETWEEN THE YEARS 1990-1997

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Research has consistently shown that intimate partner homicide (IPH) rates have been on a steady downward decline over the past two decades. A relatively recent movement in IPH research, however, has emphasized the need for further dissecting the aggregate trends by factors such as gender, race, and victim-offender relationship. In response to these issues, this study looks at the relationship between IPHs and factors such as gender, race, and age. The present study explores officially reported IPH cases in Dallas, Texas between the years 1990-1997. Specific attention will be paid to the victim’s and suspect’s age, race, and gender. The findings of the study will assist in identifying significant characteristics of these IPH incidents which may lead to a greater understanding of the types of relationships in which IPH is more likely to occur. Studying the relationship between IPHs and these factors, as this research aims to do, is important to understanding what IPH incident characteristics need more attention to help prevent future incidents from occurring. As a result of this research, a better understanding of whether IPH may occur in certain types of relationships will be reached and then can be further utilized to educate.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

There has been an extensive amount of criminological research spanning several decades examining homicide frequency and trends. Official estimates have indicated that overall homicide rates have been stable since the mid-1970s, ranging from approximately 8 to 10 homicides per 100,000 in the population (Jennings & Piquero, 2008). Homicide is among the 6 leading causes of death for persons aged 1-44 years and accounts for approximately 18,000 deaths annually in the United States (Paulozzi, Saltzman, Thompson, & Holmgreen, 2001). The majority of homicides are committed by persons known to the victim (Paulozzi et al., 2001).

Unfortunately, violence has always been a problem facing American communities and thousands of Americans each year face a devastating reality, victimization by those they trust and love.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) occurs among all racial, age, and economic groups and shatters families at every level of our social structure (Bledsoe, 1997). IPV is defined by the American Medical Association as “an ongoing devastating experience of physical, psychological, or sexual abuse in the home, associated with increased isolation from the outside world and limited personal freedom and accessibility to resources” (Houry, Reddy, & Parramore, 2006, pg. 1483). Research has revealed that violence is a common occurrence in 10% to 25% of all marriages in the United States and one in four murders nationwide involves family relationships (Bledsoe, 1997).

Before 1980, there were only a few national studies on IPV in the United States. Since 1990, reducing the rates of IPV has been an objective of public and private agencies focused on this issue. Increased attention on IPV during the 1990s resulted in the publication of an integrative review of IPV, the passage of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994, and the
establishment of a National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women (Lee, Thompson, & Mechanic, 2002). While the incidence of violence among intimate partners is no longer a surprise to researchers and policymakers, it is important to recall that only 25 years ago, little data on family violence existed (Cardarelli, 1997).

During the past 2 decades, major changes in law and public policy have redefined violence against intimate partners as an appropriate area for legal intervention (Cardarelli, 1997). Prior to the 1970s, assaults against intimate partners, particularly women, were considered misdemeanors in many states, emergency orders of protection were unavailable to victims, and pleas of self-defense in spousal abuse cases were generally not effective (Riedel & Smith, 2004). By 1980, 47 states had passed some type of domestic violence legislation, and due to this and other activities aimed at decreasing this type of violence, the United States has witnessed a decline in intimate partner homicide (IPH) over the past 20 years (Riedel & Smith, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

Although there has been a general decline in IPHs, the issue remains at the forefront of public concern as there are still approximately 5.3 million IPV incidents each year resulting in 2 million injuries and 1,300 deaths annually (Houry, Reddy, & Parramore, 2006). The Federal Bureau of Investigation’s (FBI) Uniform Crime Report (UCR) indicated 11% of murder victims were determined to have been killed by an intimate partner during the years 1976 through 2005 (see Table 1). While we have seen a decline in the number of men murdered by intimates, dropping 17% since 1976, the number of women killed by intimates was stable for nearly 2 decades (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007). After 1993, the number of women killed by intimates declined reaching the lowest level recorded in 2004 (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007).
Table 1

*Homicide Victim/Offender Relationships 1976-2005*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>594,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimate</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>64,529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Intimate</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
<td>320,554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>209,194</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, 2007

Research has consistently shown that IPH rates have been on a steady downward decline over the past two decades (Houry et al., 2006). A relatively recent movement in IPH research, however, has emphasized the need for further dissecting the aggregate trends by factors such as gender, race, and victim-offender relationship (Jennings & Piquero, 2008). To give an idea of how many homicides are attributed to intimate partners over the past 25 years, Table 2 presents UCR data broken down by victim gender and victim-offender relationship.
Table 2

*Homicide Victim Offender Relationship by Victim Gender, 1976-2005*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim-Offender Relationship</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimate</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-Spouse</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyfriend/Girlfriend</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Family</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Family</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance/Known</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbor</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee/er</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend/Acquaintance</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Known</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In response to these issues, this study looks at the relationship between IPHs and factors such as gender, race, and age. Specific attention is given to any notable trends that might have occurred during the time period under study to determine whether it affected the frequency of IPHs. Studying the relationship between IPHs and these factors, as this research aims to do, is important to understanding what IPH incident characteristics need more attention to help prevent future incidents from occurring.
Purpose of the Study

The present study explores officially reported IPH cases in Dallas, Texas between the years 1990-1997. The findings of the study assists in identifying significant characteristics of these IPH incidents which may lead to a greater understanding of the types of relationships in which IPH is more likely to occur. The characteristics of IPH suspects, victims, and incidents are examined. Specific attention is paid to the victim’s and suspect’s age, race, and gender. Other factors, such as whether the suspect was on probation or parole and if there were any notable trends in the frequency of IPH during the time period examined is also explored. Additionally, the present study examines whether any significant bivariate relationships exist between these characteristics.

First, however, it is important to review past literature on IPH. An historical overview of homicide in general and specifically IPH is presented so that the reader understands the problem of homicide and what drives an individual to commit the act of homicide. By applying a number of criminological theories, this study examines whether certain factors, such as gender and race are correlated to incidents of IPH victimization. Trends in homicide victimization are discussed as are the reasons for the national decline in incidents of IPH. Other factors considered are how intimate partners are defined, the relationships between gender and age and IPV, and men and women as perpetrators of IPV. Overall the present study seeks to develop a better understanding of whether certain relationships exist between these factors of IPH and if these factors can help prevent IPH.
Research Questions

Four research questions on IPH will be addressed within the present study. The research questions are answered through descriptive and bivariate statistical analyses. Table 3 presents the four research questions answered by this research study.

Table 3

*Research Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question #1:</th>
<th>Are there any notable trends in the frequency of IPH between 1988 and 1997?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Question #2:</td>
<td>Do significant relationships exist between:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) The gender and race of the victim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) The gender and race of the suspect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) The gender of the victim and the race of the suspect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) The gender of the suspect and the race of the victim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question #3:</td>
<td>Do significant relationships exist between:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) The gender and age of the victim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) The gender and age of the suspect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) The gender of the victim and the age of the suspect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) The gender of the suspect and the age of the victim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question #4:</td>
<td>Do significant relationships exist between:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) The gender of the victim and whether the suspect is on probation or parole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) The gender of the suspect and whether the suspect is on probation or parole.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By examining these four research questions, a better understanding of why IPH occurs and if certain factors put one at more risk of IPH will be ascertained. The answers to these questions will determine whether individual characteristics are more likely to be found among incidents of IPH. The following section discusses why it is important to research characteristics of IPH incidents.
Significance of the Study

This study looks to build on previous research to address the characteristics surrounding IPH. As mentioned above, millions of individuals are faced with IPV victimization annually. The outcome of this research will benefit victims of IPH as well as others researching IPH, in that it will provide a better understanding concerning the nature and extent of IPHs in one of Texas’ largest cities.

In the first nationally representative survey of violence in families conducted in 1975, 28% of married couples reported at least 1 physical assault occurring between them (Browne, 1997). Although the succeeding years showed an increase in national awareness of IPV, the rates of marital violence still remain high. According to statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, approximately one-third of female murder victims are killed by a current or former intimate partner, compared to 4% of male murder victims (Volpe, 2004). While the number of males being killed by an intimate partner has been on the decline, the proportion of women killed by an intimate partner has been increasing (Department of Justice, 2007).

According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2007), female murder victims are substantially more likely than male murder victims to have been killed by an intimate partner. Although the majority of studies show that females are more likely to be victims of IPV, it is important to not forget that males are also victimized by their female partners. The majority of research studies have been conducted on data where the majority of IPH victims were female (Gauthier & Bankston, 1997). The present study has a sample of 78 IPH cases, and of the 78 cases, interestingly 39 cases involved a male victim and 39 cases involved a female victim. Therefore analyzing this data will provide a unique look into IPH perpetrated by both males and females. To further examine the gender of victims of IPV, Table 4 presents yearly totals from the
UCR. Overall, the number of women killed by an intimate partner was stable between the years 1976-1993 and then declined 23% between the years 1993-1997 whereas the number of men murdered by an intimate partner fell 60% from 1976-1997 (Rennison & Welchans, 2002).

Table 4

*Violence by Intimate Partners, by Gender, 1993-1998*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Female Victims</th>
<th>Male Victims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Rate Per 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1,072,090</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>1,003,180</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>953,700</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>879,290</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>848,480</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>876,340</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, 2002

The information gained from the present research will be an asset to researchers, social service agencies, and police departments whose job it is to address the issues of IPV and IPH. The findings will reveal the types of relationships in which IPH is more likely to transpire. As a result of this research, a better understanding of whether IPH may occur in certain types of relationships will be reached and then can be further utilized to educate.

Conclusion

The present study seeks to address the issues of IPH in more detail by examining the characteristics of individual incidents. Data provided by the Dallas Police Department will be utilized to answer the research questions posed by the present study. The following chapters explore IPH more in detail and explain how the present study will be conducted and analyzed.

Chapter 2 presents previous literature on IPH victims and IPH offenders. The literature review focuses on the history of homicide and theoretical approaches to the study of homicide.
Further, it looks specifically at IPH and any related trends that occurred over the decades relating to IPH victims and offenders. This section also examines gender/age and gender/race relationships within intimate pairs to describe how these variables are related to IPH. Finally, women and men as perpetrators of intimate partner violence are discussed.

Chapter 3 introduces the methodology used to conduct the present study. The study sample is identified and the data collection method is explained. The 4 research questions of the study are presented and the variables used in the present study are described including their coding structure. Lastly, limitations to the present study are discussed and the plan of analysis is presented.

