



Intimate Partner Violence Victimology: Factors Affecting Victim Engagement with the Police and Criminal Justice System

Volume 1 of 2

By

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ABSTRACT

The thesis concerns an examination of victim engagement with the police investigation of domestic abuse. Notwithstanding the huge efforts being made in tackling the problem by police forces across the UK, national inspections still find that the services provided to victims are “not good enough” (HMIC, 2014, p.6). Subsequently, the thesis argues that in order to build an approach around empowering victims of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), there first needs to be further research into victim engagement with the police investigation (Birdsall *et al.*, 2016; Hoyle & Sanders, 2000). Using the rationale, the research examined 540 cases of IPV to determine which factors were significantly associated with victim engagement. It controlled for suspect charging, cross validated the results with qualitative case file information and brought together the findings through an analysis of their co-occurrence. The process resulted in distinct themes and an overall model of victim engagement. The thesis concludes that the current risk assessment used routinely by the police to identify victim vulnerability does not take into account victim engagement. The thesis therefore proposes that the factors, themes and model of victim engagement developed throughout the thesis, as well as other means of assessing victim engagement, would need to precede the DASH risk assessment to provide a more effective evaluation of victim vulnerability. Doing so would allow the police to critically communicate and provide suitable support that is applicable to all victims of IPV. Crucially, the early indication of victim withdrawal would allow the police to identify some of the most vulnerable victims of abuse who would otherwise disengage from professional support and place themselves at greater risk of harm, injury and abuse.

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INTRODUCTION

Evidence-based policing has become a prominent strategy for police forces across England and Wales, especially at a time of wide financial cutbacks and public scrutiny. The strategy aims to build policy and practice around ‘what works’ in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of police resources (Lum & Koper, 2014; Lum, 2009; Sherman, 1998). One of the areas with a growing literature into evidence-based policing is domestic abuse, with particular focus on effective responses and victim protection.

Domestic abuse has been, and continues to be, a priority for the government and police forces in the UK. Home Office circulars 60 and 139 both prioritised and standardised the response to domestic abuse, requiring police forces to collate incidents more accurately and establish dedicated ‘Domestic Violence Officers’ to deal more effectively with cases (Grace, 1990). Since 1990, there has been a range of policy changes widely applied to the police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and courts with regards to the problem (Hester, 2005). However, whilst acknowledging the UK criminal justice system has made various modifications and focused on improving services to victims, it appears that it is still “not enough” (Hoyle & Sanders, 2000, p. 19). In fact, examinations by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) (2014) conclude that the police response to victims of domestic abuse “is not good enough” and that “there are weaknesses in the service provided to victims” (HMIC, 2014, p. 6). As a result, the police suffer from a high rate of case attrition with victims retracting for numerous reasons (Hester *et al.*, 2008), which is demonstrated by Robinson and Cook (2006) who found that 44% of their sample resulted in victim withdrawal. The low prevalence in reporting, as well as withdrawal when a victim does report abuse, illustrates that the current system does not encourage victims to use the criminal justice process when dealing with their abuse. As a consequence, the limitations hinder any positive steps towards effective improvements for victims of abuse. This has led to more recent announcements by the

Prime Minister, Theresa May, into renewed efforts to formulate domestic abuse laws (BBC News, 2017).

With such low figures in reporting and cooperation, as well as criticisms into the services provided to victims, the current thesis focuses on victim engagement with the police investigation of domestic abuse cases. It uses the term Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) as the thesis focuses specifically on adult victims in relationships, rather than other vulnerable victims involved in family abuse (such as children) that may require a different approach.

Chapter 1 of the thesis covers a comprehensive literature review. The chapter examines the current state of domestic abuse processes and highlights that any improvement to the current system would require further research into victim engagement with the police. It then establishes that the direction of victimology research has moved towards inclusive multifactorial studies, often with the use of an ecological perspective to structure factors. Subsequently, the literature review applies an ecological perspective to existing IPV literature in order to explore, extract and interpret factors that may affect victim engagement with the police.

Chapter 2 provides detail on the main methodology used throughout the thesis, including the study design, the sample of 540 IPV cases, materials, procedure, reliability of data and ethics.

Chapter 3 is the first data chapter and focuses on a statistical analysis of victim engagement.

Chapter 4 conducts a similar analysis against suspect charging.

Chapter 5 concerns the triangulation of data to cross validate findings from the previous data chapters and case file information.

Chapter 6 involves an examination of the correlation between the significant factors in order to develop themes of victim cooperation and withdrawal.

Finally, the thesis ends with a discussion in Chapter 7 which provides a summary of each data chapter, discusses an overall model of victim engagement, highlights practical and theoretical implications, outlines limitations and suggests further research into specific areas of victim engagement.

CHAPTER 1 - LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to provide a comprehensive review of the literature, Chapter 1 explores the definitions of abuse, the risk assessment process, policy initiatives, criminal and civil law, as well as more flexible responses to IPV. It then examines case handling and argues for an alternative approach based on victim empowerment. It establishes that such an approach would aim to increase victim satisfaction and confidence within the criminal justice system; however, such an approach highlights a need for further research into victim engagement and communication. Consequently, the literature review considers the direction of victimology research, including a discussion of individual victim theories, gender and a movement towards multifactorial studies in IPV. The chapter establishes that the development and direction of research could be harnessed to provide an inclusive multifactorial study into victim engagement with the police. Following this rationale, the literature review then progresses into the application of an ecological perspective to explore factors that may affect victim engagement based upon existing IPV literature.

Definitions of Domestic Abuse and Intimate Partner Violence

The first step to exploring IPV in the UK is the commonly agreed definitions that form the foundation of the problem. Domestic abuse is currently defined in the UK as “any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: Psychological, Physical, Sexual, Financial and Emotional” (Home Office, 2013). The thesis, however, focuses specifically on abuse that occurs between intimate partners, otherwise known as IPV. IPV is considered as acts of physical and sexual aggression, the threat of physical and sexual abuse, emotional abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour between current partners or ex-partners (Heise &

Garcia-Moreno, 2002). It can occur in marriages, long-term intimate partnerships, short-term intimate encounters, and even applies to relationships that have ended (Harvey *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, IPV also includes financial abuse providing there is an objective hindering of a partner's financial independence, thus limiting their options and forming barriers (Kelly *et al.*, 2014). Whilst the thesis will refer to both domestic abuse and IPV throughout, the main topic of investigation is victim engagement within cases of IPV. Whilst there are no major issues in the current definitions of domestic abuse and IPV, there are currently limitations in identifying and assessing risk within IPV cases.

Identifying and Assessing Risk in IPV

Police forces across England and Wales are engaged in combatting IPV, in which all forces use the same or a similar method for assessing risk. Currently, police forces routinely use the 'Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour Based Violence' (DASH) risk assessment formulated by Laura Richards in 2009 (Richards, 2015). The assessment contains 28 key questions pertaining mainly to physical abuse and information about the suspect. However, the DASH risk assessment itself has numerous weaknesses and other risk assessment tools may be more appropriate.

The main concern surrounding the DASH is that it makes no effort to assess victim cooperation, any issues that may lead to victim withdrawal, or ultimately whether the victim engaged with the risk assessment itself. The assessment should not only focus on external risk factors, but should also consider the victim's engagement with the police since it is one of the main considerations to their safety.

In addition, the DASH as an actuarial risk assessment tool seems poor in comparison to other assessments developed outside of the UK (Bowen, 2011). The 'Domestic Violence Screening Instrument' (DVSI) (Williams & Houghton, 2004), 'Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment' (ODARA) (Hilton *et al.*, 2004) and

‘Domestic Violence Risk Appraisal Guide (DVRAG) (Hilton *et al.*, 2008) are all forms of actuarial assessment developed to improve case processing and decision making in cases of domestic abuse. The DVRAG in particular was found to have a good level of predictability in comparison to professional judgement and structured professional judgement (Bowen, 2011). This is in comparison to the DASH risk assessment, which has been found to provide a low level of predictability in IPV recidivism. For example, McManus *et al.* (2014) analysed 2596 cases of domestic violence and found that only 4 out of the 27 risk factors included in the DASH were able to identify domestic abuse recidivism.

One of the more troubling issues with the DASH as an actuarial tool is that the assessment requires multiple points to be present for the abuse to become ‘higher risk’ in a referral to support services. Many of these individual points are of a serious nature (such as any previous attempt to strangle, choke, suffocate or drown) which Hoyle (2008) attributes to the ideology, as the DASH was initially formulated for the purposes of domestic homicide. Since domestic homicide is at the extreme end of the spectrum, it can be argued the assessment is not fully representative of all domestic abuse cases, yet it is used routinely in police practice. Boer *et al.* (1997) also argue that it is reasonable for a professional or assessor to conclude that a victim is at a high risk of abuse based upon a single (rather than multiple) criterion from risk assessments.

Finally, the DASH risk assessment does not take into account the victim’s subjective assessment of their risk, which could add value to any coping strategy (Hoyle, 2008). This is because risk assessments are formed with an assumption that victims are acting rationally and with free will. The assessment of risk, advice and subsequent safety plan based on these objective factors may not be applicable to victims who are still emotionally dependent on their abuser, or where a victim’s options are severely restricted by the controlling behaviour they are subject to. Since the victim is an intimate partner of

the suspect, their position allows them to consider the unique circumstances and factors involved in their own risk (Beech & Ward, 2004). However, any subjective assessment would need careful control, as previous research into subjective victim assessment ('Danger Assessment Scale' (DAS)) has identified that victims are not a reliable indicator of future abuse (Campbell, 1995). This has led to academics calling for more research into how victims formulate their own assessments and perceive their risk of IPV (Heckert & Gondolf, 2004). However, even though victims are poor indicators of future abuse, their subjective assessment is important in the grading of the overall risk assessment. In addition to them providing potentially crucial qualitative information, the overall grading should try to meet a victim's expectation to ensure effective engagement. For example, a victim may not believe the police are taking them seriously if they perceive themselves as a high risk victim, but the case is graded as low or medium risk (Hoyle, 2008). This would have a negative impact upon their engagement and satisfaction with the police.

Overall, it would appear that the DASH risk assessment as an actuarial tool might have significant deficiencies when assessing IPV (McManus *et al.*, 2014). As such, it could reduce the level of victim engagement if the police do not accurately measure the risk to the victim using an appropriate risk assessment tool. Nevertheless, once abuse has been reported and identified, there are a number of procedural responses the police can use in processing the case. Whilst more flexible, preventative and rehabilitative responses are currently under development, the more common response to IPV is to use provisions under criminal and civil law.

Legal Responses

The primary responses to abuse are the formal procedures governed by legislation. However, with regards to criminal law, there is currently no specific crime of domestic abuse or IPV within the UK. Discussions pertaining to the formulation of such legislation

state that it would be a positive step towards ending the ambiguity relating to such behaviour, creating a clearer sense of when the police are empowered to intervene (Casciani, 2014). Recent government announcements aim to develop such legislation (BBC News, 2017); however, until this exists there are many individual laws that prohibit coercive, controlling and violent behaviour. The most recent development in domestic abuse legislation is S76 Serious Crime Act (2015), which prohibits coercive or controlling behaviour within an intimate or family relationship. Such legislation has been a welcome improvement as a legal response to abuse, since it addresses more complex situations faced by victims that may not fall under existing legislation (Candela, 2016). Such existing legislation includes the Criminal Damage Act 1971, Criminal Justice Act 1988 and the Sexual Offences Act 1956 and 2003, which can all penalise the offender for the behaviour carried out during the IPV incident. Since many of the scenes the police attend include physical violence, the most commonly used piece of legislation is S39 Criminal Justice Act 1988 and S47 Offences against the Person Act 1861. However, one of the major concerns about arrests for violence is that they tend to be dropped to the lowest form of assault, using S39 powers (Cretney & Davis, 1997). Whilst the lowering of the charge may better reflect the crime and increase the likelihood of prosecution from a legal aspect, there could be a negative impact on the victim's experience and engagement if they consider agencies to be trivialising the incident. This impact could take the form of withdrawal if the victim is dissatisfied with the police trivialising the violence they have suffered, or in some cases could even influence the victim to trivialise the abuse and consider the incident too minor for prosecution.

Civil law also has an important role to play in cases of IPV. Part IV of the Family Law Act 1996 (as amended by the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004), as well as the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims (Amendment) Act 2012, allows for the protection of victims through applications of non-molestation orders and occupation

orders. Also, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 can grant the use of restraining orders against abusers. The civil remedies are important to victims as breaches of these orders become a criminal matter, in which the offender is then penalised through the use of criminal law (Bird, 2006). However, as noted by Burton (2009), in order to gain access to public funds for a non-molestation order, victims are usually expected to first pursue and cooperate with the criminal prosecution of the abuser. Not only does this raise concerns over the need of finance for a victim to deal appropriately with abuse through civil law, but it also further highlights the importance of victim cooperation with the police.

More Flexible, Preventative and Rehabilitative Responses

As mentioned, IPV responses have recently aimed to become more flexible, placing an emphasis on rehabilitation and prevention. The changes again illustrate the need to further develop responses to victims in order to encourage victim confidence and to improve victim engagement with the criminal justice system. One possibility in responding to abuse is the use of restorative justice in place of retributive justice. An example of this process occurring in practice was the consideration of conditional cautions under the Criminal Justice Act 2003. Although the approach is currently explicitly excluded from cases of domestic abuse (Office for Criminal Justice Reform, 2010), commentators argue that it may be a practical solution to lower risk cases. A pilot scheme in Hampshire illustrated how conditional cautions can focus on the rehabilitation of the offender through Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes (DVPPs) and other Offender Behaviour Programmes (OBPs). The approach may be useful if the case is minor or one of first time violence, where the victim intends to remain in the relationship and considers a prosecution to be too punitive (Braddock, 2011). This is especially so when considering the routine practice of simple cautions, which merely warn some perpetrators of their

behaviour if they have admitted to the abuse. However, to pursue such a strategy would need further development, as there are no nationally accredited DVPPs or OBPs; in fact these are usually only available once the offender has been prosecuted. Furthermore, general difficulties in enrolment and funding, an unrealistic expectation on behalf of the victims as to increased safety and rehabilitation of the offender have also been noted (Justice, 2014; Munro, 2011). Again, a more fundamental approach towards understanding victim engagement would be needed in order to make these reforms.

More fluid measures, such as Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs), implemented under the Crime and Security Act 2010, have also appeared as an effective way of circumventing the rigidity of the criminal justice system. The orders are made as a short term solution when the police believe there is a risk to a victim, but there is not enough evidence to arrest an abuser for a particular offence under existing criminal law. Whilst this approach may be hailed as an improvement in services to victims, justifying their use in cases involving no evidence and no arrest is problematic. In such cases the police solely rely on the victim's testimony to penalise and place controls on the suspect, as opposed to following standard criminal procedures. Taking into account the difficulty of identifying false reports (Ferguson and Malouff, 2016), research into sexual abuse cases often demonstrates that false reports account for up to 10% of reported cases (Weiser, 2017). Therefore, in the handful of cases where the allegation of abuse is not true, the approach would mean that a victim only needs to convince officers that they are at risk of further abuse to secure unjust orders against the suspect.

The use of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, brought about through a call for Claire's Law, has also been a positive step for victims of IPV, and is said to have generated 270 abuse history requests in the Greater Manchester Police area alone (BBC News, 2014). In addition, the use of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) has

been an effective method of dealing with some cases of domestic abuse and IPV since their creation in 2005 (Costas, 2012). This uses a tailored approach to IPV, including fast-tracked scheduling, specialist training to members of the court and various other improvements in case handling to ensure a victim's needs are met (Wilson, 2010). Consequently, the Justice with Safety (2008) review of the SDVCs not only found an average higher number of convictions compared to non-SDVC cases, but there was a reported higher level of victim and public confidence in the criminal justice system (Cook *et al.*, 2004).

Case Handling

As this review shows, there is a plethora of policy initiatives widely applied to the police, CPS and the courts (Hester, 2005). However, there also continues to be weaknesses with implementation which directly impacts on practice and case handling (Kirby, 2013). New policies are often hailed as an improvement, yet not incorporated into every day police practice (Saunders & Barron, 2003). An example is the Home Office Circular 19/2000 which introduced a range of measures, most notably the policies of 'mandatory arrest' and 'pro-prosecution'. In practice, however, a number of limitations became apparent. For example, there were often failures in the positive action required by officers who attended the IPV incident, with vital evidence and other details omitted from the investigation (HMIC, 2014). As such, arrests from individual incidents varied between 45-90% across UK police forces.

There are also issues concerning the guidance and positive action when considering the use of 'dual arrest' and the 'identification of a primary aggressor'. Whilst dual arrest policy was an effective means of ensuring mandatory arrests in cases of IPV, the approach suffers from numerous drawbacks. Difficulties in interpreting and applying the dual arrest policy have previously been evidenced, with the strategy itself appearing

ineffective in terms of punitive or criminal sanctions after the arrest (Martin, 1997). Furthermore, academics also question the ethics of arresting a potential victim and the impact this has on their future engagement with the police (Fraehlich & Ursel, 2014). Subsequently, the use of dual arrest is rare in the UK and police guidance suggests that officers should avoid this approach, especially when there are children involved in the case.

The identification of a primary aggressor, therefore, seems to be a more effective policy for arrests in IPV cases. In this approach officers are expected to take positive action in order to identify the primary aggressor at each scene of abuse, usually by asking questions and taking into account the history of abuse between the couple involved (Hester, 2012). However, the controversy surrounding gender in IPV, the prevalence of bi-directional violence, and lack of officer training raises issues in the police's identification of the primary aggressor in each incident (Hester, 2012). In many cases the police have a limited time to quell the initial scene and make an arrest, meaning that the identification of a primary aggressor is a quick decision. As a result, the police often rely on immediate and visual information when they identify a primary aggressor, such as aggressive behaviour and visible injuries (Dawson & Holton, 2004). Because previous research highlights how cases of physical violence often result with the female partner being more likely to be injured by the male (Swan *et al.*, 2008), the overall result is that males are usually more likely to be considered the primary aggressor at the initial scene of abuse. The dynamic has even been found to occur in cases of bi-directional violence.

In heterosexual cases of IPV where both parties had visible injuries, officers would use dual arrest if it was an available option. However, in cases where the officers were expected to identify a primary aggressor, they reasoned that the policy aimed to eliminate the party who had acted in self-defence. Subsequently, they were more likely to arrest the male (as their injuries were visibly less serious) and consider the female as

acting in self-defence (Finn *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, the gender complications could also account for the significantly higher rate of dual arrests in cases involving same-sex couples, as officers were unable to use gender as a means of differentiating a primary aggressor (Hirshel *et al.*, 2007).

The difficulties illustrate how policy has not been uniformly incorporated into police practice, with individual officers left to interpret what is meant by positive action when attending a range of vastly different abuse incidents (HMIC, 2014, p. 12). Subsequently, the approaches to case handling are often dependent on the training and experience of individual officers, in which there are different responses to case handling. The difference in responses and positive action is also apparent in how individual officers deal with the victims of the IPV incident.

Victim Handling

The police in the UK have a difficult role to fulfil when it comes to dealing with victims of crime, especially with regards to victims of domestic abuse. The difficulty stems from the police having to act as investigators and mediators, ensuring the welfare of the victim whilst compiling a strong evidential case for the CPS. Previous research highlights that victims of IPV are likely to use the police to quell the immediate situation (Apster *et al.*, 2003); however, in many cases this is followed by the victim's withdrawal from further action (Hoyle 1998; Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996). Robinson and Cook (2006) further state that this withdrawal usually occurs up to one month after the police response. Overall, there are general concerns about IPV cases where a victim has withdrawn their evidence, as these cases rarely result in a successful outcome (Hoyle & Sanders, 2000).

One of the main difficulties is that there is still no uniformity over the practical approach to take when dealing with victims of IPV, with officers again left to interpret what is meant by positive action. Some officers favour a 'victim choice' and others use a

‘pro-prosecution’ approach in handling cases of abuse (Hoyle & Sanders, 2000). Whilst some officers prefer a victim choice approach, difficulties arise when a case is dropped because the victim withdraws and does not want to continue with a prosecution. To do so damages the broader message sent to perpetrators of abuse, illustrating how they can avoid consequences if the victim withdraws. An approach based on the victim’s choice also assumes that they have all the accurate information, support and advice needed to become domestic abuse free (Hoyle & Sanders, 2000). Similar issues arise when using a ‘pro-prosecution’ approach and the victim opposes a prosecution. The difficulties are (in addition to the case usually failing due to lack of evidence) that a ‘pro-prosecution’ approach has to deal with the ethics and the public interest to prosecute an abuser against the victim’s wishes. Even in cases where a victim cooperates, previous research highlights how officers can prioritise the investigation over victim welfare by using the victim as the main source of information or evidence (Barrett & Hamilton-Giachrisis, 2013). Ultimately, it separates the overall aims of police and victims, as whilst the police’s main aim is to investigate and compile a case for prosecution, the victim’s main aim is to merely become ‘domestic abuse free’ (Harris-Short & Miles, 2011; Payne & Wermeling, 2009).

The deficiencies in such approaches cause other commentators to argue for a ‘victim empowerment’ approach. The philosophy that underpins this method is to tailor responses more effectively towards individual expectations and needs, communicate and liaise with victims, and to increase victim satisfaction and confidence (Wilson & Jasinski, 2004). Furthermore, it would enhance the creation of an effective support network (Hohl *et al.*, 2010), as a victim would be more likely to perceive the police as legitimate and place more trust in their protection (Tyler, 2004). This contrasts significantly with many current victims’ experiences where the charge is dropped due to lack of evidence, or when the criminal justice system is pushing for a prosecution of an offender against the express wishes of the victim (Harris-Short & Miles, 2011; Payne & Wermeling, 2009).

Encouraging victim empowerment could benefit both the police and victims. Not only would it promote safety as the police would become part of the coping strategy as opposed to working parallel to it, but there would also be an increase in positive criminal outcomes as victims would communicate their expectations and needs (be they retributive or restorative) with regards to obtaining justice. Increased confidence would also mean that future IPV victims would be more likely to report cases and present evidence (Roberts & Hough, 2005). However, a policing response based on the empowerment of victims requires further research. This includes a more in-depth examination of what victims need, how to address their views and expectations, and an understanding of the volume of vastly different cases pertaining to numerous victims who all have separate needs. In order to deliver a victim empowerment approach to policing, there first needs to be research into victim engagement with the police so that professionals can effectively communicate with victims of abuse. In addition to identifying individual needs and expectations within the volume of vastly different cases, research into victim engagement also needs to focus on how officers can assess cooperation and withdrawal earlier in the investigation, in order to address the potential issues affecting the victim within a case of IPV.

Victim Engagement

Victim engagement refers to the victim's involvement with the police and criminal justice system from the reporting of the incident through to the disposal of the case. There are academics who argue for a victim empowerment approach to domestic abuse, both within police practice (Birdsall *et al.*, 2016; Hoyle & Sanders, 2000) and within the court process (Peterson, 2013). One of the central cores of victim empowerment is whether the victim liaises with the police in order to gain advice, protection and justice. Since the victim can either be part of the criminal justice system throughout, or retract whilst the case is

ongoing, victim engagement as a whole can be considered as either cooperation or withdrawal.

Cooperation concerns victims who use police support and action, remaining as part of the case until it is disposed by the criminal justice process. Conversely, other victims call the police to quell the immediate abuse situation (Apster *et al.*, 2003), but then withdraw immediately from the investigation (Hoyle, 1998; Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996) or at any point after the initial response (Robinson & Cook, 2006). Withdrawal cases, therefore, ultimately concern victims who suffer an incident of IPV but do not want to take part in the case after reporting it to the police. This can even include victims who may be in favour of criminal justice action, but do not want to be part of the process.

During the whole procedure, there are multiple points of contact between the police and victim, with majority of the interaction occurring at the early stages of the investigation, arrest and charging decision. As such, some of the most important dynamics to consider with regards to victim engagement and the overall case progression occur very early in the criminal justice process. The victim's engagement, whether the suspect is charged and the outcome of the case are all strongly intertwined. Therefore, they should all be considered together when the police deal with instances of abuse. Without the victim's cooperation, the case is likely to be hindered in terms of evidence collection, often resulting in a discontinuation of the case due to lack of evidence (Hoyle & Sanders, 2000). In cases of victim cooperation, extrinsic evidence is still necessary in order to build a strong case with a better chance of securing a charge against the suspect and a disposal of the case through the court system (Ellison, 2002). Therefore, any multifactorial study into victim engagement with the police must control for the investigation or suspect charging, as it is heavily intertwined with the engagement of a victim.

Ultimately, however, victim cooperation is crucial so that the police can communicate with the victim about their needs and expectations. Such communication is the first step in building a case that empowers the victim, as the police then have the ability to direct the case towards the victim's interests, or provide reasoning and support when they are unable to dispose of the case in the requested way. In addition, by identifying victim withdrawal at the beginning of the investigation, the police would be better placed to address some of the most vulnerable abuse victims that require enhanced communication and support.

However, the areas of victim engagement and the formation of a victim empowerment approach appear under researched. Whilst there are methodologies that focus on victim interviews to examine support seeking and engagement as a whole, there seems to be no comprehensive examination of risk factors that impact a victim's engagement with the police investigation of IPV. Consequently, the literature review now progresses into a review of IPV literature to explore the current direction of victimology research. It will consider individual victim theories, contradiction and consolidation of gender in IPV research, movements towards an ecological perspective, and the application of an ecological perspective in identifying factors that could impact victim engagement and suspect charging in the police investigation of IPV.

Individual Victim Theories

Within victimology research there are numerous theories into how victims deal with abusive relationships, with contemporary theories generating a more multi-disciplinary and holistic approach. However, previous research into IPV perpetration and victimisation has often focused on individual theories that apply to the whole IPV population. In reviewing the literature, Hamel (2013) argues how the earlier research based on the concept of Battered Women Syndrome (BWS) was gravely flawed and

formulated around limited non-representative samples. He further argues that the interviews conducted contained a number of leading questions and responses, which were then interpreted on a highly subjective basis (Hamel, 2013). He proposes more empirically based theories that account for the actions of abuse victims. In this he emphasises three main theories: Traumatic Bonding Theory; Survivor Theory; and Social Agency Theory.

Dutton and Painter (1981) explored the concept of traumatic bonding to explain how powerful emotional attachments are formed and developed through power imbalances and intermittent good-bad treatment. The theory stipulates that partnerships which have an imbalance in power can accelerate over time, creating negative feelings and emotions in the victim and making them more dependent upon the abuser. This can occur regardless of individual roles and has even been reported to occur within a simulated setting (Zimbardo *et al.*, 1973). Survivor theory derives from Gondolf and Fisher (1988), who built upon earlier work by Bowker (1986) to explain how individual victims deal with abuse. They explain that methods such as flattering the abuser, fighting back and actively seeking help are coping strategies used in handling violence. They explain it is therefore a lack of available resources that causes the victim to be unsafe, rather than a feeling of helplessness. Social agency theory is similar to survivor theory in the sense that it considers the victim to be a normal individual who is responding appropriately in dealing with abuse, but focuses on the situation rather than the specific strategy employed. Schuller *et al.* (2004) explain how testimony of IPV and domestic abuse should focus on the situation, including the abuser's dominance and control, lack of effective alternative services or community support and the dangers of leaving an abusive relationship. This is opposed to basing a testimony on the victim's psychological reactions and essentially blaming the victim for their reaction to the abuse. Further to these approaches Bonanno (2004) suggests that resilience in the face of trauma is more

common than first perceived. This is in contrast to a concept of victim helplessness, where resilience was considered rare or even pathological. Applied to victims of abuse, there is potential for research to take account of victims who continue to cope and work beyond the negative experiences emanating from an abusive relationship (Hodges & Cabanilla, 2011).

Whilst the above commentary from victimology based approaches is essential in understanding IPV as a whole, the more recent application of critical social theory has allowed researchers to understand the limited scope of the previous theories and the fragmentation that results when the research is applied to practice (Norris *et al.*, 2013). The central assumption of a critical perspective is that all actions are fundamentally mediated by power relations already socially and historically constituted within society. Although the theory attempts to overcome the limitations in combining many separate theories of abuse victims, the approach is still hindered by a divide in ideology surrounding gender.

Gender Symmetry/Asymmetry in IPV

An examination of the literature into victim research cannot be furthered without a deeper understanding of how gender affects IPV, especially as previous research appears contradictory. The ‘family violence approach’ explains that the perpetration of violence is as prominent in women as it is in men (symmetry), whereas the ‘feminist approach’ argues it is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men against women (asymmetry) (Dobash & Dobash, 2004). In order to position the thesis effectively, it is prudent to examine this debate more carefully.

From the feminist perspective, there is seemingly a wealth of evidence suggesting that violence is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men against women. Advocates further explain that this is mainly caused by wider societal rules and patriarchal beliefs that

encourage male dominance and, in turn, female subordination (Abrar *et al.*, 2000; Dobash *et al.*, 1992). Dobash and Dobash (2004) argue that as violence is primarily perpetrated by men towards women, any violence that occurs on behalf of the female within the relationship should be taken with the assumption of self-defence against her male counterpart. In addition, they argue IPV often contains ‘constellations of abuse’, as opposed to single ‘acts’, in which the perpetrators attempt to control the lives of their female partners in many different ways (Browne *et al.*, 1999; Campbell & Soeken, 1999; Lloyd & Taluc, 1999). It is argued these constellations, as well as the context of cases, are overlooked by advocates of family violence research (Dobash *et al.*, 1992). Essentially, the feminist perspective argues that the recorded statistics do not take into account the context of violence as it only reports individual acts. Therefore, any research utilising a gendered approach assumes patriarchy is a direct cause of IPV (Bell & Naugle, 2008), as opposed to a factor that could possibly affect and interact with other factors (Dutton, 2006).

Conversely, family violence advocates have argued against a feminist perspective and highlight findings since the 1970s that illustrate gender symmetry (Straus & Gelles, 1986; Straus, 1977). Previous studies within the 1970s found that 12.1% of females and 11.6% of males had reported one or more incidents of abuse from their intimate partner within the year (Straus, 1977). More recent research in 2010 continued to report findings of gender symmetry, with 5.9% of females and 5.0% of males reporting one or more incidents of abuse within the year (Breiding *et al.*, 2014). Such findings have been argued as empirically valid (McNeely & Mann, 1990) and numerous commentators have produced evidence to criticise the feminist perspective, arguing it is generated from ideological concepts rather than objective and empirical evidence that emerges from a solid methodology (Nowinski & Bowen, 2012; Graham-Kevan, 2007; O’Leary *et al.*, 2007; Dutton & Corvo, 2006; Hamel & Nicholls, 2006; Stith *et al.*, 2004; Archer, 2002;

Sugarman & Frankel, 1996). Family violence advocates raise further concerns with a feminist approach forming the basis for many IPV treatment and intervention programmes, as these programmes have often reported limited success (Whitaker *et al.*, 2006; Babcock *et al.*, 2004). Ultimately, family violence advocates argue that there is an evidence base illustrating that IPV is a gender symmetrical issue that requires primary prevention and treatment programmes using a gender inclusive and family violence perspective (Straus, 2006).

The distinction between the two standpoints has been further complicated by the development of IPV typologies (Johnson, 1995; 2010). Johnson explains how IPV can be categorised as ‘Intimate Terrorism’, ‘Violent Resistance’, or ‘Situational Couple Violence’ (Johnson, 2010). He argues that it is the situational couple violence that is being captured within the national surveys and agrees that this type of abuse may well demonstrate gender symmetry. He states that intimate terrorism is the use of violence alongside systematic coercion and control, which he argues is predominantly perpetrated by men due to patriarchy. He then further reasons that the separate category of violent retaliation is predominantly perpetrated by women, often in response to intimate terrorism. However, more recent research into the prevalence and types of coercion and control has called into question the validity and reliability of the typologies. Carney and Barner (2012) found that 41% of women and 43% of men reported experiencing some form of coercive control within a relationship. These findings of gender symmetry in coercive control were also supported by literature such as Robertson and Murachver (2011) who found that both men and women admitted to both perpetrating and being subject to controlling behaviours. Furthermore, Felson and Outlaw (2007) suggest that there may be different types of coercion and control used by males and females, which has been further supported by studies using samples drawn from male shelters (Jasinski *et al.*, 2014). Taking into account the literature, the typologies appear too simplistic and

are insensitive to the huge variation and qualitative differences present within every case of abuse. For example, if a female partner is using some form of threat (other than physical violence) to coerce and control a male partner, it seems inaccurate to ignore this form of abuse within the typologies. More importantly, if the male in this instance was to use physical violence in an attempt to break the systematic coercion and control, the violence would most likely be considered ‘situational couple violence’ as opposed to ‘violent resistance’. Such categorisation would not get to the core problem of the relationship, since both the female and male would need behavioural treatment in order to develop a healthier relationship.

Due to the distinct difficulties and disagreement between the feminist and family violence academics, more recent literature often appeals for the two perspectives to merge. Winstok (2013) argues that each approach scrutinises the methodology of the other’s evidence base, and that this has occurred because they are two approaches to the same topic. Instead, he proposes that there is a need for a more flexible methodology to capture all the dynamics of partner violence, covering the interests of both the feminist and family violence commentators. Considering this fresh and inclusive perspective, studies could begin branching into the examination of IPV within same-sex partnerships, as it reframes and closely inspects pre-existing ideological frameworks, cultural narratives and stereotypes (Baker *et al.*, 2013). In addition, it would also increase the sensitivity and care around the analysis of variables, in which gender could be considered a proxy. Such variables could be strength, size, experience with aggression and others that may pertain more to one gender, but could be considered independently as well as within the gender context (Follingstad & Ryan, 2013). Furthermore, a more critical analysis of bi-directional violence, without attaching labels such as ‘victim’ or ‘perpetrator’, would allow for a closer inspection of both the female and male partners’ behaviour within heterosexual relationships (Ross & Babcock, 2010).

Studies that use agency samples (for example police, shelters and healthcare sector) often tend to portray and overrepresent the more severe cases of IPV (Gerstenberger & Williams, 2013) and are usually male-dominant (Straus, 2011). This could be attributed to the perceptions surrounding gender and abuse, in which male victims may underreport and perhaps ignore abuse that would otherwise be reported by a female victim (Sylaska & Walters, 2014). Studies that utilise independent data samples, such as the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) launched in 2010, better represent a broad sample of the overall IPV target population, reporting a broad spectrum of abuse and more gender symmetry (Breiding *et al.*, 2014).

With all of the above in mind, the thesis aligns with family violence advocates who believe that IPV is gender symmetrical and that great care is needed when interpreting gender in a discussion of prevalence. Therefore, a clear distinction should be drawn and care taken in any examination of victim engagement with the police, since a sample in this instance will be applicable to the target population of agency reported IPV cases and may not be representative of the gender symmetry of IPV research as a whole. The distinction is important, as whilst a police sample may be male perpetrator and female victim dominant, it would differ from other studies where sample bias occurs. Such bias has occurred in previous studies when the research targeted female only shelters (Gondolf & Fisher, 1988), advertised an IPV questionnaire in ‘Women’s Day’ magazine (Bowker, 1986), or used agency samples only, but then applied their findings to the overall IPV population.

Development of Multi-Factor Research into IPV

As a consequence of the above mentioned limitations, IPV research has been developing and broadening towards multifactorial studies into victimisation, repeat abuse and victim withdrawal from the criminal justice system (Cattaneo *et al.*, 2007; O’Leary *et al.*, 2007;

Robinson & Cook, 2006; Crandall *et al.*, 2004; Stith *et al.*, 2004). The rationale for the direction of research is that it breaks down existing victim theories and questions the current stereotypes and gender assumptions often attached to IPV studies (Baker *et al.*, 2013; Follingstad & Ryan, 2013). This is because the individual factors can be examined both within and separate from established concepts of IPV as well as their gender context, thus allowing for a closer inspection of the dynamics that impact upon victimisation and support seeking.

One of the major developments in building towards a multifactorial approach to IPV research is the use of an ecological perspective in structuring the numerous factors and scales (Dixon & Graham-Kevan, 2011; Fatania, 2010; Dixon *et al.*, 2009; Dutton, 2006). This perspective, first established by Bronfenbrenner as the Ecological Systems Theory in child development (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), is an evolving theoretical system for human development commonly utilised by researchers. The model is used due to the breadth and ability to examine the numerous and dynamic risk factors involved in violence, thus overcoming the limitations of applying individual theories. Whilst the use of the model has been promoted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2010), it is important to note that there are deviations to the model that apply to various disciplines. With regards to IPV research, the most noteworthy example is the Nested Ecological Model (NEM).

Nested Ecological Model (NEM)

Heise (1998) argued strongly for the adoption of an ecological model within the realms of IPV; however, the most prominent example of an applied ecological perspective is the Nested Ecological Model (NEM) as outlined by Dutton (2006). He explains how the amalgamation of Bronfenbrenner's perspective by Belsky (1980) allowed for the

formation of the model comprising of the Macrosystem, Exosystem, Microsystem and Ontogenetic levels of analysis.

The model was originally developed for the perpetration of violence, to which there is a wealth of evidence demonstrating its use in studying both IPV perpetration and victimisation (Dixon & Graham-Kevan, 2011; Fatania, 2010; Dixon *et al.*, 2009; O’Leary *et al.*, 2007; Stith *et al.*, 2004; Heise, 1998). It has been further promoted by the WHO, with published reports recommending the use of the ecological model to “help understand the multifaceted nature of violence” (Krug *et al.*, 2002; p.12). This is because the model itself has the breadth and ability to examine the multiple dynamic risk factors both within and outside of existing theories and gender contexts. In addition, there has been further application of the model to focus on victims of IPV by taking into account factors that impact victimisation and support seeking (Fatania, 2010; Heise, 1998).

With regards to the four levels of the model, each is ‘nested’ into the next to represent the connection between each of the systems. The nesting of each system captures the interaction and intermingling of factors, in which specific variables can operate within broader variables. Therefore, the application of the model is more representative than any individual theory or the result of separating numerous theories, as they are all naturally unified and complimentary (Dutton, 2006). The broadest level is the macrosystem, which relates to the overarching cultural and societal structures that can impact upon an individual. The exosystem refers to social constructs and networks that work within society, but outside of the immediate relationship. The microsystem concerns factors related to the immediate family unit and the context of the abuse. Finally, the ontogenetic level of analysis features individuals and factors related to their psychology and development (Fatania, 2010). Whilst the victim will be the main focus of investigation, the thesis will also examine the couple as a whole. All variables will be considered in order to fully explore factors related to the development, experience and

interaction of the couple, which may provide relationship dynamics that are associated with victim engagement.

Previous applications of an ecological perspective have highlighted scales and variables that could potentially fall within the levels of the model. Epstein *et al.*, (2003) established numerous issues that would impact victims of abuse in the prosecution of a suspect, although they differ in terminology when referring to the levels of ecology. In addition, the paper highlights a limitation to the ecological model, demonstrating that there is no consensus on the placement of individual factors or scales within the model itself. Within Epstein *et al.*, (2003) they consider a lack of social support to be an issue considered within the relational level (microsystem), whereas the current thesis aligns with Stith *et al.*, (2004) in which social support appears as an institutional factor (exosystem). In addition to the placement of individual factors, Stith *et al.*, (2004) also highlight how some factors appear to be conceptually further from the victim or the abuse (macrosystem and exosystem) and should be considered distal, with those appearing closer (microsystem and ontogenetic) being considered as proximal. Their research found partial support for the terminology regarding proximity, as the factors within the exosystem were found to have smaller effect sizes than those coded into the microsystem and ontogenetic levels of the model.

In addition to the placement and terminology of factors, Neal and Neal (2013) also explain how the nesting of each level means that the interaction between them remains elusive. They suggest an alternative interaction of the levels forming a model in which each level is 'networked' as opposed to 'nested'. Both concepts would appear to work in theory, since they would allow for an explanation of interaction between the factors, whilst also visualising how some factors are more proximal and others are more distal to the victim or abuse. However, the thesis in this instance applies the 'Nested Ecological Model' to the topic of study as it appears to be an effective framework which

has been promoted widely by the WHO and in academic literature (Fatania, 2010). However, care will be taken in the interpretation of factors within the levels of the model and there will be sensitivity towards the interaction of the factors across the various levels of the NEM.

Therefore, the literature review adapts and applies the NEM to explore existing IPV literature in order to identify, interpret and analyse factors that may have an impact upon victim engagement with the police. Firstly, it considers factors that may impact a victim, either in terms of cooperation or withdrawal, and establishes factors that will be taken forward for a statistical examination against victim engagement. Secondly, in order to control for the investigation within the examination of victim engagement, the NEM also considers the effect charging could have on the factors extracted from literature. Finally, as the NEM considers that the factors contained within the levels interact with one another, the literature review also explores the potential examination of the interaction between the factors extracted from the literature.

Factors that Influence Victim Engagement

Sleath and Smith (2017) recently published a research paper into factors that predict victim retraction from police reported allegations of IPV. The aims and methodology of the paper share numerous similarities with the current thesis. However, one of the differences between the two research projects is that the current thesis uses the NEM (Dutton, 2006) as a framework throughout the research to structure the factors extracted from literature and case files.

Macrosystem

Firstly, the macrosystem relates to the overarching cultural and societal structures that can have an impact upon an individual. The concepts act as groupings that can define an individual and their experience of IPV, meaning that variables within this category can

influence a large group of victim responses when it comes to engagement with the police (Follingstad & Ryan, 2013). With regards to the macrosystem in this instance, the chapter took account of concepts such as gender, sexual minorities (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Questioning, and Allied (LGBTQA) relationships), ethnical and cultural practices, religious beliefs and theories of decision making.

Some academics argue that IPV is a ‘gendered crime’ (Jewell & Wormith, 2010); whilst others argue that abuse can be bi-directional between males and females and within same sex couples (Langhinrichsen-Rohling *et al.*, 2012; Palin-Davies, 2006). There is seemingly a discord between family violence advocates and feminist advocates around the concept of gender symmetry/asymmetry when considering the perpetration of abuse (Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Straus & Gelles, 1986; Straus, 1977). Amongst the criticism is an argument that males seemingly perpetrate more severe violence as they are more likely to have variables such as size, strength, experience with violence and aggression, all of which may be attributed to causing more harm and injury (Baker *et al.*, 2013). The perception of gender symmetry or asymmetry itself is an important recognition and has repercussions in a discussion of engagement, as men have been found to be significantly less likely to cooperate with the police after the initial situation has been dealt with (Cook, 1997). This negativity in male support seeking could occur through the influence of previous research stating that IPV is mainly violence against women, which can dissuade males from being associated with victimisation.

A second concept that is useful in the examination of victim engagement with the police is sexual orientation and the possible effects of being in a LGBTQA relationship. Previous research into the occurrence of IPV within LGBTQA relationships argues that the prevalence of violence is comparable, if not higher, than in heterosexual relationships (Koeppel & Bouffard, 2014). Furthermore, the concept could also allow for an examination around gender issues, since studies such as Oringher and Samuelson (2011)

discovered that men who reported they had perpetrated IPV in a same-sex relationship also reported higher levels of masculine behaviours than those who had not used violence. The findings could relate to further gender issues such as the dichotomous ‘butch’ and ‘fem’ interpretation of homosexual relationships. In this instance butch partners may be considered more likely to perpetrate violence due to their association with masculine traits and, in contrast, a fem partner may be associated victimisation due to their association with feminine traits (Hassouneh & Glass, 2008). Further gender issues relate to the reporting of IPV, since some studies of same-sex relationships have illustrated that there is often a higher rate of perpetrator reporting of IPV than in other forms of relationship (Stephenson *et al.*, 2010). However, there is no corresponding research into whether the perpetrator self-reporting has any impact upon a victim’s support seeking. Whilst it has been argued that being in an LGBTQA relationship affects support seeking in general (Rowlands, 2006); Finneran and Stephenson (2013) explain that the concept with regards to the police response is under researched compared to the police response to male-perpetrated/female-victim IPV. They comment that now same-sex partnerships have the legal recognition of marriage it will hopefully increase the legitimacy of same-sex partnerships and, in turn, increase the legitimacy of research and responses to violence that can occur within these relationships. Furthermore, studies into same-sex IPV could also hold merit when examining factors that are attributed more to one gender than another (Baker *et al.*, 2013). Ultimately, such research would not only improve knowledge of same-sex IPV victim engagement with the police, but provide a closer inspection into pre-existing ideological frameworks, cultural narratives and stereotypes that had existed in IPV research for decades.

Another concept within the macrosystem would be the examination of ethnicity, since there may be an effect on the victim’s support seeking and engagement if there are particular issues for minorities or particular culturally specific forms of IPV. Issues could

include worries of immigration/deportation, language barriers, feelings of social isolation (Bauer *et al.*, 2000), as well as more general discrimination, dedication to family and a cultural stigma surrounding divorce (Lipsky *et al.*, 2006). In addition, it is important to recognise specific cultural IPV issues such as genital mutilation, rape, dowry related violence, femicide and honour crimes, since they would make the experience of IPV different to cases with no apparent cultural association. This would, therefore, be crucial in identifying the effect it has on victim engagement with the police (Kulwicksi *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, examining such variables would be important as previous research has highlighted that such racial and ethnic minorities can be under and over represented based upon the sampling method used (Follingstad & Ryan, 2013).

Taking account of any form of religion within cases is also important in the examination of IPV, especially with regards to victim engagement with the police. Whilst previous literature examines perpetrators of IPV and their religion (Levitt *et al.*, 2008), much less has been done to understand the contribution of religious belief to IPV as either a causal factor or as a potential issue to address within a victim support network (Popsecu & Drumm, 2009). Such research would be useful to better understand any effect that religion has upon support seeking, as more generally some studies have reported that moderate levels of belief reduce the vulnerability of IPV, but higher and stricter religious views are not associated with a lower vulnerability (Lehrer *et al.*, 2009). Furthermore, religious leaders have also been reported to explain how the sanctity of marriage should be weighed against the need to leave the abuser and that divorce should only be used as a last resort (Levitt & Ware, 2006). Therefore, a victim may utilise religion as a coping response to deal with violence and abuse, in which they find it more suitable to their needs. If this is the case, there could be an impact upon their engagement with the police.

The final variable that will be discussed within the macrosystem will be around decision making theories and the possible benefit they could have in analysing victim

engagement with the police. Theories such as the ‘Rational Emotional Model’, formed by Anderson (2003), explain how it is fair to assume that individuals make decisions in order to reduce negative emotions. Examining the area in more depth, ‘Prospect Theory’ (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) states that an individual will identify a reference point for assessing their circumstances and then take the least risky option because of ‘loss aversion’ (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984). In furtherance, Josephs *et al.* (1992) discovered that those with low self-esteem were most likely to take the least risky option, so as to minimise the risk of the loss or threat in damaging their self-esteem. This could also be because individuals overestimate the intensity of the negative emotion involved in the loss or threat (Kermer *et al.*, 2006). Compounding all the information together would result in the assertion that a victim of IPV, who by their very position may have low self-esteem, would be more sensitive to potential risks and losses. This would subsequently result in the victim making decisions that would minimise their risk of further abuse and loss, at least in the victim’s view. This is also important when faced with a victim who maintains a strong emotional connection to the abuser, as any attempt to prosecute and separate the couple could result in the victim fearing the loss of the abuser or something the abuser provides, such as financial stability. In this instance, the models suggest that a victim would make a decision to withdraw from the police in order to avoid the negative feeling of loss if the abuser and victim were to separate, or they were to lose an amenity such as their home.

Factors covered within this topic would be simple issues such as worries about social services and with court, in which the victim must make decisions in order to avoid negative outcomes. Victims with children that are informed their children may be taken into care may distance themselves from engagement with agencies, as they simply perceive this negative emotion to be much worse than remaining in the abusive relationship. With regards to the court, a victim may also be in a position to make

impossible choices such as those between physical safety and financial security. As cooperation with the police and courts would result in a prosecution, this would ultimately deprive victims of financial security if the suspect is to lose their job due to criminal sanctions (Carey & Soloman, 2014).

Whilst the above mentioned decision making theories relate to victims actively making decisions, further literature outlines how victims of IPV may also attempt to avoid making decisions. Such literature includes the ‘Hassle Factor’ (Casey, 2008) and ‘Omission Bias’ (Ritov & Baron, 1990) theories of decision making. Exploring the theories in more depth, a victim may anticipate regret if they make an active decision, or an active effort in the prosecution of the abuser. However, it must be noted that anticipated regret would occur in those who do not have a personality that would otherwise result in ‘Action Bias’ (Baron & Ritov, 2004). This could mean that the victim’s expectation and intentions could hold predictive worth in assessing the likelihood of engaging with the police (Robinson & Stroshine, 2005). The ‘Social Functionist Approach’ (Tetlock, 2002) outlines how individuals need to justify their decisions to other people as well as themselves, which could affect support seeking behaviour if the victim considers their decision to be irrational. This could account for the underreporting or withdrawal of victims after a police response, since they do not believe their experience of IPV is serious enough to warrant prosecution, or why males may not want to be seen as a victim of IPV.

Considering victim engagement with the police, factors related to omission bias could include the victims who did not report the abuse themselves, did not request the report if it was made by a third party, and when they are initially reluctant to disclose the abuse at the scene and follow police procedure. With regards to the initial scene of abuse, there is a plethora of evidence illustrating how victims of abuse can withdraw even after initially showing support (Bennet *et al.*, 1999). In addition, investigating the source of the report and whether the victim requested it would be useful in determining the effect it has

on victim engagement, especially since previous research has seemingly been conflicting (Felson *et al.*, 2002; Coulter *et al.*, 1999).

Moving on to explanations of more complex decision making processes, the ‘Elimination by Aspects’ theory developed by Tversky (1972) stipulates that individuals consider a decision one aspect at a time until they reach an answer. Furthermore, Galotti (2007) found that individuals tend to limit the amount of information or variables that they consider when they approach a problem. Contextualising this within IPV, it would then be important for a multifactorial analysis to take account of variables that are most commonly thought to be important when the victim considers their engagement with the police. Taking note of these variables would help determine the strength of the predictability and whether there is an association with either victim cooperation or withdrawal. In other words, if victims consider a certain set of variables to be most important, it will be these variables that are considered first in their decision to engage with the police.

Exosystem

The exosystem refers to social constructs and networks that work outside of the immediate relationship and relate closely with factors that could be found in the microsystem. The current paper examines the exosystem by taking account of friends and relatives, peer groups, the police, the use of shelters/emergency accommodation, courts, charity support, any health sector support, and social work support. Liang *et al.* (2005) explain how both formal and informal systems of support are needed in order to improve a victim’s mental health, as well as their willingness and ability to access other forms of help and subsequent capacity to stay safe.

Whereas formal systems refer to structures such as the police and other agencies, informal support can come in the form of friends and family. Such informal support can be emotional sustenance, such as listening, believing, and providing advice, as well as

material assistance such as financial help, accommodation and lifts to work (Liang *et al.*, 2005). However, there are some arguments that this form of support is short term and in some cases may not be effective when friends or family place pressure on the victim to return home. This is often because friends and family lose sympathy with the victim through time, especially if the victim continually returns back to their abusive partner (Binney *et al.*, 1981). Despite the informal support, victims who experience more severe abuse need more formal support than that provided by friends and family. More formal support can be provided by various established organisations that deal with IPV cases and victims of abuse. As the paper concerns an examination of factors relating to victim engagement with the police, most attention should be given to the police interaction in handling the IPV case.

Factors such as the length of correspondence, the collection of extrinsic evidence, whether the victim's preferences are taken into account, body worn video camera and CCTV footage, as well as various other specific factors may impact victim engagement. With regards to the attending officers, issues such as the gender of attending officers may also be important, since Homant and Kennedy (1985) found that policewomen and policemen differed in their perceptions of how they deal with a scene of abuse. Policemen often viewed policewomen as being too passive and not assertive, whereas policewomen considered their behaviour as patient and more understanding towards the situation.

Another factor of formal support relates to the use of CCTV and body worn video cameras at scenes of abuse. There are high expectations for the use and potential impact of bodycam footage in domestic abuse and IPV cases (Ellis *et al.*, 2015). The Home Office Guidance for the Police use of Body Worn Video Devices (Goodall, 2007) states how the evidence gathered from bodycam in IPV cases provides an exact record of the demeanour and language of the suspect, disturbances throughout the scene, and the emotional effect on the victim. This ultimately strengthens the prosecution case and thus supports reluctant

victims and witnesses through the police investigation and court process (Goodall, 2007). It is therefore important to conduct an examination into the use of bodycam footage and CCTV within a study of victim engagement with the police.

Information on the victim's access to other agencies may also inform factors surrounding victim engagement, as a victim who receives support from multiple agencies may have their needs better met and understood than those who do not engage with any of the support services other than the police. Yet, even with support from other agencies, Edwards (1989) argues that more could still be done to improve communication and links between other agencies and the police, since abusers continue to abuse victims even after they have removed themselves from the relationship. In addition, courts are argued to be pro-family and prioritise unity over the protection of the victim (Saunders & Barron, 2003). In the past there have been reports of how such judgements can be seriously damaging to victims of IPV, highlighting cases where the residence of a child may be granted to an abuser if the victim does not comply with sanctions and orders imposed by the court (Saunders & Barron, 2003); or victims facing jail time if they fail to communicate with the abuser about their children whilst the abuser is in prison for the IPV related crime (The Telegraph, 2015); or basing the sentencing of the suspect on the victim's perceived vulnerability (Halliday & Hurst, 2017).

Microsystem

The microsystem is the third category of analysis and refers to the factors that relate to the family unit, or the immediate context in which the abuse incident occurred. Within the microsystem, various variables can be further grouped based upon their context. These groupings are: factors related to the couple's situation, factors related to the abuse, factors related to the victim and factors related to the suspect.

Some factors are not directly related to the abuse incident, but can be noted as occurring alongside the abuse. These could be children, pregnancy, marriage, living in

the same dwelling, victim having a higher social status than their abuser, consumption of drugs and alcohol, jealousy or mistrust, as well as any other unique factors that can be attributed to a couple and their situation (Feingold *et al.*, 2015; Schonbrun *et al.*, 2013; Hines & Douglas, 2012). With regards to children, there is a plethora of evidence demonstrating how IPV has a negative effect on children within the relationship (Wolfe *et al.*, 2003) and how it affects the victim's decision to report the abuse and seek help (Meyer, 2010; Bonomi *et al.*, 2006). In addition, some pertain to the centrality of the parenting role in dealing with IPV, in which the child becomes the primary influence on managing the abuse, staying or leaving an abusive relationship, and engaging with formal support (Kelly, 2009). However, it seems that the involvement of an unborn child (i.e. a pregnant victim) seemingly had no effect on support seeking behaviour (Meyer, 2010), and would be important to examine with regards to victim engagement as a separate factor. In addition, marriage could affect victim engagement with the police, since Meyer (2010) found that married victims were more likely to report abuse, especially so if there was a child of that marriage present.

McLeod (1983) reports how victims who were separated or divorced from the abuser were the most likely victims to cooperate with the prosecution of their abuser. Cohabitation and living circumstances would be a factor closely related to support through the exosystem, in that a victim of IPV may use a shelter to remove themselves from violence. Jonker *et al.* (2014) explain how moving to a shelter aids with mental health, social outcomes and generally managing abuse, whereas having a victim return to the same house with the abuser means that the abuse, coercion and control can continue when the partners are back in private. Kaukinen *et al.* (2013) outlined a more general factor in that victims with a higher social status than their abuser are more likely to seek support, yet there are limitations in defining and measuring an individual's social status.

A further dynamic to consider is the consumption of alcohol, both for the victim and suspect, and the impact this has on the victim's engagement with the police. Drug and alcohol use are commonplace in IPV incidents, in which the suspect, victim or both can be under the influence. In addition, both males and females have a higher tendency to be both a perpetrator and/or a victim of IPV if they are a user of alcohol and drugs (Hines & Douglas, 2012; Stuart *et al.*, 2012). Whilst the link between alcohol consumption and perpetration of violence has been heavily examined within academia, the association between alcohol and the victim's engagement with the police has been scarce. This is troubling when studies highlight that, whilst female victim alcohol consumption had no effect on reporting, male victims were significantly more likely to report abuse if they had consumed no alcohol. The research then follows on to state that male victims were less likely to report abuse if they had also been consuming alcohol (Thompson & Kingree, 2006). With this in mind, both drug and alcohol use/abuse may affect a victim's engagement with the police at a scene of IPV. This may be due to the fact that they cannot remember the incident, they believe the alcohol is the issue and excuse their partner's behaviour, or have a dependency on the abuser because of the dependency for the alcohol or drug.

Lastly, jealousy or partner distrust relates to the batterer subtypes developed by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994), in which Buck *et al.* (2012) linked partner trust to an increased risk of violence within relationships. Likewise, jealousy or partner distrust may be an issue in victim engagement, especially in cases where the suspect directs abuse at a new partner or if it is mentioned by the victim as a possible cause for violence.

Other factors can relate specifically to the abuse captured within the incident, such as the type of abuse, the extent of the abuse and whether it was an incident of reabuse or the first time it has occurred. The type of abuse can have an effect on the professionals dealing with the case as well as the victims themselves. Basow and Thompson (2012)

highlight how physical abuse is taken a lot more seriously by professionals than non-physical abuse. This will be an especially important factor with regards to examining victim cooperation with the police, as a victim that experiences non-physical abuse may not believe their experience of IPV was substantial enough to warrant police involvement. This may occur when there were only threats to the victim and/or the abuser discharges physical abuse through the destruction of property, resulting in criminal damage. However, it is important to note that the recent creation of legislation prohibiting coercive and controlling behaviour in intimate partnerships may have a positive effect on future cases of abuse. This is because the legislation ensures that non-violent forms of abuse are more readily recognised and taken seriously by the police, as well as aiding victims in identifying what behaviour may be considered abusive within a relationship. Subsequently, future studies of victim engagement would need to take into account the promotion of sanctions against non-violent abuse, however, it is likely that such attitudes were not present within the current thesis due to the date of the cases examined. In addition to the type of abuse, the study could also take into account the extent or severity of abuse and whether the suspect used a weapon. Bonomi *et al.* (2006) explain how those who suffer severe abuse or where there is a weapon involved are more likely to call the police. Therefore, it would be important to examine whether the severity of abuse and/or the use of a weapon impacts victim engagement with the police beyond the initial report.

Factors attributed to the victims themselves, such as self-blame, mental health issues, illness, disabilities, employment status and age, should all be considered when examining victim engagement. Self-blaming can come as one of the many psychological impacts that abuse can have on a victim. Rose *et al.* (2011) state how victims can self-blame with respect to the incident, believing that they themselves are to blame for triggering the abuse and shifting some of the onus from the abuser. This can even occur in conjunction with separate self-blame for not being able to leave an abusive relationship

(Wolhuter *et al.*, 2009). Special dispensation should be given to victims with recorded mental health issues, illnesses and disabilities, especially if the victim is reliant on the abuser for daily care and mobility meaning the loss of the relationship would also mean the loss of those amenities (Ballan *et al.*, 2014). If any of the above issues are identified, it would be important to link these factors back to the support offered through the exosystem and the amenities offered by other agencies.

In addition, age can also be an interesting factor in determining victim engagement with the police, as IPV is often regarded as an issue for younger couples (Feingold *et al.*, 2015; Lundy & Grossman, 2009). Research into IPV often argues that it is not an issue that is affected by age, but that abuse occurs in relationships of all ages (Weeks & LeBlanc, 2011). In addition, it would also be useful to determine whether the age difference between the two partners has an association with victim engagement, as a larger age difference could indicate relationships where there are power imbalances caused by different stages in the individuals' lives (Babcock *et al.*, 1993; Straus *et al.*, 1980; Straus, 1976). Overall, it would be pertinent to include cases involving all ages that are recorded within the police case files and examine age as a factor in a victim's engagement with the police.

Furthermore, examining the victim's socio-economic status is also an important consideration in the microsystem. Matjasko *et al.* (2013) explain how demographic factors such as poverty, unemployment and low income are associated with IPV victimisation, which may suggest that financial stress or unemployment contribute towards IPV perpetration. Dutton (2006) provides that this may be because the suspect and victim have increased contact if they are unemployed, more conflict over financial matters, lowered self-esteem and redirected aggression from the abuser because of the unsatisfactory work situation. It would be useful within any study of IPV victimology to determine whether these factors also have an association with victim engagement.

Furthermore, there is growing literature on how workplace interventions are positive in aiding victims dealing with IPV (Yragui *et al.*, 2012). Whilst research in this area is still limited, there are recommendations that further research should examine the use of Employee Assistance Programmes and whether there is a positive effect on IPV victims (Pollack *et al.*, 2010). If such factors arose within an examination of victim engagement, the close contact and support with employers in order to deal with abuse would have very close relations to factors within the exosystem.

Whilst the same demographic factors used to examine victims would also apply to suspects, further factors that are specific to the perpetration of abuse would also be crucial to consider in the victim's engagement. Such factors would be the risk of violence upon leaving the abuser and the use of sympathy techniques. Dichter and Gelles (2012) explain how abuse, coercion and control make the decision to leave an abusive relationship difficult in the first place, but then increased violence or the threat thereof upon leaving the relationship means that some decisions are heavily based on the protection of the victim. Similarly, an abuser can also use powerful appeals of sympathy towards the victim, as well as play on the 'special nature' of their relationship in order to maintain control (Bonomi *et al.*, 2011). This is especially prominent if the abuser can then also demonstrate how both of the partners are victims of the criminal justice system, especially if the victim believes that a prosecution of the abuser is too punitive.

Ontogenetic

Finally, the ontogenetic level of analysis features the victim's and suspect's development, experience and other internal factors that led to their responses. In this instance, there will be an examination of whether a victim's development and past experience has any effect on their engagement. It will also include an exploration of the suspect's background, since this may influence a victim's response to cooperating with the police. Because the focus of this level of analysis is on the individual and their development, there are only a few

factors that could be considered within this category with regards to engagement with the police. Such factors are reabuse and the type of abuse used in past, anti-social and violent personality traits, and more generally the victims and suspects history of crime. In addition, any study of victim engagement would also need to take into account the victims previous engagement with the police and whether (if applicable) the engagement resulted in positive or negative outcomes with the CJS.

It is important to determine whether the victim was reabused, by either the same suspect or within a previous relationship, as this may have an impact upon their engagement with the police. Whilst Bell *et al.* (2013) found that the victim's experience of reabuse was not affected by the criminal case outcome, or even the incarceration of the suspect, it would be important to determine whether effective victim engagement with the police could have an impact on future incidents of abuse. Likewise, a suspect's previous convictions for violent and anti-social offences could impact upon the victim if they are aware of their partner's history and believe their partner is able to bypass the police response in order to maintain control.

The previous outcome of a case relating to a past experience of abuse may also have an impact upon victims. Some officers chose a 'victim choice' approach in dealing with cases of which some victims prefer a simple caution and consider this a positive outcome. Such outcomes demonstrate the difference in aims between the police and victim, as prosecution in these instances could be considered as a negative outcome for the victim. Victims who support a prosecution would gain most benefit from the standard procedure; however, a continuous failing of cases against a suspect due to lack of evidence could damage the victim's confidence. Ultimately, there are police and prosecutors who do not believe that prosecution of the suspect is always in the best interests of the victim (Hoyle, 1998). In some cases, the police's aim can run contrary to the victim's if the victim expressly states they do not want a prosecution of the suspect.

Within such cases, this is because it could be more damaging to the victim's situation since they may want to remain with the partner without penalising them, or it may even exacerbate further abuse (Payne & Wermeling, 2009). Actively working against a victim's wishes may affect further engagement, since Hickman and Simpson (2003) found that when victims were asked about reporting further domestic violence, victims who received their preferences in dealing with the issue were more likely to report subsequent victimisation (36%) than those who did not (26%).

Factors that Influence Suspect Charging

As previously mentioned within this review, any multifactorial study of victim engagement with the police investigation would need to control for the progress of the investigation itself. Cases where the victim instantly withdraws often result in a lower chance to charge the suspect due to a damaged ability to collect effective evidence. Conversely, the charging decision may affect victim engagement with the police. This would occur if the victim does not agree with the progress of the case, in which a charge is sought against the victim's wishes or the charging of a suspect creates further difficulty for the victim (Wilson, 2010; Davis *et al.*, 2003; Dawson & Dinovitzer, 2001).

The link between victim engagement and charging is apparent in literature from different jurisdictions such as Canada, in which the effect of the prosecutor's view of victim engagement had a huge impact upon the overall success of the case. It found that when the prosecutor perceived the victim as cooperative the case was seven times more likely to result in a prosecution (Dawson & Dinovitzer, 2001). Furthermore, previous research in the US examined how prosecutors naturally liberalised their criteria to include cases involving non-cooperative victims. The result was a doubling in the amount of cases that were dealt with through court, as well as an increase in the average case length, an

increase in the prevalence of pre-trial crime, a decrease in conviction rates and a decline in victim satisfaction (Davis *et al.*, 2003).

In contrast, the aforementioned Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) have been an effective method of dealing with cases of IPV. Consequently, the Justice with Safety (2008) review of the SDVCs not only found an average higher number of convictions compared to non-SDVC cases, but there was a reported higher level of victim and public confidence in the criminal justice system. However, even with a modified court system, there was still a split in victim cooperation and victim withdrawal cases (Cook *et al.*, 2004). The contrast between all of the approaches above demonstrates how victim engagement is crucial in the charging and prosecution of a suspect, and that the successful charging of a suspect does not always guarantee victim cooperation.

Overall, the literature review highlights the need to control for suspect charging within an examination of victim engagement. In order to control for the effect, the literature review considers it a separate topic which will be analysed against all the factors extracted from the literature. In addition, suspect charging will also form an individual factor within the victim engagement analysis to determine whether there is a statistical relationship within the current thesis. Subsequently, the literature review considers the factors extracted from previous literature and their potential impact upon the charging of a suspect.

Macrosystem

As mentioned previously, the macrosystem refers to the overarching cultural and social structures within a population. Factors in this level impact an individual because they apply to the overarching rules of society and, therefore, act as groupings that define the individual and their experiences. Subsequently, the factors also apply to large groups of people and their responses to the police. The macrosystem in this instance was used to examine charging within IPV cases, and examined concepts such as gender, sexual

minorities (LGBTQA relationships), nationality, ethnicity, religious beliefs, and decision making.

The gender of the suspect and victim are an important consideration when it comes to the charging decision of the case, especially as IPV as a whole is considered to be a gendered crime (Jewell & Wormith, 2010). Because of previous academic research highlighting that gender bias is prevalent in the formation of many treatment programmes, it would be important to determine whether gender bias occurs in police practice. This would most often occur in the form of criminal charges being more likely to occur in cases involving a male suspect in comparison to a female suspect (Worrall *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, previous research also highlights how the gender of the victim has an effect on how the police deal with a case (Dawson & Holton, 2014). This occurs as officers have previously been evidenced as attaching victim blame to male victims, and in addition, the level of blame was related to the likelihood of the officer deciding to pursue a charge against the suspect (Stewart & Maddren, 1997). This meant that if the victim was male, the officer would attach more blame to the victim and become less likely to charge the suspect.

There are researchers who outline how IPV is more prevalent in homosexual relationships as opposed to heterosexual relationships (Koeppel & Bouffard, 2014). Potentially, the recent increase in legitimacy of homosexual relationships and marriage within society (Finneran & Stephenson, 2013) may increase the reporting of IPV in LGBTQA relationships and result in a larger number of cases that involve different relationship types for the police to handle. Therefore, an examination into the charging of cases involving homosexual IPV would be necessary to determine whether it plays a part in the charging decision. There are various reasons why a difference may occur, with some literature highlighting how homosexual perpetrators were more likely to report their behaviour (Stephenson *et al.*, 2010), as well as support agencies stating that they do not

think there is adequate training of staff members to deal with LGBTQA IPV (Ford *et al.*, 2013). Consequently, the difference in reporting and the training of staff to deal with LGBTQA cases may highlight differences in the way they handle a case in comparison to more frequent heterosexual cases of IPV.

The nationality, ethnicity and religion of both the suspect and victim could have an effect on the charging decisions made within a case. Previous literature with regards to race and charging has been well documented and has often provided conflicting evidence. However, more recent meta-analyses into the charging of a suspect based on race suggests that minority offenders are at greater odds of being charged with an offence than white offenders (Jawjeong, 2016). This could tie in closely with the nationality of the suspect and victim, especially if they have immigrated from outside of the UK. Previous studies have found that victims from other countries find it more difficult to deal with abuse since they are subject to more ethnic and cultural barriers than victims in their home country. However, issues with low acculturation may also apply to suspects (Lipsky *et al.*, 2006). This could occur when issues such as language barriers, lack of effective legal support, lack of social support, and different cultural views etc., impact the way in which a suspect interacts with the police. Since police are more likely to charge a suspect they consider uncooperative (Phillips & Verano, 2008), the difficulties outlined above may result in the suspect appearing more uncooperative than a suspect that is White British. Furthermore, the interaction of the suspect with the police may be affected by their belief system and religious views, as previous studies have linked more conservative religious beliefs to more abusive behaviour within relationships (Ellison *et al.*, 1999). This may be due to outdated beliefs regarding patriarchy, masculinity and potential issues with emotional regulation (Levitt *et al.*, 2008).

The decision making process of the victim could have an effect on the charging decisions and the ability to charge the suspect within a case. Whilst there is plenty of

evidence examining how victims are generally supportive of the law and report abuse incidents themselves (Antle *et al.*, 2010; Felson *et al.*, 2002; Coulter *et al.*, 1999), the support for a charge and prosecution after the initial response is mixed. In fact, there are numerous examples of victims that withdraw after the initial police response and after showing initial support for the police investigation (Bennett *et al.*, 1999). With regards to charging, victims who are initially reluctant to support police action and do not provide crucial evidence may damage the chance or ability for the police to charge the suspect from the outset of the case. In this instance, taking into account the decision making of the victim would be important to determine the effect it had on charging. The reverse effect could also occur when a victim makes a decision to cooperate, but then receives an undesirable result with regards to charging. Cases where a victim initially cooperates with the police but then does not secure a charge, or a charge is brought against the victim's express wishes, could involve damage to the police's relationship with the victim that ultimately results in victim withdrawal (Harris-Short & Miles, 2011; Payne & Wermeling, 2009). The dynamic outlined above shows how victim engagement and charging are closely related, in which either could affect the outcome of the other. Therefore, an examination of the factors related to the victim's decision making could uncover relationships to the charging of the suspect in order to determine how the factor interacts with victim engagement overall.

Exosystem

Social structures and constructs outside of the immediate intimate partnership are covered by the exosystem level of analysis. The area concerns both formal and informal systems of support for victims of IPV, which may also impact upon the charging decisions made within the sample. Informal support refers to the family, other relatives and peer groups of the victim; whereas more formal support relates to the police, witnesses, professional support networks and courts.

The victim's family and friends could potentially have an impact upon the charging decisions in the case, with their involvement forming either a positive or negative effect. The potential effect would occur early on in the police response when officers interact with the victim and their social network. For example, friends and family can provide material assistance and emotional sustenance (Liang *et al.*, 2005), which would all have a positive effect on the victim engaging with the case. In addition, the presence of friends and family and their assistance may support the credibility of the victim and influence officers handling the case. Conversely, if friends and family interact with the victim in a negative way, then this may influence the officers to become disillusioned with the case from the beginning. This is because friends and family can lose sympathy with the victim through time, especially if the victim continually returns to the abusive partnership (Binney *et al.*, 1981). The effect of friends and family becomes important to examine overall, as previous studies have uncovered how victims of domestic abuse seemingly have smaller and less helpful informal support structures than individuals not experiencing abuse (Katerndahl *et al.*, 2013).

The police and other formal support services have a very important role to fulfil when it comes to handling cases of IPV. With specific regards to the police their early judgements and decision making influence how they interact with the suspect, the vigour in which the case progresses and ultimately how successful the case will be in securing a charge against the suspect (Schuller & Stewart, 2000). Two important themes the police and agencies have to consider when processing a case are victim cooperation and credibility throughout the investigation, in order to maximise the charging ability within the case. This is because cooperative witnesses help with the investigation and evidence collection (Hamby *et al.*, 2016), and the charging decisions are often heavily built around their credibility (Lifschitz, 2004). Consequently, the use of external and professional support agencies could have the same effect as friends and family, in that they provide

effective support (Coker *et al.*, 2004) but may also add credibility to victims as officers perceive the victim as in need of professional support. In addition to the victim engagement and credibility, previous research highlights how the victim's level of fear contributes towards police decision making and their placement within the DASH risk assessment (Trujillo & Ross, 2008). Therefore, an examination of the professional support networks and DASH risk assessment would be important when examining the charging in cases of IPV.

As mentioned, the credibility of IPV victims is often an issue within the charging decision and prosecution of a case, usually because IPV occurs in private and there are rarely witnesses to corroborate the victim's account (Lifschitz, 2004). Therefore, the presence of witnesses within the case may be a crucial element in securing a charge against the suspect, especially if the witness is independent of the victim. Whilst there is compelling evidence against the reliability of eye-witness evidence, the immediate effect would be on officers handling the case, since they would rely on the third party account to weigh up the credibility of the victim's statement when dealing with the scene. Furthermore, Dawson and Holton (2014) also found that if there were multiple victims at a crime scene, an offender was more likely to be charged. Therefore, it would be important to examine any tertiary victims to the IPV incident, since this may also impact upon the charging of the suspect within the case.

The police themselves have a significant role to play in the charging of the suspect, in which they must interact positively with the victim and effectively collect extrinsic evidence to build a case. Evidence collection should focus on the types of evidence that are associated with the charging of the suspect, including a statement from the suspect and the collection of physical evidence (Peterson & Bialo-Padin, 2012). The factor of extrinsic evidence would be important to examine in the charging analysis, since evidence itself is the very core of case building and the main consideration in the charging of a

suspect. Furthermore, the use of bodycam footage, phone footage and CCTV footage would be important to examine separately. Bodycam, video and CCTV provide the courts with the suspect's demeanour and disturbances at the scene that may not otherwise have been captured in the officers' statements (Ellis *et al.*, 2015). Ultimately, previous studies have linked the footage from bodycams with a higher likelihood of arrest and charging within criminal cases (Morrow *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, academics also call for the use of video footage in recording the victim's initial account and using it as the basis of their testimony (Westra & Powell, 2015). Again, this shows the importance of victim credibility and their engagement from the beginning of the case in order to provide effective evidence.

Microsystem

The immediate intimate partnership and the context surrounding the abuse incident are considered within the microsystem. As the level of analysis covers a large number of factors, they are further grouped into sections that apply to the interaction and context of the couple. The sections include the couple's situation, the abuse incident, the victim and the suspect.

One of the main considerations within the microsystem is the involvement of children in the IPV incident. The negative impact witnessing IPV has on children is well documented (Wolfe *et al.*, 2003) and further research illustrates how children are the primary concern for victims when dealing with the abuse (Kelly, 2009). However, other studies have shown that whilst victims may believe they are making decisions and acting in the best interests of their children, they are seemingly unaware of the profound effect the exposure to abuse has on them (Peled & Gil, 2011). This in turn has previously led some jurisdictions to enforce policies promoting the removal of children from their victimised mothers, in order to ensure the protection of the children (Trepiccione, 2001). Whilst for many victims the children may be a priority in their decision making, the

previous literature illustrates how there is no guarantee that the victim will be more likely to cooperate with the police if they have children (Rhodes *et al.*, 2011). Whilst such findings suggest that the presence of children has no impact on victim engagement, the priority of child protection may have an impact upon the officers dealing with the incident and in forming a case that becomes higher risk. This could potentially increase the chance of the case resulting in a charge against the suspect, and would therefore be an important factor to consider within the charging analysis. In addition, examining the difference between children of the relationship, of the suspect only, and of the victim only, would allow for a closer examination of the child's relationship with the couple and the subsequent level of charging.

The intimacy and proximity between the couple has been previously reported to affect the charging, conviction and sentencing of suspects (Dawson, 2004), as well as the overall decision making of the professionals processing the case. In addition, the intimacy and emotional proximity of the couple has been found to be especially important alongside victim credibility. Spohn and Holleran (2001) found that in cases involving intimate partners the suspect was less likely to receive a charge from a prosecutor if there were any questions about the victim's character or behaviour. This was not found when they studied cases involving strangers and acquaintances/relatives. Therefore, with credibility becoming an issue specifically in cases involving intimate partners, any actions or factors which represent damage to the victim's credibility may have an overall effect on the charging decision within the case. Furthermore, any of these factors would also relate closely to the exosystem and the agencies involved with the victim.

Another prominent feature of the microsystem analysis concerns the use of drugs and alcohol by both the suspect and victim. Previous research outlines how both males and females are more likely to become perpetrators and victims of IPV when they are frequent users of drugs and alcohol (Stuart *et al.*, 2012; Hines & Douglas, 2012).

Specifically considering the suspect, there is evidence suggesting that the use of drugs and alcohol during the abuse incident increases the likelihood that the suspect will receive a criminal charge for the abuse (Schmidt & Steury, 1989). Contrariwise, the presence of alcohol consumed by the victim seems to damage the charging of a case. This is due to officers forming a negative perception of drunken victims, with this negative view increasing the more intoxicated a victim appears (Schuller & Stewart, 2000). The literature relates back to the level of blame officers attach to the victim, in which those who appear heavily intoxicated are more likely to be blamed and less likely to receive a charge against the suspect (Stewart & Maddren, 1997).

It is often argued that physical abuse is taken more seriously than non-physical abuse when dealing with cases (Basow & Thompson, 2012). In addition, the severity of the physical abuse, especially with the involvement of a weapon, increases the seriousness of the case (Bonomi *et al.*, 2006). Combining the previous research, there has been plenty of evidence demonstrating how physical abuse is taken more seriously by officers, yet the overall effect on charging is less apparent. What is clear, however, is how victim injuries that are well photographed and evidenced can increase the chance of a successful charge (Dawson & Holton, 2014). Not only do physical injuries provide evidence of the abuse, but they also visualise the victim's suffering as a result of the abuse incident. As they evidence the suffering of the victim, the more severe the injuries are within the case the greater the ability of charging the suspect overall (Schmidt & Steury, 1989). Throughout the analysis, the different types of abuse will be analysed against charging to determine whether any type of abuse is more likely to result in a charge of the suspect, as well as specifically examining physical abuse and the victim's injuries.

In conjunction to the type and severity of the IPV abuse, the number of offences the suspect is arrested for may increase the likelihood of a charge for the IPV related crime. This would occur if the suspect was arrested for drug related crimes, criminal

damage, or other tertiary behaviour alongside an assault. These non-IPV related crimes, or crimes that could be considered tertiary to the main abuse incident, would support the overall charging of the suspect in the main IPV crime (Phillips & Verano, 2008).

When examining factors related to the victim in the charging decisions of the case, the section mainly focuses on the demographics of the victim, such as age, age difference between the couple, mental health, illness and/or disability, and employment. However, other elements would concern factors such as whether the victim underreported or undermined their abuse, their level of fear and whether the victim self-blamed for the IPV incident. Whilst the victim's level of fear was already considered in a discussion around their placement on the DASH risk assessment (Trujillo & Ross, 2008), the response of the victim in terms of blame may also impact the charging of the case. Victims can self-blame for many reasons surrounding the abuse incident, from using violence themselves through to not being able to leave the relationship (Rose *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, previous research illustrates how the perpetrators of IPV attribute blame towards the victim for the IPV incident, even after they have been convicted for the abuse (Henning *et al.*, 2005). Combining the literature, there may be situations in which the victim will self-blame and the suspect attributes blame towards the victim, which may have an overall influence on officers dealing with the incident. Referring back to the attribution of victim blame by officers (Stewart & Maddren, 1997), the designation of blame towards a victim may be furthered if they are drunk and have also used violence within the incident. As the level of blame was related to the likelihood of the officer deciding to pursue a charge against the suspect, the factor of victim self-blame may have an impact on the officers responding to the incident and the overall charging of the suspect.

With regards to the suspects within the sample, the same demographic factors will be examined in order to determine whether the suspect's characteristics impact charging. However, special attention will be given to whether the suspect had a recorded mental

health issue, illness, and/or disability. This is due to more recent literature and policy surrounding perpetrators with mental health issues, as they impact how a perpetrator is dealt with through the CJS. Since the CJS can take into account mental health problems when deciding to charge a perpetrator (Cummins, 2012), the presence of mental health issues overall would therefore directly impact any analysis in the charging of suspect within the current sample.

Charging may also be affected by the suspect's behaviour and interaction with the victim, which could be closely tied to victim engagement. This would occur if the victim was afraid of the suspect, especially if there were threats of further violence resulting in the victim withdrawing their evidence (Dichter & Gelles, 2012). In addition, the suspect may also use sympathy techniques to encourage the victim to return to the relationship (Bonomi *et al.*, 2011). At this point, a victim may not only withdraw from the CJS but actively oppose a charge and prosecution of the suspect if they want to continue the relationship.

Ontogenetic

The final level of analysis, ontogenetic, focuses on an individual's history, experiences and development in their response to the IPV incident. The section focuses on the history of both the victim and suspect, as well as their history as a couple, in examining factors related to the charging of the suspect. As the section relates to the couple's history and development it examines features such as reabuse, whether the reabuse occurred within the same relationship, the type of previous abuse, the suspect's and victim's criminal history, the victim's previous engagement with the police and whether they received a previous positive or negative outcome with the CJS.

Previous research into the impact charging has on the prevalence of reabuse has been mixed and would, therefore, form an important factor within the current research project. Studies have found that police intervention and the charging of a suspect in IPV

cases resulted in a significant reduction in police call outs and victim-reported violence (Jaffe *et al.*, 1986). Subsequent studies, however, illustrated that the criminal case outcome did not affect the rate of reabuse, even when the suspect was sent to prison (Bell *et al.*, 2013). Linking together the previous literature, it seems that the policing response and initial charging of a suspect may have an impact upon a broad sample of suspects, however the smaller convicted sample of perpetrators are not deterred by the criminal intervention and continue to reabuse the victim. Therefore, considerations around whether the case is one of reabuse, the prevalence of reabuse in the couple and the number of crimes involved in the incident may all contribute towards the charging decision within the current case. The rationale for the link would be that it may become apparent that officers handle a case with unwillingness if they are aware of consistent repeat abuse, since previous studies evidence a link between continually failed cases and officer frustration (Horwitz *et al.*, 2011).

As mentioned within the microsystem, physical abuse is taken more seriously than other forms of IPV (Basow & Thompson, 2012); with the severity of the abuse and victim injuries all visualising the victim's suffering and increasing the likelihood of a charge (Dawson & Holton, 2014; Bonomi *et al.*, 2009; Schmidt & Steury, 1989). The type of previous abuse will be considered within the ontogenetic level of analysis, as any previous physical abuse may result in the current case being taken more seriously regardless of the type of abuse that was involved. This is further justified by previous literature surrounding the charging of suspects in cases of stalking and harassment, since some officers chose never to charge a case of stalking because they believed it was less dangerous than other behaviour (Lynch & Logan, 2015). Consequently, examining the types of reabuse may uncover patterns that illustrate how certain types of past abuse can form the basis of a stronger case that is more likely to result in a charge against the suspect.

