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INVISIBLE AT EVERY TURN

AN EXAMINATION OF LESBIAN INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

by

MIKEL L. WALTERS

Under the Direction of Dr. Denise A. Donnelly

ABSTRACT

Although scholars have been studying domestic violence for four decades now, it is only recently that domestic violence occurring in non-heterosexual relationships has received attention. The purpose of this study is to explore the interconnections between the experiences of survivors of lesbian intimate partner violence (IPV), the lesbian communities' beliefs regarding IPV, and available shelter services. The ultimate goal of this project is to describe how the experiences and practices of all three ultimately affect survivors of lesbian IPV. To accomplish this, members of the lesbian community were asked to complete an on-line survey, and qualitative interviews were conducted with both shelter employees and lesbian IPV survivors. While more than 50% of lesbians completing the online survey reported experiencing IPV in a lesbian relationship, most agreed that lesbian IPV was ignored in lesbian communities. Lesbians also agreed that survivors would not seek help from local DV shelters or police, but did believe there were appropriate services available in their area. DV shelters reported allowing lesbian survivors to access their heterosexually focused services, but offered no services specifically

addressing the unique needs of lesbian survivors. Lesbian survivors reported feeling isolated, trapped and helpless due to the lack of acknowledgement and support in their communities and scarcity of available services. The findings of this study suggest that IPV is common in lesbian relationships. Despite this finding, denial in the lesbian community and the lack of appropriate shelter services continue the isolation and marginalization of lesbian survivors.

INDEX WORDS: Lesbian, Intimate partner violence, Survivor, Domestic violence services, Community attitudes

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VIOLENCE

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MIKEL L. WALTERS

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2009

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MIKEL L. WALTERS

Committee Chair: Denise A. Donnelly

Committee: Lesley W. Reid

Phillip W. Davis

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

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This dissertation is dedicated to
PG
and all the brave women just like her.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is an issue which has caught the attention of our society for decades. It was not until the 1970's feminist movement; however, that domestic violence came to be recognized as a social problem. Services for victims of domestic violence were initially developed by local groups of concerned citizens and focused primarily on the needs of white, middle-class women (Schechter, 1982). Countless articles, books and training manuals have been written about the issue of violence against women. This phenomenon has survived several bouts of labeling, going from "wife abuse" to "battered woman" to "victim" then "survivor of domestic violence" and now "survivor of intimate partner violence." Regardless of the popular name at the time, intimate partner violence continues to negatively impact individuals, families, communities and society as a whole. Thus, intimate partner violence is worthy of study and in need of our continued scholarly attention (Loseke 1992). While we have described the problem in detail, we still lack viable solutions.

The idea of husbands battering wives (men battering women) emerged in the mid-1970's as a social problem. The second wave of the feminist movement and the push for equal rights between the sexes brought attention to this issue. Abuse was viewed as so pervasive that it warranted public concern and attention in order to be rectified. The feminists of this time single-handedly brought intimate partner violence from a private issue behind closed doors to the forefront of the public eye. It could no longer be dismissed as a private matter between a man and his wife (Loseke 1992).

The past twenty-five years have seen a flurry of activity in both the activist and academic realms surrounding domestic violence. Feminist activists' and theorists' primary goals have been to bring domestic violence to the public's attention (Bograd 1999). They focused primarily on

white, middle-class heterosexual women. Unfortunately, this marginalized other women, such as lesbian women or women of color, who did not fit neatly into this identity (Donnelly, Cook and Wilson 2005; Sokoloff and Dupont 2005).

A popular view in the feminist movement is echoed by Bograd who states, “I privileged the dimension of gender over others because it seemed to offer parsimonious explanatory power and clinical direction. I believed that gender-sensitive models of violence were universal, relevant to all families and thus race-, class- and sexual orientation neutral” (Bograd 1999:276). Other social contexts outside of gender- including race, class, and sexual orientation- were thought of as stressors and were not seen as having explanatory power (Bograd 1999). This set the stage for the exclusion of battered women who did not fit the feminist conception of the “proper” victim.

Some scholars have begun to adopt approaches that challenge gender as the primary factor in domestic violence explanatory models. Emphasis has been placed on inequality and oppression which occurs at the intersections of race, class, heterosexism and gender (Sokoloff and Dupont 2005). Intersectionality theories purport that domestic violence is only one form of oppression and social control (Crenshaw 1992) and that social contexts are created in the intersection of power systems (such as race, class, gender and sexual orientation) and oppression (prejudice, class stratification, gender inequality and heterosexism) (Bograd 1999; Hill Collins 2004; Sokoloff and Dupont 2005). A clearer understanding of the intertwined structures of oppression and power increases the knowledge and understanding of domestic violence in marginalized populations (Sokoloff and Dupont 2005).

One group that has been (and continues to be) marginalized in the DV movement are lesbians. In this dissertation, I explored the overall effects of community attitudes, available

services and overarching social institutions on lesbian survivors. In order to do so, I examined the interconnections between survivors of lesbian intimate partner violence, the lesbian community and mainstream domestic violence shelter services, with the ultimate goal of describing how the experiences and practices of all three ultimately affect survivors of lesbian intimate partner violence.

Lesbian survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) are women who have experienced violence at the hands of their female intimate partners. Defined by Beth Hart in 1986, lesbian domestic violence is a “pattern of violent [or] coercive behaviors whereby a lesbian seeks to control the thoughts, beliefs, or conduct of her intimate partner or to punish the intimate for resisting the perpetrator’s control” (pg. 7 in Renzetti 1992). Further division of the definition of lesbian domestic violence can be discussed in terms of physical abuse; verbal abuse; emotional abuse; sexual abuse; psychological abuse; and threats (Poorman 2001). These divisions are necessary due to the varying context of each.

The domestic violence movement largely constructed a dichotomous fallacy that violence between intimate partners is highly gendered: men are batterers and women are battered. This type of gendered message restricts theoretical images of intimate partner violence (Seelau and Seelau 2005). Socially constructed “appropriate” gender roles reinforce the idea that men are masculine and masculinity equates with dominance. Women are feminine and therefore, weak and vulnerable (Seelau and Seelau 2005). In reality, however, the power and control that is exercised in intimate partner violence is committed by both males and females. Inaccurate social perceptions of gender, however, drive and authenticate the thoughts about who are the appropriate batterer and the appropriately battered. When we divorce women from submission and men from domination, the reality of IPV becomes clearer.

While domestic violence occurs in both lesbian and gay male relationships, for the purpose of this project, I focus solely on the violence which takes place between lesbian partners. Lesbian survivors of domestic violence experience a “double bind.” They hold a double minority status in our patriarchal society (West 1999; Hill Collins 2004). They are members of gendered and sexual minorities, while gay male survivors (especially white gay men), do not experience the intersectionality of being a double minority.

For the remainder of this dissertation, I refer to the violence which occurs specifically within lesbian relationships as intimate partner violence (IPV) rather than domestic violence. This terminology purposefully differentiates this type of violence from others while recognizing and including any intimate relationship regardless of marital status, age, or gender (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2002). Domestic violence offers a broad definition of any violence which occurs in a domestic setting. I do not want lesbian intimate partner violence to be confused with the violence that lesbians are often subjected to in their families of origin after their sexuality is disclosed. Thus I will refer to the violence which occurs in lesbian relationships as lesbian intimate partner violence (LIPV).

By highlighting the experiences of lesbian survivors of IPV, my intention is not to specify and reify that sexual identity is the sole identity modeling their lives and experiences. Lesbian survivors are as heterogeneous a group as any other social group. Their lives and experiences are shaped and molded by their personal and public lives, the norms of social structure, and the oppression and privileges that are attached to their race, class and gender presentation.

In this research, I explored three different levels of social reality which effect lesbian survivors of intimate partner violence. I explored the personal life stories of women who had

survived lesbian intimate partner violence. I examined the attitudes and beliefs of lesbians within the lesbian community regarding intimate partner violence. Finally, I studied the policies and procedures of two large domestic violence shelters in a large city in the southeastern United States.

There is no one “correct” way to collect data or do research. For some research questions, quantitative methods are best; for example, surveys seeking attitudes and beliefs about lesbian intimate partner violence from a large community. For other research, such as studies of hard to reach populations, qualitative methods usually work best. Still other research, such as analyzing workplace practices is best accomplished through organizational case studies. The strength of this study is in its use of *all* these methods - quantitative, qualitative and case study. To gain a panoramic view of attitudes, services and experiences surrounding lesbian intimate partner violence. Understanding the lesbian community’s beliefs and attitudes is best accomplished through quantitative methods. Analyzing the principles, policies and procedures of domestic violence agencies requires a complete case study. Finally, uncovering the experiences of lesbians who are survivors of lesbian intimate partner violence requires in-depth, qualitative interviewing. This combination of methods allows for a more complete view of experiences, beliefs and practices regarding this issue.

This strategy contributes to the literature on lesbian intimate partner violence in several ways. First, it adds to the limited research on lesbian intimate partner violence. Moreover, the methodology allows me to address survivors’ experiences of violence in their relationships with other women. In addition, attitudinal research of the lesbian community is beneficial, as this area lacks thorough examination. Finally, my study is the first of its kind to triangulate data using quantitative data, qualitative data and case studies to explore lesbian intimate partner violence.

In order to best present these data, this dissertation is organized in a series of chapters that offers an in-depth discussion of each data set, the findings of the data, and finally a discussion that brings together all the data, situating the findings into perspective. In Chapter 2, I review the relevant literature on lesbian IPV, covering six sub-sections. In the first section I discuss the types and prevalence of lesbian IPV, including estimated rates from most current sources. Next, I discuss the challenges that traditional domestic violence shelters pose to lesbian survivors. A discussion of the history of the LGBT communities works to situate the experiences of lesbian survivors within a societal framework. The fourth section includes a discussion of the formation of LGBT communities in order to provide insight into the inner workings of such communities. Next previous researching examining lesbians IPV survivors are explored. The last subsection explores services that are available to lesbian survivors of IPV.

In Chapter 3, I present the theoretical perspectives and guiding research questions that drove my research. In this chapter, I utilize an ecological theoretical perspective and explore the ways in which it informs a discussion of lesbian intimate partner violence. The chapter begins with a general description of domestic violence theories used to examine lesbian intimate partner violence. Next, I briefly discuss the underpinnings of the ecological model. Finally, I offer a detailed discussion of the ways in which this theoretical perspective can explain lesbian intimate partner violence as one part of the larger social problem of violence against women and present the three overarching questions that guide this research.

Chapter 4 presents a detailed discussion of the methods of analyzing the qualitative interview data, employing a modified grounded theory approach is also presented. I also discuss the process of coding that ensued as I organized and made sense of the transcripts of the qualitative interviews. Then I present the results of the qualitative interview data analyses.

Highlighted are the most interesting findings. The different “stories” of experience as a survivor of lesbian IPV are illuminated in great detail. Included throughout the chapters are quotes from the women who were interviewed, highlighting their experiences of violence in intimate relationships with other women.

Chapter 5 contains the results of the community survey. This survey was created to assess the attitudes and behaviors of members of the lesbian community in regards to lesbian intimate partner violence. Because of the quantitative methodology of this section, eight hypothesis were developed all focusing on how different aspects of lesbian intimate partner violence and the attitudes and behaviors of the lesbian community. This chapter begins with a discussion of the methodology and sampling procedures used to collect the community data. Then I present review of the summary statistics on all variables from the survey. Finally, the results of analyses testing each hypothesis are presented and described in detail and results the results of logistic regression analysis are discussed.

In Chapter 6, I present the findings of the case studies of the two domestic violence agencies; Paradox Women’s Shelter and Colossal Shelter for Women. These findings are based on agencies documents, staff interviews and shelter websites. The chapter begins with a discussion of the methods and sampling procedures used to collect these case studies. The chapter concludes with discussion of these findings.

In Chapter 7, I coalesce the findings from the qualitative interviews, the quantitative survey, and the case studies and address each of the three guiding questions in detail. I include a detailed discussion of the interplay between each of these areas using the ecological model to organize my discussion.

Finally in Chapter 8, I conclude the dissertation by synthesizing the previous chapter. I summarize the findings from my research and discuss their relevance to the field of study addressing same-sex domestic violence. The reader is informed by the contributions of this research to the larger body of research on lesbian intimate partner violence. Finally, I offer recommendations for future research in the area of lesbian intimate partner violence and make policy implications of the present research.

The following chapter presents a review of previous literature and past research on the prevalence of lesbian IPV, domestic violence agencies and gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered (LGBT) communities. This chapter also contains a discussion of community construction, the lesbian community and IPV, lesbian survivors and available services for lesbian survivors of lesbian IPV.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Incidence of Lesbian Intimate Partner Violence

In order to lay a strong foundation for this research, a more precise discussion of the types of abuse included under the rubric of LIPV is warranted. As stated previously, abuses in LIPV include physical, verbal, emotional, economic, and sexual (Poorman 2001). Physical abuse can include acts of physical aggression not limited to slapping, hitting, shoving, grabbing, and/or throwing. Physical abuse also includes intentional deprivation of physical necessities such as water, food, shelter or sleep. The most common forms of physical violence in lesbian intimate partner violence are pushing/shoving, hitting with open hand or fist, and hits or scratches to the face, genitals or breasts (Poorman 2001). While reports of violent incidents of stabbing, shooting, or having a gun or knife inserted in the vagina are indeed rare, they do occur (Poorman 2001).

Scholars agree that when compared with heterosexual IPV, lesbian IPV incidents have higher frequencies of verbal, emotional or psychological abuse than physical abuse (Renzetti 1992). The most common forms of verbal, emotional or psychological abuse include verbal threats, such as being demeaned in front of friends, family or strangers. Other common forms of mental abuse include disruption of eating and sleeping patterns and abuse of others in the household, such as children or pets (Poorman 2001).

In addition, lesbian IPV has a unique element that is not an issue in heterosexual violence. This is the fear of and/or the act of outing. Lesbian batterers, similar to gay male batterers, sometimes use their partners' sexuality as an element of control. They threaten to or do tell their partners' families, friends, place of employment, and ex-spouses as a way to exercise power and control (Renzetti 1992). Outing has brutal, real life consequences ranging from losing

the support of family and friends to being fired from a job or losing custody of one's children (Renzetti 1992; Poorman 2001). No matter the level or type of abuse, lesbian batterers, like all batterers, have the distinct ability to tailor their abuse to their intimate partners' vulnerabilities (Renzetti 1992).

Domestic violence occurring in non-heterosexual relationships has received little attention. The two primary reasons are widespread homophobia/heterosexism and the belief that women are not aggressive and do not batter other women (Rezentti 1992). Due to research regarding the rate at which this violence occurs, academic and activist attention surrounding LIPV is increasing. Although awareness is growing, a significant number of lesbians continue to suffer at the hands of their female batterers.

The status of lesbians in our society and the institutional discrimination which continues to occur make it difficult for researchers to obtain accurate current data in regards to this population. Needless to say there is no local, state or national lesbian registry. While there is no statistical consensus regarding the rate at which LIPV occurs, it is thought that LIPV occurrences are comparable to the rates of opposite sex domestic violence (OSDV). A recent study indicates that between 41% and 68% of all lesbians may have experienced some kind of domestic violence in their intimate relationships (Burke, Jordan and Owen 2002; National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs 2002; Waldner-Haugrud, Vaden Gratch and Magruder 1997). Others estimate from 7% to 48% of same sex survivors experience physical abuse and as high as 90% experience verbal abuse (Burke and Follingstad 1999; Balsam 2001). In several studies on lesbian sexual assault the rates range from 5% to 57% (Brand and Kidd 1986; Loulan 1988)

There are several reasons why it is difficult to obtain exact statistics on the rate of LIPV. First, the stigma of being homosexual in our society is present, especially in the more

conservative, rural areas of the country. People are less likely to identify as gay or lesbian if they feel like it could negatively affect them in any way. Second, there has been no national survey that focuses specifically on the effects of intimate partner violence on sexuality minorities. Third, lesbian victims of intimate partner violence are a very isolated, hidden population. There is no one place where accurate counts could be taken. For example, researchers could locate heterosexual female survivors of IPV through domestic violence services and/or shelters. Few lesbian survivors, however, seek these services or if they do, they are reluctant to disclose their sexuality or the gender of their batterer due to the fear of possible rejection, harassment or discrimination from shelter workers or other residents in the shelter (Renzetti 1992; Donnelly et al., 1999; Leventhal and Lundy 1999; Poorman 2001).

While domestic violence scholarship has investigated the incidence of lesbian IPV, the sexual abuse component of IPV has not been intensively examined. Poorman (2001) defines sexual abuse as any non-consensual sexual behavior. To date, it is unclear how often sexual abuse or rape occurs in LIPV (Girshick 2002); although one recent study by Walden-Haugrud and Gratch (1997) reported that over half of the lesbians in her sample had experienced sexual coercion at least once. The most frequent outcome was non-consensual penetration (Waldner-Haugrud and Gratch 1997). As with LIPV, a large limiting factor in obtaining such knowledge is that rape crisis agencies have yet to address the issue of lesbian sexual violence (Girshick 2002).

The lesbian population appears to have lower rates of physical abuse than heterosexual couples but higher rates of emotional abuse (Renzetti 1989, 1992). The Family Violence Project, a counseling agency offering legal advocacy for lesbian survivors, conservatively estimates that 1 in every 5 lesbians has experienced violence in her intimate relationship (Ventura 1995).

Due to various factors which prevent accurate estimations of same sex domestic violence, the majority of lesbians and gay male domestic violence cases go unreported (Potocziak et al. 2003). Victims face systematic and ethical barriers from both inside and outside the lesbian community that prevent them from reporting their attacks, and seeking help from a shelter, law enforcement or the judicial system. Individual decisions, beliefs and attitudes within, for example, DV shelter services, law enforcement and the judicial system, are likely to be affected by sexual stigma. Additionally, lesbian survivors can be seen as traitors to their own kind for disrupting the utopian lesbian myth of egalitarian relationships, creating another obstacle to seeking help. Lesbian survivors are often stigmatized and ostracized from their community for reporting their abuse (VanNatta 2005).

Miller, et al. (2001), found that lesbians use the same types of physical aggression and violence that are found in heterosexual relationships. Also, as in heterosexual relationships, the lesbian batterer is more dependent and does not feel in control in her relationship. However, Miller, et al. discovered that lesbian victims who have more independence and ultimately more resources are more likely to report domestic violence than those who are more dependent on their batterer. This is similar to heterosexual women with children who are more dependent on their husbands for financial support.

Domestic Violence Agencies

It is unlikely that survivors of lesbian IPV will seek support from shelters because they see shelters as the province of heterosexual women (Helfrich and Simpson 2005). Survivors of lesbian IPV are more likely to consult friends, family or a therapist (Giorgio 2002, Girshick 2002). Domestic violence services are often seen as unavailable or severely limited to survivors whose batterer are female, due to homophobia, social constructions of “appropriate” battered

woman and exclusivity. Traditionally, survivors of domestic violence have been heterosexual women mostly with children, who have experienced physical abuse at the hands of their husband or boyfriend. Loseke deemed these women as “real” battered women. Survivors whose circumstances differ or who have different experiences have not been viewed as battered women by shelter advocates (Loseke 1992; Simpson and Helfrich 2005; VanNatta 2005; Helfrich and Simpson 2006).

Homophobia

Seidman (2003) defines homophobia as a systemic crisis privileging the heteronormative nature of our society by foundationally establishing that heterosexuality is the assumed social norm to which all other sexualities are compared. While sexuality is seen as a continuum on which heterosexuality and homosexuality are both terminal ends, heterosexuality is hierarchally privileged over homosexuality to such extent that social structures, laws and norms are constructed to value heterosexuality above all others (Bograd 1999).

Lesbian battering occurs in the larger context of homophobia which affects women personally, socially and systematically. As Pharr (1986) explains:

There is an important difference between the battered lesbian and the battered non-lesbian: the battered non-lesbian experiences violence within the context of a misogynist world: the lesbian experiences violence within the context of a world that is not only woman-hating, but is also homophobic (pg 204).

The term homophobia was coined by Weinberg (1972) to describe an irrational fear, hatred and intolerance of homosexuality. This term has evolved and is now viewed as more inline with other “-isms” including racism, sexism and classism (Balsam 2001). Some researchers have proposed that “heterosexism” is a more suitable term. Heterosexism as defined by Herek is “an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes, any non-heterosexual

form of behavior, identity, relationship and community” (2004: 316). For the purpose of this paper, I use the terms heterosexism and homophobia interchangeably.

Whether perceived or actual, homophobia and/or heterosexism are immense barriers for lesbians seeking assistance for domestic violence. Services that are available to traditional victims of domestic violence are not usually available to lesbians. In a study by Renzetti, 64% of lesbian women in abusive relationships stayed in them simply because they “did not know where, or how, to seek help (1992: 395). Services readily known and available to heterosexual women are not readily known or available to lesbian women including shelters, hotlines, support groups, transitional housing, court advocates, and child specialists (McLaughlin & Rozee, 2001; Balsam 2001).

Shelters and DV services are expected to be anti-heterosexist, anti-homophobic, and concerned solely with domestic violence (Donnelly et al. 1999). Such expectations come from the community, financial supporters, religious institutions and other shelter residence. This, however, is a dangerous assumption. Society at large privileges heterosexuality over homosexuality as right and moral and lesbians as wrong and immoral. DV workers and shelter residents do not escape these socialized messages and often further isolate and alienate battered lesbians who are seeking shelter from violence in their own homes (Girshick 2002). This alienation can include turning away lesbians because the shelter is “full”; not distinguishing the primary aggressor from the survivor in a lesbian relationship and discounting the lesbian survivor’s experience of abuse as not “real” abuse. All of these place women at risk.

Unsurprisingly, while heterosexuality is pervasive in society, it is also the foundational construction of the domestic violence movement and the assumed sexuality of all survivors. This assumption is evident in the initial contact from the survivor. Shelter workers often ask for

the survivor to reveal the identity of her abuser. If the survivor is heterosexual, the batterer will most likely be male and the survivor seamlessly transitions into the appropriately constructed domestic violence model and has all available services and programs offered to her. If the survivor is lesbian, this simple request to disclose the batterer's identity places the lesbian survivor in a precarious situation at the very site where a promise of protection is supposed to exist. Such a situation immediately forces the survivor to make a decision: to out herself, to evade the question, or to lie (VanNatta 2005). Either of these decision results in a zero sum game. If she lies or evades the question, then she binds her own hands and has to hide in plain sight. She also runs the risk of being discovered if she slips up or does not lie well enough. If she outs herself, she runs the risk of not receiving the shelter and safety so desperately needed and of enduring the homophobia of other survivors within the shelter.

Heterosexual victims of domestic violence can begin their healing process by leaving their abusive environment while lesbian survivors cannot leave a homophobic society or culture, not even in the shelters or services designed to protect and help survivors of intimate partner violence (Neisen 1993). This is not unlike the experience of ethnic and racial minority women. For these survivors, it is as impossible to escape the prevalent cultural and societal norm of racism when seeking refuge from intimate partner violence (Donnelly et al. 2005).

Homophobia not only plays a part in the availability of services to lesbians but also in interactions with battered heterosexual women seeking the same services in the shelter. This works to further alienate and isolate lesbian victims (Balsam, 2001). Lesbian victims of IPV need appropriate and adequate services made available to them in order to combat this crisis within the lesbian community (McLaughlin & Rozee, 2001).

Social Construction of the Battered Woman

The domestic violence movement has been heavily influenced by feminist philosophy and the entire movement (including services and shelters) is conceptualized on the basis of women as victims and men as batterers. Feminist theories base their understanding of battering on gender and power inequality, which is a direct outcome of our patriarchal society (Loseke 1992; VanNatta 2005). These perceptions are built and supported by structural factors such as gender specific language in literature and training information, lack of training and knowledge of lesbian intimate partner violence, lack of experience in dealing with women battered by other women, and the pressure placed on shelter workers to identify “real” battered women who are in need of their limited resources (Loseke 1992; VanNatta 2005).

The limited resources of services and shelters serving survivors of domestic violence dictate the need to serve to the greater good. This philosophy encourages workers to operate on “normative” case assumptions (Loseke 1992; VanNatta 2005). While this philosophy may indeed serve the greater good it certainly creates built-in marginalization of battered women based on an individual’s perception of the “real” battered woman.

Institutional Barriers

In addition to the discriminatory construction of the entire domestic violence movement, there are other institutions that perpetuate institutional discrimination. Simpson and Helfrich (2005) outline ways in which institutions, mostly shelters, continue invisible discrimination towards non-heterosexual survivors. These include ambiguous policies, relegation of responsibility to specific agency or staff, and lack of commitment to serving lesbians. This lack of commitment is transmitted through attitudes towards training of staff and volunteers and the

use of heterosexist language in their training manuals, public literature, mission statements and the overarching domestic violence vernacular.

Street-Level Bureaucrats

Service providers at all levels in domestic violence shelters and services have a great amount of power over the survivor (Loseke 1996; Simpson and Helfrich 2005). This power is perpetuated by the ambiguous policies of domestic violence shelters. The lack of firm policies or the attempts of the shelters to work around issues of homophobia and heterosexism in their facility create clefts in the system which can prevent services from reaching lesbian survivors.

The shelter policies state that their mission is to assist women being battered in domestic violence situations; how this “help” operates on the ground is quite different from and often times at the discretion of the shelter workers themselves (Loseke 1996 and VanNatta 2005). Some shelters do not require shelter workers to assist or work with anyone with which they are uncomfortable. This freedom to select clients allows the shelter to “choose” to help lesbians or to refer them out (Simpson and Helfrich 2005). This freedom creates an inordinate power differential between staff and potential client. This type of power on the part of the worker can lead to discrimination not only of lesbians, but of other minorities or anyone who the staff member is not convinced is in real need. For example, shelters workers have the power to admit women into the shelter at their discretion particularly if the shelter is deemed “full.” Worker A may admit any woman who request admittance into the shelter, while Worker B may save room within the shelter in case what she defines as a “real battered” woman requests help.

The decision to accept a woman into a DV shelter is often made by the hotline operators or the shelter intake workers, who are often times poorly trained volunteers. This is especially true when the shelter is deemed full. The workers have the power to “make space” for a woman

they perceive as a battered woman in need, or to refer the client/caller to another shelter. At that moment in time the woman is not yet a battered woman until the shelter workers deem her so (Loseke 1996; VanNatta 2005).

There is an entire list of ways in which shelter workers determine the potential survivor's level of need. These include tangible elements such as last incident of abuse, the presence of physical abuse, a temporary order of protection, a police report, and intangible elements such as the judgment and experience of the worker (Loseke 1992; VanNatta 2005). The argument could be made, however, that judgment and experience of the worker does not suffice for the lesbian survivor, as the majority of workers do not have experience working with this minority population.

No matter the difference in how workers use their power, they operate upon a subjective foundation. The combination of the subjective nature of their decision and their power as gatekeepers leaves women who reside in the margins of traditional domestic violence, i.e.: lesbian women, without services and other marginal women.

The power bestowed on shelter workers can be dangerous, even deadly, to survivors of lesbian IPV. Their lack of training, education and experience adversely affect the survivor in many ways (Loseke 1996; Simpson and Helfrich 2005). This power limits access to services for the survivor in need, and can create a dangerous situation within the shelter. Most shelter workers have not been trained in how to distinguish victim from batterer. In their heteronormative day-to-day operations, workers in shelters only have to be able to distinguish between genders to recognize victim from batterer. This creates an environment in the shelter where battering for lesbian survivors could continue. Without the ability to distinguish batterer from victim minus the gender dichotomy, batterers can continue to abuse victims by gaining

access to the shelter, posing as victims themselves (Helfrich and Simpson 2005, VanNatta 2005,). This crisis was highlighted by a respondent in a recent study who proclaimed “Batterers do not have incentive to call a shelter for help” (VanNatta 2005 pp. 428). Unfortunately, it is not known how often this happens. However, regardless of the prevalence, the possibility of such an occurrence places lesbian survivors in danger in a theoretically “safe space.”

Survivor Probation

Once in the shelter the jury may still be out on whether or not the lesbian survivor of IPV is really a battered woman and not just a homeless woman in need of shelter. The ways in which many shelter staff decide if the woman is really a battered woman in need are based on several criteria such as the interaction with staff and other residents, their dedication to attending shelter sponsored meetings and programs and her success in her search for permanent housing (Loseke 1996 and VanNatta 2005). Shelter workers develop the ability to detect inappropriate clients for their services. Clients who are working on their goals, complying with shelter rules, attending house meetings, support groups, counseling and who appear to be actively looking for work are perceived as appropriate for shelter services (Loseke 1996; Yllo 1993; VanNatta 2005).

Women who do not actively participate or connect with staff or other resident may come under suspicion by shelters workers. Survivors of lesbian IPV, however, may have a completely valid reason for not connecting with others or not participating in these activities. Lesbian or bisexual women may: not want to disclose the sex of their batterer; avoid groups; be evasive in counseling; and not connect with other women, all in an effort to hide her sexual identity and protect herself from perceived and/or real homophobia within the shelter, from either workers or clients (VanNatta 2005).

Exclusivity

One way that shelters may offer services to lesbians is by appointing one person as the exclusive liaison for lesbians who have been battered. When shelters do offer such services the exclusivity of these services may further isolate and endanger these women (Giorgio 2002, Simpson and Helfrich 2005). The positive to this exclusivity is that lesbian survivors have a specific point of contact where they hopefully can be assured they will not be met with homophobic discrimination. Such a liaison is also familiar with the issues surrounding lesbian intimate partner violence and is also keen on the best ways to approach the system in order to meet the needs of lesbian survivors in the most proactive way.

While it may initially appear that these types of services are proactive and progressive, they have the potential to be damaging and even deadly. These exclusive services can remove the lesbian from the mainstream shelter by allocating a “lesbian specialist” in the shelter to manager all cases of lesbian IPV. Such exclusivity may take the lesbian survivor out of the mainstream shelter/services and allocates her to a specific person, therefore denying her the use and availability of full shelter services including hotline intervention (Simpson and Helfrich 2005).

For example if a survivor calls the hotline in urgent need of help and discloses that her batterer is a woman, her case may not be handled by the hotline but referred to the lesbian advocate. The fact that the batterer is a woman may also imply that the crisis is less pressing and therefore less critical and dangerous (Giorgio 2002). This type of delay in assistance can be just as deadly to a woman with a female batterer as it would be to a woman with a male batterer. In addition to above consequences such a referral would automatically “out” the lesbian survivor. Such outing could have severe implications of its own and consequently discourage the lesbian survivor from continuing to seek help from the shelter.

Training and Gender Specifics

Training in the shelter is usually hands on, learning by doing. Formal training is based mostly on the day-to-day routines of shelter life. If there is any training involving minority clients, this is likely to be brushed over during the limited amount of formal training time (Simpson and Helfrich 2005). As is usually the case with any kind of training, what is not experienced or encountered on a regular basis is packed away not be remembered.

Now that I have examined the issues that affect lesbian survivors of domestic violence in the domestic violence shelter and service area, I will turn my attention to the lesbian community. The next section will examine LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered), LGBT community formation, community ideals, community existence and finally the lesbian community and lesbian intimate partner violence.

LGBT Communities

It is important to address the attitudes and actions of the lesbian community. Before addressing them, I will situate the lesbian community within the larger sexual minority community to which they belong. An overview of the actions and attitudes of the larger sexually marginalized community is necessary. Smaller sexual minority communities like lesbian communities, comprise what is often referred to collectively as the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) community. This collective group has a rich history of political as well as social activism and intolerance for injustice and inequality based on an individual's gender and/or sexual identification.

There has been an emphasis among members of the LGBT community to advocate and strive for equal rights in their communities. Such principles date as far back as the early 1920's with the advent of the Society for Human Rights which was founded in Chicago in 1924 by

Henry Gerber. Gerber described the group as an advocacy organization for people with “mental abnormalities” however it was really the first formally organized group focusing solely on homosexual rights in the United States (Nardi, Sanders and Marmor 1994; Poindexter 1997).

The gay and lesbian community has faced many acts of intolerance from the larger community, sometimes these acts turned violent. The most notorious example took place on June 27, 1969 at a gay and lesbian bar known as the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village. This incident is commemoratively known as the Stonewall Riots. On this night the drag queens, fags and lesbians, femme and butch alike, fought back against the unlawful harassment which had taken place here regularly at the hands of the New York City Police Department. This event was the commencement of the Gay Rights Movement (Poindexter 1997) and is celebrated every year in cities across the United States.

The LGBT community has historically experienced varied types of oppression ranging from blatant physical harassment and violence, including death, to discrimination in terms of employment, housing, education, access to human services, and basic protection under the law (Garnets, Herek and Levy 1990, Rosario, Rotheram-Borus and Reid 1996, Schneider 1991, Travers and Schneider 1997, Waldo 1998). The threat of violence and harassment in its wide-ranging forms is nothing new to the LGBT community and its individual members.

Those common historical practices of the LGBT community, in which individuals band together to fight oppression is a valiant attempt to right the wrongs which affect LGBT citizens of our heterosexist, patriarchal society (Harper and Schneider 2003). Such a communal stance is evident in recent efforts to end discrimination and oppression such as the repeal of the sodomy laws, the fight to legalize gay marriage and the construction of legislation that provides equal

protection in the workplace. These examples are just a few at how the individuals of the larger LGBT community have banded together to fight for their own protection.

Ironically, the very communities which have historically come together to protect themselves from the threat or actual occurrence of outside verbal harassment as well as physical violence, have failed to turn their attention to the verbal harassment and physical violence that happens within their communities in the form of intimate partner violence. In fact, some of the early leading feminist advocates speaking out against the abuse of women at the hands of their intimate male partners were lesbian. For example, the late Del Martin was a major feminist player in the domestic violence movement in the 1970's and 80's. She and her partner Phyllis Lyons were major gay and lesbian rights activist and formed the first national lesbian organization *Daughters of Bilitis* in 1953. Even though Del Martin held a major role in both the domestic violence and gay rights movement her activist worlds never met and she did not speak out against lesbian domestic violence.

Construction of Community

In order to understand the power of the diverse LGBT community to rally together in support of common cause, it is important to discuss briefly how and why communities are formed. It might appear that the lack of homogeneity in the greater LGBT community would leave their commitment weak and their actions impotent. This, however, has not been the case. The lesbian community - as well as the larger LGBT community - is comprised of communities of like-minded people who are connected by one or more factors such as age, employment, race, social activities and interests. As Nystrom and Jones (1991) explain "This connectedness to others who are like oneself offers an environment that does not need to be defended, explained or justified..." (pp. 294).

In community building, one of the foundational elements begins with a collective group of individuals who purposefully share in group membership or identity (Cox and Gallois 1996). This collective group membership, however, reaches far beyond the act of mere labeling. While naming or labeling is essential and instructive in the production of community, it is the adoption of norms, values, behaviors, and characteristics by the group and its individual members that not only cement the foundational elements of the community but also reifies these elements, thus legitimizing it as a valid identity (Tajfel & Turner 1979, Turner 1987, Cox and Gallois 1996).

Through the adoption of these elements, communal identities begin to self-categorize and us/them dichotomies are formed (Cox and Gallois 1996). These dichotomies assist in defining the community; what is “them,” is not “us.” For example, what is straight is not gay, what is male is not female, what is black is not white. In the LGBT communities, there are multiple gradients between not only individual gender and race identities but also between gay and lesbian couple identities and heterosexual couple identities.