Chapter 4 presents the results from this research. All the variables listed in chapter 3 are evaluated in this section and significant results are discussed. Descriptive analyses, both univariate and bivariate, are conducted to test for statistical significance in answering the research questions.

The final chapter presents conclusions and implications resulting from the analyses. The results of the evaluation are compared to previous literature. Future directions for research on this topic will also be given.

In conclusion, this thesis empirically examines the relationships that exist between characteristics of IPH victims and offenders. Characteristics such as gender, age, race, and whether the suspect was on probation or parole are examined. The results of this study can be used to better understand the types of relationships in which IPH is more likely to occur and to educate readers on IPH incident characteristics so that hopefully future incidents can be prevented.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the previous literature on intimate partner homicide (IPH), including studies conducted on both victims and offenders. First, the history of homicide is explored. Second, risk factors for IPH are discussed. Following, men as perpetrators and women as perpetrators are explored and discussed separately. Literature examining the relationships between age and gender and race and gender is reviewed to determine whether they influence IPH incidents. Finally, the literature review concludes with an analysis of whether a relationship exists between IPH and prior history of violence.

Historical Overview of Homicide

Murder has been a part of the human experience since the beginning of time. As we are beginning a new millennium in a violent culture, it remains important to attempt to understand why people commit such hideous crimes against others. The first family-related homicide in recorded history is reported in the Bible, when Cain murdered Abel out of jealousy and the children of the very first people on earth became murderer and victim (Moffatt, 2000). Another description of family violence can be found in Genesis which describes God’s commandment that Abraham sacrifice his son Isaac (Gelles, 1997). So, as one can see, family violence is certainly not a new phenomenon.

The most common definition for homicide is the killing of one human being by the act or omission of another. The crime of homicide has been divided into four categories by the International Association of Chiefs of Police: (a) domestic; (b) confrontational; (c) youth; and (d) robbery-related (Moffatt, 2000). Each type is different in terms of why the perpetrator committed
the act, why the perpetrator chose a certain victim, and how the law responds to the act committed.

Homicide differs in context as the circumstances surrounding the planning and execution of a homicide are changed by place, time, and presence of others (Moffatt, 2000). An important contextual issue is triggering mechanisms. Each individual has the capacity to commit a crime but ultimately makes the decision of whether to follow through with the act. The majority of those who consider committing a murder never will. For others the pressure becomes overwhelming to the point where they cannot take it anymore, and the triggering mechanism becomes the next pressure-inducing event. A triggering mechanism is the deciding point in whether to commit violence or restrain from it. Those who cannot control this pressure release it by resorting to violence. For example, a triggering mechanism might occur when the pressure of a situation becomes so overwhelming (i.e., a spouse having an affair) that the only way to eliminate the pressure is to get rid of the situation by some sort of violence. Whether or not one commits a homicide depends on the individual and how well they cope with pressure and can control their triggering mechanism. More importantly, as we try to understand homicide, it becomes essential to identify the type of homicide under investigation in the present study. Domestic homicide, specifically IPH and the impact it has on the victim and society, is examined in order to better understand why a person would murder their intimate partner.

Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Homicide

Following the path carved by Marvin Wolfgang (1958), criminologists over the past decades have developed an analysis of the interactions that culminate in criminal homicide. Wolfgang’s classic study of homicide in Philadelphia was one of the first empirical examinations of homicide at the event level (Swatt & He, 2006). Wolfgang introduced the concept of victim
precipitation where the victim may provoke his or her victimization. A number of criminological theories focus on the social characteristics of homicide victims and take into account structural, cultural, and interactional factors (Wilson, 1993). The structural factor involves the gap between classes and races of people. The cultural factor suggests groups with high homicide rates are intrigued by or find violence a normative part of their everyday life. Therefore it is their culture that subjects them to violence. The interactional factor involves the individual’s behavior. This explanation suggests that each party involved in the homicide escalated the violence and was equally responsible for the outcome. These three factors help to explain homicidal violence, but it might be argued that together they truly represent one relatively coherent theory.

Interestingly however, when gender is combined with these factors, all 3 quickly fall apart (Wilson, 1993). The structural factor is eliminated as women are among the most disadvantaged citizens and their rates of violence are relatively low compared to men. When relating gender to the subcultural explanation, it is relevant to say that the majority of those in the subculture of violence are men which imply physical segregation. The notion of subculture is being geographically separated and usually occurs between races and classes. Gender becomes difficult to fit into this notion, as men and women live together in the same areas and neighborhoods. Of the three theoretical factors, the interactional explanation weakens the most when related to gender. If criminal homicide is perceived as a “face game” or character contest, the low rates of women’s violence suggest that women do not play face games. Another problem arises as women are subjected to criminal homicide after a long history of wife battering. In this case, the husband was the only character playing a face game as the wife was only defending herself. These factors suggest a better understanding of gendered homicide would suffice if the focus was not entirely on criminal homicide but the criminalizing process.
In the 1930s, Shaw and McKay introduced social disorganization theory which suggests that neighborhood poverty and ethnic heterogeneity satisfy the community-level capacity to regulate crime. Poverty therefore contributes to residential instability and weakens community involvement. Browning (2002) applied the social disorganization perspective on the neighborhood-level determinants of crime to partner violence. The findings of his study indicated that neighborhood cohesion and informal social control capacity is negatively associated with both IPH rates and nonlethal partner violence. The purpose of his research was to apply social disorganization theory to violence in intimate partner relationships by employing data resources that compare community characteristics to IPH rates and individual level partner violence for women in Chicago. Overall, the study’s findings matched the hypothesis in that socially organized communities are more prepared to handle the exposure of women to potentially violent men.

There are a number of criminological theories that provide an overlap of the victim-offender relationship. Routine activities theory suggests that variations in lifestyle shape an individual’s exposure to risk and lead to the individual’s victimization and opportunities for offending (Broidy, Daday, Crandall, Sklar, & Jost, 2006). Under this theory differences in risks of victimization are associated with differences in lifestyle. Theorists argue that people who are young, male, unmarried, poor, and African American have a higher risk of victimization than those people who are older, female, married, wealthy, and European American (Vold, Bernard, & Snipes, 2002). Self-control theory also links offending and victimization and contends that low self-control is a shared trait leading individuals to high-risk environments and activities (Broidy et al., 2006). Criminal activities that offenders and victims engage in often occur in settings where guardianship is minimal and the chances of detection and punishment are limited,
so it can be argued that their criminal behavior is a “rational” choice from a deterrence or rational choice perspective (Broidy et al., 2006). As one can see, criminological theory provides implicit and explicit perspectives of the overlap between the victim and offender relationship. Another overlap exists between gender and family structure and how they relate to violence.

*Gender and Family Structure-Violence Relationship*

Family structure is also a factor that may affect the violence levels and victimization rates of males and females. It has been found that males become more affected by structural conditions, whereas females are affected by their greater reliance on and involvement in social relationships (Schwartz, 2006). Theorists have speculated that families are crucial to the development of an individual’s prosocial behaviors. Young males use an imitative socialization process where they emulate the use of violence, male responsibility, and resistance to peer pressure demonstrated from their peer groups and men in their household (Schwartz, 2006). Female-headed families are not as dominant since authority of women does not carry as much weight when not supported by male authority (Schwartz, 2006). Further, males who hold a familial role, such as a father are less prone to violence and discourage violent encounters.

There has been limited research on whether family structure affects women more, less than, or differently than men. Schwartz (2006) examined the influence of family structure on female rates compared to male rates of homicide offending across more than 1,600 counties in the year 2000. The findings revealed that family structure plays an important role in determining homicidal behavior for both women and men, but shows a greater effect on male homicide. Gender symmetry occurs as females often resort to violence in the presence of male violence. Therefore, the causes of male violence may indirectly or directly relate to female violence. Female rates of homicide are affected by family structure, but not at the same rate as male
homicides. However, family structure does have the strongest effect on both male and female homicides compared to other ecological measures taken in the study.

Families play a role in female violence and family disruption causes females to compete for those males who are able to provide resources. This competitive environment creates female-on-female violence motivated by rivalry, defense of sexual reputation, and ownership of males (Schwartz, 2006). This can also create female-on-male violence as the female finds no way of escaping the emotional or physical abuse endured by the family or relationship. Females place a greater emphasis on family structure than males because they want to fulfill family obligations and want to help the needs of others. Women typically conform or perpetrate more violence in families where fathers are absent and they are required to perform more roles and responsibility within the family. Females are more supervised than males and are under greater scrutiny by their peers. This greater supervision might be a cause as to why fewer females are subjected to stranger victimization than males.

These informal controls are more effective on females than males because of the greater supervision families have on guarding the female from harm (Schwartz, 2006). While growing up males are taught to protect their mother or sisters. This idea of protection can lead males to believe violence is necessary when protecting your family. In families where females are the head of the household, social controls on these females’ behaviors is less likely. Due to this, these females are more likely to deviate in violent ways and be more vulnerable to becoming a victim. Family members encounter social behaviors within their family structures. No matter what gender, family members are subjected to violence when family disruption is high and social support systems are low. Family structure affects males and females differently, but the social behavior and household environment raised in can have the same effect on both genders.
Gender Inequality and Homicide

When examining homicide victims by gender it is important to explore gender inequality. Although females perpetrate less homicide than males and are less likely to be the victims of crime in general, their violent actions are less likely to be justifiable to the public and to the criminal justice system. Females are more likely to be attacked by a male than another female and this leaves the female at a disadvantage (Wilson, 1993). The average female is smaller and weaker than the average male. In a study of adult intimate partners, it was found that males were larger in 96% of the relationships and the couple’s self-perception of both the male and female was that the male was stronger (Wilson, 1993). Feminist theory emphasizes the importance of gender inequality for understanding the causes of violence directed against females (Haynie & Armstrong, 2006).

