



Intimate Partner Violence in the Military: an Investigation of Reporting Crimes to Law Enforcement Officials

Patricia Becker¹ · Ronet Bachman²

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Abstract

Although awareness of intimate partner violence (IPV) has increased, acknowledging that American military members and their families are particularly vulnerable to these forms of violence has been relatively recent. While scholars have shown that victims of IPV are unlikely to report their victimizations to the police (Venema *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 31(5), 872–899, 2016), virtually no attempts have been made to explore reporting crimes to the police by those in the military and/or victimized by someone in the military. In this paper, the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) data from 1992 to 2016 were used to examine whether incidents of intimate partner violence were less likely to be reported to the police if either the victim and/or offender were active duty military personnel. To ascertain whether military status affected decisions to report for other violent crimes, models predicting the probability of reporting to the police for robbery victimizations were also examined. This research revealed that a military connection significantly decreased the likelihood of IPV being reported compared to the civilian population, however, military status had no effect on the likelihood of robbery victimizations being reported. Results support the contention that the military culture may reduce the likelihood that IPV victimizations will be reported to police compared to their civilian counterparts. Because this was not true for robbery victimizations, policies directed at reducing the reluctance of IPV victims to seek justice through law enforcement channels are needed along with continued efforts to prevent IPV in the military specifically, and within the nation generally.

Keywords Intimate partner violence · Police reporting · Military · Victimization

Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is an important global public health concern that significantly affects the lives of individuals. In the United States, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) (2014) reported that, on average, 22.3% of women experience severe IPV in their lifetime. This violence has devastating and long-lasting consequences for the victims including numerous negative physical and psychological health concerns, including

death (Marshall et al. 2005). Despite the progress our society has made in acknowledging these victimizations as social problems, victims of IPV are still unlikely to report their victimizations to the police (Venema 2016). Moreover, research has only recently begun to address the high rates of IPV that exist across different institutions in the United States. For example, data indicate that women in the military and/or those with partners in the in the military face greater risk of victimization compared to those in the civilian population (Jones 2012; Dichter et al. 2011; Rentz et al. 2006). Anecdotal evidence suggests that women in the military are even more reluctant to report their victimizations to authorities compared to their civilian counterparts (House of Representatives Hearings 2009a, b). While research has found that several factors affect the likelihood that IPV will be reported to the police (Felson et al. 2002; Kaukinen 2004), very little is known about the factors that affect the likelihood that victims connected to the military will report their victimizations to police.

Using the most recent data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), this paper attempts to fill this

✉ Patricia Becker
beckerp@udel.edu

Ronet Bachman
ronet@udel.edu

¹ Department of Sociology & Criminal Justice, University of Delaware, 257 E. Main Street Suite 110, Newark, DE 19716, USA

² Department of Sociology & Criminal Justice, University of Delaware, 335 Smith Hall, Newark, DE 19716, USA

gap by examining whether there is a difference in reporting incidents of IPV when the victim and/or offender are in the military compared to victims who are not. To determine whether these differences may be unique to IPV, differences in reporting to police between civilian and military related personnel are also compared for robbery victimizations. Specifically, this research asks, “Are intimate partner assaults less likely to be reported to the police if either the victim and/or offender are active duty military personnel?” and, “Does military status also affect reporting for other violent crimes like robbery?” This counterfactual comparison will illuminate whether the military culture differentially reduces the likelihood that law enforcement officials will be notified for IPV victimizations specifically or for victims of violence generally.

Literature Review

Police Reporting

A great deal of research has investigated the factors that affect decisions to report crimes to the police by victims of violence. A number of these studies focus on the relationship between the offender and victim. For example, Baumer and Lauritsen (2010) investigated reporting crimes using the National Crime Survey (NCS) from 1973 to 1993 and the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) from 1992 to 2005. They found that the probability of police notification for incidents involving known offenders, including intimate partners, other family members, and acquaintances increased since the mid-1980s. Similarly, Felson et al. (1999) drew upon the NCVS from 1992 to 1994 to examine the effect of the victim-offender relationship on reporting one-on-one assaults to the police. They found that victims were more likely to call the police when the offender was an ex-spouse compared to all other types of offenders including other romantic partners, acquaintances, and strangers. In addition, they concluded that victims were more likely to call the police when either the victim or the offender was female. Consistent with the majority of the extant research, they also found that injury to the victim also increased the probability of police notification.

In addition to victim-offender relationship, other research has investigated whether other victim and crime characteristics influence police notification. Bosick et al. (2012) used NCVS data from 1992 to 2010 to investigate the relationship between reporting of all nonfatal violent victimizations, which included rapes, robberies, and assaults. They concluded that as a victim’s age increased, so did the likelihood of reporting violence to the police. In addition to age, female victims under 50 were more likely than their male counterparts to report victimizations. However, gender was not a significant predictor of reporting for victims aged 50 or older.

In sum, research has examined the trends in police notification of violence over time as well as the factors related to reporting violent crime generally. However, there is less research that has examined the unique characteristics that affect the probability of police notification for IPV generally, and virtually none for IPV involving military personnel specifically. A review of this literature will be examined next.

Police Reporting for IPV

Similar to the research investigating police reporting for all victimizations, some scholars have utilized the NCVS to explore the factors related to police notification for IPV. For instance, using the NCVS data from 1992 to 1998, Felson et al. (2002) found that victims attacked by their intimate partners were less likely to report their victimizations to the police because of privacy concerns, wanting to protect their partner, or fear of retaliation. Similar to other research that has utilized the NCVS, victimizations against females, those that resulted in injury, and those involving armed offenders were each more likely to be reported to police.

Studies have also examined the influence of other demographic characteristics like race, marital status, and parental status on reporting IPV. Kaukinen (2004) used data from the Violence Against Women and Men Survey (NVAWS) to investigate the effect that demographic characteristics had on general help seeking behaviors for victims of IPV and sexual assault. Results indicated that compared to women of color, white women were more likely to engage in all help seeking behaviors, including reporting to police. Akers and Kaukinen (2009) also investigated the relationship between demographic characteristics and help seeking behaviors by female victims of IPV using the Canadian General Social Survey (CGSS). Results indicated that minority women were more likely to report their victimizations to police, married women were less likely to contact the police, and income and education had no effect on police notification. Consistent with the effects found for race/ethnicity from this Canadian survey, data from the NCVS indicates that IPV victimizations against minority women are also more likely to be reported to police than victimizations against white women (Bachman and Coker 1995).

In addition to the research that has relied on the national surveys noted above, research has also explored factors related to help seeking behaviors for victims of IPV who have contacted the police and/or other victim services. For example, Hollenshead et al. (2006) used data from a sample of female victims of IPV from a metropolitan police department and client service groups to examine the factors related to help seeking. They found that there was no statistically significant association between age and help-seeking behavior, but concluded that there was a strong underutilization of social services by minority groups. Other research has investigated the

reasons women of color may be reluctant to seek help from authorities. Based on interviews with 29 African American female victims of IPV, Neville and Pugh (1997) concluded that the reasons for their reluctance to report were related to their distrust of the police and a fear of other negative consequences if they did report. While these findings from clinical and police reported incidents are informative, they cannot be generalized to all victims of IPV since the women from these samples have already met the threshold of seeking help for their victimizations.

In sum, a few factors have consistently been found to affect the likelihood of IPV victimizations being reported to police. Gender (i.e., female victims), weapon presence, and victimizations that result in physical injuries each appear to increase the likelihood that victimizations will be reported to police. However, other characteristics of the victim, such as age and race/ethnicity, have not been found to consistently increase or decrease the likelihood of victimizations coming to the attention of the police. What is clear across all studies, however, is that only a small percentage of IPV victims reported their victimizations. Although the extant research has been important in understanding the factors that affect IPV victims' willingness to report their victimizations to police, these studies have not considered the unique nature of the military and how military status can impact victims' help-seeking behavior. The next section will highlight what we know about the military and victimization generally, and IPV specifically.

IPV in the Military

There are approximately 1,400,000 men and women in active-duty in the U.S. military including in the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and the Navy. More than 200,000 of these are women, which is about 15% of the total (Governing 2013). The Department of Defense (DOD) acknowledges that IPV is a serious problem in the military, however, there are no representative data sources that accurately measure the prevalence of IPV for military personnel and their partners. For instance, the United States Government Accountability Report (2010) states, "DOD continues to have long-standing problems with the reliability and completeness of data on incidents of domestic abuse and does not have visibility over the total number of these incidents that occur throughout DOD" (p. 17). The review below details what we know about IPV in the military based on data from the Department of Defense.

While exact estimates of IPV in the military are not readily available, the United States Government Accountability Office Report (2010) concluded that of all the domestic violence incidents reported to the Family Advocacy Program's Central Registry, 47% of domestic violence victims were active-duty service members. In addition, 62% of abusers were active-duty service members. In sum, those incidents

reported to the Family Advocacy Program's Central Registry show that abusers are more likely to be military service members; while, victims are slightly more likely to be civilians.

Scholars have also investigated the prevalence and potential risk factors of IPV in the military. Campbell et al. (2003) utilized the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) database and concluded that 30% of women reported adult lifetime intimate partner violence. In addition, 22% of women reported IPV during their military service. More recently, a telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of female veterans who used the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) primary care reported that 18.5% reported past-year psychological, sexual, or physical IPV (Kimerling et al. 2016).

Other scholars have concluded that the most prevalent form of IPV in the military is physical violence (Jones 2012; Rentz et al. 2006). Rentz et al. (2006) conducted a meta-analysis of studies that either explored child maltreatment, spousal abuse, or both within military families. Rentz and co-authors reported that IPV rates in military samples were higher compared to civilian samples. This finding was confirmed by Marshall, Panuzio, and Taft's (2005) who concluded that rates of IPV perpetration among military veterans and active duty servicemen were three times higher compared to civilian samples.

When examining help-seeking behavior for military personnel, it is essential to understand the procedural issues with reporting options and chain of command requirements that are unique to the military. Within the military, it is the commander's role to ensure that IPV offenders are held accountable through appropriate discipline under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and/or administrative protocols (BWJP n.d.; DTFDV 2003). The military commander has a range of options to correct/change an offender's behavior at the lowest level possible. Due to the complete discretion that commanders have and the desire to resolve complaints at the lowest level possible, the DOD has direct hotlines where victims can call that override the military chain of command. Reports of IPV can come from multiple sources that include the victim, chaplain/religious advisor, medical personnel, civilian law enforcement, and third parties. If a victim reports IPV to the military command, they have a choice between filing an Unrestricted and Restricted Report. Unrestricted Reports are given to command and/or law enforcement for investigation, whereas Restricted Reports allow victims to receive medical care and advocacy services confidentially without an investigation (DTFDV 2003).

In sum, while research clearly indicates that IPV victimization is higher among those involved in the military, there is only anecdotal evidence that victimizations involving military personnel are less likely to be reported to police. By examining the reporting differentials between police notification for military and civilian IPV victims, this study helps fill these gaps in the literature. Moreover, by predicting police

notification for both IPV and robbery victimizations, this paper will examine whether military status affects help-seeking behavior for violent crime victims generally, or IPV victims specifically.

Methods

Materials

Data for this study utilized the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS): Concatenated files, 1992–2016, which is the most recent data publicly available. This survey is contracted by the United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. The purpose of this survey is to obtain the actual prevalence of crimes that are both reported and not reported to the police along with contextual characteristics of victimizations, including whether any injuries were sustained, if medical attention was received, offender and victim characteristics, the victim and offender relationship, and whether the police were notified.

The NCVS accumulates data from personal and household victimizations through a continuing multistage cluster sample survey of individuals residing at residential addresses, which results in a nationally representative sample. Any individual age 12 or older living in the United States, including those living in dormitories or religious buildings are included in sampling procedures and data collection. Data are collected semi-annually, with face-to-face interviews used for the first interview followed by computer-aided telephone interviews. Using behavioral specific screening questions, the interview queries respondents about both violent and property crime victimizations that have occurred within the reference period of ‘the past 6 months.’ Although a recall period of 6 months may be considered limited, research has shown that respondents generally are able to recall events more accurately over a 6-month period than over a 12-month period (Bhandari and Wagner 2006; BJS 2017).

Analyses for this paper focus exclusively on assaults that were perpetrated by an intimate partner (e.g. spouse/partner or ex, boy/girlfriend or ex) and robberies perpetrated by anyone. To measure assault victimizations, respondents were asked a series of questions including, ‘‘Has anyone attacked or threatened you in any of these ways: With any weapon, for instance, a gun or knife; With anything like a baseball bat, frying pan, scissors, or stick; By something thrown such as rock or bottle; Include any punching or choking, etc. Respondents are further cued to think about incidents that may have been committed by someone they knew. To measure robbery victimizations, respondents were also asked a number of behavioral specific questions such as, ‘‘Was something belonging to you stolen such as wallet, purse, briefcase, jewelry, cellphone,’’ among other cues. Robbery is considered a violent crime by the

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), so the NCVS classifies only theft incidents that involved force or the threat of force to the victim as robberies. For a more detailed discussion of the measurement of these victimizations, see the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS n.d.)

Design

Dependent Variable

Reported to the Police To determine if the victimization was reported to the police, respondents are asked ‘‘Were the police informed or did they find out about this incident in any way?’’ This variable is coded as 1 = yes, 2 = no, and 3 = don’t know. The variable is transformed and dichotomized as 1 = yes and 0 = no or don’t know. A total of 56% of intimate partner assaults and 59% of robbery victimizations were reported to the police.

Independent Variables

Victim or Reference Person in Armed Services For this variable, the NCVS asks respondents if they are currently an Armed Forces member. In addition to examining whether victims are currently in active duty, it is also important to determine whether their intimate partners may be serving in the military. Although there is no question in the NCVS that directly asks about this, it is possible to estimate this by using information about the reference person in the victim’s household. The reference person is the owner and/or co-owner (or renter) of the household. The NCVS asks respondents if the reference person is currently serving in the Armed Forces, and assuming that the intimate partner delineated as the offender is actually the same reference person, this can be used to indicate whether the offender is in the military. Using these two variables, we created a variable titled *military*, which was coded 1 for those victims and/or reference persons who were in the military and 0 for those who were not in the military¹.

Based on previous literature, several other variables were included in multivariate models predicting reporting to the police. Descriptive statistics for the sample are shown in Table 1. These control variables included age, race, marital status, presence of a weapon, if medical care was received, gender of the victim², education, employment, and if the incident occurred in a private location. In addition to these control variables, the models predicting the reporting of robbery also included whether multiple offenders were present and if the crime was committed by a stranger.

¹ Except for age, all variables were coded dichotomously.

² The gender of the offender could not be included in IPV models because it was highly correlated with the gender of the victim. The vast majority of IPV victimizations against females were perpetrated by males. As a result, including both gender of the victim and offender in the same model produced multicollinearity.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for IPV and robbery victimizations, (NCVS 1992–2016)

	IPV			Robbery		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Dependent variables						
Reported to police	5264	.56	.50	6105	.59	.49
Independent variables						
Military						
Reference person	5264	.01	.12	6105	.01	.10
Victim	5264	.01	.10	6105	.01	.09
Military	5264	.02	.12	6105	.01	.11
Control variables						
Contextual characteristics						
Weapon present	5264	.17	.38	6105	.47	.50
Medical attention	5264	.18	.38	6105	.17	.38
Private location	5264	.71	.45	6105	.22	.42
Multiple offender				5933	.42	.49
Stranger				6105	.65	.48
Victim characteristics						
Non-hispanic white	5264	.70	.46	6105	.56	.50
Female	5264	.85	.36	6105	.39	.49
Marital status	5237	.16	.37	6080	.22	.41
Age	5264	33	11.14	6105	33	16.01
Employment	5264	.59	.49	6105	.51	.50
Education	5189	.45	.50	6020	.39	.49

Participants

On average, IPV victims were 33 years old ($SD = 11.14$, Range = 12–90), female (85%), non-Hispanic white (70%), employed (59%), high school graduates or less (55%), and not married (84%). Additionally, only 18% sought medical attention, 17% of victimizations involved a weapon, and the majority (71%) occurred in a private location.

Robbery victimizations were more often committed by a stranger compared to known offenders³ (65%), involved one perpetrator (58%), almost half involved a weapon (47%), few victims sought medical care (17%), and a majority were committed in public (78%). On average, victims were 33 years old ($SD = 16.01$, Range = 12 to 90), non-Hispanic white (56%), male (61%), single (78%), the majority of victims only had a high school degree or less (61%) and just over half were currently employed (51%).

³ Robbery victimizations perpetrated by multiple offenders that included both stranger and known offenders were coded as stranger.

Procedure

For this study, only one-on-one IPV assault victimizations were examined. These incidents included completed aggravated assault with injury, attempted aggravated assault with a weapon, threatened assault with a weapon, simple assault completed without injury, and verbal threat of assault. There were a total of 5264 incidents of IPV.⁴ As noted above, models predicting reporting for robbery victimizations will be used as a counterfactual to determine whether military status has the same or a different effect on reporting robbery victimizations to police. There were 6105 incidents of robbery, which included both lone and multiple offender victimizations.

To visualize the bivariate distribution of police notification across key independent variables, Chi square analyses will first be presented. Next, logistic regression was conducted to determine the effect that each independent variable had on reporting to police, net of all other factors. As noted above, the NCVS utilizes a stratified, multistage cluster sample design, which prevents researchers from assuming that the observations in the sample are independent from one another (Baumer 2002). This is problematic because regression analyses assume that observations are independent. An additional issue when using the NCVS data is that respondents can report more than one victimization within the 6-month reference period. The NCVS uses a “series victimization protocol” to address the burdens on respondents who report a large number of repeated victimizations during the reference period. These victimizations are classified as “series incidents,” but the threshold for defining them has changed during the survey’s history. Generally, if respondents experienced several victimizations that are similar in nature during the same reference period, they are classified as a series incident and the detailed information about them were collected for the last occurrence. To adjust for both the sampling strategy and series victimizations, an incident weight was applied prior to conducting analyses. This weight controls the number of incidents for each respondent. It is important to note that series incidents account for less than 1% of all violent victimizations (Lauritsen et al. 2012). All analyses were performed using Stata, version 14.

⁴ This measurement of IPV did not include all forms of violence measured by the NCVS. Also, although it would have been ideal to examine police-reporting behavior of rape and sexual assault victimizations, there were too few cases that involved military personnel to compare in multivariate models.

Results

Bivariate Statistics

The relationships between all of the independent variables and police reporting were examined utilizing chi-square tests and results are presented in Table 2⁵. For the bivariate results examining reporting IPV to police, victimizations where either the perpetrator or the victim were in the military were significantly less likely to be reported to police compared to those that involved no military connection. For the bivariate results examining reporting robberies to police, military status of either the victim or offender did not significantly affect decisions to report. This provides preliminary evidence that the military culture may decrease the likelihood of IPV victimizations being reported, but does not affect reporting for robbery victimizations.

At the bivariate level, several other victim and contextual characteristics were also related to reporting IPV and robbery. For both IPV and robbery incidents, those that involved a female victim, that involved a weapon, where medical care was received, and that occurred in a private location were significantly more likely to be reported. Education level had the opposite effect across crime types. Robbery victimizations involving victims with higher levels of education (those with some college or more) were more likely to be reported, while IPV incidents that involved victims with a high school education or less were more likely to be reported. For robbery victimizations, incidents that involved victims who were married, employed, and where the perpetrator was a stranger were each more likely to be reported. Race/ethnicity was the only factor that decreased the likelihood of police notification. Incidents of IPV involving Non-Hispanic white victims were significantly less likely to be reported compared to all other races.

This section has examined the effects of the independent variables on police reporting at the bivariate level. While this analysis has the advantage of illuminating the actual percentage differentials that exist across independent variable categories, multivariate analyses are required to determine which variables retain their significance after controlling for the other independent variables. The next section will present these multivariate models.

⁵ Because our dependent variable is a dichotomy, displaying the percentage differentials across IV categories within a DV category is the appropriate statistical technique for examining bivariate relationships (Paternoster and Bachman 2018). This allows one to see the effect of the independent variable categories on the dependent variable (i.e. the percentage of victimizations reported to the police).

Table 2 Bivariate examining relationship between independent variables and police reporting for IPV and robbery (NCVS 1992–2016)

	Dependent variables	
	Reported IPV	Reported robbery
Independent variables		
Military variable		
Military connection	41.0%**	58.6%
No military connection	55.9%**	58.9%
Control variables		
Contextual characteristics		
Weapon present	64.8%***	65.0%***
Weapon not present	53.7%***	53.5%***
Medical attention received	72.9%***	78.6%***
No medical attention received	51.9%***	54.9%***
Public location	53.5%*	56.0%***
Private location	56.5%*	69.1%***
Multiple offenders		62.6%***
Single offender		56.1%***
Stranger		59.7%
Known		57.6%
Victim characteristics		
Non-hispanic white	53.0%***	59.2%
Non-white	61.8%***	58.6%
Female	56.2%*	66.5%***
Male	52.3%*	54.1%***
Married	55.6%	67.4%***
Not married	55.7%	56.5%***
Employed	55.8%	63.4%***
Not employed	55.4%	54.2%***
Some college or more	52.5%***	63.0%***
High school or less	58.4%***	56.3%***

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Multivariate Analyses

Tables 3 and 4 present the results of the logistic regression models predicting police reporting of IPV and robbery respectively. While it would have been ideal to examine the effects of each military variable (victim, reference person, and neither in armed services) separately, 79% of victims in the armed services were also victimized by offenders in the service. Because of this overlap, only military connection was used to determine if military status affects reporting to police. As can be seen in Table 3, when either the victim and/or the offender were in the military the odds that the victimization was reported decreased by 41%, $p < .05$, 95% CI [.35, .98]. Thus, even after controlling for the other factors found to be important in predicting police reporting, when an incident of IPV involved military personnel, the likelihood of it being

Table 3 Logistic regression results examining the predictors of reporting IPV to police (NCVS 1992–2016)

Independent variables	Odds ratio	Std. error	95% CI	
			Lower bound	Upper bound
Military connection	.59*	.15	.35	.98
Control variables				
Contextual characteristics				
Weapon present	1.46***	.13	1.23	1.73
Medical attention	2.46***	.22	2.06	2.92
Private location	1.13	.08	.99	1.30
Victim characteristics				
Non-hispanic white	.74**	.05	.64	.85
Female	1.25**	.11	1.05	1.49
Age	1.01**	.002	1.00	1.02
Marital status	.99	.0005	.99	1.00
Employment	1.12	.07	.98	1.27
Education	.99	.0002	.99	1.00

N = 4810

****p* < .001; ***p* < .01; **p* < .05

Prob > *F* = .000***

reported to police was significantly lower compared to their civilian counterparts. Providing further support for this conclusion, Table 4 presents the results of the logistic regression models predicting police notification for robbery victimizations. Consistent with the bivariate analyses, the military independent variable did not affect the likelihood of robberies being reported to the police. This suggests that even after

controlling for other important factors, military status still serves to decrease reporting to the police for violence perpetrated by intimate partners but does not do so for other violent crimes like robbery.

Other characteristics of the victimization were also significant when predicting police reporting for both IPV and robbery. Incidents wherein the offender had a weapon, incidents

Table 4 Logistic regression results examining the predictors of reporting robbery to police (NCVS 1992–2016)

Independent variables	Odds ratio	Std. error	95% CI	
			Lower bound	Upper bound
Military connection	1.06	.29	.63	1.81
Control variables				
Contextual characteristics				
Weapon present	1.66***	.11	1.46	1.89
Medical attention	3.01***	.30	2.48	3.67
Private location	1.74***	.16	1.45	2.08
Multiple offenders	1.00	.0002	.99	1.00
Stranger	1.15**	.09	1.00	1.05
Victim characteristics				
Non-hispanic White	.94	.06	.83	1.07
Female	1.77***	.12	1.55	2.02
Age	1.02**	.003	1.01	1.02
Marital status	1.00	.0004	.99	1.00
Employment	1.34***	.09	1.18	1.53
Education	.99	.0002	.99	1.00

N = 5441

****p* < .001; ***p* < .01; **p* < .05

Prob > *F* = .000***

in which the victim required medical care, incidents involving older victims and female victims were all more likely to be reported. The odds that robbery victimizations were reported to the police increased significantly when victims were employed, when incidents occurred in a private location, and when the offender was a stranger.

Similar to bivariate results, there was only one victim characteristic that significantly decreased the odds of police notification for IPV. Specifically, the odds of IPV victimizations being reported to the police decreased significantly for victims who were white non-Hispanic, compared to victims of other race/ethnicities.

Discussion

Using a contemporary and nationally representative sample of crime victimizations from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), the primary goal of this research was to examine whether assaults perpetrated by intimate partners were less likely to be reported to police when the victim and/or offender were in the military compared to victims unaffiliated with the military. This research contributes to the current literature by providing one of the first multivariate analyses using a large national sample to examine whether a military connection influences the likelihood of reporting IPV to the police. To determine whether the effect of military status differentially predicted police reporting of IPV victimizations compared to other forms of violent crime, robbery victimizations were also examined to provide this counterfactual comparison.

Initial bivariate analyses revealed that a military connection significantly decreased the likelihood of IPV being reported compared to IPV victimizations against the civilian population, however, military status had no effect on the likelihood of robbery victimizations being reported. Multiple logistic regression results confirmed this result and indicated that even after controlling for the effects of other important victim and incident characteristics, IPV victimizations involving civilians were more likely to be reported compared to victimizations in which either the victim or offender were in the military. These findings suggest that the military culture may decrease the likelihood of IPV victims notifying law enforcement officials, but have no effect on notification for other violent crimes.

To help explain this finding, it is essential to understand the military culture. The factors that dictate the informal norms and processes of service members in the military are masculinity and professionalism (Wilson 2007). One explanation for why military culture may differentially silence IPV victims is through hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is a pattern of practice or a process that perpetuates male dominance over women (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Scholars have researched the presence of hegemonic

masculinity in different organizations and workplaces (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). In particular, specific patterns of hegemonic masculinity have been found in the military, and may be related to the likelihood that victims of IPV will seek help from authorities. Hegemonic masculinity promotes a culture of solidarity and secrecy within the military. The accumulation of secretiveness, dominance, and solidarity may affect how supervisors and disciplinary bodies within the military structure respond to reports of IPV. This culture may further influence the decision to report for female victims of IPV who are in the military or who have intimate partners in the military. Despite the increasing number of women in the military, it remains a male-dominated institution. As such, females are already considered outsiders because they defy the hyper-masculine culture and traditional gender roles. To avoid hostile interactions with their male counterparts or losing their military identity, these victims may decide to keep their IPV victimizations private (Dunivin 1994). Anecdotal evidence supports this contention (House of Representatives Hearings 2009a, b).

Other facets of the military may also decrease the likelihood of police notification. The military culture also can have unique collateral consequences for military personnel who perpetrate IPV. For example, if active duty military IPV offenders are charged, they may be forced to relinquish their weapons, which could be grounds for a dishonorable discharge. Second, when military personnel are victimized they have the option of making two types of reports, reports that are restricted and those that are unrestricted. Restricted Reports allow victims to receive medical care and advocacy services confidentially without causing an investigation (DTFDV 2003). The opportunity to file a restricted report may decrease the likelihood that incidents of IPV actually get reported to police. Unfortunately, while allowing victims to access medical services, this essentially nullifies any deterrent effect the criminal justice system may have in deterring future violence.

The findings of this research offer clear policy implications. Similar to the surveys implemented by the DOD to monitor the prevalence of rape and sexual assault victimizations, it is important to monitor the prevalence of IPV using similar survey methodology. Like the other national surveys that measure victimization including the NCVS, these screening questions could be added to the already existing survey instrument that monitors rape and sexual assault. Policies also need to be in place to ensure that victims feel safe to report IPV to the police. Without these policies that attempt to change the culture of silence, victims will remain disconnected from support services because several of these services rely on police referrals. Furthermore, not reporting victimizations to the police limits the deterrent aspect of the criminal justice system, which is one of its major functions (Skogan 1984). The DOD also needs to implement a better system of reporting the data they do have regarding IPV to the public. The first

step to accountability is maintaining a level of transparency regarding the problems of IPV in the military with the public. Lastly, because this research shows that military status did not affect the likelihood of robbery victimizations being reported, but decreased the chance of IPV incidents coming to the attention of police, this highlights the need to combat the stigma associated with IPV generally, and within the military specifically. Combating this stigma can impact reporting of IPV across all institutions, not just within the military.

One limitation of this study is that the NCVS relies on a nationally representative of the U.S. population generally, not of military personnel specifically. As a result, there were only a small number victims who were in the military themselves and/or who reported that the perpetrators were also in the military. Because of this limitation, the findings should not be generalized to the larger military population. Despite this, however, the NCVS provided a unique opportunity to examine how a military connection may influence decisions to report crimes to the police. These results underscore the need for more research to investigate the factors that affect help seeking behavior of IPV victims serving in the military. Related to this is limitation is the assumption that victim's reference person as measured by the NCVS was the offender in IPV incidents. This assumption needs to be tested with surveys that more directly measure the military status of both the victim and the offender.

Another important limitation of this research is that victims were not specifically asked about the type of law enforcement agency that was notified. Because victims in the military also have the option of reporting their victimizations to their superiors, who would then notify military law enforcement, it is not clear whether the generic question asked by the NCVS includes this reporting mechanism specific to military personnel. However, it may also be that military respondents conflated the term "police" with military law enforcement and therefore assumed that police" included military law enforcement. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine in which of these ways our results may be biased. This also has implications for future researchers and policy makers alike as civilian areas with military bases may not be capturing all IPV incidents reported to police in civilian law enforcement reports as many may remain exclusively within the domain of military law enforcement.

Future research should extend analyses of military personnel reporting to the police beyond IPV to include incidents of rape and sexual assault. Unfortunately, there were too few rape incidents reported in the NCVS that involved active duty military personnel to include those victimizations in this analyses. As illustrated in a growing body of literature, a number of sexual assault scandals in the military have been exposed (DOD 2013; House of Representatives, 2009b; House of Representatives, 2009a). In addition to examining reporting decisions, it is crucial that future research explores the barriers

associated with reporting these victimizations within the military. For instance, The Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military (2017) reveals about a 10% increase in the number of military sexual assault victims who reported their victimizations to authorities, though the actual percentage of victimizations decreased in 2014 (4.3%) compared to the estimates in 2012 (6.1%). Although this report shows some positive advancements made by the Armed Forces to combat sexual assault and an increase in victims' willingness to make reports to authorities, the survey revealed that respondents still experienced negative outcomes from reporting their sexual assaults. For instance, 62% of active duty sexual assault victims who reported their victimizations also reported experiencing some form of retaliation and/or punishment professionally, socially, and/or administratively.

In sum, much more research is needed to document the prevalence of IPV for those serving in the military as well as the institutional and societal responses in place to ameliorate the consequences of victimization when it occurs. Without these data, policies designed to prevent IPV in the military will be ill informed at best. It is hoped that this research will be a catalyst for future research, both qualitative and quantitative, in these areas of inquiry.

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