The idea of a lesbian community itself is somewhat of a misnomer. The lesbian community is often constructed by many overlapping communities identified by the common experiences of lesbians who are part of that particular community (Esterberg 1993, 1997). Therefore the values and norms of that smaller community are mostly defined and embedded in the context in which that are established i.e. bars, bookstores, women’s events etc (Sinding, Grassau and Barnoff 2006). In addition communities can be further divided on the basis of gender presentation, social class, race (Esterberg 1993, 1997), age, income, education, family status and sexual identity (Sinding et al.. 2006). No matter the level of division, membership in a lesbian community is a qualification in order for a woman to affirm her lesbian identity (Lemon and Patton 1997).

This condition of membership in the lesbian community leaves little room for the intersections between all the other identity markers (class, race, education) and sexual identity. This is a classic set up for the argument between identity politics and intersectionality (Hill Collins 2004). Identity politics, introduced in the 1980's, was based on the idea that minority individuals would fight for equal legal and human rights based on their particular minority identity. However, identity politics does not have room for multiple identities that individual concurrently occupy. The lack of room for multiple identities causes further marginalization and discrimination even within a movement which is meant to liberate minorities. For example, the identity of a black lesbian woman who lives in a housing project has a much different experience in being lesbian than a white lesbian woman who lives in a downtown loft in a socially diverse urban area. While they are both lesbians, the space where their concurrent identities intersect with their sexual identity shapes their experiences of their sexual identity and the definition of their sexual identity. Therefore, it is common for smaller communities to form in which members have other common identity markers in addition to their sexual identity.

In the shadow of these smaller tangible communities exists a larger lesbian community in which most lesbians would consider themselves collective members. Although this larger community often seems illusive and placeless, nevertheless it acts as a regulating center in developing rules and ideals regarding lesbian identity (Gordon 2006). Nonetheless, the lesbian community is a source of interaction with others and therefore is a "vital link in the acquisition of a viable lesbian identity" (Lemon and Patton 1997: 114).

Community Ideals

Several lesbian community beliefs and values stem from the construction of a dichotomy between heterosexual and lesbian. These beliefs have been and continue to be supported by the

feminist perspective and by society as a whole. The early 1970's feminist perspective had great influence in shaping lesbian identity. It was during this period that feminist lesbians began to reject anything that appeared to emulate masculinity including sexuality, sexual objectification of women and power differentials in lesbian relationships (Faderman 1991). Feminists emphasized that lesbian relationships should contain feminine values, egalitarian relationships and emotional connection (Taylor and Rupp 1993, Aronson 1998; Rupp 1999).

As illustrated in a recent study, several lesbians interviewed in a qualitative study felt that everyone else besides them in the greater lesbian community knew "the rules." This lack of knowledge somehow made these women not like other lesbians and left just outside the mainstream of lesbian knowledge (Gordon 2006). Even though each felt that there was no clearly written rule book, each came up with several rules she felt would be include if such a book existed. For example, one well-known rule is that women in the lesbian community should not sleep with men. The women who transgress this rule would risk being ostracized from the larger community (Gordon 2006). The dichotomous categorization of heterosexual/lesbians is at work here. What is not lesbian (sex only with women) is therefore read as heterosexual (sex with men) and often cast out from the community.

Two other examples of such unspoken rules produce further evidence of the feminist influence on lesbian identity. First, lesbians are always to emphasize the emotional over the physical and the relationship over the sex, meaning an intimate relationship should be centered on the emotional connection between the two women and not necessarily the sexual connection between the two. This often leads to an emotional relationship without sex being preferred and valued over a sexual relationship without emotion. Second, emotional feminine traits win out

over physical masculine traits (Gordon 2006). This second 'rule' further clarifies the previous tenet. Lesbian identity values the emotional feminine over the physical masculine.

A clear understanding of such community norms assists lesbian women in their personal process of self-identification (Lemon and Patton 1997). Even though values and norms appear to be loosely defined concepts they are arguably central to the communities' identity as well as individuals who identify within that community (Sinding et al. 2006). This is important because in order to be read as lesbian and ultimately accepted into the community one must embody the identities which the community recognizes as lesbian.

While members collectively hold the values and norms of a community, there is also room for such individuals to hold different values and norms while simultaneously continuing to identify as belonging to a community (Cox and Gallois 1996). For example, the lesbian community holds the idea that lesbian relationships are egalitarian in nature due to the absence of hierarchal patriarchy in the intimate relationships between women. However, individual women, through their own personal experiences, values and norms may disagree with this fundamental ideal of the community without renouncing membership in the lesbian community nor her identity as a lesbian.

Community Existence

Granted not all lesbians experience the same norms and values. Given the diversity among lesbians (in terms of age, gender presentation, class, education, and race), the norms and values of certain groups stand in conflict with other groups (Sinding, Grassau and Barnoff 2006). No matter if lesbians experience none, some or all of these same social norms and values, there is a collective identity which composes many lesbian communities. Such communities may be geographic in nature which could indicate similar class standing (Harper and Schneider 2003). In

the Atlanta metropolitan area there are certain census tracts which indicate a higher than normal amount of lesbian headed households (U.S. Census 2000) and these could be arguably labeled as a community, at least a physical/residential community.

Communities' may also be organized around other characteristics such as commonly held religious belief, common characteristics such as age, race, class, gender presentation, and education/occupation or organized events or activities such as playing sports like golf or softball or attending sporting events and relate to topics such as social justice and equal rights.

Lesbian Community and Lesbian Intimate Partner Violence

The effects of these community rules which inform community norms, are far reaching in terms of lesbian intimate partner violence. The norms of the lesbian community romanticize the ideals supporting the notion that women are non-violent, that the lesbian community offers safety to its members and the close knit connections of women that are supported by feminine ideals create a protective and isolated environment beyond the reach of males in their intimate relationships (Merlis and Linville 2006).

In the 1970's, the Radical lesbian feminist enforced the perspective that only men were violent, not women. Such reinforcement worked to validate lesbian relationships and discredit the myth that lesbians were perverted, sick and deviant (Hassouneh and Glass 2008). The influence of the feminine perspective on lesbian identity and community norms in conjunction with the gendered response of the heterosexual community and heteronormative institutions to domestic violence perpetuates the dangerous idea that women are incapable of violence and cannot be the batterers but only the battered (Renzetti 1996). Joan Aronson argues "The heterosexism embedded in institutions crucial to the welfare of lesbians in need of care, serve to heighten the likelihood of obligation and dependence in relationship" (1998: 508).

In addition to the pervasive heteronormativity of social institutions, intimate relationships between two women are definitionally devoid of intimate partner violence for three distinct reasons. First, girls don't hit each other. Traditional gender role socialization dictates that women are incapable of violence. Women are innately nonviolent, caretaking and nurturing (Gilbert 2002; Girshick 2002; Perilla, Frndak, Lillard & East 2003). Women are passive, weak and operate on a more emotional and less physical foundation. Based on these traditional stereotypes and gender characteristics, it would be almost impossible for women to use violence against one another.

Second, the myth of the lesbian utopia was born out of the idea that a community in which relationships and friendships are devoid of men is protected from the power and control men possess over women in the larger patriarchal society. Another part of the utopian myth is that because lesbian relationships consist of two women a type of default egalitarianism naturally takes place (Faderman 1991; Taylor and Rupp 1999; Rupp 1999; Hassouneh and Glass 2008). This myth also encourages the illusion that lesbian communities are somehow more enlightened than heterosexual communities (Elliot 1999) and therefore tender, warm and loving but in no way violent (McLaughlin & Rozee 2001).

Third, if violence was to ever take place between two women in the context of a lesbian relationship it would be viewed as nothing more than a cat fight (Hassouneh and Glass 2008). After all, how much damage could be done? They are women. They cannot possibly hurt one another. Violence between women flies in the face of the traditional gender role stereotype of women. The tenacity of these stereotypes combined with the belief that women lack the physical strength and stature to cause any serious harm on one another, violence between women is dismissed or disregarded as nothing more than a catfight (Hassouneh and Glass 2008).

Lesbian Survivors

Lesbian survivors of IPV maybe unaware that shelter services are available because most advertising and outreach occurs outside of lesbian community or places frequented by lesbians. Even though advertising in public places, lesbians, as with most other minorities, learn to decode public information into two distinct categories: 1. For me or 2. Not for me. The images and verbiage used gives clues to lesbians if the advertising or service advertised are meant for their consumption. For example, if a lesbian sees information about intimate partner violence and she does not believe or is not aware that intimate partner violence occurs in lesbian relationships then she will not deem the information relative to her life. However, as Coker (2000) points out no matter how well materials or resources are (re)distributed to reach marginalized women, it would not bring about the needed social change to reform structures which work to ignore these vulnerable populations.

In addition to the lack of knowledge of services, lesbian survivors may also face personal barriers in seeking help. The anticipation of discrimination, the reality of “outing” herself and the fear of having to “talk about it” maybe prevent lesbians from reaching out to professional domestic violence services (Simpson and Helfrich 2005). If lesbian survivors *are* aware of domestic violence services, they are indeed often disregarded by professionals and service providers (McClennen, Summers and Vaughan 2002). Therefore, lesbian survivors often seek help or assistance from their friends or individual therapists (McClennen, Summers and Vaughan 2002; Helfrich and Simpson 2005).

Therapists, however, are not likely to see lesbian intimate partner violence as a real threat and often recommended damaging treatment such as couples counseling and did not regularly recommend shelter or police involvement (Helfrich and Simpson 2005). The lack of formal help

or services often leads to the victim continuing to remain silent about the abuse while continuing to maintain a long-term relationship with her batterer (McClennen 2005).

Available Services

Victims of same-sex domestic violence have very few resources to which they can turn for help. The need for lesbian services remains largely unexamined and unarticulated. Currently, there are approximately 1500 domestic violence shelters in the United States and a host of other organizations that serve survivors of domestic violence (Freiss 2000). There are not, however, any shelters which are exclusively devoted to lesbian and bisexual survivors (Helfrich and Simpson 2005).

There are fewer than 30 agencies within the United States with programs specifically designed for lesbians. Five of these shelters are located in California (Helfrich & Simpson, 2005). Renzetti (1995) found that out of 566 domestic violence service agencies only 9.3% provided services to lesbian victims of domestic violence. Typically all shelters, hotlines, and health services are geared toward serving female victims of a male batterer (Helfrich & Simpson, 2005). Michelle VanNatta (2005) explains “Contemporary battered women’s services are based on a model of abuse involving a violent, controlling man and a nonviolent, passive woman” (pp. 427).

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to shed light on the incidence of lesbian intimate partner violence, the practices of domestic violence shelters, the historical perspective of the LGBT communities and their formation, lesbian survivors and the services available to them. Continued research in the area of lesbian intimate partner violence is needed to elaborate upon previous

findings. In the next chapter, the theoretical perspective used to frame the present study will be discussed, along with the guiding research questions addressed in this study.

CHAPTER 3. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Domestic Violence Theory

In the most traditional academic sense, domestic violence has been examined using single causal models. Gelles (1993) outlines three general classifications of causal theories which have served as the traditional means of addressing domestic violence: Individual Models, Sociological Models and Socio-structural Models.

The Individual Model (Psychological) focuses primarily on the characteristics of both the batterer and the survivor in order to investigate the principle cause of violence. The elements of this model include self control and self esteem issues (Green 1984), mental illness (Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz 1980), criminal behavior inclinations (Hotaling, Straus and Lincoln 1989) and substance abuse (Kantor and Straus 1987). This theory focuses mainly on agency and does not address structural issues which contribute or lead to domestic violence.

The Sociological Model (Socio-psychological) focuses primarily on the institution of family (including dyads). This model investigates stressors specifically related to the families and how these stressors result in violence between partners. Such stressors could include socio-economic status, race, sexuality, income, education, beliefs regarding traditional gender roles and religion. The Sociological Model examines the effect each of these has on domestic violence. However, this model does not often include the structural context or the intersecting levels in which these occur.

The phenomenon of intergenerational violence, and how and why it is transferred, is also addressed by the Sociological model (Gelles 1993). Consideration is given to "...family structure, stress, the transmission of violence from one generation to the next, and the family interactional patterns" (Gelles, 1993:9). This model does not focus on a single characteristic of

social life and is seen as having limited value in creating solutions for intimate partner violence (Dwyer et al., 1995).

The final model that Gelles outlines is the Socio-structural Model (Feminist). This model is based mainly on feminist notions of domestic violence. The primary tenant of the feminist model is “Domestic violence cannot be adequately understood unless gender and power are taken into account” (Yllo 1993: 47). Feminists would argue that the pervasiveness of patriarchy evident in our legal system, including judges, law makers and law enforcers, continues to perpetuate the gender power imbalance of domestic violence.

While feminist models have been arguably the most recognized, they have many drawbacks which limit their effectiveness in theorizing domestic violence. Feminist theories have been criticized for their narrow definitions along with their reification of traditional gender roles (i.e. masculine equals man equals batterer, while feminine equal’s woman equals survivor).

The complexity of domestic violence requires more than a single causal model. While these models offer a vital perspective when part of an integrated framework, they are insufficient when used alone. More recently researchers have been incorporating a multi-systems approach in domestic violence models (Dwyer et al. 1995). Borrowing from the ground breaking work of psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner, DV researchers have used his theoretical contribution to examine domestic violence.

Bronfenbrenner (1973) used a multifaceted approach to understand child abuse. He recognized that we all live in a multitude of different environments and it is the interplay between these environments which creates certain conditions, such as child abuse. He developed four different environmental elements in his theoretical model: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem.

The microsystem is the immediate setting in which a person operates and participates in face-to-face interactions. Examples can include intimate interactions between family and friends, children and parents, and children and teachers, among others. Personal history is also included within the microsystem environment.

The mesosystem is the space in which two microsystems interact. The mesosystem “comprises the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates” (Bronfenbrenner 1979: pg25). Bronfenbrenner explains the connection and interaction between the home and school. For example, the events that occur at home can affect on the progress of the child in school. Home and school are each independent microsystems. However, what happens in one may have an effect on the happenings in the other.

The third environment is the exosystem. The exosystem is an environment in which the developing individual does not actively participate, but is certainly affected by (Weisz, Tolman, and Bennett 1998). In the case of children (Bronfenbrenner’s focus), the parents’ work place is an environment where children do not have direct involvement, but activities that happen there directly affect the child. Take for example the working mother. A child may not have any direct involvement with her/his mother’s work or work place but the fact that the mother is away at work does affect the child. The mother may not be able to pick the child up after school, may not be able to attend school functions during work hours and may have to divide her attention more so than if she was not working. The child is not directly involved the mother’s work, but it directly affects the child. This indirect interaction with direct affect is what Bronfenbrenner calls the exosystem.

The final environment in his ecological approach is the macrosystem which constitutes the larger societal framework (Bronfenbrenner 1979). In terms of Bronfenbrenner’s work, this

environment contains larger social and cultural institutions in which the individual lives, but usually has no control over. The macrosystem is the environment for which all other environments operate within. For example, in our society patriarchy is seen as a social norm. Patriarchy contains the issue of male entitlement, rigid gender roles, masculinity linked with aggression. All other environments operate under patriarchal rule. The traditional family that Bronfenbrenner is interested in operates and operationalizes patriarchy. It not only operates under the rules of patriarchy, it continues to reify patriarchy in daily interactions, thereby setting the stage for all other environments in which the family exists.

Ecological Modeling of Domestic Violence

While not all of Bronfenbrenner's environments, or his exact model, were neatly fashioned into a domestic violence theoretical model, his groundbreaking work describing the interplay among the personal, situational and social cultural factors, has given DV researchers the tools to create a more holistic theoretical model (Heise 1998). While the ecological model has been used extensively in the study of child abuse and neglect and to some extent by various battering theorists including Carlson, Dutton and Edleson and Tolman, this theoretical modeling approach has not been widely utilized by activists, academics or sociologists (Heise 1998).

The ecological model's role in the study of domestic violence suggests an opportunity exists for the development of multi-level interventions (Dwyer et al. 1995). "An ecological approach to abuse conceptualizes violence as a multifaceted phenomenon grounded in an interplay among personal, situational, and sociocultural factors" (Heise 1998:263). The integration and synthesis of varying levels of analysis allows for the formation of a collective model of domestic violence. Ecological theory's broad-based conceptualization and its focus on complex interaction is fitting in the investigation of family violence as a whole and more

specifically intimate partner violence (Little and Kantor 2002). This theoretical approach lends itself to a more holistic approach to intimate partner violence than the three models specified by Gelles. I believe that this type of approach is necessary due to the complexities of violence located within families and more specifically between intimate partners.

The phenomenon of domestic violence is complicated and complex when occurring within the traditional location of a heterosexual relationship. I would argue, however, the complexities of domestic violence are amplified when it occurs within any marginalized or minority group. These include sexual minorities, elderly, racial minorities, ethnic minorities, immigrants' or male victims of intimate partner violence. Turning to the focus of this paper, the personal and structural issues which have historically affected lesbians provide for a more convoluted structure of intimate partner violence. Due to the incompatibility of the heterosexual domestic violence modeling framework with lesbian intimate partner violence, I feel it is necessary to construct a theoretical model addressing lesbian intimate partner violence. I do not think that the single causality models previously presented by various disciplines can fully address the complexities of lesbian intimate partner violence. In order to create this ecological model, I depended upon existing literature and previously modeled ecological theories that examined others forms of violence.

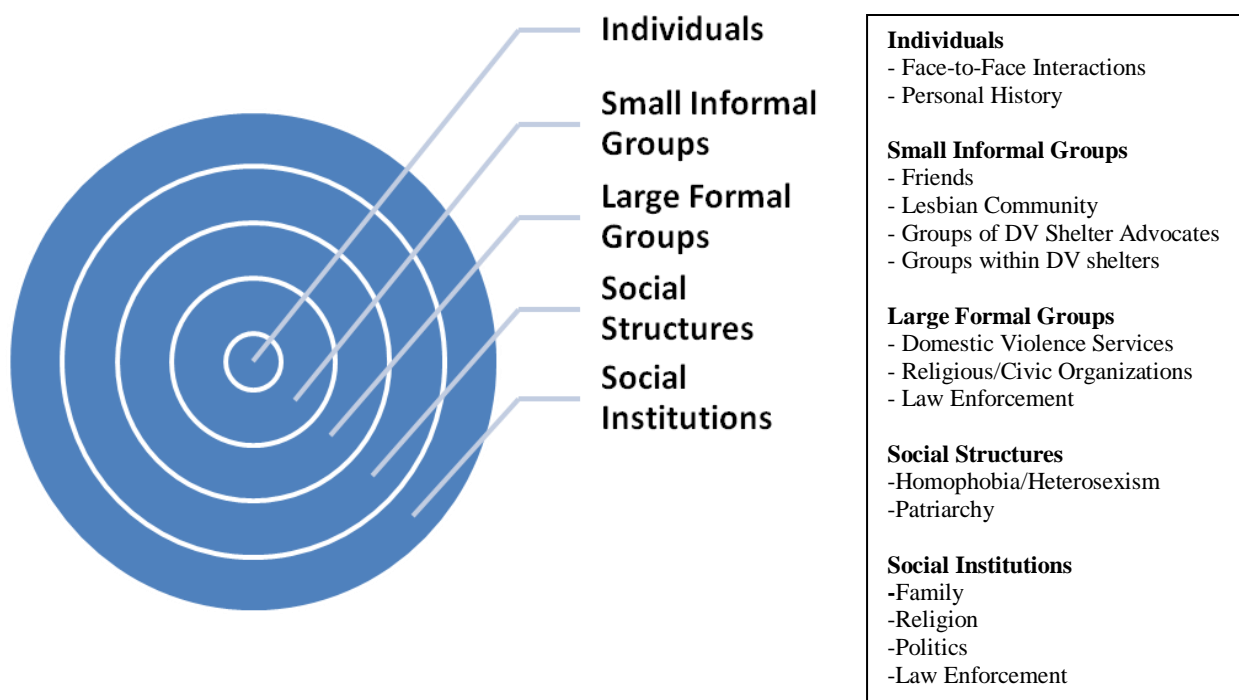


Figure 3.1 Ecological Model of Lesbian Intimate Partner Violence

Following the foundational elements of ecological theory, I have constructed a visual model of four concentric circles, each representing an environment which individuals occupy. The model seeks to represent the issues of each exclusive environment, the interplay between the environments and the affects they have on the individual. The presentation of this constructed theoretical model is crucial due to the lack of theoretical attention focusing solely on lesbian intimate partner violence and because researchers rarely examine all levels. This means that our understanding of domestic violence is fragmented.

As with many social phenomena, various discourses exist, often simultaneously, to explain the etiology of an experience. These explanations are often couched and bound by the perspective from which they are created, leaving large areas of the issue unaddressed. Such fragmentation prohibits a multifaceted, comprehensive, cohesive understanding of the problem. This is especially dangerous for populations that fall outside the normative margins (i.e. sexual

minorities, racial minorities, disabled individuals). Their experiences of IPV are made vastly more complicated by the social barriers of homophobia, heteronormativity, racism, etc. A single foci theoretical explanation lacks the sophistication to address the nuances which effect lesbian IPV. Therefore, a more intricate, robust theoretical framework is needed to appropriately address lesbian intimate partner violence.

Individuals

The innermost circle *Individuals* is the environment where face-to-face interactions and one's personal history dwells. Within lesbian intimate partner violence, such an environment constitutes the face-to-face exchanges between the lesbian survivor and batterer and the outside world. This includes their interactions with each other, other members of the lesbian community, domestic violence service workers, police officers and various members of larger social institutions including domestic violence service workers, police officers, judges and various members of larger social groups.

This environment also contains individuals' personal experiences. It is undeniable that each person brings their history into their daily lives. Personal history can affect the way a person perceives information, the way they respond to situations and their participation in face-to-face interactions. For example, internalized homophobia could affect the ways that individual lesbian survivors and perpetrator interact with each other and others outside their relationship.

Another example is having experienced violence in your family of origin. Several studies have concluded that heterosexual men and women who have witnessed marital abuse as a child, being abused oneself as a child or an adult, or witnessing violence in community increased the likelihood of becoming a survivor and/or perpetrator of IPV (CDC 2007). In terms of lesbian survivors, a number of researchers have found a high correlation between lesbians with a history

of family violence and increased risk for experiencing violence in their lesbian relationships (Lobel 1986; Renzetti 1992; Walker 2000).

Small Informal Groups

The next circle represents the *Small Informal Groups*. In the case of lesbian intimate partner violence, *small informal groups* include a lesbian group(s) of friends, the lesbian community and groups within the lesbian community¹, and domestic violence shelters or services and groups within DV shelters.

In terms of the lesbian community, this *small informal group* environment includes the group of friends held by the lesbian survivor or batterer or their collective group(s) of friends, collective members of the lesbian community who may come together over sporting events, traditional community activities such as going to a particular bar, lesbian organizations and services, such as a health initiative or support group, lesbian family groups or activist groups that may fight for gay marriage or equal rights for domestic partners.

Within another of these small informal groups, DV workers interact with survivors “on the ground” and deal with the real consequences of intimate partner violence. This informal group includes workers at shelters (that Loseke (1992) refers to as “street-level bureaucrats”). Such a group is usually comprised of the shelter managers, shelter workers, case managers, hotline workers, and volunteers who have direct, intimate contact with the survivors of domestic violence on a daily basis. Others involved in DV services, such as board members or other upper level executives of the organization, are not included in this group. The job of these individuals

¹ Admittedly, there is no single lesbian community. Their existence is multifaceted and diverse. There are women who have intimate relationships with other women who do not identify as lesbian. These women may identify as bisexual or women identified women. For the purpose of this paper the term “lesbian community” is meant to encompass any woman who has ever had an intimate relationship with another woman.

is often to direct the shelters and sustain the organization as an operative and productive entity, not to serve survivors direction.

In addition to the workers in the shelter, another group in this environment consists of the other residents who are also residing or seeking help within the shelter. This informal group can set the tone of the shelter and have a large impact on the overall experience of survivors residing there. Survivors living in the safe house interact with each on a daily basis and arguably more often than the limited number of shelter staff. Such an intimate living arrangement between practical strangers makes for a, difficult at best, situation. The personalities of individual shelter members and the dynamics of the group or groups within the shelter, have a great impact on the experience of each survivor living under the shelters roof. The group(s) has the ultimately authority in the type of experience another survivor is going to have in shelter. Shelter members who are accepted into the shelter group have a much different experience than those who are deemed outcasts.

Large Formal Groups

The third circle *Large Formal Groups*, represents groups in domestic violence services, religious/civic organizations and law enforcement. While this is not a comprehensive listing of all the large formal groups that could exist within this environment, for the purpose of this project, I will focus on domestic violence shelters and law enforcement.

In this model, domestic violence services and a shelter's environment are in two different environments. While it is atypical to see the same type of organization occupying two different environments in an ecological model, the internal hierarchy of domestic violence services and shelters creates a split in these organizations. These two distinct areas of DV organizations are

divided between the organizational or upper management division and the working or “on the ground” division.

The organizational or upper management division is often comprised of the board of directors, the founding agents and the executive director. This staff is often comprised of administrators, planners, coordinators and program designers (Loseke 1992). The goals, mission and organizational model of DV organizations are often created and maintained by board members, executive directors or steering committees directly responsible for the program’s continued operation (Loseke 1992).

Often their responsibility is focused primarily on the fiscal health and continued existence of shelters. While domestic violence shelters receive funding or grants from federal, state and local municipalities, there are many private or community contributors which are vital to the expansion and/or mere survival of the shelter. It is not uncommon for funding to be provided by various religious and civic organizations. This support not only arrives in monetary form but can also include food, clothing and a volunteer base (Loseke 1992). Therefore, religious and civic organizations play a vital role in this large formal group environment.

The morals and values of religious and civic organizations can and do dictate where they place their money and volunteer time. It makes sense that civil and religious organizations put their support behind institutions that exhibit and share their beliefs and goals. This type of power “to give or not to give” by the civil and religious organizations could potentially have great impact on the large formal group decisions of the DV organization (the board of trustees, the executive directors, etc). Therefore, the interplay between these large formal groups has a significant impact on the ways in which the DV shelter operates and who they will serve.

The last large informal group in this environment is law enforcement. The attitudes and beliefs of law enforcement as a whole and individuals carrying out law enforcement have an enormous impact on the outcome of domestic violence cases. Law enforcement is the entry point of DV cases in the legal system. If law enforcement or the law enforcement officer does not deem violence in an intimate partnership as domestic violence (a criminal offense), then technically that crime has not been committed and the parties involved are not privy to the prosecutions or protections guaranteed under the law.

Social Structures

The outermost ring *Social Structures* represents the context in which all of the inner environments exist and operate. In our society, patriarchy and heterosexism are two concepts in which all the previously discussed environments operate. Individuals and institutions alike are shaped, modeled and socialized within the confines and constraints of patriarchy and homophobia/heterosexism.

The interplay between these environments and the effect this has on survivors of lesbian intimate partner survivor and the lesbian community is complex and multifaceted. While it is possible that individual survivors of lesbian IPV may have positive and supportive experiences in their community, the literature and research does not indicate that positive experiences and supportive networks are the norm. Therefore, this initial theoretical model will focus on the problematic interplay between these four environments.

In the next section, I go into more depth about the interconnections between these environments. While there are other subgroups named within each environment, I will concentrate on the groups that this study addresses directly.

Individuals

Personal History

There are several risk factors that contribute to heterosexual women becoming survivors of intimate partner violence. These include witnessing childhood marital abuse, experiencing childhood physical or sexual abuse, unemployment, lack of education, low socio-economic class and low self esteem (CDC, 2007). There has been limited scholarship on the risk and protective factors for lesbian survivors of IPV. Internalized homophobia has been sighted as a possible risk factor for lesbian IPV (Shattuck 1992). Internalized homophobia is the personal acceptance and internalization of negative attitudes held by some members of society towards homosexuals (Renzetti 1992). The effects of internalized homophobia are low self-esteem, perceived powerlessness, obsessive concern with group stigma, denial of group membership and aggression against members of one's own group (Margolies et al. 1987). Internalized homophobia is born out of the interplay between the individual's feelings of one's self and the larger social structure of homophobia. If foundational elements of society did not include homophobia then internal homophobia would not exist.

Small Informal Groups

Lesbian Community and Individuals

While survivors can be hushed by their own beliefs and fears, they receive messages from members of their own community which aid in keeping their silence. Victims who seek services in the heterosexual community may be charged with being a traitor or a less than good steward of the lesbian community.

Minority groups seeking assistance often feel like asking for help is a direct reflection on their people. As discussed in terms of African American women in Donnelly et al. (2005),

seeking help outside the community has perceived or real negative connotations on the community at hand. This is no different for the lesbian community. Survivors of lesbian intimate partner violence who seek help outside the lesbian community are thought to be “airing the communities’ dirty laundry to the straight world” (Giorgio 2002).

This certainly reflects on the lesbian community as a whole. Survivors are caught in a double bind. It is imperative that they speak up and demand services in order for them to receive recognition in the world of heterosexual domestic violence services. However, if they do speak up, then they are seen as traitors in their own community. They disrupt the ideal of the lesbian community. The ideal being that lesbian relationships are unequivocally equal in terms of power, control, decision making, etc. Also because lesbian relationships do not include men, there is no place for violence to occur.

In the name of self-protection, the lesbian community continuously reconstructs and attempts to uphold this utopian, egalitarian image. It is an imperative to the community and cultural identity for lesbians to distance themselves from what they perceive as the unsavory characteristics of men. In order to combat the heterosexist notion that lesbians desire to be men, lesbian communities work tirelessly to distance themselves from patriarchal attitudes which privilege men over women. In theory, a community devoid of such patriarchal characteristics should be egalitarian in nature. However, it is clear that this utopian ideal is so embedded within the lesbian mindset that the lesbian community will often sacrifice one of their own in order to protect this exterior façade. In an attempt to conceal the reality of problems which occur in everyday lesbian lives, survivors of lesbian IPV maybe be shunned and scorned for their disloyalty to the lesbian community (Giorgio 2002).

The lack of recognition of lesbian IPV by some survivors, some batterers and the lesbian community supports a fertile breeding ground for continued lesbian violence. Some advocates as well as some victims may believe that women are not capable of violence (Giorgio 2002; Hassouneh and Glass 2008). Hiding violence works to perpetuate these misconceptions allows violence to continue unchecked.

Personal and Professional Distance

In any given geographical region, whether rural, suburban or urban, the communities in which lesbians socialize are small and intimate groups, much smaller than the greater heterosexual community. The closeness of such community members often does not allow a great deal of distance between the social and professional aspects of the lesbian community and its members.

In terms of intimate partner violence, this intimate knowledge of one's abuser or the very act of seeking help can threaten the anonymity of the lesbian survivor. The likelihood of contact between the social and the professional increases as the communities size decreases. This lack of social and professional distance increases the vulnerability of the survivor. Lesbian survivors of intimate partner violence often lack the protection of anonymity that other survivors, whether heterosexual or those residing in larger lesbian communities, depend. Such anonymity is not only vital to the protection and well being of the survivor but also to their ability to safely leave their batterer (Renzetti 1992).

Shelters/Services

The social construction of the battered woman within the domestic violence movement is influenced by feminist theories and philosophies. As Donieleen R. Loseke (1992) explains, there are several reasons why the so-called "street-level bureaucrats" of the shelters construct a

battered woman in the way they do. The ultimate goal is to select the “appropriate client” for their shelter. Given the fact that there are often many more requests for assistance than can be accommodated, shelter workers are saddled with the responsibility of recognizing survivors, triaging their needs, and accepting or referring elsewhere all who come in contact with the shelter.

Due to the intense pressure on shelter workers to manage the shelter in the most efficient, appropriate manner within their limited resources, the gate keeper may not view a lesbian survivor as an “appropriate client” for their shelter. This is not only an issue for lesbians but for any marginalized groups who are traditionally viewed as not being victims of intimate partner violence, such as minority women, and homeless women and men, whether heterosexual or homosexual (Donnelly et al. 1999).

In order to maneuver such gate keeping, some lesbian survivors may employ traditional stereotypes just to buy freedom into the mainstream shelters and services. For example, some lesbians seeking services at domestic violence shelters may pass as heterosexual in order to obtain the services the shelter has to offer without outing herself. This “passing” reduces the fear of discrimination due to her sexuality. These services and privileges are bought, however, at the cost of denying one’s sexuality and deceptively constructing an identity (Bograd 1999).

Such “passing” occurs at the cost of isolating and distancing oneself from the lesbian community. The argument could be made that the individual who chooses to buy these freedoms by passing is throwing the lesbian community and its members under the train. Not accurately representing oneself as a sexual minority allows both the domestic violence and the lesbian communities to continue to ignore the issue of lesbian intimate partner violence.

In addition to denial and passing, some survivors who recognize that they have experienced abuse at the hands of their intimate partner and decide to seek help, struggle with issues of loyalty and identity. Within domestic violence shelters, there is a common identity of survivor among all the residents, and it is assumed that this identity is that of a heterosexual survivor. This identity of “survivor” is the common link on which the shelter operates. The identity of a heterosexual survivor may be problematic for the lesbian survivor seeking refuge in traditional domestic violence shelters. It is at this point it seems that the lesbian survivor might have to make an identity choice; battered woman or lesbian. For most people, both inside and outside the shelter, these two identities seem incongruent.

The shelter climate is geared towards women who are battered by men. Shelter decor, pamphlets, and reading materials have gendered bias. This presents a particular problem for lesbian survivors seeking shelter. For lesbian survivors their actions within the shelter can stem from fear of dismissal, rejection, violence or discharge from the shelter, including the staff and other survivors, if it is known that they are lesbian or that their batterer was another woman. For example, their perceived unwillingness to fully or openly participate during counseling and group sessions does not stem from not being ready for help or lack of interest in the process, but simply from their discomfort with the shelter’s heteronormative environment.

As discussed previously, lesbian or bisexual survivors of lesbian IPV do not seek assistance from local DV shelters often, thereby hiding the epidemic of lesbian IPV. As one shelter worker stated about lesbian survivors “I don’t see a need for [LGBT services] right now. [LGBT people] do exist, but they never come to our agency” (VanNatta 2005). By no means am I suggesting that the blame be placed on the backs of the survivors of lesbian IPV. It is difficult, however, to refute shelters’ statements such as the one above that lesbian IPV does not exist.

Unfortunately without the visual presence of survivors of lesbian IPV in domestic violence shelters, lesbian survivors continue to go unnoticed and unheard. However, if shelters were able to shift their perspectives, widening their “selective” vision, it would be clear that many individual, besides white heterosexual women, are being abused in their intimate relationships.

Refusing to disclose ones’ sexuality due to fear of or real homophobia within the shelter or agency continues to closet the existence of non-heterosexual sexuality and leads to the domestic violence movement’s failure to recognize the spectrum within which domestic violence occurs. Without challenging the status quo, there is little chance that lesbian IPV will be taken seriously by the domestic violence movement and given the attention it needs and deserves. If the stereotype of women as victims and men as batterers is not challenged, then society will continue to ignore the fact that women can be aggressive and abusive, and abuse will go unnoticed based on these gendered stereotypes that the domestic violence field and society as a whole operates within.

Large Formal Groups

Domestic Violence Agencies

In some areas, shelters might be afraid of losing outside private funding for their shelter due to the homophobic nature of some religious and civic organizations. One study found that some shelters refused to serve lesbians due the disapproval of influential financial contributors and board members (Donnelly et al. 1999). Similarly, shelters are sometimes bound by the morals and values founding/supporting religious organizations as well as community standards. If a shelter depends on this support, financially or otherwise, they may be artificially limited to the types of services they can provide and to whom those services can be provided. The shelter

would not be able to help anyone if they risked serving minorities that the community did not approve of, such as lesbians survivors (Donnelly et al. 1999).