Some theorists believe increased violence against females is linked to the female’s increased social role and power in society that results in a “backlash” by men who are threatened by the new roles of females (Haynie & Armstrong, 2006). Whaley and Messner (2002) provide empirical support for the backlash argument in that gender inequality is associated with higher rates of male killings of females (Haynie & Armstrong, 2006). The backlash hypothesis stresses an unintended consequence of female empowerment (Pridemore & Freilich, 2005). Other theorists believe that the increased social status of females creates less risk of victimization and allows them greater opportunities to escape victimization when and if it occurs in the home (Haynie & Armstrong, 2006). As females increase their status they become less likely targets of victimization compared to those females who choose to have a minimal status thus increasing their chances of victimization.
Researchers have argued that the impact of gender equity on female victimization was conditioned by the strength of the masculine subculture (Pridemore & Freilich, 2005). In this masculine subculture, males are more threatened by gender roles and are more willing to resort to violence. Therefore, according to this argument, regions that are characterized by male dominance and the masculine subculture should have higher female victimization rates. Lending credence to this idea, Whaley and Messner (2003) showed a positive relationship between gender equality and male offender-female victim homicide rates in the South (Pridemore & Freilich, 2005). Another study by Steffensmeier and Haynie (2000) revealed that women’s structural disadvantage is a significantly positive predictor of adult and juvenile homicide rates (Dewees & Parker, 2003). When considering differences in homicide victims by gender it is important to look at the factors involving gender inequality. Another form of homicide, IPH, has been a growing topic of interest of researchers as intimate violence has shown to be a significant social and public concern.

**Intimate Partner Homicide**

The National Center for Injury and Prevention Control defines intimate partner violence (IPV) as “the threatened or actual use of physical force that results in or has the potential to result in death, injury, or harm” (Daniels, 2005, p.45). IPH refers to homicide that occurs between two individuals in an intimate relationship (Swatt & He, 2006). An intimate partner can be defined as a current or former spouse, a current or former boyfriend or girlfriend, a common-law spouse, a cohabitating partner, or a current or former dating partner (Daniels, 2005, p.45). Intimate partner violence is synonymous with the terms “domestic violence,” “spouse abuse,” “battering,” “domestic abuse,” “forced sex,” “marital rape,” and “date rape” (Daniels, 2005, p.45). Department of Justice Statistics indicate that the incidence of intimate partner violence is about
one million cases per year for women and 150,000 cases per year for men (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). Additionally, the National Crime Victimization Survey found that death from a domestic violence homicide accounted for 11% of all murders of both men and women from 1993 to 1999 (Daniels, 2005).

IPH is primarily a crime committed against women. In 1999, the mortality rate from homicide committed by an intimate partner was 32% for women and 4% for men (Rennison, 2001). For every murdered spouse or girlfriend, however, there are hundreds of women being beaten, coerced, and intimidated (Daly & Wilson, 1988). Women are killed by intimate partners more often than any other category of killer (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003). Additionally, in 70 to 80% of IPHs, no matter which partner was killed, the man physically abused the woman before the murder (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003).

Another factor of IPH is how certain states have higher IPH rates compared to others. Researchers from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) analyzed data collected from 1981 to 1998 by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The researchers discovered that Southern and Western states have the highest rates of IPH among women (Association of Operating Room Nurses, 2002). The findings showed that legal spouses committed one-half of the IPHs of both men and women. They also discovered the risk of this increases with the size of the population of the community where the couple lives (Association of Operating Room Nurses, 2002). The cities with population sizes of 250,000 and more have higher rates of IPH compared to cities with 10,000 or less people. The study of IPH has received a great amount of attention over the years and this has led in part to a steady decline in its occurrence over the past 20 years (Wells & DeLeon-Granados, 2004). Many factors need to be considered when evaluating IPH some of which include defensive violence mechanisms, why batterers commit homicide, and the
relationship between gender, age, and race of the offender and the victim. The following section highlights important characteristics and examines research regarding to intimate partner homicide.

Trends in Homicide Victimization

There is an excessive amount of literature on homicides within sexual relationships, but only a small portion of literature exists on homicides within a broader framework of patriarchal relations (Websdale, 1999). This literature is important as it gives insight to the characteristics of IPH. These characteristics might include the gender, age, race, socioeconomic background, and criminal history of the participants. While data can provide valuable information concerning the perpetrator and the victim, it often becomes difficult to know for sure if the cases of IPH are preceded by domestic violence (Websdale, 1999). Victims may not always report an incident or police may not report a domestic violence incident as one. In order to fully grasp and interpret the data concerning IPH, we must first recognize the overall decline of IPV and understand trends that have occurred.

In their study, Puzone and colleagues (2000) analyzed the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting System’s (UCR) Supplemental Homicide Report (SHR) data for the years 1976 to 1995. During the 20-year period under investigation, the rates of spousal homicide victimization decreased overall (Puzon et al., 2000). Homicide victimization rates decreased more rapidly for husbands at 75% than for wives at 41% (Puzon et al., 2000). The researchers looked at racial differences among wives and husbands and found homicide victimization rates for Black spouses declining at a faster rate overall than homicide victimization rates for White spouses, particularly White wives (Puzon et al., 2000). More specifically, Black male IPH victimization declined more rapidly than for any other group between 1976 and 1996 (Wells & DeLeon-Granados, 2004).
The data revealed Blacks were more at a risk of IPV than Whites, but between 1976 and 1995 the homicide rates for Blacks had decreased significantly when compared to Whites.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), during the years 1976 to 1996, the frequency of IPH fell from 2,959 incidents (1976) to 1,809 incidents (1996) in the United States (Websdale, 1999). The sharpest decreases during this period were of male victims, particularly Black male victims. Over the years, a trend concerning gender and IPV shows that male intimate partner victimization has declined at greater rates than female victimization (Wells & DeLeon-Granados, 2004). Nationally, between 1976 and 1996, the number of male victims declined 5% per year and declined 1% per year for female victims (Wells & DeLeon-Granados, 2004).

A possible reason for the decline in IPH during this time period is the change in rate of marriage within the age groups at highest risk for homicide victimization and offending (Rosenfeld, 1997). More younger people are waiting longer to get married. For example, in 1970, 55% of American men between 20 and 24 years of age had never been married and this percent has increased to 80% in 1992 (Rosenfeld, 1997). A trend emerged nationally from 1976 to 1987, as rates of married victimization declined while rates of unmarried victimization increased (Wells & DeLeon-Granados, 2004). The rate of marital IPH is decreasing, whereas the rate of nonmarital IPH is increasing (Swatt & He, 2006). Homicide by a spouse in the United States represented 53% of all IPHs in 1998, which decreased substantially from their 75% representation in 1976 (Wells & DeLeon-Granados, 2004).

The above trends might suggest the decline of IPV is due to changes of criminal justice policy and an increase in domestic resources to educate people about domestic violence. A more thorough analysis shows that the decline in rates for male victimization and trends marked by racial differences are responsible for the decline (Wells & DeLeon-Granados, 2004). Studies
have also found that the increase in legal assistance and shelters has been associated with the
decline (Wells & DeLeon-Granados, 2004). However, these factors are not the only factors to
consider as they do not account fully for the trend decline. Other factors to consider are how
intimate partners are defined (i.e., married and non-married), the relationships between gender
and age, gender and race, and men and women as perpetrators of IPV.

Gender and Age

In general, younger rather than older individuals are more likely to be perpetrators and
victims of IPH (Websdale, 1999). Mercy and Saltzman (1989) analyzed the FBI SHRs from
1976 to 1985 and found as the frequency of crime increased, the age differential between the
partners increased as well. Marriages that had large age gaps between the two spouses had
homicide rates four times as high when compared to marriages where the husband was 2 years
older, the most common gap (Websdale, 1999).

Glass and colleagues (2008) compared young adult femicides (18 to 20 years of age) with
older adult femicides (21 years and older). Femicide, the homicide of women, is the seventh
leading cause of death for women in the United States (Glass, Laughon, Rutto, Bavacqua, &
Campbell, 2008). Glass and colleagues (2008) examined demographics and risk characteristics
between younger and older victims and found no significant differences. Although there were no
significant differences in risk factors, younger adult victims of intimate partner femicide were
more likely to have experienced controlling behaviors and extreme jealousy from their
perpetrators than their older adult counterparts (Glass et al., 2008). Findings also showed young
adult women were more likely to have been killed by an ex-partner rather than a current partner
and the perpetrator was more likely to be unemployed.
The age of victims of IPH is also related to race or ethnicity. Block and Christakos (1995) revealed that among men, Black men aged 35 to 39 were the most frequent victims of IPH, with a rate of 18 per 100,000 per year. Among women, Black females are the most victimized group, with 11 being killed by intimate partners per 100,000 per year (Websdale, 1999). Women who are White or Latino face less risk of victimization when compared to Black women. Although age plays an important role in who is likely to be a victim or perpetrator of intimate partner violence, race also plays a role in determining which gender is at greater risk of victimization.

**Gender and Race**

An important issue in the criminal justice system is how African Americans are overrepresented among homicide victims. Homicide is the leading cause of death among Black women under age 44 and among young Black men (Websdale, 1999). The same is true for IPH. In their longitudinal analysis of spousal homicide, Block and Christakos (1995) found Blacks have an 8.4 times higher rate of spousal homicide compared to Whites. A possible reason why Blacks have higher rates of spousal homicide could be due to the differential response of the police and health professionals. Police take crime less seriously in Black residential areas and are more willing to tolerate the violence until it starts to affect the wealthier White neighborhoods (Websdale, 1999). Another reason is Blacks, specifically Black women, are more likely to report their victimization when compared to other races. White women reported victimizations in approximately half of the cases, while Black women reported two-thirds of their victimizations (Websdale, 1999).

Paulsen and Brewer (2000) determined how the spousal sex ratios of killing (SROKs) and the number of female perpetrators for every 100 male perpetrators compared between Chicago and Houston. Wilson and Daly (1992) introduced this useful measure of women and
men’s involvement as perpetrators. They expressed the ratio of the number of female homicide offenders for every 100 male offenders. Three important dimensions were revealed to help broaden our understanding of the problem of IPV. First, the SROKs in both cities were only high for the killing of spouses and children, as the study did not include other blood relatives, acquaintances, or strangers (Paulsen & Brewer, 2000). The study showed that the men’s relative risk for IPH victimization in both cities decreases when 2 parties are estranged in some way. The last finding revealed is that the large SROKs observed were primarily a Black phenomenon and the lowest SROKs were found among Hispanics. A reason for the racial differences in SROKs between the 2 cities was due to the fact that 40% of Chicago’s population is Black whereas Blacks make up less than 30% of Houston’s population (Paulsen & Brewer, 2000).