More broadly than the type of reabuse, the suspect's and victim's criminal history may also have an association to charging within the current case. Schmidt and Steury (1989) found that, in addition to reabuse with the same victim, the suspect's previous offences increased the chance of securing a criminal charge. This result is echoed through further research, with findings such as one previous assault arrest increasing the odds of charge and conviction (Fratzen *et al.*, 2011) and that previous domestic violence arrests were associated with an increased chance of charging, conviction and being sent to prison (Henning & Lynette, 2005). In addition, Henning and Lynette (2005) also found that a history of any type of criminal involvement outside of family and domestic abuse was associated with a greater chance of charging. Overall, it appears that the suspect's criminal history may be a strong factor in determining the likelihood of a charge within the current IPV case. With regards to the victim's criminal history, previous research illustrates how cases involving non-strangers were affected by victim characteristics such as a prior criminal record (Beichner & Spohn, 2012). Therefore, taking into account the victim's previous criminal history may uncover dynamics that affect the charging decision of the case. This could occur if the victim has previous convictions for assault against the suspect, as previous feminist research outlines how abuse on behalf of the females against males should be considered as self-defence (Dobash & Dobash, 2004), and therefore may highlight a case that is higher risk. However, whilst such feminist research calls for female perpetration to be considered as self-defence, studies into female only perpetration have found that self-defence and the defence of children are the least frequently coded categories when examining female only violence (Stewart *et al.*, 2014).

The victim's previous engagement with the CJS and whether they received a positive or negative outcome may have repercussions on the ability to charge within the current case. Many officers and prosecutors believe that a prosecution is not always in the victim's best interests (Hoyle, 1998) and in some cases a prosecution may be more

damaging than helpful to a victim's position (Payne & Wermeling, 2009). As a result, the victim's previous engagement could be heavily linked to current engagement within the case, which would have a subsequent impact upon suspect charging. Overall, the importance of victim satisfaction, engagement and gaining a desired outcome may be strongly linked to the charging of a suspect within the current case (Felson *et al.*, 2005). Taking into account the victim's preferences and working towards them would increase the likelihood of the victim reporting further incidents of abuse to the police. In addition, the literature suggests it would also increase the likelihood of the victim cooperating throughout the investigation, which could increase the likelihood of suspect charging.

The Interaction between Factors

Throughout the literature review there was a need to capture vast amounts of information pertaining to victim engagement. The process required a flexible model and justified the application of the ecological model as a framework (Stith *et al.*, 2004; Schumacher *et al.*, 2001). One of the drawbacks that the NEM presents, however, is the complexity when informing assessments in police practice. Advocates of the approach state that it is the best representation for variables in IPV, often arguing that it works in mutual exclusivity to any other form of profiling or clustering (Saunders, 2004). However, the literature review argues that there would be worth in further examining the correlation between any significant factors found within the study. The rationale for doing so is rooted in Canter (1985) who explains that research focused on individuals, and subsequent practice based around individuals, requires an acceptance that there will be numerous variations and disparities between the individuals when forming conclusions. He further explains that to focus on the individuals within research requires sensitivity to the qualitative similarities and differences between factors.

The application of an overall list of significant factors would be too onerous for individual officers, as they would have to manually examine the correlation or grouping of factors within each case. This would become especially difficult when examining the plethora of IPV incidents they attend, all with vastly varying circumstances, victim needs and expectations. Therefore, by examining the relationships between the significant factors it would be possible to determine whether the levels of analysis established by the NEM are the most representative themes for the factors contained within the study. By providing representative themes of victim engagement the thesis would be able to structure the findings to provide a practical assessment of victim engagement for officers and professionals.

The need for simplifying data in police practice is evidenced by the prevalence of profiling within a criminal justice setting, in which criminal justice agencies consistently aim to simplify information so it becomes more efficient within practice. There is an increasing acceptance by academics around the use of a bottom-up profiling, in which perpetrator profiles are developed from variables that are present at existing crime scenes (Canter & Heritage, 1990). Specifically within IPV research, the Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) batterer typologies were an example of profiling suspects based upon a number of factors and scales displayed within their abuse, in which the profiles appeared consistent in testing (Holtzworth-Munroe *et al.*, 2000; Langhinrichsen-Rohling *et al.*, 2000). The profiling of victims within IPV research is more uncommon, which may be due to difficulties in justifying the profiling of victims since it treads closely to victim blaming (Karmen, 2013). However, the concept of multiple factors impacting upon reporting, support seeking and coping with IPV has been covered by academics. Previous studies that focus on the victim only, without consideration of the suspect, have been restricted in considering the characteristics of victims. This has resulted in such literature focusing on minority victims and the characteristics that cause difficulties in the way they

cope with abuse. Much of the previous research into IPV victims uses differing terminology such as ‘minority stress’, ‘double stigma’ and ‘compounded disadvantage’ to describe how multiple unique factors affect ethnic minorities, disabled and sexual minority victims (Finneran & Stephenson, 2013; Hague *et al.*, 2010).

With all of the above in mind, facet theory is a unique methodology that emerged from literature around multidimensional scaling, which concerns specific techniques in examining the contents of multifactor or multivariate studies. Shye *et al.* (1994) states that it addresses itself to a crucial flaw that often appears within behavioural research, which is how to deal with the conceptual complexity of behaviour itself. Referring back to Canter (1985), facet theory takes into account and outlines the qualitative similarities and differences between the individuals within the overall sample. It does this by considering the co-occurrence of the factors with the overall assumption that if two or more factors are conceptually similar, then they will be empirically similar (Brown, 1985). Taking into account the sources examined throughout the literature review, each level of analysis concerns numerous factors in an overall examination of victim engagement with the police. The model captures each of the factors within the levels of analysis based upon their representation to the ecology of the IPV couple. In order to determine the most representative structure of any factors found to impact victim engagement, the literature suggests a further examination into the potential interaction of factors to form themes of victim cooperation and withdrawal across the sample.

Summary

Chapter 1 commenced by outlining the significant efforts respective UK governments and criminal justice agencies have made in attempting to reduce IPV. However, notwithstanding the significant level of resources and effort placed into these initiatives, the results have not generated the anticipated level of outcomes. Recent reviews continue

to criticise the response by UK agencies to this universal problem. The question is therefore, what more can be done? This chapter argues that a more radical change is required that has at its core a heightened level of victim awareness, empowerment and engagement.

In essence the literature review argues that victim engagement research can be further developed by using the direction of current research that focuses on multiple disciplines, multiple victim theories, and the inclusion of gender and sexual orientation. The literature review, therefore, applies the NEM as part of a multifactorial study into victim engagement with the police. Factors were extracted from previous literature and placed within the model for discussion and interpretation as to their effects on victim engagement and suspect charging. In addition, the literature review also considered the interaction of the factors contained within the model, and suggested that any significant factors should undergo further analysis to determine themes that may be more applicable to police practice.

Overall, a spectrum of care and understanding should be provided to victims of IPV, as the literature reports how the homogenous response does not acknowledge or address the multiple and unique factors that affect a victim in each case (Cerulli *et al.*, 2015). An improved understanding of what affects victims and their engagement with the police allows for more targeted, effective and efficient support. Many practical applications could be drawn from such research and applied to policy, legislation and to police training. Furthermore, including an evaluation of victim engagement into the risk assessment process would allow for an early identification of vulnerable victims. By identifying victim withdrawal from the outset, the police would be better placed to critically communicate with victims and provide enhanced support. Overall, such an approach may ultimately reduce the demand throughout the criminal justice system, by reducing failed prosecutions and increasing victim satisfaction. Such an expanded

capacity and flexible response could be used proactively to promote greater victim understanding; increase further victim cooperation; increase victim confidence; garner victim trust; increase victim reporting; and ultimately lead to enhanced criminal justice outcomes.

Thesis Aims and Objectives

Based upon the literature review outlined, the main aim of the thesis is to examine potential factors affecting victim engagement with the police, in order to identify factors related to victim cooperation and withdrawal in the police investigation of domestic abuse cases.

Throughout the thesis, each chapter concerns a step by step process in breaking down factors that affect victim engagement with the police, in which each chapter represents a separate research objective of the thesis as a whole. Firstly, Chapter 2 explains the main methodology used throughout the thesis. Chapter 3 is the first data chapter and involves an examination of the factors extracted from literature against victim engagement with the police. Chapter 4 uses the same procedure to explore and analyse the same factors in their association to suspect charging. Chapter 5 then provides a cross validation by triangulating the results of the victim engagement and suspect charging analysis, within a thematic and qualitative context (please see Appendix 3), in order to provide explanations for the findings of victim engagement. The final chapter of analysis, Chapter 6, investigates the co-occurrence of the victim engagement factors in order to determine themes that provide structure to the findings.

Therefore, to accomplish the overall aim, there are four research objectives that pertain to each data chapter within the thesis. They are:

- To identify factors that impact on victim engagement;
- To identify factors that impact on suspect charging;

- To overlay qualitative case file information to the quantitative results (please see Appendix 3);
- To test and develop themes of victim engagement through further quantitative analysis.

CHAPTER 2 - MAIN METHODOLOGY

Study Design

The study needed a comprehensive methodology in order to examine victim engagement, charging and case file information. There was a need to conduct a statistical analysis to determine whether there were any associated factors to victim engagement and charging, in addition to a more in-depth analysis to determine how these factors interacted with victim engagement. The combined output of identification and explanation was necessary in forming conclusions that were applicable to police practice. Therefore, a mixed methodology was employed to address both exploratory and confirmatory questions through the use of quantitative and qualitative data (Greene, 2007) (please see Appendix 3).

The study required the collection of a large amount of information with specialised access, using both physical police case files and computer databases. The first year of the thesis, from 1st April 2014 to 1st January 2015, was dedicated to non-police personnel vetting, external ethical approval, consent, as well as access to databases, cases, and a workspace within Preston police station. After becoming fully vetted and trained, the researcher also needed training and the correct levels of access for the database and storage system used within the station. Once access to the database, storage system and workstation was established on 1st January 2015, the sample was then identified using the police custody database C3P0. The information on the system was stored and processed for the purposes of police work and attention was needed to identify a total sample of cases. The researcher, therefore, began searching and examining cases from the first quarter of 2013 that carried a 'DV' marker within the custody database. As the study required a balanced sample of cases resulting in a charge and no charge against the suspect, the research first focused on cases that resulted in no charge. This was because

there was no electronic copy of the files in cases where the suspect did not receive a charge. Instead, the case was marked as ‘archived’ which meant that the physical file was stored in a physical location. In order to gain access to the physical case files, the researcher needed to identify their location and isolate them for access. The researcher initially identified 407 archived physical case files which were stored at a warehouse facility in Accrington police station.

On 14th July 2015, the researcher was able to secure a workstation in Accrington police station and liaised with police storage in order to access the physical case files. Upon access to storage, 358 of these case files were logged into the archive correctly and had not been destroyed. As the storage facility was home to 18,000 boxes of files, the researcher was able to refine the sample to 304 files that were realistically accessible due to time constraints and resources¹. Upon closer inspection of the status of these files: 1 file was missing, 3 files had storage details changed and 12 had been scanned to a disk with the physical file destroyed. At this point in time, there were 291 cases that involved the physical case files and 12 cases that involved a scanned copy to a disk, which resulted in a total of 303 cases. However, during the data collection process, some of the case files had issues that prevented them from being included within the study. Issues included the suspect or victim being under 18 years of age, as although domestic abuse and IPV applied to any partnership over the age of 16 years, the researcher did not include cases involving 16 and 17 year olds due to ethical and practical considerations. In addition to

¹ The warehouse contained 18,000 boxes, with each box containing roughly 50 files. The boxes themselves were marked and stored on large industrial shelves. Within the warehouse there were numerous shelves, and an overflow section. Each of the shelving units consisted of 4 levels of 2 rows, one behind the other, which meant that access to the boxes at the back required the removal of the corresponding box in front. Furthermore, the boxes were not specifically recorded within the level on the shelf, which meant the researcher could potentially search an entire shelf (roughly 20 boxes) for the required box. Furthermore, any box on the shelves other than the lowest/ground required the use of a mobile lift. Since further training was needed to operate the lift as well as the moving and handling of heavy objects, the sample could only take account of files that were recorded as being stored in a box located on a bottom shelf of the warehouse. Upon locating the box, each of the 50 files contained inside were examined in order to locate the correct file that related to the sample list.

age, some files related to the wrong case and were unrelated to IPV in any way (i.e., none DV thefts and assaults relating to persons other than those named on the cover/labelling of the case), whereas other cases referred to the correct case but only contained a front sheet and no core documentation from which to collect worthwhile data. Subsequently, the first half of the sample concerned 270 cases that did not result in a charge against the suspect. These 270 cases were examined, taking approximately an hour per case and 5 cases being read and processed each day. Therefore, the researcher completed data collection for the first half of the sample by 13th October 2015.

Returning to Preston police station, the second half of the sample related to cases where the suspect had been charged, in which most of these cases were accessible through the police custody suite C3P0. The researcher therefore identified 270 cases that resulted in a charge of the suspect and matched all of the inclusion criteria required for the case to be applicable within the study. As the file was stored electronically and all of the core documents contained within the file were accessible, the researcher completed data collection for the second half of the sample by 1st January 2016. This resulted in a total of 540 cases of IPV, which included an equal split of cases that result in a charge and no charge against the suspect.

Sample

Due to the nature of the data, the researcher utilised a convenience sampling method. Since one of the main criticisms of such an approach is that the sample would not be representative of the overall target population, the researcher employed a stratified balance of cases involving the charging of the suspect ($n = 270$, 50%) and no charging of the suspect ($n = 270$, 50%). The split of charge/no charge was done for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is a common finding across research into IPV cases that the charging of a suspect is strongly linked with victim engagement (Wilson, 2010; Davis *et al.*, 2003;

Dawson & Dinovitzer, 2001). Therefore, examining the difference between cases resulting in a charge/no charge would examine the association between charging and how this is affected by victim engagement and vice versa. Secondly, previous research into the charging decisions of domestic abuse and IPV cases has been sparse and limited to small US samples. However, such research consistently finds a balance between the charging and no charging of the suspect within such cases (Worrall *et al.*, 2006; Hirschel & Hutchison, 2001; Schmidt & Steury, 1989). Thirdly and in conjunction, this is further confirmed by the sample examined within the current study, as it targeted all domestic abuse related incidents within the first quarter of 2013 (1st January - 31st March). Out of the total 1397 domestic abuse incidents identified, 581 of the cases were disposed of without charging the suspect (No Further Actions, Cautions, and Harassment Orders) and 816 cases resulted in a charge against the suspect. Therefore, the stratified sample collected through a convenience sampling method was important within both the statistical examination of charging and victim engagement, as well as in the representation of the split in charging found in previous literature and within the target population of IPV cases in Lancashire.

Overall, the sample itself consisted of 540 separate cases of IPV, which included a total of 540 victims and 540 suspects. The researcher ensured that all of the cases represented non-duplicated couples, as well as ensuring that none of the cases involved the same suspect abusing a different intimate partner within the sample. With regards to the composition of victim engagement within the sample, there were more cases of victim cooperation than victim withdrawal. From the total 540 cases, there were 345 cases of victim cooperation (63.9%) and 195 cases of victim withdrawal (36.1%).

Materials

The study made use of the physical and electronic police case files, provided by Lancashire Constabulary and information available on the computer databases. More specifically, the MG3, MG5, and MG11 were the main documents required in each case, as well as a copy of the victim retraction statement if it was applicable to the case (Lea & Lynn, 2012). The MG3 and MG5s were sought after as they included important data on: the incident and response, charging decision, key evidence, information about witness statements, the background to a case to provide context, the suspect's interview, Police National Computer (PNC) checks, and a list of the strengths and weaknesses of each case (The Prosecution Team, 2011; 10-12). The MG11 provided the victim's statement, as well as others who were involved such as witnesses and other non-IPV victims. Whilst these main documents were sought after in each file, all information within the file was examined so it could be used within the study. The case files were accessed through police storage and kept on-site as the researcher extracted the information from each case. In addition, the use of the police computer databases included the use of the police's custody suite and intelligence databases (C3P0 and Sleuth), as well as databases that were victim orientated (PVP). All information useful for analysis was extracted into a pre-determined template of variables developed through a review of previous literature (discussed later within Chapters 3 and 4 of the thesis). Any information that reoccurred formed a new factor, which was then added to the template and updated to include data from the whole sample (please see Appendix 2 for the 'Coding Framework' and all factors examined).

Procedure

To determine whether the case was suitable, the victim's name, age and their statement were all examined to ensure they were a victim of IPV and that they were 18 years or older. The age of 18 was selected to avoid any complication with ethical approval. In

addition, there may have been different referrals, processes and support services for victims under the age of 18, which may have affected the results. The suspect's name and age were also checked to ensure that they were 18 years or older. The researcher then searched the file for a retraction statement, whether the victim was recorded as willing to attend court on the back of the MG11, and whether the victim expressly stated that they were willing to cooperate and support the police. In addition, the researcher also examined the MG3, to get an overview from the CPS as to the victim's status within the case. All the information was used to determine whether a case was one of victim cooperation or victim withdrawal.

It is important to note at this stage that it was not possible to determine in every case whether a victim actually attended court or not, so the remit of the sample was victim engagement with the police from the reporting of the crime through to when the victim was supposed to appear in court. The outcome of the case was recorded in each instance and whilst it was reasonable to assume that cases that were dismissed due to lack of evidence were usually due to the victim not attending court (i.e. withdrawal), it could not be recorded with certainty. Therefore, some cases may be recorded as victim cooperation based on the evidence within the case file; however, the victim may not have subsequently attended court. Any findings within the study and the remit of victim cooperation cases will be interpreted in the context of the police investigation up to the court date only. In addition, it was possible to collect most data about the victims in each case through the MG11 and electronic database; however, there were difficulties in some cases of victim withdrawal. In a small number of cases the victim would not disclose their details to the officers and were unable to be fully traced. This meant that in some extreme cases of victim withdrawal only the victim's name and date of birth was available to the researcher, alongside data regarding their demeanour and other factors within the case.

The case itself was still used as there was plenty of data and the core documents that may have contained information as to factors that affected victim engagement.

After the suitability of the case and the victim's engagement with the police was established, the police report of the incident (MG5) was read and an anonymous summary was recorded for later qualitative analysis. In addition, the defendant's interview was also read and a summary recorded for later qualitative analysis. Throughout the quantitative extraction, small sections of qualitative data were also recorded and stored alongside the corresponding quantitative factors. This was done to provide more detail to any of the factors that were later found to be significantly associated with victim engagement. In addition, the researcher recorded small sections of qualitative data that concerned any unique or individual issues within particular cases that may have had a specific effect on the victim's decision to cooperate or withdraw. In addition, the research also recorded any reasons a victim gave for retraction within their MG11s. These pseudo-anonymised summaries were stored for qualitative analysis and gave valuable insight into the specific reasons the victims withdrew from the investigation.

Model

The data was extracted from the case files and placed within the Nested Ecological Model (Dutton, 1995; 2006) that was adapted to encompass factors which could be associated with victim engagement and charging. All quantitative data extracted from the case files and police database was distributed across the Macrosystem, Exosystem, Microsystem and Ontogenetic categories of the model ready for analysis (please see Appendix 2 for the 'Coding Framework' and all factors examined). All sanitised text data was also stored for later qualitative analysis (please refer to Appendix 3).

Reliability and Accuracy of Data

The importance of validity and reliability lies in the fact that it is a test of the extent to which the research variables represent the actual variables measured. Within the current study, statistical controls and inter-rater reliability were examined when considering the reliability and accuracy of the data.

Firstly, the use of a statistical control such as Bonferroni Correction or Holm-Bonferroni Correction was considered throughout the initial data chapters when refining factors of victim engagement. However, the researcher reports the result throughout the thesis without a statistical control. The rationale for doing so was to prevent a Type II error; especially as the cross validation and triangulation chapter of the thesis applied explanations and identified limitations to factors manually. Therefore, Bonferroni Correction was calculated for information purposes only in the overall table of significant findings.

Secondly, inter-rater reliability in the form of the kappa coefficient requires two separate raters making ratings on a small number of categories (Howitt & Cramer, 2008). At the data collection stage, the use of kappa as a means of testing reliability was unrealistic as there were two raters, rating numerous factors, which consisted of different types of data, with various levels, throughout a large number of cases. If the kappa coefficient was used to determine inter-rater reliability in this instance, it would have been conducted separately for each of the 103 factors extracted, as each variable had different levels of coding. In addition, each case took approximately an hour for data extraction, so due to time constraints a total of 5 cases were processed by the secondary rater. Instead, to obtain a descriptive and visual representation of the accuracy of the overall data collection, a simple percentage method was used. Each case contained 103 factors that were extracted for analysis (approx. 0.97% per factor), and were compared between the researcher and secondary rater to determine the percentage of exact agreement in coding

between each case. A total percentage of exact agreement was measured for each of the 5 cases, and then an average total percentage of agreement was calculated. Overall, the inter-rater reliability found that on average across the 5 cases tested, 84.5 factors out of 103 were exact matches. This resulted in an average accuracy of 81.97% in data extraction and coding between the two raters.

Ethics

As mentioned earlier, the study did not include information pertaining to suspects or victims who were under the age of 18. Whilst ethical approval may have been granted for the use of such data, the researcher would have been unable to obtain informed consent from a parent or guardian related to the case. In addition, as the minors were also suspects or victims of domestic abuse, they may have been considered as ‘high risk’ which could have caused complications in ethical approval. Therefore, in addition to the practical considerations around the use of such data, it was removed from the study to ensure timely ethical approval and efficient data collection.

More broadly, as the participants within the study were unable to give consent, the researcher liaised with the Lancashire Constabulary and discussed the best means of data collection. Ethical approval was granted for data collection using the police as gatekeepers and consent was obtained from the Lancashire Constabulary. This meant that the researcher was vetted to view confidential and secret information stored on the police systems. The researcher, therefore, read and stored the information within the police systems and only the sanitised and anonymous data was extracted from the police systems and used within the study.

Ethical approval was granted by the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) Science, Technology, Engineering, Medicine and Health (STEMH) ethics committee in March 2015. The research was conducted in partnership with the Lancashire

Constabulary who provided access to the case files and police databases. The case files and databases were accessed within police stations by the researcher, who was vetted to Non Police Personnel Vetting (NPPV) Level 3 in order to view confidential and secret information. All the data that was extracted from the case files and police databases was pseudo-anonymised, with all confidential information remaining on the police systems and only the sanitised data being used for analysis. All data, both on the police systems and used in the analysis for the research project, was processed and stored in accordance with the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) regulations for data protection and within the statutory requirements provided under the Data Protection Act 1998. It was processed in accordance with the ‘eight principles of data protection’ and was done so at all times.

CHAPTER 3 - FACTORS OF VICTIM ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

Chapter 3 concerns an analysis of factors against victim engagement with the police. As the Nested Ecological Model (NEM) (Dutton, 2006) was used to structure the factors throughout the literature review, the model appears as a continuous structure once again within the data chapter.

Methodology

The current chapter involves a systematic statistical analysis of the 103 factors extracted from literature against victim engagement within the sample (please see Appendix 2 for the ‘Coding Framework’ and all factors examined). The sample itself contained 540 cases of IPV, including 540 separate suspects and victims. From the total sample, there were 345 cases of victim cooperation (63.9%) and 195 cases of victim withdrawal (36.1%).

The main methodology of the thesis is outlined in Chapter 2 and includes a discussion of the sample and case files used within the thesis. For further detail on the study design, sampling, materials and procedure, please refer to Chapter 2 of the thesis.

Results

To provide context of IPV within Lancashire in the first quarter of 2013, the Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) referrals and domestic abuse crimes were all totalled. There were 7344 IPV referrals made to the Lancashire Constabulary and assessed through DASH, in which 415 (5.6%) were high risk, 1612 (22.0%) were medium risk, and 5317 (72.4%) were standard risk victims. Of these 7344 entries, a total of 1397 were IPV related crimes which the police dealt with and recorded. Whilst 816 (58.4%) cases resulted in the suspect being charged, 581 (41.6%) cases did not involve a charge against the suspect and such cases were often discontinued, resulted in a simple caution, or were

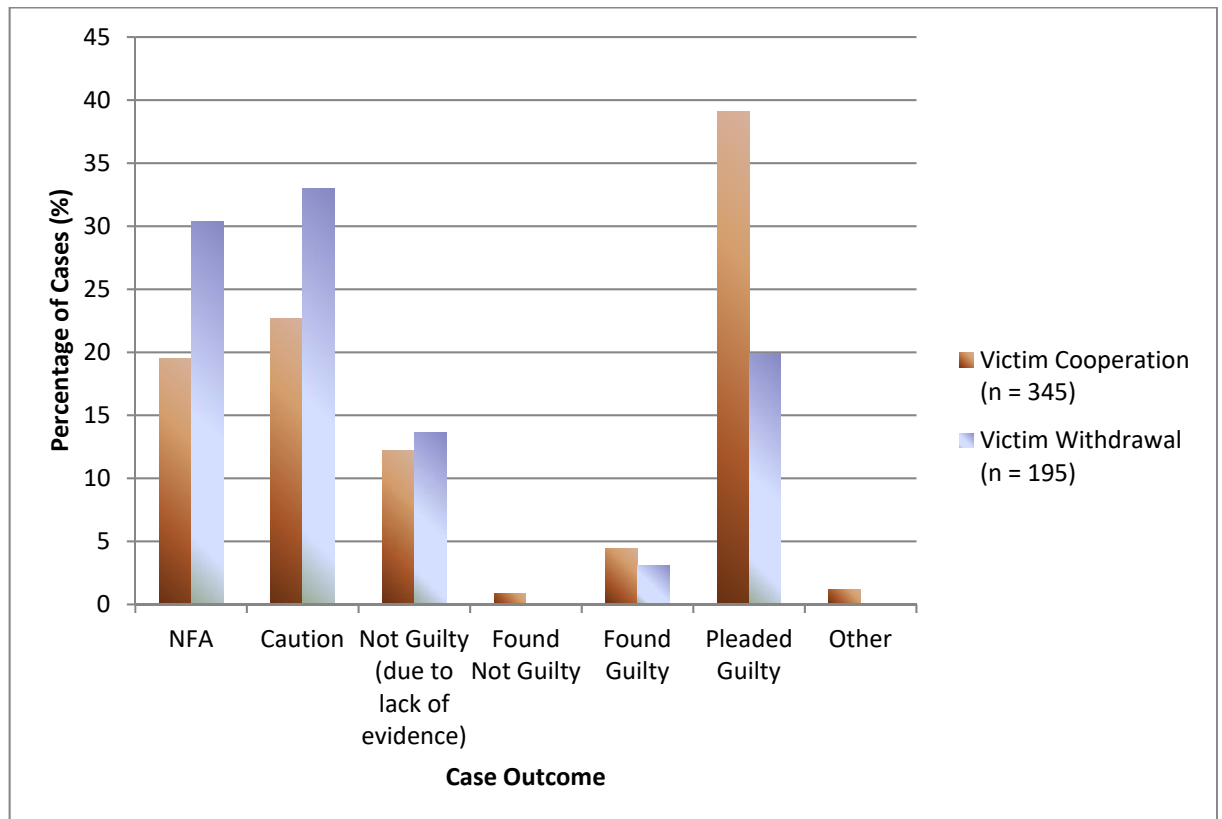
disposed of in some other way such as a harassment order. The study in this instance examined a total of 540 incidents out of the 1397 that were reported, in which there was an even split of 270 cases that resulted in the suspect being charged and 270 cases where the case was disposed without charging the suspect.

Before the main analysis on victim engagement against the factors extracted from the case files using the NEM, the analysis began with an examination into whether victim engagement was closely tied to charging within the current sample of IPV cases. Upon testing there was a significant relationship between the charging of the suspect and victim engagement, $\chi^2(1, n = 540) = 20.878, p < .001, \phi = .197$. The finding illustrated that, even with the hard work of many police officers and professionals, the cases more likely to result in a charge were those that involved victim cooperation (73.3%, $n = 198$) in comparison to cases where the suspect was not charged (54.4%, $n = 147$).

The finding was confirmed by further analysis that examined the relationship between victim engagement and the outcome of the case. From a total 540 cases, it was possible to determine and record the disposal in 534 instances. Disposals within the sample ranged from: 125 cases (23.5%) resulting in No Further Action (NFA); 141 cases (26.4%) resulting in a simple caution; 134 cases (32.2%) where a suspect pleaded guilty at court; 21 cases (3.9%) where the suspect was found guilty at court; 68 cases (12.7%) where the suspect was found not guilty due to lack of evidence; 3 cases (0.6%) where the suspect was found not guilty based upon evidence presented; and 4 cases (0.7%) where there was another form of disposal. The chi square analysis found that 4 cells (28.6%) had an expected count less than 5, so Fisher's exact significance was used within the analysis. It found that there was a significant association in the outcomes based on victim engagement, $\chi^2(6, n = 534) = 29.252, exact p < .001, V = .235$. It found that the cases where victim cooperation was present were more likely to result in outcomes such as the suspect pleading guilty in court (77.9%, $n = 134$), suspect being found guilty in court

(71.4%, n = 15), suspect being found not guilty in court (100.0%, n = 3) and the case being disposed of in some other way (100.0%, n = 4). This is compared to cases of victim withdrawal which were more likely to result in outcomes such as NFA (53.6%, n = 67) and simple cautions (55.3%, n = 78). Figure 3.1 below illustrates the association between victim engagement and the outcomes of the IPV cases.

Figure 3.1: Statistical Association between Victim Engagement and the Case Outcome.



Macrosystem

There were two hypotheses formed for each level of the NEM. The first hypothesis related to the effect sizes of the variables found within each level of the model and the second referred to the expected direction of the results. The hypotheses formed within the macrosystem were:

- 1) As the factors are considered more distal (Stith *et al.*, 2004), any findings will have a small effect size in comparison to any findings in other levels of the NEM.

- 2) Within the macrosystem female victims, male suspects, and heterosexual relationships will be associated with victim cooperation. Male victims, as well as decision making related to loss aversion, omission, and apathy will be associated with victim withdrawal.

The analysis of factors across the macrosystem resulted in a number of significant findings in relation to the hypotheses outlined above. As the majority of the tests within the chapter involved nominal data, Phi and Cramer's V was used to determine the effect sizes of the results using Chi squares. When examining the differences in groups through t-tests, Cohen's D was employed to determine the effect size of the result. In both sets of tests, it is accepted that a result of 0.1 refers to a small effect, 0.3 refers to a medium effect and 0.5 refers to a large effect (Cohen, 1988). Table 3.1 outlines the significant findings of the macrosystem ordered by effect size.

Table 3.1: Significant Findings within the Macrosystem Ordered in Effect Size.
(* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$). For information purposes only: Bonferroni correction was calculated to visualise a control for a type I error at $p < .003$ ($0.05/13 = .003$) for the macrosystem.

| Factor Name | Level | All Present | Cooperation % | n | Withdrawal % | n | Effect Size |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-----|--------------|-----|-------------|
| ***Initial Victim Reluctance | | 534 | 64.0% | 342 | 36.0% | 192 | .670 |
| | Present | 144 | 11.1% | 16 | 88.9% | 128 | |
| ***Expressed Issues with Court | | 73 | 32.9% | 24 | 67.1% | 49 | .611 |
| | Present | 46 | 10.9% | 5 | 89.1% | 41 | |
| ***Victim Reported/Requested Report | | 464 | 65.9% | 306 | 34.1% | 158 | .247 |
| | Present | 388 | 71.1% | 276 | 28.9% | 112 | |
| ***Source of Report | | 522 | 63.8% | 333 | 36.2% | 189 | .212 |
| | Victim | 358 | 70.7% | 253 | 29.3% | 105 | |
| | Third Party | 153 | 49.0% | 75 | 51.0% | 78 | |
| | Suspect | 11 | 45.5% | 5 | 54.5% | 6 | |

Gender and Sexual Orientation

Contrary to the second hypothesis neither the gender of the suspect or victim, nor the type of relationship had a significant association with victim engagement ($ps > .05$).

Decision Making

The second hypothesis also predicted that decision making theories related to loss aversion, omission, and apathy would be associated with victim withdrawal. The analysis found that there was strong support for this part of the hypothesis, with numerous findings related to victim decision making. One of the major factors within decision making theory was whether the victim was initially reluctant or hesitant to follow police procedure during the police response. Such hesitation took the form of the victim refusing to provide a statement at the initial scene, refusal to provide photos of injury or damage, refusal to allow witnesses to provide statements, and in some cases stating to the police that they would talk to them at a later date. From the total sample, it was possible to make this determination in 534 cases, and of these, initial victim reluctance was present in 144 cases (27.0%). When analysed against victim engagement with the police, there was a significant relationship, $X^2(1, n = 534) = 239.917, p < .001, \phi = .670$. The analysis found that when initial victim reluctance was present within the sample, the case was less likely to result in cooperation (11.1%, $n = 16$) in comparison to cooperation when initial victim reluctance was not present (83.6%, $n = 326$).

The victim was considered as having issues with attending court if they mentioned within their statement that it was too stressful, they had worries and did not like the idea of going to court, or were scared to face the suspect in court. Those who expressed the opposite, in which they stated that they were determined to go to court, were recorded as having no issues with court. Out of the 73 cases where this factor was coded, 46 victims (63.0%) expressed issues and apprehensions about attending court, with the remaining 27

victims (37.0%) stating they had no issues and were willing to attend court. When this factor was analysed against victim engagement, the chi square found that there was a significant relationship, $\chi^2(1, n = 73) = 27.295, p < .001, \phi = .247$. It found that the cases most likely to result in victim cooperation were the 70.4% of cases ($n = 19$) where the victim expressed no issues with attending court. This was in contrast to the 10.9% of cases ($n = 5$) that cooperated when they expressed issues with attending court in their victim statement.

Specifically inspecting the victim's involvement in the reporting of their abuse, it was possible to determine whether the victim reported the incident directly or requested a third party report in 464 cases. It was apparent that in 388 cases (83.6%) the victim had reported or requested a third party report of the abuse incident. When this dynamic was examined against victim engagement there was a significant relationship. The chi square found that 71.1% ($n = 276$) of cases where the victim had reported or requested a report resulted in victim cooperation in comparison to the 39.5% ($n = 30$) of cooperation cases when the victim did not report or request a report. The chi square illustrated how the relationship between the factors was significant, $\chi^2(1, n = 464) = 28.367, p < .001, \phi = .611$.

Summary

The macrosystem originally contained 13 factors that were extracted from previous literature and applied to the level of analysis. Upon statistical examination against victim engagement, the section found four findings that had a significant relationship to victim engagement within the sample. The findings partially support the second hypothesis outlined at the beginning of the section. Whilst demographic factors such as gender and relationship type had no significant association with victim engagement, decision making

theories related to loss, omission, and apathy were significantly associated with victim withdrawal across the sample.

Exosystem

The two hypotheses for the exosystem were:

- 1) Similar to the macrosystem, the factors in the exosystem are considered to be more distal (Stith *et al.*, 2004), meaning that any findings will have smaller effect sizes in comparison to microsystem and ontogenetic factors.
- 2) Within the exosystem it is likely that cases with a strong amount of evidence, less pressure on the victim, and the presence of both formal and informal support will be associated with victim cooperation. Cases with little evidence, lack of available support and victim isolation will be more likely to result in victim withdrawal.

The analysis resulted in a number of significant findings and Table 3.2 below outlines the direction of all the significant factors in the exosystem.

Table 3.2: Significant Findings within the Exosystem Ordered in Effect Size.
(* $p = <.05$; ** $p = <.01$; *** $p = <.001$). For information purposes only: Bonferroni correction was calculated to visualise a control for a type I error at $p <.002$ ($0.05/18 = .002$) for the exosystem.

| Factor Name | Level | All Present | Cooperation % | n | Withdrawal % | n | Effect Size |
|---|----------------|-------------|---------------|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| **Heavy Reliance on Victim for Prosecution | | 429 | 67.8% | 291 | 32.2% | 138 | .142 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 335 | 71.3% | 239 | 28.7% | 96 | |
| **Bodycam/Video Footage | | 540 | 63.9% | 345 | 36.1% | 195 | .138 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 32 | 37.5% | 12 | 62.5% | 20 | |
| *Witness Engagement | | 249 | 62.7% | 156 | 37.3% | 93 | .126 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 196 | 65.8% | 129 | 34.2% | 67 | |

Informal Support

None of the factors that related to the victim's informal support systems had a significant association with victim engagement. This meant that having family, friends or both, and

when the victim reported feeling isolated appeared to have no relationship with victim engagement in the sample ($ps > .05$).

Formal Support

Contrary to the second hypothesis, the cases that did not contain evidence appeared to be associated with victim cooperation. The CPS often made note of whether the case relied heavily on the victim's testimony and that it would fail if the victim withdrew. The researcher considered these cases to place heavy reliance on the victim for the prosecution of the suspect, as there was little extrinsic evidence to bolster the case. In addition, other cases included a CPS lawyer who explicitly mentioned the possibility of a victimless prosecution. Overall, this factor of CPS placing a heavy reliance on the victim was recorded in 429 cases, with 335 cases (78.1%) placing a heavy reliance on the victim for prosecution and 94 cases (21.9%) considering the possibility of a victimless prosecution. Upon statistical examination through the use of a chi square, the results showed that there was a significant relationship between the two factors, $X^2(1, n = 429) = 8.638, p = .003, \phi = .142$. The chi square found that 71.3% ($n = 239$) of cases where there was a heavy reliance on the victim for the prosecution resulted in victim cooperation, in contrast to 55.3% ($n = 52$) of cases that resulted in victim cooperation when a victimless prosecution was possible.

Again in contrast to the second hypothesis, video evidence appeared to be associated with victim withdrawal. Bodycam/video footage was recorded as present when the officers had recorded footage on body worn cameras that was retrievable from their device and uploaded to a computer system. In addition, the factor also included cases where a witness or victim captured video footage on their phone, or CCTV footage was captured and could be used within the case. Out of the total 540 cases, bodycam/video footage was recorded as present in 32 cases (5.9%). When analysed against victim

engagement within the case, the chi square found a significant relationship between the two variables. It found that 37.5% ($n = 12$) of cases that involved bodycam/video footage resulted in victim cooperation in comparison to the 65.6% ($n = 333$) of cases with no footage. The chi square illustrated how the relationship was statistically significant, $X^2(1, n = 540) = 10.267, p = .001, \phi = .138$.

Whilst the involvement or presence of a witness had no significant relationship with victim engagement ($p > .05$), the engagement of a witness within the case did have a significant association with victim engagement. In the 249 cases where witnesses were present, 196 cases (78.7%) involved witnesses who cooperated, with the remaining 53 cases (21.3%) involving witnesses who did not want to engage with the police. When this factor was examined against victim engagement, the chi square found a significant relationship. The result suggested that the cases more likely to result in victim cooperation were those where the witness cooperated with the police (65.8%, $n = 129$) in comparison to cases where the witness withdrew (50.9%, $n = 27$). The chi square showed that the relationship between the two factors was statistically significant, $X^2(1, n = 249) = 3.944, p = .047, \phi = .126$.

With regards to support services specifically involved in the care of the victim, neither the presence of a professional support network nor the referral to a professional support network had a significant association with victim engagement within the sample ($ps > .05$).

Summary

There were a total of 18 factors extracted from the case files and placed within the exosystem. Upon conducting the exosystem level of analysis, the results show that there were three factors that had a significant association with victim engagement. The findings appear to largely dispute the second hypothesis, as cases with video evidence were

associated with victim withdrawal and cases without evidence were more likely to involve victim cooperation. Such disparities will be discussed later in the chapter.

Microsystem

The hypotheses for the microsystem were:

- 1) As the factors are considered as more proximal (Stith *et al.*, 2004) any findings will have a larger effect size in comparison to factors in the macrosystem and exosystem.
- 2) Cases that involved a victim who had children, had further emotional and geographical proximity from the suspect, was involved in a serious case of abuse and who had not consumed alcohol will be associated with victim cooperation. Cases where the victim self-blamed and minimised the police response will be associated with victim withdrawal.

The analysis uncovered a large number of significant findings within the microsystem.

Table 3.3 illustrated the significant results within the microsystem.

Table 3.3: Significant Findings within the Microsystem Ordered in Effect Size.
(* $p = <.05$; ** $p = <.01$; *** $p = <.001$). For information purposes only: Bonferroni correction was calculated to visualise a control for a type I error at $p <.001$ ($0.05/52 = .001$) for the microsystem.

| Factor Name | Level | All Present | Cooperation % | n | Withdrawal % | n | Effect Size |
|--|--------------------------|-------------|---------------|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| ***Apparent Understating of Abuse | | 528 | 64.6% | 341 | 35.4% | 187 | .551 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 88 | 5.7% | 5 | 94.3% | 83 | |
| ***Victim stated Continuing/Ending Relationship | | 94 | 54.3% | 51 | 45.7% | 43 | .440 |
| | <i>States Continuing</i> | 37 | 27.0% | 10 | 73.0% | 27 | |
| | <i>States Ending</i> | 57 | 71.3% | 41 | 28.1% | 16 | |
| ***Cohabitation after Incident | | 445 | 65.2% | 290 | 34.8% | 155 | .404 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 141 | 36.9% | 52 | 63.1% | 89 | |

| Factor Name | Level | All Present | Cooperation % | n | Withdrawal % | n | Effect Size |
|--|--------------------------|-------------|---------------|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| **Suspect Older (Years) | Scale | | | | | | .336 |
| ***Apparent Self-Blame | | 490 | 68.6% | 336 | 31.4% | 154 | .315 |
| | <i>Present</i> | <i>29</i> | <i>10.3%</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>89.7%</i> | <i>26</i> | |
| ***Relationship Status | | 538 | 63.9% | 344 | 36.1% | 194 | .270 |
| | <i>Intimate Partners</i> | <i>324</i> | <i>53.4%</i> | <i>173</i> | <i>46.6%</i> | <i>151</i> | |
| | <i>Ex-partners</i> | <i>214</i> | <i>79.9%</i> | <i>171</i> | <i>20.1%</i> | <i>43</i> | |
| ***Cohabitation during Incident | | 508 | 66.3% | 337 | 33.7% | 171 | .265 |
| | <i>Present</i> | <i>268</i> | <i>54.5%</i> | <i>146</i> | <i>45.5%</i> | <i>122</i> | |
| *Age Difference (Years) | Scale | | | | | | .210 |
| ***Stalking and Harassment | | 530 | 63.8% | 338 | 36.2% | 192 | .194 |
| | <i>Present</i> | <i>114</i> | <i>81.6%</i> | <i>93</i> | <i>18.4%</i> | <i>21</i> | |
| ***Victim Alcohol | | 522 | 64.8% | 338 | 35.2% | 184 | .187 |
| | <i>Sober</i> | <i>329</i> | <i>71.4%</i> | <i>235</i> | <i>28.6%</i> | <i>94</i> | |
| | <i>Consumed Alcohol</i> | <i>174</i> | <i>52.3%</i> | <i>91</i> | <i>47.7%</i> | <i>83</i> | |
| | <i>Drink Dependent</i> | <i>19</i> | <i>63.2%</i> | <i>12</i> | <i>36.8%</i> | <i>7</i> | |
| ***Victim Consumed Alcohol | | 522 | 64.8% | 338 | 35.2% | 184 | .182 |
| | <i>Present</i> | <i>193</i> | <i>53.4%</i> | <i>103</i> | <i>46.6%</i> | <i>90</i> | |
| ***Suspect Alcohol | | 515 | 63.7% | 328 | 36.3% | 187 | .175 |
| | <i>Sober</i> | <i>213</i> | <i>72.3%</i> | <i>154</i> | <i>27.7%</i> | <i>59</i> | |
| | <i>Consumed Alcohol</i> | <i>257</i> | <i>55.3%</i> | <i>142</i> | <i>44.7%</i> | <i>115</i> | |
| | <i>Drink Dependent</i> | <i>45</i> | <i>71.1%</i> | <i>32</i> | <i>28.9%</i> | <i>13</i> | |
| **Suspect Consumed Alcohol | | 515 | 63.7% | 328 | 36.3% | 187 | .150 |
| | <i>Present</i> | <i>302</i> | <i>57.6%</i> | <i>174</i> | <i>42.4%</i> | <i>128</i> | |
| *Injury Type | | 529 | 64.5% | 341 | 35.5% | 188 | .139 |
| | <i>No Injury</i> | <i>117</i> | <i>76.1%</i> | <i>89</i> | <i>23.9%</i> | <i>28</i> | |
| | <i>No Visible Injury</i> | <i>163</i> | <i>60.1%</i> | <i>98</i> | <i>39.9%</i> | <i>65</i> | |
| | <i>Minor Injury</i> | <i>217</i> | <i>63.1%</i> | <i>137</i> | <i>36.9%</i> | <i>80</i> | |
| | <i>Serious Injury</i> | <i>32</i> | <i>53.1%</i> | <i>17</i> | <i>46.9%</i> | <i>15</i> | |
| **Any Injury | | 529 | 64.5% | 341 | 35.5% | 188 | .129 |
| | <i>Present</i> | <i>412</i> | <i>61.2%</i> | <i>252</i> | <i>38.8%</i> | <i>160</i> | |
| **Physical Abuse | | 538 | 64.1% | 345 | 35.9% | 193 | .128 |
| | <i>Present</i> | <i>422</i> | <i>60.9%</i> | <i>257</i> | <i>39.1%</i> | <i>165</i> | |

| Factor Name | Level | All Present | Cooperation % | n | Withdrawal % | n | Effect Size |
|--|----------------|-------------|---------------|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| *Victim Generally Scared | | 387 | 68.7% | 266 | 31.3% | 121 | .122 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 248 | 73.0% | 181 | 27.0% | 67 | |
| *Suspect Drink Dependent | | 302 | 57.6% | 174 | 42.4% | 128 | .114 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 45 | 71.1% | 32 | 28.9% | 13 | |
| *Suspect Older by 20 or more Years | | 539 | 64.0% | 345 | 36.0% | 194 | .108 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 15 | 33.3% | 5 | 66.7% | 10 | |
| *Victim Mental Health, Illness, and/or Disability | | 536 | 64.2% | 344 | 35.8% | 192 | .100 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 52 | 78.8% | 41 | 21.2% | 11 | |
| *Verbal Abuse | | 486 | 65.4% | 318 | 34.6% | 168 | .094 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 382 | 63.1% | 241 | 36.9% | 144 | |
| *Couple are Same Age | | 539 | 64.0% | 345 | 36.0% | 194 | .089 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 49 | 77.6% | 38 | 22.4% | 11 | |

Children

Contrary to the second hypothesis formed in the microsystem, none of the factors pertaining to children or the involvement of children in the abuse were associated with victim engagement ($ps > .05$).

Proximity

The strongest factor in relation to emotional and geographical proximity was in relation to the victim's relationship intentions immediately after the abuse incident. In 94 cases there was a victim statement in which the victim had expressed intentions either to continue or to end the relationship with the suspect. Out of the 94 cases, 57 cases (60.6%) involved a victim who stated they were ending the relationship and 37 cases (39.4%) involved a victim who stated they were continuing the relationship. There was a significant association between the factors when analysed through the use of a chi square, $X^2(1, n = 94) = 18.227, p < .001, \phi = .440$. The finding indicated that the cases more likely to result in victim cooperation were the 71.9% ($n = 41$) of cases in which the victim stated

they were ending the relationship in comparison to the 27.0% of cases ($n = 10$) in which the victim stated they were continuing the relationship. The finding supported the second hypothesis which suggested that a further emotional proximity would be associated with victim cooperation, in which the intention to leave a relationship demonstrated an increasing emotional proximity between the victim and suspect.

The living arrangements of the couple was assessed both during the IPV incident and after the police had dealt with the initial incident. With regards to the couple's cohabitation status during the incident, there were 508 cases that contained information on living arrangements. It was recorded that 268 cases (52.8%) involved couples who cohabited during the incident and 240 cases (47.2%) involved couples who lived separately. When the factor was analysed against victim engagement there was a significant relationship, $X^2(1, n = 508) = 35.738, p < .001, \phi = .265$. The result showed that 54.5% of cases ($n = 146$) where the couple cohabited resulted in victim cooperation, whereas 79.6% of cases ($n = 191$) resulted in victim cooperation when the couple lived apart. After the abuse incident had been dealt with by the police, the study took account of the couple's living arrangements or planned arrangements. Fewer cases contained information on the factor, in which it was examined and recorded in 445 cases. The data showed that there were 304 couples that lived together and 141 couples that lived separately after the abuse incident. When this factor was analysed against victim engagement there was a stronger significant relationship than the previous finding, $X^2(1, n = 445) = 72.767, p < .001, \phi = .404$. The result illustrated how cases where the couple continued living together after the abuse incident were less likely to result in cooperation (36.9%, $n = 52$) in comparison to when the couple lived separately after the abuse incident (78.3%, $n = 238$). This particular result also supported the hypothesis regarding proximity. In this instance the findings show that when there was a further geographical

proximity, both before and after the abuse incident, there was a strong association with victim cooperation.

A final strong finding supporting the second hypothesis related to the relationship status of the couple when the abuse occurred. It was possible to record the couple's relationship status in 538 cases across the sample. There were two cases that involved a suspect and victim who disagreed on their relationship status and therefore were not included in the coding. From the 538 cases, 324 cases (60.2%) concerned intimate partnerships at the time the abuse occurred and 214 cases (39.8%) concerned ex-partners. A chi square test against victim engagement showed that when the couple were ex-partners 79.9% of cases ($n = 171$) resulted in victim cooperation, whereas 53.4% of cases ($n = 173$) resulted in victim cooperation when the couple were in an intimate partnership. The chi square illustrated how the relationship between the two variables was significant, $X^2(1, n = 538) = 39.287, p < .001, \phi = .270$.

Self-Blame and Minimisation

Both the findings of victim self-blame and the victim understating or undermining the abuse supported the second hypothesis in the microsystem. Victims who blamed themselves for the incident were present in 29 cases (5.9%) out of the total 490 cases where it was possible to examine. When self-blame was examined against victim engagement the chi square found a significant relationship, $X^2(1, n = 490) = 48.492, p < .001, \phi = .315$. The result demonstrated that cases where the victims blamed themselves were less likely to result in cooperation (10.3%, $n = 3$) when compared to cases where the victim did not blame themselves for the abuse incident (72.2%, $n = 333$).

Similarly, the study also captured whether the victim understated the abuse incident, or fully disclosed the incident to the police. This was based upon their account being corroborated by other extrinsic evidence, or when victims openly stated that they

were not fully disclosing the incident. The available information allowed for the coding of the victim understating abuse in 528 cases. There were 88 cases (16.7%) where the victim did not fully disclose the abuse incident to the police and 440 cases (83.3%) where the victim fully disclosed the abuse incident to officers. The chi square analysis found that there was a significant relationship between the factors, $\chi^2(1, n = 528) = 160.173, p < .001, \phi = .551$. The result indicated that when the victim understated their abuse to the police 5.7% ($n = 5$) of cases resulted in victim cooperation. This was significantly less than the 76.4% ($n = 336$) of cases which resulted in cooperation when the victim fully disclosed their abuse to the police. The findings partially confirmed the hypothesis, in which both factors were significantly associated with victim withdrawal.

Alcohol

The second hypothesis stated that the cases which involved a victim who did not consume alcohol would be more likely to cooperate. When the victim's alcohol consumption was broken down into dichotomous coding there were 522 cases that included information on alcohol. Within the 522 cases, 193 victims (37.0%) had consumed alcohol and 329 victims (63.0%) had not consumed alcohol. The results showed that cases that involved victims who had not consumed alcohol were more likely to result in cooperation (71.4%, $n = 235$) in comparison to cases where the victim had consumed alcohol (53.4%, $n = 103$). The chi square demonstrated the significant relationship between the two factors, $\chi^2(1, n = 522) = 17.384, p < .001, \phi = .182$.

Similar findings appeared when the researcher considered the suspect's alcohol consumption. In this instance, there were 302 cases (58.6%) where the suspect had consumed alcohol and 213 cases (41.4%) where the suspect had not consumed alcohol. When examined against victim engagement there was a significant relationship, $\chi^2(1, n = 515) = 11.647, p = .001, \phi = .150$. The finding illustrated that the cases more likely to

result in victim cooperation were the 72.3% (n = 154) of cases with no consumption of alcohol in contrast to the 57.6% (n = 174) of cases where the suspect had consumed alcohol.

When isolating the suspect being drink dependent into dichotomous coding; only the 302 cases where alcohol was consumed were examined with regards to drink dependency. It was recorded that 45 cases (14.9%) contained a suspect that was drink dependent and 257 cases (85.1%) involved suspects who had consumed alcohol but were not known as being drink dependent. Upon analysis the chi square showed a significant relationship between the two factors, $\chi^2(1, n = 515) = 3.944, p = .047, \phi = .114$. The finding demonstrated that 71.1% (n = 32) of cases resulted in cooperation when the case involved a suspect who was drink dependent, whereas 55.3% (n = 142) resulted in cooperation when the suspect had consumed alcohol but was not considered to be drink dependent. Therefore, the findings not only supported the second hypothesis of the microsystem but also built upon it. In this instance the consumption of alcohol by both the suspect and victim was associated with victim withdrawal. However, contrary to expectation, the suspect being dependent on alcohol was associated with victim cooperation. The implications of the findings will be discussed later in the chapter.

Type and Extent of Abuse

The second hypothesis predicted that more serious cases of abuse would be linked to victim cooperation. However, the following findings into the type and extent of the abuse provided conflicting evidence with regards to the hypothesis. Cases were examined for the presence of stalking and harassment within the current IPV incident, in which it was recorded as present in 114 cases (21.5%) out of the total 530 where it was possible to determine. The occurrence of stalking and harassment within the current IPV incident was examined against the victim's engagement within the case and uncovered a

significant relationship, $X^2(1, n = 530) = 19.931, p < .001, \phi = .194$. The finding highlights that cases which involved stalking and harassment were more likely to result in victim cooperation (81.6%, $n = 93$) in comparison to when stalking and harassment were not present (58.9%, $n = 245$).

Whilst the previous finding confirmed the hypothesis for the microsystem, the following results into other types of abuse appeared to contradict expectation. Verbal abuse was coded when the suspect utilised language that went beyond an argument and was considered offensive, degrading and hurtful to the victim. Out of the 486 cases where this determination was made, verbal abuse was recorded as present in 382 cases (78.6%). When verbal abuse was analysed against victim engagement, the chi square found that there was a significant relationship, $X^2(1, n = 489) = 4.333, p = .037, \phi = .094$. It found that the cases more likely to result in cooperation were the 74.0% ($n = 77$) of cases that contained no verbal abuse in comparison to the 63.1% ($n = 241$) of cases where verbal abuse was present.

All but two cases were examined with regards to whether the case contained physical violence². From the total 538 cases, it was evident that there was physical abuse in 422 cases (78.4%). An analysis was conducted on physical abuse against the victim's engagement with the police. The chi square found a significant relationship whereby 75.9% ($n = 88$) of cases resulted in cooperation when there was no physical abuse, in comparison to 60.9% ($n = 257$) of cases that resulted in cooperation when physical abuse was present, $X^2(1, n = 538) = 8.854, p = .003, \phi = .128$. All of the findings into the type of abuse illustrated how stalking and harassment was associated with victim cooperation, yet cases of physical and verbal abuse were associated with victim withdrawal.

² The two excluded cases contained very little information about the abuse incident itself, in which it was not possible to determine whether the incident involved an assault.

Furthermore, neither financial nor emotional abuse had a significant association with victim engagement ($ps > .05$).

To further explore the issues around the extent of abuse, the level of injury to the victim was also examined with dichotomous coding. From the 529 cases coded, 412 victims (77.9%) stated experiencing injuries of any type and 117 victims (22.1%) did not. When examined against victim engagement, the simple contingency table found a significant relationship between any injury and victim engagement. The finding demonstrated that the cases more likely to result in victim cooperation were the 76.1% of cases ($n = 89$) which involved no injury in comparison to the 61.2% of cases ($n = 252$) that involved any injury to the victim. The chi square showed that there was a significant association, $X^2(1, n = 529) = 8.835, p = .003, \phi = .129$.

Delving further into the extent of the abuse, the study took account of whether the case file mentioned the level of fear experienced by the victim. In some instances, the case file or notes by the support agencies mentioned extreme levels of fear, using language such as 'petrified', 'extremely distressed' and 'terrified' to denote more vulnerable victims who had expressed high levels of fear. In such cases, the victim was coded within the case files as appearing terrified. In addition, it was also possible to determine the victim's assessment of fear if they reported feeling frightened in their statement or in the DASH risk assessment. Whilst the victim appearing terrified had no significant relationship with victim engagement ($p < .05$), the victim feeling generally scared appeared as a finding within the analysis. 387 cases contained information from which the researcher could determine whether the victim felt scared or not, in which it was recorded that 248 cases (64.1%) involved a victim that reported feeling generally scared. When examined against victim engagement there was a significant relationship, $X^2(1, n = 387) = 5.803, p = .016, \phi = .122$. The finding showed that cases where the victim reported feeling generally scared were more likely to be cases of victim

cooperation (73.0%, $n = 181$) than in cases where the victim did not mention feeling scared or explicitly stated not feeling scared (61.2%, $n = 85$).

Relationship Demographics

The age of both the suspect and victim was examined against victim engagement, which found no significant association ($ps > .05$).

However, the study also took account of the age difference between the couple at the time of the incident. The ages of both parties were compared and an age difference (in years) was recorded for each case. When the average age difference between the couple was examined against victim engagement, the t-test found a significant difference, $t(538) = 2.479, p = .013$, in which cases of victim cooperation had a smaller age gap ($M = 4.99, SD = 4.85$) than cases of victim withdrawal ($M = 6.27, SD = 7.02$). As the test was comparing groups, Cohen's D was used to determine the effect size of the factor. In this instance $d = .210$, which indicated a small to medium effect size.

In addition to the previous finding, the age difference within the sample was split to separately capture the age differences in cases where the victim was older and in cases where the suspect was older. In this instance, 306 cases involved a suspect that was older than the victim. The average age difference was examined against victim engagement and the t-test found a significant relationship with a medium effect size, $t(306) = 2.699, p = .007, d = .336$. It found that when focused on cases with an older suspect, victim cooperation had a smaller age difference between the couple ($M = 5.60, SD = 4.63$) when compared to cases of victim withdrawal ($M = 7.48, SD = 7.58$).

During the analysis there was a trend in the data which suggested a relationship between victim engagement and suspects who were 20 years or older than the victim. With regards to the post hoc testing, there were 15 cases (2.8%) where the suspect was 20 years or older than the victim and 524 cases (97.2%) where the factor was not present.

When the factor was examined against victim engagement the chi square showed that 64.9% (n = 340) of cases without this characteristic resulted in victim cooperation, whereas 33.3% (n = 5) resulted in cooperation when this factor was present, $\chi^2(1, n = 539) = 6.302, p = .012, \phi = .108$.

The couple were considered the same age when their ages were an exact match. 49 cases (9.1%) concerned a couple that were the same age, whereas 490 cases (90.9%) concerned various age differences. The factor was examined against victim engagement, in which the chi square found a significant relationship, $\chi^2(1, n = 539) = 4.292, p = .038, \phi = .089$. It found that the cases more likely to result in victim cooperation were those where the case involved a couple who were the same age (77.6%, n = 38) in comparison to cases where this demographic was not present (62.7%, n = 307).

Summary

The microsystem was the most comprehensive section with a total of 52 factors extracted and placed within the level of analysis. The results demonstrated that there were 26 factors that had a significant relationship with the victims' engagement in the sample. The findings appeared to provide partial support for the second hypothesis. Whilst the cases that involved a greater emotional and geographical proximity were associated with victim cooperation, there was no association with regards to children and conflicting results with regards to more serious cases of abuse. The cases that involved self-blame and initial reluctance were significantly associated with victim withdrawal as expected.

Ontogenetic

The hypotheses for the ontogenetic level of the NEM were:

- 1) As the factors are considered to be the most proximal (Stith *et al.*, 2004) any findings will have the largest effect size in comparison to factors in the other levels of the NEM.
- 2) Cases where the victim has previously used the police as a response, had previously cooperated and has received a positive outcome will be associated with victim cooperation. Cases where the victim had reported the abuse for the first time, had previously withdrawn or had a negative previous experience will be associated with victim withdrawal.

The ontogenetic system contained significant findings related to victim engagement.

Table 3.4 below outlines the significant factors in the ontogenetic level ordered in terms of their effect size.

Table 3.4: Significant Findings within the Ontogenetic System Ordered in Effect Size.

(* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$). For information purposes only: Bonferroni correction was calculated to visualise a control for a type I error at $p < .002$ ($0.05/20 = .002$) for the ontogenetic level.

| Factor Name | Level | All Present | Cooperation % | n | Withdrawal % | n | Effect Size |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| ***Previous Cooperation or Withdrawal with CJS | | 185 | 74.6% | 138 | 25.4% | 47 | .393 |
| | <i>Previous Cooperation</i> | <i>105</i> | <i>89.5%</i> | <i>94</i> | <i>10.5%</i> | <i>11</i> | |
| | <i>Previous Withdrawal</i> | <i>80</i> | <i>55.0%</i> | <i>44</i> | <i>45.0%</i> | <i>36</i> | |
| ***Previous Positive or Negative Outcome with CJS | | 166 | 75.9% | 126 | 24.1% | 40 | .274 |
| | <i>Previous Positive</i> | <i>94</i> | <i>86.2%</i> | <i>81</i> | <i>13.8%</i> | <i>13</i> | |
| | <i>Previous Negative</i> | <i>72</i> | <i>62.5%</i> | <i>45</i> | <i>37.5%</i> | <i>27</i> | |
| **History of Stalking/Harassment | | 435 | 66.7% | 290 | 33.3% | 145 | .138 |

| Factor Name | Level | All Present | Cooperation % | Cooperation n | Withdrawal % | Withdrawal n | Effect Size |
|---|----------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| *Suspect Abuse to Same Victim | <i>Present</i> | 95 | 78.9% | 75 | 21.1% | 20 | .112 |
| | | 491 | 66.6% | 327 | 33.4% | 164 | |
| *Previous DV Report, Contact or Engagement with Police | <i>Present</i> | 358 | 69.8% | 250 | 30.2% | 108 | .094 |
| | | 456 | 68.2% | 331 | 31.8% | 145 | |
| | <i>Present</i> | 285 | 71.6% | 204 | 28.4% | 81 | |

Previous Police Response to Abuse

In 456 cases it was possible to record whether the victim had previous DV related contact with the police or whether they reported the abuse for the first time. 285 cases (62.5%) involved victims that had previous DV contact with the police and 171 cases (37.5%) involved a victim that appeared to handle the abuse through the police for the first time. Their experience of reporting was examined against their engagement, in which the chi square found that there was a significant relationship between the factors, $X^2(1, n = 456) = 3.997, p = .046, \phi = .094$. The finding outlined that the cases more likely to result in victim cooperation were those that involved a victim who had used the police for a second or further time (71.6%, $n = 204$) in comparison to those who had reported the abuse for the first time (62.6%, $n = 107$).

In addition to a previous report, the victims' past engagement was also recorded within the cases. Only consistent previous cooperation or withdrawal was coded into the factors due to the complexity of the data. It was possible to examine consistent previous engagement in 185 cases from the total sample, in which 105 victims (56.8%) had previously cooperated and 80 victims (43.2%) had previously withdrawn from the police investigation. When analysed against victim engagement through the use of a chi square there was a significant relationship, $X^2(1, n = 185) = 28.557, p < .001, \phi = .393$. The result inferred that the cases of consistent previous victim cooperation were more likely to result

in victim cooperation within the current case (89.5%, $n = 94$) in comparison to the cases that involved consistent previous victim withdrawal (55.0%, $n = 44$).

Furthermore, the study also took into account the CJS outcome that the victim had received in their previous cases and whether it was one explicitly requested by the victim. A positive outcome included a disposal that the victim requested outright and received, or involved a positive criminal conviction if the victim made no express preference. Likewise, a negative outcome included cases where the victim's previous preferences were set aside, or the case against the suspect had failed when the victim stated no preference. Much like the previous finding, only consistent previous experience was taken into account to simplify the factor and, therefore, did not code mixed previous CJS outcomes. From the data recorded there were 166 cases included, in which 94 cases (56.6%) referred to previous positive outcomes and 72 cases (43.4%) referred to previous negative outcomes. When the factors were analysed against victim engagement the chi square found a significant relationship, $\chi^2(1, n = 166) = 12.489, p < .001, \phi = .274$. It showed that the cases where the victim had previous positive outcomes were more likely to cooperate with the current case (86.2%, $n = 81$) in comparison to those that received previous negative outcomes (62.5%, $n = 45$). The collection of findings provided strong support for the second hypothesis, which stated that previous positive engagement and outcomes would be significantly associated with victim withdrawal.

Previous Abuse

This factor concerned whether the suspect had previously abused the victim, which was possible to examine in 491 cases. It was recorded that 358 cases (72.9%) involved a suspect who had previously abused the victim and 133 cases (27.1%) involved a suspect that appeared to have abused the victim for the first time. When the previous abuse was examined against victim engagement for the current IPV incident there was a significant

relationship, $X^2(1, n = 491) = 6.212, p = .013, \phi = .112$. The finding highlighted that the cases which involved a victim that had previously been abused by the same suspect were more likely to result in victim cooperation (69.8%, $n = 250$) in comparison to cases where the abuse seemingly occurred for the first time (57.9%, $n = 77$).

In addition to previous abuse that involved the same victim, there was also a significant finding with regards to the suspects that had previously engaged in stalking and harassment. It was possible to determine whether the suspect had a history of stalking and harassment in 435 cases, in which it was recorded as present in 95 cases (21.8%). A chi square analysis examined the association between this factor and victim engagement and found that there was a significant relationship, $X^2(1, n = 435) = 8.249, p = .004, \phi = .138$. The finding demonstrated that 78.9% ($n = 75$) of cases resulted in victim cooperation when the suspect had a history of stalking and harassment, whereas 63.2% ($n = 215$) of cases resulted in cooperation when the suspect had no history of stalking and harassment. The set of findings built upon the hypothesis and suggested that when there was a history of any type of previous abuse, especially stalking and harassment since the effect size was greater, there was a significant association with victim cooperation.

Summary

The ontogenetic level of analysis consisted of 20 factors that were extracted from previous literature. The subsequent analysis found that five factors had a significant relationship with victim engagement across the sample. The findings appeared to support the second hypothesis and the anticipated direction of the factors in relation to victim engagement.

Distal and Proximal Factors

In addition to the factor hypotheses, the data chapter also provided partial confirmation of the hypotheses developed from Stith *et al.* (2004). Throughout the chapter it was

evident that the microsystem and ontogenetic system contained factors with large effect sizes (0.1-0.5 and 0.1-0.4 respectively) because they were more proximal to the victim or abuse. Subsequently, more distal factors within the exosystem resulted in smaller effect sizes (0.1-0.2). However, the study deviated from the hypotheses when considering the effect sizes of the results within the macrosystem (0.2-0.6), as it was expected that these would be small due to the factors being more distal. The large effect sizes within the macrosystem related to the findings of victim decision making, which were interpreted to apply to the overall population as opposed to on an individual level. The effect sizes seemed to suggest that the factors of decision making as independent variables were more proximal to the dependent variable than anticipated. This is because the victim could have used decision making processes in their overall decision to engage with the police.

Discussion

The objective of the current chapter was to identify factors that had an association with victim engagement. The analysis found that there were numerous factors significantly associated with victim engagement across the NEM. In addition, the results partially supported the hypotheses developed around distal and proximal factors (Stith *et al.*, 2004) as the findings within the microsystem and ontogenetic levels of analysis carried larger effect sizes than the exosystem. However, the study also found strong associations with factors related to victim decision making which was examined within the macrosystem. The discussion, therefore, moves into applying the literature to the significant findings with a specific focus on how the factors may be directly affecting the victims in the sample.

Macrosystem

The decision making factors within the macrosystem carried large effect sizes even though the level as a whole was considered to be more distal (Stith *et al.*, 2004). The

current thesis placed the factors within the macrosystem because they were broadly interpreted as societal or cultural variables that impact larger groups of victims. However, it could be argued that the decision making factors (as independent variables) and the victim's decision to engage (as the dependent variable) were conceptually similar. This is because the victim's cooperation with or withdrawal from the police could also be classified as a decision. Therefore, the independent variables would have appeared proximal to the dependent variable due to their conceptual overlap, which may explain the large effect sizes reported in the analysis.

Discussing the area in more depth, the factors that had a significant association within the current chapter included a victim's initial reluctance at the scene, an unrequested third party report of the incident and the victim expressing issues with attending court. These findings supported much of the previous literature, such as the 'Rational Emotional Model' (Anderson, 2000) and 'Prospect Theory' (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) with the concept of loss aversion. The theories seemed to provide an explanation of the findings, not only within the macrosystem but also throughout the study as a whole. The literature suggested that a victim who considered their engagement with the police to be more negative than an alternative strategy was more likely to withdraw. Therefore, when the police dealt with the scene of abuse it could have been useful to focus on certain behaviours, emotions and actions by the victim that illustrated the victim's decision making. This would have taken into account factors such as who reported the IPV incident, whether the victim had fully disclosed the incident to officers and whether the victim expressed any issues about attending court. Likewise, identifying behaviours such as minimisation, lying to officers or a reluctance to follow procedure would all indicate a case where the victim is likely to withdraw from the investigation.

A second decision making theory examined within the chapter was the 'hassle factor' (Casey, 2008) or 'omission bias' (Ritov & Baron, 1990), in which a victim

withdrew out of apathy. The theories applied to the cases where there was a third party report of the incident, since the victim had not yet made an active effort to engage with the police (omission). Such victims were therefore more likely to withdraw in comparison to the victims that had called the police themselves (action). Such a finding would be important to consider in a victim's engagement, especially since there has been conflicting evidence around victim reporting (Bennet *et al.*, 1999; Coulter *et al.*, 1999).

Like many previous samples of IPV, the police sample within the current study illustrated gender asymmetry. Referring to previous literature, it was expected that the sample would feature a majority of female victims and a majority of male suspects as the sample was collected through the use of secondary source police data. Such a sample would represent the more serious and extreme cases of abuse, predominantly formed by the 'intimate terrorism' category of IPV developed by Johnson (1995; 2010). However, the sample did not seem to be heavily made up of intimate terrorism and instead there were a range of behaviours and abuse apparent within the sample. In fact, the majority of cases within the sample seemed to involve situational couple violence, which was supported by the findings of the qualitative analysis (Appendix 3). Therefore, the discussion suggests that the sample was male suspect and female victim dominant because of the stereotypes involved in the police response and arrest decision. Most of the cases within the sample involved some form of physical violence whereby the female was more likely to be injured by the male (Swan *et al.*, 2008). Because injuries are one of the main considerations in the decision to arrest (Dawson & Holton, 2004), the males in these cases were more likely to be considered the perpetrator and were subsequently arrested. Regardless of the sample composition, however, the study showed that the gender of the suspect and victim had no effect on their engagement with the police. Furthermore, victim engagement had no association with the sexuality of the couple. Both findings appeared in contradiction to the hypothesis, especially when considering

literature around minority difficulties in responding to abuse and the prominence of IPV in homosexual couples (Koeppel & Bouffard, 2014). It seems that from the results, therefore, the current study concludes that when the abuse was reported to the police a victim of either gender in a homosexual partnership was just as likely to cooperate as a victim of any gender in a heterosexual partnership.

Exosystem

Continuing the theme of proximal and distal factors, the analysis of the exosystem provided strong support for the Stith *et al.* (2004) hypothesis, since the significant factors contained within the exosystem carried low effect sizes. This meant that the factors were considered to be distal from the couple, which appears to be accurate within the analysis as the significant findings referred more to the agencies and evidence within the case than the suspect or victim directly.

Informal support examined the friends and family of the victim, and whether they were present within the case. Contrary to the hypothesis formed for the exosystem, the study found that there was no association with informal support structures in the analysis, which suggested that family and friends had no impact upon a victim's engagement with the police. However, a deeper examination into how friends and family interacted with the victim would allow for a closer examination of the variables and could influence engagement. Cases where friends and family were present within the current study sometimes included family members or friends that were spiteful, unhelpful or compounded the difficulties faced by the victim. This was in contrast to friends and family that provided constant and helpful support necessary for the victim to remain safe. Considering the more complex interaction of family and friends, future research would be best placed to hypothesise that helpful and supportive informal support will be associated with victim cooperation. A separate hypothesis may also examine whether unhelpful and unsupportive informal support will be associated with victim withdrawal,

to ensure that both elements are captured within future research. Examining the point in more depth, the association between victim engagement and witness engagement may lend insight into the future hypotheses since many of the witnesses involved within the cases were the victim's friends or family. Therefore, the finding that victim cooperation was more likely to occur in cases of witness cooperation could have illustrated that positive and proactive action on behalf of friends and family as witnesses to the incident had some effect on victim engagement with the police. However, since witness engagement also included witnesses that were unconnected to the victim socially, the discussion can only conclude that witness cooperation (regardless of the relationship to the victim) meant the case was more likely to involve a cooperative victim.

With regards to more formal support, there were a number of findings that opposed the hypothesis developed for the exosystem. In particular, the hypothesis predicted that cases with more evidence and less pressure on the victim would be associated with victim cooperation. However, findings such as the presence of bodycam/video being associated with victim withdrawal, as well as the CPS placing heavy reliance on the victim for a prosecution being associated with victim cooperation, illustrated results in the opposite direction. At first the findings seemed at odds with the hypothesis and rationale of previous literature which suggested the collection of extrinsic evidence was vital to ensure victim cooperation with the police (Ellison, 2002). In fact, the results appear to suggest that the pressure on the victim to prosecute may have been appropriate in order to secure their engagement. However, care must be taken in the explanation of findings, as the type of withdrawal from the police within the sample was not necessarily a negative outcome for the victim or the police. Firstly, victims that were in favour of punishing the suspect from the outset of the case may have been more likely to cooperate if there was not enough evidence to convict the suspect without their testimony. Regardless of whether they supported a prosecution or not, in cases where

there was the possibility of a victimless prosecution the victims were given an opportunity to withdraw. Because the case was able to continue without their testimony and they were presented with an opportunity to remove themselves from the inconvenience and stress of attending court, the withdrawal in such cases seemed to be a positive decision. Therefore, when the police built a case around extrinsic evidence and removed pressure from the victim, the process seemed to build towards victim withdrawal. However, the result should be interpreted positively because the victim had used the police to quell the immediate abuse and often became IPV free with the protection of the police and bail conditions against the suspect, whilst the police were able to build a case to prosecute the suspect with a realistic prospect of conviction. Therefore, the results aligned with the reasoning of Ellison (2002) that the investigation should look to all extraneous evidence in an attempt to ease the burden often placed on victims of abuse.

Microsystem

The microsystem appeared to contain factors that had strong effect sizes in their association with victim engagement. The set of findings provided evidence for the hypothesis that the microsystem would contain strong relationships because the factors were considered more proximal to the victim (Stith *et al.*, 2004).

The factors that had a large effect size within the microsystem related to victim self-blame and minimisation at the scene of abuse. Victim self-blame can come as one of the many psychological issues when a victim deals with IPV (Rose *et al.*, 2011). In line with the hypothesis, the results confirmed and expanded upon the literature and suggested that the self-blaming of a victim also related to victim withdrawal within cases of IPV. However, whilst self-blame in terms of provocation was apparent, there was no evidence that victims self-blamed for not being able to leave the relationship, as suggested by Wolhuter *et al.* (2009). The results also found that victims who understated or undermined their abuse were more likely to withdraw from the investigation. Whilst the factor was

placed within the microsystem because it related to how the victim interacted with the scene of abuse, the factor appears to relate more to decision making theory placed within the macrosystem. Again, the finding resulted in a large effect size because the factor may have been more proximal to the victim's decision to engage from the outset of the case. In this instance the factors provided support for the 'hassle factor' (Casey, 2008) or 'omission bias' (Ritov & Baron, 1990), since the victim could have understated or undermined the abuse to lessen the seriousness of the police response. Such tactics may have been used to gain more time for the victim to actively make a decision about whether to prosecute the suspect, or to neutralise the stressful and emotionally charged situation and avoid making decisions altogether.

The analysis also found strong effect sizes concerning the victim's relationship intentions, relationship status and their cohabitation status before and after the abuse incident. The factors were interpreted to concern the emotional and physical proximity between the couple. Whilst previous research stated that married couples were more likely to report abuse incidents to the police (Meyer, 2010), the same effect did not follow through into overall engagement. This was because marriage and the length of the relationship had no association with victim engagement. From the analysis it appeared that the more accurate indicator of the couple's emotional proximity was their defined relationship status, stated as either intimate partners or ex-partners, during the incident. This particular factor was significantly associated with victim engagement because those who considered themselves ex-partners appeared to have no further emotional connection with the suspect and were therefore willing to cooperate with the police to punish the suspect (McLeod, 1983). However, it appeared that marriage as a factor was more complex, with some victims being coded as divorced but they had re-entered into a relationship with the suspect and had developed an emotional connection. The findings into the relationship status and victim engagement were also complimented by further

significant findings into emotional and physical proximity. Findings such as living apart at the time of the incident, living apart after the incident, and the victim's intention to end the relationship after the abuse had occurred all provided evidence to suggest that victims were more likely to cooperate with the police when there was a further emotional and geographical proximity between them victim and the suspect.

The hypothesis within the microsystem predicted that cases involving children would be more likely to result in cooperation. However, the results showed that there were no associations regarding children and victim engagement. At first this appeared contradictory when the study considered previous research which stated that victims with children were more likely to report abuse (Bonomi *et al.*, 2006) and that children were a priority in support seeking (Kelly, 2009). It appears that within the cases there were often choices presented to the victims of IPV, since they had to choose between withdrawal from the investigation to maintain the family unit and income, or cooperation with the police to convict the suspect and destroy the family unit and income (Carey & Soloman, 2014). Again, this resulted in the victim having to make an assessment over which decision resulted in the least risk and loss. In this instance, it seemed reasonable (at least as a short term option in order to make an alternative IPV coping strategy) for an individual to withdraw from the police investigation in order to minimise their loss. To do so may maintain a family unit and income, prevent the victim and children from being tarnished with the criminal reputation of an abuser, prevent the removal of children by social services, and avoid the stress involved in potentially becoming homeless. Such a strategy could be considered an effective approach to maintain order in the victim's and children's lives, however previous literature also illustrated how victims are seemingly unaware of the damage caused to children by remaining in the abusive environment (Peled & Gil, 2011). Considering the contrast in literature, the findings and discussion highlight that there is a need to develop a non-aggressive approach to abuse cases where

the victim does not want a prosecution (Trepiccione, 2001), but is in dire need of engagement in order to protect the children in the abusive household.

With regards to factors that were related directly to the abuse, there were significant associations between victim engagement and the types of abuse. The strongest association was victim cooperation in cases that involved stalking and harassment. This was because the victim often reported such behaviour to the police since they wanted no further contact with the suspect and were therefore happy to cooperate in order to prevent communication. In contrast, physical and verbal abuse cases were associated with victim withdrawal, and they also seemed to occur together frequently. The findings linked back to the literature which stated that physical abuse was taken more seriously than other forms of non-physical abuse (Basow & Thompson, 2012), since there seemed to be difficulties present in cases of physical abuse. In addition, the victims who had sustained any form of injury, be it visible or not, were more likely to withdraw than those who had received no injury. This related to the findings of Bonomi *et al.* (2006) who found that victims who suffer more severe abuse or abuse with a weapon were more likely to call the police. However, whilst victims may have been more likely to call the police, the results showed that a large number of such cases also resulted in victim withdrawal.

The results of the analysis showed that the demographic factors of the suspect had no impact on victim engagement within the sample. This meant that mental health issues, illnesses, disabilities, age of the suspect and employment status all had no effect on the way the victim interacted with the police. However, the age difference between the couple uncovered findings in relation to victim engagement, in which couples with a larger age difference were associated with victim withdrawal. The findings suggested that whilst individual age may not have an effect, and that IPV is indeed a problem for all ages (Weeks & Leblanc, 2011), the age difference between the couple had worth in an assessment of the victim's situation. Young female victims that had an older male partner

were more likely to withdraw, with reported age differences ranging from 22-41 years (in which the victim was often 18 years of age and the suspect was 42 through to 59 years old). A likely explanation for the association with victim engagement could be that the factor itself would have captured relationships in which the suspect had more power within the relationship because of the different stages of the individuals' lives (Babcock *et al.*, 1993; Straus *et al.*, 1980; Straus, 1976). The imbalance of power and resources, therefore, made the victim of abuse more dependent upon the suspect for the resources they provided within the relationship.

In addition to the couples' demographics, the study examined factors specifically related to the suspects' behaviour. However, the findings demonstrated that there was no association between any of the examined factors and victim engagement. A possible explanation would be that victims reacted in different ways to the behaviour of the suspect, which subsequently resulted in a mixture of victim cooperation and withdrawal. For example, the use of sympathy and reconciliation techniques as explained by Bonomi *et al.* (2011) implied that victims would be more likely to withdraw as they reconcile with the suspect. However, the study in this instance found that there was no outright association with sympathy techniques and victim engagement. The result occurred because, in conjunction to cases where the technique worked in securing victim withdrawal, other suspects used sympathy and reconciliation techniques after the victim had ended the relationship. The victims in such cases then reported these communications as stalking and harassment, which meant that a portion of the suspects that were coded as using sympathy techniques were the suspects in cases where the victim had reported a case of stalking and harassment within an ex-partnership. As these types of cases were related to victim cooperation, the factor as a whole provided a mixed result with regards to victim engagement with the police.

Ontogenetic

Much like the microsystem, the factors within the ontogenetic level carried medium to large effect sizes in comparison to the exosystem. However, the hypothesis involving proximal and distal factors would also suggest that the ontogenetic factors are the most proximal to the victim and would subsequently be the most significant factors in the analysis with the largest effect sizes (Stith *et al.*, 2004). This did not appear within the analysis. The most likely explanation is that the factors mainly refer to the victim's development and history as opposed to their actual situation. Because the factors considered their history as opposed to their immediate situation, they appear to be weaker in their effect on the victim's decision to engage in comparison to the factors in the microsystem and factors pertaining to the victim's decision making in the macrosystem.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the factor with the largest effect size within the ontogenetic analysis was the victim's previous cooperation or withdrawal from the criminal justice system. Following on from Stith *et al.*, (2004), it would appear the factor carried the largest effect size because it was the most proximal to the victim's current decision to engage, in comparison to other factors captured within the ontogenetic level. Further to its effect in the NEM, the association of current victim engagement with previous victim engagement highlighted that the approach taken by the CPS in using it as a factor to determine the strength of the case was effective. As the consideration over the victim's previous engagement to determine whether there was a 'realistic prospect of conviction' appeared in many of the MG3s, it justified the need for an assessment of the victim's engagement from the beginning of the investigation.