Social Structures

Homophobia

Homophobia, whether perceived or actual, is a large barrier for gays and lesbians seeking assistance for domestic violence. Services that are available to traditional victims of domestic violence are not always available to gays and lesbian. These include shelters, hotlines and support groups (McLaughlin & Rozee, 2001). Often times the first contact a survivor has with a shelter forces the survivor to reveal their sexuality when asked by the shelter work to identify their abuser. This immediately forces the survivor to make a decision: to out herself, to evade the question or to lie (VanNatta 2005).

Homophobia not only plays a part in the availability of services to gays and lesbians but also in interactions with battered heterosexual women seeking the same services in the shelter. This works to further alienate and isolate gay and lesbian victims (Balsam, 2001). Lesbian victims of SSDV need appropriate and adequate services made available to them in order to combat this seemingly new crisis within the lesbian and gay community (McLaughlin & Rozee, 2001).

Heterosexism

Heterosexism refers to an ideology which denies, degrades, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationships and community. It is defined as “a form of social control in which values, expectations, roles, and institutions normalize heterosexuality, which, in turn, is promoted and enforced formally and informally by structures in which men are dominant, that is, the patriarchy” (Spaulding 1999:13). Heterosexuality is assumed to be the

norm and everything outside of heterosexuality is constructed and perceived as deviant.

Heterosexual privilege is the invisible foundation under which society so effortlessly operates.

Patriarchy

Historically, patriarchy refers to the structuring of society fashioned after the family unit in which men have the primary responsibility for the well being of all. It also means that society is mostly controlled by men. Men are privileged and honored due to their disproportionate share of power and vice versa. Patriarchy is one of the foundational elements of feminist theories regarding domestic violence (Loseke 1992; Dwyer et al. 1995). Due to the power differential between men and women, men are seen as batterers while women are seen as victims. Some feminists would argue that individuals of the same sex do not have this power differential between them therefore any violence which occurs between same sex couples is not as critical or severe as violence between a man and a woman (McLaughlin and Rozee 2001; Hassouneh and Glass 2008).

Theory Building

In order to employ Bronfenbrenner ecological theoretical approach in the study of lesbian intimate partner violence I have developed three overarching research questions. These questions addressed the foundational elements of ecological theory in the study of lesbian intimate partner violence by examining the interplay between survivors of lesbian intimate partner violence, attitudes of lesbians regarding lesbian IPV, and attitudes and actions of representatives of services and shelters normally serving survivors of IPV.

1. How do lesbian communities' attitudes regarding lesbian intimate partner violence affect a) the lesbian survivor and b) domestic violence shelters/services?
2. How do domestic violence shelters/services affect a) the lesbian community and b) lesbian survivor of intimate partner violence?

3. How do survivors of lesbian intimate partner violence affect a) the lesbian community and b) domestic violence shelters/services?

Conclusion

This purpose of this chapter was to provide an in-depth explanation of and discussion of the ecological theoretical model and its relationship lesbian intimate partner violence. More research is needed to examine the interplay of the levels of the social ecology and how they impact lesbian IPV. The next chapter contains a detailed description of the in-depth interviews with lesbian survivors of lesbian intimate partner violence.

CHAPTER 4. QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

This chapter includes the results of semi-structured, in-depth, in person interviews with four lesbian women who admitted to having experienced intimate partner violence with a past partner. The names used in this chapter are all pseudonyms to protect the identity of these brave women who came forth to tell their story.

The chapter begins with an overview of the methodology and sampling procedures used in collecting these interviews. Then an overview of the sample's social background characteristics is presented. The majority of this chapter contains a compilation of results surrounding the themes that emerged in discussions with the women. Their own words are often used to illuminate their "stories."

Lesbian Survivor Interviews

In order to solicit participants for the lesbian life history interviews, I invited interested respondents from the community survey to take part. Respondents who had experienced intimate partner violence in relationships with other women were invited to contact me via email if they were interested in participating further in this project. The location at which the interviews took place was at the discretion of the participant. Three of the interviews were conducted in a professional location in a private office and one in a private home.

The sample size for this section consisted of four women who were survivors of lesbian IPV. Granted a sample of this size is extremely small for qualitative research. Lesbian survivors, however, are an extremely hard to reach population. The results of this analysis are not representative beyond the confines of this particular sample. The demographics for this sample are presented in table 4.1.

The sample for the in-depth interviews with lesbian survivors consisted of four women. Three of them were in their thirties (31, 36 and 37) and one classified herself as between ages 40-50. Three out of the four identified as white and one as African American. All four stated they were middle class in terms of SES. Two of the women were working on their PhD and two held a BA or BS degree. All but one worked full-time. They earned a range of incomes from 10-12k up to 80k per year. All participants identified their sexual identification as lesbian and their gender as female. All these women had been out for a number of years. Two have been out more than 20 years while the other two were out twelve and fourteen years. Three of the four women were in committed relationships and none of them were experiencing IPV in their current relationship.

Variable Name	Measurement	Percentage
Age	30-39 years of age	75
	40-50 years of age	25
Race	White	75
	African American	25
Education	Bachelors Degree	25
	Some Graduate School	25
	Masters Degree	50
Employment Status	Employed Full-Time	75
	Student	25
Income	Less than \$20,000	25
	\$20,000 less than \$40,000	25
	\$60,000 less than \$80,000	25
	\$80,000 less than \$100,000	25
Sexual Identity	Lesbian	100
Relationship Status	Married or Married Like	75
	Not Committed	25
Level of Disclosure of Sex ID	Fully Out	100
Time in Lesbian Community	11-15 years	25
	16-20 years	25
	More than 20 years	50

Instrument

In conducting lesbian survivor life history interviews, I asked a range of questions including demographic information, relationship information, violence experienced in

relationship(s), perception of lesbian community attitudes, assistance sought and experience if assistance was sought. See appendix A for list of survivor interview questions.

Data Management

The digital recordings of the face-to-face interviews with lesbian survivors were erased upon completion of transcription. Each interview was assigned a case number. No personal identifying information was included in the transcripts. The original transcribed interviews were secured and maintained in a locked file cabinet to which only my dissertation chair and I had access. The electronic versions of the transcripts were kept in a password protected computer to which only I had the password.

Data Analysis

For the life history interviews, I used the modified grounded theory processes of open, axial and selective coding (Glaser and Strauss 1967). There were several modifications to the traditional grounded theory process. First, the instrument was not altered as data was collected. The questions for the qualitative interviews were created prior to data collection and remained stable to allow for direct comparison between the interviewees. In addition, the sample size limited the usefulness of changing the focus of the research while collecting data. Second, I did not modify the research strategy during the research process. Again, the sample size limited the organic development of a research strategy found in traditional grounded theory (Charmez 2006). Third, saturation of categories was not reached in the data. Saturation refers to the cessation of coding due to the lack of new theoretical insight being found in the data. The data is said to then be saturated (Charmez 2006). The small sample size offers limited probability of saturation occurring. While this study does contain a small sample, the population of lesbian survivors who would participate in such a study is small, hard to reach population.

The coding process began with open coding in three phases. Open coding is the first part of the coding process. In this process, each line of the transcript is carefully read and themes are identified throughout. Then codes are assigned that describe these themes. In order to analyze the data, first, I used line-by-line open coding, reading each line of the transcript, identifying themes and assigning codes throughout the document. I began to develop concepts which were directly linked to indicators within the text. Using a constant comparison method, I continuously compared the next line and its indicators with concepts that I had already developed. This process allowed me to begin to see linkages between the concepts and variables created with each session of open coding. As I continued to discover new indicators, I connected them with other variables until there were no more new indicators.

After coding line-by-line I reread the entire response from the participant to ensure I had not overlooked any concepts and also to identify any discrepancies within the response that I might have overlooked in my line by line examination.

During the next phase of modified grounded theory methods, I employed axial coding. Axial coding is the process of identifying relationships between codes. In the process of axial coding an understanding of phenomenon, context, intervening conditions and causality begin to emerge. In axial coding, I examined each variable independently to look for the causes, contingencies and consequences of each variable. I accomplished this by writing each variable, one at a time on separate sheets of paper looking for causes, contingencies and consequences of the variable. Seeing the variable in the center of the page allowed me to only focus on that one variable. Through this process, I was able to continue to link variables together.

This sample represents the innermost circle in the ecological model, the Individual Level or what Bronfenbrenner called the microsystem. The Individual Level houses the biological,

demographic and personal history factors that each survivor brings to her behavior in an intimate partnership. Also, the Individual Level is the direct setting in which the person operates and participates in face-to-face interactions and where one's personal history lies. For lesbian survivors these face-to-face interactions take place in their intimate relationships and with individuals in the Informal Small Groups level including friends, family, and members of the lesbian community. Also lesbian survivors have face-to-face interactions with advocates from domestic violence shelters and law enforcement officers, both of these entities lie in the Formal Large Group environment. For the women in this sample, their stories tell of their interactions with their families, their partners, domestic violence shelters, and law enforcement. In addition, their stories indicate the profound effect their interactions with these groups had on them and their experience of intimate partner violence.

The results presented below are categorized by the themes that emerged during analysis of the data. Past relationships and experiences surrounding the violence the women suffered are discussed for each of the subheadings that follow. Each of the subheadings resides within the ecological model. The survivors' individual histories, traits and experiences affect the way that she sees, understands and reacts to the other levels of the social ecology.

While the experience of the survivor lies within the individual environment of the social ecology, these experiences do not occur in a vacuum. The other levels of the social ecology directly influence the experience of the survivor. The influence of these other environments can be seen in interplay between the individual environment and the other levels of the social ecology; small groups (family, friends and the lesbian community); large groups (domestic violence shelters and law enforcement); and finally by the encompassing social structures

(homophobia and heterosexism). Each of these environments has its own unique influence over the experience of the lesbian survivor.

Background of Violence

Family of origin violence has been shown to a major risk factor for becoming a survivor of lesbian intimate partner violence. Several studies have concluded that lesbians who experienced or witnessed violence in their families of origin were also more likely to experience lesbian IPV (Schilit, et al. 1991; Lockhart, et al. 1994; Tjaden, et al. 1999; Tigert 2001). All the women interviewed had either experienced or witnessed multiple forms of violence in their family of origins, so I felt it was important to address their childhood histories.

Two of the women interviewed had witnessed verbal or physical abuse; one had experienced physical abuse and the fourth sexual abuse as a child. Both women who experienced abuse were abused by male siblings. The long lasting effects of violence in childhood are evident in these women's stories. The abuse these survivors witnessed or experienced in their childhoods were perpetrated solely by males. Their previous experience and socially supported belief that only males are batterers impeded their recognition of their own battering as adult women thus causing a delay in the cessation of abuse.

Barbara, age 36, reported hearing her grandfather verbally abuse her grandmother. Lynn, age 31, had a physically abusive grandfather:

“My grandfather was physically abusive to my grandmother, yeah, verbally abusive to my grandmother...[he] was an alcoholic and just a son-of-a-bitch really.”

Barbara's perception of her grandfather would later impact the ways in which she viewed violence in her own relationship. Anyone who did not meet that criterion was not seen, in her mind, as a batterer.

Susan, age 37, had both witnessed and experienced verbal abuse from her father:

“He [father] would demean her [mother] a lot...I always remember him calling her stupid. So it’s- it was hard cause it’s like we- my mom couldn’t live up to his expectations and none of us could either. So that- there was that. And I mean he was always, always talking bad about my weight and that sort of thing.”

Kimberly, age 45, had experienced physical abuse at the hands of her adopted brother who suffered from mental illness.

“He was extremely violent and very scary and abusive towards me when my parents were not around and he was much younger. There was one incident where he chased me around the house with a butcher knife, right, while my mom was at school, my dad was at work. But, yeah he hit me and whatever all the time.”

Lynn, age 31, who described her childhood as devoid of violence and “extremely unremarkable” went on to explain that she was sexually abused by her oldest brother when she was 7 or 8 years old. Later, her intimate partner’s knowledge of this abuse became justification for perpetrating emotional, physical and sexual violence against her. Lynn’s partner felt the need to “toughen her up” and would use the knowledge to sexually and emotionally abuse her.

As detailed later in the chapter, the women’s experience of abuse from male family members affected their ability to recognize and deal with the violence experienced in their intimate relationship with another woman. Their experiences created an ideal of what battering looked like and what a batterer looked like. These ideas created greater problems for the survivors in terms of identifying, accepting and escaping their abusive relationship.

Major Findings

1. You Fight Like a Girl

This theme focuses on the gendered ideals that lie beneath intimate partner violence, which includes the types of violence the women experienced in their intimate relationships and the recognition and legitimization of lesbian IPV by friends, family, shelter services and law

enforcement. The firmly engrained societal belief that only men are aggressive and violent is the discourse that forcefully conceals the violence that is perpetrated by women against other women. These beliefs foster the myth that lesbian relationships are more egalitarian, partners do not abuse each other, and two women are neither big enough nor strong enough to inflict serious harm (McLaughlin and Rozee 2001). Fights involving two women are nothing more than a “Cat Fight” where scratching and hair pulling exist as the outermost limits of their violent aggression (Hassouneh and Glass 2008.)

2. The Gender Myth

Lesbians are socialized in the same heterosexist, male dominated society and hold some of the same beliefs as others. Like most of society, they find authenticity in the artificial idea that men are aggressive and women aren't. This belief has contributed to the myth that lesbians neither oppress nor abuse one another. Girshick (2002) lays out the circular argument which leaves survivors isolated, invisible, and imaginary “A women is not supposed to be a sexual perpetrator or batterer. Without the perpetrator, there cannot be a victim; hence, women cannot be victims of assault by other women.”

Kimberly demonstrates the fallacy of this belief in her story:

They just think they- people can't fathom women doing that to each other. Because we're suppose to be loving and nurturing and all that crap but – and I think women think that too. I think it happens just as much as it does in the heterosexual world, because we're the same people. I mean just because we're gay doesn't mean that we're not – that there's not violent people in our community.

The myth that women cannot hurt one another does not exist only in the heterosexual community. It is also alive and well in the lesbian community. Lynn describes the messages she has received from members of the lesbian community.

I have heard, unfortunately, lots of stories of women that have gone through domestic violence situations and the attitude that I've always heard is that it's not domestic

violence; it's two women arguing. It's a catfight. It's, you know, you're both women, so you should be able to figure it out. It's almost like there's this belief that domestic violence can only happen if there is physical power; there's a physical power difference. It has to be that someone is more physically able to control the other one, which isn't the case.

This pervasive misconception about violence in lesbian relationships is dangerous to lesbian survivors. This common air of disbelief works to strengthen the wall of denial that continues to entrap lesbians who are battered by their partners.

Lynn was working in a domestic violence shelter while she was being abused at home and still did not recognize her experience as IPV

It happened so gradual that it took – it took before – it got serious before I realized how bad it was and I think I had a mindset... I felt immune. I had went through all these trainings and I was a counselor at the domestic violence shelter and I was a volunteer there, and I think because there was no male component... I think it took me longer to accept what was really going on.

In addition to the societal beliefs into which Lynn was indoctrinated, her formal training at the domestic violence shelter reaffirmed the idea that in order for intimate partner violence to exist there must be a “male component.” Compounded with Lynn’s own personal experience of being sexually abused by her brother, these experiences further cemented her thoughts that in a relationship with another woman she was safe, and as she said “immune.”

The denial that women can and do abuse each other puts women at greater risk even when they are reaching out for help. Susan opened up to her mother about her abusive relationship and asked her mother for help after being beaten by her partner, Greta.

My mom didn't believe me—when I told her she didn't believe that she- her reaction was that doesn't happen with other women. Women don't do that to each other. And I think it took her actually seeing me bruised to have her realize the yeah, I wasn't just blowing this out of proportion. It hurt. It made me feel like she didn't believe what I was telling her. When I called her and asked her to come over and get me because Greta had hurt me, she stopped at a sewing machine place on the way because she had an errand to run. So, I mean that – that, I think hurt more than Greta's fist.

The lack of support from family, friends and the lesbian community injure survivors as much, if not more, than the violence perpetrated against them by their partners. The mistaken belief that a) violence does not occur in the absence of men and b) lesbians relationships are egalitarian and immune from violence supports, perpetuates and further enables lesbian intimate partner violence to flourish unrestrained. In addition, the lack of support by family and friends creates additional barriers for the survivor to overcome. Due to the lack of support from traditional domestic violence agencies, law enforcement and judicial systems, not being believed, supported or assisted by family and friends is a devastating blow to these women who suffer at the hands of their intimate partners. It truly leaves them isolated with no place to turn thus making it extremely difficult to escape the violence.

3. How Girls Fight

As stated previously, violence between women is not seen as particularly harmful or dangerous to the women involved. The stories of these women provided graphic images of the level and extent of violence perpetrated by women. The range of abuse experienced in this sample included emotional abuse (isolation, control, threats to pets, harassing phone calls), verbal abuse (yelling, name calling, insults), stalking, throwing object to frighten, financial abuse (taking entire paycheck, creating debt, stealing money), physical abuse (restraining, pushing, shoving, punching, slapping) and sexual abuse (coercion, forced sex, rape). The women experienced a combination of multiple forms of violence.

The women's stories bring to light the types of emotional, physical and sexual violence they experienced at the hands of their female partners. The violence in the relationship started slow and was almost always undetectable or unrecognized by the survivors., The violence

increased in severity and frequency over time, sometimes peaking when the survivor tried to leave the relationship.

Barbara described her relationship as more emotionally abusive and controlling but it became physical when she tried to leave.

I remember the first time very much. I was going to end the relationship. I had gone to stay at some friend's house and that's where I was going to move into. And she showed up there, and I remember I was in bed. And she comes and just gets on top of me and is just punching me in the face over and over and over again. "Your not going to leave me....You're not going to go, I won't let you.

Susan described the types of violence and the escalation of violence she experienced.

I mean screaming really loud and she would call me stupid, she would tell me I'm fat and just always hit on the things that really hurt, you know. For the first year there wasn't any physical violence. She was very controlling as far as sexually. She had to always be the one to initiate and it was when she wanted. That's when we would have sex. After the physical abuse started happening she wouldn't take no for an answer. And typically it was after there had been- like after she had hit me. At first she would just bitch and bitch and bitch until I finally was like okay, whatever, and I'd just lay there and whatever. But towards the end of our relationship, which it was five years, towards the end of the relationship there – she would physically force me to have sex. She would rape me. And I think that happened probably two or three times towards the end of our relationship.

In addition to emotional and physical abuse Lynn also suffered sexual abuse. Her partner was also very cruel and used the abuse Lynn had suffered as a child to hurt her.

She claimed that she felt she needed to toughen me up and she used to say she couldn't stand women that were weak and couldn't handle things. But there was a time that she pinned me down and she just was touching me and it made me very uncomfortable and she knew that, and she was like, "Oh, is this the way you used to let your brother fuck you?" and things like that, just really cruel. Really cruel, she was good at that.

It is not difficult to see that the types of violence experienced by these women far exceed a "cat fight" and do not differ significantly from violence found in male to female IPV. Female batterers can and do perpetrate the same types of violence as male batterers. These findings are consistent with Miller et al. (2001). In a study of lesbian IPV, Miller et al. (2001) concluded that

lesbians use the same types of aggression and violence that are found in heterosexual relationships.

4. To Protect and To Serve

A police officer may be the first contact a lesbian survivor has with formal protection and a link to potential services (Simpson and Helfrich 2005.) In the sample, three of the women had called the police. In one case, when 911 was called, the police never responded. In the other cases, the police had responded to their residence multiple times. Only one call resulted in the batterer being arrested and removed from the situation.

The police were often called by neighbors to Susan's house for domestic violence.

The police came out three or four times. It was always a neighbor who called. They would just tell us to behave and that, you know, that we needed to act like ladies. They didn't even ask for an explanation. They just told us to go and you know, whenever they would come they would just say you guys need to be quiet. When she was hitting me outside and they came and I was physically bruised she-she didn't even try and explain it away at all. She just kind of stood there and then the police left. But after the police left it was awful. Because even though it wasn't me that was calling she still blamed me.

Law enforcement equated the situation occurring at Susan's house as more of a disturbing the peace call than domestic violence. Not only did the police not shelter Susan from the violence but their lack of recognition or concern appeared to have emboldened her abuser. Repeated inaction on the part of law enforcement reassured Susan's partner that she was not committing any crime, insinuating this was not abuse, and that Susan's calls for help would be ignored; therefore, essentially giving her partner the "green light" to continue as she pleased.

Lynn contacted the police several times. Once when living in a more suburban area of the Northeast, she was told by police that they couldn't make her batterer leave. Lynn states when she finally moved to a more metropolitan area, calling the police produced different results.

The police came out and I think I locked myself in the bathroom at the time, but the

police got there and she was twisting the story “Oh, that’s not what happened. It was mutual and we were shoving.” One of the officers looked at me and saw that I – my face was, you know, bruised and I was bleeding and they arrested her. And she actually had a charge and I think she had to do some community service or that kind of thing.

Living in a metropolitan area can increase the odds that lesbian survivors of lesbian IPV may be receive more appropriate treatment by the local police department. Metropolitan areas are assumed to have more diversity and police may be better prepared to deal with intimate partner violence situations devoid of heterosexual relationships, however, location does not guarantee that law enforcement will take the incident seriously or act accordingly.

5. Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell

In this theme, there are several variables, including personal, perpetrator and community denial. Denial at the individual and community level was perpetuated by the secrecy, silence and concealment of violence occurring in lesbian relationships. On a personal level, many of the survivors recognized that they were unable in the beginning to recognize or admit the abuse that was occurring in their relationships. They talked about the reasons for and the strength of their denial, and their inability to recognize that they were being abused.

Barbara’s family had rejected her when she told them she was a lesbian. Her partner was the person who took her in and loved her and she felt rescued her from her family. This experience affected her ability to recognize violence in her relationship.

And then I found her, and she seemed like a savior to me, someone who was going to help me. She loved me...It was difficult because I kept looking at her as this person that had rescued me from my family and so I would always make excuses for whatever she was doing.

Susan also believed that her experiences with her father and his verbal abuse clouded her judgment in her relationship with Greta.

I think now that I look back on it there were- there were signs right away about how she was controlling and that sort of thing. But I just-you know, I was very much into

someone who was attracted to me and you know it was very flattering and it was all that I knew and of course I just closed my eyes to all those worries.

The levels of personal denial these women's stories demonstrate make it clear their experiences with their families of origin made it most difficult to identify painful realities in their relationships.

The women in the sample reported different experiences in communicating with their partners about the violence taking place in their relationships. The level of communication ranged from absolutely no communication or recognition of the abuse, to a limited amount of careful communication to full recognition but colluding against their therapist.

Barbara recalls that there was absolutely no talk about the violence with her partner.

We never talked about that. We never talked about it. It would just happen and then it would just be done. We never talked about it. Why would we need to? I would find myself apologizing for having my ass kicked.

Lynn states she and her partner could talk about the violence but never in a condemning way.

We talked about it some, and she admitted a lot of it. We would talk about – we would talk about it, but never in an accusatory manner. It was more like about fights or that sort of thing. I can't say that we were ever completely honest.

Susan and her partner talked openly about the violence and sought assistance from a couple's counselor but they purposefully agreed that there would be no talk of the violence.

She immediately would apologize and say she was so sorry and she would, you know, she would never do it again. And we tried counseling, you know, we went to couples therapy and had things up on the fridge about, you know, what our triggers were and that sort of thing and how, you know, we were going to work on these things. But of course neither one of us were honest with the counselor about the physical violence. We – and you know, that was the plan when we went in. We talked about it before we went, we're not going to tell her about that, we'll talk about our verbal fighting and that's it.

The collusion between the couple to keep the violence in their relationship a secret when seeking help further empowered the batterer by having the survivor participate in the sabotage of outside

assistance. By the survivor purposefully keeping this information from the therapist, the batterer's behavior is minimized along with the seriousness of the situation.

The lack of recognition, accountability and communication within the dyad makes it difficult to talk about intimate partner violence with family and friends. Survivors often feel shame and blame themselves for the abuse. They often feel like they have done something to cause the abuse or that the abuse is just normal. Barbara explains what prevented her from telling anyone and why she still keeps this secret today.

I just didn't have those conversations with people. Most of it was that I was ashamed of what was going on. I would never tell anyone because I thought I had done something. No body ever knew what was going on. No one knew. And to this day I still haven't shared with my parents.

The shame Barbara carried made it almost impossible for her to recognize that the abuse she was experiencing was not her fault. The shame increased her isolation, distancing her not only from friends and family, but from a way out of her abusive relationship.

In addition to feeling ashamed and responsible for the abuse, survivors may not only be blamed for the violence by friends, family and the lesbian community but also for not stopping it. Lynn talked about the reaction to intimate partner violence she had witnessed in her community.

There's actually a woman that I knew really, really well and she, that's one of the ways in we connected is that she had gone through an abusive relationship, and she said that they, you know, she had – they had- tons of friends that knew, but it was more so seen as personal and “If you really wanted to, you could do something about it. You could fight back. You don't have to sit there and take it. So whenever you're ready to be a woman, then, you know, it'll – you know, she'll stop doing this to you.

Barbara works in the field of domestic violence now and tries to speak to her lesbian friends about intimate partner violence.

My friends that I have, you know, they- you know, they're all like, “well if somebody were to beat me, I'd just get the hell out of it and I'd leave. I would just kick their ass back.” I'm like ok, whatever.

Susan eventually told her friend what she had experienced in her relationship with Greta.

So when I told my friends, I know I was the first person that they ever knew and I think it was a big eye opener for them. Because they did – they did believe me. You know, I didn't – it's not that they didn't believe me, they were just shocked and they didn't know how to even talk to me about [intimate partner violence], you know. So, they do now. I mean we've talked about it now and I think all of them now have known another person who has been abused by their partner.

Opening up to friends and family about an abuse in an intimate relationship can be difficult.

However, communication about lesbian IPV and sharing personal experiences with friends and family is vital in breaking the denial that surrounds this type of abuse.

The experiences of these three women differ greatly. Lynn's and Barbara's experiences demonstrate the denial held on a community level. For years, intimate partner violence in heterosexual relationships was seen as a private matter between a man and his wife. People took the general attitude of "it's none of my business what happens behind closed doors" or "she could leave if she really wanted to." Due to the women's movement and the subsequent domestic violence movement these ideals have started to change.

However, in the lesbian community the amount of knowledge, recognition and communication is sorely lacking and thus we see the same lackadaisical attitudes that the heterosexual community once held. Susan's ability to share with her friends and her friends' ability to listen enabled them to understand and learn what was happening within her lesbian relationship. Such willingness allows a conversation to begin and for people to start to recognize what is no longer a "family" secret.

6. Wonder-Twin Powers: Heterosexism and Homophobia

This theme revolves around the affects of heterosexism and homophobia on the survivor of lesbian intimate partner violence. As discussed in previous chapters, heterosexism is the

institutional and societal reinforcement of heterosexuality as the privilege and powerful norm, while homophobia is the fear of homosexuals. Homophobia exists in both hetero and homosexuals. Internal homophobia is the internal feeling of homosexuality as wrong and immoral and harboring feelings of worthlessness about oneself due to their homosexuality (Balsam 2001).

Interestingly, two of the women in the sample talked about the heterosexist views of their families and how these views endangered them and possibly kept them in abusive relationships longer. Even though their families had expressed disbelief in a woman's capability of perpetrating IPV, they were quick to blame the survivor's sexuality for the abuse.

Barbara links the consequences of heterosexism and homophobia of her family directly to the length of time she stayed in an abusive relationship.

I wonder also because you have a whole other layer of oppression from being a victim of domestic violence in a lesbian relationship if your family has turned – like turns against you. I mean, I think that now, thinking back, that I don't think I would have stayed as long had I had the support of my family. You know, I couldn't have gone to my mom and been like, hey, my girlfriend is beating me up- you know, because that was not an option. Because she would have been like, well, that's what's going to happen, you know?

The reaction Barbara anticipated from her family if she told them about the abuse coexisted with the other factors in her relationship to keep her entangled with her abusive partner. Not only does heterosexism and homophobia marginalize those who are not heterosexual, for survivors of intimate partner violence, it can keep their secrets hidden, it can isolate them from their families and ultimately hinder their efforts to end an abusive relationship.

Lynn's parents would not have liked any woman Lynn was involved with simply because she was a lesbian. This fact along with Lynn's fear of her parents' reaction to the abuse she was experiencing made her feel like she needed to stand up and protect her relationship even more.

I mean, no matter who she was, they weren't gonna like her, but they- I felt like I didn't want them to say "Oh look. See? You know it's because you're a lesbian. If you weren't a lesbian, this wouldn't happen."

Not only did Lynn suffer the consequences of homophobia in her family, the homophobic beliefs held by her partner kept her isolated and controlled cutting off her links to the lesbian community.

I didn't have a lot of lesbian friends. She would not allow me to share that we were in a relationship because she was still in the closet. She didn't want to be identified as a lesbian couple and she felt like if I identified as a lesbian, then she would have to identify as a lesbian and that would be an issue. So I can't say that there were any friends for me to talk to because she had – she had not – she didn't want that.

Heterosexism and homophobia, both in and outside the lesbian community, contributed to these women remaining in an abusive relationship. If these phenomena were absent, both Barbara and Lynn might have had the love and support they needed to flee their batterers and reduce the amount of abuse they endured.

Conclusion

This chapter details the major findings from semi-structured interviews with four lesbian women who had survived intimate partner violence in a relationship with another woman. The results of the interviews highlighted the ways in which various levels of the social ecological framework influenced the survivor's experience of IPV in terms of: gender norms and expectations, denial of lesbian IPV, survivor's ability to ask and receive help, and heterosexism and homophobia.

Society's acceptance and expectation of gendered traits affected how those in the other levels of the social ecology thought about lesbian IPV. The overarching societal understanding of gender not only did not allow for women to perpetrate violence, but certainly women were not

allowed to perpetrate violence against other women. This belief was stronger than the reality that lesbian IPV does exist and lesbians do perpetrate violence against their female partners.

These gendered assumptions allowed for continued denial of lesbian IPV not only in the lesbian community, but other small groups as well, such as friends and family. The majority of the sample was met with great resistance in believing that women could perpetrate intimate partner violence. The stories of their violent experiences were not believed by their community, their friends or their family due to the strong hold of the gendered assumptions which lead to denial that women could not batter other women. This created more obstacles and barriers for lesbian survivors to overcome in order to escape their abusive relationship and stop the violence.

The survivor's efforts to deal with and/or end escape the violence they were experiencing were complicated by the presence of homophobia and heterosexism. These social structures exist in the most outer level of the social ecology and have profound influence over the environmental interactions. This is most evident when the survivors spoke of their efforts to invoke law enforcement to assist them during a particular violent episode. The actions of law enforcement ranged from dismissal of the violence taking place between the partners to a complete unwillingness to respond to the survivor's request for help.

It is clear that the norms, beliefs and actions of various entities residing in all levels of the social ecology have a profound impact not only on the experiences of lesbian survivors but in survivor's ability to recognize the reality of their situation and take steps to protect themselves from violence and abuse in their intimate relationships. In the next chapter, I will discuss the findings from the Lesbian Community Survey.

CHAPTER 5. QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

This chapter contains results from the Lesbian Community Survey. This survey was collected from a local lesbian community in a large metropolitan area. In terms of the ecological model, the lesbian community resides in the Small Group Environment or what Bronfenbrenner labeled a mesosystem. The small group environment is the space where two microsystems interact. This environment is comprised of the interchange between two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates (Bronfenbrenner 1979). The findings from the Lesbian Community survey will provide insight into the attitudes and the behaviors of the lesbian community surrounding lesbian intimate partner violence. In the discussion I will expand on how the findings from the Lesbian Community Survey impacts lesbian survivors.

In this chapter, I first present the hypotheses, methodology and sample characteristics for the Lesbian Community Survey. Then I present frequencies, means and ranges of each variable in the study. Next I descriptive data on items from the survey are provided. It begins with the frequencies, mean and range of each variable in the study. Next the attitudinal and behavioral items asked in the survey are described. Results of analyses to test each set of hypotheses are described in detail. Finally, results from logistic regression of Revised Conflict Tactics Scale are explained.

Hypotheses

Specifically for the quantitative section I developed a number of hypotheses which were developed out of the review of the literature and my knowledge of the community. These hypotheses allowed me to examine the attitudes of the larger lesbian community, assess differences in attitudes within the community and the ways in which attitudes of masculine women and feminine women differ. These hypotheses were:

1. Masculine lesbians are less likely than feminine lesbians to consider lesbian IPV a serious issue in the lesbian community.

Masculine lesbians may be less likely to admit having been a victim of abuse in their intimate relationship. Admitting such abuse could threaten their masculine, butch/stud persona (Anderson 2005). Therefore, due to such a threat, masculine lesbians may refrain from talking about lesbian IPV in their communities. This lack of communication could lead to the belief that lesbian IPV is not a serious community issue.

2. Lesbians who use physical aggression during conflict with their intimate partners are less likely than those not using physical aggression to consider lesbian IPV a serious issue in the lesbian community.

Lesbians who are physically abusive to their partners are less likely to recognize their actions as acts of intimate partner violence. These lesbians would be less likely to consider lesbian intimate partner violence as serious in the lesbian community due to their inability to recognize their own actions as violent.

3. Lesbians who use physical aggression during conflict with their intimate partners are more likely than those not using physical aggression to justify using violence in intimate relationships.

As in Hypothesis 2, lesbians who use physical aggression in their intimate relationships may not recognize their actions as incidents of intimate partner violence. Therefore, they may justify their physical actions in order to convenience themselves or others that their actions are not abusive.

4. Lesbians who have not experienced aggression (verbal or physical) by their intimate partners are less likely than those who have experienced aggression (verbal or physical) to consider lesbian IPV as common in the lesbian community.

Due to the high level of denial in the lesbian community surrounding the existence of lesbian IPV, lesbians who have not experienced violence in their relationship may not believe that lesbian IPV is a common occurrence in the lesbian community.

5. Lesbians who have experienced physical aggression at the hands of their intimate partners are less likely than those who have not to intervene when witnessing lesbian IPV.

Lesbians who have been physically abused by their intimate partner may be more likely recognize a situation where IPV is occurring in a lesbian relationship thus sympathizing with the survivor. In turn, they may be more likely to intervene due to their own experience than lesbians who have not ever experienced lesbian IPV.

6. Feminine lesbians are more likely than masculine lesbians to believe that there are community resources for lesbian IPV survivors.

Lesbians who have traditional gender presentation (feminine) may not experience the same types of discrimination as lesbians with nontraditional gender presentation (masculine). Therefore, feminine lesbians may be accustomed to having services available to them to address their needs i.e. health services, gynecological services, etc. They may assume that services would also be available for lesbian survivor of intimate partner violence.

7. Lesbians who use physical aggression during conflict with their intimate partners have a more narrow definition of acts that constitute lesbian IPV.

Lesbians who use physical aggression may have difficulty defining their actions in their intimate relationship as violent. Therefore, when asked if certain acts constitute lesbian intimate partner violence, they may recognize the actions they have perpetrated and become reluctant to define them as examples of lesbian IPV; thus constructing a narrower definition of lesbian IPV.

8. Masculine lesbians are less likely than feminine women to report having experienced intimate partner violence.

As stated previously, masculine lesbians may experience greater difficulty in recognizing abuse perpetrated upon them by their intimate partner due to the threat on their personal identity. For this reason, masculine lesbians may be less likely to report having experienced abuse at the hands of their partner.