IPV is a national problem that has been studied among many racial, ethnic and cultural groups. When examining gender and race, a consistent demographic profile has emerged with victims and perpetrators in that they are more likely to be African American couples who are young, undereducated, unemployed, and urban dwellers (West, 2004). Caetano and his colleagues (2005) looked at prevalence, incidence and recurrence of IPV among Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics from 1995 and 2000. In 1995 and 2000, the prevalence of IPH was higher among Blacks and Hispanics than Whites. Whites had a lower rate of prevalence in 2000 compared to 1995. Incidence rates were twice as high for Blacks and Hispanics than for Whites during that time period. IPV recurrence rates were also higher among Blacks and Hispanics than Whites. The study suggests that the course of IPV among Blacks is shorter, with more Blacks perpetrating IPV than Whites and Hispanics (higher prevalence and incidence) but also remitting earlier (Caetano et al., 2005). A growing body of research, however, has suggested race is often a
proxy for social class and other structural inequalities (West, 2004) so these relationships could be attributed to class rather than race.

*Men as Perpetrators*

Men commit nearly all multiple homicides in families and typically kill as the final act of aggression in intimate relationships in which they have been the abusers (Websdale, 1999). In regard to IPH, Wolfgang (1958) found the ratio of husband-to-wife killings nearly even, but the relationships accounted for 41% of all women homicide victims. Wolfgang found when married females committed homicides, the victim was overwhelmingly a husband and more husbands are homicide victims than wives when the homicide involved victim precipitation. As mentioned above, victim precipitation is a concept used to define situations in which the victim initiates his or her own victimization. Wolfgang (1958) defined a homicide as victim precipitated when the victim was the first to use physical force. In general, the ratio of male offenders to female offenders is closer for IPH than any other category of homicide. There are approximately 6 female offenders for every 10 male offenders (Swatt & He, 2006).

Both men and women can be verbally and physically aggressive; however, an analysis of IPH may fail to acknowledge the role that unequal strength may play during an assault. Men, on average, are stronger than women and have a greater chance of forcibly restraining their victim. Studies show men perpetrate more aggressive actions against their female partners than women do against their male partners (Cardarelli, 1997). Also, men are more likely to perpetrate multiple aggressive actions during a single incident (Cardarelli, 1997). Although women were significantly less likely than men to be victims of violent crime, they are more vulnerable to particular types of perpetrators (Cardarelli, 1997). Men are more likely to be victimized by strangers or acquaintances and women are more likely to be victimized by intimates.
A possible reason why men decide to perpetrate aggressive behavior against their intimate partner is perceptions of betrayal. Many men who beat their intimate partners feel they have been betrayed, deceived, or abandoned by them. Men who reported being betrayed by their partner often relied on their partner for support; when this support ended, the men resorted to violence (Websdale, 1999). Some cases show men who murder their female partner made prior threats to kill their partner. In almost one-third of multiple homicides, the men had threatened to kill their intimate female partners at some point before the fatality (Websdale, 1999). The man either communicated the threats to neighbors or friends, and the majority of the threats were issued to the woman herself who later reported them to others.

Another important factor to look at when exploring the reasons why men murder intimate partners is whether the female was trying to escape the relationship or trying to get a divorce. Trying to escape their abusive relationship can put women in more danger as the effort to escape causes more rage in the abuser. Attempts to leave violent men are one of the most significant correlates with domestic death (Websdale, 1999). In order for women to protect themselves from their intimate partners, they may try and seek help from criminal justice agencies, or in extreme cases, they may take the matter in their own hands and resort to homicide as self-defense.

**Women as Perpetrators**

The number of known female-perpetrated homicide incidents in 2003 is substantially lower than the number of male-perpetrated homicides (Swatt & He, 2006). When compared to other forms of homicide, however, there is less gender disparity. Females may have a small involvement in serious criminal activity, but IPH is an exception. A key difference between male and female-perpetrated IPH incidents is that female offenses often involve an explosive release of aggression toward a chronically abusive intimate partner (Swatt & He, 2006). Women
typically kill their intimate male partners in self-defense and within the confines of an increasingly abusive relationship (Websdale, 1999). Women rarely kill other people, accounting for only 11.5% of homicides committed by adults. However, when women do kill, the victim is most likely a male intimate partner (Cardarelli, 1997).

Mentioned earlier, the concept of victim precipitation helps explain the intimate partner killings of men by women. The woman may have felt endangered by her intimate partner to the point of responding in a manner that resulted in the death of the precipitant (Websdale, 1999). Swatt and He (2006) hypothesized that females are more likely to be the offender if the offender had a record of pre-homicide injury. Data collected in the Chicago Women’s Health Risk Study from 1995 to 1998 was analyzed to assess women’s issues resulting from domestic violence. The results revealed females were more likely to have experienced pre-homicide injury (53.6%) than males (3.5%) (Swatt & He, 2006). The finding supports the idea that female perpetrated IPH incidents are oftentimes linked to defensive reactions resulting from prior abuse (Swatt & He, 2006).

Titterington and Harper (2005) examined IPH from 1985 to 1999 in Houston, Texas to see how likely women are to be offenders in domestic homicide. The study described female IPH offending through a measure known as the sex ratio of killing (SROK). Wilson and Daly (1992) who introduced the concept of SROK found for every 100 men in the United States who killed their wives, 75 wives killed their husbands. The ratio for women is ten times greater than that for all other types of homicide (Titterington & Harper, 2005). The findings showed women were over 40% of the offenders in lethal domestic assaults (Titterington & Harper, 2005). A downward trend has emerged where men’s rates of homicide victimization had decreased, but this is not the same case for women as their rates have been increasing. When a woman does
make the decision to violently assault or murder someone, the victim is usually an intimate partner.

The majority of all forms of IPV are overwhelmingly perpetrated by men against women. Past literature also indicates how it may become necessary for women to use self-defense to protect themselves when these situations arise. Due to the increase in women protecting themselves from their spouses, there has also been an increase in female arrest rates and dual arrest in IPV incidents. One explanation for the increasing number of women arrested for IPV is that women are using violence as a defensive mechanism against abusive partners (Muftic, Bouffard, & Bouffard, 2007). Often, criminal justice officials fail to consider self-defense and therefore view incidents as a one-time situation where you have an offender and a victim. This approach may be a reason why there is an increase in arrests of women for IPV.

Limited empirical data exists regarding the reasons or motives for the perpetration of IPV by women (Stuart, Moore, Gordon, Hellmuth, Ramsey, & Kahler, 2006). Stuart and colleagues (2006) examined arrested women’s self-reported reasons for IPV perpetration and examined women who were victims of severe violence to see if they were more likely than women victims of minor partner violence to report self-defense as a reason for their violent behavior. The study revealed the most common reasons for violence perpetration among women were self-defense, poor emotion regulation, retaliation from past abuse, and provoked by the partner (Stuart et al., 2006). Self-defense was the most common response when asked why they responded to the batterer with violence.

Within the study of IPV, controversy exists as to whether perpetration and victimization of domestic violence is gender specific (Melton & Belknap, 2003). Melton and Belknap (2003) looked at 2,500 incidents of IPV, and found that females were more likely than males to resort to
violence as self-defense to protect themselves from an abusive partner. Findings further revealed that male defendants’ actions were more serious and caused more fear for victims than did the female defendants’ actions (Melton & Belknap, 2003). As mentioned above, males make up the majority of the defendants and are more likely than women to be perpetrators of IPV. In addition, self-defense is mentioned more often by women than men when asked why they resorted to violence. This supports Melton & Belknap’s (2003) research indicating the main reason why women use violence against current and former male partners is to resist the violence perpetrated against them.

Why Batterers Kill

Each year in the United States, more than 1,000 battered women are killed by an intimate partner, the majority of which had in the past sought assistance from the criminal justice system without success (Ewing, 1997). It has been estimated that in more than 80% of spousal homicides, the police had been called to the marital home at lease once in the 2 years preceding the killing (Ewing, 1997). The likelihood for a battered woman to be killed by her intimate partner has been found to be proportional to the degree to which the woman fights back. Battered women who resist abuse are more likely to be killed than those battered women who suffer in silence (Ewing, 1997). Those who try to leave or do accomplish leaving their batterer are at the highest risk of becoming homicide victims. Research has consistently found that violence against battered women escalates significantly, often to fatal proportions, any time these women try to take any control over their lives or their relationship.

A strong connection is found between women’s victimization by an intimate partner and the incidence of homicide women commit against those partners (Jenson, 2001). Women who have been abused stay in their abusive relationships for many reasons some of which are related
to their gender structures. First, traditional norms play a role as society places a huge emphasis on a legal marriage, the expectation for the woman to take care of, obey, and honor the man, and for the woman to keep the family happy at all times. Another reason why women may stay in abusive relationships is because of the unequal gender system in our society. Men usually have the financial power to control the family and they receive stronger support from the justice system and society in general. The woman’s role is seen as keeping the household organized and making her man happy. The gender conditions that keep women in abusive relationships and that simultaneously support men’s control and use of violence to maintain power increase the likelihood that women might kill their intimate partner (Jenson, 2001).

The ultimate question becomes, why do battered women kill their abusers and why doesn’t the law do more to prevent these killings? Reports show battered women who kill have been abused both physically and psychologically by the men they killed (Ewing, 1997). The majority of battered women do not kill, but those who do, have been subjected to more severe abuse, are usually older and less educated, and have fewer coping resources. Ewing (1997) collected data on 100 cases in which battered women killed their batterers. One-third of the killings took place during a battering incident and the others occurred after the battering incident. Of the 100 cases, 85 went to trial with the woman claiming self-defense. These women claimed battered woman syndrome and this allows the jurors to understand what the woman had endured and why she felt it was necessary to use deadly force against her partner. Battered woman syndrome is a learned helplessness and proposes that women in abusive relationships experience a constellation of effects such as they cannot distinguish between memories of past abuse and current threats, and thus experience intense feelings of fear and anger (Gelles, 1997).
Every time a woman is killed or beaten it points to the failure of the criminal justice system. Many police departments have delays in response time to these calls and occasionally fail to respond to the calls at all (Ewing, 1997). By the time the police do arrive, the batterer has finished abusing the partner. Without visually seeing the crime occur, the police officers usually do not make an arrest or remove the batterer from the home. The only advice the battered woman is given is to leave the batterer, seek an order of protection, or file charges. Women, who insist on filing charges against their batterer, rarely get their case processed in a timely manner. Ewing (1997) found over 90% of women interviewed not only called the police but filed a complaint against their batterer. Of those cases, only 1% of the complaints were ever prosecuted. Battered women usually keep silent and eventually kill their abuser or their abuser kills them instead. In summary, IPH is directly influenced by low levels of gender equality (Jenson, 2001). Economic opportunities and the failure of human service institutions create barriers for women who are in abusive relationships. Therefore they may resort to homicide to solve the problem on their own.