In addition, the results also showed that victims who received previous consistent positive outcomes with the CJS were linked to victim cooperation. The previous literature highlighted how a prosecution was not always in the victims' best interests (Hoyle, 1998) and that victims who received their preference in dealing with the suspect were more

likely to report subsequent abuse (Hickman & Simpson, 2003). The literature also highlighted how victims only used the police to quell the immediate situation but then did not want any further action (Apster *et al.*, 2003). Therefore, the finding not only supported but also built upon the previous findings of Hickman and Simpson (2003), since it suggested that cooperative victims were more likely to have had previous positive outcomes. Furthermore, the finding also implied that victims who did not previously express a preference but then secured a conviction against the suspect could be considered as having received a positive outcome. It seemed likely that this occurred because the cases which involved victims who expressed no preference about a prosecution were the cases where the victims preferred a prosecution from the beginning of the investigation.

Previous literature pertaining to the reabuse of a victim suggested that reabuse was not affected by the criminal case outcome or by the incarceration of the suspect (Bell *et al.*, 2013). However, the current research project found that there was an association between reabuse and victim engagement. A possible explanation for the result would be that an isolated incident of IPV might have been a case of situational couple violence that did not involve coercion or control (Johnson, 2010). Therefore, these suspects were not considered dangerous by the victims who withdrew, and the victim also considered the police intervention unnecessary for the isolated outburst. Similarly, the cases could have also involved individuals who were long-term victims of intimate terrorism (Johnson, 2010), but they had never previously reported the incidents nor wanted any contact with the police. With regards to victim cooperation in cases of repeat abuse, the sample included victims that had already given the suspect a second chance after a first incident of abuse, as well as victims who had been subject to numerous previous incidents and had reached the 'final straw'. Therefore, the results indicated that officers should have examined the history of abuse between the two partners in an assessment of victim engagement, as cases of reabuse were more likely to result in cooperation.

Conclusion

Across the whole of the NEM there were many factors significantly associated with victim engagement. Whilst the findings partially supported the first hypotheses developed from previous literature (Stith *et al.*, 2004), the reported results seemingly illustrated that the factors which carried the largest effect sizes were those that appeared most proximal to the victim's decision making. Upon reflection, such a finding was to be expected considering that the dependent variable of the study was the victim's decision to cooperate or withdraw from the police investigation. This meant that the factors pertaining to the victim's decision making (macrosystem) and factors in the immediate context (microsystem) were the strongest in their association and effect size with victim engagement. Contrary to prediction, these factors were stronger than those within the ontogenetic, as the ontogenetic factors mainly pertained to the victim's history and development. This had less of an effect on their decision to engage in comparison to factors in the immediate context and their decision making processes.

The macrosystem, which was predicted to be the most distal from the victim, resulted in a number of strong associations with victim engagement. These factors related to the victim's decision making processes which appeared in close proximity to the dependent variable, explaining the strong associations. In addition, gender and sexual orientation did not impact victim engagement, with both homosexual and heterosexual males and homosexual and heterosexual females being equally as likely to cooperate or withdraw from the police investigation. Focusing on gender, the sample appeared to be comprised of mainly male suspects and female victims, supporting the concept of gender asymmetry within IPV. In applying the Johnson (2010) typologies to the sample as a potential explanation, it would be expected that the sample contained a majority of 'intimate terrorism' cases. This is because Johnson argues that males mainly perpetrate this form of abuse, explaining the formation of gender asymmetry. However, the

circumstances of the cases and qualitative information from Appendix 3 otherwise suggested that the majority of the cases within the sample pertained to situational couple violence, where the couple argued over personal circumstances before the subsequent violence. Whilst the study did not collect detailed information of the couple's personal or private behaviour, which may well have involved coercion and control, it appeared that the typologies did not provide a sufficient explanation as to the formation of gender asymmetry within the sample. Instead, the thesis simply suggests that the explanation for gender asymmetry was that males were more likely to use violence due to specific traits (such as size, strength, experience with aggression and violence) (Baker *et al.*, 2013), which is the most visible and widely recognised form of abuse. This would have been visually apparent to officers who would have mainly examined aggressive behaviour and injuries in identifying and arresting a primary aggressor (Dawson & Holton, 2004), which resulted in the majority of male suspects within the sample (Finn *et al.*, 2004).

The exosystem contained factors associated with victim engagement but they appeared weak in terms of their effect sizes. This was due to the factors mainly pertaining to the agencies involved in the abuse and the evidence of the case, which could be considered distal to the victim's decision to engage. Friends and family had no effect on victim engagement; however, witness cooperation meant that the case was more likely to involve victim cooperation. Because many of the witnesses included friends and family of the victim, the finding highlighted the need for more detail into 'how' the friends and family interacted with the victim in order to form a potential association with victim engagement. This would be in comparison to the current study, which merely coded friends and family as present or not present within each case. Furthermore, the presence of bodycam/video footage was associated with victim withdrawal and the CPS placing a heavy burden on the victim's testimony was associated with victim cooperation. The findings themselves suggested that cases with evidence and the possibility of a victimless

prosecution built towards victim withdrawal, but that the withdrawal was positive within the sample because both the police and victim had achieved their aims.

The microsystem appeared to contain a number of significant findings with strong effect sizes. The factors appeared in close proximity to the victim's decision to engage as the factors related to the immediate context of the abuse and relationship. With regards to the couple's situation, it seemed that the emotional and geographical proximity of the couple had significant associations to victim engagement, since being ex-partners, no cohabitation before and after the incident and the victim intending to end the relationship all had an association with victim cooperation. Furthermore, victim self-blame and the victim understating or undermining the abuse incident also appeared to be strongly associated with victim engagement. These factors could also be interpreted to indicate a victim's decision making. Their initial reluctance at the scene may have been used as a tactic to buy more time to make a decision, or to neutralise the situation and avoid making a decision altogether (Casey, 2008; Ritov & Baron, 1990).

Contrary to expectations the ontogenetic level contained significant associations that did not have the strongest effect sizes across the NEM. This was mainly due to the factors relating to the victim's history and development, which appeared more distal from their decision to engage than other factors within the NEM. The findings provided further support for this interpretation, since the factor with the strongest effect size in the ontogenetic level was the victim's previous engagement with the police. In more depth, the analysis found that both consistent previous cooperation and consistent previous positive outcomes within the CJS were both linked to victim cooperation within the current case. The finding further justified the need for victim engagement in IPV investigations and demonstrated how positive outcomes with the police meant that a victim was significantly more likely to use them again. This was in comparison to a victim

who had negative experience or had not used the police as a response to the abuse previously.

Overall, Chapter 3 concerned an analysis into victim engagement with the police and uncovered numerous factors associated with victim cooperation and withdrawal. The next chapter of the thesis follows a similar structure and analyses the same factors against suspect charging within the sample.

CHAPTER 4 - FACTORS OF CHARGING

Introduction

As outlined throughout the literature review and methodology, the previous literature highlights how individual factors could affect the charging decision or the ability to charge the suspect in each case. In addition, the chapter argues that there is a strong relationship between charging and victim engagement, which is further evident throughout the explored literature. The previous chapter also found a statistically significant relationship between victim engagement and suspect charging within the current sample.

Using the significant findings from the previous chapter and the rationale that victim engagement is heavily interwoven with suspect charging in many cases of IPV (Wilson, 2010; Cook *et al.*, 2004; Davis *et al.*, 2003; Dawson & Dinovitzer, 2001), the current chapter concerns an analysis of the factors extracted from the literature to determine their statistical association to suspect charging.

Methodology

The data examined within the current chapter consists of the same 103 factors examined in the previous chapter. The study contained a stratified sample of 270 cases resulting in a charge against the suspect and 270 cases where there was a disposal without charging the suspect. The stratified convenience sampling method and analysis into charging was done for a number of reasons outlined within the literature review and main methodology of the thesis.

The main methodology of the thesis is outlined in Chapter 2, which covers a discussion of the sample and case files used within each chapter of analysis. For further

detail on the study design, sampling, materials and procedure used throughout the thesis, please refer to Chapter 2.

Results

Macrosystem

Like the previous data chapter, there were two hypotheses formed for each level of the NEM. The first hypothesis related to the effect sizes of the variables found within each level of the model and the second referred to the expected direction of the results. The hypotheses formed within the macrosystem were:

- 1) As the factors are considered more distal (Stith *et al.*, 2004) any findings will have a small effect size in comparison to any findings in other levels of the NEM.
- 2) Within the macrosystem cases that involve male suspects and female victims will be more likely to result in a charge, as well as cases that specifically involve initial victim reluctance.

As stated in the previous data chapter, Phi and Cramer's V was used to determine the effect sizes of the findings as they concerned dichotomous data. When examining the differences in groups through t-tests, Cohen's D was employed to determine the effect size of the result. The effect sizes refer to an established interpretation, in which 0.1 refers to a small effect, 0.3 refers to a medium effect, and 0.5 refers to a large effect (Cohen, 1988).

Upon analysis, the macrosystem resulted in numerous significant findings with regards to suspect charging. Table 4.1 below outlines the findings in order of their effect size.

Table 4.1: Significant Findings within the Macrosystem Ordered in Effect Size.

(* $p = <.05$; ** $p = <.01$; *** $p = <.001$). For information purposes only: Bonferroni correction was calculated to visualise a control for a type I error at $p <.003$ ($0.05/13 = .003$) for the macrosystem.

| Factor Name | Level | All Present | Charged | | Not Charged | | Effect Size |
|---|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------|------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| | | | % | n | % | n | |
| **Expressed Issues with Court | | 73 | 26.0% | 19 | 74.0% | 54 | .325 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 46 | 37.0% | 17 | 63.0% | 29 | |
| ***Initial Victim Reluctance | | 534 | 50.0% | 267 | 50.0% | 267 | .279 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 144 | 27.1% | 39 | 72.9% | 105 | |
| **Victim Reported/Requested Report | | 464 | 52.4% | 243 | 47.6% | 221 | .154 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 388 | 49.0% | 190 | 51.0% | 198 | |
| *Victim Nationality | | 457 | 58.0% | 265 | 42.0% | 192 | .122 |
| | <i>UK</i> | 437 | 59.3% | 259 | 40.7% | 178 | |
| | <i>EU</i> | 11 | 27.3% | 3 | 72.7% | 8 | |
| | <i>Other</i> | 9 | 33.3% | 3 | 66.7% | 6 | |
| **Victim Gender | | 540 | 50.0% | 270 | 50.0% | 270 | .120 |
| | <i>Male</i> | 58 | 32.8% | 19 | 67.2% | 39 | |
| *Source of Report | <i>Female</i> | 482 | 52.1% | 251 | 47.9% | 231 | .114 |
| | | 522 | 49.8% | 260 | 50.2% | 262 | |
| | <i>Victim</i> | 358 | 47.2% | 169 | 52.8% | 189 | |
| | <i>Suspect</i> | 11 | 27.3% | 3 | 72.7% | 8 | |
| *Suspect Gender | <i>3rd Party</i> | 153 | 57.5% | 88 | 42.5% | 65 | .111 |
| | | 540 | 50.0% | 270 | 50.0% | 270 | |
| | <i>Male</i> | 486 | 51.9% | 252 | 48.1% | 234 | |
| | <i>Female</i> | 54 | 33.3% | 18 | 66.7% | 36 | |

Gender

The second hypothesis anticipated that cases involving male suspects and female victims were more likely to result in a charge. The analysis found that both the suspect's and victim's gender were significantly associated with suspect charging.

It was possible to record the suspect's gender in each of the 540 IPV cases. In total, there were 486 male suspects (90.0%) and 54 female suspects (10.0%) across the entire sample. The suspect's gender was examined against the charging of the suspect and found a significant relationship, $X^2(1, n = 540) = 6.667, p = .010, \phi = .111$. The result illustrated how male suspects were more likely to be charged (51.9%, $n = 252$) than female suspects (33.3%, $n = 18$).

It was also possible to record the gender of each victim across the 540 IPV cases. As expected the victims' gender across the full sample was predominantly female, with 482 female victims (89.3%) and 58 male victims (10.7%). Victim gender was examined against the charging of the suspect to determine whether there was a relationship. The finding illustrated that the cases which involved a female victim were significantly more likely to result in a charge of the suspect (52.1%, $n = 482$) in comparison to cases involving a male victim (32.8%, $n = 19$) when analysed through the use of chi square, $X^2(1, n = 540) = 7.726, p = .005, \phi = .120$.

Decision Making

The hypothesis developed from the macrosystem predicted that initial victim reluctance would have an association with suspect charging, as the initial reluctance may have damaged the police's ability to collect effective evidence at the scene of abuse. However, the findings went further by demonstrating that there were significant associations with many of the factors related to the victim's decision making process.

It was possible to record initial victim reluctance in 534 cases, which consisted of the victim being hesitant to follow police procedure at the initial abuse incident. Out of the 534 cases, it was present in 144 (27.0%). A chi square test was utilised to examine the relationship between initial victim reluctance and the charging of the suspect, in which there was a significant relationship between the factors, $X^2(1, n = 534) = 41.419, p < .001, \phi = .279$. As expected, the finding indicated that the cases more likely to result in a charge against the suspect were those where the victim followed all police procedure during the initial response to abuse (58.5%, $n = 228$) in comparison to cases that involved initial victim reluctance (27.1%, $n = 39$). Interestingly, however, the result also shows a larger effect size in the association between suspect charging and victim gender, in comparison to suspect gender.

Building upon the hypothesis, it was possible to determine in 464 cases whether the victims had directly reported the incident themselves or requested a third party to report the incident on their behalf. It was evident within the cases that 388 victims (83.6%) directly reported or requested a report of the abuse. The result demonstrated that the cases more likely to result in a charge were those where the victim was not involved in the reporting of the incident (69.7%, $n = 53$), in comparison to the cases where the victim directly reported or requested a third party report of the abuse (49.0%, $n = 190$). The chi square showed that the relationship between the two variables was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1, n = 464) = 10.989, p = .001, \phi = .154$.

Furthermore, a number of victims expressed views about attending court as part of the prosecution process. Some expressed stress and fear of court, whereas others stated they were happy and willing to attend. It was possible to record data on the victim's views on attending court in 73 cases. With regards to the 73 cases, 46 victims (63.0%) expressed issues and apprehensions about attending court and 27 victims (37.0%) stated they had no issues with court and were willing to attend. When examined with a chi square the factors were found to have a significant relationship, $\chi^2(1, n = 73) = 7.716, p = .005, \phi = .325$. The results demonstrated that the cases which were more likely to result in a charge against the suspect were those in which the victim expressed issues about attending court (37.0%, $n = 17$) in comparison to cases where the victim did not express issues about attending court (7.4%, $n = 2$).

Summary

Throughout the macrosystem 13 factors were extracted from the case files and placed within the level of analysis. In total there were seven findings that had a significant relationship with the charging of the suspect. With regards to the second hypothesis developed within the macrosystem, the significant findings in this instance appeared to

confirm that the cases involving male suspects and female victims were more likely to involve a charge against the suspect. In addition, the hypothesis expected that only initial victim reluctance would be associated with suspect charging. However, the analysis found that there were numerous factors from the victim's decision making that were significantly associated with suspect charging.

Exosystem

The hypotheses for the exosystem were:

- 1) The factors of the exosystem will be considered as distal in comparison to the microsystem and ontogenetic levels of the NEM, meaning they will carry smaller effect sizes than significant findings in those levels considered more proximal (Stith *et al.*, 2004).
- 2) Cases with the presence of evidence, the presence of people other than the victim and more agency involvement will be more likely to result in suspect charging.

The analysis uncovered numerous significant findings with regards to suspect charging.

Table 4.2 illustrates all of the significant findings ordered in terms of their effect size.

Table 4.2: Significant Findings within the Exosystem Ordered in Effect Size.
(* $p = <.05$; ** $p = <.01$; *** $p = <.001$). For information purposes only: Bonferroni correction was calculated to visualise a control for a type I error at $p <.002$ ($0.05/18 = .002$) for the exosystem.

| Factor Name | Level | All Present | Charged | | Not Charged | | Effect Size |
|---|----------------|----------------|---------|-----|----------------|-----|----------------|
| | | | % | n | % | n | |
| ***Referral to Professional Support Network | | 491 | 49.7% | 244 | 50.3% | 247 | .373 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 135 | 80.0% | 108 | 20.0% | 27 | |
| ***Witness Engagement | | 249 | 57.8% | 144 | 42.2% | 105 | .331 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 196 | 66.3% | 130 | 33.7% | 66 | |
| ***Existing Professional Support Network | | 375 | 46.1% | 173 | 53.9% | 202 | .257 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 79 | 70.9% | 56 | 29.1% | 23 | |

| Factor Name | Level | All Present | Charged % | Charged n | Not Charged % | Not Charged n | Effect Size |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| **Evidence of Family and/or Friends | | 330 | 80.9% | 267 | 19.1% | 63 | .217 |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 83 | 86.7% | 72 | 13.3% | 11 | |
| | <i>Family/New Partner</i> | 122 | 77.0% | 94 | 23.0% | 28 | |
| | <i>Friends</i> | 88 | 72.7% | 64 | 27.3% | 24 | |
| | <i>Family/New partner AND Friends</i> | 37 | 100.0% | 37 | 0.0% | 0 | |
| ***Extrinsic Evidence | | 520 | 51.2% | 266 | 48.8% | 254 | .240 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 345 | 59.7% | 206 | 40.3% | 139 | |
| **DASH Rating | | 385 | 59.7% | 230 | 40.3% | 155 | .191 |
| | <i>Standard</i> | 137 | 49.6% | 68 | 50.4% | 69 | |
| | <i>Medium</i> | 170 | 60.6% | 103 | 39.4% | 67 | |
| | <i>High</i> | 78 | 75.6% | 59 | 24.4% | 19 | |
| ***Incident Involved Abuse to Others | | 539 | 49.9% | 269 | 51.1% | 270 | .188 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 92 | 70.7% | 65 | 29.3% | 27 | |
| ***Incident Involved Others | | 538 | 50.2% | 270 | 49.8% | 268 | .179 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 297 | 58.2% | 173 | 41.8% | 124 | |
| **Victim Isolation | | 424 | 55.7% | 236 | 44.3% | 188 | .158 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 37 | 81.1% | 30 | 18.9% | 7 | |
| **Any Witnesses | | 540 | 50.0% | 270 | 50.0% | 270 | .137 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 249 | 57.4% | 143 | 42.6% | 106 | |
| **Heavy Reliance on Victim for Prosecution | | 429 | 62.5% | 268 | 37.5% | 161 | .131 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 335 | 59.1% | 198 | 40.9% | 137 | |
| *Bodycam/Video Footage | | 540 | 50.0% | 270 | 50.0% | 270 | .094 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 32 | 68.8% | 22 | 31.2% | 10 | |

External Agencies

The analysis uncovered significant associations between suspect charging and the presence or referral to a professional support network, confirming the prediction made within the second hypothesis of the exosystem. Exploring the findings in more detail, 375

cases included information on whether the victim was interacting with a support network when the incident was reported to the police, in which 79 cases (21.1%) involved the presence of a professional support network. When investigating the relationship this factor had on the charging of the suspect the chi square found that there was a significant relationship, $\chi^2(1, n = 375) = 24.676, p < .001, \phi = .257$. The results showed that the cases which involved a victim who was aided by a professional support network were more likely to result in a charge against the suspect (70.9%, $n = 56$) in comparison to when the victim was not aided by a professional support network (39.5%, $n = 117$).

In addition, 491 cases contained information on whether there was a referral of the victim to a professional support network, in which there were 135 cases (27.5%) where there was a recorded referral of the victim. The presence of a victim referral was examined against the charging of the suspect through the use of a chi square which found that there was a significant relationship, $\chi^2(1, n = 491) = 68.404, p < .001, \phi = .373$. The results showed how 80.0% ($n = 108$) of cases that involved a referred victim managed to secure a charge against the suspect, whereas a charge was secured in 38.2% ($n = 136$) of cases where the victim was not referred to a professional support network.

Evidence

A few findings also confirmed the prediction made within the second hypothesis, which was that cases involving evidence would be more likely to result in suspect charging. The expectation was self-explanatory, since it would have been difficult for officers to secure a charge against a suspect without any evidence to support a prosecution. In this instance, there were three complimentary findings with regards to the presence of evidence. The factor of extrinsic evidence concerned cases where there was evidence other than the victim, suspect and police statements. Such evidence included bodycam/video footage, photos of victim injury, photos of damage to property, witnesses and text messages. The

researcher was able to identify the available evidence in 520 cases from the total sample, in which extrinsic evidence was present in 345 (66.3%) of these cases. There was a significant relationship between the presence of extrinsic evidence and the charging of the suspect, in which 59.7% ($n = 206$) of the cases containing extrinsic evidence resulted in a charge against the suspect. This was compared to the 34.3% ($n = 60$) of cases that resulted in a charge without extrinsic evidence, as outlined within the chi square, $X^2(1, n = 520) = 30.036, p < .001, \phi = .240$.

Whilst the previous factor concerned all types of evidence, the analysis continued to find that the presence of bodycam/video footage was significant in suspect charging, however the factor was found to have a small effect size, $X^2(1, n = 540) = 4.783, p = .029, \phi = .094$ (please see Table 4.2 above).

Complementing the above findings, the analysis also found that when the case involved no heavy reliance on the victim for a prosecution the case was more likely to involve suspect charging, $X^2(1, n = 429) = 7.390, p < .007, \phi = .131$. In this instance, 74.5% ($n = 70$) of cases resulted in a charge against the suspect when there was no heavy reliance in comparison to 59.1% ($n = 198$) of cases resulting in a charge against the suspect when there was a heavy reliance on the victim to prosecute.

Third Parties

The hypothesis was also confirmed by findings regarding witnesses and other people. However, there was a surprising finding regarding victim isolation. Examining witnesses, all 540 cases were explored to determine whether they involved witnesses, of which there were 249 cases (46.1%) that involved one or more. An examination of witness presence against the charging of the suspect discovered a significant relationship, $X^2(1, n = 540) = 10.202, p = .001, \phi = .137$. The results showed that the cases more likely to result in a

charge of the suspect were the cases that involved the presence of a witness (57.4%, $n = 143$) in comparison to cases without any witnesses present (43.6%, $n = 127$).

Following on from previous finding, of the 249 cases where a witness was present the researcher also recorded whether the witness cooperated or withdrew from criminal proceedings. The data showed that 196 cases (78.7%) involved witnesses that cooperated and engaged with the police and 53 cases (21.3%) involved witnesses who refused to get involved. When the factor was examined against the charging the chi square found a stronger significant relationship between the factors than the previous findings, $X^2(1, n = 249) = 27.250, p < .001, \phi = .331$. The result showed that the cases more likely to result in a charge were those that involved a cooperative witness (66.3%, $n = 130$) in comparison to a witness that withdrew (26.4%, $n = 14$). Unintentionally, the findings supported the hypothesis in two ways. It firstly demonstrated that the presence of other people within the case was associated with a successful charge against the suspect. Secondly, as these third parties gave witness accounts as evidence the findings also supported the prediction that more evidence in the case would be associated with suspect charging.

Broader factors concerned third parties that were involved in the incident and whether they were abused alongside the victim. The factors included both adults and children within the household, and when analysed against suspect charging it was found that the presence of others had a significant association with suspect charging, $X^2(1, n = 538) = 17.243, p < .001, \phi = .179$. Building upon the finding, the researcher also found a significant association between suspect charging and the suspect abusing others at the scene, $X^2(1, n = 539) = 19.097, p < .001, \phi = .188$. Again, the findings were complimentary with one another, as the abuse to others was found to have a larger effect size. This reflected the increased likelihood of charging in cases where the suspect had been generally violent and aggressive to a number of people as opposed to just the victim.

However, appearing to contradict the hypothesis was the finding concerning victim isolation. In this instance there were 37 cases (8.7%) where the victim expressly stated that they felt isolated and relied on the suspect for social interaction. When this factor was examined against the charging of the suspect there was a significant relationship, $\chi^2(1, n = 424) = 10.614, p = .001, \phi = .158$. The result illustrated that the cases more likely to result in a charge against the suspect were those that contained a victim who felt isolated (81.1%, $n = 30$) in comparison to when the victim did not report feeling isolated (53.2%, $n = 206$). The finding and its implications will be discussed later in the chapter.

Summary

Within the exosystem level of analysis, there were a total of 18 factors extracted from the case files and placed within the model. Overall, there were 12 factors that had a significant relationship to the charging of a suspect within the sample. The level of analysis seemed to provide support for the second hypothesis. Cases with more evidence, the involvement of others at the scene, as well as the presence and interaction with external agencies were all associated with a higher likelihood of suspect charging. However, what appeared to contradict the hypothesis was that victims who reported feeling isolated were more likely to secure a charge against the suspect. The findings and implications of this will be covered later in the discussion section of Chapter 4.

Microsystem

The hypotheses for the microsystem were:

- 1) The factors contained within the microsystem will be considered to be more proximal than those in the exosystem and macrosystem. Therefore, it is expected

that the significant factors in the microsystem will have larger effect sizes than the factors in exosystem and macrosystem (Stith *et al.*, 2004).

- 2) As cases of physical abuse, stalking and harassment, and financial abuse will be more likely to involve evidence it is expected that these cases will be more likely to result in a charge against the suspect in comparison to emotional and verbal abuse.

The microsystem level of analysis found a large number of significant findings with regards to suspect charging. Table 4.3 highlights the factors found to be significantly associated with suspect charging in order of their effect size.

Table 4.3: Significant Findings within the Microsystem Ordered in Effect Size. (* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$). For information purposes only: Bonferroni correction was calculated to visualise a control for a type I error at $p < .001$ ($0.05/52 = .001$) for the microsystem.

| Factor Name | Level | All Present | Charged % | n | Not Charged % | n | Effect Size |
|---|-------------------|-------------|-----------|-----|---------------|-----|-------------|
| ***Victim states | | | | | | | |
| Continuing/ Ending Relationship | | 94 | 68.1% | 64 | 31.9% | 30 | .458 |
| | States Continuing | 37 | 94.6% | 35 | 5.4% | 2 | |
| | States Ending | 57 | 50.9% | 29 | 49.1% | 28 | |
| **No. of Children of the Suspect Only | Scale | | | | | | .265 |
| ***Financial Abuse | | 534 | 49.6% | 265 | 50.4% | 269 | .244 |
| | Present | 156 | 68.6% | 107 | 31.4% | 49 | |
| *Suspect Older (Years) | Scale | | | | | | .236 |
| ***Cohabitation after Incident | | 445 | 47.0% | 209 | 53.0% | 236 | .234 |
| | Present | 141 | 29.8% | 42 | 70.2% | 99 | |
| *No. of Children of the Victim Only | Scale | | | | | | .226 |
| ***Stalking and Harassment | | 530 | 49.2% | 261 | 50.8% | 269 | .201 |
| | Present | 114 | 68.4% | 78 | 31.6% | 36 | |

| Factor Name | Level | All Present | Charged % | n | Not Charged % | n | Effect Size |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|-------------|
| ***Admission of Guilt | | 535 | 50.5% | 270 | 49.5% | 265 | .181 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 236 | 40.3% | 95 | 59.7% | 141 | |
| **Victim Generally Scared | | 387 | 58.7% | 227 | 41.3% | 160 | .170 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 248 | 64.9% | 161 | 35.1% | 87 | |
| **Married | | 531 | 50.8% | 270 | 49.2% | 261 | .156 |
| | <i>Not Married</i> | 429 | 53.8% | 231 | 46.2% | 198 | |
| | <i>Married</i> | 89 | 39.3% | 35 | 60.7% | 54 | |
| | <i>Engaged</i> | 4 | 75.0% | 3 | 25.0% | 1 | |
| | <i>Separated/ Divorced</i> | 9 | 11.1% | 1 | 88.9% | 8 | |
| **Injury Type | | 529 | 49.9% | 264 | 50.1% | 265 | .150 |
| | <i>No Injury</i> | 117 | 62.4% | 73 | 37.6% | 44 | |
| | <i>No Visible Injury</i> | 163 | 43.6% | 71 | 56.4% | 92 | |
| | <i>Minor Injury</i> | 217 | 49.8% | 108 | 50.2% | 109 | |
| | <i>Serious Injury</i> | 32 | 37.5% | 12 | 62.5% | 20 | |
| **Suspect states Victim Main Aggressor/False Allegation | | 533 | 50.1% | 267 | 49.9% | 266 | .145 |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 330 | 47.9% | 158 | 52.1% | 172 | |
| | <i>Victim Main Aggressor</i> | 179 | 49.7% | 89 | 50.3% | 90 | |
| | <i>Victim Made False Allegation</i> | 24 | 83.3% | 20 | 16.7% | 4 | |
| **Relationship Status | | 538 | 50.2% | 270 | 49.8% | 268 | .149 |
| | <i>Intimate Partners</i> | 324 | 44.1% | 143 | 55.9% | 181 | |
| | <i>Ex-partners</i> | 214 | 59.3% | 127 | 40.7% | 127 | |
| **Suspect Employment | | 469 | 57.4% | 269 | 42.6% | 200 | .142 |
| | <i>Un-employed</i> | 248 | 63.7% | 158 | 36.3% | 90 | |
| | <i>Employed</i> | 208 | 49.5% | 103 | 50.5% | 105 | |
| | <i>Other</i> | 13 | 61.5% | 8 | 38.5% | 5 | |
| **Suspect Threatened/ | | 537 | 50.3% | 270 | 49.7 | 267 | .141 |

| Factor Name | Level | All Present | Charged % | n | Not Charged % | n | Effect Size |
|---|--|-------------|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|-------------|
| Carried out Self-harm and/or Suicide | <i>Not Present</i> | 468 | 48.7% | 228 | 51.3% | 240 | |
| | <i>Present</i> | 27 | 40.7% | 11 | 59.3% | 16 | |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | | | | | | |
| | <i>Present (But Has Previously Occurred)</i> | 42 | 73.8% | 31 | 26.2% | 11 | |
| *Victim Employment | | 410 | 57.1% | 234 | 42.9% | 176 | .140 |
| | <i>Un-employed</i> | 210 | 63.3% | 133 | 36.7% | 77 | |
| | <i>Employed</i> | 169 | 52.1% | 88 | 47.9% | 81 | |
| | <i>Other</i> | 31 | 41.9% | 13 | 58.1% | 18 | |
| **Physical Abuse | | 538 | 49.8% | 268 | 50.2% | 270 | .129 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 422 | 46.4% | 196 | 53.6% | 226 | |
| **Suspect Drugs | | 507 | 47.7% | 242 | 52.3% | 265 | .118 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 78 | 61.5% | 48 | 38.5% | 30 | |
| *Any Pets | | 532 | 50.6% | 269 | 49.4% | 263 | .117 |
| | <i>No Pets</i> | 482 | 49.8% | 240 | 50.2% | 242 | |
| | <i>Own Pets (But Not Abused)</i> | 33 | 45.5% | 15 | 54.5% | 18 | |
| | <i>Own Pets (Suspect Abuses Them)</i> | 17 | 82.4% | 14 | 17.6% | 3 | |
| *Verbal Abuse | | 486 | 48.6% | 236 | 51.4% | 250 | .115 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 382 | 45.5% | 174 | 54.5% | 208 | |
| *Children of the Suspect Only | | 508 | 52.2% | 265 | 47.8% | 243 | .110 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 28 | 75.0% | 21 | 25.0% | 7 | |
| *Cohabitation during Incident | | 508 | 50.8% | 258 | 49.2% | 145 | .103 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 268 | 45.9% | 123 | 54.1% | 145 | |
| *Apparent Understating of Abuse | | 528 | 50.0% | 264 | 50.0% | 264 | .102 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 88 | 38.6% | 34 | 61.4% | 54 | |
| *Jealousy, Mistrust, Distrust, and/or Control from Both Partners | | 522 | 49.6% | 259 | 50.4% | 263 | .094 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 11 | 81.1% | 9 | 18.2% | 2 | |

| Factor Name | Level | All Present | Charged % | n | Not Charged % | n | Effect Size |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|-----|---------------|-----|-------------|
| *Children of the Victim Only | | 505 | 52.3% | 264 | 47.7% | 241 | .093 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 126 | 60.3% | 76 | 39.7% | 50 | |

Proximity

The second hypothesis did not consider the emotional and physical proximity between the couple when predicting factors that would influence suspect charging. However, as with the findings of victim engagement, the analysis illustrated that cases where the suspect and victim had a further emotional and physical proximity were more likely to result in suspect charging.

The finding with the largest effect size in the analysis was the victim's relationship intentions after the abuse incident. In this instance the victim's relationship plans were examined against the charging of the suspect and found a significant association with a large effect size, $\chi^2(1, n = 94) = 19.734, p < .001, \phi = .458$. The results illustrated that the cases more likely to result in a charge against the suspect were those where the victim stated they planned to continue the relationship (94.6%, $n = 35$) in comparison to when the victim stated that they planned to end the relationship (50.9%, $n = 29$). The finding appeared surprising, as to be more likely to secure a charge when the victim wanted to continue the relationship appeared counter-intuitive in terms of victim engagement. The finding, therefore, will be examined further within the discussion of this chapter.

Following the theme in terms of effect sizes, the plans for cohabitation after the abuse incident also had a significant association with suspect charging. Interestingly, the chi square analysis showed a significant association with a medium effect size, $\chi^2(1, n = 445) = 24.455, p < .001, \phi = .234$ in which the cases that more likely to result in a charge against the suspect were those where the couple lived apart after the abuse incident (54.9%, $n = 167$). This appeared to contradict the previous finding, as the cases more likely to result in a charge were those where the victim planned to continue the

relationship. The disparity in results is likely due to the low frequency in the first findings of proximity, as the 30 victims who planned to continue their relationship would have been unlikely to appear in the 167 cases where the victim moved out after the abuse incident.

In addition to the victim's future plans, the relationship status and living arrangements of the couple during the abuse were also significantly associated with suspect charging. However, these findings appeared to carry lower effect sizes in their association. The relationship status of the suspect and victim at the time of the incident showed that ex-partners were more likely to gain a charge against the suspect, $X^2(1, n = 538) = 11.926, p = .001, \phi = .149$, as were couples who lived apart during the abuse incident, $X^2(1, n = 508) = 5.431, p = .020, \phi = .103$ (please see Table 4.3 above).

Types of Abuse

The second hypothesis of the microsystem stated that suspect charging was expected in cases involving physical abuse, financial abuse and stalking and harassment as there would be more evidence present in such cases. The microsystem uncovered associations with most types of abuse and partially supported the hypothesis.

With regards to stalking and harassment, the chi square analysis uncovered a significant relationship, $X^2(1, n = 530) = 21.367, p < .001, \phi = .201$ which showed that in cases where stalking and harassment was present 68.4% ($n = 78$) of cases resulted in a charge against the suspect. This was in comparison to cases where stalking and harassment was not present, as 44.0% ($n = 183$) of cases resulted in a charge against the suspect. Similarly, there was also a significant association between suspect charging and financial abuse, $X^2(1, n = 534) = 31.705, p < .001, \phi = .244$. The result illustrated how the cases that involved financial abuse were more likely to result in a charge against the suspect (68.6%, $n = 107$), which aligned with the hypothesis.

The results found a significant association between physical abuse and suspect charging. However, the relationship was in the opposite direction to the hypothesis, as cases that involved physical abuse were less likely to result in suspect charging, $\chi^2(1, n = 538) = 8.884, p = .003, \phi = .129$. The same relationship was found in cases that involved verbal abuse, in which cases where it was present were less likely to result in a charge against the suspect, $\chi^2(1, n = 486) = 6.474, p = .011, \phi = .115$. There was no association between emotional abuse and suspect charging ($ps > .05$). The results appear to demonstrate that cases which involved stalking and harassment as well as financial abuse had evidence or some capacity to allow for the charging of the suspect. However, in contrast to the hypothesis, cases that involved physical and verbal abuse were more likely to result in no charge against the suspect. This may well have been due to complications in evidence gathering, as well as difficulties in victim engagement.

Children

The hypothesis also did not consider the presence and number of children impacting on the charging of the suspect within the microsystem analysis. When children were examined the factor was broken down into whether they were part of the intimate partnership, the suspect's only, or the victim's only.

In this instance 508 cases contained information on whether any children within the case belonged to the suspect only. It was possible to determine that 28 cases (5.5%) contained a child that was the suspect's only, which referred to children from a previous or new intimate partnership. When the factor was analysed against the charging of the suspect, there was a significant relationship, $\chi^2(1, n = 508) = 6.192, p = .013, \phi = .110$. The finding showed that the cases more likely to result in a charge were those that involved a child of the suspect only (75.0%, $n = 21$) in comparison to when the suspect did not have a child from a previous partnership (50.8%, $n = 244$).

Following the previous finding, a second variable also covered whether the suspect had children only, but in this instance recorded the number of children. The factor was recorded in 505 cases in total, since in 3 cases it was unclear how many children the suspect had outside of the current intimate partnership. An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine the relationship between the number of children the suspect had and the charging of the suspect in each case. The test showed that there was a significant difference, $t(505) = 2.925, p = .004, d = .265$, in which suspects that were charged had a higher average number of children with different intimate partners ($M = 0.10, SD = 0.43$) than in cases where the suspect was not charged ($M = 0.02, SD = .014$).

The study also recorded children that belonged to the victim only, which again took account of situations where the victim had children from previous or new intimate partnerships. It found that out of the 505 cases examined, 126 cases (25.0%) involved victims who had children from outside of the current intimate partnership. When the factor was examined against whether the suspect was charged there was a significant relationship, $\chi^2(1, n = 505) = 4.350, p = .037, \phi = .093$. The chi square illustrated that the cases more likely to result in a charge against the suspect were those where the victims had children from outside of the intimate partnership (60.3%, $n = 76$) in comparison to when the victims did not have children from outside of the intimate partnership (49.6%, $n = 188$).

Much like with children of the suspect only, the same method was used to record data for children of the victim only. Therefore, the number of children the victim had outside of the current intimate partnership was also examined. It was possible to examine the number of children in all 505 cases, in which the data was analysed against suspect charging. The t-test showed that there was a significant difference in the number of children of the victim only, $t(505) = 2.526, p = .012, d = .226$, in which cases that involved a charge against the suspect involved victims with a higher average number of

children outside of the intimate partnership ($M = 0.49$, $SD = 0.94$) when compared to cases that resulted in no charge ($M = 0.30$, $SD = 0.67$). Both of the t-tests for the number of children belonging to the suspect and victim reported medium effect sizes, indicating that the factor was prominent in terms of suspect charging. It may be the case that the officers attending the scene would have taken into account children from previous relationships and may have been more likely to charge the suspect, in order to ensure that there was an intervention for the children unconnected to the abusive relationship.

Summary

As the microsystem was the most detailed level of analysis there were a total of 52 factors extracted from the case files and placed within the model. There were 25 factors that had a significant relationship with suspect charging across the sample. Taking into account the second hypothesis, the results provided partial support for the predictions made. Whilst stalking and harassment and financial abuse were more likely to result in suspect charging, the lack of charging in physical and verbal abuse seemed to contradict expectations. Furthermore, there were also significant findings around the proximity of the couple and the presence of children belonging to either the suspect or victim, which was not covered by the hypothesis. The findings, therefore, will be examined further and explained in more detail within the discussion.

Ontogenetic

The hypotheses for the ontogenetic level were:

- 1) The factors of the ontogenetic level of the NEM are considered to be the most proximal to the couple and will therefore result in the largest effect sizes in comparison to other levels of the NEM (Stith *et al.*, 2004).

- 2) Suspects that have previously abused the victim, previously abused another partner and have a greater criminal history will be more likely to result in suspect charging.

The analysis of the ontogenetic level uncovered numerous significant findings with regards to suspect charging. Table 4.4 illustrates all of the significant findings ordered in terms of their effect size.

Table 4.4: Significant Findings within the Ontogenetic Ordered in Effect Size.

(* $p = <.05$; ** $p = <.01$; *** $p = <.001$). For information purposes only: Bonferroni correction was calculated to visualise a control for a type I error at $p <.002$ ($0.05/20 = .002$) for the ontogenetic level.

| Factor Name | Level | All Present | Charged | | Not Charged | | Effect Size |
|--|--------------------------|-------------|---------|-----|-------------|-----|-------------|
| | | | % | n | % | n | |
| ***History of Emotional Abuse | | 413 | 49.4% | 204 | 50.6% | 209 | .526 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 162 | 16.7% | 27 | 83.3% | 135 | |
| ***History of Financial Abuse | | 430 | 47.4% | 204 | 52.6% | 225 | .449 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 185 | 21.6% | 40 | 78.4% | 145 | |
| ***History of Abuse with any Others | | 369 | 54.5% | 201 | 45.5% | 168 | .355 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 188 | 71.8% | 135 | 28.2% | 53 | |
| ***No. of Previous Convictions (Suspect) | Scale | | | | | | .326 |
| ***Previous DV Report, Contact or Engagement with Police | | 456 | 56.8% | 259 | 43.2% | 197 | .294 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 285 | 68.1% | 194 | 31.9% | 91 | |
| ***History of Stalking/Harassment | | 435 | 50.3% | 219 | 49.7% | 216 | .280 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 95 | 76.8% | 73 | 23.2% | 22 | |
| ***Previous Positive or Negative Outcome with CJS | | 166 | 75.9% | 126 | 24.1% | 40 | .274 |
| | <i>Previous Positive</i> | 94 | 86.2% | 81 | 13.8% | 13 | |
| | <i>Previous Negative</i> | 72 | 62.5% | 45 | 37.5% | 27 | |

| Factor Name | Level | All Present | Charged | | Not Charged | | Effect Size |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| | | | % | n | % | n | |
| ***History of Verbal Abuse | | 454 | 53.3% | 243 | 46.5% | 211 | .248 |
| | <i>Present</i> | <i>314</i> | <i>61.8%</i> | <i>194</i> | <i>38.2%</i> | <i>120</i> | |
| *No. of Previous Offences Against the Person (Victim) | | | | | | | .198 |
| | Scale | | | | | | |
| ***History of Any Abuse | | 492 | 54.1% | 265 | 45.9% | 226 | .193 |
| | <i>Present</i> | <i>371</i> | <i>59.6%</i> | <i>221</i> | <i>40.4%</i> | <i>150</i> | |
| ***Suspect Abuse to Same Victim | | 491 | 54.0% | 265 | 46.0% | 226 | .173 |
| | <i>Present</i> | <i>358</i> | <i>59.2%</i> | <i>212</i> | <i>40.8%</i> | <i>146</i> | |
| *Previous Cooperation or Withdrawal with CJS | | 185 | 77.3% | 143 | 22.7% | 42 | .152 |
| | <i>Previous Cooperation</i> | <i>105</i> | <i>82.9%</i> | <i>87</i> | <i>17.1%</i> | <i>18</i> | |
| | <i>Previous Withdrawal</i> | <i>80</i> | <i>70.0%</i> | <i>56</i> | <i>30.0%</i> | <i>24</i> | |
| ***Suspect Previous Convictions | | 452 | 56.4% | 255 | 43.6% | 197 | .150 |
| | <i>Present</i> | <i>351</i> | <i>60.4%</i> | <i>212</i> | <i>39.6%</i> | <i>139</i> | |
| **Previous IPV for Couple | | 487 | 54.4% | 265 | 45.6% | 222 | .128 |
| | <i>Present</i> | <i>359</i> | <i>58.2%</i> | <i>209</i> | <i>41.8%</i> | <i>150</i> | |

Suspect Abuse History

The second hypothesis developed for the ontogenetic level predicted that suspects with a history of abusing the victim or any previous partners would be more likely to receive a charge. There were a number of findings within the ontogenetic level that provided support for the hypothesis, and further built upon it by suggesting types of historical abuse which had more of an effect on suspect charging.

The first finding concerned the suspect's general domestic abuse history. It included any form of abuse to any intimate partner, including the victim within the current case, up to the incident reported within the current case. It was possible to examine

whether there was any type of previous abuse used by the suspect in 492 cases, in which 371 suspects (75.4%) were coded as having previously used any form of abuse against any intimate partner. Analysed against charging, the chi square illustrated how those most likely to receive a charge overall were the suspects that were recorded as having a history of any form of abuse, since 59.6% ($n = 221$) of these cases resulted in a charge against the suspect. This was in comparison to the 37.2% ($n = 45$) of cases resulting in a charge when the suspect had no recorded history of any form of abuse, $X^2(1, n = 492) = 18.399$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .193$. The analysis also specifically examined whether the suspect had previously abused the same victim within the case and whether this impacted suspect charging. The finding further supported the hypothesis as the suspects who had a history of abuse with the victim were more likely to receive a charge, $X^2(1, n = 491) = 14.643$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .173$.

The analysis also uncovered that certain types of historic abuse resulted in various associations and effect sizes with regards to suspect charging. In order of effect sizes, an unsuccessful case was more likely to involve a history of emotional abuse ($X^2(1, n = 413) = 114.223$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .526$) and a history of financial abuse ($X^2(1, n = 430) = 86.815$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .449$). Conversely, a history of stalking/harassment ($X^2(1, n = 435) = 34.136$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .280$) and a history of verbal abuse ($X^2(1, n = 454) = 27.923$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .248$) were significantly associated with a successful charge against the suspect (please see Table 4.4 above). It is also interesting to note, however, that there was no significant association between a successful charge of the suspect and a history of physical abuse ($p > .05$).

Victim's Previous Engagement

Whilst not covered by the hypothesis, the victim's previous reports, experience and engagement with the police and CJS were also associated with suspect charging. It was

possible within 456 cases to determine whether the victim had previous IPV related contact with the police or whether they appeared to be in contact with the police for the first time. From the 456 cases examined, it was recorded that 285 cases (62.5%) concerned a victim that had previous IPV related contact, with the remaining 171 cases (37.5%) involving a victim reporting abuse for the first time. When examined against the charging of the suspect in the case, the chi square found that there was a significant relationship between the two factors, $\chi^2(1, n = 456) = 39.3530, p < .001, \phi = .294$. The finding illustrates how the cases most likely to result in a charging of the suspect were the 68.1% ($n = 194$) of cases where the victim had previous IPV related contact with the police. This was in comparison to the 38.0% ($n = 65$) of cases resulting in a charge that involved a victim appearing to report IPV related offences for the first time.

In addition to previous reports, the experience of victims who had previously interacted with the police was examined against suspect charging. When analysed there was a significant relationship, $\chi^2(1, n = 166) = 12.489, p < .001, \phi = .274$, in which 86.2% ($n = 81$) of cases involving victims with a previous positive experience resulted in a charge against the suspect and 62.5% ($n = 45$) of cases resulted in a charge when the victim had a previous negative experience. The finding infers that cases where victims have had a consistent positive previous experience with the police were more likely to result in a charge of the suspect than in cases where the victims have had a consistent negative previous experience.

Building further into the theme, the victim's previous engagement with the police was also taken into consideration within the study. Again there was a significant finding with regards to suspect charging, which demonstrated that the cases most likely to result in a charge against the suspect were those where the victim previously cooperated (82.9%, $n = 87$) in comparison to those who previously withdrew (70.0%, $n = 56$), $\chi^2(1, n = 185) = 4.277, p = .039, \phi = .152$.

Criminal History

The hypothesis predicted that cases where the suspect had a more extensive criminal history were more likely to result in a charge. The hypothesis was tested by using the number of previous convictions and the number of previous offences against the person. To ensure thoroughness, the study also examined the victim's criminal history to determine whether this had any impact on the charging of the suspect within the sample. In 452 cases it was possible to view and record the suspects' criminal history using the results from the Police National Computer (PNC) checks. From the 452 cases, 351 (77.7%) suspects had previous convictions. A chi square analysis between this factor and charging shows that cases involving suspects with previous convictions of any sort were more likely to result in a charge (60.4%, $n = 212$) in comparison to cases where the suspect did not have any previous convictions (42.6%, $n = 43$), as shown within the chi square, $X^2(1, n = 452) = 10.134, p = .001, \phi = .150$.

Following on from the previous finding, the number of previous convictions the suspect had was recorded in 448 cases. When examined against charging through an independent samples t-test, the result showed a significant relationship, $t(445) = 3.389, p = .001, d = .326$. It found that the suspects involved in the cases resulting in a charge had a higher average number of previous convictions ($M = 8.92, SD = 10.75$) than the suspects in cases resulting in no charge ($M = 5.65, SD = 9.19$), and that the overall effect size of the association was larger than when the analysis only considered the presence of previous convictions.

When examining the victim's criminal history there was no association between the presence of previous convictions and suspect charging ($p > .05$). However, the analysis also focused on the victim's previous offences against the person. It was possible to determine within 453 cases whether the victim had one or more previous convictions for offences against the person. From the data, 52 victims (11.5%) had at least one previous

conviction for offences against the person. There was a significant difference when comparing the victims' number of previous convictions for offences against the person against charging of the suspect. The independent samples t-test, $t(451) = 2.091, p = .037, d = .198$, showed that the cases involving a charge of the suspect involved victims that had a higher average number of previous convictions for offences against the person ($M = 0.29, SD = 0.99$), when compared to victims in cases where no charge was brought against the suspect ($M = 0.13, SD = 0.03$).

Summary

Within the ontogenetic level of analysis, there were a total of 20 factors extracted from the case files and placed within the model. In total, there were 14 factors that had a significant relationship to charging within the analysis. The second hypothesis predicted that suspects who had previously abused the victim or any previous partner and had a greater criminal history would be more likely to receive a charge. The results provided strong support for the hypothesis, but also uncovered that cases where victims had a larger number of previous offences against the person were more likely to result in suspects receiving a charge.

Distal and Proximal Factors

The data chapter concerned the four levels of the NEM in an analysis against suspect charging. In addition to forming individual hypotheses specific to the factors examined at each level, the analysis also hypothesised that the overall effect sizes within the microsystem and ontogenetic levels would be larger as the factors were more proximal to the victim (Stith *et al.*, 2004). The results found strong support for the hypotheses, as the effect sizes of the findings were larger in the levels of the NEM that were proximal to the victim: macrosystem (0.1-0.3), exosystem (0.1-0.4), microsystem (0.1-0.5) and

ontogenetic (0.1-0.5). Furthermore, the upper range of effect sizes at each level of the NEM seemed to positively correlate with the proximity to the victim. Taking the largest effect size from each level of the analysis and working from the most distal to the most proximal provided evidence of the visual correlation: macrosystem (.325), exosystem (.373), microsystem (.458) and ontogenetic (.526).

Discussion

The objective of the current chapter was to identify factors that had an association with suspect charging. The analysis found that there were numerous significant findings across the NEM. The data chapter also provided strong evidence for Stith *et al.* (2004), as the findings within the microsystem and ontogenetic levels of analysis carried larger effect sizes than the macrosystem and exosystem. In further detail, the upper range of effect sizes in each level of the analysis seemed to correlate with the level of the NEM in terms of proximity, illustrating how the macrosystem was the most distal and the ontogenetic was the most proximal. Taking into account all of the findings, the chapter moves into a discussion of the results with regards to the previous literature explored in order to determine potential implications and explanations for the significant findings.

Macrosystem

The results supported the hypotheses and previous literature in the assertion that gender was a significant factor in the charging of a suspect. Within the current study, male suspects were more likely to receive a charge than female suspects, which highlighted potential gender bias in the police response (Worrall *et al.*, 2006). As the sample contained more male suspects than female, and more males were subsequently charged than females, the findings of the chapter provided evidence which supported a gender asymmetrical perspective (Jewell & Wormith, 2010). Furthermore, the gender of the victim also had a significant relationship with the charging decision, as female victims

were more likely to secure a charge against the suspect than male victims. The result aligned with literature such as Dawson and Holton (2014) and related to officer blame outlined by Stewart and Maddren (1997), since the officers may have been more likely to attach blame for the incident on a male victim in comparison to a female victim.

There were numerous factors with regards to the victim's decision making that had an association to the charging of the suspect, which illustrated once again how closely tied the charging of a suspect was to victim engagement. With regards to initial victim reluctance, the study showed how victims who were initially reluctant to be involved with the police process damaged the ability to charge the suspect (Harris-Short & Miles, 2011; Payne & Wermeling, 2009). The finding tied in with victims who expressed issues with attending court and how they were more likely to secure a successful charge. These cases were more likely to involve victim cooperation as the victim realistically considered a prosecution with the suspect which increased the chance of a successful charge. However, on the whole, the factor of the victim attending court was associated with victim withdrawal.

Whilst the previous findings linked closely to victim engagement, the following finding appeared to illustrate that third parties were more strongly associated with suspect charging than the victims' engagement. The results illustrated how a case was more likely to result in a charge when there was a third party report of the incident. The finding demonstrated how the involvement of a third party often meant that they provided an account for the victim's abuse and in doing so provided essential evidence on the victim's behalf. Whilst the previous literature heavily focused on victim reports (Antle *et al.*, 2010; Felson *et al.*, 2002; Bennett *et al.*, 1999; Coulter *et al.*, 1999), the current findings suggested that there would be worth in an examination of third party reports to determine which type of report reflected more vulnerable victims. Such research would have a direct

application to evaluating victim engagement with the police and in forming an assessment of risk and vulnerability.

Exosystem

There were key sets of findings throughout the exosystem that were important in an examination of charging. A strange finding from the analysis was that victims who reported feeling isolated were more likely to secure a charge against the suspect. Whilst at first the researcher considered this factor to fall under the third parties theme of results, the more appropriate placement of the factor would be with external support agencies. This is because it is likely that, because it was freely expressed by the victim within the case files, the police staff would have referred the victim to a support network to counteract their isolation. This would align with the other findings into professional support networks, as both were found to have a significant association with suspect charging. Taking into account Coker *et al.* (2004), the professional support networks would have been able to provide the same material assistance as friends and family, thus bolstering the victim's ability to stay safe. In addition, the involvement of external agencies seemed to have also impacted upon police and CPS decision making when considering the credibility of the victim and whether to charge the suspect.

The second theme of findings referred to evidence collection and the reliance placed upon the victim. As expected, the collection of extrinsic evidence within the case was associated with a higher likelihood of charging the suspect. Although the result was positive in terms of charging, it illustrated that only three out of every five cases in which extrinsic evidence was present resulted in a charge. The actual frequency of the significant association, therefore, highlighted potential deficiencies in the type of evidence collected, as not all extrinsic evidence seemed to result in a successful charge. Previous literature argued that the police evidence collection should have focused on evidence that was linked to charging, such as physical evidence and the suspect's statement or account

(Peterson & Bialo-Padin, 2012). However, a closer inspection of the data and themes within Appendix 3 illustrated difficulties when the police used certain types of evidence. An example was using photographs of the victim's injuries, as it tended to fall short on providing proof of how the abuse occurred. Whilst the extrinsic evidence damaged the suspect's credibility in cases where they stated that no abuse had occurred, the photos became very weak when the suspect provided a consistent statement that accounted for the evidence and the victim's injuries in the photographs.

There was a low effect size when considering the impact of bodycam/video footage against suspect charging. When bodycam/video footage was present the case was more likely to result in a charge against the suspect, which supported previous studies with similar findings (Morrow *et al.*, 2016). This was because the bodycam/video footage provided the exact demeanour of both the suspect and victim during the police response to the incident, as well as a progression of events that made it difficult for the suspect to dispute (Ellis *et al.*, 2015). However, the low frequency and small effect size of the factor means that generalising the finding would become difficult. This is especially so when considering the factors seemed to also be associated with victim withdrawal, potentially questioning the reliability and validity of the factors. Nonetheless, the findings around the collection and use of evidence were supported by the subsequent finding into whether the CPS placed heavy reliance on their testimony. It appears that such cases would have already been strengthened by the extrinsic evidence and bodycam/video footage within the case, which resulted in the increased likelihood of charging the suspect without the victim's testimony (Schuller & Stewart, 2000).

The final theme of findings that were strongly associated with the charging of the suspect in the exosystem related to the involvement of third parties in the abuse. The cases that were found to be more likely to result in a charge were those where a witness was present, a witness cooperated, the incident involved other victims that were abused by the

suspect, or when there were others involved that were not directly victimised. The results confirm how the involvement of a third party was critical in securing a charge against the suspect. The witnesses provided crucial evidence for the police, corroborated the victim's account and often testified, which resulted in a greater likelihood of charging the suspect (Hamby *et al.*, 2016; Lifschitz, 2004). Furthermore, the findings that indicated a higher level of charging in cases where there were others who were abused by the suspect related directly to Dawson and Holton (2014). They explained how multiple victims at a crime scene increased the likelihood of charging the suspect, which was confirmed within the current analysis.

Microsystem

Relating back to the geographical and emotional proximity within the relationship, there were a number of findings related to the couple's circumstances that had an association to charging. The geographic distance was apparent in findings around the couples' cohabitation, in which those living apart before and after the abuse incident formed a greater chance of securing a charge against the suspect. In addition, the geographic distance also seemed to align with the victim's emotional distance to the suspect, both before and after the incident. The intimacy of the couple was important in the progression and charging of cases (Dawson, 2004), since Spohn and Holleran (2001) found that any damage to the victim's credibility, specifically in IPV cases, had a profound impact on the way in which the case was dealt with through the CJS. The results provided support for the argument into the emotional proximity of the couple, as ex-partners were more likely to secure a charge against the suspect than victims in intimate partnerships. What also appeared within the results was that it was the victim's intentions and future plans for the relationship and cohabitation that resulted in a larger effect size on charging, supporting literature such as Robsinson and Stroshine (2005). They argue for a focus on the victim's intentions, which in this instance would apply to the victim's future

relationship plans, especially as a suspect was more likely to receive a charge if the victim stated they were continuing the relationship. Such cases may have related to victims who were particularly vulnerable and reliant upon the suspect, as the police could have placed a greater emphasis on charging the suspect in order to safeguard the victim.

A second theme of findings found within the microsystem referred to the types of abuse that were used in the cases. The literature review outlined how physical abuse was taken more seriously by officers than non-physical abuse (Basow & Thompson, 2012) and that severe physical abuse was considered to be the most serious form of IPV (Bonomi *et al.*, 2006). The study in this instance, however, found that cases which involved non-physical abuse were more likely to result in a charge against the suspect. This was simply due to more straightforward evidence collection in comparison to the cases that involved physical abuse. For example, cases that involved stalking and harassment were more likely to result in a charge against the suspect because the victim often kept the unwanted communication as evidence. In cases that involved financial abuse, the fraudulent establishment of debt, use of debit cards to withdraw money and criminal damage that left the victim at a financial loss was all evidenced through bank accounts, bodycam/video footage and photos of damage. Conversely, cases of physical violence had no association with suspect charging, which suggested that there were complications in the evidenced gathered or victim engagement.

The final theme of findings found within the microsystem analysis was the presence and number of children belonging solely to the suspect or victim. It found that when the suspect and victim had children from outside of the intimate partnership the case was more likely to result in a charge against the suspect. What appeared especially interesting was how children of the relationship and the presence of any children in the abuse incident both had no impact on the charging decision in the case. This is despite officers and professionals being aware of the profound impact abuse can have on children

(Wolfe *et al.*, 2003). At first the results appeared confusing, however, the simplest explanation for the association was that the presence and number of children indicated the suspects' and victims' history of previous partners. An explanation for how the dynamic affected charging was that the victims in the current study seemed to have moved from previous abusive partnerships, in which they had mothered or fathered children. The fact that they had moved from previous abusive relationships meant that they had a history of victimisation and were high risk victims. Similarly, the suspects with children from previous relationships seemed to come from an abusive past, in which their history of IPV made them more susceptible to charging. Therefore, children of the relationship and whether they were involved seemingly had no effect on charging, but the number of children attached to the suspect or victim outside of the intimate partnership indicated their history of previous partners and history of abuse.

More specific findings within the microsystem related to the victim's response to the abuse incident and how it impacted charging. The results of the study demonstrated that the victim's level of fear had an association with charging, in which those who reported feeling generally scared were more likely to secure a charge. At first this appeared to align with literature that explained how the level of fear impacted a risk assessment (Trujillo & Ross, 2008), since those who reported feeling scared were more likely to be ranked as higher risk and more likely to secure a charge. However, what appeared confusing was that the study also took into account whether the victim appeared terrified within the case and found no association with suspect charging. Therefore, the results indicated that those who outwardly disclosed their fear to officers were more likely to secure a charge against the suspect than the victims who appeared terrified but did not always disclose their fear to the police.

Also prominent within literature was the impact of drugs and alcohol on suspect charging. The study found that alcohol consumption by both the suspect and victim did

not affect charging within the case, despite previous literature which suggested otherwise (Hines & Douglas, 2012; Stuart *et al.*, 2012; Schuller & Stewart, 2000). This may have occurred due to the coding of alcohol within the current study, as alcohol was coded as present whenever the suspect or victim had consumed any amount of alcohol. A more effective approach would have been to examine the charging decision against a scale of intoxication to determine whether the higher scores of victim intoxication resulted in a lower likelihood of charging (Schuller & Stewart, 2000). With regards to drug use, there was a significant association between the suspect using or being in possession of drugs and suspect charging. Whilst the finding would align with the previous literature around drugs and alcohol, what seemed more likely was that the arresting of the suspect for the drug offences, often in addition to other tertiary offences, provided a means to charge the suspect without pursuing the IPV related offence. Furthermore, in the cases where the IPV offence was pursued the drug offences would have supported the arrest and charge for the IPV related crime as explained by Phillips and Verano (2008).

Ontogenetic

The couple's abuse history appeared as a theme of findings within the ontogenetic level of the NEM. Cases that involved a previous history of any IPV between the couple, a suspect that had previously abused the victim, or when the suspect had a history of abuse outside of the examined relationship were more likely to result in a charge. Previous literature outlined how a police response to an IPV incident led to fewer call outs in the future (Jaffe *et al.*, 1986), however the criminal outcome of the case as a variable was found not to deter future rates of reabuse (Bell *et al.*, 2013). The study in this instance found that, regardless of the effect previous criminal intervention had on the rate of reabuse, cases of reabuse which were responded to by the police within the current sample were more likely to result in a charge against the suspect than cases of first time abuse.

Therefore, even if there was officer frustration involved in the sample due to previous case attrition (Horwitz *et al.*, 2011), it did not impact the charging ability in such cases.

The findings were further examined to determine what types of previous abuse led to a higher likelihood of charging within the current case. Previous literature argued that physical abuse was taken more seriously than non-physical abuse (Basow & Thompson, 2012) and that types of abuse such as stalking and harassment could be taken less seriously by officers who considered it less dangerous (Lynch & Logan, 2015). Such literature would suggest that previous physical abuse would be the most likely to result in a charge against the suspect within the current case. However, this did not occur within the current sample. Instead, the presence of historical stalking and harassment or verbal abuse meant that the suspect was more likely to be charged within the current case. It is likely that the association occurred because the victim reported a repeat instance of stalking or harassment perpetrated by their former intimate partner. The repeated callouts for the stalking and harassment may have increased the seriousness of the case and resulted in the higher likelihood of charging the suspect. Interestingly, it was also found that a history of emotional abuse and financial abuse led to a lesser likelihood of charging the suspect. One explanation for the associations was that the findings were closely tied to victim engagement, since victims who had suffered previous emotional or financial abuse would have been more vulnerable because the abuse targeted their psychology and finances. This would have been further compounded when the victim did not consider their abuse to be serious because there was no physical violence. In addition, the lower rate of charging would have also occurred because the previous types of abuse may not have led to criminal intervention against the suspect. This would have especially concerned victims that had reported previous emotional abuse since the behaviour involved was not comprehensively prohibited by legislation until the introduction of the coercive and controlling behaviour laws in 2015. This would be in comparison to verbal

abuse or stalking and harassment which were covered by public order and harassment offences.

The following theme of findings referred to the victim's previous interaction with the police. Throughout previous literature there were many academics who argued against a pro-prosecution approach in some cases (Hoyle, 1998), since it was damaging to the victims' position (Payne & Wermeling, 2009). Further research outlined how some victims consequently call the police to quell the immediate situation without a consideration for further action (Apster *et al.*, 2003). The results of the current study showed that there was a higher level of charging in cases where the victim had previous domestic abuse contact with the police, which suggested that the mere reporting of their abuse in the past was enough to increase the chance of a charge in the cases examined. Whilst the finding was positive and carried a medium effect size, there were further associations to charging in cases where the victim had consistent previous cooperation with the police and had received consistent previous positive outcomes. At first the results seemed to suggest that there is need for victim engagement and positive outcomes in order to secure a charge (Felson *et al.*, 2005). However, the larger effect size with regards to any previous reporting actually illustrates that a suspect is more likely to receive a charge if there has been any previous contact between the police and victim in the past.

Findings around the suspects' and victims' criminal history supported other findings from the ontogenetic analysis and highlighted how previous offences increased the rate of charging (Schmidt & Steury, 1989). The length of the suspect's criminal history and criminal association directly impacted the ability to charge the suspect within the case (Henning & Lynette, 2005). However, the findings around the suspects' previous offences against the person had no association with charging. This deviated from literature such as Fratzen *et al.* (2011) who suggested that previous assaults increased the chance of charging. What did appear within the results was how the cases that resulted in

a charge were more likely to involve victims who had a higher average number of prior offences against the person. The finding partly supported literature around the victims' previous criminal history (Beichner & Spohn, 2012) and that some victims contained within the sample were the main abuser in the relationship. Whilst this could relate to the feminist approach of self-defence, where females used violence to deter abuse incidents (Dobash & Dobash, 2004), the perspective had many limitations within the previous research (Stewart *et al.*, 2014). Instead it simply seemed that a victim with a higher average number of convictions for previous offences against the person had experience with violence and aggression and were, therefore, more likely to use it as a response to the abuse. The overall result was a victim that physically fought back against the suspect, in which the bi-directional violence heightened the seriousness of the case and the suspect was more likely to receive a charge.

Conclusion

There were a number of factors that had a significant relationship with the charging of the suspect within the sample examined. Whilst each level of the NEM provided a comprehensive list of significant factors, the effect sizes of the associations provided support for Stith *et al.* (2004). In this instance, there was a trend between the factors with the highest effect size and the level in which they appeared. The ordering of effect sizes throughout the NEM suggested that it was an effective structure for the factors, as those that were more distal from the relationship appeared within the macrosystem and those that were more proximal occurred within the ontogenetic level.

Within the macrosystem, the effect sizes of the factors ranged from low to medium, suggesting that they were distal in relation to the couple. However, there were a number of significant associations that appeared interesting with regards to suspect charging. Gender bias appeared to occur within the police response, since male suspects and female victims were more likely to result in a charge than any other dynamic. In

addition, the significant results around decision making and reporting the incident within the macrosystem supported findings within the exosystem, and highlighted how the involvement of third parties was strongly associated with a charge against the suspect.

The exosystem illustrated that external agencies aided in the charging of the suspect, most likely by removing and safeguarding the victim. Furthermore, there were unsurprising associations between a successful charging of the suspect and the presence of extrinsic evidence, bodycam/video footage and no pressure on the victim's testimony. However, what did appear concerning was that only three in every five cases where extrinsic evidence was presented resulted in a charge. The discussion highlighted potential deficiencies in the evidence collected by the police, with evidence such as photographs falling short on providing conclusive proof of abuse. Finally, the analysis also uncovered that third parties were crucial in the charging of the suspect.

The geographical and emotional proximity of the couple was also important to the charging decision, since ex-partners and couples living apart were the most likely to secure a charge against the suspect. However, there was an unexpected finding that illustrated how a charge against a suspect was more likely to occur in cases where the victim intended to continue the relationship. This suggested that officers and support agencies ensured the charging of the suspect in order to better protect a victim that may have been dependent on the suspect. Furthermore, the microsystem also found that the significant association between children and suspect charging was not due to a direct relationship. Instead the study suggested that the children involved within the sample represented the suspects' and victims' partner history and highlighted cases that involved individuals from previous abusive relationships.

The suspect's abuse history, specifically previous stalking and harassment or verbal abuse, was linked to the charging of the suspect within the current incident. There was no association with physical abuse, which seemed to contradict expectations (Basow

& Thompson, 2012). In addition, emotional abuse and financial abuse were associated with lesser suspect charging, uncovering potential insight into victim vulnerability where past abuse has targeted the victim's psychology as opposed to physical assaults. Previous cooperation and positive outcomes were associated with a greater level of suspect charging. However, the effect sizes were smaller than when considering any previous DV contact. The dynamic demonstrated that any previous contact the victim had with the police about domestic abuse meant that the case was more likely to result in a charge against the suspect. Finally, examining the suspect's criminal history and the victim's history of offences against the person illustrated cases where the victim was more experienced with violence and was able to use it as a coping mechanism to the abuse. This subsequently resulted in the factors being associated with a greater likelihood of suspect charging, due to the presence and the seriousness of bi-directional violence.

All of the above findings provided insight into what aspects influenced the charging of the suspect. Furthermore, the findings also continuously highlighted the importance of victim engagement and evidenced how closely entangled it was in any explanation of how the factors impacted a charge against the suspect. Overall, Chapter 4 concerned an analysis around the charging of the suspect in order to determine which factors had a significant association. The next chapter of the thesis, Chapter 5, progresses into a deeper exploration of the significant factors associated with victim engagement in the police investigation, whilst controlling for suspect charging.

CHAPTER 5 - CROSS VALIDATING FACTORS OF VICTIM ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

The previous data chapters examined factors that influence victim engagement and suspect charging. In addition, Appendix 3 concerned a broad thematic analysis of the 540 IPV cases, which provided qualitative themes into why the abuse occurred, why the suspect abused the victim and why the victim withdrew from the police investigation. Consequently, the study has three major strands of results made up of both quantitative and qualitative data. As the thesis moves towards drawing conclusions, there is a need to triangulate the three major strands of results in order to consolidate all of the findings and to develop overarching themes. Therefore, the chapter aims to focus on the factors significantly associated with victim engagement and refine them for further examination later in the thesis. The end result of the chapter is to have a list of findings that are significantly associated with victim engagement which have been examined against suspect charging and the themes from the qualitative analysis. The list should only include the variables that appear reliable, valid and have some form of explanation as to potential causality in the effect they have on victim engagement with the police.

In order to do this, the current chapter cross validates the findings of victim engagement (Chapter 3) with the other strands of result within the thesis. More specifically, it will triangulate the significant findings of victim engagement against any corresponding significant findings of suspect charging (Chapter 4) through the use of a 3-way chi square. Further to the statistical comparison, the triangulation will then apply the case file information and themes from Appendix 3 as a qualitative overlay, providing explanations for the significant associations between the factors and victim engagement.

The procedure for the statistical comparisons and qualitative overlay will be discussed within the methodology.

Methodology

The main methodology of the thesis is outlined in Chapter 2, which involves a discussion of the sample and case files used within each chapter of analysis. For further detail on the study design, sampling, materials and procedure used throughout the thesis, please refer to Chapter 2.

The current chapter involves a systematic approach in cross validating the findings of victim engagement. It firstly lists the factors that had a significant association with victim engagement and provides a form of triangulation. Whilst there are four main types of triangulation (Denzin, 2006), the form used in this instance relates to the methodological triangulation of both the quantitative and qualitative data extracted from the case files within the same study. Morse (1991) argues that methodological triangulation maximises the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches, whilst minimising their weaknesses. She further states that a mixed approach contributes practically to the development of knowledge. As such, academics in more practical disciplines, such as policing, often use mixed methods and triangulation within behavioural research in order to address the multifaceted and complex nature of the human response (Schwartz *et al.*, 2009).

Procedure

The process of triangulation began with listing the factors that had a statistically significant relationship to victim engagement (Chapter 3). It is important to note that the list included three exceptions in the form of additional themes, which were included due to interesting results within the quantitative analysis and their frequency across themes within the qualitative analysis. These three themes were gender, alcohol and children, and

were included for thoroughness even though they were not significantly associated with victim engagement.

Regarding each item in the list individually, if the factor was also significantly associated with suspect charging (Chapter 4) there was a statistical comparison of the factor through the use of a 3-way chi square. The use of the 3-way chi square allowed the researcher to examine any significant relationship between the factor and victim engagement within both the charged cases and not charged cases. This was to provide context for the factor and to also examine the effect size differences. The three exceptions did not appear in this analysis even if they appeared significant in the charging analysis. This is because there were no corresponding victim engagement findings to compare with in suspect charging.

Further to the statistical comparison, the analysis also applied any of the qualitative themes that related to the quantitative findings. This process was conducted in order to provide insight and an explanation of how the factors may have directly impacted victim engagement. The triangulation provided a partial explanation of potential causality between the independent variables and the dependent variable, which could be tested in future research. Furthermore, the themes also provided reasons as to why a statistical relationship may not have been as strong as expected.

Finally, there were exceptions to the triangulation process since the researcher chose to examine some factors in more depth than others. During data collection, the researcher stored a log of memos that related to cases that contained unique circumstances which may have had an adverse effect on certain associations within the sample. The researcher chose to examine this in more depth by visualising the factors across the NEM and conducting post hoc testing to ascertain whether some factors had been impacted by extraneous variables within the case.

Table 5.1 below provides an overview of the triangulation process conducted throughout the current chapter.

Table 5.1: Systematic Process of Triangulating Victim Engagement, Charging and Case File Information.

| Factor | Victim Engagement | Compared with Charging | Thematic Overlay | Exceptions and Further Exploration |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|--|---|
| Macrosystem | | | | |
| Gender | No (Key theme) | Yes | Self-Defence/Victim Main Aggressor; Victim False Allegation/Malicious Report | Visualisation Across All Factors in NEM |
| Initial Victim Reluctance | Yes | Yes | None | |
| Source of Report | Yes | Yes | None | |
| Victim Reporting/Requesting Report | Yes | Yes | Suspect Gaining/Regaining Control | |
| Victim Expressed Issues with Court | Yes | Yes | Stress of CJS and Just Want to Move On; Over-Exaggerated Abuse or Incident Taken Too Seriously; Wanted Help Not Punishment; Victim Also to Blame | |
| Exosystem | | | | |
| Bodycam/Video Footage | Yes | Yes | None. | Unique Circumstances; Visualisation Across All Factors in NEM |
| Heavy Reliance on Victim for Prosecution | Yes | Yes | Stress of the CJS and Just Want to Move On | |
| Witness Engagement | Yes | Yes | None. | |
| Microsystem | | | | |
| Children | No (Key theme) | Yes | Issues with Children; Child or Pet issues | Visualisation Across All Factors in NEM |
| Physical Abuse | Yes | Yes | None. | |
| Injury Type | Yes | Yes | None. | |
| Verbal Abuse | Yes | Yes | None. | |
| Stalking/Harassment | Yes | Yes | Stress of CJS and Just Want to Move On; Restoration/Reconciliation Occurred | |
| Suspect 20 years or Older than Victim | Yes | No | Suspect Gaining/Regaining Control | Unique Circumstances; Visualisation Across All |

| Factor | Victim Engagement | Compared with Charging | Thematic Overlay | Exceptions and Further Exploration |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|--|---|
| | | | | Factors in NEM |
| Suspect and Victim Alcohol | Yes (Key theme) | No | Suspect generally Anti-Social/Bad Mood/Mood Swing; Cannot Remember; Wanted Help Not Punishment; Restoration/Reconciliation Occurred; Alcohol | |
| Victim Mental Health/Illness/Disability | Yes | No | None | Unique Circumstances; Visualisation Across All Factors in NEM |
| Victim Generally Scared | Yes | Yes | None | |
| Apparent Self-Blame | Yes | Yes | None | |
| Apparent Understating of Abuse | Yes | Yes | None | |
| Relationship Status during Incident | Yes | Yes | None | |
| Cohabitation during Incident | Yes | Yes | Restoration/Reconciliation Occurred | Unique Circumstances |
| Cohabitation after Incident | Yes | Yes | None | Unique Circumstances |
| Victim States Continuing/Ending Relationship | Yes | Yes | None | |
| Ontogenetic | | | | |
| Suspect Abuse to Same Victim | Yes | Yes | None | |
| History of Stalking/Harassment | Yes | Yes | None | |
| Previous Cooperation/Withdrawal with CJS | Yes | Yes | None | Unique Circumstances |
| Previous Positive/Negative Outcome with CJS | Yes | Yes | None | Unique Circumstances |

Results

Macrosystem

Gender

There was no significant relationship between the suspects' or victims' gender and victim engagement with the police, as reported in the victim engagement analysis. However, there were significant findings in the charging analysis. From the suspect charging analysis, it is important to consider that male suspects were more likely to be charged than female suspects. In addition, when the victim was female the suspect was more likely to be charged than when the victim was male. Considering that majority of the cases involved heterosexual couples, the findings illustrated that the stereotypical cases of male suspect and female victim IPV were more likely to result in a charge than any other dynamic.

The qualitative overlay provided numerous findings within the suspect's interview in which the suspect raised gender issues in the arrest and investigation. The theme of self-defence or the victim being the main aggressor highlighted how some males reported being victims of domestic abuse. They argued that their response to the victim was reasonable and proportionate but that they felt aggrieved because they were arrested over the female. In addition, there were also cases where the male suspect explained to the police that they subjected themselves to the physical abuse because they feared they would be arrested if they reacted to protect themselves. Furthermore, there were cases where the male suspect reported that the victim had made a false allegation to the police. They often explained that the female victim made the malicious report because of a spiteful motivation. Whilst many of the issues outlined above may have been stated to provide a legal defence, there were also victim retraction statements that involved female victims who admitted to making false reports before any abuse had occurred. Because of the consistent gender issues that appeared within the thematic overlay, as well as the

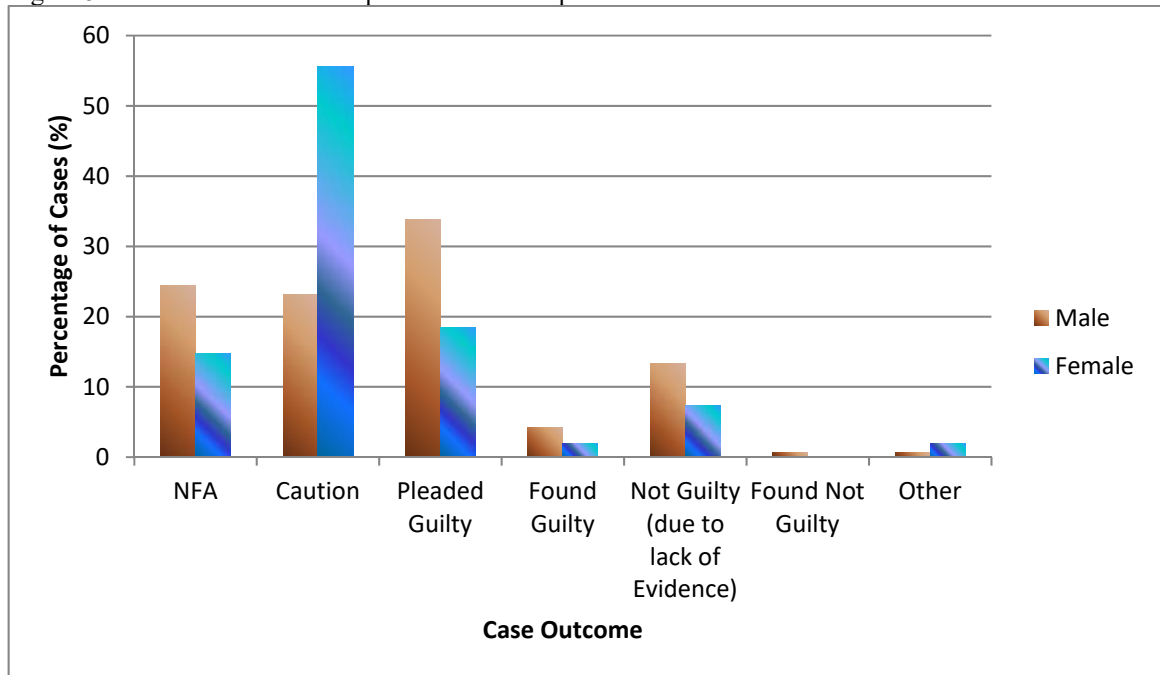
statistical gender bias in the charging of the suspect, the suspects' gender was visualised across all factors of the NEM to determine whether there were any trends in the data.

When examining the suspect gender against other factors within the NEM, there was a significant association between suspect gender and initial victim reluctance, $\chi^2(1, n = 534) = 4.336, p = .037, \phi = .090$. In this instance, when the suspect was female the case was more likely to have involved a victim who was initially reluctant to cooperate with the police (14.6%, $n = 21$) in comparison to when the suspect was male (8.5%, $n = 33$).

Furthermore, a second chi square examined suspect gender against an admission of guilt within the case $\chi^2(1, n = 535) = 21.129, p < .001, \phi = .199$. It found that female suspects were also more likely to admit their abuse (16.1%, $n = 38$) in comparison to male suspects (4.3%, $n = 13$).

The researcher then examined suspect gender against the case outcome and discovered that there was a significant association. As 5 cells (35.7%) had an expected frequency of less than 5, Fisher's exact significance was used, $\chi^2(6, n = 534) = 28.038, FET < .001, V = .229$. The test illustrated that the cases which involved a female victim were more likely to result in a caution (21.3%, $n = 30$) in comparison to a guilty plea (5.8%, $n = 10$), being found guilty (4.8%, $n = 1$) and not guilty (due to lack of evidence) 5.9%, $n = 4$). Figure 2 below illustrated the gender difference in case outcome across the sample of 534 cases where it was possible to record.

Figure 5.1: Statistical Relationship between the Suspects' Gender and the Outcome of the Case.



Initial Victim Reluctance

Initial victim reluctance had a significant association with both victim engagement and suspect charging. To further explore the relationship, charging of the suspect was used as a control within a 3-way chi square test. With regards to the first partial table, which controlled for no charge, there was a significant relationship between initial victim reluctance and victim engagement, $X^2(1, n = 267) = 164.674, p < .001, \phi = .785$. The chi square found that in cases where initial victim reluctance was present the case was more likely to result in victim withdrawal (94.3%, $n = 99$) in comparison to cases where it was not present (14.2%, $n = 23$). When examining the second partial table, which controlled for a charge, there was also a significant relationship between initial victim reluctance and victim engagement, $X^2(1, n = 267) = 54.720, p < .001, \phi = .453$. The finding illustrated that when initial victim reluctance was present the case was more likely to result in victim withdrawal (74.4%, $n = 29$) in comparison to cases where it was not present (18.0%, $n = 41$). Overall, the 3-way chi square illustrated how the presence of initial victim reluctance meant that a case was more likely to result in victim withdrawal when there was both a charge and no charge against the suspect. However, it found that

the association between initial victim reluctance and victim withdrawal was stronger in cases where the suspect was not charged.