Lesbian Community Sample

For lesbian community data, I used a non-probability convenience or snowball sample, recruited from a variety of sources. I sent emails to local list-serves of lesbian and lesbian-friendly groups. Such list-serves included: the undergraduate and graduate LGBTQIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersexed and questioning) list-servs of two large schools in an urban metropolitan area in the southeast, LGBTQIQ listserv; Rainbow Family, MEGA (Marriage Equality _____), Lesbian Health Initiative and an LGBTQIQ group at a local congregation, as well as any Yahoo and Google groups which were listed as lesbian specific. I also recruited participants via mass emails to groups of known lesbian or bisexual women. In addition, I recruited survivors using IRB-approved flyers placed in locations lesbians were known to frequent, and advertised in newspapers that serve this population.

The community sample consisted of 252 women who self-identified as ever having had an intimate relationship with another woman (see table 5.1). The average age of the sample was 35.8 years. Four percent were 19 years of age or under but all participants were 18 years of age or older. Twenty-nine and a half percent of the sample was between the ages of 20-29 year and 33.5% were between the ages of 30-39. Over 18% of the sample was between the ages of 40-49. Just over 12% were between 50-59 years of age and 2.2% were between 60-69 years. In terms of race, individuals who identified as white comprised 89.4% of the sample, African Americans made up 5.8% and 4.9% were of some other mixed race.

Over 58% of the sample reported living in the defined Metropolitan Area while 41.7% of the sample lived outside this area. Overall the sample was well educated, with less than 1% not completing high school and 2.2% holding a high school degree. Almost 21% of the sample attended some college, and 23.1% received at least a bachelor's degree. Over 14% attended some graduate school, 27.6% held master's and 10.7% earned a PhD or professional degree.

Over 63% of the sample was employed full-time; 12.9% was employed part time. Of respondents who stated that they were out of the work force, 16.4% were students, 1.3% were primarily engaged in household duties, 1.3% were retired, 1.8% were unable to work and 2.7% reported "other" as a type of employment status.

Even though the sample was well-educated and many respondents were employed, the low levels of personal income were surprising. Twenty-seven percent reported earning less than \$20,000 per year. Twenty-four percent earned between \$20,000-\$40,000 and another 23.9% earned between \$40,000 and \$60,000. Only 13% earned between \$60,000 and \$80,000 while 4.1% earned between \$80,000 and \$100,000. Almost 8% of the sample reported earning more than \$100,000. As expected, as age increased so did income. The majority of women earning more than \$100,000 ranged in age from 40 and above.

In terms of sexual identity of the sample, 75.4% of women identified as lesbian, while 11.8% identified as queer. Just over 6% said they were bisexual, 4.4% identified themselves as women loving women and 2.2% identified as 'other.' Over 75% reported being married or in a marriage-like relationship while 24.2% were not in a committed relationship. When asked about the level of disclosure of their sexual identity 79.1% stated they were fully out in their lives while 3.1% were not out at all. Seven percent were out to their friends, 8.4% were out to their families and 2.2% were out to their employers.

The average time in the lesbian community was 15.1 years. Only 1.4% considered themselves members for less than one year and 17% considered themselves members for between 1 and 5 years. More than 10% have been a member of the lesbian community for between 16-20 years while 22.7% have been a member between 11-15 years and another 22.7% between 6 and 10 years. Almost 26% of the sample reported they have considered themselves members of the lesbian community for more than 20 years.

When comparing this sample with the larger population of the metropolitan area that I studied, there is some variation. Table 5.2 presents demographic comparisons between the sample, residents of the metro area and the United States as a whole. Data presented for the Metro Area and the nation were collected from the 2007 American Community survey (U. S. Census Bureau 2007.) Comparison data was not available for all sample characteristics.

Variable Name	Mean	Measurement	Percentage	n
Age	35.8	19 and under	4.0	227
		20-29	29.5	
		30-39	33.5	
		40-49	18.5	
		50-59	12.3	
		60-69	2.2	
Race		White	89.4	226
		African American	5.8	
		Other	4.9	
Area of Residence		Metro Atlanta	58.3	252
		Outside Metro Atlanta	41.7	
Education		High School	.9	225
		High School Graduate	2.2	
		Some College	20.9	
		Bachelors Degree	23.1	
		Some Graduate School	14.7	
		Masters Degree	27.6	
		PhD or Professional Degree	10.7	
Employment Status		Employed Full-Time	63.6	225
		Employed Part-Time	12.9	
		Engaged in Home Duties	1.3	
		Student	16.4	
		Retired	1.3	
		Unable to Work	1.8	
		Other	2.7	
Income		Less than \$20,000	27.0	222

		\$20,000 less than \$40,000	23.9	
		\$40,000 less than \$60,000	23.9	
		\$60,000 less than \$80,000	13.5	
		\$80,000 less than \$100,000	4.1	
		More than \$100,000	7.7	
Sexual Identity		Lesbian	75.4	228
		Woman loving Woman	4.4	
		Bisexual	6.1	
		Queer	11.8	
		Other	2.2	
Relationship Status		Married or Married Like	75.8	227
		Not Committed	24.2	
Level of Disclosure of Sex ID		Not at All	3.1	225
		Out to Friends	7.1	
		Out to Family	8.4	
		Out to Employer	2.2	
		Fully Out	79.1	
Time in Lesbian Community	15.09	Less than 1 year	1.4	220
		1-5 years	17.3	
		6-10 years	22.7	
		11-15 years	22.7	
		16-20 years	10.5	
		More than 20 years	25.5	

Whites are overrepresented in my sample, while African Americans and those of other races are underrepresented. Education levels are higher in my sample than in Metro Area or the United States. The number of individuals employed was higher in my sample than in Metro Area or the U.S.

Moreover, my sample appeared to be skewed towards higher levels of educational achievement, even though this did not appear to translate into higher income. Yearly income of the sample was not substantially higher than the national average. There are several possible explanations for the apparent disconnect between education and income in this sample. First, women make on average twenty cents less per hour than men. The gender of the sample puts them at a disadvantage automatically in terms of income. Secondly, it is possible that some of these women experienced discrimination in the workplace due to their sexual orientation and were not offered or promoted to higher paying positions. Third, it is possible that lesbians who

were more likely to participate in such a study could have chosen to work in occupations that do not offer high levels of income including social service organizations or non-profits.

Variable Name	Measurement	Sample	Metro Area*	U.S.*
Area of Residence**	Metro Area (n=140)	57		
	Outside Metro Area (n=105)	43		
Race	White	89.4	48	74
	African American	5.8	39	12
	All Other	4.9	13	14
Education**	Some High School	1	14	15
	High School Graduate	2	25	30
	Some College	21	34	36
	Bachelors Degree or Higher	76	27	19
Income**	Median Income	\$30160	\$29558	\$23066
Employment Status**	Employed	76	69	67
	Not Employed	24	31	33
*American Community Survey 2007				
**Females only data				

Instruments and Measurement

I utilized three instruments from the Lesbian Community Survey. First, I included subscales that were adapted from the Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Australian Survey (2006). For the purpose of my project, this scale was called The Lesbian Community Attitudes Towards Lesbian IPV (see appendix B). Second, I used The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus et al., 1996) in order to assess the ways in which individuals resolved conflict in their intimate partnerships (see appendix C). Third, I utilized the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (Bem 1974) in order to assess gender roles characteristics of participants (see appendix D).

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables were a collection of four attitudinal scales and four single questions from the Lesbian Community Survey². This survey and these scales were adapted from the Community Attitudes on Violence Against Women Survey (Taylor and Mouzos 2006) administered in Victoria Australia in 2006. These are not perfect scales for studying lesbian community attitudes regarding intimate partner violence as they were originally constructed to examine community attitudes regarding heterosexual intimate partner violence. Given the developing stage of empirical research on lesbian IPV, however, such data can be useful in formulating hypotheses for later testing with more representative samples.

The scales examined four distinct realms of IPV: the likelihood of the respondent intervening in an IPV situation; identification of behaviors that constitute intimate partner violence; identification of behaviors that justify violence against an intimate partner; and a judgment about who is most affected by lesbian intimate partner violence. Variables, Cronbach's alpha and communalities for all four scales are presented in table 5.3.

The intervention scale measures the likelihood that the respondent will intervene in an intimate partner situation based on the respondents relationship to the victim; stranger, neighborhood, friend. The possible responses for all variables ranged from very likely to very unlikely on a 5 point scale. The score for this scale can range from 3-15, with higher scores representing a greater likelihood that the respondent would intervene in an intimate partner violence situation.

² The Lesbian Community Survey was constructed using the Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women Survey 2006 as a guide. Taylor, N and Mouzos, J. 2006, *Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women Survey: A Full Technical Report*, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.

The scales that measured which behaviors were believed to constitute lesbian IPV, and justification for violent actions had response categories that ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree on a 5 point scale. The scores for the behavior scale ranged from 27-135, with higher scores indicating the recognition of a broader range of behaviors representing intimate partner violence. The scores for the scale measuring justification of violent actions ranged from 9-45, with higher scores representing greater justification for intimate partner violence.

The scale that measured who is most affected by lesbian IPV contained response categories ranging from almost always masculine women to almost always feminine women on a 5 points scale. The range of this scale is from 3-15, with higher scores indicating the belief that masculine women are most affected by lesbian IPV.

The response categories for the four single question variables listed in appendix C ranged from strongly agree to strong disagree on a 5 point Likert scale. The last question asking respondents if they had experienced lesbian IPV was asked with a yes or no response.

Independent Variables

I used two pre-existing scales as the independent variables. First, I used the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2) which consists of eight subscales. Four of the eight focus on the actions of the respondent and the remaining four focuses on the actions of the respondents' partner as reported by the participant. Secondly, I used the Bem Sex Role Inventory Scale to assess the gender expression of the participants.

Revised Conflict Tactics Scale

The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale is the second version of a popular scale created by well-known family researcher Murray Straus. His original Conflict Tactics Scale was created in 1979, and the revised version produced in 1996. The scale was designed to “measure(s) both the

extent to which partners in a dating, cohabitating, or marital relationship engage in psychological and physical attacks on each other and also their use of reasoning or negotiation to deal with conflicts” (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, Sugarman 1996:283).

The Revised Conflict Tactic Scale has been criticized by feminist researchers for its inability to address the context in which the violence occurs, i.e. fighting back, using violence to control violence; using violence to escape violence (Ristock 2003). This context of the situation is especially important when addressing lesbian IPV as several studies have shown that while lesbians are more likely to fight back, it is clear that one person in the relationship has distinct power and control over the other. Therefore, the use of violence on by both women is not indicative of mutual battering (Renzetti 1992; Ricks, Vaughan and Dziegielewski 2002; Peterman and Dixon 2003; Ristock 2003).

Although, several criticism of this scale exist, the validity and reliability of this scale in determining prevalence of intimate partner violence has been repeatedly supported (Newton, Connelly and Landsverk 2001; Jones, Ji, Beck, and Beck 2002). The survey focuses on three distinct concepts in family violence: 1) Reasoning; 2) Verbal Aggression; 3) Physical Violence. I have used the revised version as it is fundamentally the same as the original scale, but has been improved upon based on several years of use (Straus et al. 1996).

The CTS2 is divided into four areas (negotiation subscale, psychological aggression subscale, physical assault subscale, sexual coercion subscale and injury subscale). Each area is then divided into two distinct realms (one assessing actions of the respondent and the other assessing the actions of the partner as reported by the respondent.) I present results for each subscale separately below (see table 5.3). I elected not to include the negotiation scales due to the lack of variance in the data.

For all of the subscales, response categories are divided into the number of times these items have happened over the last year or if they had ever happened in the history of the relationship. Response categories range from 0-7 (1=Once a year, 2= Twice in the past year, 3=3-5 times in the past year, 4=6-10 times in the past year, 5= 11-20 times in the past year, 6= more than 20 times in the past year, 7=not in the past year, but it did happen before, 0= this has never happened). There are two basic scoring methods in the CTS2: prevalence and chronicity. The chronicity method measures the percentage of the sample that reports the number of incidence within the last twelve months. The prevalence method measures the percentage of the sample that reports at least one instance of the behavior in question (Newton, Connelly and Landsverk 2001.) For the purpose of this study, it was more important to assess the occurrence of these events and not the number of events. In order to determine prevalence of lesbian intimate partner violence using the CTS2, each variable was recoded as a dummy variable with 0=never happened and 1=has happened in the relationship.

The subscales measured the respondent's actions towards partner. These include: having been injured in a fight with her partner, and the respondent's perpetration psychological, physical and sexual violence against her partner.

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Communalities	CTS2 Alpha
Respondent Perpetrated Psychological Violence	.736		.79
1. I insulted or swore at my partner.		.594	
2. I shouted or yelled at my partner.		.686	
3. I stomped out of the room or house or yard during a disagreement.		.425	
4. I did something to spite my partner.		.428	
5. I called my partner fat or ugly.		.658	
6. I destroyed something that belonged to my partner.		.434	
7. I accused my partner of being a lousy lover.		.475	
8. I threatened to hit or throw something at my partner.		.584	
Respondent Perpetrated Physical Violence	.862		.86
1. I threw something at my partner that could hurt.		.530	
2. I twisted my partner's hair.		.687	

3. I pushed or shoved my partner.	.556	
4. I used a knife or gun on my partner.	.851	
5. I punched or hit my partner with something that could hurt.	.596	
6. I choked my partner.	.968	
7. I slammed my partner against the wall.	.589	
8. I beat up my partner.	.968	
9. I stabbed my partner.	.968	
10. I burned or scalded my partner on purpose.	.651	
Respondents Injuries	.796	.95
1. I had a sprain, bruise or small cut because of a fight with my partner.	.730	
2. I passed out from being hit on the head by my partner in a fight.	.552	
3. I went to the doctor because of a fight with my partner.	.594	
4. I needed to see a doctor because of a fight with my partner.	.279	
5. I had a broken bone from a fight with my partner.	.716	
Respondent Perpetrated Sexual Violence	.633	.87
1. I made my partner have sex without protection.	.307	
2. I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have oral or anal sex.	.630	
3. I used force (like hitting, holding down or using a weapon) to make my partner have sex.	.767	
4. I insisted on sex when my partner did not want to (but did not use physical force.)	.783	
5. I used threats to make my partner have oral or anal sex.	.674	
6. I insisted my partner have oral or anal sex (but did not use physical force.)	.893	
*The question "respondent had physical pain the next day because of a fight with my partner." was removed from the analysis due to the lack of variability in responses.		

I performed factor analysis for this project in order to be able to compare a lesbian sample with the 1996 findings of Straus et al. Table 5.4 presents the variables, the Cronbach's Alpha, the communalities, and the alpha coefficients of the CTS2 published by Strauss et al. (1996) for the respondent subscales. The factor analysis performed for this project produced some low communalities for certain factors due to the dichotomization of the variables. In the interest of being consistent with the nationally recognized scales, I chose to leave those variables in the scales.

The next set of subscales from the CTS2 are constructed from variables in which the participant responds to the exact same questions as above, but in these scales, the respondent

reported the actions of her partner. I will refer to these sets of subscales as the partner subscales indicated reference to partners' actions (see table 5.4). The subscales measure the actions of the respondent's partner including the partner having been injured in a fight with the respondent, and the partner's perpetration psychological, physical and sexual violence against the respondent.

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Communalities	CTS2 Alpha
Partner Perpetrated Psychological Violence	.780		.79
1. My partner insulted or swore at me.		.640	
2. My partner shouted or yelled at me.		.497	
3. My partner stomped out of the room or house or yard during a disagreement.		.556	
4. My partner did something to spite me.		.618	
5. My partner called me fat or ugly.		.431	
6. My partner destroyed something that belonged to me.		.591	
7. My partner accused me of being a lousy lover.		.562	
8. My partner threatened to hit or throw something at me.		.528	
Partner Perpetrated Physical Violence	.870		.86
1. My partner threw something at me that could hurt.		.553	
2. My partner twisted my hair.		.547	
3. My partner pushed or shoved me.		.609	
4. My partner used a knife or gun on me.		.765	
5. My partner punched or hit me with something that could hurt.		.571	
6. My partner choked me.		.561	
7. My partner slammed me against the wall.		.709	
8. My partner beat me up.		.630	
9. My partner stabbed me.		.769	
10. My partner burned or scalded me partner on purpose.		.412	
Partner's Injuries*	.671		.95
1. My partner had a sprain, bruise or small cut because of a fight with me.		.874	
2. My partner felt physical pain the next day because of a fight we had.		.833	
3. My partner passed out from being hit on the head by me in a fight.		.689	
4. My partner went to the doctor because of a fight with me.		.972	
5. I needed to see a doctor because of a fight with my partner.		.896	
6. I had a broken bone from a fight with my partner.		.885	
Partner Perpetrated Sexual Violence	.766		.87
1. My partner made me have sex without protection.		.213	
2. My partner used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make me have oral or anal sex.		.619	
3. My partner used force (like hitting, holding down or using a weapon) to make me have sex.		.569	

4. My partner insisted on sex when I did not want to (but did not use physical force.)	.463
5. My partner used threats to make me have oral or anal sex.	.473
6. My partner insisted I have oral or anal sex (but did not use physical force.)	.616

The Bem Sex-Role Inventory

The Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) scale was created in 1974 by psychologist Sandra L. Bem. Even though this scale was created more than thirty years ago, it is still being used today to measure masculine and feminine gender roles separately as well as providing a measure of androgyny (Bem 1974). The survey presents a total of sixty individual traits: 20 masculine, 20 feminine, 20 traits thought to be traditionally socially acceptable. Respondents are asked to rate themselves on a 7 point Likert scale 1 (never or almost never true) to 7 (almost always true).

There are three separate sections for scoring the survey: masculine, feminine and androgynous. Ratings for the 20 Masculine items are added to calculate the Masculinity score. For the purpose of this study, I will not calculate the participants' level of androgyny or social acceptability. There are also 20 ratings for the Feminine score. In order to compute the BSRI the total score was derived from subtracting an individual's Femininity score from their Masculinity score. A score of +10 to +20 is classified as Masculine (meaning that individual has more masculine gender role traits); a score of -10 to -20 is classified as a Feminine (meaning the individual has more feminine gender role traits); a score of +9 to -9 is categorized as Androgynous (Bem 1974). See appendix D for the complete survey questions. The variable name assigned to the BRSI score is "gender."

As with the CTS2 scale, the validity and reliability of this scale has been published repeatedly over the last 30 plus years. However, for the purpose of this dissertation, I also

performed factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of this scale for my sample. Table 5.5 presents these results.

Variable Name	Cronbach's Alpha	Communalities	Reported Alpha
Masculine Traits	.859		.86
Self-reliant		.784	
Defends own beliefs		.590	
Independent		.767	
Athletic		.625	
Assertive		.587	
Strong personality		.600	
Forceful		.723	
Analytical		.652	
Has leadership abilities		.728	
Willing to take risks		.428	
Makes decisions easily		.359	
Self-sufficient		.796	
Dominant		.585	
Masculine		.609	
Willing to take a stand		.649	
Aggressive		.711	
Acts as a leader		.739	
Individualistic		.509	
Competitive		.584	
Ambitious		.450	
Feminine Traits	.787		.82
Yielding		.608	
Cheerful		.459	
Shy		.684	
Affectionate		.575	
Flatterable		.497	
Loyal		.450	
Feminine		.503	
Sympathetic		.682	
Sensitive to needs of others		.739	
Understanding		.595	
Compassionate		.723	
Eager to soothe hurt feelings		.627	
Soft-spoken		.747	
Warm		.613	
Tender		.623	
Gullible		.628	
Childlike		.566	
Does not use harsh language		.589	
Loves children		.319	
Gentle		.677	

Control Variables

The control variables consisted of eleven socio-demographic variables: age, race/ethnicity, county of residence, education, employment status, income, sexual identity, time in lesbian community, level of disclosure of sexual orientation, relationship status, and experience of IPV.

Age was collected in number of years. Race and ethnicity was collected as a seven category nominal variable (1=White, non-Hispanic, 2=Black, non-Hispanic, 3=Asian-Pacific Islander, 4=Hispanic, 5=Multiracial, 6=American Indian or Alaskan Native.) Due to the lack of response, this variable was collapsed into a three category nominal variable (1=White, 2=African American and 3=Other.) Area of residence was collected by name of county. This variable was then recoded into a dummy variable 1=Metro area and 2=Outside Metro area. Due to the majority of respondents living in just three metro counties, the metro area was defined as only including these. Outside the Metro Area contained any area other than these three counties. Education was collected as a seven category ordinal variable (1=less than high school, 2=high school graduate, 3=some college, 4=bachelors degree, 5=some graduate school or professional school, 6=masters degrees, 7= PhD or professional degree). Employment was collected as an eight category nominal variable (1=employed full-time, 2= employed part-time, 4=engaged in home duties, 5=student, 6=retired, 7=unable to work, 8=other). Income was measured as a six category ordinal variable (1=less than \$20,000, 2=\$20,000-less than \$40,000, 3=\$40,000-less than \$60,000, 4=\$60,000- less than \$80,000, 5=\$80,000-less than \$100,000, 6=100,000 and over).

Sexual identity was collected as a five category nominal variable (1=lesbian, 2=woman loving woman, 3=bisexual, 4=queer, 5=other.) Time in lesbian community will be collected in

number of years and then recoded into an ordinal categorical variable (1=less than 1 year, 2=1-5 years, 3=6-10 years, 4=11-15 year, 5=16-20 years, and 6=20 or more years. Level of disclosure of sexual orientation was collected as a six category ordinal variable (1=not at all; 2=only out to self and partner; 3=out to friends; 4=out to family; 5=out to employer; 6= fully out.) Relationship status was collected as a four category nominal variable (1=married or married like relationship, 2=seriously dating one person, 3=dating many people, 4=single). However, due to low response numbers in few categories, this variable was recoded to a dummy variable with 0=committed relationship and 1=Not committed.

Data Management

Upon completion of the Lesbian Community Survey, I downloaded the data into SPSS. All of the SPSS data was electronically stored on a password-protected computer. The data from Survey Monkey was not accessible after the subscription to Survey Monkey was terminated. Survey Monkey purges the online survey and the resulting data from their site upon termination of the monthly contract.

After downloading the quantitative data from the Lesbian Community Survey directly into SPSS, preliminary data analyses were performed. The data was cleaned and sorted. Surveys that were not complete or did not meet IRB requirements were removed and destroyed. Variables were created for all responses to the survey, with variable and value labels.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics including frequencies and means were run on all variables. From this analysis, I constructed sample demographics and characteristics.

In the second stage, I constructed validity and reliability measures for the Lesbian Community Attitudes Towards Lesbian IPV Survey. I performed factor analysis on the subscales

of the survey in order to investigate any multidimensionality in the concepts. Those variables that were found to load highly on the factor(s) were tested for reliability using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Factors with a minimum of three variables, with an Eigenvalue of one or greater and a reliability coefficient of at least .6 were accepted for this analysis (Allison 1998). Of the attitudinal items in the Lesbian Community Survey, four subscales (Ntrvene, Affected, Behaviors and Justify) meeting the above criteria were created. The other two instruments, CTS2 and BRSI have existing measures of validity and reliability; however, I performed both factor analysis and Cronbach's Alpha for the purpose of comparison. Tests for multicollinearity were conducted using collinearity diagnostics in the SPSS software. I examined the tolerances for each independent variable in the model and found that no tolerances were less than .01. No collinearity issues were detected. Also in the second stage, using SPSS software package, I performed bivariate statistical analysis on all variables. I used the Pearson's R to determine the strength of the linear association between the variables and to discover the existence of any significant bivariate relationships between the variables (see appendix E).

In the third stage, I performed OLS regression in order to assess the significance of each variable while controlling for the others. Because the dependent variables, the subscales of the Lesbian Community Survey, are scales and can be considered continuous variables. I used Ordinary Least Squares regression in a two-stage regression model to perform the analysis. The independent variables, the Revised Conflict Tactic Scale and the BRSI, were introduced into the regression model along with the control variables discussed earlier. The first model used OLS regression to analyze the impact of the independent variables, the subscales of the Revised Conflict Tactic Scale and BRSI on the dependent variable subscales measuring intervention, who

is most affected, violent behaviors and justification for violent actions. Each of these regressions was conducted independently for each dependent variable subscale.

The second model used multiple regression model building to analyze the impact of the Revised Conflict Tactic Scale and the Bem Sex Role Inventory on intervention, who is most affected, violent behaviors, and justification for violent actions while controlling for age, education, income, relationship status, time in community, experience of LIPV and area of residence. Because there was so little variance in the race category, I chose not to control for race.

In the fourth stage of data analysis, I utilized logistic regression analysis in order to predict behaviors in the CTS2 subscale based on the attitudinal scales of the Lesbian Community Survey. Logistic regression is used to predict the odds of a particular occurrence of a dichotomous variable (Vogt 1999). While the goal of OLS is for the sum of the squared errors to be as small as possible, the goal of logistic regression is to try to predict the number of occurrences correctly. For example in terms of this hypothesis, logistic regression used the gender score of the respondent from the Bem Sex Role Inventory and the control variables to predict whether or not they had experienced intimate partner violence in a relationship with another woman. Logistic regression reports the logged odds of an event taking place using the Beta coefficient (B) and the odds of an event taking place ($\text{Exp}(B)$).

In this analysis, there were six logistics regressions performed, one for each of the dichotomous subscales of the Revised Conflict Tactic Scale. The attitudinal scales of the Lesbian Community Survey were utilized as the independent variables remained unchanged and the control variables utilized include age, education, income, and employment status.

Descriptive Statistics and Frequencies

Frequencies and descriptive statistics were conducted for all independent, dependent and control variables. The mean score for each interval level variable or nominal/ordinal level variable with more than four categories are presented in appendix F. Frequencies are presented for all other nominal and ordinal variables.

When I examined the responses of the sample as a whole, it became clear that psychological violence was the most common type of violence experienced or perpetrated in a relationship between two women in this sample. Surprisingly, even though physical violence was the second most common form of violence experienced or perpetrated, the percentage of injuries reported by the respondent for herself or her partner were relatively low. Another surprising finding was that sexual abuse (experienced and perpetrated) was higher than expected with more lesbians reporting perpetration of sexual abuse than reporting experiencing sexual abuse by their partners. Also, more than half the women in the sample had experienced IPV in their relationship. More than 95% thought IPV was serious in the lesbian community; more than 50% thought it was common. However, more than 75% of the sample thought it was unlikely that services would be available to survivors of intimate partner violence.

The knowledge of services as well as the actual availability of services are vital to the lesbian community. When community members are not aware of actual services or are misinformed about the services that are available, survivors of lesbian IPV within the community are in vulnerable. The link between the community and knowledge of available services is a virtual life-line for community members in need of assistance.

Lesbian Community Survey Scales

Frequency tables for all four scales were used to examine community attitudes, beliefs and behaviors surrounding lesbian intimate partner violence. Appendix H presents the mean scores of each individual question in the final scales.

The values of the scale that measures justification for violent actions range from 9-45 with higher scores indicating greater justification for violent behaviors against an intimate partner. For the scale that measures likelihood of intervention, the values range from 3-15 with higher values representing the greater likelihood of intervention when witnessing an episode of violence between intimate partners. The values of the scale that measures behaviors that constitute intimate partner violence range from 27-135 with high scores indicating a greater awareness of behaviors that constitute intimate partner violence. For the scale assessing who is most affected by lesbian intimate partner violence, the scores ranged from 3-15 with higher scores indicating a belief that masculine women are more affected by IPV than feminine women. The midrange value of this scale (9) indicates beliefs that women were affected equally regardless of their gender.

When examining the responses of the sample in its entirety interesting results emerged. Although respondents thought scenarios presented were justifiable reasons for perpetrating IPV, they did indicate that a few were more justifiable than others. The variable “refused to have sex ” had the lowest of all the means in the scale; meaning that if a partner refuses to have sex with her partner then violent action could be justified. The second lowest mean was for “socializes with friends too much.” This suggests that if a woman socializes with her friends too much and doesn’t take care of her family, her partner may be justified in using violence against her.

Although the majority of the sample reported they would intervene if they witnessed an IPV episode, they indicated they would be least likely to intervene in an argument between strangers. The sample expressed that the gender presentation of the woman (masculine or feminine) was not a factor in who was affected by intimate partner violence. The overall results indicated that the sample believed both masculine and feminine lesbians could be affected equally by violence in an intimate relationship.

Testing Hypotheses

Before testing each hypothesis, bivariate correlations were examined for all the dependent variables.³ A correlation matrix with dependent and independent variables is presented in table 5.6. Respondent perpetrating physical violence was the only variable significantly correlated with the scale measuring justification of violent actions ($r=.144$). Respondent perpetrating physical violence ($r= -.149$), respondent perpetrating sexual violence ($r= -.154$), partner perpetrating sexual violence ($r= -.243$) and partner injured in a fight with respondent ($r= -.203$) were significantly correlated with the likelihood of intervention. Respondent perpetrating physical violence ($r=.144$), respondent injured in fight with partner ($r=.200$), partner perpetrating sexual violence ($r=.146$) and partner injured in fight with respondent ($r=.160$) were significantly correlated with the IPV is common in lesbian community variable. Respondent injured in fight with partner ($r= -.122$) and partner perpetrating sexual violence ($r= -.160$) were the only two subscales significantly correlated with the services available variable. Finally, respondent perpetrating physical violence ($r=.258$), respondent injured in fight with partner ($r=.165$), partner perpetrating physical violence ($r=.357$), partner perpetrating sexual violence ($r=.204$), and partner injured in fight with respondent ($r=.170$) and

³ Correlations for all variables are presented in Appendix G.

the belief that lesbian IPV is common ($r=.292$) were significantly correlated with having experienced lesbian IPV. Bivariate correlations revealed that none of the variables used in this analysis were close to having a perfect linear relationship and none of the variables had tolerances less than .01; therefore, the chance of multicollinearity between independent variables is highly unlikely (Allison 1999.)

Table 5.6: Bivariate Correlations of Independent and Dependent Variables.

Variable Name	Justify	Intervene	Behavior	LIPV Common	IPV Serious	Services Available	Experienced LIPV
Resp. Physical	.144*	-.149*	-.090	.144*	.039	-.122	.258**
Resp. Sexual	.029	-.154*	-.123	.015	.033	-.092	.107
Resp. Injured	.046	-.138	-.055	.200**	.133	-.213**	.165*
Partner Physical	.128	-.127	-.136	.130	.010	-.081	.357**
Partner Sexual	.117	-.243**	-.100	.146*	-.051	-.160*	.204**
Partner Injured	.113	-.203**	.030	.160*	.013	-.136	.170*
Gender Experienced	.063	.190*	-.043	-.103	-.079	.085	-.137
LIPV	-.013	-.079	-.076	.292**	-.010	-.078	1

Appendix I present the findings for H1-H8.

H1: Masculine lesbians are less likely than feminine lesbians to consider lesbian IPV a serious issue in the lesbian community.

To test Hypothesis 1, “lesbian IPV is serious” was created as the dependent variable in an OLS regression model. In order to test hypothesis 1, an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression was run with “lesbian IPV is serious” as the dependent variable and “gender” as the independent variable with controls for age, education, income, and area of residence. Area of residence was added as a control variable because depending on the area in which one lives, the belief that lesbian IPV is a serious issue may differ.

The R^2 indicates how much of the variability of the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable(s) (Vogt 1999.) The R^2 of .047 indicates that 4.7% of the variances in

predicting who believes IPV is serious in the lesbian community are explained by the variables in this model. The findings do not lend support for Hypothesis 1.

Age was the only variable significantly correlated with lesbian IPV being a serious issue in the lesbian community. The correlation was weak at $\beta = .059$, $b = .167$. The unstandardized regression coefficient “b” indicates the change in the dependent variable for each increase or decrease in the independent variable (Vogt 1999.) The unstandardized regression coefficient is dependent on the unit of measure of the independent variables and cannot be compared with other independent variables with different units of measures in the model. Beta is the standardized regression coefficient that also indicates the change in the dependent variable for each increase or decrease in the independent variable, however, the standardized coefficient places all independent variables in into a common metric: standard deviation units. So Beta indicates the changes in the dependent variable with an increase or decrease of one standard deviation unit of the independent variable and can be used for comparative purposes (Allison 1996).

The model for Hypothesis 1 indicated that as age increases so does the likelihood that an individual would see IPV as a serious issue in the lesbian community. These results suggest that women who are older may take violence in relationships more seriously than younger women. More than likely, women who are older have experienced at least several different relationships and have had the opportunity to witness more lesbian relationships. Therefore, they would have a broader knowledge of practices that are common in lesbian relationships and the lesbian community.

H2: Lesbians who use physical aggression during conflict with their intimate partner are less likely than those not using physical aggression to consider lesbian IPV a serious issue in the lesbian community.

To test Hypothesis 2, “lesbian IPV is serious” was created as the dependent variable in an OLS regression model. In this model, “lesbian IPV is serious” was the dependent and “respondent perpetrated physical violence” subscale was the independent variable with age, education, income, and area of residence as the control variables. The R^2 of this model is .028. This model explains 2.8% of the variance for this dependent variable. This hypothesis was not supported by the data. There were no statistically significant behaviors correlated with viewing lesbian IPV as a serious issue in the lesbian community. Therefore, it appears that lesbians have the same perception of the seriousness of lesbian intimate partner violence regardless of their perpetration of physical aggression, age, race, education or employment status.

H3: Lesbians who use physical aggression during conflict with their intimate partner are more likely than those not using physical aggression to justify using violence in their violence in their relationships.

In order to test Hypothesis 3, an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression was run with “justification of violent actions” as the dependent variable and “respondent perpetrated physical violence” as the independent variable with who is most affected by lesbian IPV, likelihood of intervention, behaviors that constitute lesbian IPV, age, education, income, and relationship status as the control variables. The measurements for who is most affected by lesbian IPV, likelihood of intervention, behaviors that constitute lesbian IPV and relationship status were also controlled for as the level of justification for violent actions may vary based on these measures. The R^2 of .213 indicates that 21.3% of the variance in justification of violent actions was explained by the seven variables. Hypothesis 3 was supported by these data.

The only behaviors significantly correlated with the likelihood of justifying violent actions were respondents who had perpetrated physical violence, the likelihood of intervention and the behaviors believed to constitute lesbian IPV. The correlations ranged from -.086-1.702,

with the respondents who had perpetrated physical violence against their partner having the highest correlation with justifying violent actions.

These findings indicate that women who perpetrate physical violence on their intimate partners are more likely to believe that in certain circumstances this type of violence is justified. In addition, the less likely the respondent is to intervene in an intimate partner situation, the more likely she is to justify violent actions. The more narrow the definition of lesbian IPV (the fewer behaviors that constitute lesbian IPV) a woman has, the more likely they are to justify violent actions. Finally, the more education a woman has the more likely she will justify her violent actions against a partner.

It is possible that women with more education recognize their actions as violent and feel the need to justify their actions due to the social stigma of intimate partner violence. Women with less education may not recognize their actions as violent and therefore feel less need for justification. In addition, women who have more encompassing beliefs about the acts which constitute intimate partner violence are less likely to justify acts of intimate partner violence.

H4: Lesbians who have not experienced aggression (verbal or physical) by their intimate partners are less likely than those who have to consider lesbian IPV common in the lesbian community.

OLS regression was conducted to test this hypothesis with the dependent variable “lesbian IPV is common” and “experienced lesbian IPV” as the independent variable with age, education, income, time in community and area of residence as the control variables. Time in community and area of residence are important control variables as both may affect the respondent’s views on what is common in the lesbian community. The R^2 was .118 indicating that approximately 12% of the variance is explained in this model. Hypothesis 4 was supported by this data.

The only factors significantly correlated with the belief that lesbian IPV was common were the respondents experience with IPV in a relationship and income. The correlations were all weak, ranging from -.112 to .550. This model indicates that women who had not experienced intimate partner violence in a lesbian relationship were less likely to believe IPV was common in the lesbian community. Also the higher a woman's income level, the less likely she is to believe that IPV is common in the lesbian community.

H5: Lesbians who have experienced physical aggression at the hands of their intimate partner are less likely than those who have not to intervene when witnessing lesbian IPV.

In order to test Hypothesis 5, I ran an OLS regression with "likelihood to intervene" as the dependent variable and "experienced lesbian IPV" and "partner perpetrated physical violence" as the independent variables while controlling for age, education, income and gender. Gender was control for because women who are more masculine may feel more secure in their ability to defend themselves and others and therefore intervene in a lesbian IPV situation. The R² for this model was .108 indicated that approximately 11% of the variance is explained by the respondents age. Hypothesis 5 was not supported.

The only factors that were significant with the likelihood of intervention were the respondent's age and gender. Both the correlations were weak, ranging from .023 to .527. Having experienced physical violence by an intimate partner was not statistically significant when predicting the likelihood of intervention in an IPV situation. However, older women and women who were slightly more masculine in their gender were more likely to intervene in a situation where lesbian IPV was occurring.

H6: Feminine lesbians are more likely than masculine lesbians to believe that there are community resources for lesbian IPV survivors.

In order to test hypothesis 6, OLS regression was performed with "services available" as the dependent variable and "gender" as the independent variable while controlling for age, education, income, time in community and area of residence. Time in community and area of residence may impact the knowledge of available services as well as actual services available in their area. Therefore, I also controlled for these two variables. The R^2 for this model was .146, meaning that 14.6% of the variance was taken up by these seven variables.

I found no support for Hypothesis 6 in the data. The two factors significantly correlated with the belief that services were available for survivors of lesbian IPV were the respondent's education and their area of residence. Both of these correlations were weak, ranging from -.641 to .271. The more education a woman had the more likely she was to believe that services would be available. Also lesbians living in the metro area were more likely to believe there were services for survivors of lesbian IPV than lesbians living outside the metro area. It is possible that lesbian women with more education either have knowledge of particular lesbian services through social groups or assume that services are available for lesbians based the availability of IPV services to heterosexual women. It is also possible that women with higher education levels have other resources and therefore would not seek services if they became a survivor of intimate partner violence (therefore never knowing the reality of what services are actually available to lesbian survivor).

Lesbians who lived inside the metro area were more likely to believe that services were available to lesbian survivors. This could be explained by the fact that lesbians who live in metro areas see a vast amount of services available to the LGBTQIQ community various services that lesbians living outside a metro area may not see. Due to the increased acceptance LGBTQIQ individuals experience in metropolitan areas, lesbians living in these areas may just assume that

needed services are available. Lesbians living outside a metro area may believe that there are no services available in their area.

H7: Lesbians who use physical aggression during conflict with their intimate partner have a more narrow definition of acts that constitute lesbian IPV.

An OLS regression was run to test Hypothesis 7 with “behaviors that constitute IPV” as the dependent variable and “respondent perpetrating physical violence” as the independent variable, and age, education, income and experienced lesbian IPV as the control variables. There were no significant variable in this model. The R^2 of this model was .037 indicating this variables account for 3.7% of the variance. Hypothesis 7 was not support by these data.

H8: Masculine lesbians are less likely than feminine lesbians to report having experienced intimate partner violence.

I used logistic regression to test Hypothesis 8. In order to test this hypothesis “experienced lesbian IPV” was the dichotomous dependent variable while “gender” was the independent variable. Age, education, and income were controlled for in this model.

Hypothesis 8 is supported by the data even though this model only predicts the correct outcome only 54.1% of the time. The factors significantly correlated with the reporting of experiencing lesbian IPV were gender and income. These correlations were weak, ranging from -.017 to -.305. In terms of the gender score in the BSRI, each one unit increase in the gender score decreases the likelihood of having experienced lesbian intimate partner violence by .017 odds. Although the decrease is minimal these findings were statistically significant at the .05 level. This finding suggests that the more masculine a woman is according to the BSRI, the less likely she is to report having experienced lesbian IPV.

In terms of income level, each one unit increase in income decreases the likelihood of having experienced lesbian IPV by .305 odds. In terms of odds, the odds of the respondent who

has a one unit increase in income is .737 times as likely to have experienced violence as someone with lower income. The more income a woman makes the less likely she is to report having experienced IPV in an intimate relationship.

After testing the original hypotheses, which were mostly focused on how actions influenced attitudes, I examined the idea that the relationship between actions and behaviors may be reciprocal in nature. Due to the small sample size more complex statistical analysis was not feasible, so, I examined the data from the opposite direction by focusing on how attitudes influence behaviors.

In order to achieve this, the CTS2 subscales that originally operated as independent variables were converted to dependent variables and the originally dependent attitudinal variables were changed to independent variables. The original control variables remained unchanged.

Revised Conflict Tactic Scales

Frequency tables for all eight CTS2 subscales were used to analyze the behaviors of respondents and the reported behaviors of partners by respondents. Appendix J denotes the mean score of each individual question in the subscales.

The mean scores of the subscales were discussed previously, however upon examining the individual mean scores for the items used to construct the scales several themes emerge. When examining the injury subscales (both respondent and partner) it appears that neither sustained many injuries. The most common injury sustained by both was sprains.

In terms of perpetration of psychological violence, the respondents reported that they and their partners had perpetrated psychological violence in their relationships in approximately equal amounts. The types of psychological violence perpetrated were different. More than half

the respondents stated they had sworn, shouted and stomped out during an altercation with their partners. Interestingly, when asked what psychological violence had been perpetrated against them by their partners more than half said their partners had sworn at them, did things to spite them and called them fat and ugly. Psychological violence subscale is the only subscale where the respondents reported they perpetrated more violence than their partners.

Respondents reported they and their partners had perpetrated equal amounts of physical violence in their relationships. The most common form of physical violence perpetrated by both was pushing. In every category in this subscale there were more respondents reporting physical violence perpetrated against them than they had perpetrated against their partner. The same holds true for sexual abuse. There were more respondents reporting sexual violence had been perpetrated against them than there were respondents reporting they had perpetrated sexual violence against a partner. This holds true for every category in the sexual violence subscale. The most common form of sexual violence perpetrated by both respondent and their partner was using physical force to make the person have anal or oral sex. The victimization and perpetration of sexual violence was reported by more respondents than the number of respondents reporting either they or their partner had been injured during an altercation.

Prior to performing logistic regressions, bivariate correlations were examined. Significant bivariate correlations are presented in table 5.7. Some of these relationships remained significant in the logistic regression while others did not. The variables significantly correlated with the respondent being injured in a fight with partner were partner being injured in a fight with respondent, the partner perpetrating physical and sexual violence against respondent physical violence. The correlations ranged from .343 to .479. Behaviors significantly correlated with respondent's perpetration of physical violence were partner being injured in a fight with partner,

the partner's perpetration physical and sexual violence. The correlations ranged from .329 to .551. The behaviors significantly correlated with the respondent's perpetration of sexual violence were the respondent being injured in a fight with partner and the partner's perpetration of sexual violence. These correlations ranged from .229 to .405. Gender was not significantly bivariately correlated with any of these other variables. Bivariate correlations revealed that none of the variables (with the exception of partner perpetrating psychological violence and respondent perpetrating psychological violence) used in the analysis had correlations coefficients that exceeded .50. The chance of multicollinearity between these independent variables is not likely (Allison 1999).

	Respondent Injured	Respondent Physical	Respondent Sexual	Gender
Partner Injured	.479**	.551**	.229**	.073
Partner Physical	.475**	.581**	.112	-.055
Partner Sexual	.343**	.329**	.405**	-.138
Gender	.032	.011	.022	1

Logistic Regression CTS2 Scale

Logistic regression was also used in the analysis of the CTS2 subscales. The subscales are scored on lifetime prevalence meaning the response categories were 0=never happened, 1=has happened. Therefore, all the dependent variables in the following analysis are dichotomous, and logistic regression is appropriate for the following models.

Upon completion of the logistic regressions, it became clear that the significant predictors of perpetrating physical and sexual violence were victimization in the forms of physical and sexual violence. Table 5.8 presents the variables that predict perpetration. Model A presents several behaviors that were significant predictors of the respondent being injured in a fight with partner. These include the partner being injured in a fight with respondent, the partner's

perpetration of sexual violence, the respondent's perpetration of physical violence, respondent's age, and education. These predictors were moderately strong ranging from -2.186 to 4.753. This model predicts the correct outcome 96.9% of the time.

Women whose partners have sustained injuries during a fight with them were at high risk for sustaining injuries themselves. Previous research suggests that lesbians defend themselves from abuse more than heterosexual women (Walker 1986; Ristock 2002). This could account for the increase in risk to lesbians who have injured their partner in an altercation. Since two women may be more equal in physical stature than a man and a woman, lesbians are more likely to use violence to stop violence or control violence.

Women whose partner perpetrates sexual violence on them are at higher risk for being injured in a fight with partner. It is not uncommon for multiple forms of abuse to occur in heterosexual intimate partner violence (Riggs, Caulfield and Street 2000). However, very limited research has been conducted on the types of violence lesbians perpetrate on their intimate partner.

Women who perpetrate physical violence on their partner are at increased risk for being injured in a fight with her partner. As stated previously, it is more common for lesbian victims to fight back when being physically abuse by their partner than heterosexual women. This could lead to both women, the batterer and the survivor, being injured in an IPV situation.

The less education the respondent has the more likely she will be injured in a fight with her partner. Since I could not determine the identity of the batterer or the battered, it is difficult to interrupt these results. However, lesbian survivors who have less education may have less resources or knowledge to help them when violence occurs in their relationships. Lesbians with less education may not recognize their actions or their partners' actions as violent.

Model B presents two significant behaviors that predictor the respondent perpetrating physical violence against her partner. These are partner having perpetrated physical violence against respondent and respondent having perpetrated sexual violence against her partner. These predictors are moderately strong ranging from 1.475 to 3.175. This model predicted the correct outcome 85.5% of the time.

This model means that women who have been the victim of physical violence at the hands of a partner are more likely to perpetrate physical violence against a partner. In addition, lesbians who perpetrated physical violence against their partners are also likely to perpetrate sexual violence against them as well. This finding is consistent with the heterosexual IPV literature but there is less known about the types of violence perpetrated in lesbian relationships.

Finally, in Model C there were three behaviors which significantly predicted the respondent perpetrating sexual violence. These are the partner's perpetration of physical or sexual violence against respondent and the employment status of the respondent. These predictors are moderately strong, ranging from -1.725 to 2.305. This model predicted the correct outcome 89.5% of the time.

Respondents are more likely to perpetrate sexual violence against their partner if they have been sexually abused by a partner. Interestingly, respondents are less likely to perpetrate sexual violence against their partner if their partner has perpetrated physical violence against them. Finally employment status is also a predictor of perpetration. The lower the employment status of a lesbian (the less hours worked per week) the more likely she is to perpetrate sexual violence against her partner.

Table 5.9 examines the significant predictors of partners' actions against respondent (as reported by respondent.) Model A presents the behaviors that predict the respondents' partner

being injured in a fight. Respondent being injured in a fight with partner was the only significant predictor of partner being injured in a fight. This prediction is strong with a value of 4.439. The respondents' partners were more likely to be injured in altercations if the respondent had also sustained injuries in an altercation with a partner. This model predicted the correct outcome 93.6% of the time.

Model B presents behaviors that predict partner's perpetration of physical violence against respondents. These behaviors are respondent perpetrating physical violence, partner perpetrating sexual violence, age and respondents income. These predictors range from weak to strong with values of $-.379$ to 5.746 . This model predicted the correct outcome 82.1% of the time.

Model B explains the variables that are significant in predicting if a lesbian is going to be physically abused by her partner. Physical abuse is more likely to take place if the perpetrator had been physically abused by an intimate partner. A lesbian who has been experienced physical IPV in the same or previous relationship is more likely to physical abuse her partner. Again, we see multiple forms of violence being used. If a partner has perpetrated physical violence the partner is also more likely to perpetrate sexual violence. In addition, the likelihood of having experienced physical abuse at the hands of an intimate partner increases with age. The older the respondent is, the more likely she has been in more relationships and thus has a greater likelihood of being physically abused by her partner. Finally, the more money the respondent makes the less likely she will be physically abused by her partner.

The last model, Model C, the only behavior that is a significant predictor of partner's perpetration of sexual violence is the respondent perpetrating sexual violence against her partner. This predictor is moderate at 2.057. If a respondent's partner has perpetrated sexual violence

against her, the respondent is more likely to perpetrate or have perpetrated sexual violence against her partner. It is possible that by perpetrating sexual violence (or any violence) in a relationship it raises the bar of acceptable behavior in the relationship. Once violence is introduced into a relationship by either person, the other person may believe that behavior is now acceptable. This model predicted the correct outcome 85.0% of the time.

Conclusion

This chapter detailed the descriptive findings for the Lesbian Community Survey, as well as the results of analysis to test each organizing hypotheses. In examining the results of the OLS regression there was not one variable that was consistent throughout all the dependent variables. The significant variables were different for each dependent variable. However, when examining the results of the Logistic Regression it became clear that for most types of IPV, the greatest risk factor for victimization was perpetration. These meaning of these findings will be discussed in-depth in a later chapter. In the next chapter, the results of the case study findings with two domestic violence agencies are presented.

Table 5.8: Logistic Regression of Dependent Variables of the Respondent CTS2 Subscales on Select Independent Variables						
0=Never Happened 1=Has Happened						
	A		B		C	
	Respondent Injured in Fight w/Partner		Respondent Perpetrated Physical Violence		Respondent Perpetrated Sexual Violence	
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)
Partner Injured	4.753*(2.147)	115.973	-----	----	----	----
Partner Physical	----	----	3.175***(.533)	23.936	-1.725*(.870)	.178
Partner Sexual	3.476**(1.335)	32.315	.066(.617)	1.068	2.305***(.686)	10.021
Respondent Physical	3.325*(1.415)	27.809	----	----	1.617*(.771)	5.036
Respondent Sexual	-2.832(1.688)	.059	1.475*(.751)	4.370	----	----
Age	1.356*(.638)	3.880	-.381(.234)	.683	-.373(.290)	.689
Education	-2.186*(.893)	.112	-.321(.184)	.726	-.238(.235)	.788
Income	-.185(.552)	.831	.099(.223)	1.104	-.077(.310)	.926
Employ. Status	----	----	-.241(.182)	.786	.420*(.208)	1.522
Constant	-1.379(2.861)	.252	.131(1.146)	1.139	-1.734(1.364)	.177
% Predict.	96.9%		85.5%		89.5%	
*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001						

Table 5.9: Logistic Regression on Dependent Variables of the Partner CTS2 Subscales on Select Independent Variables						
0=Never Happened 1=Has Happened						
	A		B		C	
	Partner Injured in Fight		Partner Perpetrated Physical Violence		Partner Perpetrated Sexual Violence	
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)
Respondent Injured	4.439**(1.514)	84.704	----	----	----	----
Respondent Physical	----	----	3.082***(.507)	21.795	.171(.577)	1.186
Respondent Sexual	.734(.997)	2.083	-1.337(.785)	.263	2.057***(.626)	7.826
Partner physical	-.456(1.194)	.634	----	----	1.784(.588)	5.953
Partner Sexual	.717(.999)	2.049	1.748**(.590)	5.746	----	----
Age	-.572(.485)	.564	.428*(.209)	1.534	-.349(.237)	.706
Education	.624(.359)	1.866	.108(.175)	1.114	-.453(.186)	.636
Income	-.197(.399)	.821	-.379*(.187)	.684	.198(.219)	1.219
Constant	-4.597(1.996)	.010	-2.861**(.1022)	.057	-.077(1.009)	.926
% Predict.	93.6%		82.1%		85.0%	
*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001						

CHAPTER 6. CASE STUDIES

In order to address the impact of domestic violence shelters on lesbian IPV survivors, I conducted case studies of two domestic violence shelters in adjacent geographic areas inside the area of study. Domestic violence agencies are located in large formal groups in the ecological model developed for this project. This environment is what Bronfenbrenner would have labeled the exosystem. This location is an environment in which the developing individual, in this case the lesbian survivor, do not participate but are directly affected by the practices, decisions and policies of the domestic violence shelter (Weisz et al. 1998).

Domestic Violence Agency Case Studies

I conducted in-depth case studies with two domestic violence shelters located in a Southeastern urban area with a large concentration of lesbians. A good case study can offer a full sense of participants' intentions that impact decisions and events. These studies are an "in-depth, multifaceted investigations, using qualitative research methods of a single social phenomenon" (Orum, Feagin and Sjoberg 1991: pg 2). Case studies are conducted in great detail, usually over a period of time and rely on several different data sources. By relying on multiple data sources, case studies allow researchers to check the accuracy of the issue by asking several different people the same in-depth questions and then by cross examining these results with alternative and independent sources of information.

There are several advantages, as well as limitations, to conducting case studies. The advantages to case studies are: 1) they allow for observations and knowledge gained to be grounded in the natural setting of the case study, 2) case studies provide information from multiple sources gathered over a period of time which permits a more holistic study of the complex social actions and meanings observed in the study, 3) they allow for the uncovering of historical dimensions within an organization or setting, 4) case studies often lead to new theory

generating by suggesting new interpretations of social occurrences or meaning (Orum et al. 1991).

There are also limitations in conducting case studies including researcher biases in collecting and analyzing data, lack of standardized measures and inability to generalize findings to other populations (Ragin and Becker 1992). Researcher bias in conducting case studies is often overcome by assembling a team of observers who cross-check their findings and observations with one another. However, when more than one researcher is involved in qualitative data analysis the issue of inter-rater reliability arises. Meaning no two researchers experience or evaluate things in exactly the same way, therefore their analysis of data may differ greatly. I am the only researcher analyzing the data in this study therefore reliability of constructing analysis is greatly improved. Using a single judge insures that the evaluation of context and experience will be consisted within the analysis.

In the study, I conducted three qualitative interviews with employees at each shelter in different levels of management including the executive director, the shelter manager and a case manager for each shelter. The interviewees were selected by whoever occupied those specific positions at the time of the interview. Several of the advocates interviewed had either held other positions in the agency previously or were currently holding several positions simultaneously. Half of the interviews were conducted at the agencies administrative offices and the other half at the agencies safe house.

The interviews topics revolved around four main themes: personal demographics, shelter information, shelter policies and procedures, lesbians' use of shelter services. In addition to the interviews I also conducted content analysis of shelter documentation including histories, pamphlets, web-sites and any outreach materials in order to cross-check data I had gathered in

the in-depth interviews. I also examined photographs in these materials and on the agencies webpage to validate data I gathered from other sources in the agency. See Appendix F for shelter advocate interview questions. See Appendix G for a list of materials collected for analysis.

Data Management

Each shelter was assigned a case number. All the documentation of the shelter services were kept in a locked file cabinet to which only my dissertation chair and I had the key. The digital recordings of the face-to-face interviews with shelter advocates were erased upon completion of transcription. Each interview was assigned a case number. No personal identifying information was included in the transcripts. The original transcribed interviews were secured and maintained in a locked file cabinet to which only my dissertation chair and I had access. The electronic versions of the transcripts were kept in a password protected computer to which only I had the password.

Data Analysis

I followed the same qualitative procedures as described above for the interviews with shelter workers as I did with the life history of survivors. I also performed content analysis of the shelter literature in print, online website, testimonials given by clients, online blogs, if present, and images used by the organization to promote their mission.

When performing the content analysis of the printed or online information I focused on three specific practices: 1) the use of gender in their organization; 2) heteronormative ideology; 3) diversity in services. In the content analysis of the images or photos I looked for images of gender and sexual diversity and the message the image is sending about the shelter, its services or their clientele.

When analyzing the interview data from the shelter workers I compared their statements to the mission statements of their organization. I continuously compared the interviews from the same organization to check for consistency. I also examined the interviews for the same three specific elements as in the content analysis: gendered language, heteronormative ideology and diversity in services. I performed the same type of content analysis of the agencies' bylaws and mission statement. I also examined the documents and interviews for support or recognition of IPV occurring in relationships other than traditional heterosexual IPV.

By collecting data from three distinct populations (the lesbian community, lesbian survivors and domestic violence service organizations), I was able to analyze the data from each sample independently and situate each group accurately in the ecological theoretical model. The combination of these three data sets has also given me the ability to analyze the data as a whole and address the overarching research questions. Employing multiple paradigms of inquiry (Alford 1998) provided me with the ability to reach across various methodological techniques and bring together different aspects of truth, creating a more in-depth, robust understanding of the ways in which each level of the social ecology affects lesbian survivors of intimate partner violence.

In conducting this research, several areas of the organization were examined. All of these areas are a direct reflection of the policies and procedures of the domestic violence agency set solely by the agency but have enormous impact on lesbian survivors and the lesbian community as a whole. These included: general shelter information; history of shelter; mission of shelter; services provided; interviews with employees; images shelter presents; testimonials of clients published; the language and text of websites and blogs. When analyzing the data from the case

studies, I was looking for three specific issues: 1. Use of Gender; 2. Heteronormative Ideology; 3. Diversity of Available Services

Paradox Women's Shelter

Paradox Women's Shelter (PWS) is located in a suburb of a major southern city. They serve a community of approximately 700,000 people. According to the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) statistics, in 2007, 6579 aggressors were arrested under the family violence act. Of these, 74.7% were men and 25.2% were women. In the community Paradox Women's Shelter serves, eight women were killed by their heterosexual intimate partners in 2008.

PWS was founded over 30 years ago by a group of individuals concerned about domestic violence in their community. It was founded upon and continues to operate on the basis of feminist philosophies. Their mission reflects their dedication to the creation of a society free of domestic violence through education by serving diverse communities of women and children affected by domestic violence. Paradox Women's Shelter is a 32 bed shelter that receives more than 12,000 crisis calls a year and serves more than 400 women a month including shelter residents and community members.

PWS has many services available for women and children who have experienced intimate partner violence. These services are broken down into two separate areas; those available in shelter and those based in the community. Services available within the shelter include: confidential and safe shelter support groups, child and youth advocacy, financial education and empowerment, HIV/AIDS education (including prevention and healthy sexuality education), parenting programs, nutrition education, exercise programs, resume writing, appropriate clothing provision for interviews, and immigration documentation. Services available to the community include a safe house, 24-hour crisis line, legal advocacy, consultation with volunteer attorneys,

support groups, family advocacy, dating violence prevention, community education, and supervised visitation for non-custodial parents.

In conducting the case study of this shelter, I examined documents from the shelter, and information from their online website, including their online blog. I also conducted three face-to-face interviews with shelter employees. (Annie, Sonia and Janice). Their jobs titles range from Executive Director to Shelter Manager. All three women ranged in age from 30-50. All had worked at the shelter in several positions and all had been at Paradox for more than ten years.

Use of Gender

Paradox Women's Shelter appeared to use gender in two basic ways: 1) in assessing the primary aggressor in a relationship 2) in images published in their documents and online website.

Identification of the Primary Aggressor

Gender was also used in determining the primary aggressor in an abusive relationship. Traditionally, men were seen as the primary aggressors due to the socially held idea that they are naturally aggressive and violent. Yet, when trying to determine the primary aggressor in a lesbian relationship, gender is no longer a clear and reliable marker. Sonia explains the difficulties when dealing with lesbian couples.

...screening was more difficult, you know, with the groups trying to determine who the primary aggressor was in the relationships because it was much more difficult to identify.

She makes it clear that when serving lesbian clients, the tools advocates have used and depended on for many years may no longer be effective and possibly are obsolete. Using gender to assess the roles of individuals in a violent relationship is no long an effective way of differentiating the survivor from the batterer. For lesbian survivors, a mistaken identification could be devastating.

Lesbian survivors present new challenges for domestic violence shelters. When asked about the ways in which the advocates would go about this identification, Annie explained that it

is necessary to look for specific markers that would help to determine the primary aggressor. These would include language which indicates the aggressor believes themselves to be superior to their partner, or they will make it known that their partner is subordinate. Often they will have more money and therefore, a sense of entitlement. Jackie explained why it isn't necessary to identify the primary aggressor in a lesbian relationship.

I don't know necessarily that I would try to [identify the aggressor] because need and she's saying that I'm the person that's hurt, I think, we need to believe her.

This could allow a couple to enter the shelter. When the shelter advocates were asked about this situation, they all concurred that this had not happened in their shelter. When asked how they would handle this type of event, I received surprising responses. Janice, an advocate explained,

That seems so like—I'm sure it could happen but it's like it never has...it would kind of go I guess to who got there first.

Jackie made clear that

What's important to us is to believe the women that we're talking to. We don't want to make people feel like they have to, you know, so we have to give the woman that we're talking to the benefit of the doubt.

Images

All of the photographs or video that Paradox publishes in their public documents, online website, and client testimonials represent women who are traditionally gendered in appearance. All the women in photographs had longer hair and wore it in traditionally feminine manner; pulled back, or in braids or natural, with the exception of one woman. Most all the women wore feminine clothing, blouses, skirts, trousers. The women in the photographs and videos also wore earrings and makeup. In addition to their feminine appearances, most of the women were

pictured with children. There was not much diversity in terms of gender presentation in the photographs and videos published by Paradox.

Heteronormative Ideologies

Even though Paradox Shelter for Women was founded on a feminist philosophy and continues to operate under such auspices, I found that the vast majority of their clients, services, printed and online documents, online blog, and images to be, without exception, heteronormative.

The main theme that runs throughout the text and images produced by this organization is the fact that they serve women and children. The argument could be made that until very recently, the words *women and children* were code for heterosexual and weak. Women who have children are automatically assumed to have, at some point, had a sexual relationship with a man, and therefore are heterosexual. These types of assumption will be changing, if they haven't started already, as a substantial percentage of lesbians have children (Falco 1991). However, still it is assumed women who have children are heterosexual.

Language

When opening up their webpage, on the first page is their mission statement. One of the first lines of their mission statement says, "We strive to meet the immediate needs of the diverse community of battered women and their children." Such diversity may refer to diversity of race however their services do not reflect the diversity of the community they serve. In other literature, both in print and online, the phrase "women and children," or some reference to women with children, appear approximately 2/3rd of the time. Only 1/3 of the time did the literature mention women without children. This language marginalizes all women without children, including the majority of lesbians.

The use of such language continued in the interviews with the staff. When asked how many people their safe house accommodates, two of the three advocates confirmed “32 *women and children*.” This is the same language used repeatedly to describe the clients of their safe house. In a recent letter soliciting donations from the community, Paradox stated they had served over 250 *women and children* in their safe house in the last year. Another publication states “...provides temporary housing for women and children at a secure and confidential location.”

Paradox publishes an online blog. The subjects of the blog are often feminist focused stories and stories regarding violence against women. It is not clear if one person at Paradox writes the blog or if there are many bloggers. The stories range from violence occurring during custody exchange, murder suicides in families, increase in domestic violence after Katrina, to recent domestic violence related deaths. After following the blog for more than a year, I found the words “gay” or “lesbian” only mentioned one time in all the blog entries for that year which was approximately 90 entries. The context in which these words were used were in terms of school bullying, and did not relate in any way to intimate partner violence

Client Stories

Paradox does a good job of providing and promoting the success of their clients. One way in which this is accomplished is through publishing client stories. There are two formats where such stories are published: in print and video. In my analysis, I found three videos of clients on their web-site and five stories in their printed literature. In all of these stories, there were no client success stories that did not involve men as batterers or women without children. Of the eight stories, four of the women were married with children, three of the women had children, one had a boyfriend, and the other a husband.

Diversity in Services

Paradox provides a broad array of services to individuals in the community, as well as individuals within their shelter. In reviewing a document that describes each of the services provided, it appears that many of these are provided mostly for women with children. There are many examples in which the description of the service confirms that the service is primarily for women and children.

From their bulletin describing shelter services:

- Safe House: “Temporary housing for women and children at a secure and confidential location.”
- Legal Advocacy: “Assist women obtaining... child support payments and temporary custody of their children.”
- Supervised Visitation: “Families requiring supervised visitation are given a safe place for those visits to occur...that promotes and supports the bond between parent and child.”

Of the ten services described, six could be perceived as having heteronormative connotations. For example, in the description of the safe house program the first line states “provides temporary housing for *women and children*.” Other programs with suggestive undertones include family advocacy, child and youth advocacy, dating violence prevention and supervised visitation of non-custodial parents. Three out of the remaining four programs listed either refer to child related services, such as “help with child custody issues” or “childcare is provided.” Only the community education program’s description does not mention women and children.

While on the surface the quotes above and the description of the services do not appear to be outwardly heteronormative. However, in order to have rights such as child support payment, temporary custody or supervised visitation for parent and child, relationships between parent,

partner and child must be legally recognized. While it is possible and in some cases probable that lesbian families with children are legally recognized and would have the legal rights to family services offered by shelters, for the vast majority of lesbian families this recognition does not exist. These services are in most cases reserved for heterosexual families not because lesbians' families do not children but because these families are not legal recognized.

Colossal Shelter for Women

Colossal Shelter for Women (CSW) is located in a suburb of the major southern city which I studied. They serve a community of approximately 1,800,000 people. In their services area, 7474 aggressors were arrested under the family violence act in 2007. Over 77% were male and almost 23% were female (SBI 2008.) In 2008, seventeen women were killed by their intimate partner in this county. This statistic is three times higher than in all other areas in the state (State Domestic Violence Fatality Review Annual Report, 2009.)

Colossal was founded over 30 years ago by a group of individuals concerned about domestic violence in their community. Their mission reflects their desire for *women and children* to live a life free of violence. CSW received more than 10,000 crisis calls last year, housed approximately 550 women and children in their safe house and offered over 10,000 services to approximately 1200 individuals in their community based programs.

Colossal offers a 24-hour crisis line, emergency shelter, parenting groups, youth programs, community based services, transitional housing, legal advocacy, community and shelter based support groups, public assistance benefits, a teen dating violence program, and community outreach.

In conducting the case study of this shelter, I examined shelter documents, information from their online website including, public service announcements, press releases, and their

literature. I also conducted three face-to-face interviews with shelter employees: Kathleen, Elisabeth and Claire. Their job titles included housing coordinator, crisis line advocate and community outreach coordinator. All three women ranged in age from 30-50. Their years of experienced at Colossal varied from a few years to almost a decade.

Use of Gender

Much like Paradox Women's Shelter, CSW also employed gender in much the same ways. Gender was used: a) as a way of determining the primary aggressor; and b) in images published in their documents and online website.

Identification of Primary Aggressor

Like Paradox Shelter for Women, Colossal Women's Shelter also depends heavily on gender to determine who the primary aggressor is. As is evident in the discussion on gendered labels, the CWS advocates I spoke with were prone to identify males as batterers and females as victims.

As discussed previously, one of the unique factors in lesbian intimate partner violence is that both women could have access to the services and shelter provided by a DV organization. This presents two equally dangerous scenarios. First, if a lesbian survivor leaves her batterer and seeks shelter in a safe-house, the batterer could access the safe-house under the premise that she was also a battered woman. Second, if the batterer accessed the shelter first, she would have first hand knowledge of all the services available to the survivor and could even have knowledge of where the safe-house is located. The batterer could then use this information as power over the survivor to continue the abuse.

When exploring how advocates go about determining the primary aggressor in a lesbian relationship, the advocates made interesting remarks. Elizabeth stated that she could not tell who

the batterer was until she heard both sides of the women's story. When asked if this was the same in heterosexual relationships, she replied that in heterosexual relationship

We believe the woman, period...Our theory is we believe her story first. We take their word for it, whatever they say.

Kathleen added that if two women in a relationship presented at the shelter for services,

It just would seem like both of them needed the services and showed up.
Claire discussed an incident where two women in a lesbian relationship did approach

CWS for services and the feelings she had surrounding this incident. She explained:

Yeah, and I don't think we handled it very well. We worked with somebody that was in one of our shelter and there was someone at another shelter. And just based on who came to us first, that's who knew most about the services available for survivors and ultimately who got the best support from us. That was really tough for me to see, you know, that it was just a matter of timing... But it really made me think, you know, if we hadn't screened all that or if either of them had lied about their batterer's name, they could have ended up in the same shelter...And the point where we realized, wow, we might actually have the batterer in our shelter. That was really scary for us because we didn't know who was who.

Images/Photographs

The images that appear in CWS's printed documents and their online website are photographs of both women who have used their services and public services advertisements. In both cases, the women in these photos have a traditionally feminine appearance. Of the nineteen photographs depicting women, 15 of the women have long hair of a traditionally feminine fashion, and 4 of the women have short hair. Of those four, two are depicted with men, one is obviously pregnant and one is with a child. All of the women in the photographs, including the photographs published for their teen dating violence campaign, appear to be wearing makeup, earrings, jewelry and are dressed in distinctly feminine attire.

Heteronormative Ideologies

Language

Colossal Shelter for Women makes clear to the visitors to their website and the readers of their organizational information that their main mission is to serve women and children. As discussed previously, the phrase *women and children* or *women with children* were once strictly associated with heterosexuality. As stated previously, many lesbians do have children however the phrase *women and children* indicate a public recognition of family. Unfortunately, all lesbian families with children have not achieved such status yet.

At CSW, such heteronormative speech is overtly expressed through their organizational language to such a degree that it is difficult to imagine their services might be meant for anyone other than women with children. The mission statement of the organization clearly emphasizes their primary role as “supporting *women and their children* in their efforts to live violence free.”

In addition, the language used on their website, in printed text including press releases, yearly reports, community information, and funding raising drives, overwhelmingly uses the phrase *women and children* when describing their services. In such documents, the phrase *women and children* is used over 82% of the time compared to singular words such as *woman* or *women*, which does not imply the connotation of sexual orientation as heterosexual, appears only approximately 18% of the time.

Although the official and public language of the organization indicates their proclivity to serve heterosexual women, the same linguistic patterns are not so readily identified in the language of the advocates. When searching the transcripts of the personal interviews with shelter advocates, which consisted of more than 4 hours of total face-to-face talk to with these women, there was only one time that one of the advocates used the phrase *women and children*. This

phrase was used to answer the question “What services does your shelter offer?” and Elizabeth quickly responded “We offer emergency shelter for *women and children* [only].” It appeared to be somewhat of an ingrained response to such a question. I found no other incidents or phrases used by the advocates corresponding to heteronormative intuitional language of their organization.

Photographs

In addition to the organizational language, CWS continued with their heterosexual ideology in their use of photographs published in their literature or in their public service campaigns. In examining the pictures published by CWS, I found there was a bit more diversity in who was depicted in the photographs. The majority (58%) were of women alone without children or partners. Granted the women in these photos displayed a feminine presentation, the confirmation of heterosexuality, with the inclusion of a man or children in the scene, was absent. Over 25% of these photos pictured both women and children. Twelve percent pictured women with a supposable male partner and less than 1% of all photographs were of only children.

In the ad campaigns produced by CWS, not only are the images clearly heterosexual, but the text used with the photographs confirm the assumption. For example, in the ad campaign for teen violence prevention, there is only one photo of a male and female with a caption that reads “peace is what she will never have if she leaves me.” The other two photographs are of teenage girls by themselves. The captions, however, read “I ♥ my boyfriend because I’m scared of what will happen if I don’t” and “Smile is something I gotta do or my boyfriend will kill me.” Clearly, it is not only the symbolic message of the photographs but the tangible message attached to them.