Prior History of Violence

In some IPH cases, police have had prior involvement with the perpetrator and the victim. In over half of the cases in which a man killed his present or former intimate female partner, the police had contact with the parties because of IPV at the residence (Websdale, 1999). There is difficulty when determining the precise extent of police involvement as not all officers document domestic calls. Besides not documenting domestic calls, another problem emerges as some victims will not reach out to the police. Most studies appear to show that victims of known offenders reach out less often than victims in cases involving stranger offenders, a trend also shown in arrest patterns (Jordan, 2004). Not only have perpetrators had previous encounters with
the police, some have had restraining orders against them for similar offenses. Research indicates women typically seek orders of protection after serious levels of victimization (Jordan, 2004).

Many perpetrators of IPH utter threats at some point in their violent relationship (Websdale, 1999). Threats to murder an intimate partner need to be taken seriously, even though a small number of perpetrators actually follow through with the threats. IPHs take place at various stages in relationships. Some occur while a woman is still residing with the perpetrator, others occur after the woman has left and found another partner, and still others take place after the woman has filed for divorce or a restraining order against the partner. Victims may try to leave their intimate partner and in doing so they are killed during their final attempt to escape. Because it is evident in some cases that a prior history of violence exists, victims of IPV and first responders need to consider prevention strategies to help prevent future victimizations and possibly death.

Conclusion

The 1999 National Criminal Victimization Survey revealed the mortality rate from IPH was 32% for women and 4% for men (Daniels, 2005). A recent analysis of IPV demonstrated that although women are slightly more likely to engage in at least one act of physical aggression than are men, male-to-female violence has been found to have more detrimental effects than does female-to-male violence (Stuart et al., 2006). Although men’s violence against women is devastating, the effects of violence perpetrated by women should not be ignored. It becomes important to understand the characteristics of incidents where women are the perpetrators of IPH as arrest rates are increasing for women involved in IPV. A prominent defense used by female perpetrators of this crime is self-defense. Because of the nature and severity of IPV, health care professionals need to conduct research on risk factors and need to develop effective prevention
strategies so that IPV victims do not feel the need to respond to IPV victimization with homicide (Daniels, 2005). The present study hopes to add to what is known about IPH by exploring incidents in more detail. The following chapter explains the methodology used for the present study.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will discuss the methods used to conduct the present study on intimate partner homicide (IPH). The present study looks at officially reported IPH cases in Dallas, Texas between the years 1990-1997. Secondary data obtained from the Dallas Police Department (DPD) is utilized for analysis. 4 research questions on IPH will be addressed within the present study. Descriptive statistics, Pearson’s chi-square analyses, and independent samples $t$-tests will be conducted to answer the research questions. Bivariate analyses will be utilized to determine whether significant relationships exist between the variables under study. Limitations to the present study are also discussed.

The data utilized is a product of a research grant on homicide in the city of Dallas which was initiated between the faculty of the University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Criminal Justice and the DPD’s Crimes Against Persons Division Homicide Unit. The data was originally collected and compiled by DPD’s Crimes Against Persons Division Homicide Unit. The present study relies on this data to explore the characteristics of IPH cases occurring in Dallas during this time period.

Population under Study

The population under study includes all homicide cases reported to DPD between the years 1990-1997. During this time, there were 4,675 cases investigated by the Crimes Against Persons Homicide Unit. Of these homicide cases, 201 cases were reported to involve a family violence motive. From this population, our sample includes only those cases of IPH occurring between married or common law married intimate partners where there was a family violence motive. To define, common law marriage is a type of marriage in which couples can become
legally married by living together for a long period of time, representing themselves as a married
couple, and intending to be married (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007). Overall, our sample
included 78 cases, 50 of which entailed common law married intimate partners. Of the 78 IPH
cases, interestingly 39 cases involved a male victim and 39 cases involved a female victim. This
is unique in that females are much more likely than men to be murdered by an intimate partner
(U.S. Department of Justice, 2007).

Method of Data Collection

As mentioned above, the present study relies on secondary data obtained in 1997 by the
UNT Department of Criminal Justice faculty from the DPD. The DPD provided in-depth
information regarding each officially reported homicide case that occurred in Dallas between the
years 1990-1997. After the data was received by the Department of Criminal Justice faculty, it
was coded and transferred to an SPSS database. Before beginning analysis for the present study,
this project was approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (see Appendix).

Research Questions

There are several research questions on IPH that are addressed by the present study.
These questions involve case characteristics including characteristics of IPH suspects, victims,
and incidents. Additionally, the present study examines whether any significant bivariate
relationships exist between these case characteristics. The research questions were developed
based on past literature and when answered will assist in identifying significant characteristics of
these IPH incidents which may lead to a greater understanding of the types of relationships in
which IPH is more likely to occur. To this end, the research addresses the following research
questions:

1) Are there any notable trends in the frequency of IPH between 1990 and 1997?
2) Do significant relationships exist between the following variables?
   a) Gender and race of the victim.
   b) Gender and race of the suspect.
   c) Gender of the victim and the race of the suspect.
   d) Gender of the suspect and the race of the victim.

3) Do significant relationships exist between the following variables?
   a) Gender and age of the victim.
   b) Gender and age of the suspect.
   c) Gender of the victim and the age of the suspect.
   d) Gender of the suspect and the age of the victim.

4) Do significant relationships exist between the following variables?
   a) Gender of the victim and whether the suspect is on probation or parole.
   b) Gender of the suspect and whether the suspect is on probation or parole.

Variables under Analysis

To answer the research questions noted above, many variables will be analyzed. The type of analysis utilized is discussed in the next section. The variable year is a nominal categorical variable and was used to determine whether trends exist as to which years IPH was most prevalent. The variables victim gender, suspect gender, victim race (White, Black, Hispanic), suspect race (White, Black, Hispanic), and suspect on probation/parole are all binary variables indicating demographic characteristics of each incident. Finally, the variables victim age and suspect age are continuous metric variables. Table 5 presents the variables included in the analysis and their coding structure.
Table 5

*Variables and Coding Structure*

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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>0=No; 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect Race</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>0=No; 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>0=No; 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>0=No; 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim Age</td>
<td>Metric, continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect Age</td>
<td>Metric, continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect on Probation/Parole</td>
<td>0=No; 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Plan of Analysis**

Analyses for the present study follow in 2 parts. First, descriptive analyses were used to ascertain the frequency of specific characteristics among the sample of cases. These descriptive statistics are useful in describing the sample of cases as well as in determining trends based on the years in which the IPHs occurred (i.e. Research Question 1). Second, bivariate analyses were utilized to determine whether significant relationships exist between the variables under study.
Nonparametric tests were conducted to test for statistical significance and answer the research questions. The use of nonparametric tests allows the researcher to analyze data that comes as frequencies, such as the number of male or female victims of IPHs. The specific nonparametric test that is used for the present study is the Pearson chi-square test. Chi-square is a type of nonparametric test that allows you to determine if what you observe in a distribution of frequencies would be what you would expect to occur by chance (Salkind, 2008). Pearson chi-square tests were used to answer Research Questions 2 and 4.

To answer Research Question 3, an independent samples $t$-test was conducted. An independent samples $t$-test is used when determining whether a significant relationship exists between a metric variable and a binary (categorical) variable. For example, in answering Research Question 3 it was determined whether a significant relationship exists between the variables victim gender and victim age.

Limitations to the Present Study

There are a few limitations within the study that need to be considered. First, and most importantly, the study involves secondary analysis of data received from the DPD. The problem with secondary analysis of data is the format may be incompatible for internal comparison or the data may be inaccessible or not presented in useful forms (Houston, 2004). Also, the age of the data reduces the generalizability of the findings as the findings will have to be put in context to the years in which the IPHs under study occurred. Another significant limitation of this evaluation is the problem of incomplete or missing data. Researchers have no knowledge of how is the data was originally collected and may not know if the data is accurate. It becomes very difficult to evaluate the accuracy of the data after it has been collected. The data has also been filtered through standard law enforcement coding and then released for evaluation. Errors may
have been made during the entry of data or there could have been a misinterpretation about the
crime incidents in the case files. One specific issue that limits the number of cases available for
analysis for the present study is that when coded, the categories of the variable victim-suspect
relationship did not distinguish between boyfriend/girlfriend and acquaintance. Due to this, only
intimate partners who were married or common-law married spouses at the time of the incident
can be included in the analysis. The last limitation to note is that due to the small sample size,
only bivariate statistics can be used for analysis. While bivariate statistics are useful, the use of a
multivariate model would have been preferred if it was possible.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the methods used for the present study on IPH. Using secondary
data provided by DPD, the four research questions posed were answered through statistical
analysis. Findings will assist in identifying significant characteristics of these IPH incidents
which may lead to a greater understanding of the types of relationships in which IPH is more
likely to occur. Chapter 4 presents the results of the analyses.
CHAPTER 4
ANALYSES

This chapter presents the results of the analyses run to answer the research questions posed by the present study. Descriptive statistics, Pearson’s chi-square analyses, and independent sample t-tests were conducted to answer the four research questions. The chapter begins with a description of the sample which includes characteristics related to intimate partner homicide (IPH) cases that occurred between the years 1990 and 1997 in the city of Dallas, Texas. Following, the results of bivariate analyses are discussed in relation to each research question.

The first research question examined the frequency of homicides across the years under study to see if any trends resulted. The second research question was explored using Pearson’s chi-square analyses to determine whether significant relationships exist between the variables gender, race of the suspect, and race of the victim. To answer the third research question, an independent sample t-test was used to explore whether significant relationships exist between the variables gender of the suspect, gender of the victim, age of the suspect, and age of the victim. Pearson’s chi-square analyses were again utilized to answer the fourth research question and determine whether a significant relationship exists between the variables gender of the suspect, gender of the victim, and whether the suspect was on probation or parole at the time of the homicide. First, the characteristics of the sample are explored.

