

ASSESSING VIOLENT ENCOUNTERS: POLICE USE OF LETHALITY REPORTING

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ABSTRACT

To identify individuals at greater risk for violent victimization, police agencies have begun to use lethality assessments. This strategy involves the use of screening questions asked of victims that assess dangerousness. Grounded in the criminological literature on domestic violence (DV), the Maryland Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) has been adopted in numerous jurisdictions. More specifically, this risk assessment targets episodes of intimate partner violence (IPV). These situations tend to precipitate greater levels of lethality. Using risk assessment reports from a county located in the southern United States, this research examines the correlates of intimate violence, the predictive ability of the screening instrument, and distribution of intimate partner violence across areas with different degrees of economic stability. Findings suggest that offender sex, employment status, a recent separation, and scoring high on the assessment screening items helps to predict prior victimization. The subculture of violence perspective is used as a theoretical context.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Camilla Bibbs, who instilled the values of education, life, and love to me. I am grateful for the positive upbringing and engaging learning environment she set in place for me that have made me the man I am today. Also, I would like to dedicate this to my fiancée, Whitney Ridley, who has helped me to achieve further than I thought possible. She has inspired me to never give up on my dreams or myself.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCADV, Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

DV, Domestic Violence

IPV, Intimate Partner Violence

LAP, Lethality Assessment Protocol

M.N.A.D.V., Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence

POSTC, Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Council

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The police response to violence is among the most critical actions they perform. Extant research has confirmed the primary intimate nature of violent crime, and recent studies have concentrated on specific types of violence between intimates. Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is violence precipitated by those in romantic relationships as opposed to other kinds of close associations (commonly labeled as domestic violence). Though IPV is a form of domestic violence (DV), it has been defined as violence among partners that may more likely lead to fatal outcomes, especially for females. The relatively high rates of lethal consequences in both DV and IPV incidences have led to developing risk assessment tools for police response. More recently, the Maryland lethality assessment protocol (LAP) has been utilized by jurisdictions that aim to reduce fatal outcomes.

Responding sensibly to violence in policing is not a new concept. In the early 1980s, the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment found that police response was a critical element in whether severe injury or lethality occurred (Sherman & Berk, 1984). Lethality assessments are part of the latest strategies used by law enforcement and members of the healthcare and social service sector to create resources for law enforcement to better identify cases of victimization among intimate partners (Kaur & Garg, 2008). Intimate partners comprise any current or past spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, domestic partner, or sexual partner (Hasstedt & Rowan, 2016).

Ultimately, lethality assessments aim to identify IPV and provide a basis for law enforcement and social service intervention (Services, 2013).

The origins of the most noted lethality assessment, the Maryland Model, can be directly linked to the work of Campbell and her associates (Campbell, 2001; Messing, Campbell, Sullivan Wilson, Brown, & Patchell, 2017; Messing, Campbell, Ward-Lasher, Brown, Patchell, Sullivan, & Wilson, 2016). Klein (2012) describes the revised danger assessment scale [the Maryland Model] designed by Campbell as associating a “yes” response to any of the first three questions or answering “yes” to four out of the eight remaining questions resulting in victims being at high risk for lethality. Klein further stipulates that the LAP assessment seeks to uncover some of the underlying origins or contexts of IPV. The primary goal of the risk evaluation is to categorize episodes of violence as to their seriousness, thereby, reducing violence and severe injury (Klein, 2012). As a result, the use of the LAP should associate positively with lethality reduction.

The Maryland assessment tool is grounded in research on DV and IPV (Campbell, 2001; Campbell, Woods, Chouaf, & Parker, 2000). Extant research suggests that the lack of advocacy services places many victims at higher risk; for women, the risk is much greater. The LAP assessment is an 11-item questionnaire completed by law enforcement officers that respond to violent crime. In jurisdictions that utilize LAP, the evaluation is used to identify risk in IPV incidences. The LAP assessment is designed to help predict lethality as well as to advocate the use of social and advocacy services that might have a positive impact.

Statement of the Problem

The creation of IPV risk assessments provides a tool for law enforcement to determine levels of severity in cases of intimate partner violence. These assessments are then analyzed and used proactively to intervene and inform discretion in handling violent victimizations that often reflect gender-based assertions of male dominance and subsequent victimization of women and girls (Alejo, 2014).

Risk assessments are designed to reduce severe and lethal violence while tracing patterns of re-victimization (Messing, Campbell, Wilson, Brown, Patchell, & Shall, 2014). For this study, the potential for re-victimization or repeat victimization is defined as the likelihood that a victim of IPV will become a chronic victim after having a prior history of a violent encounter. An apparent theme of risk assessment studies is the focus on the victim's perspective as key to evaluating and predicting the future risk of intimate partner violence. Still, other studies have noted the need to utilize information from multiple sources so the soundest decision can be made towards aiding and counseling victims (Gulliver & Fanslow, 2015; Kropp, 2008; Nicholls, Pritchard, Reeves, & Hilterman, 2013).

Conventional wisdom suggests that law enforcement officers may be unwilling to put forth the effort to assess the potential for fatal outcomes. Therefore, when police officers are willing to determine dangerousness, the severity of injury and lethality may be significantly reduced. LAP assessments can be considered part of a police agency's crime analysis strategy in that all agencies are concerned with violence in their communities. While it is widely assumed that violence is related to living in lower, socio-economic communities, LAP assessments conducted routinely across all communities could present a more comprehensive picture of

violent crime. Still, abused women in intimate relationships suffer the greatest from violent victimizations as compared to their male counterparts (Messing et al., 2014).

The importance of providing law enforcement with tools that help recognize and assess levels of IPV cannot be stressed enough. Many police agencies are not equipped to address IPV adequately. This lack of preparedness results in potentially higher levels of injury and lethality. Since many police agencies do not have access to information on chronic IPV victimization, the use of evidence-based strategies is necessary.

Purpose and Objectives

The goal of the current research is to conduct a descriptive and inferential analysis of LAP reports that were collected in a medium-sized, southern jurisdiction. To this end, three research questions are considered, which are as follows: 1) can patterns and correlations be identified in IPV cases in the database? 2) is evidence of violence more prevalent when an affirmative answer is given to all primary, violence screening questions?, and 3) can IPV be mapped along communities with different levels of economic well being (average poverty level)? To understand IPV, it is imperative to place it within the context of violence generally. Therefore, the existing review of literature considers criminal violence (causes and consequences), violence and lethality, risk assessment, the Maryland protocol, and theoretical contexts.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Violence and Lethality

Violence exists in many forms with some being more profound than others. The act of violence includes inflicting harm using physical, mental, and emotional attacks towards a victim. The characteristics of societal violence over time change in priority. There are many forms of violence, such as gender-based violence, and greater emphasis may be placed on one type of victimization as opposed to another (M.N.A.D.V., 2016; Services, 2013; Towers & Walby, 2012). For example, intimate violence is defined as rape or sexual assault, forced marriage, sexual harassment, trafficking, femicide, domestic violence, and intimate partner violence (Messing et al., 2014; Messing & Thaller, 2013; Towers & Walby, 2012). Due to the widely accepted belief that men are less marginalized than women, males are less likely to be victims of intimate violence (M.N.A.D.V., 2016; Messing & Thaller, 2013; Services, 2013; Towers & Walby, 2012).

Growing up with violence in the home has been linked to violence in adulthood. The result of this type of violence is the adverse psychosocial outcomes demonstrated by children exposed to violence and child abuse (Moylan, Herrenkohl, Sousa, Tajima, Herrenkohl, & Russo, 2010). Significant exposure to violent games, at any age, tends to project it into real life. Therefore, more considerable exposure to violent content increases the risk of developing habitual violent behavior (Anderson & Warburton, 2012). Other aspects of growing up with

violence include being exposed to or experiencing violence within the family. The primary media outlet that influences youth is television. Youth that view television with negative or violent content bring their learned behavior into other social gatherings, such as school (McGaha-Garnett, 2013).