Source of Report

The source of the report had a significant relationship with both victim engagement and the charging of the suspect. Subsequently, a 3-way chi square was utilised to examine the source of report against victim engagement, whilst controlling for a charge against the suspect. Both partial tables within the chi square contained 2 cells (33.3%) that had an expected count of less than 5, so Fisher's exact significance was selected. The first partial table, which controlled for no charge, found that there was a significant association between the groups, $X^2(2, n = 262) = 12.034$, *exact p* = .002, *V* = .215. It outlined how cases more likely to result in victim cooperation were those in which the victim reported the abuse themselves (60.8%, *n* = 115) in comparison to when the suspect reported the incident (37.5%, *n* = 3) or when it was reported by a third party (36.9%, *n* = 24). The second partial table, which controlled for a charge, also found a significant association between the groups, $X^2(2, n = 260) = 16.515$, *exact p* < .001, *V* = .254. Again, it outlined that the cases more likely to result in victim cooperation were those in which the victim reported the abuse themselves (81.7%, *n* = 138) in comparison to when it was reported by a third party (58.0%, *n* = 51). Overall the findings showed that cases which resulted in both a charge and no charge against the suspect were more likely to involve victim cooperation when the victim reported the abuse incident themselves, as opposed to when it was reported by any third party.

Victim Reporting/Requesting Report

The previous data chapters illustrated that there was a significant relationship between the victim reporting their abuse in both the victim engagement and suspect charging

analysis. In order to determine the overall impact the factor had on victim engagement, the current data chapter examined whether the victim reported or requested a third party report against victim engagement whilst controlling for a charge against the suspect. In this instance the first partial table, which controlled for a charge, found that there was a significant relationship between the two factors, $\chi^2(1, n = 221) = 5.878, p = .015, \phi = .163$. It found that when the victim reported or requested the report, the case was more likely to be one of victim cooperation (61.1%, $n = 121$) in comparison to when the victim had no involvement in the report (34.8%, $n = 8$). The second partial table, which controlled for a charge, also found a significant relationship, $\chi^2(1, n = 243) = 33.632, p < .001, \phi = .372$. Much like the first partial table, it found that when a victim reported the abuse or requested a report, the case was more likely to result in victim cooperation (81.6%, $n = 155$) in comparison to when the victim had no involvement in the report (41.5%, $n = 22$). The finding showed that the victims who reported the incident directly or requested a third party report of the abuse were associated with victim cooperation in cases which resulted in both a charge and no charge against the suspect. However, the results also demonstrated how the relationship was stronger in cases where the suspect was charged in comparison to when they were not charged.

Furthermore, the themes that related to why the abuse occurred and why the victim withdrew provided insight into how the victims may or may not have been able to report their abuse directly. Within the thematic overlay there was a theme that related to the suspect gaining/regaining control that directly impacted the source of report. The theme concerned a number of cases where the victim attempted to call the police, but the suspect would often take their phone and prevent the victim from help-seeking. Often this exacerbated the abuse and resulted in the victim shouting for a neighbour's help, or fleeing the address and seeking third party support. Therefore, if the victim was successful in calling the police they would have been considered as reporting the incident

themselves. However, in cases where the victim attempted to report the incident themselves but were unsuccessful due to the suspect's control, the circumstances had given time for a third party to make an unrequested report of the incident. The explanation would account for the victims who cooperated even though they did not report the abuse incident themselves within the previous factor 'source of report', since they made every effort to report the abuse themselves.

Victim Expressed Issues with Court

With regards to the victim expressing issues with going to court, both the victim engagement analysis and the charging analysis found significant relationships with the factor. In order to explore the relationships in further depth, the researcher examined the victim expressing issues with court against victim engagement, whilst controlling for a charge against the suspect. The first partial table, which controlled for no charge, found that there was a significant relationship, $X^2(1, n = 54) = 14.328, p < .001, \phi = .515$. The result showed that the cases where the victim expressed issues with going to court were more likely to result in victim withdrawal (82.8%, $n = 24$) in comparison to when they stated they were willing to attend (32.0%, $n = 8$). The second partial table involved 3 cells (75.0%) that had an expected count of less than 5. Subsequently, Fisher's exact significance was used in the second partial table, which controlled for a charge, and also found a significant relationship between the two factors, $X^2(1, n = 19) = 19.000, exact p = .006, \phi = .1000$. The result showed that when the victim expressed issues with attending court the case was more likely to result in victim withdrawal (100.0%, $n = 17$) in comparison to cases where they stated they were willing to attend court (0.0%, $n = 0$). The result demonstrated that, regardless of the charging decision made within the case, when a victim expressed issues with attending court they were more likely to withdraw

from the investigation. However, the results further illustrated how the relationship was stronger in cases where there was a charge against the suspect.

The finding that victim engagement was associated with victims who expressed an issue with going to court was enriched by the themes developed from the qualitative data. There were numerous themes that mentioned issues with the prosecution and attending court, which included stress of CJS, victims stating that the abuse incident was petty or of equal blame, a prosecution was too serious and victims wanting help as opposed to punishment. Within these themes, the victims explained how they did not want to pursue a prosecution because the suspect had reacted to their behaviour, or that the response was too serious. Other victims became IPV free before they attended court, and felt that the CJS was just a stressful process for punishing the suspect. As they had achieved their aim of becoming IPV free and had no interest in punishing the suspect, they withdrew from the process because they believed it was in their best interests. This often occurred in criminal damage cases where the damage was repaired or paid for by the suspect and was also evident in harassment cases where the unwanted contact had ceased. Furthermore, some victims expressly mentioned within their retraction statements that they wanted the suspect to get help and not go to prison. In such cases the suspect often had issues with mental health or alcohol and the victim wanted to continue the relationship.

Exosystem

Bodycam/Video Footage

Both the victim engagement and charging analysis found significant relationships with the presence of bodycam/video footage. Subsequently, the researcher used a 3-way chi square test to examine the relationship between bodycam/video footage and victim engagement, whilst controlling for a charge against the suspect. The first partial table had

1 cell (25.0%) with an expected count less than 5, which meant that Fisher's exact significance was used. The first partial table, which controlled for no charge, found a significant relationship between bodycam/video footage and victim engagement, $X^2(1, n = 270) = 4.967$, *exact* $p = .026$, $\phi = .136$. It showed that when bodycam/video footage was present the case was more likely to result in withdrawal (80.0%, $n = 8$) in comparison to cases where it was not present (44.2%, $n = 115$). The second partial table, which controlled for a charge, also found a significant relationship between bodycam/video footage and victim engagement, $X^2(1, n = 270) = 9.519$, $p = .002$, $\phi = .188$. The result illustrated that when bodycam/video footage was present the case was more likely to result in withdrawal (54.5%, $n = 12$) in comparison to cases where bodycam/video footage was not present (24.2%, $n = 60$). The overall findings suggested that, regardless of the charging decisions made within the case, victim withdrawal was more likely to occur in cases where bodycam/video footage was present.

Whilst there were no themes from the thematic analysis that directly applied to the finding, the case file information illustrated how the factor involved victims who appeared to be more vulnerable than the victims involved in the cases where bodycam/video footage was not present. Specifically, much of the IPV within these cases occurred in public places and upon police arrival the victim explicitly stated that they did not want to involve officers. Subsequently, the factor of bodycam/video footage was visualised across all factors of the NEM to determine whether there was a trend in the data.

Upon visualisation across the NEM, chi squares were conducted on factors that appeared to correlate with the factor of bodycam/video footage. Firstly, there was a significant association between bodycam/video footage and the victim reporting/requesting the report, $X^2(1, n = 464) = 15.841$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .185$. The finding demonstrated that the cases that involved bodycam/video footage were more likely to be

cases where the victim was not involved in the reporting of their abuse (17.1%, $n = 13$) in comparison to when no bodycam/video footage was present (4.6%, $n = 18$).

Secondly, there was a significant association between groups when examining bodycam/video and the DASH risk assessment, $\chi^2 (2, n = 385) = 12.875, p = .002, V = .183$. It found that in cases where bodycam/video footage was present 15.4% of cases ($n = 12$) were marked as high risk, 4.7%, of cases ($n = 8$) were medium risk, and 3.6% of cases ($n = 5$) were standard risk. The finding showed how cases that involved bodycam/video footage were more likely to be assessed as high risk victims on the DASH risk assessment.

Thirdly, a chi square was used to examine the presence of bodycam/video footage and the victim understating or undermining their abuse, $\chi^2 (1, n = 528) = 6.361, p = .012, \phi = .110$. The result showed that the cases which involved bodycam/video footage were more likely to contain a victim who understated their abuse (11.4%, $n = 10$) in comparison to when bodycam/video footage was not present (4.5%, $n = 20$).

From the results it seemed that the association between victim engagement and bodycam/video footage occurred because the victims coded into the bodycam/video footage factor appeared more vulnerable and higher risk than others within the sample. To investigate whether this was indeed the case, the researcher computed a new factor named 'Vulnerable Victims'. Within this factor, a victim was coded as a vulnerable victim if: they did not report the abuse or request the report themselves; they underreported or undermined their abuse to police; and they were recorded as high risk on the DASH risk assessment. Since the criteria were very specific, only 8 cases matched all of the requirements. The newly computed factor of vulnerable victims was then subject to a chi square against victim engagement to determine whether there was a relationship between the factors. Because 1 cell (25.0%) had an expected count less than 5, Fisher's exact significance was used. The chi square found that there was a significant relationship

between the two factors, $X^2 (1, n = 540) = 14.367$, exact $p < .001$, $\phi = .163$. The finding illustrated that the cases more likely to involve victim withdrawal were those where the victim was coded as a vulnerable victim (100.0%, $n = 8$) in comparison to cases where the victim was not coded as vulnerable a victim using the criteria specified above (35.2%, $n = 187$).

Heavy Reliance on Victim for Prosecution

The prosecution placing a heavy reliance on the victim for evidence was significant with both the victim engagement and charging decision. To further examine the relationship between a heavy reliance on the victims' testimony and victim engagement, a 3-way chi square test was conducted in order to control for charging within the sample. The first partial table, which controlled for no charge, did not find a significant relationship between the factors ($p > .05$). When examining the second partial table, which controlled for a charge, there was a significant relationship between the two factors, $X^2 (1, n = 268) = 13.029$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .220$. The result showed that in cases where there was heavy reliance on the victim's testimony the case was more likely to involve victim cooperation (79.3%, $n = 157$) in comparison to when there was no reliance on the victim and victimless prosecution was possible (57.1%, $n = 40$).

The thematic overlay highlighted a number of cases where the victim was aware that the case would continue even though they were withdrawing from the investigation and prosecution. In many cases the victim stated that they were in favour of the suspect being prosecuted through court, but did not want to be part of the process. Whilst this factor illustrated that building a strong case based on extrinsic evidence was more likely to build toward victim withdrawal, the withdrawal in such cases was not negative. The theme that referred to the stress of the CJS illustrated how building towards victim

withdrawal was in the best interests of the victim within those particular cases, as it removed the burden of prosecution from the victim whilst ensuring their safety.

Witness Engagement

Witness engagement was significantly associated with both victim engagement and suspect charging, in which witness cooperation had a significant relationship to victim cooperation and a successful charge against the suspect. The study used a 3-way chi square test in order to examine the relationship witness engagement had with victim engagement, whilst controlling for a charge against the suspect. Upon analysis the chi square found that neither of the partial tables, which controlled for when the suspect was charged and not charged, had a significant association with victim engagement ($ps > .05$).

Microsystem

Children

Whilst the factors around children were not significantly associated with victim engagement and the significant findings with regards to charging seemed to indicate the couple's partner history, children appeared as a common theme across each section of the qualitative analysis. One theme as to why the abuse occurred concerned arguments about childcare, or the direct involvement of children in the abuse. In addition, what was apparent in the victims' reasons for retraction was how they prioritised their children's needs or how they feared repercussions towards themselves and their children. An explanation for the incongruence between the quantitative and qualitative findings was that the prioritisation of children could culminate as either cooperation or withdrawal based upon the victims' circumstances. This meant that whilst children were an important consideration to the victims of IPV, there was no statistical association to victim engagement.

In order to investigate the involvement of children within victim engagement, 3-way chi squares were utilised to control for the types of children when examining whether the child was directly involved in the incident. The first 3 sets of 3-way chi squares examined whether the involvement of children in the abuse incident had a relationship to victim engagement, whilst controlling for children of the relationship, children of the suspect only and children of the victim only. All the tests showed that there was no association between the child being involved in the incident and victim engagement, regardless of whether the child was of the relationship, of the suspect only or of the victim only ($ps > .05$). The findings suggested that even if a child was involved in the abuse incident directly, it did not have any association with the victim's engagement within the case.

To further explore the effect of children, the researcher took in account case file information in which some victims mentioned the involvement of social services as a reason for their withdrawal. To determine whether there was any association with regards to social services and victim engagement, 3 sets of 3-way chi squares were used to examine whether a referral to a professional support network had a relationship to victim engagement, whilst controlling for children of the relationship, children of the suspect only and children of the victim only. The first result showed that there was no significant relationship between a referral to a professional support network and victim engagement when controlling for the presence of children of the relationship only ($p > .05$). The second finding also found that there was no significant relationship between a referral to a professional support network and victim engagement when controlling for children of the suspect only ($p > .05$). With regards to the third test, however, there was a significant association between a referral to a professional support network and victim engagement when controlling for the presence of a child of the victim only, $X^2(1, n = 116) = 5.522, p = .019, \phi = .218$. The result showed that in the cases that involved a child of the victim

only, the case was more likely to result in victim withdrawal when there was a referral to a professional support network (44.2%, $n = 19$) in comparison to when there was no referral to a professional support network (23.3%, $n = 17$). The finding suggested that the victims who had a child, children, or were pregnant from outside of the intimate partnership were more likely to result in withdrawal when there was a referral to a professional support network (most commonly social services).

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse appeared as a significant finding in both the victim engagement and charging analysis. Therefore, the factor required further exploration in cross validation. The study used a 3-way chi square test to examine the physical abuse and victim engagement, whilst controlling for charging. The first partial table, which controlled for no charge, found no significant relationship ($p > .05$). The second partial table, which controlled for a charge, found that there was a significant relationship between physical abuse and victim engagement, $X^2 (1, n = 268) = 5.997, p = .014, \phi = .150$. The finding showed that when the suspect was charged, the cases of physical abuse were more likely to involve victim withdrawal (30.1%, $n = 59$) in comparison to cases where physical abuse was not present (15.3%, $n = 11$).

Injury Type

As the type of injury the victim suffered had a relationship with both victim engagement and the charging of a suspect, a 3-way chi square was used to examine the relationship between victim injury and victim engagement, whilst controlling for a charge against the suspect. Upon analysis, however, neither partial table had a significant relationship with victim engagement ($ps > .05$).

Verbal Abuse

Much like physical abuse, verbal abuse also had a significant relationship within both the victim engagement and charging analyses. Subsequently, the factor was re-examined against victim engagement whilst controlling for a charge against the suspect. The first partial table, which controlled for no charge, found no significant relationship between the factors ($p > .05$). However, the second partial table, which controlled for a charge, found a significant relationship between verbal abuse and victim engagement, $X^2 (1, n = 236) = 5.277, p = .022, \phi = .150$. The test found that the cases which involved verbal abuse were more likely to result in victim withdrawal (29.3%, $n = 51$) in comparison to cases which did not involve verbal abuse (14.5%, $n = 9$).

Stalking/Harassment

Stalking and harassment was a significant finding in both sets of statistical analyses and was therefore re-examined against victim engagement, whilst controlling for a charge against the suspect. The first partial table, which controlled for no charge, found that there was a significant relationship between stalking/harassment and victim engagement, $X^2 (1, n = 269) = 5.180, p = .023, \phi = .139$. It showed that the cases more likely to result in victim cooperation were those that involved stalking/harassment (72.2%, $n = 26$) in comparison to cases that did not involve stalking/harassment (51.9%, $n = 121$). The second partial table, which controlled for a charge, also found a significant relationship between stalking/harassment and victim engagement, $X^2 (1, n = 261) = 9.167, p = .002, \phi = .187$. The finding again showed that the cases more likely to result in victim cooperation were those that involved stalking/harassment (85.9%, $n = 67$) in comparison to cases that did not involve stalking/harassment (67.8%, $n = 124$). The finding overall illustrated how stalking/harassment was associated with victim cooperation in cases where the suspects

were both charged and not charged; however, there was a stronger association in cases that resulted in a charge against the suspect.

The themes developed from the qualitative data provided insight into stalking/harassment cases. The theme that concerned the stress of the CJS and the occurrence of reconciliation/restoration provided an explanation for some of the cases which resulted in withdrawal. There were some victims that withdrew after reporting the stalking and harassment because the unwanted contact from the suspect had ceased. Victims then reasoned within their retraction statements that they had become IPV free and no longer needed the time and resources of the police. Furthermore, they also highlighted how continuing to pursue a case against the suspect could aggravate the circumstances and potentially restart the stalking and harassment.

Suspect 20 years or Older

During the analysis into age and victim engagement, the study uncovered a trend in the data and found that there was a significant relationship between victim withdrawal and cases where the suspect was 20 years or older than the victim. The suspect being 20 years or older was visualised across the NEM to determine whether the factor had an association with other variables within the analysis. Upon visualisation, there seemed to be a trend between age difference and the victim's alcohol dependency. A chi square was conducted to examine the relationship between the victim being drink dependent and the suspect being 20 years or older, which highlighted that 1 cell (25.0%) had an expected count of less than 5. Fisher's exact significance was used and the chi square found a significant relationship, $X^2(1, n = 193) = 11.250$, *exact* $p = .014$, $\phi = .241$. The test illustrated that the cases more likely to involve victims who were drink dependent were those that involved a couple where the suspect was 20 years or old than the victim (50.0%, $n = 3$) in comparison to cases that involved couples with other age differences (8.6%, $n = 16$).

In addition, the cross validation applied a thematic overlay to the factor and found that none of the existing themes applied directly to the finding. However, some of the cases involved in the factor contained unique circumstances which may have impacted engagement. Such circumstances involved the victim being a registered carer of the suspect, in which they had taken on an official duty of care towards the suspect within their relationship.

Suspect and Victim Alcohol

The quantitative analysis found that there was a significant association between victim engagement and the consumption of alcohol by the suspect and victim. Alcohol, especially with regards to the suspect, often appeared within the thematic overlay. In the summary of the incident there was a theme of suspects who became violent and aggressive after drinking, which culminated in the IPV incident. There was also a theme of victims using alcohol as a reason for withdrawal. In some cases, the victim seemed to use alcohol as a means of excusing the suspect's behaviour and often stated that the suspect was nice when they were sober. Similarly, themes around why the victim withdrew uncovered how some victims reported that they did not want punishment for the suspect since they were already receiving rehabilitation for their alcoholism. In such cases, the victim considered that an investigation and prosecution against the suspect would only exacerbate the IPV by making the drinking, and ergo the abuse, worse. Furthermore, alcohol appeared once again when examining the suspect interviews. Many suspects claimed they could not remember the incident due to alcohol and, therefore, did not provide detail about the incident from their perspective. However, the lack of memory did not necessarily mean that they denied guilt in every case, since there seemed to be an equal split of suspects that admitted and denied the incident after being read the victim's statement. With regards to alcohol and victims, some victims stated that they were

withdrawing because they embellished the event due to being under the influence, or that they had caused injury to themselves. Victims also withdrew as they admitted that they could no longer remember the events of the incident clearly due to intoxication and were no longer interested in a prosecution.

Victim Mental Health/Illness/Disability

Cases that involved a victim with a mental health issue, illness and/or disability were significantly associated with victim engagement. Since there was no corresponding significant relationship with charging, the cross validation progressed into a thematic overlay and found that none of the existing themes applied to the factor. However, the case file information highlighted how there were some cases that involved unique circumstances which may have impacted victim engagement.

The unique circumstances mainly pertained to victims that presented with mental health issues. The cross validation took into account the circumstances since they would have affected the overall relationship of the factor in an examination of victim engagement. One example of a unique circumstance involved an elderly female victim who had been missing for a number of days. Upon being found, the victim was cared for by numerous agencies and had no recollection of her movements or activities. Upon speaking to her partner it was discovered that she had spent all the money in a joint account. The suspect was angry and had hit the victim in the head with his walking stick during the argument, for which he was placed under arrest for assault. As the victim had previously gone missing for a number of days there was an existing support network in place who assessed her mental health, as well as police involvement as she was reported as a vulnerable missing person. This unique set of circumstances may have resulted in victim cooperation because the victim was already passively involved with the police and support networks, in comparison to active victim cooperation within other cases. A

second case involved a victim with diagnosed autism and ADHD. The victim was known to various authorities and the police for making continuous false allegations of abuse by family members and her partner. In this instance the victim had made a report of abuse which the police investigated. Because of the evidence and circumstances presented, as well as the explicit notes made by officers in the case file, the likelihood was that the case was another false allegation. However, it was apparent that the victim in this instance cooperated throughout the investigation even though it was concluded that the incident had never occurred.

In order to gain quantitative support for the assertion that the factor contained limitations due to unique circumstances with regards to mental health issues, the researcher visualised victim mental health issues, illnesses and/or disabilities across all factors of the NEM. Upon visualisation, a chi square was conducted on the victim having a mental health/illness/disability and an existing professional support network, which uncovered a significant association, $\chi^2 (1, n = 374) = 5.274, p = .022, \phi = .119$. The finding illustrated that cases where the victim had a mental health issue, illness and/or disability were more likely to involve an existing professional support network (15.4%, $n = 12$) in comparison to cases where there were no mental health issues, illnesses, and/or disabilities (7.1%, $n = 21$). Whilst the factor of existing professional support networks itself had no association with victim engagement, the qualitative data provided an explanation as to the effect it may have had specifically to those with mental health issues.

Victim Generally Scared

As the victim reporting being generally scared had an association with both victim engagement and charging, a 3-way chi square was used to examine the relationship between the factor and victim engagement, whilst controlling for a charge against the

suspect. Upon analysis, however, neither partial table had a significant relationship to victim engagement ($ps > .05$).

Apparent Self-Blame

Within the thematic analysis of why the victim withdrew, there was a theme that involved victims who stated that they felt guilty because they were also to blame for the IPV incident. Victim self-blame ranged from the victim admitting that the abuse was bi-directional, through to the victim blaming themselves for having an affair or for provoking the suspect. The insight provided detail into the finding that victim self-blame is significantly associated with victim withdrawal, since the victims that felt guilty about their own behaviour during the incident seemingly removed blame from the suspect and withdrew from the investigation. To further examine the area and determine whether the victim's own violence had an association with self-blame, a chi square was conducted to determine the relationship between victim self-blame and bi-directional violence in the case. The test found a significant association between the groups, $X^2(2, n = 383) = 7.557$, $p = .023$, $V = .140$. It found that the cases more likely to involve victim self-blame were those where the victim used violence first in the incident (18.5%, $n = 5$) in comparison to when the victim acted in self-defence (6.3%, $n = 4$) or when bi-directional abuse was not present (5.1%, $n = 15$). The finding suggested that there was a relationship between the victims' use of violence and how they blamed themselves, in which victims who used violence first were more likely to self-blame.

Apparent Understating of Abuse

In the victim engagement and charging analysis there was a significant association with the victim understating or undermining their abuse. In order to examine the relationship between the factor and victim engagement further, a 3-way chi square test was conducted

in order to control a charge against the suspect. The first partial table, which controlled for no charge, found a significant relationship between the victim understating their abuse and victim engagement, $X^2(1, n = 264) = 87.338, p < .001, \phi = .522$. The result showed that cases where the victim understated or undermined their abuse were more likely to result in victim withdrawal (96.3%, $n = 52$) in comparison to when the victim fully disclosed the abuse incident (31.9%, $n = 67$). The second partial table, which controlled for a charge, also found a significant relationship between the two factors, $X^2(1, n = 264) = 87.338, p < .001, \phi = .575$. The finding also showed that the cases where the victim understated or undermined their abuse were more likely to result in withdrawal (91.2%, $n = 31$) in comparison to cases where the victim fully disclosed the incident to the police (16.1%, $n = 37$).

Relationship Status during Incident

The relationship status of the couple was a significant finding within both the victim engagement and charging analyses. Subsequently, the association between relationship status and victim engagement was examined, whilst controlling for a charge against the suspect. The first partial table, which controlled for no charge, found a significant relationship between relationship status and victim engagement, $X^2(1, n = 268) = 18.921, p < .001, \phi = .266$. The result demonstrated how the cases more likely to result in cooperation were those that involved ex-partners (73.6%, $n = 64$) in comparison to intimate partnerships (45.3%, $n = 82$). The second partial table, which controlled for a charge, also found a significant relationship between the two variables, $X^2(1, n = 270) = 14.618, p < .001, \phi = .233$. It also found that cases more likely to result in victim cooperation were those that involved ex-partners (84.3%, $n = 107$) in comparison to intimate partnerships (63.6%, $n = 91$).

Cohabitation during Incident

As the cohabitation status during the incident was significant in both chapters of statistical analyses, the factor was re-examined against victim engagement whilst controlling for a charge against the suspect. The first partial table, which controlled for no charge, found a significant relationship, $X^2(1, n = 250) = 19.247, p < .001, \phi = .277$. The test found that cases in which the couple lived together at the time of the incident were more likely to result in victim withdrawal (54.5%, $n = 79$) in comparison to the cases where the couple lived apart at the time of the incident (26.7%, $n = 28$). The second partial table, which controlled for a charge, also found a significant relationship, $X^2(1, n = 258) = 12.991, p < .001, \phi = .224$. The finding also showed that the cases where the couple lived together at the time of the incident were more likely to result in withdrawal (35.0%, $n = 43$) in comparison to when the couple lived apart at the time of the incident (15.6%, $n = 114$).

The thematic overlay provided themes that directly applied to the cohabitation of the couple and provided specific insight into why some victims withdrew even when they were living apart from the suspect. For example, the theme of reconciliation/restoration was common in cases of criminal damage since the theme usually referred to cases where the suspect had damaged the victim's property because they lived at separate addresses. After the victim had reported the incident the suspect paid or repaired the damage and the victim then felt a prosecution was no longer necessary.

Cohabitation after Incident

Similar to the section above, the cohabitation status of the couple after the incident was also a significant factor throughout the chapters of analysis. In order to further explore the finding, a 3-way chi square test was conducted in order to control for a charge against the suspect. The first partial table, which controlled for no charge, found a significant relationship between the cohabitation status after the incident and victim engagement, X^2

(1, $n = 236$) = 28.966, $p < .001$, $\phi = .350$. The test found that cases where the couple lived together after the abuse were more likely to result in victim withdrawal (63.6%, $n = 63$) in comparison to cases where the couple lived apart after the incident (28.5%, $n = 39$). The second partial table, which controlled for a charge, also found a significant relationship, X^2 (1, $n = 250$) = 37.089, $p < .001$, $\phi = .421$. Again, the result showed that cases where the couple lived together after the abuse incident were more likely to withdraw (61.9%, $n = 26$) in comparison to cases where the couple lived apart after the incident (16.2%, $n = 27$). The finding implied that, in cases that involved both a charge and no charge against the suspect, a couple who lived together after the abuse incident was more likely to involve victim withdrawal from the police investigation. However, the result further demonstrated that the association was stronger in cases where the suspect was charged for an IPV related crime.

The finding often referred to victims who no longer lived with the suspect after the incident as they had moved to a more secure environment, such as their parents' dwelling. Cases where the couple remained at the same address after the incident, or where the victim returned to the home address of the suspect were associated with victim withdrawal; whereby the following qualitative overlay provided insight into the association. Those linked to withdrawal stated that the suspect owned the property, which often meant that they and their children would be homeless if they left the relationship.

However, there were some unique circumstances involved within the sample that provided reasoning for why a couple continued to live together whilst the victim cooperated with the police. One particular case involved a dwelling which both parties had invested money into and they would not move until they had sold the property in order to receive their fair financial share. Such circumstances provided reasoning for the handful of cases where the couple still lived together, but were no longer in an intimate partnership and were cooperative with police. Such unique circumstances would have

lowered the strength of association between the couple living together after the incident and victim withdrawal.

Victim States Continuing/Ending Relationship

In both the victim engagement and charging analyses, there was a significant finding with regards to the victim stating that they were continuing or ending the relationship with the suspect immediately after the abuse incident. In order to examine the factor in more depth, a 3-way chi square test was used to examine the factor against victim engagement whilst controlling for a charge against the suspect. The first partial table, which controlled for no charge, found no significant relationship between the factor and victim engagement ($p > .05$). In the second partial table, which controlled for a charge, there was a significant relationship between the victim stating they were continuing or ending the relationship and victim engagement, $X^2(1, n = 64) = 21.260, p < .001, \phi = .576$. The finding illustrated that the cases more likely to result in victim cooperation were the cases in which the victim stated an intention to end the relationship with the suspect (86.2%, $n = 25$) in comparison to cases where the victim expressed an intention to continue the relationship with the suspect (28.6%, $n = 10$).

Ontogenetic

Suspect Abuse to Same Victim

The suspect abusing the same victim was a significant finding within both the victim engagement and suspect charging analyses. Therefore, further exploration was required using a 3-way chi square in order to control for a charge against the suspect. Upon analysis, however, neither partial table had a significant relationship with victim engagement ($ps > .05$).

History of Stalking/Harassment

Much like the previous result, the suspect having a history of stalking and harassment was associated with both sets of analyses. However, upon further exploration using a 3-way chi square in order to examine the factor against victim engagement whilst controlling for a charge against the suspect, neither partial table had a significant relationship with victim engagement ($ps > .05$).

Previous Cooperation/Withdrawal with CJS

The victims' previous consistent engagement was a significant finding within both the victim engagement and charging analyses. Therefore, the factor was re-examined against victim engagement whilst controlling for a charge against the suspect. The first partial table, which controlled for no charge, found a significant relationship between previous victim engagement and current victim engagement, $X^2 (1, n = 42) = 4.978, p = .026, \phi = .344$. The finding showed that the cases more likely to result in victim cooperation were those where the victim had previously cooperated with the police (83.3%, $n = 15$) in comparison to cases where the victim previously withdrew from the police investigation (50.0%, $n = 12$). The second partial table, which controlled for a charge, also found a significant relationship between the two factors, $X^2 (1, n = 143) = 22.225, p < .001, \phi = .394$. The finding also illustrated that the cases more likely to result in victim cooperation were those where the victim had previously cooperated with the police investigation (90.8%, $n = 79$) in comparison to cases where the victim withdrew (57.1%, $n = 32$). Both results found that, regardless of charging, the victims who had previously cooperated with the police were more likely to cooperate with the current investigation. However, the results did show that the statistical relationship between the factors was stronger in cases where the suspect was charged.

Whilst there were no themes that directly applied to the finding, there were unique circumstances recorded in some cases of victim cooperation about their previous withdrawal from past investigations. In some cases the victim had expressly mentioned within their statements that they had consistently withdrawn from past investigations for various reasons, but this was then followed by the victim discussing how the current case was the ‘final straw’. Whilst these unique statements were apparent within the victim’s statement, there seemed to be no corresponding mention of the victim’s intention within the MG3. Instead the CPS focused on the victim’s previous withdrawal as opposed to their current intentions. Therefore, the case file information suggested that the ‘final straw’ cases would have accounted for the weaker association between previous victim withdrawal and current victim withdrawal in comparison to the association between previous victim cooperation and current victim cooperation.

Previous Positive/Negative Outcome with CJS

The victim receiving a consistent positive or negative outcome from the CJS was significant with both the victim engagement and charging analyses. In order to examine the relationship between the factor and victim engagement more thoroughly, a 3-way chi square test was conducted to control for a charge against the suspect. The first partial table, which controlled for no charge, found no significant association ($p > .05$). The second partial table, which controlled for a charge, found a significant relationship between the victims’ previous outcomes with the CJS and victim engagement with the police, $X^2(1, n = 126) = 9.516, p = .002, \phi = .275$. The result demonstrated that the cases more likely to result in victim cooperation were those where the victim had previously received consistent positive outcomes with the CJS (87.7%, $n = 71$) in comparison to cases where the victim had received previous consistent negative outcomes with the CJS (64.4%, $n = 29$).

Whilst previous positive outcomes were linked to current victim cooperation, the research notes also highlighted some unique circumstances to consider in case outcomes. With regards to victims who expressed previous negative outcomes, one victim explained how they felt tricked into a prosecution within a previous case, since the police did not explain that providing a statement was the beginning of a formal complaint that would ultimately lead to court action. Therefore, the victim refused to provide a statement and ultimately refused to engage with police procedure altogether. In addition, a separate case involved a victim who explained how they were part of a previous dual arrest and that they were previously unhappy with being arrested alongside the suspect.

Discussion

The aim of the current chapter was to cross validate previous results in order to further examine the findings with regards with victim engagement. The triangulation consisted of a list of significant factors associated with victim engagement, a comparison of the findings with the suspect charging if applicable, and the application of a thematic overlay or qualitative data from case files. Themes formed around why the abuse occurred, why the suspect abused the victim, why the victim withdrew, as well as unique circumstances and case file information, which allowed for further explanations as to the effect the factors had on victim engagement. In addition, the thematic overlay also identified some complexity and limitations in the application of some factors to the topic of victim engagement.

Macrosystem

When gender was considered within the sample it seemed clear that the cases of male suspect and female victim IPV were more likely to receive a charge and go to court. The results from cross validation found that victims were more initially reluctant to follow police procedure in cases that involved a female suspect. In addition, the results also

found that female suspects were more likely to fully admit their abuse to the police. The collection of findings throughout cross validation illustrated that when the police dealt with cases which involved female suspects, the combination of reluctant victims and the female suspects fully admitting the incident meant that the case was more likely to be disposed through the use of a simple caution. This differed from cases that involved male suspects since a victim was more likely to follow police procedure and the male suspect was less likely to admit the abuse, which resulted in the police focusing on a charge against the suspect. Contrary to the earlier discussion in Chapter 4 that outlined how gender bias seemed to occur in the police response (Worrall *et al.*, 2006), the cross validation of data suggested that the relationship between gender and charging, as well as gender and the case outcome, was due to the interaction of the suspect during the initial police response.

In addition, the results also offered a fresh perspective in an examination of male victim engagement with the police. Whilst previous studies into male victims suggested that the reluctance in support seeking was due to the difficulties of being associated with victimisation (Rowlands, 2006; Cook, 1997), the results of the current study suggested that the reluctance was due to a fear of criminalising their female partner.

Relating back to the literature surrounding the rational emotional model (Anderson, 2000) and prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), the literature suggested that victims who considered cooperation with the police to be more negative than another strategy were more likely to withdraw from the investigation. Throughout the cross validation, there were multiple examples where this occurred within the thematic overlay. For example, the theme of restoration/reconciliation involved victims who stated that their grievance was resolved and that a prosecution was merely an aggravating process. From the victim's perspective there were more negative effects in cooperating with the investigation in comparison to them withdrawing, which resulted in the victim

deciding to withdraw. Furthermore, the concept of loss aversion (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984) related to many findings such as the victim expressing issues with going to court, as well as multiple findings through the microsystem such as the loss of the suspect (relationship status and relationship intention), the loss of housing (living together during and after incident), loss of family unit and income (expressed in some retraction statements) and the loss of children (withdrawal when there was a child/pregnancy of victim only and a referral to a professional support network). This has been previously considered by academics as the impossible choices a victim of IPV must make in deciding whether to engage with an investigation and prosecution of their intimate partner (Carey & Soloman, 2014).

The results continued to find a strong link between victims who reported the incident and victim cooperation. The results aligned closely to Robinson and Stroshine (2005) who argued that the victims' expectations and intentions have some worth in assessing their engagement. In this instance, the victims who reported the abuse to the police themselves, or requested a third party report, evidenced an initial expectation or intention to involve the police in dealing with the IPV situation. Therefore, the source of report and whether the victim reported or requested a third party report were important in an assessment of victim engagement.

More complex decision making processes, such as the 'elimination by aspects theory' (Galotti, 2007) were not captured by the research. Since the current study only examined correlation and not causation, it meant that there was no examination of the factors that a victim prioritised in their decision to engage with the police. However, the results from the cross validation captured some aspects of the theory, since cases where a victim expressed issues with attending court had a stronger relationship to victim withdrawal when there was a charge against the suspect. The result implied that in cases where the victim expressed issues with going to court and the charging of the suspect

meant that their attendance would become a reality; the factor became a priority in the victims' decision to withdraw. Future research using subjective victim interviews would be more suited for the collection of data into the victims' priorities when they consider engagement with the police (Bryce *et al.*, 2016; Graham-Kevan *et al.*, 2015).

Exosystem

The next level of analysis uncovered numerous limitations in explaining the association between some of the factors within the exosystem and victim engagement. The association between bodycam/video footage and victim engagement occurred because the vulnerable victims coded into the factor meant that there was an association to victim withdrawal. The explanation for the effects of bodycam/video footage as a factor was that the bodycam, CCTV or phone footage allowed for the charging of the suspect without the victim's testimony, especially when supported by other extrinsic evidence. The interpretation was supported by both the previous literature into the effectiveness of bodycam/video footage (Morrow *et al.*, 2016), as well as the following findings into the association between victim withdrawal and a possible victimless prosecution.

As mentioned previously within the charging analysis, the significant results into various witness and evidence factors increased the likelihood of a charge. The evidence subsequently led to the CPS often considering a victimless prosecution based upon all of the evidence present in the case. Therefore, the cases that involved bodycam/video footage and when the CPS suggested a possible victimless prosecution were the cases in which extrinsic evidence was often present in lieu of the victim. Furthermore, the explanation also accounted for the weak association between witness engagement and victim engagement. Whilst cooperative witnesses may have supported the victim's testimony and increased the likelihood of victim cooperation, the association would have been weakened because the witnesses also lessened the need for the victim to give evidence altogether. This became especially pertinent when the case was based around a

third party report and evidence, since the third parties acted as advocates throughout the criminal justice system without the victim's cooperation. The findings referred closely to Ellison (2002) as it seemed that the cases had enough evidence to secure a prosecution whilst also removing the burden from the victim.

With all of the above in mind, the findings in the exosystem mainly referred to the evidence present and how the case progressed with a witness (sometimes in lieu of the victim). Therefore, the chapter highlighted limitations in the use of bodycam/video footage as a factor of victim engagement and illustrated complexities in the interpretation of witness engagement affecting victim engagement with the police. Furthermore, the CPS placing a heavy reliance on the victim for prosecution instead focused on whether the CPS considered a victimless prosecution within the case. The altered interpretation and perspective better represented the direction of the relationship between victimless prosecutions and victim engagement (Schuller & Stewart, 2000).

Microsystem

The findings into the involvement of children related closely to the exosystem, as they concerned the involvement of professional support networks. Throughout the analysis it seemed that the presence of children in the relationship had no effect on victim engagement with the police. Furthermore, there was no association when the factor was controlled for the direct involvement of children in the abuse incident. Whilst previous research and subjective victim interviews stated that victims with children were more likely to report abuse (Bonomi *et al.*, 2006) and prioritise their children (Kelly, 2009), it seemed that the involvement of children had no relationship with the victims' decision to engage with the police. The previous chapter outlined how there were often impossible choices for victims with children, since they had to choose between withdrawing from the investigation to maintain a family unit and income, or cooperating with the police to convict the suspect and destroy family unit and income (Carey & Soloman, 2014).

However, the qualitative data from the thematic overlay illustrated how there were difficulties in some cases that involved professional support networks. Douglas and Hines (2010) explained how mothers that are involved in domestic abuse believe that child protection professionals do not fully understand the issues involved in abuse and often respond inappropriately to their situation. Taking into account the themes within the study, in addition to the literature around social services involvement, the current chapter used children as a control when examining victim engagement against a referral to a professional support network. Whilst there was no association with children of the relationship and children belonging to the suspect, there was an association with children belonging to the victim. The finding indicated that victims who had children outside of the intimate partnership were more likely to withdraw from the police investigation when there was a referral to a professional support network, since it was most commonly social services that had become involved in the protection of the children.

Whilst there were many explanations as to why a victim with children from a previous relationship would withdraw upon referral to a support network, one possible suggestion was that the victims had a heightened duty of care towards the children. The heightened duty would have been a result of the children being in the full protection of the victim (i.e. the victim was 100% responsible for their protection) in comparison to children of the relationship in which the victim shared the responsibility of protection with the suspect (i.e. the suspect and victim were both 50% responsible for their protection). Taking into account the literature on the victim's decision making process and the effects of low self-esteem (Josephs *et al.*, 1992), the victim would have a lowered self-esteem, a feeling of guilt and a feeling of failure in protection after the abuse incident when they considered the children's welfare. The combination would result in an increased sensitivity, or a heightened negative reaction towards the removal or loss of the children through social services. Furthermore, such cases would also have involved a risk

of the child being removed from the victim and placed in the protection of the other biological parent. Such a position could have overwhelmed the victims within the study and resulted in the victim feeling pressured by the suspect, the biological parent and the support services, which consequently resulted in victim withdrawal in order to minimise the risk of loss altogether.

Continuing with findings related to the couple's situation, both the geographical and emotional proximity continued to have strong associations to victim engagement. The relationship status, relationship intention and cohabitation all demonstrated how victim cooperation was more likely in cases where there was a larger distance between the couple. On the whole, those who were ex-partners were more likely to be living apart and those in intimate partnerships were more likely to be living together. Contrasting the results with previous literature, Canadian samples highlighted how IPV was more prominent in couples cohabiting without marriage in comparison to those who were cohabiting with marriage (Brownridge, 2008). Furthermore, research into specific risk factors found that cohabitation was a factor that increased the risk of victimisation, but marriage was a factor that lowered the risk of victimisation (Abramsky, 2011). With reference to the previous literature, the themes applied in cross validation explained how there were a number of variations to the couples' circumstances, with some ex-partners who still lived together and some intimate partners who lived apart. Furthermore, the complications were compounded when the couples' marriage status was considered. Some victims were recorded as separated or divorced, but the results showed how they still cared for the suspect and had withdrawn from the investigation. The circumstances outlined above demonstrated the variation in the victims' circumstances, which subsequently resulted in the factors specific to the current relationship status having an association to victim engagement. Overall, the emotional and geographical proximity of the couple should be examined carefully since factors such as marriage did not accurately

represent the couple's relationship. Instead, the more direct factors of whether the couple considered themselves as intimate partnerships or not seemed to best reflect their emotional proximity.

The suspects' and victims' use of alcohol did not appear to affect the charging decisions made within the cases of IPV, contrary to previous academic literature (Schuller & Stewart, 2000). However, the factors appeared consistently throughout the engagement analysis, which suggested that victim engagement was affected by the suspect consuming alcohol, the suspect being drink dependent and the victim consuming alcohol. Referring back to previous literature, many academics have linked the perpetration and victimisation of IPV with the consumption of alcohol (Hines & Douglas, 2012; Stuart *et al.*, 2012) or seeking alcohol treatment (Schonbrun *et al.*, 2013). The results in this instance suggested that the consumption of alcohol by both the suspect and victim meant that the case was more likely to result in victim withdrawal. Throughout the thematic overlay there were numerous explanations as to why the associations may have occurred. One example involved a handful of cases in which many of the victims toned down the incident of abuse after they had become sober. Furthermore, there was also evidence of victims who discharged the blame of the incident through the suspect's use of alcohol as opposed to the suspect themselves. Conversely, the results also showed that cases where the suspect was alcohol dependent were more likely to involve victim cooperation. The thematic overlay provided insight into a small number of these cases and suggested that the association between the variables occurred because the victims wanted help and support in dealing with the suspects' alcohol addiction. The lack of association between alcohol and charging seemed to have occurred because a number of victims who had consumed alcohol did not appear intoxicated to the officers who dealt with the incident. In future, to determine whether alcohol affected the charging of the suspect in each case, a separate factor of whether the suspect and victim appear intoxicated would be an

effective means of further researching the overall effect of drugs and alcohol on the charging decision.

Regarding the abuse itself, there were significant associations between victim engagement and various types of abuse. The strongest association was victim cooperation in cases of stalking and harassment. The relationship appeared significant because the victim often reported such behaviour to the police since they wanted no further contact with the suspect and were, therefore, happy to cooperate in order to prevent communication. Furthermore, because the victim often kept evidence of the unwanted communication the police were often presented with a straightforward case. Overall, the circumstances resulted in the stalking and harassment cases forming a strong association to both charging and victim engagement with the police. However, there were some cases where the victim withdrew, in which the thematic overlay provided an explanation for the outcome. In some cases the suspect had ceased communication after the victim had reported the stalking and harassment to the police. The victim reasoned they had become IPV free and that a prosecution could agitate the suspect. Such cases demonstrated the difference in aims between the victim and the police, since the victim merely aimed to become IPV free whereas the police aimed to prosecute the suspect (Harris-Short & Miles, 2011; Payne & Wermeling, 2009). In cases where the IPV had indeed ended and the case was dropped, the conflict in aims became especially apparent when the victim considered the outcome as positive, but the police considered the outcome as negative.

Physical and verbal abuse were associated with victim withdrawal across the sample examined, and were likely to occur together as the suspect utilised verbal abuse in the build up to the violence and aggression. Whilst previous literature explained that physical abuse was taken more seriously than other forms of non-physical abuse (Basow & Thompson, 2012), it appeared that the seriousness in response was partly the reason for victim withdrawal. In some of the victims' retraction statements, the victim mentioned

how the violence was not serious enough to warrant a prosecution of the suspect. The results were further supported by findings that illustrated cases where the victim underreported or undermined the level of violence experienced in an attempt to lessen the seriousness of the police response.

Factors related to the victim also appeared to have further depth within the results of the cross validation. Rose *et al.* (2012) explained how self-blame can come as one of the many psychological reactions to IPV. The results of the chapter built upon the previous literature since they demonstrated that cases where the victim used physical force first were significantly more likely to involve victim self-blame than those who used physical force in self-defence or did not use physical force at all. This was further supported by the thematic overlay, in which some victims explained how it was unfair to solely punish the suspect for the incident since they themselves had used physical force in provocation. However, throughout the research, there appeared to be no evidence of self-blame by the victim for not being able to leave the abusive relationship, as suggested by Wolhuter *et al.* (2009).

Difficulties arose in the application of the victim having a mental health issue, illness or disability as a factor in association to victim cooperation. Unique circumstances within the cases meant that the association seemed to have occurred because of the cases that involved mental health issues which skewed the factor as a whole. Overall, the factor did not appear to be a reliable indicator of victim engagement, since victim cooperation appeared in cases that involved false accounts of abuse and when the victim passively cooperated with the police due to earlier events. The interpretation was further supported by the results into presence of an existing support network when considering victims with a mental health issue, illness or disability, since it demonstrated how care services were already involved with the victims coded into the factor. Therefore, the finding around the victim having a mental health issue, illness or disability aligned with literature such as

Ballan *et al.* (2014), since it appeared that special dispensation was given to such cases. Because the factor heavily interacted with the exosystem and the cases involved unique circumstances in an overall effect on victim engagement, the results highlighted limitations in the use of the factor in an overall assessment of victim engagement with the police.

Whilst individual demographic factors were not associated with victim engagement, there were associations with factors that reflected the couples' interaction. An example was the individual age of the suspect and victim, in comparison to the factor of age difference between the couple. Although individual age resulted in no association, which supported literature that suggested IPV and engagement was a problem across all ages (Weeks & Leblanc, 2011), the age difference between the couple was associated with victim engagement. The age differences within the cases and their effect on victim engagement related to victim reliance within the relationship, which was caused by the different stages in the individuals' lives. In cases where the victim was very young, the issues would be the suspect having a greater amount of material resources, more money, more life experience, as well as potential social isolation if friends and family were upset by the age difference. This would correlate with other issues that suggested the victim was more vulnerable, such as material/resource issues, homelessness, drug or alcohol addiction and child abuse from family members. The explanation was supported within the results as there was a significant association between the suspect being 20 years or older than the victim and the victim being drink dependent. Furthermore, when the couple involved were elderly there was often an issue with care. Cases where the suspect was elderly and the victim was 20 years younger often involved a relationship where the suspect relied on the victim for day to day care. As some of these victims were the registered carer for the suspect, the victim had also taken on a duty of care towards the suspect in addition to their relationship. Because the couple were in an intimate

relationship and the victim was a registered carer, there were often strong emotions attached to the prosecution and punishment of the suspect, since the victim had to consider both their emotional attachment to the suspect and their duty of care.

Ontogenetic

Throughout the thesis, the victims' previous engagement with the police was not only significantly associated with the victim engagement and suspect charging, but it was often mentioned expressly by the CPS when they determined the strength of a case. The consideration of the victims' previous engagement to determine whether there was a 'realistic prospect of conviction' justified the need for an assessment of the victims' engagement with the police from the outset of the investigation, especially since the current study found that there was an association to victim engagement. The research suggested that only previous consistent cooperation or withdrawal had an association with victim engagement, as there was no examination of the victims who had previous mixed engagement with the police. The results illustrated that previous victim withdrawal occurred for numerous reasons which were not subsequently taken into account by the CPS. Therefore, when the police conduct an assessment of victim engagement they should take into account the reasons for any previous withdrawal, since it would provide crucial insight for the CPS when they consider the victim's engagement and a realistic prospect of conviction within the current case.

In addition, the victims' view of the police and CJS also had a significant relationship with victim engagement and the charging of the suspect. It seemed that the experience a victim had with prior police intervention influenced the way in which they engaged with the police. The finding aligned with previous literature that explained how a prosecution was not always in the best interests of the victim (Hoyle, 1998) and that victims who received their preference in dealing with the suspect were more likely to report subsequent abuse (Felson *et al.*, 2005; Hickman & Simpson, 2003). The findings

within the cross validation highlighted that great care should have been taken by officers when they explained the procedure to victims, so as not to ‘trick’ them into making a formal complaint against their will. Furthermore, previous literature highlighted the dangers of dual arrest policies as they appeared to damage future victim engagement (Fraehlich & Ursel, 2014). The current results provided support for the previous literature, as it found that one victim explained how their withdrawal was due to the dent in their confidence after the police previously used a dual arrest response. Overall, the results outlined above highlighted a need for increased police legitimacy, patience and communication in dealing with the initial scene of abuse, as the response affects the victims’ subsequent engagement with the police investigation.

Conclusion

The previous chapters have concerned a multifactorial analysis into victim engagement with the police. In total, the study examined 540 police cases of IPV within the first quarter of 2013 and extracted 103 factors that were analysed against victim engagement (Chapter 3) and charging (Chapter 4). The study also examined the qualitative data extracted from the cases and formed themes around recurring information (please see Appendix 3). The current chapter consolidated and cross validated all of the overarching themes that had emerged from the results throughout the thesis. During the analysis, some factors were broken down in order to better represent their association with victim engagement and in doing so allowed for the creation of more specific factors within the study.

The factors with strong associations to victim engagement appeared within the macrosystem, microsystem and ontogenetic levels of the NEM, which supported literature such as Stith *et al.* (2004). Findings around the victim’s decision making process in the macrosystem found that the victim reporting or requesting a third party report was

associated with victim cooperation, whereas initial victim reluctance, an unrequested third party report and the victim expressing issues with attending court were all associated with victim withdrawal. The microsystem found that stalking and harassment, no injury, the suspect being drink dependent, the victim being generally scared, ex-partners and the victim expressing intentions to leave the relationship were all associated with victim cooperation. Likewise, victims with children from a previous relationship that had been referred to a professional support network, the presence of physical abuse, the presence of verbal abuse, the suspect being 20 years or older than the victim, the suspect and victim consuming alcohol, apparent self-blame, the victim understating or undermining the abuse, being in an intimate partnership, the couple cohabitating before and after the abuse incident, and the victim expressing intention to continue the relationship were all associated with victim withdrawal. Finally, the ontogenetic level of analysis found that the suspect abusing the same victim, the suspect having a history of stalking and harassment, the victim having previous DV contact with the police, previous cooperation and previous positive outcomes with the CJS were associated with victim cooperation. However, previous victim withdrawal and previous negative outcomes with the CJS were linked to victim withdrawal.

There were difficulties in applying factors within the exosystem, since the level of analysis seemed to relate to the evidence and progression of the case alongside victim engagement. With this in mind, factors that were associated with victim engagement in the exosystem were interpreted carefully. They suggested that cases which involved strong evidence were associated with victim withdrawal, however in such instances the victim's withdrawal was not a negative outcome for either the police or the victim. This was because both the police and victims had often achieved both of their aims in dealing with the IPV incident (Ellison, 2002).

Within the charging analysis, however, the areas that had the strongest association to charging were the exosystem and the ontogenetic level of analysis. The exosystem found that the presence of bodycam/video footage, a high DASH rating, the presence of extrinsic evidence, a potential victimless prosecution, presence of witnesses, witness cooperation, the incident involving others, incident involving abuse to others, presence of existing professional support networks, victim isolation, and the presence of a referral to a professional support network were all associated with a charge against the suspect. The ontogenetic level found that the presence of previous IPV for the couple, the suspect abusing the same victim in the past, suspect history of abusing any other partner, suspect having previous convictions, a higher number of previous convictions (suspect), history of verbal abuse, history of stalking and harassment, history of any abuse, victim having previous convictions for offences against the person, the victim having previous DV contact with the police, previous cooperation, and previous positive outcomes all had a significant relationship to a charge against the suspect.

The findings from the cross validation illustrated, therefore, that the levels of the NEM that appeared weak in assessing the victim's engagement were the strongest in assessing the charging of the suspect. In addition, the ontogenetic level of analysis was strongly associated with both victim engagement and charging; however, it found that different themes of factors applied separately to both sets of analysis. The couple's previous criminal history and repeated abuse incidents strongly impacted the charging of the suspect within the current cases, whereas the victim's previous engagement and outcomes with the CJS strongly impacted the victim's engagement within the current case.

Therefore, upon cross validation of the data, the study found that the NEM provided an effective framework for data extraction and analysis. Furthermore, the overlap in some findings illustrated areas in which victim engagement and suspect

charging were intrinsically linked to one another, whereas the separation of other factors highlighted their direct impact upon either victim engagement or charging. In addition, the cross validation of the findings also uncovered various associations between the factors themselves, which demonstrated the complexities involved within the IPV cases. The outcome of the cross validation was a shortlist of refined factors that were statistically linked to victim engagement, which had been cross validated against the charging of the suspect and in depth case file information (please see Appendix 4 for the full list of refined victim engagement factors).

As mentioned above, the chapter found that there was a complex interaction between all of the variables within the cases of IPV. Therefore, in order to fully develop the research, the next chapter of the thesis progresses into an examination of the interaction between the significant factors of victim engagement. In order to gain further insight into how the factors interacted with one another, a different form of analysis is required. This is because cross-tabulations are conceptually restricted in their explanation of a phenomenon, since they analyse distinct subsets of variables without the variables considering each other. The further development of the thesis, which is explored in the next chapter, requires the use of a multidimensional scaling procedure or a multivariate classification system in order to examine the correlation between the factors.

CHAPTER 6 - STRUCTURING FACTORS OF VICTIM ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

The literature review established that there would be worth in examining the correlation between the factors to determine more specific and representative themes of victim cooperation and withdrawal within cases of IPV. There was both a practical and theoretical rationale for conducting the analysis into the co-occurrence of factors.

Practically, it would be too onerous for individual officers to consider the interaction of the significant factors contained in the NEM (Chapters 3-5) in each case. This would become especially prominent when considering that officers attend a large volume of domestic abuse cases on a daily basis, which all present with vastly different circumstances.

Theoretically, the previous data chapters found numerous factors associated with victim engagement that carried a range of effect sizes. The findings with the largest effect sizes were decision making factors in the macrosystem, as well as emotional and physical proximity factors in the microsystem. They illustrated how some variables could be considered the most proximal to the dependent variable, which was the victim's decision to engage (Stith *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, the thesis moves into chapter 6 with the research question: is there a more representative structure for the significant factors of victim engagement?

Taking into account the previous findings and the research question, the current chapter aims to explore whether an examination of the correlation between the factors leads to distinct similarities or differences which could be used to group the findings. In order to achieve the aim, the current chapter uses the processes derived from facet theory

and multi-dimensional scaling to examine the co-occurrence of significant factors across the sample within the thesis.

Within the macrosystem, the analysis found that the victim being initially reluctant to follow police procedure, an unrequested third party report and the victim expressing issues with attending court were all associated with victim withdrawal. As established in earlier literature, the factors mainly pertained to the victim's decision making process, referring to literature from the rational emotional model (Anderson, 2000) and prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). It examined the concept of loss aversion in the victim's decision making (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984), whereby victims made decisions in order to minimise the risk of loss. This related to the impossible choices victims must make in their decision to engage (Carey & Soloman, 2014), in which many of the decisions resulted in some form of risk and loss for the victim. Furthermore, an unrequested third party report highlighted some cases where the victim did not make an active decision to report the incident and had, therefore, expressed no intention to involve the police in the handling of their abuse from the outset (Robinson & Stroshine, 2005). As the decision making factors appeared to be related theoretically, the study expected that the factors would also co-occur empirically.

The exosystem contained few factors that had an association with victim engagement, as the level of analysis seemed to better reflect factors than had an association with the charging of the suspect. However, witness engagement was associated with victim cooperation, in which the finding seemed to pertain to victim credibility (Lifschitz, 2004). A possible victimless prosecution was associated with victim withdrawal, as it appeared that the victim was able to remove themselves from court proceedings whilst still enabling a successful case (Ellison, 2002).

The microsystem was the largest level of analysis within the NEM and contained numerous factors associated with victim cooperation and victim withdrawal. With regards

to victim cooperation, cases involving stalking and harassment have previously been taken less seriously by officers who considered it as less serious than physical abuse cases (Lynch & Logan, 2015). Because previous literature outlines that the seriousness of the case is linked to the victim's level of injury and level of fear (Trujillo & Ross, 2008), the factors of the victim reporting feeling scared and victim suffering injuries may heavily correlate with physical abuse cases, but not with cases that involved stalking and harassment. Furthermore, since physical abuse cases often involved verbal abuse in the lead up to the assault, the factor of verbal abuse may also correlate with the factors outlined above. The suspect being drink dependent and the victim expressing an intention to end the relationship could also co-occur, as the victim may end the relationship due to the suspect's alcohol addiction. In addition, the factors of suspect drink dependency and the victim ending the relationship could also co-occur with stalking and harassment cases, in which the suspect used their alcohol addiction as a sympathy technique in an attempt to remove blame and reconnect with the victim (Bonomi *et al.*, 2011). Considering the co-occurrence of factors associated with victim withdrawal, the literature around the couple's emotional and geographical proximity could relate to relationship and cohabitation status (Abramsky, 2011). In addition, their consumption of alcohol may also relate to their close proximity, as couples in intimate partnerships may have been more likely to consume alcohol together (Hines & Douglas, 2012; Stuart *et al.*, 2012). The co-occurrence of these factors would all form a theme that related to the suspect's and victim's social status within the microsystem as outlined by Kaukinen *et al.* (2013).

Finally, the ontogenetic system involved factors associated with the victim's previous engagement with the police. Earlier literature explained how the CJS intervention and the imprisonment of the suspect did not affect the reporting of IPV (Bell *et al.*, 2013). This would mean that the victim's previous DV contact with the police could correlate with previous positive cooperation and previous positive outcomes, since the

police had intervened in prior abuse (Hickman & Simpson, 2003). Conversely, the factors of previous negative outcomes with the CJS and previous withdrawal would also be likely to co-occur (Hickman & Simpson, 2003), since they would have demonstrated how the victim did not find the CJS suitable to their prior needs and that was the reason for their withdrawal in the past (Hoyle, 1998).

Methodology

The current chapter concerns an examination of the correlation between the significant findings to victim engagement and concerns the same sample used throughout the thesis. Please see Chapter 2 for the main methodology, which explains the study design, sample, materials and procedure.

Analysis

In order to conduct the analysis within the current chapter, the study made use of Smallest Space Analysis (SSA) and Partially Ordered Scalogram Analysis with base Coordinates (POSAC) in examining the co-occurrence between the factors.

Variables

A shortlist of factors was compiled throughout the previous chapters of the thesis and consisted of 32 factors that were associated with either victim cooperation or victim withdrawal (please see Appendix 4).

As the data needed to meet certain requirements for SSA, the list was reviewed to determine the eligibility of each factor into the analysis. Firstly, only nominal dichotomous variables were used (coded as: 0 – Not Present; 1 – Present). The dichotomous approach is an effective method for secondary source studies since the binary coding gives maximum clarity and reliability (Almond & Canter, 2007). Secondly, similar to previous literature, there were exclusion rates with regards to the presence of the factors in the overall sample. Factors that were present in less than 5% of cases were

excluded, as low prevalence may affect the results and their inclusion would have little benefit (Goodwill & Alison, 2007). Likewise, factors with greater than 70% prevalence were also excluded as they would occur in too many cases to be useful in determining themes (Almond & Canter, 2007).

Smallest Space Analysis (SSA)

With regards to the SSA, the thesis used the same approach found in previous research (Almond *et al.*, 2015; Almond & Canter, 2007; Canter *et al.*, 2003), and aimed to examine the relationship between the factors associated with victim cooperation and withdrawal. The use of SSA provides a visual representation of the relationships between all variables when they are considered together, and therefore readily elucidates any patterns or themes within the dataset (Lingoes, 1973). It does this by examining the association between one variable with all other variables, calculating a correlation coefficient for each and then ranking the variables in terms of correlation. It then repeats this process for each of the variables within the dataset, resulting in a large matrix of variables ranked against one another based on their correlation. The ranks are then transformed into a visual output, which represents the variables as ‘points’ in an abstract space, with the ‘distance’ between the points representing the correlation between the variables. The points that are closer together are those that have a higher correlation, meaning the variables were more likely to occur simultaneously than the variables that are positioned further away. Therefore, the output can be readily interpreted purely on the basis of space between the points without a need to impose any definition or scale. As highlighted in previous research, Jaccard’s coefficient is considered the most appropriate measure of association in research using secondary sources (i.e. police data), which were not specifically designed for the research project (Canter *et al.*, 2003). This is because within the police case files, some factors may well have been present but not recorded by the officers and staff involved within the case. Taking into account the criteria for eligibility, each factor was

examined to determine whether it was suitable for SSA and whether it was associated with either victim cooperation or victim withdrawal. Reviewing the eligibility of the factors for SSA, Table 6.1 below outlines the factors included in the relevant SSAs, as well as the factors that were excluded from the SSA altogether.

Table 6.1: Factors Included in the Cooperation SSA, Withdrawal SSA and Factors Excluded from the SSA.

| Included in SSA | | Excluded from SSA |
|---|--|---|
| Cooperation SSA | Withdrawal SSA | (Reason) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Witness Cooperation • Stalking and Harassment • Suspect Drink Dependent • Victim Expresses Intention to End Relationship • Same Age • Victim Reported Generally Scared • Abuse to Same Victim • Suspect History of Stalking and Harassment • Victim Previous DV Contact • Previous Victim Cooperation • Previous Positive Outcomes with CJS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Victim Reluctance • Unrequested Third Party Report • Issues with Court • Possible Victimless Prosecution • Suspect Consumed Alcohol • Victim Consumed Alcohol • Victim Self Blame • Victim Understated or Undermined Abuse • Current Intimate Partnership • Living Together During Abuse • Living Together After Abuse | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mean Age (Scale Data) • Suspect Older (Scale Data) • Physical Abuse (>70%) • Victim Injured (>70%) • Verbal Abuse (>70%) • Suspect 20 Years or Older than Victim (<5%) |

| Included in SSA | | Excluded from SSA |
|-----------------|---|-------------------|
| Cooperation SSA | Withdrawal SSA | (Reason) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child of Victim Only and Referral to a Professional Support Network • Victim Expresses Intention to Continue Relationship • Previous Victim Withdrawal • Previous Negative Outcomes with the CJS | |

Partially Ordered Scalogram Analysis with base Coordinates (POSAC)

In addition to SSA, the study also made use of a POSAC in examining the factors that had the strongest statistical relationship to victim engagement. As the factors relating to cooperation and withdrawal were separated, there was a separate analysis on five factors with the strongest relationship to victim cooperation, as well as on five factors with the strongest relationship to victim withdrawal. The five factors included into the POSACs are illustrated in the table below.

Table 6.2: The Five Factors with the Strongest Effect Size to Victim Cooperation and Victim Withdrawal.

| Cooperation POSAC | Effect Size (ϕ) | Withdrawal POSAC | Effect Size (ϕ) |
|--|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim Expressing Intention to End Relationship • Previous Victim Cooperation | <p>.440</p> <p>.393</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Victim Reluctance • Victim Expressed | <p>.670</p> <p>.611</p> |

| Cooperation POSAC | Effect Size (ϕ) | Withdrawal POSAC | Effect Size (ϕ) |
|--|------------------------|---|------------------------|
| | | Issues with Attending Court | |
| • Previous Positive Outcomes | .274 | • Victim Understated or Undermined Abuse | .551 |
| • Victim Reported or Requested a Third Party Report | .247 | • Cohabitation after the Incident | .404 |
| • Stalking and Harassment | .194 | • Victim Self- Blame | .315 |

POSAC concerns the examination of a sample based upon the interaction between a set of variables simultaneously. It does this by forming numerical profiles based upon the presence or absence of the factors examined, and by providing an overall score for each victim within the sample. Within the current study, each of the five factors examined were coded as either present (1) or not present (0). This meant that the numerical profile for each victim ranged from 0+0+0+0+0 through to 1+1+1+1+1, with any combination of factor profile possible. A POSAC also assumes there is an underlying order to the factors, which in this instance is the strength of cooperation or withdrawal. Therefore, in addition to the individual factors forming a numerical profile, each victim was allocated a total score of engagement based upon the totalling of their profile, which in the current study ranged from 0 - 5. The total score was developed from an underlying assumption that cooperation or withdrawal would become stronger when more associated factors were present. Therefore, the total score related to the engagement of the victim, with the highest score of 5 relating to strong cooperation or withdrawal within the analyses and the lowest

score of 0 relating to no effect in engagement. In addition, it is possible for numerous victims to have the same score, but for this score to be made up of different factor profiles (Taylor, 2002; Shye, 1985).

When placed into the graph, each profile is plotted as a geometric point within the space, with the more similar profiles occurring closer together. If two or more victims have the same factors present, and are therefore considered to have the same numerical profile, they will be represented by the same plotted point within the graph. The plots are given coordinates relating to each axis, ranging from 0 - 100 for the *X* and *Y* axes, and 0 - 200 for the joint and lateral axes. Upon examining the plotted points, the total scores are measured along the joint (*J*) axis (bottom-left through to top-right), with the lowest score appearing in the bottom-left and the highest score appearing in the top-right. Therefore, the joint axis examines the quantitative total score of cooperation or withdrawal for each victim within the sample. However, as mentioned, the total score could comprise of different factor profiles, meaning that there is a difference in the composition of factors forming the total score. When examining the various profiles, the difference between the profiles can be observed along the lateral (*L*) axis (bottom-right through to top-left). As the axis examines the differences in the profiles of factors that make up the victim's total score, the lateral axis ultimately represents the qualitative differences between the factors involved in each profile. As mentioned, it is also important to note that numerous victims may have the same factor profile and total score, and will therefore all appear as the same plotted point within the graph (Porter & Alison, 2001; Shye *et al.*, 1994).

When considering the plots, the POSAC will provide a main plot of all the victim profiles that appeared within the analysis. In addition, the POSAC also provides an individual item plot for each of the five factors used within the analysis. The item plots appear using the same structure as the main configuration of profiles, but appear as the original coding (present – 1; not present – 0) to illustrate which factors appeared in which

profiles within the configuration. In order to interpret the POSAC analysis, the item plots are partitioned so the profiles where the factor was present fall on one side of the partition and profiles where the factor was absent fall on the other. POSAC calculates six coefficients for each item plot, which represents the suitability for each of the six commonly used forms of partitioning (please see Figure 6.1 below). Each of the partitions provides an interpretation for the item plot and ultimately provides an overall explanation as to the plotted points within the analysis (Shye, 2009; Taylor, 2002; Porter & Alison, 2001).

Figure 6.1: Six Ways of Partitioning Item Plots in a Partially Ordered Scalogram Analysis with base Coordinates (POSAC).

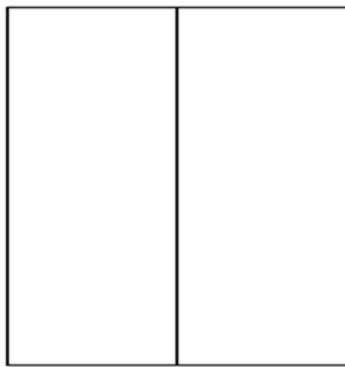


Figure 6.1.1 - Illustrates an X partition



Figure 6.1.2 - Illustrates a Y partition

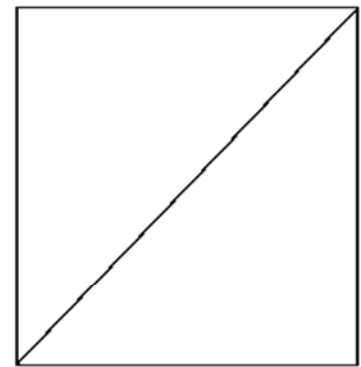


Figure 6.1.3 - Illustrates an L partition

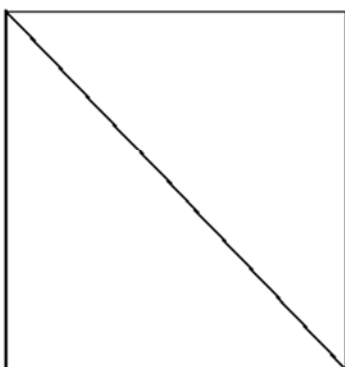


Figure 6.1.4 - Illustrates a J partition

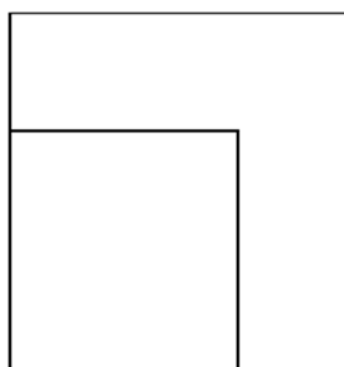


Figure 6.1.5 - Illustrates a Q partition

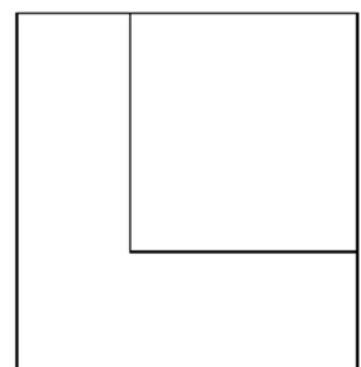


Figure 6.1.6 - Illustrates a P partition

Results

Smallest Space Analysis (SSA) of Factors associated with Victim Engagement

SSA of Cooperation Factors

The hypothesis for the cooperation SSA was:

1. There will be distinct facets present within the correlation of cooperation factors that form reliable themes of victim cooperation.

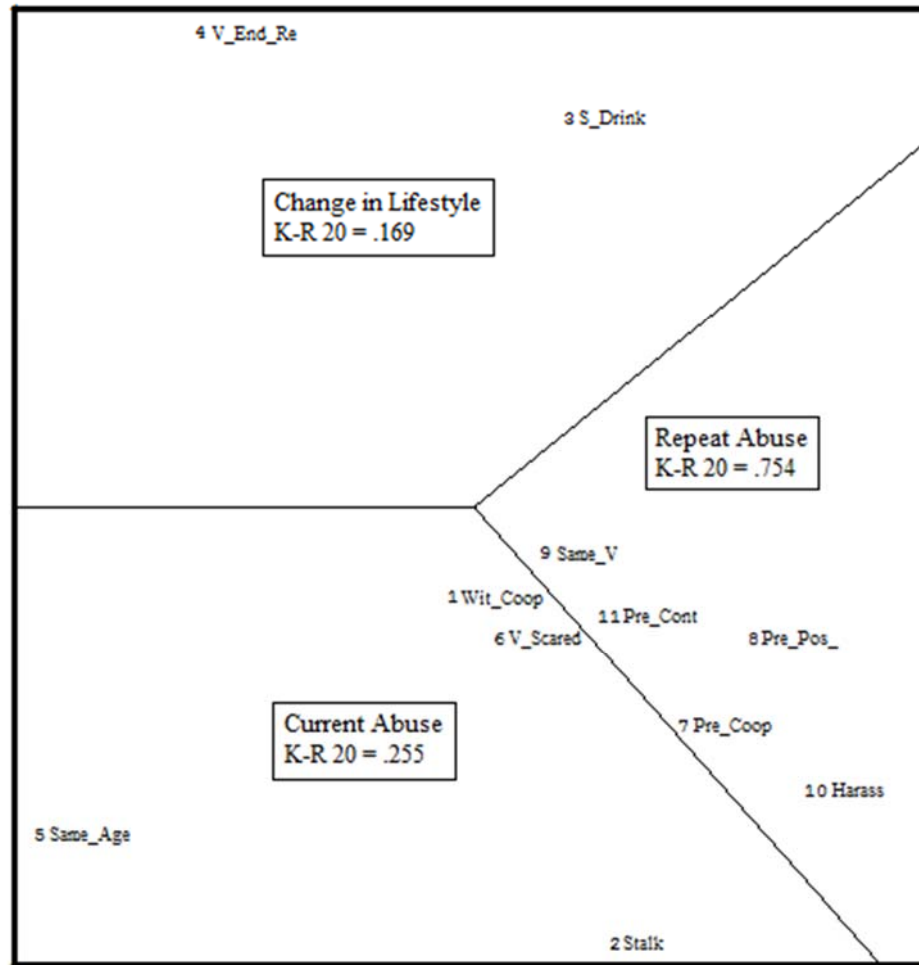
In order to test the hypothesis, an SSA was conducted on 11 factors associated with victim cooperation across 540 cases of IPV. The three-dimensional SSA had a Guttman Lingo coefficient of alienation of .06, which suggested an excellent fit between the SSA plot and the original association matrix (Canter & Heritage, 1990). Due to limited space, factor labels are given as abbreviations (please see Table 6.3 for full factor definitions). Figure 6.2 represents vectors 1 and 2 of the three-dimensional space within the SSA output.

Table 6.3: Label Definitions and Frequency of Variables Examined within the Cooperation SSA.

| Label | Definition | Frequency (%) |
|----------|--|---------------|
| Same_V | The suspect abused the same victim previously. | 358 (66.3%) |
| Pre_Cont | Victim had previous DV contact with police. | 285 (52.8%) |
| V_Scared | The victim reported feeling scared of the suspect. | 248 (45.9%) |
| Wit_Coop | Witness cooperated within the investigation. | 195 (36.3%) |
| Stalk | Case involved stalking and harassment. | 114 (21.1%) |

| Label | Definition | Frequency (%) |
|----------|--|---------------|
| Pre_Coop | Victim consistently previously cooperated with police. | 105 (19.4%) |
| Harass | Suspect had history of stalking and harassment. | 95 (17.6%) |
| Pre_Pos_ | Victim received consistent positive outcomes with CJS. | 94 (17.4%) |
| V_End_Re | Victim stated that they were ending the relationship. | 57 (10.6%) |
| Same_Age | Suspect and victim were the same age. | 49 (9.1%) |
| S_Drink | The suspect was alcohol dependent. | 45 (8.3%) |

Figure 6.2: Smallest Space Analysis Diagram Illustrating 3 Dimensional Output, Vectors 1 and 2, of the Co-occurrence of Factors Associated with Victim Cooperation.



The aim of the cooperation SSA was to determine whether there were reliable themes of factors associated with victim cooperation that deviated from the NEM. At first Figure 6.2 appeared to provide support for the hypothesis as it demonstrated how the co-occurrence of cooperation within the sample could be broken down into three thematically similar subgroups. Kuder-Richardson 20 (K-R 20) coefficients were used to represent the internal reliability of each subgroup. The calculation is similar to the commonly used Cronbach's alpha, but can apply to variables with dichotomous coding. The K-R 20 values shown in Figure 6.2 illustrated that only the theme of 'Repeat Abuse' provided an acceptable level of internal reliability. This meant that the analysis did not support the hypothesis, as only one out of the three themes developed resulted in acceptable reliability.

Repeat Abuse

The factors falling to the bottom right of Figure 6.2 illustrated the victim's history of dealing with IPV and appeared as a dominant theme within the cooperation results. The 'suspect abused the same victim previously', 'suspect had history of stalking and harassment', and the 'victim had previous DV contact with police' all show how the suspect or victim had past connections to IPV, in which most of the victims had been previously involved with a police response. Furthermore, the 'victim consistently previously cooperated with police' and the 'victim received consistent positive outcomes with CJS' illustrated how the police response to the previous abuse was often positive and there was an established network between the victim and police in handling their IPV. The overall theme demonstrated a consistent positive history of the victim using the police to deal with their abuse, which provided an overall association with victim cooperation within the current case. Furthermore, as the K-R 20 value was $>.70$, the theme also resulted in an acceptable internal reliability.

Current Abuse

The 'witness cooperated within the investigation', the 'case involved stalking and harassment, the 'victim reported feeling generally scared, and the 'suspect and victim were the same age' all pertained to the victim's current abuse incident. The cooperation of a witness and the victim reporting feeling scared to officers seemed to correlate within the response to the current incident. The cases that involved stalking and harassment represented the type of abuse that was involved within the current case. Whilst at first the suspect and victim being the same age appeared as an outlier, both theoretically and within the analysis, the factor represented the potential power balance involved within the relationship due to the same age between the couple. In this instance, such a consideration would apply to the current abuse incident since it would highlight potential

power balances in comparison to cases where the suspect was 20 years and older than the victim which referred to power imbalances, social stigma and victim withdrawal.

Change in Lifestyle

The ‘suspect was alcohol dependent’ and the ‘victim stated that they were ending the relationship’ both related to victims who wanted to change their lifestyle. The victim stating that they were ending the relationship related directly to changing their relationship dynamic as they were no longer happy with the abusive relationship. In addition, the suspect being alcohol dependent also contained cases where the victim stated that they wanted to get help for the suspect’s alcohol addiction as opposed to seeking punishment. In such cases, the victim was found to cooperate in order to receive the help, which demonstrated an intention to change their own lifestyle as well as the lifestyle of the suspect. However, the theme itself was sparse and the gaps in the SSA suggested that there were other factors that could relate to a change in lifestyle, but that these factors were not captured within the current thesis.

SSA of Withdrawal Factors

The hypothesis for the withdrawal SSA was:

1. There will be distinct facets present within the correlation of withdrawal factors that form reliable themes of victim cooperation.

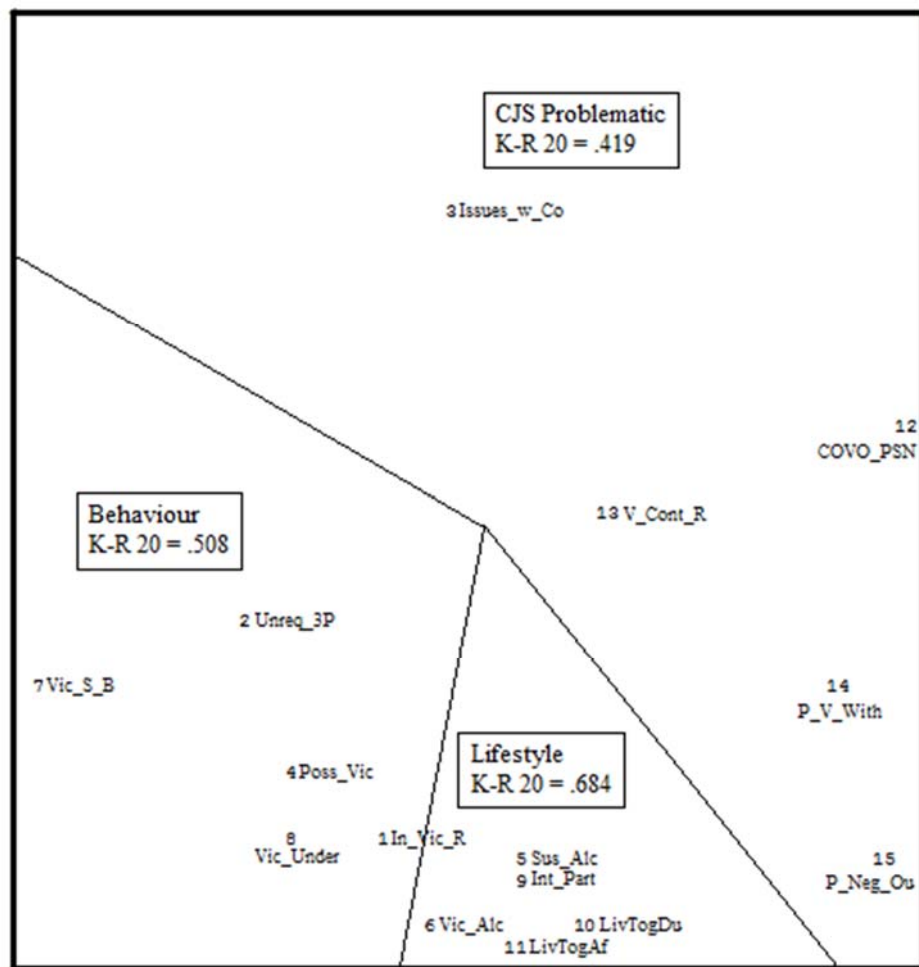
With regards to factors associated with victim withdrawal, there were a total of 15 factors shortlisted to be analysed through the use of SSA. The three-dimensional SSA had a Guttman Lingoes coefficient of alienation of .11, and due to limited space within the output the factor labels are abbreviated (please see Table 6.4 for full factor definitions). Figure 6.3 represents the three-dimensional output along vectors 1 and 2.

Table 6.4: Label Definitions and Frequency of Variables Examined within the Withdrawal SSA.

| Label | Definition | Frequency (%) |
|----------|---|---------------|
| Int_Part | Couple were in an intimate partnership. | 324 (60.0%) |
| Sus_Alc | Suspect consumed alcohol. | 302 (55.9%) |
| LivTogDu | Couple were living together during incident. | 268 (49.6%) |
| Vic_Alc | Victim consumed alcohol. | 193 (35.7%) |
| In_Vic_R | Victim initially reluctant to follow police procedure. | 144 (26.7%) |
| LivTogAf | Couple were living together after the incident. | 141 (26.1%) |
| Poss_Vic | Possible victimless prosecution. | 94 (17.4%) |
| Vic_Unde | Victim understated or undermined their abuse. | 88 (16.3%) |
| P_V_With | Victim previously withdrew from police investigation. | 80 (14.8%) |
| Unreq_3P | Third party report without the victim's permission. | 76 (14.1%) |
| P_Neg_Ou | Victim previously received negative outcomes with the CJS. | 72 (13.3%) |
| Iss_w_Co | Victim expressed issues with going to court. | 46 (8.5%) |
| COVO_PSN | Victim has children unrelated to the suspect and there was a reported referral to a professional support network. | 43 (8.0%) |

| Label | Definition | Frequency (%) |
|----------|--|---------------|
| V_Cont_R | Victim expressed intentions to continue with the relationship. | 37 (6.9%) |
| Vic_S_B | Victim blamed self for part or whole of incident. | 29 (5.4%) |

Figure 6.3: Smallest Space Analysis Diagram Illustrating 3 Dimensional Output, Vectors 1 and 2, of the Co-occurrence of Factors Associated with Victim Withdrawal.