Sample Characteristics

Among the 4,675 homicide cases reported to the Dallas Police Department (DPD) between the years 1990-1997, 201 cases involved a family violence motive. Among these cases, 78 involved married or common law married intimate partners as suspects and victims. Of the 78 cases, 39 involved a male victim and 39 cases involved a female victim. As these were all
heterosexual relationships, 39 cases involved a male perpetrator and 39 cases involved a female perpetrator. This sample is unique in that females are overrepresented as perpetrators. According to the literature, females are much more likely than males to be murdered by an intimate partner (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007). The demographic characteristics of the 78 cases retained for analysis are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect on Probation or Parole</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average age of victims in the sample was 37 (37.14) and the average age of suspects in the sample was 38 (37.81). The majority of the victims were Black (60.5%), while White victims comprised 18.4% and Hispanic victims 17.1% of the sample victims. Similarly, the majority of suspected perpetrators were Black (60.5%), while White suspects comprised 23.7%
and Hispanic suspects 11.8% of the sample suspects. Of the suspects, 25% were on probation or parole at the time of the homicide.

Analysis of Research Question 1

The first research question examined whether trends exist based on the frequency of IPH cases during the years 1990-1997. Almost one-third (28.9%) of IPHs occurred in 1993. The reason why female victims of IPH was so high in 1993 is unknown, but would be interesting for future research to see why there was such a high number of female victims in Dallas, Texas during this year. Nationally, the number of violent crimes by intimate partners against females declined from 1993 to 2001 (Rennison, 2003). Compared to females in 1993, males were victims of about 162,870 violent crimes by an intimate partner and by 2000 the total had fallen to an estimated 103,220 victimizations (Rennison, 2003). The years 1990 and 1991 shared the same number of IPHs with 2 cases (2.6%) each and so did the years 1994 and 1995 with 11 cases (14.5%) occurring in each year. The highest frequency of IPH cases occurred between the years 1992 and 1995, comprising a total of 71.1% of all IPHs occurring during the eight year period. In 1996, the number of IPHs declined with only 6 cases (6.6%) reported that year. During the year 1997, however, the frequency of IPH cases rose, with 13 cases (17.1%) reported that year. Table 7 presents the frequency of IPH cases by year.
Table 7

Frequency of IPH Occurrence by Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male Victims</th>
<th>Female Victims</th>
<th>Total Victims</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of Research Question 2

The second research question examined whether a significant relationship exists between the variables *victim gender*, *suspect gender*, *race of the victim* and, *race of the suspect*. Four bivariate chi-square analyses were utilized to examine these relationships. The first explored the relationship between the variables *victim gender* and *victim race*. The second explored the relationship between the variables *victim gender* and *suspect race*. The third examined the relationship between the variables *suspect gender* and *victim race* and the fourth explored the relationship between the variables *suspect gender* and *suspect race*. Table 8 presents the results of the Pearson’s chi-square analyses.

Table 8

Pearson’s Chi-Square Results for Gender and Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim Race</th>
<th>Victim Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim Race</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Yes</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suspect Race</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Yes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Yes</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim Race</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Yes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suspect Race</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Yes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Yes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An examination of IPH victims revealed that there were 8 White female victims, 21 Black female victims, and 7 Hispanic female victims. Among the male victims, there were 6
White victims, 25 Black victims, and 6 Hispanic victims. 9 female victims were killed by a White male. The majority of female victims \((n=21)\) were killed by a Black male. 9 male victims were killed by a White female. As with the female victims, the majority of male victims \((n=25)\) were murdered by a Black female. Hispanics were the least represented racial/ethnic category.

In exploring the IPH suspects it was found that there were 9 White female suspects, 25 Black female suspects, and 3 Hispanic female suspects. 9 male suspects were White, 21 were Black, and 6 were Hispanic. The majority of female suspects \((n=25)\) murdered a Black victim. There was an equal number of White and Hispanic victims \((n=6)\) killed by a female suspect. The majority of male suspects \((n=21)\) murdered a Black victim. Following, 8 male suspects murdered a White victim and 7 male suspects murdered a Hispanic victim. Nationally, Blacks were victimized by intimate partners at significantly higher rates than persons of any other race between 1993 and 1998 (Rennison, 2000). Black females experienced IPH at a rate of 35% higher than that of White females, and Black males at a rate of 62% higher than that of White males (Rennison, 2000).

Results from the Pearson’s chi-square analyses show no significant relationships between the variables \textit{victim gender/suspect gender} and \textit{victim race}: White \((\chi^2=.350, 1 \ df, \ n.s.)\). There were also no significant relationships found between the variables \textit{victim gender/suspect gender} and \textit{victim race}: Black \((\chi^2=.881, 1 \ df, \ n.s.)\). Further, there were no significant relationships found between the variables \textit{victim gender/suspect gender} and \textit{suspect race}: White \((\chi^2=.000, 1 \ df, \ n.s.)\) or the variables \textit{victim gender/suspect gender} and \textit{suspect race}: Black \((\chi^2=.881, 1 \ df, \ n.s.)\). As there were the same number of male and female victims and male and female suspects, the statistical findings were the same when the analyses were run with the variable \textit{victim gender} and the variable \textit{suspect gender}. Because there were so few cases involving Hispanic victims and
suspects, Pearson’s chi-square analyses could not be conducted using those variables. The next research question examined relationships between the variables victim gender, suspect gender, victim age, and suspect age.

Analysis of Research Question 3

Research question three examined whether a significant relationship exists between the variables regarding gender and age of the victims and suspects. Independent sample t-tests were used to determine whether significant relationships exist between these variables. Table 9 presents the results of the independent sample t-tests results.

Table 9

**Independent Sample t-Tests Results for Gender and Age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Victim Gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (n=38)</td>
<td>Female (n=38)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Victim</td>
<td>35.74**</td>
<td>11.72</td>
<td>38.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Suspect</td>
<td>34.42**</td>
<td>9.24</td>
<td>41.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suspect Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (n=38)</td>
<td>Female (n=38)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Victim</td>
<td>38.55**</td>
<td>18.38</td>
<td>35.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Suspect</td>
<td>41.30**</td>
<td>17.65</td>
<td>34.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<.01

Results revealed a significant relationship between the variables victim gender and victim age ($\chi^2=7.964$, 74 df, $p<.01$) and a significant relationship between the variables suspect gender and victim age ($\chi^2=7.964$, 74 df, $p<.01$), with female victims being older than male victims. Significant relationships also exist between the variables suspect gender and victim age ($\chi^2=7.964$, 74 df, $p<.01$) and the variables suspect gender and suspect age ($\chi^2=9.434$, 73 df, $p<.01$) with male suspects being older than female suspects. Nationally, for both males and females, rates of violence by an intimate partner were below 3 victimizations per 1,000 persons.
under age 16 and over age 50 (Rennison, 2000). Females ages 20 through 24 were victimized by an intimate partner at the highest rate, 21 per 1,000 females (Rennison, 2000). Based on this finding, victims in the present sample are older than average. A reason for this finding could be that the majority of national studies define intimate partners as current or former spouses, boyfriends, girlfriends, common law married, or married couples (Rennison, 2001). The present study defined intimate partners only as common law or married partners, thus the sample was smaller and the age of the victims were older. Analysis of the final research question is discussed next.

Analysis of Research Question 4

The fourth and final research question examined whether significant relationships exist between the variables victim gender, suspect gender, and whether the suspect was on probation or parole at the time of the homicide. A Pearson’s chi-square analysis was utilized to examine these relationships. Table 10 presents the Pearson’s chi-square results for this research question.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Suspect on Probation or Parole</th>
<th>Victim Gender</th>
<th>Suspect Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5*</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Suspect on Probation or Parole</th>
<th>Suspect Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14*</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05

Results revealed that there were 5 male victims whose suspected perpetrator was on probation or parole at the time of the homicide. There were more female victims (n=14) whose
suspected perpetrator was on probation or parole at the time of the homicide. Pearson’s chi-square analysis revealed a significant relationship between the variables victim gender and whether the suspect was on probation or parole at the time of the offense ($\chi^2=5.684$, 1 df, $p<.05$), with more female victims killed by a suspect on probation or parole. A significant relationship was also found between the variables suspect gender and whether the suspect was on probation or parole ($\chi^2=5.684$, 1 df, $p<.05$) with more male suspects being on probation or parole when the offense was committed.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of the univariate and bivariate statistical analyses utilized to examine the 4 research questions explored in this study. The demographic characteristics of the sample were presented. The majority (71.1%) of IPH cases occurred between the years 1992 and 1995. No significant relationships were found between the variables victim gender, suspect gender, victim race, and/or suspect race.

Analysis of the third and fourth research questions, however, did reveal significant relationships between variables. Female victims were significantly older than male victims and male suspects were significantly older than female suspects. Females were also significantly more likely to be murdered by a suspect on probation or parole at the time of the offense. Overall, the analyses revealed interesting results and based on these, the following chapter provides practical implications and suggestions for future research on IPH.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the conclusions of the present study. The importance of this research was to gain a better understanding of the characteristics of intimate partner homicide (IPH) incidents occurring in Dallas, Texas between the years 1990-1997. The research provides additional data and information to the current literature base concerning specific characteristics found among cases of IPH. Based on the findings discussed in Chapter 4, implications for practitioners and health care professionals as well as suggestions for future research on this topic are given.

Principal Findings

Although the occurrence of IPH has decreased over the past 20 years, it continues to represent a significant health problem that requires attention (Puzone et al., 2000). Through the first research question, this research examined whether trends exist based on the frequency of IPH cases during the years 1990-1997. The majority (28.9%) of IPHs occurred in 1993, while the years 1990 and 1991 had the least amount of cases with 2 each (2.6%). The highest frequency of IPH cases occurred between the years 1992 and 1995, comprising a total of 71.1% of all IPHs occurring during the 8 year period. Nationally, between 1993 and 2000, the proportion of all male murder victims killed by an intimate was relatively stable while the proportion of female murder victims killed by an intimate increased slightly (Rennison, 2003).

The second research question examined whether a significant relationship exists between the variables victim gender, suspect gender, victim race, and suspect race. While there were no significant relationships found, an examination of IPH victims revealed the majority of female victims (n=21) were killed by a Black male, and the majority of male victims (n=25) were killed...
by a Black female. In exploring the IPH suspects it was found the majority of female suspects 
(n=25) murdered a Black male, and the majority of male suspects (n=21) murdered a Black 
female. Consistent with this research, nationally between 1993 and 1998, Blacks were victimized 
by intimate partners at significantly higher rates than persons of any other race (Rennison & 
Welchans, 2000). Black females experienced IPH at a rate 35% higher than that of White 
females, and Black males at a rate of 62% when compared to White males (Rennison & 
Welchans, 2000).

