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IMMIGRANT HISPANIC WOMEN AND THE VICTIMIZATION
THEY ENCOUNTER IN THE UNITED STATES

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Criminal Justice


by
Alejandra Aranda Redondo
September 2011

IMMIGRANT HISPANIC WOMEN AND THE VICTIMIZATION
THEY ENCOUNTER IN THE UNITED STATES

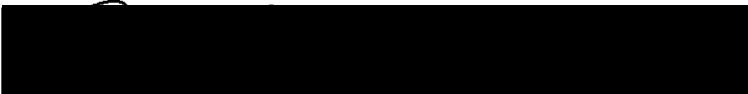
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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined the experiences of ten female Hispanic advocates who counseled abused immigrant Hispanic women, along with ten immigrant Hispanic women who have been victims of domestic violence. The interviews explored some of the primary reasons why immigrant Hispanic women are victims of abuse, along with the various barriers they faced, with the woman herself and her surrounding community, and ways in which they coped. The influence of the Hispanic culture is a driving force in the women's inability to move away from their abusers, to seek help, and to obtain the necessary help. The results highlight the importance of considering the Hispanic culture of the women into future policies, programs and other victim support systems. Suggestions for further research and policies which focus on the culture of the victimized women will be presented. Finally, this study offers possible practices that could help improve the situation of these and future victimized women.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
Issues Faced	3
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	11
Acculturation/Cultural Factors	12
Help-Seeking Behavior	17
Social Learning Theory	18
Language Barriers	22
Lack of Knowledge and Resources	25
Lack of Understanding by Law Enforcement and Community Services	29
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	34
Qualitative Analysis	37
Advocate/Counselor Participants	38
Instrumentation	39
Procedure for Interviewing Counselor/Advocate Participants	40
Victim Participants	45
Instrumentation	47
Procedure for Interviewing Victim Participants	50
Validity and Reliability	55

Limitations	56
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	58
Counselors and Advocates: Commitment to Helping Abused Immigrant Women	59
Abuse	63
Acculturation/Cultural Factors	68
Social Learning Theory	88
Language Barriers	91
Help-Seeking Behaviors	94
Lack of Understanding by Law Enforcement	102
Lack of Knowledge and Resources	107
Additional Findings	111
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Policy Implications	117
Future Research	127
APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHICS SURVEY FOR A VICTIM ADVOCATE OR COUNSELOR	131
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR A VICTIM ADVOCATE OR COUNSELOR	134
APPENDIX C: REVISED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR A VICTIM ADVOCATE OR COUNSELOR	136
APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS - COUNSELORS/ADVOCATES	141
APPENDIX E: COUNSELOR/ADVOCATE DEBRIEFING STATEMENT	146

APPENDIX F: DEMOGRAPHICS SURVEY FOR AN IMMIGRANT HISPANIC FEMALE VICTIM	148
APPENDIX G: SELECT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: USED IN THE STUDY BY AARATI KASTURIRANGAN AND ELIZABETH NUT WILLIAMS (2003)	151
APPENDIX H: SELECT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: USED IN THE STUDY BY HARRIS ET AL. (2005)	153
APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR AN IMMIGRANT HISPANIC FEMALE VICTIM	155
APPENDIX J: REVISED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR AN IMMIGRANT HISPANIC FEMALE VICTIM	158
APPENDIX K: INFORMED CONSENT RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS - SURVIVORS	163
APPENDIX L: SURVIVOR DEBRIEFING STATEMENT	169
APPENDIX M: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL	174
REFERENCES	176

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The victimization of women in the United States is a serious issue. According to the Commonwealth Fund, nearly one third of American women have been physically abused by their husband or boyfriend (Collins et al., 1999). Clinical data indicate that 22-37% of emergency room visits made by women are for injuries sustained from relationship violence and that 75% of these women will be re-victimized (Murdaugh, Hunt, & Sowell, 2004).

Underreporting is a significant obstacle in accurately assessing the problem of female victimization. Whereas women of all ages, socio-economic classes, races, and ethnicities are victimized, Hispanics particularly those who have migrated to the United States, not only experience high rates of abuse but are also the most likely not to report their victimization (Mendelson, 2004).

Domestic violence is a significant issue for Hispanic women in the United States with 54.9% reporting violent victimization (Murdaugh et al., 2004). Although it is difficult for all women to report the violence and prevent future abuse, Hispanic women tend to face unique challenges

in coping with violence (Mendelson, 2004). These include a plethora of stressors that may relate to immigration, challenges of acculturation, language barriers, legal and economic pressures, and fear of the abuser.

In this study, the term Hispanic refers to someone of or relating to Spain or Spanish-speaking Latin America (Wood & Price, 1997). In addition, abuse is defined as "to treat in a harmful, injurious, or offensive way and/or to commit sexual assault upon" (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/abuse>).

This study is multi-purposed and, based on the literature review, five major issues were identified. The first issue centered on the cultural identity of immigrant Hispanic women and how it contributed to the likelihood and longevity of their abuse. This research also attempted to discover if Hispanic cultural attitudes and the perceptions of these victimized immigrant women affected their help-seeking behaviors. The second issue concerned whether or not language barriers prevented reporting and help-seeking by abused immigrant Hispanic women. The third issue examines the help-seeking behaviors of the victims of domestic violence to understand their perceptions and attitudes while in abusive situations. Social Learning

theory is used to help understand the specific cultural factors discovered. The fourth issue explored the extent to which these women believed that law enforcement has a negative perception about them, or had a lack of understanding regarding their cultural identity and the subsequent impact on the likelihood of them reporting their abuser and/or seeking help. Lastly, the study examined the extent to which the lack of knowledge about resources affected immigrant women's likelihood of reporting abuse.

Issues Faced

The first major issue is acculturation and is defined as the process of adopting the cultural traits or social patterns of another group. In traditional Hispanic households, the man controls the relationship, makes the decisions and is the overall ruler of the home (Villareal & Cavazos, 2005). The likelihood of Hispanic women becoming victims of abuse is possibly increased by the impact of acculturation versus the associated gender role ideology rooted in "machismo" and the perceived female identity. Machismo is a social behavior pattern in which the Latin male exhibits an overbearing attitude to anyone in a position he perceives as inferior to his, demanding

complete subservience which is evident when related to male-female interactions (Wood & Price, 1997).

Harris et al. (2005) presented the idea that possible changes in the dynamics of the relationship may come about because of differing gender role expectations between men and women. They discovered that problems occurred when Hispanic women migrated to the United States, started to acculturate and adopt less traditional perspectives with regards to gender role behaviors and attitudes. Based on their research they developed two specific research questions. The first was to determine if traditional gender role attitudes associated with females being subordinate to males could place a woman at a higher risk for being abused by their spouse. The second was to discover if less traditional gender roles would make a woman realize that she does not have to accept abuse, and therefore minimize her risk of victimization.

A critical question of this study was whether the cultural identity of immigrant women contributes to the likelihood of them becoming victims of abuse and if it increases the longevity of their abuse. The purpose was to discover if cultural identity contributes to the abuse of immigrant Hispanic women and to see if the women feel their

cultural identity inhibits their ability to fight or remove themselves from abusive relationships.

The second issue raised in the literature concerned Hispanic women's help-seeking behavior. Martina Acevedo (2000) sought to further understand the perceptions and attitudes of abused Hispanic women by examining their help-seeking behaviors. Her study was based on social learning theory. This theory helped to provide an understanding of the cultural factors found in the situations of abused immigrant Hispanic women. This theory also helped to bring awareness of and responses to abuse of immigrant Hispanic women. The research found women's attitudes were influenced by cultural factors such as gender roles and the view that marriage is a life-long commitment.

Based on Acevedo's study (2000), a second research question was proposed concerning the Hispanic cultural attitudes of the victimized women. This study attempted to discover whether Hispanic cultural attitudes and self-perceptions of the victimized immigrant women, affected the way they seek help. This question explored the behavior trends of Hispanic women who have been abused. Furthermore, this study provided suggestions to counselors and police

officers so that they might be better equipped to handle these culturally influenced situations.

The third issue dealt with the barriers faced by immigrant women that need be recognized by those members of the community that do not belong or are not part of the Hispanic culture. Language barriers, can lead to a lack of reporting and help-seeking by women. Judith McFarlane et al. (2002) supported this thought in their study of intimate partner violence against immigrant women. McFarlane et al. (2002) discovered that American-born Hispanic women were more likely to report abuse than immigrant Hispanic women and were more likely to classify certain physical aggression as abuse. Their study further supported their premise that language barriers were an obstacle in women reporting abuse after discovering that 12 percent of the women were prevented from speaking English by the abuser and this inability to speak English prevented almost one-third of the women from receiving help.

These findings, presented by McFarlane et al. (2002), created another question about the extent of language barriers and how often they lead to a lack of reporting and help-seeking by abused immigrant Hispanic women. The answer to this question would help show the degree to which there

might be a need for an increase in resolving language barrier situations.

Another major issue was the lack of knowledge and resources for immigrant Hispanic women. The knowledge that is needed by these women to attain help is oftentimes lacking. Dutton et al.'s study (2000) helped to clarify how the lack of knowledge about resources made it difficult for immigrant women to report abuse, by examining the barriers that immigrant women must overcome to gain assistance and become eligible for public benefits.

Their study revealed that immigrant Hispanic women rated "battered women's services" the highest or most needed, followed by economic resources, and legal assistance. Also, immigrant Hispanic women tend to spend longer times in violent relationships and have a more difficult time moving out of them because of their lack of knowledge of the resources available to them (Dutton et al., 2000).

These findings lead to an examination of the extent to which there is a lack of understanding about resources and services available to abused immigrant Hispanic women. This study also explored the possibility that the lack of knowledge could affect the likelihood of immigrant women

reporting their abuser and/or seeking help. This may help to determine what kind of assistance is needed and the type of understanding and education needed by law enforcement and other community services. This is important because it will be used to provide suggestions on how to help the women become knowledgeable about resources. This in turn can increase the reporting of abuse and seeking help.

Lastly, the lack of understanding by law enforcement and community services and programs was reviewed. Immigrant Hispanic women often need law enforcement and community services to help them confront abuse issues and help them to understand the services and resources they have at their disposal. Having law enforcement and community programs consider the many cultural issues faced by immigrant Hispanic women is essential to stopping the victimization they encounter.

A study conducted by Kasturirangan and Williams (2003) examined the experience of Hispanic survivors of domestic violence. Their aim was to understand the kinds of cultural attitudes a counselor might encounter when working with battered Hispanic women and explored the lack of understanding by the courts and law enforcement affecting

the likelihood of immigrant women to report their abuse or seek help.

Their study found that many women faced racism and prejudice, even when trying to attain social services to escape the abuse. Also, through their interviews they found that some of the women felt their counselors did not understand the importance of family nor the cultural pressures they experienced. The interviewed women wanted counselors who understood both their language and their culture.

This brief overview of the literature review revealed the scarcity of research on abuse of immigrant Hispanic women. In reviewing these issues this study not only supports the current literature and issues presented but it does it in a way that gives victims of domestic violence a chance to be heard. This differs from other studies due to its qualitative nature. The actual problems and issues faced by these women is presented using their own words, as actual quotes from the interviews are added to this study to substantiate the ideas presented. This adds to the current body of literature because most of the studies found on this subject matter are often quantitative in nature, providing statistical significance, while this

study adds empirical significance and evidence and supports findings from additional studies presented in the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reasons for abuse and the level of acceptance of the abuse can determine the length of time a woman will be a victim of domestic violence. Evaluating both social norms and internal ideology can help to establish those causes of abuse. In the Hispanic culture, intimate partner violence can be determined through a number of social and internal factors, such as the woman's belief system or the strength of her cultural influence.

The literature presents points to some of the issues occurring within the Hispanic culture. Cultural identity or acculturation is one of the main reasons immigrant Hispanic women tend to be abused (Raj & Silverman, 2002). Along with their identity are the women's own personal cultural attitudes and perceptions that can greatly affect their help-seeking ideas. A strong social factor for immigrant women that many times prevents them from reporting their abuse is the language barriers they experience in the United States (McFarlane et al., 2002). The involvement of law enforcement is also crucial for immigrant women who find the courage to seek help but the lack of understanding

by these agencies about the women's cultural identity inhibits their ability to provide the proper resources (Kasturirangan & Williams, 2003). Lastly, the research demonstrates how the lack of knowledge about resources can greatly deter the immigrant Hispanic woman's likelihood of reporting abuse and offers suggestions to combat the problem (Dutton et al., 2000).

Acculturation/Cultural Factors

Machismo is one of the strongest cultural roles found within the Hispanic culture. Here the man controls the relationship, makes the decisions, and is the overall "ruler of the home" (Villereal & Cavazos, 2005). This mentality of the male is often one of the leading causes of spousal abuse within the culture. The strongest overall factor which contributes to the likelihood of Hispanic women becoming victims of abuse is the impact of acculturation and the gender role ideology found in the idea of machismo and female identity (Acevedo, 2004).

Machismo usually starts at a young age with boys being taught that they should act like men and not women and to hold themselves proudly and without emotion. These boys are taught to believe that girls should be respected but at the

same time be submissive and obedient (Villereal & Cavazos, 2005). This can have both positive and negative effects in that there is a sense of protecting the honor and welfare of the family, having a strong work ethic, being a good provider, and always living up to the familial responsibilities (Galanti, 2003). The negative effects include heavy drinking, subjugation of women and potential domestic violence towards women (Falicov, 1998).

Machismo can be seen in the way men act around other men and the way they act towards women. For example, settling matters with a fight can determine which male is more macho. With women, machismo can be seen in the way young males seek traditional females who will be submissive and will not challenge their roles (Villereal & Cavazos, 2005). When these relationships turn into marriages, it is the husband who makes all the important decisions in the family and the wife defers to him, in a way gaining her identity through being married to him (Williams, 1990).

In the father role, Hispanic males display the machismo attitude when they are dominant and the authoritative figure in the family (Powell, 1995). He makes all the major decisions and is the ruler of the household, where his relationship with his children are usually

emotionally distant and severe punishment is used to maintain the respect of both the children and the wife (Powell, 1995).

Harris, Firestone, and Vega (2005) examined the impact of acculturation and gender role ideology on intimate partner abuse based on its relation to the country of origin. Their study revealed that possible changes may come about because of the expectations about appropriate role behavior for men and women.

Vega's (1990) study examined a strong identification, and attachment to family, associated with the Hispanic culture. Mexican Americans prefer more intimate contact with family and tend to view the family as a place of strong emotional support (Harris et al., 2005). Also, Mirande and Enriques (1979) found that working-class Hispanic women place a high value on maternal and domestic roles and the ideology is strongly reinforced by parents and husbands who often tend to discourage the women from attaining higher education and career skills. Also, families can oftentimes blame the woman for making family matters public and destabilizing the meaning of marriage (Salcido & Adelman, 2004).

The problems occur when Hispanic women migrate to the United States and start to acculturate by adopting a less traditional perspective in regards to gender role behaviors and attitudes (Harris et al., 2005). According to Raj and Silverman (2002), for immigrant women, these issues may increase their vulnerability to an even greater extent as these women live within two often conflicting cultures. Men tend not to give up their gender ideas of maintaining power over women but this mentality is increased in Western culture when during socialization, men are encouraged to behave aggressively (Harris et al., 2005). Also, immigrant women may no longer be willing to conform to certain traditional gender-based norms which often lead to an increase in male efforts to control these women (Raj & Silverman, 2004).

Harris et al.'s (2005) study based their research on two specific ideas. The first was to determine if traditional gender role attitudes associated with females being subordinate to males, could place a woman at a higher risk for being abused by their spouse. Second, to discover if less traditional gender roles would make a woman realize that she does not have to accept abuse, therefore maintaining their risk of victimization.

Harris et al. (2005) found that over 80 percent of the women of Mexican origin stated that their husbands insisted on having control over their marriage. Also, the fact that the women had been born in Mexico, tended to suggest that there would be a significantly lower likelihood of reporting abuse. Overall, their study found that the more traditional and strongly identified to her culture a woman was, the less likely she was to report any type of abuse, blurring the definition of abuse. According to this study, the traditional gender and cultural roles inhibiting Hispanic women was the strongest indicator of possible potential abuse and increased longevity of any current victimization they were encountering.

Kasturirangan and Williams (2003) identified two major areas of cultural identity that may affect the ways in which Hispanic women deal with issues of domestic violence. The first is traditional gender roles; women are encouraged to model their behavior after the Virgin Mary. Women are able to deal with a great amount of suffering without protest for the sake of their families and do not seek help outside of the family dynamics. Women are taught to accept the men making their decisions. The second cultural area is the traditional family roles. The home is the woman's

domain and it is her job to keep it together. Wives are expected to be respectful and submissive to their husbands (Garcia-Preto, 1990). Also, in placing the responsibility of family on the woman and the economic responsibility on males, the options for women are reduced when having to separate from an abusive spouse (Raj & Silverman, 2002).

According to Canino and Canino (1993), women will often deny themselves basic protection from their abusers simply to maintain the traditional family structure. Family roles tend to be barriers for women that keep them from attaining help. Other major barriers presented by Kasturirangan and Williams (2003) are language barriers, financial barriers, and immigration status barriers.

Help-Seeking Behavior

Martina Acevedo's (2000) qualitative study examined the perceptions and attitudes of abused women and their help-seeking behaviors. Open-ended interviews were conducted with battered, immigrant Mexican women. The questions revolved around gender-role expectations, the participant's own definitions of physical abuse between spouses, personal questions regarding their own abuse, and

gathering information regarding their own help-seeking behaviors.