Past studies have shown that living in communities with limited resources, no social capital, or political voice leads to a greater likelihood of experiencing high rates of violence and police presence (La Vigne, Fontaine, & Dwivedi, 2017). These studies have also shown that unless victims of violent crimes are engaged in a protective posture, the problems remain unchanged (La Vigne et al., 2017). The contexts of violence have changed over time with different varieties viewed as more problematic. Originally, domestic violence between spouses primarily included husbands that battered their wives, which was thought to be a legitimate exercise reflecting their right and license to control aspects of family life. Historically, domestic violence was tolerated and deemed appropriate by a society that viewed women as chattel (Kaur & Garg, 2008). Contemporary criminal justice and social policy have given greater attention to women especially due to their greater likelihood to become victims of intimate violence.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence includes any physical, sexual, emotional, or mental attacks by family and other household members (Kastner, 2015; Walker, Bowen, Brown, & Sleath, 2018). Prior studies have shown that a relationship exists between economic or social dependency and victimization. Since some in relationships are more likely to have this dependence, they become more susceptible to violence. Studies have also shown a link between the types of abuse inflicted on victims and the gender or sexuality of the perpetrator. It has been recognized that both men

and women use physical violence against intimate partners, though it may differ qualitatively and quantitatively between partners (Kastner, 2015; Walker, Bowen, Brown, Sleath, 2018). As well, research suggests that the level of domestic violence inflicted can depend on the relationship between the victim and the abuser (Walker et. al., 2018). Kastner (2015) concluded that domestic violence occurs as a form of abusive behavior that helps perpetrators gain and maintain power over their family members (Kastner, 2015).

Violence Towards Women

The prevalence of domestic violence (DV) has been linked to different consequences for both the antagonist and victim alike. Victims of DV tend to endure shorter life spans, pain, and suffering at the expense of their abuse. Women have always been targets and are portrayed as weak, vulnerable, and easily exploitable (Kaur & Garg, 2008; Moylan, Herrenkohl, Sousa, Tajima, Herrenkohl, & Russo, 2010). Their assumed weakness, along with their strength and size, has been perceived as part of the reasoning behind the gender imbalance in DV occurrences. This weakness has been seen as more detrimental in societies defined with rigid gender roles, where women have fewer resources to combat abuse (Kaur & Garg, 2008; Moylan et al., 2010). Ironically, the abusers victimize women to show protection and care through violent means. It is more difficult for women to ask law enforcement for aid when dealing with cases of domestic violence as they are considered supportive of the social order that, all too often, disregards women and girls (Kaur & Garg, 2008; Moylan et al., 2010).

DV continues to flourish in the wake of questionable police approaches. Police intervention in this area has been criticized as both dismissive and derogatory, and this leaves many (DV) victims unwilling to contact law enforcement. The likelihood of reporting increases

only after multiple violent attacks (Eigenberg, Kappeler, & McGuffee, 2012; Gavin, 2015; Grant, 2017). DV exposure became more problematic due to local jurisdictions that place nuisance ordinances in effect to prevent multiple calls to the police (typically between 2-3 calls in a six-month time frame) from the same location, deeming the victim a “nuisance” (Gavin, 2015). In situations such as these, landlords are asked to evict the victim from the property or face a fine for every day they remain in residence (Gavin, 2015; Grant, 2017). As a result of an increased rate of domestic violence calls, victims tend to be victimized by both the abuser and the landlord, and symbolically by law enforcement. Therefore, victims are forced to choose between their safety and housing situation.

Intimate Partner Violence (What We Know)

Intimate partner violence includes physical and mental attacks among significant others. Physical attacks against victims of intimate violence include biting, hitting, slapping, kicking, burning, choking, shaking, intimidation, or the use of a weapon. In 2010, 30% of women beginning at the age of fifteen and older had experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime (Abrahams et al., 2013; Messing & Thaller, 2015). Throughout a woman’s lifetime, at least 35% experience intimate partner violence (Black et al., 2011; Messing, Campbell, Ward-Lasher, Brown, Patchell, & Sullivan Wilson, 2016). Mental and emotional attacks include the degradation of the victim’s character, controlling behavior, and the isolation of the partner from anyone outside of the intimate relationship. These relationships represent husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend, and ex-boyfriend/ ex-girlfriend as well as same-sex relationships (Chang et al., 2010). The victims in these relationships are susceptible to the conditions of poor physical and mental health resulting from abusive relationships (Messing, Amanor-Boadu, Cavanaugh,

Glass, & Campbell, 2013; Messing et al., 2017; Messing & Thaller, 2013). Due to the lasting impact of intimate partner violence, strong ties between IPV and mental health issues such as depression, suicidal tendencies, and post-traumatic stress disorder have been found (J. T. Messing et al., 2014).

It has been suggested that validating the number of resources needed to positively impact victims of IPV is dependent upon the collection of credible data that focuses on the variety and prevalence of the problem. By observing the likelihood of being exposed to subsequent violence, the possibility of re-victimization becomes a more apparent focus when handling cases of IPV (Campbell et al., 2009). After an incident of intimate partner violence occurs, the victim often attempts to find aid typically through law enforcement (Campbell et al., 2009; Gavin, 2015). When law enforcement arrives on the scene of an intimate, violent incident, the LAP assessment is initiated to determine the severity of the situation as well as the need for social service intervention.

Policing and Risk Assessment

When approaching the scene of a violent situation, law enforcement must use caution when dealing with victims as this may be their first contact with the criminal justice system (Messing et al., 2014; Saxton, Olszowy, MacGregor, MacQuarrie, & Wathen, 2018). There tends to be a level of skepticism toward the police when victims are from minority groups. Minority populations tend to be hesitant in calling the police as a result of differential enforcement that disadvantages these groups. Research confirms that police officers exercise a higher level of discretion when handling cases of intimate partner violence in areas made up of minority populations. (Garner & Maxwell, 2009; Morrow, Katz, & Choate, 2016; Saxton et al., 2018).

To be effective in combating violence, it is vital that law enforcement assess and acquire all pertinent evidence upon arrival (Garner & Maxwell, 2009; Morrow et al., 2016). Anything that threatens or potentially threatens the livelihood of the victim should be documented through notes, victim assessments and other observations to increase the likelihood of a conviction. Much too often, this detailed documentation is not available (Garner & Maxwell, 2009; Morrow et al., 2016). Sherman & Harris (2014) concluded that the response to violence was further complicated by the greater likelihood of lethal force when the perpetrator was arrested (Sherman & Harris, 2014). These researchers suggested that not apprehending perpetrators was the best law enforcement decision in that lethality rates increase if the violent perpetrator goes to jail (Sherman & Harris, 2014). The findings of Sherman and Harris (2014) are in contrast with the earlier results of the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Study, which concluded that arrest was the best approach (Sherman & Berk, 1984). It is worth noting that Sherman participated in both studies.

Saxon et al. (2018) concluded that victim safety should be the primary consideration for law enforcement that responds to violent crime calls. The researchers further stipulated that police officers must also consider the likelihood of re-victimization upon leaving the scene. Assessment of risk has often been problematic because many agencies are ill-prepared to respond to chronic violence calls for service in a competent manner. In areas where police response is non-systematic, responding law enforcement officers tend to receive mixed and negative feedback about their performance due to limited resources and inadequate training. Residents in these communities perceive any police response to be helpful due to lower expectations of the police. However, they are dissatisfied with the police as they are under the impression that the police have little to no effect on assuaging the violent situation (Saxton et al.,

2018). Providing any form of assistance to victims of intimate partner violence is a sensitive subject and must be approached cautiously. For this reason, a comprehensive risk assessment must be utilized.