The third research question examined whether a significant relationship exists between 
the variables regarding victim gender, victim age, suspect gender, and suspect age. Results 
revealed that female victims were significantly older than male victims. Results also revealed 
that male suspects were significantly older than female suspects. Nationally, for both men and 
women, the rates of violence by an intimate partner were less than 3 victimizations per 1,000 
persons under the age of 16 and over the age of 50 (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). On average, 
female victims in the present study were 39 years while male victims were 41 years. Nationally, 
between 1993 and 2000, women ages 20 to 24 were victimized by an intimate partner at the 
highest rate, 21 per 1,000 women (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). This rate was about 8 times the 
peak rate for men as they had 3 victimizations per 1,000 men ages 25 to 34 (Rennison & 
Welchans, 2000). Based on these national data, women and men victims in the present study 
were older than average. A reason for this difference could be that this study and other studies 
define intimate partners differently. Studies that may include boyfriends and girlfriends could 
possibly have younger victims, when in the present study the sample only included common law 
or married spouses.
The final research question examined whether significant relationships exist between the variables 

*victim gender, suspect gender,* and whether the suspect was on probation or parole at the time of the homicide. Results revealed more female victims (*n*=14) had a suspected perpetrator on probation or parole at the time of the homicide as compared to male victims (*n*=5). It was found that females were significantly more likely than males to be killed by a suspect on probation or parole. Overall, the analyses of the 4 research questions revealed interesting results and, based on these, the next section provides practical implications for intimate partner violence (IPV) and IPH incidents.

**Practical Implications**

The past 20 years has witnessed an increased amount of attention to policy options that could help reduce IPV and increase victim safety. IPH has declined for more than 2 decades; however, evidence suggests that the benefits of increased safety are not evenly distributed across classes of victims (Wells & DeLeon-Granados, 2004). Research has begun to provide a better understanding of policy implications for IPH. The following policy implications can serve to reduce the exposure of men and women to abusive partners. Implications of the present study impact social services, the criminal justice system response, the health professional response, and safety planning.

In 2001, approximately 588,490 U.S. women reported physical or sexual assault by intimates, and men were victims of about 103,220 violent crimes committed by intimate partners (Mancini, Nelson, Bowen, & Martin, 2006). Women experience significantly more violence from intimate partners than do men and more than 25% of American married couples report experiencing one or more incidents of IPV (Mancini et al., 2006). Because IPV usually occurs behind closed doors in American households, policy approaches need to encourage reporting so
that the abuse and violence is recognized and so that criminal justice, social service, and health professionals can respond with adequate treatment.

The present study looked at whether certain trends existed based on the frequency of IPH cases during the years 1990-1997 in Dallas, Texas. One-third of all IPHs occurred in 1993 and there were 17 female victims of IPH during this year. This was the highest of any year and was higher than any year for male victims. It would be interesting for future research to determine why there was a high number of female victims of IPH in 1993. Also, the present study examined the relationship between the variables victim gender, suspect gender, race of the victim, and race of the suspect. Although there were no significant relationships found between these variables, it is important to compare race to being at risk of IPH. The present study findings were consistent with national data in that Blacks were victimized by intimate partners at significantly higher rates than persons of any other race between 1993 and 1998. It becomes the responsibility of the criminal justice system, social services, and health professionals to recognize this trend and address the issue that Blacks are at higher risks of IPHs compared to any other race. All victims, specifically Black victims of IPV need to receive adequate treatment and need advice on whether to stay or escape their abusive relationships.

The results of the present study found a significant relationship between the variables victim gender and victim age and a significant relationship between the variables suspect gender and victim age, with female victims being older than male victims. Also, a significant relationship existed between the variables suspect gender and victim age and the variables suspect gender and suspect age, with male suspects being older than female suspects. Average annual rates from 2001 through 2005 for IPV were higher for females than males within each age category (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007). Research suggests IPV rates differ greatly based on
the age of the victim (Rennison, 2001). It becomes important for victims of IPV to know whether their age group is at a higher risk for IPV and to be aware of the dangers of a potential abusive relationship. The present study showed the average age of a female victim being 39, while the average age of a male victim being 36. The average age of a female suspect was 36, and the average age of a male suspect was 39. These results also hold significance when compared to national statistics, in that both males and females with the highest risk of IPH are those which ages range from 20 to 24 (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007) indicating that those victims in our sample are older than average.

The present study also found a significant relationship between the variables victim gender and suspect gender and whether the suspect was on probation or parole. Studies show in cases where there was a documented history of IPV, perpetrators were significantly more likely to be former partners (35.7%) and to have criminal records (64.8%) (Moracco, Runyan, & Butts, 2003). For males, a history of probation or parole predicts recidivism, whereas for women, severity of the assault and having ended the relationship with their victim predicts recidivism (Menard, Anderson, & Godboldt, 2009). It becomes important for the safety of victims of IPV to know whether their partner has a history of IPV and to consider the consequences of staying in the relationship. Research suggests offenders whose files indicate evidence of a history of probation or parole was significantly more likely to recidivate (Menard et al., 2009). A victim of IPV can prevent an IPH from occurring if they can find out ahead of time if the person they are considering getting into a relationship with has a criminal history of abuse.

Looking toward new directions and the future, there are a number of policy steps that could help prevent IPV. First, society needs to eliminate the norms that legitimize and glorify violence in the society and in the family (Gelles, 1997). For example, get rid of deadly weapons
in the home, eliminate spanking as a way of punishment for children, or eliminate the use of the death penalty. Another possible strategy to help prevent IPV is to reduce violence-provoking stress created by society (Gelles, 1997). Reducing financial stress in the home or reducing poverty and inequality could help eliminate stress in families. The most important prevention strategy is to break the cycle of violence in the family. Violence will never be prevented if parents set the example to their children that hitting people we love is appropriate. The proposed strategies require change within families. The ultimate decision to change these practices is up to a society and those who live in it.

Policies and services designed to help victims of IPV appear to have 2 possible and opposing effects: either they decrease the abuse and risk of homicide or they have the unintended consequence of increasing them (Dugan, Nagin, & Rosenfeld, 2003). It becomes the responsibility of social services to provide victims of IPV with opportunities to help reduce their exposure to potential offenders and to terminate their abusive relationships. The ultimate goal is to provide policies, programs, and services that will effectively reduce contact between intimate partners and to reduce the opportunity for abuse and violence (Wells & DeLeon-Granados, 2004). Not only do social services need to provide these programs and services, but they must be accessible and effective. Since there has been an increase of attention towards IPV and IPH, there has also been a growing trend to increase the funds and services for victims of IPV.

Since the 1970s, due to the battered women’s movement, there has been an increase in IPV policies and programs (Dugan et al., 2003). Thus policymakers have responded with making stronger criminal justice sanctions, specialized procedures, and more available services for victims. Certain interventions (such as warrantless arrest laws and economic assistance for victims of IPV) may help reduce IPHs; however, some interventions designed to help victims
might have a backlash or retaliation effect (Dugan et al., 2003). The victim’s abuser might find out they have been seeking services and because of this the violence might escalate and lead to an IPH. The risk of IPH is highest when a victim of domestic abuse tries to leave the relationship or tries to get outside help (Dugan et al., 2003). To see whether social services are effective in helping victims of IPV, there needs to be more examination of the noted decline in IPHs considering the actual use and quality of services as they relate to victim safety (Wells & DeLeon-Granados, 2004).

The criminal justice system has been the primary focus of historical and current efforts to combat IPV. The past 2 decades have witnessed an increased amount of attention to changes in the criminal justice system response to IPV by researchers, policymakers, advocates, and practitioners (Wells & DeLeon-Granados, 2004). Although researchers have paid attention to the policy changes that have occurred, research has produced little knowledge about the aggregate-level effects of such change on the processing of cases and on the most serious forms of IPV (Wells & DeLeon-Granados, 2004). Another area of concern is explaining gender-specific arrests trends in IPV cases. There is little reason to suspect criminal justice policy will not remain the primary focus society uses to address IPV. Therefore, there needs to be more attention towards increasing the official reporting of cases and expediting the processing of cases.

About half of all victims of IPV between 1993 and 1998 reported their victimization to law enforcement authorities (53% of women and 46% of men) (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). It is believed that police officers are in a position that allows them to identify cases of IPV and then respond in ways that will increase the safety of the victim (Wells & DeLeon-Granados, 2004). It becomes difficult for police officers to identify an IPV case, however, when victims do not
report their crime or will not explain to the officer what has happened. Between 1993 and 1998, half of the male victims’ reasons and a third of the female victims’ reasons for not reporting the IPV to the police was because it was a “private or personal matter” (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). Other reasons for not reporting were fear of reprisal by the perpetrator and the victim did not want to get the offender in trouble with the law (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). In order for the criminal justice system to respond effectively to the issue of IPV, the victims should be encouraged to report their crime.

In the majority of IPHs, the victim had experienced violence at the hands of their partner in the past year (Block, 2003). When a victim first experiences IPV, they may seek the help of a health professional or trained practitioner. Health professionals are aware that, by seeking help, an abused victim indicates that their situation could be serious (Block, 2003). Health professionals should talk to the victim about the nature of the violence they have experienced, when it happened, how frequently it happened, and what kind of violence occurred. Health professionals and practitioners not only provide support and advice for victims, but also discuss the risks involved in leaving an abusive relationship. It becomes the responsibility of these trained individuals to discuss the best ways to minimize the risks when deciding whether to leave a partner who abuses the victim.

Abused women are more likely to seek medical help or contact the police then to seek counseling or go to a service agency (Block, 2003). This suggests that medical workers and police officers can play important roles in linking abused victims to counseling and other community services (Block, 2003). An important issue concerning help from health professionals or other agencies is being able to provide resources for abused Hispanic victims. Helping agencies and practitioners need to find ways to ensure that abused Hispanic victims have
culturally accessible and supportive resources available to them (Block, 2003). Solutions are needed to resolve the problems of minority victims of IPV who are overcoming barriers to the justice system (Websdale, 2003). Overall, medical workers, counselors, and police officers can work together to provide and improve victim services for victims abused by their intimate partners.