Social Learning Theory

Their study is one of the few in which a theoretical foundation is used. While other theories may be applicable, the idea of social learning theory presented by Acevedo (2000) was used to framework her study. Social learning theory is when behaviors or attitudes are learned from peer groups or social stimuli. This theory suggests that it would help structure an understanding of the cultural factors in the awareness of and responses to abuse of immigrant Hispanic women who are or were victims (Acevedo, 2000). Social learning theory relates to immigrant Hispanic abuse by providing researchers with an explanation of the psychological functioning of the abused immigrant Hispanic women. This theory supports the idea that psychological functioning is a "constant reciprocal interaction" between behavior and the social conditions which control behavior (Bandura, 1977).

It is believed that the battered immigrant Hispanic woman's behavior is determined by the relationship between environmental and self-generated stimuli (Acevedo, 2000). Environmental stimuli can be anything causing learned and

unlearned responses and consequences. Self-generated stimuli is an internal process in which there is a connection between the external conditions, surrounding a woman, that cause a response and the way a woman internally or mentally processes these conditions (Acevedo, 2000). The internal process can occur through verbal messages, images, or physiologically which can cause a battered woman to continue to live within an abusive relationship.

Immigrant Hispanic women who are victims of abuse repeatedly stay within these violent situations because of the messages they receive from family, friends, or even church, such as never divorcing or knowing a woman's place. They internalize these ideas and base their future decisions about whether or not to leave an abusive relationship on them (Vasquez, 1998). For Hispanic women, many of these decisions are culturally based and are a reflection of the culture's rules and norms which deem men the head of the home and the women the appeasers (Raj & Silverman, 2004).

Social learning theory adds to the idea of how the psychological functioning of the abused immigrant Hispanic woman works, according to Acevedo (2000), "The performance or avoidance of responses can be either learned through

one's own direct experiences and their reinforcement of, by observing someone else's behavior" (p. 250).

This means children raised in these abusive situations will be even more likely than children in non-abusive situations to learn and copy the behavior and responses of abused and abuser parents. This increases the likelihood of children acting out their learned behavior on their own partners.

This also works in the opposite direction in that an abused woman is also more likely to report abuse or leave her violent relationship if she is exposed to even more positive situations (Acevedo, 2000). Also, the situations need to be reinforced and rewarded so that the positive reactions and responses will continue.

Social learning theory also helps us to focus on the present conditions of the woman instead of the past. It will, therefore, be easier to evaluate a situation and find both the positive and negative stimuli involved. This will provide an easier way of altering the stimulus conditions (Acevedo, 2000).

The findings support the design of social learning theory in that internalizing of beliefs greatly affected the decisions the women made about their situations (Acevedo, 2000). The study found that tolerance of abuse

stemmed from the women's attitude toward abuse. Similar to the results found by Kasturirangan and Williams (2003), which discovered women's attitudes were influenced by cultural factors such as gender-roles and viewing marriage as a life-long commitment. Many of the women had also "normalized" the abuse because it had been part of their childhood, with their mothers also having been abused by their fathers (Acevedo, 2000). Perilla's (1999) study also found that the women have simply accepted the abuse as "normal" or "their fate."

These women explained how they did not see abuse as abnormal until they had received some type of assistance. In most cases, the women most likely would not have asked for assistance, it was their children being abused and the negative consequences they could face as the main force pushing them to seek help (Perilla, 1999).

Seeking help became even more difficult when social support systems were unavailable. The participants explained that their families were back in Mexico and were only surrounded by their abuser's family. Some women did not reach out to support systems, like agencies, because to these women, "agency" means shelter or a way for them to

leave their partner which in their culture is an unacceptable option for women (Perilla, 1999).

Acevedo's (2000) and Perilla's (1999) studies have provided insight into the battered immigrant Mexican women's experiences with abuse and their help-seeking behaviors and suggests areas of further research.

Language Barriers

Focusing on policy is a good start to correcting the situation of abused immigrant women. When trying to correct policy, the barriers faced by immigrant women must be recognized. Language barriers themselves can lead to a lack of reporting and help seeking by women. McFarlane et al. (2002) study supported this idea, which focused on the domestic violence immigrant women face and the order of protections they try to attain to protect themselves. The purpose of this study came about when it was realized that there were two serious problems. The first was that there was a high amount of domestic violence occurring among immigrant women. There was a serious lack of documented research trying to find out why the problem was so severe and what can be done to stop the violence.

McFarlane et al. (2002) examined a study conducted on Asian women and the types of physical assaults they had experienced. They suggested that this group of immigrant women was more likely to succumb to violence because they were usually first generation women and their lack of the English language was a difficult barrier for them to overcome. The Asian women study provided support for the theory of why Hispanic immigrant women also face the same kind of abuse when trying to assimilate (McFarlane et al., 2002).

McFarlane et al. (2002) discovered that American born Hispanic women were more likely to report abuse than immigrant Hispanic women and immigrant Hispanic women were less likely to classify certain physical abuse as abuse. This led the team of McFarlane et al (2002) to try to answer in their own study why immigrant Hispanic women are less likely to report abuse and why the women were less likely to see violence towards themselves as abuse. Perilla, Bakeman, and Norris' (1994) study found indicating stressors such as immigration status, prejudice and lack of English proficiency, contributed to abuse and lack of reporting or help-seeking.

McFarlane et al. (2002) set out to learn about the extent of intimate partner violence reported by immigrant women before, as compared to after, seeking an order of protection. They began their examination using a qualitative method of gathering information. The local district attorney's office was asked for their assistance. Permission was granted to conduct interviews within the special family violence unit of the district attorney's office. Included were women, only ages 18 or older, with evidence of intimate partner assault and qualified for an order of protection against their significant other.

One-on-one interviews were used followed by three month and sixth month follow up phone interviews. The interviews contained "demographic data forms," which identified age, income, education, etc., "severity of violence against women scales," which measured the threat of violence and actual physical violence, "stalking victimization survey," which had yes/no questions used to document stalking, and lastly a "danger assessment scale," which was used to determine the potential risk of these women becoming homicide victims.

McFarlane et al. (2002) found that most women were in the mid-30s and reported an annual household income below

\$20,000. Of the 150 women, 42 were not born in this country and out of the 42, 40 of them did not speak English. Compared to women born in the United States, immigrant women were more likely to be in a relationship with a current abuser, of Hispanic ethnicity, who has less than a high school education, and does not speak English. An interesting factor was 12 percent of the women were prevented from speaking English by the abuser and the inability to speak English prevented almost one-third of the women from receiving help for the abuse. The interviews also showed the abuser influenced the ability of women to attain jobs and legal immigration status.

Limiting the generalization of this study were women who were already looking for help were used instead of finding women who needed help but were having difficulties coming forward. This could have made it difficult to understand barriers placed on immigrant women and could have removed the sense of urgency from the women's situations because these women were already attaining help.

Lack of Knowledge and Resources

The availability of resources plays an essential role in victimized women escaping dangerous situations. The

knowledge that is needed by these women to attain these resources is what is commonly lacking. Most often what is needed are referrals to support groups or services by other people, such as police officers. Dutton, Orloff, and Hass (2000) emphasized that the lack of knowledge about resources made it difficult for immigrant women to report abuse. This was discovered by looking further into the barriers which immigrant women must overcome to gain assistance and to become eligible for public benefits. West, Kantor, and Jasinski (1998) found that Hispanic women used less formal and informal resources with Mexican women being the group least likely to seek assistance.

Dutton et al. (2000) focused on two different but related aspects. The first examines the obstacles for battered Hispanic women to preventing or escaping abuse and the second studies the availability of resources and their responses to intimate partner abuse. The study analyzed immigrant Hispanic women's help-seeking behaviors within the context of the variables that can serve as obstacles on the road to stopping abuse.

Their focus discussed research on the living situations of Hispanic women. Dutton et al. (2000) concentrate on life struggles of the immigrant Hispanic

women, such as the cultural roles they must act out, the likelihood of early marriage and early families, and the lack of education most of these women possess. Previous research by Torres (1991) used within their study introduced a short comparative done between the abuse of Hispanic women versus Caucasian and African American women. Information presented showed Hispanic women, especially immigrant women, spend longer times in violent relationships and have a harder time moving away from them because of their lack of knowledge and lack of resources available to them.

Dutton et al., (2000) study was structured to comprise of women who had immigrated to the United States within their lifetime, were native speakers, and were located in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. The women were informed about the study and how they were needed by the community agency to help find solutions for abuse among immigrant women. The immigrant women were divided into four categories of 1) physically or sexually abused, 2) psychologically abused, 3) non-abused immigrants, and 4) the Help-Seeking sample of women who had been abused and are looking for help. The survey contained 269 multiple choice, yes and no, semi-structured, and open ended

questions. The questions revolved around demographic, types of violence, abuse, work history, income, benefits used, and their personal experience.

The results of the survey were similar to results discovered in the previous studies but still revealed some interesting findings. According to Dutton et al. (2000) study, there were more women under the age of 30 in the non-abused category versus the other categories. Hispanic women who were currently married or had been previously married had higher rates of physical and sexual abuse (59.9%) and about 49.8% of those women were married to U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents. Interesting factors discovered in their study were the ratings placed on various resources by the abused immigrant women. The participants were asked to rate which services they found would be most useful to them and their situations. They rated "battered women's services" the highest, followed by economic resources, and legal assistance.

Dutton et al. (2000) study did not emphasize opened ended questions. This could be viewed as a limitation because more emphasis could have produced more intimate details about the women's situations. Potential barriers and issues could have been discovered if more focus had

been placed on the qualitative. The small sample size which included women in one specific location could be seen as a restriction because generalization could not be made concerning the situation of all immigrant Hispanic women. The location could have also posed as a constraint because metropolitan areas do not contain as many immigrant women as compared to rural areas closer to the borders or closer to farming towns and communities.

Lack of Understanding by Law Enforcement and Community Services

Many immigrant Hispanic women fail to attain help and report their abusers for many different reasons. Immigrant Hispanic women often face a very challenging and very different situation than most native born victimized women. Most of these women must deal with the issue of their culture being a constant internal barrier within themselves. Immigrant Hispanic women need law enforcement and community services to understand that most of their internal issues make it difficult for them to confront abusive situations. It is essential that law enforcement take it upon them to help women understand the services and resources available.

Having law enforcement and community services take the time to understand many of the cultural issues faced by immigrant Hispanic women is essential to stopping the victimization they encounter. Kasturirangan and Williams (2003) conducted a qualitative study examining the experience of Hispanic female survivors of domestic violence. Their aim was to understand the kinds of cultural attitudes a counselor might encounter when working with Hispanic battered women and helped to answer the question about racism, prejudice and a lack of understanding by the courts and police affecting the likelihood of immigrant women reporting their abuse or seeking help.

The basis of Kasturirangan and Williams' (2003) ideas came about previous research they found explaining women's experiences names racism as a cause for a lack of trust for institutions such as police and courts. In addition, women were often afraid to leave their abusers for fear of escalating violence (Salcido & Adelman, 2004). Canino and Canino (1993) determined it was important to understand the ways in which cultural variables might affect the decision to leave a violent situation.

The research by Kasturirangan and Williams' (2003) looked into this idea by conducting a study involving nine

Hispanic women who were survivors of domestic violence and had sought counseling. The women were asked questions regarding their perceptions of Hispanic women, cultural experiences in the United States, gender roles in upbringing, perception of family support, reasons for staying with an abusive partner, reasons for leaving an abusive partner, reaction to counseling received and desired characteristics in a counselor.

The results of Kasturirangan and Williams' (2003) study found the women often saw Hispanic women as submissive, not expressing their wants and needs, and catering to men. Many had faced racism and prejudice, even when trying to attain social services to get away from abuse. This is supported by Salcido and Adelman's (2004) study. Specifically, their study found that Hispanic women avoided calling the police because of the lack of protection they receive and the fear that calling the police would lead to their own arrest and deportation. About two-thirds of the women mentioned being raised to take care of the home, their children, and most importantly their husbands therefore, lacking resources to leave their situations.

Many of the support systems for the women were non-existent and many were even pressured to stay with their abusers (Sobagal et al., 1987). That same pressure was the reason many of the women stayed with their abusers and especially fear for their children's safety. The children were the women's strongest reason for leaving their abusers. Belknap and Sayeed's (2003) study found that the responses they received from their interviews was that if family was not nearby or if they did not have a good friend, then they did not speak to anyone and their problems had to stay private and hidden.

The findings regarding counselors were the focal point of Kasturirangan and Williams' (2003) results. The women were split on their feelings towards their counseling experiences. Some of the women felt their counselors had listened well to their problems, the other women felt the counselors did not understand the importance of family nor the cultural pressures the women experienced. The women, according to Kasturirangan and Williams (2003), wanted counselors who understood both their language and their culture. Almost all the women wanted a counselor who was Hispanic and someone both they and their children could talk to. The participants wanted family oriented

counselors. Listening was described as very important in contributing to a battered Hispanic woman's confidence in discussing her situation (Belknap & Sayeed, 2003).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The research was a qualitative study that utilized a survey and an in-depth interview design (Hagan, 2007). Hispanic female advocates and counselors, who counseled immigrant Hispanic women, were interviewed using an interview schedule which included open-ended questions and a survey. These tools were implemented to discover more about their experiences with abused immigrant women and the services they provided to them. Also examined were their professional opinions about the various factors involved in the abuse of immigrant Hispanic women.

Women who were victims of domestic violence were also interviewed in an effort to examine their first-hand experiences. The interviews consisted of an interview schedule which included open-ended questions and a survey. The purpose of the interviews was to provide a more in-depth understanding about the abuse they have experienced, the problems they felt their culture has caused for them while being abused, the types of obstacles they faced in obtaining help, and their understanding of the resources that were available at the time of their abuse.

Interviews of both the counselor/advocates and immigrant Hispanic women were used to develop the following research questions:

- "How does acculturation and/or the women's Hispanic cultural attitudes affect the above mentioned factors and their help-seeking behavior?"
- "How do the immigrant Hispanic women's language barriers affect their reporting and help-seeking behavior?"
- "Do the perceptions and attitudes of the victims of domestic violence affect or influence the way they seek help or prevent it?"
- "What are the perceptions of the women towards law enforcement in regards to how they handle the abusive situations and its influence on reporting abuse and seeking help?"
- "What is the extent of the women's knowledge about resources and services available to them and does it affect their likelihood of reporting or seeking help?"

Both groups of women were interviewed in this study due to their ability to provide different perspectives on the research questions presented. The counselors/advocates

are more aware of how abuse is defined thus they are better able to recognize and identify abuse, even abuse that has not yet been recognized by the victims themselves. In addition, counselors are able to provide professional insight into the victim's situations by breaking down and analyzing various aspects of the violent situations in a way that is more conducive to supporting the research presented. Lastly, they have a better understanding of policy and resource availability and issues, consequently making them better able to provide possible solutions for abuse.

The female participants who are survivors of domestic violence may not provide technical insight to abusive situations but they add actual experience of abusive situations, specific to immigrant Hispanic women. These women also provide firsthand knowledge of cultural issues, internal barriers they dealt with, and help-seeking behaviors. Most importantly, the women's experiences with domestic violence add a voice and gives validity to the specific struggles they face as immigrant Hispanic women dealing with this issue.

Qualitative Analysis

The interview questions and survey focused on the five questions presented earlier. The questions examined the women's own personal experiences with domestic violence and explored their understanding of the reasons behind the abuse they experienced. For the survivors of domestic violence, cultural-gender identity along with how they perceive male and female roles is analyzed.

A large focus within the interviews was to discover if culture plays a part in why Hispanic immigrant women are likely to become abused. The respondents' answers were also reviewed to see what type of factors they considered in deciding whether or not to seek help for the physical abuse, including the cultural reasons related to family and gender-role expectations, and psycho-social stressors such as English-speaking ability. Lastly, the participants were asked about the extent of their knowledge of available programs and resources when trying to get away from abusive relationships.

The interview questions and surveys of the counselors and advocates were developed to find out about their experiences working with Hispanic women who were victims of domestic violence. This included their understanding of the

women's perceptions of themselves, any cultural factors they had seen expressed and stressors they had to address with this particular group of women. It was also important to learn what they thought should be done to help women in similar abusive situations.

Advocate/Counselor Participants

The participants were from agencies in both Southern California and North Texas. For this study, the names of the participating agencies were changed to provide anonymity. Of the ten interviews, three worked with the Delta County District Attorney's Office, Division of Victim Services in Southern California. One counselor worked for the Moffat Police Department's Victim Services and the remaining women worked for Women's Rights in North Texas, a non-profit organization focused on ending domestic violence.

The heads of the agencies were contacted for participants to be part of this study. Participants were required to be Spanish-speaking abuse counselors or advocates who dealt mainly with victims of domestic violence who were immigrant Hispanic women.

Participants consisted of ten bilingual abuse counselors and advocates whose caseloads dealt primarily with immigrant Hispanic women. The counselor/advocates were all Hispanic women and ranged in age from 24 through 36. They all held a Bachelor's degree and at least half had Master's degrees. The degrees majors varied from liberal arts to clinical counseling. Together they had a combined work experience of almost 38 years working with immigrant Hispanic women. About 80-100% of each counselor/advocates caseload consisted of immigrant Hispanic women who were victims of domestic violence and were in need of advocates and counselors to help them deal with their volatile situations and to provide assistance in working with the justice system.

Instrumentation

A demographic survey was used to obtain information about the participant's age, sex, cultural and ethnic background of themselves and their parents, education, length of involvement with immigration, and continued likelihood of involvement with these women (see Appendix A).

The interview survey consisted of both close ended questions and open-ended questions focusing on the

participant's personal interest in abused immigrant women, along with questions pertaining to the participants' understanding of why their clients had become victims. Examples of questions asked were "From your experience, what have you come to believe are the main reasons for this type of victimization?" Questions focusing on the factors contributing to the abuse, and possible solutions and services needed to fight the victimization of these women were also addressed (see Appendix B).

Lastly, a pilot test interview was conducted with a counselor in Pasadena, California. The pilot interview helped to determine if questions were being asked correctly, if they were eliciting appropriate responses and confirming whether all areas of the study had been covered. As a result, some of the questions were re-worked and new questions, such as cultural and religious motivators, were added to cover more areas of this study (see Appendix C). The approximate duration of an interview was also determined from this interview.