In 1986, Campbell created a danger assessment, which focused on measuring the amount of severity linked to violence in intimate partner relationships with a current or ex-partner (Campbell et al., 2009; Nicholls et al., 2013). The original danger assessment was created as a 15-question dichotomous assessment, which became a 20-question instrument as a part of the revision, along with a weighted algorithm used to predict lethality (Campbell et al., 2009; Nicholls et al., 2013). Risk assessments are mainly used to predict the risk of future re-assault or re-victimization, and the likelihood of homicide for victims of violence (Messing et al., 2014). When compared to risk assessment and danger assessment approaches, the lethality assessment program (LAP) takes an alternative approach to understanding intimate partner violence. Unlike other risk assessments, the LAP was initially an extensive modification of the danger assessment used to track lethality or more severe cases of violence (Services, 2013). LAP now stands as one of the first risk assessments for initial responders that questions the victim to determine the lethality of the situation (Grant, 2017). These assessment strategies include educating victims of the risk factors associated with being a victim of IPV (Messing et al., 2013). Identifying associated factors helps to determine the next phase that responding law enforcement take to provide assistance to victims. First responders use the LAP as an identifier for assessing the risk associated with cases of IPV (Messing et al., 2013). The LAP is envisioned as a way to identify victims that may be susceptible to being battered or killed by their intimate partners (Campbell et. al., 2009).

The LAP works as a partnership between the police and social service providers. It attempts to identify a method for measuring the level of potential danger for victims in violent encounters with significant others (M.N.A.D.V., 2016). The purpose of the LAP is to decrease the rate of severe and repeat lethal and non-lethal victimization. The LAP seeks to achieve this by generalizing the approach and making it user-friendly to law enforcement and other community professionals. As well, the LAP works to increase rates of aid-seeking and emergency safety planning (M.N.A.D.V., 2016; Messing et al., 2014). The LAP process is initiated at the end of an investigation amidst a past or current intimate relationship.

If the responding officer believes any of the following is present:

- 1) a potential for re-victimization after leaving the scene;
- 2) the officer feels an act of violence occurred;
- 3) the officer responding acknowledges the violence call as involving a repeat victim or location;
- 4) or if the officer has a feeling, or based on instinct, believes the victim is in danger (Grant, 2017, pg. 4).

Then, the officer can determine what steps should be taken next to provide further safety for the victim (Grant, 2017). Even though the creation of LAP is more systematic and comprehensive than other risk assessments, it too relies greatly on officer reasoning and discretion.

The need for further police action relies heavily on how victims answer the questions on the screening protocols. If the victim is considered at risk for subsequent violence, the responding officer directs the victim to the hotline where they are put in contact with a domestic violence counselor (M.N.A.D.V., 2016). By speaking to the hotline counselor, the victim is given an option to immediately access social services, develop an action plan to secure their future safety, or they can elect to act later. As the LAP interaction is typically kept brief so officers can resume their duties, they then refer victims to social services as soon as possible.

These services provide transportation to domestic violence services, assistance with the creation

or implementation of the safety plans, or provision of periodic follow-ups through calls and visits. Another element is the ongoing monitoring for the welfare and safety of the victim (M.N.A.D.V., 2011, 2016). If the victim's answers do not signal a high-risk situation, victim chooses not to speak to the hotline operator, or the victim decides not to answer the lethality screening questions, the responding officer continues to follow the risk assessment protocol (M.N.A.D.V., 2011, 2016).

This action involves providing the victim with a contact for the responding officer and other service providers in the likelihood that there is a chance of re-victimization by the perpetrator. Another part of the protocol for the officer is to advise the victim of their situation and the danger involved in staying in their current environment. The final aspect of the protocol requires the officer to conduct follow-up visits and calls as appropriate (M.N.A.D.V., 2011, 2016).

As the LAP process has progressed, it has become apparent to researchers that a difference exists among victims that seek services and support at the incident of domestic violence as opposed to post hoc. Many victims that contact social services may not know they are victims of violence nor will they reach out for help. This reluctance, in turn, should prompt the hotline worker to provide information and educate victims about their situation and resources and services available to victims of violence (M.N.A.D.V., 2011, 2016; Services, 2013).

The LAP was initially a model for assessing danger in IPV situations (M.N.A.D.V., 2011, 2016; Services, 2013). The lethality screen included a protocol that determined what actions to take regarding the risk-level associated with the victim. LAP started as a response to a problem of not being able to track those at risk violent victimization or lethality in Maryland. With the purpose of improving responses to violence, the implementation phase was initiated which

created a pilot version of the program to test its effectiveness in other participating jurisdictions. The Maryland study on IPV risk assessment was initially used to tackle rates of domestic homicide (M.N.A.D.V., 2011, 2016; Messing et al., 2014; Services, 2013). More recently, the Model has increased its parameters to include intervention and social service intervention for victims (Grant, 2017). After a pilot study between 2003 and 2005, the implementation of the LAP process was validated, and the assessment was adopted by states other than Maryland (M.N.A.D.V., 2011, 2016; Services, 2013).

During the first year of the Maryland study, there were multiple meetings between subcommittees composed of 10 practitioners and researchers to create a “corresponding protocol” (M.N.A.D.V., 2011, 2016; Services, 2013). Ten months after progressing through the creation stage, it came time to implement a trial run in the jurisdictions of Anne Arundel County Police Department and Harford County Sheriffs’ Office, who partnered with three domestic violence agencies. The Program included a 31-day test run, which concluded that 95% of advocates found that LAP was an uncomplicated process (M.N.A.D.V., 2011, 2016; Services, 2013).

The second year included reviewing and analyzing the results of the first year. This analysis period involved reviewing surveys of officers, advocates, and field test coordinators (M.N.A.D.V., 2011). The next step was to send out programmatic information to other law enforcement and domestic violence agencies for further comments. The pilot study was then critiqued for further modifications based on the opinions and views of practitioners. Finally, the LAP results were utilized to isolate key violence factors and training needs, which included a training video (M.N.A.D.V., 2011). This process has been altered and implemented in other state

programs that have attempted to mirror the image of the Maryland LAP Program (Grant & Cross-Denny, 2017; Klein, 2012).

The result of the pilot program success has led to a greater emphasis on information sharing and training, using a train-the-trainer approach. These trainings include methods designed to best aid first responders and other community-based programs. The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence currently provides training on how to deal with victims and perpetrators on the scene of domestic violence incidents (Grant, 2017; M.N.A.D.V., 2011, 2016; Services, 2013).

The train-the-trainer approach typically consists of the chiefs or acting heads of an agency's DV unit, sergeants or field training officers, and other executives of local domestic violence service providers and agencies (Grant, 2017; M.N.A.D.V., 2011, 2016; Services, 2013). Other members that are trained included line officers. Their training consists of the initiation of the screening protocol as well as the follow-up contact protocol during violence response scenarios as a part of entry-level training. Community-based members of domestic violence programs are trained and provided technical assistance by the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence to help create, promote, and enhance existing strategies that focus on homicide prevention and domestic violence against women (M.N.A.D.V., 2011, 2016; Services, 2013).

The success of the implemented Maryland LAP study can be illustrated in a 34% reduction in domestic violence homicides as a result of intimate partner violence between 2007 and 2012 (Services, 2013). In response to the success of the program, other states and municipalities are beginning to adopt the lethality-screening tool and protocols to use in their jurisdiction. Currently, jurisdictions in 34 states and 14 municipalities have adopted the LAP

model to predict and reduce IPV violence in their communities. As a result of its implementation, states saw reductions in domestic violence as well as motivation to include other partners. For example, the inclusion of other partners has been implemented and validated in the states of Connecticut and New Hampshire (Grant & Cross-Denny, 2017; Klein, 2012).