The withdrawal SSA aimed to determine whether there were reliable themes of victim withdrawal that deviated from the NEM. As shown in Figure 6.3 above, there were three distinct themes among the co-occurrence of withdrawal factors that represented three thematically similar subgroups that deviated from the NEM. Again, K-R 20 coefficients were used to represent the internal reliability of each subgroup, with the K-R 20 values

shown in Figure 6.3. The values showed that none of the variables gained an internal reliability of $>.70$. However, the theme of 'Lifestyle' resulted in a $K-R\ 20 = .68$, which demonstrated a fair internal reliability considering the information used within the study was not originally collected for empirical research purposes. Overall, the results of the analysis rejected the hypothesis that there would be distinct facets that provided reliable themes of withdrawal factors.

Lifestyle

The factors falling to the bottom centre of the figure represented the lifestyle factors involved within the case. The 'suspect consumed alcohol', the 'victim consumed alcohol', the 'couple were in an intimate partnership', the 'couple were living together during incident' and the 'couple were living together after the incident', all referred to the couple's relationship status, cohabitation and co-consumption of alcohol. Such factors highlighted cases where the couple would be geographically and emotionally closer, which illustrated higher levels of intimacy than when these factors were absent. Furthermore, the co-consumption of alcohol highlighted how some couples consumed alcohol as a shared experience.

Behaviour

The factors that represented the behaviour of victims during the police response and throughout the case as a whole were grouped together to the left of Figure 6.3. A 'possible victimless prosecution', a 'third party report without the victim's permission', the 'victim initially reluctant to follow police procedure', the 'victim blamed self for part or whole of incident', and the 'victim understated or undermined their abuse' all formed the theme of behaviour. A possible victimless prosecution related to the victim withdrawing because the case was strong enough to proceed without their engagement. This was often because

of third party evidence, which is supported by the close proximity of the factor pertaining to an unrequested third party report. Furthermore, the victim being initially reluctant to follow police procedure, the victim understating or undermining the abuse and victim self-blame all related to the victim's behaviour as they tried to minimise the police response to the abuse incident.

CJS Problematic

The factors to the right of the output formed a theme around the CJS being problematic for the victim. The theme involved factors such as the 'victim expressed issues with attending court', the 'victim has children unrelated to the suspect and a referral to a professional support network', the 'victim expressed intentions to continue the relationship', 'consistent previous victim withdrawal' and 'consistent previous negative outcomes with the CJS'. Cases where the victim actively expressed issues with attending court highlighted cases where the victim provided a reason for their withdrawal. This differed to when the victim expressed an intention to continue the relationship, as this instead showed how they prioritised their relationship with the suspect over the CJS process. The prioritisation of the relationship implied that the CJS was no longer useful to the victim and in many cases it became problematic for the victims who wanted to continue the relationship with the suspect. The victims that had children from a previous relationship who had been referred to a professional support network showed how victims disengaged from the CJS process because they feared losing custody of their children. Finally, consistent previous victim withdrawal and negative outcomes with the CJS correlated with one another, which demonstrated how victims who previously withdrew were those who were not satisfied with the previous handling of their abuse. The findings illustrated that the sample involved victims who had not been satisfied with the previous

CJS response and had consistently withdrawn in the past, which was associated to their withdrawal within the current incident.

Partially Ordered Scalogram Analysis with base Coordinates of Factors associated with
Victim Engagement

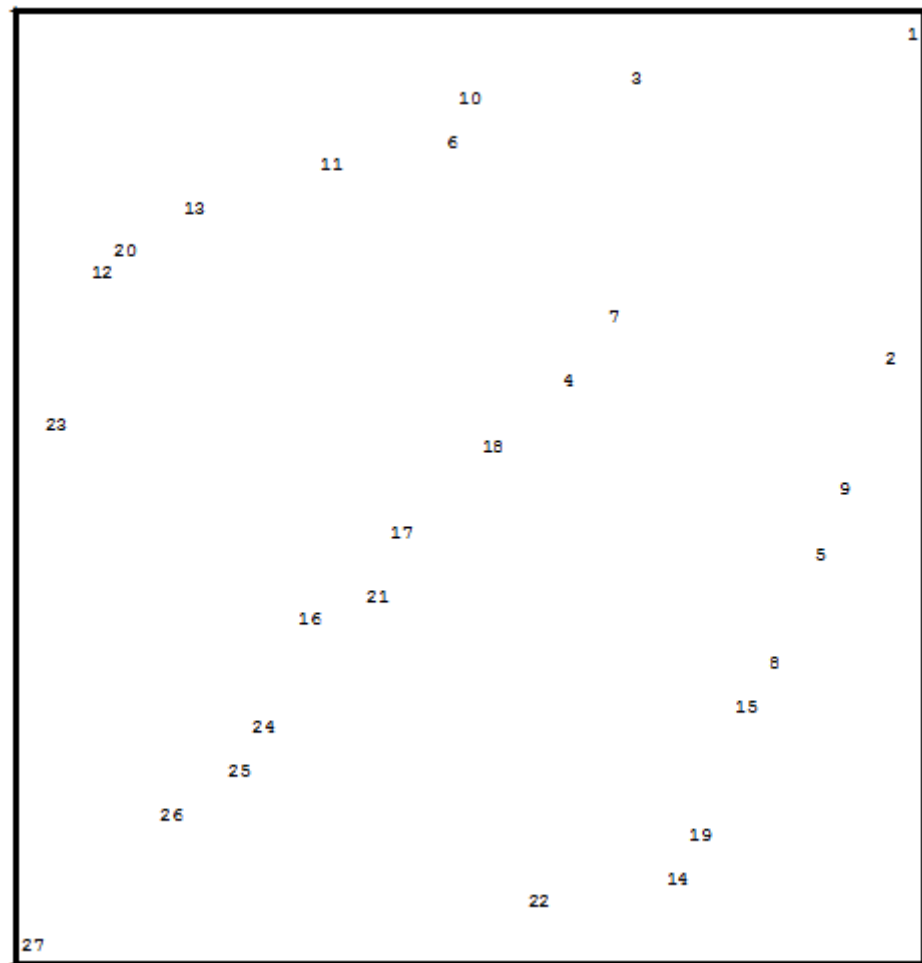
POSAC of Cooperation Factors

The hypothesis for the cooperation POSAC was:

1. There will be distinct differences between the five factors that had the largest effect sizes in their association with victim cooperation.

In order to test the hypothesis, a POSAC was conducted on the five factors that had the strongest effect size in their association with victim cooperation. In order of frequency, the factors that were included within the cooperation POSAC were: victim reporting or requesting a third party report, $\phi = .247$ (71.8%); stalking and harassment, $\phi = .194$ (21.1%); previous victim cooperation, $\phi = .393$ (19.4%); previous positive outcomes, $\phi = .274$ (17.4%); and the victim expressing intentions to end the relationship, $\phi = .440$ (10.6%). The 540 victims were represented by 27 distinct profiles (out of a possible $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 32$). Figure 6.4 presents the main two-dimensional POSAC plot for the profiles. This plot demonstrated a coefficient of correct representation (CORREP) of .859, which indicated a good fit of the profiles within their regions of the configuration. From an initial visualisation of the structure, there was an even spread of points across the quantitative joint axis and three distinct sets of collinear spreads through the qualitative lateral axis.

Figure 6.4: Main Partially Ordered Scalogram Analysis (POSAC) Plot for 27 Factor Profiles based on 5 Factors within a 540 Victim Sample.



There were 101 victims that fell to the bottom left of the configuration with score of 0 (profile 27). These profiles did not necessarily represent the 195 cases of withdrawal, since some victims who withdrew presented with factors of cooperation and not all victims who cooperated displayed the identified factors of cooperation. No cases appeared in the top right of the configuration with a score of 5 (profile 1), since this extreme profile was added by the analysis software. The remaining 439 victims were spread throughout the output with scores ranging from 1 to 4. The spread indicated that there were qualitative differences in the cooperation of victims. In order to explore the results further, each of the five item plots were examined.

To analyse each factor within the POSAC, the output of the factor was examined using the partitions mentioned within the methodology. The partition aimed to apply

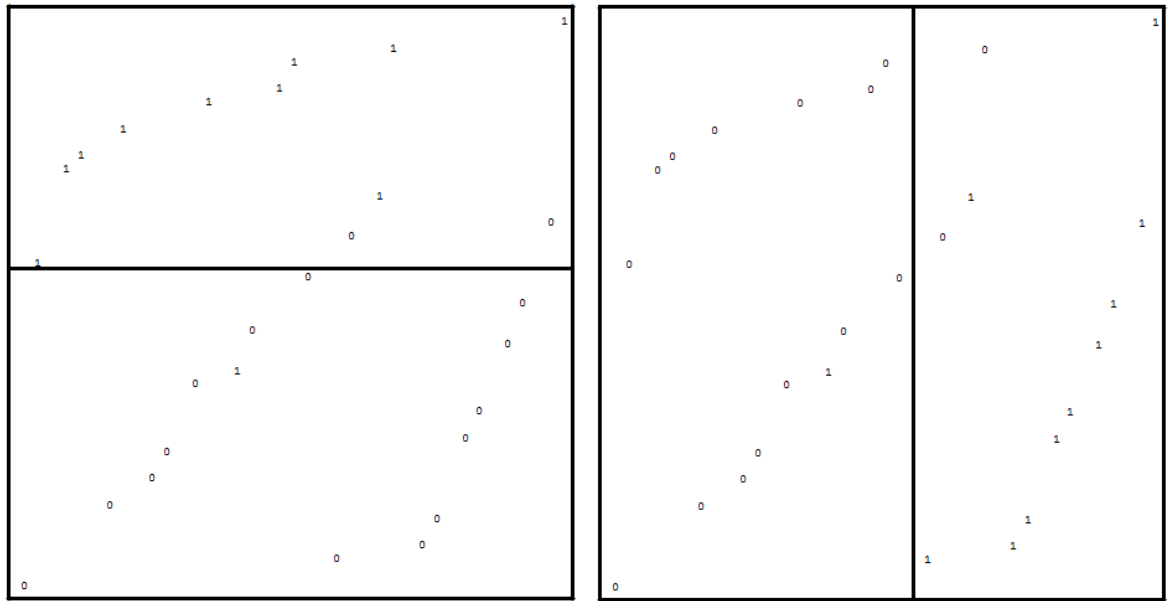
structure to a factor and formed a coefficient of monotonicity. The coefficient of monotonicity measured the degree of accuracy to which the partition represented the distinction between cases, whereby a coefficient of 1 illustrated a perfect partition. This would appear within the configuration as a line, where victims with the same factor would fall on one side of the line and those that did not would fall on the other. However, as the coefficient decreased, the validity of the partition was weakened in terms of it being a true discriminator of cases. Overall, coefficients of $>.8$ are generally considered the minimum acceptable level within POSAC (Alison & Porter, 2001; Shye *et al.*, 1994). Figures 6.5 and 6.6 illustrated the item plots for each of the five factors. The figures show the same structure as the overall profile configuration, but were coded to represent whether the factor was present (1) or not present (0) within each profile.

Identifying the two polar variables within the configuration was the first step in interpreting the item plots used within the POSAC. As shown in Figure 6.5, item 1 (victim expressed intention to end the relationship) and item 5 (case involved stalking and harassment) appeared to be polar variables. The victim expressing an intention to end the relationship formed a Y partition (coefficient of monotonicity = .99), which meant that the factor was the main contributor to the Y axis. Cases involving stalking and harassment, however, formed an X partition (coefficient of monotonicity = 1.00), which showed a perfect partition of the X axis. As the two items formed straight partitions along the X and Y axes, they were considered to be the main contributors to their respective coordinates and were polar variables in their composition of the POSAC configuration (Shye, 2009).

Figure 6.5: Polar Partitions of Cooperation POSAC.

Figure 6.5.1: Item 1, Victim Expressed Intention to end the Relationship, Forming a Y Partition.

Figure 6.5.2: Item 5, Case Involved Stalking and Harassment, Forming an X Partition.

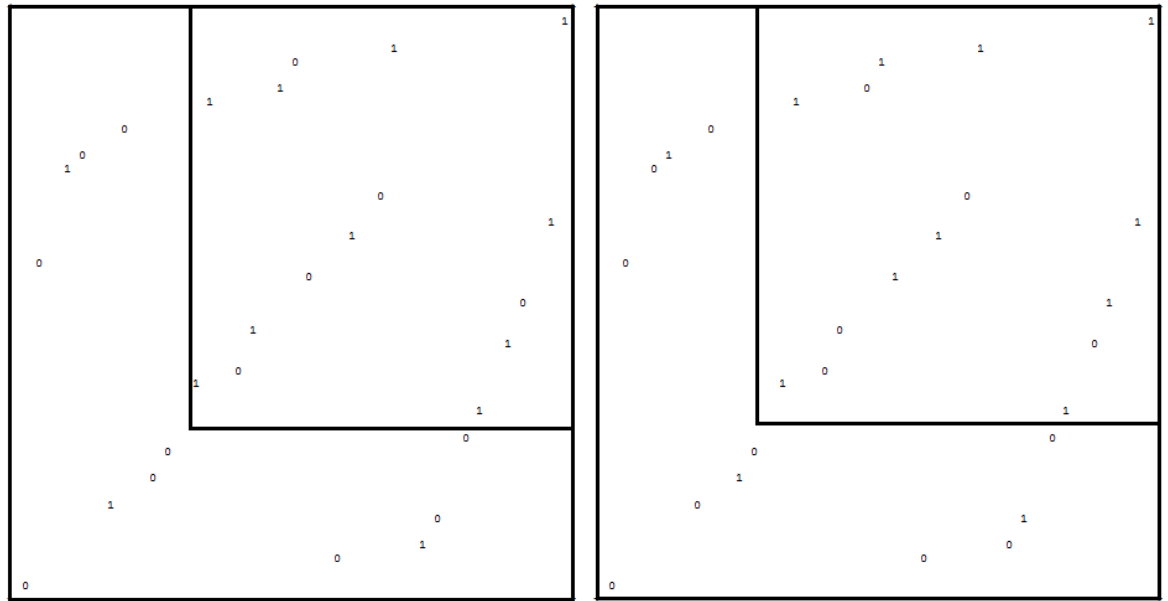


Item 2 (previous victim cooperation) and item 3 (previous positive outcomes with CJS) both formed P partitions with a coefficient of monotonicity of .95, as highlighted in Figure 6.6 below. These factors acted as accentuators within the configuration, appearing in profiles where the victims had higher total scores. Furthermore, item 4 (victim reported abuse or requested a third party report) also formed a P partition, however the coefficient of monotonicity fell below the commonly accepted level of $>.80$ (coefficient of monotonicity = .72), which meant that the P partition did not form an acceptable discrimination of cases within the item plot.

Figure 6.6: Further Item Partitions in Cooperation POSAC.

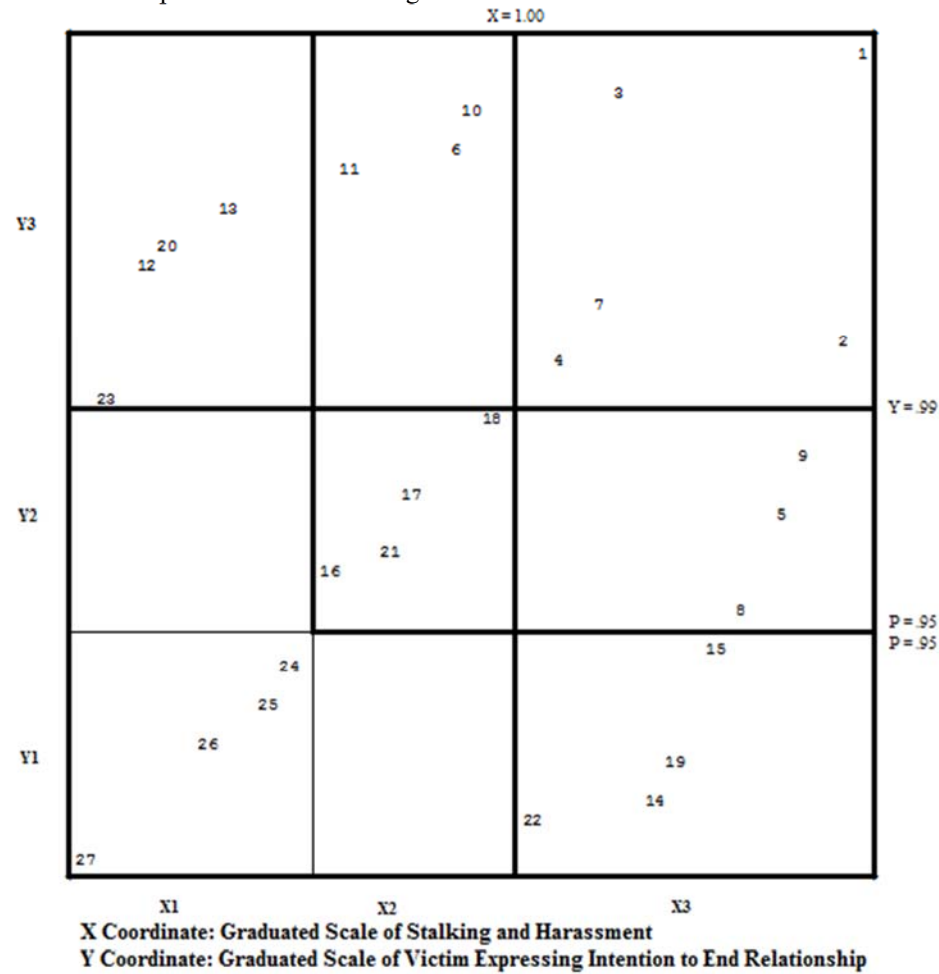
Figure 6.6.1: Item 2, Previous Victim Cooperation, Forming a P Partition.

Figure 6.6.2: Item 3, Previous Positive Outcomes with the CJS, Forming a P Partition.



Overall, the partitions demonstrated how cases appeared either to involve a victim expressing an intention to end the relationship, or involve stalking and harassment in the formation of victim cooperation. The polar variables then occurred alongside the other items in the configuration, such as previous victim cooperation and previous positive outcomes, when they formed victims with higher profile scores. This was illustrated by the factor profiles themselves, in which only 5 cases out of 540 involved a victim who reported a case of stalking and harassment as well as expressed intentions to end the relationship with the suspect. In order to gain an oversight into the formation of profiles across the POSAC configuration, all item plots with a coefficient of monotonicity $>.80$ appeared as a superposition in Figure 6.7.

Figure 6.7: Superposition of Item Partitions with a Coefficient of Monotonicity >.80, Forming a Graduated Measurement Space in the Main Configuration.



The superposition, illustrated in Figure 6.7 above, showed the item partitions used within the analysis. Coordinate X was broken down into three meaningful intervals based upon previous cooperation, previous positive outcomes and whether the case involved stalking and harassment. Interpreting the axis, the intervals related to a graduated stalking and harassment scale, in which the larger X scores related to stronger victim cooperation. The X scores and their interpretations are outlined in the following table.

Table 6.5: The X Score: Graduated Scale of Stalking and Harassment.

| X-Score | Explanation of Interval |
|----------------|--|
| 1 | Low Cooperation: case involved no stalking/harassment, the victim had not previously cooperated with the police and had received no previous positive outcomes. The victim may have expressed intentions to end the relationship and/or may have reported the incident of abuse themselves. |
| 2 | Medium Cooperation: case involved no stalking/harassment, but the victim was likely to have previously cooperated with police and received positive outcomes with the CJS. The victim may have expressed intentions to end the relationship and/or may have reported the incident of abuse themselves. |
| 3 | High Cooperation: case involved stalking/harassment, the victim had previously cooperated with police and received previous positive outcomes with the CJS. The victim may have also expressed intentions to end the relationship and/or reported the incident of abuse themselves. |

Coordinate Y represented the cooperation of the victim and was also broken down into three meaningful intervals based upon the victim's previous cooperation, previous positive outcomes and their express intention to end the relationship. Upon examination, it appeared that the intervals along the Y axis related to a graduated scale of the victim expressing an intention to end the relationship, in which the larger Y score related to stronger victim cooperation. Subsequently, the following table outlined the Y scores and their explanations as to victim cooperation.

Table 6.6: The Y Score: Graduated Scale of Victim Expressing Intention to End the Relationship.

| Y-Score | Explanation of Interval |
|----------------|---|
| 1 | Low Cooperation: may have involved stalking/harassment and victim may have reported the incident themselves. The victim had not previously cooperated with the police or received previous positive outcomes with the CJS. The victim did not express an intention to end the relationship. |
| 2 | Medium Cooperation: may have involved a case of stalking/harassment and victim may have reported the incident themselves. The victim was more likely to have previously cooperated with police and received positive outcomes with the CJS. The victim did not express an intention to end the relationship. |
| 3 | High Cooperation: may have involved a case of stalking/harassment and the victim may have reported the incident themselves. The victim was likely to have previously cooperated with police and received positive outcomes with the CJS. The victim also expressed an intention to end the relationship with the suspect. |

Overall, the POSAC coordinates in this instance have been interpreted to represent two opposing factors in their effect on victim cooperation. It appeared that within the five factors with the strongest relationship to victim cooperation, there appeared to be two strands that combined to create an overall strong case of victim cooperation. These two strands referred to cases of stalking/harassment and the victim expressing an intention to end the relationship, which then combined with other factors (and rarely one another) in an overall effect on victim cooperation.

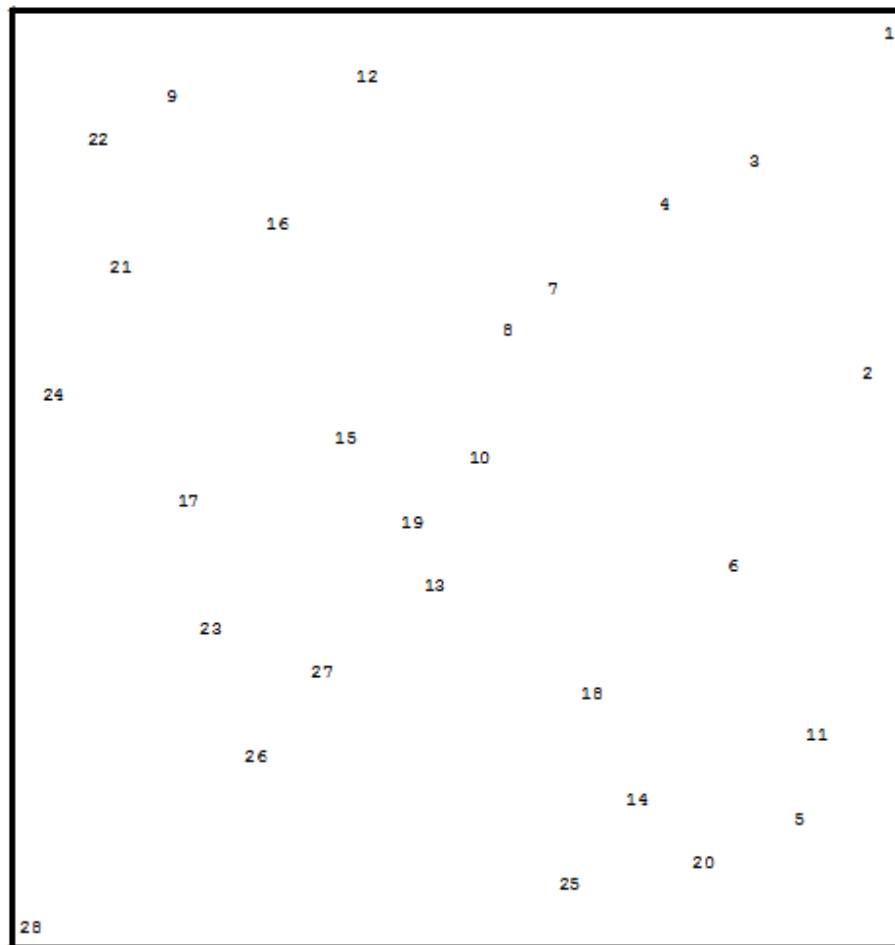
POSAC of Withdrawal Factors

The hypothesis for the withdrawal POSAC was:

1. There will be distinct differences between the five factors that had the largest effect sizes in their association with victim withdrawal.

In order of frequency, the factors included within the withdrawal POSAC were: initial victim reluctance, $\varphi = .670$ (26.7%); cohabitation after the incident, $\varphi = .404$ (26.1%); victim understated or undermined abuse, $\varphi = .551$ (16.3%); victim expressed issues with attending court, $\varphi = .611$ (8.5%); and the victim self-blaming for the incident, $\varphi = .315$ (5.4%). Within the withdrawal POSAC, the 540 victims were represented by 28 distinct profiles (out of a possible $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 32$). Figure 6.8 presents the main two-dimensional POSAC plot for the profiles and demonstrated a CORREP of .973, which indicated a good fit of the profiles within their regions of the configuration. An initial examination of the output showed a considerable spread on both the quantitative and qualitative axes, demonstrated by the spread in points within Figure 6.8.

Figure 6.8: Main Partially Ordered Scalogram Analysis (POSAC) Plot for 28 Factor Profiles based on 5 Factors within a 540 Victim Sample.



There were 285 victims that appeared in the bottom left of the output with a score of 0 (profile 28). Again, the 285 victims did not represent the 345 cases of victim cooperation, as some cooperative victims presented with factors of withdrawal and not all victims who withdrew displayed the identified factors of withdrawal. Unlike the cooperation POSAC, there was one case that appeared in the top right of the configuration with a score of 5 (profile 1). The remaining 254 victims were plotted throughout the configuration with scores ranging from 1 – 4. The spread of factors throughout the configuration highlighted qualitative differences in the profiles of withdrawal. The item plots for each of the five factors were examined to determine whether there were partitions with a coefficient of monotonicity $>.8$. Figures 6.9 and 6.10 present the item plots for each of the five factors. The figures displayed the same structure as the overall profile configuration, but were

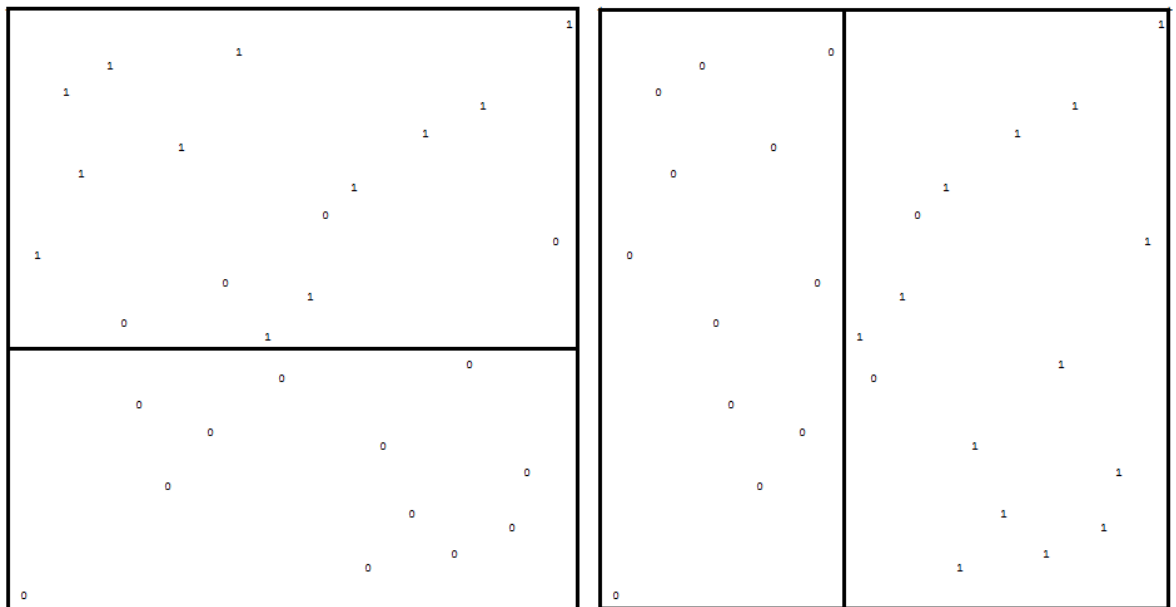
coded to represent whether the factor was present (coded as 1) or not present (coded as 0) within each profile.

Firstly, as shown in Figure 6.9 below, item 2 (victim expressed issues with attending court) and item 4 (cohabitation after the abuse incident) appeared as polar variables. The victim expressing issues with attending court formed a Y partition (coefficient of monotonicity = 1.00), that formed a perfect partition across the Y axis. Similarly, cohabitation of the couple after the abuse incident formed an X partition (coefficient of monotonicity = 1.00), which illustrated a perfect partition with regards to the X axis. As the two items formed straight partitions, they appeared to be the main contributors to their respective coordinates and were polar variables in their composition of the POSAC configuration.

Figure 6.9: Polar Partitions of Withdrawal POSAC.

Figure 6.9.1: Item 2, Victim Expressing Issues with Attending Court, Forming a Y Partition.

Figure 6.9.2: Item 4, Couple Cohabitation after Abuse, Forming an X Partition.



In addition to items 2 and 4 appearing as polar variables, item 1 (initial victim reluctance) formed a P partition (coefficient of monotonicity = .97) and acted as an accentuator within the configuration. Item 3 (victim understated or undermined abuse) and item 5 (victim self-blamed) both formed J partitions with a coefficient of monotonicity of .97 and .93 respectively. These partitions illustrated that the variables were likely to occur with either

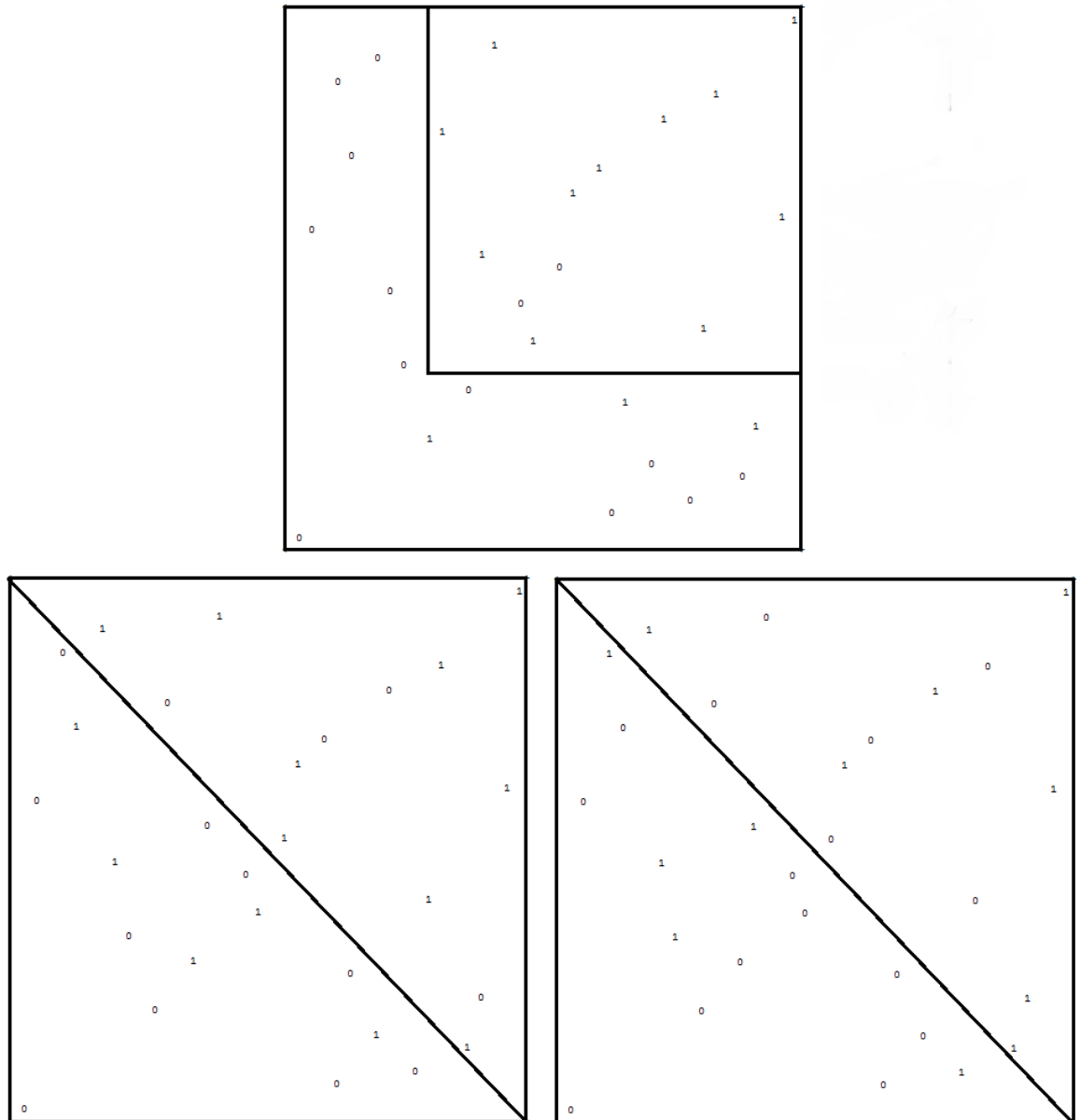
of the polar variables in their formation of profiles, and as they partitioned to the top right of the configuration they more commonly appeared in profiles with a higher total score.

Figure 6.10: Further Item Partitions of Withdrawal POSAC.

Figure 6.10.1: Item 1, Initial Victim Reluctance, Forming a P Partition.

Figure 6.10.2: Item 3, Victim Understating or Undermining Abuse, Forming a J Partition.

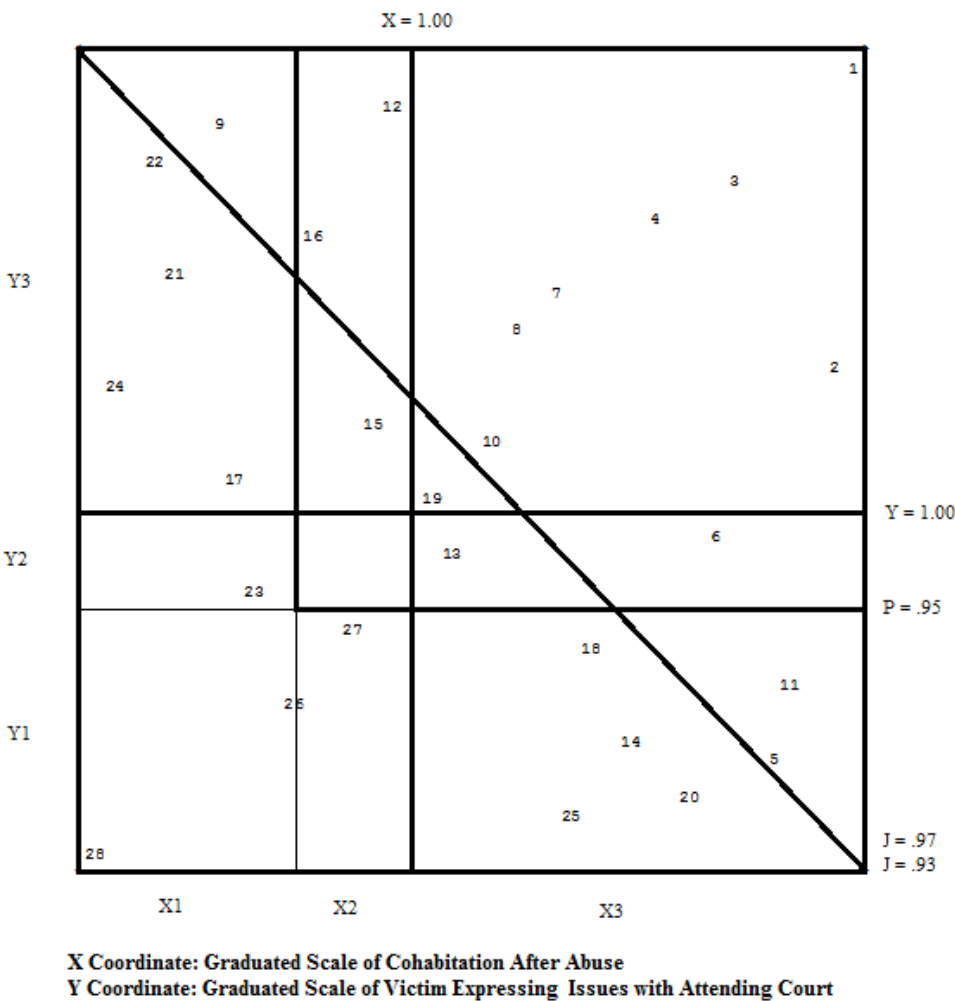
Figure 6.10.3: Item 5, Victim Self-Blame, Forming a J Partition.



Overall, the partitions demonstrated how cases appeared either to involve a victim who cohabited with the suspect after the abuse incident, or expressed issues with attending court in the formation of victim withdrawal. These opposing factors both then occurred alongside other factors of withdrawal, such as initial victim reluctance, understating or undermining abuse, and self-blame. This was confirmed by the factor profiles in which

only 12 cases out of 540 involved a victim who expressed issues with attending court whilst cohabitating with the suspect after the abuse incident. In order to gain an oversight into the configuration of victim withdrawal the item plots used within the analysis formed a superposition, which is outlined in Figure 6.11.

Figure 6.11: Superposition of Item Partitions with a Coefficient of Monotonicity $>.80$, Forming a Graduated Measurement Space in the Main Configuration.



The superposition, illustrated in Figure 6.11 above, showed the combination of item partitions used within the analysis. Coordinate X was broken down into three meaningful intervals based around the victim's initial reluctance and the cohabitation of the couple. Upon interpretation, the intervals along the X axis seemed to relate to a graduated scale of cohabitation after the abuse, in which the larger score related to stronger victim withdrawal. As such, the X scores and their explanations are outlined in the following table.

Table 6.7: The X Score: Graduated Scale of Cohabitation after the Abuse Incident.

| X-Score | Explanation of Interval |
|----------------|--|
| 1 | Low Withdrawal: the victim did not live in same dwelling as the suspect after the abuse, fully reported incident, followed police procedure and did not engage in self-blame. May have expressed issues with attending court. |
| 2 | Medium Withdrawal: the victim did not live in the same dwelling as the suspect after the abuse, but understated or undermined the abuse, was initially reluctant to follow police procedure and was more likely to engage in self-blame. May have expressed issues with attending court. |
| 3 | High Withdrawal: the victim lived in the same dwelling as the suspect after the abuse, understated or undermined the abuse, was initially reluctant to follow police procedure and was more likely to engage in self-blame. May also have expressed issues with attending court. |

Coordinate Y represented the withdrawal of the victim and was also broken down into three meaningful intervals based upon the victim's initial reluctance and the victim expressing issues with court. Upon examination, it appeared that the intervals along the Y axis related to a graduated scale of the victim expressing issues with attending court, in which the larger score related to stronger victim withdrawal. Subsequently, the following table outlined the Y scores and their explanations as to victim withdrawal.

Table 6.8: The Y Score: Graduated Scale of the Victim Expressing Issues with Attending Court.

| Y-Score | Explanation of Interval |
|----------------|--|
| 1 | Low Withdrawal: the victim expressed no issues with attending court. May have lived in the same dwelling as the suspect after the incident, but fully reported abuse, followed police procedure and did not engage in self-blame. |
| 2 | Medium Withdrawal: the victim expressed no issues with attending court. May have lived in the same dwelling as the suspect after the incident, understated or undermined the incident, were initially reluctant to follow police procedure and engaged in self-blame. |
| 3 | High Withdrawal: the victim expressed issues with attending court. May have lived in the same dwelling as the suspect after the abuse incident, understated or undermined the incident, were initially reluctant to follow police procedure and engaged in self-blame. |

Overall, the POSAC coordinates in this instance have been interpreted to represent two opposing factors in their effect on victim withdrawal. It appeared that out of the five factors with the strongest relationship to victim withdrawal, there were two strands that combined to create an overall strong sense of victim withdrawal. These two strands referred to the cohabitation of the couple after the reported abuse incident and the victim expressing issues with attending court, which then combined with other factors (and rarely one another) in an overall effect on victim withdrawal.

POSAC Joint Scores

In addition to the qualitative scales, the researcher also quantitatively examined the POSACs using the victims' total scores. The process began by taking the joint axis scores (J score) from both the cooperation and withdrawal POSACs. The cooperation J score and withdrawal J score were placed against their corresponding case within the dataset and prepared for statistical analysis. In order to determine whether there was a difference

in score between cooperation cases and withdrawal cases, the researcher utilised an independent samples t-test to examine the J scores against victim engagement.

As mentioned, the cooperation J scores ranged from 0 – 4 across the 540 cases. An independent t-test indicated that there was significant difference, $t(538) = 8.986, p < .001$, in which cases of victim cooperation had a higher mean cooperation J score ($M = 1.70, SD = 1.11$) when compared to victim withdrawal cases ($M = 0.89, SD = 0.78$).

With regards to the withdrawal J score, the scores ranged from 0 – 5 across the 540 cases. The independent t-test found that there was a significant difference, $t(538) = 23.334, p < .001$, in which cases of victim withdrawal had a higher withdrawal J score ($M = 1.88, SD = 0.96$) in comparison to cases of victim cooperation ($M = 0.23, SD = 0.49$).

The cooperation J score t-tests indicated that the cases had a mean cooperation J score of 1.70, which indicated that the sample involved an average of two factors from the cooperation POSAC. The withdrawal J score indicated that the sample had a mean withdrawal J score of 1.88, which indicated that the sample involved an average of two factors from the withdrawal POSAC. Subsequently, in order to determine the accuracy of the J scores in differentiating engagement, the researcher split the total 540 cases to form separate samples which captured all of the cases that scored ≥ 2 in cooperation J score and ≥ 2 in withdrawal J score. Upon forming the samples, there were 204 cases out of 540 that involved ≥ 2 factors of victim cooperation and 132 cases out of 540 that involved ≥ 2 factors of victim withdrawal. The samples were not mutually exclusive and victims who scored ≥ 2 factors in both cooperation and withdrawal would have appeared in both samples. In order to determine the accuracy of the J scores, the split samples were examined to determine whether the J scores correctly differentiated victim engagement within their respective samples.

Table 6.9: Differentiation Accuracy of Cooperation and Withdrawal J Scores within their Respective Samples.

| | Cooperation J Score of ≥ 2 | | Withdrawal J Score of ≥ 2 | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| | Frequency (n) | (%) | Frequency (n) | % |
| Victim Cooperation | 167 | 81.86% | 9 | 6.82% |
| Victim Withdrawal | 37 | 18.14% | 123 | 93.18% |
| Sample Total | 204 | 100% | 132 | 100% |

As illustrated in Table 6.9 above, the cooperation J score demonstrated 81.86% accuracy in differentiating cases of victim cooperation, with an error rate of 18.14%. Likewise, the withdrawal J score demonstrated 93.18% accuracy in differentiating victim withdrawal, with an error rate of 6.82%.

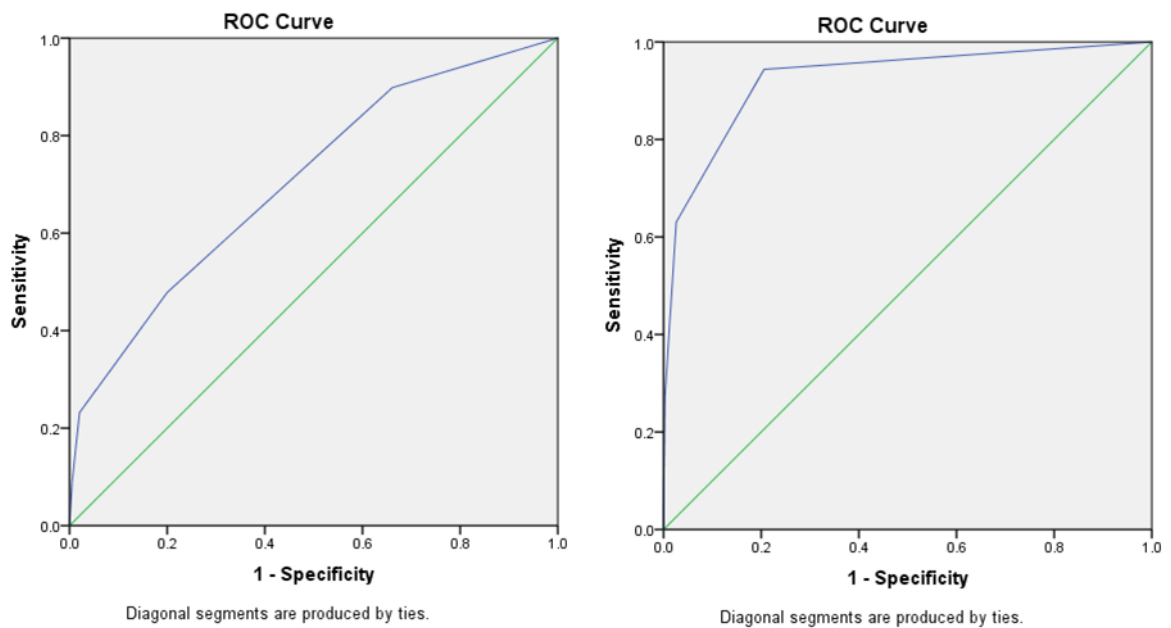
In order to fully investigate the J scores in their assessment of victim engagement, the study moved into a Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curve analysis. The analysis was used in order to examine whether the cooperation J score and withdrawal J score provided an accurate differentiation or classification of victim engagement within the total 540 case sample. The ROC curve provided a two dimensional graph which measured the rate of true positives along the Y axis (Sensitivity) against the true negatives along the X axis (Specificity). The bottom-left of the graph (0, 0) represented never allocating a positive classification, therefore also gaining no false positives. The opposing side in the upper-right of the graph (1, 1), represented the unconditional issuing of positive classifications, thus maximising the number of false positives. The graph presented with a line running from the bottom-left through to the top-right ($X = Y$), which represented the classification of cases based upon random chance. The line therefore assumed that if the desirable outcome was guessed half of the time, then the strategy would correctly guess half of the positive cases correctly and half of the negative cases correctly. Upon plotting the data, which in this instance referred to the cooperation J scores and

withdrawal J scores, any resulting curve that appeared in the upper-left section of the graph indicated a classification that was better than random chance. This was in comparison to any curve falling to the bottom-right of the graph which would indicate a classification that was worse than random chance (Fawcett, 2006; Erkel & Pattynama, 1997).

A common measurement used in describing the validity of the ROC curve is the Area Under the Curve (AUC). As the graph was compiled in a 1 x 1 space, the area under the ROC curve was measured from 0 – 1. However, as the line of random chance divided the graph equally, the area under the curve specifically concerned the total area between the line of chance and the ROC curve. Therefore, the AUC is a combined measure of both sensitivity and specificity across the entire ROC curve and provided an overall measure as to its validity. The higher the area score was from 0.5, the greater the validity of the classification system in comparison to random chance (Hajian-Tilaki, 2013; Fawcett, 2006).

Figure 6.12 presents the ROC curves for the cooperation J score and the withdrawal J score in differentiating victim engagement out of the 540 cases. The results showed that both scores differentiated victim engagement within the sample, but that the withdrawal J score provided a greater ability to differentiate engagement than the cooperation J score. This was illustrated by the withdrawal J score resulting in a larger area under the curve ($AUC = .92, p < .001$) that indicted an excellent area score, compared to the cooperation J score ($AUC = .71, p < .001$) that resulted in a fair area score.

Figure 6.12: ROC Curves of the POSAC J Scores.
 Figure 14.1: ROC Curve for the Cooperation J Score
 Figure 14.2: ROC Curve for the Withdrawal J Score.

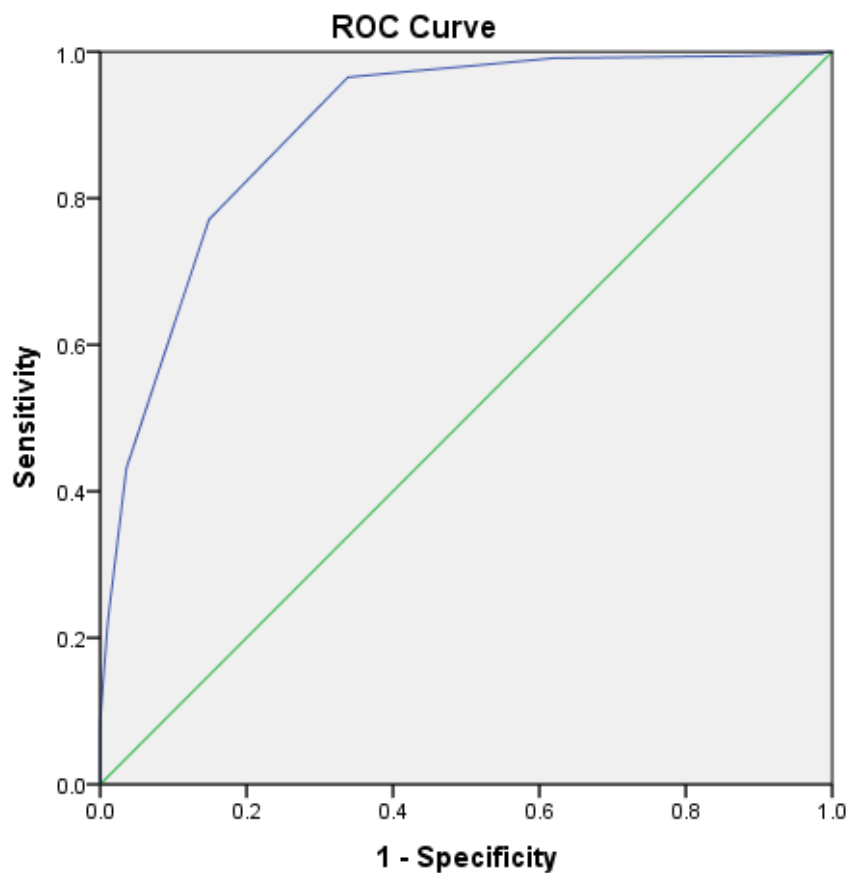


However, as mentioned previously, the J scores were not mutually exclusive and this meant that victims could have had high J scores in both cooperation and withdrawal. Therefore, the above results did not take into account the false positives and negatives within the cooperation J score that would have occurred because of the withdrawal J score, and vice versa, in an overall examination of victim engagement. Therefore, the researcher combined the cooperation J scores and withdrawal J scores into a ‘Total Victim Engagement Score’. As both cooperation and withdrawal were comprised of five factors from their respective POSACs, the victim engagement score resulted in a scoring out of 10. Furthermore, as the cooperation J scores would affect a victim positively and the withdrawal J scores would affect a victim negatively, the overall victim engagement score would take into account the balance of cooperation and withdrawal scores. Therefore, the output of the victim engagement score would require a similar structure to a Litmus Scale, in which the centre of the scale represented no effect. Overall, this resulted in a default victim engagement score of 5/10 that indicated no effect. Subsequently, a score of 0/10 represented strong victim withdrawal (as there would be all five factors of withdrawal present without any cooperation factors) and a score of 10/10 represented strong victim

cooperation (as there would be all five factors of cooperation present without any withdrawal factors).

This meant that the coding process began with each victim scoring 5/10. Their cooperation J scores were added and their withdrawal J scores were subtracted. For example, if a victim had a cooperation J score of 2 and a withdrawal J score of 1, their overall victim engagement score would be $(5 + 2 - 1 =) 6/10$ which indicated victim cooperation. The process, therefore, included the interaction of the factors associated with both cooperation and withdrawal in an overall determination of the victim's engagement. Upon coding the 540 cases with the total victim engagement score, the researcher then conducted a ROC curve analysis (please see Figure 6.13) on the ability of the victim engagement score to differentiate between victim engagement within the 540 case sample.

Figure 6.13: ROC Curve for the Total Victim Engagement Score.



Diagonal segments are produced by ties.

Figure 6.13 showed the ROC curve for the total victim engagement score and demonstrated how the score provided a more effective differentiation or classification than random chance, as it presented with a good area score ($AUC = .896, p < .001$).

In order to fully examine the total victim engagement score, the study utilised an independent t-test to examine the mean total victim engagement scores in cooperation and withdrawal cases. The independent t-test found that there was a significant difference, $t(538) = 20.297, p < .001$, in which cooperation cases resulted in a higher mean total victim engagement score ($M = 6.46, SD = 1.32$) in comparison to withdrawal cases ($M = 4.01, SD = 1.39$). In addition, the scoring was applied to the current 540 case sample to determine a percentage of accuracy in the identification of cooperation and withdrawal.

Table 6.10: Application of the Victim Engagement Score to the Current 540 Case Sample.

| | Identified: Cooperation | | No Identification | | Identified: Withdrawal | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Actual Cooperation | 266 | 90.2% | 67 | 64.4% | 12 | 8.5% |
| Actual Withdrawal | 29 | 9.8% | 37 | 35.6% | 129 | 91.5% |
| Total | 295 | 100% | 104 | 100% | 141 | 100% |

The sample of IPV cases used within the current study contained 345 cases of victim cooperation and 195 cases of victim withdrawal. As seen in Table 6.10 above, the victim engagement score was able to identify engagement in 436 cases. It identified victim cooperation in 295 cases with an accuracy of 90.2% and identified victim withdrawal in 141 cases with an accuracy of 91.5%. Overall, the combination of the POSAC J scores provided a good differentiation of victim engagement within the sample of 540 IPV cases.

Discussion

The current chapter aimed to examine the relationships between the factors that were significantly associated with victim cooperation and victim withdrawal in order to fully explore the complexity involved within the IPV cases. It first conducted an SSA on 11 factors of victim cooperation and 15 factors of victim withdrawal, which provided a visual output of the spatial correlation between each of the variables. The spatial output was then interpreted to form themes that appeared within the co-occurrence of the factors. The chapter then utilised a POSAC to examine the relationships between the five factors of victim cooperation and five factors of victim withdrawal that had the largest effect size in their association with victim engagement. The POSAC was then analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively to provide an overall representation as to the trends that occurred within the 540 IPV cases. In examining the relationships between the factors, the chapter took account of both the similarities and differences between each of the cases (Canter, 1985) and carefully examined the co-occurrence of factors during the interpretation (Saunders, 2004).

In examining the similarities between the cases, the chapter demonstrated how the co-occurrence of cooperation and withdrawal factors were able to be broken down into thematically similar subgroups. With regards to factors of cooperation, the three themes of ‘repeat abuse’, ‘current abuse’ and a ‘change in lifestyle’ all related to similarities between the factors in their overall association with victim cooperation.

Firstly, the theme of repeat abuse illustrated how previous abuse and the way it was dealt with by the police had an effect on victim cooperation. Whilst previous literature outlined that reabuse was not affected by CJS intervention and the imprisonment of the suspect (Bell *et al.*, 2013), the theme within the results did illustrate that the suspect abusing the same victim, and the victim having previous contact with the police, were likely to occur together in their association with victim cooperation. In addition, the theme

also highlighted that the factors of previous cooperation and previous positive outcomes with the CJS were likely to occur together in an association to victim cooperation (Hickman & Simpson, 2003). Overall, the theme inferred that even if reabuse was to occur after criminal justice intervention, the victim previously reporting and positively engaging with the police all culminated in a greater likelihood that the victim would cooperate in the subsequent police intervention.

The second theme related to the current abuse incident, which differentiated from repeat abuse as it encapsulated factors that were related to the victim's engagement within the immediate investigation. The theme involved stalking and harassment as a type of abuse but it appeared a small distance away from other factors contained within the theme. This could have occurred because the factor which related to the victim disclosing their fear to officers had previously been linked to cases that were rated as higher risk and taken more seriously by officers (Trujillo & Ross, 2008). This would subsequently oppose cases of stalking and harassment as previous literature has highlighted how officers can take this form of abuse less seriously as they consider it less dangerous than physical abuse (Lynch & Logan, 2015; Basow & Thompson, 2012). The factors of witness cooperation and the victim disclosing their fear to officers appeared in close proximity to each other within the theme of current abuse. The position of the factors indicated that these appeared more likely to occur in physical abuse cases in comparison to stalking and harassment, especially as physical abuse would be more likely to be visually witnessed by a third party. In such cases, the two factors could have co-occurred because the witness cooperation bolstered the victim's credibility and made the victim feel supported in their prosecution of the suspect (Tetlock, 2002). This could have subsequently led to the victim being open and honest with officers about their level of fear. Finally, the couples that were the same age related to a potential power balance within their relationship (Babcock *et al.*, 1993; Straus *et al.*, 1980), in comparison to power imbalances when the suspect

was much older than the victim. The couple being the same age could have lowered the complications for the victim when they considered their cooperation in the immediate incident, in comparison to cases where the victim was reliant on the older suspect for numerous reasons. Overall the factors outlined above related to the victim's engagement in the immediate abuse incident and separated from factors related to repeat abuse or the victim's change in lifestyle which was captured within the next theme.

The third theme of cooperation related to the victim's change in lifestyle, which linked closely to literature by Kaukinen *et al.* (2013) who found that victims with a higher social status were more likely to seek support for IPV. The victims who expressed an intention to end the abusive relationship, or cooperated to get help for the suspect's drink dependency highlighted an attempt to change their lifestyle. As the victims attempted to change their lifestyle and the lifestyle of the suspect, the overall theme related to a victim who was attempting to improve their social status. Such cases could be addressed with the Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes (DVPPs) and Offender Behaviour Programmes (OBPs) mentioned within the thesis literature review (Braddock, 2011). However, there would still be difficulties when considering practical change to the suspect's behaviour and the safety of the victim (Justice, 2014; Munroe, 2011). Whilst the theme did not provide an adequate level of internal reliability, the gaps within the SSA suggested that there were other potential factors which would apply to the theme but they were not covered by the current study. Any further factors that applied to the victims who aimed to change their lifestyle would further relate to the need for a victim empowerment approach in IPV. The approach would need to ensure support was readily available in cases where the victim wanted help as opposed to punishment, in order to provide the motivation necessary for victim cooperation in the police investigation.

The themes formed around the factors associated with victim withdrawal included 'lifestyle', 'behaviour' and the 'CJS being problematic' for the victim. Within the theme

of lifestyle, the couples appeared to have a close proximity both emotionally and geographically. In addition, there appeared to be a shared consumption of alcohol, which related back to literature such as Hines and Douglas (2012) and Stewart *et al.* (2012) who illustrated how the consumption of drugs and alcohol increased the risk of IPV perpetration and victimisation. With this in mind, the close proximity of the couple mixed with alcohol could again highlight issues with the victim's social status, since the victim in such instances would have had the same social status as the suspect because their lifestyles were intimately linked. The previous literature suggested that victims with a higher social status were more likely to seek support (Kaukinen *et al.*, 2013), which meant that in the cases of close proximity the victim would be at more risk because their lower social status was a result of their lifestyle being intrinsically linked to the suspect.

The second theme of withdrawal captured factors that were interpreted to represent the victims' behaviour within the case. Victim self-blame (Rose *et al.*, 2011) and the victim understating or undermining their abuse were not previously considered in the context of the victim's decision making as outlined in the previous literature (Ansderon, 2000; Kahneman & Tversky, 1984; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Furthermore, a victimless prosecution was previously interpreted to relate to formal support structures. Considering the factors together, the victim's decision making, minimisation in the police response and withdrawal when the burden of a prosecution was removed (Ellison, 2002) all related to the victim's behaviour and their intentions within the investigation (Robinson & Stroshine, 2005).

The final theme of withdrawal related to the CJS being problematic for the victim and related to victim distrust towards the police and criminal justice process. Previous literature argued that prosecutions are not always in the best interest of the victim (Hoyle, 1998) and that in some circumstances they may make the victim's situation worse (Payne & Wermeling, 2009). The current theme illustrated how the victim expressing issues with

court, previous victim withdrawal and previous negative outcomes were all directly related to the CJS being problematic for the victim. Furthermore, victims with children from a previous relationship that had been referred to a professional support network also highlighted potential cases where the victim was withdrawing from the CJS in order to distance themselves from social services and the removal of their children (Kelly, 2009). Furthermore, the victim expressing an intention to continue their relationship with the suspect represented cases where the victim had prioritised the relationship over the CJS. As the CJS aimed to punish their partner, the process became problematic for the victim since it would have damaged their future relationship. Again the dynamics outlined above identified the need for a victim empowerment approach to IPV cases, in which a more fluid approach would have addressed the difficulties experienced within the CJS and could have prevented victim withdrawal.

Overall, the established themes of cooperation and withdrawal provided support for a small scale bottom-up approach to profiling victim engagement (Canter & Heritage, 1990), or to form distinct subtypes of victim engagement (Holtzworth-Munroe *et al.*, 2000; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994). Such an approach would allow officers to respond appropriately to cases with different themes of engagement. Therefore, when interpreting the results in terms of similarities, the chapter found distinct themes within the factors that provided insight into the composition of victim cooperation and withdrawal across the sample.

However, what appeared to have more worth during interpretation was the difference between the factors within the sample. As outlined by Brown (1985), facet theory assumed that the more conceptually similar the factors were the more they would be empirically similar. However, the reverse perspective could also be taken in the interpretation of factors within facet theory, whereby the more conceptually dissimilar the factors were the more they would be empirically dissimilar. The current chapter found

that there were distinct qualitative differences that appeared within the results, which illustrated how cases of victim cooperation and victim withdrawal occurred in different ways across each case within the sample.

From the results of the POSAC, it was clear that the factors that involved the ‘victim expressing an intention to end the relationship’ and the ‘case involving stalking and harassment’ polar opposed each other in the formation of victim cooperation. Theoretically, this was because a case involving stalking and harassment usually involved a couple who were ex-partners and, therefore, would have been extremely unlikely to involve a victim who stated an intention to leave the relationship. Likewise, a victim who expressed intentions to leave the relationship would not have been able to realistically report stalking and harassment whilst they were in an intimate partnership with the suspect. Therefore, within the five strongest factors of victim cooperation, there appeared to be a spectrum of interaction between the factors that ultimately formed victim cooperation. These findings are also represented in the SSA results, where the ‘victim expressing an intention to end the relationship’ appeared at the very top of the visual space, whereas the ‘case involving stalking and harassment’ appeared at the very bottom, which again demonstrated a spectrum of factors within the cooperation analysis.

In addition, the POSAC of withdrawal also showed that the ‘victim expressing issues with attending court’ and the ‘suspect and victim cohabiting after the abuse’ polar opposed each other in the composition of victim withdrawal. Theoretically, this was because victims who expressed issues with attending court showed an intention to prosecute and punish the suspect and, therefore, were unlikely to cohabit with the suspect after the abuse incident. Likewise, a victim who cohabited with the suspect after the abuse showed an intention to return to the relationship and, therefore, the victim would not have realistically considered the possibility of attending court. However, there was both theoretical and empirical overlap of the factors, in which victims considered a prosecution

and expressed issues with attending court, but upon withdrawal from the CJS they returned to the relationship and cohabited with the suspect. Therefore, the five strongest factors of victim withdrawal also formed a spectrum of potential interaction between the factors in their composition of victim withdrawal. The findings are again supported by their respective SSA results, since the ‘victim expressing issues with attending court’ appeared at the very top of the visual space, whereas the ‘suspect and victim cohabiting after the abuse’ appeared at the very bottom.

Considering the qualitative variance in factors associated with victim cooperation and withdrawal, the current chapter moved into an overall assessment of victim engagement that took into account the qualitative findings. In order to do so, the analysis utilised the total scores from the cooperation and withdrawal POSACs. The scores represented the number of factors that were used within their respective measurements, in which the presence of the factors also developed qualitative differences. When the scores were tested and combined, the result was a total victim engagement score that took into account the positive and negative effect that the cooperation and withdrawal scores had on the victim. The total victim engagement score, therefore, not only provided an assessment as to the quantitative strength of association each case had to cooperation or withdrawal, but also involved the qualitative differences in the composition of the score. This meant that it was applicable to the full 540 case sample used throughout the thesis and was found to have provided a strong differentiation or classification of victim engagement. This built upon previous literature such as Finneran and Stephenson (2013) and Hague *et al.* (2010) who established that multiple factors had a compounded effect on the way the victim sought out and engaged with support services. The results further imply that the combination of factors into an overall score provided an effective means of identifying and potentially measuring the strength of victim cooperation and victim withdrawal within cases of IPV.

Conclusion

The objective of the current chapter was to examine the correlation between the factors associated with victim engagement, in order to fully explore the complexity of the cases and provide simplified themes of victim cooperation and withdrawal. Whilst the results indicated that the co-occurrence formed themes of victim cooperation and withdrawal, the chapter found more worth in examining the differences that occurred between the factors.

In examining the similarities between the factors across the 540 cases, both the cooperation and withdrawal factors were broken down into three thematically similar subgroups. With regards to cooperation, the factors were represented by the themes ‘repeat abuse’, ‘current abuse’ and ‘change in lifestyle’. The themes encapsulated factors that were related to the victim’s past experience of IPV and their experience in using the police; the types of abuse and subsequent dynamics occurring within the immediate incident; and factors which indicated cases where the victim was attempting to gain support in improving their lifestyle and in becoming permanently IPV free. The withdrawal factors were represented by the themes ‘lifestyle’, ‘behaviour’ and ‘CJS being problematic’. The themes captured factors related to the emotional and geographical proximity of the couple; behaviour throughout the investigation and criminal justice process that indicated disengagement; and various issues throughout the CJS that made the process a negative and stressful experience for the victim.

In examining the differences across the five strongest factors of victim cooperation, the results demonstrated that the ‘victim expressed an intention to end the relationship’ and the ‘case involved stalking and harassment’ were polar variables in the composition of cooperation. In examining the five strongest factors related to victim withdrawal, results indicated that ‘the victim expressing issues with attending court’ and the ‘suspect and victim cohabiting after the abuse’ were polar variables in the composition

of withdrawal. The POSAC results were supported by their respective SSA results, which illustrated how there was a spectrum of factors that had varying qualitative interactions in cooperation and withdrawal. The results also visually indicated that the polar variables formed the boundary of these spectrums of cooperation and withdrawal. The analysis then utilised the POSACs total scores to provide an overall assessment of victim engagement. The result was a total victim engagement score that represented both a quantitative and qualitative assessment of factors associated with cooperation and withdrawal. Subsequently, the score provided a strong differentiation or classification of victim engagement across the 540 case sample used throughout the thesis.

Overall, the main objective of the chapter was to explore the complexity of the IPV cases in order to provide themes that simplified the findings of the thesis. However, the chapter instead found that the qualitative variance in the factors meant that their interaction with victim engagement was too complex to be considered simply. Overall, the chapter demonstrated that any assessment of victim engagement with the police would need to take into account the qualitative variance of the factors in order to fully understand the potential engagement of each individual victim of IPV. As the findings of the overall thesis remain complex, the next chapter moves into an overall discussion into the theoretical utility of the findings and how they could be applied to police practice.

CHAPTER 7 - DISCUSSION

The main aim of the thesis was to examine potential factors affecting victim engagement, in order to identify key factors related to victim cooperation and withdrawal in the police investigation of IPV cases. Due to the complex nature of IPV, the thesis was organised into four data chapters that represented a step by step process that explored victim engagement, whilst controlling for the charging and progression of the case. The Nested Ecological Model (NEM) was used as an initial structure in data extraction, as it ensured that the model included variables in each level to provide a comprehensive analysis of victim engagement. The first data chapter explored victim engagement and found factors that were statistically related to victim cooperation and withdrawal. The second data chapter followed the same procedure in exploring suspect charging, which found factors statistically related to a charge against the suspect. The thesis then conducted a cross validation of the findings by triangulating the factors of victim engagement with the factors of charging along with qualitative information from the case files. The thesis then brought together all of the findings and developed themes of cooperation and withdrawal through the use of Smallest Space Analysis (SSA) and Partially Ordered Scalogram Analysis with base Coordinates (POSAC).

Each of the chapters provided a detailed insight into the victim's engagement with the police and the progression of the case through the criminal justice system. The next section provides an overview as to the key findings from each of the data chapters compiled throughout the thesis.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 3 – Factors of Victim Engagement

The chapter aimed to determine which factors extracted from literature were statistically related to victim cooperation and withdrawal in the police investigation of IPV. The 103

factors extracted from the 540 cases were placed within the NEM and statistically analysed to determine which factors had a significant association to victim engagement. The analysis focused on two elements throughout the chapter. It focused on whether there were significant associations between the factors and victim engagement, as well as focusing on the effect sizes of any significant findings. Overall, the chapter found that there was partial support for the Stith *et al.* (2004) hypothesis, since the exosystem carried small effect sizes and was considered more distal than the microsystem and ontogenetic levels of the model. However, the findings deviated from the hypothesis when decision making factors were considered within the macrosystem, and when examining the smaller effect sizes of factors in the ontogenetic in comparison to the microsystem.

Contrary to expectation, the macrosystem resulted in a small number of findings which had large effect sizes. The findings related to decision making factors and illustrated that they were proximal to the victim. Upon reflection, the findings only became apparent when considering that the dependent variable (the victim's engagement) could also be interpreted as a decision. This meant that decision making factors were very proximal to the dependent variable, perhaps resulting in the large effect sizes. In addition, the hypothesis predicted that gender would impact victim engagement; however, the results found that male and female victims were equally as likely to cooperate or withdraw within the sample.

The exosystem carried low effect sizes in the small number factors that were associated with victim engagement. It appeared that the factors within the level mainly concerned evidence gathering and external agencies, which would have been more distal from the victim's decision to engage. The level also appeared to provide conflicting findings with regards to the hypothesis, as cases with bodycam/video footage and less pressure on the victim seemed to be associated with victim withdrawal. Upon interpretation the results seemed to demonstrate that the dynamic was positive for both

victims and police, as the withdrawal was part of a victimless prosecution process. In these instances, the evidence and ongoing investigation meant that the victim was able to withdraw without damaging the case and had the protection of the suspect's bail conditions.

The microsystem provided the most detailed level of analysis, with the larger effect sizes illustrating how the factors may be considered more proximal to the victim's decision to engage. The explanation for the larger effect sizes could be that the level pertained to the immediate context of the abuse, which would have impacted the victim's engagement directly. One of the main themes of factors related to the couple's emotional and physical proximity, in which cooperation was more likely to occur in cases where the couple had a greater distance between them. In addition, the victim's self-blame and understating or undermining abuse could be interpreted as factors of victim decision making. These particular findings could also relate to those within the macrosystem as they appeared more proximal to the victim's decision to engage.

Also deviating from the Stith *et al.* (2004) hypothesis was the ontogenetic level of analysis. The findings seemed to highlight that the factors pertaining to the victim's development and history appeared weaker in their association than the factors in the immediate context of their decision to engage. With the context in mind it was perhaps unsurprising that the factor with the largest effect size within the ontogenetic level was the victim's previous engagement with the police. In addition to supporting the explanation of the proximity of factors to the victim's decision to engage, the finding also confirmed the hypothesis developed for the direction of the results. In this instance previous victim cooperation appeared to be significantly associated with current victim cooperation. Further to the finding, the analysis also found that victims who had a positive previous experience with the CJS were more likely to cooperate within the current case, justifying the need for victim satisfaction in cases of IPV.

Whilst there were many findings statistically linked with victim engagement, the analysis uncovered that there was a significant association with the charging of the suspect. It was expected that charging and the overall progression of the case would be heavily tied to the victim's engagement within the sample. Due to the expectation and the significant finding, the next data chapter of the thesis took into account suspect charging in order to use it as a control in an overall examination of victim engagement.

Chapter 4 – Factors of Charging

The previous data chapter found a statistically significant relationship between suspect charging and victim engagement, which aligned with the literature explored within the thesis (Wilson, 2010; Davis *et al.*, 2003; Dawson & Dinovitzer, 2001). Therefore, the 103 factors across the 540 cases were analysed against the charging of the suspect. The results found strong support for the Stith *et al.* (2004) hypotheses, as the macrosystem, exosystem, microsystem and ontogenetic levels of analysis were all ordered in terms of their proximity when considering the largest effect size in each level.

Within the macrosystem, the effect sizes of the factors ranged from low to medium, suggesting that they were distal in relation to the couple. However, there were a number of significant associations that appeared interesting with regards to suspect charging. Gender bias appeared to occur within the police response, since male suspects and female victims were more likely to result in a charge than any other dynamic. In addition, the significant results around decision making and reporting the incident supported findings within the exosystem by highlighting how the involvement of third parties was strongly associated with a charge against the suspect.

The exosystem found two themes of findings with regards to suspect charging. The first was that external agencies and the presence of third parties were crucial in providing evidence and testimony on the victim's behalf. Regardless of the effect on

victim engagement, the presence of an external agency or third party meant the police were significantly more likely to charge the suspect within the case. However, the second theme related specifically to extrinsic evidence. Whilst the finding was as expected, in that the presence of evidence meant the suspect was more likely to be charged, the finding illustrated that there were deficiencies in the evidence gathered. The study found that only three in every five cases with extrinsic evidence resulted in a charge. The qualitative data illustrated that this was due to difficulties with photographs as evidence, especially when the suspect was able to explain the visual injuries or damage captured in the photos.

As with the victim engagement analysis, emotional and physical proximity appeared as a theme of significant findings. They also demonstrated how a suspect was more likely to be charged when there was a greater emotional and geographical distance between the couple. However, in cases where the victim reportedly wanted to continue a relationship, the suspect was more likely to receive a charge. The finding appeared to relate to particularly vulnerable victims who had some form of dependency on the suspect, be it emotional, financial, social or physical. Due to the vulnerability and reliance upon the suspect, the association could have been a result of the police placing a greater emphasis on charging the suspect in order to safeguard the victim.

The hypothesis for the ontogenetic level of analysis predicted that the suspects with a greater history of IPV, with the current victim or otherwise, and a greater criminal history would be more likely to receive a charge. The findings provided support for the hypothesis and also illustrated how certain types of previous abuse led to a charge in comparison to others. The results illustrated that both a broad history of crime and specific IPV offences increased the ability to charge the suspect. This was especially if the previous abuse was easily identified or reported and the suspect had previously admitted or been found guilty of the offences. Conversely, there was no association between a history of physical abuse and suspect charging, which appeared to contradict previous

literature. The difficulty in charging the suspect in such cases seemed to be related to both victim engagement and the availability of evidence. There were some cases where the victim was fully cooperative but there was not enough evidence to charge, and others where evidence was present but the victim retracted their statements. The findings again demonstrated the importance of victim engagement within cases of IPV and the deficiencies in some evidence collected at the scene. When examining the victim's previous engagement with the police, the data showed a larger effect size for reporting a previous DV incident to the police and the association with suspect charging, in comparison to the associations with previous victim cooperation and previous positive outcomes. The theme seemed to demonstrate that any previous report of domestic abuse was enough to increase the chance of suspect charging within the current case.

Overall, the chapter found strong support for the hypotheses developed from Stith *et al.* (2004). It also found numerous factors which were statistically linked to the charging of the suspect. Subsequently, the analysis highlighted a need to cross validate and triangulate both victim engagement and charging to further understand and explore the findings.

Chapter 5 – Cross Validating Factors of Victim Engagement

The thesis required a cross validation and triangulation of the findings from the data chapters and appendices in order to breakdown the complex and detailed relationships occurring within the IPV sample. The chapter, therefore, took the significant factors of victim engagement, examined them against suspect charging and applied qualitative case file information to provide further depth.

On the whole, the results illustrated that the factors in the NEM that had strong associations with victim engagement were also weak in their association with charging, and vice versa. However, there were findings throughout the chapter that highlighted

factors with strong associations with both victim engagement and charging, which demonstrated how the two subjects were intertwined within the sample. In addition, the thematic overlay provided a deeper layer of understanding for certain factors, such as in cases where the victim had a child (unrelated to the suspect) that was referred to a professional support network. The further analysis uncovered that it was the removal of children that was associated with victim withdrawal. However, the thematic overlay also highlighted cases with unique circumstances that caused difficulties in the application of some factors to victim engagement. Such factors included the presence of bodycam/video footage, which captured cases where victims were more vulnerable and the abuse occurred in public areas. In addition, there were cases that involved victims with mental health issues, illnesses and/or disabilities that often involved situations where victim engagement would have not been applicable. This was because the victims were already in the care of the police due to their mental health when the IPV occurred, or the victim knowingly made a false report of abuse due to their mental health and cooperated with the false account.

The chapter amalgamated all of the previous findings within the thesis to provide a deeper understanding into how the factors directly impacted victim engagement with the police investigation. The chapter found that there was a complex interaction between all of the variables within the cases of IPV, which uncovered limitations in the use of some factors to assess victim engagement. The study, therefore, revealed the need to examine the interaction between all of the factors to determine whether there were distinct similarities or differences in their association with cooperation and withdrawal.

Chapter 6 – Structuring Factors of Victim Engagement

Because the previous analyses had examined each factor of victim engagement in isolation, the final chapter brought the factors together to explore the potential themes of

victim cooperation and withdrawal. To examine the co-occurrence of factors, the chapter utilised SSA and POSAC to analyse the similarities and differences in the factors used within the sample.

The SSA results showed how the factors formed thematically similar subgroups that deviated from the NEM that had been used as a structure throughout the thesis. The themes that represented victim cooperation included ‘repeat abuse’, ‘current abuse’ and ‘change in lifestyle’. The withdrawal factors were also represented by three themes, which were ‘lifestyle’, ‘behaviour’ and the ‘CJS being problematic’ for the victim. The themes added a further layer of understanding into victim engagement by taking into account the interaction of factors that were associated with victim cooperation and withdrawal; however, the themes were found to have low internal reliability upon testing. Subsequently, the chapter found more worth in examining the differences that occurred within the sample, in which the POSACs highlighted how polar variables and accentuators formed qualitatively different types of victim cooperation and withdrawal. The chapter also developed a victim engagement score based upon the results of the POSAC that took into account the qualitative variance in victim engagement throughout the sample.

Consequently, the chapter concluded that the complexity of the IPV cases was evidenced by the need to take into account the qualitative variance in the victims’ engagement, as well as the quantitative score, in order to provide a full and representative assessment of victim engagement with the police.

Identifying Victim Engagement

A model was developed to illustrate the findings of the thesis (please see Figure 7.1 on page 254). The model combined all of the results from the final chapter of analysis to provide a full overview as to the dynamics and themes that occurred within victim

engagement. The top and bottom of the hourglass model represented the qualitative results of the POSAC, with the polar variables appearing at the left and right of the hourglass and the remaining factors appearing in the centre. The themes on the top and bottom of the model represented the themes formed from the SSA results and their placement within the model corresponded to the polar variables within the hourglass. In addition, the number of factors present within the hourglass represented the cooperation and withdrawal scores, which were combined to form the total victim engagement score. Therefore, the width of the hourglass represented the qualitative variance in each victim's engagement with the police and the height of the hourglass represented a quantitative assessment of their engagement.

To utilise the model, an assessor would begin from the centre of the hourglass and assume a victim engagement score of 5/10, which represented no effect. The assessor would then examine the case for the 10 prioritised factors contained within the hourglass and input all of the applicable factors that were present in the case. The prioritised factors then generate an overall victim engagement score out of 10, in which a score greater than 5 would indicate victim cooperation and a score less than 5 would indicate victim withdrawal. In addition to the factors within the hourglass, the themes on the outside represented categories containing additional supportive factors (please see Table 7.1). As the width of the model represented the qualitative variance, the prioritised factors gave an indication of the themes to focus on in search of further supportive factors.

Figure 7.1: Hourglass Model of Victim Engagement for Identifying Victim Cooperation and Withdrawal in the Police Investigation of IPV Cases.

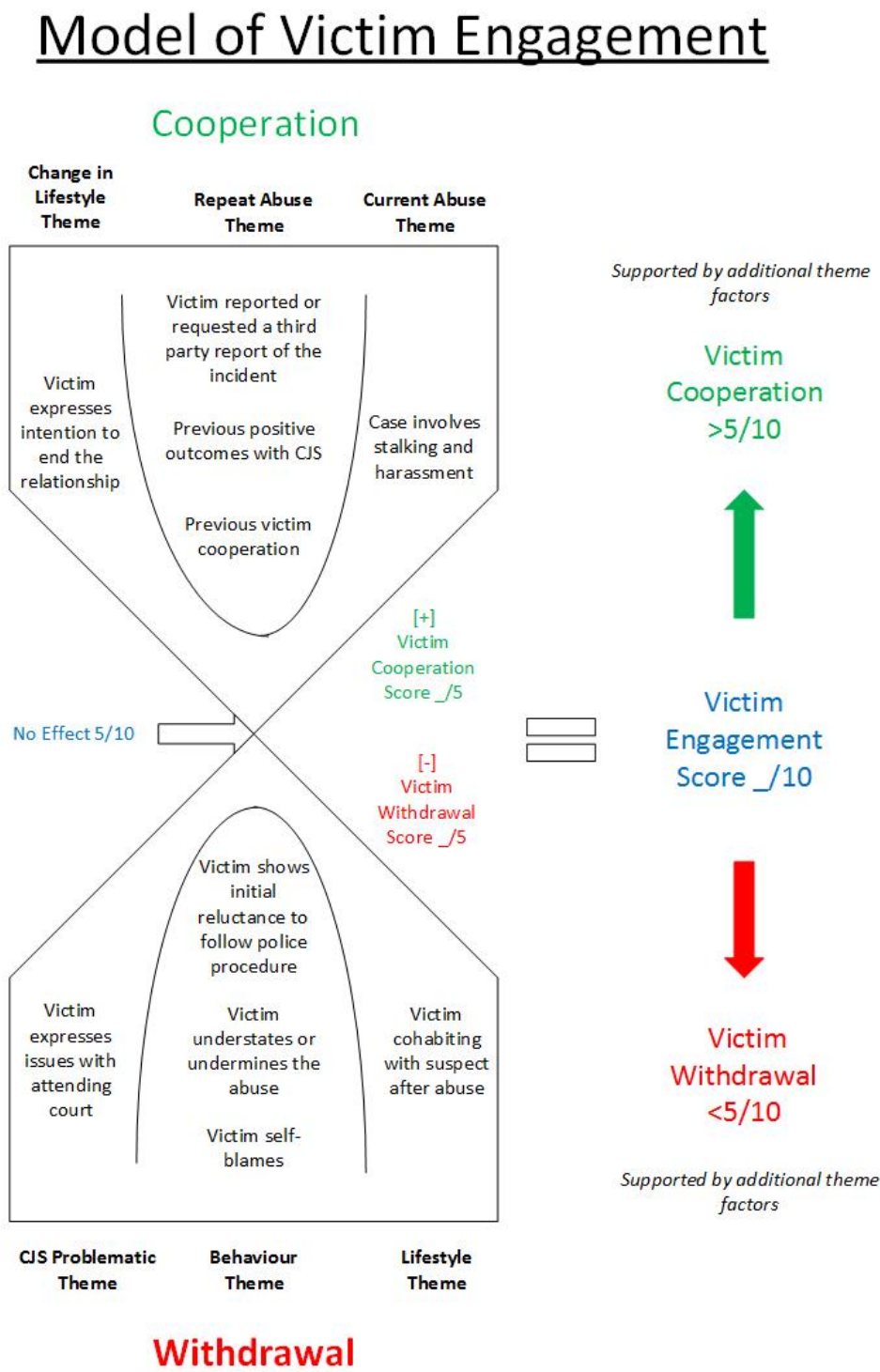


Table 7.1: Factors Contained within the Themes of the Hourglass Model.

| Cooperation Themes | Withdrawal Themes |
|--|---|
| Change in Lifestyle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspect drink dependent | CJS Problematic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child(ren) of the victim (unrelated to the suspect) and a referral to social services; • Victim expresses intention to continue the relationship; • Previous victim withdrawal; • Previous negative outcomes with CJS. |
| Repeat Abuse: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim has had previous DV contact with police; • Same victim abused by the same suspect; • Suspect has history of stalking and harassment. | Behaviour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unrequested third party report of incident; • Possible victimless prosecution. |
| Current Abuse: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Witness cooperation; • Victim reports feeling generally scared to officers; • Couple are the same age. | Lifestyle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspect consumed alcohol; • Victim consumed alcohol; • Current intimate partnership; • Cohabitation during the abuse incident. |

The examples outlined below provide two examples of how the model illustrated in Figure 7.1 would apply to police practice in the early identification of victim engagement.