CWS's advertisement campaign focused on domestic violence survivors; all three posters contain pictures of women with their assumed male partners. Only one caption explicitly reads heterosexual, "I like it when my husband puts out cigarettes on my back." The other two do not specifically mention husband or boyfriend but the individuals in the photos are engaged in such a way that leads the viewer to believe they are intimately involved. In addition, one of the photos contains a picture of pregnant woman and in the other photo, the individuals have wedding bands on.

It is clear that there are several ways in which the message of heteronormativity can be relayed. Sometimes this message is explicit with images and words, and at other times it is implicit and more subtle. Nonetheless, CWS appears to hold heteronormative ideologies, in the day to day practice of their operations and their public profile.

Clients Stories

Colossal also uses their clients' stories as public service announcements by printing them in their newsletters and website and in the videos on their website. All of the client stories published by CWS display one commonality that runs through all the published client stories: they were all heterosexual. All of the victims were women and all of the batterers were men. CWS posts "an award winning video" on the first page of their website. This video portrays four women telling their stories of how they were battered by their intimate partner. All of these women were battered by men. Three out of the four were battered by their husbands.

Thirteen other clients told their stories in printed documents. All of these women were heterosexual. There were eight married women who were battered by their husbands. Six of them had children. The other five women were abused by their boyfriends and four of these women had children.

Diversity in Services

CWS offers a wide range of services to survivors of intimate partner violence. They offer 12 services in total, which occur within the shelter and/or in the greater community. These include a safe house, crisis line, children's programs, support groups, etc. Some of the services offered by CWS are described as for *women and children*. The majority, however, state that they are for battered women. The services that are for women and children include the crisis line, the emergency shelter, parenting groups, and child and youth programs. The remainder of the services are for battered women and not specifically for *women and children* or *women with children*. In these services, the availability of childcare is mentioned, but is not the focus.

When interviewing the advocates, I asked about the services their shelter offered, and the advocates easily rattled off the entire list. Recognizing that CWS does not offer specific services for lesbians, I asked Kathleen about the services available for lesbians, and she stated

I think that for a lot that they just don't know that the services are available. I really don't think that they know the services are available.

Later in the interview, when I asked if she knew of any shelters that served lesbians or bisexual women with specific programs, she stated "Not that I know of."

Conclusion

This chapter details the major findings from case studies of two domestic violence shelters. Results reveal that domestic violence shelters are not prepared to deal with lesbian survivors of intimate partner violence. It is clear that the combination of their policies and practices could jeopardize the safety lesbian survivors in three distinct ways: the ways in which they use gender, their foundational heteronormative ideologies and available services.

Domestic violence agencies existed in the Large Formal Group environment. Lesbian survivors are profoundly impacted by practice and protocols of the shelter but do not participate

in the creation and implementation of such policies. The policies and procedures that have the most impact upon lesbian survivors are the shelters use of gender in their public images and as a tool to identify the primary aggressor, the shelters heteronormative ideology in the language used to describe their mission and services, and the client stories they chose to publish as being representative of their shelter. Finally, shelters impact lesbian survivors by the lack of diverse services to address lesbian intimate partner violence and lesbian survivors needs. Each of these findings will be discussed in greater detail in the discussion chapter. In the next chapter, a detailed discussion of the findings from Chapter 4 through 6 is presented.

CHAPTER 7. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the findings from the three preceding chapters are considered and explanations are offered within the framework of the ecological theoretical perspective utilized in this study. The guiding research questions and the findings of this study are situated and addressed in the various levels of the social ecology. This chapter begins with a review of the guiding research questions, an assessment of the levels of social ecology and the interplay between each component, followed by an in-depth discussion of the findings of Chapters 4-6.

Guiding Research Questions

Due to the nature of exploratory research, instead of developing hypotheses to address the overall study, three guiding questions were developed to guide the research. These questions were created based on the underpinnings of ecological theory, recognizing that many factors work together to impact survivors of intimate partner violence. The research questions stated in Chapter 4 are as follows: (1) How do lesbian communities' attitudes regarding lesbian intimate partner violence affect a) the lesbian survivor and b) domestic violence shelters/services? (2) How do domestic violence shelters/services affect a) the lesbian community and b) lesbian survivor of intimate partner violence? (3) How do lesbian survivors of intimate partner violence affect a) domestic violence shelters/services and b) the lesbian community?

Levels of the Social Ecology

As discussed in Chapter 3, it is important to explore the interplay between different levels of the social ecology. For this research, I have focused on the four different levels of the social ecology: The Individual (the lesbian survivor), Small Informal groups (intimate partnership, lesbian community, friends and family), Large Formal Groups (domestic violence agencies and law enforcement) and Societal Structures (heterosexism/homophobia). While these groups are

represented in Chapter 3 in a concentric model, the relationship between these groups is not unilateral, meaning that each level does not only impact the level above it. There is a complex reciprocal relationship between each of the levels. In order to understand how each of these levels impacts the others, and ultimately the lesbian survivor of IPV, this discussion is arranged based on the relationship and interaction of each of these levels, and their ultimate impact on lesbian survivors. The discussion proceeds from the innermost level, the individual, to the most encompassing level, social institutions.

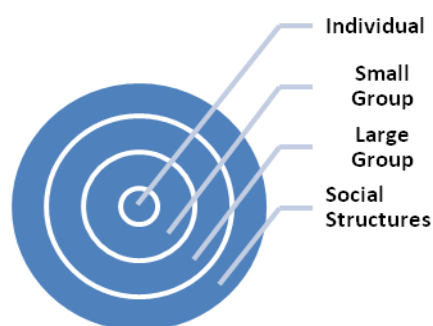


Figure 7.1 Levels of Social Ecology

Individual Level – Lesbian Survivors

The Individual Level contains the personal history of the survivor that influences and impacts their behavior. One of the most common personal histories in the survivors stories were their experience of family of origin violence. While there has been limited research on other risk factors of lesbian IPV survivors, several studies have concluded that lesbians who experienced or witnessed violence in their families of origin were also more likely to experience lesbian IPV (Schilit et al. 1991; Lockhart, et al. 1994; Tjaden, et al. 1999). These findings are consistent with the findings of the qualitative interviews in this project. All of these women had either experienced or witnessed violence in their families of origin. Two out of the four were physically

or sexually abused by a brother. The remaining two witnessed interparental and/or intergrandparental physical and psychological violence as a child.

All of the women in this study were well educated; everyone had finished at least a college education and two currently working on their PhD's. They all considered themselves to have middle class backgrounds. They were all in their early twenties when they experienced violence in their relationships. Interestingly, these violent relationships were the first serious relationships with a woman any of these women had been in.

However, it was not the first serious relationship their partner had been in. All of their partners were well known and well connected in the community. Being a newcomer to the lesbian community presented many challenges for these women. They reported it being difficult to know the social norms, values and expectations of the community and all reported depending on their partner to educate them and guide them as they became more familiar and settled in their new lifestyle. This difference between these couples created a natural power imbalance in which the perpetrator exploited.

Small Informal Groups – Lesbian Community

The Small Informal Groups is the level of the ecological framework where the interaction of two or more Individual Levels occurs. For example, the small informal groups represent interaction between the couples, family, friends and the lesbian community. The main focus of this study is the interaction that takes place between the lesbian community and survivors of lesbian intimate partner violence. In this section, I address the effects that the lesbian community has on lesbian survivors, along with the impact lesbian survivors have on the lesbian community.



Figure 7.2 Lesbian Community and Lesbian Survivors

Impact of Lesbian Community on Lesbian Survivors

The findings of the Lesbian Community Survey indicated that the sample held strong views about lesbian intimate partner violence. More than half of the women sampled had experienced some form of intimate partner violence in their relationships with other women. Ninety-five percent of the sample thought lesbian intimate partner violence was serious in the lesbian community. Fifty percent of the sample felt like lesbian IPV was common in their community. Data such as these suggest the community is at least familiar with lesbian intimate partner violence, leading one to assume that this social phenomenon is acknowledged and hopefully addressed in a positive manner to prevent violence from occurring in lesbian relationships. Unfortunately, my research does not support such a premise.

Analyzing the data from the Lesbian Community Survey and the in-depth survivor interviews have made it clear that lesbian survivors are profoundly affected by the attitudes and actions of the larger lesbian community. This study has produced several areas in which the larger lesbian community affects the individual survivor. The factors that affect lesbian survivors and ultimately the entire lesbian community the most are: community denial, justification, isolation vs. insulation, group dynamics and the types of violence perpetrated and experienced by community members.

Denial

As discussed in depth in Chapter 7, denial of Lesbian IPV occurs on many different arenas, including the lesbian community. It is difficult for people to recognize violence between two women. Often it is labeled as “relationship drama” or a “cat fight,” and it is difficult for some people to understand or acknowledge. Such labels ignore the existence of violence in lesbian relationships. The lack of acceptance and knowledge about lesbian intimate partner violence in the lesbian community works to increase the risk that lesbians will experience violence in their relationships. Without the knowledge needed to recognize a relationship as abusive, it is difficult to end the cycle and escape the abuse. If one doesn’t know what it is, it’s almost impossible to protect oneself from it.

When I asked Barbara what she had learned about lesbian IPV from her lesbian friends she replied:

Nothing. I mean, I hadn’t really been told anything. There was – I mean except for what my experience taught me, you know, you just stay quiet. I don’t think anybody ever said anything.

This same experience was supported by the sample in the Lesbian Community Survey. Lesbians who had not experienced violence in their relationship were less likely to believe that IPV was common in the lesbian community. Without these conversations taking place and the dissemination of knowledge in the community lesbians have no way of knowing lesbian intimate partner violence occurs at the same rate as heterosexual IPV.

The lack of discussion and knowledge in the community places lesbians at great risk for experiencing violence in their intimate relationships. This risk is much greater for young lesbians or lesbians in their first serious relationship as these women are usually less connected with the lesbian community, have not witnessed other lesbian relationships, and are more dependent on

their first partner for information about lesbian culture (Ristock 2003). The Lesbian Community Survey data also suggests this same pattern, as older women were more likely to believe lesbian IPV is serious in the lesbian community. Older lesbians have experienced and witnessed many more lesbian relationships, are more connected in the community and are intimately familiar with the culture of the lesbian community.

Not only does such naïveté put lesbians at risk for violence, it simultaneously dismisses the experiences of lesbians who have been abused in their intimate partnership. When Lynn confided in her lesbian friends about her abuse, she was faced with great indifference.

There have been people that I told about my relationship and it being abusive, and it was always met with apathy, at least from people in the lesbian community.

Not being believed, dismissed and delegitimized sends a strong message to survivors to keep your stories to yourself. Survivors have already been battered by the people they love and who they believed loved them. Further abuse is perpetrated upon these women by the stance of the lesbian community. Whether it is called denial, naïveté, or ignorance, the response of the lesbian community increases the risk of lesbian IPV, and silences the women they call family, friends or lovers.

Justification

Justification for violent actions not only supports but perpetuates the denial explored above. Like denial, justification of lesbian IPV puts lesbians at risk for greater frequency and more severe violence. The Lesbian Community Survey data found that women who perpetrated physical IPV were more likely to justify violent actions than women who did not perpetrate physical IPV against their partners. Interestingly, the survey also suggested that the more a lesbian justifies violence in a relationship the more likely she *and* her partner will be injured in an altercation between them.

The Community Survey also showed that the greater the recognition of IPV, the less justification occurred. Survivors state that they were injured while in denial or justifying the abuse they endured. Unfortunately, the abuse only escalated. The justification of violent actions masks violence in lesbian relationships. More than a fourth of the sample perpetrated physical violence. The survey data found that perpetrators of physical violence are more likely to justify violent actions. The more justification that occurs within the lesbian community, the more normalized violence is in relationships.

While the survivor interviews did not support the idea that increased levels of justification led to their partners being injured, they did recount that their own justification led to greater levels of violence and abuse at the hands of their partner.

Susan recalls what happened after the first physically violent episode.

And then it didn't happen again for I'd say a half a year. It escalated for, you know, like I said there's like six months where nothing happened and then it was like once a month, and then it was, you know, weekly and then at the point and time when finally, you know, I ended the relationship it was a daily thing.

There were several reasons given by the survivors for their justification ranging from the belief that their partner loved them and would never hurt them, to the belief that they had attained a dream house with a white picket fence and they did not want that dream to end.

The community sample suggested that the more recognition of behaviors as violent action the less likely a lesbian is to justify such actions. The survivors reported much the same thing. After they recognized their partners' behaviors were violent, they no longer could justify their actions or stay in the relationship. In terms of realizing this behavior was violent, a survivor stated "It just- something switched in my head and I just, I was done, and I was done."

Justification of lesbian intimate partner violence works to support the denial exhibited by the survivors, as well as members of the community. The reasons given for justification aren't

important. There are no acceptable reasons for anyone to suffer violence and abuse at the hands of her intimate partner. As noted above, justification not only endangers the survivor, but puts the perpetrator at risk as well. In addition, justifying violence in intimate relationships normalizes and excuses relationship violence, hiding the problem while leaving the survivors to suffer in silence.

Circle of Violence

Interestingly, increased justification for lesbian IPV indicated that both the perpetrator and survivor were at increased risk for injury. This is remarkable because when examining the types of violence perpetrated in lesbian couples in the Lesbian Community Survey, the major risk factor for perpetrating violence in an intimate relationship was having been the victimized by an intimate partner. The findings suggest that lesbians who perpetrate intimate partner violence are more likely to also be perpetrated upon and vice versa. The actions taken by individual members of the lesbian community not only directly affect survivors of lesbian IPV, these actions may make them survivors as well.

Twenty-six percent of the sample reported perpetrating physical violence against their partner, while 31% reported being physically abused by their partner. If a lesbian perpetrated physical violence, she is more likely to deny that IPV is a serious issue in the lesbian community, and she is more likely to offer justification for her own violent actions.

Additional findings suggest that lesbians who experienced IPV at the hands of their partner were at greater risk for being sexually abuse by their partner. In the community sample, 11% of the women reported having perpetrated sexual violence against their partners while almost 18% reported they had been sexually abused by a partner. Two of the women interviewed had also experienced sexual abuse by their lesbian partners.

The attitudes of members of the lesbian community not only affected survivors, but also perpetrators. As the community sample showed, perpetrators are at higher risk for becoming survivors and vice versa. This circle of violence puts all lesbians in danger. Once violence enters a relationship, it appears that it will continue not only in that relationship, but in future relationships. Denial, justification and secrecy of intimate partner violence that runs unchecked and appears to be the status quo in the lesbian community, endanger all members of the lesbian community. In order to break the cycle, it is vital that awareness, acknowledgement and communication regarding intimate partner violence take place in every lesbian community.

Isolation vs. Insulation

The final way in which lesbian survivors are negatively affected by the lesbian community is the very nature of lesbian relationships. This element appeared in the interviews with the survivors of lesbian IPV. For many reasons, some historical, gay and lesbian relationships have had to be secretive and their communities insularly. The protective shield which has cocooned the lesbian community and has allowed it to thrive and prosper has also simultaneously silenced the survivors who are battered by their lesbian partners and isolated them from the community and society at large.

One of the women I interviewed, Barbara explained:

Well, we do like to- I think the first thing that came to my mind was that we do have these relationships with our friends. We do stay within a circle. You know like, people tend to- in a group of friends, you've typically been with at least five of them if there's twelve right? And those people have been with each other. If we were in that group of 12 and you were with someone and then you and I got together, it's like they would – no one would ever tell you. There would just not be any talking about it. There would be no one sharing. It would be quiet. So therefore, you wouldn't know about, you know, former partners that maybe have been abusive. I don't think you would know because people just don't talk about it.

This unspoken group code that Barbara described just adds to the denial, the justification, and the circle of violence that raises the threat level of these invisible acts of violence which occur in lesbian relationships. The ability to maintain such a secret from a probable victim, who is considered a friend, provides some insight into how profound and deep the denial runs.

Lesbian communities are also isolated, because many women experience anger, rejection, are disowned and experience violence from their families of origin upon disclosing their sexual orientation. Lesbians often make such close and intimate connections with their group of friends that they become their families of choice, replacing the families from which they have been rejected.

The rejection of family, combined with the insular nature of the lesbian community, produces a substantially thick enclosure that makes it most difficult for lesbian survivors to escape relationships in which they are enduring significant violence. The insulation/isolation factor is created from both inside and outside the lesbian community, created equally by family of origin and family of choice. Barbara notes:

You have a whole other layer of oppression from being a victim of domestic violence in a lesbian relationship if your family has turned – like turns against you.

Two of the other women talked about being afraid to let their family know anything about their intimate partnerships. Each of them kept their two families (family of origin and choice) separated at all costs, even when the cost meant continuing to endure their partner's physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

Impact of Lesbian Survivors on Lesbian Community

Silence Isn't Golden

There is a great lack of recognition and discussion about lesbian intimate partner violence within the lesbian community. As many survivors stated, they told no one about the abuse they

were experiencing. Some of the women felt embarrassed. Others felt they would not be believed. Lynn felt her partner would always be believed over her.

Like she knew that whoever told the story first usually people believed it...
And so I felt like the outsider. Like there was no room for me. Like they,
you know, they all more so bought into what she had said was going on.

Others believed they had done something to deserve the abuse. Barbara explained "I mean, I would never tell anyone because I thought I had done something."

It is understandable why lesbian survivors would be reluctant to share their experiences of abuse when they feel there would be negative repercussions. However, the greatest repercussions actually arise from remaining silent. They come from the continued denial of relationship violence that runs throughout the lesbian community. Remaining quiet about the abuse they have endured denies the lesbian community the opportunity to recognize the seriousness of the issue.

According to the Lesbian Community Survey, lesbians who had not experienced lesbian IPV were less likely to believe that it was common in lesbian relationships. If survivors could step into the light and tell their stories, then it might be possible that other lesbians would not have to experience the same violence in order to believe lesbian IPV exists.

Larger Consequences

Not only does not speaking out about the violence in lesbian relationships put other lesbians in danger of being battered but it also endangers the batterers as well. The Lesbian Community Survey indicated that the main risk factor for victimization is perpetration and vice versa (injury, physical and sexual). If a lesbian has been battered then she will more than likely batter a partner.

In this study it is unclear if the violence took place in the same relationship as reciprocal violence or if it occurred in a different relationship. None-the-less, the sterility of the lesbian community in terms of communication and recognition of lesbian IPV, is the perfect breeding ground of such a cycle. The unwillingness of the lesbian community to recognize the violence that is taking place in their own backyards, combined with the reluctance of survivors to come forward, allows such a cycle to continue unchecked.

One possible explanation for this type of cyclical pattern may be found in the survivors' stories about the long term effects of experiencing IPV. Susan still feels the effects of her first relationship after 15 years.

I actually get afraid that I could fall back into that. So a big part of me closes myself off. And even in my last relationship I know I held a lot of emotions back. I closed myself off a lot because I was afraid to open, totally open because I was afraid of being hurt again.

Barbara's other relationship suffered because of her experience.

I mean, I think I've become really hypersensitive in my relationships after that, looking at, you know, controlling behavior. I went from that extreme way to the other extreme that you are not going to control me, you are not going to tell me what I can and cannot do. And I ended up in some really [bad relationships] - not in the relationship I ended up. I hurt a lot of women who were probably really good women, but I was just so...I'm going to protect myself; you're not going to fuck me over.

After Kimberly had been battered in several of her relationships, she recalls that she then also battered one of her partners.

Then in one of my relationships, I actually hit her [my girlfriend] one time and the minute it happened, I said "That's it. We're done. I'm so sorry. I never meant to do this and if this is what's gonna happen, then we're done." And she didn't want to break up me. And I just didn't see how I could possibly go back.

There is some evidence of this phenomenon of survivors becoming batterers, and vice versa, in studies of violence between men and women (McNeely and Robinson-Simpson 1987). The blurring of the lines between batterer and survivor brings to light that intimate partner violence in any relationship is convoluted and complex. This type of realization makes the recognition of lesbian IPV even more important. If lesbian intimate partner violence continues to be a taboo matter, then the rate of women who are abused by other women is going to continue to rise.

Mutual Battering: Fact or Fiction?

The findings in the Lesbian Community Survey indicate that in terms of physical and sexual violence, the greatest risk factors for battering are being battered and vice versa. The idea that intimate partner violence could be reciprocated between both partners is known as mutual battering. Mutual battering was first suggested in the context of heterosexual relationships in the late '80s (McNelly and Robinson-Simpson). Since then it has been suggested that violence occurring in a lesbian relationship is another example of mutual battering.

The data from the Lesbian Community Survey suggests that lesbians who have perpetrated violent acts against their partners have also been perpetrated against and those who have been perpetrated against are in turn more likely to perpetrate. However, the index used to measure relationship violence measures prevalence and gives no clue as to the context or time frame in which the violence took place. The data from the survey provides a “snapshot” rather than a “full length movie” to provide some background and context to the relationship in which the violence occurred. In other words, the survey did not capture whether the violence perpetrated by a woman occurred in the same relationship where she was herself battered, or in another relationship entirely.

Previous research on lesbian intimate partner violence has labeled mutual battering in lesbians relationships as “the myth of mutual battering” (Renzetti 1992). Several studies have found that lesbians are more likely to defend themselves, compared to heterosexual women, against violence in their relationships (Walker 1986; Renzetti 1992; Farley 1992). First, most lesbian couples are more equal in physical stature than heterosexual couples, and so there is not as large physical power differential as between a man and a woman. Second, there is greater acceptance in the lesbian community for the idea that lesbians should defend themselves against violence. Several researchers deny that intimate partner violence occurring within lesbian relationship is mutual battering. They admit that although both partners may use violence, only one partner is always more dominating and has more power and control in the relationship (Lobel 1986; Renzetti 1992; Farley 1992; Ricks et al. 2002; Peterman and Dixon 2003).

It is dangerous to automatically label intimate partner violence occurring in lesbian relationships as mutual battering without knowing more about the context in which the violence took place. Renzetti (1992) suggests that accepting mutual battering in lesbian IPV could cause the survivor to self-identify as a batterer even if she had used violence only once in self-defense. Such misidentification would cause the primary batterer to use this description in order to avoid responsibility for her actions. Furthermore, the labeling of mutual battering is problematic in that it would provide justification for the lack of support to survivor from friends, family, shelter advocates to law enforcement and the judicial system.

Because of the limitations of the instrument and the difficulty in obtaining contextual information in a community sample, I caution against the interpretation of these results as providing evidence that mutual battering in lesbian relationships accurately describes the violence. While the findings of the survey cannot and should not be dismissed, more research

needs to be done focusing on the contextual background in which lesbian intimate partner violence occurs. More importantly, the main point the findings support is that lesbian IPV is complex and convoluted. Dividing individuals into dichotomous categories of batterer and survivor may be an oversimplification of reality. However, relying solely on the “snapshot” provided by these results to answer the question, “fact or fiction?” has a negative impact on the lesbian survivor, as well as the community as a whole.

Large Informal Groups – Domestic Violence Agencies

The next environment in the social ecology is the Large Informal Groups. This environment represents large groups such as domestic violence shelters, law enforcement, religious organizations. In this environment, the developing individual, does not participate in the entities in this environment but are directly affected by its practices policies and decisions.



Figure 7.3 Domestic Violence Agencies and Lesbian Community

Impact of Domestic Violence Agencies on Lesbian Community

The second of my guiding questions addressed the effects that domestic violence shelters have on the lesbian community and lesbian survivors. There were several ways in which the lesbian community is impacted by domestic violence shelters. The main two issues that are discussed below are the obvious contradiction between shelter principles and practices, and the lack of community outreach.

Contradictory Ideals and Practices

The shelters chosen for the case study were born out of a community need for services to survivors of domestic violence. One shelter in particular, Paradox Women's Shelter, stated they were absolutely a feminist based organization. As organizations that emerged from the feminist movement, domestic violence shelters are vulnerable to contradictions between their stated purpose and actual practices that reinforce the dominant culture (VanNatta 2005). The following discussion will highlight the ways in which these domestic violence shelters reproduce a system of inequality for women in the lesbian community.

Both the shelters selected for the case studies had a clear mission that was repeated publically in their printed and online documentation. The mission statements of these shelters are remarkably similar in that both indicate their dedication to serving battered women and their children. This statement runs contradictory to the feminist ideals of ending inequality and providing services for all. By using the term "women and children" the shelters are indicating that this is a service only for women with children. Repeatedly stating these services are for "women and children" does not publically offer their services to lesbians without children or single heterosexual women with no children. The availability of services to women without children is inferred. While women without children may assume this includes them, many of them may not. In order to follow through on the feminist ideals set forth by the shelter, their language needs to be all inclusive and explicitly state to whom their services are offered.

Their use of such identifying phrases may inform some lesbians within the community that if you do not have children and/or are heterosexual, then this service is not explicitly for you. Members of the lesbian community searching for help in dealing with violence in their

relationship may not understand or assume those services are available to them also. They may be unable to overlook the specificity of the clientele publically recognized by these shelters.

Domestic violence shelters/services are experts in the field of domestic violence. Arguably, no other agency has as much experience at dealing with domestic violence on such an intimate level. Their words and practices may be seen as the practices of experts. Therefore, it is vital for shelters to be cognizant of the words they used and understand that by designating services for particular demographic, other groups are marginalized by such a designation.

In addition to not welcoming lesbians publically or openly, shelter's are also making a public statement to the community about a) what intimate partner violence is and what it isn't and b) who is affected by intimate partner violence and who isn't. Shelters have a great deal of power not only in their own operation, but they possess great power in the overall understanding and education of society as a whole. Implying that services may be available for lesbian survivors lacks the clarity needed to publically recognition that lesbian intimate partner violence is legitimate and that lesbians are equally, if not more profoundly, impacted by the experience of violence in their intimate relationships.

When domestic violence shelters exclude lesbians or any minority suffering from violence in their intimate relationships from their public documents it prevents the society from recognizing and understanding that violence occurs in lesbian relationships. Such exclusion has serious consequences in terms of law enforcement, the judicial system and other service agencies as often times lesbians are dependent on the knowledge and understanding of these individuals to help them escape or keep themselves safe in a relationship.

The day in day out operations of both domestic violence shelters do not reflect the mission created to direct their organizations. By believing that survivors are a homogeneous

group with a common collection of characteristics and stories, shelters are unknowingly active participants in the abuse that members of the lesbian community endure in private.

Community Outreach

The communities that the two shelters serve have a large population of lesbian couples residing in their service areas. According to the 2000 Census, more than 3% of all households in the communities they support are comprised of lesbian couples. According to the results of the Lesbian Community Survey more than 61.5% of the participants reside in the service area of these two shelters. Again, more than half of the participants reported experiencing some form of lesbian intimate partner violence in their relationships.

Neither of the shelters have any type of outreach to the lesbian community. Both shelters have outreach coordinators who make presentations at community gatherings, religious institutions, community groups, schools, and community events educating the public about relationship violence.

During an interview with a community outreach coordinator, when asked if there was specific population their organization was interested in reaching out to, the immediate response given was:

This agency, by the way, has always been since its inception very, very much dedicated to serving the gay community. We've always had gay staff members. We never, ever – our director never hires or even thinks about hiring someone who isn't not only accepting of people who are gay, but gay, transgender, etcetera, etcetera, but actually can truly celebrate and embrace relationships that are like the ones that so many of us here on staff have. And so it's really a wonderful thing.

Ultimately, the answer was that this shelter does not do any outreach to the lesbian community.

They had given a presentation to gay men's group once, but they were not aware of any venues

in which they could reach out to the lesbian community. Interestingly, while this shelter had reached out to a gay men's group, it does not offer services to male survivors of IPV.

It is imperative that domestic violence shelters reach out and advocate for all survivors of intimate partner violence. Community education about intimate partner violence is vital in the lesbian community. As stated previously, secrecy and denial about lesbian intimate partner violence is prevalent in the lesbian community, and therefore, significant effort needs to be spent on education about intimate partner violence. Lesbians need to be shown that relationship violence can and does occur. The lesbian community needs to be aware that one in four women, regardless of sexual orientation, will be physically abused by their intimate partner. The rates for psychological violence are thought to be even higher for lesbians than heterosexual women. It is vital to the well-being of the lesbian community to be included as a regular part of shelters' community education and outreach plans.

Impact of Lesbian Community on Domestic Violence Agencies

The lesbian community affects domestic violence shelters in various ways. The lesbian community and its members challenge traditional domestic violence shelters' foundational principles and make it difficult to determine primary aggressors. Because lesbian survivors do not seek services at traditional shelters, the experiences that shelter advocates have in serving lesbian survivors is limited.

Challenge to Tradition

The reality of lesbian intimate partner violence stands in direct contrast to the foundational principles of the domestic violence movement that grew from feminist underpinnings. Even though feminisms theoretical principles called for equality and inclusion for all, the reality of the feminist movement was equality for some and inclusion for a few

(Faderman 1991.) Thus, shelters that grew out of the feminist movement rely exclusively on the premise the only women are survivors and only men are batterers (VanNatta 2005). Lesbian IPV challenges the exclusivity of these narrow definitions of batterer and survivor. In order for traditional DV shelters to recognize, accept and embrace lesbian survivors, they would also have to admit that batterers are not all men. VanNatta found that shelter advocates believe that accepting that women are capable of battering somehow results in “letting men off the hook” (2005:428). Openly, advocating for lesbian survivors would be a challenge to these fundamental beliefs. It is impossible to openly advocate for lesbian survivors while still maintaining that only men are batterers. Such a schizophrenic dilemma ultimately leads to a closeted relationship between lesbian IPV survivors and traditional DV services.

Gender Isn't the Issue

Lesbians create a dilemma for most DV shelters' advocates in that they do not “fit” into the everyday, normal model of operation. Domestic violence shelters are dependent on gender and gendered roles to identify the players in heterosexual partnership violence. When gender is no longer a tool that works, it is difficult for advocates to restructure their entire approach to serving survivors.

Historically, shelter advocates and service providers have consistently used gender to identify the primary aggressor. Since they only serve women and survivors, if a woman presents for services, she must be a survivor; leaving men to be batterers. When lesbians present for services, then there are no gender markers that distinguish her from her batterer. The gender that advocates have relied on to determine survivor from batterer has suddenly disappeared, and there are no other tools used to determine survivor from batterer.

When shelters do try to distinguish the batterer from the survivor in a lesbian relationship, they continue to use gender markers. The reliability of this practice is questionable for two reasons. First, lesbian identities are not gender dependent. The community is not neatly categorized into butch and feminine identities. Secondly, while the results of the Lesbian Community Survey suggest that gender presentation does not differ in terms of who seeks shelter services, the results concluded that masculine women are less likely to report experiencing IPV compared to feminine women. Therefore, shelters may see mostly feminine lesbians present for services due to the underreporting of masculine women being battered.

Reaching Out

Lesbian survivors and the lesbian community often have difficulty recognizing and/or accepting that intimate partner violence occurs in their relationships. When lesbians do reach out it is not usually to traditional domestic violence shelters (Renzetti 1992). None of the survivors interviewed for this study, had contacted a domestic violence shelter. All of them reached out to private therapists or to family and friends, and that was not until they had already left the relationship. Therefore, shelters and their advocates do not have a great deal of experience dealing with lesbian intimate partner violence.

When shelter advocates were asked how often they come in contact with a lesbian survivor in their shelter, most of the advocates stated that while not rare it certainly was not an everyday occurrence. The lack of experience serving lesbian survivors makes it difficult for advocates to become familiar, knowledgeable and comfortable serving members of the lesbian community. Claire, a shelter advocate at Colossal explained the disadvantage this lack of contact has on shelter advocates' effectiveness:

Our volunteer trainings and our staff trainings are just the basic DV101 and, you know, rules of how the shelter runs. And there's like this little five minute – it's

like use gender neutral language and that's it. And we go with that. That's not good enough. The fact is it comes up so seldom. It's not a skill that – it's not a brain muscle that our staff is using all the time. So they lose it, you know. They think they know what they're supposed to do and then they get a lesbian call, and they're like, oh god, what am I supposed to do?

Although lesbians may be aware that domestic violence shelters exist, lesbian survivors do not usually access them. Because money is constantly an issue for shelters, it is difficult for them to provide specialized services to communities that do not present themselves as in need.

According to the results of the Lesbian Community Survey, believing services were available for lesbian survivors was dependant on geographical location. Those who lived in the metropolitan area were more likely to believe that there were shelter services available to lesbian victims of intimate partner violence compared to lesbians who lived outside the metro area. Despite this, most women in the metro area did not know of any specific services or shelters open to lesbian survivors.

The practices of traditional domestic violence shelters, and the attitudes and behaviors of the lesbian community and its members, work to maintain the social distance between advocate and survivor, which negatively affects both the lesbian community and traditional domestic violence shelters. Lesbians do not seek services from traditional domestic violence shelters. Because of this, shelters have not had to accommodate lesbian survivors by revising their best practices to include lesbian survivors. Shelters are therefore unprepared and sometimes unwilling to handle the unique elements of lesbian IPV. In the end, these practices keep everyone in their place, with lesbian survivors of IPV without shelters or services, and domestic violence services or shelters without lesbian clients.



Figure 7.4 Domestic Violence Agencies and Lesbian Survivors

Impact of Domestic Violence Agencies on Lesbian Survivors

Domestic violence agencies impact lesbian survivors in several ways. Chapter 6 outlined the practices of the domestic violence agencies in the case studies. There were three main areas which impact lesbian survivors of IPV: use of gender, heteronormative ideology and diversity in services. All of these areas either explicitly or implicitly negatively impact lesbian survivors. Some of these areas negatively impact lesbian survivors more than others. The power of the impact on lesbian survivors results from the potentiation of all these elements. Potentiation refers to the power of elements, which is greater than their simple combination (Venes 2005). Meaning that either of these alone or in simple combination do not produce the full force of impact that lesbian survivors experience in domestic violence agencies.

Use of Gender

The case studies revealed that these shelters use gender as the most prominent means to identify the primary aggressor in a relationship. The use of gender in their language occurs in the language of an advocate when describing the batterer and survivor. Also, the images and photos on their website and their printed documents tell the reader two important things: 1) who they serve at their shelter and 2) more importantly who they don't serve.

Domestic violence agencies' use of gender is informed by heteronormative ideology. This is the assumption that *real* violence only occurs in a relationship between a woman and a man, where the man is identified as the batterer and the woman a victim. From the perspective of these domestic violence agencies, survivorhood is not only determined by the victim's gender, but also by the gender of their batterer. Public messages sent through text, images, photo's and client stories make it clear that gender is used to identifier not only batterers but survivors as well. Their overuse of the phrase *women and children* may point out to lesbian survivors who don't have children that these services are not meant for you. Such messages could prevent lesbian survivors from seeking refuge from their abusive relationships.

In an interview, Lynn illustrates how these messages operate. During the time when she was involved in an abusive relationship, she worked in a domestic violence shelter. She began as a volunteer, and then received training to become a domestic violence counselor.

I was a volunteer there, and I think because there was no male component [in their relationship], it just felt at the time like I just don't know – I think it took me longer to accept what was really going on. I didn't feel like I identified with it [lesbian domestic violence].

Lynn goes on to explain

There was never a thought in my mind to go to the shelter because it seemed to me like "Oh those are women who are..." I don't know. I think about it now and I'm like "...fearing for their lives? Yeah, that was me." It felt like, "Well, you come here basically if you don't have anything else and you have children," because they had like a children's program and all that. But not some place to go if it's just you and your partner.

Shelter advocates even spoke about how their shelters' policies and procedures affected lesbian survivors. Elizabeth, a shelter advocate, expresses her frustration about how to make it known that lesbians are welcome in their shelter.

