

**USING AN INTERSECTIONAL LENS TO EXPLORE HOW WOMEN
NAVIGATE INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

by

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ABSTRACT

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a widespread problem that disproportionately affects women in heterosexual relationships. It occurs among all races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic statuses. This study is a qualitative study of the Civil Justice Project's (Fleury-Steiner & Miller, 2014) interview transcripts examining IPV victims' help-seeking behaviors and self-efficacy across gender, race, education, culture, employment status, and structure. Findings extend current knowledge on help-seeking behaviors and self-efficacy by using an intersectional lens to examine multiple inequalities. The majority of participants, regardless of race, were successful in obtaining Protection from Abuse orders, and because of this success, they felt safer and empowered, leading to increased feelings of self-efficacy. The process, however, was puzzling to the women, and affected their feelings of whether justice was achieved and stronger feelings of self-efficacy. Equal numbers of women, regardless of race, engaged in defensive violence as a form of self-defense. All of the women reached out for help from friends, family members, or professionals, which increased their feelings of self-efficacy. Yet, due to social location and structural barriers, women varied in their access to help-seeking behaviors. Limitations of the study are addressed and future directions and policy implications are included.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

IPV is a widespread problem that disproportionately affects women, with about four out of five reported victims being female (Catalano, 2012; Truman & Morgan, 2014). It occurs among all races/ethnicities and socio-economic classes, though it affects women of color in ways that are different from those of white women due to unique circumstances and context. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (Catalano, 2012; Truman & Morgan, 2014), African American females experience IPV at a rate 35% higher than their white female counterparts and about 2.5 times that of women of other races. African American women are less likely than white women to use social services, battered women's programs, report abuse to authorities, or go to the hospital because of abuse (Feminist Majority Foundation, 2006). Women of color are also less likely to report to authorities or seek help due to cultural norms, language barriers, and religious beliefs (White, 1985; Lichtenstein & Johnson, 2009). In particular, African American women are unlikely to report abuse or seek help due to discrimination, distrust of police, and negative stereotyping (Nash, 2005). Women of color's responses to IPV may reflect an adherence to informal norms, values, or beliefs associated with their social location. Thus, it is important to better understand cultural responses to IPV when examining how women of color navigate IPV relationships.

This thesis examines barriers and opportunities in the help-seeking behaviors and self-efficacy of women of color who experienced IPV and filed for protection

from abuse orders (PFAs) compared to white women; it uses a sociological lens through which an intersectional approach examining race, gender, class, education, employment, and cultural differences is applied. Race-based literature such as “the Beth Richie’s (1985, 1996) work on battered black women is utilized to interpret women’s behaviors when analyzing factors of race, culture, and structure. Richie’s (1985, 1996) and Hillary Potter’s (2008) work will aid in analyzing the experiences of the battered black women in the study’s sample.

1.1 Literature Review

1.1.1 Intersectionality and IPV

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that allows for the recognition of multiple inequalities and is informed by multiracial feminism (Burgess-Proctor, 2006). “Intersectionality recognizes that systems of power such as race, class, and gender do not act alone to shape our experiences but rather, are multiplicative, inextricably linked, and simultaneously experienced” (Burgess-Proctor, 2006). Chesney-Lind & Chagnon (2016) argue that classical criminology theory is limited because it lacks an intersectional analysis, focusing strictly on male experiences. Not only does scholarship in Criminology lack intersectionality, but, according to Chesney-Lind & Chagnon (2016), so does the field itself as white privilege is prevalent in Criminology due to a lack of diversity in race/ethnicity among scholars in the field.

For scholarship in Criminology to be classified as intersectional, it needs to examine two or more variables together, such as race and gender, and how these interact with other interlocking oppressions (Crenshaw, 1991). Richie (1985) examines the combination of race and gender in examining why battered black women

are a challenge for the black community, arguing that “too many blacks still think this is a divisive issue which should not be aired in public” rather than viewing IPV as the social phenomenon that it is. Richie (1985) interviews battered black women and finds that most believe that domestic violence is not a problem in black communities, but rather “its occurrence, like substance abuse, crime, and unwanted adolescent pregnancy, are symptoms of living systematically deprived in a society that is designed to dominate and control” such people and that because systematic deprivation is inflicted on men by society, it is in turn inflicted upon women by those men. This finding, however, supports the theory of the black matriarch and the myth of the “strong black woman” which Richie (1985) argues is problematic because it implies that the role of black women in families is to receive regular beatings in order to alleviate black men’s stress. In her book *Compelled to crime: The gender entrapment of battered black women*, Richie (1996) shares the stories of battered, incarcerated African American women and explores what happens when the criminal justice system (CJS) is introduced as a repressive force in their lives. Richie (1996) uses the legal notion of ‘gender entrapment’ to argue that African American women are entrapped in the corners of US society by their vulnerability to men’s violence and are punished for behaviors that are prescribed by societal mores of appropriate gender roles. Richie (1996) argues that it is due to black IPV victims’ inability to escape cyclical violence that they are left with few options but to engage in illegal activities, which leads to continued disenfranchisement as they are incarcerated and denied access to services they need to change their lives such as counseling and programs that help battered women.

Crenshaw (1991) examines the various interactions of race and gender in the context of violence against women of color using intersectionality more broadly as “a way of mediating the tensions between assertions of multiple identities and the ongoing necessity of group politics” (Crenshaw, 1991). According to Crenshaw (1991), “through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and ground the difference among us and negotiate the means by which these differences will find expression in constructing group politics” (Crenshaw, 1991). Hillary Potter has also conducted scholarly research on battered black women. In *Battle Cries*, Potter (2008) argues that we must not “address intimate partner abuse from a belief that the experiences of this abuse are similar across race, ethnicities, cultures, nationalities, and sexual orientation” (Potter, 2008). Through the stereotype of “strong black woman” can hinder black women from seeking help and support, Potter (2008) argues that this stereotype often helps African American women to resist abuse and to verbally and physically retaliate against their abusers. Potter (2008) finds that black women do not view themselves as victims, but rather as resisters; besides resisting future IPV incidents, black women, also feel the need to resist the scrutiny of family members, religious leaders, non-black IPV victims, and the criminal justice system due to their intersections of race and a cultural legacy of distrust of biased institutions. All of these scholars have particularly focused on the issues of race and gender in relation to violence against women and IPV. Collins (1998) argues that unlike traditional social science research, intersectional approaches “view institutionalized racism, social class relations, gender inequalities, and nationalism expressed on both sides of state power as analytical constructs that explain family organization in general, and black family organization in particular” (Collins, 1998). With paradigms of intersectionality, any

particular social location where systems of oppression and inequality organized along race, gender, or social class, meet or intersect, produce distinctive group histories or experiences (Collins, 1998). In order to fully understand IPV and the experiences of IPV victims, intersectionality is needed to examine how different intersections shape similarities and differences in victims' help-seeking behaviors and self-efficacy.

1.1.2 Defensive Violence

A faction of scholars on IPV have cited that women who are battered engage in what some have called "mutual combat" with their abusive partners, often as a form of self-defense (Farrell, 1999; Fiebert, 1997, 1998; Miller, 2005; Miller & Meloy, 2006; Moffit & Caspi, 1999; Pearson, 1997). Michel Johnson's work (1995, 2000) differentiates between four distinct patterns of intimate partner violence that address the degree of control that motivates use of violence in intimate relationships. *Common couple violence* encompasses relationships in which both partners use violence in certain situations and the violence is of relatively low frequency, unconnected to control and not likely to escalate or involve serious injury. The *intimate terrorism* pattern is one in which violence is one tactic in a general pattern of control and is more frequent, unlikely to be mutual, and more likely to escalate and result in serious injury. *Violent resistance* is used primarily by women and is unmotivated by control whereas *mutual violent control* relationships are categorized by both partners use of violence and vying for control (Johnson, 1995, 2000). Most (male) offenders, according to Johnson (1995, 2000), belong to the intimate terrorism category.

Research suggests that most women are not the batterers in relationships and that when they do use violence against their partners, it is almost always used in self-defense or as a retaliatory tactic to ongoing abuse (Dasgupta, 1999, 2002; DeKeseredy

& Schwartz, 1998; Hamberger & Guse, 2002; Johnson & Ferraro, 2000; Kimmel, 2002; S. L. Miller, 2001, 2005; Miller & Meloy, 2006; Osthoff, 2002; Stark & Flitcraft, 1988; Stuart et al., 2006). In fact, self-defense and retaliation for past abuse, along with poor emotion regulation and provocation by the partner, were the most cited reasons for violence perpetration in Miller's (2005) and Stuart et al.'s (2006) work on reasons for intimate partner violence perpetration among arrested women. Women in IPV relationships tend to be isolated from their family members due to the manipulation and control asserted by their abusive partners, thus they have lower levels of family attachment (Kuijpers, Van der Knaap, & Winkel, 2012; Lanier & Maume, 2009), which may lead to greater adoption of 'the code of the street'. For marginalized women, the intersections of culture, race, other inequalities, often greatly increase the probability that they will be criminalized for their use of force against abusive partners (Crenshaw, 1991; Larance & Miller, 2017). Women of color and South Asian immigrant women are particularly at risk for arrest (Dasgupta, 1999, 2002; Larance & Miller, 2017; Potter, 2008; Richie, 1996, 2012; Roy, 2012; Sokoloff, 2005; West, 2002, 2009). According to Potter (2008) black women engage in dynamic resistance. "Dynamic resistance is the concept that links the varied and similar experiences and identities of battered black women to provide improved understanding of their encounters with and reactions to the violent events in their live and the existing support networks" (Potter, 2008). Potter (2008) acknowledges that black women have been found to fight back at greater rates than white women, as demonstrated in a study using National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) data; the NCVS study revealed that intimate partner violence against black men is 62% higher

than that of white men. In this thesis, I explore if intersections of race, class, culture, and structure influence female IPV victims' use of defensive violence.

1.1.3 Importance of Intersectionality

Feminist criminologists have used intersectionality to theorize about the relationship between inequalities and crime, such as IPV. For example, Richie (1996) researched how intersecting systems of race, class, and gender can lead battered black women to commit crime. Richie's (1996) concept of gender entrapment asserts that, "some women are forced or coerced into crime by their culturally expected gender roles, the violence in their intimate relationships, and their social position in the broader society" (p 133). According to Richie (1996), society provides black women with few socially acceptable ways to change their position, making incarceration almost inevitable. Richie (1996) found that many African American women refused to speak out against African American men, believing their partners have fewer opportunities than they do, while other women believed that because they had participated in criminal acts, they were prohibited from taking advantage of social programs that are designed to help battered women (Richie, 1996). Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) argue that an intersectional framework needs to be used in the development of theories on IPV, or domestic violence in general. According to Sokoloff and Dupont (2005), intersectional frameworks to IPV "question the monolithic nature of woman battering, call for greater emphasis on the structural cases of woman battering, caution against disempowering representations of marginalized battered women and explore the complex role of culture in understanding abuse and our responses to it" (p 40). These critiques are powerful; thus an intersectional approach will be used to examine the types of help-seeking behaviors women engage

in and whether they differ based on intersections of social location (e.g., race, class, gender), culture, and structure.

According to Crenshaw (1991) the experiences of women of color are often the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism, but these experiences are underrepresented in discourse in either feminist or antiracist scholarship. “Because of their intersectional identity as both women *and* of color within discourses that are shaped to respond to one *or* the other, women of color are marginalized within both” (Crenshaw, 1991). Thus, intersectional scholarship that includes women of color from a variety of races and ethnicities is needed. Potter (2006) argued that by using an integrated approach examining structural, cultural, and family influences in connection to IPV, black feminist criminology aids in a more accurate explanation of how black women experience and respond to IPV along with how the CJS responds to battered black women. Approaching IPV against African American women from the position of the lives and experiences of black women as victims and offenders “may offer a more comprehensive appraisal of their experiences with and responses to their victimization” (Potter, 2006). In *Battle Cries*, Potter (2008) draws attention to the ways that race and class shape IPV violence against women and the social responses to IPV. Potter (2008) argues that because of black women’s unique intersections of race, class, and gender, they experience abuse and repression in ways that are different than other women, as they must engage in resistance in a variety of locations, such as their homes, workplace, communities, and congregations while white women have a greater advantage because of their race. Battered black women must overcome stereotypes, such as the “strong black woman,” when facing IPV victimization and because of such stereotypes perpetuated by society, and their communities and

congregations, they have greater difficulty receiving the help they need, as social responses to their victimization are different for those of white women (Potter, 2008). White women are seen as “weak” and have less conviction resisting the patriarchy than black women, thus they are perceived to need more help than black women. By using an intersectional lens, I explore if differences emerge between battered women of color and white women in their help-seeking behaviors, feelings of self-efficacy, and experiences with the courts and court actors.

1.1.4 Help-Seeking Behaviors and Self-Efficacy of IPV Victims

Help-seeking behaviors are actions that IPV victims take that may assist them in leaving abusive relationships. Help-seeking behaviors can include using the courts, relying on police, family, friends, or religious support, and the seeking of medical attention. Regarding help-seeking behaviors, and the factors that contribute to it, Potter (2004, 2007), Flicker et al. (2011), Morgan et al. (2016), and O’Neal & Beckman (2017) have conducted research on help-seeking of IPV victims using an intersectional lens. Potter (2004) explores the effects of social structure and black culture on patterns of abuse and finds that women utilize various methods to leave the relationships, “including their own determination and the assistance of family, friends, religion, and spirituality.” Potter (2004) finds that reasons black women often give for staying in an abusive relationship, and thus not engaging in help-seeking behaviors, are “related more to shame of being a single, unmarried mother, whose children had no stable father-figure; criticisms by family members to make the relationship work; religious teachings; embarrassment; and, to a lesser extent, the advice from friends that the financial benefits were worth enduring some abuse.” Flicker et al. (2011) examined the differential impact of concomitant forms of violence and ethnicity on the

help-seeking behaviors of women suffering from IPV. Flicker et al. (2011) find that women who experience concomitant sexual abuse are less likely to seek help, while those who experience concomitant stalking are more likely to seek help whereas concomitant psychological abuse was not associated with help-seeking. Flicker et al. (2011) also assert that ethnic differences exist when it comes to seeking help from friends, mental health professionals, police, and protection orders. For instance, Latinas are less likely than white women to seek help from the police, and African American women are more likely to seek protection orders than white women (Flicker et al., 2011). Morgan et al. (2016) synthesized data across five studies to determine the role of gender, sexuality, and context upon help-seeking for IPV. Morgan et al. (2016) find that gender and sexuality influence how help-seeking in different contexts is viewed. Sexuality is found to potentially be as important as gender in influencing help-seeking and that both help to highlight the difficulties some men experience in help-seeking at all along with some of the barriers women experience in disclosure to health professionals when not directly asked appropriate questions (Morgan et al. 2016). Women are found to favor help-seeking from primary care providers who are familiar and where they are known whereas gay men were found to favor help-seeking from genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinics where there is a taken for granted acknowledgment of sexual identity (Morgan et al., 2016). Morgan et al. (2016) conclude that their findings suggest the need for an intersectional approach to providing support services for IPV victims.

O'Neal and Beckman (2017) conducted a qualitative analysis on the intersections of race, ethnicity and gender to examine the barriers to social services among Latina IPV victims. Cultural barriers in language, social isolation, and gender

norms are all found to be significant issues in preventing victims of IPV from seeking and obtaining social services and were reframed as institutional barriers that “shape the way Latinas gain access to social services when seeking solace, protection, and support” (O’Neal and Beckman, 2017). Socioeconomic barriers of educational attainment, poverty, and distribution of resources also affect Latina women’s help-seeking behaviors in IPV relationships (O’Neal and Beckman, 2017). Legal barriers, such as law enforcement, fear of deportation, and anti-immigration beliefs and laws also influence Latina women’s help-seeking behaviors.

While current literature on help-seeking behaviors of IPV victims has been conducted using an intersectional framework, it still fails to include multiple inequalities and to examine help-seeking behaviors in combination with self-efficacy. Also, only a few studies have been conducted on either self-efficacy or collective efficacy in relation to IPV.

1.1.5 IPV and Protection Orders

When studying intimate partner violence and safety issues, one important tool available to victims is protection orders. Family courts address relationship and family disputes, and in the cases of IPV, they can issue orders of protection from abuse (PFAs), as well as address custody and visitation issues. Protective orders work best for victims whose partners have a criminal history, particularly a history of abuse (Keilitz, Hannaford, & Efkenman, 1996; Kethineni & Beichner, 2009; Logan & Walker, 2009). Many factors influence decisions about who gets issued protection orders. Keilitz, Hannaford, and Efkenman, in their 1996 study, find that factors such as accessibility of the court process, victims’ connections to services such as domestic violence programs or advocates, and the criminal records of abusers, all affect the

outcome of protection orders. Other factors that are often viewed when examining protection orders and protection order violations are age, race/ethnicity, education level, employment status, number of kids, relationship status, and history of abuse (Durfee & Messing, 2012; Kethineni & Beichner, 2009; Logan & Walker, 2009; Lucken, Rosky, & Watkins, 2015; McFarlane et al., 2002; Shannon, Logan, & Cole, 2007). Another factor also taken into consideration when conducting research on civil protection orders is whether or not the petitioner filed for a previous protection order (Durfee & Messing, 2012; Fleury-Steiner & Miller, 2014).

An early study conducted by Keilitz, Hannaford, and Efkelman (1996) found that for the majority of victims, protection orders were effective and they experienced no problems or violations after the order was issued. It is also important to note that the researchers found participants were more likely to receive services such as assistance from the community or government services before the protection order is issued than they are to receive these same services after the order is obtained (Keilitz, Hannaford, & Efkelman, 1996). More recent research conducted by Durfee and Messing (2012) finds that the strongest predictors of having obtained a protection order (PO), or PFA, are previous contact with police and medical professionals, and that education level, income, age, race, and having children were also significant factors related to the obtainment of protection orders. PFA, or protection from abuse order, is the language used uniquely by the jurisdiction under study. Protection orders are usually short-term solutions to abuse, often lasting one to two years before they expire. If abuse is still occurring after the PFA expires, victims must continue filing for PFAs as it is hard to get a permanent or lifetime protection order. However, research finds that for victims who are able to obtain permanent orders, they are less

likely to be re-abused and the majority of survivors with orders of protection from abuse report feeling safer, having increased self-esteem, and feel they have more protection from future abuse (Nichols, 2013). Logan and Walker (2009) discover that the majority of women in their study find protection orders to be effective despite violations. Family courts can play a significant role in the prevention and reduction of domestic violence and abuse by increasing access to non-adversarial proceedings and providing mandatory risk assessment of victims and mandatory education and training of employees on how to handle victims of intimate partner violence (Ellis, 2008). If victims are treated with respect by all members of the criminal justice system and involved in the decision-making process, they will be more likely to use the criminal justice system if revictimized in the future (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2000, 2003). Representatives of the CJS, such as law enforcement and court personnel, can contribute to victims' sense of fairness throughout the process, thus achieving procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2000, 2003). When victims are treated with respect, they are more likely to perceive the justice system as fair, and thus, will be more likely to use the system in the future if they are revictimized. When victims experience high levels of procedural justice or fairness, they may feel a greater sense of empowerment or self-efficacy in relation to their help-seeking behaviors. In this thesis, I explore victims' perceptions of procedural justice as they navigate the civil court process.

Chapter 2

THE CURRENT STUDY

While intersectional scholarship on IPV exists in regards to PFAs help-seeking behaviors, and self-efficacy, only certain intersections are explored in a single study, such as race and gender or race, class, and gender. Studies have also failed to fully examine help-seeking behaviors and their connection to feelings of self-efficacy. This thesis focuses specifically on the intersection of race, class, gender, culture, and structure on women's help-seeking behaviors and self-efficacy in intimate partner abusive relationships. Using an intersectional approach, I explore what types of help-seeking behaviors female IPV victims engage in and how they differ based on social location, culture, and structure. I explore help-seeking behaviors such as filing for a PFA, reliance on police, and using a lawyer or domestic violence advocate/shelter and explore how these behaviors may vary based on social location. I also investigate what influences women's use of defensive violence and what facilitates women's self-efficacy, using the work of Beth Richie and Hillary Potter to explore potential cultural and structural differences. Additionally, I consider the effectiveness of victim's help-seeking behaviors in influencing their perceptions of achieving justice. By using an intersectional framework, I advance the understanding of intimate partner relationships, particularly in regards to women of color's responses to IPV, and help begin to fill a gap on the effects of social location, culture, and structure on private versus public victimization. An intersectional approach also achieves a better

understanding of the complexity of IPV and how women of color may react differently than white women depending on structure, norms, and social location differences.

2.1 Methods

2.1.1 Research Questions and Procedure

My research questions focus on how the intersection of race, gender, class, culture, and structure affect the help-seeking behaviors and self-efficacy of women in abusive relationships. My research questions are as follows

1. What kinds of help-seeking behaviors do female victims of IPV engage in and how do these behaviors vary by social location?
2. What influences women's use of defensive violence?
3. What facilitates women's self-efficacy?
4. How effective are female IPV victims' help-seeking behaviors in feeling like they attained justice?

The thesis explores these research questions by conducting a secondary analysis of the Civil Justice Project's qualitative interview transcripts (Fleury-Steiner, & Miller, 2014). The Civil Justice Project revolves around the accessibility of victims obtaining protection from abuse orders (PFAs), their outcomes and experiences with abuse and the court process. The Civil Justice Project includes both qualitative and quantitative data, including interviews and court observations. Women were interviewed at two different times, known as Time 1 and Time 2, and interviews were semi-structured using the same interview survey guide as the quantitative interviews, allowing for participants to elaborate with greater detail when answering questions. In this thesis, I use Time 1 responses of 29 women to explore their help-seeking

behaviors and self-efficacy, using an intersectional approach as a theoretical guide when coding the transcripts and analyzing responses. Participants range in age from 21-60. The overwhelming majority of participants, 26 of the 29 (89.7%) have at least one child, the majority, 21 of 29 (72.4%), have at least some college education or higher, and most, 23 of 29 (79.3%), are employed. Eleven of the 29 women (37.9%) received some sort of government assistance (disability, unemployment, social security, food stamps, and so forth) while six of the 29 women (20.7%) did not and the other 12 (41.4%) did not wish to disclose whether or not they received government assistance. Table 1 provides a list of participant demographic characteristics. Table 2 provides a list of all pseudonyms and each woman's demographic characteristics. Pseudonyms are used for all the women in the sample to ensure confidentiality, as well as for any people participants mentioned by name during the interview. The qualitative analysis utilizes a modified grounded theory approach (Charmez, 2001; Snow, Morrill, & Anderson, 2003) and uses an intersectional lens to explore how the code may affect who women of color navigate abusive relationships and how intersectionality helps to explain female IPV victims' help-seeking behaviors and self-efficacy.

2.1.2 Analytical Strategy

The qualitative interview transcripts were coded into categories of theoretical concepts and ideas using the qualitative analysis software NVivo. NVivo was used to make the coding process systematic and more efficient. Theoretical coding began broadly, starting with codes for overall themes of help-seeking behaviors, self-efficacy, types of IPV, distrust, and respect, and then narrowing as analysis progresses. For example, help-seeking behaviors were broken down into the subcategories of PFA; response of the court; police; support; domestic violence advocate; lawyer; seek

medical attention; and feelings on help-seeking behaviors. Help-seeking behaviors can include engagement with the Criminal Justice system, specifically police (calling police and police responses), and the courts (filing for PFA, court responses, treatment by judges, use of lawyer or mediator and treatment by them, use of domestic violence advocate and treatment by them) but may also include seeking support from family or friends, and in some cases, women's use of defensive violence in response to abusive behavior. Though questions seem very structured, the qualitative interview process allowed participants full opportunity to provide as much detail as they desired when answering questions and to raise new concerns. The majority of the interviews were taped with participants' permission, and all interviews were transcribed. Interviews ranged in length from 28 minutes to 2 hours and 20 minutes.

Chapter 3

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Types of Help-Seeking Behaviors

3.1.1 PFAs and Court Actors

All the women interviewed engaged in help-seeking behaviors, which contributed to their sense of self-efficacy since they described feeling much pride in having the courage to reveal the abuse to others and seek their assistance. The ultimate help-seeking behavior was the filing, and in most cases, the obtaining, of a PFA. Over one million victims of IPV seek protection or restraining orders each year (Tiaden & Thoennes, 2000; Sorensen & Shen, 2005). In this study, although all applied for a PFA, 26 of the women (89.7%) were granted a PFA, with three women denied one. Two of the three women denied a PFA were black females with children who received some form of government assistance, but differed on education levels, with one having some college and the other having less than a high school diploma or GED. These three women did not have lawyers to represent them, as the pro bono attorneys available to help in court “passed” on their cases due to what the attorneys perceived to be lack of evidence and weak cases. The majority of women in the study did not have attorneys, but for these three women in particular, not having an attorney, combined with their social location had a negative impact on the outcome of their court proceedings. For these three women, their negative outcomes negatively impacted their feelings of self-efficacy and their perceptions of procedural justice in

regards to court proceedings. Previous studies suggest that filing for protection orders or PFAs can result in reduced violence (Carlson, Harris, & Holden, 1999; Fleury-Steiner, Fleury-Steiner, & Miller, 2011; Logan & Walker, 2009; Logan, Cole, Shannon, & Walker, 2007) and provide psychological benefits for victims, such as reducing fear and creating a greater sense of safety, security, and empowerment or self-efficacy (Connely & Cavanagh, 2007; Fischer & Rose, 1995; Gover, Brank, & MacDonald, 2007; Wright & Johnson, 2012). In this study, 21 of the victims (72.4%), regardless of race, class, culture, or structure, seem to experience reduced violence because of the PFA, resulting in no violations of the PFA by their abuser at the time the first wave of interviews were conducted. Also, regardless of intersections, the majority of women experienced increases in feelings of self-efficacy and safety by being granted a PFA. Having the PFA eased the minds of the women, made them feel more empowered, increasing their self-efficacy and their perceptions of fairness of the court process. While each woman filed for a PFA, they expressed a variety of reasons for filing and had different access to resources to help with the filing and obtaining of a PFA. All of the women felt that filing for a PFA was the only way to stop the violence, and often felt it was the last resort. Some explanations that women gave for filing are as follows:

“It was an inevitable fix this had to happen because he was not going to change. I waited years for him to change. We tried counseling but he always stopped after a few sessions... There was no way to communicate without verbal and physical violence. The boldness and depravity that he interacted with me got worse, as well as the neglect of our son. I feel my son is safer now because of the PFA, because he must have supervised visitation with his father, if his father wants to see him. The confusion and abuse, physical and verbal, my son was

seeing is negated with the PFA and will same him but a little late” (Tina).

“Because he told me the next time he sees me he was going to beat my ass and my boyfriends and requests that he be there when I drop my daughter off to him. So that he can... Yes. That’s why I was like I’ve had enough... It’s been an ongoing thing and I’ve been trying to be nice and stay out of the court and it’s just not working anymore, I’ve had enough” (Britney).

Other reasons women filed for PFA include the encouragement of family and/or friends, police officers, and so forth along with the knowledge that PFAs can be for themselves, for their children, or for both themselves and their children, though children do not have to be included in the PFA if the mother does not want them included or if the abuse was not against the children. Twenty-six of the women in the sample have children, thus a main reason stated for filing for a PFA was to protect themselves and/or their children. Filing an order to protect themselves or their children increased self-efficacy because they were proactively trying to increase the safety of their loved ones and themselves. Of the women with children, 24 of the 26 women with children were successful in obtaining a PFA. Some reasons that women with children filed for a PFA are as follows:

“The reason why I did the PFA and I wanted to do it for [daughter] and I, because every single incident where, that I listed [in the PFA application] I was holding [daughter]” (Tammy).

“The support from family and once they told me I can do it against just me and him and not the kids, leave the kids out of it” (Samantha).

“Umm, I wanted to get a protection order because I didn’t want him to go to my children’s school and take them from school and take them to his house. And try and, you know, lure me there” (Kristen).

For many of the women, the protection order was a way to keep them and their children safe from future abuse. This act increased women’s self-efficacy because applying for the PFA was something tangible they could do to better protect their children and themselves. By engaging in such a tangible act, women felt empowered as they took their lives and safety into their own hands and proactively tried to make changes that would enhance their wellbeing. Support from family and/or friends is helpful, but not all female IPV victims have access to this kind of support due to isolation tactics used by abusive partners; thus, protection orders are viewed by the women as their only options.

Within this sample, not every victim received support from family or friends; one woman had no support, four women had support only from friends, seven women had support from family only, and over half the women, 17 of them, had support from both family and friends. The reasons participants gave for lack of support include the following examples:

“No, I went on my own, I figured, I didn’t even think about bringing anybody” (Janet).

“She said that she handled this mostly on her own-she didn’t want to tell her family at the time of the abuse because they would “blow it out of proportion”” (interview with Sasha).

Depending on social and cultural context, some women are more likely to seek help than others and rely on family or friends for support when they are experiencing abuse. This corresponds to Richie's work (1985) where she argues that black women are less likely to seek outside help because of the stereotype of the "strong, black woman" and the problematic beliefs that black women are supposed to be punching bags for black men to relieve their stress. Social support, from either family or friends, is influenced by cultural context, with neighborhoods characterized by higher levels of disadvantage having a negative effect on IPV social support (Wright, 2012).

According to Potter (2008), white women are seen as "weak" and in need of more help and support, thus white women will turn to people outside of the relationship for support and help in escaping an abusive relationship. Social support from family is found to reduce the prevalence and frequency of IPV (Wright, 2012), because those closest to us, usually family members, are the people who will best be able to recognize signs of abuse. Wright (2012) finds, contradictory to expectations and prior research (Browning, 2002), that social support from friends was related to higher frequencies of IPV, though it was not significantly related to the prevalence of IPV.

In this sample, of the four women who had support solely from friends, the majority of those women were likely to be white, to be under 40 years old and to have at least a high school education. These women were likely to be isolated from their family due to manipulation or control asserted by their partners. Of the seven women who only had familial support, the women were more likely to be women of color, to be under 40 years old, and to have a high school education. These women relied on their family for help because their family members often witnessed the abuse. Of the 17 women who had both familial support and support from friends, the majority of

these women were likely to be white, under the age of 40, have at least a high school education, and to be employed. The overwhelming majority of women who had support of any kind were white women, while many of the women of color only had support from family. Women in IPV relationships tend to be isolated from their family members or friends due to the manipulation and control asserted by their abusive partners, thus they have lower levels of family attachment (Kuijpers, Van der Knaap, & Winkel, 2012; Lainer & Maume, 2009). For the women of color in this study they were more likely to have support from family, thus they likely have higher levels of family attachment. In this sample, however, almost all 14 of the black women (48.3%) in the sample were equally likely to have support from either just family or from both family and friends. These family members and friends were often directly involved in the incidents, witnessing the abuse. The black women relied on informal support from family or friends who were witnesses to the abuse, and who were directly involved. This seems to contradict Richie's (1985) belief that black women were less likely to seek help due to the idea of the "strong black woman" and the acceptance of beating black women as a way to reduce stress for black men but Richie (1985) is referring to formal support, such as law enforcement, rather than informal support, such as those in your social network. Black women only relied on informal support from family and friends who were witnesses to the incidents of abuse. For example, Michelle was described by the interviewer as having support from both family and friends.

"She has a friend that is a good listener-she lives in another state. She also has 3 members of her family, one of which is more supportive than the other 2. She also has her attorney friend that is helping her with paperwork and things like that, and she sees a therapist. She says that

she keeps things close, she does not really share what she is going through with other people” (Michelle).

Similarly, a white woman described her support as follows:

“Yeah there was only a few people that knew what was really going on so ya know they saw first-hand so ya know. I’m not really that type of person that...I’m gonna pretty much do what I feel is right anyway. I’ll take your suggestion but doesn’t mean I’m gonna use ‘em kind of person. I’ll listen but I pretty much have my mind made so. It just took me a while to get there” (Kimberly).

All but one of the women in the sample had support from family or friends, regardless of race, education level, employment status, government assistance, or age. For the one woman who had no support at all, she was a 49-year old, employed, black female who chose not to disclose her education level. This one 49-year old black female with no support, exemplifies the belief of Richie (1985) that black women do not seek help from outsiders and that black people handle problems of their own. It could be because of her age, she was hesitant to seek informal support, as IPV is still stigmatized as a private issue, and as an older woman, she may not feel comfortable disclosing such information to those in her social network. Regardless of the type of support women received, having support from family or friends gave women the courage to go through with filing for a PFA, thus increasing their self-efficacy. Besides support from family and friends, three women, about 10.3% of the sample, mentioned religious help or support from friends, clergy members, or their pastors. Of these three women, two of the three were women of color with some college education. This finding is consistent with Potter’s (2007) work on black IPV victim’s use of religious services,

as a small percentage of the women in the study sought out religious support before filing for a PFA. Current literature regarding help-seeking behaviors does not really analyze familial support or support from friends, as IPV victims often experience social isolation as a form of control, however, this was not the case for the women in this study as they were all able to receive familial and/or friend support as they were not socially isolated from these people, despite efforts of some of the abusers to isolate them. Current research on help-seeking behaviors, instead, is directed more towards the use of religious services (Macy et al., 2005; Potter, 2007), medical services (Bauer, Rodriguez, Quiroga, & Flores-Ortiz, 2000; Rodriguez, Sheldon, Bauer, & Perez-Stable, 2001), and legal services (Ackers & Kaukinen, 2009; Durfee & Messing, 2012).

In the sample, 23 of the women, regardless of race and education, did not have an attorney and only interacted with a court mediator for their cases. Only six of the women (20.7%) used an attorney, either private or pro bono. The women who were able to afford a private attorney were more likely to be white, have at least some college education, and to be employed. The two women who used a pro bono attorney were both unemployed, and had some college education, though they varied by race. Structural barriers in access to adequate attorneys may help to explain why the majority of women in the sample did not have an attorney. Unlike criminal cases, where indigent defendants are appointed an attorney, poorer people pursuing civil cases are not provided with an attorney by the court. Lawyers present during civil proceedings, such as PFA cases, are either privately acquired or are working on a volunteer basis and family law may not be their professional specialty. In order to qualify for a pro bono attorney, participants had to earn under a certain amount of

money, and if they earned over the threshold, the volunteer attorneys would not take their cases. Not all victims knew that they could ask for help from a lawyer or domestic violence advocate because they were unaware that resources such as Victim Services and volunteer attorneys were available. This lack of awareness could be attributed to their lack of connections to people with knowledge of resources, such as a friend or family member or a knowledgeable police officer. Even if they knew they could use a lawyer, most women experienced a catch 22, where they made too much money to qualify for a pro bono attorney but did not make enough money to hire a lawyer on retainer. Sixteen of the women used a domestic violence advocate for help with the PFA process, and most had prior knowledge of the advocates from either filing previously, or from having a friend, family member, or police officer with knowledge or resources for how to get in contact with an advocate. Additionally, the majority of women who had the help of a domestic violence advocate were under the age of 40. IPV tends to reach peak prevalence in early adulthood, thus many victims are usually under the age of 40 (Truman & Morgan, 2014). These women, mainly younger victims, often used the domestic violence advocates to help fill out the paperwork associated with applying for a PFA. The following women describe how they used domestic violence advocates to help fill out the paperwork:

“The first time I got it, I didn’t have anybody to assist me in filing it out which I didn’t know what to expect, so you know that was fine. This time um the advocacy program, they, when I went to fill it out, they said do you have anybody here you know to help you? And I said no and she said well will help you, so um Tyler....she was helping me and it went really well...She was really able to guide me in it, so I wasn’t as overwhelmed like I was the first time” (Isabelle).

“The court system was very helpful, they have an advocacy program that walks you through it, step by step and helps you with everything that you need. Whether it be follow-up phone class, calling to check on you, they make sure your paperwork is accurate, and they give you the best assistance they possible can” (Monica).

In an interview with Lindsey, a 34-year-old unemployed, white female with some college education, the interviewer summarized her story:

“The process of filling out the paperwork was OK because she had a DV advocate help her file. She said that if she did not have anyone to help her, it would have been confusing.”

Working with domestic violence advocates or advocacy programs are often found to be effective in helping IPV victims obtain protection orders since victims alone may not have the clout of an attorney, and having some form of professional support may cause the judge to treat the case more seriously (Ellis, 2008; Keilitz, Hannaford, & Efkenman, 1996; Logan & Walker, 2009). Women of color were more likely than white women to use a domestic violence advocate, with nine out of the 16 women who worked with an advocate being a woman of color. Most of these women were employed and had at least a high school education. This finding is at odds with research by Richie (1985) that shows that black women are less likely to seek formal help from outsiders. This difference may be due to the informal nature of advocacy services compared to more formal outside help-seeking. It could also be affected by the composition of advocates – primarily if not exclusively female – and thus the victims may feel the advocates are more approachable. It could also be that their level of education impacted their desire to use an advocate, as the paperwork may be confusing to those that have little exposure to legal jargon. Using a domestic violence

advocate increased women's self-efficacy as they were better able to understand what the paperwork required and what information needed to be included or excluded.

Using an advocate also influenced women's perceptions of procedural justice, as the women who worked with an advocate overwhelmingly viewed the court process as more satisfactory since the advocates were helpful and respectful. Thirteen of the women did not use a domestic violence advocate because either they felt they did not need one, or in the case of many of the participants who did not use an advocate, because they did not know about them or how to get in contact with one. For example, Jane, a white 51-year-old employed, female white a professional degree said this about not using an advocate:

"I started talking to another woman there [at the courthouse] and I found at that...all these people had like advocates talking to them and um support and lawyers. Nobody told me to get a lawyer, nobody told me there were people that I could talk to. I just felt alone I felt very alone and it was really upsetting and when I was being continued I was I was crying and there was nobody down here giving help" (Jane).

Similarly, Elizabeth, a 49-year-old employed, white female with a professional degree said:

"I wasn't sure how to get an advocate" (Elizabeth).

Of the thirteen women who did not use a domestic violence advocate, the majority of these women was more likely to be white, employed, over 40 years old, and has at least some college education. This is interesting because white women, due to their social location, are usually more likely to have greater access to resources, yet it was

white women who were more likely to not have an advocate, due to lack of knowledge on how to contact one. It could be that the white women's education influenced their decisions on using an advocate, as the paperwork may not have been as puzzling to these women. These women may have felt more empowered by going through the process without an advocate, increasing their feelings of self-efficacy. While using an attorney or domestic violence advocate is helpful when examining the PFA process, in addition to receiving support from family and friends, it is also important to examine how reliance on police for help influences help-seeking behaviors and the PFA process.

3.1.2 Reliance on Police for Help

Part of the oath of law enforcement officers is the duty to protect and serve. All but three participants relied on police for help in at least one incident of IPV. Victims call police for a variety of reasons, such as to handle stalking, physical abuse, threats, and violations of the PFA. One participant, Mandy, a white employed female with a high school education, has a cousin who is a police officer, and he informed her that a PFA "would be her best protection." Mandy has also called the police in response to violations of her PFA in which her abuser and his family have been contacting her nonstop. Previous literature suggests that women with children are more likely to call the police than women who do not have children, possibly to protect the children from the abuse (Bonomi, Holt, Martin, & Thompson, 2006) and that victims below or at the poverty level are more likely to call the police (Hutchinson & Hirschel, 1998). The majority of participants have children, and of the 26 women who have kids, 22 of them (75.9%) relied on police for help, so the women's decisions to call police are consistent with previous literature. Victims from all education levels were likely to

call the police, and 20 of the participants employed were likely to rely on the police for help. Of the 11 women who receive some form of government assistance, 10 of the 11 relied on police for help, thus supporting Hutchinson & Hirschel's (1998) finding that victims below or at the poverty level are more likely to call the police. Two-thirds of this sample of women called the police no doubt because there were no other resources available to stop or flee the abuse. Women also stated they called the police in hopes that the abuser would be arrested or forced to leave, and to give them a paper trail of evidence for them to use when filing for the PFA. Social location did seem to impact the overall rates of reliance on police, as almost all of the women on government assistance relied on the police for help. Law enforcement is supposed to be a help-seeking resource for everyone, regardless of social location, however social location helps determine who is more likely to call police. Eleven of the fourteen women of color in the study called police while all 15 white women (100%) in the study called police. For the three women who did not rely on police for help, all of the women were black, had at least some college education, and were employed, while two of the three women were also at least 40 years of age. Their age and education level may have indirectly influenced their reliance on police for help as these women were likely more aware of racial bias of police officers and had more years of self-reliance. Their age and education level may have also influenced their feelings of self-efficacy as more years of self-reliance would likely cause them to feel more empowered. These women did not rely on police because they did not think police were needed. For example, one of the three women never thought about calling the police as she often brushed off the incidents of abuse:

“I never...I never...I didn’t, you know. It was...I mean. It...it was, when you think about it now that it was just that minor little thing, but he did...you know, he did hit me. He did touch me. So it was like, but, you know. Of course. Again, I’m not thinking like, you know. That’s my child’s father...I mean, he probably...you know, I make no excuses. I was just like...no, whatever. You know? Like most of us do brush it off. And if it was to happen again, it’s like, oh now you really trying to hurt me. You know what I mean? So that’s how I looked at it. I didn’t look at it as, like...it was something like physical, like he was trying to hurt...he just wanted to go get high. That’s how I looked at it. He needed an excuse to get out the house” (Sheryl).

The other two women did not call the police themselves; rather, another person present, either a friend or family member, called the police about the abuse. The majority of victims, regardless of age, did rely on the police for help. The majority of the women said they were treated with respect by police officers and seemed to trust the police officers to help them. This study finds no differences along age, racial, educational, or cultural lines in reliance on police for help, as the majority of participants did rely on the police when it came to incidents of abuse. Structural differences did occur as women lacked resources, such as lack of finances or control of finances, which left them with no viable options but to rely on police for help. However, cultural and structural differences may help to explain why some women use defensive violence.

3.2 Defensive Violence

Participants discussed how their partners’ abuse contributed to their decisions to use force in their relationships. Sixteen of the women in the sample used force against their partners. Half of these women were women of color and the other half were white women. These women described how they used force as a form of self-defense or to let the abuser know that they would not just stand by and take the abuse

without responding. The women's motivations reflect the research conducted on women's use of force for stopping abuse, retaliating, resisting domination, protecting self or others, or striking out preemptively to gain short-term control (Dasgupta, 1999; Harasim-Pieper, 2011; Larance, 2006; Miller, 2001). Some other studies on women's use of force in IPV situations maintain that battered women engage in "mutual combat" with abusive partners (Farrell, 1999; Fiebert, 1997, 1998; Moffit & Caspi, 1999; Pearson, 1997) without acknowledging the role of self-defense. Women provided the following explanations for their use of force:

"I, I grabbed his arm a couple of times, um, I never slapped him um but I did grab his arm and I pushed him, just cause I went out of control myself just because it he pushed me to that limit where I couldn't leave without saying the last thing, you know, I'm and that is sort of a bad thing about me, is that I'm like always like to get the last word in and I couldn't leave because the guilt I was, because the guilt that I was leaving cause he made me feel guilty that I was leaving, but then I had to leave but he pushed me to that point, but it was like I was another person...I would use force against him cause I felt like I needed to try to take control of the situation, you know, I was just, I was way out of line, I know that" (Janet).

"Um, I've always just, like defended myself. Like when he would grab me I would just try to get him to let go of me. Um, I never actually, like, punched him or anything. I was always just being defensive" (Linda).

"If I had to do that [seek medical attention], believe me, he wouldn't be walking" (Carol).

Similarly, a summary from an interviewer's notes described:

“I also got the feeling that talking about her experiences were empowering to her because she mentioned on multiple occasions that she would never let anyone put their hands on her ever again...She mentioned that she frequently fought back, and even stabbed him as well-their physical altercations occurred in the home as well as in public (she talked about fighting in bars and grocery stores)...She said that if he shows up or starts harassing her again, she would take matters into her own hands and bypass the police-she is scared for her life, he has already shot and stabbed her, she is convinced he would do it again if he was provoked” (interview conducted with Sasha).

Of the sixteen women who used force, all said they reacted to their partner’s violence in self-defense, regardless of women’s race, education or employment status; most of the women, 14 women (87.5%), responded by pushing the abuser away. Black women, according to Potter (2008) view themselves as resisters to violence, using physical or verbal resistance to violence. These black women were resisters, as they resisted abuse by fighting back physically and in some cases, such as Carol who said to her abuser, “Well I don’t need anybody to talk for me. I’m capable of talking for myself”, verbally resisted as well. However, white women could also be characterized as resisters and both white women and women of color can be classified as engaging in what Michael Johnson (1995, 2000) calls *violent resistance*, as they engaged in use of force to fight back against abuse. There were not racial differences in women’s use of defensive violence as both white women and women of color engaged in such *violent resistance* (Johnson, 1995, 2000) as a form of self-defense. All of the women who engaged in defensive violence, or violent or dynamic resistance, experienced increases in self-efficacy as defending themselves through verbal or physical means gave them a sense of empowerment, as they took a stand against the abuse. Two of the women used a knife to defend themselves. These women were black, but they varied based on education, employment status, age, and government assistance. This suggests

that a pattern of weapons use may exist for how women of color may use defensive violence in ways that white women do not. Potter (2008) finds that “the compelling circumstances that lead battered women to retaliate physically against a batterer may be connected to the severity of an abusive event, the expected outcome, or the battered woman’s personal experiences with abuse” and that “these acts may occur at the time the abuser attacks, or, in a more passive, safer method, while the batterer is incapacitated in some way (for example, asleep or intoxicated) or otherwise not expecting an imminent reprisal by the resister.” Black women are likely to use a weapon, such as a knife, in these incidents. Almost half the sample, 13 women, did not use force, and they explained that they refrained because of fear of their abuser’s reaction, that he might retaliate and escalate the violence. Other common concerns were fear of punishment; particularly fear of their own arrest for domestic violence or offensive touching, even though they would have been acting in self-defense. Below are some explanations women gave for choosing not to participate in defensive violence:

“I would just let it happen...I wouldn’t dare fight back because I know it would make it worse. And I know what he would end up doing. I know he would kill me” (Holly).

“I wouldn’t necessarily say I used force. I would talk my way out of it. I’d say ‘okay, okay’. I said ‘just let me go and I’ll talk to you. I’m not gonna talk to you while you got me hemmed up like this’” (Alicia).

Police responses to calls for domestic violence that may result in dual arrest cause female victims of IPV to fear being mischaracterized (Larance & Miller, 2017; Martin, 1997; Miller, 2001; Osthoff, 2002). In this study, while there were no dual arrests,

several women's abusers called police about them, and one woman was arrested by the police while her abuser was not arrested. Victims of IPV are known to be at high risk for revictimization, from either a former partner or a current partner (Kuijpers, van der Knapp, & Winkel, 2002). Some of the women in the sample experienced abuse previously, with negative outcomes, and this made them more reluctant to use force again. For the women engaging in defensive violence, there seemed to be an implicit feeling of empowerment expressed in their interviews, demonstrating self-efficacy in taking a stand against the violence as a form of protection for themselves and/or their children. Engaging in help-seeking behaviors, in general, illustrates women's self-efficacy, and all of the women in the sample reached out for some kind of help. However, while all the women engaged in different help-seeking behaviors, not all of their efforts were effective. The results of their help-seeking behaviors influenced their feelings of self-efficacy.

3.3 Success and Failures of Help-Seeking Behaviors

When victims seek help and receive support from other people or social institutions, these responses could help victims regain a sense of mastery over their situations. In relationships characterized by abuse, women are too often silenced or too fearful to reach out to the criminal justice system for assistance. Yet those who do may feel empowered and increase their self-efficacy, which in turn may give them more confidence to pursue further help from police and the courts. In the present study, the interviews revealed that 15 of the women experienced difficulties obtaining help from the courts or law enforcement. Of the women who did not get any help, or received ineffective help from the courts or police, the majority of the women was white, employed, has children, and had at least some college experience.

3.3.1 Problems with DFS

For many of the women who failed to obtain help from the courts, the ineffective help stemmed from DFS (Department of Family Services), court failure to serve the PFA or record when the PFA was served, or judge's refusal to allow certain evidence. Here, the women endured huge disappointment when DFS refused to take their claims seriously, or when DFS failed to provide promised evidence when at trial. These women were likely to be employed, white women, with at least some college education and under the age of 40. Their age reflects that they are parents with children under the age of 18 who are thus under DFS purview. Though they had some social capital, this was not enough to get DFS to care enough about their cases to do the job effectively. This decreased their feelings of self-efficacy as they were often frustrated and felt powerless when DFS did not do their jobs effectively. For these women, DFS failed to follow up on claims, such as checking into the safety of the living environment of the noncustodial parent or the safety of the location where the alleged abuse occurred. For Robyn's case, the ineffectiveness of the DFS workers went even further, with DFS failing to provide promised evidence at trial of the CAC interview, which supported her claims that her young daughter was sexually assaulted. DFS's failure to accurately perform the duties of their job contributed to lack of evidence, or weak evidence in the cases for many women, which, in turn, influenced the likelihood that an attorney would take their case. Of the three women whose failed cases rested on DFS involvement, only one, Tammy, a 28-year-old employed, white female, had an attorney, who was privately obtained, while the other two did not, and while two of these three women were ultimately able to get a full protection order granted, Robyn, one of the women who did not have an attorney, had her case dismissed because the foundation of her case rested on the DFS evidence that they

failed to provide as promised. The failures with DFS caused these women to feel let down, leading to decreased feelings of self-efficacy due to their reliance on DFS to help them secure justice. Robyn, who is employed, receives government assistance, and has some college education, was the only woman of color to have problems with DFS, and was one of the only three women in the sample to be denied a PFA. The other two women who received ineffective help from DFS were employed, white women with at least an Associate's degree. The white women's social location helped them to overcome the structural barriers that the failure of DFS caused, while such barriers were what caused Robyn's case to be dismissed.

3.3.2 The Court Process and PFA orders

Twenty-six of the 29 women interviewed were ultimately granted a PFA, so while they may have experienced some difficulties with law enforcement or court actors along the way, they ultimately received their desired outcome. However, many women maintained that the court process betrayed them because of the failure to serve the PFA, and the manner in which they were treated in court. They also maintained that the court process betrayed them due to the limitations of the consent process (the consent process involves a negotiation with the respondent through the use of a mediator in which both the petitioner and respondent agree to the conditions of the PFA and where the respondent agrees not to take the PFA to trial to challenge it). In addition, feelings of betrayal also stemmed from issues that were raised during trial, such as when evidence was allowed, or after obtaining the PFA, what happened when violations of the order occurred. Administrative concerns for efficiency in the civil court process have led to increased use of consent processes for civil protection orders in order to move a greater number of cases through the system as quickly and

efficiently as possible (Epstein, 2002). For seven of the women in the sample, they felt the court system failed them when they sought help, with four of the seven experiencing problems relating to what kind of evidence they were allowed to present in court. Evidence from civil cases cannot be used in ongoing or upcoming criminal cases to avoid issues of double jeopardy, thus for women, such as Holly, who have cases going through both the civil and criminal court systems, they must deal with the removal of evidence in civil cases in order to avoid influencing the criminal proceedings, which, in turn, may affect the outcome of their PFA proceedings. This causes an undue burden and stress on IPV victims, especially if both cases hinge on the same evidence, as they are forced to choose which cases to pursue. It can also influence victims' perceptions of procedural justice in regards to legal proceedings, as victims may feel the legal process is unfair when it prevents them from using such evidence for both cases. It is a mystifying process for the women. At the time of the first interview with Holly, she had not had her hearing yet for the full PFA, so with this analysis it is undetermined how such rules of evidence affected her cases. However, in the case of Karen, a 40-year-old, employed, white female with an associate's degree, the judge outright refused to have a hearing for the full PFA, claiming lack of evidence, even though the same evidence, showing abuse occurred, was allowed by another commissioner when granting the temporary PFA.

“They wouldn’t even have the hearing. They wouldn’t even let ‘em speak. What was in the petition. She...now this is the same petition, mind you, that the PFA was granted on an ex parte basis. She’s [the judge] looking at the same exact thing. And she flips through it and she says ‘I don’t see any evidence of abuse in here. This is a custody issue. And it’s the both of you together. The two of you together doing this nonsense is hurting your children. Duh duh duh.’ I mean, a 20 minute

lecture. And I'm standing there and she was like 'case dismissed'. And I'm like how can another judge grant this on an ex parte basis and you refuse to have the hearing. I could see if she had the hearing and then decided that. But she wouldn't even let, I had all these people. I mean, I had to keep subpoenaing them week after week after week to be there. And they came religiously and she wouldn't even let them take the stand and the whole thing was thrown out" (Karen).

Karen perceived her court experience to be unfair because the judge did not treat her fairly, refusing to even have the trial before dismissing her case. Another example of a time when the judge refused to permit evidence into the court proceeding involved Robyn, when the crucial testimony of her witness from DFS was ruled inadmissible, she believed the refusal caused her to be denied a PFA for her daughter.

"I'm like 'okay, this is an incident that has happened to my daughter. I need paper documentation stating that my daughter has had this interview and it showed uh, sexual abuse; that, that a sexual assault did occur to her'. Well they wouldn't give me anything. Umm, so I asked the DFS worker and I'm like, I said 'okay, so are you sure that umm...' –the DFS worker, her name is Hannah [pseudonym]- '...that Hannah is gonna come prepared with this, with this evidence?' [She responded] 'Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah'. Okay, well day of court; Hannah was unprepared. Hannah didn't tell the, didn't tell the judge anything about the CAC and that sexual assault did occur to my, to my daughter. She told the judge that there was an open investigation for DFS and that was it.....The judge looked at me and said 'so this is your evidence?'" (Robyn).

Robyn's negative perception of procedural justice was affected when the DFS worker failed to provide the evidence as promised, thus disrespecting Robyn, and the judge not only disrespected her but treated her unfairly, by giving her implicit signals that what she was doing was wrong and that her case was not worth pursuing. What was also maddening to the women was how the court dealt with PFA violations. PFAs

were violated not only by the respondents themselves, through calls, texts, or in person, but also by people associated with the abusers who contacted victims on behalf of the abuser. Eight of the women in the sample (27.6%) reported experiencing some sort of PFA violation. These women were more likely to be white, employed, and have at least some college education. This means that white women were more likely to disclose that they were experiencing PFA violations. Prior research on protective order violations, such as Carlson, Harris, & Holden (1999) find that women with very low SES were less likely to report re-abuse as were African-Americans, while Logan, Cole, Shannon, & Walker (2007) find that rural white women report more victimization while urban white and urban African American women were very similar on perceptions of protective order effectiveness and satisfaction. In this study, white women of a relatively moderate SES, due to being employed and having at least some college education, were more likely to disclose that they had already experienced a PFA violation. Other women in the study either did not experience any PFA violations at the time of the interviews, or did not feel comfortable disclosing that such violations occurred.

For the women who disclosed PFA violations, violations occurred when the abuser tried to call or text for reasons outside of what was permitted in the PFA or when they both went to the same religious service. PFSA's were also violated by family members of the abuser due to harassing text messages on their behalf or by others seeking information about the abuser. For example, Caroline said:

“ Then Hospital's calling me saying ‘oh, we want to talk about a discharge plan’. I'm like ‘lady, there's a PFA in place. He tried to kill me. Don't call me again. I don't care what you do with him’. She says ‘well, we're sending him to [a mental health facility]’. I said ‘okay’. So he starts calling me from [a mental health facility] ‘hey, baby. I guess you're mad at me. You didn't come

visit me. I don't remember what happened. I got some broken ribs. If you bring me a change of clothes, the keys to my car, and my wallet I will walk away from you peacefully'. But yet, you don't recall anything? But you add that little piece to the end. He called me twice. The [mental health facility] called me 4 times. I advised them they were in violation of the PFA. They continued to call me after they knew the PFA was there. Umm, I took him clothes, his car keys, and his wallet. I dropped 'em off at the receptionist's desk. I handed her a copy of the PFA; I said 'give this to your administrators. You are in violation. Do not call me again'. His social worker calls me three days later....She wants, she wants to know what happened. She doesn't understand. Can I give her some information about his background and his family? Umm, and I know you have a PFA so can we speak confidentially? You know I have a PFA; why are you calling me?" (Caroline).

Another woman, Naomi, was described by the interviewer as experiencing a PFA violation:

"He continues to try to text her about things other than children and finances, and she has not reported any of that and it did not seem like she was taking that type of violation seriously enough to report" (Naomi).

Some women experienced problems throughout the process when filing for their first PFA while others were filing for a new PFA after previous orders expired. Since most PFAs only last one to two years, many victims of IPV have to routinely go back to court to receive new orders, which are typically granted as long as they have new evidence that abuse is still occurring, and thus, protection is still needed. It is hard to get a permanent or lifetime protection order, thus for women who continue to experience abuse, they must re-file every one to two years. This is what happened with Sasha, a 49-year-old black female, who filed for a lifetime PFA after she realized that her previous PFA, which she was under the impression was a lifetime PFA, had expired, allowing for her abuser to show up on her doorstep. Thus, for many of these women, while the outcome was effective, the process was perilous. Procedural justice

was low, though the outcome was achieved. Procedural justice involves individuals' perceptions of fairness in the process that resolves disputes and allocates resources, in this case victims' perceptions of the fairness of legal proceedings (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2000, 2003). Low procedural justice means that individuals perceive the process as unfair. High procedural justice means that individuals perceive the process as fair. Procedural justice not only affects individuals' opinions of the fairness of the court process but can also affect individuals' understandings of their encounters with police.

3.3.3 The Police

While twenty-six of the women in the sample relied on police for help, the police often failed to provide tangible assistance. Of the 15 women who experienced problems when seeking help from the courts or police, nine women in this subsample of women received ineffective help when they relied on law enforcement. This subsample of women were more likely to be women of color, employed, have at least some college education, and under the age of 40. When officers arriving on the scene cannot determine the primary aggressor, and who was using defensive violence as a form of self-defense, this can lead to dual arrests, or to just the victim being arrested for domestic violence or offensive touching rather than the abuser. For three women of color, Michelle, Linda, and Kristen, police responded to their abuser's calls for incidents of IPV against the victims, and in one case, Linda was arrested instead of her abuser, even though she had visible marks on her. Linda's arrest relates back to Crenshaw (1991) and Larance & Miller's (2017) findings that for women of color, their intersections of race, culture, and other inequalities greatly increase their likelihood of being criminalized for their use of force against abusive partners.

Additionally, Linda's arrest relates to Richie's (1996) findings that society provides black women with no socially acceptable way to respond to violence against them. For Michelle, the officers seemed to side with the abuser whenever they were called about him, thus he was never arrested. This is reminiscent of Richie's (1985) work on battered black women and the police bias that finds that police believe it is acceptable for black women in families is to receive regular beatings. While research suggests that women of color are more likely to contact police (Ackers & Kaukinen, 2009), police in general are hesitant to respond to calls for domestic abuse and do not take such calls seriously. For these women of color, police officers disrespected them because officers failed to believe or take seriously, their claims, and because, often, police took their time in responding to calls for help. This failure by police to take victims' claims seriously or to respond to calls for help in an adequate period of time decreased women's self-efficacy as they felt less empowered when relying on police for help-seeking. The women gave reasons for their failure to get help from police, including the failure of police officers to respond quickly to domestic calls or officer's use of their discretion to choose whether to write up or file police reports on domestic incidents. Victims' perceptions of procedural justice were low when engaging with the responding officers, meaning officers were perceived by victims to be unfair, often because officers failed to provide these women of color with the help they were seeking.

"I called the police. And I'm like 'I'm not putting up with this crap'. So he left by the time the police got here. When the first officer got here I was telling him what was going on. And then the second officer that arrived, I guess he took over. I want to say he took over and took my statement and everything. And the first officer- I don't know his name;

I couldn't, right now I can't recall his name- said to the other officer 'this is a waste of time. We've got better things to do'. And I was just like, at that point, I was just crushed" (Carol).

"So wait for the cops to come back. I was back and forth was them. I could tell you one thing: the cops are kind of um...[pauses for a few seconds and chuckles] They're not so sensitive to domestic violence. [Chuckles in response to question of how long police took to get there] Almost an hour [breathes heavily] Almost an hour. And you know what they told me? There's nothing that you can really do because he's a resident here" (Alicia).

Police officers are reluctant to respond to "domestics" given their inclination to view IPV as a private matter that should be resolved in the private sphere rather than through law enforcement intervention. Leisenring (2012) found that many women report believing that police officers hold stereotypical views of IPV (such as minimizing the abuse and excusing the abuse), which they believe affected the outcomes of their cases, and that some officers are particularly critical of women who call the police multiple times. This finding can be seen in Alicia's experience with the police. Social location did not seem to influence the low procedural justice, or unfairness, that women of color experienced in their interactions with police officers.

While 15 of the participants (51.7%) failed to receive adequate help from the courts or law enforcement, thus experiencing low procedural justice, the other 14 participants experienced effective help from the court and police, thus experiencing high procedural justice, which increased their feelings of self-efficacy. There were racial patterns of difference between the two groups, with more white women failing to receive adequate help from either the courts or law enforcement and more women of color experiencing effective help from the court and police. Some participants

described experiencing a high procedural justice, or fair, response from police that resulted in effective help-seeking behaviors.

“I: So, but they, did they say that you should get a PFA? P: Yeah, they told me that I should get one. I: Uh huh. P: But that’s it. I: Uh, so did you feel like they listened to you at all or that you were treated fairly by the police at that time? “: I mean, I felt like they wanted to help but there was just nothing that they could do” (Denise).

“I: So when the police were out here did they tell you about PFAs? P: Yeah, it was the police officer that told me and gave me the information of where to go. And I went to the court the very next day to do, yeah, to file for the PFA” (Gwen).

Police officers who are trained on how to respond to domestic violence cases are better able to provide women with resources and information, such as describing the PFA process, how to file or where to file, and how to get in touch with resources to help them. When police officers engage in fair treatment of victims, influencing offenders' perceptions of procedural justice, they can suppress subsequent violence even in the face of adverse outcomes (Paternoster, Brame, Bachman, & Sherman, 1997).

Victims who are able to obtain permanent protection orders are less likely to be re-abused, feel safer, have increased self-esteem, and feel more protected from future abuse (Nichols, 2013). In the present study, the majority of women was satisfied with their PFA outcomes and reported feeling safer after receiving the PFA; only five of the women (17.2% of the sample) were dissatisfied with the process and felt less safe. The women who were satisfied with the court process expressed increased feelings of self-

efficacy due to their success in obtaining a PFA, and the help they received in achieving that goal.

“It is like a breath of relief but it’s like, I still have to look over my shoulder...But I’m just glad I actually had the courage to go through it, with it” (Denise).

“But I do feel a little secure. Like I said, not I feel like if he’s here or he approaches me I can pick up the phone and say ‘hey, I have a PFA and he’s here’ that they will actually, you know, be more susceptible of coming, you know, immediately” (Carol).

For the women dissatisfied with the process, they felt disrespected or ignored by judges/commissioners, mediators, domestic violence advocates, attorneys, or police officers. They felt less safe, even with a PFA because they believed “it’s just a piece of paper” and having such a piece of paper was not going to prevent violations or prevent revengeful abusers from harming them in the future. Yet research conducted on the effectiveness of protection orders has found them to be at least somewhat effective in reducing violence (Logan & Walker, 2009; McFarlane, et al., 2002). Logan and Walker (2009) found that two out of five women in their study did not experience violence after the protection order was issued but that three out of five women experienced ongoing violence. Though protection orders, in reality, may not have been effective, the majority of women perceived them to be effective and thus reported feeling safer when having a protection order (Logan & Walker, 2009). This is the case here; despite eight women experiencing PFA violations, only two of the women reported not feeling safer after having a PFA. Results from this thesis support Logan & Walker’s (2009) findings, as the overwhelming majority of women felt more

empowered and had increased feelings of self-efficacy and safety after obtaining a PFA. McFarlane et al. (2002) also found that protection orders are effective in reducing levels of violence, and in this sample, only eight women experienced continued violence after being issued a PFA by experiencing some violation of the PFA.

Just like with any type of court process, some people are going to be more successful than others. With the PFA process, while everyone had to file for a PFA in order to be a part of the study, not everyone had the same experiences, with white women who were employed and at least some college experience having more success with the court and law enforcement, while black women had more difficulty in their interactions with the police than with the court. While outcomes may have been successful in regards to the court process, or relying on police, victims' perceptions of procedural justice were low in relation to these help-seeking behaviors because the women felt silenced, that their needs were trivialized by law enforcement, judges, or other court actors, and that the process itself was demeaning or unfair. Thus, understanding how women experience the PFA process can help us to better understand the process itself and to come up with possible solutions to improve upon the future experiences of women who are similarly situated.

Chapter 4

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This thesis explored how victims of IPV navigate the civil court process, their sources of support, and how their efforts affected feelings of self-efficacy and justice. In particular, it sought to discern whether differences across these experiences emerged for women who differed on social demographic characteristics such as race, social class, and other cultural and structural factors. Using qualitative data based on in-depth interviews conducted with 15 white women and 14 black women who pursued civil court options, it explored help-seeking options and other ways that women responded to IPV such as use of defensive force. Scholarship by Richie (1985, 1996) and Potter (2008) suggest that women of color's responses are complicated by their social locations as well as structural issues related to bias of the criminal justice system. Tyler's work (1988, 2000, 2003) on procedural justice reveals that how victims are treated affects their perception of the fairness of the process and how satisfied they are with the process regardless the outcome. By using an intersectional approach, this thesis examined IPV victims' help-seeking behaviors and self-efficacy in relation to their social locations, structural barriers related to the bias of the criminal justice system, and their perceptions of fairness of the process.

The data analysis revealed both similarities and differences in women's responses to IPV. The majority of participants, regardless of race, were successful in obtaining Protection from Abuse orders, and because of this success they felt safer and empowered, leading to increased feelings of self-efficacy. Yet the process was

puzzling to women overall, and affected their feelings of whether justice was achieved and stronger feelings of self-efficacy. Structural barriers that prevented access to resources, such as the type of help received from domestic violence advocates and lawyers, help to explain why some women found the process to be more confusing, and why the women who either did not have an attorney or did not use a domestic violence advocate, were less satisfied with the process or has weaker feelings of self-efficacy. Structural barriers in access to attorneys could also help to explain differences in feelings of self-efficacy and perceptions of procedural justice. For the majority of women, they did not have an attorney, and because of this the process was more confusing and mystifying than it would have been if they had an attorney. Due to the puzzling nature of the court experience, if the women had access to lawyers, this could have increased their feelings of self-efficacy as they likely would have better understood the process, causing them to become more empowered in their choice to pursue a PFA. Additionally, having a lawyer could have enhanced women's perceptions of procedural justice in terms of the court process, because even if their outcome would not have changed, having a lawyer might influence their perceptions of the process to be fair as they would have had an attorney to help them argue their cases and to try to persuade the judge to rule in their favor.

Equal numbers of white women and women of color engaged in defensive violence as a form of self-defense, but women of color did so in ways that reflected the work of Richie (1985, 1996), and Potter (2008). Richie (1996) argues that black women are punished for behaviors that are prescribed by societal norms of appropriate gender roles, such as using defensive force and in this study, women of color engaged in such behaviors that could cause them to be punished, as some of them went beyond

just pushing when resisting abuse. In fact, the women of color were more likely to use weapons, which supports the findings of Potter (2008).

When looking specifically at the black women's experiences, however, several differences emerge. Women of color were more likely to use domestic violence advocates than white women, to experience less procedural justice in terms of reliance on police, and – though rare- were more likely to be denied a PFA. Women of color experienced little sense of procedural justice in regards to police because law enforcement failed treat the women of color with respect, respond to “domestics” in a timely manner, or to take women of color's concerns and experiences of abuse seriously. Women of color experienced more structural barriers in terms of access to resources. They were more likely to be poor, thus unable to afford an attorney or to afford to rely on help-seeking resources other than the police. Police were unlikely to treat women of color with the respect they deserved or to treat their cases fairly, as police view domestic violence as a private issue, and hold stereotypes revolving around issues of abuse with people of color. Police also took their time in responding to “domestics” for women of color. It is because of this lack of resources, and structural barriers, that, in rare incidences, women of color were more likely to be denied a PFA.

All of the women reached out for help from friends, family members, or professionals, which also increased their feelings of self-efficacy; they were not just being passive victims. Yet due to social location and structural barriers, women varied in their access to help-seeking behaviors, such as using a lawyer. Of the six women who had access to an attorney, only two of these women were women of color, and only one of them had access to a private attorney, who was a friend. All but one of the

women received support from at least friends or family, regardless of social location. The more successful the women were with their help-seeking behaviors, the greater their feelings of self-efficacy were, as they felt empowered and justified their choice to pursue a PFA. Feelings of self-efficacy often corresponded to the amount of procedural justice women experienced when seeking help from the courts or from police officers. When legal proceedings or responses of police were seen as fair the greater the impact was on victims' feelings of self-efficacy and satisfaction with the process (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2000, 2003). Future research should also explore the connections help-seeking behaviors may have on collective efficacy as well as self-efficacy. A limited amount of research currently exists on this topic. Hayes and Franklin (2016) explore community effects on women's help-seeking behavior for IPV victims in India and find that working status, decision-making in the partner dyad, illiteracy, controlling behavior, and severe physical or sexual abuse affect the likelihood of help-seeking at the individual level; age at marriage for women and the proportion of severe physical or sexual abuse if found to affect help-seeking behaviors at the community level. Hayes and Franklin (2016) acknowledge that research on the importance of individual and community level empowerment characteristics, or what may be referred to as self-efficacy, that may enhance or hinder help-seeking, is underdeveloped. Browning (2002) conducted a study extending the span of collective efficacy and social disorganization theory to partner violence and found that collective efficacy is negatively associated with both intimate homicide rates and nonlethal partner violence. In this work, collective efficacy has a greater regulatory effect on nonlethal violence in neighborhoods where tolerance of IPV is low, and collective efficacy also increased the likelihood that women will disclose

conflict in their relationships to various potential sources of support (Browning, 2002). More research should be done to explore how collective efficacy and self-efficacy influence help-seeking behaviors and perceptions of procedural justice by women seeking civil protection orders. Future research should do more to tease out the connections between feelings of efficacy and perceptions surrounding procedural justice.

Though looking at the data with an intersectional lens revealed some differences for women of color, further work is needed to explore intersections of social location, culture, and structure on types of help-seeking behaviors, barriers to help-seeking, procedural justice, and women's use of defensive force. A more refined measure of socio-economic class would be helpful, since many of the women interviewed did not feel comfortable disclosing information on income, and whether or not they received any kind of government assistance (welfare, disability, food stamps, and so forth), thus inhibiting a complete understanding of social class inequalities. Since this data set was limited to heterosexual women, future research should explore whether or not these findings are consistent across a more diverse sample that includes same-sex relationships. The intersectional approach would offer greater power with a more diverse and larger sample of women that includes women of color from a variety of races/ethnicities. Follow-up interviews at another point in time could reveal how feelings of procedural justice, self-efficacy and effectiveness of help-seeking action hold up over time. In particular, it would be important to determine if women's help-seeking behavior, such as filing for a PFA, actually impacts safety and feelings of self-efficacy over time. Future research should also explore how factors of age and education can influence help-seeking behavior, self-

efficacy, and procedural justice, especially in regards to women seeking civil orders of protection, and how such factors relate to structural barriers to help-seeking and access to the criminal justice system.

Despite these limitations and recommendations for future research, the current exploratory study, raises some important policy implications. On a practical level, the women's interviews reveal that much can be done to make the process less mysterious and more user-friendly. For instance, civil courts across the country should endeavor to do more to make domestic violence advocacy programs within the civil courts less confusing. These programs are needed to provide victims with the resources and assistance needed to file orders of protection from abuse. Also, these victim services need to be better publicized so that IPV victims know they exist and how to collaborate with such programs to receive needed emotional support and legal aid with the court protection order process. Besides providing a list of resources available to victims and a how-to guide for filling out the paperwork, courts could also provide instructional videos on how to file the paperwork, how to get in touch with a domestic violence advocate, or how to qualify for a pro bono attorney. Courts could partner with domestic violence advocate programs to implement such policy recommendations. Courts should also provide victims with information on the effectiveness of protection orders, and what to do when orders are violated. Some jurisdictions partner with law student run clinics for criminal cases and this operation could be replicated for civil cases, so that those who cannot afford an attorney and do not have access to an attorney can get the help they need while enhancing law students' practical experiences with real cases. This could help to increase women's feelings of self-efficacy and foster more favorable perceptions from victims regarding

procedural justice. Despite some existing training, there remains a need for people who work in the courthouse to receiving training on civil court options for IPV victims (Ellis, 2008). Failures of the consent process could be better addressed by policies that require the same judge or commissioner who granted the temporary PFA to also preside over all court appearances related to the permanent PFA. A focus on improving DFS investigations, such as requiring completion of investigations within a certain time period or sanctions that could be leveled, would help victims' cases and increase not only their sense of procedural justice, but also their feelings of self-efficacy.

Larger and more diverse samples could expand our knowledge on how people's personal factors and structural issues affect their help-seeking actions, self-efficacy, and procedural justice. This study revealed that women of color experienced low levels of procedural justice, due to unfair treatment by police and court actors, being silenced, and having their concerns trivialized. Social location, as well as cultural and structural barriers, such as lack of access to attorneys, or stereotypes about "strong back women" needing less help and IPV being viewed as a private issue prevented the women of color from experiencing the positive procedural justice outcomes and increased feelings of self-efficacy that white women experienced. As more victims opt for civil court remedies, it is incumbent upon our society to address these limitations to justice.

Women are disproportionately affected by intimate partner violence, and it remains a highly gendered issue, with males being the primary offenders and women the primary victims. Criminal justice responses to IPV are still problematic today because of the racialized nature of the CJS institution. Black women are less likely to

receive the same treatment as white women from law enforcement when responding to “domestics”, and structural barriers in access to attorneys, advocates and funds to hire an attorney disproportionately affect poor women and women of color. Social institutions, such as the CJS, reproduce gendered and racialized systems of domination and oppression. Thus, intersectional solutions need to be implemented to combat such gendered and racialized systems of domination; further intersectional scholarship needs to be conducted to better comprehend how such gendered and racialized systems of domination continue to exist.

Table 1.1 Demographics for Qualitative Time 1 Interviews N=29		
	Actual # Participants	% of Participants
Participant Race		
White	15	51.7%
African American	13	44.8%
Hispanic	1	3.5%
Age		
21-25	5	17.2%
26-30	4	13.8%
31-35	6	20.7%
36-40	3	10.3%
41-45	1	3.5%
46-50	7	24.1%
51-55	1	3.5%
56-60	2	6.9%
Government Assistance		
Yes	11	37.9%
No	6	20.7%
Missing	12	41.4%
Employed		
Yes	23	79.3%
No	6	20.7%
Education Level		
Less than High School	1	3.5%
High School grad/GED	5	17.2%
Trade School	1	3.5%
Some College	13	44.8%
Associate's Degree	3	10.3%
College Degree	1	3.5%
Professional Degree	4	13.8%
Missing	1	3.5%
Kids		
Yes	26	89.7%
No	3	10.3%
Lawyer		
Private	4	13.8%
Pro Bono	2	6.9%
Mediator/No attorney	23	79.3%
Domestic Violence Advocate		

Yes	16	55.2%
No	13	44.8%
Reliance on Police		
Yes	26	89.7%
No	3	10.3%
Support		
Family	7	24.1%
Friends	4	13.8%
Both	17	58.6%
None	1	3.5%
Religious Help		
Yes	3	10.3%
No	26	89.7%
Defensive Violence		
Yes	16	55.2%
No	13	44.8%
Full PFA		
Yes	26	89.7%
No	3	10.3%

Table 2.1: Participant Pseudonyms and Demographics											
Name	Age	Race	Employment Status	Education Level	Gov't Assistance	Kids	Lawyer	DV Advocate	Support	Defensive Violence	Full PFA
Tina	49	Black	Unemployed	Some College	No	Yes	Pro bono	Yes	Family	No	Yes
Britney	27	White	Employed	H.S.	No	Yes	Table	No	Both	Yes	Yes
Tammy	28	White	Employed	BA	Missing	Yes	Private	Yes	Both	No	Yes
Samantha	28	Black	Unemployed	Some College	Missing	Yes	None	Yes	Family	No	Yes
Kristen	32	Black	Unemployed	H.S.	Yes	Yes	None	No	Family	Yes	Yes
Janet	49	White	Employed	Some College	Yes	Yes	None	No	Both	Yes	Yes
Sasha	49	Black	Employed	Missing	Missing	Yes	None	No	None	Yes	Yes
Kimberly	36	White	Employed	Some College	Yes	Yes	Private	Yes	Both	Yes	Yes
Michelle	56	Black	Employed	Some College	Missing	Yes	None	No	Both	Yes	Yes
Isabelle	32	White	Employed	H.S.	Missing	Yes	None	Yes	Friends	No	Yes
Monica	48	Black	Employed	Some College	Missing	Yes	None	Yes	Both	No	Yes
Lindsey	34	White	Unemployed	Some College	Yes	Yes	Pro bono	Yes	Friends	Yes	Yes
Jane	51	White	Employed	PhD	No	Yes	None	No	Both	Yes	Yes
Elizabeth	49	White	Employed	MA	Missing	Yes	None	No	Both	No	Yes
Sheryl	34	Black	Employed	Associate degree	Yes	Yes	None	Yes	Family	No	Yes
Linda	29	Black	Employed	Associate degree	Missing	Yes	Private	Yes	Both	Yes	Yes

Carol	49	Black	Employed	Some College	No	Yes	None	Yes	Friends	Yes	Yes
Holly	21	White	Unemployed	Some College	Yes	No	None	No	Friends	No	N/A
Alicia	31	Black	Employed	Some College	Missing	No	None	Yes	Family	No	Yes
Robyn	39	Black	Employed	Some College	Yes	Yes	None	No	Both	No	No
Karen	40	White	Employed	Associate Degree	Yes	Yes	None	No	Both	Yes	No
Caroline	49	White	Employed	2 MAs	Missing	Yes	None	Yes	Both	No	Yes
Naomi	43	Black	Employed	MA	No	Yes	None	No	Family	No	Yes
Denise	24	Black	Employed	H.S.	Yes	Yes	None	Yes	Family	Yes	Yes
Gwen	60	Black	Employed	Some College	No	Yes	None	Yes	Both	Yes	Yes
Mandy	23	White	Employed	H.S.	Missing	Yes	None	No	Both	No	Yes
Courtney	24	White	Employed	Some College	Yes	Yes	Private	Yes	Both	Yes	Yes
Tiffany	32	Black	Unemployed	Less than H.S.	Yes	Yes	None	Yes	Both	Yes	No
Olivia	22	White	Employed	Trade	Missing	No	None	No	Both	Yes	Yes

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