Application to Police Practice Example 1: Identifying Strong Victim Cooperation

The victim had recently split from her partner after a previous serious physical assault. She had previously cooperated with the police, after which the suspect was charged and found guilty. After the break up the suspect had called her mobile on 200 occasions and she had ignored all of the contact. In addition, the suspect had also been turning up drunk

to the school as the victim picked up their children, and had been following her to various appointments throughout her day. On the day of the incident, the suspect consumed half a bottle of vodka and turned up at the school and verbally abused the victim. He then also went to her parent's address and began verbally abusing them. The victim then decided to get in contact with the police herself and report all of the behaviour in full to officers.

Upon the police response, the officer would apply the model to the victim to determine the likelihood of their engagement with the police investigation. In this instance the officers would use the model to note that the case involved harassment, the victim has reported the abuse herself, that she had previously cooperated with the police and she had received a positive outcome in dealing with the previous assault incident. These four prioritised factors would then lead officers to look for supportive factors of cooperation within the appropriate themes, or potentially address the victim about the supportive factors if they were not present. The model also demonstrated to officers that there were no factors of potential withdrawal because the victim did not express any issues with attending court, did not express initial reluctance to follow police procedure upon their response, did not understate or undermine the abuse, did not blame herself for any of the incident and it was clear that the victim and suspect now lived apart. If the officers then used the themes for further supportive factors of withdrawal, the only factor that applied to the case was that the suspect had consumed alcohol within the incident.

Therefore, the victim had 4 factors of cooperation and 0 factors of withdrawal, which resulted in an engagement score of 9/10. The score indicated that the case was likely to result in victim cooperation throughout the police investigation. The victim was assessed as a high risk victim when assessed through the DASH risk assessment (example was based on case 15 - actual victim cooperation; High Risk DASH).

Application to Police Practice Example 2: Identifying Strong Victim Withdrawal

The suspect and victim were intimate partners for 14 years and were drinking together at a party. The suspect verbally abused the victim and the victim responded by slapping the suspect in the face. The suspect entered into a rage and banged the victim's head against a wall, threw her to the floor and slapped her numerous times in the face. One of the friends at the party intervened, whilst another friend called the police. Upon the police response, the suspect was extremely aggressive and blamed the victim for his arrest. The victim provided a signed statement to officers which explained how it was the first time they had been physically violent towards each other and that the suspect only slapped her in the face once or twice. The victim had no visible injuries. The officers then attempted to take statements from the friends at the party, but the victim told officers not to allow the friends to get involved; however, the friends cooperated with the police and provided signed statements. After the situation had been dealt with, the victim returned back to the family home to look after the children whilst the suspect was transported to the police station.

Upon the police response, officers would apply the model to determine the likelihood of victim engagement with the police investigation. The case did not involve any stalking or harassment, the victim expressed no issues with attending court in her statement and there was no reported previous abuse between the couple. In addition, the victim did not report the abuse herself since the report was made by a third party without her request. Therefore, there were no factors of victim cooperation present within the case. However, when examining the withdrawal factors of the model, the victim stated to officers that it was the first time 'they had been violent towards each other' and had, therefore, partly self-blamed for the incident. When she explained the abuse to officers she reported being slapped only once or twice, whereas the witness accounts reported that the victim had been thrown against a wall and forced to the floor by the suspect before

being slapped numerous times. This meant that the victim had understated the abuse she had suffered. Whilst the victim provided a signed statement herself, she showed initial reluctance to follow police procedure when she attempted to prevent the friends at the party from providing witness accounts to the police. Finally, after the initial scene had been dealt with, the victim was returning to the family home without expressing any intentions to relocate, which meant it was extremely likely that the victim would continue to cohabit with the suspect after the abuse incident. Taking into account the withdrawal factors present, the officers would then examine the themes of ‘behaviour’ and ‘lifestyle’ for further supportive factors of victim withdrawal.

The victim had 0 factors of cooperation and 4 factors of withdrawal, which formed a score of 1/10. The score indicated that the case was likely to result in victim withdrawal from the police investigation. The victim was assessed as a medium risk victim when assessed through the DASH risk assessment (example was based on case 30 - actual victim withdrawal; Medium Risk DASH).

Application to Police Practice: Full Sample

The examples above provided an application of the model to police practice in cases of strong cooperation and strong withdrawal. However, the model was developed to apply to the full sample of IPV cases used within the thesis and yielded an AUC of .896 in the ROC curve analysis. The table below presents the application of the model if it were to occur in each of the cases within the sample as an assessment to identify victim engagement with the police investigation.

Table 7.2: Application of the Hourglass Model to the Current 540 Case Sample, without Qualitative Support.

| | Identified: Cooperation | | No Identification | | Identified: Withdrawal | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Actual Cooperation | 266 | 90.2% | 67 | 64.4% | 12 | 8.5% |
| Actual Withdrawal | 29 | 9.8% | 37 | 35.6% | 129 | 91.5% |
| Total | 295 | 100% | 104 | 100% | 141 | 100% |

The sample of IPV cases used within the current study contained 345 cases of victim cooperation and 195 cases of victim withdrawal. As seen in Table 7.2, the hourglass model was able to identify victim engagement in 436 cases. It identified victim cooperation in 295 cases with an accuracy of 90.2% and identified victim withdrawal in 141 cases with an accuracy of 91.5%.

However, great care must be taken in the application of the model in practice, especially when considering the promotion culture in policing. Officers could misuse the research if they use the process to identify cases of victim withdrawal early, but for professional gain as opposed to an appropriate response. This means an officer focused on promotion and progression through the ranks may place more emphasis on cases of victim cooperation in order to bolster their rate of convictions. Such an approach would be in complete contradiction to the ethos of the thesis, as the current research argues that more emphasis and effort should be placed into cases of victim withdrawal to establish an effective system of victim engagement. Therefore, the model should be used in conjunction with the ideology of the thesis, in which the early identification of victim withdrawal should be linked to an early intervention process to better meet the needs and expectations of a victim. Furthermore, the process should consider victim engagement a

priority and their cooperation should be taken as seriously as the prosecution against the suspect.

Theoretical Contributions

The thesis found that many factors had an association with victim engagement, which highlighted numerous theoretical contributions to the policing of IPV. This section draws together the findings throughout the data chapters, highlights exceptions and unexpected results, and discusses further research needed in order to advance knowledge of victim engagement.

Gender

There are competing perspectives around the concept of gender within IPV. Some academics consider IPV to be a gendered crime (Jewell & Wormith, 2010), with males more likely to abuse females leading to the formation of gender asymmetry (Dobash & Dobash, 2004). In addition, the feminist perspective also criticised the approach of family violence research as it does not take into account the context of cases (Dobash *et al.*, 1992). The current study, however, took context into account and also found numerous female suspects that had abused both male and female partners. The gender dynamics within the sample suggested that patriarchy was a factor that interacted with other factors in an overall cause of abuse, as opposed to being a direct cause of IPV itself (Dutton, 2006). However, the sample did not reflect the gender symmetry often argued by the family violence advocates (Breiding *et al.*, 2014; Gelles & Straus, 1986; Straus, 1977).

The study found difficulties when trying to apply the Johnson (2010) typologies. The sample within the thesis included 540 police cases of IPV, with a majority of male perpetrators and female victims. From the literature, such a sample would be expected to contain mostly ‘intimate terrorism’ cases, since Johnson argues that these cases are more likely to be perpetrated by men against women, thus explaining the gender composition

of the sample. However, the qualitative analysis in this instance found that most of the cases within the sample seemed to involve ‘situational couple violence’. Taking into account the history of abuse between the couples, there were only a small number of cases in which coercion and control was apparent. Therefore, the thesis aligns with the views of family violence advocates and suggests that there is gender symmetry in the prevalence of IPV. However, due to the dominance and practice of feminist literature, the current response to IPV seems to be gender asymmetrical. This has been further complicated by the Johnson typologies as he argues that ‘situational couple violence’ is the only typology which represents gender symmetry (Johnson, 2010). Furthermore, the gender asymmetrical typologies of ‘violent resistance’ and ‘intimate terrorism’ do not cover the huge qualitative variations that appear in each case of IPV. Consequently, the typologies appear flawed when considering violence alongside coercion and control. Considering males and females have been found to use qualitatively different coercion and control to abuse their partner (Robertson & Murachver, 2011), the categories of ‘violent resistance’ and ‘intimate terrorism’ appear unrepresentative of males as victims and females as suspects. For example, they would not capture a case of abuse where a female victim is using non-violent coercion and control (intimate terrorism), to which the male then reacts with violence in order to break the cycle of coercion and control (violent resistance).

The difference in responses to male and female suspects was apparent within the charging analysis of the thesis. Male suspects were more likely to receive a charge, as were cases that involved female victims, which at first suggested that gender bias occurred in the charging of police cases (Worrall *et al.*, 2006). Further analysis uncovered that the association was due to the suspects’ interaction with police. Female suspects were more likely to admit guilt and receive a caution, whereas male suspects were more likely to deny guilt and receive a charge. It would be critically important, therefore, for further research to consider the possibility that the police response to female suspects may differ

from the response to male suspects. The greater likelihood of a female admission may have been due to females not worrying about the stigma of perpetration as much as males, especially as female perpetrators have been considered to mainly act in self-defence and use 'violent resistance' (Johnson, 2010). Subsequently, as they were more honest and open about the situation they were more likely to receive a caution as opposed to a charge. Furthermore, and more worryingly, the research also found that victims (regardless of their own gender) were more likely to be initially reluctant to follow police procedure when the suspect of the abuse was female. The result illustrated how victims hesitated when criminalising their female partner in comparison to criminalising a male partner, again highlighting potential difficulties caused by social stigma. Overall, the results around gender aligned with the argument that there should be a closer inspection of variables (such as size, strength, experience with violence and aggression) that may be attached to one gender over the other, in order to control for the existing gender stereotypes often applied to IPV (Baker *et al.*, 2013).

Future research into the police response to IPV could examine the processing of male and female suspects and focus on the differences between the groups. The research would need to take into account the officers' and victims' attitudes, views and decision making to determine whether there are difficulties in the investigation and charging of female IPV suspects. Such research would be best placed to examine the responses to homosexual couples and whether the response to IPV differs in lesbian and gay relationships. Any significant factors could then be applied to heterosexual IPV, to determine to what extent gender affects the police response to abuse cases across all sexual orientations.

Lifestyle

The victim's lifestyle with the suspect appeared to affect their engagement with the police. The emotional and geographical proximity of the couple seemed to impact both

engagement and charging within the current study (Dawson, 2004), as couples with a further emotional and physical proximity were more likely to cooperate and secure a charge against the suspect. The associations occurred due to the types of abuse involved, since cases with a wider emotional and physical proximity involved cases of stalking and harassment and criminal damage (as the couple lived in separate dwellings); whereas cases that involved a closer emotional and geographical proximity were more likely to involve physical assaults. In addition to proximity, the consumption of alcohol also applied to the victim's lifestyle, in which both the suspect and victim often consumed alcohol together (Hines & Douglas, 2012; Stewart *et al.*, 2012; Schuller & Stewart, 2000). Furthermore, the qualitative data from the thesis also highlighted the complexities alcohol developed when processing a case of IPV, in which suspects appeared unable to recall events during the suspect interview and where victims used the suspects' intoxication as a means of shifting blame from the suspect onto the effects of the drug.

Further research into victim engagement with regards to the couple's lifestyle could take into account the limitations within the current study. The thesis previously mentioned that there was a limitation in the coding of alcohol, since it was only considered as consumed or not consumed. A more appropriate approach for future study of victim engagement could be to determine whether a scale of intoxication led to a difference between cooperation and withdrawal. The fresh variables would be better suited to capture cases where the victim or suspect was drunk, as opposed to had just consumed a small amount of alcohol. In addition, lifestyle could also take into account employment and finances. The fresh research could consider differences in lifestyle and engagement between employed couples and unemployed couples, or couples with more income against those on a lower income. Furthermore, the ability and potential use of a deprivation scale may lend a more general insight into the victim's lifestyle in cases of IPV, which could be examined against victim engagement. In addition, it would be

interesting to determine whether victim cooperation or withdrawal is more likely to occur in certain geographic areas, so the police could target engagement campaigns in certain neighbourhoods to increase reporting and cooperation.

Change in Lifestyle

Separately to the previous theme, cases that involved the victim attempting to change their lifestyle had an association with victim cooperation. The difference between the current theme and theme of lifestyle emphasised a need for a victim empowerment approach to IPV, in which more immediate and available support should be applied specifically to victims expressing an intention to improve their lifestyle. Supporting victims who were seeking to improve their lifestyle would have been crucial to victim cooperation, since it provided the necessary motivation for the prosecution of the suspect (Birdsall *et al.*, 2016; Hoyle & Sanders, 2000). This was in comparison to cases where the victim was expected to prosecute their partner without any motivation other than to punish them.

Cases that involved a change in lifestyle either concerned the suspect being drink dependent or the victim expressing an intention to end the relationship. One of the main themes found within the thematic analysis was victims who wanted help and not punishment, which often occurred in cases that involved a suspect with an alcohol dependency. This meant that, out of the many influences towards cooperation, one of the reasons victims cooperated with the police in drink dependency cases was because they wanted help from the police in finding support and rehabilitation for the suspects' alcoholism. In addition, victims that expressed an intention to end the relationship also illustrated an intention to improve their lifestyle, since they no longer wanted to be part of an aggressive partnership and suffer further abuse. The factors corresponded to the victims' lifestyle as discussed above, since alcohol consumption by the suspect and/or victim was more likely to result in withdrawal. This occurred because the victim did not

usually consider the suspect's alcohol consumption to be an issue, and the victims in such cases were more likely to be co-consuming alcohol with the suspect.

Taking into account the findings within the theme of a change in lifestyle, future research could further explore victim intentions (Robinson & Stroshine, 2005) to determine whether there is a significant association between their intentions at the scene of abuse and their overall engagement. Studies could collect interview data with the victims about their intentions to prosecute a suspect and see whether the intentions follow through into later victim cooperation. Such research may be best placed to use a longitudinal study design, so there is a constant evaluation of the victim's thought process, motivation and intentions, to determine at what points in the CJS they are considering withdrawal. Subsequent safeguards could then be put in place at any relevant points throughout the processing of a case, in order to capture victims following the processes and intentions which were associated with withdrawal. In addition, separate research into a change in lifestyle could identify what motivates a victim to cooperate with the police and prosecute the suspect. Whilst most motivations may simply be to stop the abuse from occurring, others may be more complex such as rehabilitating the suspect or other forms of positive change within the couple's lifestyle.

Behaviour

Closely linked to a change in lifestyle, the victim's intentions could also manifest in certain types of behaviour and decisions at the initial scene of abuse. When the police dealt with the initial scene they were required to follow a set of criteria in order to process the case. The thesis found that a key consideration for the police was the victims' reactions and behaviour to the process throughout the reporting and initial response to abuse, as their behaviour was statistically linked to their engagement (Robinson & Stroshine, 2005). Victims who were involved in the report of the incident and who followed police procedure throughout the initial response were significantly more likely

to cooperate with the investigation than when any of the elements were missing. Missing elements included not reporting or not requesting a third party report, refusing to provide a statement at the immediate scene, refusing to be photographed and refusing to allow others at the scene to provide witness accounts. (Harris-Short & Miles, 2011; Payne & Wermeling, 2009). Others understated or undermined their abuse, stated that the police response was too serious, and some victims engaged in self-blame to remove blameworthiness from the suspect (Rose *et al.*, 2012).

In addition, children had no association with victim engagement since the victims would make a decision to cooperate or withdraw based upon what they perceived to be in their children's best interests (Kelly, 2009; Bonomi *et al.*, 2006). However, when considering children from outside the intimate partnership and there was a referral to a professional support network (social services), the cases were more likely to result in victim withdrawal. The finding linked back to previous literature which explained how victims did not believe that social services fully understood their circumstances when they reacted to their situation (Douglas & Hines, 2010). Within the current thesis, the significant association with victim withdrawal was most likely due to the risk of loss, since the children could be removed from the victim and either placed in social care or in the custody of the other biological parent. In such cases, the victim chose to withdraw from the CJS in order to distance themselves from the abuse incident, criminal intervention and the support network, because they deemed the loss of their children as the greater risk (Anderson, 2000; Ritov & Baron, 1990; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979).

The findings highlighted the need to consider whether the processing criteria applied to every case is the most appropriate means of addressing the victim upon their first contact with the police. In addition, as the officers process the case and fulfil the list of criteria, it would be crucial for officers to take into consideration the victims' reactions

and behaviour in order to recognise cases where the homogenous system was not appropriate to the victims' needs.

The study found quantitative links between certain behaviours and victim engagement, however there is still a need for comprehensive qualitative data into the victim's reactions. Further research into the victim's subjective view of the initial scene of abuse would provide invaluable insight into their reaction to the police response, thought processes and behaviour. The results of such research would then provide explanations as to the thought processes behind the victim's behaviour and their subsequent cooperation or withdrawal.

Seriousness

As mentioned throughout the thesis, some victims and the police had different aims within cases of IPV, which sometimes led to conflicts of interest within the investigation (Harris-Short & Miles, 2011; Payne & Wermeling, 2009). Furthermore, findings from the study also highlighted that victims seemed to consider the police as a separate entity in dealing with the abuse, as opposed to considering the police as a gateway into criminal action against the suspect. One of the main contributors to the issue, it seemed, was the difference between views of seriousness formed by the police and victim.

When the current abuse incident involved stalking and harassment, the case was more likely to involve victim cooperation than any other type of abuse. This was despite previous literature that highlighted how officers can take this form of abuse less seriously (Lynch & Logan, 2015). Physical and verbal abuse cases, however, were more likely to result in victim withdrawal, even though the police have been found to take these cases more seriously (Basow & Thompson, 2012). Consistent with these findings, the study also found that victims who reported no injuries to the officers were the most likely to cooperate and secure a charge against the suspect, which contradicted previous literature (Bonomi *et al.*, 2006).

It appeared that the police took physical abuse cases very seriously because the victim's suffering was often visualised through their injuries. In the majority of cases, this was the best approach to correctly handle some of the most vulnerable victims within the sample. However, whilst there were numerous victims who agreed to the seriousness of the abuse, some did not believe their experience of physical abuse was serious enough to warrant a prosecution. In such cases the victim had called the police only to quell the immediate situation or to remove the suspect from the address and did not want any further action beyond that point. Furthermore, there were numerous repeat victims of IPV present within the sample. Those who had previously reported the abuse to the police, had cooperated in the previous investigations and were satisfied with the previous CJS outcomes were more likely to cooperate within the current IPV case (Felson *et al.*, 2005). Nevertheless, there were numerous cases of repeat abuse that withdrew because of consistent previous negative outcomes. These cases consisted of numerous victims who had not wanted the police to pursue a prosecution against the suspect or had felt tricked into pursuing criminal action against the suspect during a previous response.

Overall the findings illustrated how some victims believed that a criminal prosecution was too serious for the IPV they experienced. Furthermore, those who had consistently experienced this pattern of malalignment were consistently found to withdraw from the police investigation. An important consideration for the police, therefore, would be to develop a more comprehensive assessment of risk. Any risk assessment, which ultimately forms the seriousness of the case, could take into account the victims' subjective assessment of their own risk. Ultimately, this would ensure that the police build both an objective and subjective assessment of risk for the case, in which they can identify victims who considered different risk factors and have, therefore, formed a different view as to the seriousness of the case.

Issues with Court

One of the key themes of withdrawal was the victim expressing issues with attending court, which included: the court dates and process taking too long; being stressful and confusing; feeling too serious and daunting; and facing the suspect in court. Whilst the victim expressing issues with attending court was statistically linked to a charge against the suspect, it was also subsequently linked with victim withdrawal. During the control, the thesis found that the statistical relationship between court issues and victim withdrawal was stronger in cases where the suspect received a charge. Therefore, it appeared that in cases where the victim expressed issues with court initially involved a cooperative victim, since the victim had realistically considered the prosecution of the suspect. The cooperation of the victim would have allowed for crucial evidence gathering and subsequently allowed for a charge against the suspect. However, as the charging of the suspect then meant that the victim was expected to attend court, their issues became a priority and subsequently increased the likelihood of withdrawal.

Future research into the responses to IPV could determine whether the application of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) (Costa, 2012) would be appropriate in cases with this factor. The research would test whether the improved court services actually met the needs of victims who expressly stated they had issues with attending court (Wilson, 2010). Within a victim empowerment approach, the use of such a strategy would not only allow for the SDVCs to apply to cases where the improved service would positively impact victim engagement, but it would ensure efficiency by directing cases through alternative strategies when the victim has not expressed issues with attending court and has different victim needs.

Third Party Reports

The thesis found that a vital dynamic to consider within IPV cases was the presence of third parties. Whilst third party reports often resulted in victim withdrawal, they were

more likely to secure a charge against the suspect. Many academics have previously focused research on victim reporting (Antle *et al.*, 2010; Felson *et al.*, 2002; Bennett *et al.*, 1999; Coulter *et al.*, 1999), and the current thesis also promoted a victim empowerment approach in order to increase the level of victim reporting.

However, the thesis found that there is also a large gap in research with regards to third party reports of IPV. There was still mystery around the meaning of third party reports and how they reflected the vulnerability of the victim in each case. Further study would be necessary to understand whether third party reports by family and friends reflected cases of IPV where the victim was less vulnerable because they have an advocate who engaged with the police on their behalf. This would be especially prominent if the parent of the victim acted as an advocate throughout the criminal justice process. This research could be in comparison to neighbour reports of IPV, in which victims may be more vulnerable because the abuse had escalated to such an extent that the neighbours reported the incident to the police. Furthermore, it would be essential to consider the difference in reporting between different demographic and geographic areas, as areas with a higher crime rate may have a lower level of reporting domestic abuse than areas with a lower crime rate. Each element of research would build toward an understanding of how to address third party reports, as well as how to compensate for the low levels of victim reporting. If applied alongside a victim empowerment approach, the potential increase in victim reporting through satisfaction and confidence in addition to a greater understanding around third party reports could directly address the low prevalence of IPV reporting which currently occurs within the UK.

Removing the Burden from Victims

Upon responding to the incident of IPV officers were expected to collect evidence that was useful to prove the allegation and charge the suspect. Peterson and Bialo-Padin (2012) explained how the police should have focused on evidence that was associated

with the charging of the suspect; however, the current thesis found that this relationship fluctuated based upon the suspects' interaction with the evidence present. Stalking and harassment cases appeared the strongest in terms of evidence gathering, as the unwanted communication was often kept by the victim as evidence for the police. However, in physical abuse and damage cases, photographs of the victim's injuries or damage to property were the most susceptible to becoming weak because the suspect provided a version of events that accounted for the image.

Body worn video footage, mobile phone video footage and CCTV footage provided stronger evidence to charge, often capturing the immediate lead up or aftermath of the incident, as well as the abuse itself (Ellis *et al.*, 2015). Subsequently, the thesis found a strong association between the presence of bodycam/video footage and the charging of a suspect (Morrow *et al.*, 2016). It became further prominent and compounded the damage to the suspect's credibility when they provided an untruthful version of events that was later disproved by the footage, or continued to dispute the facts observed within the footage itself.

Similar to video footage, the presence of third parties at the scene of abuse aided the police in corroborating accounts. Witnesses that provided statements to officers supplied invaluable credibility to victims of IPV (Dawson & Holton, 2014). In addition, the presence of multiple victims alongside the main IPV victim also aided in the identification of the main aggressor, as multiple parties provided consistent accounts against the suspect (Hamby *et al.*, 2016).

The cases most likely to result in difficulties for the police, however, were cases where the suspect did not admit to the IPV related crime and instead provided an account that was very similar to the victim's allegations. This often involved the suspect explaining a situation of self-defence, defence of others or defence of property. The difficulty arose because the version of events accounted for the victim's injuries and any

disturbance at the scene, whilst also providing sufficient ambiguity as to the abuse itself. Such a strategy would relate back to what is often termed as ‘he said, she said’ cases (Lifschitz, 2004), where the police have no further evidence or means of ratifying one version of events over the other. In such instances, the officers would have been best placed to keep on record (with bodycam or phone footage) the state of the dwelling, by carefully taking into account the placement of objects within the address. This was because the suspect often had to deviate from the main allegation in order to create a context whereby they were reacting to a situation of abuse as opposed to creating it. Such cases could have been distinguished by very minor details (i.e. the location of thrown objects, damage to certain objects and disturbances in certain rooms) that only became significant to officers after they interviewed the suspect.

Overall, the thesis found that cases with strong evidence against the suspect and where a victimless prosecution was possible were more likely to be cases of victim withdrawal. However, the withdrawal in many cases was not necessarily a negative outcome, since the police and victim had both achieved their separate aims. In such cases, the victim was provided with an opportunity to remove themselves from the stressful prosecution process, whilst also becoming IPV free with the protection and support of the police as the case continued through the CJS. Concurrently, the police were engaged in the protection and support of the victim, whilst also pursuing a prosecution against the suspect with a realistic prospect of conviction. Such an approach would still require critical communication in order to ensure that the withdrawal in such cases did not reflect the victim wanting to stop the prosecution against the suspect. On the whole, by removing the burden of a prosecution from the victim and placing the onus of a prosecution on the police and CJS, the criminal justice process as a whole would then be able to solely focus on the victim’s needs as a victim, as opposed to their requirements as a witness (Ellison, 2002).

Practical Implications

The main aim of the thesis was to examine potential factors affecting victim engagement with the police, in order to identify factors related to victim cooperation and withdrawal in the police investigation of IPV cases. The rationale for the research stemmed from the promotion of a victim empowerment approach to policing IPV (Birdsall *et al.*, 2016; Hoyle & Sanders, 2000). This would be in contrast to the current homogenous system focused on the prosecution of a suspect, which does not account for the numerous issues and victim needs found within each case (Cerulli *et al.*, 2015). The most important consideration of the research was that there is no assessment of victim engagement with the police when they respond to each incident of abuse. This means that withdrawal is not considered when the police examine all other aspects of the victims' risk through the DASH risk assessment (Richards, 2015). More importantly, there is currently no assessment into whether each victim of abuse actually engages with the DASH risk assessment itself.

The fact that the police response to IPV is hinged on the DASH risk assessment means that any evaluation of the victim engagement would need to precede or supersede the standard risk assessment. This would ensure that there are strict measures in place to identify vulnerable victims who may not even engage with the standard risk assessments used routinely in police practice. The hourglass model developed through the thesis could provide an effective assessment as to the likelihood of victim engagement within each case of domestic abuse. Furthermore, the model itself was developed to apply to all cases of IPV and, therefore, provides a response to IPV that is applicable to all victims of abuse. By identifying the likelihood of victim engagement at the early stages of the investigation, the police can appropriately prioritise resources and support services in order to meet the needs of IPV victims. This becomes especially prominent when considering the charging

analysis found that 78.1% of cases involved the CPS placing a heavy burden on the victim to prosecute since there was not enough evidence to consider a victimless prosecution.

In cases of victim withdrawal, victim vulnerability is increased due to the refusal of professional support, and throughout the thesis such cases often appeared to involve physical abuse and previous negative outcomes with the police and CJS. By identifying victims likely to withdraw from the outset of the case, the police will be better equipped to provide an appropriate and timely response in order to critically communicate with victims and break the cycle of negativity often developed through poor victim satisfaction to previous responses. More vitally, identifying and addressing otherwise disengaged victims would enable officers and professional support workers to ensure the victims' protection from further abuse at the earliest possible opportunity.

Limitations and Further Research

Each of the data chapters discussed limitations that were specific to the factors or themes examined within the research; therefore, the current section will provide an overview as to limitations to the research and its application as a whole. The section will also suggest further research in order to overcome the limitations identified within the thesis.

The largest limitation of the research project was that the methodology and analysis were extensive, with numerous independent variables being examined against the dependent variable. Consequently, the coding within the study only provided a shallow insight into factors affecting engagement. For example, factors such as the presence of friends and family or the consumption of alcohol did not get into the detail of 'how' the factors impacted upon the victim, which meant that valuable insight may have been lost. If more detailed coding was applied to such factors, the analysis may have found further associations with victim engagement; however, the amount of data collected meant that it could not be covered within the current thesis. Furthermore, different forms

of analysis could have been conducted throughout the study in order to explore the factors of victim engagement (Sleath & Smith, 2017). Whilst in this instance the study analysed the factors individually before then examining the co-correlation of the factors, future research may test the factors examined through a stepwise regression analysis to establish a predictive model of victim engagement.

With regards to the sampling method and materials, the thesis utilised a stratified convenience sample of IPV cases recorded and processed by the Lancashire Constabulary in 2013. Therefore, the study was reliant on police data and the results of the thesis were predominantly based on information from the police databases and case files. Whilst it is a unique approach to research and forms the basis of evidence-based policing, the methodology can be considered a limitation as police information is criticised as suffering from bias and gaps in intelligence (Stainer, 2013; Sheptycki, 2004). Furthermore, criminal justice agencies develop operational systems for practical use, in which they only collect and process data that allows the system to work effectively. Consequently, this means that some detailed information is lost in order for the operational system to maintain efficiency (Marshall, 2005). Although police data is considered to hold good coverage of situations and people, there may have been instances within the current study where some of the factors explored may well have been present within cases, but were not recorded and reported by the professionals handling the case.

With regards to the generalisation and application of findings, it is important to note that the data used within the current study only examined IPV handled by the Lancashire Constabulary. The results, therefore, are based on this force area alone, as other police forces may have different procedures, risk assessments and policies in place when handling IPV cases. In addition, the sample involved cases of IPV from 2013, meaning there needs to be careful interpretation of the findings when considering the application of the research on a contemporary sample. Furthermore, as mentioned within

the main methodology under Chapter 2 of the thesis, the coding of the victim's engagement was based on the police investigation only and did not take into consideration whether the victim attended court. Therefore, the sample only reflected victim engagement with the police and was not representative of the whole criminal justice process.

To overcome the limitations outlined above, future research could further examine the results of the thesis through different conditions and methodologies. Firstly, further research into certain factors affecting victim engagement, as well as the hourglass model of victim engagement, could be examined against a separate sample of cases dealt with by the Lancashire Constabulary. In addition, the research could also be conducted in different force areas to determine whether victim engagement factors are largely affected by the police force involved. Further to expanding the scope chronologically and geographically, the results could also be applied to the victim's court attendance within a case. Further research could utilise data from the CPS in determining whether victims attended court and gave evidence, in order to determine whether cases marked as victim cooperation resulted in cooperation throughout the whole criminal justice process.

Regarding the factors of engagement directly, the research included some elements of subjectivity when examining the suspect interviews and victim statements. However, the thesis as a whole was predominantly an objective study into victim engagement. Future research could pair the information extracted from police resources with victim interviews, in order to further explore the victim's views in each case. This is because victim interviews provide a direct methodology in determining factors affecting the victim engagement (Bryce *et al.*, 2016; Graham-Kevan *et al.*, 2015); without a need to control for charging or the progression of the case.

Overall, the hourglass model represented the variance and likelihood of victim engagement with the police. Whilst it provided an effective assessment, the model itself

is still inherently complex because the engagement of victims with the police investigation involved many complications that cannot be simplified. Such complexity could be considered a limitation, especially when considering the direct practical application to the huge volume of IPV cases dealt with by the police on a daily basis. However, taking into account all of the previous limitations and potential future development, the thesis suggests further research into the potential digitisation of the model. This would allow for the collection of basic and simplistic data by officers and professionals that is then computed autonomously within the model to provide an evaluation of victim engagement. The results would provide a visual output of potential victim engagement that is based upon the results within the thesis, further research and subsequent testing. Furthermore, if successfully digitised, the hourglass model could be consistently updated by officers and professionals handling the case. This would result in a real-time representation of the victim's potential engagement that could fluctuate alongside the constant considerations and issues faced by victims in their overall decision to engage with the police at any point throughout the investigation.

Conclusion

There are numerous reasons why it is important to distinguish between cases of victim engagement early into the investigation. Firstly, it is currently overlooked by the police when assessing the victim's vulnerability through the DASH risk assessment (Richards, 2015), even though it is arguably the most crucial consideration to their safety (Hoyle, 2008). Secondly, cases of victim withdrawal hinder the case in terms of evidence collection and often result in a discontinuation due to lack of evidence (Hoyle & Sanders, 2000). Thirdly, and most importantly, in the early identification of possible victim withdrawal the police would be able to prioritise cases where there is a critical need to communicate with the victim in order to gain insight into their needs and expectations. In

doing so, officers and professionals may be able to alter the progress of a case to protect victims that would otherwise suffer further violence and abuse if the case was not appropriately responded to.

In distinguishing between cases of cooperation and withdrawal, and further identifying different types of cooperation and withdrawal, the combined findings of the thesis have been formulated into an overall model. Whilst there is a need for further development and testing, as well as a need to potentially digitise the complex nature of the model for police practice, the ‘Victim Engagement Hourglass Model’ provides an overall assessment of victim engagement. It produces a quantitative measure to identify likely cases of cooperation or withdrawal, in addition to a qualitative visual output of the potential themes of factors that impact each individual victim.

Therefore, the thesis highlights the importance of victim engagement with the police and how it is routinely neglected in each case. Any improvements towards evaluating victim engagement from the outset of the investigation, through a more rigorous risk assessment and specific officer training, would directly address the current limitations formed through the use of the DASH risk assessment. Firstly, it would allow for an early identification of cases where the victim would need a more comprehensive support structure than in cases where a victim cooperates with the police. Secondly, by identifying cases of victim withdrawal early into the investigation, officers would be required to build a case against the suspect with knowledge that the investigation will be unlikely to involve evidence from the victim. Finally, and most importantly, the early identification of cooperation and withdrawal would allow the police to prioritise cases in need of critical communication. The communication would be invaluable in providing the foundation of a case that empowers the victim to deal with their abuse, as it would allow police the ability to provide information, options and provisions in order to dispose of the case in a way that fully suits the victim. In instances where the police do not have

the ability to direct the case towards the victim's requests, they then have the channels of communication necessary to provide reasoning, advice and support as they handle the case in the victim's best interests.



Intimate Partner Violence Victimology: Factors Affecting Victim Engagement with the Police and Criminal Justice System

Volume 2 of 2

By

Nathan Birdsall

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Central Lancashire in collaboration with Lancashire Constabulary

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethical Approval

27th March 2015

Michelle Ann McManus/Nathan Birdsall
School of Forensic and Investigative Sciences
University of Central Lancashire



Dear Michelle/Nathan,

Re: STEMH Ethics Committee Application
Unique reference Number: STEMH 322

The STEMH ethics committee has granted approval of your proposal application 'Intimate Partner Violence Victimology: Factors Affecting Victim Engagement with the Police and Criminal Justice System'. Approval is granted up to the end of project date* or for 5 years from the date of this letter, whichever is the longer. It is your responsibility to ensure that

- the project is carried out in line with the information provided in the forms you have submitted
- you regularly re-consider the ethical issues that may be raised in generating and analysing your data
- any proposed amendments/changes to the project are raised with, and approved, by Committee
- you notify roffice@uclan.ac.uk if the end date changes or the project does not start
- serious adverse events that occur from the project are reported to Committee
- a closure report is submitted to complete the ethics governance procedures (Existing paperwork can be used for this purposes e.g. funder's end of grant report; abstract for student award or NRES final report. If none of these are available use e-Ethics Closure Report Proforma).

Please also note that it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the ethics committee that has already approved this application is either run under the auspices of the National Research Ethics Service or is a fully constituted ethics committee, including at least one member independent of the organisation or professional group.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Thain
Chair

STEMH Ethics Committee

* for research degree students this will be the final lapse date

NB - Ethical approval is contingent on any health and safety checklists having been completed and necessary approvals as a result of gained.

Appendix 2: Coding Framework

Table 2.1: Coding Framework – Variables and Level of Coding Extracted from Literature and Placed Within the Nested Ecological Model.

| <u>NEM Level of Analysis</u> | <u>Factor Name</u> | <u>Coding Levels</u> |
|---|--|--|
| Macro-system | 1) Suspect Gender 2) Suspect Ethnicity 3) Suspect Nationality 4) Victim Gender 5) Victim Ethnicity 6) Victim Nationality 7) Relationship Type (Sexual Orientation) 8) Religion 9) Initial Victim Reluctance 10) Source of Report 11) Victim Reported/Requested the Report 12) Type of Report 13) Issues with Court | 1) Female/Male 2) White/Asian/Black 3) UK/EU/Other 4) Female/Male 5) White/Asian/Black 6) UK/EU/Other 7) Heterosexual/Homosexual 8) No Religion/Christianity/Muslim/Other 9) No/Yes 10) Victim/Suspect/Third Party 11) No/Yes 12) Phone Call/Attended Station/Mobile Patrol/Other 13) No/Yes |
| Exosystem | 14) Time Between Incident and Arrest 15) Photograph Evidence 16) Bodycam/CCTV Footage 17) DASH Rating 18) Extrinsic Evidence 19) Arrest to Charge Lowering 20) Special Measures 21) Heavy Reliance on Victim for Prosecution | 14) Scale Data (Days) 15) No/Photos of Injury/Photos of Damage/Photos of Injury and Damage 16) No/Yes 17) Standard/Medium/High 18) No/Yes 19) No/Yes 20) No/Yes 21) No/Yes |

| <u>NEM Level of Analysis</u> | <u>Factor Name</u> | <u>Coding Levels</u> |
|---|--|---|
| | 22) Orders Existing/Considered 23) Any Witnesses 24) Witness Engagement 25) Incident Involved Abuse to Others 26) Incident Involved Others 27) Existing Professional Support Network 28) Evidence of Family and/or Friends 29) Victim Isolation 30) Referral to Professional Support Network 31) Suspect had 'Outside Support' in Abuse | 22) No/Order Existing or Been Granted/Order Refused/Cancelled 23) No/Yes 24) No/Yes 25) No/Yes 26) No/Yes 27) No/Yes 28) No/Family or New Partner/Friend/Family or New Partner and Friend 29) No/Yes 30) No/Yes 31) No/Yes |
| Micro-system | 32) Admission of Guilt 33) Physical Abuse 34) Injury Type 35) Physical Abuse Bi-Directional 36) Use/Involvement of a Weapon 37) Verbal Abuse 38) Emotional Abuse | 32) No/Yes 33) No/Yes 34) No Injury/No Visible Injury/Cuts, Reddening, Swelling or Bruising/Serious Injury 35) No/In Self Defence/Victim used Violence first 36) No/Suspect used Weapon/Victim used Weapon/Both used Weapons 37) No/Yes 38) No/Yes |

| <u>NEM Level of Analysis</u> | <u>Factor Name</u> | <u>Coding Levels</u> |
|---|--|--|
| | 39) Sexual Abuse | 39) No/Yes |
| | 40) Stalking/Harassment | 40) No/Yes |
| | 41) Financial Abuse | 41) No/Yes |
| | 42) Child in Area during Incident | 42) No/Yes/Pregnancy |
| | 43) Suspect Age | 43) Scale Data (Years) |
| | 44) Victim Age | 44) Scale Data (Years) |
| | 45) Suspect and Victim Age Difference | 45) Scale Data (Years) |
| | 46) Suspect or Victim Older | 46) Scale Data (Years) |
| | 47) Suspect Older (Years) | 47) Scale Data (Years) |
| | 48) Victim Older (Years) | 48) Scale Data (Years) |
| | 49) Age Difference Breakdown | 49) Victim Older 20yrs+/Victim Older 19yrs-/Same Age/Suspect Older 19yrs-/Suspect Older 20yrs+ |
| | 50) Suspect Employment | 50) Unemployed/Employed/Other |
| | 51) Victim Employment | 51) Unemployed/Employed/Other |
| | 52) Suspect Alcohol | 52) No/Yes/Drink Dependent |
| | 53) Suspect Drugs | 53) No/Yes |
| | 54) Suspect Mental Health/Illness/Disability | 54) No/Yes |
| | 55) Victim Alcohol | 55) No/Yes/Drink Dependent |
| | 56) Victim Drugs | 56) No/Yes |
| | 57) Victim Mental Health/Illness/Disability | 57) No/Yes |
| | 58) Victim Generally Scared | 58) No/Yes |
| | 59) Victim Appeared Terrified | 59) No/Yes |
| | 60) Victim Fears Risk to Others | 60) No/Yes, Child(ren)/Yes, Other |
| | 61) Apparent Self-Blame | 61) No/Yes |
| | 62) Apparent Understating of Abuse | 62) No/Yes |

| <u>NEM Level of Analysis</u> | <u>Factor Name</u> | <u>Coding Levels</u> |
|---|---|---|
| | 63) Relationship Status during Incident | 63) Ex-partner/Intimate Relationship |
| | 64) Married | 64) No/Yes/Engaged/Separated or Divorced |
| | 65) Length of Relationship | 65) Scale Data (Years) |
| | 66) Cohabitation during Incident | 66) No/Yes |
| | 67) Cohabitation after Incident | 67) No/Yes |
| | 68) Victim States Continuing/Ending Relationship | 68) Continuing/Ending |
| | 69) Children of Relationship | 69) No/Yes/Pregnancy |
| | 70) No. of Children of Relationship | 70) Scale Data (Frequency) |
| | 71) Children of Suspect Only | 71) No/Yes |
| | 72) No. of Children of Suspect Only | 72) Scale Data (Frequency) |
| | 73) Children of Victim Only | 73) No/Yes/Pregnancy |
| | 74) No. of Children of Victim Only | 74) Scale Data (Frequency) |
| | 75) Total No. of Children | 75) Scale Data (Frequency) |
| | 76) Mean Age of all Children | 76) Scale Data (Years) |
| | 77) Mean Age of Children Breakdown | 77) Infant (0-3yrs)/Child (4-12yrs)/Adolescent (13-17yrs) |
| | 78) Any Pets | 78) No/Yes/Yes, Suspect Abuses Them |
| | 79) Jealousy/Mistrust/Distrust/Control During Incident | 79) No/Yes |
| | 80) Jealousy/Mistrust/Distrust/Control from Both Partners | 80) No/Yes |
| | 81) Suspect stating Victim was Main Aggressor/Making False Allegation | 81) No/Victim Main Aggressor/False Allegation |

| <u>NEM Level of Analysis</u> | <u>Factor Name</u> | <u>Coding Levels</u> |
|---|--|--|
| | 82) Suspect Threatened/Carried out Self-Harm and/or Suicide 83) Evidence of Reconciliation/Sympathy from Suspect | 82) No/Yes/No, But Has in the Past 83) No/Yes |
| Ontogenetic | 84) Previous IPV for Couple 85) Suspect Abuse to Same Victim 86) Suspect Abuse to Other Previous Partners 87) History of Abuse with any Others 88) Suspect Previous Convictions 89) No. of Previous Convictions 90) No. of Previous Offences Against the Person 91) History of Physical Abuse 92) History of Verbal Abuse 93) History of Emotional Abuse 94) History of Sexual Abuse 95) History of Stalking/Harassment 96) History of Financial Abuse 97) History of any Form of Abuse 98) Victim Previous Convictions 99) No. of Previous Convictions | 84) No/Yes 85) No/Yes 86) No/Yes 87) No/Yes 88) No/Yes 89) Scale Data (Frequency) 90) Scale Data (Frequency) 91) No/Yes 92) No/Yes 93) No/Yes 94) No/Yes 95) No/Yes 96) No/Yes 97) No/Yes 98) No/Yes 99) Scale Data (Frequency) |

| <u>NEM Level of Analysis</u> | <u>Factor Name</u> | <u>Coding Levels</u> |
|---|---|--|
| | 100) No. of Previous Offences Against the Person | 100) Scale Data (Frequency) |
| | 101) Previous Report/Contact/Engagement with Police | 101) No/Yes |
| | 102) Previous Cooperation/Withdrawal with CJS | 102) Previous Withdrawal/Previous Cooperation |
| | 103) Previous Positive/Negative Outcome with CJS | 103) Previous Negative/Previous Positive |

Appendix 3: Thematic Analysis of 540 IPV Cases

Literature Review

The thesis required a deeper understanding into the dynamics and themes occurring within the 540 cases of IPV. Therefore, the objective of the current Appendix is to explore the 540 IPV cases by examining what key factors were present in the abuse incidents by asking the questions: Why did the abuse occur? Why did the suspect abuse the victim? Why did the victim withdraw from the investigation? The Appendix provides a basic understanding into the dynamics of domestic abuse, with a focus on the victim, perpetrator and relationship themes. Any themes formed within the analysis will provide valuable insight during the statistical analysis, as well as in cross validating and triangulating the results of the thesis.

Why did the abuse occur?

One of the most considered questions within IPV research is why did the abuse occur? Overall, it is clear that there is no single reason for the occurrence of IPV (Whiting *et al.*, 2014); with previous studies highlighting many objective risk factors of perpetration and victimisation. Whilst the risk assessment approach to IPV perpetration provides an objective insight, an often overlooked approach to examining why abuse occurs can be found in subjective victim explanations. Upon the initial police response, the victim often provides details that are recorded by an officer in a formal statement, or a pocket notebook (PNB) entry. The details given by the victim provide valuable context and background to their situation, and in some cases can contain direct quotes from the victim. The victim's statement, alongside other evidence, forms the summary of the incident under the MG5 and is considered by the police to be the very foundation of the case. The MG5 is a core and important document within each case file, especially as it is often compiled by the police after all the evidence has been reviewed and interviews have been conducted.

Therefore, the summary of the incident within the police report contains vital information on the victim's allegation of abuse, the context surrounding the immediate abuse incident and ultimately why the victim believes the abuse has occurred. It is argued that the victim's subjective assessment of their position is overlooked in research and risk assessments (Hoyle, 2008), which limits overall explanations as to why abuse occurs (Flynn & Graham, 2010). Since the victim is an intimate partner of the suspect and they suffer the abuse first hand, their very position provides valuable insight into unique behaviours, circumstances, factors and triggers that are involved in the occurrence of abuse and their own risk (Beech & Ward, 2004).

Previous research into the victim's perceptions of the perpetrator's motive often focuses on gender differences. An example of such research is Follingstad *et al.* (1991) who examined both male and female victims and perpetrators in their perceptions of the motives behind abuse. They found that female victims were more likely to state that the suspect was using violence and aggression to gain control over them and that their partners were seeking retaliation because they had hit them first. Conversely, male victims were more likely to perceive the perpetrator as using violence and aggression to show how angry they were, or that they were also retaliating for emotional hurt caused by them (Follingstad *et al.*, 1991). The research not only highlights motives considered by the victim when they reflect on why the perpetrator abused them, but also demonstrates that there are in fact differences in the perceptions between male and female victims. Furthermore, from the 13 motivations examined in total, the most common motives and explanations as to why the abuse occurred were: the perpetrator wanted to gain control or get their own way; they were retaliating to emotional hurt; they were jealous; and they wanted to show how angry they were. Such motives would be useful to examine within the thematic exploration of why abuse occurs, as certain behaviours within the case files may align with the themes outlined above. Jones (1993) conducted similar research into

the victim's perceptions of the perpetrator's motives, however, in this instance focused on whether their perception made them more likely to remain in a relationship and justify the abuse. Throughout the interviews conducted within the previous study, the victims mentioned distinct themes of motives including the consumption of alcohol, control by the suspect, the suspect's family background, children and possessiveness. Whilst the study aimed to determine whether the motives had an impact upon the victim remaining in the relationship, the themes themselves would relate directly to the current study and may aid in the formation of themes when examining why the abuse occurred.

Why did the suspect abuse the victim?

In response to the allegation made by the victim, the suspect is often interviewed to provide an account of the alleged incident. In addition to the summary of the incident mentioned earlier, the MG5 document also contains a summary of the suspect's interview with the police. Whilst the summary of the incident is formed around the victim's perceptions of the abuse incident and why they considered the abuse to have occurred, the suspect's interview allows for an examination of why the suspect abused the victim, or why the suspect believes the abuse occurred. Much like previous research into the victims' perceptions, there are several studies that also examined the suspects' perceptions around why they believe abuse had occurred, or what motivated them to abuse the victim.

Referring back to Follingstad *et al.* (1991), male perpetrators were more likely to admit using force in retaliation to being hit first by the victim, as well as feelings of jealousy which led to physical force. Females were more likely to use force in retaliation for emotional hurt, as well as to express anger. Combining the findings overall, the study found that the most common motives of abuse were not knowing how to express themselves verbally, needing to protect themselves, expressing jealousy, wanting to gain control, wanting to show anger, retaliation for being hit and retaliating for emotional hurt.

Further research into the perpetration of abuse has also categorised typologies of perpetrators based on the prevalence of their abuse and their motivations or reasons for using force. Babcock *et al.* (2004) examined the coding of batterers based upon their motives for abuse and determined 3 distinct typologies: 1) violence to control; 2) violence out of jealousy; and 3) violence following verbal abuse. The typologies of batterers are an often researched topic within the perpetration of IPV (Holtzworth-Munroe *et al.*, 2000), with the terminology and typologies themselves forming themes relating to the suspect's response to the victim's allegations within the police interview.

More recent research, however, highlights the difficulties in interpretation of the suspects' reasoning and explanations. Many perpetrators do not have a single reason or motivation for the abuse and can switch from notions of blaming the victim through to explanations of responsibility. Whiting *et al.* (2014) found this to be the case, and that the perpetrators often switched back and forth quickly and freely, demonstrating the complexity in interpreting their response. In addition, they also found that the perpetrators also felt their abuse was justified and often attempted to use minimisation in order to lessen the impact of the incident. Such a finding may have important implications within the current study, especially as the suspect will be responding to police questioning about a serious allegation. However, it appears that more prolific abusers tend to place blame solely on the victim, with little to no explanations of responsibility themselves. This was especially so when examining imprisoned perpetrators, as they continued to blame the victim for the IPV incident even after their conviction and imprisonment (Henning *et al.*, 2005).

Why did the victim withdraw from the investigation?

At any point, from the initial police response to the disposal of the case through the Criminal Justice System (CJS), the victim may withdraw and provide a retraction statement. In addition, within their original statement they can provide reasons as to why

they do not wish to be part of the investigation after the police have quelled the immediate situation. Therefore, the reasons within the victim's initial statements and retraction statements provide crucial insight into why they withdrew from the case. Such information would be paramount when examining victim engagement against the factors extracted from the case files throughout the thesis. As the literature review focuses on factors that may affect victim engagement with the police, any of the factors mentioned within the literature review may appear as a reason for retraction within the current thematic exploration. In addition to factors explored thus far, previous literature into subjective victim interviews or statements provides a different perspective into the reasons for retraction. This alternative perspective can relate directly to the thematic exploration, working alongside the literature already examined to form themes into why the victim withdrew.

Much of the previous research now recognises the difficulties and impossible choices that a victim of IPV must consistently make in dealing with abuse. They often have to weigh up risk and choose between physical and psychological safety, against financial and practical security if they are reliant on the suspect for finance, housing and security for them and their children (Carey & Soloman, 2014). Artz (2011) found that victims often withdrew because of the history and severity of violence, deadly threats from the suspect and findings relating specifically to the victim's experience with the courts. This supports the literature around the difficulties victims face when engaging with professional support. However, there appears to be four consistent themes as to why victims withdraw from the CJS (Robinson & Cook, 2006). The themes refer to the victim's misconceptions about the CJS process; victim frustration with the complexity of the court process; fear about their safety and the safety of children; and victim disagreement about the incarceration of the suspect. As such, the Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) introduced many measures to counteract the deficiencies in the

criminal justice process outlined by victims, however, the rates of victim engagement continued to be the same (Robinson & Cook, 2006; Cook *et al.*, 2004). This may suggest that themes other than those found in the existing research may occur, or some of the themes may be more prevalent or have a more profound effect on victims when considering their engagement with the police.

Summary

The literature examining factors affecting victim engagement with the police, in addition to the further literature into the subjective victim and perpetrator views on motivations behind the abuse, combines to provide an overall representation as to key factors involved in domestic abuse. The Appendix in this instance utilises the previous research in broadly exploring the 540 cases of IPV used within the thesis. The themes around why the abuse occurred, why the suspect abused the victim, and why the victim withdrew from the CJS will all provide crucial insight when exploring any factors that have an association with victim engagement. Any themes uncovered within the current Appendix will appear again when exploring the triangulation of data and an overall refinement of factors related to victim engagement.

Methodology

The Appendix in this instance concerns a broad thematic analysis of the 540 IPV cases, uncovering themes into why the abuse occurred, why the suspect abused the victim and why the victim withdrew from the CJS.

The summary of the incident and suspect interview, found within the MG5, were reviewed and rewritten into sanitised text data to ensure that all confidential data was removed. In addition, any reasons a victim gave for withdrawal from the investigation were extracted and recorded against the corresponding case, also forming an anonymous

text extract. The three datasets were compiled and reread for familiarisation. They were then subjected to a broad thematic analysis.

For each dataset, the thematic exploration consisted of a broad-brush analysis of the 540 cases, extracting and recording key words and phrases. A broad perspective was used to allow maximum freedom in the emergence of themes that would allow for an open ended enquiry through deeper analysis in the thesis data chapters (Todres & Galvin, 2005). Upon completion, themes were then formed around the key words and phrases and coded against every case where it applied. At this point, there was an ‘uncoded’ category that was used for cases that did not fit into the existing themes. After the first pass of coding, a second broad-brush analysis was conducted on the ‘uncoded’ category, picking out key words and phrases that were re-examined against the existing themes. At this stage the existing themes were amended, removed, or split to accommodate data from the ‘uncoded’ category. After the formulation of new and amended themes, there was a second pass of coding which applied the new themes across the sample. Once again, there was an ‘uncoded’ category which included cases that had information useful for a discussion, but did not fit existing themes and was not common enough to form a separate theme. From this point, the number of cases mentioning each theme was totalled (n). The total number of cases and percentage helped illustrate the proportion of cases that each theme applied to, although it is important to note that the themes themselves are not mutually exclusive and a single case had the potential to appear in each theme formed (Howitt & Cramer, 2008).

Results

Why Did the Abuse Occur?

Relationship Issues (169 cases)

A large number of cases involved allegations of abuse that seemingly occurred due to issues within the couple’s relationship. The theme in this instance focused on cases where

the IPV was a consequence of an argument or consistent harassment that involved jealousy, mistrust, distrust, insecurity and actual infidelity. Jealousy appeared in many forms throughout the theme, from one partner being jealous and insecure after the other had been out drinking, through to one partner being jealous and insecure about the other being at an ex-partner's address to see their children.

The most common issue within the theme was either party in the relationship, or both parties, believing that the other had cheated on them. This often culminated in arguments and an invasion of privacy by one party into the other's social media accounts and communication. Because this often involved the suspect or victim grabbing their partner's phone, tablet, or computer to view messages and communication, the physical act very often resulted in subsequent physical force. This involved one party using force to view the messages and communication, with the other using physical force to reacquire their device. This physical force then seemingly progressed into violence and ultimately resulted in calls to the police in order to settle the situation. In the cases that did not contain physical abuse, the suspect would often take the phone, tablet, or computer and, after reading messages and becoming angry, they would damage or destroy the device. This resulted in criminal damage to the victim's property, which was then often followed by further damage to co-owned items of property throughout the address or damage to the mortgaged premises.

In the cases that did not contain these circumstances, or in addition to these circumstances, there were some suspects who did not accept the ending of their relationship. Whilst the majority of these cases involved suspects who were physically aggressive with the victim in order to determine whether they had a new partner, there were cases that did not involve any physical violence and aggression and instead related only to harassment. The cases in these instances involved suspects who were seemingly fixated on the victim and maintained unwanted contact. This unwanted contact was most

often through electronic communication, but did also include the suspect physically attending the victim's address, despite explicit and express communication from the victim that the relationship had ended and to stop contact.

Suspect Generally Anti-Social/Bad Mood/Mood Swing (160 cases)

Unlike the previous theme that mainly related to an external cause, a similar amount of cases involved an internal change in the suspect that led to the abuse incident. In this instance the theme involved suspects and behaviour that was generally anti-social, abusive and violent without an apparent cause. However, at this point it is important to note that the lack of an apparent cause may well have been because the victim did not disclose it to the police when they made a statement and, therefore, it was not present in the summary of the incident. This could have occurred for a number of reasons such as the victim not fully disclosing any provocation, or the victim being unaware of circumstances that had already put the suspect into a bad mood.

A key subtheme within the suspect being anti-social, having a bad mood or a mood swing was the consumption of drugs and alcohol. In many cases the suspect became aggressive after drinking heavily, but did so without any apparent cause or reason. Usually the suspect became verbally abusive towards any others present, including strangers, friends, family members and the victim. Subsequently, many cases then followed with the victim taking responsibility for the suspect's behaviour, in which they attempt to verbally warn the suspect and persuade them to be calm. As a result of the suspect's anti-social mood and intoxication, the suspect would then often direct the abuse at the victim by verbally abusing them in front of others. From this point some cases involved victims that attempted to physically restrain the suspect, or pull them away as they squared up to others, in an overall attempt to prevent further aggression. It was at this point where physical force was then apparent from numerous individuals. This

included: from the suspect as they tried to continue their behaviour; from victims as they tried to stop the situation; and from others present who had been angered and provoked by the suspect.

A second subtheme related to apparent mental health issues which could account for the suspect's seemingly volatile behaviour. With regards to such cases, they often involved suspects where there was a sharp change in their mood from peaceful to aggressive, which occurred instantly and without any evident external cause. After the change in mood, there was a range of volatile behaviour that included direct physical abuse to the victim, as well as a range of behaviour that did not constitute physical abuse. Such behaviour included the handling of kitchen knives and walking around the house threatening to self-harm, threats to harm children, systematic damage to furniture and possessions, starting garden fires and aggressively burning objects, threatening to kill and burn household pets, as well as turning up to their ex-partner's address and standing silently outside. In addition to the volatile behaviour, mental health issues also appeared in cases involving elderly couples. In these situations the suspect was reported as suffering from Alzheimer's disease and had used physical force against the victim as they appeared confused.

Issues with Children (151 cases)

Another prominent theme throughout the sample was children, either directly involved in the abuse incident or as a subject which led to an argument that subsequently culminated in abuse. Specifically relating to ex-partnerships and children, there were a number of cases where the victim had communicated to the suspect that they were taking the children and would not allow the suspect to see them again. The communication led to heated arguments between the couple and in some cases resulted in physical violence. Conversely, some victims had allowed the suspect to visit and care for their children while

the victim went on a night out or spent time with a new partner. In these instances, the suspect often became jealous of the victim having a new partner, or attempted to prevent the victim from going on a night out, which led to verbal and physical abuse.

With regards to those predominantly in intimate partnerships, there were abuse incidents which involved the children directly. In such instances there were cases involving the suspect using physical violence to punish children for swearing and other bad behaviour. In such cases, many of the victims did not agree with the use of physical force as a punishment, or believed that the treatment of the children by the suspect in general was inappropriate. This often resulted in confrontation between the couple, in which the victim addressed the suspect about the use of violence and often shouted that the suspect was a bad parent. In majority of cases where the suspect had used physical violence as a punishment for the children, the suspect was then also violent towards the victim during the argument resulting in the police response. In addition to physical violence, suspects often became angry at the confrontation and being called a bad parent and would react by causing criminal damage to property. There were also cases where the suspect considered the victim to be over-parenting the children, or was at fault for the child crying during the night time. In a couple of cases the suspect therefore used physical force to prevent the victim from tending to the child when it began crying. Finally, and more generally, those in intimate partnerships also seemingly argued about childcare, involving issues with family members looking after the child and the cost of nursery services or babysitters. This often led to heated arguments which subsequently spilled over into abuse, without the child necessarily being present.

Suspect Gaining/Regaining Control (94 cases)

Abuse also seemingly occurred when the suspect wanted something from the victim, or wanted the victim to stop doing something. In these situations, when the victim refused,

the suspect would then often use physical force either to gain control of the resource they required, or to regain control of the victim to prevent them from doing something they did not want them to do.

The theme encapsulated a vast amount of reasons specific to the suspect and victim, but can be broken down into smaller themes of behaviour. Some suspects merely wanted a certain material possession from the victim, including money, drugs, alcohol and entry into a victim's address for a place to sleep. In such instances, the victim often refused such access, which resulted in the suspect using physical force. The suspect used physical force on the victim to pressure them into getting the resources they wanted, actively stole the resource they wanted from the victim, or caused criminal damage in order to gain entry into the victim's premises. In addition to gaining control of a physical possession, suspects were also reported to have used violence and aggression in order to get the victim to act in a certain way. This included various behaviours such as preventing the victim from going out, through to wanting an argument with the victim who was ignoring them.

In addition to gaining control of something, the theme also captured cases where circumstances began to move beyond the suspect's control and they used physical force to prevent this. This most often occurred after an initial incident and the victim attempted to call the police, or flee the address to a neighbour in order to report the incident. At this point, the suspect used physical force to prevent the victim from help-seeking by stealing and destroying the victim's phone, or by actively pinning the victim to the floor to prevent them from running away.

Victim Used Violence First (14)

There was a small group of cases that involved the victim expressing that they had used physical force first within the incident that caused the suspect to enter a rage and become

physically violent. Taking into account all of the cases within the theme, the victim reported punching, slapping, or pouring/throwing liquid over the suspect following an argument. The most frequently occurring incident seemed to involve the suspect verbally or emotionally abusing the victim, to which the victim responded by slapping the suspect in the face. At this point, the suspect then entered into a rage and used physical violence that went beyond a reasonable and proportionate response. In addition to the physical violence present within the cases, there were a small number where the victim also admitted to causing criminal damage to property alongside the suspect.

Family Member Issues (9 cases)

Relating closely to previous themes, there were cases that involved the suspect and victim arguing over family members. In these instances, there were many individuals who did not like their partners' family and did not want their partner to communicate with them. In the cases within the sample, the suspect or victim had maintained contact with the family members, which resulted in an argument that progressed into abuse. In addition to communication with family members, there were some victims that were fed up with the suspect's family calling them a bad parent, and so they disclosed information to the family that angered the suspect. Such disclosures involved the suspect's drug usage and cheating. When the suspect and victim interacted again after the disclosure, an argument ensued which resulted in an incident of abuse.

Uncoded (103 cases)

There were 103 cases where the victim and suspect argued and IPV had occurred, but there was no information or evidence within the police report as to the background of the incident to determine why they were arguing or why the abuse seemingly occurred. All cases that were uncoded did not fall into the existing six themes mainly due to a lack of

information recorded in the MG5 as to the summary of the incident. Table 3.1 below presents the themes developed when examining why the abuse occurred.

Table 3.1: Summary of Incident Themes and Frequencies.

| Theme | Number of Cases (<i>n</i>) | Percentage (from total <i>n</i> = 540) |
|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Relationship Issues | 169 | 31.3% |
| Suspect Generally Anti-Social/Bad Mood/Mood Swing | 160 | 29.6% |
| Issues with children | 151 | 27.9% |
| Suspect Gaining/Regaining Control | 94 | 17.4% |
| Victim Used Violence First | 14 | 2.6% |
| Family Member Issues | 9 | 1.7% |

Why did the Suspect Abuse the Victim?

Suspect Denied Assault/Guilt (225 cases)

Whilst examining the suspect's interview for themes around why the suspect abused the victim or why the abuse occurred, it became clear that the interviews were predominantly defensive with the police. The largest theme within the suspect interviews was the outright denial that the suspect had assaulted the victim or that the incident occurred altogether.

Within the theme there were a number of explanations for the evidence presented to them and the photos of the victim's injuries or damage. The responses from the suspects varied in their depth of explanations, which ultimately formed a broad spectrum of responses. One side of the spectrum involved suspects that denied the incident outright and provided no explanation for the incident, or provided an explanation for the incident that did not account for the victims' injuries or fit with extrinsic evidence. In many of these interviews, the interviewer expressly questioned the suspect about the victim's

injuries and their response was often that they did not know, suggested they were self-inflicted, and/or suggested the victim had fallen over things and caused injury. The opposing side of the spectrum were explanations denying the offence, in which the suspect stated that the victim gained the injuries through the suspect acting in self-defence. Often these explanations covered both the injuries to the victim and the extrinsic evidence collected at the scene, which meant that the account was consistent and credible but it did not match the allegation of the victim. In addition, some suspects also described how the injuries to the victim or damage to property was historical and did not occur as the victim had reported to the police.

There was also a group of cases that involved a suspect who denied the IPV offence, but admitted to the offences occurring alongside the main allegation. The cases often referred to assaults, in which the victim had reported the incident to the police and upon their arrival the suspect was arrested for a number of charges. During the interviews the suspects would often outright deny the assault, in which they either provided no explanation as to the victim's injuries or provided an explanation that accounted for the injuries. In part of their explanation they admitted to behaviour such as drug possession, criminal damage, verbal abuse and cheating on their partner. In some cases this could have been because these were the genuine facts and an assault did not actually occur, or did not occur in the way the victim had reported to the police. However, in cases where there was extrinsic evidence disproving their version of events, the technique may have been used in an attempt to strengthen their narrative and increase their credibility if they had admitted to other offences where there was clear evidence.

Full/Partial Admission (209 cases)

Another prominent theme throughout the suspect interviews were full or partial admissions to the IPV incident. This included the cases where the suspect may have

initially denied and disputed the incident, but throughout the interview admitted to behaviour that constituted IPV. Often the suspect would then admit that their actions were in contravention to legislation, in which they ultimately admitted guilt within the interview.

There were interesting dynamics that occurred within the full/partial admissions to IPV within the suspects' interviews. It was clear throughout the sample that the majority of the cases that involved full admissions were incidents that did not involve a physical assault. Within the theme, many suspects admitted harassment, public order offences and criminal damage. Specifically examining criminal damage cases there seemed to be an acceptance that criminal damage to property was a minor incident that did not require the police. This occurred frequently since the suspect stated they could easily repair the damage to the property most often because of their trade, profession or employment. In such instances, the suspects seemingly did not consider any impact the aggression and damage had on the victim and did not recognise or consider any psychological harm caused. Another interesting dynamic that occurred throughout criminal damage cases was the co-ownership or mortgaging of property in an intimate partnership. For example, there were numerous cases where a victim had locked a suspect out of a mortgaged property, to which the suspect then threw bricks/paving through windows or kicked down doors in order to gain access to the property. In such instances the suspect considered they had done nothing wrong and that they were merely entering the property where they lived. However, upon explanation by the police that the property they damaged was owned by the bank, the suspects then seemingly understood why the charge of criminal damage was appropriate and, therefore, fully admitted responsibility for the incident. This also occurred with jointly owned property such as vehicles or furniture, in which the victim had a proprietary interest. A misunderstanding of the law, as well as further complications, appeared more often in cases involving an assault.

With specific regards to admissions in cases of assaults, many of the suspects involved in such cases denied any assault at the beginning of the interview. However, as the interview progressed and the law was outlined, many of the suspects then provided a full or partial admission to an assault. In such cases, there was range of misunderstandings about assaults that appeared within the suspects' initial denial. For example, some suspects believed that minor violence against their partner was not prohibited by law and did not accept that their behaviour constituted an assault. Others believed that since they did not actually physically touch the victim, and that the victim only feared violence, they did not conduct behaviour that constituted an assault. Furthermore, there were some suspects who stated that since they did not intend to harm the victim, they did not have the appropriate *mens rea* for an assault. However, upon the police interview where legislation was explained to suspects, including the fear of violence constituting an assault, recklessness instead of intention was a sufficient *mens rea*, and that all physical violence against a partner was prohibited by legislation, the suspect accepted they had conducted behaviour that constituted an assault under the legislation outlined.

Another issue with the suspect's admission of guilt involved cases where the suspect reported using violence in defence against the victim. Throughout the interview, the police questioned and examined the progression of the incident, in which many suspects explained retaliatory violence that went beyond a self-defence and what was reasonable and proportionate under the circumstances. Some suspects appeared to be initially unaware of proportionality, stating that since the victim hit them they should be allowed to hit the victim back out of retaliation. However, what also appeared within some of the cases was how the suspect had reportedly suffered physical abuse from the victim, but they did not consider themselves to be victims. For example, there was a case of reported bi-directional violence in which the suspect had admitted an assault. During the admission, however, the suspect explained how the victim had hit him in the head

with a drinking glass and caused injuries that were not mentioned by the victim. Because the suspect did not consider this an assault by the victim, he ultimately did not want to press charges.

Furthermore, there were suspects that did not provide a full admission of the incident in the interview, and instead provided a partial admission that was in relation to the allegation. Whilst some cases involved bodycam, CCTV or phone footage that essentially forced the suspect into a full admission, many of the cases involved little evidence as to how the incident actually occurred. In such cases, the victim's allegations included punching or hitting, which was denied by the suspect. Instead, the suspect admitted to behaviour such as spitting, grabbing and shaking, which was sufficient to constitute an assault. However, within the thematic exploration it was considered as a partial admission because it did not fully align with the victims' allegations and, therefore, may have included suspects that did not admit full responsibility for the incident.

Self-Defence/Victim Main Aggressor (88 cases)

Suspects who stated that they were acting in self-defence appeared again as a separate theme, but in this instance included cases where the suspect did not admit committing an assault. In some instances this referred to cases where the suspect had clearly used violence that went beyond a reasonable and proportionate response to physical force used by the victim. Objectively and legally the suspect had committed an assault due to their version of events, but they refused to admit any wrongdoing throughout the police interview.

However, there were cases where extrinsic evidence and a consistent account by the suspect illustrated events where the suspect was using force in response to initial violence by the victim. These cases usually consisted of the suspect being attacked by the victim and then either pushing the victim away or grabbing the victim's arms and bringing

them to the floor to restrain them and prevent further violence to their person. In addition, other suspects used physical force to prevent the victim from destroying property and possessions, either by physically grabbing the property from the victim's hands or by restraining the victim. In addition, suspects also reported that they used force against the victim, in order to disarm them of a weapon that they had picked up and were threatening to use on the suspect.

In addition to the suspect reporting that they behaved in a way that only amounted to self-defence, there were some suspects who expressly stated to the police that the victim was the main aggressor and that they did not react with any physical force in self-defence. This ranged from some cases which involved suspects who refused to provide any explanation of the incident and repeated that they had been abused by the victim without reaction, through to cases where the suspects provided a consistent explanation that provided a more credible version of events than the victims' main allegation when taking into account the extrinsic evidence. In addition, some of the suspects that claimed the victim was the main aggressor also had injuries to their person, thus leaving the police with a situation where both allegations from the suspect and victim accounted for the progression of events, the injuries to each party and the evidence collected from the scene. This would then cause the police great difficulty when both parties made allegations of assault against one another.

No Comment/Silence (68 cases)

This theme was simply where the suspect either remained silent or replied 'no comment' to all or most of the questions posed to them. Also included within the theme were cases where the suspect had written a pre-prepared statement with a solicitor that was read out, but then the following interview was answered with 'no comment'. In the cases covered by the theme, suspects may have answered confirmatory questions, such as that they were

in a relationship with the victim, but did not offer any explanation as to the events of the incident (other than what was explained in a pre-prepared statement).

Victim False Allegation/Malicious Report (58 cases)

There were 58 cases where the suspect expressly stated to the police that the victim's allegations were lies and that the victim had made a false allegation to the officers. Within the theme the suspect often explained to the police the motivation behind the false and malicious report, which included reports in order to gain child custody, because of the suspect having a new intimate partner, or that the suspect had insulted friends and family members of the victim. Examining the theme closely, there may well have been cases where the allegations against the suspect could have been genuinely false; however, there were other cases where the suspect's interview did not seem sincere. For example, there were cases where the suspect stated to officers that they had caused damage to the victim's property by accident, that they took the children from the address with the victim's permission, or that they did not assault the victim and were unaware how the victim developed injuries. They then merely concluded the interview by stating that the victim had made a false allegation.

Other suspects provided an account that aligned with the victim but stated that the latter part of the allegations relating to any criminal behaviour was false. Whilst it was often unclear whether this was actually the case, there were some instances where the suspect was able to provide an independent alibi confirming that they were not in the area at the time of the alleged incident. Furthermore, some cases involved suspects that highlighted to the police that the victim had made many previous false allegations against them. Whilst some suspects may have been trying to use previous failed cases in an attempt to discredit the victim, there were genuine cases where the victim was known to the police and other services for making false allegations due to mental health issues.

Cannot Remember (52 cases)

There was a common theme of the suspect not being able remember details or some of the details involved in the incident. There were cases where the suspect could otherwise remember the entire event and their victimisation, but could not remember the violence they allegedly perpetrated. Often, the suspect reported that they could not remember the incident because of alcohol and reported that they were very drunk at the time.

It is also important to note that the suspects involved within this theme did not all deny the assault. Even though they stated they had no recollection of events, some suspects chose to admit criminal behaviour and stated that if the victim reported the incident then it must have occurred. This was in contrast to others who outright denied assault even though they stated they could not recall any events.

Uncoded (41 cases)

The uncoded cases mainly referred to suspect interviews that were unable to be conducted for various reasons. These cases included suspects that were unfit for interview due to poor health and others who were too aggressive and violent for police staff to realistically conduct an interview. Subsequently, as there was no interview with the suspect in these cases, the summary of the interview section of the file contained no information. Furthermore, there were also cases where the suspect's interview was recorded on the MG5 as having occurred, but there was no record of it on the MG5 itself and appeared to be missing from the case file as a whole. Table 3.2 below presents the themes developed when exploring why the suspect abused the victim.

Table 3.2: Suspect Interview Themes and Frequencies.

| Theme | Number of Cases (<i>n</i>) | Percentage (from total <i>n</i> = 540) |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Suspect Denies | 225 | 41.6% |
| Assault/Guilt | | |
| Full/Partial Admission | 209 | 38.7% |
| Self-Defence/Victim Main | 88 | 16.3% |
| Aggressor | | |
| No Comment/Silence | 68 | 12.6% |
| Victim False | 58 | 10.7% |
| Allegation/Malicious Report | | |
| Cannot Remember | 52 | 9.6% |

Why did the Victim Withdraw from the Investigation?

Stress of CJS and Just Want to Move On (33 cases)

Some of the victims expressed concerns in continuing the investigation and prosecution of the suspect, as they reported it was causing too much stress. This ranged from added stress to work and study, through to the general stress affecting the family unit. Many of the victims in these instances expressed how the process was not benefiting them and that they just wanted to move on. In addition, there were also a number of cases that involved stalking and harassment where the victims had reported the abuse to the police and officers had interacted with the suspect. After the initial police response, the victims reported within their retraction statements that they had no further contact from the suspect, or had moved to a different area. Since the stalking and harassment had ceased, the victims felt that a prosecution was unnecessary and did not benefit them since they had already become free of IPV.

Child or Pet Issues (30 cases)

Issues involving children, and in a few cases household pets, formed the next most common theme for reasoning around retraction. With regards to children there were two main issues affecting the victims' decision to withdraw from the investigation and prosecution. The first set of issues mainly surrounded the criminalisation of the children's parent, in which many victims stated that they wanted the suspect to continue seeing their children, wanted to maintain a family unit and did not want to tarnish the parent with criminal convictions. The victims who mentioned these reasons did not always want to continue the relationship, however there were still negative connotations attached to prosecuting the suspect in terms of their children. The second issue appeared in cases of repeat abuse and when the children were involved or witnessed the abuse incident. In such cases, there was often a referral to social services with regards to the child's protection and ensuring that there was a safe environment for the children. However, some victims with children considered social services a threat, in which the fear of their children being taken into care led them to formally withdraw from the investigation. There were similar sentiments also directed towards household pets and, therefore, rationalised its place within the theme. These cases mainly involved a concern over the welfare of the animals, as the victim did not want them to be sent to a shelter if the suspect was to be prosecuted and sent to prison. They withdrew, usually among other reasons, to ensure that the household pet was not removed from the family unit.

Over-Exaggerated Abuse or Incident was Taken Too Seriously (29 cases)

There were a handful of cases where the victim had expressly outlined within their statement and subsequent retraction statement that the police had taken the incident too seriously. In these cases, the victims explained how emotions were running high and that they may have embellished events in the moment, often because they were drunk. In

addition, some mentioned how they had merely reported a petty argument or fight, which they believe was not serious enough to have involved a police response. In some cases, the victims explained that the reason why they had called the police and reported domestic abuse was because they wanted the suspect removed from the address. Consequently, victims in these instances wanted to withdraw from the investigation and were adamant for the prosecution to cease because they believed that it was far too punitive for the incident that had occurred.

Wanted Help Not Punishment (25 cases)

Many of the victims called the police for assistance as they were unable to calm the suspect and just wanted help in neutralising the immediate situation. They stated that it was this reason alone they had called the police and wanted no further action to be taken beyond that point. Conversely, other victims explained how they wanted to cooperate with the police in order to receive help for the suspect. However, they explained that the investigation and prosecution of the suspect seemed to be aimed at punishing the suspect for the incident, which they believed would not better their circumstance. In many of these cases, the victim considered a prosecution as only harmful to their position. This became especially prominent in retraction statements which explained that a prosecution would damage progress the suspect was already making in rehabilitation, by creating stress and making a current addiction/issue worse, or ultimately meant a loss of the suspect's job causing further issues that would only exacerbate the stress of their circumstances.

Victim Also to Blame (17 cases)

In 17 cases, the victim stated that they were partly to blame for the incident, by either starting the argument which culminated into the IPV, or by contributing to the violence

that occurred. In addition, some victims also reported purposefully making the suspect jealous by stating they had interest from other males and felt that this provoked the suspect to become jealous and angry. Because the victims felt they contributed towards the incident, they then go on to state that it was unfair to solely punish the suspect because there was wrong on both sides. As they attributed blame to themselves as well as the suspect, they did not support a prosecution of the suspect and subsequently withdrew at various points throughout the investigation.

Restoration/Reconciliation Occurred (15 cases)

In a small number of cases the victim explained how they and the suspect had reconciled after the incident and the suspect had acted in a way that provided restoration for the victim. This occurred in different ways for different forms of IPV. For example, in cases of criminal damage, the suspect had paid for the damage directly, replaced the items (predominantly mobile phones), paid a workman to repair the damage, or had repaired the damage themselves. Since the suspect had apologised and repaired the criminal damage caused, the victim did not want any further action. In cases of stalking and harassment, there were often cases where the suspect had ceased contact after the report and police response. Because this meant that the victim had achieved their aim of becoming IPV free, they reasoned that they did not want to pursue a criminal conviction as it was unnecessary now that they had received their desired outcome. Furthermore, in cases that involved an assault, the suspect would apologise to the victim and state that they would seek help for their issues. This included seeking help for anger management issues, rehabilitation for excessive alcohol consumption and psychiatric treatment for suspected mental health issues.

Want to Continue Relationship (12 cases)

There were 12 cases where the victim provided a retraction statement in which they mention how they wanted to continue a relationship with the suspect and that a prosecution would make that difficult. In some cases this was among other reasons for withdrawing as outlined in other themes, but there were a few cases where this was the sole reason why the victim was withdrawing from the prosecution of the suspect.

Fear of Suspect (11 cases)

A handful of cases included a statement of retraction from the victim that explained how they were withdrawing for fear of reprisals from the suspect. In most cases this was all the information that was provided within the statement, but some victims went into further detail. Some mentioned how the suspect had left the address and had not been back since the police had responded, therefore they did not want to aggravate the suspect with court action. In addition to further physical violence, victims also reported other means of reprisals, such as the suspect planting drugs in their address in order to have the children removed by social services. Furthermore, a handful of the victims within the theme went on to explain a private strategy in dealing with the abuse, in which they were planning to move from the area and end the relationship. They believed that by cutting ties with the suspect and the prosecution, they were lowering their risk of further harm in comparison to cooperating with the police. Others pursued civil action such as non-molestation orders or other remedies through the civil courts. They described how they reported the abuse to the police in order to gain a log number or incident report that they could then use as evidence for the civil remedies and to gain housing assistance.

Alcohol (10 cases)

Alcohol appeared as a reason for retraction in a small number of cases, in which the victim blamed the intoxication of the suspect or themselves when they explained their withdrawal from the investigation. Some victims stated that they had embellished events due to intoxication and that their allegation was exaggerated. In addition, one victim explained that they lied in their statement and that they had fallen and caused injuries whilst intoxicated, but then went on to blame the suspect. There were also cases where the victim admitted not being able to remember any of the events during the incident because of alcohol. They stated that since they could not remember, they had not suffered and did not want to continue with a prosecution. In contrast to victim intoxication, some statements described how they did not want a prosecution because the suspect was drunk at the time. The victims explain how the abuse only occurred when the suspect was intoxicated and did not occur when they were sober. Furthermore, one case involved a victim who knew the suspect became aggressive whilst intoxicated and had called the police as soon as the suspect began drinking in order to remove them from the address. They stated that they told officers there was verbal abuse in order to remove the suspect before any abuse occurred and it was therefore unfair to punish the suspect as they had committed no offences.

Uncoded (19 cases)

The uncoded cases in this instance contained unique circumstances that did not form one of the themes mentioned. One of the issues involved within the uncoded cases were when victims expressly stated that they did not like the police. A second issue concerned victims who discussed the suspects' mental health and that it was unfair to prosecute them for their behaviour. A final but less common pattern was the victim's concern over outside judgement. This was most prominent when one victim was discussing the issue of 'izzat'

within the Muslim community. Table 3.3 below presents the themes developed when exploring why the victim withdrew.