Procedure for Interviewing Counselor/Advocates Participants

The participants were located in a variety of ways. First contact was made with the Forensic Controller of a

medical center in Rancho Otero, California, who was able to make contact with the director of the Delta County District Attorney's Office, Division of Victim Services who was able to set up interviews with counselors that fit the required criteria. Contact was also made with Victim Services at the Moffat Police Department where some of their advocates were interviewed for this study and were able to provide contact information for the Clinical Director of the Women's Rights Center. The Clinical Director then provided the remaining counselors needed for the study.

All agencies were informed of the nature and purpose of the interview prior to them requesting participants. The directors were provided with a copy of the Counselor Consent form and the questions that would be asked of the participants. Once participants were confirmed, interviews were scheduled and conducted at each agency at a time that was convenient for their respective counselor/advocate.

An initial pre-test interview was conducted on a single counselor from California. This was done to ensure that the questions were eliciting the appropriate responses and that they would be correctly understood by the participants. It was quickly realized that some of the questions were eliciting answers from the counselor based

on what she had been told from the abused women and not her professional opinion. A few of the questions had to be restructured so that they questioned the counselors on their opinions based on their experience working with immigrant Hispanic women who are victims of abuse (see Appendix C).

Questions also had to be added to the survey questionnaire as it was discovered that certain research topics of this thesis were not being completely addressed. For example, question number 9 and 10 were included so the participants could elaborate on the topics of religion and cultural perspectives (see Appendix C).

Before the interviews began, participants were informed that they would be asked to respond to several questions regarding their experiences counseling abused immigrant Hispanic women. Counselors/advocates were also provided with an Informed Consent Form that was approved by California State University, San Bernardino Institutional Review Board (see Appendix D). This form explained that their participation in this study was completely voluntary and that they were free not to answer any questions and could withdraw from the interview at any time. It was made clear to all of the counselors/advocates that their

responses would be held in the strictest of confidence. None of their names would be reported with the responses. Instead, they were assigned a number to be used in all of the paperwork and as their identification in the interview. It was further explained that their participation in this study would be used to help highlight the importance of considering the culture of Hispanic women in all future policies, programs, and support and justice systems.

The form also asked each participant if they were willing to be tape recorded during their interviews. It was explained that the tape recording would be used for transcription purposes only so that direct quotes from the interview could be used for the study. All audio taped interviews would be checked so that names were not used and that the assigned number would be the only identifier.

Lastly, participants were told that the interviews were not going to be used for any purpose other than this study. Then they were provided details as to where they could obtain the results of this study upon completion and contact information should they have further questions or concerns.

Once the participants had reviewed the consent form and signed it with their assigned number the interview

process began. The first part of the interviews started with a short demographics survey that took about five minutes to complete. Counselors/advocates had the option of completing the surveys and interviews in either English or Spanish but all chose to complete it in English. The surveys consisted of short questions that asked about their personal background such as their age, ethnicity, level of education, length of time working, and occupation of their parents.

The second half of the questions, known as the Interview Schedule, took about 45 minutes to complete. These questions inquired about their experiences working with immigrant Hispanic women who were victims of domestic violence and about their opinion about what should be done to help women in those situations.

Each participant was given the option of conducting the interview in either English or Spanish. The interviews were all conducted in English. Audio taping began after the survey was filled out and any concerns they may have had were answered. Each interviewee had a copy of the questions at all times. This made it easier for the participant to answer the questions and feel more comfortable. After the

interview, each counselor was given a debriefing statement and was provided with contact information should they have any further questions or concerns regarding the interview (see Appendix E).

The last step was to utilize the counselors/advocates as stepping stones to interview actual female immigrant Hispanic victims of domestic and sexual abuse. Snowball sampling was used by asking the counselors or advocates to recommend prospective participants. With the permission of the clinical director, the counselors and advocates contacted women in their caseloads that fit the requirements of the women needed for the study.

The counselors were assured that all the participants' interviews would be completely confidential and were provided a copy of the Survivor Consent form and the questions that would be asked. After reviewing the documentation, they proceeded to contact some of their clients and set appointments.

Victim Participants

The second set of interviewees consisted of ten female immigrant Hispanic who were survivors of domestic and/or sexual abuse and violence. A majority of the women were

recommended by the counselor participants of Women's Rights, a woman's shelter in North Texas. A couple were provided by the Delta County District Attorney's Office, Division of Victim Services out of Delta, California.

The women ranged in age from 24 through 41. All were only Spanish-speaking, Catholic and had immigrated to the United States as adults. The average duration of their abusive relationship was 10.25 years and all of the women were currently receiving help for the abuse they had suffered.

Out of the ten women, eight were illegal immigrants and the remaining two only had work permits. However, all were in the process of becoming U.S. citizens. The survivors' level of education did not exceed a junior high school level and all were employed. All the women had children and were either separated from their abuser or divorced.

These women were survivors of domestic and sexual violence and had sought counseling from the center. The criteria for selecting these women required that the women must have immigrated to the United States within her lifetime and be a native Spanish speaker, they had to be over 18 years of age and had experienced or were currently

experiencing an abusive intimate partner relationship. The women all spoke Spanish, with some having very little understanding of English. These participants resided in areas of Southern California and in various areas of a county in North Texas.

Instrumentation

The researcher/interviewer used a semi-structured interview schedule consisting of open and closed-ended questions. These questions were written in both English and Spanish by the researcher who is bilingual and bicultural.

The first section of the interview schedule was comprised of a survey which was used to obtain basic demographic information about the respondents and their intimate partners. The demographic form requested information about the participants' age, country of birth, cultural background, years in the United States (length of time living), marital status, length of time with partner, number of children, education, self-identified race/ethnicity, employment status, relationship to the abuser, and primary language. The survey was also written in both English and Spanish (see Appendix F).

The second part of the interview schedule consisted of a semi-structured interview. The interview consisted of 24 questions that were a mixture of simple questions and open-ended questions. The questions created were based on the women's culture, domestic violence experiences, help-seeking behaviors, and related barriers. The interview was divided into five sections incorporating the above mentioned factors.

The first set of questions focused on the respondents' cultural-gender identity. Some of the questions were modified versions of questions found in a study conducted by Kasturirangan and Williams (2003) (see Appendix G). Modified versions of their questions included, "What has growing up in your country taught you about being a woman?" The questions also examined how these women perceived male and female roles with questions such as, "What do you feel is the woman's role in an intimate relationship?"

The second section of questions focused on the women's own personal experiences with domestic violence. A modified version of these questions was created from a study by Harris, Firestone, and Vega (2005) where participants were asked about the types of abuse they encountered, including mental, physical, and sexual abuse. Such questions

included, "Has your partner ever forced you to have intimate relations against your will?" (see Appendix H).

The third section from the interview schedule looked at understanding the reasons for abuse. Included in this section was an in-depth question used to prompt a detailed discussion regarding the participant's history of abuse to see if any patterns could be discovered. Some of the questions also centered on discovering if culture played a part in why Hispanic immigrant women were likely to become abused. An example of this question asked, "How does your culturally developed female role play a part in the abuse you have experienced?"

The fourth section of the questionnaire were directed towards whether the respondents ever considered specific factors in deciding whether or not to seek help for the physical abuse, including their cultural factors related to family and gender-role expectations, and psycho-social stressors such as their English-speaking ability. Questions included asking the women about how language barriers played a role in their help-seeking behavior and how their perceptions of the police could inhibit them from reaching out for help. An example of this question is, "Do

your perceptions of the police affect the likelihood of you contacting them in cases of violence?"

The final section of questions asked the participants' about their lack of knowledge about resources and how it affected the immigrant women when trying to get away from abusive relationships (see Appendix I). The questions focused on finding out about needed resources for immigrant women and to see if any current available resources provide some type of assistance to these women. Also, the questions attempted to discover barriers to services for women who have experienced domestic violence. Lastly, the questions were used to help assess services needed by women who have experienced domestic violence.

Procedure For Interviewing Victim Participants

The counselors and advocates for Women's Rights and the Delta District Attorney's Office, Division of Victim Services agreed to help with finding participants to be interviewed. The researcher explained the nature and purpose of the study so that they could provide that information to prospective participants.

The clinical director gave permission for the counselor and advocates to contact the women in their case loads who fit the criteria. The women that agreed to be

interviewed were asked the location of where they would be most comfortably interviewed. All participants chose to have the interviews conducted at the Women's Rights Center or Delta office. Also, all the interview sessions were conducted by the researcher, in the participants' language of preference. In all cases, all the interviews were conducted in Spanish.

An initial pre-test interview was conducted on a single survivor. This was done to ensure that the questions were eliciting the appropriate responses and that they were being correctly understood by the participants. It was discovered that a few of the questions were a little difficult to understand and had to be simplified.

Some of the questions also had to be asked in a way that solicited answers that were reflective of their mindset prior to receiving help and not after. For example, questions were preceded with the phrases such as, "While you were in an abusive relationship..." or "Before you received help for the abuse..." Once the questions were re-worked and finalized, the actual ten interviews were scheduled (see Appendix J).

Prior to the interviews starting, participants were given a Survivors Informed Consent form that is approved by

CSUSB's Institutional Review Board. The form and researcher explained that their participation in this study was completely voluntary. They were free to not answer any questions and they could terminate the interview at any time. They were also assured that their names and anything they said about themselves and all the answers to the questions were completely private and confidential. Their names were not used at any time. Instead, participants were provided with a letter to be placed on all paperwork and to be used in tape recording (see Appendix K).

Furthermore, audio taping was requested to be permitted and all participants allowed it. It was first explained that they could say no to have the interview recorded. All paperwork and tape-recordings would be checked to confirm that there was no way they could be identified and that all recordings would be destroyed as soon as they had been transcribed. Lastly, the female survivors were assured that this study was in no way related to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and that if there was a question in regards to their current immigration status it was simply for informational purposes.

Once the consent forms were signed with the letter assigned, a short demographics survey was given. The survey took about five minutes to complete and asked respondents about their age, race, country of origin, immigration status, level of education, religious beliefs and marital status. Upon completion of the survey, an audio recording was initiated and the interview began.

The interview took between an hour and an hour and a half to complete. The interview was a semi-structured interview that allowed the women to elaborate on important ideas, perspectives, and experiences. The women were encouraged to continue with thoughts, ideas, and encounters they had and were given substantial opportunity to express themselves.

Once the interview was completed the women were given a debriefing statement which explained to them more about the study. They were informed that their participation could help women in similar situations who were afraid to come forward about their abuse. The debriefing statement also explained that their participation might help to improve community and legal support for abused immigrant women. It was also stated in the form that a possible risk of emotional distress from re-telling their stories of

abuse was possible due to their involvement in this study. To help offset any possible stress, the researcher provided contact information to help hotlines and reminded them that they could contact their counselor at any time (see Appendix L).

As soon as the interviews were over, all the surveys and interviews were checked to ensure that the women used no names or identifying data other than the letter assigned.

The researcher then transcribed the dialogue of the interviews, verbatim. The researcher and two other fluent Spanish-speakers conducted translation of the transcribed interviews. The first individual was a first generation Hispanic college graduate who had minored in Spanish. The second individual was born and raised in Mexico, had come to the United States in her early 20s, had lived here for over 20 years and had learned to speak English. The researcher selected these two participants due to their bilingual status and their ability to understand the colloquial Spanish that most of these women spoke.

The researcher and the two volunteers translated all the interviews from Spanish to English. However, so that confidentiality was maintained, pieces of interviews where

given to each translator at different times. This assured that no translator had a complete interview at any given time, however, maintaining that all interviews were translated by each translator.

Once all the interviews were translated, the researcher compared them to one another to make sure there was consistency in the responses. If all three translators produced the same response then the likelihood of researcher bias was removed. The transcribed interviews were then used for qualitative data analysis.

To assist in the write up of the information, aliases were given to both the counselors/advocates and the survivors of domestic violence. This was done to remove the need to refer to the women by their assigned number or letter.

Validity and Reliability

To help maintain validity and reliability within this study, different procedures were used to both analyze and interpret the data, such as the use of reflexivity to make sure the researcher was aware about her own potential biases and predispositions.

Data triangulation was used to provide better validity. The multiple interviews from both the counselors/advocates and the abused women were used to identify common patterns and if there were any additional agreeing information that could be obtained from the different interviews.

When interpreting the interviews, low inference descriptors were used in which direct quotes from the interviews were used to describe attitudes and behaviors and to add voice and depth to the issues they faced during the abuse. To increase the validity of this study, both groups of participants were asked for feedback, especially the victims. This was done by providing a debriefing statement that explained the reasons for the types of questions being asked. They were then asked if they felt each set of questions adequately supported each topic.

Limitations

The purpose of this study was to provide further explanation of variables that had been suggested in other literature as being contributing factors to the occurrence of the abuse and victimization among immigrant Hispanic women. Given the small number of interviews and the small

amount of open-ended questions, the possibility of not being able to make generalizations concerning the reasons behind the victimization and the problems encountered by immigrant Hispanic women was an issue.

Another limitation was the sample set. The participants represented only a specific number of women from specific areas of Southern California and a county in North Texas. This left out women from rural areas and central and northern areas of California and Texas and the rest of the United States.

Another limitation was that the only women who were involved in the study were those who had asked for help from the participating agencies. This could potentially bias the study in that these women already have a different mind set than those who still live secretly with their abuse. The women who have yet to seek assistance can not be accounted for and therefore generalization could become a problem, as it may lack validity for this unspoken for group.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In conducting this research, it was important to discover how cultural issues, self perceptions, attitudes about law enforcement and lack of knowledge about resources prevented abused immigrant Hispanic women from leaving abusive relationships. It was also important to understand how language barriers and psycho-social stressors affected their reporting and help-seeking behaviors; however, it was also a goal of this study to get their personal stories of abuse. This study not only focused on the stories of the survivors of domestic violence but also the experiences of the counselors and advocates who have helped them with their struggles with breaking the cycle of violence.

Understanding the stories of the survivors of domestic violence helps to better comprehend the types of abuse, the internal struggles they dealt with, and the external issues they encountered when seeking help. Knowing the perspectives of the counselors and advocates, in regards to the experiences of the women they helped, was important because of the professional insight they could provide to help understand the above mentioned factors involved in the

abuse of immigrant Hispanic women. In all, the participants' stories and perspectives will aid in answering the research topics presented.

Counselors and Advocates: Commitment to Helping Abused Immigrant Women

As mentioned, it was essential to get the experiences of the counselors and advocates who worked with immigrant Hispanic women. In this section it is important to understand why they have committed to helping a population of women who face so many barriers when dealing with issues of domestic violence. Not only are the reasons about why they initially got into this field examined but also a few of the initial challenges they faced which helped to strengthen their commitment to this profession.

In reviewing their interviews, it was discovered that the counselors and advocates started working in victim counseling and advocacy for different reasons. Counselor Tanis who has worked for Women's Rights for the past three years stated:

I saw the need. I didn't realize how many women were abused. I didn't realize how many of the Hispanic population experienced abuse and the severity of the

abuse that they experienced and that's kind of what motivated me to continue to learn more about it.

(October, 2009)

An advocate from Delta, named Angela, related, "I kind of fell into it because there are a limited number of bilingual people who are able to communicate with immigrant women from Latin America, especially from Mexico" (January, 2009). Sofia, a counselor from Women's Rights, whose caseload is 95% immigrant Hispanic women, stated:

It's an issue that is personal for me and I think that it's very important, so I started volunteering and I really enjoyed it. I just felt like I was really giving back so I decided to go into it as a profession. (September, 2009)

Being a voice for a group of women whose culture has taught them to remain silent about domestic violence is often challenging; however, it tends to be the least frustrating of all the issues. Josephina, who has been an advocate in Moffat for the last 8 years, explained that one of the most trying challenges was having the survivors of domestic violence accept that there actually was a problem. According to her:

A lot of the women get referred here by schools, by other agencies, CPS, and so sometimes they are not coming because they have chosen to come, sometimes a friend or a family member has told them "hey you need to go" and they don't see past the "my friend is the one who sent me here so I'm not sure what I'm doing here." (November, 2009)

Another very difficult challenge many of the counselors initially faced in helping the abused immigrant Hispanic women was having them take the preliminary steps in leaving their abusive partners. Many advocates stated that when they first started in this field they knew that this would be an issue but did not initially understand how deep the women's cultural identities affected their willingness to get help. Most of these women were convinced by their abusers into believing that anything they wanted to accomplish was not possible without their influence or help. According to the counselors, this oftentimes is the reason these abused women start to construct barriers within themselves. Vina, who has only been working with immigrant Hispanic women for the past year, has already realized this and stated:

For the Latinos, machismo is big and this phenomena is engraved, bien pegados [really stuck], to their thinking and to their beliefs. And that is the biggest challenge working with a community that believes something that is not right. So because of their beliefs they stay. I have to challenge their beliefs so that on their own they could figure out this is not the right thing for me. (October, 2009)

Other counselors and advocates agreed with the frustrations experienced by this counselor and had described how they dealt with the exact same challenges with the women they counseled.

Although initial career motivations differed, reasons for helping immigrant Hispanic women were similar amongst the counselors and advocates. They wanted these women to feel supported and understood; and to know what resources were available to them. They wanted to provide both support and awareness for domestic violence victims within the Hispanic community both culturally and legally. This type of support can often add to the encouragement and empowerment these women needed to move past the barriers they face. One finding of this study was just how strongly

committed the counselors and advocates were to helping this group of women.

Abuse

Having established a general idea as to why many of the counselors and advocates get into this field, another important goal of this research was to describe the forms of abuse experienced by the participants. To get a better understanding of the barriers immigrant Hispanic women deal with, one must first know about the specific types of abuse they had to endure while in these relationships. Only upon comprehending the types of abuse, can one really start to understand the root of where many of the issues of domestic violence stem from. Many of the participants not only explained the types of abuse but also provided personal stories of specific violent situations to give a better overall picture of what the domestic violence really looked like in their everyday lives.