Based on the results of the Maryland study, Connecticut created a LAP program through an increased effort of law enforcement to collaborate with other domestic violence agencies such as the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence. In 2012, the program operated under a partnership between the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) and the Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POSTC) (Grant & Cross-Denny, 2017; Klein, 2012; Services, 2013; C. C. A. D. Violence, 2017). Fourteen police agencies and 11 domestic violence, advocacy agencies actively participated in the initiative statewide (Services, 2013). Another adopter of the Maryland study was the New Hampshire's Attorney General's Office (Governor's Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2013 (Governor's Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2011)). Like the Maryland study, it uses the 11-question lethality screening tool that determines the victim's potential risk of being seriously injured or killed.

The use of the Maryland model has also been widely successful in other states such as Oklahoma. In this study, Messing and colleagues (2014) found that victims were significantly more likely to take protective actions between the initial lethality assessment interview and the follow-up interview. The study concluded that the increase in women's use of formal and informal protective actions decreased the frequency and severity of physical violence (Messing et al., 2014). Campbell and colleagues (2015) also conducted research that suggested the LAP would increase women's use of protective actions in situations of intimate partner violence while

decreasing the frequency and severity of violence. Despite the limitation of selection bias introduced by officers referring victims of intimate partner violence to researchers, the outcome showed a positive effect on curbing IPV.

Why the Maryland study?

For many, the Maryland study has served as a core foundation for other domestic violence programs, which is significantly due to the qualities that make it stand out from other danger and risk assessments. For starters, the employment of the Model has rendered a high success rate when implemented correctly in states that mirror their programs after the LAP (Services, 2013). Maryland's LAP consists of a lethality screening with an accompanying field protocol (M.N.A.D.V., 2011, 2016; Services, 2013). The LAP encompasses a screening tool along with a response and referral protocol by other first responders outside of law enforcement, such as hospital staff and practitioners. After determining the victim's situation as related in any way to domestic violence, the referral process commences (M.N.A.D.V., 2011, 2016; Services, 2013). The process has created a more natural fluidity between first responders, social services, and other healthcare professionals by improving collaboration and services. As a result of its success, it was recognized by the Ash Institute at Harvard University as one of the "Top 50" *Innovations in American Government* programs in 2008 (M.N.A.D.V., 2011, 2016; Services, 2013). Available evidence suggests that the LAP may be a best practice as far as IPV danger assessment is concerned.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

One possible explanation that may shed light on intimate partner violence is the subculture of violence theory. The subculture of violence theory has been used to describe where and why violence is endemic to certain places and situations. The notion of the subculture of violence also shows that different environmental factors can play a significant role in increasing violence in many communities (Doucet, D'Antonio-Del Rio, & Chauvin, 2014). Violence has been conceptualized as the result of retributive justice and self-defense (Blumenthal, 1972; Wolfgang and Ferucutti, 1967). Rates of violence can be affected by a range of factors with demographics having a significant influence (Blumenthal, 1972).

Lawson (2012) described violence as being sustained through exposure to violence as a socially learned aspect of society. Lower-income neighborhoods have been associated with prolonged harmful exposure to social disorder while maintaining an absence of social order (Curry, Latkin, & Davey-Rothwell, 2008; Li et al., 2010). Wolfgang & Fericutti (1967) surmised that the subculture of violence is unevenly distributed among groups in the social structure as it only exists in certain neighborhoods. Evidence from prior studies shows that regions that have higher levels of violence naturally increases the exposure to violent for residents (Curry et al., 2008; Lawson, 2012). This neighborhood perspective was once thought to be heavily dependent upon racial characteristics. However, Graif & Sampson debunked this notion and alternatively viewed “foreign-born diversity” as a central factor that helped predict neighborhood levels of

violence (Graif & Sampson, 2009). As a result of recent research on the subculture of violence theory, a more specific perspective has been posited, which suggests that the subculture of violence in the South differs slightly from how it exists in other regions of the country (Doucet et al., 2014). This difference has been associated with a variety of violent behaviors that have been historically associated with the southern region of the US (Doucet et al., 2014).

Southern Subculture of Violence

As a result of major feuds and disagreements, rowdy fights, and actual lynchings, it is apparent that multiple factors have played a role and have influenced southern violence. Some of the more contemporary research suggests that there is a higher level of violence acceptance in some places as opposed to others, especially as a means to settle disputes. Therefore, criminologists have suggested that the southern subculture of violence exists as a result of a frontier spirit, a sense of honor, and the establishment of evangelical protestant communities (Doucet et al., 2014; Hayes & Lee, 2005).

The existence of a frontier culture comes as a result of the past where an absence of law enforcement in the rural and developing South meant solving one's own problems (Doucet et al., 2014). Hill and colleagues found that a lack of police presence had no significant influence on neighborhood order whether a good or bad part of town. Within subcultures in the southern US, these researchers surmised that violence was somewhat endemic. The need to fight would not cease based on police presence because it was a result of passing down southern traditions of protecting individual pride and honor (Hill, Jobling, Pollet, & Nettle, 2014).

Another major contributor to violence in the South can be linked to a sense of honor. Many in the South consider their reputation and honor to be synonymous when under scrutiny if

they are attacked or threatened in any manner, deliberately or not (Doucet et al., 2014). Many men living in these societies are quite conscious of how others view them and thus believe it to be a societal norm to respond to violence with violence (Doucet et al., 2014; Tracy, 2011). Males in these communities perceive that when men do not address threats or assaults with violence, they are cowards. In this regard, the admittance of weakness or doing nothing is thought to bring about humiliation and rejection (Tracy, 2011).

Past research has concluded that many southern men have considered the church to be an essential aspect of their lives (Doucet et al., 2014; Tracy, 2011). Within this society that has fused its' laws with that of the evangelical protestant church, the subculture of violence has come about differently. In communities where evangelical protestants make-up much of the community, the church leaders tend to disregard addressing violence in families; these areas tend to have high rates of community violence (Doucet et al., 2014; Tracy, 2011).

In past studies, the southern subculture of violence has been linked to areas affected by poverty. In these areas, those exposed to extreme deprivation were more likely to develop violent tendencies and participate in criminal behavior to achieve their perceived status (Hayes & Lee, 2005; Pieszko, 2016); Past studies have found that poverty directly correlated with homicide rates (Bailey, 1984). Parker (1989) found that without the economic means to handle situations violence may be one of the only options available. Individuals in areas characterized by poverty are more likely to feel physically vulnerable based on their economic situations (Chilton, 2004; Hayes & Lee, 2005). These feelings of helplessness encourage violent behavior as a means to gain status. The link between the southern subculture of violence and poverty has indicated a higher propensity for violence within impoverished regions. This propensity to protect oneself

ironically results in violence directed at family members and other loved-ones (Chilton, 2004; Hayes & Lee, 2005; Tracy, 2011).