Table 3.3: Victims' Reasons for Retraction Themes and Frequencies.

| Theme | Number of Cases (<i>n</i>) | Percentage (from total <i>n</i> = 146) |
|--|---------------------------------|--|
| Stress of CJS and Just Want to Move On | 33 | 22.6 % |
| Child or Pet Issues | 30 | 20.5% |
| Over-Exaggerated Abuse or Incident Taken Too Seriously | 29 | 19.8% |
| Wanted Help Not Punishment | 25 | 17.1% |
| Victim Also to Blame | 17 | 11.6% |
| Restoration/Reconciliation Occurred | 15 | 10.3% |
| Want to Continue Relationship | 12 | 8.2% |
| Fear of Suspect | 11 | 7.5% |
| Alcohol | 10 | 6.8% |

Discussion

The thematic exploration broadly examined the 540 IPV cases to provide themes around the basic questions asked when dealing with a case of IPV. The formation of themes within the results illustrated the complexities involved in each case and how many of the cases differed vastly in circumstances. However, there were numerous areas that re-emerged throughout the thematic exploration, which formed outright themes and subthemes. The discussion applied the literature to the themes uncovered and considered the impact they could have throughout the study. Not only did the themes help in the

formation of factors to explore through further statistical analysis, but they also aided in explanations of causation and co-occurrence within the sample.

Most of the themes outlined in previous literature which pertained to why the abuse occurred appeared again within the current thematic exploration. Abuse to control the victim (Backcock *et al.*, 2004; Jones, 1993; Follingstad *et al.*, 1991) appeared within the case files and formed the theme of suspect gaining/regaining control. Whilst the literature mainly focused on control within the relationship, the theme in this instance also included the behaviour involved in the suspect trying to stop the victim from help-seeking and calling the police. Whilst coercive control in the relationship may have long term effects on victim engagement, the theme highlighted behaviour in the immediate incident that may have implications on short term engagement, since the victim was prevented from reporting their abuse.

The theme of relationship issues in examining why the abuse occurred included jealousy (Follingstad *et al.*, 1991) and possessiveness (Jones, 1993) as outlined in previous literature. Whilst the jealousy and possessiveness, as well as other issues, did not cause the abuse outright, it often led to situations where the suspect or victim would invade the other's privacy and led to physical force such as snatching and pushing. It seemed that the verbal confrontation, suspicion and use of physical force all culminated in a situation that led to the overall violent incident. This formed difficulties in applying the findings to the literature around typologies of violence, since violence to control, violence out of jealousy and violence following verbal abuse all seem very closely tied when examining cases that involved relationship issues (Babcock *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, the theme of the victim stating they were also to blame within retraction statements illustrated that some victims reported purposefully acting in a way that made the suspect jealous. In such cases the victim was aware that this would provoke the suspect and cause them to become angry and aggressive. Consequently, the victim

expressed guilt and felt partly to blame for the incident. As they reasoned that it was unfair to solely punish the suspect for the incident, they withdrew from the investigation and prosecution.

A frequent theme involved within the sample was when the suspect behaved in a way that was generally anti-social, abusive and aggressive without an apparent cause. The theme itself could link to the suspects' development, family background and poor emotional regulation, but a more prominent subtheme within why the abuse occurred, as well as throughout the findings as a whole, was the use of drugs and alcohol (Jones, 1993). Within explanations as to why the suspect abused the victim, the suspect would reply by stating that they could not remember since they were heavily intoxicated, perhaps in an attempt to avoid responsibility. In addition, alcohol appeared a number of times in themes formed around the victims' retraction statements. One theme was the involvement of alcohol outright, in which victims reported they had lied in their original statement, or could not remember the abuse and were no longer concerned about it. The theme also captured victims who excused the suspects' behaviour and blamed it on the alcohol as opposed to the suspect. Other themes that involved alcohol were formed around cases where the victims explained how the abuse was taken too seriously and that they may have exaggerated or embellished events due to emotions running high and intoxication. Subsequently, they believed that the incident was petty or trivial and were not willing to support a prosecution. A final issue with regards to alcohol within retraction statements was victims withdrawing in order to prevent any damage to the application or progress the suspect was making in rehabilitation. They highlighted how they wanted help and not punishment from the CJS and that the rehabilitation for alcoholism was also part of a restoration and reconciliation process for the incident.

As mentioned by Follingstad *et al.* (1991), victims often reported the suspect abusing them as retaliation for an initial physical attack made by the victim. This finding

was echoed in the current thematic exploration and featured in all three areas of exploration; however, it appeared most frequently within the suspects' interviews. With regards to why the abuse occurred and why the victim withdrew, the themes around the victim using violence first and victim self-blame all seemed to lend insight into violence out of retaliation. When exploring why the abuse occurred, victims often slapped the suspect in the face following verbal abuse, to which the suspect responded with violence that went beyond a reasonable and proportionate response. In such cases, the victim tended to use this behaviour as an excuse as to why they were withdrawing from the investigation, since they felt it was unfair to punish the suspect after they had provoked and instigated the violence. However, whilst the dynamic accounted for 14 cases, when examining why the suspect abused the victim the theme of the victim being violent was present in 88 cases. With regards to the suspects' interviews as a whole, many suspects often switched between blaming the victim and taking responsibility each time they were presented with new information and definitions of legislation (Whiting *et al.*, 2014). Whilst many chose various explanations for the incident, there were 88 cases where the suspect outright denied assault and stated that any violence they used was in self-defence against the victim. Whilst their version of events may have been part of their psychology of consistently blaming the victim (Henning *et al.*, 2005) or a means of avoiding legal responsibility, there were cases where the suspects' version was credible. In such cases there was often evidence consistent with their account, they also had injuries and the victims' credibility was damaged by an inconsistent account.

Children were a consistent finding throughout all areas of the thematic exploration, highlighting that they were a prominent consideration to both the suspect and victim within the IPV incidents (Jones, 1993). Issues with children appeared as a theme when examining why the abuse occurred, in which arguments were apparent in ex-partnerships and intimate partnerships over childcare and jealousy of child access. In

addition to arguments over children, the theme also captured suspects and victims who argued over the treatment of children, which often illustrated how the victim would confront the suspect about the use of physical force as punishment. Children also appeared in the suspects' interviews when examining why the suspect abused the victim, in which children became an issue within the theme of the victim making a false allegation or a malicious report. The suspect would often highlight issues within the relationship and how the couple had, or were going to, separate. In these instances, the suspect would often state that the victim was making a false or malicious allegation of abuse in order to gain custody of the children. Furthermore, children were also commonly mentioned within themes across the victims' reasons for retraction, as well as forming a theme itself. The theme of child or pet issues within the reasons for retraction provided insight into how the victim had to weigh up between punishing the suspect and maintaining a family unit for the children (Carey & Soloman, 2014). The victims also mentioned withdrawing from the investigation in order to distance themselves from social services, especially in cases of repeat abuse. Similar reasoning also appeared with regards to household pets, in which some victims mentioned withdrawing so the pet was not sent to an animal shelter. This suggested that in addition to children, victims also had concerns about household pets when they considered a prosecution against the suspect. Children were also mentioned when the victim considered fear and reprisals from the suspect. Such cases involved victims that were concerned with the physical safety of both themselves and their children (Robinson & Cook, 2006). However, a few cases mentioned reprisals that went beyond physical violence, such as fears that the suspect would plant drugs in the victim's address so they would lose custody of their children, which again illustrated the complexities victims face when considering their engagement with the police (Artz, 2011).

A consistent issue that appeared across themes relating to the victims' reasons for retraction related to the criminal justice system. The findings aligned closely to Robinson and Cook (2006) who outlined how victims expressed misconceptions about the CJS, frustration with the court process and disagreement about the prosecution of the suspect. The themes that related to the stress of the CJS and just wanting to move on, the incident being taken too seriously, wanting help not punishment and restoration or reconciliation, all illustrated how victims withdrew from the CJS because it did not meet their needs. Out of the reasons for retraction, the frequency of cases that withdrew with such reasoning demonstrated that the CJS was found to be unsuitable for a large number of victim needs. This related back to the thesis literature review, in which it was argued that there was a difference in aims between the police and victims. Whilst the police mainly aim to protect the victim and prosecute the suspect, the victim mainly aims to become IPV free, which can sometimes lead to conflicts of interest (Harris-Short & Miles, 2011; Payne & Wermeling, 2009).

Conclusion

The Appendix set out to thematically explore the cases of IPV in order to gain a basic understanding of the circumstances and dynamics that were involved within the sample of IPV cases. It examined why the abuse occurred, why the suspect abused the victim and why the victim withdrew from the investigation, in which the key similarities between cases formed themes across the sample as a whole.

Whilst the analysis found numerous themes that were consistent with previous literature, the analysis allowed for a more detailed insight into the behaviours, circumstances and factors that formed the basis of these themes. In doing so, it was possible to examine specific dynamics related to the couples within each theme, which often highlighted the vast difference in their situations and circumstances even though they shared similar thematic issues. An example would be the theme of children, in which

the theme encapsulated a plethora of issues such as the treatment of the children, arguments over childcare, child access, jealousy of children being in the partner's new relationship and malicious reports in order to gain custody. Themes such as retaliation and blame, alcohol and children captured a large number of circumstances, in which numerous factors may have been present and affected victim engagement with the police. Therefore, in addition to forming themes around the occurrence of IPV that were consistent with previous literature, the analysis also uncovered many specific dynamics that occurred within the sample. Both the general themes and specific circumstances provided valuable insight during the statistical analysis and cross validation of data. The qualitative data allowed for the application of context to any significant associations with victim engagement and charging, in which the qualitative data provided explanations of potential causality during the cross validation of significant findings.

Appendix 4: Refined Victim Engagement Factors

Table 4.1: A Shortlist of Refined Victim Engagement Factors.

Ordered in size of effect within the Nested Ecological Model. (* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$).

| Factor Name | Level | All Present | Cooperation % | n | Withdrawal % | n | Effect size |
|---|------------------------|----------------|------------------|------------|-----------------|------------|----------------|
| <u>Macrosystem</u> | | | | | | | |
| ***Initial Victim Reluctance | | 534 | 64.0% | 342 | 36.0% | 192 | .670 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 144 | 11.1% | 16 | 88.9% | 128 | |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 390 | 83.6% | 325 | 16.4% | 64 | |
| ***Issues with Court | | 73 | 32.9% | 24 | 67.1% | 49 | .611 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 46 | 10.9% | 5 | 89.1% | 41 | |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 27 | 70.4% | 19 | 29.6% | 8 | |
| ***Unrequested 3rd Party Report | | 464 | 65.9% | 306 | 34.1% | 158 | .247 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 76 | 39.5% | 30 | 60.5% | 46 | |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 388 | 71.1% | 276 | 28.9% | 112 | |
| <u>Exosystem</u> | | | | | | | |
| **Possible Victimless Prosecution | | 429 | 67.8% | 291 | 32.2% | 138 | .142 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 94 | 55.3% | 52 | 44.7% | 42 | |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 335 | 71.3% | 239 | 28.7% | 96 | |
| *Witness Cooperation | | 249 | 62.7% | 156 | 37.3% | 93 | .126 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 196 | 65.8% | 129 | 34.2% | 67 | |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 53 | 50.9% | 27 | 49.1% | 26 | |
| <u>Microsystem</u> | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| ***Apparent | | | | | | | |
| Understating or | | 528 | 64.6% | 341 | 35.4% | 187 | .551 |
| Undermining of | | | | | | | |
| Abuse | | | | | | | |
| | <i>Present</i> | 88 | 5.7% | 5 | 94.3% | 83 | |
| | <i>Not</i> | | | | | | |
| | <i>Present</i> | 440 | 76.4% | 336 | 23.6% | 104 | |
| ***Victims' | | | | | | | |
| Relationship | | 94 | 54.3% | 51 | 45.7% | 43 | .440 |
| Intentions | | | | | | | |
| | <i>Contin-</i> | 57 | 71.9% | 41 | 28.1% | 16 | |
| | <i>uing</i> | | | | | | |
| | <i>Ending</i> | 37 | 27.0% | 10 | 73.0% | 27 | |
| ***Cohabitation | | | | | | | |
| after Incident | | 445 | 65.2% | 290 | 34.8% | 155 | .404 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 141 | 36.9% | 52 | 63.1% | 89 | |
| | <i>Not</i> | | | | | | |
| | <i>Present</i> | 304 | 78.3% | 238 | 21.7% | 66 | |
| ***Apparent Self- | | | | | | | |
| Blame | | 490 | 68.6% | 336 | 31.4% | 154 | .315 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 29 | 10.3% | 3 | 89.7% | 26 | |
| | <i>Not</i> | | | | | | |
| | <i>Present</i> | 461 | 72.2% | 333 | 27.8 | 128 | |
| ***Relationship | | | | | | | |
| Status during | | 538 | 63.9% | 344 | 36.1% | 194 | .270 |
| Incident | | | | | | | |
| | <i>Intimate</i> | 324 | 53.4% | 173 | 46.6% | 151 | |
| | <i>Partners</i> | | | | | | |
| | <i>Ex-</i> | 214 | 79.9% | 171 | 20.1% | 43 | |
| | <i>partners</i> | | | | | | |
| ***Cohabitation | | | | | | | |
| during Incident | | 508 | 66.3% | 337 | 33.7% | 171 | .265 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 268 | 54.5% | 146 | 45.5% | 122 | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 240 | 79.6% | 191 | 20.4% | 49 | |
| *Children of the Victim Only and Referral to Professional Support Network | | 116 | 69.0% | 80 | 31.0% | 36 | .218 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 43 | 55.8% | 24 | 44.2% | 19 | |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 73 | 76.7% | 56 | 23.3% | 17 | |
| ***Stalking and Harassment | | 530 | 63.8% | 338 | 36.2% | 192 | .194 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 114 | 81.6% | 93 | 18.4% | 21 | |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 416 | 58.9% | 245 | 41.1% | 171 | |
| ***Victim Consumed Alcohol | | 522 | 64.8% | 338 | 35.2% | 184 | .182 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 193 | 53.4% | 103 | 46.6% | 90 | |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 329 | 71.4% | 235 | 28.6% | 94 | |
| **Suspect Consumed Alcohol | | 515 | 63.7% | 328 | 36.3% | 187 | .150 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 302 | 57.6% | 174 | 42.4% | 128 | |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 213 | 72.3% | 154 | 27.7% | 59 | |
| **Any Injury | | 529 | 64.5% | 341 | 35.5% | 188 | .129 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 412 | 61.2% | 252 | 38.8% | 160 | |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 117 | 76.1% | 89 | 23.9% | 28 | |
| **Physical Abuse | | 538 | 64.1% | 345 | 35.9% | 193 | .128 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 422 | 60.9% | 257 | 39.1% | 165 | |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 116 | 75.9% | 88 | 24.1% | 28 | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| *Victim Reports | | | | | | |
| Feeling Generally Scared | | 387 | 68.7% | 266 | 31.3% | .122 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 248 | 73.0% | 181 | 27.0% | 67 |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 139 | 61.2% | 85 | 38.8% | 54 |
| *Suspect Drink Dependent | | 302 | 57.6% | 174 | 42.4% | .114 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 45 | 71.1% | 32 | 28.9% | 13 |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 257 | 55.3% | 142 | 44.7% | 115 |
| *Suspect Older by 20 or more Years | | 539 | 64.0% | 345 | 36.0% | .108 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 15 | 33.3% | 5 | 66.7% | 10 |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 524 | 64.9% | 340 | 35.1% | 184 |
| *Verbal Abuse | | 486 | 65.4% | 318 | 34.6% | .094 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 382 | 63.1% | 241 | 36.9% | 141 |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 104 | 74.0% | 77 | 26.0% | 27 |
| *Couple are Same Age | | 539 | 64.0% | 345 | 36.0% | .089 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 49 | 77.6% | 38 | 22.4% | 11 |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 490 | 62.7% | 307 | 37.3% | 183 |
| *Mean Age Difference | Scale | 538 | | | | |
| **Suspect Older (Mean Age) | Scale | 306 | | | | |
| <u>Ontogenetic</u> | | | | | | |
| ***Previous Cooperation/ Withdrawal with CJS | | 185 | 74.6% | 138 | 25.4% | .393 |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|------|
| | <i>Coop- eration</i> | 105 | 89.5% | 94 | 10.5% | 11 | |
| | <i>With- drawal</i> | 80 | 55.0% | 44 | 45.0% | 36 | |
| ***Previous | | | | | | | |
| Positive/Negative | | | | | | | |
| Outcomes with the | | | | | | | |
| CJS | | 166 | 75.9% | 126 | 24.1% | 40 | .274 |
| | <i>Positive</i> | 94 | 86.2% | 81 | 13.8% | 13 | |
| | <i>Negative</i> | 72 | 62.5% | 45 | 37.5% | 27 | |
| **History of | | | | | | | |
| Stalking and | | 435 | 66.7% | 290 | 33.3% | 145 | .138 |
| Harassment | | | | | | | |
| | <i>Present</i> | 95 | 78.9% | 75 | 21.1% | 20 | |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 340 | 63.2% | 215 | 36.8% | 125 | |
| *Suspect Abuse to | | | | | | | |
| Same Victim | | 491 | 66.6% | 327 | 33.4% | 164 | .112 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 358 | 69.8% | 250 | 30.2% | 77 | |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 133 | 57.9% | 77 | 42.1% | 56 | |
| Previous DV contact | | | | | | | |
| with Police | | 456 | 68.2% | 311 | 31.8% | 145 | .094 |
| | <i>Present</i> | 285 | 71.6% | 204 | 28.4% | 81 | |
| | <i>Not Present</i> | 171 | 62.6% | 107 | 37.4% | 64 | |

Appendix 5: Smallest Space Analysis (SSA) and Partially Ordered Scalogram Analysis with base Coordinates (POSAC)

7.1 – Cooperation SSA

```
*****
*      Jaccard COEFFICIENTS      *
*****
```

```
Number of Variables ..... 11
Number of cases ..... 540
```

Matrix of Jaccard coefficients (Decimal point omitted)
and numbers of cases (N) in computing them

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|----------|----|--|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| | | +-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+----- | | | | | | | | | | |
| Wit_Coop | 1 | 100 (196) | 17 (540) | 6 (540) | 9 (540) | 8 (540) | 29 (540) | 17 (540) | 18 (540) | 34 (540) | 16 (540) | 32 (540) |
| Stalk | 2 | 17 (540) | 100 (114) | 3 (540) | 2 (540) | 9 (540) | 27 (540) | 30 (540) | 26 (540) | 21 (540) | 31 (540) | 24 (540) |
| S_Drink | 3 | 6 (540) | 3 (540) | 100 (45) | 10 (540) | 4 (540) | 9 (540) | 8 (540) | 10 (540) | 11 (540) | 8 (540) | 11 (540) |
| V_End_Re | 4 | 9 (540) | 2 (540) | 10 (540) | 100 (57) | 4 (540) | 9 (540) | 5 (540) | 4 (540) | 10 (540) | 1 (540) | 7 (540) |
| Same_Age | 5 | 8 (540) | 9 (540) | 4 (540) | 4 (540) | 100 (49) | 10 (540) | 8 (540) | 7 (540) | 9 (540) | 7 (540) | 9 (540) |
| V_Scared | 6 | 29 (540) | 27 (540) | 9 (540) | 9 (540) | 10 (540) | 100 (248) | 25 (540) | 26 (540) | 52 (540) | 26 (540) | 47 (540) |
| Pre_Coop | 7 | 17 (540) | 30 (540) | 8 (540) | 5 (540) | 8 (540) | 25 (540) | 100 (105) | 60 (540) | 27 (540) | 27 (540) | 35 (540) |
| Pre_Pos_ | 8 | 18 (540) | 26 (540) | 10 (540) | 4 (540) | 7 (540) | 26 (540) | 60 (540) | 100 (94) | 24 (540) | 25 (540) | 31 (540) |
| Same_V | 9 | 34 (540) | 21 (540) | 11 (540) | 10 (540) | 9 (540) | 52 (540) | 27 (540) | 24 (540) | 100 (358) | 25 (540) | 68 (540) |
| Harass | 10 | 16 (540) | 31 (540) | 8 (540) | 1 (540) | 7 (540) | 26 (540) | 27 (540) | 25 (540) | 25 (540) | 100 (95) | 29 (540) |
| Pre_Cont | 11 | 32 (540) | 24 (540) | 11 (540) | 7 (540) | 9 (540) | 47 (540) | 35 (540) | 31 (540) | 68 (540) | 29 (540) | 100 (285) |

```

*****
*WEIGHTED  SMALLEST SPACE ANALYSIS*
*                WSSA1                *
*****

```

```

Number of variables ..... 11
Minimal dimensionality ..... 2
Maximal dimensionality ..... 3
Similarity Data (Correlations)
Tied values with a tolerance of ..... .000
Weighting parameter for Locality ..... 0

```

I N P U T M A T R I X *

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|----------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Wit_Coop | 1 | 100 | 17 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 29 | 17 | 18 | 34 | 16 | 32 |
| Stalk | 2 | 17 | 100 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 27 | 30 | 26 | 21 | 31 | 24 |
| S_Drink | 3 | 6 | 3 | 100 | 10 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 11 | 8 | 11 |
| V_End_Re | 4 | 9 | 2 | 10 | 100 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 1 | 7 |
| Same_Age | 5 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 4 | 100 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 7 | 9 |
| V_Scared | 6 | 29 | 27 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 100 | 25 | 26 | 52 | 26 | 47 |
| Pre_Coop | 7 | 17 | 30 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 25 | 100 | 60 | 27 | 27 | 35 |
| Pre_Pos_ | 8 | 18 | 26 | 10 | 4 | 7 | 26 | 60 | 100 | 24 | 25 | 31 |
| Same_V | 9 | 34 | 21 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 52 | 27 | 24 | 100 | 25 | 68 |
| Harass | 10 | 16 | 31 | 8 | 1 | 7 | 26 | 27 | 25 | 25 | 100 | 29 |
| Pre_Cont | 11 | 32 | 24 | 11 | 7 | 9 | 47 | 35 | 31 | 68 | 29 | 100 |

* The original coefficients were multiplied by 100 and rounded into integer numbers

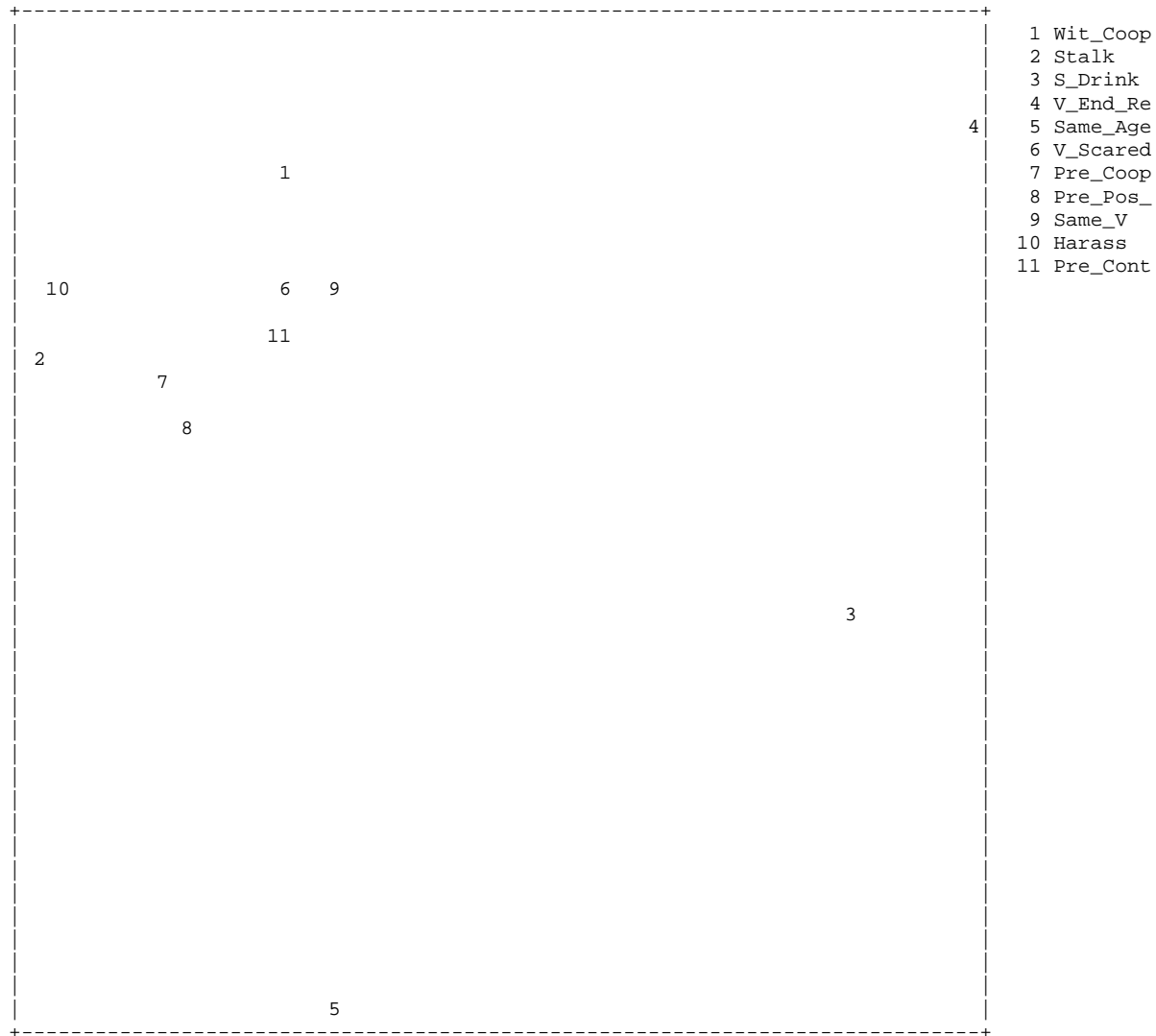
Number of tied Classes 1

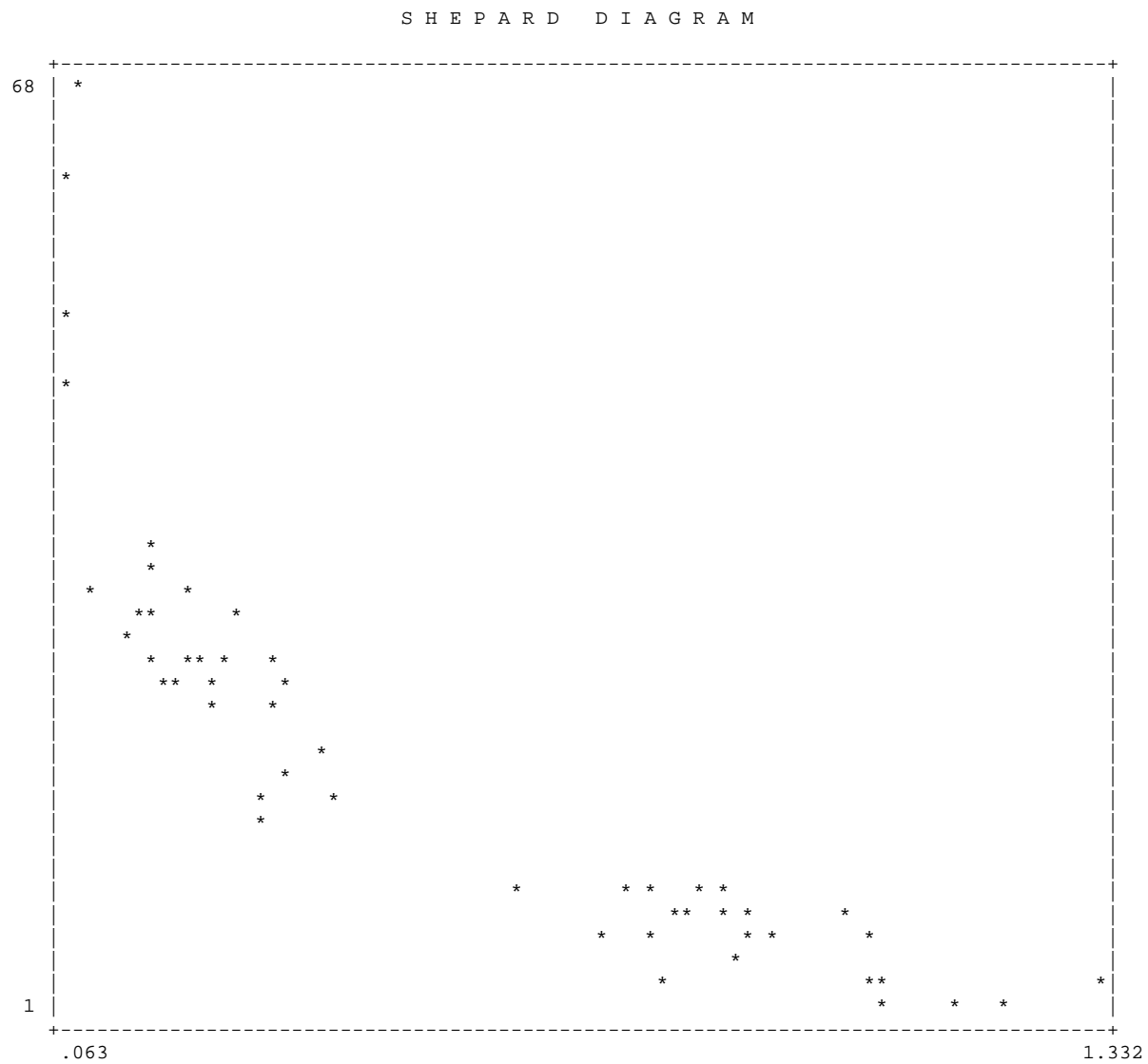
D I M E N S I O N A L I T Y 2

Rank image transformations 21
 Number of iterations 40
 Coefficient of Alienation13610

| Serial Number | Item coeff. of Alienation | Plotted Coordinates | |
|------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-------|
| | | 1 | 2 |
| 1 | .12677 | 26.37 | 86.36 |
| 2 | .08553 | .00 | 66.77 |
| 3 | .15428 | 86.39 | 40.40 |
| 4 | .12158 | 100.00 | 90.41 |
| 5 | .16053 | 31.88 | .00 |
| 6 | .12499 | 25.51 | 74.09 |
| 7 | .09544 | 13.66 | 64.01 |
| 8 | .12911 | 16.92 | 59.15 |
| 9 | .07506 | 31.16 | 73.37 |
| 10 | .15160 | 3.48 | 73.97 |
| 11 | .13274 | 26.40 | 68.80 |

Space Diagram for Dimensionality 2. Axis 1 versus Axis 2.



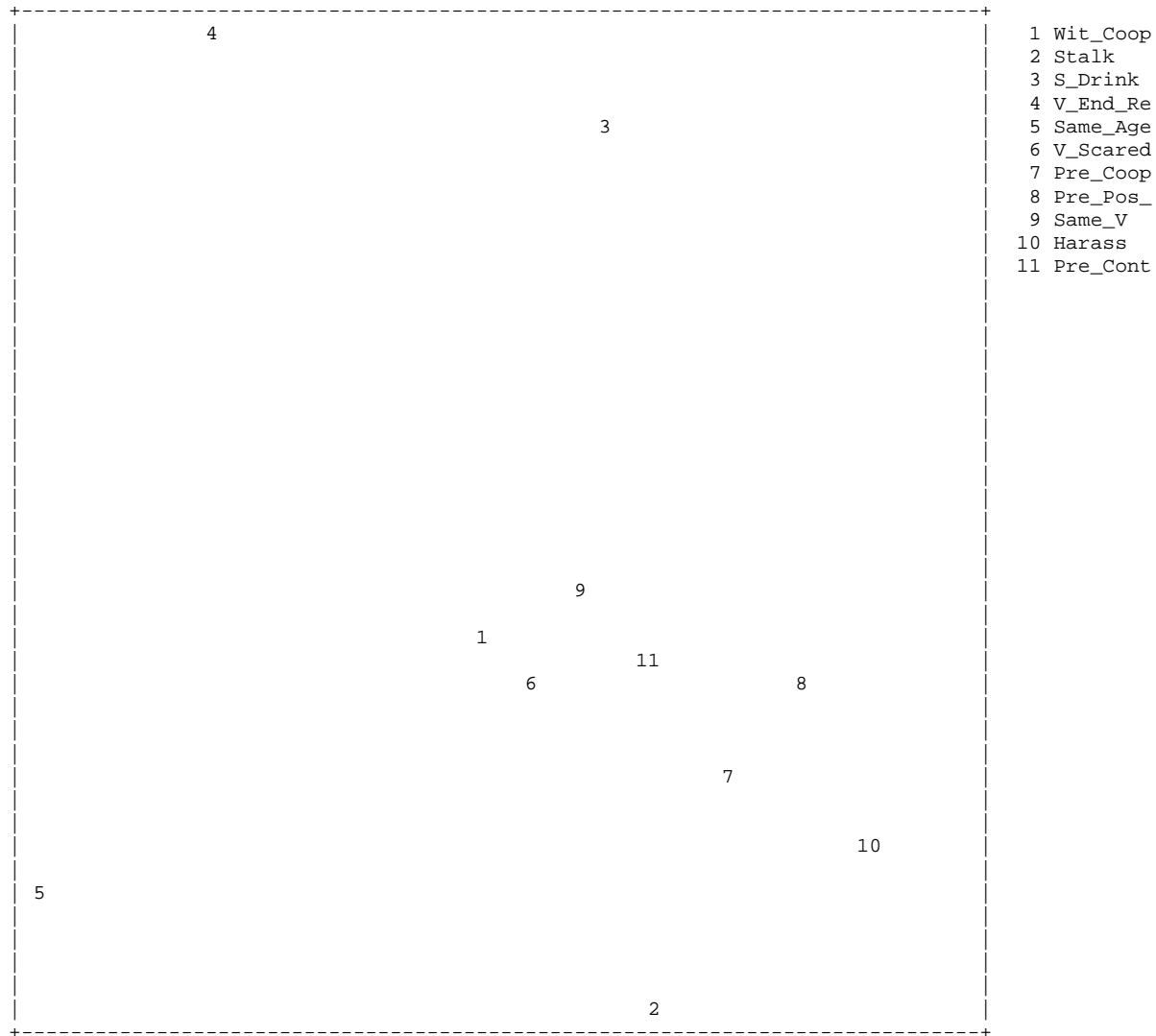


D I M E N S I O N A L I T Y 3

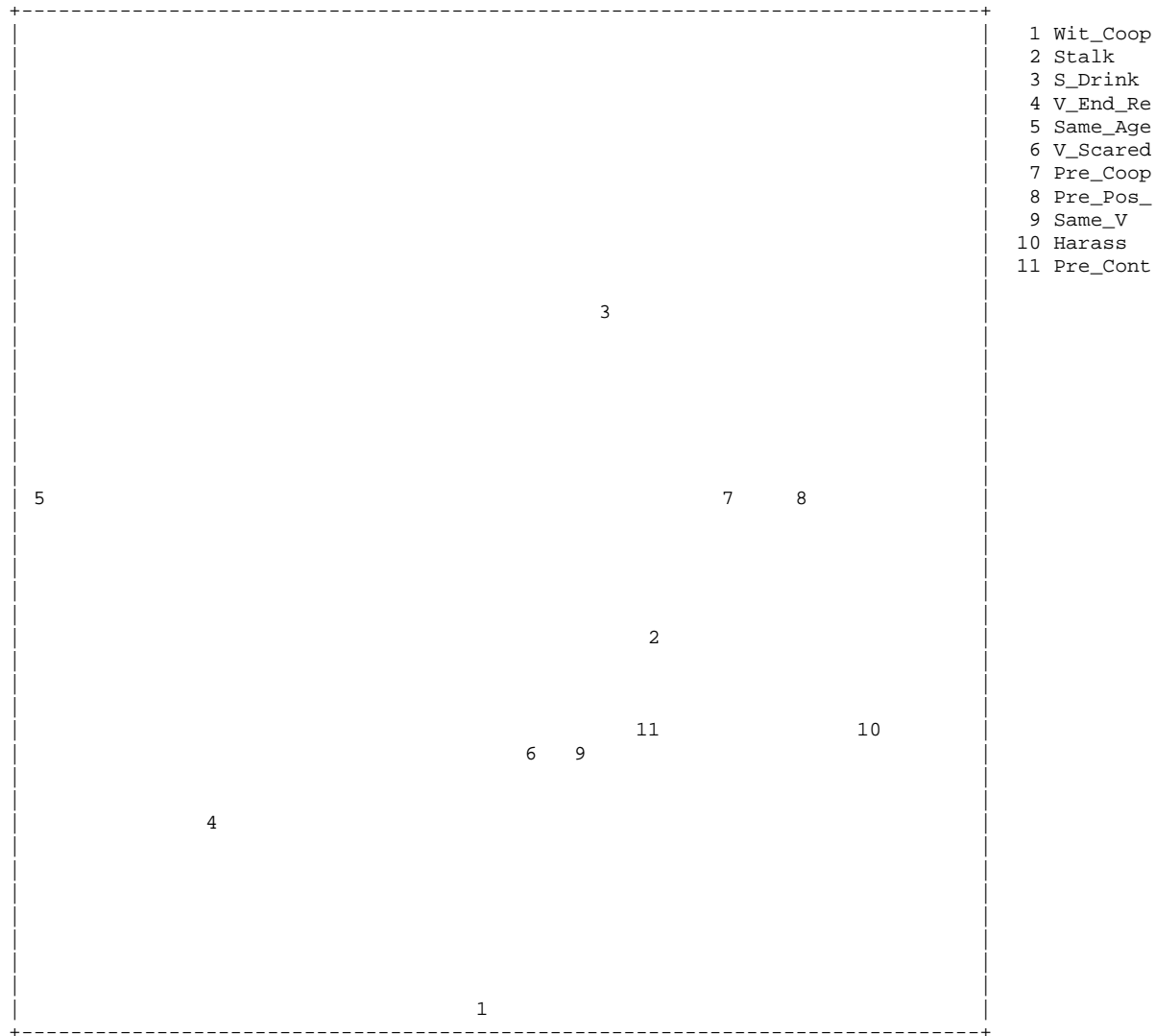
Rank image transformations 20
 Number of iterations 38
 Coefficient of Alienation06048

| Serial Number | Item coeff. of Alienation | Plotted Coordinates | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|--------|-------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | .07885 | 48.26 | 38.44 | .00 |
| 2 | .04758 | 67.00 | .00 | 37.32 |
| 3 | .06229 | 60.80 | 89.40 | 70.80 |
| 4 | .03936 | 19.60 | 100.00 | 19.72 |
| 5 | .03470 | .00 | 12.17 | 53.55 |
| 6 | .07709 | 53.89 | 32.87 | 25.82 |
| 7 | .06115 | 74.18 | 24.20 | 51.74 |
| 8 | .07501 | 81.31 | 34.17 | 52.77 |
| 9 | .04405 | 56.64 | 43.82 | 25.12 |
| 10 | .08757 | 89.17 | 17.06 | 27.97 |
| 11 | .07104 | 64.83 | 36.70 | 28.83 |

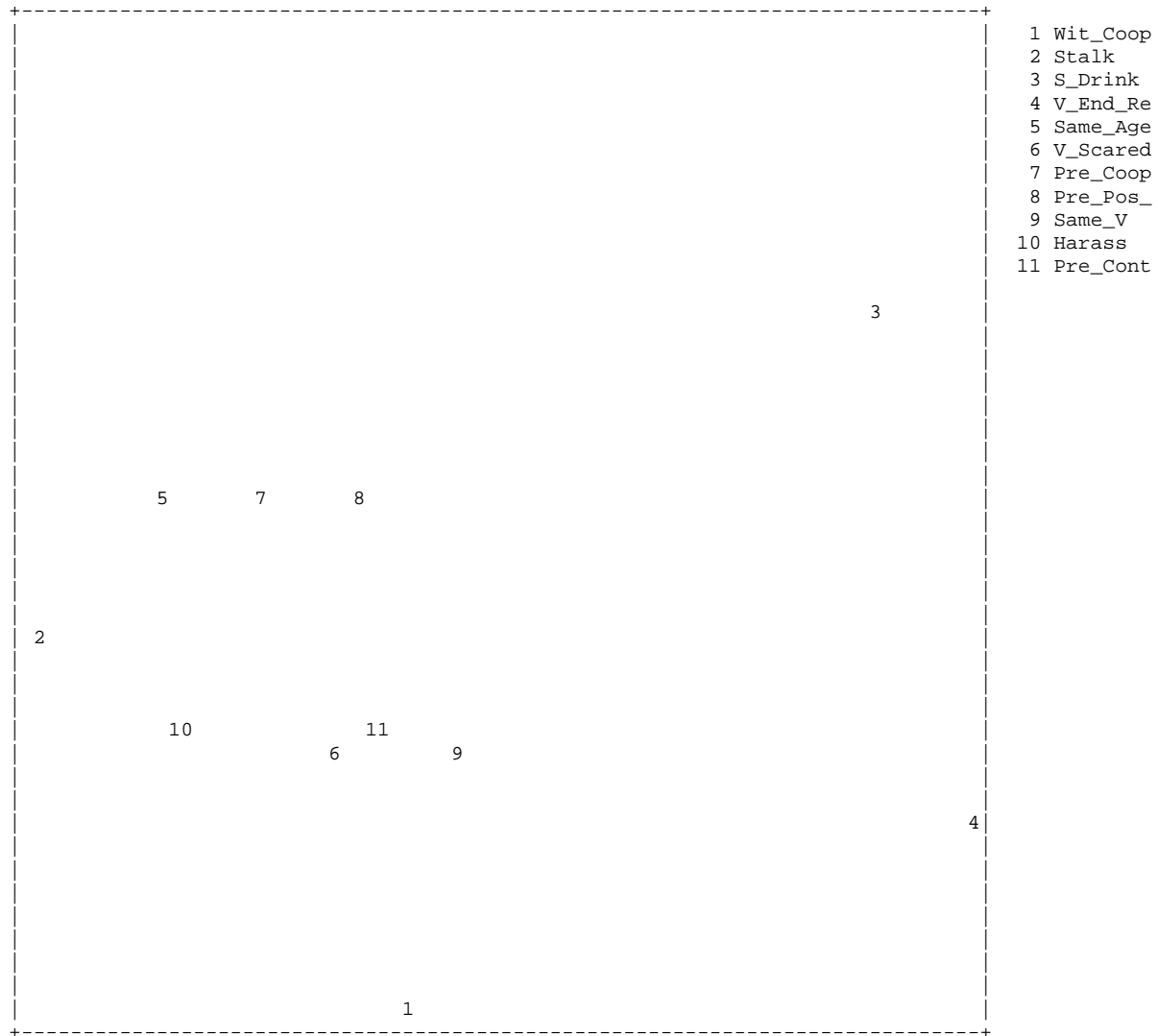
Space Diagram for Dimensionality 3. Axis 1 versus Axis 2.

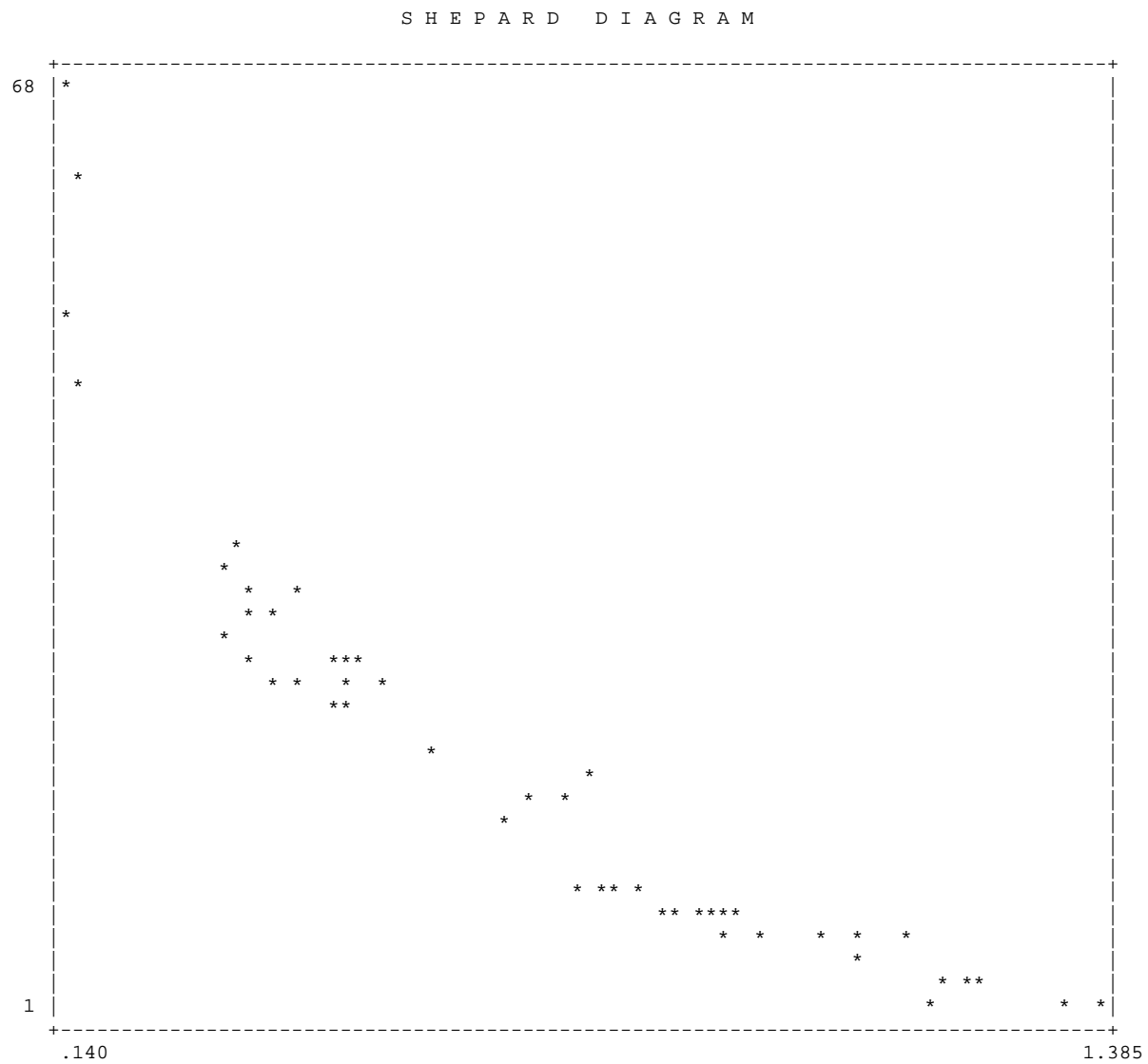


Space Diagram for Dimensionality 3. Axis 1 versus Axis 3.



Space Diagram for Dimensionality 3. Axis 2 versus Axis 3.





7.2 – Withdrawal SSA

```
*****  
*      Jaccard COEFFICIENTS      *  
*****
```

```
Number of Variables ..... 15  
Number of cases ..... 540
```


| | | Matrix of Jaccard coefficients (Decimal point omitted) and numbers of cases (N) in computing them | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| In_Vic_R | 1 | 100 (144) | 18 (540) | 12 (540) | 17 (540) | 27 (540) | 24 (540) | 9 (540) | 32 (540) | 34 (540) | 27 (540) | 31 (540) | 6 (540) | 8 (540) | 13 (540) | 12 (540) |
| Unreq_3P | 2 | 18 (540) | 100 (76) | 8 (540) | 21 (540) | 17 (540) | 20 (540) | 9 (540) | 21 (540) | 15 (540) | 10 (540) | 11 (540) | 7 (540) | 14 (540) | 11 (540) | 6 (540) |
| Iss_w_Co | 3 | 12 (540) | 8 (540) | 100 (46) | 5 (540) | 10 (540) | 8 (540) | 6 (540) | 7 (540) | 9 (540) | 8 (540) | 7 (540) | 7 (540) | 11 (540) | 8 (540) | 4 (540) |
| Poss_Vic | 4 | 17 (540) | 21 (540) | 5 (540) | 100 (94) | 15 (540) | 18 (540) | 6 (540) | 12 (540) | 15 (540) | 14 (540) | 8 (540) | 6 (540) | 7 (540) | 8 (540) | 10 (540) |
| Sus_Alc | 5 | 27 (540) | 17 (540) | 10 (540) | 15 (540) | 100 (302) | 60 (540) | 5 (540) | 18 (540) | 51 (540) | 40 (540) | 23 (540) | 8 (540) | 7 (540) | 16 (540) | 14 (540) |
| Vic_Alc | 6 | 24 (540) | 20 (540) | 8 (540) | 18 (540) | 60 (540) | 100 (193) | 7 (540) | 21 (540) | 42 (540) | 31 (540) | 20 (540) | 6 (540) | 6 (540) | 12 (540) | 13 (540) |
| Vic_S_B | 7 | 9 (540) | 9 (540) | 6 (540) | 6 (540) | 5 (540) | 7 (540) | 100 (29) | 16 (540) | 8 (540) | 6 (540) | 9 (540) | 6 (540) | 6 (540) | 4 (540) | 3 (540) |
| Vic_Unde | 8 | 32 (540) | 21 (540) | 7 (540) | 12 (540) | 18 (540) | 21 (540) | 16 (540) | 100 (88) | 23 (540) | 19 (540) | 27 (540) | 7 (540) | 14 (540) | 7 (540) | 4 (540) |
| Int_Part | 9 | 34 (540) | 15 (540) | 9 (540) | 15 (540) | 51 (540) | 42 (540) | 8 (540) | 23 (540) | 100 (324) | 67 (540) | 40 (540) | 8 (540) | 9 (540) | 15 (540) | 14 (540) |
| LivTogDu | 10 | 27 (540) | 10 (540) | 8 (540) | 14 (540) | 40 (540) | 31 (540) | 6 (540) | 19 (540) | 67 (540) | 100 (268) | 53 (540) | 10 (540) | 11 (540) | 14 (540) | 13 (540) |
| LivTogAf | 11 | 31 (540) | 11 (540) | 7 (540) | 8 (540) | 23 (540) | 20 (540) | 9 (540) | 27 (540) | 40 (540) | 53 (540) | 100 (141) | 6 (540) | 17 (540) | 11 (540) | 11 (540) |
| COVO_PSN | 12 | 6 (540) | 7 (540) | 7 (540) | 6 (540) | 8 (540) | 6 (540) | 6 (540) | 7 (540) | 8 (540) | 10 (540) | 6 (540) | 100 (43) | 13 (540) | 15 (540) | 7 (540) |
| V_Cont_R | 13 | 8 (540) | 14 (540) | 11 (540) | 7 (540) | 7 (540) | 6 (540) | 6 (540) | 14 (540) | 9 (540) | 11 (540) | 17 (540) | 13 (540) | 100 (37) | 8 (540) | 6 (540) |
| P_V_With | 14 | 13 (540) | 11 (540) | 8 (540) | 8 (540) | 16 (540) | 12 (540) | 4 (540) | 7 (540) | 15 (540) | 14 (540) | 11 (540) | 15 (540) | 8 (540) | 100 (80) | 38 (540) |
| P_Neg_Ou | 15 | 12 (540) | 6 (540) | 4 (540) | 10 (540) | 14 (540) | 13 (540) | 3 (540) | 4 (540) | 14 (540) | 13 (540) | 11 (540) | 7 (540) | 6 (540) | 38 (540) | 100 (72) |

```

*****
*WEIGHTED  SMALLEST SPACE ANALYSIS*
*              WSSA1              *
*****

```

```

Number of variables ..... 15
Minimal dimensionality ..... 2
Maximal dimensionality ..... 3
Similarity Data (Correlations)
Tied values with a tolerance of ..... .000
Weighting parameter for Locality ..... 0

```

I N P U T M A T R I X *

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
|----------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| In_Vic_R | 1 | 100 | 18 | 12 | 17 | 27 | 24 | 9 | 32 | 34 | 27 | 31 | 6 | 8 | 13 | 12 |
| Unreq_3P | 2 | 18 | 100 | 8 | 21 | 17 | 20 | 9 | 21 | 15 | 10 | 11 | 7 | 14 | 11 | 6 |
| Iss_w_Co | 3 | 12 | 8 | 100 | 5 | 10 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 11 | 8 | 4 |
| Poss_Vic | 4 | 17 | 21 | 5 | 100 | 15 | 18 | 6 | 12 | 15 | 14 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 10 |
| Sus_Alc | 5 | 27 | 17 | 10 | 15 | 100 | 60 | 5 | 18 | 51 | 40 | 23 | 8 | 7 | 16 | 14 |
| Vic_Alc | 6 | 24 | 20 | 8 | 18 | 60 | 100 | 7 | 21 | 42 | 31 | 20 | 6 | 6 | 12 | 13 |
| Vic_S_B | 7 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 100 | 16 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 3 |
| Vic_Unde | 8 | 32 | 21 | 7 | 12 | 18 | 21 | 16 | 100 | 23 | 19 | 27 | 7 | 14 | 7 | 4 |
| Int_Part | 9 | 34 | 15 | 9 | 15 | 51 | 42 | 8 | 23 | 100 | 67 | 40 | 8 | 9 | 15 | 14 |
| LivTogDu | 10 | 27 | 10 | 8 | 14 | 40 | 31 | 6 | 19 | 67 | 100 | 53 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 13 |
| LivTogAf | 11 | 31 | 11 | 7 | 8 | 23 | 20 | 9 | 27 | 40 | 53 | 100 | 6 | 17 | 10 | 11 |
| COVO_PSN | 12 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 6 | 100 | 13 | 15 | 7 |
| V_Cont_R | 13 | 8 | 14 | 11 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 14 | 9 | 11 | 17 | 13 | 100 | 8 | 6 |
| P_V_With | 14 | 13 | 11 | 8 | 8 | 16 | 12 | 4 | 7 | 15 | 14 | 10 | 15 | 8 | 100 | 38 |
| P_Neg_Ou | 15 | 12 | 6 | 4 | 10 | 14 | 13 | 3 | 4 | 14 | 13 | 11 | 7 | 6 | 38 | 100 |

* The original coefficients were multiplied by 100 and rounded into integer numbers

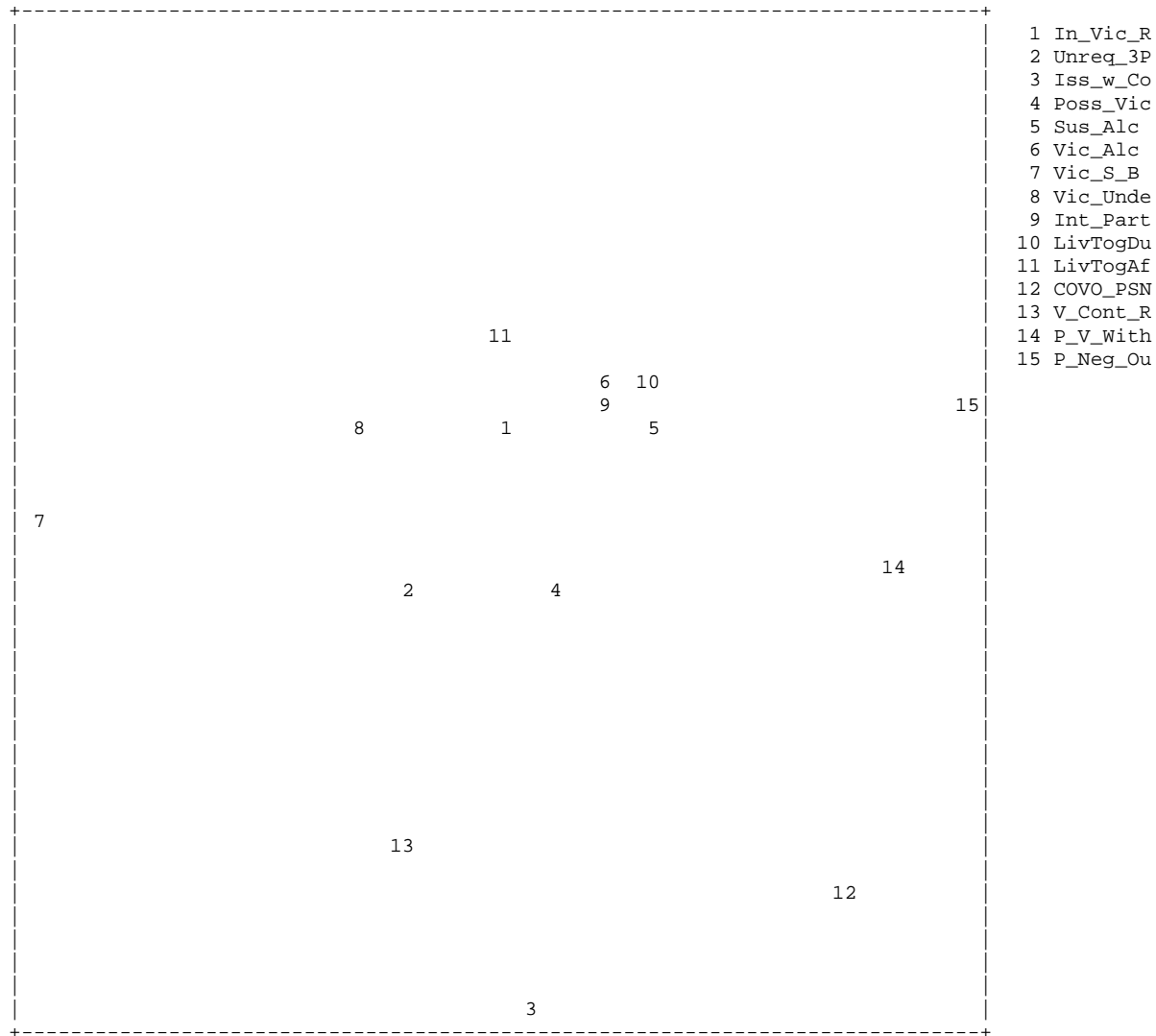
Number of tied Classes 2

D I M E N S I O N A L I T Y 2

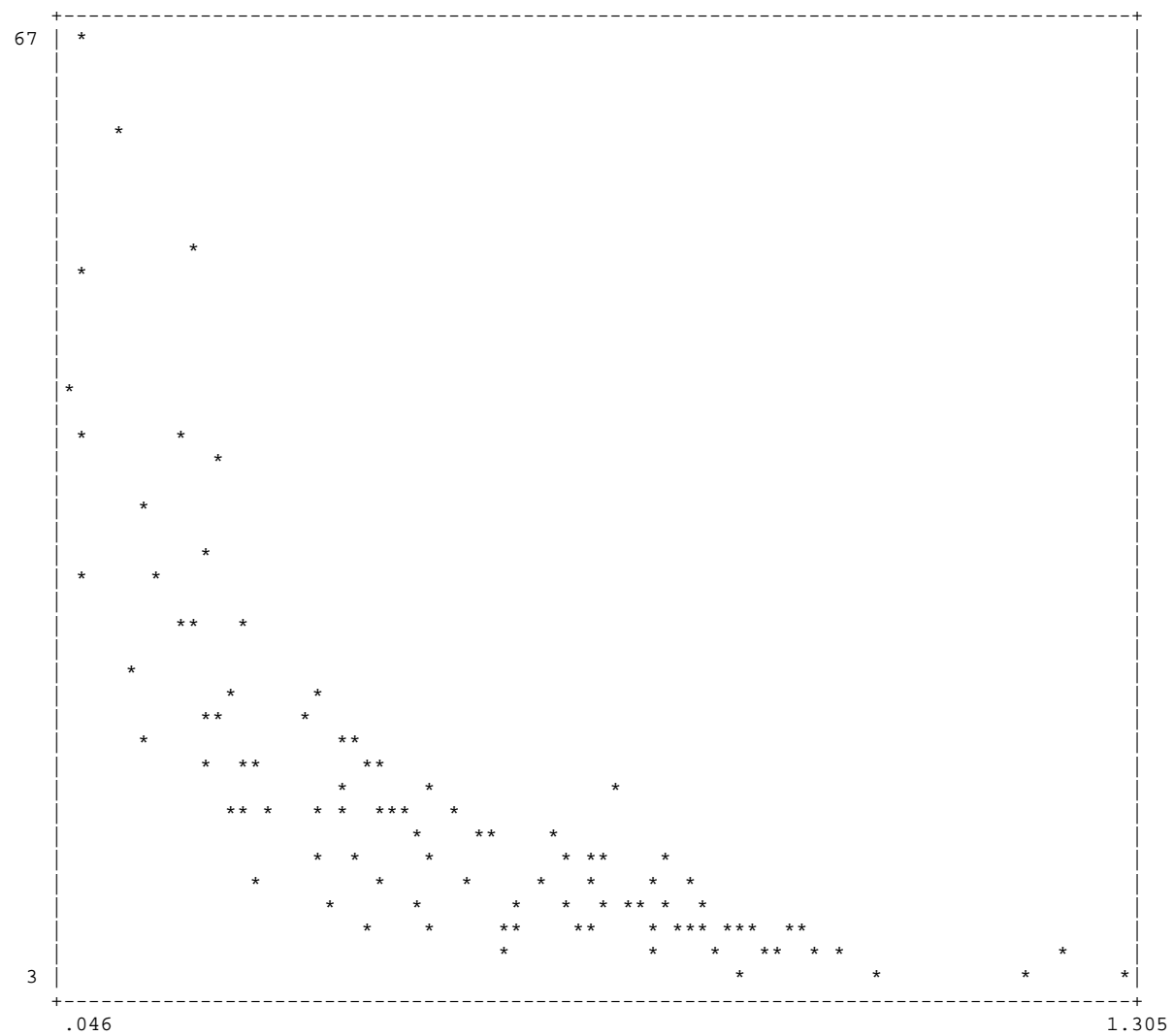
Rank image transformations 6
 Number of iterations 10
 Coefficient of Alienation22274

| Serial Number | Item coeff. of Alienation | Plotted Coordinates | |
|------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-------|
| | | 1 | 2 |
| 1 | .22633 | 51.13 | 58.57 |
| 2 | .18656 | 39.25 | 43.00 |
| 3 | .24578 | 52.65 | .00 |
| 4 | .20871 | 56.31 | 43.12 |
| 5 | .18952 | 66.19 | 59.71 |
| 6 | .17649 | 59.28 | 63.92 |
| 7 | .14669 | .00 | 49.53 |
| 8 | .23979 | 35.11 | 58.79 |
| 9 | .13723 | 61.10 | 60.88 |
| 10 | .20821 | 64.50 | 63.66 |
| 11 | .28943 | 51.25 | 69.78 |
| 12 | .21466 | 87.70 | 11.80 |
| 13 | .28821 | 40.34 | 16.64 |
| 14 | .14987 | 91.22 | 45.69 |
| 15 | .15804 | 100.00 | 61.09 |

Space Diagram for Dimensionality 2. Axis 1 versus Axis 2.



S H E P A R D D I A G R A M

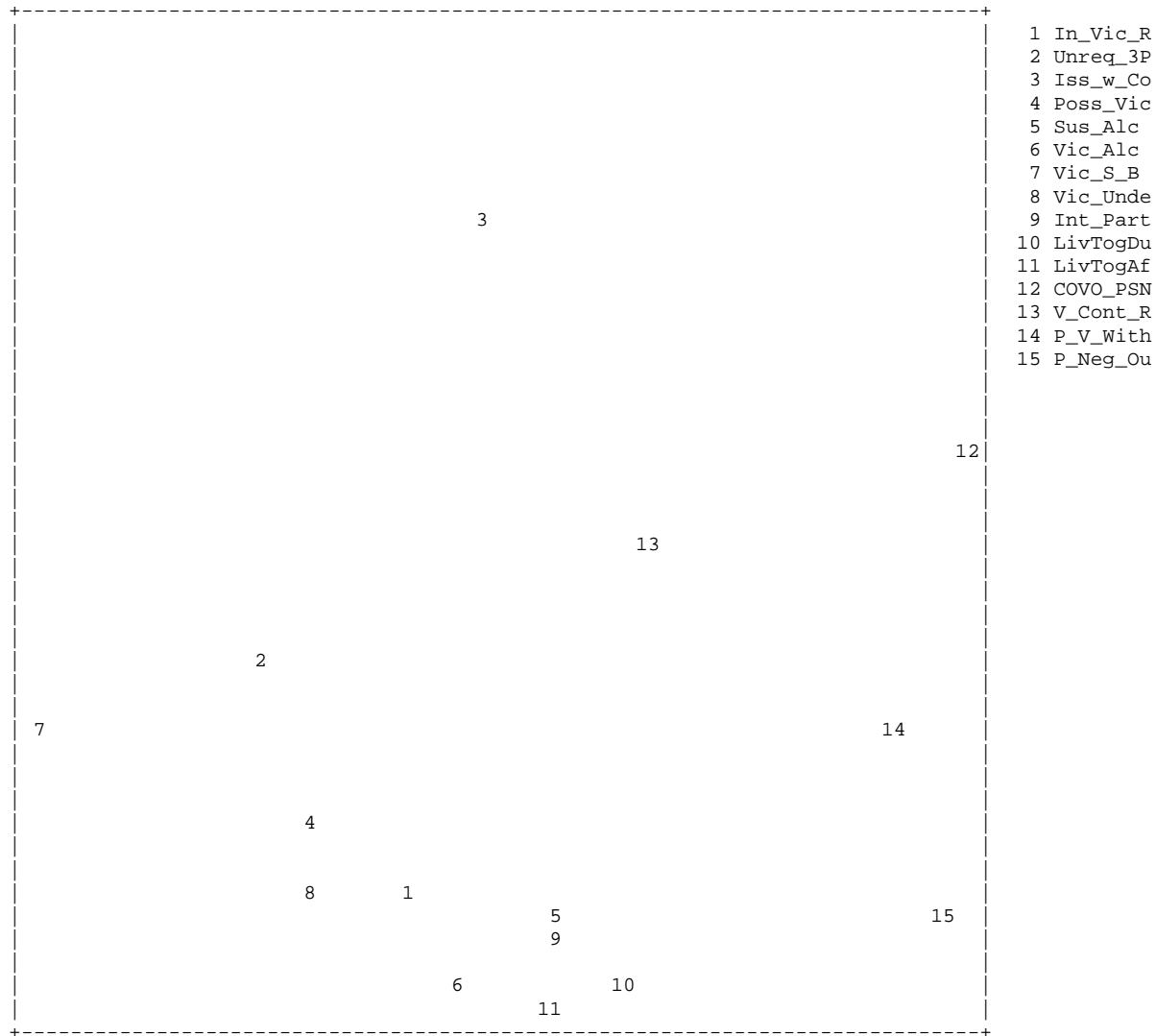


D I M E N S I O N A L I T Y 3

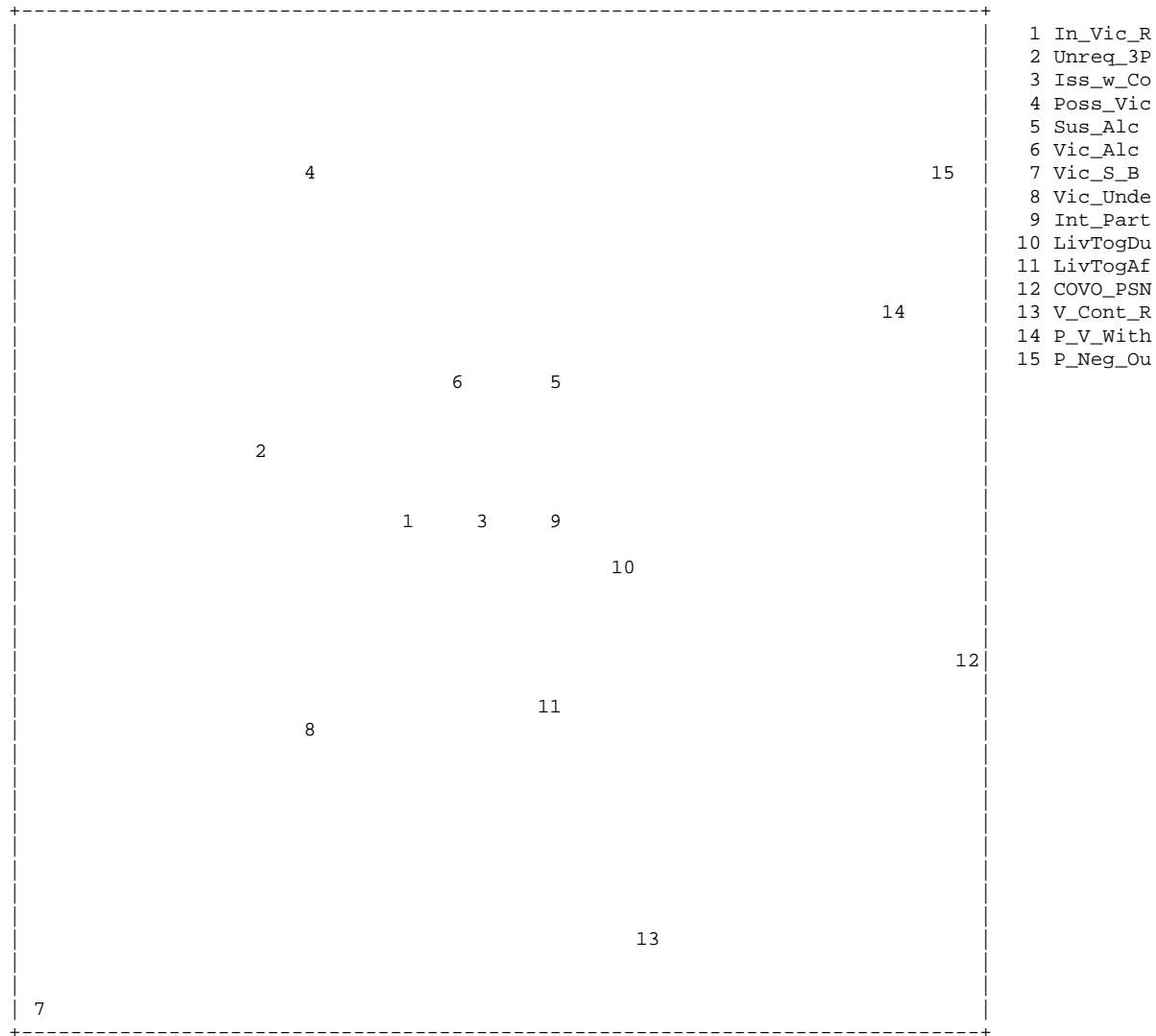
Rank image transformations 10
 Number of iterations 18
 Coefficient of Alienation11634

| Serial Number | Item coeff. of Alienation | Plotted Coordinates | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | .14375 | 39.60 | 12.69 | 49.07 |
| 2 | .14828 | 22.72 | 36.50 | 58.21 |
| 3 | .12909 | 47.80 | 81.87 | 50.00 |
| 4 | .13185 | 28.82 | 18.58 | 86.15 |
| 5 | .10727 | 56.56 | 10.18 | 63.45 |
| 6 | .10789 | 44.11 | 2.89 | 63.75 |
| 7 | .09444 | .00 | 27.57 | .00 |
| 8 | .10843 | 27.74 | 12.48 | 28.92 |
| 9 | .07486 | 54.68 | 6.24 | 49.85 |
| 10 | .08329 | 63.03 | 3.23 | 46.29 |
| 11 | .12115 | 54.99 | .00 | 31.16 |
| 12 | .13502 | 100.00 | 58.30 | 34.72 |
| 13 | .13648 | 65.05 | 47.76 | 7.79 |
| 14 | .06329 | 91.07 | 29.75 | 71.22 |
| 15 | .10113 | 98.33 | 8.96 | 84.77 |

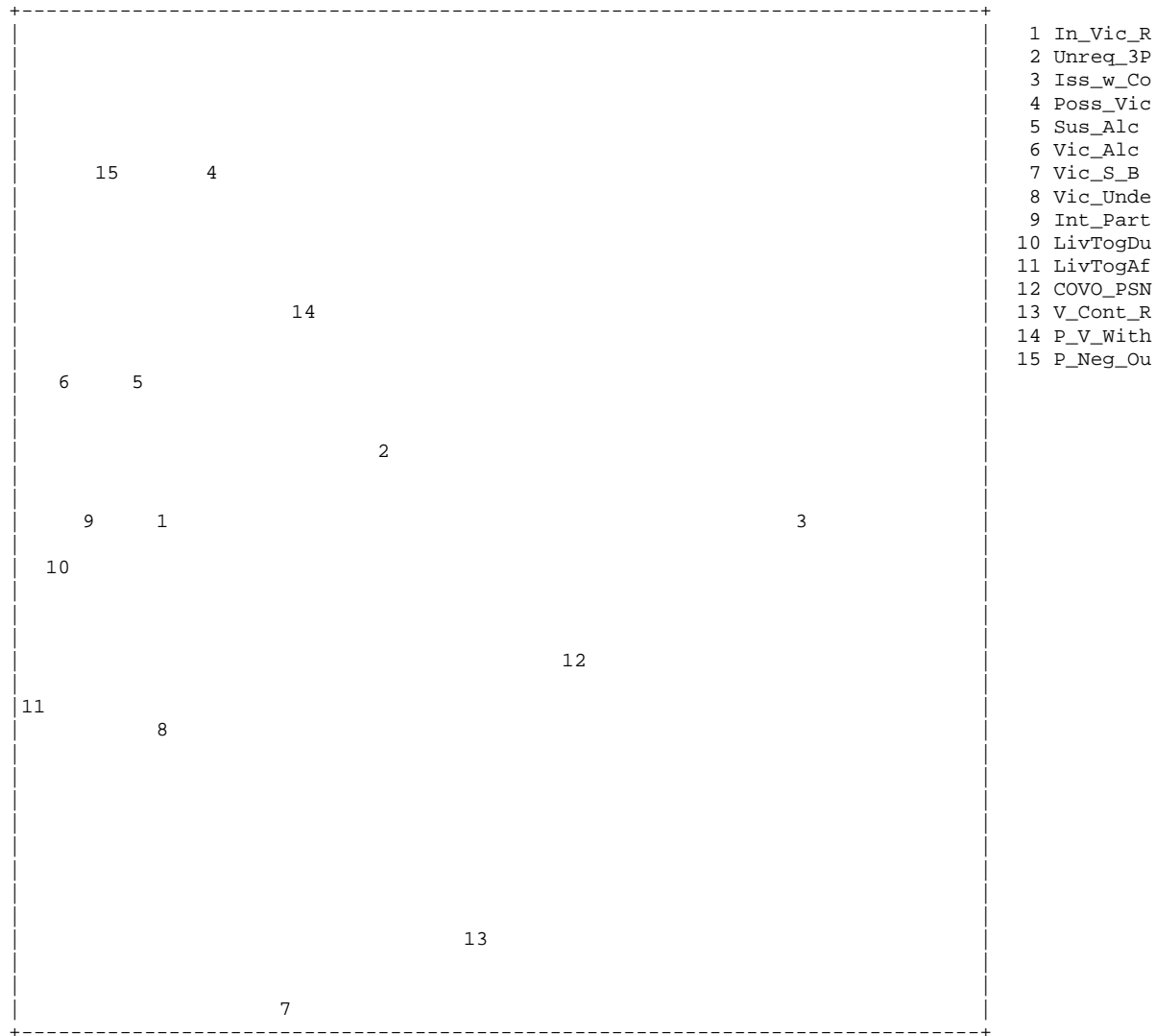
Space Diagram for Dimensionality 3. Axis 1 versus Axis 2.

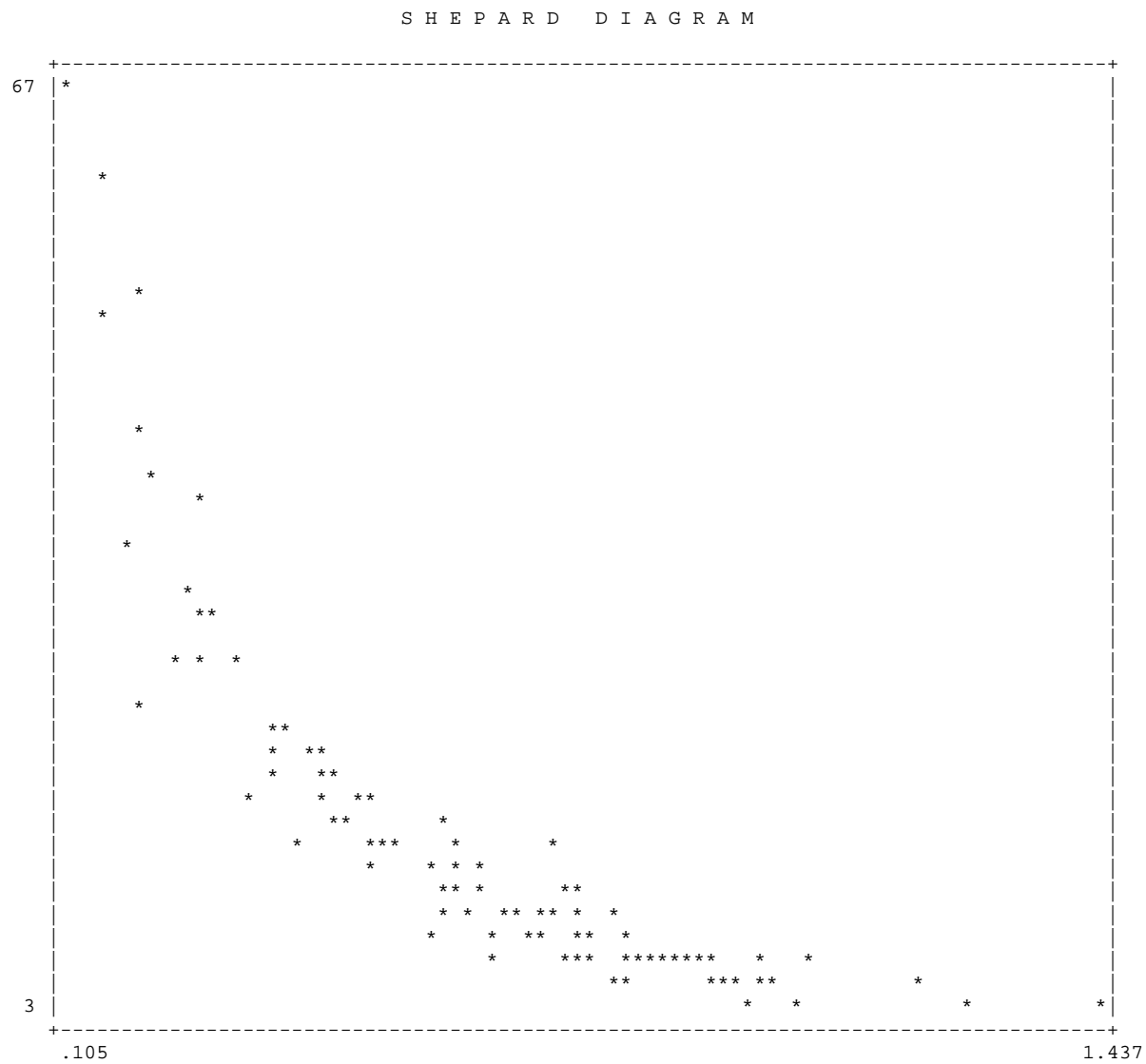


Space Diagram for Dimensionality 3. Axis 1 versus Axis 3.



Space Diagram for Dimensionality 3. Axis 2 versus Axis 3.