The research showed that verbal and emotional abuse goes hand in hand with physical abuse. According to the counselors and advocates, where there is emotional and verbal abuse there will be physical abuse. As Claudia, a counselor who has worked with immigrant women for four

years, stated, "More often than not, they will have experienced physical abuse and verbal is always there. Verbal and emotional abuses will absolutely 100% always be there. For Hispanic women, physical abuse is always there" (January, 2009). Verdad, a counselor with 12 years of experience working with domestic violence victims, explained that verbal and emotional abuse were not exclusive of one another and calculated that over 99% of the Hispanic women in her caseload had simultaneously experienced both types of abuse. Many of the counselors and advocates stated it was very rare to come across a woman who had only experienced verbal and emotional abuse (October, 2009).

The survivors of domestic violence who were interviewed for this study substantiated the information presented by the counselors and advocates. All ten of the survivors had experienced verbal, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse during their relationships. Almost 50% of the women interviewed had experienced verbal, emotional, and sexual abuse on a daily basis. Teresa, a survivor of domestic violence and a mother of three, explained how the emotional abuse affected her, she stated, "He severally lowered my morale. He made me feel really bad as a person

and he made me reach a point that I felt I wasn't worth anything. I, myself, believed that I didn't matter" (November, 2009).

When it came to physical abuse, many of the survivors stated comments similar to the one expressed by Paula, who was physically abused by her boyfriend of 9 years, who said, "The abuse was everyday, it was everyday! It was verbal, physical and sexual and I didn't want to have sex with him" (September, 2009). Yolanda, a mother of two, gave details about the time she was first hit in public, "He left me a black eye once. He hit me while we were in the street. He punched me and kicked me right there in the street" (December, 2009). Juana, who first reached out to Women's Rights two years ago, shared her story about when abuse first happened to her:

It was literally like the second day of being with him, he abused me physically. He slapped me and he threw me outside of the apartment and I don't know what happened then but then he dragged me back inside by my hair. From that day on the abuse continued and it was many years and it happened many, many times. (July, 2009)

All the survivors shared their own stories of a particular violent experience. All of the participants, survivors, counselors and advocates, were able to explain the severity of the abuse with detailed recollection of the survivor's specific experiences.

Another type of abuse that was common in the experiences of the women was the sexual abuse. Many of the counselors shed light on the fact that sexual abuse is one of the major abuses that immigrant Hispanic women often experience in their abusive relationships. They agreed that the reason for the sexual abuse was another way for their partners and spouses to maintain control in the relationships. Lora, who is the youngest of all the counselors interviewed, explained:

The intensity of the abuse is so extreme. I mean, it's not just "he punched me" or "he pushed me" or "he pulled my hair". There is a lot of sexual abuse that takes place, there's a lot of verbal and emotional abuse along with the sexual and so I think that is one of the biggest abuses that I have seen. (July, 2009)

Several of the women further supported this statement and explained that their partners would force them to have sexual relations with them. It was found through this

research that sexual abuse was often the final event in the abusive incident. The verbal or emotional abuse and the physical abuse always preceded the sexual abuse when the women would recall their violent experiences. A lot of the women's confrontations sounded almost identical to the statement made by Verdad, who stated, "He would shove me, drag me by the hair, punch, hit in the face, choke, and even threaten to kill me and then he would force me to have relations even though I didn't want to" (November, 2009).

Having suffered through these terrible experiences, all the survivors interviewed found the courage to get away from their abusive relationships. Anita, who spent six years in an abusive relationship, explained her reasoning for leaving:

If I had continued in that abusive relationship it would have ended badly. It was going to end in death. Moving little by little in an abusive relationship, it [abuse] starts to become normal. It started to become normal for me and each time it was the same until I realized that if I stayed, one day I would die.
(March, 2009)

Upon leaving their relationships they found it essential to talk to a counselor about the struggles they dealt with and

find ways to move forward with their lives. The research found that in helping the women, the counselors continue to get a better understanding of the abuses suffered, and the cultural attitudes and psycho-social factors behind it.

Acculturation/Cultural Factors

The major goal of this study was to find out if acculturation and/or cultural factors contributed and possibly prolonged the abuse immigrant Hispanic women endured and if it influenced their help seeking behaviors. The research found that the most common reason given by counselors and advocates as the cause of the abuse of immigrant Hispanic women was the Hispanic culture.

It was confirmed that the Hispanic culture has traditional roles established for both men and women. Men, according to their roles, are suppose to be the financial supporters, heads of their households, the ones who finalize all the decisions, and the ones who establish the rules. Teresa, a woman who has lived in the United States for the past 10 years, stated that in Mexico the men direct the relationships and make the decisions and the woman had to accept it and support the decisions he made (December, 2009). As Carmen, a victim of domestic violence for 11

years simply put it, "If you get married you have to do what your husband says" (March, 2009). Erica, a counselor from Delta with six years of experience, explained it as having to do with cultural upbringing. She said:

I think some of it has to do with cultural upbringing. I think with this population specifically, a lot of times its normal for them to have that patriarchy and that males be the head of the household and have their kind of final say and that be the defining voice in the relationship and so its normal for those types of controlling behaviors to be happening. (February, 2009)

The women, according to the ideas expressed, are the primary care givers for their children and partners. They are also primarily responsible for taking care of the home, fulfilling their husband's needs, supporting and complying with all the decisions their husbands make. Many of the survivors stated that Latinos think that women are simply suppose to have children, take care of the home, and the husband can do whatever he wanted to do. Leti, who experienced one of the lengthiest periods of abuse stated, "My obligations with him were to take care of him, take care of my son, and my house. It was my obligation to take

care of the home" (October, 2009). Hispanic immigrant women are taught to be submissive. Paula explained how she felt during the time she was in her abusive relationship:

I was taught to be submissive and always take care of him. When he got home from work and he was tired from work I had to take care of him. That was, in my case, what I did. I made sure he was okay even if I wasn't, as long as he was. That was what was important. (September, 2009)

Additional findings showed that while a woman is taught to be submissive, a man is taught to be macho. The need for a man to be macho, in the Hispanic culture, is essential to being respected and a dominant figure. The idea of having to be macho includes the belief of having a sense of entitlement over the women in their lives. According to the research, this often means controlling them however they see fit, whether it is by being a strong male role model or using abuse to control them. Sophia, a counselor who has worked with immigrant women for three years stated she had heard this several times from many of her clients. She said:

I think, one, it is a sense of entitlement, especially with this population. It goes back to the history of

the relationship, the dynamics of the relationship and the male role, so males feel that they are entitled to do those kinds of things to somebody. That's one of the things I've heard. (September, 2009)

Many of the survivors interviewed also detailed machismo as a reason for the abuse they suffered. As Leti, a mother of four, explained:

In his family there was always machismo on the part of his dad and his mother did whatever the father said. And I think that because he always saw that, I think that affected him in that he acts that way with me. One has to listen to and do whatever he says. (July, 2009)

Teresa, who is currently separated from her abusive boyfriend had a very similar view on machismo and explained:

It was because of his dad. His dad was very machista meaning that only what he says matters and the woman has to do what he says and to support everything. For example, he wouldn't cook for anything, he wouldn't help me for anything because he was a man and all of the home obligations were mine because I am the woman

and I have to do all of it. The man only has to pay the bills. (November, 2009)

The research shows how the culturally determined male and female roles and the women's strong beliefs in these roles severely impact their help seeking behavior. Not only does it often prevent them from seeking help but it also contributes to the abuse they experience and keeps them in abusive relationships for longer periods of time. The counselors and advocates definitively believed that the established cultural roles had the utmost influence on these women being victims of domestic violence. Lara, with an 80% caseload of immigrant Hispanic women, stated:

Culture plays a big part because it's kind of engraved. I think they have a harder time because of the religion, because of the culture. You know you marry somebody, you stay with that person and you never leave them. (July, 2009)

Yesenia, a counselor with Women's Rights explained:

Some of it can also be the culture. [long pause] Males in the Latin culture are seen as the head of the households. They are the ones who work, you do as they say. The mother of the house, the wife, stays home and takes care of the kids. That stuff, the nurturing

stuff is her responsibility. You don't do anything outside of the home. As so sometimes, whenever the wife decides to step outside of those boundaries or limits, some of that starts tension. (October, 2009)

Another finding that came to light was several of the advocates and counselors believed that because of their belief in relationship roles, the women had developed co-dependency patterns that they saw from their family origin. Here, the men are taught to want women who will depend on them and are taught to be dominant over them. Both the men and the women carry these ideas with them into their relationships. As Juana, the youngest survivor interviewed described:

I think that education has a lot to do with it; the education, the customs, the tradition. In his family there is abuse on the part of his father abusing his mother and I think a lot of the way he was raised has to do with the atmosphere of abuse. He carried that atmosphere of abuse with him into the relationship. (July, 2009)

The Hispanic male mentality of needing to dominate these women helps to create barriers which prevent the women from reporting their abuse. Continually highlighted were how

gender ideologies were part of the abuse experienced. As Erica, a counselor for Delta stated:

I think it has to do with their gender roles. The male being the head of the household and the woman is secondary in that process. But also the fact that they have very gender specific roles as far as what males and females should be doing. (February, 2009)

Many of the survivors understood this and stated that when they initially were in the relationship they believed they did not have any value. As Yolanda stated, "At that time, I felt like I had no value and because he was the man, he was worth more than I did" (December, 2009).

Perceiving themselves as the lesser beings, the abused immigrant Hispanic women felt they had no reason to complain about abuse and therefore failed to report it. This research shows how these gender ideologies prevent the women from seeking help.

In addition, it was discovered that the women often times did not realize abuse was occurring or downplayed the severity of their situations because of how they interpreted or understood their gender roles. Tanis, a counselor whose entire caseload is immigrant Hispanic women illustrated:

The man has control over her and he knows she is going to do what he says that she is supposed to do. And I think it's embedded, you know, you're supposed to do whatever your husband tells you to do, you're supposed to serve your husband, your suppose to be submissive to your husband and I think there's a misconception of what that means. (October, 2009)

Many of the counselors explained that the women often minimize the abuse by stating the abuse was not bad at all or he had only verbally assaulted her. As Pilar, a counselor with three years experience explained, "There is no excuse for hitting them but in their heads there is because when the victims come here one of the things they say is, 'He's educating me, he wants me to be a better person'" (September, 2009). Many of the women do not realize how detrimental the abuse is to their mental state. This is a serious obstacle which keeps them in abusive situations and deters them from reaching out for help.

This study also found that the role of the submissive wife has been engrained in these women since childhood which affected their probability of them seeking help. Many of the abused immigrant women confirmed this was a major contributing factor that often stopped them from attaining

help. All of them had mothers and even grandmothers who were perfect models of the submissive housewife. As Juana, a survivor whose has been abused since the age of 17 stated:

Mainly they instilled in me to preserve the family and unfortunately, in my culture, I have noticed a lot of people that I know, they give Mexican men rights because they are men. He is the one that rules, he has the control over things and he is the one that is going to order. (October, 2009)

The women had felt as though they were not good partners or mothers because they were complaining or opposing the abusive situations in which they were living in. As Angela, a counselor who has worked with immigrant Hispanic women for four years explained:

The most difficult and challenging thing for women is to realize that they have options. For a lot of these women, their parents, their grandparents and their great grandparents have put up with men hitting them and so it's very expected for them to just put up with it. (January, 2009)

Adding to their emotional stress, the research found they were taking their issues outside of the family dynamic

which is considered unacceptable in the Hispanic culture. As Pilar, a counselor with three years experience put it, "A lot of times you hear from the women that their mothers and grandparents told them, 'You have to carry your cross.' Meaning, whatever life brings you, you have to stick with it" (September, 2009). The women were not supposed to take their problems and issues outside the home, she must simply accept them. As Teresa, a woman who lived with 8 years of abuse stated:

Well in our culture they talk about that you have to stay with your husband or partner and you have to deal with things because they are a part of the marriage. The problems are part of a marriage and you always have them. (December, 2009)

There was a general consensus shared among the women that all problems belong solely to the women. Yolanda, a 34 year old survivor, declared that women had to learn to deal with everything from their husbands (November, 2009). In accepting their abusive roles, the women explained that reporting abuse or speaking to a stranger to get help was not even a concept that initially crossed their minds.

The interviews also highlighted how the abused immigrant women had been taught that nobody should know

about the problems going on in the home. Reaching out for support was unthinkable, even if the woman's life was possibly in jeopardy. Many of the abused immigrant women reported that those people in their lives that they thought they could depend on to help them like relatives, and even immediate family members had failed to provide comfort or assistance. Moreover, some of them would try to persuade the victim to remain in her relationship because it was what was expected of a wife/partner. Vina, a Mexican-American counselor explained the following:

Not having the support from their family and maybe they do have family members here [US] but the family members are saying, "You should stay", "Give him another chance", "It's your fault, if you just do whatever he says you won't be going through this." So the message they get from their family is huge.

(October, 2009)

Without having their family on their side, many of the women interviewed believed they were had no options but to stay with their abuser or be looked down upon by their families.

Along with the family support, the research discovered that many of the women looked to their religion for

guidance and support. The counselors and survivors were split evenly on whether religion was supportive or a deterrent of the abusive relationships. All of the women interviewed are Catholic and in this religion it is held that marriage is sacred and should be preserved. Due to this, many of the women often deal with an internal struggle of survival versus religious beliefs.

As affirmed by the survivors and counselors, the religious doctrine of Catholicism teaches the women that marriage is for life. Verdad, a survivor who experienced 12 years of abuse stated, "Marriage has to be for life. You have to be with your partner and no one else and you have to stay with him until death, whether you get along or not" (November, 2009). Women who choose to leave their abusive husbands also have to deal with the stigma of divorce. As Teresa, a 27 year old survivor of abuse simply stated, "Well they see it [divorce] as bad. It's like you are marked" (November, 2009). A counselor named Tanis from Women's Right also echoed this statement when she said, "They [survivors] have this understanding that when you get married it's for life. There's no reason for you to get a divorce. Divorce is taboo" (October, 2009).

According to many of the counselors, many of the abused women use prayer to ask for help because they understand that they are in a dangerous situation however, they refuse to leave them. Angela, a counselor whose caseload is 90% immigrant Hispanic women explained:

Okay this is how it is...A lot of women say, "If I pray to God he'll help me out of it." They think "All I can do is pray. I can't leave, I can't call anybody to help me, the only thing I can do is pray to God.

(January, 2009)

As explained by another Delta counselor named Claudia, some of the women take this to another level and believe they are being punished for some unknown reason. She expressed the following:

Many of the women feel that if there is a problem you have to pray about it. But some think, "Well what did I do that was so bad that I am being punished. In this way and whatever it is that I did that was so bad then maybe I deserve it now. (January, 2009)

Due to much of the religious doctrine, in regards to marriage, some of the women revealed negative experiences when reaching out to their churches for help. An advocate from Moffat named Josephine with eight years experience

explained that some of the women she helped had reached out to their churches for guidance but had encountered resistance from the various members of the congregation (June, 2009). Some of the women stated that they were encouraged to work things out with their abusive husbands and to not consider divorce due to its non-acceptance in the church. Sofia, a Mexican American counselor, detailed how a woman suffered severe abuse after receiving this type of encouragement.

Sometimes they [survivors] have some not so positive help because they [church] would encourage them to stay in relationships and the abuser was not changing. That just furthered the cycle of violence. For example, one of my clients, her priest or pastor, he encouraged her to work through the problems in their relationship, so she gave him another chance and he ended up breaking her leg. It was really hard hearing that. (September, 2009)

As reported by many of the counselors and advocates, when the women do reach out to their churches or priests for help they often get encouraged to stay or work things out. As one counselor stated, Yesenia from Women's Rights:

More often than not a lot of ladies that come in are Catholic and so they are in that mental state where they think, "I have to stay with that person for the rest of my life." It's just the way they believe and so they think, "I can't just divorce them or my parents will turn against me, my family won't support me" and so they just stay in that cycle. And when they finally do reach out to their churches they have at times tried to keep the couples together and try to make them work it out. It's almost like they are forcing them to work things out as oppose to getting them individual help. (November, 2009)

Lora, an advocate with a Master's degree, described how if a priest does not understand the dynamic of the circle of violence it could possibly put the woman in danger due to their lack of understanding of 1)the severity of the situation and 2) the risks of a woman staying in this type of situation (July, 2009). The counselors and advocates who did not see religion as a support system for these women explained that this is one of the biggest barriers they have to break through. The research shows that for a little more than half of the women interviewed religion was more of a reason for them to accept abuse then get away from it.

One the other side of this, the research found a fair amount of survivors and counselors who agreed that religion was a positive influence in helping the immigrant Hispanic women who suffer with domestic violence. Many of the counselors and advocates explained that many of their clients used their religion as a source of strength to get through their emotional process. As Erica, who has three years experience working with immigrant Hispanic women, mentioned "A lot them do use religion as a source for strength and you do hear that all the time. Women tell you, 'You know, I wouldn't have gotten through this if it wasn't for God' and you can see that it is a really big thing for them" (February, 2009).

Along with religious motivation, churches themselves have offered profound help to several of the women. As some of the counselors explained, church is one of the few places these women can go where they are not constantly questioned about their whereabouts or reasons for going. It lowers the suspicion that many of the abusers develop about their partners. While they are there, many of the women have become aware of the resources available to them. Many of the counselors have heard about many churches offering

these women help to get out of their abusive relationships and provide them resources.

In many of the interviews it was found that one of the major resources the women are receiving from their congregations is support and a confirmation that leaving their abusive relationship is okay. Lora, an advocate with an 80% immigrant Hispanic women caseload explained:

I think if a priest or pastor is able to kind of guide them and tell them, "You know, it is okay for you to leave" and give them that comfort, it motivates them because that guilt is taken away. (July, 2009)

Josephine, another advocate with Moffat agreed and stated:

Because they believe that they are suppose to stay with them [significant other], when a priest tells them, "You don't have to stay in this relationship" or "You have options, even though the Bible says this, your safety is first" it makes the women rethink their entire situation and understand that abuse is not acceptable no matter what. (June, 2009)

Several of the women interviewed also supported this idea and explained that their priest had told them to leave because of the danger that they were in. This study shows that having positive reinforcement from their churches has

helped some of the women overcome the barriers they face in regards to their religious beliefs. This type of support has led some of the participants to seek help and remove themselves from their abusive situations.

Aside from the religious aspect of the Hispanic culture, another issue that was found was the Hispanic culture can at times stimulate an abuser's insecurities. Some of the advocates from Women's Right saw a strong cultural conflict between the American and Hispanic cultures occurring in the households of the abused women. Sofia, a counselor with three years experience confirmed this:

If a woman wants to do something else outside of what her husband feels is acceptable, then that usually will cause some of the abuse to escalate. Especially because Hispanic women, they have a lot more opportunities here and so they want to take advantage of those opportunities and then that kind of spurs on some of the conflict that arises in those relationships because that's not "their role".

(September, 2009)

Many of the women came from countries where there were not very many opportunities for women to become self-sufficient

or independent of men, so they did not ever believe that it was an option for them. The interviews showed that the longer the woman was in the United States, the more she realized that it was possible to have an education, a career, an opinion and render their own decisions. Lora, an advocate of Puerto Rican descent explained:

The difference between experiencing it here [United States] versus somewhere else is that once they get here they realize that they are able to talk about it [abuse]. Where they are from that's just a normal way of living, I mean, there are no resources available, so that's just kind of the way they live life. When they come to the United States they start realizing, "Wow, I don't have to live this way." (July, 2009)

According to the participants, resentment starts to build within their husbands and partners toward the American culture and the women themselves because they see the traditional cultural roles changing towards an ideology that makes the women more independent and not as submissive. The men in these relationships also start to develop self-doubt or it intensifies because of the lack of the female's dependability on them. The men were starting to experience their wives having opinions of their own and

questioning them on the decisions he had made. According to Vina, a counselor from Women's Right, the abusers uses violence and emotional abuse to retain their control over their significant others, especially as the women start to break away from traditional cultural norms. Angela, a counselor in Delta further supported this and explained:

Men use the physical abuse. Where they will just beat them, slap them, push them, shove them, and use a lot of emotional abuse. For a lot of these women who are illegal it's a different form of emotional abuse. There partners tell them things like, "Well if you go to the cops then they're going to send you back to your country, so you're better off staying with me." Or they will tell them things like, "Go ahead and tell the cops, they are going to deport you and put your kids in foster care. (January, 2009)

Tanis, a counselor with four years experience further explained these types of insecurities by explaining how the men often feel a sense of entitlement in regards to the women in their relationship and feel that they must do whatever is necessary to maintain this control. She states:

When the men come here [United States], there is this idea that they need to keep things like the way they

were in their countries. So when the women come here they think that because they're here, that they don't have any rights and so they are more willing to put up with things because of the fear of being illegal or fear of police. So abusers use this fear against them.

(October, 2009)

The research was able to highlight how for the women interviewed, their main struggle was dealing with the traditional Hispanic culture and the new liberating American culture. When it came to their relationships, the new liberating ideologies of the American cultures often battled with the engrained, culturally granted, authority and superiority of their husbands or partners. The conflicting cultural beliefs often helped to increase the abuse the immigrant Hispanic women experienced and helped to deter them from reporting abuse and seeking help.

Social Learning Theory

The research also shows how Social Learning Theory can be used to understand the specific cultural factors in this study. Various examples can be seen in the results presented such as when a woman is constantly being told that marriage is for life and divorce is not an option.

Many of the abused women were receiving this message from family, friends, and even their religious support and would internalize this message. This caused the women to believe that leaving an abusive relationship was not an option for them. It was not until the abused immigrant women received positive stimuli, either from religious leaders or from those around them, did they finally start to believe they had options other than staying in the abusive relationship.

Social Learning Theory can also be used to understand the culturally determined male and female roles and how they can keep immigrant Hispanic women in abusive situations for longer periods of time. The abused women in this study were taught from a very young age to be submissive to the men in their lives. Many of the women had internalized the idea that the men in their lives were superior, many of the women failed to reach out for help because they valued themselves as less important, therefore having no reason to complain.

Adding to the idea of male and female roles, many of the abused immigrant Hispanic women were also taught from a young age that a woman's role was to be a mother and housewife. Many of the women in this study were taught to preserve the family and felt guilty or ashamed if they

complained about the abuse in their relationships. The idea of breaking up the family unit was often enough to keep some of the abused women from reporting abuse or seeking help.

The research also helped to affirm some of the work done by Martina Acevedo in her study on battered immigrant Hispanic women and the information she presented on Social Learning Theory (2000). In her study, Acevedo (2000) examined the perceptions and attitudes of abused women and their help-seeking behaviors.

Acevedo presented the idea that the battered immigrant Hispanic woman's behavior is determined by the relationship between environmental and self-generated stimuli (2000). The internal process can occur through verbal messages, images, or physiologically which can cause a battered woman to continue to live within an abusive relationship (Acevedo, 2000). This can be seen in the abused immigrant Hispanic women interviewed for this study. Many of the women explain of these types of stimuli when they talk about learning about their culturally defined female roles and what is expected of them and the affect of religion doctrine on their decision to either stay in an abusive relationship or leave.

Martina Acevedo also presented the idea that stimuli also works in the opposite direction in that an abused woman is also more likely to report abuse or leave her violent relationship if she is exposed to even more positive situations (2000). This can be seen in some of the responses of the women interviewed for this study. Several of the women mentioned they had received support and confirmation that leaving their abusive relationship was okay, often from friends or religious leaders. This positive reinforcement helped to motivate the participants to leave their relationships. It also helped to remove the guilt many of the participants felt about breaking up the family unit.

Language Barriers

The second major goal of this study was to discover how language barriers affect the reporting of abuse and the help-seeking behaviors of abused immigrant Hispanic women. A continuing theme amongst the advocates and counselors was many of the immigrant Hispanic women they helped, faced a variety of difficulties when trying to leave their abusive relationships with a particular struggle being the language barriers. As Lora, an advocate from Moffat simply put it,

"A major problem is the language barriers. To speak with the police officer, to speak with any service agencies, there's a language barrier with them" (July, 2009). Another counselor, Tanis from Women's Right, explained that the language barrier often kept the women from speaking out about their abuse. She said:

The language is a big deal. I have a lot of women who say, "I call the police but the officers don't know Spanish and so my child had to translate." So I think that's a very big thing that the women don't speak English and that in itself prevents them from being outspoken. (October, 2009)

The research was able to establish that the breakdown of communication is detrimental to the women reaching out for help. The fear of having to survive, of finding ways to get away from their abusers, and of seeking help are often enhanced due to the inability to speak English.

Another language barrier that was found was when the women attempt to seek help from law enforcement or community services. Many of the women live in communities where the primary language spoken is Spanish. However, when they have to deal with law enforcement, the legal system or have to get assistance from government programs and

services, English is the established language, making it very unlikely that the women will go to these services for help. Anita, a victim of her boyfriend's abuse for six years, explained that she had difficulty going to the police because of her lack of English. She explained:

My sister would always tell me she would accompany me [to the police station] because she spoke a little bit of English. The last time I had to have my son explain for me. I would tell him, "tell them this, tell them that". It is very difficult. (March, 2009)

Juana, a 24 year old survivor, expressed that she would have left her abusive relationship a lot sooner had she spoken English. Due to her lack of English she did not know that there was information out in the community. When she wanted to leave her relationship she did not know where to go, did not know who to ask for help, she did not know anything and found it difficult to communicate for help (July, 2009).

When abused immigrant Hispanic women are able to find help and do decide to apply for benefits, it becomes difficult for them to communicate about the specific resources they desire for themselves and their families. The interviews showed that it was difficult for many of the

women to understand rules and policies, to fill out forms, and to express the severity of their abuse. Without someone to explain all the options available, many future victims could end up caught in a vicious cycle of abuse that entails attempting to seek help, discouragement, and finally lead them back to abuse. As Tanis, a counselor with three years of experience, stated, "If the women cannot comprehend the choices available to them, they will not know they have any to take which will affect the likelihood of them ever getting help or leaving the abuse (October, 2009).

Help-Seeking Behaviors

Along with the language barrier immigrant women often face, the research also attempted to determine if the survivors' perceptions and attitudes influenced the way they sought help or prevented it. One of the factors the research found to influence the way the women seek help is the lack of support systems and its affect on the woman's mental state.

Many of the counselors and advocates explained that many of their clients had been brought to the United States by their partners or husbands. This means that many of

these women come to this country without their families or friends or any type of emotional support system. Once the immigrant women have arrived here, her and her partner usually ends up staying with family or friends of her partner; as a result she is encircled by his support system. Since the women are literally alone, when abuse occurs they are less likely to reach out due to their lack of personal relationships. As Angela, a 29 year old counselor with four years of experience explained:

A lot of the women who come here to the states...they come here and have no social support, they don't speak English, they don't work, all they know is their partner. It's not easy for them to leave because they don't have anywhere to go and they don't know anyone. It's not any easy life for immigrant women. (January, 2009)

Knowing that a support system is essential for women to be able to leave their abusive relationships; Claudia, a counselor with four years of experience, explained that it is important for all advocates and counselors to make sure their clients know that they [counselors] are there to provide emotional support. In doing so, they are letting

these women know that they could be a small portion of their support system (January, 2009).

An additional factor that was discovered, which prevents these women from seeking help, is that many of them had been so emotionally abused their perceptions of themselves were extremely negative. A counselor from Women's Right named Pilar explained that many of her clients were brainwashed by their abusers to think they would not be able to survive without them (September, 2009). One survivor, Elisa a 36 year old woman from El Salvador, supported this and stated, "When you are in an abusive relationship you lose everything. You lose your values, you lose your self-esteem, everything. You need to recuperate all that and get out of that relationship" (May, 2009) The interviews revealed that abusers use this type of abuse to separate the woman from individuals he thinks could help her, provide support or those who have the ability to persuade her to become independent or reach out for help. Sabina, a survivor who lived with 10 years of abuse, described a particular experience:

My ex-husband never wanted me to hang out with my girlfriends. One time I had a friend over and he screamed and hit me in front of her. She tried to step

in and stop him but he threatened to hit her too. He told her to get out of the apartment and she wasn't allowed to come back. I think he started the fight because he saw her in the apartment. After that I never brought my friends over or really went out.

(October, 2009)

Several of the survivors also described how their partners not only isolated them from family and friends; they also played on their ignorance and fear, further damaging their psyche. Carmen, a survivor who experienced the longest period of abuse, detailed:

He would always tell me that it was his word against mine. And with him telling me that and me already being afraid to call because I was illegal, I wouldn't call. He was always telling me, "The police will never believe you; on the contrary, they are going to take you and deport you." He always threatened me. (March, 2009)

All of the counselors and advocates supported this idea and explained that the men always did this as a way to further control the women. By instilling fear in them, they were less likely to reach out for help. Although this is a common occurrence in all domestic violence situations, it

was discovered that abusers of immigrant Hispanic women often use specific types of threats such as deportation, the threat of stealing their children and taking them across borders, and/or the fear of cultural persecution, i.e. breaking family tradition, religious excommunication, or becoming an outcast in the community.

The fear that is instilled in the women by their abusers affects their attitudes to the point of preventing the reporting of abuse. The research shows that abusers use the fear of deportation as the primary method of keeping them from seeking help. Most of the women interviewed originally believe that law enforcement would deport them because they are illegal immigrants. Yesenia, a counselor who spent three of four years working with immigrant Hispanic women explained:

A lot of the times Latina women will not call the police, especially if they do not have documents. Once again that goes back to the when the husband says, "If you call the police they are going to deport you. So a lot of them don't call the police. (November, 2009)

Many of the counselors, advocates and women also explained how having children was used as a weapon to instill fear. Their partners make the women believe as

though their children will be taken away or they will be deported and will not ever be able to see them again.

Josefina, the advocate from Moffat, described how the threats often work:

A lot of it has to do with some of them not having their documents to be in the States and so that becomes a huge advantage for their abusive spouses who will use it against them. When it comes to immigrant women there is an extra level of abuse and that is the threatening where they say, "if you don't do what I say, I'm going to call the police and you're going to be deported and the children will be taken away." So the women believe this and they don't report it.

(June, 2009)

The fear of being deported is many times more than enough to keep immigrant Hispanic women in their abusive relationships and will prevent them from seeking help.

Lastly, the study found that the women's perceptions and attitudes toward law enforcement often kept them from seeking help. The idea of simply having to trust law enforcement is often an enormous barrier many of these women have to overcome. As Angela, a counselor whose caseload is 90% immigrant Hispanic women, explained:

Another thing that is also really challenging is for them [survivors] is to be able to trust law enforcement. They don't come over here to the United States and automatically have this trust in our police officers and law enforcement because they don't have that kind of trust for them in their own countries.

(January, 2009)

One example of this can be seen in the participants who come from Mexico. In Mexico there is a law known as "Abandono de Hogar" or "Home Abandonment". According to several of the counselors interviewed, this law states that the women who leave their homes can be prosecuted civically or criminally for abandoning their homes or can lose rights to their children. Vina, a 26 year old counselor from Women's Right, explained:

There is this law in Mexico, a lot of my clients are Mexican, and there is a law in Mexico that says if you leave your house you lose all your rights. So many of the women when they come here they think it's the same way here. So when they are in a relationship, they want to leave but they think, "If I leave then I'll lose all my rights, I lose my children" and often that

is one way an abuser will control them. (October, 2009)

This law was mentioned in several of the interviews of the survivors of domestic violence. Many of them mentioned that they bring the fear of losing their rights, or more importantly their children, with them when they come to the United States. This for them prevents them from seeking help from law enforcement.

Another common theme found in the research was many of the women believed that law enforcement simply wanted to deport them and that belief kept them from reaching out for help. The women interviewed stated that at the time of their abuse, they felt as though deportation of immigrants was the main goal of law enforcement. Angela, a counselor from Delta, reported that, "They're so distrustful of our system because their only experience with our system has usually been, 'they're trying to get me', 'they're trying to send me back to my country.' So it's very difficult for them to trust police officers" (January, 2009). As mentioned previously, the fear of deportation is often a major factor in their inability to seek help. The perceptions and attitudes of the women were deeply shaped by the not only by the fear instilled by abusers but also

the isolation and lack of emotional support. These factors along with those mentioned in the following section greatly affect the help seeking behaviors of abused immigrant Hispanic women.

Lack of Understanding by Law Enforcement

One of the goals of this research was also to examine how immigrant women perceived law enforcement in regards to how they handled their particular abusive situations. The study also focused on the possibility of a lack of understanding by law enforcement of the women's cultural, internal and external barriers which affect the women's willingness to report abuse or seek help. In analyzing the information, two differing views about law enforcement came to light.

The first common theme was the re-victimization by law enforcement. Many of these women had experienced everything from verbal and emotional abuse to sexual and physical abuse and had to add re-victimization by law enforcement to their list of exploitations. Angela the counselor from Delta who was born in Mexico stated:

A lot of my clients have been further victimized by the police because when women get beat by their

husbands, you know, they call the cops and the cops come and take the husband away and they'll put them in jail for a night or two and then what? And then they let them go! So that's victimization because it's not taking what the women are saying seriously or the situation. That has happened to many of my clients before. (January, 2009)

The interviews showed that many times this is due to a lack of understanding of the cultural aspects of the victim. Lora, the youngest advocate interviewed, stated that often times law enforcement does not understand what is happening in an immigrant Hispanic woman's home life as far as the cultural norms are concerned (July, 2009). Law enforcement often times fails to recognize the submissive roles of women in the Hispanic culture which makes it difficult for them to do things like report on their husbands or be open about issues they deal with in their personal lives. For Teresa, who was in an abusive relationship since the age of 19, she considered it lucky if you actually came across an officer who was on your side or understood the Hispanic culture. She felt that countless police officers did not see Hispanic people in a very good light (November, 2009).

Several of the survivor participants added that they felt that law enforcement officials did not care or did not want to bother to do anything until the situation had gotten to an extreme level. Anita, a survivor of six years of abuse, explained, "I reported it four times and they took pictures of the bruises but the next day they would never go look for him, never anything, until the day the police found him actually hitting me" (March, 2009). Another survivor, Verdad, explained how the police were on her abuser's side, she described, "My husband would threaten me that if I called the police, he would send someone after me. Then when I did call [police], they didn't do anything. They knew him and would let him go" (November, 2009). These experiences made many of the women distrustful of law enforcement and kept them from reaching out to them for help.

Although some of the women had negative experiences with law enforcement the research found that a number of the counselors had seen a good amount of the women in their caseloads with positive experiences and this idea was further supported by some of the survivors interviewed. Many of the positive experiences had to do with law enforcement personnel being knowledgeable about the

resources available for victims of domestic violence, including immigrants. Juana, who experienced seven and a half years of abuse, revealed one of her experiences:

When I left the relationship I was in, I remembered the information the police gave me about the shelter, about Women's Right. So thank goodness for the numbers they gave me. They told me, "Call here, they can help you." (July, 2009)

Leti, a 32 year old woman from Mexico had a very similar experience and shared:

When I called the police it was because my ex-husband came to my house and forced himself in. He wanted to get me [abuse her] and that is when I called the police. They then offered me help so that I could do an order of protection. (July, 2009)

Many of the counselors and advocates felt that law enforcement most times did try outreaching to the victims of domestic violence, regardless of their immigration status. Erica, a counselor with six years of experience said, "You know, they believe the victim for what they're telling them. They're not necessarily blowing it off. They believe the victim and they really are outreaching to get

them the services they need" (February, 2009). Leti, a survivor, also suggested:

The police need to put more information out there. When someone calls the police, there needs to be more people who understand the person and what is happening, the situation they are in and that they give the information about the shelter or places that can help. It shouldn't matter the legal status of a person, they shouldn't even ask that. (July, 2009)

All of the counselors, advocates and survivors agreed that law enforcement needed to continue to be aware of the resources available to these women so that in dangerous circumstances they could offer the proper assistance.

The research found that negative experiences with law enforcement greatly affected the perceptions of the immigrant Hispanic women. When the women received negative reinforcement from law enforcement they were less likely to reach out to them again to report abuse. However, when the women received positive reinforcement from law enforcement they were more willing to report abuse and were more likely to seek help and remove themselves from the abuse. In addition, when law enforcement was well informed about

available resources the women were more likely to follow up on the help given.

Lack of Knowledge and Resources

Being well informed about resources was an important issue to examine. Therefore, another objective of the present research was to see the extent of the women's knowledge about resources and services available and if it affected their ability to seek help or report abuse. One of the counselors from Delta encountered some situations where her clientele had lost faith in her because they came to believe that she was not providing any support or help. Some of the victimized women had a tough time understanding how the criminal justice system worked and therefore concluded that the system was not willing to help them get away from their abusive situations. Angela, a Mexican American counselor explained:

Where it becomes really hard is trying to convince women that the laws are made to protect them. There's still that whole mistrust issue of it. It's one thing for a law to change; it's another thing to convince them that this law changed to help them. The distrust is so severe and I don't think there is enough

education out there, targeting these people and that distrust sometimes falls back onto us. (January, 2009)

The lack of understanding about the services available, has at times, prevented the counselors and advocates from providing the proper assistance to the victimized women. This causes distrust within the victims which leads them back to the original idea that their counselor is not willing to aid them which keeps them from seeking future assistance.

Some of the survivors themselves supported this view and stated that at the time of their abuse, they did not fully understand or know about all the help available to them. This made them focus their frustration onto their counselors when they finally did look for help. Some of the women stated that it was due to this lack of understanding and information which kept them in their abusive relationships or made them angry at those individuals trying to help them. Teresa, a 27 year old Mexican woman, explained about when she first contemplated divorce, because of her lack of understanding about resources, she stayed in her abusive relationship a lot longer than she needed. This survivor originally did not want to file divorce papers because she knew she would have to go to

court. She believed that if she went to court they would deport her as soon as she showed up in the building and she ended up staying in her relationship another year before finally going through with the divorce (November, 2009).

The interview of the survivors also revealed that the lack of information regarding immigration status kept them from seeking services and assistance. At the time of their abuse, many of the women believed they did not qualify for or would not receive benefits because they were not citizens of the United States. Many of the women stated that they feared calling law enforcement for help because they feared deportation. Leti, a survivor who suffered with 15 years of abuse, explained:

At the time that I was being abused I didn't know that the police wouldn't deport me. I was always scared to call because even though they would probably stop the abuse, the idea of getting deported was worse for me. If I had known that I wouldn't, I would have called.
(July, 2009)

Many of the counselors and advocates agreed and Lora, an advocate from Moffat, stated:

I think that knowing the resources that are available is key. Often I hear women say, "If I would have known

there was help like this, I would have left him a long time ago." So I know that they don't understand that there is help out there and that abuse isn't something they have to live with. (July, 2009)

All the counselors felt that it was essential that there be education provided to these women so that they know there are resources, they do have rights, and there are options for them.

It was also discovered that education was a major tool needed by the immigrant Hispanic women to help them become knowledgeable about resources and services. Not only education about the resources available and how they work but also job skill resources, English classes and knowing the law. All these factors together, according to the counselors interviewed, would increase a woman's likelihood of knowing about or being aware of resources available. Josefina, an advocate with eight years of experience stated, "Education will give them options. When you have options, you're able to make decisions about what's best for you and you don't have to put up with bad situations" (June, 2009).

Many counselors, advocates, and the women of domestic violence express the need for more information about the

resources available to these women. Many of the women acknowledge the fact that the lack of understanding about resources greatly impacted their ability to leave their violent situations. Had they known early on in their relationships about programs, services and the willingness of people to help, the likelihood of getting help would have increased.

Additional Findings

An additional aspiration of this research was to bring to light other issues which were not originally a focus of the study but would be discovered in the process of interviewing the participants. These barriers are important to include due to their potential for further research and analysis.

The barrier all the counselor, advocates and survivors mentioned was the lack of a legal status in the United States. Several issues had arisen for the immigrant Hispanic women because they did not have legal US citizenship. The first was their inability to obtain jobs. Without a green card, citizenship or legal permanent resident status, becoming financial independent of an abusive partner becomes very difficult. Paula, a survivor

from Nicaragua, details a particular experience when staying in a shelter:

I think that immigration should be a little more easily permitted because there are many women that want to get ahead on their own. I think that is the reason why there so many victims because one time when I was in the shelter, a friend of mine told me that she wouldn't leave him [abuser] because she didn't have papers to work, so she couldn't find work. The world was closed to her because she didn't have documents. (September, 2009)

Many of the counselors and advocates also agreed and described how legal status is often a difficult issue to overcome when trying to help them leave an abusive situation. Pilar, a counselor with an 85% caseload of immigrant Hispanic women described her frustration:

It's difficult whenever you have to tell them that there is nothing you can do because it's gonna be up to them to make all the decisions. Especially whenever they're looking for benefits or jobs and there is not a lot you can do to help them in the department because of their legal status. (September, 2009)

All of the immigrant Hispanic women mentioned the need for legal status. As Yolanda, a mother who is legally separated from her abuser had described:

I think they should help women who are illegal because there are a lot of people that want to get out of those situations but that is what doesn't let them get ahead. Not having US documents impairs you a lot of the times. (December, 2009)

Another issue with the inability to get a job is that it can hinder a woman's ability to get program benefits. Erica, a counselor out of Delta, explains a specific situation:

A lot of the ways the programs are set up have a lot of barriers put in place. For example, they might not need to be documented but in order for them to access different programs they have to have a steady job with a company name on their check. In order to get that they have to have some type of identification or some type of documentation to get that. So by default they are still discriminated against by the program because of the way the program is set up. Bottom line is they need some type of documentation and a lot times they

don't have that so therefore they are not eligible for services. (February, 2009)

Not being able to find a job also can make them ineligible for government funds. Sofia, a counselor with a caseload that is 95% immigrant Hispanic women explains:

Accessing the government funds can be difficult. Having documentation or not is not necessarily a determining factor but in a roundabout way it is because they're not able to get a steady job. They often work under the table for cash and that can't be verified so when things like relocation programs are offered, where the government will give you money to help you find a place to live, an apartment won't accept you because they don't have steady jobs. (September, 2009)

The inability to get a job leads into another barrier which became evident during the interviews. The lack of a job caused severe financial issues for many of the immigrant Hispanic women. Over 70% of the women interviewed had been housewives and were therefore financially dependent on their partners or spouses. Josefina, a counselor who has spent six of the last eight years working with immigrant Hispanic woman, explained:

Half of them that are immigrant don't work. They are stay at home moms and that ties back to the financial [situation] because they are ready to leave and they can't because they don't have a job and they don't know where to look for it because the men are the providers. (June, 2009)

The fear that many of the woman carry, according to Lora an advocate from Moffat, was the issue that many of the men were sole providers and the women stressed about how they would find work, how they would support their children and how they would survive without money (July, 2009).

Many of the counselors agreed that financial services are essential for these women to be able to leave their abusive situations. Pilar, a counselor from Women's Right, explained:

Financial support is probably one that they need the most because, for the reason that while in the relationship they were unable to have a job whether it be because their spouses didn't let them or because they didn't have papers [legal] to be able to get one. (September, 2009)

All the issues mentioned by the survivors, counselors and advocates need to be further analyzed and additional

resources need to be accessible to help immigrant Hispanic women move away from domestic violence.

In reviewing all the information gathered it was evident that cultural attitudes cause the greatest amount of barriers for immigrant Hispanic women. However language barriers, self perceptions, perceptions about law enforcement and the lack of knowledge about resources greatly influence abused immigrant Hispanic women. All these factors along with those discovered throughout the interview process significantly inhibit an immigrant Hispanic woman from reporting abuse and seeking help. The need to break through both internal and external barriers is essential for these women.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The existing body of literature and the results of the survey interviews revealed many barriers which show to intensify the likelihood of immigrant Hispanic women becoming victims of and staying in domestic violence situations. These things include cultural influences, immigration status, lack of legal and community resources, and lack of understanding regarding available resources. These issues have been shown to be used by their abusers to maintain control over their partners and spouses and use these factors to stop them from attaining help. As a result, current and existing laws and guidelines must be further evaluated and new policies need to be developed. Further research has been recommended so that a better understanding about immigrant Hispanic women and their barriers is achieved so their situations can be more easily improved.

Policy Implications

One of the main issues and possibly the easiest to target is the language barriers immigrant Hispanic women

repeatedly have to deal with. Although the issue is continually improving, possible ways to help ease this problem, is to have various types of information and services available in Spanish such as legal rights, abuse awareness, and legal services and assistance. This information should be presented and available in areas these women are most likely to see them but are still safe such as churches, a child's school or a neighborhood market. Leti, a survivor of 15 years of abuse, mentioned that pamphlets should be more readily available and they should be specific about a person's race or legal residency status not being an obstacle in getting help (July, 2009). Another survivor, Elisa who suffered with 17 years of abuse, further explained, "There needs be more information such as in schools, good pamphlets on how to leave an abusive relationship because I didn't even know what a shelter was. I didn't know that a place like that existed" (July, 2009). Another survivor, Anita whose boyfriend was her abuser, explained how she still comes across this issue when she speaks to other victims of abuse.

A lot of people do not know about resources available.

I tell you this because a lot of women, friends of mine, that are abused, I tell them, "Why don't you

leave there?" And they tell me, "And go where?" It's that they don't know that there is a center that has help and support. (March, 2009)

The continued hiring of Spanish speaking personnel in the law enforcement and legal arenas is vital. These individuals need to be able to offer resources, counseling, and referrals to services that will help immigrant Hispanic women deal with domestic violence issues. One of the advocates who supported this idea, Josefina whose entire caseload is immigrant Hispanic women, explained:

Having people that speak Spanish is a big deal. You will be surprised how many agencies that work with abused women don't have Spanish speaking staff. It's very frustrating to know that the majority of the population you're serving is going to be Spanish speaking, regardless of whether you like it or not, that's the reality of it. And so when you call an agency and they tell you, "Oh we don't have Spanish speaking staff" it is very discouraging. So I think having someone that can relate to them with their language makes a major difference. (July, 2009)

Another counselor, Erica who has spent half of her career working specifically with immigrant Hispanic women, also supported this idea and explained:

They're not speaking English so we need to have someone available for them to speak with. This includes all non-profits, district attorneys, the police and so forth. (February, 2009)

For the majority of the women who are stay at home mothers and wives, Spanish public service announcements which explain abuse and provide information about where they can get help should air at times when the abuser is the least likely to be home, such as during a work day (Acevedo, 2000). Juana, a survivor who is currently separated from her abusive husband, explained:

I think that it's the information. There are many people who don't have information and they don't look for it because they are scared. They are scared because they are immigrants; they fear that they will not be able to get ahead. I think that a lot of the women don't look for help, it's because they think that if they leave the abusive relationship they won't have anywhere to live, they won't have anything to

eat, they won't have anywhere to work. They don't know and they need lots of information. (July, 2009)

Community involvement and support can play a role in the support and help the women need to get out of their abusive environments. The community support can come from programs and outreaches specifically targeted towards the women's personal development. These community programs should also provide information and resources about restraining orders, financial and legal services, and any other resources that are available. Community based programs should emphasize healthy family ideals, explain how abuse affects the family and explain the severity of staying in abusive relationships. One counselor, Yesenia from Women's Right, suggested:

There needs to be a lot more word out there as far as what healthy relationships are. If we could get that out there into schools and actually have a curriculum on healthy relationships it would be awesome. It's just getting the word out, continuing to build.

(November, 2009)

Additional resources can also be provided by community outreaches and programs such as English classes and career building skills.

There is also a need for counselors and advocates who have an understanding of the cultural aspects and barriers of the immigrant Hispanic woman so that they are better adept to help them. The counselors and advocates need to be aware of the cultural differences and the cultural clash that occurs between the original culture of these women and the American culture to which they are trying to assimilate (Kasturirangan & Williams 2003, Acevedo 2000, Mendelson 2004, Raj & Silverman 2002). Many of the counselors and advocates voiced this concern during their interviews. Once counselor, Tanis whose entire caseload supported immigrant Hispanic women, specifically stated:

There needs to be more research about how these women deal with liberating American influences versus their traditional marriages. Many of these men use abuse to stop their partners from assimilating or the abuse that was already there progresses and people that work and help these women need to understand this.
(October, 2009)

Angela, a counselor with four years experience, simply stated, "Being Hispanic, they are able to trust me a lot more than they would be willing to trust someone of another race or ethnicity" (January, 2009).

Advocates and counselors need to grow their knowledge base when it comes to what is valued by the immigrant Hispanic woman. In expanding their education about what is important to the women, they will be able to better develop approaches and responses to their unique situations. Counselors and advocates, along with individuals who may come in contact with victims such as law enforcement and the courts, need to be aware of the concerns and needs of the immigrant Hispanic woman and be up to date on improvements in policies and laws that can help improve their situations (Kasturirangan & Williams 2003, Acevedo 2000, Mendelson 2004). As Yesenia from Women's Right simply put it:

If you don't know what resources are out there then there's no way you can potentially help somebody. If you don't know or are not aware of new policies and laws then how are you going to relay that to a client? (November, 2009)

In the United States there are current policies and programs in place that focus on helping abused immigrant women of all cultural backgrounds. One of the main programs is known as Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Often times the procedures for this program are so restrictive and

complex, they become ineffective in the fight against victimization (Salcido & Adelman 2004). As Erica, a 33 year old Mexican American counselor explained:

For example, one of the things they [the victims] have to do is get a detective or police officer to sign off on whether or not they feel that they were cooperative with any type of law enforcement in order to be eligible for VAWA. So the way that VAWA is set up is that they have to be pursuing some type of legal action towards the abuser, which we know a lot of times the victims are hesitant to do that. Especially people that are undocumented and don't have a legal stance in the United States. They have that fear in them so it's very hard for them while they're going through the domestic violence to report it because they're not going to report it for fear of the law. So I think one of the things that can be more helpful for them is for some of those legal requirements to be more lenient. (February, 2009)

This is a serious problem for immigrant Hispanic women because many of them fear the legal system and/or the possible backlash of reporting their abuse. Juana, a

survivor of domestic violence who is currently separated from her husband, explained:

In the beginning, when my abusive relationship started, I was scared to call the police because I didn't have papers [immigration papers], so my husband would manipulate me by using that against me. He would say, "If you call the police, they are going to take you." That affects you. (July, 2009)

This can make the VAWA policy literally ineffective for illegal immigrant women who are victims of domestic violence. Access to the full range of benefits many abused immigrant Hispanic women need to help them leave their abusers, must be available regardless of immigration status (Raj & Silverman 2002).

Additional law and policy modifications are needed to remove legal impediments that challenges battered women's access to VAWA and other available resources (Dutton et al 2000). Current immigration laws automatically discourage women from receiving help with abuse. When these women come to the United States illegally they automatically become criminals based on our current immigration laws which consequentially make them eligible for deportation

(Salcido & Adelman 2004). This was also understood by Sofia, a counselor from Women's Right, who stated:

A lot of times they have to go about doing something whether it's getting an under the table job or getting some type of falsified identification and then they take the risk of being caught and then their excluded from their VAWA. So it's kind of a balancing act because they have to make things happen either way and it's not a clear streamline service for them because of the documentation issue. (September, 2009)

Also, due to many immigration policies involving a petition or sponsorship for citizenship, many abusers use this as weapon to keep their victims compliant. If for any reason, petitioners or sponsors, who are often times the abusers, withdraw their petitions, the victims instantly become illegal and criminals (Salcido & Adelman, 2004).

The availability of resources also needs to be further improved upon. Erica, with six years of experience as a counselor, explained that, "One of the biggest areas that needs to be addressed are the resources. There are hardly any legal resources out there that are free and that will assist with immigration issues" (February, 2009). This also extends to the issue of immigration because many of the

programs that are available make it difficult to receive aid so all of the counselors, advocates, and survivors of domestic violence agreed that citizenship should be more easily attainable.

Although various problems and solutions have been presented, the main focus of advocates and counselors, law enforcement and the community should be to let the abused women know they are there to support them. Only by letting abused immigrant Hispanic women know that there is help available and they do not have to go through the process of leaving their abusive situations alone, will they be able to take the first steps in changing their lives. Outreach and counseling are the keys to helping abuse immigrant Hispanic women get out of abusive situations.

Future Research

Since obvious shortcomings have been found to lie within the current legal system it is recommended that future research be conducted when it comes to immigrant Hispanic women and the domestic violence struggles they face, specific to cultural and acculturation issues. Many of the counselors and advocates suggested that more research needed to be done to better understand the

internal barriers Hispanic women face. In understanding the barriers the women face, counselors, advocates, law enforcement and organizations can create policies and programs designed specifically for their specific needs.

Research has shown that the levels of violence fell significantly for those women who had contacted a justice agency and had applied for a protective order (McFarlane et. al 2002). In addition, research conducted in this specific area could present advocates and counselors with a more than adequate amount of resources to recommend to immigrant Hispanic women. This help could possibly encourage and motivate the women to abandon their volatile relationships. Yesenia, a 29 year old counselor from Women's Right, confirmed:

Having the laws and having the policies that you can literally take out and say, "Look, here there's this help offered to you, it's your option if you want to take it or not but it is an option." So I think it motivates them, it encourages them and it helps them to know that they are not alone and you're actually going to have some back up and not just be waived off and ignored. (November, 2009)

Persons who interact with abused immigrant Hispanic women need to be familiar with the many culturally rooted reasons immigrant women stay with their abusers (Kasturirangan & Williams 2003). Many of the counselors interviewed have come to realize this while working with the women. They understand that many of the women feel it is their fault they are being abused and feel they must continue with their relationships no matter how difficult the situation. This, however, is a culturally embedded ideal that makes the women feel this way. The normalizing of abuse also needs to be evaluated to better comprehend the internalizing of abuse that immigrant Hispanic women do (Acevedo 2000, Mendelson 2004). As Claudia, a counselor with four years of experience put it:

In regards to domestic violence, it is important to know the mental and emotional state where these women are coming from. It's very easy to judge them and actually not understand the way they may feel and why they stay in those situations. (January, 2009)

Also missing from the policies and programs currently in place is an understanding of the Hispanic cultural perceptions of the female and male roles and the family dynamics. For that reason, research in this area is highly

recommended. Many of the counselors and advocates believed that it was very important that anyone who works with victims, any kind of victims, would be more sensitive to their culture.

The main goal of this study is to intensify awareness of the many issues immigrant Hispanic women who are victims of abuse must deal with. Counselors, advocates, law enforcement, law makers, and the community as a whole, needs to promote more research that focuses on the needs of these specific women. There should also be a persistent process of development for more efficient programs and legislation, for better policies that provide help for the victims and reform the programs and policies currently available. It is imperative that future research and resources be directed towards the healing and increased self-reliance for the women...any of whom could be our colleague, our friend, or our mother.

APPENDIX A
DEMOGRAPHICS SURVEY FOR A VICTIM
ADVOCATE OR COUNSELOR

Demographics for a Victim Advocate/Counselor

Sex: Female Male

Age: _____

Race/Ethnicity: _____

Are you American born? Yes No **(If yes please answer next question)**

What generation are you: 1st 2nd 3rd Other _____

Occupation of Father: _____

Occupation of Mother: _____

What generation college graduate are you: 1st 2nd 3rd
Other _____

College/University Attended: _____

Major: _____

Highest Degree Attained: AA BA/BS Masters PhD

Length of Time in this Profession: _____

Length of Time working in Immigration: _____

Continued Likelihood of working in Immigration:

Not likely Likely Very Likely Not sure

Developed by: Alejandra Aranda Redondo

Datos Para una Consejera de Victimas

Edad: _____

Raza étnica: _____

¿Nació usted en los Estados Unidos? Si No
Si sí, contesta por favor la próxima pregunta)

¿Qué generación es usted? (**círculo uno**)
Primer Segundo Tercero Otra: _____

Trabajo de su padre: _____

Trabajo de su madre: _____

¿Qué generación graduado colegial es usted?
Primer Segundo Tercero Otra: _____

Colegio/Universidad Atendió: _____

Mayor: _____

El grado más alto recibió: _____

¿Por cuánto tiempo ha usted estado en esta profesión?:

¿Por cuánto tiempo ha usted trabajado en la inmigración?:

¿Qué es la posibilidad que usted va continua trabajar en la
inmigración? (**círculo uno**)

No posible Posible Muy Posible No se

Convertido por: Alejandra Aranda Redondo

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR A VICTIM
ADVOCATE OR COUNSELOR

Interview Questions for a Victim Advocate/Counselor

- 1) What made you become an advocate for abused women, specifically immigrant women?
- 2) What do you think your role will be in the next 5 years?
- 3) What have you found to be the most difficult or challenging about your career?
- 4) From what you have seen and dealt with here what do you feel is the most difficult or challenging for immigrant women who are victims of violence?
- 5) From your experience what has been the most common type of victimization experienced by the women who have come forward?
- 6) From your experience what have you come to believe are the main reasons for this type of victimization?
- 7) From your personal experience in what ways have you seen these women either further victimized or helped by the police?
- 9) With your years of experience with victims, how have the laws or policies changed toward this group and how have they impacted your ability to help victims?
- 10) From your years of experience what have you come to realize is most needed by and for these women and for what reasons?
- 11) How do you feel you will use your career to develop or to continue to develop what is most needed by these women so that they may overcome and empower themselves?

Developed by: Alejandra Aranda Redondo

APPENDIX C

REVISED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR A

VICTIM ADVOCATE OR COUNSELOR

Interview Questions for a Victim Advocate/Counselor

- 1) What made you become an advocate for abused women, specifically immigrant women?
- 2) What percentage of the women you help are Latina?
- 3) What have you found to be the most difficult or challenging about your career?
- 4) From what you have seen and dealt with when helping survivors, what do you feel is the most difficult or challenging for immigrant women who are victims of violence?
- 5) From your experience as an advocate/counselor, what has been the most common type of victimization experienced by the women who have come forward?
- 6) So based on your experience as a counselor/advocate what do you believe are some of the main reasons for this type of victimization?
- 7) Why do you think these particular women have experienced this type of victimization here in the United States?
- 8) Why are these women being abused by their significant others? What do you feel are some of the reasons they are hitting these women?
- 9) How have you seen religion playing a role in the help the women receive for abuse?
- 10) Have you ever seen religion as a motivator to get help?
- 11) In what ways do their cultural ideas and values play a role the reasons for their abuse?
- 12) From what the women have told you, in what ways have you seen these women either further victimized or helped by the police?
- 13) With your experience with immigrant survivors, how have the laws or policies changed toward this group?

- 14) How have they helped you to better deal with victims of domestic violence?
- 15) What have you come to realized is needed most by and for these women and for what reasons?
- 16) How do you feel you will use your career to develop or to continue to develop what is most needed by these women so that they may overcome and empower themselves?
- 17) What do you think your role will be in the next 5 years?
- 18) How would you like to see policies and programs improve for these women over the next five years?

Developed by: Alejandra Aranda Redondo

Preguntas Para una Consejera de Víctimas

- 1) ¿Qué le hizo ser un consejero para mujeres abusadas, específicamente mujeres inmigrante?
- 2) ¿Qué es el porcentaje de mujeres que usted ayuda que son Latinas?
- 3) ¿Qué ha encontrado usted sobre ser lo más difícil de su carrera?
- 4) ¿De lo que usted ha visto aquí, qué sientes es lo más difícil para mujeres inmigrante que son víctimas de la violencia?
- 5) ¿De su experiencia, qué ha sido el tipo más común de violencia para estas mujeres?
- 6) ¿De su experiencia, qué ha venido usted creer son las razones principales para este tipo del trato injusto?
- 7) ¿Usted porque piensa que las mujeres han experimentado este tipo de violencia específicamente en los Estados Unidos?
- 8) ¿Por qué estas mujeres están abusadas? ¿Que piense son las razones que las están pegando?
- 9) ¿Ha visto usted la religión ayudando las mujeres recibir ayuda para el abuso?
- 10) ¿Usted ha visto a la religión como un motivador para garra ayuda?
- 11) ¿De qué maneras los ideas y valores culturales de las mujeres contribuya a las razones de el abuso?
- 12) ¿De su experiencia personal, en qué maneras ha visto usted las mujeres victimadas o ayudadas por la policía?
- 13) ¿De su experiencia personal con víctimas, cómo han cambiado las leyes sobre las mujeres y cómo tienen ellos impresionaron su habilidad de ayudar a víctimas?

- 14) ¿Cómo le han ayudado asistir las víctimas de violencia doméstica?
- 15) ¿Con sus años de experiencia, qué ha venido usted es necesitado para estas mujeres y para qué razones?
- 16) ¿Cómo se siente usted va utilizará su carrera para desarrollar o continuar desarrollar lo que es muy necesitado por estas mujeres para que ellos puedan vencer estas situaciones?
- 17) ¿Piensa usted que va continuar trabajar con estas mujeres en los siguientes cinco años?
- 18) ¿Cómo quiere ver las políticas y programas mejorar en los siguientes cinco años?

Convertido por: Alejandra Aranda Redondo

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS - COUNSELORS/ADVOCATES

INFORMED CONSENT
(Research Participants - Counselors/Advocates)

The study in which you are being asked to participate in is designed to investigate the challenges faced by immigrant Hispanic women who are victims of domestic violence and are trying to attain help for the abuse from agencies in Southern California and Northern Texas. This study is being conducted by Alejandra Redondo under the supervision of Dr. Deborah Parsons, Professor of Criminal Justice. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

In this study you will be asked to respond to several questions with regards to your experience counseling abused immigrant Latina women. The first part of the questions, known as the Demographics, will take about 5 to 10 minutes to complete and will consist of simple questions which will ask you about your personal background. The second half of the questions, known as the Interview Schedule, should take about 45 to 55 minutes to complete. These questions will ask you about your experiences working with Latina women who are victims of domestic violence and also your opinion about what should be done to help women in their situation. All of your responses will be held in the strictest of confidence by the researchers. Your name will not be reported with your responses. You may receive the results of this study upon completion on December 1, 2009 at California State University, San Bernardino Office of Criminal Justice.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free not to answer any questions and may stop at any time.

Your identity along with the information received will be completely confidential. Your name will not be on any papers or tape-recordings or used during the interview process. A number will be given to you to place at the top of all paperwork given to you and that number will be used in the audio-taping instead of your name. This will help to keep all paperwork organized. Only the interviewer will meet with you during the interview, unless you grant permission to another person, such as a witness, to be present at the time of the interview.

By placing a check mark in the box below, I acknowledge that I have been informed of, and that I understand, the nature and purpose of this study, and I freely consent to participate. I also acknowledge that I am **AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE.**

I have read the above description and give my consent for the use of the audiotape as indicated above.

143

Consentimiento Informado
(Para una Consejera de Víctimas)

En este estudio, en el cual le estamos pidiendo participar, sea diseñado para investigar los problemas por las cuales las mujeres inmigrantes latinas han sido víctimas de violencia domestica y que están intentando tener ayuda de las agencias de abuso en el Sur de California y Norte de Tejas. El propósito de este estudio es entender las situaciones difíciles de las mujeres inmigrantes latinas que son víctimas del abuso y para encontrar la mejor manera de ayudarles a conseguir mejores recursos y servicios para estas mujeres. Este estudio está conducido por Alejandra Redondo bajo la supervisión de la Dr. Deborah Parsons, profesora de justicia criminal. Este estudio ha sido aprobado por el Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

En este estudio, le pedimos contestar las preguntas sobre los abusos por los cuales usted paso, la posibilidad que su cultura haya tenido que ver con sus abusos, los tipos de barreras que usted tuvo que pasar y que no le permitió pedir ayuda, y si usted se siente que hay una carencia de conocimiento sobre los recursos de ayuda para mujeres abusadas. Las respuestas a estas preguntas deben salir de su propia experiencia personal y no hay respuesta correcta o incorrecta. Si usted no desea contestar a alguna de las preguntas o no le pertenece puede pasarla.

El examen le tomara de 5 a 10 minutos. La entrevista tomara de 45 a 55 minutos. La entrevista se le podrá hacer en el lugar que usted se sienta más cómoda. Todas sus respuestas serán completamente confidenciales. Se le dará una letra como clave que usted pondrá en su formulario en ves de usar su nombre. Se le dará un formulario en el cual usted decide si nos da su permiso de gravarla o no. Si usted no desea que su entrevista sea gravada, no será problema. En caso que usted acepte ser gravada, la cinta será revisada solamente por la persona que la entrevisto para estar segura que en ningún momento su nombre fue mencionado. Las grabaciones de la cinta serán destruidas cuando se pase todo en escrito. Si usted desea obtener una copia de los resultados pueden recogerlas después del primero de Diciembre del 2009 en la Universidad de Estado del estado de California de San Bernardino, oficina de la justicia criminal.

Su participación en este estudio es totalmente voluntaria. Usted es libre de no contestar a las preguntas y de retirarse en cualquier momento durante la entrevista. Cuando usted termine la entrevista, usted podrá recibir una explicación más detallada sobre este estudio. Para asegurar la validez del estudio, le pedimos que no divulgue lo que hemos conversado. Su participación será muy valiosa para otras mujeres en su misma situación. Su ayuda con este estudio puede conducir al desarrollo y al acceso para mejorar la ayuda a las mujeres inmigrantes abusadas. Un riesgo posible debido a su participación en este estudio puede ser de sentimientos encontrados de contar de nuevo sus incidentes emocionales y físicos del abuso.

Su identidad, junto con la información recibida, será totalmente confidencial. Solamente su entrevistadora tendrá contacto con usted a menos que usted dé el permiso a otra persona, tal como un testigo o un familiar, de estar presente en la entrevista.

Si usted tiene algunas preguntas o preocupación por el estudio, siéntase en confianza de contactarme o a la Dr. Deborah Parsons en (909)537-7364. Favor de no olvidar de dejar su clave.

Poniendo una marca de palomita en la caja abajo, reconozco que me han informado, y que e entiendo, la naturaleza y el propósito de este estudio, y yo consiento libremente participar en este proyecto. Y que también soy mayor de 18 años de edad.

Por favor ponga la marca aquí [] Fecha: _____

La Firma del Participante (clave) _____ Fecha: _____

Firma del testigo _____ Fecha: _____

APPENDIX E

COUNSELOR/ADVOCATE DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Study of Abused Immigrant Hispanic Women Debriefing Statement - Counselors

This study you have just completed was designed to investigate the types of barriers immigrant women face as battered women. This study investigated their help-seeking behaviors and their deterrents for not receiving help. In this study participants were questioned how they interpreted victims' views of their culture, their ideas regarding marriage and status in relationships, on reasons for staying in abusive relationships, knowledge about resources, and the ways in which they saw victims seeking help and what made them seek help. These questions were used to help understand the delicate cultural situation of immigrant battered women. The information received from the study will be used to highlight the importance of including the Hispanic culture of the women into all future policies, programs and justice systems because of the specific barriers they encounter.

Thank you for your participation and for not discussing the contents of the decision question with others. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Alejandra Redondo or Dr. Parsons at 909-537-7364. If you would like to obtain a copy of the group results of this study, please contact Dr. Parsons at 909-537-7364 at the end of Spring Quarter of 2009.

APPENDIX F
DEMOGRAPHICS SURVEY FOR AN IMMIGRANT
HISPANIC FEMALE VICTIM

Demographics for an Immigrant Hispanic Female Victim

Age: _____

Race/Ethnicity: _____

Country of Origin (Birth): _____

Primary Language: English Spanish

Years in the United State: _____

Immigration Status: _____

Highest Level of Education: _____

Are you employed? Yes No

Marital Status: Single Married Divorced Widowed

Relationship to Abuser: _____

Length of Time with Abuser: _____

Number of Children with Abuser: _____

Developed by: Alejandra Aranda Redondo

Información Personal

Edad: _____

Raza étnica: _____

País de Origen (nacimiento): _____

Lenguaje Primario: (indique uno) Inglés Español

¿Cuánto inglés usted sabe? (indique uno)

Nada de ingles Muy poco Puedo entender mucho

Puedo entender y hablar mucho Fluido en inglés

Años en los Estados Unidos: _____

Estado de Inmigración: _____

Nivel de educación: _____

¿Trabaja usted? (indique uno)

Si

No

Estado civil: (indique uno)

Solo

Casado

Divorciado

Viuda

¿Cuál es su religión?: _____

¿Cuántas veces usted va a misa? (circulé uno)

Una vez por semana

Una vez al mes

Una vez al año

En ocasiones

Días festivos

Nunca

Convertido por: Alejandra Aranda Redondo

APPENDIX G

SELECT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: USED IN THE STUDY

BY AARATI KASTURIRANGAN AND ELIZABETH

NUT WILLIAMS (2003)

Select interview questions: Used in the study by Aarati Kasturirangan and Elizabeth Nut Williams (2003)

Edited Interview Schedule

- 1) What do you feel you learned from your family about what it is like to be a woman?
- 2) How do you feel being a Latina woman in the U.S.?
- 3) If you feel comfortable, could you please describe your history with domestic violence?
- 4) What is your reaction to the help you have received?

Kasturirangan, A. & Williams, E.N. (2003). Counseling Latina Battered Women: A Qualitative Study of the Latina Perspective. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 31, 162-178.

APPENDIX H

SELECT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: USED IN THE

STUDY BY HARRIS ET AL. (2005)

Select interview questions: Used in the study by Harris et al. (2005)

Edited Interview Schedule

- 1) Has your current (spouse/partner) ever insulted you, called you names, or told you that you were worthless?
- 2) Has your current (spouse/partner) ever pushed you, hit you with a fist, used a knife or gun, tried to choke you?
- 3) Has your current (spouse/partner) ever forced you to have sex against your will?

Harris, R.J., Firestone, J.M. & Vega, W.A. (2005). The Interaction of Country of Origin Acculturation, and Gender Role Ideology on Wife Abuse. *Social Science Quarterly*, 86, 463-483.

APPENDIX I
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR AN IMMIGRANT
HISPANIC FEMALE VICTIM

Interview Questions for an Immigrant Latina Female Victim

Section One - Cultural Issues

- 1) What has growing up in your country, taught you about being a woman? (In-depth)
- 2) What did you feel was the woman's role in her relationship with her partner?
- 3) What do you feel is the man's place in the relationship or marriage?
- 4) How should the decisions about family and daily life be decided in a relationship or marriage?
- 5) Do you feel differently about being a woman, partner, and/or mother now that you have moved to the United States than when you did in your country of origin? (In-depth)
- 6) At that time did you see men and women the same?

Section Two - Types and Frequency of Abuse

- 7) Has your husband or boyfriend ever insulted you or disrespected you in any way?
- 8) Has your husband or boyfriend ever pushed you, hit you, choked you or used any type of physical force against you?
- 9) Has your husband or boyfriend ever used a weapon against you such as a knife or a gun?
- 10) Has your boyfriend or husband ever forced you to do stuff against your will and what were they?
- 11) How many times a week did you experience physical and/or sexual abuse?

Section Three - Reasons for Abuse

- 12) Could you please tell me about the abuse you have dealt with throughout your life from husbands or boyfriends? (In-depth)

- 13)What have been some of your reasons for staying in an abusive relationship?
- 14)How does the way your culture taught you to be a woman play a part in the abuse you have experienced?
- 15)How does the way your culture taught your husband or boyfriend to be a man play a part in the abuse you have experienced?

Section Four - Help Seeking Behavior

- 16)How much has the language difference helped or hurt your ability to seek help with both police and agencies?
- 17)Have you contacted the police for any type of help when dealing with abusive situations? Why or why not?
- 18)Does the way you feel about the police affect the chances of you contacting them in cases of violence?
- 19)What was the main reason you chose to seek help the first time you sought it? (In-depth)
- 20)How do you see the police's understanding of your particular abusive situation?

Section Five - Lack of Knowledge

- 21)How has learning about the different available resources affected the way you handled your abusive situations?
- 22)Does being of immigrant status stop you from using the resources made available to you?
- 23)In general, what do you feel is the most needed resources for immigrant Latina women?

Developed by: Alejandra Aranda Redondo

APPENDIX J

REVISED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR AN

IMMIGRANT HISPANIC FEMALE VICTIM

Interview Questions for an Immigrant Latina Female Victim

Section One - Cultural Issues

- 1) What has growing up in your country, taught you about being a woman? (In-depth)
- 2) While you were in your abusive relationship, what did you feel was the woman's role in her relationship with her partner?
- 3) While you were in your abusive relationship, what did you feel was the man's place in the relationship or marriage?
- 4) During that time, how did you feel the decisions about family and daily life should have been decided in a relationship or marriage?
- 5) While you were in your abusive relationship, did you see men and women the same?
- 6) What does your faith or religion say about your position in your relationship?
- 7) What does your faith or religion say about staying in a relationship?
- 8) While you were in your abusive relationship did your religion prevent you from receiving help? If "yes", then how?
- 9) While you were in your abusive relationship did your religion help you receive help? If "yes" then how?

Section Two - Types and Frequency of Abuse

- 10) Has your husband or boyfriend ever insulted you in any way?
- 11) Has your husband or boyfriend ever pushed you, hit you, choked you or used any type of physical force against you?
- 12) Has your boyfriend or husband ever forced you to do things you did not want to do and what were they?

- 13)How many times a week did you experience physical and/or sexual abuse?

Section Three - Reasons for Abuse

- 14)Could you please tell me about the abuse you have dealt with throughout your life from husbands or boyfriends? (In-depth)
- 15)While you were in the abusive relationship, what were some of your reasons for staying in an abusive relationship?
- 16)How does the way your culture taught you to be a woman added to your abuse?
- 17)How does your partners attitude about being a man, added to the abuse you have experienced?

Section Four - Help Seeking Behavior

- 18)How much has the language difference helped or hurt your ability to seek help with both police and agencies?
- 19)Before you received help for the abuse, did you contact the police for any type of help when dealing with abusive situations? Why or why not?
- 20)At the time of the abuse, did the way you feel about the police affect the chances of you contacting them in cases of violence?
- 21)What was the main reason you chose to seek help the first time you sought it? (In-depth)

Section Five - Lack of Knowledge

- 22)How has understanding about different resources helped you in your abusive relationship?
- 23)Does being of immigrant status stop you from using the resources made available to you?
- 24)In general, what do you feel is the most needed resources for immigrant Latina women?

Developed by: Alejandra Aranda Redondo

Preguntas Para Víctimas

Sección Uno - Ediciones Culturales

- 1) ¿Qué educación moral sobre la mujer te enseñaron en tu país?
- 2) ¿En el tiempo que usted estuvo en su relación abusiva que pensó era las obligaciones una mujer debe tener en una relación con su pareja?
- 3) ¿En el tiempo que usted estuvo en su relación abusiva que pensó que eran las obligaciones un hombre debe tener en una relación con su pareja?
- 4) ¿En el tiempo que usted estuvo en su relación abusiva que usted como pensó que se deberían tomar las decisiones familiares en una relación?
- 5) ¿En ese tiempo usted vio al hombre y a la mujer iguales?
- 6) ¿Qué opina tu religión sobre tus obligaciones en tu relación?
- 7) ¿Qué opina tu religión sobre el divorcio?
- 8) ¿Tu religión a interferido con tu decisión de buscar ayuda? ¿Si tu respuesta es sí, en qué forma a interferido?
- 9) ¿Su iglesia le ha ayudado a recibir ayuda? ¿Si tu respuesta es sí, en qué forma?

Sección dos - Tipos y frecuencia del abuso

- 10) ¿Su novio o marido la ha insultado?
- 11) ¿Su novio o marido la ha empujado, golpeado, estrangulado, o utilizado fuerza física contra usted?
- 12) ¿Su novio o marido le ha forzado a hacer cosas que usted no desea hacer? ¿Si su respuesta es sí, cuáles son?
- 13) ¿Cuántas veces a la semana fue usted abusada física o sexualmente?

Sección tres - Razones del abuso

- 14) ¿Podría describir el abuso que usted sufrió en su relación?
- 15) ¿Cuál ha sido algunas de sus razones por haber permanecido en una relación abusiva?
- 16) ¿De qué manera tu cultura, religión, o moral te a afectado para que soportes o aguantes una relación abusiva?
- 17) ¿Tú piensas que el sexo masculino en tu país tenga que ver con el abuso hacia la mujer? Si tu respuesta es sí, explícame porque lo piensas así.

Sección cuatro - Comportamiento que busca de la ayuda

- 18) ¿De qué manera el idioma te ha afectado o ayudado para buscar ayuda con la policía o agencias de ayuda contra el abuso?
- 19) ¿Antes de que usted busco ayuda por el abuso, usted se contacto a la policía por ayuda cuando usted ha sido abusada? Si su respuesta es no, porque no?
- 20) ¿Antes de que usted busco ayuda que era tu forma de pensar acerca de la policía? Eso afecta la posibilidad de usar su ayuda en un momento de violencia?
- 21) ¿Cuál fue la razón principal que usted eligió para buscar ayuda la primera vez?

Sección cinco - Falta de conocimiento

- 22) ¿Tú piensas que aprendiendo y entendiendo las diferentes formas de ayuda, te ayuden para salir de esa relación abusiva?
- 23) ¿Te ha impedido el hecho de ser inmigrante, recurrir a la ayuda disponible para la mujer abusada?
- 24) ¿En tu opinión, cuales son los recursos de ayuda que la mujer abusada necesite?

Convertido por: Alejandra Aranda Redondo

APPENDIX K
INFORMED CONSENT
RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS – SURVIVORS

INFORMED CONSENT
(Research Participants - Survivors)

The study in which you are being asked to participate in is going to be used to investigate the challenges faced by immigrant Hispanic women who are victims of domestic violence and are trying to get help for the abuse from agencies in Southern California and Northern Texas. The reason for this study is to understand the hard situation of immigrant Hispanic women who are victims of abuse and hopefully to find ways to provide better services for these women to get help. This study is being done by Alejandra Redondo under the guidance of Dr. Deborah Parsons, Professor of Criminal Justice. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

In this study you will be asked to answer questions about the abuse you have experienced, the possible problems your culture has caused for you while being abused, the types of obstacles you had to deal with that have stopped you from getting help, and if you feel a lot women, who are being abused, do not know about resources to help them with the violence. The answers for these questions are from your own personal experience and there is no right or wrong answer. If you do not want to answer one of the questions, just ask to skip it.

The first part of the questions, known as the Demographics, will take about 5 to 10 minutes to finish and will be simple questions which will ask you about yourself, such as your age. The second half of the questions, known as the Interview Schedule, should take about 1 hour to 1 ½

hours to finish. The questions will ask you about your experiences with domestic violence and also your opinion about what should be done to help women dealing with the same thing. The interviews can be done at any place you feel the most comfortable, such as your home, office, or counseling center, etc. All of your answers will be completely private. Your name will not be used. Instead you will be given a letter, as a code, to put at the top of all papers. You will also be asked for permission to tape record the interview. You can say no to have the interview being recorded. All paperwork and tape-recordings will be checked to make sure there is no way to identify you. Tape recordings will be destroyed as soon as they have been written onto paper. You can receive the group results once the study is done on December 1, 2009 at the following location: California State University, San Bernardino, Office of Criminal Justice.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to not answer any question and stop at any time. When you have finished the interview, you will get a statement telling you more about the study. Your participation could help women in similar situations who are scared of coming forward about their abuse. Your help with this study may help to improve support for abused immigrant women. A possible risk because of your help in this study may be possible emotional hurt from telling your memories of abuse.

Your name, everything you say about yourself and all the answers to your questions will be completely private. Your name will not be used at any time. Only the

interviewer will have contact with you, unless you give permission to another person, such as a witness, to be there with you when you do the interview.

If you have any questions or are worried about anything in this study, please feel free to call me or Dr. Deborah Parsons at (909) 537-7364.

By putting a check mark in the box below, I admit that I have been told and I understand, the reason and purpose of this study, and I agree to participate. I also admit that I am AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE.

Place a check mark here ☐ Date: _____

Participant's Signature (use Letter): _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness

I have read and I understand the explanation about using tape-recording during my interview and give my permission for the use of the audiotape as indicated above.

Participant's Signature (Letter/Number) _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness

Consentimiento Informativo
(Para Sobrevivientes del Abuso Domestica)

En este estudio, en el cual le estamos pidiendo participar, se a diseñado para investigar los problemas por las cuales las mujeres inmigrantes latinas han sido víctimas de violencia domestica y que están intentando tener ayuda de las agencias de abuso en el Sur de California y Norte de Tejas. El propósito de este estudio es entender las situaciones difíciles de las mujeres inmigrantes latinas que son víctimas del abuso y para encontrar la mejor manera de ayudarles a conseguir mejores recursos y servicios para estas mujeres. Este estudio está conducido por Alejandra Redondo bajo la supervisión de la Dra. Deborah Parsons, profesora de justicia criminal. Este estudio ha sido aprobado por el Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

En este estudio, le pedimos contestar las preguntas sobre los abusos por los cuales usted paso, la posibilidad que su cultura haya tenido que ver con sus abusos, los tipos de barreras que usted tuvo que pasar y que no le permitió pedir ayuda, o si usted se siente que por falta de conocimiento sobre los recursos de ayuda para mujeres abusadas. Las respuestas a estas preguntas deben salir de su propia experiencia personal y no hay respuesta correcta o incorrecta. Si usted no desea contestar a alguna de las preguntas o no le pertenece puede pasarla.

El examen le tomara de 5 a 10 minutos. La entrevista tomara de 1 hora 1 hora y medio. La entrevista se le podrá hacer en el lugar que usted se sienta más cómoda. Todas sus respuestas serán completamente confidenciales. Se le dará una letra como clave que usted pondrá en su formulario en vez de usar su nombre. Se le dará un formulario en el cual usted decide si nos da su permiso de gravarla o no. Si usted no desea que su entrevista sea gravada, no habrá ningún problema. En caso que usted acepte ser gravada, la cinta será revisada solamente por la persona que la entrevisto para estar segura que en ningún momento su nombre fue mencionado. Las grabaciones de la cinta serán destruidas cuando se pase todo en escrito. Si usted desea obtener una copia de los resultados pueden recogerlas después del primero de Diciembre del 2009 en la Universidad de Estado del estado de California de San Bernardino, oficina de la justicia criminal.

Su participación en este estudio es totalmente voluntaria. Usted es libre de no contestar a las preguntas y de retirarse en cualquier momento durante la entrevista. Cuando usted termine la entrevista, usted podrá recibir una explicación más detallada sobre este estudio. Para asegurar la validez del estudio, le pedimos que no divulgue lo que hemos conversado. Su participación será muy valiosa para otras mujeres en su misma situación. Su ayuda con este estudio puede conducir al desarrollo y al acceso para mejorar la ayuda a las mujeres inmigrantes abusadas. Un riesgo posible debido a su participación en este estudio puede ser de sentimientos encontrados de contar de nuevo sus incidentes emocionales y físicos del abuso.

Su identidad, junto con la información recibida, será totalmente confidencial. Solamente su entrevistadora tendrá contacto con usted a menos que usted dé el permiso a otra persona, tal como un testigo o un familiar, de estar presente en la entrevista.

Si usted tiene algunas preguntas o preocupación por el estudio, siéntase en confianza de contactarme o a la Dra. Deborah Parsons en (909)537-7364. Favor de no olvidar de dejar su clave.

Poniendo una marca de palomita en la caja abajo, reconozco que me han informado, y que entiendo, la naturaleza y el propósito de este estudio, y yo consiento libremente participar en este proyecto. Y que también soy mayor de 18 años de edad.

Por favor ponga la marca aquí **[]** **Fecha:** _____

La Firma del Participante (clave) _____ **Fecha:** _____

Firma del testigo _____ **Fecha:** _____

APPENDIX L
SURVIVOR DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Study of Abused Immigrant Latina Women Debriefing Statement

This study you have just finished was made to investigate the types of barriers immigrant women deal with because they are victims of abuse. This study also investigated the actions of the participants when they were looking for help and their reasons for not getting help. In this study participants were asked questions on their culture, on their ideas about marriage and their place in their relationships, on their reasons for staying in abusive relationships, their knowledge about resources, and the ways in which they got help and what made them get help. These questions were used to help us understand the situation of immigrant battered women by looking at and understanding your culture. The information received from the study will be used to show the importance of including the Latina culture of the women into all future policies, programs and justice systems because of the specific barriers they deal with.

Thank you for your participation and for not discussing the questions and interview with others. If you have any questions about the study, please contact Alejandra Redondo or Dr. Parsons at 909-537-7364. If you would like a copy of the group results of this study, please contact Dr. Parsons at 909-537-7364 at the end of Winter Quarter of 2009.

If you feel you have need to talk to someone about any emotions or feelings you may be dealing with because of this study please call one of the numbers below.

California

ADV Crisis Line - (951) 683-0829

Battered Women's Crisis Hotline - (714) 891-8121

Bear Baker Diversity Counseling - (866) 921-2339
(toll-free)

Texas

Toll free 24 hour crisis hotline 877-701-7233

Estudio de Mujeres Latinas Inmigrantes Abusadas Interrogatorio de la Declaración

Este estudio que usted acaba de terminar fue diseñado para investigar los tipos de barreras de las mujeres inmigrantes. Este estudio también investigó los comportamientos de los participantes al buscar ayuda y sus impedimentos para no recibir ayuda. En este estudio preguntaron los participantes sobre su cultura, sus ideas sobre la unión y estatus en sus relaciones, sus razones para permanecer en relaciones abusivas, su conocimiento sobre recursos, y las maneras de las cuales consiguieron ayuda y qué hicieron para conseguirla. Estas preguntas fueron utilizadas para ayudarnos a entender la situación cultural delicada de las mujeres inmigrantes. La información recibida del estudio será utilizada para demostrar la importancia de incluir la cultura Latina de las mujeres en todas las políticas, programas y sistemas futuros de la justicia debido a las barreras específicas que se encuentran.

Gracias por su participación y por no comentar las preguntas ni la entrevista con otras personas. Si usted tiene cualquier pregunta sobre el estudio, comuníquese con Alejandra Redondo o la Dra. Parsons en 909-537-7364. Si usted quisiera una copia de los resultados de este estudio, póngase en contacto con la Dra. Parsons en 909-537-7364 a finales del cuarto del 2009.

Si se siente en la necesidad de hablar con un profesional sobre sus temores o sentimientos por causa de este estudio, por favor de comunicarse a los siguientes números.

California

ADV Crisis Line - (951) 683-0829

Battered Women's Crisis Hotline - (714) 891-8121

Bear Baker Diversity Counseling - (866) 921-2339

(llamada gratis)

Texas

Llamada gratis - 24 hour crisis hotline 877-701-7233

APPENDIX M
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SAN BERNARDINO**

5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino, CA 92407-2397

SPONSORED PROGRAMS

Institutional Review Board

(909) 537-5027

fax: (909) 537-7028

<http://irb.csusb.edu>

June 01, 2007

Ms. Alejandra Redondo
c/o: Prof. Deborah Parsons
Department of Criminal Justice
California State University
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

**CSUSB
INSTITUTIONAL
REVIEW BOARD**

Full Board Review

IRB# 06094

Status

APPROVED

Dear Ms. Redondo:

Your application to use human subjects, titled, "Immigrant Latina Women and the Domestic Violence They Encounter in the United States" has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Your informed consent document is attached. This consent document has been stamped and signed by the IRB chairperson. All subsequent copies used must be this officially approved version. A change in your informed consent requires resubmission of your protocol as amended.

You are required to notify the IRB if any substantive changes are made in your research prospectus/protocol, if any unanticipated adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research, and when your project has ended.

Your project is approved for one year from the letter approval date listed above. If your project lasts longer than one year, you (the investigator/researcher) are required to notify the IRB by email or correspondence of *Notice of Project Ending* or submit a *Request for Renewal* at the end of your approval end date. Failure to notify the IRB of the above may result in disciplinary action. You are required to keep copies of the informed consent forms and data for at least three years.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, IRB Secretary. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-5027, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application identification number (above) in all correspondence.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Samuel S. Kushner, Chair
Institutional Review Board

SK/mg

cc: Prof. Deborah Parsons, Department of Criminal Justice

The California State University

Bakersfield • Channel Islands • Chico • Dominguez Hills • East Bay • Fresno • Fullerton • Humboldt • Long Beach • Los Angeles • Maritime Academy
Monterey Bay • Northridge • Pomona • Sacramento • San Bernardino • San Diego • San Francisco • San Jose • San Luis Obispo • San Marcos • Sonoma • Stanislaus

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