It's really hard to tell from –it says battered women. I don't how you can determine that includes me if I'm in a same-sex relationship, because most of them don't think that that includes them. There has to be some advertisement that says that means me, too. And I

don't know how we can word it, but it has to be something that lets other women know, women that are in a same-sex relationship, that that's me, too, rather than calling me up and saying do you accept women in same-sex relationships. There has to be some kind of way. I don't know how we're going to get it done or how we're going to phrase it, but there has to be a way without having a big clause that says, oh yeah...same-sex women, too.

Identify Primary Aggressor

Another way in which gender is used in shelters is to identify the primary aggressor.

Using gender to determine the batterer is extremely tricky in lesbian couples. Trying to access the aggressor in a lesbian relationship renders gender useless. However, not addressing the aggressor in a lesbian couples has grave consequences, especially if they are both seeking services at the same time.

Some advocates expressed that it was not important to identify the primary aggressor in a lesbian relationship because the woman who was seeking services from the shelter was obviously the survivor. Several advocates explained that they believe the women's stories who come to the shelter. Elizabeth exclaimed "We believe the woman, period."

One of the unique elements about lesbian IPV is because batterers are also women they have the ability to gain shelter access. If a lesbian batterer also presents as a battered woman at the shelter where her partner has sought safety, the battering can continue while both women are in the shelter. In addition, the simple knowledge gained of the shelter location, the inner workings of the shelter, and the resources of the shelter, provides a batterer with a great amount of power and control over the survivor. The batterer can use this information to manipulate the survivor to stay in the abusive relationship. Therefore, it is essential that shelters work to identify the primary aggressor and not simply solve the problem by splitting up the couple into different shelters. Knowledge is power and by batterers having the knowledge of the services available to their victims gives batterers even more power to control their partner in the future.

The shelter policy of believing “every woman” places lesbian survivors in an extremely vulnerable and dangerous position. If a safe house is no longer safe, this leaves few options for the lesbian survivor to flee the abuse she has endured in her relationship. The fundamental function of a shelter is to keep its residents safe. Shelters go to great lengths to keep the safe house a confidential location, including using elaborate plans and practices to keep women safe from their batterers outside. For lesbian survivors, however, none of these safety mechanisms help them if who they are hiding from is waiting inside.

Lack of Services

Shelters offer a whole host of services to clients in the shelter, community clients and the community itself. Some of those services are intended to address the needs of specific populations. For example, shelters have children’s program and safe exchange sites for parents sharing custody of their children. These programs are not used by all women in the shelter, because only those who have children would need these services.

Neither of the shelters in the case studies offered programs specifically for lesbians. Elizabeth explained, “No matter what your preference is, we don’t change the services that you will receive; abuse is abuse.” However, for lesbians abuse sometimes can look very different and lesbian survivors face numerous barriers that heterosexual women do not. Heterosexual women do not have to convince anyone that they have been abused by their male partner. Systems that serve survivors are based on a heterosexual paradigm, including the shelter policies, laws of the county or state, the judicial system, and law enforcement.

Just the fear of not getting services alone is often enough to keep women from seeking assistance. These services can be anything from a safe space to speak out about their abuse and

be honest about their batterer being a woman to receiving assistance in navigating a legal system that has been historically unfriendly to lesbians.

Sonja, a shelter advocate, talks about once providing services to lesbians.

...back in the day like – you know back in the day because we used to have what we called the lesbian support groups and we had a lesbian crisis line and at that time only the lesbians work with lesbians who are coming here for our services because that's the way they wanted it. They wanted to be the ones that serve the women who needed them. And so but those services weren't used very much which is why we couldn't have like dedicated services to that.

Granted, domestic violence agencies have to make concessions on what services they offer due to the limited funding they receive and the overwhelming demand for services.

However, the services that Sonja described that were offered “back in the day” did not appear to tax their shelter as these were services they were already providing to heterosexual women.

Domestic violence agencies offer many services that are directed at a small population of clients.

It is not sufficient for domestic violence shelters to have advocates that specifically serve lesbian survivors. This could cause negative consequences for the shelter, in terms of time devoted to small number of clients, and for the lesbian survivor, in terms of limited services. Having a lesbian specific advocate severely limits the availability of services for lesbians to one person.

Instead of having services from an entire staff of professional available to them like other women in the shelter, their access to services is significantly decreased to the availability of one person.

All shelter advocates need to be trained to deal with domestic violence regardless of the survivor. The lack of assistance in navigating a heteronormative system is dangerous and damaging to lesbian survivors; because at every turn of the system, there is the chance they will be discriminated against and oppressed due to their sexual orientation. This chance is something that most lesbian survivors are not willing to take.

Impact of Lesbian Survivors on Domestic Violence Agencies

Lesbian survivors are less likely to seek assistance from traditional domestic violence agencies. None of the survivors interviewed had sought help from a domestic violence shelter; even though one of the survivors worked at a shelter during the time of her abuse. The lack of a lesbian presence at domestic violence agencies sends the message to the domestic violence world that intimate partner violence is not a problem in the lesbian community.

I am not suggesting that it is the sole responsibility of lesbian survivors to risk or endure discrimination and oppression in order to make a point for the entire lesbian community. It certainly is not their responsibility. I am suggesting, however, that if services never see lesbian survivors in their shelters, it is difficult to conclude anything other than the assumption that lesbians don't need their help.

Lack of Experience

The knowledge and expertise that most advocates attain is developed through their experiences on the job (Loseke 1992). If they never encounter a lesbian survivor, it is difficult for them to grasp and fully understand the unique experiences and needs of a lesbian survivor. Advocates are inundated with heterosexual domestic violence, and it is difficult to change their practices that adequately serve heterosexual women to those needed to face a completely new set of challenges when serving lesbian survivors.

When lesbians do seek services in traditional domestic violence shelters, it is not uncommon for them to lie about the identity of their batterers. While this is completely understandable due to the heteronormative landscape in the shelter, at the same time this denies shelter advocates the ability to learn and understand what the real needs of lesbian survivors are. Not being honest about who their batterer is, or not engaging directly and honestly in shelter life,

allows the shelter staff to see lesbian IPV as an exception and not the rule. This leaves shelter advocates with inaccurate beliefs about the needs of lesbian survivors.

Elizabeth believes that lesbians are more independent and do not need shelter services as much as heterosexual women.

They're more independent because they don't allow – in my sense, it's not allowed to where I'm just going to wait on somebody to make a decision for me; I'm just going to go out there and do it. I guess that society feeds that. You know, that's how society treats them, that you're an outcast more than in here. So you're going to have to make it on your own. And it's a battle.

This type of incorrect assumption about lesbian survivors does two things. First, it puts added stress and unrealistic expectations on lesbian survivors who do seek shelter from abuse.

Secondly, domestic violence agencies may provide less help than would be available to heterosexual survivors.

Never the Two Shall Meet

It may appear that the worlds of the lesbian community and the domestic violence community are simply two worlds that never collide. Surprisingly, this is not true. There have been a number of famous lesbians, including Del Martin and Ellen Pence, who have been instrumental in developing and nurturing the domestic violence movement to its current state. For example, longtime women's right activist and lesbian Del Martin was vital in bringing attention to the social problem of violence against women. She began speaking against domestic violence in the early 1970's and wrote the book *Battered Wives* in 1979. Although Del Martin was a women's rights and domestic violence activist throughout her life, she did not allow for her two worlds to collide. Del did not speak out about lesbian intimate partner violence. The involvement of lesbians in domestic violence agency work not only happens to influential

individuals, but to everyday women working in shelter. Lynn, a survivor recalls the attitudes of several lesbians who worked a shelter with her.

There were a lot of lesbians involved in the shelter, like as volunteers or as staff or as counselors and there definitely seemed to be more of a mindset that, “We are women loving women and we’re helping these women who are in abusive relationships.” But not really a, “This can happen between us” sort of thing. It was an us and them kind of thing – because there were a lot – I just remember a lot of lesbians that were helping at the shelter but I don’t remember there being any lesbians *in* the shelter. And there was no talk of “This also happens in the lesbian community.”

By not recognizing, not speaking out and not advocating for lesbians in domestic violence agencies, lesbians are keeping their survivor sisters in the closet. They are missing an unprecedented opportunity to make change from the inside out. If lesbians working in shelters do not advocate for lesbians survivors, then why should anyone expect heterosexual advocates to do the same?

Assumptions by Lesbians

In addition to not seeking help from domestic violence agencies, the attitudes of the community and lesbian survivors about domestic violence agencies also increases the gap between survivors and shelters. For example, Kimberley, a survivor, explained why she could not go to a shelter in her area.

I don’t feel like that, you know, where would I go? Say I was in an abusive relationship right now. Where would I go? Am I – I live in ----- County – am I suppose to go down to one of the, you know, various shelters run by probably crazy religious nuts, as a lesbian and go down there and ask for help? What kind of help am I gonna get? I am gonna be proselytized. I’m gonna be told I’m bad. I’m gonna be told “We can’t help you.”

The assumption (even if its not true) that domestic violence agencies are not going to be accepting, and there is no help for lesbians to receive there, keeps lesbians from seeking the help

they need and keeps advocates and agencies from understanding that intimate partner violence is prevalent in lesbian communities and there are many lesbian survivors that need their help.

The previous discussion has made clear three pertinent ideas. 1. Lesbian intimate partner violence is not recognized as a dangerous crisis in the lesbian community. 2. Domestic violence shelters/services do not provide adequate services for lesbian survivors of intimate partner violence or outreach and education to the lesbian community. 3. The actions and attitudes of lesbian survivors and community members can further isolate themselves from the help so desperately needed to end the violence in lesbian relationships.

Social Structures

In the most outer shell of the social ecology lie Social Structure. Heise defines this level of the social ecology as “a broad set of cultural values and beliefs that permeate and inform the other three layers of the social ecology. [Social Structures] factors operate through their influence on factors and structures lower down in the system (Heise 1998; pg 277). In this model, I define social structures as representing stable patterns of thought and behaviors in order to achieve an important social task (Mooney, Know and Schacht 2006). The two main social that envelope this model are heterosexism and homophobia.

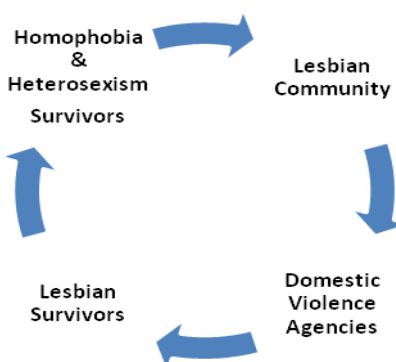


Figure 7.5 Impact of Homophobia and Heterosexism

Impact of Homophobia and Heterosexism

Homophobia and Heterosexisms most important social task is maintaining the status quo in society that simultaneously privileges the sexual majority and oppresses sexual minorities. Such preservation leads to the practices that continue to victimize lesbian survivors of IPV. This thought is particularly poignant upon the realization that while heterosexual victims of domestic violence can begin to heal once they leave the abusive environment, lesbian survivors cannot escape a society that believes heterosexism and homophobia are foundational elements. Since society is fully enveloped by these structures, the beliefs and practices that reflect these values seep down through and into all layers of the social ecology.

Homophobia in DV Agencies

Whether perceived or actual, homophobia and/or heterosexism are immense barriers for lesbians seeking assistance for domestic violence. While domestic violence agencies are expected to be anti-heterosexist, anti-homophobic, and concerned solely with domestic violence (Donnelly et al. 1999), lesbians have great difficulty obtaining lesbian specific services. During an interview, Annie, a shelter advocate, discusses the steps her shelter takes to combat homophobia.

One thing is our literature, you know, if you get online and read, you know, we're really very upfront about, you know, homophobia is not okay, you know, period.

Even though the shelter may be letting readers know that homophobia is not okay, in some ways they work to prevent this problem by not addressing or acknowledging that anything other than heterosexual violence exists, or that they offer services to anyone else. The lesbian community may not see this agency as available to them. After all, homophobia is not a problem if there aren't any lesbians present.

Heterosexism in Law Enforcement

Most of the lesbian survivors interviewed had called 911, at least once, in an attempt to get help from law enforcement during a violent episode with their partner. There was only one instance when these types of call led to the batterer's arrest. A shelter advocate recalls how some police officers have treated lesbian survivors.

I would say police officers sometimes really screw it up. I've heard of cases, probably percentage wise higher, for same sex couples where the police officers are not getting it. So they do-- they said something offensive or, you know, just show their ignorance around lesbian relationships....They showed up and there's two women in the house, you know, and it's things like, you know, well what you need is [a good man], and then well you're a really good looking woman why aren't you with a man and then there's the bad awful crap that they say.

Often police officers are the first service providers lesbian survivors come into contact with. This is especially true if 911 were called. This type of treatment is not a message that encourages survivors to trust that there is help available to them in a system that is set up to protect and help women in violent relationships.

It is essential that police officers are well-versed in applying the law to all citizens equally. Training specifically devoted to lesbian intimate partner violence is essential to safety to both lesbian survivors and batterers. Domestic violence agencies are key in offering training to law enforcement agencies regarding the complicated issues surrounding domestic violence in general and the specific distinction found in lesbian IPV. In addition to domestic violence agencies, lesbian community leaders and organizers should partner with police agencies and domestic violence agencies in an effort to bring real understanding and voice the needs of lesbian survivors to these frontline service providers.

Heterosexism and Homophobia in Families of Origin

Several survivors spoke of the reasons why they remained silent about their abuse and worked diligently to hide any evidence that suggested violence was taking place in their lesbian relationship. They felt as if their families' attitude and beliefs expressly relayed the message that they should not have expected anything different in a lesbian relationship. Lesbian relationships are bad by their very nature (because it is not a heterosexual relationship), and therefore, bad things are *going* to happen in them. Expecting otherwise would be naive. One survivor stated that she would not have stayed in her abusive relationship for so long if her family had reacted different, and if they had been there to support her in the most difficult time in her life.

Heterosexism and homophobia in families works to push lesbians away from their families and supports their dependence on their friends and partner to fulfill the space where families once existed. For many lesbians, this is a hurtful situation but not necessarily a dangerous one. For survivors of lesbian intimate partner violence, the gap that is left by the absence of family can be extremely treacherous.

Internal Homophobia

Lesbian relationships are not immune from the internal impact of homophobia. Internal homophobia “manifests as a hatred of one’s homosexuality, the belief that one is “sick” for being gay...It can manifest as a discomfort with other gay people and guilt about one’s sexual orientation” (Balsam 2001:29). The elements explained in this definition highlight the ways in which internal homophobia affects lesbian survivors of IPV. Lynn, a survivor, reported that in one abusive relationship that she was in, her partner was still closeted. Because of her partner’s internal homophobia, Lynn was not allowed to openly identify as a lesbian or make friends within the lesbian community. The isolation Lynn experienced in this relationship kept her

isolated from the larger community and reinforced the power and control her partner exhibited over her.

Conclusion

This chapter presents speculations that are guided by theory about the three sets of findings in this study. I used the ecological theoretical model and the levels of the social ecology in order to organize my thoughts regarding lesbian attitudes and beliefs about lesbian IPV, along with the policies and practices of domestic violence agencies and the personal experiences of survivors of lesbian IPV. By using an ecological framework to examine the interplay of the levels of the social ecology sheds some light on how these environments operating within the ecological framework affect survivors of lesbian IPV.

This goal of this work is to help people realize that this violence is occurring in lesbian relationships everyday, and that lesbians are deserving of equal and good treatment for themselves from their partners, the lesbian community, and the larger community. This certainly includes those agencies that should be there to help them in time of need, like domestic violence agencies and law enforcement officers. Finally, all individuals are deserving of equal rights, respect and the dignity to live a life free of violence, especially in their most intimate relationships. My wishes are best reflected in a statement by Annie, a shelter advocate.

In any case, it's about continuing to get people to break down all those old dangerous ideas about patriarchal violence and how it works. It's like when people can really understand what it does, where it comes from and when we believe that we have some kind of right or obligation even to act in that way dominating someone else and, you know, ruling the roost, captain of the ship, king of castle, blah, blah, blah, you know, instead of approaching people in our lives like real equals, respecting human rights, understanding that people are free even if we're married, even if we make promises, even if we have children, people are free to be with you everyday or leave you everyday and that's the vulnerability of relationships in love and it's like this is kind of getting people to get their head around the fact that people are free and that people are free to break your heart and hurt you and disappoint you. Welcome to being a human being.

CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION

The discussion of lesbian intimate partner violence guided by the ecological theoretical perspective makes clear that lesbian intimate partner violence is a complicated and complex issue. The interplay between the levels of the social ecology demonstrates there are multiple issues at play that impact lesbians and their relationships, thus making it difficult to address intimate partner violence in lesbian relationships.

This study addressed three main questions: (1) How do lesbian communities' attitudes regarding lesbian intimate partner violence affect a) the lesbian survivor and b) domestic violence shelters/services? (2) How do domestic violence shelters/services affect a) the lesbian community and b) lesbian survivor of intimate partner violence? (3) How do survivors of lesbian intimate partner violence affect a) the lesbian community and b) domestic violence shelters/services? These research questions were explored by investigating lesbian community attitudes, conducting case studies of domestic violence agencies, and interviewing survivors of lesbian IPV.

The use of these three methods allows for a comprehensive picture of the issues surrounding lesbian intimate partner violence, including an exploration of community attitudes, analysis of local domestic violence agencies, as well as an in-depth look at the women who have experienced it. The combination of quantitative, case study and qualitative methods has not been employed in previous research on this topic.

Contributions of Research

This study makes several contributions to the field of gay and lesbian studies and the field of domestic violence. First, it offers an in-depth examination of lesbian community attitudes regarding lesbian intimate partner violence. To my knowledge, there have not been other studies which specifically examine the attitudes of lesbians in terms of lesbian IPV. As with other social

movements, community activism and education is the key. The lesbian communities support is paramount to end the silent suffering of lesbian survivors of IPV.

A second contribution of this research is that it provides a detailed examination of the policies and practices of two large local metropolitan domestic violence agencies. This information highlights areas in need of improvement in order to better serve lesbian IPV survivors. Employing both case studies and in-depth survivor interviews, this dissertation created a literary dialogue between lesbian survivors and domestic violence agencies, giving agencies an insider's view of just how their policies effect survivors of lesbian IPV. Not only could this information improve services for this minority but hopefully it will spur domestic violence agencies to take a fresh look at how their feminist practices impact all survivors of intimate partner violence.

Third, this gives a voice to the survivors of lesbian intimate partner violence while adding to the body of knowledge the experiences of lesbian in their violent relationships. By giving these women a voice, it not only informs the academic field of research, it also validates the experiences of these women and empowers them to tell their stories, some for the first time, thus allowing them to explore their experiences without the fear of rejection or discrimination.

The final contribution of this study is the expansion of the ecological theoretical perspective. This perspective was originally used to explain child abuse and neglect. It has been successfully adapted to examine intimate partner violence. Hopefully, the utilization of ecological theory in the investigation of lesbian intimate partner violence will broaden the applicability of this theory while illuminating the multifaceted interactions occurring simultaneously in the phenomenon of lesbian intimate partner violence.

Limitations

The very nature of this exploratory research presents a number of limitations. First, the convenient sample for the lesbian community survey and the lesbian survivors' interviews limits the generalizability of these findings. Since there was no available sampling frame for members of the lesbian community it was impossible to select a probability sample. In addition, lesbian survivors of lesbian intimate partner violence are a vulnerable, hard to reach population. Collecting this type of data was the driving force behind this project regardless of the generalizability of the findings.

A second limitation of this dissertation is the lesbian community survey. This survey was adapted from a national survey used in a foreign nation to assess the community attitudes regarding heterosexual intimate partner violence against women. This survey may not have explored the differing nuances between IPV in heterosexual community and lesbian communities. This may have also limited my ability to address the differing ways communities are structured, operate, share information and generate social change.

Others limitations lay in the findings of the domestic violence agencies case studies. These two agencies are in relatively close proximity to one another and have similar client demographics. The policies and practices of these two agencies may not reflect common practices in DV agencies in other parts of the state, other parts of the region or in other regions of the country. Sections of the findings may be applicable to other domestic violence agencies while others may not.

Lastly, the homogenous sample of survivors limits the findings in this study. All of these women survivors interviewed were middle-class, well education with higher than average incomes. Their experiences, and ultimate resources to deal with lesbian IPV, are directly

impacted by their social standing and the rights and privileges bestowed upon them because of their status. A more diverse sample could have yielded different findings and offered a different view of lesbian IPV based on these diverse experiences and struggles in dealing with lesbian intimate partner violence.

Recommendations for Future Research

The field of future research on lesbian intimate partner violence is wide open. Practically any area pertaining to the study of lesbian intimate partner violence is in need of further research. I have several recommendations for future research. First, I would recommend a more comprehensive study of domestic violence agencies policies and procedures serving surviving survivors of lesbian intimate partner violence. Domestic violence agencies are essential in how lesbian IPV is thought about in the larger community, in offering safe harbor to lesbian survivors, and reaching out and educating the larger community, as well as the lesbian community, in regards to lesbian IPV.

Second, I would recommend a more in-depth study of lesbian community attitudes about lesbian IPV and how those attitudes directly impact survivors. Research on how homophobia and heterosexism affect community attitudes in terms of lesbian IPV is needed and would certainly inform more in-depth discussion about what impact the community has on survivors.

Third, a study of the context in which violence occurs in lesbian relationships is needed. While the Revised Conflict Tactic Scale does assess the types and prevalence of violence, it lacks the sophistication to get at the context in which the violence takes place. This is extremely important to address the myth of mutual battering in lesbian relationships. There are several reasons people use violence. Sometimes it's for self-protection and other times it's to maintain power and control over ones partner. The origins and underlying premise of these scenarios are

completely different. It is vital that further attention be given to the context in which intimate partner violence occurs, not only for lesbians but for all individual experiencing violence in their relationships.

Finally, I would recommend further investigation into the structural inequalities that affect lesbian survivors. While this dissertation examines domestic violence agencies, there are several other structural elements which need further examination. Including the beliefs and attitudes of employees in the judicial system and how they effect judicial actions such as prosecution of batterers and issuance of temporary protective orders. Also the actions of law enforcement and its impact on lesbian IPV is critical need of examination. Law enforcement officers are often the first person a lesbian survivor ever engages about their abuse. Their ability to react appropriately has long lasting effects on the help that lesbian survivors receive.

Policy Implications

There are several policy implications of this research. First, this research will inform the two agencies in the case study how their policies have a negative impact on lesbian survivor. Hopefully, the findings in this research will lead to policy changes in their organizations including decreasing or eliminating the overt heteronormative messages created by their agencies. Also, this research highlights the need for agencies to perform active outreach education about lesbian IPV to the lesbian community as well as the larger society. It is my hope that these findings will lead other agencies to examine their policies and address any areas that marginalized survivors.

Secondly, this research informs lesbian community organizations and community leaders about the prevalence, dangers and challenges of lesbian intimate partner violence. The findings of this research create an opportunity for discussion and education by the community to the

community members. In turn, it is possible that the dissemination of this information throughout the community will lead to greater recognition of lesbian IPV and thus services to help lesbian couples experiencing violence in their relationships.

Lastly, it is my hope that the findings in this research will start a dialogue between the lesbian community, members and leaders, and domestic violence agencies. This type of discourse could create an exchange of valuable information and thus educate members in both the domestic violence arenas and the lesbian communities. Shrinking the social distance between these two groups increases the possibility that a) domestic violence agencies become more welcoming organizations, able to serve all survivors, b) lesbian survivors will seek help and refuge in shelters thus having a safe place to go when escaping abuse and thus help shelter advocates understand the specific needs and challenges of lesbian survivors, c) the lesbian community will become more aware of the effects that intimate partner violence has on a community and becomes educated in the overall impact that community attitudes and behaviors have on intimate partner violence.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Survivors Life History Questions

I. Personal Information

1. How old are you?
2. What racial or ethnic group do you identify with?
3. What would you say is your current socio-economic class?
4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
5. Are you employed?
 - a) Full Time? Part Time?
6. What is your occupation?
7. What is your yearly income?
8. How do you sexually identify?
9. What is your gender identity?
10. Are you out to your family, friends, work, school?
 - a) If so, how long?
11. Are you in a relationship now?
12. Are you experiencing violence in this relationship?
13. Who is the main income earner in your household?
14. Did you witness violence growing up?
 - a) What type?
 - b) Who was involved?
 - c) How long did it last?
 - d) If resolved, how so?
15. Did you experience violence growing up?
 - a) What type?
 - b) Who was involved?
 - c) How long did it last?
 - d) If resolved, how so?

II. Violent Relationship Information

1. How long have you been in this relationship?
2. Is this your first relationship?
3. If not, how many other relationships have you had with women prior to the current one?

III. Violence in Relationship

1. Tell me about the violence in your relationship.
2. When did it start?
3. How did it start?
4. What does the violence look like in your relationship (verbal, emotional, physical ,etc)? How do you define violence then?

5. How long did it last?
6. Was there a cycle that you noticed the violence followed?
7. Were there certain indicators where you knew violence would ensue?
8. How did you handle the violence? Would you fight back?
9. Did you think of your partner as a perpetrator?
10. Did you think of yourself as a perpetrator?
11. How did you handle violent situations?
12. What would your partner say about these violent incidents?
13. How many violent episodes took place over the course of your relationship?

IV. Friends Attitudes

1. What was the general stance in your group of friends in the lesbian community about lesbian intimate partner violence?

V. Lesbian Community Attitude

1. What kinds of information did you receive from the lesbian community about intimate partner violence?
2. What is your general sense about the lesbian communities' attitude regarding intimate partner violence?
3. Did anyone in the lesbian community or your group of lesbian friends know that violence was taking place in your relationship?
4. If so, what was their reaction to the violence from the community or your group of friends?
5. Did you feel that your relationship with your friends changed in any way after they found out about the violence taking place in your relationship?
6. Did you feel that your partner's relationship with these friends changed in any way after they found out about the violence taking place in your relationship?

VI. Assistance

Have you:

1. Sought help for relational abuse
2. Sought counseling
3. Sought police assistance
4. Sought shelter
5. Sought help at DV agency
6. Sought support from friend
 - a) Lesbian/Gay friends
 - b) Straight friends
7. Sought support from parents
8. Sought support from a family member
9. Used a crisis hotline
10. Did you find any of the above helpful?

VII. Shelter Seeking Experience

1. If you did seek support from a domestic violence agency, which one did you contact?

2. How did you contact them? Phone, personal visit, email, others.
3. What was your first impression of the shelter?
4. Tell me about your experience.

Appendix B. Lesbian Community Attitudes towards Lesbian IPV Survey

Sub-Section 1

Beliefs about what constitutes lesbian IPV

Range= 18-90. Higher scores indicate more likely to define LIPV.

1. If one partner in an intimate relationship slaps or pushes the other partner to cause harm or fear, is this a form of domestic violence?

5. Yes, Always
4. Yes, Usually
3. Yes, Sometimes
2. I don't know
1. No

2. If one partner in an intimate relationship forces the other partner to have sex, is this a form of domestic violence?

5. Yes, Always
2. Yes, Usually
3. Yes, Sometimes
4. I don't know
1. No

3. If one partner in an intimate relationship throws or smashes objects near the other partner to frighten or threaten them, is this a form of domestic violence?

5. Yes, Always
2. Yes, Usually
3. Yes, Sometimes
2. I don't know
1. No

4. If one partner in an intimate relationship tries to scare or control the other partner by threatening to hurt other family members, is this a form of domestic violence?

5. Yes, Always
4. Yes, Usually
3. Yes, Sometimes
2. I don't know
1. No

5. If one partner in an intimate relationship tries to scare or control the other partner by threatening to hurt their pet(s), is this a form of domestic violence?

5. Yes, Always
4. Yes, Usually
3. Yes, Sometimes
2. I don't know
1. No

6. If one partner in an intimate relationship tries to scare or control the other partner by threatening to out them to their family, is this a form of domestic violence?
5. Yes, Always
 4. Yes, Usually
 3. Yes, Sometimes
 2. I don't know
 1. No
7. If one partner in an intimate relationship tries to scare or control them by threatening to out them to their friends, is this a form of domestic violence?
5. Yes, Always
 4. Yes, Usually
 3. Yes, Sometimes
 2. I don't know
 1. No
8. If one partner in an intimate relationship tries to scare or control them by threatening to out them to their employers, is this a form of domestic violence?
5. Yes, Always
 4. Yes, Usually
 3. Yes, Sometimes
 2. I don't know
 1. No
9. If one partner in an intimate relationship yells abusively at the other person is this a form of domestic violence?
5. Yes, Always
 4. Yes, Usually
 3. Yes, Sometimes
 2. I don't know
 1. No
10. If one partner in an intimate relationship controls the social life of the other partner by preventing them from seeing their family and friends, is this a form of domestic violence?
5. Yes, Always
 4. Yes, Usually
 3. Yes, Sometimes
 2. I don't know
 1. No
11. If one partner in an intimate relationship repeatedly criticizes the other one to make them feel bad or useless, is this a form of domestic violence?
5. Yes, Always
 4. Yes, Usually
 3. Yes, Sometimes

2. I don't know
1. No

12. If one partner in an intimate relationship tries to control the other partner by denying them money, is this domestic violence?

5. Yes, Always
4. Yes, Usually
3. Yes, Sometimes
2. I don't know
1. No

13. Do you regard stalking to be a form of domestic violence? By stalking I mean repeatedly followed or watched at home or work?

5. Yes, Always
4. Yes, Usually
3. Yes, Sometimes
2. I don't know
1. No

14. Do you regard harassment via repeated phone calls to be a form of domestic violence?

5. Yes, Always
4. Yes, Usually
3. Yes, Sometimes
2. I don't know
1. No

15. Do you regard harassment via repeated emails, text messages, and the like to be a form of domestic violence?

5. Yes, Always
4. Yes, Usually
3. Yes, Sometimes
2. I don't know
1. No

16. A woman cannot abuse or be abused by another woman.

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither Agree Disagree
4. Somewhat Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

17. A woman cannot be raped by another woman.

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither Agree Disagree
4. Somewhat Disagree

5. Strongly Disagree

18. A woman cannot be raped by a woman she has a sexual relationship with.

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither Agree Disagree
4. Somewhat Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Sub-Section 2

Beliefs about the pervasiveness of LIPV

Range= 7-35 with higher scores indicating belief that Lesbian IPV is more prevalent

1. When thinking about violence against women, do you agree or disagree that intimate partner violence in heterosexual relationships is a serious issue?

5. Strongly Agree
4. Somewhat Agree
3. Neither Agree or Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

2. Would you agree or disagree that intimate partner violence in lesbian relationships is a serious issue?

5. Strongly Agree
4. Somewhat Agree
3. Neither Agree or Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

3. Do you agree or disagree that intimate partner violence in heterosexual relationships is common?

5. Strongly Agree
4. Somewhat Agree
3. Neither Agree or Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

4. Do you agree or disagree that intimate partner violence in lesbian relationships is common?

5. Strongly Agree
4. Somewhat Agree
3. Neither Agree or Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

5. Do you agree or disagree that intimate partner violence is common in the lesbian community?

5. Strongly Agree
4. Somewhat Agree

3. Neither Agree or Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

6. Do you agree or disagree that domestic violence is a criminal offense?

5. Strongly Agree
4. Somewhat Agree
3. Neither Agree or Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

7. Have you ever experienced domestic violence in an intimate relationship with another woman?

5. Strongly Agree
4. Somewhat Agree
3. Neither Agree or Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

Sub-Section 3

Understanding of who perpetrates and who is affected by lesbian intimate partner violence.

1. Do you think that it's mainly more masculine women, mainly more feminine women or both that commit acts of domestic violence?

1. Mainly more masculine women
2. Both but more masculine women more often.
3. Both equally
4. Both but more feminine women more often
5. Mainly more feminine women

2. Do you think that more masculine women or more feminine women would be more likely to suffer physical harm as a result of domestic violence?

1. Mainly more masculine women
2. Both but more masculine women more often
3. Both equally
4. Both but more feminine women more often
5. Mainly more feminine women

3. Do you think that more masculine women or more feminine women would be more likely to suffer emotional harm as a result of domestic violence?

1. Mainly more masculine
2. Both but more masculine women more often
3. Both equally
4. Both but more feminine women more often
5. Mainly feminine women

4. Do you think the level of fear experienced is worse for more masculine women, worse for more feminine women, or equally bad for both?

1. Mainly more masculine women
2. Both but more masculine women more often
3. Both equally
4. Both but more feminine women more often
5. Mainly feminine women

Sub-Section 4

Belief in explanation where violence is justified

Range=9-40 with higher scores indicating beliefs that violence can be justified.

1. Domestic violence can be excused if it results from people getting so angry that they temporarily lose control.

5. Strongly Agree
4. Somewhat Agree
3. Neither Agree or Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

2. Domestic violence can be excused if the victim is heavily affected by alcohol or drugs.

5. Strongly Agree
4. Somewhat Agree
3. Neither Agree or Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

3. Domestic violence can be excused if the perpetrator is heavily affected by alcohol or drugs.

5. Strongly Agree
4. Somewhat Agree
3. Neither Agree or Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

4. A woman would be justified in using physical force against her partner if she wastes money.

5. Strongly Agree
4. Somewhat Agree
3. Neither Agree or Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

5. A women would be justified in using physical force against her partner is she keeps nagging her.

5. Strongly Agree
4. Somewhat Agree
3. Neither Agree or Disagree

- 2. Somewhat Disagree
- 1. Strongly Disagree

6. A women would be justified in using physical force against her partner if she refuses to have sex with her.

- 5. Strongly Agree
- 4. Somewhat Agree
- 3. Neither Agree or Disagree
- 2. Somewhat Disagree
- 1. Strongly Disagree

7. A women would be justified in using physical force against her partner if she admits to having sex with another woman or man.

- 5. Strongly Agree
- 4. Somewhat Agree
- 3. Neither Agree or Disagree
- 2. Somewhat Disagree
- 1. Strongly Disagree

8. A woman would be justified in using physical force against her partner if she socializes too much with friends.

- 5. Strongly Agree
- 4. Somewhat Agree
- 3. Neither Agree or Disagree
- 2. Somewhat Disagree
- 1. Strongly Disagree

9. A woman would be justified in using physical force against her partner if she puts her own career ahead of their relationship or their family.

- 5. Strongly Agree
- 4. Somewhat Agree
- 3. Neither Agree or Disagree
- 2. Somewhat Disagree
- 1. Strongly Disagree

Sub-Section 5

Beliefs about victim, community and systemic responses to lesbian IPV.

Range=11-55 with higher scores indicating more positive beliefs about victim, community and system responses to lesbian IPV.

1. Most lesbians who experience domestic violence are reluctant to go to the police.

- 1. Strongly Agree
- 2. Somewhat Agree
- 3. Neither Agree or Disagree
- 4. Somewhat Disagree
- 5. Strongly Disagree

2. Most lesbians who experience domestic violence will go to local domestic violence shelter for help.

5. Strongly Agree
4. Somewhat Agree
3. Neither Agree or Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

3. Most lesbians turn a blind eye to, or ignore domestic violence.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Somewhat Agree
3. Neither Agree or Disagree
4. Somewhat Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

4. It's hard to understand why women stay in violent relationships.

5. Strongly Agree
4. Somewhat Agree
3. Neither Agree or Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

5. Domestic violence is more likely to occur in heterosexual couples.

5. Strongly Agree
4. Somewhat Agree
3. Neither Agree or Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

6. Domestic violence is a private matter to be handled within the relationship.

5. Strongly Agree
4. Somewhat Agree
3. Neither Agree or Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

7. Domestic violence does not occur in lesbian relationships.

5. Strongly Agree
4. Somewhat Agree
3. Neither Agree or Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

8. Most lesbians deny domestic violence happens in the lesbian community.

1. Strongly Agree

- 2. Somewhat Agree
- 3. Neither Agree or Disagree
- 4. Somewhat Disagree
- 5. Strongly Disagree

9. Most women could leave a violent relationship if they really wanted to.

- 5. Strongly Agree
- 4. Somewhat Agree
- 3. Neither Agree or Disagree
- 2. Somewhat Disagree
- 1. Strongly Disagree

10. In domestic violence situations where one partner is physically violent towards the other, it is entirely reasonable for the violent person to be made to leave the home.