The link between IPV and the subculture of violence theory may be more evident in lower-income communities that tend to have higher rates of crime and transition. The projection of violence in the South may, therefore, be somewhat more pronounced when environmental and poverty level factors align (Doucet et al., 2014; Tracy, 2011). The subculture of violence is thought to explain IPV in light of the role it plays in the community where men feel the need to defend their honor (Kaur & Garg, 2008; Tracy, 2011). Thus, if a perpetrator feels their spouse was not acting in the “role of a woman,” then they deserve to be punished (Kaur & Garg, 2008). Men do not like to feel threatened by their spouses under any circumstances. Thus, when their partners out-perform them, they feel insignificant and tend to become abusive (Kaur & Garg, 2008; Renzetti, 2009; Tracy, 2011). The subculture of violence perspective is relevant to what is known about IPV and has great potential for being part of the explanatory framework.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY & PROCEDURES

The overarching purpose of this research was to conduct a descriptive analysis of lethality assessment reports to observe patterns, correlations, and other contextual issues. Data were collected as part of an ongoing project with the International Association of Chiefs of Police, which examined law enforcement and social services aid to victims of crime. The information was collected from the Family Justice Centers' records and validated by corresponding police records. From June 2018 to August 2018, the data was extracted from the agency's files. For this research, 311 cases of IPV that occurred between January and March 2018 were analyzed. Since the protocol of the jurisdiction in question required reports only in IPV occurrences, general DV cases were excluded from the analysis. The data represented all IPV reports in the jurisdiction for the observation period. Consistent with lethality protocol, a LAP was initiated when there was a response to IPV involving at least one of the following conditions:

1. There was a reason to believe that an assault or an act that constitutes domestic violence has occurred;
2. There was a belief or sense on the part of the officer that once the victim is no longer in the presence of the officer the potential for violence or danger is high;
3. When the officer has responded to a domestic situation involving either partner before; and
4. The officer believed that one should be conducted, based on the officer's professional experience, training, and instincts (Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, 2011, pg. 6).

Instrumentation

The data collection instrument used for this project was consistent with the Maryland model; however, some contextual variables were added. The data collection instrument had some initial case-processing variables such as the name of the officer, the victim, and offender, date of occurrence, contact information, prior altercations, and whether an arrest was made (see, LAP instrument in Appendix B). Data referencing the age, race, and gender of both victims and perpetrators were collected. The second section of the protocol contained three primary screening questions for which an affirmative answer to either automatically triggered the protocol referral. These questions (1 – 3) are: (1) has he/she ever used a weapon against you/threatened you with a gun?; (2) Has he/she threatened to kill you or your children?; and (3) Do you think he/she might try to kill you? Naturally, these questions indicate a more serious incident likely to produce significant levels of violence. Whereas an affirmative answer to one of the three questions above triggered the referral, the second set of items (4 – 11) required that at least 4 of the eleven prompted the lethality protocol. Questions 4 – 11 are as follows: (4) Does he/she have a gun or can he/she get one easily?; (5) Has he/she ever tried to choke you?; (6) Is he/she violently or constantly jealous or does he/she control most of your daily activities?; (7) Have you left him/her or separated after living together or being married?; (8) Is he/she employed?; (9) Has he/she ever tried to kill himself/herself?; (10) Do you have a child that he/she knows is not his/hers; and (11) Does he/she follow or spy on you or leave threatening messages?

Along with the questions extracted from the original Maryland Lethality Assessment Protocol, additional items were added from a different risk assessment. These questions included: Is there a pet (dog/cat/bird/other) in the home which he/she has harmed in the past? Is

there an elder or vulnerable adult residing in the home? The information contained in the third section of the instruments involved officers' observations that might trigger an assessment. This item required the officer to summarize these observations. The section also asked the responding officer to check one of the following items: victim screened in accordance with the protocol, victim screened is based on the belief of officer, the victim was not screened, and the officer decided not to screen. Finally, the last items asks if the victim was screened-in-after advising him/her of a high danger assessment and if the victim spoke with the hotline advocate. Besides the factors contained on the LAP instrument, zip codes and census tract information on poverty level was added to indicate the general socio-economic characteristics (i.e., median household income by zip code). These variables were added to observe the approximate level of poverty.

Taken as a whole, the factors above were used to examine the three research questions, which were: 1) can patterns and correlations be identified in IPV cases?, and 2) is evidence of violence more prevalent when an affirmative answer is given to all primary, violence screening questions?, and 3) can IPV be mapped along communities with different levels of economic well-being (average poverty level)?

Limitations

The research method was an analysis of agency data. As such, there were obvious limitations to data analysis. First, the accuracy of agency data could not be tested. The study relied upon previously collected data that could not be vetted for its' ability to answer the central research questions. There is no way to test the reliability or validity of the data itself. However, examining the files with mostly closed-ended responses provided some reliability. Ultimately, the validity of findings was impacted by the discretion used in defining the situation as an IPV

incident as well as completing the assessment, based on personal observations. These limitations are apparent in the majority of research of this type. The analysis offered an exploratory examination of LAP outcomes in the jurisdiction studied.

There was a limitation concerning the ability to look at race, due to victims being classified as Black or White. Reference was made to a race/ethnicity other than Black or White, but it was next to impossible to identify Hispanic cases. The case files made reference to victims and perpetrators being of Hispanic origin, with evidence such as the victim "spoke little to no English," or a "Spanish-speaking interpreter was present," hence, the race variable suffered from validity problems. Thus, Hispanic victims and perpetrators were placed under the Caucasian/White category. This limitation could not be overcome due to the inability to check the validity of what the officer wrote or how hastily it was written. Finally, the study was only representative of the medium-sized southern city under observation. However, the exploratory nature of the study revealed important issues regarding the use of risk assessment strategies such as LAP.

Data Analysis Strategy and Major Variables

The strategy for analysis of data included both descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequencies and central tendencies were calculated on all demographic variables. Binary items were then dummy-coded to allow for bivariate correlations of LAP variables. Finally, a series of multivariate regression analyses were run to consider factors that significantly influenced whether IPV case characteristics, demographics, and offense-related variables (e.g., offense counts and prior altercations) influenced a higher score on the initial screening variables.

The first *dependent variable* for the analysis was the combined affirmative answers to the three screening questions on the LAP which included: (1) *weapon* (has he/she ever used or

threatened to use gun); (2) *KillThreatFamily* (has he/she threatened to kill you or children; and (3) *KillThreatYou* (do you think he/she might try to kill you). This cumulative measure was calculated using responses to all completed LAP risk assessments. A second *dependent variable* was *priors* (whether there was evidence of prior altercations). This variable was used to approximate factors related to re-victimization.

Other *independent factors* in the analysis included demographic factors, an income-related variable, secondary screening questions, variables added to the original protocol (*i.e.*, *Pets and ElderRisk*), participation variables, and current offense information (*counts*). Below is a list listings and operationalization of these variables:

Demographic variables:

VictimSex – (female=0, male=1)
VictimRace – (Black=0, White =1)
VictimAge – (numeric)
OffenderSex- (female=0, male=1)
OffenderRace - (Black=0, White =1)
OffenderAge – (continuous)
PercentMedianIncome – income deviation by zip code from the median by of county (continuous)

Secondary screening variables:

GunAccess – offender access to a gun (no=0, yes=1)
choking – offender ever tried to choke victim (no=0, yes=1)
Jealous/controlling – jealous and controlling of daily activities (no=0, yes=1)
Separated – victim has left offender after cohabitation or marriage (no=0, yes=1)
Unemployed – employment status of offender (no=0, yes=1)
Suicide – offender attempted suicide (no=0, yes=1)
Unrelated-child – child in home that is not offenders or he believes is not (no=0, yes=1)
Harassment – offender spying and leaving threatening messages (no=0, yes=1)
Pets – presence of pets (no=0, yes=1)
ElderRisk – presence of elders or vulnerable individuals (no=0, yes=1)

Additional processing variables:

Refused – victim refused to participate (no=0, yes=1)

Screened-in – participation and LAP initiated (no=0, yes=1)
Hotline – victim spoke with hotline counselor (no=0, yes=1)

Offending variable:

OffenseCounts – one, two, or three or more counts (continuous)

A composite measure of the primary screening questions was created (LAPScreen1), which counted every affirmative answer for each item. This computed measure was used in both the bivariate and multivariate analyses.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive analysis of demographic variables (including race, gender, age, and household income). As expected, female victims were represented at three times the rate (75.9%) of their male counterparts. The race of victim variable was binary and revealed that slightly over sixty percent (61.5%) were categorized as Black, with the remaining cases labeled as White. The average age for all victims in the sample was 33.3. Male offenders were represented at 78.3%. Blacks were equally likely to offenders (63.6%) and victims (60.5%). Similarly, White offenders and victims were in the sample at comparable rates, 36.4%, and 39.5%, respectively. Since a great deal of crime is intra-racial, these statistics appeared to be in line with known statistics concerning interpersonal violence.