If a victim chooses to return to the abusive partner, they should be encouraged to consider a safety plan as planning ahead can enhance their safety during or after a violent incident. Every victim has a right to protect themselves and to seek assistance. The purpose of a safety plan is to minimize harm, raise a victim’s level of safety, and to protect others such as children. A victim needs to plan ahead of time, prepare to carry out the plan, and to rehearse the steps that need to be taken to leave the abusive relationship. In 1985, a Danger Assessment Tool was developed to assist victims (and the professionals who help them) to better understand the potential for danger and the level of their risk for victimization (Campbell, Webster, Koizil-Mclain, Block, Campbell, Curry, Gary, McFarlane, Sachs, Sharps, Ulrich, & Wilt, 2003). Victims of IPV should consider completing the Danger Assessment Tool as it can help evaluate the degree of danger the victim faces and may be helpful in deciding what the victim should do next. One of the primary ways to decrease intimate partner homicide is to identify and immediately assist those victims who are at risk or are in abusive relationships.

A victim of IPV needs to plan and practice how safely to get out of the house and needs to have a safety bag assembled with all their personal items. A good first step is to apply for a restraining order against the offender, although this alone will not keep a victim safe. Victims should have a safety plan ready when they must communicate with the partner. There needs to be a safety plan at home after the victim has left the abusive relationship. The victim needs to
inform friends of what has happened, needs to develop and rehearse a safety plan, and needs to change their telephone number. Also, the victim needs a safety plan at work. The victim needs to tell a supervisor about the situation, needs to keep a copy of the restraining order on their person, needs to have a plan, and needs to check workplace policies regarding IPV. In 70 to 80% of IPHs, no matter which partner was killed, the man physically abused the woman before the murder (Campbell et al., 2003). Thus, one of the primary ways to decrease IPH is to identify and intervene promptly with abused victims at risk (Campbell et al., 2003). Only more research documenting both successful and unsuccessful cases of relief from IPV will help in the design of policies to better meet the victims’ safety needs (Dugan et al., 2003). The next section looks at future research needed on the issue of IPH.

Suggestions for Future Research

While the data within this study does not support analyses of macro-level variables, future research should examine the relationships between family/social structure and IPH. Family structure is a factor that may affect the violence levels and victimization rates of males and females. It has been found that males become more affected by structural conditions, whereas females are affected by their greater reliance on and involvement in social relationships (Schwartz, 2006). Theorists have speculated that families are crucial to the development of an individual’s prosocial behaviors. Whether an individual grows up in a single-parent household compared to a household with both a mother and father could determine whether they are more or less prone to violence and violent encounters.

There has been limited research on whether family structure affects women more, less than, or differently than men. It would be interesting to see if whether an overlap exists between gender and family structure and how they relate to violence. All family members encounter
social behaviors within their family structures. No matter what gender, family members are subjected to violence when family disruption is high and social support systems are low. The social behavior and household environment an individual is raised in could affect whether they will be more likely to resort to violence as they get older.

More research is also needed to determine if income and related stress are factors of IPH. From 2001 to 2005, females living in households with lower annual incomes experienced the highest average annual rates of IPV (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007). Intimate partners victimized women living in households with the lowest annual household income at a rate nearly 7 times that of women living in households with the highest annual household income (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). Despite this extensive empirical evidence supporting a connection between household income and intimate partner, there is a notable absence of an understanding of whether it is a factor in IPHs.

Additionally, future research could further examine to what extent the social response to IPV has contributed to its decline. One study has already examined this issue. Dugan and Rosenfeld (2003) evaluated the relationship between IPH and IPV prevention resources in 48 large cities between 1976 and 1996. The ultimate goal of the study was to identify factors contributing to the variation in IPHs across place and time in the United States. The results showed the more aggressive arrest policies the cities had, fewer killings of intimate partners occurred. Also, the willingness of the prosecutor’s office to grant protection orders caused a decrease in the number of intimate partner homicides. The study concluded that finding protection from this type of abuse is not easy, but absolute exposure of reduction in such relationships is an important policy objective (Dugan & Rosenfeld, 2003).
One limitation to the present study is that the sample only includes heterosexual relationships. Future research should examine IPV and IPH among same-sex couples. In 2003, an analysis of the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), pointed to higher rates of IPV involving same-sex couples than heterosexual ones (Burke & Owen, 2006). A common weapon used by same-sex couples in IPV cases is to threaten their partner about exploiting their sexuality to everyone. Many gay men and lesbians want to keep their sexual orientation private due to fear of homophobia and a negative reaction, such as losing their job or estrangement from their family and friends (Burke & Owen, 2006).

Although IPV occurs in all types of relationships, non-prototypical (e.g., gay, lesbian) are often overlooked (Seelau & Seelau, 2005). In same-sex couples it becomes harder for the criminal justice system to distinguish the abuser from the victim. There is some evidence that the sex of the suspected perpetrator and victim and the couple’s sexual orientation influence criminal justice system response to IPV (Seelau & Seelau, 2005). Prevalence of IPV among same-sex couples is difficult to assess, however, experts estimate rates comparable to heterosexual couples (Seelau & Seelau, 2005). Research that looks at frequency and causal factors of same-sex IPV as well as an evaluation of the criminal justice and health professional response to this problem is needed.

Future research should also examine the way in which these IPV cases are handled by first responders who arrive at the scene of the incident. The first responders are either trained victim advocates or patrol officers and they are both trained to be safe and successful in handling IPV cases. First responders are able to connect and offer various support options to the victims of IPV at the time of crisis. Any feedback given by the first responders can help researchers analyze the issue of IPV and possibly lead to prevention strategies.
More research is needed on the topic of fatality reviews and whether they can truly reveal trends that could prevent future IPHs from occurring. Fatality reviews is a tool used by criminal justice professionals and other practitioners investigating IPV cases. The review looks at identified deaths (both suicides and homicides) caused by IPV and examines the effects of all IPV interventions that took place before the victim’s death (Websdale, 2003). Using these tool investigators can consider changes in prevention and intervention systems to help prevent such deaths in the future and develop recommendations for coordinated community prevention and intervention initiatives to reduce IPV (Websdale, 2003). It would be interesting to see the accuracy of the review and whether it actually helps to determine what went wrong in a relationship causing the IPH to occur and what could have been done differently to prevent the tragedy from occurring. Although the benefits of conducting such reviews have not been measured on a broad scale, preliminary results do indicate that fatality reviews can have a positive effect in addressing IPV (Websdale, 2003).

2 final issues that should be examined are the role of past criminality of suspected perpetrator and talking to the victims who survived IPH. Suspected perpetrators of IPV usually have a history of IPV. IPHs are often the culmination of escalated violence in relationships where there is a history or pattern of abuse against the victim. Research needs to further examine the continuum of violence and the causes of violence escalation to the point of IPH. Also, talking to the victims who have survived IPH could help researchers understand their abusive relationships and what escalated their partner in trying to kill them. Overall, preventing IPH includes preventing the occurrence and reoccurrence of IPV in general.
Conclusion

Although there has been a great decline in IPHs over the past 2 decades, the issue remains at the forefront of public concern as there are still approximately 5.3 million IPV incidents each year resulting in 1,300 deaths annually (Houry et al., 2006). There has been a recent movement to emphasize the need for more research concerning IPH and factors such as gender, race, and victim-offender relationship. This study looked at the relationship between IPHs and factors such as gender, race, and age. Specific attention was given to any notable IPH frequency trends that might have occurred during the years 1990-1997. Studying the relationship between IPHs and these factors, as this study intended to do, is important to understanding what IPH characteristics need more attention to help prevent future incidents from occurring.

Chapter 1 introduced the problem of IPH and the purpose of the present study. The chapter discussed the 4 research questions that were examined and the significance of the study. Studying the aspects of IPH incidents is important to understanding in what relationships IPH is more likely to occur. Chapter 2 gave a historical overview of homicide in general and specifically looked at the history of IPH. The chapter presented previous literature on IPH victims, offenders, and trends of IPH frequency over the years. Other factors examined were the relationship between gender and age, gender and race, men as perpetrators, and women as perpetrators of IPH. Overall, this chapter provided an overview of the characteristics of homicide and IPH, which helped develop a better understanding of the whether certain relationships exist between these characteristics and whether these relationships can be used in prevention and response strategies.

Chapter 3 introduced the methodology used to conduct the present study. Secondary data was obtained from the Dallas Police Department to be used for analysis. The variables used in
the study are described including their coding structure and limitations to the study were discussed. Chapter 4 presented the results of the research. Descriptive analyses, both univariate and bivariate, were conducted to test for statistical significance and to answer the 4 research questions. Significant findings were revealed when answering the third and fourth research questions. Female victims were significantly older than male victims and male suspects were significantly older than female suspects. Also, females were significantly more likely to be murdered by a suspect on probation or parole at the time of the offense. Finally, Chapter 5 presented conclusions and implications based on the findings discussed in Chapter 4.

Implications of IPH included the increased need for social service agencies, an evaluation of the criminal justice and health professional response, and safety planning for victims of IPV. Future research suggestions were also given on the topic of IPH. Future research should examine IPH on a macro-level and should examine the relationship between family/social structures. Future research should also focus on IPH in same-sex relationships and how the dynamics of violence in these relationships compares to violence in heterosexual relationships.

In conclusion, this thesis empirically examined the relationships that exist between characteristics of IPH incidents occurring in Dallas, Texas between the years 1990-1997. Characteristics such as gender, age, race, and whether the suspect was on probation or parole were examined. The findings of this study can assist in identifying significant characteristics of these IPH incidents which leads to a greater understanding of the types of relationships in which IPH is more likely to occur. Overall the results can help to educate people on IPH incident characteristics so that hopefully future incidents can be prevented.
APPENDIX

IRB APPROVAL LETTER
December 1, 2008

Rebecca Foster Department of Criminal Justice University of North Texas

RE: Human Subjects Application No. 08404

Dear Ms. Foster:

In accordance with 45 CFR Part 46 Section 46.101, your study titled "Examining the Characteristics of Intimate Partner Homicide in Dallas, Texas: 1990-1997" has been determined to qualify for an exemption from further review by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB).

No changes may be made to your study's procedures or forms without prior written approval from the UNT IRB. Please contact Shelia Bourns, Research Compliance Administrator, ext. 3940, if you wish to make any such changes.

Sincerely,

Patricia L. Kaminski, Ph.D. Chair Institutional Review Board
REFERENCES


Campbell, J. C., Webster, D., Koiziol-McClain, J., Block, C. R., Campbell, D., Curry, M. A.,


