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SOCIAL DIMENSIONS: DIFFERENCES AMONG ABUSED WOMEN WHO DO OR DO
NOT WANT THEIR ABUSER PENALIZED UNDER NO-DROP POLICIES

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ABSTRACT

Given the many factors at play when it comes to domestic violence, as well as the implications in aiding with the penalization of their abuser, it is important to understand how women respond to the prosecution of their abusers and what shapes their willingness to respond. This study sought to understand what factors influence a woman's decision to penalize or not her abuser under the implementation of no-drop policies. The study examines certain variables that could shape how a woman responds to her particular situation. Among these variables are: race, level of education, victim-offender relationship, and number of children with the abuser or in the household. The findings show that certain victim characteristics are predictive of victim desire for arrest, having the abuser placed in jail by the court and/or placed in a treatment program. Women with higher education, with children and unmarried are most likely to want their abusive partner's punished as compared to their counterparts. The findings focusing on race of the victim were mixed. Understanding what influences a woman's choice to aid in the penalization of her abuser is critical in addressing intimate partner violence.

Keywords: *domestic violence, no-drop policy, rational choice theory, race, victim-offender relationship, children, level of education*

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To my parents, who have always believed in me and have pushed me toward success. To my mentors, advisers, and professors who have been there for me every step of the way. –ELP

Introduction

Domestic violence has existed in most societies over time and place and continues to be a social problem. It is not an experience limited to a specific group of people; it occurs regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, race, age, or sexual orientation. Domestic violence has long been considered a “taboo” topic; many believe it to be a private matter between intimate partners, which takes place behind closed doors, and therefore, should be left alone. However, domestic violence affects both those directly involved and has indirect ramifications for society overall, which is why it is of great importance for society to understand the issues surrounding the abuse of women. For the purposes of this research, it is of great importance to understand how battered women try to deal with their situations and what factors influence their actions and decisions. These factors include macro structural issues such as the laws and legal expectations as well as micro level issues such as the attitudes of the abused women.

My research focuses on the implementation of the no-drop policy—a structural issue—and the attitudes women have towards these policies—an individual level issue. Issues examined include whether or not abused women want to continue with the prosecution of their abuser or want the court to let the abuser go. I examined factors which influenced women’s decisions of taking their cases to court and cooperating with the prosecutors. The study focuses on race, level of education, number of children, and what type of relationship the victim had with the abuser—spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriend or ex-boyfriend. Data for this study came from a study conducted between 1996 and 2000 by Barbara E. Smith, Robert Davis, Laura B. Nickles, and Heather J. Davies for the National Institute of Justice. The study examined the effects no-drop policies had on court outcomes, victim satisfaction with the justice system, and the victim’s feelings of safety (Smith et al. 2002). Moreover, the study focuses on whether prosecution without the victim’s

cooperation was possible and whether or not the implementation of no-drop policies was more beneficial, defined as an increased in convictions and fewer dismissals, than the traditional policy of women deciding whether or not they want to prosecute their abuser. However, my study solely focused on what factors are likely to influence a victim's willingness to penalize her abuser.

Literature Review

History of Domestic Violence

Women have been considered, throughout history, second-class citizens; subordinate in every way to men. They are thought to be sensitive, submissive creatures that should fulfill the roles of wifehood and motherhood. As a result, women are constrained by the social structure and societal expectations, and risk being in an abusive relationship for the sole purpose of avoiding social stigma and adhering to cultural norms. Aside from social factors affecting their decisions to prosecute, there are individual factors at play as well. Victims must think in terms of cost and benefits, given that abusive partners isolate women from family and friends. At times, violent partners do not allow the women to have a job and her only resources are her husband's. In some cases, women lack the means to be independent and thus must choose between safety—leaving the abusive relationship—and fulfilling necessities. In their case, necessities seem to rule over given that they need the shelter, food, and financial care for their children and themselves.

Members of society have been bombarded with myths instead of facts regarding domestic violence. Many people believe that it is simple for battered women to leave their abusive relationships. Often the blame for the abuse is targeted towards the victim, where many ask: “why doesn't she leave?” People believe that it is easy for these women to just leave, and that leaving will indeed end the abuse. However, there's another side to the issue and that's the

difficulty behind leaving an abusive relationship. “Some estimates suggest that at least 50 percent of women who leave their abusers are followed and seriously harassed or further attacked by them [the abusers]” (Browne, 1994 pp.344). Women become trapped in a dangerous life where attempts to leave are unsuccessful. They try turning to law enforcement but fear retaliation and being re-victimized by the system and the structural implications of their abuse.

The public’s perception of domestic violence might be flawed in terms of what types of abuse the women endure—domestic violence is not always physical. Both the public because of the lack of information on other types of abuse, and the battered women fail to understand the true extent and dangerousness of domestic violence. Domestic violence entails abuse outside of the obvious physical abuse. It involves sexual, verbal, psychological—controlling behaviors, isolation, and intimidation, — and/or emotional abuse (Mackenzie & Colvin, 2009). Thus, many onlookers fail to understand the effects of the extensive abuse experienced by these women at the hands of their abusers— the harm and trauma it inflicts on them both physically and mentally.

Throughout history women have been considered second class citizens—subordinate to men. “Men [represented] both the positive and the neutral, as indicated by the common use of *man* to designate human beings in general; whereas woman [represented] only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity” (Rossi, 1973, p. 675). Throughout history women suffered discrimination in many different aspects of their lives including family roles, work and economic realities. The Bible itself, as one of the primary sources, gave women the role of inferior: “For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man” (Corinthians 11:8, English Standard Version). Historically, men have expressed the inferiority of women in very similar ways as did Aristotle: “the female is a female by virtue of a certain *lack* of qualities;” “we should regard the

female nature as afflicted with a natural defectiveness” (Rossi, 1973). Thus, women have been defined as subordinate to men, and the myth of the natural inferiority of women has influenced the status of women both in terms of norms and the law. According to The South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, in ancient Rome, a man could “legally divorce, physically punish, or even kill his wife for behaviors that were permitted for men,” said punishment was known as chastisement, which entailed that the purpose of the punishment was to correct the action of the woman while minimizing the violence behind it (Saint Martha’s Hall, 2007; SCCADVASA, 2011). Men had the right to physically discipline their wives when they pleased. This pattern spread throughout Europe where wife beating became commonly used as a means to correct women. During the 14th Century, the Catholic Church stated that the beating of wives was permissible, for this would “benefit [the women] and their spiritual good” (Saint Martha’s Hall, 2007). Under medieval English common law, men were not prosecuted if they raped their wives because at the time women were not allowed to refuse sex. Furthermore, throughout the 19th Century the law of coverture mandated that women, upon marriage, had their legal identity merged with that of their husbands. A married woman was not consider to have rights of her own; she could not own property, sign legal documents, get an education without the consent of her husband, and when it came to crimes committed by women, the husband had to take the responsibility because she was *his* property and thus his responsibility. As Blackstone observed: "By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law...the very legal being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during marriage, or at least is incorporated or consolidated” (Lewis, n.d.). They had been targeted as the “weaker” sex, whose sole responsibility was to fulfill the duties of wifhood and motherhood.

In the 1950s-1960s, however, social movements started to raise awareness aimed at bringing attention to the situations experienced by women at the hands of their partners. As a result, many changes came about and laws were enacted granting women the rights they had dearly deserved. The rising awareness laid the foundation for the feminist movement in the late 19th Century and early 20th Century. The first women shelters began in the 1970s, and around the same time states started enacting legislations in order to aid battered women. For example, Pennsylvania became the first state to establish a coalition against domestic violence and to pass legislation allowing women to issue “protection from abuse orders” (Saint Martha’s Hall, 2007). Given the collaboration of many, the problem became widely known, with many more movements arising to provide services for these women and their children. By 1989, the United States had 1,200 battered women’s programs, and in 1993 violence against women was included as a human rights violation by the United Nations (Saint Martha’s Hall, 2007). As advocates started to rise against abuse toward women, many changes were made possible. In 1994, Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in order to provide funding for services to help victims of domestic violence and rape. In addition, the funding has been used to train law enforcement officials on the sensitive matter in order to provide the most help to these victims/survivors (Saint Martha’s Hall, 2007). With the years, other legislations and policies have been passed and implemented respectively and efforts to help domestic violence victims have been on the rise.

No-Drop Policy

One of the many laws and policies enacted to aid battered women in terms of the prosecution of their abusive partners is a prosecutorial policy known as the no-drop policy, which has been employed in some states in recent years. This policy is the prosecutorial

equivalent of law enforcements' mandatory arrests (Kingsnorth & Macintosh, 2004). "A no-drop policy denies the victim of domestic violence the option of freely withdrawing a complaint once formal charges have been filed" (Corsilles, 1995, p. 856). A domestic violence case is not dropped because the victim is unwilling to cooperate. A prosecutor can freely charge an abuser without the help of the victim. Despite the implementation of this policy and the increase in the prosecution of domestic violence cases, some (i.e. victims' advocates) believe this policy disempowers victims/survivors of domestic violence. Furthermore, "some critics contend that no-drop policies may cause unwanted 'side effects,' such as increasing risks of retaliation and discouraging victim reporting" (Corsilles, 1995, p. 857). However, according to a study conducted by Corsilles (1995) on the benefits and risks of no-drop policies, the findings show that the benefits seem to outweigh the risks and for this reason the author encourages the implementation of this policy (Corsilles, 1995, p. 857). The findings showed that no-drop policies are victim friendly, they facilitate the cooperation of the victims— in sixty-five to ninety-five percent of cases in states where it is employed (Corsilles, 1995, p. 873). Researchers also argued that it helps the victim have a sense of safety because it discourages the batterer from contacting the victim; "some batterers cease harassing their victims after they discover that the victim no longer controls the case" (Corsilles, 1995, p. 874). The research utilized the rational offender theory to explain that the fear of prosecution serves to deter the offender from further contacting the victim (Corsilles, 1995, p. 874). In addition, the victim does not necessarily have to contribute to the prosecution of the case although there have been cases where they were subpoenaed and jailed if unwilling to cooperate. The prosecution however has found ways to prosecute without victim testimony, although it is crucial given that the abused victim is the only witness to the abuse.

Because the victim need not be involved to any large extent in the prosecuting of the violent partner, it shows that it is a problem that goes beyond the harm done to the victim; it is a problem that affects the overall society. Just as there are benefits, there are some risks associated with the no-drop policy. For instance, not having the victim testify makes it more difficult to achieve a conviction. The victim fears for her safety—they fear retaliation from their batterers. Moreover, Corsilles (1995) argued that victims can be further victimized when subpoenaed, claiming: “Instances of victims being jailed for contempt have been reported in several jurisdictions” (Corsilles, 1995, p. 876). Thus, it is evident that there are both advantages and disadvantages to the implementation of no-drop policies but what is important to my study is identifying what distinguishes abused women who are more or less likely to contribute to the prosecution of their batterers—to want their abusers penalized.

For many years the issue of intersectionality—the combination of different systems of oppression such as sex, race, and social class—has been ignored in terms of who is likely to penalize their abuser. Studies have been conducted regarding domestic violence occurrence by race, for instance, but no study has looked into the differences in demographics between abused women who wish to penalize their abusers and those who do not. It is important to identify and understand what factors influence the decision of abused women to help with the punishment of their abusers. My research focuses on the differences in willingness to penalize the abuser in terms of race, number of children, relationship with the abuser and level of education.

Theoretical Framework

In the field of criminal justice and sociology, where the behaviors of individuals are studied, it is necessary to develop and rely on theories that can frame the research and provide necessary answers to the questions of how to deal with spouse abuse on both the individual and

societal level. For the purposes of this research, it was of great importance to look into abused victims and understand what made them behave the way they behaved. There has been research and theories developed explaining the behavior of abusers—research explaining why men abuse their partners. However, there has been little research and thus a lack of theoretical attention focusing on explaining victims' behaviors (Kingsnorth & Macintosh, 2004). Research explaining what stands between the woman, her partner and seeking the necessary help to end their abusive relationships has been limited. Rational Choice Theory (RCT) emphasizes cost and benefits as a means to explain individual behaviors. This theory offers the best framework for the explanation of abused victims' behaviors in terms of their abusive relationships (Kingsnorth & Macintosh, 2004). The focus is on the conceptualization of the behavior of people when considering a number of “decision making points over time” (Kingsnorth & Macintosh, 2004, p.304). There are social, economic and cultural reasons influencing a woman's decision to stay or leave an abusive relationship. Women often have rational reasons for staying and not wanting to aid in the prosecution/penalization of their abusers—they may fear retaliation against themselves or their children, or they may not be able to financially support themselves or their children and thus need to remain with the abuser for said support. Abused women evaluate their particular situations in order to make the choices they see best for themselves.

However, when weighting out the costs and benefits of aiding with the penalization of their abusers, abused women weight out the benefits and decide to work towards ending their misfortunes. My study examines the differences between those women who decide to help with the penalization of their abusers and those who do not. I hypothesize that certain characteristics and demographics shape how a woman responds to her situation. Decisions to aid with the penalization of the abuser vary along a number of social dimensions: race, victim-offender

relationship, whether they had children or not with the abuser or in the household and educational level.

Educational Level

Education has been shown to influence the way a person responds to a particular situation. I hypothesized that women with higher levels of education are more likely to want their abusers penalized—to want him arrested, placed in jail and/or placed in a treatment program. Women with higher levels of education may be more likely than their counterparts to assess the cost and rewards of their decision including wanting the best for them and their children—a safe environment.

A study conducted by Kaukinen et al. (2012) found that women with higher education levels are more likely to seek help (Kaukinen et al., 2012, p.592). Although not an area of focus for my study it was interesting to find that in regards to income, the opposite was supported. Women with higher levels of income are less likely to seek help. The study suggested that this is because women with higher levels of income care more about their status; they believe they have more to lose by disclosing their abusive relationships. They are also able to use their means to ameliorate their situations on their own (Kaukinen et al., 2012, p.592). The study conducted by Kaukinen (2012) examined employment as well—although not a focus of my particular study. Findings showed that employment increases the likelihood of an abused woman seeking help (Kaukinen et al., 2012, p.593), which has a lot to do with the independency of the woman from her abuser. Abused women are often dependent on their husbands, thus having their own job empowers them in many different ways, such as giving them the ability to leave the abusive relationship.

Moreover, a study conducted by Hutchison and Hirschel (1998) found level of education to be a great predictor of help-seeking behaviors. The study found that the higher the level of education the more likely the victim is to seek help. Those who had some college were most likely than those who had an education of less than high school to seek help (Hutchinson & Hirschel, 1998, p.451).

Race

Many researchers have examined the relationship between race and the likelihood of victims reporting domestic violence. Race has been found to play a significant factor in “shaping the perceived costs/benefits of official intervention” (Kingsnorth and Macintosh, 2004, p. 305). However, previous research has found both race to be a positive contributor—the women feel empowered—and a negative contributor—the women feel further victimized because of their minority status, thus fostering mixed findings.

Race contributes to how a woman perceives the criminal justice system will respond to her particular situation; whether it will not respond fairly or take seriously their victimization reports (Kaukinen, 2004). Research has found that minorities who have negative attitudes toward the police are less likely to believe that the police has the ability to be fair and just and as a result they fail to seek help (Kaukinen, 2004, p.970). Other researchers have found evidence indicating that Whites are more likely than minorities to seek help while other research has found that African Americans are more likely to report their victimization to the police when compared to Whites (Kaukinen, 2004; Felson et al., 1999). This finding can be explained by minority women seeing the police as a community care-taker (Kaukinen, 2012; Auger, Doob, Auger, & Driben, 1992). A study conducted by Kaukinen (2004) looking into the effects of race on help-seeking decisions found that race “is a significant correlate of increasing levels of help seeking”

(Kaukinen, 2004, p.981). His study instead found that White women were two times more likely than minority women to seek help with their abusive relationships. Despite the seemingly contradictory research findings, I hypothesized that white women are more likely to support the penalization of their abusers—to want him arrested, placed in jail and/or placed in a treatment program—than Non-white women.

Race is a big contributor to a woman's values and perceptions of herself. There are cultural differences by race. The attitudes of minority woman are shaped in terms of their feelings of acculturation. Acculturation is the process by which a person's attitudes and/or behavior change when coming in contact with a culture different from their own (Baly, 2010; Garcia et al., 2004). For this reason, it is reasonable to expect that because minorities have different values and norms in their respective countries they would abide by those instead of by the values and norms established in the American society. Thus, minorities, I expect will make different decisions about prosecution than Whites.

Relationship to Abuser

In domestic violent relationships the abusive partner isolates the woman, uses the children to further prevent her from leaving, threatens to kill her, and stalks her when she tries to leave the abusive relationship. In addition, the abuser economically deprives his partner— she is dependent on him for any financial need and/or issues because he prevents her from getting an education and/or attaining a job. Thus, domestic violence relationships are about power and control, where the abusive partner does everything in his power to ensure that the woman does what he mandates. These abusive men have control over women's' mind, body, economics, and children—he ultimately has control over the woman in all aspects of her life, which makes the situation hard to escape.

Victim-offender relationship has been found to be a significant predictor on victim's help-seeking behaviors. Kaukinen's study (2004) focused on the effect of the relationship and found that women victimized by their spouse were three times more likely to engage in increasing levels of help seeking as compared to those women victimized by someone else. His research further looked into whether the effect of race on the decision to seek help or not varied by the relationship between the victim and the offender. Kaukinen (2004) found that White women who married to the abuser were more likely to seek help than minority women married to their abusers. However, in another study Kaukinen et al. (2012) found that the longer a couple has been together the less likely the woman is to call the police (Kaukinen, 2012, p.593).

In this study I hypothesized that women married or at some point married to their abusers will be less likely to want their abusers penalized than women who were the abuser's significant other or former significant other. In addition, my study hypothesized that women in a relationship—either spouse of significant other—with the abuser are less likely than women not in any type of relationship with the abuser (exes) to want the abuser penalized.

Children

Children in abusive relationships play a very important role when it comes to the decision of abused women to stay or leave. "Children in a relationship are likely to affect a victim's calculation of the costs of pursuing official actions against the co-parent [the abuser]" (Kingsnorth and Macintosh, 2009, p.308). However, the findings are somewhat different from what is hypothesized by my study—women with children are less likely to want their abusers penalized than their counterparts. Researchers such as Goodman et al. (1999) found that women who have children in common with their abusers are more likely to cooperate with the prosecution of their abusers than those without children because they see "enhanced protection

of [their] children as one of the possible benefits of cooperating” (Kingsnorth & Macintosh, 2004, p.308).

I hypothesized that women who had children in common with the abusers are less likely to want their abusers penalized than women who did not have children in common with the abusers. I further hypothesized that the presence of children in the household—despite being the abuser’s children—places a woman in the position of being less likely to want the abuser penalized than women who do not have any children in the household.

Methods Section

For the purposes of this research, I used a data gathered by Barbara E. Smith, Robert Davis, Laura B. Nickles, and Heather J. Davies evaluating the use of no-drop policies for domestic violence cases in San Diego, California, Omaha, Nebraska, Klamath Falls, Oregon, and Everett, Washington, between the years 1996-2000 (“Evaluation of No-Drop Policies,” n.d.). In order to gather the data, the researchers identified sites where the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) had awarded funds for no-drop prosecution to encourage arrests. From the different places where funds had been given in order to implement no-drop policies, the researchers chose Everett, Washington, Klamath Falls, Oregon, and Omaha, Nebraska. In addition, although not a city that had applied for funds for the policy implementation, the researchers believed it was important to include San Diego, California because it had been the first place to try no-drop policies and it was also widely considered to have been the most successful at implementing the policy. Overall, according to the researchers, these sites seemed the most committed to implementing a strong no-drop policy and thus was worth studying in order to determine the success of the policy in terms of implementation (“Evaluation of No-Drop Policies,” n.d.).

To assess the impact of the statutes, researchers collected official records data on a sample of domestic violence cases (occurring between 1996 and 2000) resulting in no trial (Part 1) and cases (occurring between 1996 and 1999) which resulted in a trial (Part 2)—both focusing on San Diego, California. In the remaining three sites, Everett (Part 3), Klamath Falls (Part 4), and Omaha (Part 5), researchers collected data on all domestic violence cases (with disposition occurring between 1996 and 1999) resulting in a trial.

The focus of my study focuses on the data gathered through telephone interviews with the domestic violence victims in the four sites who had a domestic violence case resolved under the no-drop policy. Victims were asked about (1) what they believed should have been done with the case (from dropping charges to sentencing batterers to jail terms), (2) their willingness to cooperate with criminal justice officials, (3) their contact with victim advocates, (4) their belief that their views were heard and considered by criminal justice officials, (5) their satisfaction with officials (police, prosecutor, and judge) and with the case outcome, (6) their beliefs about whether the criminal justice outcome had increased or decreased their safety, and (7) the level of violence experienced after the case was resolved in court. Extensive efforts were made to reach the victims but many refused to participate—further discussed in the limitations section (“Evaluation of No-Drop Policies,” n.d.).

In terms of the information gathered about the victims, my study solely focused on variables that served as independent variables—that alluded to wanting the abuser penalized—and others that served as dependent variables—demographics.

Dependent Variables

The principal focus of this study was the victim’s wish in terms of the penalization of the abuser— to want him arrested, placed in jail and/or placed in a treatment program. The

prosecutor has the authority to proceed with the prosecution of an abuser despite the victim's cooperation. Because victim testimony is frequently the only evidence available, their cooperation is needed. I focused on identifying the different ways in which abused victims cooperated with the prosecution of their abusers by taking into consideration different variables: Did the victim want the abuser arrested; did the victim want the court to place the abuser in jail; did the victim want the defendant ordered to a treatment program. These variables were all dichotomous—yes or no.

Independent Variables

In order to determine what characteristics correspond to women who want their abuser penalized under no-drop policies, this study looked into different social dimensions. In terms of race, there was a disproportionate higher number of Caucasian victims when compared to African Americans, Hispanics and Others. For this reason, I recoded African Americans, Hispanics and Other races into one category: Non-white. Thus, creating a dichotomous variable (0= White; 1=Non-white).

Another variable taken into consideration was the relationship with the abuser. The original study looked into different relationships such as: spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, ex-spouse, ex-boyfriend/ex-girlfriend, child, brother, father, live in companion, roommate, friend, step-dad, among other. However, for the purposes of this study, it was of interest to look at whether they were spouses or ex-spouses and whether the abuser was the victim's significant other or former significant other. My study further grouped these categories differently in order to see if there was a difference. I examined whether they were together—either as spouse of significant other (boyfriend) or not together— ex-spouses or ex-boyfriend.

I also focused on the relationship between the number of children the abused woman had with the abuser, as well as the number of children in the household, and the results the victim wanted to occur. The original study specified the number of children either with the abuser or in the household, but my study recoded the variable into a dichotomous variable: 1=whether there were children or 0=no children, in order to test if it had any influence in their wish to have their abusers penalized.

In addition, I tested if level of education of the abused victim had any effect on the desire to have the abuser penalized by the system. To do this, the variable “highest grade in school” was recoded into three categories: less than high school (1), high school (2), and more than high school (3).

After conducting the necessary recoding, I ran crosstabulations between the independent and dependent variables. The software used to analyze the data is known as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Crosstabulations between the dependent variables and independent variables were conducted in order to identify if any of the independent variables—race, level of education, victim-offender relationship, children—had an effect on the dependent variables—wanting the abuser arrested, wanting the court to place the abuser in jail and/or wanted the abuser placed in a treatment program. Crosstabulations are an appropriate technique for my analysis since they allow me to examine the effects of the independent variable on my dependent variable while simultaneously controlling for a third variable. They also provide a statistical test to determine the significance of the relationship.

Findings and Discussion

The focus of the study was to determine what distinguishes women who want their abuser to be penalized under no-drop policies and women who did not want their abuser penalized.

Wanting the abuser to be penalized was examined using three variables: the victim wanted the abuser arrested; the victim wanted the court to place the abuser in jail; and whether the victim wanted the court to place the abuser in a treatment program. Independent variables examined: level of education, race, relationship to the defendant (the abuser)—either spouse or ex-spouse or significant other or former significant other (two categories); currently in a relationship or not (two categories); and/or having children with the abuser or presence of children in the household despite being or not the abuser's children.

Level of Education

My first hypothesis is: Women with higher levels of education are more likely to want their abusers penalized than women with lower levels of education. Findings showed that women who had an education of less than high school were the ones more likely to want their abusers penalized as compared to women with an education level of high school or more. Although the relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p < .063$) the relationship was in the direction hypothesized and, given the small N (127 women), the finding is substantively important. In terms of wanting the court to put the abuser in jail, women who had completed high school or had earned a GED were more likely to want the court to put the abuser in jail than their counterparts. This relationship was not found to be statistically significant but does support the hypothesis. Lastly, women who had an education of more than high school were more likely to want the court to simply place the abuser in a treatment program, but this relationship was also not statistically significant but it is in the direction hypothesized. It is evident that there are differences along the level of education and the type of cooperation from women. Although the relationships were not statistically significant findings show that women with more than a high school education—higher levels of education—were more likely to want their abuser penalized

as hypothesized by my study. Education seems to be highly important in women wanting to help end their particular situations. This can be due to the fact that education shapes the way women see their situations. Education shapes women's knowledge of the role different support networks play in providing help to end the violent relationship. In this case the prosecutor, the judge, and the courts served as support networks for these women.

[Tables 1, 2 and 3 about here]

Race

The second hypothesis tested in this research is: White women are more likely to cooperate with the prosecution of their abusers than Non-white women. The findings for this analysis are presented in Tables 4, 5, and 6. Non-white women (87.5%) were more likely than white women (74.4%) to want their abuser arrested. The significance was .07 and the relationship is in the opposite direction of the hypothesis. When examining wanting the court to place the abuser in jail, the relationship was not found to be statistically significant although white victims were more likely to say they wanted the court to put the abuser in jail. About sixty-two percent of White women said this compared to fifty-three of Non-white victims. The relationship between race and wanting the court to put the abuser in a treatment program was also not found to be statistically significant. Both White and Non-white victims were as likely to want their abuser put into treatment—White (76.2%) and Non-white (77.8%). It can be said that the findings support the findings of other studies such as the one conducted by both Felson et al. (1999) and Kaukinen (2004), where mixed findings were presented when it came to race. My findings are also not conclusive as Non-white women were more likely to want their abuser to be arrested, white women were more likely to want their abuser put in jail, and no race differences were identified for wanting the abuser to go into some kind of treatment. Findings regarding the

race of the victim are evidently ambiguous both in this study and in other studies (i.e. Kingsnorth and Macintosh, 2004; Hirshel and Hutchison, 2003). I believe this is because regardless of race, the willingness to cooperate or not with the prosecution/penalization of an abuser depends more on the perception women have of law enforcement. Minority women in particular, at times are faced with the dilemma of not contributing with the prosecution of their abusers to show loyalty to their community—abiding by the norms established for marriage—and contributing to the prosecution because they feel dependent on the system in order to escape their misfortunes—they see law enforcement as a community caretaker (Kingsnorth and Macintosh, 2004).

[Tables 4, 5 and 6 about here]

Relationship to Abuser

Women married or formerly married to their abusers are less likely to want their abusers penalized than women who were not married to their abusers—the abuser was their significant other or former significant other. I tested his relationship in two ways. First, I categorized the relationship into the abuser was or is a spouse or was or is a significant other.

Those who were the abuser's significant other (girlfriend in this case) were more likely to want the defendant arrested (89.4%) and this was found to be statistically significant ($p < .01$). This supports my hypothesis that victims are less likely to want the abuser arrested if married to him. These findings are presented in Table 7. The same was found with wanting the court to place the abuser in jail; those who were the abuser's ex-girlfriend were more likely to want the court to put the abuser in jail (67.3%) and this relationship was found to be statistically significant ($p < .05$) and supports my hypothesis. Lastly, in terms of wanting the court to put the abuser in a treatment program, those who were married to the abuser were more likely to want this option, and the relationship was found to be statistically significant ($p < .05$). This may be

due to the fact that the woman was in a marital relationship with the abuser and consequently has much to gain if her spouse deals with his problems. Since significant others were not necessarily in a long term relationship, they have little to lose by having their abuser go to court or jail. Future research should focus on these differences in reactions to situations. Clearly, there is a difference between wanting the abuser jailed and wanting the abuser to get help and this is affected by the kind of relationship the victim has with the abuser. Women who are married to their abusers may have a stronger emotional attachment and commitment and thus decide not to have their abusers put in jail but instead simply wish for the abuser to get help in order to maintain the relationship.

[Tables 7, 9 and 11 about here]

The second hypothesis tested focuses on whether or not the couple was together at the time of the abuse—either as spouse of boyfriend/girlfriend (significant other). I hypothesize that women who were together at the time of the study with the abuser either as spouse or girlfriend are less likely to want their abusers penalized than women who were not with the abuser as either spouse or girlfriend.

Findings showed that those who formerly had a relationship with the abuser were more likely to want the abuser arrested than their counterparts although this relationship was not statistically significant. These findings are presented in Table 8. Those still with the abuser either as spouse or girlfriend (58.4%) were as likely as those not with the abuser (59.1%) to want the court to put the abuser in jail. The relationship between being together or not and wanting the court to put the abuser in a treatment program was found to be statistically significant (.026) at the .05 level. These findings are shown in Table 12. Those who were together with the abuser

were more likely to want the abuser placed in a treatment program further supports my hypothesis that perhaps the abuser getting treatment allows for the relationship to be maintained.

[Tables 8, 10 and 12 about here]

Children

I next focus on whether or not women who had children in common with the abuser were less likely to want their abuser penalized than women who did not have children in common with the abuser. Those who had children with the abuser were as likely as those who did not have children with the abuser to want the abuser arrested—children with the abuser (78.9%); no children with the abuser (78.4%). Those who did not have children with the abuser were more likely to want the court to place the abuser in jail than those who had children with the abuser but this relationship was not statistically significant. Those who did not have any children with the abuser were as likely as those with children with the abuser to want the court to put the abuser in a treatment program but this relationship did not reach statistical significance. Children in abusive relationships affect how a victim weighs the costs and benefits of contributing to the penalization of her abuser. It seems, according to these findings, that to an extent having children with the abuser is likely to make the woman seek help, perhaps as a means to protect the children.

[Tables 13, 15 and 17 about here]

The next hypothesis tested examines wanted outcomes as influenced by whether or not the women had children in the household and not necessarily those of the abuser. Women who had children in the household were less likely to want the abuser penalized than women who did not have children in the same household as the abuser. Those who had children in the

household—not necessarily with the abuser—were more likely to want the abuser arrested (81.4%) but this relationship was not found to be statistically significant. Those with children in the household were as likely as those with no children in the household to want the court to put the defendant in jail. Those who did not have children in the household were more likely to want the court to place the abuser in a treatment program and this relationship reaches near statistical significance.

[Tables 14, 16 and 18 abut here]

Conclusion

The findings yielded information consistent with the hypotheses tested in this study. The findings encourage the idea that victims are indeed engaged in a complex decision making process where they need to weigh the costs and benefits of contributing with the penalization of their abusers. As shown through studies conducted around this topic (Kaukinen 2004; Kingsnorth & Macintosh, 2004; Kaukinen et al. 2012; Hirschel & Hutchison, 2003) , there are differences in terms of demographics between women who wish to prosecute their abusers and those who do not, women who seek help and those who do not, etc. These include: race, level of education, victim-abuser relationship, and children with the abuser. There are evident differences in the way women deal with their particular abusive relationships; abused women make decisions taking into consideration factors that are shaped by their race, level of education, relationship with the abuser, and children with the abuser, which is why this study focused on these factors in order to add to the existing literature from another perspective—wanting the abuser penalized under no-drop policies, not simply engaging in help-seeking strategies which has been the focus of past research. I focused on women’s willingness to help prosecute their abusers under policies that are mandatory—despite their willingness or lack of willingness to

prosecute, their abuser will be charged and the no-drop policy will be implemented. Past research has focused on the victim's willingness to report their situations to the police, engage in help-seeking strategies, and support official action. However, no research has focused on their support under policies that will proceed without their help. Future research should look into whether women feel pressured to cooperate under said policies. As stated, women do not have to aid in the prosecution of their abusers under no-drop policies but those who do, make their decisions based on and shaped by their particular demographics.

As long as there are power differences in relationships, intimate partner violence will continue to occur. On the individual level, women need to be educated about predictors of abuse and resources that are present for women who want to leave their abuse relationships. These decisions should be presented in the language of rational-choice theory. What does the woman have to gain by leaving the relationship (reward) and what does she have to lose (costs). In addition to the individual level of analysis, researchers and policy makers also need to consider the structural side of abuse. Why is partner abuse considered to be normative in situations and why do societies tolerate the abuse? What social changes need to occur to reduce abuse on a normative and societal level? Future research needs to further examine these issues and apply the outcomes of empirical research to public policy.

Although this study found expected differences when among women and their particular demographics, most of the relationships were not found to be significant at the .05 level. This may be due to the small number of respondents—an abundant amount of missing data which is one of the biggest limitations of this study. Furthermore, because the data used was from a study conducted by Smith et al. (2002) with the purpose of understanding the cases of abused women under no-drop policies, it was not a random sample. Moreover, there wasn't a sample of women

in States without the implementation of the no-drop policy serving as a control group in order to compare the two groups. The women in this study were in States implementing no-drop policy and without a comparison group one is unable to understand if there might be some differences in how the women respond to their situations—wanting the abuser penalized or not. It would also be interesting to understand if duress plays a factor in how women respond under no-drop policies. This research provides an insight into explaining victim behavior. I consider victim's decisions and what influences them to be an area of great importance with significant differences that needs further theoretical development, research and understanding.

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Tables

Table 1. Crosstabulation of Level of Education and Wanting the Abuser Arrested, N=127.

			Education			Total
			Less than high school	High school or GED	More than high school	
Did the victim want the defendant arrested	Yes	Count	25	43	32	100
		Percentage	89.3%	82.7%	68.1%	78.7%
	No	Count	3	9	15	27
		Percentage	10.7%	17.3%	31.9%	21.3%
Total	Count	28	52	47	127	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .063

Table 2. Crosstabulation of Level of Education and Wanting Court to put Abuser in Jail, N=99.

			Education			Total
			Less than high school	High school or GED	More than high school	
Victim wants the court to put defendant in jail	Yes	Count	12	30	16	58
		Percentage	54.5%	68.2%	48.5%	58.6%
	No	Count	10	14	17	41
		Percentage	45.5%	31.8%	51.5%	41.4%
Total	Count	22	44	33	99	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .201

Table 3. Crosstabulation of Level of Education and Wanting Court to put Abuser in Treatment Program, N=99.

			Education			Total
			Less than high school	High school or GED	More than high school	
Victim wants the court to put defendant in treatment program	Yes	Count	15	35	26	76
		Percentage	68.2%	77.8%	81.3%	76.8%
	No	Count	7	10	6	23
		Percentage	31.8%	22.2%	18.8%	23.2%
Total	Count	22	45	32	99	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .523

Table 4. Crosstabulation of Race of Victim and Wanting the Abuser Arrested, N=126.

			Race		Total
			White	Non-White	
Did the victim want the defendant arrested	Yes	Count	58	42	100
		Percentage	74.4%	87.5%	79.4%
	No	Count	20	6	26
		Percentage	25.6%	12.5%	20.6%
Total	Count	78	48	126	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .077

Table 5. Crosstabulation of Race and Wanting Court to put Abuser in Jail, N=99.

			Race		To tal
			White	Non- white	
Victim wants the court to put defendant in jail	Yes	Count	39	19	58
		Percentage	61.9%	52.8%	58 .6%
	No	Count	24	17	41
		Percentage	38.1%	47.2%	41.4%
Total	Count	63	36	99	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .375

Table 6. Crosstabulation of Race and Wanting Court to put Defendant in Treatment Program, N=99.

			Race		To tal
			White	Non- White	
Victim wants court to put defendant in treatment program	Yes	Count	48	28	76
		Percentage	76.2%	77.8%	76.8%
	No	Count	15	8	23
		Percentage	23.8%	22.2%	23.2%
Total	Count	63	36	99	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .857

Table 7. Crosstabulation of Relationship to Abuser and Wanting the Abuser Arrested, N=128.

			Relationship to Defendant		Total
			Spouse or ex-Spouse	Significant other or ex	
Did the victim want the defendant arrested	Yes	Count	42	59	101
		Percentage	67.7%	89.4%	78.9%
	No	Count	20	7	27
		Percentage	32.3%	10.6%	21.1%
Total	Count	62	66	128	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .003

Table 8. Crosstabulation of Relationship to Abuser and Wanting the Abuser Arrested, N=128.

			Relationship to Defendant: Current or Ex		Total
			Currently Together	Ex-Relationship	
Did the victim want the defendant arrested	Yes	Count	80	21	101
		Percentage	77.7%	84.0%	78.9%
	No	Count	23	4	27
		Percentage	22.3%	16.0%	21.1%
Total	Count	103	25	128	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .486

Table 9. Crosstabulation of Relationship to Abuser and Wanting Court to put Abuser in Jail, N=99

			Relationship to Defendant		Total
			Spouse or ex-Spouse	Significant other or ex	
Victim wants the court to put defendant in jail	Yes	Count	21	37	58
		Percentage	47.7%	67.3%	58.6%
	No	Count	23	18	41
		Percentage	52.3%	32.7%	41.4%
Total	Count	44	55	99	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .050

Table 10. Crosstabulation of Relationship to Abuser and Wanting Court to put Abuser in Jail, N=99.

			Relationship to Defendant:		Total
			Current or Ex		
			Currently Together	Ex-Relationship	
Victim wants the court to put defendant in jail	Yes	Count	45	13	58
		Percentage	58.4%	59.1%	58.6%
	No	Count	32	9	41
		Percentage	41.6%	40.9%	41.4%
Total	Count	77	22	99	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .957

Table 11. Crosstabulation of Relationship to Abuser and Wanting Court to put Abuser in Treatment Program, N=99.

			Relationship to Defendant		Total
			Spouse of ex-Spouse	Significant other or ex	
Victim wants the court to put the defendant in a treatment program	Yes	Count	38	38	76
		Percentage	86.4%	69.1%	76.8%
	No	Count	6	17	23
		Percentage	13.6%	30.9%	23.2%
Total	Count	44	55	99	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .043

Table 12. Crosstabulation of Relationship to Abuser and Wanting Court to put Abuser in Treatment Program, N=99.

			Relationship to Defendant:		Total
			Currently Together	Ex-Relationship	
Victim wants court to put defendant in a treatment program	Yes	Count	63	13	76
		Percentage	81.8%	59.1%	76.8%
	No	Count	14	9	23
		Percentage	18.2%	40.9%	23.2%
Total	Count	77	22	99	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .026

Table 13. Crosstabulation of Children with the Abuser and Wanting the Abuser Arrested, N=127.

		Children with Abuser		Total	
		No children with abuser	Children with abuser		
Did the victim want the defendant arrested	Yes	Count	40	60	100
		Percentage	78.4%	78.9%	78.7%
	No	Count	11	16	27
		Percentage	21.6%	21.1%	21.3%
Total	Count	51	76	127	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .944

Table 14. Crosstabulation of Children in Household and Wanting the Abuser Arrested, N=127

		Children in the Household		Total	
		No children in household	Children in household		
Did the victim want the defendant arrested	Yes	Count	21	79	100
		Percentage	70.0%	81.4%	78.7%
	No	Count	9	18	27
		Percentage	30.0%	18.6%	21.3%
Total	Count	30	97	127	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .181

Table 15. Crosstabulation of Children with the Abuser and Wanting the Court to put Abuser in Jail, N=99

			Children with Abuser		Total
			No children with abuser	Children with abuser	
Victim wanted court to put defendant in jail	Yes	Count	25	33	58
		Percentage	62.5%	55.9%	58.6%
	No	Count	15	26	41
		Percentage	37.5%	44.1%	41.4%
Total	Count	40	59	99	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .515

Table 16. Crosstabulation of Children in Household and Wanting the Court to put the Abuser in Jail, N=99

			Children in Household		Total
			No children in household	Children in household	
Victim wants court to put defendant in jail	Yes	Count	13	45	58
		Percentage	56.5%	59.2%	58.6%
	No	Count	10	31	41
		Percentage	43.5%	40.8%	41.4%
Total	Count	23	76	99	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .819; N=99

Table 17. Crosstabulation of Children with Abuser and Wanting Court to put Abuser in Treatment Program, N=99.

			Children with Abuser		Total
			No children with abuser	Children with abuser	
Victim wants court to put defendant in treatment program	Yes	Count	31	45	76
		Percentage	77.5%	76.3%	76.8%
	No	Count	9	14	23
		Percentage	22.5%	23.7%	23.2%
Total	Count	40	59	99	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .887

Table 18. Crosstabulation of Children in Household and Wanting Court to put Abuser in Treatment Program, N=99.

			Children in Household		Total
			No children in household	Children in household	
Victim wants court to put defendant in treatment program	Yes	Count	21	55	76
		Percentage	91.3%	72.4%	76.8%
	No	Count	2	21	23
		Percentage	8.7%	27.6%	23.2%
Total	Count	23	76	99	
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .060

ACADEMIC VITA

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Education

Paterno Fellow and Schreyer Honor Scholar, The Pennsylvania State University- May 2013

Bachelors of Arts

Majors: Crime, Law, & Justice and Sociology

Minors: French, Women Studies and International Studies

Honors: Crime, Law, & Justice

Semester Abroad: Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier III, France Spring 2011

Honors and Awards

Dean's List (2009-2012)

Liberal Arts Alumni Society (2012-2013)

Bob and Mindy Cohen Scholarship in the College of the Liberal Arts (2012-2013)

Bank of America Merrill Lynch Honors Scholarship in the Schreyer Honors College (2011-2013)

Bunton Waller Scholarship (2010-2013)

Gene and Roz Chaiken Trustee Scholarship in the College of the Liberal Arts (2010-2012)

Society of Distinguished Alumni Trustee Matching Scholarship for the Schreyer Honors College (2011-2012)

Major Charles Dennis McKee Memorial Scholarship in the Dept. of Sociology & Crime, Law, and Justice (2011-2012)

Academic Competitiveness Grant (2009-2011)

Activities

Eve Ensler's The Vagina Monologues, Spring 2012

- Performed in order to raise awareness about the reality of violence against women.
- Helped raise funds for anti-violence groups within the Penn State Community.

Donor & Alumni Relations Committee for Penn State's ICF/Panhellenic Dance Marathon,
September 2011-May 2012

- Motivated, empowered and educated the THON community in order to help increase awareness of pediatric cancer.
- Helped maintained and build relationships with alumni, individuals, small businesses, corporations and foundation donors in order to fundraise effectively.

Member of the Mock Trial, September 2009-Present

- Participated in intercollegiate mock trial competitions with teams from other institutions.
- As a captain (2010), organized meetings and led a team of fellow members to prepare for trials.
- Developed public speaking, legal analysis and professional conduct.

Volunteer Work

Certified Volunteer Counselor/Advocate for Center County Women's Resource Center - Sylvia Stein Shelter, August 2011-Present

- Addressed the concerns of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking victims on a hotline.
- Assisted victims of sexual assault at the Mount Nittany Hospital, State College, PA.

Penn State Habitat for Humanity, Spring 2010

- Participated in the Spring Break program in Clay County, Florida.
- Contributed to the organization's goal of eliminating poverty housing and homelessness, by helping built safe and affordable houses for families.

Work

Campus Ambassador for Teach For America, August 2012- Present

- Spread awareness about Teach for America and help mobilize recruitment strategies on-campus.

Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, The Pennsylvania State University

Women and the Criminal Justice System, Fall 2012

- Keep track of grades, attendance, and participation and help the instructor manage group assignments.
- Grade quizzes and papers and act as a liaison between the students and the instructor.

Research Methods in Criminal Justice Course, Fall 2011

- Attended lectures, took notes for students' reference when necessary and assisted in class as needed.
- Helped write and grade quizzes and papers
- Organized and ran review sessions before each examination.
- Held office hours in order to help students.

Research

Undergraduate Research Assistant, The Pennsylvania State University

Research on the Death Penalty, Pennsylvania Senate Resolution No. 6, September 2011-June 2012

- Project approved by the Pennsylvania Senate, jointly conducted by the Justice Center for Research at the Pennsylvania State University and the Pennsylvania Interbranch Commission on Gender, Racial and Ethnic Fairness.
- Thorough study of the administration of Pennsylvania's death penalty to assess whether there is racial or ethnic disparities present.

Research on the Lynchings in Georgia (1882-1930), National Science Foundation Grant, January 2012-May 2012

- Funded by a NSF grant awarded to Professor R. B. Ruback on "The Process of Collective Behavior: Validation of a Unified Mathematical Model Using Computer Vision Tracking."
- Helped develop the coding system and coded over 400 historical newspaper articles focusing on the spread of lynchings in Georgia from 1882 to 1930.

Summer Research Opportunity Program, Summer 2012

- Research Title: *Pennsylvania's Death Row Offenders: Is the Population a Result of Systematic Bias?*

- Research Advisor: John H. Kramer, Department of Sociology and Crime, Law and Justice, The Pennsylvania State University
 - Conducted an in-depth descriptive analysis of Pennsylvania's Death Row Population sentenced between 2000 and 2011 by using data from Pennsylvania's Department of Corrections and news resources.
 - Coded the data and conducted the necessary analysis with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) in order to explore the potential of systematic bias in Pennsylvania's criminal justice system.

Professional Presentations

Oral Presentation: "Pennsylvania's Death Row Offenders: Is the Population a Result of Systematic Bias?" Presentation offered at the Pennsylvania State University—2012 SROP & McNair Research Symposium.

Skills

Languages: Fluent in speaking, writing and reading: Spanish, English, and French