The median household income in the jurisdiction from which the sample was drawn was \$47,898 for 2016 (Hamilton County, Tennessee (TN), n.d.). Using the median household income for the county, a variable was computed, which compared specific zip code median household incomes as a percentage (negative or positive) of the countywide average. This calculation was included in the analysis as a proxy measure of poverty.

Table 1 Demographics of IPV Cases

Victim Demographics:		
Male	75	24.1
Female	236	75.9
White	123	39.5
Black	188	60.5
Average Age	33.3	
Offender Data:		
Male	242	78.3
Female	67	21.7
White	112	36.4
Black	196	63.6
Average Age	32.67	
Median Household Income of Jurisdiction:	\$47,898.00	
n = 311		

Analyses of primary and secondary LAP screening variables, case processing variables, current offense, and prior IPV involvement information is illustrated in table 2. Both frequencies and valid percentages are listed. Of the three primary screening questions that require initiation of the LAP 41.8% of victims answered in the affirmative to whether they feared they might be killed (*KillThreatVictim*). Affirmative responses to whether offender threatened to kill the victim and children (*KillThreatFamily*) and ever used a weapon against the victim (*weapon*) revealed that 36.2% and 25.5%, respectively said yes.

Responses to three of the secondary LAP screening items revealed responses greater than 50%. These items included *choking* (57%), *jealous/controlling* (64.3%), and *separated* (52.8%). Other secondary screening variables exhibited a relatively high number of yes answers. Variables such as *GunAccess* (40.5%) and *harassment* (45%) were illustrations of sound affirmative percentages.

Table 2 Descriptive Analysis of LAP Questions

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percent
<i>Initial screening variables</i>		
Has he/she ever used a weapon against you/threatened you with a weapon? (Yes)	60	25.5
Has he/she threatened to kill you or your children? (Yes)	85	36.2
Do you think he/she might try to kill you? (Yes)	97	41.8
<i>Secondary screening variables</i>		
Does he/she have a gun or can he/she get one easily? (Yes)	94	40.5
Has he/she ever tried to choke you? (Yes)	131	57
Is he/she violently or constantly jealous or does he/she control most of your daily activities? (Yes)	148	64.3
Have you left him/her or separated after living together or being married? (Yes)	122	52.8
Is he/she employed? (Yes)	105	45.7
Has he/she ever tried to kill himself/herself? (Yes)	40	17.5
Do you have a child that he/she knows is not his/hers? (Yes)	49	21.2
Does he/she follow or spy on you or leave threatening messages? (Yes)	103	45
<i>Other variables added to analysis</i>		
Are there any pets? (Yes)	11	5
Are there any elders or vulnerable residents? (Yes)	11	5.1
<i>Additional processing variables</i>		
Client did not answer any of the questions. (Did not answer)	77	24.8
If client screened-in, LAP contacted. (Yes)	109	51.9
Client Spoke with Hotline Counselor (Yes)	76	38.2
Is there anything else that worries you about your safety? (Yes)	28	48.3
<i>Arrest information</i>		
Offense Counts		
One Count	166	53.2
Two Counts	106	34
Three or more Counts	40	12.8
Prior Altercations? (Yes)	99	40.4

questions, and 51.9% were screened in accordance with the LAP protocol.

A mere five percent of the victims reported having *pets* that might be harmed. Another approximate five percent (5.1%) of the victims reported having elders or vulnerable residents in the home. Approximately twenty-five percent (24.8%) refused to answer questions, and 51.9% were screened in accordance with the LAP protocol. Finally, as revealed in table 2, the majority of offenders were charged with one offense count (53.2%). Thirty-four-percent was charged with two offense counts, and remaining 12.8%, with three or more counts. Forty-percent (40.4) of offenders had prior IPV altercations.

Finally, as revealed in table 2, the majority of offenders were charged with one offense count (53.2%). Thirty-four-percent was charged with two offense counts, and remaining 12.8%, with three or more counts. Forty-percent (40.4) of offenders had prior IPV altercations.

Bivariate Correlations

Appendix A reveals that the variable of prior altercation was positively correlated with the cumulative number of screening questions (LAPscreen1). As screening questions increased, so did evidence of a prior altercation ($r=.253$). Offender sex correlated with prior altercations with law enforcement ($r= .192$) as well as the victim's sex ($r= -.723$). A relationship existed between the victim's sex ($r=- .170$) and prior altercations. Thus, when an offender's sex was male, the probability of having prior altercations increased, while an increase in victim's sex (being female) slightly increased the probability of having prior altercations.

A correlational analysis comparing primary and secondary screening variables can be observed in Appendix B. Harassment was significantly related to several variables ($r=.440$), gun access ($r=.239$), choking ($r=.488$), and being jealous ($r=.253$). Thus, as jealousy increased, so did the frequency of choking, access to a gun, and prior altercations. A significant, positive

correlation existed between being separated and being jealous ($r=.353$) and an offender assaulting a victim through choking ($r=.208$). It is likely that when the victim left their significant other, the probability of facing retaliation by the offender escalated in the forms of jealousy and choking.

Appendix B also depicts a significant relationship between offenders' employment ($r=.179$) with jealous and controlling behavior. Another significant finding was the positive relationship between pets ($r=.207$) and victims going through the LAP screening process. It appears that having pets in potential danger increased the likelihood of scoring higher on the LAPscreen1 variable. Though not as significant, pets also had a positive relationship with gun access ($r=.157$). Thus, having a pet increased the likelihood of gun access. The presence of elders or vulnerable individuals in the home correlated with gun access ($r=.200$). This positive correlation indicated that those most vulnerable lived in homes with greater access to guns.

Though not depicted in on the tables, LAPscreen1 and prior altercation along with three additional variables were subjected to a correlational analysis. These variables included the victim was screened in according to protocol, whether the victim used the counseling hotline, and the number of offense counts. A positive correlation existed between contacting the hotline and prior altercations ($r=.240$), LAP screening ($r=.416$), and those that screened-in ($r=.736$). As calls to the hotline increased, the number of LAP screenings, and the number of victim's that were screened increased. Regarding offense counts, the data depicted an inverse relationship ($r=-.091$).

Multivariate Analyses

A logistic regression model was constructed to determine the relationship between key predictive variables and prior altercations (See Table 3). Offender sex had a significant influence on the outcome variable ($\beta=1.52^{**}$). This finding indicated that being a male offender helped to predict whether the inmate had a prior altercation. Another variable that significantly influenced having priors was scoring higher on the screening questions ($\beta=.681^*$). This coefficient was positively correlated with the cumulative number of screenings (LAPscreen1) influencing the likelihood that prior altercations were disclosed.