- 5. Strongly Agree
- 4. Somewhat Agree
- 3. Neither Agree or Disagree
- 2. Somewhat Disagree
- 1. Strongly Disagree

11. I know the domestic violence resources available in my area.

- 5. Strongly Agree
- 4. Somewhat Agree
- 3. Neither Agree or Disagree
- 2. Somewhat Disagree
- 1. Strongly Disagree

Sub-Section 6

Preparedness to intervene in situations of lesbian IPV.

Range=5-25 with higher scores indicated preparedness to intervene in lesbian IPV situations.

1. How likely do you think you would be to intervene IN ANY WAY AT ALL, if a lesbian that you didn't know was being physically [or verbally] assaulted by her partner in public?

- 5. Very Likely
- 4. Somewhat Likely
- 3. Somewhat Unlikely
- 2. I don't know
- 1. Very Unlikely

2. How likely do you think you would be to intervene IN ANY WAY AT ALL, if a lesbian neighbor that you didn't know well was being physically [or verbally] assaulted by her partner in public?

- 5. Very Likely
- 4. Somewhat Likely
- 3. Somewhat Unlikely
- 2. I don't know

1. Very Unlikely

3. If you became aware that a close lesbian friend of yours was currently a victim of domestic violence, how likely would you be to intervene IN ANY WAY AT ALL?

5. Very Likely

4. Somewhat Likely

3. Somewhat Unlikely

2. I don't know

1. Very Unlikely

4. How likely would it be, if you needed to get outside advice or support from someone about a domestic violence issue, that you would know where to go?

5. Very Likely

4. Somewhat Likely

3. Somewhat Unlikely

2. I don't know

1. Very Unlikely

5. How likely do you think it is that there are services in your area to assist and support survivors of lesbian intimate partner violence?

5. Very Likely

4. Somewhat Likely

3. Somewhat Unlikely

2. I don't know

1. Very Unlikely

Appendix C. Revised Conflict Tactics Scale

No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree, get angry with the other person, want different things from each other, or just have fights because they are in a bad mood, are tired, or for some other reason. Couples also have many different ways of trying to settle their differences. This is a list of things that might happen when you have differences. Please circle how many times you did each of these things in the past year, and how many times your partner did them in the past year. If you or your partner did not do one of these things in the past year, but it happened before that, circle “7.”

How often did this happen?

1=Once in the past year

2=Twice in the past year

3=3-5 times in the past year

4=6-10 times in the past year

5=11-20 times in the past year

6=More than 20 times in the past year.

7=Not in the past year, but it did happen before

0=This has never happened

1. I showed my partner I cared even though we disagreed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
2. My partner showed care for me even though we disagreed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
3. I explained my side of a disagreement to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
4. My partner explained her side of a disagreement to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
5. I insulted or swore at my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
6. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
7. I threw something at my partner that could hurt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
8. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
9. I twisted my partner's arm or hair.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
10. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
11. I had a sprain, bruise, or small cut because of a fight with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
12. My partner had a sprain, bruise, or small cut because of a fight with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
13. I showed respect for my partner's feelings about an issue.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
14. My partner showed respect for my feelings about an issue.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
15. I made my partner have sex without protection.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
16. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
17. I pushed or shoved my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
18. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
19. I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have oral or anal sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
20. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
21. I used a knife or gun on my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
22. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
23. I passed out from being hit on the head by my partner in a fight.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

24. My partner passed out from being hit on the head in a fight with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
25. I called my partner fat or ugly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
26. My partner called me fat or ugly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
27. I punched or hit my partner with something that could hurt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
28. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
29. I destroyed something belonging to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
30. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
31. I went to a doctor because of a fight with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
32. My partner went to a doctor because of a fight with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
33. I choked my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
34. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
35. I shouted or yelled at my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
36. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
37. I slammed my partner against a wall.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
38. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
39. I said I was sure we could work out a problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
40. My partner was sure we could work it out.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
41. I needed to see a doctor because of a fight with my partner, but I didn't go.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
42. My partner needed to see a doctor because of a fight with me, but didn't go.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
43. I beat up my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
44. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
45. I stabbed my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
45. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
46. I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
47. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
48. I stomped out of the room or house or yard during a disagreement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
49. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
50. I insisted on sex when my partner did not want to (but did not use physical force).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
51. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
52. I had a broken bone from a fight with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
53. My partner had a broken bone from a fight with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
54. I used threats to make my partner have oral or anal sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
55. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
56. I suggested a compromise to a disagreement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
57. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
58. I burned or scalded my partner on purpose.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
59. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
60. I insisted my partner have oral or anal sex (but did not use physical force).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

61. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
62. I accused my partner of being a lousy lover.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
63. My partner accused me of this.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
64. I did something to spite my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
65. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
66. I threatened to hit or throw something at my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
67. My partner did this to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
68. I felt physical pain that still hurt the next day because of a fight with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
69. My partner still had physical pain the next day because of a fight we had.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
70. I agreed to try a solution to a disagreement my partner suggested.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
71. My partner agreed to try a solution I suggested.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

Appendix D. BEM Sex-Role Inventory

For each of the following terms, please rate yourself on a scale from 1 (never or almost never true) to 7 (almost always true). Please circle the number that corresponds to your answer.

1. Self-reliant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Yielding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Defends own beliefs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Cheerful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Moody	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Independent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Shy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Conscientious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Athletic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Affectionate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Theatrical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Assertive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Flatterable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Happy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Strong personality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Loyal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Unpredictable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Forceful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Feminine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

21. Reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Analytical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Sympathetic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Jealous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. Has leadership abilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. Sensitive to the needs of others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. Truthful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. Willing to take risks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. Understanding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. Secretive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. Makes decisions easily	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. Compassionate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. Sincere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. Self-sufficient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. Eager to soothe hurt feelings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. Conceited	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. Dominant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. Soft-spoken	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. Likable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40. Masculine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41. Warm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42. Solemn	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

43. Willing to take a stand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44. Tender	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45. Friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46. Aggressive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47. Gullible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48. Inefficient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
49. Acts as a leader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
50. Childlike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
51. Adaptable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
52. Individualistic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
53. Does not use harsh language	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
54. Unsystematic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
55. Competitive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
56. Loves Children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
57. Tactful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
58. Ambitious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
59. Gentle	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
60. Conventional	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<i>Appendix E: Variables, Measurements, Cronbach's Alpha and Communalities for All Dependent Variables</i>			
Variables	Measure	Cronbach's Alpha	Communalities
Intervene Scale	Scale	.750	
1. How likely do you think you would be to intervene IN ANY WAY AT ALL, if a lesbian that you didn't know was being physically (or verbally) assaulted by her partner in public?			.778
2. How likely do you think you would be to intervene IN ANY WAY AT ALL, if a lesbian neighbor that you didn't know well was being physically (or verbally) assaulted by her partner in public?			.837
3. If you became aware that a close lesbian friend of yours was currently a victim of intimate partner violence, how likely would you be to intervene IN ANY WAY AT ALL?			.437
Violent Behavior Scale	Scale	.927	
1. One partner slapping another partner to cause harm is a form of intimate partner violence.			.688
2. One partner slapping another partner to cause fear is a form of intimate partner violence.			.758
3. One partner pushing another to cause harm is a form of intimate partner violence.			.808
4. One partner pushing another to cause fear is a form of intimate partner violence.			.817
5. One partner forcing another to have sex is a form of intimate partner violence.			.586
6. One partner throwing objects near another to frighten them is a form of intimate partner violence.			.806
7. One partner throwing objects near another to threaten them is a form of intimate partner violence.			.870
8. One partner smashing objects near another to frighten them is a form of intimate partner violence.			.888
9. One partner smashing objects near another to threaten them is a form of intimate partner violence.			.891
10. One partner trying to scare another by threatening to out them to their family is a form of intimate partner violence.			.838
11. One partner trying to control another by threatening to out them to their family is a form			.849

of intimate partner violence.			
12. One partner trying to scare another by threatening to hurt other family members is a form of intimate partner violence			.739
13. One partner trying to control another by threatening to hurt other family members is a form of intimate partner violence.			.740
14. One partner trying to scare another by threatening to hurt their pet(s) is a form of intimate partner violence.			.823
15. One partner trying to control another by threatening to hurt their pet(s) is a form of intimate partner violence.			.903
16. One partner trying to scare another by threatening to out them to their employer is a form of intimate partner violence.			.866
17. One partner trying to control another by threatening to out them to their employer is a form of intimate partner violence.			.878
18. One partner yelling abusively at another is a form of intimate partner violence.			.598
19. One partner preventing another from seeing their family and friends is a form of intimate partner violence.			.626
20. One partner repeatedly criticizing another to make them feel bad or useless is a form of intimate partner violence.			.689
21. One partner trying to control another by denying them money is a form of intimate partner violence.			.703
22. Stalking, being repeatedly followed or watched at home or work is a form of intimate partner violence.			.432
23. Harassment via repeated phone calls is a form of intimate partner violence.			.830
24. Harassment via repeated emails, text messages and the like is a form of intimate partner violence.			.771
25. A woman cannot abuse or be abused by another woman.			.453
26. A woman cannot be raped by another woman.			.813
27. A woman cannot be raped by a woman she has a sexual relationship with.			.718
Justification Scale	Scale	.918	
1. Intimate partner violence can be excused if it results from people getting so angry that they			.746

temporarily lose control.			
2. Intimate partner violence can be excused if the victim is heavily affected by alcohol.			.784
3. Intimate partner violence can be excused if the perpetrator is heavily affected by alcohol.			.841
4. A woman would be justified in using physical force against her partner if she wastes money.			.671
5. A woman would be justified in using physical force against her partner if she keeps nagging.			.877
6. A woman would be justified in using physical force against her partner if she refuses to have sex with her.			.815
7. A woman would be justified in using physical force against her partner if she admits to having sex with another person.			.593
8. A woman would be justified in using physical force against her partner if she socializes too much with friends.			.885
9. A woman would be justified in using physical force against her partner if she puts her own career ahead of their relationship or their family.			.856
Affected Scale	Scale		.612
1. Who do you think would suffer physical harm as a result of intimate partner violence?			.528
2. Who do you think would suffer emotional harm as a result of intimate partner violence?			.478
3. Who do you think would experience a greater level of fear?			.686
Single Question Variables			
1. Do you agree or disagree that intimate partner violence in lesbian relationships is common?	Nominal		
2. Would you agree or disagree that intimate partner violence in lesbian relationships is serious?	Nominal		
3. Have you ever experienced intimate partner violence in an intimate relationship with another woman?	Nominal		
4. How likely do you think it is that there are services in your area to assist and support lesbian survivors of intimate partner violence?	Nominal		

<i>Appendix F: Frequencies and Descriptive Statistics for All Variables</i>			
Variable Name	N	Range	Mean/Frequency
<i>Dependent</i>			
Justification of violent behavior	226	9-45 ¹	11.21
Intervention in LIPV situation	208	3-15 ²	12.79
Behaviors that constitute IPV	219	27-135 ³	113.42
Who is most affected	230	3-15 ⁴	8.29
LIPV is common	238	1-5	3.62
LIPV is serious	238	1-5	4.80
Experienced LIPV	239	0-1	.55
Available services	220	1-5	3.78
<i>Independent</i>			
Revised Conflict Tactic Sub-Scales			
Respondent sustained injuries	190	0-1	0.08
Yes			8.4%
Respondent perpetrated psychological violence	207	0-1	0.87
Yes			87.4%
Respondent perpetrated physical violence	200	0-1	0.27
Yes			26.5%
Respondent perpetrated sexual violence	199	0-1	0.11
Yes			11.1%
Partner sustained injuries	196	0-1	0.10
Yes			9.7%
Partner perpetrated psychological violence	208	0-1	0.85
Yes			85.1%
Partner perpetrated physical violence	197	0-1	0.31
Yes			31.5%
Partner perpetrated sexual violence	197	0-1	0.18
Yes			17.8%
BEM Sex-Role Inventory			
Masculine	201	20-140	98.85
Feminine	192	20-140	98.64
BSRI	184	-46-60 ⁵	.50
<i>Control</i>			
Age	227		35.8
18-19			4.0%
20-29			29.5%
30-39			33.5%
40-49			18.5%
50-59			12.3%
60-69			2.2%
Race	226		
White			89.4%
African American			5.8%
Other			4.9%

Area of Residence	252	
Metro Atlanta		58.3%
Outside of Metro Atlanta		41.7%
Education	225	
Less than High School		.9%
High School Graduate		2.2%
Some College		20.9%
Bachelors Degree		23.1%
Some Graduate School		14.7%
Masters Degree		27.6%
PhD or Professional Degree		10.7%
Employment Status	225	
Employed Full-Time		63.6%
Employed Part-Time		12.9%
Engaged in Home Duties		1.3%
Student		16.4%
Retired		1.3%
Unable to Work		1.8%
Other		2.7%
Income	222	
Less than \$20,000		27.0%
\$20,000 less than \$40,000		23.9%
\$40,000 less than \$60,000		23.9%
\$60,000 less than \$80,000		13.5%
\$80,000 less than \$100,000		4.1%
More than \$100,000		7.7%
Sexual Identity	228	
Lesbian		75.4%
Woman loving Woman		4.4%
Bisexual		6.1%
Queer		11.8%
Other		2.2%
Relationship Status	227	
Married or Marriage-Like		75.8%
Not Committed		24.4%
Level of Disclosure of Sex ID	225	
Not at All		3.1%
Out to Friends		7.1%
Out to Family		8.4%
Out to Employer		2.2%
Fully Out		79.1%
Time in Lesbian Community	220	15.9
Less than 1 year		1.4%
1-5 years		17.3%
6-10 years		22.7%
11-15 years		22.7%

16-20 years	10.5%
More than 20 years	25.5%

¹ Higher values indicate greater justification for violent actions.

² Higher values indicate greater likelihood intervention would take place when witnessing an episode of IPV.

³ Higher scores indicate greater awareness that certain actions constitute IPV.

⁴ Higher scores indicate a belief that masculine women are more likely to be affected by IPV than feminine women.

⁵ Scores ranging from +10 to +20 indicate more masculine traits.
Scores ranging from -10 to -20 indicate more feminine traits.
Scores ranging from +9 to -9 indicate more androgynous traits.

Appendix G: Bivariate Correlations for All Variables

	linjury	County	Justify	Ntrvn	Behavior	Affected	Pinjury	Edu	Age	Iphys	Race	Genscore	IPVCom
Iphys	.399***	.072	.144*	-.149*	-.090	-.216**	.551**	-.180*	.110	1	.046	.011	.144*
Timein	-.019	-.206**	.007	.232**	.002	.097	.014	.200**	.638**	-.075	-.077	.169*	.011
County	.080		.138*	-.224**	-.075	-.099	.156*	-.171**	-.224**	.098	.108	.124	.086
Rel.Stat.	.075	.069	-.008	-.043	-.131	-.010	.106	-.108	.074	.210**	.054	-.085	-.006
SexId	-.009	.006	.038	-.086	-.004	.060	.053	-.070	-.283**	.214**	.036	.026	.048
Income	-.145*	-.175**	-.043	.095	-.004	.060	.053	.454**	.414**	-.102	-.060	.095	-.180**
Emp.Stat	.030	.001	-.082	-.043	.050	-.051	-.014	-.249**	-.133*	.074	.112	.070	.138*
Race	-.015	.092	.000	-.040	-.009	.009	-.024	-.102	-.116	.046	1	.094	.031
Edu	-.323**	-.203**	.038	.046	.051	.036	-.151*	1	.288**	-.180*	-.102	.103	-.134*
Age	.000	-.211**	-.033	.220**	.119	.014	-.046	.288**	1	-.110	-.116	.057	.020
linjury	1	.078	.046	-.138	-.055	-.183*	.479**	-.323**	.000	.399**	-.015	.032	.200**
Justify	.037	.136*	1	-.163*	-.239**	-.057	.113	.038	-.033	.144*	.000	.063	.012
Ntrvn	-.144	-.199**	-.163*	1	.114	.099	-.203**	.046	.220**	-.149*	-.040	.190*	-.054
Behavior	-.033	-.122	-.239**	.144	1	-.022	.033	.051	.119	-.086	-.009	-.030	.126
Affected	-.183*	-.077	-.057	.099	-.022	1	-.223**	.036	.014	-.216**	.009	-.005	-.084
Pinjury	.479**	.111	.113	-.203**	.033	-.223**	1	-.151*	-.046	.551**	-.024	.073	.160*
ExpIPV	.165*	-.030	-.013	-.079	-.076	-.128	.170*	-.039	.112	.258**	.012	-.137	.292**
Genscore	.032	.169*	.063	.190*	-.043	-.005	.073	.103	.057	.011	.094	1	-.103
IPVCom	.212**	.047	.012	-.054	.126	-.084	.160*	-.134*	.020	.144*	.031	-.103	1
IPVser	.133	.005	-.222**	.044	.207**	-.055	.013	-.026	.046	-.039	-.081	-.079	.244**
Psex	.343**	.132	.117	-.243**	-.100	-.067	.317**	-.279**	-.181*	.329**	.109	-.138	.146*
Pphys	.475**	.078	.128	-.127	-.136	-.053	.348**	-.124	.021	.581**	.019	-.055	.130
Isex	.159*	.144*	.029	-.154*	-.123	-.233**	.229**	-.191**	-.168* c	.205**	.096	.022	.015

Appendix G: Bivariate Correlations for All Variables

	IPVser	Psex	Pphys	Isex	Timein	Rel.Status	SexID	Income	Emp.Status	ExpIPV
Iphys	-.039	.329**	.581**	.205**	-.075	.210**	.214**	-.102	.074	.258**
Timein	-.012	-.113	.034	-.122	1	-.014	-.306**	.386**	-.099	.149*
County	-.040	.154*	.091	.138	-.220**	.047	-.009	-.149*	-.030	-.015
Rel.Stat.	.063	.244**	.278**	.023	-.014	1	.021	-.146*	.193**	-.011
SexId	-.105	.186**	.157*	.099	-.306**	.021	1	-.252**	.176**	.009
Income	-.130	-.154*	-.137	-.131	.386**	-.146*	-.252**	1	-.458**	.009
Emp.Stat.	.117	.041	.128	.169*	-.099	.193**	.176**	-.458**	1	.123
Race	-.081	.109	.019	.096	-.077	.054	.036	-.060	.112	.012
Edu	-.026	-.279**	-.124	-.191**	.200**	-.108	-.070	.454**	-.249**	-.039
Age	.046	-.181*	.021	-.168*	.638**	.074	-.283**	.414**	-.133*	.112
Iinjry	.120	.343**	.475**	.159*	-.019	.075	-.009	-.145*	-.015	.178*
Justify	-.222**	.117	.128	.029	.007	-.008	.038	-.043	-.082	-.013
Ntrvn	.044	.243**	-.127	.154*	.232**	-.043	-.086	.095	-.043	-.079
Behavior	.207**	-.112	-.126	-.125	.002	-.131	-.004	-.011	.050	-.065
Affected	.055	-.067	-.053	-.233**	.097	-.010	.060	-.033	-.051	-.128
Pinjury	.013	.317**	.348**	.229**	.014	.106	.053	-.108	-.014	.170*
ExpIPV	-.010	.204**	.357**	.107	.149*	-.011	.009	-.073	.123	1
Genscore	-.079	-.138	-.055	.022	.169*	-.085	.026	.095	.070	-.137
IPVCom	.244**	.146*	.130	.015	.011	-.006	.048	-.180**	.138*	.292**
IPVser	1	-.051	.010	.033	-.012	.063	-.105	-.130	.117	-.010
Psex	-.051	1	.349**	.405**	-.113	.244**	.186**	-.154*	.041	.204**
Pphysd	.010	.349**	1	.112	.034	.278**	.157*	-.137	.128	.357**
Isex	.033	.405**	.112	1	-.122	.023	.099	-.131	.169*	.107

<i>Appendix H: Mean Scores for Scale of Lesbian Community Survey</i>	
Variable Name	Mean Score
Justification for violent behaviors	11.21
Temporary lose of control	1.52
Victim heavily affected by alcohol	1.29
Perpetrated heavily affected by alcohol	1.33
Waste money	1.19
Nagging	1.15
Refuses to have sex	1.12
Has sex with another woman	1.33
Socializes with friends too much	1.13
Puts career before partner	1.16
Intervention in IPV situation	12.79
Intervene when victim is a stranger	3.87
Intervene when victim is a neighbor	4.83
Intervene when victim is a friend	4.09
Behaviors that constitute IPV	113.42
Slapping to harm	4.80
Slapping to cause fear	4.87
Pushing to harm	4.71
Pushing to cause fear	4.75
Forcing sex	4.90
Throwing things to frighten	4.65
Throwing things to threaten	4.66
Smashing things to frighten	4.59
Smashing things to threaten	4.61
Threatening to out to family to scare	4.28
Threatening to out to family to control	4.40
Threatening to hurt family to scare	4.84
Threatening to hurt family to control	4.84
Threatening to hurt pets to scare	4.75
Threatening to hurt pets to control	4.73
Threatening to out to work to scare	4.45
Threatening to out to work to control	4.51
Yelling	4.40
Preventing person from seeing family & friends	4.59
Criticizing	4.42
Denying money	4.15
Stalking	4.67
Harassing phone calls	4.30
Harassing via technology	4.18
Women cannot abuse other women	4.82
Women cannot rape other women	4.85
Women cannot be raped by sex partner	4.85
Who is most affected by LIPV	8.29
Suffer more physical harm	2.73
Suffer more emotional harm	2.92
Experiences greatest level of fear	2.63

<i>Appendix I: Regression of Dependent Variables (LIPV Serious, LIPV Common, Justification, Intervention, Services Available, Behaviors, Experience LIPV) on Selected Independent Variables</i>								
Independent Variables	LIPV Serious ¹	LIPV Serious ²	Justify ¹	LIPV Common ¹	Intervention ¹	Services Available ¹	Behaviors ¹	Experience LIPV ²
Resp. Perp.	----	-.035(-.038)	1.702**(.220)	----	----	----	-1.038(-.042)	----
Phys. Abuse		(.071)	(.625)				(2.009)	
Part. Perp.	----	----	----	----	-.523(-.102)	----	----	----
Phys. Abuse					(.425)			
Gender	-.002(-.089)	----	----	----	.023*(.179)	.009(.126)	----	-.017*(.983)
	(.002)				(.010)	(.006)		(.009)
Most Affected	----	----	-.178(-.049)	----	----	----	----	----
Intervention	----	----	(.277)	----	----	----	----	----
			-.272*(-.196)					
			(.107)					
Behaviors	----	----	-.086***(-.288)	----	----	----	----	----
			(.022)					
Age	.059*(.167)	.046(.126)	.201(.067)	.064(.070)	.527**(.241)	-.116(-.092)	1.508(.159)	.292(1.340)
	(.029)	(.030)	(.267)	(.080)	(.194)	(.129)	(.812)	(.160)
Education	-.036(-.138)	-.020(-.072)	.393*(.174)	-.052(-.071)	-.045(-.028)	.271***(.286)	.008(.001)	.085(1.088)
	(.023)	(.024)	(.195)	(.054)	(.148)	(.081)	(.637)	(.124)
Income	-.002(-.007)	-.018(.024)	-.379(-.170)	-.112*(-.158)	-.086(-.056)	-.112(-.124)	-.299(-.041)	-.305*(.737)
	(.023)	(.071)	(.209)	(.056)	(.151)	(.083)	(.684)	(.128)
Rel. Status	----	----	-.682(-.081)	----	----	----	-.2.978(-.112)	----
			(.638)				(1.710)	
Time in Comm.	----	----	----	-.011(-.015)	----	-.082(-.082)	----	----
				(.062)		(.100)		
Experience LIPV	-.035(-.044)	-.031(-.037)	-.336(-.050)	.550***(.260)	-.390(-.083)	-.218(-.078)	-.220(-.010)	----
	(.060)	(.064)	(.519)	(.141)	(.398)	(.208)	(1.710)	
Area of Residence	.054(.068)	.058(.068)	----	.125(.057)	----	-.641**(-.223)	----	----
	(.060)	(.063)		(.145)		(.212)		
Intercept	4.848***	4.718***	25.939***	3.651***	12.029***	3.743***	113.726***	-.318(.728)
	(.124)	(.163)	(3.821)	(.310)	(.765)	(.447)	(4.292)	(.614)
R ²	.047	.028	.213	.118	.108	.146	.037	
F-Test	1.423	1.093	4.423***	4.606***	2.961**	3.997**	1.105	
1= Beta(b) (SE)	@= B(ExpB) (SE)							
* p < .05	** p < .01		*** p < .001					
1=H1; 2=H2.								

<i>Appendix J: Mean Scores for the CTS2 Subscales</i>	
Variable Name	Mean Score
Respondent injured	.084
I had a sprain	.08
I passed out	.00
I went to doctor	.02
I needed to go to doctor but did not	.01
I broke a bone	.06
Respondent perpetrated psychological violence	.87
I swore at my partner	.68
I shouted at my partner	.67
I stomped out during an argument	.65
I did something to spite my partner	.42
I called my partner fat and ugly	.07
I destroyed something of my partners	.11
I told my partner she was a lousy lover	.08
I threaten to hit my partner	.11
Respondent perpetrated physical violence	.27
I threw something at my partner	.10
I twisted my partners arm	.05
I pushed my partner	.21
I used knife or gun on my partner	.02
I punched my partner	.07
I chocked my partner	.02
I slammed my partner against a wall	.04
I beat my partner up	.02
I stabbed my partner	.02
I burned my partner	.01
Respondent perpetrated sexual violence	.11
I forced my partner to have sex without protection	.02
I forced my partner to have oral or anal sex	.09
I forced my partner to have sex	.00
I insisted my partner have sex with me	.01
I used threats to make my partner have oral or anal sex with me	.03
I insisted my partner have oral or anal sex with me	.01
Partner injured	.10
My partner had sprain	.09
My partner had physical pain	.01
My partner passed out	.01
My partner went to the doctor	.01
My partner needed to go to the doctor but did not	.00
My partner broke a bone	.05
Partner perpetrated psychological violence	.85
My partner swore at me	.67
My partner shouted at me	.12
My partner stomped out during an argument	.14

My partner did something to spite me	.65
My partner called me fat and ugly	.60
My partner destroyed something of mine	.12
My partner told me I was a lousy love	.45
My partner threaten to hit me	.14
Partner perpetrated physical violence	.31
My partner threw something at me	.14
My partner twisted my arm	.07
My partner pushed me	.24
My partner used a knife or gun on me	.04
My partner punched me	.12
My partner chocked me	.06
My partner slammed me against a wall	.10
My partner beat me up	.07
My partner stabbed me	.03
My partner burned me	.01
Partner perpetrated sexual violence	.18
My partner forced me to have sex without protection	.04
My partner forced me to have oral or anal sex	.14
My partner forced me to have sex	.03
My partner insisted I have sex with her	.04
My partner used threats to make me have oral or anal sex with her	.07
My partner instead I have oral or anal sex with her	.03

Appendix K. Domestic Violence Agency Case Study Questions

I. Information about the interviewee

1. Position interviewee holds at the shelter
2. Length of time in that position
3. Other positions held
4. Interviewees race
5. Interviewees age
6. Level of interviewee's education
7. Number of year's interviewee has worked in domestic violence field.

II. Shelter Information

1. Tell me about your shelter.
 - a. When was it founded?
 - b. Who was it founded by?
 - c. Were there any founding principles that your shelter was founded on?
2. How big is your shelter?
3. How many women do you serve in a month? (Shelter and Services)
4. What services does your shelter offer?
5. What types of outreach do you do at the shelter?
6. What are your major funding sources?
7. Do these funding sources have any stipulations or limit the types of people you can serve?
8. Do you advertise your services? If so, where?

III. Shelter Policies

1. What does your screening process look like?
2. How do you determine if a woman is in need of your services?
3. When your shelter is full, how do you determine who gets to stay?
4. What do you do when you have overflow?
5. Does your shelter have an policy on who to serve and who not to serve?

IV. Client Information

1. Are there common patterns among your clients?
2. What kinds of questions are asked during your hotline or intake interview?
3. Do you ask the women to identify their batterers?

V. Shelter Life

1. What criteria do you use to determine if they qualify to be in your shelter?
2. How often does this happen?
3. Are there rules that women have to follow in your shelter? If so, what are they.
4. What happens if these rules aren't followed?
5. If group or counseling is a requirement for staying in your shelter , what happens if a woman does not attend group or counseling?
6. What types of things do you think would prevent women from wanting to or attending group?

7. Have you had women in your shelter who don't seem to connect with the staff or other clients? Is their outcome different than other women's outcome?
8. Do women who have been battered by other women use your services or shelter?
9. How often does this happen?
10. How many times have you worked with women who have been battered by other women?
11. If they did stay in the shelter how long do lesbian or bisexual women usually stay?
12. Is their length of time here different from any other client? If so, do you have a sense of why that is?
13. Are there special resources you refer lesbians or bisexual women to?
14. What is the reaction of other residents when they find out a woman in your shelter is bisexual or lesbian?
15. Have you ever had any problems with women battered by other women in your shelter?
16. How is your staff trained in dealing with these minority survivors?
17. Do you know of any shelters that specifically service bisexual or lesbian women?
18. Is there a specific shelter or service you would try to refer bisexual or lesbian survivors to if you could not take them into your shelter?
19. In situations involving lesbian or bisexual women. is mutual battering a concern?
20. Have women ever had sexual relationships in your shelter?
21. What effect did this have on the communal living environment of the shelter?
22. In lesbian violence, how do you determine the survivor from the batterer?
23. What would you do if both the batterer and survivor sought services from your shelter?
24. Have you had lesbian or bisexual survivors disclose they have been sexually assaulted?
25. If so, how was this handled?

Appendix L: Materials Collected for Analysis in Case Studies

1. Institutional Documents including:
 - a. Mission statement
 - b. Yearly reports
2. Agency publications including:
 - a. Fund raising brochures
 - b. Information brochures
3. Personal interviews
4. Website
5. On-line blog
6. Public service campaign posters and advertisements

Appendix M: IRB Approved Survivor Informed Consent

Georgia State University
Department of Sociology
Informed Consent

Title: Invisible at Every Turn:
An Examination of Lesbian Intimate Partner Violence

Principle Investigators: Dr. Denise Donnelly and Mikel L. Walters, MA

Purpose

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. This study will look at lesbian intimate partner violence. You are being asked to take part because you have experienced violence in a lesbian relationship. Five to either other women will also be asked to take part in this study. The interview will take about forty-five minutes. You will be interviewed only once, at a time and place you choose.

Procedures

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to be interviewed. The interview will be tape recorded. You will be asked questions about your life history. This includes experiences with your family, lesbian intimate partner violence, members of the lesbian community, and domestic violence services. The interview will take forty-five minutes or less. You will not be compensated for your participation.

Risks

Talking about your experiences with violence may be upsetting. If you need to stop, please let the interviewer know. When the interview is finished, the interviewer will talk with you about any concerns that you may have. She will give you information on intimate partner violence services in your area. If you are still upset, or want to speak a private counselor, we will recommend one. This will be at your own expense.

Benefits

By taking part in this study you will not benefit. We hope to gain knowledge about lesbian intimate partner violence. This study will result in information that may improve services for the lesbian community.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study. You do not have to complete the interview. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you can drop out at any time. You may skip questions or stop participating at any time. If you decide to withdraw from the study before we are finished, your interview will be destroyed.

Confidentiality

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. Your interview will be assigned a case number. We will use a case number rather than your name on the transcript



Consent Form Approved by Georgia State University IRB January 07, 2009 - November 19, 2010

Appendix N: IRB Approved Lesbian Community Survey Informed Consent

Georgia State University
Department of Sociology
Informed Consent for On-line Participants

Title: Invisible at Every Turn:
An Examination of Lesbian Intimate Partner Violence

Principle Investigators: Denise Donnelly, PhD and Mikel L. Walters, MA

Purpose

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. This study will look at attitudes about lesbian intimate partner violence. You are being asked to take part because you are a member of the lesbian community. Two hundred fifty people will be asked to take part in this study.

Procedures

If you decide you would like to take part, you will be asked questions about lesbian intimate partner violence. We would like your opinion on the seriousness and frequency of violence within lesbian relationships. We would like to know what you consider violence. We will also ask your opinions about the services available to survivors. You will also be asked questions regarding personality traits, and problem solving. You will not be asked for personal information or be identified in any way. This online survey will take about thirty to forty-five minutes. You can only complete the survey once. You will not be compensated for your participation.

Risks

In this study, you will have no more risks than you would in a normal day of life. If you would like more information about lesbian domestic violence see the bottom of this page.

Benefits

By taking part in this study you will not benefit. We hope to gain knowledge about lesbian intimate partner violence. This study will result in information that may improve services to the lesbian community.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You do not have to participate in this study. You do not have to complete the survey. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you can drop out at any time. You can skip questions or stop participating at any time. If you decide to withdraw from the study before you are finished, your interview information will be destroyed.

Confidentiality

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. The online survey does not ask for personal information. Your survey will be assigned a case number. No personal information will appear on your survey. We are the only people who will have access to the survey. Any facts that might point to you will not appear when we present this study or



Consent Form Approved by Georgia State University IRB January 07, 2009 - November 19, 2010

Appendix O: IRB Approved Shelter Employee Informed Consent

Georgia State University
Department of Sociology
Informed Consent

Title: Invisible at Every Turn:
An Examination of Lesbian Intimate Partner Violence

Principle Investigators: Dr. Denise Donnelly and Mikel L. Walters, MA

Purpose

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. This study will examine services offered to lesbian survivors of intimate partner violence. We asked you to take part because you are an employee of a battered women's shelter. Three employees from your shelter will be interviewed. Employees of two other shelters in the area will also be interviewed. The interview will take forty-five to sixty minutes.

Procedures

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to be interviewed. The interview will be tape recorded. You will be asked questions about services your shelter offers to battered lesbians, ways you identify and deal with the lesbians, and any outreach programs.

Risks

In this study, you will have no more risks than you would in a normal day of life.

Benefits

By taking part in this study you will not benefit. This study will result in information that may improve services for the lesbian community.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study. You do not have to complete the interview. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you can drop out at any time. You may skip questions or stop participating at any time. If you decide to withdraw from the study before we are finished, your interview will be destroyed.

Confidentiality

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. Your interview will be assigned a case number. We will use a case number rather than your name or shelter name on the transcript of this interview. Your name will not appear when we present this study or publish its results. We are the only people who have access to your interview. The typed transcript of your interview will be stored in a locked file cabinet in a locked office and all data will be stored in a password protected computer. We are the only people who can access your information. No one else will have access to your information. The findings will be summarized and reported in group form. You will not be identified personally.

Compensation

There will be no compensation for your participation.



Consent Form Approved by Georgia State University IRB January 07, 2009 - November 19, 2010