7.3 – Cooperation POSAC

```
*****
* TWO-DIMENSIONAL PARTIAL ORDER SCALOGRAM *
* ANALYSIS WITH BASE COORDINATES          *
* POSAC1                                    *
*****
```

Number of Posac variables 5

Number of read cases 540

Number of rejected cases 0

Number of retained cases 540

There are 27 different profiles

| Id | Profile | Sco | Freq | Greater than profiles | Smaller than profiles |
|----|-----------|-----|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| -- | ----- | --- | ---- | ----- | ----- |
| | V P P V S | | | | |
| | i r r i _ | | | | |
| | c e e c H | | | | |
| | t v v _ | | | | |
| | i _ _ R | | | | |
| | m C P e | | | | |
| | _ o o p | | | | |
| | E o s | | | | |
| 1* | 1 1 1 1 1 | 5 | 1 | 2 3 | |
| 2 | 0 1 1 1 1 | 4 | 29 | 4 5 8 9 | 1 |
| 3 | 1 1 1 1 0 | 4 | 2 | 4 6 10 11 | 1 |
| 4 | 0 1 1 1 0 | 3 | 25 | 16 17 18 | 2 3 |
| 5 | 0 1 0 1 1 | 3 | 9 | 14 15 17 | 2 |
| 6 | 1 1 0 1 0 | 3 | 2 | 12 13 17 | 3 |
| 7 | 1 0 0 1 1 | 3 | 1 | 13 15 21 | 1 |
| 8 | 0 1 1 0 1 | 3 | 10 | 14 16 19 | 2 |
| 9 | 0 0 1 1 1 | 3 | 3 | 15 18 19 | 2 |

```

10  1 0 1 1 0    3    1  13 18 20
11  1 1 1 0 0    3    2  12 16 20
12  1 1 0 0 0    2    1  23 26
13  1 0 0 1 0    2   35  23 24
14  0 1 0 0 1    2    2  22 26
15  0 0 0 1 1    2   48  22 24
16  0 1 1 0 0    2    7  25 26
17  0 1 0 1 0    2   15  24 26
18  0 0 1 1 0    2    8  24 25
19  0 0 1 0 1    2    1  22 25
20  1 0 1 0 0    2    1  23 25
21  1 0 0 0 1    2    2  22 23
22  0 0 0 0 1    1    9  27
23  1 0 0 0 0    1   10  27
24  0 0 0 1 0    1  210  27
25  0 0 1 0 0    1    5  27
26  0 1 0 0 0    1    1  27
27  0 0 0 0 0    0  101

```

```

3
3
6 11
6 7 10
5 8
5 7 9
4 8 11
4 5 6
4 9 10
8 9
10 11
7
14 15 19 21
12 13 20 21
13 15 17 18
16 18 19 20
12 14 16 17
22 23 24 25 26

```

*Extreme profile added by program

```

Balancing weight power ..... 4 for incomparables
                               4 for comparables

```

COEFFICIENTS OF WEAK MONOTONICITY
BETWEEN THE ITEMS

```

          1    2    3    4    5
          +-----+
          I
Victim_E 1 I 1.00
          I
Prev_Coo 2 I -.29 1.00
          I
Prev_Pos 3 I -.31 .96 1.00
          I
Vic_Rep  4 I .00  .20 .01 1.00
          I
S_H      5 I -.69 .68 .63 .23 1.00

```

Number of iterations 3
 Time of last iteration000 seconds

Proportion of profile-pairs CORrectly REPresented
 CORREP coefficient8598 (= 100005 / 116312)

Proportion of comparable pairs CORrectly REPresented
 CORREP1 coefficient9142 (= 82263 / 89984)

Proportion of incomparable pairs CORrectly REPresented
 CORREP2 coefficient6739 (= 17742 / 26328)

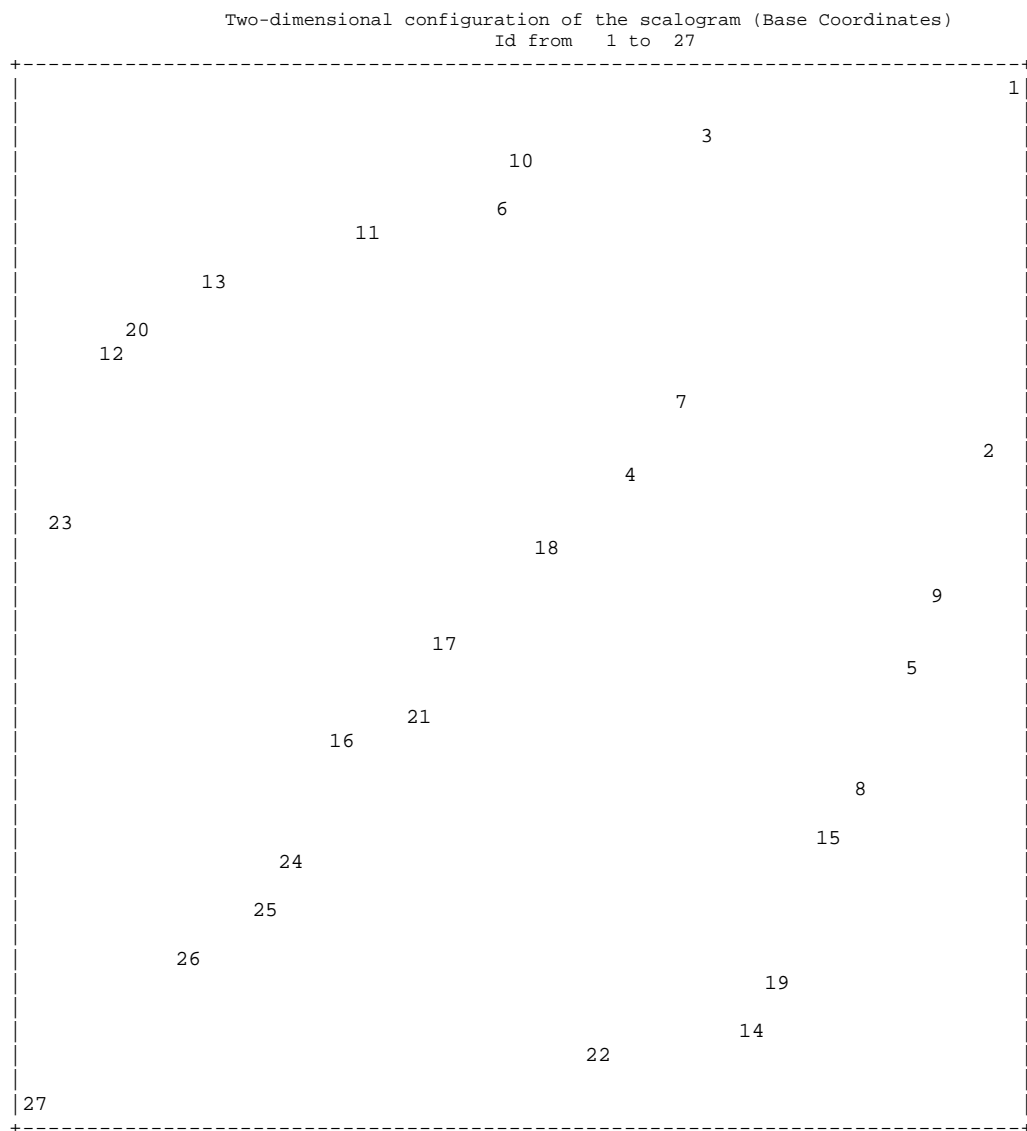
SCORe--DIStance weighted coefficient
 SCODIS coefficient9788

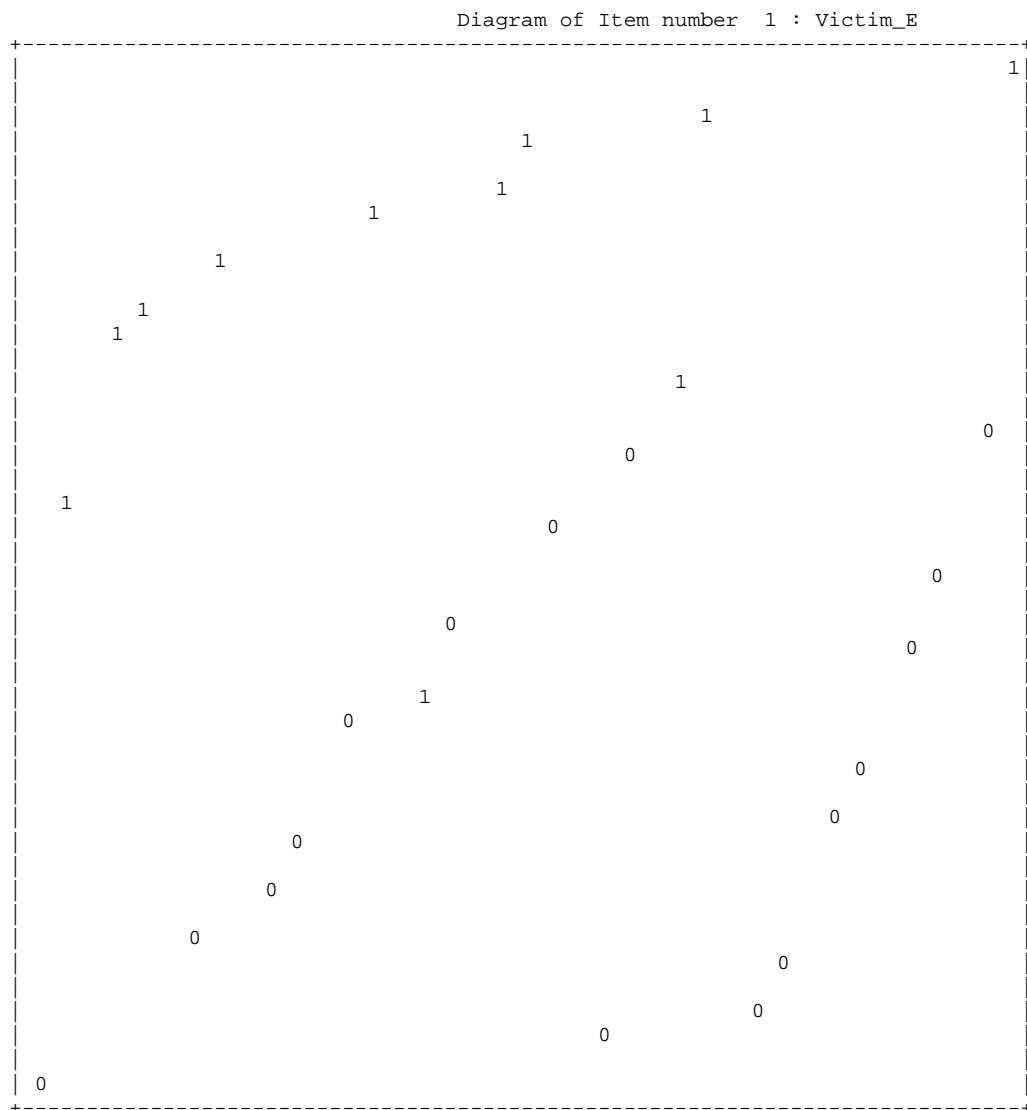
| Id | Profile | Sco | Freq | X | Y | Joint | Lateral |
|----|-----------|-----|------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| -- | ----- | --- | ---- | - | - | ----- | ----- |
| | V P P V S | | | | | | |
| | i r r i _ | | | | | | |
| | c e e c H | | | | | | |
| | t v v _ | | | | | | |
| | i _ _ R | | | | | | |
| | m C P e | | | | | | |
| | _ o o p | | | | | | |
| | E o s | | | | | | |
| 1* | 1 1 1 1 1 | 5 | 1 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 200.00 | 100.00 |
| 2 | 0 1 1 1 1 | 4 | 29 | 96.15 | 65.38 | 161.54 | 130.77 |
| 3 | 1 1 1 1 0 | 4 | 2 | 69.23 | 96.15 | 165.38 | 73.08 |
| 4 | 0 1 1 1 0 | 3 | 25 | 61.54 | 61.54 | 123.08 | 100.00 |
| 5 | 0 1 0 1 1 | 3 | 9 | 88.46 | 42.31 | 130.77 | 146.15 |
| 6 | 1 1 0 1 0 | 3 | 2 | 46.15 | 88.46 | 134.62 | 57.69 |
| 7 | 1 0 0 1 1 | 3 | 1 | 65.38 | 69.23 | 134.62 | 96.15 |
| 8 | 0 1 1 0 1 | 3 | 10 | 84.62 | 30.77 | 115.38 | 153.85 |
| 9 | 0 0 1 1 1 | 3 | 3 | 92.31 | 50.00 | 142.31 | 142.31 |
| 10 | 1 0 1 1 0 | 3 | 1 | 50.00 | 92.31 | 142.31 | 57.69 |
| 11 | 1 1 1 0 0 | 3 | 2 | 34.62 | 84.62 | 119.23 | 50.00 |
| 12 | 1 1 0 0 0 | 2 | 1 | 7.69 | 73.08 | 80.77 | 34.62 |
| 13 | 1 0 0 1 0 | 2 | 35 | 19.23 | 80.77 | 100.00 | 38.46 |
| 14 | 0 1 0 0 1 | 2 | 2 | 73.08 | 7.69 | 80.77 | 165.38 |
| 15 | 0 0 0 1 1 | 2 | 48 | 80.77 | 26.92 | 107.69 | 153.85 |
| 16 | 0 1 1 0 0 | 2 | 7 | 30.77 | 34.62 | 65.38 | 96.15 |
| 17 | 0 1 0 1 0 | 2 | 15 | 42.31 | 46.15 | 88.46 | 96.15 |
| 18 | 0 0 1 1 0 | 2 | 8 | 53.85 | 53.85 | 107.69 | 100.00 |

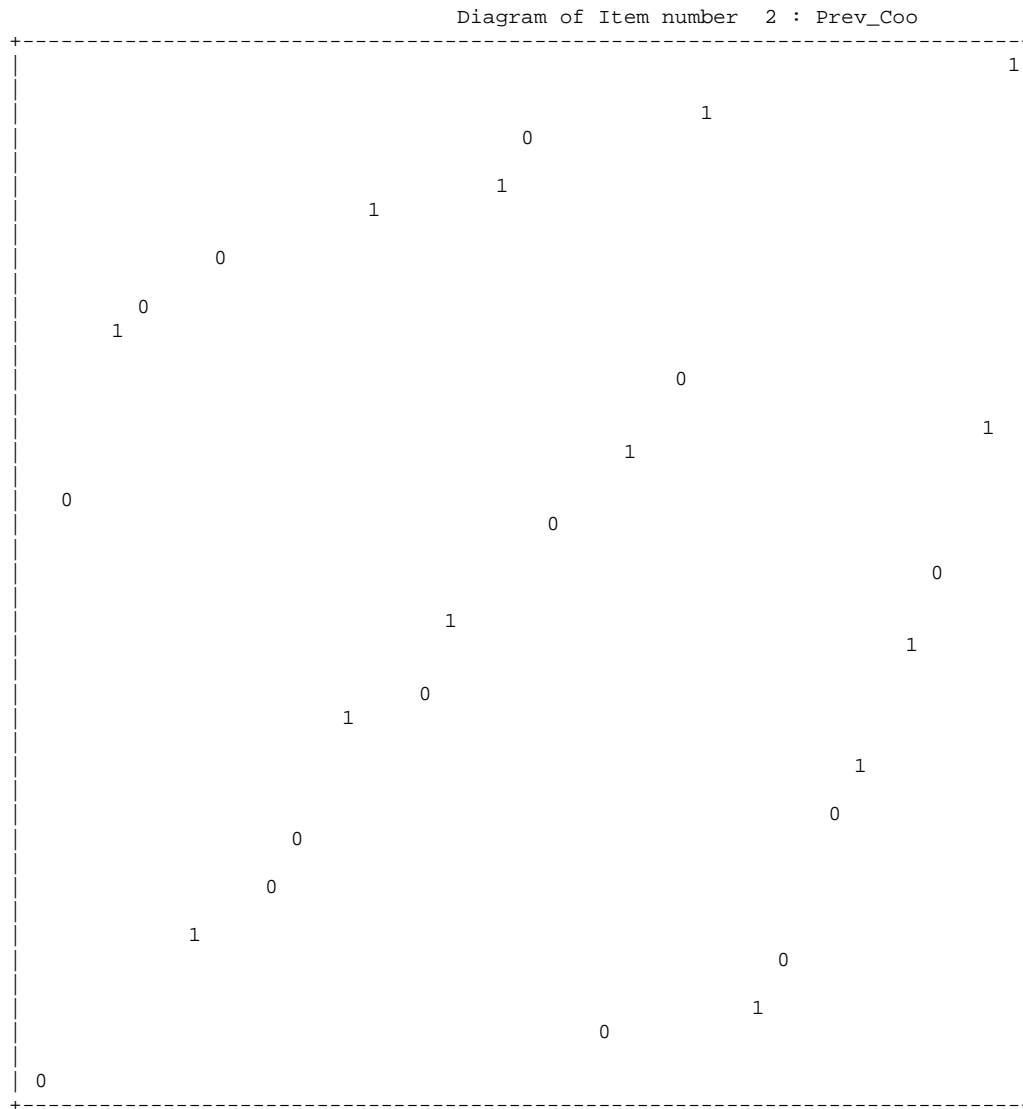
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| 19 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 76.92 | 11.54 | 88.46 | 165.38 |
| 20 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 11.54 | 76.92 | 88.46 | 34.62 |
| 21 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 38.46 | 38.46 | 76.92 | 100.00 |
| 22 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 57.69 | 3.85 | 61.54 | 153.85 |
| 23 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 3.85 | 57.69 | 61.54 | 46.15 |
| 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 210 | 26.92 | 23.08 | 50.00 | 103.85 |
| 25 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 23.08 | 19.23 | 42.31 | 103.85 |
| 26 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 15.38 | 15.38 | 30.77 | 100.00 |
| 27 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 101 | .00 | .00 | .00 | 100.00 |

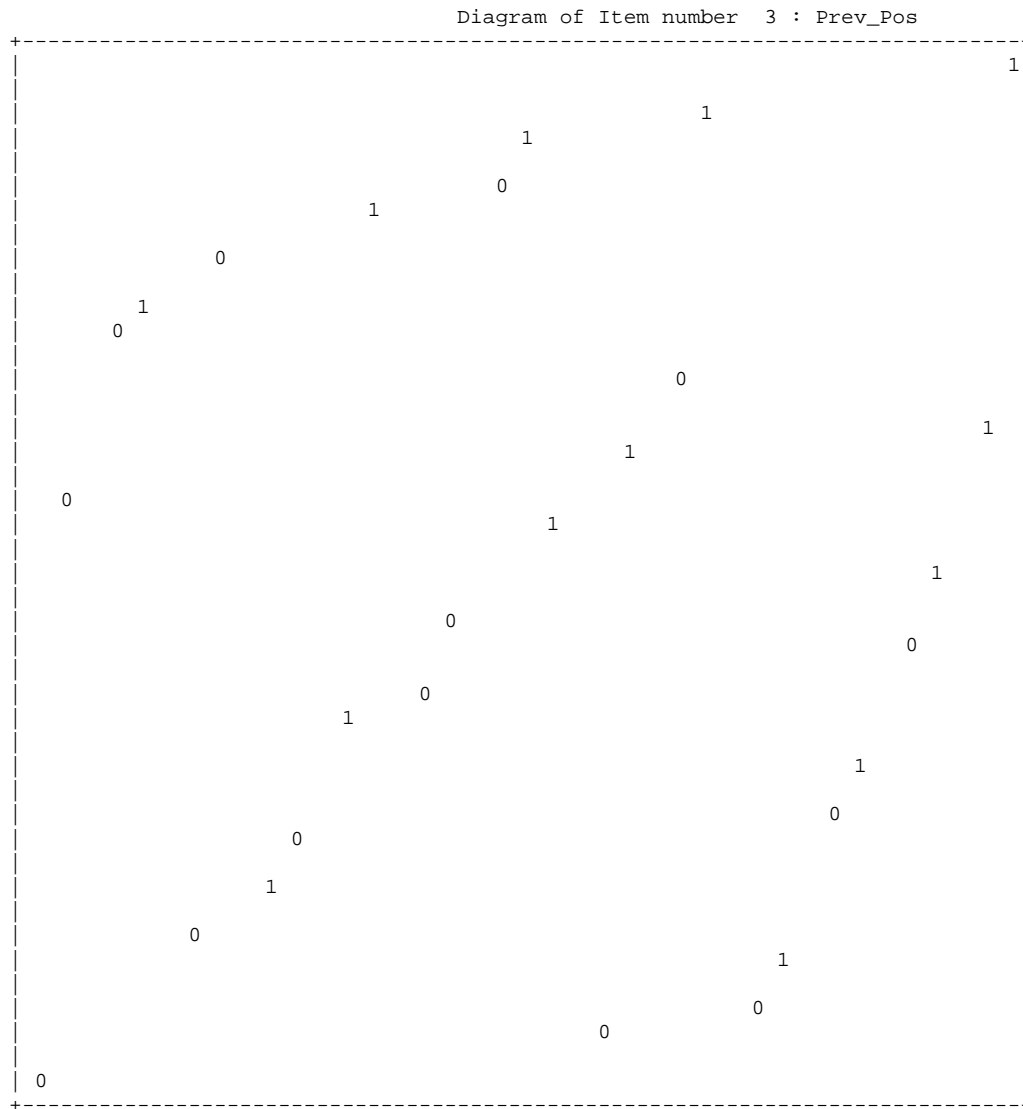
Coefficient of weak monotonicity between each observed item and the factors :
J (i.e. $X+Y$) , L (i.e. $X-Y$) , X , Y , P (i.e. $\text{Min}(X,Y)$) , Q (i.e. $\text{Max}(X,Y)$)

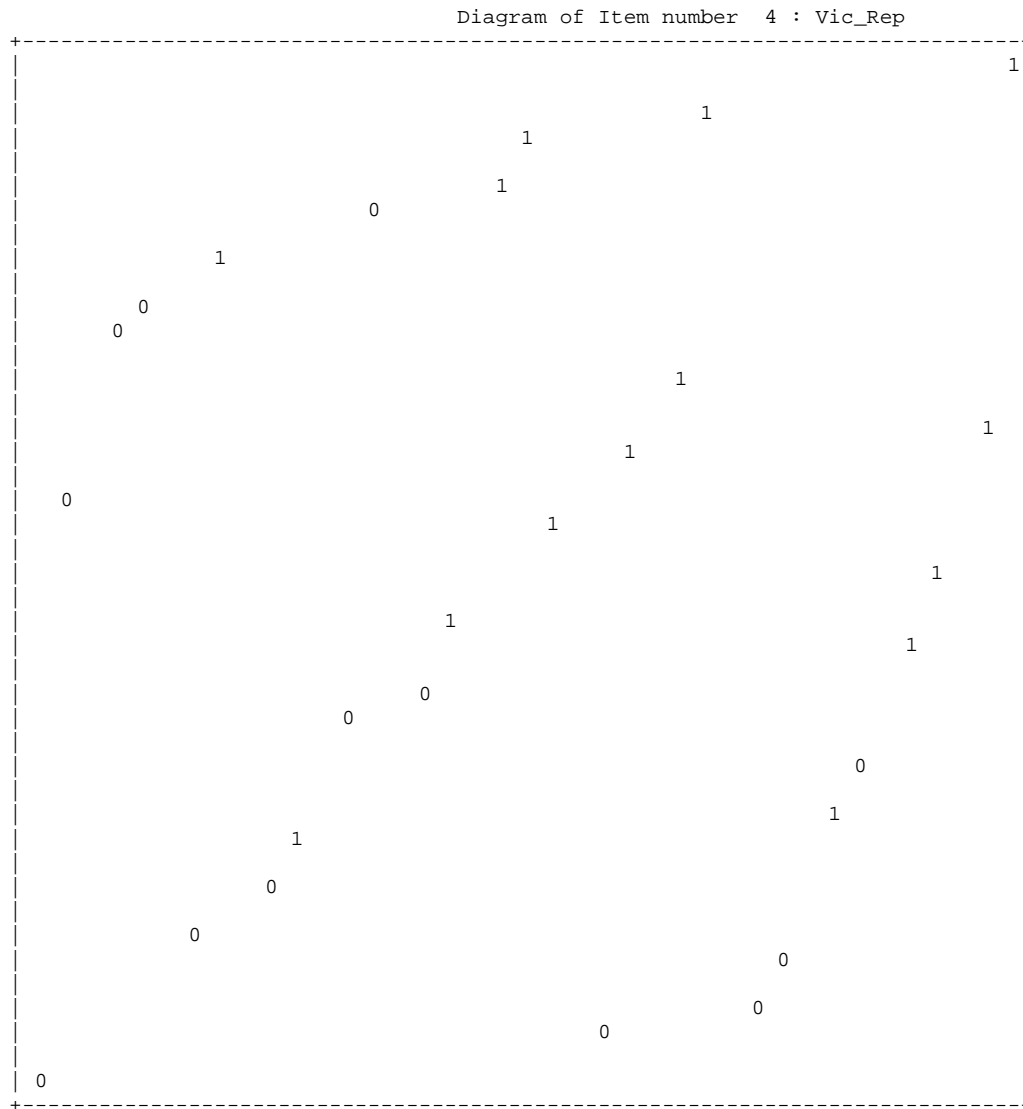
| Item name | | J | L | X | Y | P | Q |
|-----------|---|-----|-------|------|-----|------|------|
| ----- | | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Victim_E | 1 | .50 | -1.00 | -.79 | .99 | -.45 | .83 |
| Prev_Coo | 2 | .93 | .34 | .85 | .75 | .95 | .79 |
| Prev_Pos | 3 | .91 | .31 | .83 | .76 | .95 | .76 |
| Vic_Rep | 4 | .18 | -.06 | .07 | .18 | .72 | -.25 |
| S_H | 5 | .92 | 1.00 | 1.00 | .03 | .52 | .97 |

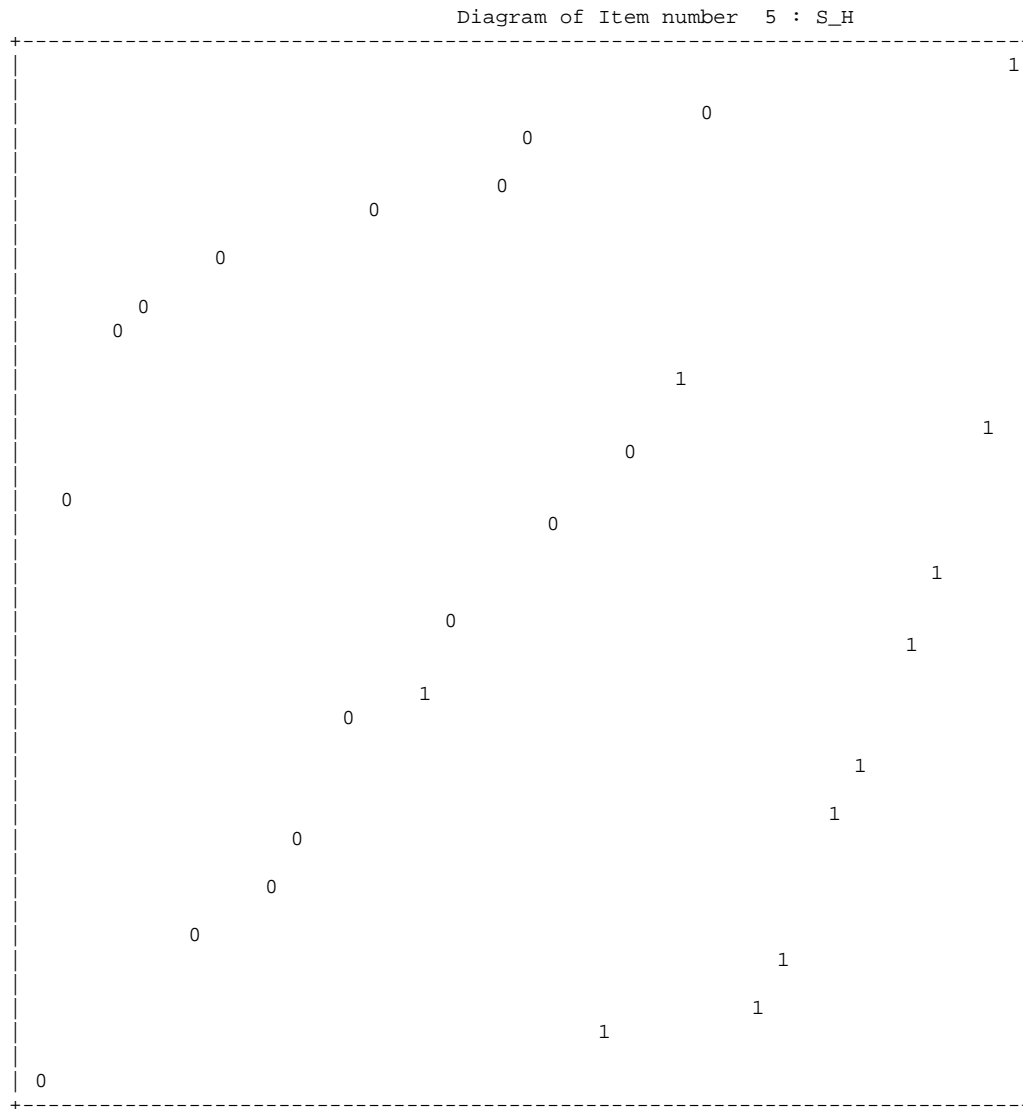












7.4 – Withdrawal POSAC

```
*****
* TWO-DIMENSIONAL PARTIAL ORDER SCALOGRAM *
* ANALYSIS WITH BASE COORDINATES *
* POSAC1 *
*****
```

Number of Posac variables 5

Number of read cases 540

Number of rejected cases 0

Number of retained cases 540

There are 28 different profiles

| Id | Profile | Sco | Freq | Greater than profiles | Smaller than profiles |
|----|-----------|-----|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| -- | ----- | --- | ---- | ----- | ----- |
| | I C U C S | | | | |
| | n t n o e | | | | |
| | i _ d h l | | | | |
| | t W e a f | | | | |
| | _ o r b _ | | | | |
| | V r s _ B | | | | |
| | i r t A l | | | | |
| | c y a f a | | | | |
| 1 | 1 1 1 1 1 | 5 | 1 | 2 3 4 | |
| 2 | 1 0 1 1 1 | 4 | 3 | 5 6 8 11 | 1 |
| 3 | 1 1 1 1 0 | 4 | 1 | 6 7 10 12 | 1 |
| 4 | 1 1 0 1 1 | 4 | 1 | 7 11 | 1 |
| 5 | 0 0 1 1 1 | 3 | 4 | 14 17 20 | 2 |
| 6 | 1 0 1 1 0 | 3 | 27 | 13 14 18 | 2 3 |
| 7 | 1 1 0 1 0 | 3 | 3 | 16 18 19 | 3 4 |
| 8 | 1 0 1 0 1 | 3 | 6 | 13 15 17 | 2 |
| 9 | 0 1 1 0 1 | 3 | 1 | 17 21 22 | 1 |

```

10  0 1 1 1 0    3    4   14 19 21
11  1 0 0 1 1    3    2   15 18 20
12  1 1 1 0 0    3    1   13 16 21
13  1 0 1 0 0    2   17   26 27
14  0 0 1 1 0    2    9   25 27
15  1 0 0 0 1    2    2   23 26
16  1 1 0 0 0    2   13   24 26
17  0 0 1 0 1    2    1   23 27
18  1 0 0 1 0    2   29   25 26
19  0 1 0 1 0    2    2   24 25
20  0 0 0 1 1    2    3   23 25
21  0 1 1 0 0    2    1   24 27
22  0 1 0 0 1    2    1   23 24
23  0 0 0 0 1    1    4   28
24  0 1 0 0 0    1   17   28
25  0 0 0 1 0    1   52   28
26  1 0 0 0 0    1   38   28
27  0 0 1 0 0    1   12   28
28  0 0 0 0 0    0  285

```

```

3
2  4
3
6  8 12
5  6 10
8 11
7 12
5  8  9
6  7 11
7 10
5 11
9 10 12
9
15 17 20 22
16 19 21 22
14 18 19 20
13 15 16 18
13 14 17 21
23 24 25 26 27

```

```

Balancing weight power ..... 4 for incomparables
                               4 for comparables

```

COEFFICIENTS OF WEAK MONOTONICITY
BETWEEN THE ITEMS

```

          1    2    3    4    5
          +-----+
          I
Init_Vic 1 I 1.00
          I
Ct_Worry 2 I .39 1.00
          I
Understa 3 I .76 .12 1.00
          I
Cohab_Af 4 I .58 .00 .66 1.00
          I
Self_Bla 5 I .52 .28 .76 .48 1.00

```

```

Number of iterations ..... 20
Time of last iteration ..... .000 seconds

```

Proportion of profile-pairs CORrectly REPresented
 CORREP coefficient9731 (= 99044 / 101777)

Proportion of comparable pairs CORrectly REPresented
 CORREP1 coefficient9869 (= 84246 / 85367)

Proportion of incomparable pairs CORrectly REPresented
 CORREP2 coefficient9018 (= 14798 / 16410)

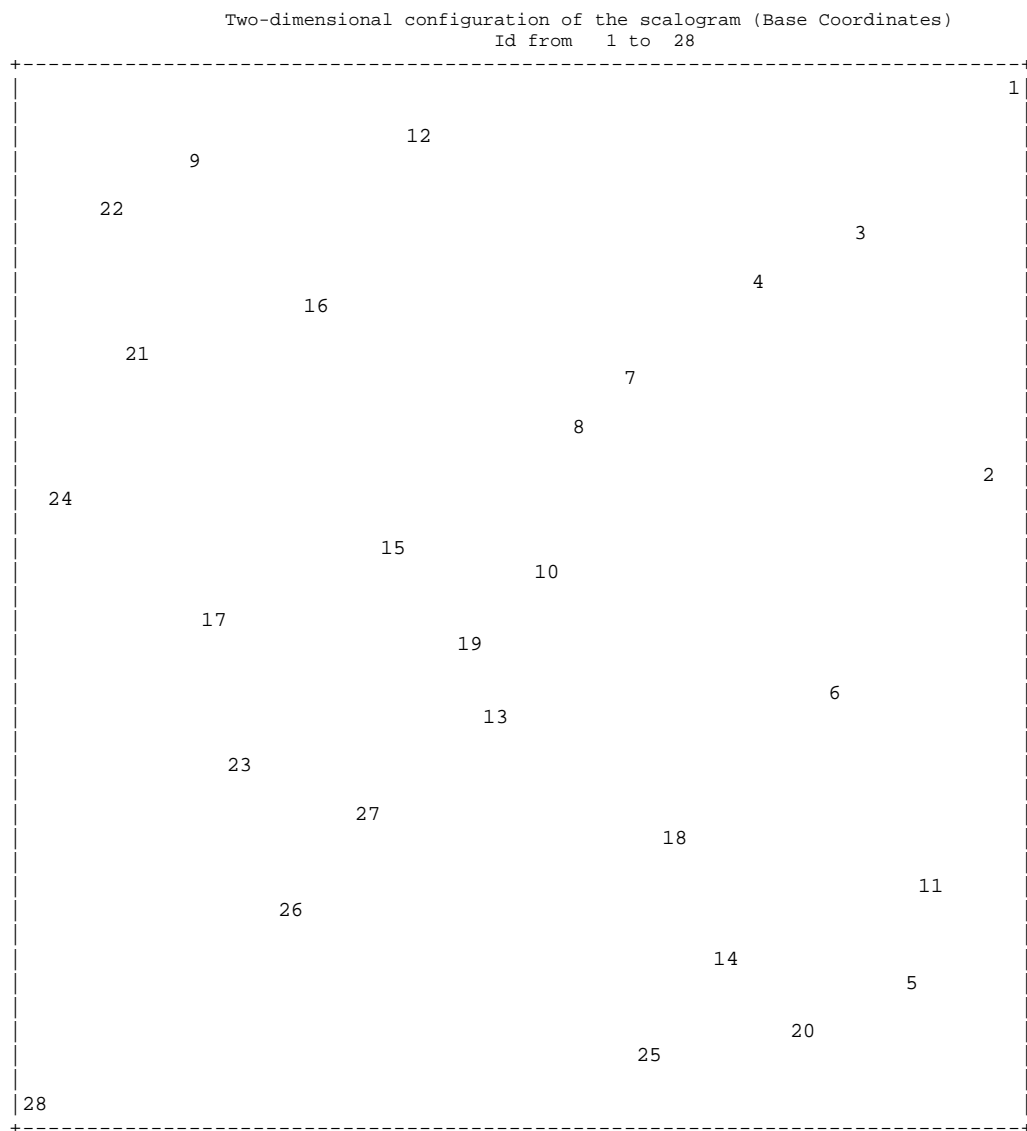
SCORe--DISTance weighted coefficient
 SCODIS coefficient9932

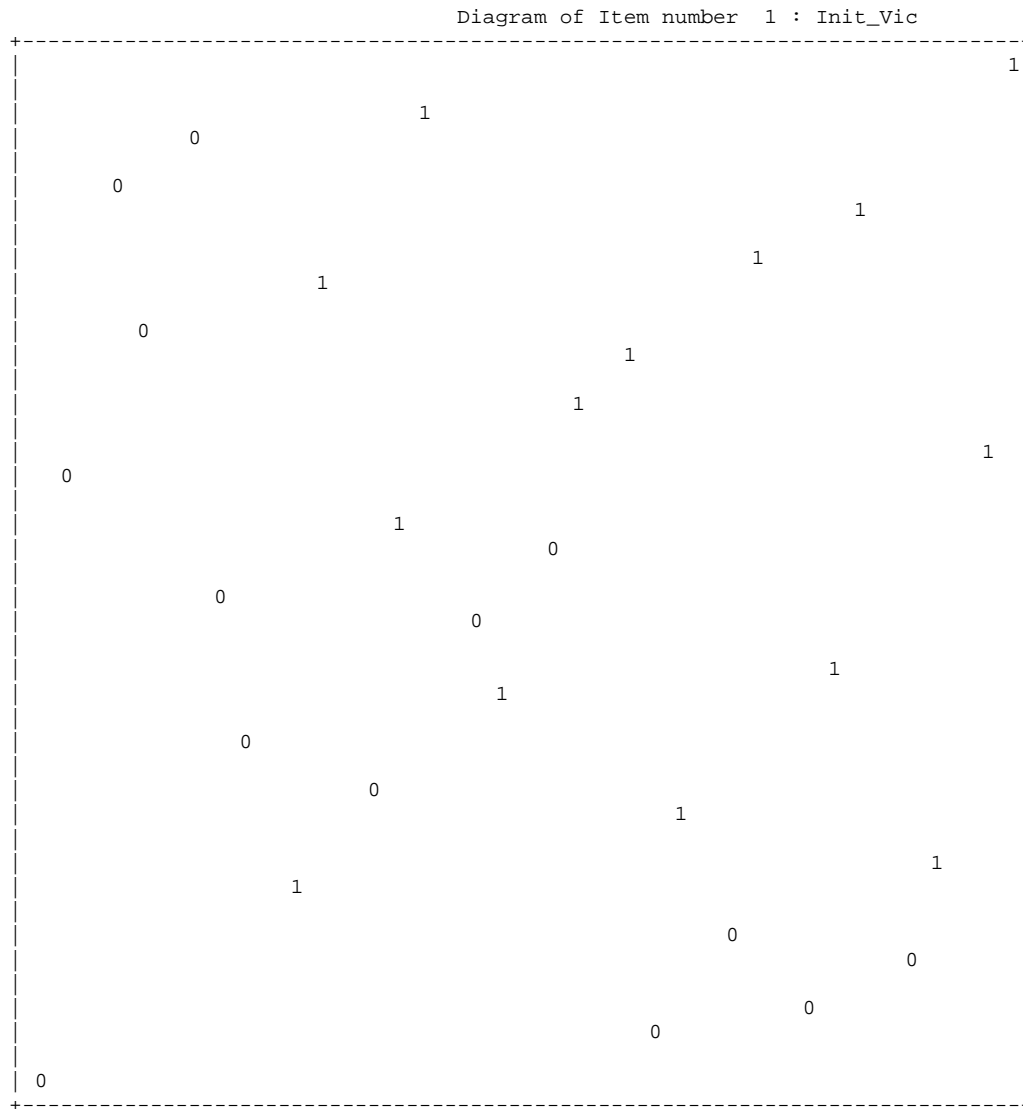
| Id | Profile | Sco | Freq | X | Y | Joint | Lateral |
|----|-----------|-----|------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| -- | ----- | --- | ---- | - | - | ----- | ----- |
| | I C U C S | | | | | | |
| | n t n o e | | | | | | |
| | i _ d h l | | | | | | |
| | t W e a f | | | | | | |
| | _ o r b _ | | | | | | |
| | V r s _ B | | | | | | |
| | i r t A l | | | | | | |
| | c y a f a | | | | | | |
| 1 | 1 1 1 1 1 | 5 | 1 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 200.00 | 100.00 |
| 2 | 1 0 1 1 1 | 4 | 3 | 96.30 | 62.96 | 159.26 | 133.33 |
| 3 | 1 1 1 1 0 | 4 | 1 | 85.19 | 85.19 | 170.37 | 100.00 |
| 4 | 1 1 0 1 1 | 4 | 1 | 74.07 | 81.48 | 155.56 | 92.59 |
| 5 | 0 0 1 1 1 | 3 | 4 | 88.89 | 11.11 | 100.00 | 177.78 |
| 6 | 1 0 1 1 0 | 3 | 27 | 81.48 | 40.74 | 122.22 | 140.74 |
| 7 | 1 1 0 1 0 | 3 | 3 | 59.26 | 70.37 | 129.63 | 88.89 |
| 8 | 1 0 1 0 1 | 3 | 6 | 55.56 | 66.67 | 122.22 | 88.89 |
| 9 | 0 1 1 0 1 | 3 | 1 | 14.81 | 92.59 | 107.41 | 22.22 |
| 10 | 0 1 1 1 0 | 3 | 4 | 51.85 | 51.85 | 103.70 | 100.00 |
| 11 | 1 0 0 1 1 | 3 | 2 | 92.59 | 22.22 | 114.81 | 170.37 |
| 12 | 1 1 1 0 0 | 3 | 1 | 40.74 | 96.30 | 137.04 | 44.44 |
| 13 | 1 0 1 0 0 | 2 | 17 | 48.15 | 37.04 | 85.19 | 111.11 |
| 14 | 0 0 1 1 0 | 2 | 9 | 70.37 | 14.81 | 85.19 | 155.56 |
| 15 | 1 0 0 0 1 | 2 | 2 | 37.04 | 55.56 | 92.59 | 81.48 |
| 16 | 1 1 0 0 0 | 2 | 13 | 29.63 | 77.78 | 107.41 | 51.85 |
| 17 | 0 0 1 0 1 | 2 | 1 | 18.52 | 48.15 | 66.67 | 70.37 |
| 18 | 1 0 0 1 0 | 2 | 29 | 66.67 | 25.93 | 92.59 | 140.74 |
| 19 | 0 1 0 1 0 | 2 | 2 | 44.44 | 44.44 | 88.89 | 100.00 |
| 20 | 0 0 0 1 1 | 2 | 3 | 77.78 | 7.41 | 85.19 | 170.37 |
| 21 | 0 1 1 0 0 | 2 | 1 | 11.11 | 74.07 | 85.19 | 37.04 |

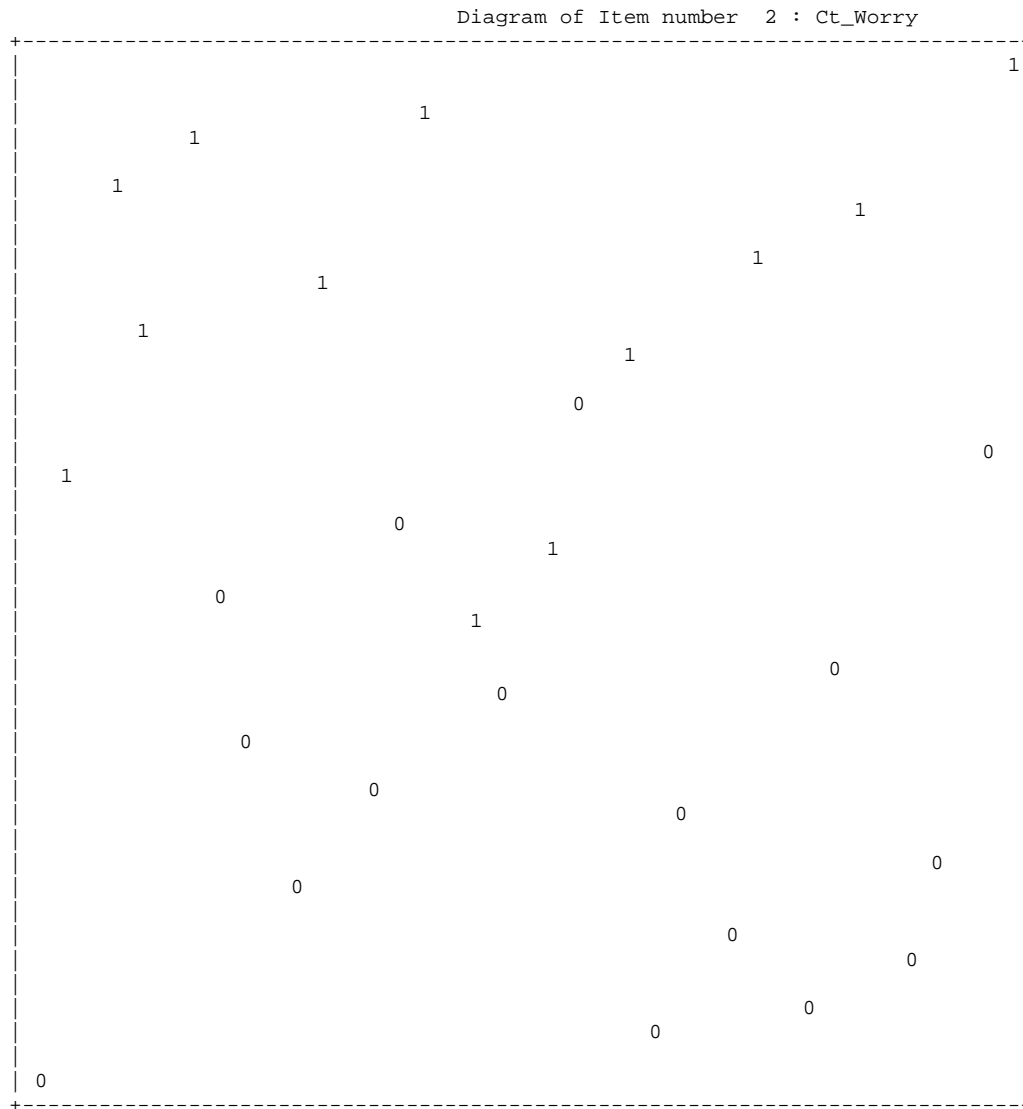
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| 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 22.22 | 33.33 | 55.56 | 88.89 |
| 24 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 17 | 3.70 | 59.26 | 62.96 | 44.44 |
| 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 52 | 62.96 | 3.70 | 66.67 | 159.26 |
| 26 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 38 | 25.93 | 18.52 | 44.44 | 107.41 |
| 27 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 33.33 | 29.63 | 62.96 | 103.70 |
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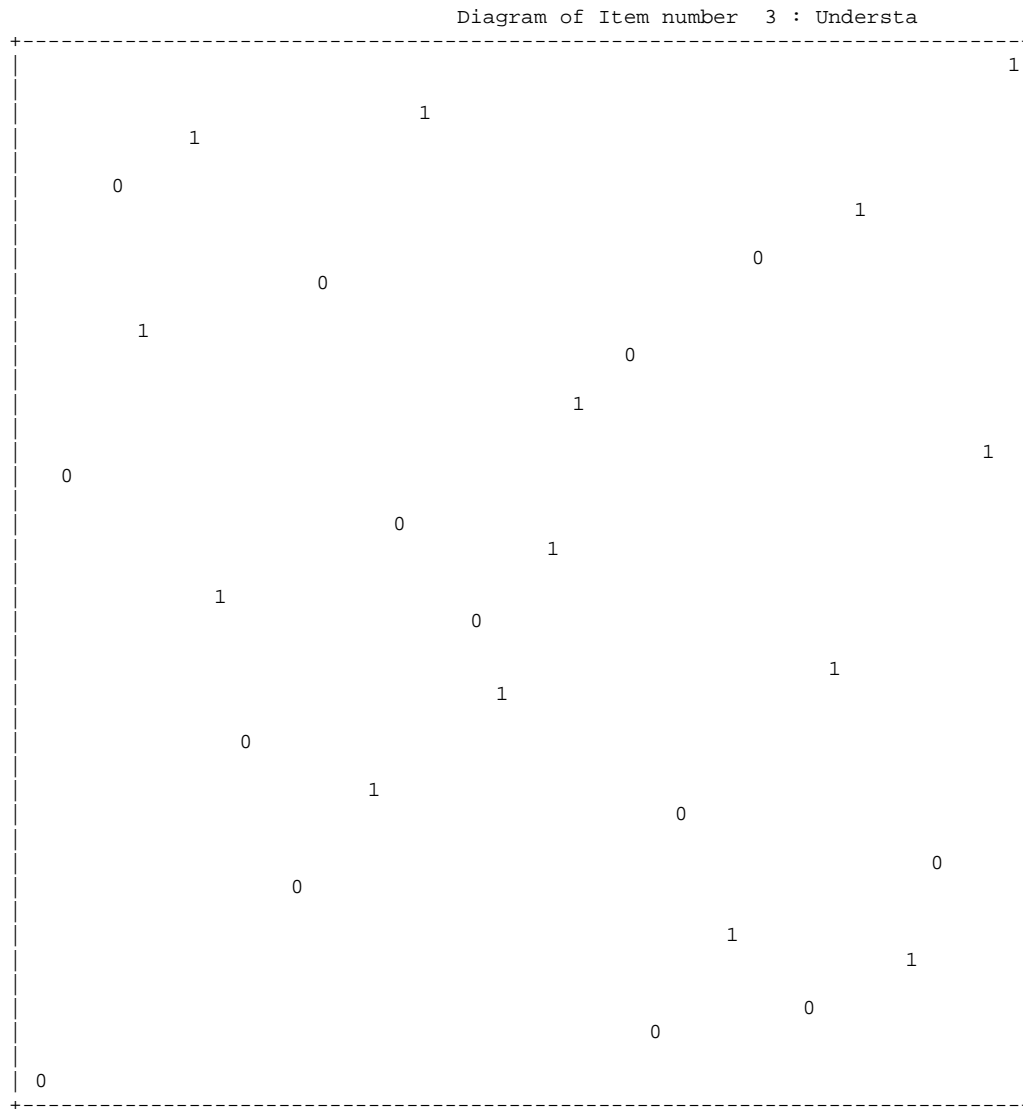
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J (i.e. $X+Y$) , L (i.e. $X-Y$) , X , Y , P (i.e. $\text{Min}(X,Y)$) , Q (i.e. $\text{Max}(X,Y)$)

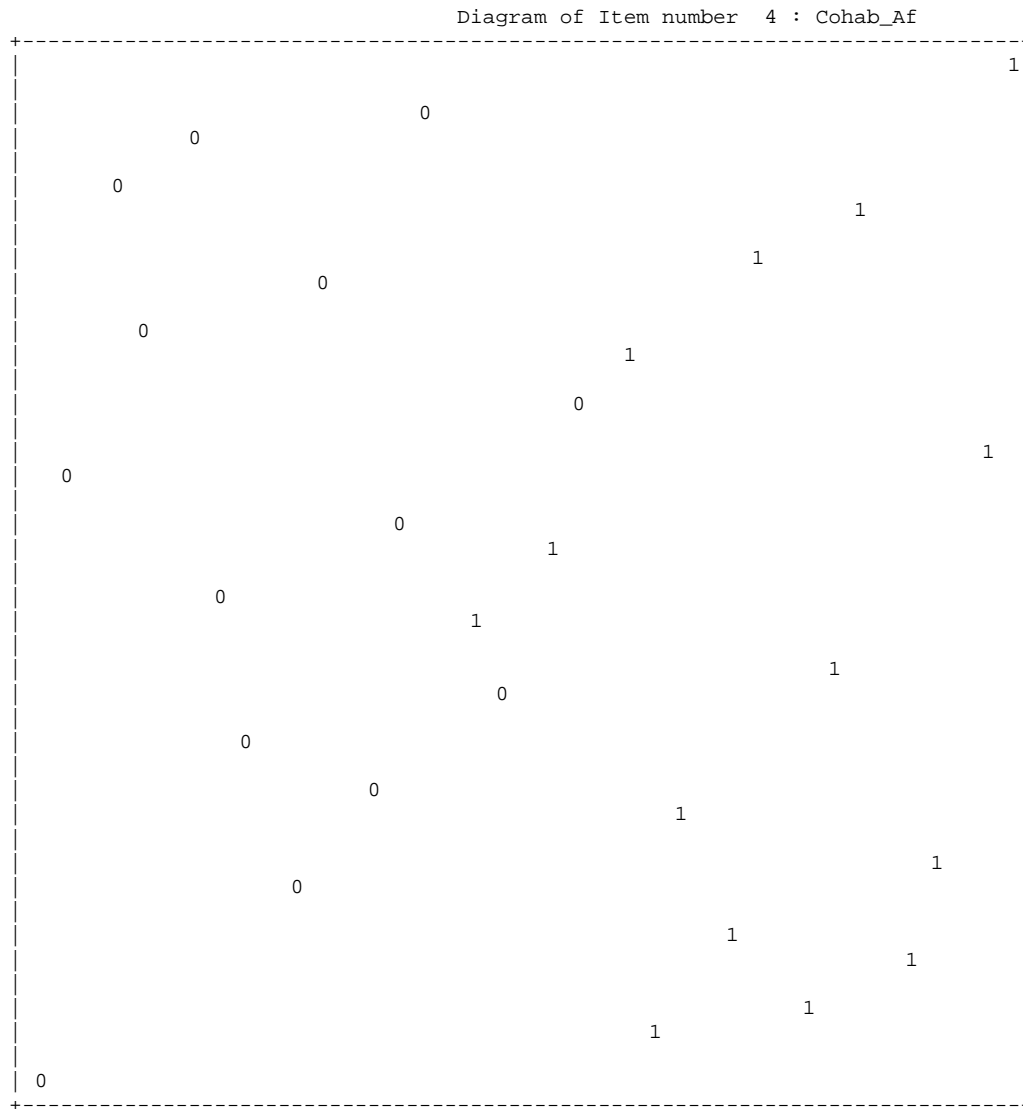
| Item name | | J | L | X | Y | P | Q |
|-----------|---|-----|-------|------|------|-----|-----|
| ----- | | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Init_Vic | 1 | .95 | .24 | .86 | .90 | .97 | .87 |
| Ct_Worry | 2 | .89 | -1.00 | .11 | 1.00 | .71 | .91 |
| Understa | 3 | .97 | .46 | .91 | .85 | .96 | .90 |
| Cohab_Af | 4 | .96 | .99 | 1.00 | .45 | .74 | .98 |
| Self_Bla | 5 | .93 | .12 | .81 | .83 | .83 | .91 |

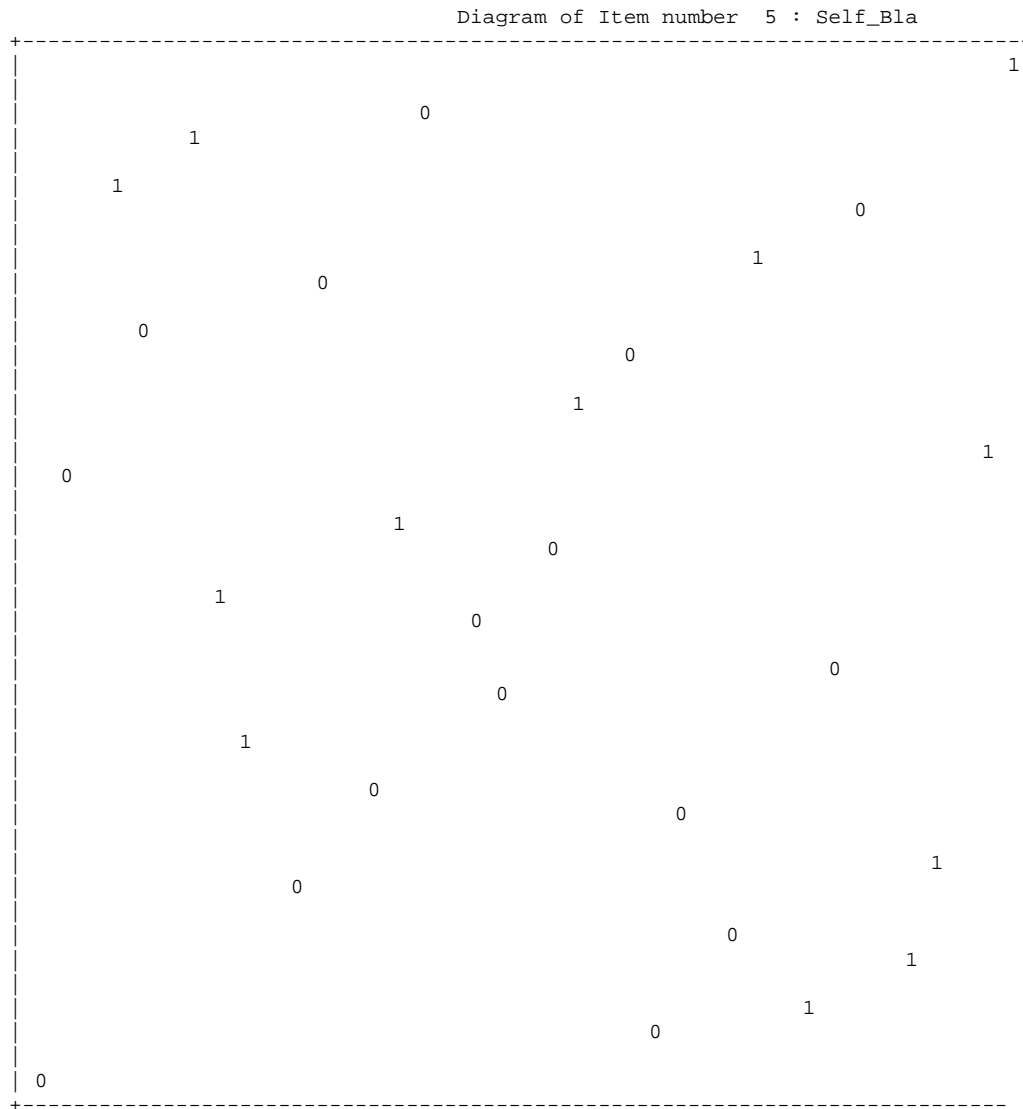












Appendix 6: Publication in Police Practice and Research: An International Journal

Police-Victim Engagement in Building a Victim Empowerment Approach to Intimate Partner Violence Cases

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Abstract

Intimate Partner Violence [IPV] has been highlighted as a priority for UK governments and criminal justice agencies since the 1990s. However, whilst generating significant policy and procedural responses, the overall impact continues to be criticised. This paper examines contemporary approaches to IPV identification and response, highlighting the limitations within victim engagement and empowerment. It then moves on to specific developments and theories in victimology, demonstrating how research into victim engagement is emerging and could be utilised in practice to enhance victim empowerment. It argues that policy and procedure based upon an enhanced victim empowerment approach would be necessary in striving for positive criminal justice outcomes and for increasing victim satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: Policing; Domestic Abuse; Domestic Violence; Victimology; Victim Satisfaction; Victim Confidence.

Paper Type: General Review

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INTRODUCTION

Domestic abuse is a wide term, currently defined in the United Kingdom as “any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: Psychological, Physical, Sexual, Financial, and Emotional” (Home Office, 2012). Such behaviour has been referred to as the hidden violence against women (Walby, 2005) and has been a priority for the UK government. Home Office circulars 60 and 139 both prioritised and standardised the response to domestic abuse, requiring police forces to collate incidents more accurately and establish dedicated ‘Domestic Violence Officers’ to more effectively deal with the problem (Grace, 1990). Since 1990, there have been a range of policy changes widely applied to the police, Crown Prosecution Service [CPS] and courts with regards to the problem (Hester, 2005). For example, the creation of a victims’ commissioner, generated through the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, was to act as an advocate for victims by improving the criminal justice system and services available to them (Ministry of Justice, 2014). However, whilst acknowledging the UK criminal justice system has moved partially in the direction of victim empowerment, this is “not enough” (Hoyle & Sanders, 2000, p. 19). In fact a recent examination by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary [HMIC] (2014) concluded that the police response to victims of domestic abuse “is not good enough” and that “there are weaknesses in the service provided to victims” (HMIC, 2014, p. 6). As such, international studies have continually highlighted a lack of cooperation from victims, with

Walby & Allen (2004) estimating only 24% of all domestic violence incidents are reported.

The purpose of the paper is to review the current UK criminal justice approach and response to victims (predominantly the police). It uses the term Intimate Partner Violence as the paper focuses specifically on adult victims in relationships, rather than other vulnerable victims involved in family abuse (such as children) that may require a different approach. This paper will illustrate how victim cooperation is an essential factor in criminal proceedings, and will highlight the importance of victim empowerment to ensure they remain part of an investigation and prosecution. The paper will be divided into two parts. Section 1 examines the risk assessment process, policy initiatives, criminal and civil law, and more flexible approaches such as restorative justice. In section 2, the discussion focuses on how victim empowerment can increase overall satisfaction and confidence within the criminal justice system, resulting in an increased likelihood that victims will cooperate with the police and report further abuse in future. Furthermore, it outlines specific developments within IPV research and victimology, exploring the reasons why victims cooperate with or withdraw from the police investigation and prosecution of the abuser.

SECTION 1: Current Perspectives and Approaches to IPV

This section explores the current responses to IPV, from identification to response, highlighting the deficiencies created through a lack of victim engagement.

Identifying the Level of the Problem

As has been mentioned all police forces are engaged in combatting IPV. However current procedures for assessing risk have been criticised. All UK police forces use the 'Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour Based Violence' (DASH) risk assessment formulated by Laura Richards in 2009 (Richards, 2015). The assessment contains 28 key questions pertaining mainly to physical abuse and information about the suspect. However the DASH risk assessment itself has weaknesses.

Firstly, it does not take into account the victim's subjective assessment of their risk, which is arguably a very strong predictor of future victimisation (Hoyle, 2008). This is because risk assessments are formed through research that often produces differing results and factors, and with an assumption that victims are acting rationally and with free will. The assessment of risk, advice and subsequent safety plan based on these objective factors may not be applicable to victims who are still emotionally dependent on their abuser or where a victim's options are severely restricted by the controlling behaviour they are subject to. Since the victim is an intimate partner of the suspect, their position allows them to consider the unique circumstances and factors involved in their own risk (Beech & Ward, 2004). Furthermore, including the victim's subjective assessment of their own risk is important in the grading of the overall risk assessment. A victim may not believe the police are taking them seriously if they perceive themselves as a high risk victim, but the case is graded as low or medium risk (Hoyle, 2008). This would have a negative impact upon their engagement and satisfaction with the police. Another concern is that the assessment makes no effort to assess the likelihood of the victim cooperating with the police or issues that may lead to victim withdrawal. Ultimately, the DASH risk assessment should not only take account of a victim's own assessment of their risk, but should also consider the victim's engagement with the police since it is one of the main considerations to their safety.

Secondly, the assessment requires multiple points to be present for the abuse to become ‘higher risk’ and in need of referral. Many of these individual points are of a serious nature (such as any previous attempt to strangle, choke, suffocate or drown) which Hoyle (2008) attributes to the ideology, as the DASH was initially formulated for the purposes of domestic homicide. Since domestic homicide is at the extreme end of the spectrum, it can be argued the assessment is not fully representative of all domestic abuse cases, yet it is used routinely by the police. Boer, Wilson, Gauthier & Hart (1997) also argue that it is reasonable for a professional or assessor to conclude that a victim is at high risk of abuse based upon a single (rather than multiple) criterion and requires a referral. This criticism is echoed in other reports; McManus, Almond, Hargreaves, Brian & Merrington (2014), analysing 2596 cases of domestic violence, found that only 4 out of the 27 risk factors included in the DASH were able to identify domestic abuse recidivism.

Overall, it would appear that the DASH risk assessment as an actuarial tool might have significant deficiencies when assessing IPV (McManus *et al.*, 2014). As such, it could reduce the level of victim engagement if the police do not accurately measure the risk to the victim, using an appropriate risk assessment tool.

Responding to the Problem

Once abuse had been identified, a police officer has a number of responses he or she can take. One of the primary approaches is to use the formal procedures governed by legislation. However currently, with regards to criminal law, there is no specific crime of domestic abuse or IPV within the UK. Discussions pertaining to the formulation of such legislation state that it would be a positive step in ending the ambiguity relating to such behaviour, creating a clearer sense of when the police are empowered to intervene (Casciani, 2014). Until this exists there are many individual laws that prohibit coercive, controlling and violent behaviour. This legislation includes the Criminal Damage Act

1971, Criminal Justice Act 1988 and the Sexual Offences Act 1956 and 2003, which can all penalise the offender for the behaviour carried out during the IPV incident. Since many of the scenes the police attend include physical violence, the most commonly used piece of legislation is S39 Criminal Justice Act 1988 and S47 Offences against the Person Act 1861. However, one of the major concerns about arrests for violence is that they tend to be dropped to the lowest form of assault, using S39 powers (Cretney & Davis, 1997). Whilst the lowering of the charge may better reflect the crime and increase the likelihood of prosecution from a legal aspect, there could be a negative impact on the victim's experience and engagement if they consider agencies to be trivialising the incident. This impact could take the form of withdrawal if the victim is dissatisfied with the police trivialising the violence they have suffered, or in some cases could even influence the victim to also trivialise the abuse incident themselves and consider the incident too minor for prosecution.

The civil law also has an important role to play in cases of IPV. Part IV of the Family Law Act 1996 (as amended by the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004), as well as the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims (Amendment) Act 2012, allows for the protection of victims through applications of non-molestation orders and occupation orders. Also, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 can grant the use of restraining orders against abusers. The civil remedies are important to victims as breaches of these orders become a criminal matter, in which the offender is then penalised through the use of criminal law (Bird, 2006). However, as noted by Burton (2009), in order to gain access to public funds for a non-molestation order, victims are usually expected to first pursue and cooperate with the criminal prosecution of the abuser. Not only does this raise concerns over the need of finance for a victim to appropriately deal with abuse through civil law, but it also further highlights the importance of victim cooperation with the police.

More Flexible, Preventative and Rehabilitative Responses

More recently IPV responses have become more flexible, increasing the emphasis on rehabilitation and prevention. One possibility is the use of restorative justice in place of retributive justice, an example being the consideration of conditional cautions under the Criminal Justice Act 2003. Although this approach is currently explicitly excluded from cases of domestic abuse (Office for Criminal Justice Reform, 2010), commentators argue that they may be a practical solution to lower risk cases. A pilot scheme in Hampshire illustrates how conditional cautions can focus on the rehabilitation of the offender through Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes [DVPPs] and other Offender Behaviour Programmes [OBPs]. This approach may be useful if the case is ‘minor’ or one of ‘first time violence’, and the victim intends to remain in the relationship or considers a prosecution too punitive (Braddock, 2011). This is especially so when comparing this with the practice of simple cautions used routinely by police, which merely warn some perpetrators of their behaviour, if they have admitted the abuse. However, to pursue such a strategy would need further development, as there are no nationally accredited DVPPs or OBPs; in fact these are usually only available once the offender has been prosecuted. Furthermore, general difficulties in enrolment and funding and an unrealistic expectation on behalf of the victims as to increased safety and rehabilitation of the offender have also been noted (Justice, 2014; Munro, 2011). Again, a more fundamental approach towards understanding victim empowerment would be needed in order to make these reforms.

More fluid measures, such as Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) implemented under the Crime and Security Act 2010 have also appeared as an effective way of circumventing the rigidity of the criminal justice system. The orders are made when the police believe there is a risk to a victim but when there is not enough evidence to arrest an abuser for a particular

offence under existing criminal law. The use of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, brought about through a call for Claire's Law, has also been a positive step for victims of IPV and is said to have generated 270 abuse history requests in the Greater Manchester Police area alone (BBC News, 2014). In addition, the use of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) has been an effective method of dealing with some cases of domestic abuse and IPV since their creation in 2005 (Costas, 2012). This uses a tailored approach to IPV, including: fast-tracked scheduling; specialist training to members of the court; and various other improvements in case handling to ensure a victim's needs are met (Wilson, 2010). Consequently, the Justice with Safety (2008) review of the SDVCs not only found an average higher number of convictions compared to non-SDVC cases, but there was a reported higher level of victim and public confidence in the criminal justice system (Cook, Burton, Robinson & Vallyely, 2004).

As this review shows, there are a plethora of policy initiatives widely applied to the police, CPS and the courts (Hester, 2005). However there also continues to be weaknesses with implementation (Kirby, 2013). Examples such as the CPS Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Domestic Violence 2009 are often hailed as an improvement, yet not incorporated into every day practice (Saunders & Barron, 2003). An example is the Home Office Circular 19/2000 which introduced a range of measures, most notably the concept of 'mandatory arrest' and 'pro-prosecution' policy, however in practice a number of limitations became apparent. For example there were often failures in the 'positive action' required by officers who attended the IPV incident, with vital evidence and other details omitted from the investigation (HMIC, 2014, p. 12). As such, arrests from individual incidents varied between 45-90% across UK Police Forces. There is also further discussion around recent guidance within England and Wales on the use of 'dual arrest' and the identification of the primary aggressor. Officers are again expected to take positive action in order to identify the primary aggressor at each scene of abuse, usually by asking questions and

taking into account the history of abuse between the couple involved (Hester, 2012). However, the controversy surrounding gender in IPV raises issues in the police's identification of the primary aggressor in each incident (Hester, 2012). The use of dual arrest is rare in the UK, and police guidance suggests that officers should avoid this approach, especially when there are children involved. Academics also question the ethics of arresting a potential victim and the impact this has on their future engagement with the police (Fraehlich and Ursel, 2014). The difficulties illustrate how policy has not been uniformly incorporated into police practice, with individual officers left to interpret what is meant by positive action when attending a range of vastly different abuse incidents (HMIC, 2014, p. 12).

The Outcome of such Responses: Victim Cooperation, Satisfaction and Confidence

The police in the UK have a difficult role to fulfil when it comes to dealing with victims of crime, especially with regards to victims of domestic abuse and IPV. The difficulty stems from the police having to act as investigators and mediators, ensuring both the welfare of the victim whilst compiling a strong evidential case for the CPS. Subsequently, previous research highlights that victims of IPV are likely to use the police to quell the immediate situation (Apster, Cummings & Carl, 2003); however, in many cases this is followed by the victim's withdrawal from further action (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996; Hoyle 1998). Robinson and Cook (2006) further state that this withdrawal usually occurs one month after the police response. Overall, there are general concerns over IPV cases where a victim has withdrawn their evidence, as these cases rarely result in a successful prosecution or outcome (Hoyle & Sanders, 2000).

One of the main concerns is that there is still no uniformity over the approach to take when dealing with victims of IPV, with some officers favouring 'victim choice', some using 'pro-prosecution', and others who use a 'victim empowerment' approach (Hoyle &

Sanders, 2000). Whilst some officers choose to use a 'victim choice' approach, difficulties arise when a case is dropped because the victim withdraws and does not want to continue with a prosecution. To do so damages the broader message sent to perpetrators of abuse, illustrating how they can avoid consequence if the victim withdraws. A 'victim choice' approach also assumes that the victim has all the accurate information, support and advice they need to become domestic abuse free (Hoyle & Sanders, 2000: 17). Similarly with a 'pro-prosecution' approach issues still arise when a victim withdraws and opposes a prosecution. The difficulties are (in addition to the case usually failing due to lack of evidence) that a 'pro-prosecution' approach has to deal with the ethics and the public interest to prosecute an abuser against a victim's wishes. However, even in cases where a victim cooperates, previous research highlights how officers can prioritise the investigation over victim welfare by mainly using the victim as a source of information or evidence (Barrett & Hamilton-Giachristsis, 2013). Ultimately, it separates the overall aims between police and victim, as whilst the police's main aim is to investigate and compile a case for prosecution, the victim's main aim is to merely become 'domestic abuse free' (Payne & Wermeling, 2009; Harris-Short & Miles, 2011). The deficiencies in this approach cause other commentators to argue for a 'victim empowerment' approach. The philosophy that underpins this method is to tailor responses more effectively towards individual expectations and needs. This would increase victim satisfaction and confidence (Wilson & Jasinski, 2004), which in turn would encourage victim cooperation. Furthermore, it would enhance the creation of an effective support network (Hohl, Bradford & Stanko, 2010), as a victim would be increasingly likely to perceive the police as legitimate, fostering more trust in their protection (Tyler, 2004). This contrasts significantly with many current victims' experience where the charge is dropped due to lack of evidence, or when the criminal justice system is pushing for a prosecution of an

offender and actively working against the express wishes of the victim (Payne & Wermeling, 2009; Harris-Short & Miles, 2011).

Encouraging victim empowerment (and therefore cooperation) would benefit both the police and victims. Not only would it promote safety as the police would become part of the coping strategy as opposed to working parallel to it, but there would also be an increase in positive criminal outcomes as victims would communicate their expectations and needs (be they retributive or restorative) with regards to obtaining justice. Increased confidence would also mean that future IPV victims would be more likely to report cases and present evidence in court (Roberts & Hough, 2005).

However a policing response, based on the empowerment of victims, requires further research. This includes a more in depth examination of what victims need, how to address their views and expectations, and an understanding of the volume of vastly different cases pertaining to numerous victims who all have separate needs. The next section explores how this can be done, taking into account recent research within victimology. This includes not only the victimisation and coping strategies of victims, but also their engagement with the police and other support services.

SECTION 2: A More Victim Centred Approach

Victimology and Intimate Partner Violence

IPV research has been developing and broadening through the academic discipline of victimology. Within victimology there is a particular emphasis on victimisation, repeat abuse (Cattaneo, Bell, Goodman & Dutton, 2007; Crandall, Nathens, Kernic, Holt &

Rivara, 2004) and victim withdrawal from the criminal justice system (Robinson & Cook, 2006). Taking a wider view of all IPV research, numerous theories have been developed to better explain (and in some cases predict) the etiology of violence and relationship between the partners. Whilst all are useful, various limitations exist and some elements (such as the approach to gender) appear contradictory.

Victim Theories

There are numerous theories into how victims deal with abusive relationships, with contemporary theories generating a more multi-disciplinary and holistic approach. Hamel (2013) argues how the research based on the concept of Battered Women Syndrome (BWS) was gravely flawed and formulated around limited non-representative samples. He further argues that the interviews conducted contained a number of leading questions and responses, which were then interpreted on a highly subjective basis (Hamel, 2013). He proposes more empirically based theories that account for the actions of abuse victims. In this he emphasises three main theories: Traumatic Bonding Theory; Survivor Theory; and Social Agency Theory.

Dutton & Painter (1981) explored the concept of traumatic bonding to explain how powerful emotional attachments are formed and developed through power imbalances and intermittent good-bad treatment. The theory stipulates that partnerships which have an imbalance in power can accelerate over time, creating negative feelings and emotions in the victim and making them more dependent upon the abuser. This can occur regardless of individual roles and has even been reported to occur within a simulated setting (Zimbardo, Haney, Banks & Jaffe, 1973). Survivor theory derives from Gondolf & Fisher (1988), who built upon earlier work by Bowker (1986) to explain how individual victims deal with abuse. They explain that methods such as flattering the abuser, fighting back and actively seeking help are coping strategies used in handling violence. They explain it is therefore a lack of available resources that causes the victim to be unsafe, rather than a

feeling of helplessness. Social agency theory is similar to survivor theory in the sense that it considers the victim to be a normal individual who is responding appropriately in dealing with abuse, but focuses on the situation rather than the specific strategy employed. Schuller, Wells, Rzepa & Klippenstein (2004) explain how testimony of IPV and domestic abuse should focus on the situation, including: the abuser's dominance and control; lack of effective alternative services or community support; and the dangers of leaving an abusive relationship. This is opposed to merely basing a testimony on the victim's psychological reactions and essentially blaming the victim for their reaction to the abuse.

Further to these approaches Bonanno (2004) suggests that resilience in the face of trauma is more common than first perceived. This is in contrast to a concept of victim helplessness, where resilience was considered rare or even pathological. Applied to victims of abuse, there is potential for research to take account of victims who continue to cope and work beyond the negative experiences emanating from an abusive relationship (Hodges & Cabanilla, 2011).

The above commentary from victimology based approaches, especially with regards to the means and strategies that victims use to cope with violence, are essential in understanding IPV as a whole. More recently, the application of critical social theory has allowed researchers to better understand the limited scope of the previous theories and the fragmentation that results when the research is applied to practice (Norris, Fancey, Power & Ross, 2013). The central assumption of a critical perspective purports that all actions are fundamentally mediated by power relations already socially and historically constituted within society – a theory that relates well to an ecological perspective.

This perspective, first established by Bronfenbrenner as the ecological systems theory in child development (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), is an evolving theoretical system for human

development commonly utilised by researchers. Whilst the use of the model has been promoted by the World Health Organisation [WHO] (2010), it is important to note that there are deviations to the model that apply to various disciplines. With regards to IPV research, the Nested Ecological Model formulated by Dutton (2006) is comprised of four levels of analysis (Macrosystem, Exosystem, Microsystem and Ontogenetic) and applies to the perpetration of violence. However, the model itself could also be applied to victims as well as perpetrators of IPV, examining factors that impact upon victimisation and victim engagement with support services. Within the Nested Ecological Model, the macrosystem relates to overarching cultural and social norms; the exosystem to social structures outside of an abusive relationship; the microsystem relating to the immediate relationship or family unit; and the ontogenetic referring to the individual's development. An ecological approach takes account of critical theory within the macrosystem, and incorporates other multiple theories and multi-disciplinary factors within the various levels of the model. Research and models built using multiple disciplines can add to the compilation of variables to test in the examination of what impacts upon the victim, can aid in the explanation of causality, and provide an explanation as to the behaviour of the victims in each case. Understanding the multi-faceted factors involved in a victim dealing with abuse would help towards understanding how to enhance their cooperation with the criminal justice system. A response encompassing these factors would be better placed to provide a victim empowerment approach, especially when it comes to police practice. This approach is more evident in practice within other areas of victim support, such as nursing, in which staff are more aware of the complexities and look beyond the surface when dealing with victims of abuse (Little & Kantor, 2002). In addition to this multi-disciplinary research there is also a call to amalgamate the theories that relate to gender within IPV.

Efforts to improve victim empowerment within IPV cannot be furthered without a deeper understanding of how gender affects IPV, especially as previous research has been contradictory. The ‘family violence approach’ explains the perpetration of violence is as prominent in women as it is in men (symmetry), whereas the ‘feminist approach’ argues it is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men against women (asymmetry) (Dobash & Dobash, 2004). In order to effectively position this paper it is prudent to examine this debate more carefully.

From the feminist perspective, there is seemingly a wealth of evidence suggesting that violence is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men against women. Advocates further explain that this is mainly caused by wider societal rules and patriarchal beliefs that encourage male dominance and, in turn, female subordination (Dobash, Dobash, Wilson & Daly, 1992; Abrar, Lovenduski & Margetts, 2000). Dobash & Dobash (2004) argue that as violence is primarily perpetrated by men towards women, any violence that occurs on behalf of the female within the relationship should be taken with the assumption of self-defence against her male counterpart. In addition, they argue IPV often contains ‘constellations of abuse’ as opposed to single ‘acts’ in which the perpetrator attempts to control the lives of their female partners in many different ways (Browne, Saloman & Bassuk, 1999; Campbell & Soeken, 1999; Lloyd & Taluc, 1999). It is argued these constellations, as well as the context of cases, are overlooked by advocates of family violence research (Dobash *et al.*, 1992). Essentially, the feminist perspective argues that the recorded statistics do not take into account the context of violence as it merely only reports individual acts. Therefore, any research utilising a gendered approach assumes patriarchy is a direct cause of IPV (Bell & Naugle, 2008), as opposed to a factor that could possibly affect and interact with other factors (Dutton, 2006).

Conversely, family violence advocates have argued against a feminist perspective, highlighting findings since the 1970s that illustrate gender symmetry (Straus, 1977; Gelles & Straus, 1986). Previous studies within the 1970s found that 12.1% of females and 11.6% of males had reported one or more incidents of abuse from their intimate partner within the year (Straus, 1977). More recent research in 2010 continued to report findings of gender symmetry, with 5.9% of females and 5.0% of males reporting one or more incidents of abuse within the year (Breiding, Chen & Black, 2014). Such findings have been argued as empirically valid (McNeely & Mann, 1990) and numerous commentators have produced evidence to criticise the feminist perspective, arguing it is generated from ideological concepts rather than objective, empirical evidence that emerges from a solid methodology (Archer, 2002; Dutton & Corvo, 2006; Graham-Kevan, 2007; Hamel & Nicholls, 2006; O’Leary, Smith Slep & O’Leary, 2007; Stith, Smith, Penn, Ward & Tritt, 2004; Sugarman & Frankel, 1996). Family violence advocates raise further concerns with a feminist approach forming the basis for many IPV treatment and intervention programmes, as these programmes have often reported limited success (Babcock, Green & Robie, 2004; Whitaker *et al.*, 2006). Ultimately, family violence advocates argue that there is an evidence base illustrating that IPV is a gender symmetrical issue that requires primary prevention and treatment programmes using a gender inclusive and family violence perspective (Straus, 2006).

However, more recently there have been appeals for the two perspectives to merge. Winstok (2013) argues that each approach scrutinises the methodology of the others’ evidence base and that this has occurred because they are two approaches to the same topic. Instead, he proposes that there is a need for a more flexible methodology to capture all the dynamics of partner violence, covering the interests of both the feminist and family violence commentators. Considering this fresh and inclusive perspective, studies could begin branching into the examination of IPV within same-sex partnerships, as it reframes

and closely inspects pre-existing ideological frameworks, cultural narratives and stereotypes (Baker, Buick, Kim, Moniz & Nava, 2013). In addition, it would also increase the sensitivity and care around the analysis of variables, in which gender could be considered a proxy. Such variables could be strength, size, experience with aggression and others that may pertain more to one gender, but could be considered independently as well as within the gender context (Follingstad & Ryan, 2013).

Studies that use agency samples (for example police, healthcare sector and others) often tend to portray and overrepresent the more severe cases of IPV (Gerstenberger & Williams, 2013) and are usually male-dominant (Straus, 2011). This could be attributed to the perceptions surrounding gender and abuse, in which male victims may underreport and perhaps ignore abuse that would otherwise be reported by a female victim (Sylaska & Walters, 2014). Studies that utilise independent data samples, such as the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) launched in 2010, better represent a broad sample of the overall IPV target population, reporting a broad spectrum of abuse and more gender symmetry (Breiding, Chen & Black, 2014).

Therefore, a distinction should be drawn and care taken in any examination of victim engagement with the police, since a sample in this instance will be applicable to the target population of agency reported IPV cases, and may not be representative of the gender symmetry of IPV research as a whole. The distinction is important, as whilst a police sample may be male perpetrator and female victim dominant, it would differ from other studies where sample bias occurs through targeting female only shelters (Gondolf & Fisher, 1988), advertising an IPV questionnaire in 'Women's Day' magazine (Bowker, 1986), or using agency samples only and then applying such findings to the overall IPV population.

Conclusion

This paper commenced by outlining the significant efforts respective UK governments and criminal justice agencies have made in attempting to reduce IPV. However, notwithstanding the significant level of resources and effort placed into these initiatives, the results have not generated the anticipated level of outcomes. Recent reviews continue to criticise the response by UK agencies to this universal problem. The question is therefore, what more can be done? This paper argues that a more radical change is required that has at its core a heightened level of victim awareness and empowerment.

This paper showed that more can be done at policy and practice level. For example, a crime of ‘Domestic Abuse’ or ‘Domestic Assault’ would allow clearer direction as to when the police can intervene, with more specific guidelines for processing cases (Casciani, 2014). This would perhaps prevent the trivialisation of some violent incidents, when a S39 charge is sought against a suspect after a particularly violent and aggressive assault (Cretney & Davis, 1997). In addition, guidelines as to the investigation of domestic abuse scenes would aid officers in building a case against the suspect. Bodycam and CCTV footage used as evidence; the police proactively examining, photographing and recording the scenes of abuse; photographing the injuries and bruising to the victim after they fully develop; and actively talking to neighbours, relatives and the public in every case, would all help to combat the weaknesses described in the HMIC report (2014, p. 12). The positive collection of extrinsic evidence is vital in ensuring victim cooperation with the police, as it has the compounded effect of removing the pressure from the victim with supporting evidence, adds credibility to their experience, and ensures officers pursue cases with a realistic prospect of prosecution from the very beginning (Ellison, 2002). In addition, the use of restorative justice as opposed to retributive justice in ‘minor’ or ‘first time’ cases would help rehabilitate potential abusers and may be more appealing to

victims, as opposed to having a merely punitive system that may not alter the behaviour of offenders or increase the safety of victims (Braddock, 2011). Developing effective and nationally accredited Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes and Offender Behaviour Programmes that are available to any individual who is cautioned or prosecuted with a domestic abuse related crime would perhaps aid in preventing future incidents (Justice, 2014; Munro, 2011).

In essence the paper argues for a victim empowerment approach by utilising more current research that has emerged from multiple disciplines, multiple victim theories, and is gender and sexual orientation inclusive. A spectrum of care and understanding should be provided to victims of IPV, as they report how homogenous responses (such as ‘pro-prosecution’, ‘mandatory arrest’ or ‘pro-choice’) do not acknowledge or address the multiple and unique factors affecting victims in each case (Cerulli *et al.*, 2015). An improved understanding of what affects victims and their engagement with the police allows for more targeted, effective and efficient support. Many practical applications could be drawn from such research and applied to policy, legislation and to police training. For example, the potential training of front line staff to spot patterns of abuse or factors affecting victim cooperation and to respond more effectively to victim needs would underpin a victim empowerment approach to IPV. It would reduce the level of negative activity currently expended within the criminal justice system, which leads to failed prosecutions and poor victim satisfaction. Such an expanded capacity and flexible response could be used proactively to promote greater victim understanding, increase victim cooperation, and ultimately lead to enhanced criminal justice outcomes.

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