Table 3 Logistic Regression on Prior Altercation and Key Predictor Variables

Variables	B	(S.E.)	Sig.	Exp(B)
Offender Sex	1.525	.574	.008**	4.594
Offender Race	.205	.409	.617	1.227
Offender Age	.008	.018	.635	1.008
LAPscreen1	.684	.337	.043*	1.981
Weapon	-.342	.779	.660	.710
Choking	-.081	.437	.853	.922
Jealous/Controlling	.202	.538	.708	1.224
Separated	.782	.410	.057*	2.185
Employed	-.802	.404	.047*	.448
Unrelated Child	.056	.446	.899	1.058
Harassment	-.325	.526	.537	.723
Pets	2.794	1.642	.089	16.352
Elder Risk	-2.674	1.559	.086	.069
Percent Median Income	.060	.0400	.731	1.000
Offense Counts	-.018	.269	.945	.982
Constant	-2.464	.980	.012	.085

Model Fit Statistics: Log Likelihood=171.075, $X^2=35.836$, $p<.05$, Pseudo $R^2=.282$

A significance was found between employment status and having a prior altercation ($\beta=-.802^*$). This finding suggested that those who are unemployed were more likely to have had previous violent encounters with the victim. A prior altercation was positively influenced by separation status ($\beta=.782^*$). Therefore, leaving home and then returning increased the presence of prior altercations.

The model indicated that four variables (offender sex, scoring higher on the screening questions, unemployment, and separation) explained approximately 28 percent of the variance in predicting whether priors were involved. Cases in areas with varying levels of income had no influence on prior altercations.

Table 4 Multivariate Analysis of Screening Question and Other Key Factors

	β	(S.E.)	Sig.
(Constant)	.013	.224	.955
Offender Sex	.038	.124	.760
Offender Race	-.011	.100	.913
Offender Age	.001	.004	.830
Prior Altercations	.194	.102	.059*
GunAccess	1.783	.125	.000**
Choking	.354	.105	.001**
Jealous/Controlling	.388	.130	.003**
Separated	.016	.101	.877
Employed	.031	.097	.746
Harassment	.246	.124	.050*
Pets	.093	.307	.763
Elder Risk	.184	.213	.391
Percent Median Income	-6.704	.000	.619
Offense Counts	-.139	.066	.038*

$R^2=.77$, (<.05 significance)

* probability greater than .05.

**probability greater than .01.

A multivariate regression analysis was used to observe the relationship between initial screening questions and key predictor variables. This analysis is presented in table 4. The demographic variables (i.e., offender sex, offender race, and offender age) revealed no significant relationships. The regression analysis was significant, with an R^2 value of .77. Six significant coefficients were found, which were gun access ($\beta=1.78^{**}$), jealous/controlling ($\beta=.388^{**}$), choking ($\beta=.354^{**}$) harassment ($\beta=.246^*$) offense counts ($\beta=-.139^*$) and prior altercations ($\beta=.194^*$). This model compared cumulative screen questions (LAPscreen1) to the above variables. Evidence of having previous disputes influenced the number of screening questions in a positive direction; however, as the number of offense counts decreased, lower scores were evident on the LAPscreen1 variable. This inverse influence appeared to be an anomaly, but admittedly the seriousness of the offense was not taken into consideration. Therefore, those with lesser offenses might have charged with multiple crimes.

Those who reported that the offender had access to a gun exhibited, a positive, significant influence on the outcome variable. Therefore, as gun access increased, the cumulative number of screening questions was influenced in a positive direction. Reported choking and jealous, controlling behavior also positively impacted the number of cumulative factors. As this type of behavior increased, the score on screening questions increased. Finally, harassment positively influenced the aggregate amount of screening questions answered in the affirmative.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

The goal of the study was to answer critical questions concerning the relevance of using LAP assessments. Specifically, the research asked three questions: 1) can patterns and correlations be identified in IPV cases? 2) is evidence of violence more prevalent when an affirmative answer is given to all primary, violence screening questions?, and 3) can IPV be mapped along communities with different levels of economic well being (median income of location)? To answer these important research questions, correlational, logistic regression, and linear regression analyses were conducted. The findings suggested significant correlations, as well as variables that predicted past IPV altercations and the cumulative number of primary screening questions answered affirmatively.

To observe and identify patterns and correlations, relationships between the dependent and independent variables were analyzed. The first dependent variable (prior altercations) associated with multiple independent factors. The independent factor of offender sex was found to have a statistically significant relationship with previous disputes. Therefore, males were more likely to have been involved in a prior altercation. This finding was expected given that most offenders in IPV incidents are male. Victim sex, therefore, influenced prior altercation, with victims more likely to be female. Previous altercations were associated with the cumulative number of primary screening questions answered in the affirmative (LAPscreen1). Hence, those who had prior disputes were more likely to have higher scores on the initial screening questions.

A previous altercation correlated positively with whether the case was subject to the LAP protocol and screened-in.

Initial screening questions (LAPscreen1) were positively correlated with having pets that might be placed in danger. Positive correlations existed between contacting the hotline, prior altercations, and LAPscreen1, and gun access. While gun access (availability of weapon) associated positively with LAPscreen1, the number of offense counts revealed an inverse relationship. Intuitively, this finding appeared odd. Since the study did not control for the seriousness of the offense, the number of counts might have masked some significant differences between cases related to level of dangerousness. Harassment was positively correlated with gun access, choking, and being jealous and controlling. The presence of elders and other vulnerable individuals in the home associated positively with access to guns. This finding would suggest that the most susceptible victims lived in places where guns were accessible. Concerning the first research question, significant patterns and associations were discovered among the host of independent and dependent variables.

The dependent variables for the study were a prior altercation and the cumulative number of initial screening questions answered in the affirmative (LAPscreen1.) Predictors of prior altercations were offender sex (being male), LAPscreen1, being unemployed, and having a recent separation. It is likely that the frustration caused by employment issues and family separation appeared to heighten the probability of a prior violent encounter. When LAPscreen1 was referenced as the outcome variable, six predictors were found, which included gun access, being jealous/controlling, choking, harassment, offense counts, and prior altercation. All predictors had a positive influence on the cumulative number of initial screening questions answered in the affirmative. To answer the second research question, prior altercation had a

significant impact on the aggregate number of initial questions given a "yes" response (primary screening questions).

The final research question asked if IPV cases could be influenced by income level or mapped along areas with different income levels. Median income level was determined by how much the average income of the location varied from that of the county of jurisdiction. Therefore, this variable can only be viewed as a proxy for socioeconomic status. The analysis revealed no association between median income level and prior altercation or LAPscreen1. Regarding IPV, the analyses concluded that it occurred regardless of the community and its' economic status. As alluded to, the median income variable suffered from a construct validity issue. As such, the measurement of relative poverty was not robust enough; it was hard to make assumptions from the data collected. Though the data was collected to look at average household income throughout the jurisdiction, no significance was uncovered. To answer the third research question, the median income level did not affect either the number of screening questions checked or evidence of past altercations; however, caution should be exercised in acceptance of this conclusion. This finding most related to the theoretical context for the research.

The subculture of violence theory is predicated on the economic stability of community life as a precursor to systematic violence. Before examining the relevance of this perspective, it is clear that more specific information on victims and aggressors would be needed. The LAP instrument does not collect such information.

Findings that were not expected were the lack of violence variables linked to prior alterations. Of the variables in the analysis, only offender sex, LAPscreen1, and being separated from family influenced prior altercation. Variables such as gun access, coking, and jealous/controlling were not predictors of prior altercations. However, in the multivariate

analysis with LAPscreen1 as the outcome variable, these factors were significant predictors. As addressed, it was expected that the economic factor of the median household income of location would have a positive effect on prior altercation. It is of interest that less than half of the LAP questions significantly influenced evidence of past altercations. If reliability checks could be performed on how previous altercation data was collected, it might provide sounder validity of measurement.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This research has supplemented the body the literature on risk assessment generally and LAP assessment specifically, but there is a need for further research. For future studies, more prior altercation questions regarding the offender in question should be added to the LAP. As well, variables that better capture the characteristics of past altercations are needed. Currently, the assessment collects data on a single question indicating the presence or absence of a past incident. LAP could concentrate better on re-victimization and chronic abuse over time by adding more past victimization items. An additional question about whether the victim previously filled out the LAP for the same perpetrator could be used to track the chronological history of abuse.

The research was based on one jurisdiction in the US. It would be beneficial to look at multiple cities from various parts of the southern region. A more valid approach would be to analyze LAP cases in jurisdictions across the northern, eastern, western, and southern areas of the US. Adding more diversity in terms of US regions would enhance the study and might allow for a better consideration of the subculture of violence as well as the subculture of southern violence perspectives. In future studies, a question that asks the victim to identify their income based on an interval scale will allow for a better determination of the level of poverty in each household in relation to the relative poverty of the area, generally. Additionally, a question that asks victims and perpetrators to identify their racial or ethnic category would be helpful.

This research has provided insight into the LAP instrument as a tool for assessing IPV. Past studies have shown that law enforcement officers are less than enthusiastic in determining the potential for violence in IPV cases. This lack of attention can result in underestimating the potential for violence and inadvertently influencing levels of lethality. Though victims of IPV can be male or female, research has shown the disproportionate number of female victims (Messing et al., 2014). Therefore, strategies aimed at reducing the level of violence in IPV incidents should be cognizant of gender inequality.

Lethality assessments are part of the latest collaborative effort used by law enforcement and members of the healthcare and social service sector to identify IPV and assess risk. Risk assessments are designed to reduce severe and lethal violence, by predicting and assessing patterns of re-victimization. An apparent theme of risk assessment studies has been the focus on the victim's perspective as key to evaluating and predicting the future risk of intimate partner violence. Still, other studies have noted the need to utilize information from multiple sources so the soundest decision can be made towards aiding and counseling victims (Gulliver & Fanslow, 2015; Kropp, 2008; Nicholls, Pritchard, Reeves, & Hilterman, 2013). In Klein's (2012) past research, the LAP assessment is approached with the focus on the underlying origins or contexts of IPV.

Admittedly, these findings are limited in the ways already discussed, but they nevertheless supplement the existing knowledge in this area. The LAP screening questions were found to predict past victimization; it is, therefore, logical that they would predict future victimization as well. Careful and timely analysis of the LAP reports has the potential to identify those who suffer from chronic victimization. If the LAP is used in an ongoing, systematic

manner, the possibility of impacting the lives of those in dangerous situations would be greatly enhanced.

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APPENDIX A

CORRELATIONS OF DEVELOPMENT VARIABLES AND CASE DEMOGRAPHICS

Correlations of Dependent Variables and Case Demographics (n=233)

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8
Lapscreen1 (X2)	.253**							
	.001							
Victim Sex (X3)	-.170	-.026						
	.023*	.690						
Victim Race (X4)	.092	-.009	-.032					
	.218	.890	.629					
Victim Age (X5)	-.055	-.062	.210	.243				
	.468	.347	.001**	.000**				
Offender Sex (X6)	.192**	-.034	-.723	.049	-.146			
	.010	.613	.000**	.458	.026*			
Offender Race (X7)	.093	-.028	.026	.814	.269	-.010		
	.216	.668	.692	.000**	.000**	.885		
Offender Age (X8)	.032	-.065	.086	.186	.671	-.024	.223	
	.667	.328	.192	.005**	.000**	.712	.001**	
Poverty Level (X9)	.051	-.037	-.051	-.009	.072	.010	-.004	.081
	.495	.578	.437	.885	.272	.883	.951	.219

Note: X1 is prior altercation

* Probability is greater than the .05 level

** Probability is greater than the .01 level

APPENDIX B

CORRELATIONS OF DEVELOPMENT VARIABLES AND CASE DEMOGRAPHICS

Correlations with Dependent Variables and Key Screening Variables (n=233)

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8	X9	X10
LAPscreen1(X2)	.253**									
Gun Access(X3)	.079	.459**								
Choking(X4)	.179*	.436**	.356**							
Jealous(X5)	.176**	.486**	.228**	.298**						
Separated(X6)	.217	.302	.108	.208**	.353**					
Employed(X7)	-.104	.119	-.039	.002	.179**	.210				
Suicidal(X8)	-.109	.162*	.091	-.021	-.015	-.001	-.012			
Unrelated Child(X9)	.045*	.125	.078	.120	.071	.102	-.043	.101		
Harassment(X10)	.102	.440**	.239**	.233**	.488**	.253**	.023	.103	.098	
Pets(X11)	.131	.207**	.157*	.116	.176*	-.030	.167	-.001	-.008	.051
ElderRisk(X12)	-.107	-.043	.200**	-.014	-.005	-.033	-.007	.165	-.063	.026

* Probability is greater than the .05 level

** Probability is greater than the .01 level

APPENDIX C

LETHALITY ASSESSMENT

LAP PROTOCOL:

1. Administer the screen verbatim.
2. If answers trigger referral call the LAP hotline number: **(423) 708-2335**
3. Submit ALL completed LAP forms to supervisor at end of shift.



5705 Uptain Road | 423-643-7600

Indicate if administered at the Red Bank Satellite location

NAME:

DATE & TIME:

Report #:

LETHALITY ASSESSMENT SCREEN

2.27.17 revision

<input type="checkbox"/> Check here if client did not answer any of the questions.		
A. "Yes" response to any of Questions #1-3 automatically triggers the protocol referral.		
1. Has he/she ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon?	YES	NO
2. Has he/she threatened to kill you or your children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you think he/she might try to kill you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Negative responses to Questions # 1-3, but positive responses to at least FOUR of Questions 4-11, trigger the protocol referral.		
4. Does he/she have a gun or can he/she get one easily?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Has he/she ever tried to choke you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Is he/she violently or constantly jealous or does he/she control most of your daily activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Have you left him/her or separated after living together or being married?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Is he/she unemployed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Has he/she ever tried to kill himself/herself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Do you have a child that he/she knows is not his/hers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Does he/she follow or spy on you or leave threatening messages?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patrol Officer or Advocate may trigger the protocol referral, if not already triggered above, as a result of the client's response to the below question, or whenever the Patrol Officer or Advocate believes the client is in a potentially lethal situation.		
Is there anything else that worries you about your safety? (If "yes") What worries you?		
Check one: <input type="checkbox"/> Client screened in according to protocol <input type="checkbox"/> Client screened in based on the belief of the Patrol Officer or Advocate <input type="checkbox"/> Client did not screen in		
IF THE CLIENT SCREENED IN:		
Did the Patrol Officer or Advocate contact the LAP Hotline (423) 708-2335?	YES	NO
After advising her/him of a high danger assessment, did the client speak with hotline counselor?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If NO, why not? did not want to speak with a counselor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SAFETY PLAN REVIEWED & COPY GIVEN TO CLIENT

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS FOR OFFICER OR ADVOCATE TO DOCUMENT:	YES	NO
A. Is there a pet (dog/cat/bird/other) in the home which he/she has harmed in the past?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Is there an elder or vulnerable adult residing in the home?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Lethality Screen utilized in the City of Chattanooga, is part of a program administered by **The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence**. NOTE: The questions above and the criteria for determining the level of risk a person faces is based on the best available research on factors associated with lethal violence by a current or former intimate partner. However, each situation may present unique factors that influence risk for lethal violence that are not captured by this screen. Although, most victims who screen "positive" or "high danger" would not be expected to be killed, these victims face much higher risk than that of other victims of intimate partner violence.

VITA

Calvin Thomas Bibbs-Lee was born in the Nashville, TN metropolitan area but was raised in Chattanooga, TN where he lived throughout his childhood and graduated from Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences in 2013. After graduation, he began his undergraduate studies at Carson-Newman University in Jefferson City, TN. In 2017, he was awarded a Bachelor of Science degree with a double major in Marketing and Management. Directly after graduation, he went to the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga where he began his Master of Science degree in Criminal Justice. In 2019, he became a candidate for graduation, and after graduation, he plans to pursue careers working with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation.