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SWEDISH POLICE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN SAME- SEX RELATIONSHIPS

A VIGNETTE STUDY

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Background. Intimate partner violence is a recognized public health issue, in which violence in same-sex relationships is included. Despite intimate partner violence in same-sex relationships being a somewhat growing area of research, we are still lacking knowledge about this problem. **Aim.** The overall aim was to investigate how Swedish police students perceive intimate partner violence in same-sex relationships. **Method.** 248 police students (69% males and 31% females) who were currently enrolled in the police education in Växjö read a vignette and answered a questionnaire. The vignettes portrayed an intimate relationship between two people and were available in four versions with the sex of the offender and victim being alternated. The questionnaire consisted of the instrument Opinions of Domestic Violence Scale, and additional questions constructed for this study. Parametric and non-parametric tests were used to make comparisons between groups. **Results.** Same-sex IPV was perceived as less serious than victimization of a heterosexual female, but the case with a same-sex relationship with a female victim was perceived as more serious than victimization of a heterosexual male. Police intervention was not found to be needed to the same extent in the cases of same-sex IPV as in the case with a heterosexual female victim. **Discussion.** The perceptions of same-sex IPV as less serious and not in as much need of police intervention as a case involving a heterosexual female victim, may have implications for how these victims are handled by the police. The perceptions of who constitutes a true victim of intimate partner violence may be of importance when decisions are made by police officers.

Keywords: intimate partner violence, same-sex relationships, police, perceptions, vignette study.

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Contents

INTRODUCTION	6
BACKGROUND	7
Prevalence	7
Violence in intimate relationships – dynamics and processes	8
Complications for victims of same-sex intimate partner violence	9
Intimate partner violence, the law and reporting practices	10
Intimate partner violence and the police	12
Perceptions of intimate partner violence in other samples	12
Street-level bureaucracy	13
The relevance of the study	14
Aim and research questions	15
METHOD	16
Design	16
Sample	16
Material	18
<i>Vignettes</i>	18
<i>Questionnaire</i>	19
Procedure	20
<i>Pilot study</i>	20
<i>Study Procedure</i>	20
Statistical analyses	21
<i>Quantitative content analysis</i>	22
Ethical considerations	23
RESULTS	24
Police students’ perceptions of the severity of intimate partner violence based on sex of the victim, offender and respondent	24
<i>ODVS</i>	24
<i>Perceived seriousness of the overall problematics in the relationship, question P</i>	25
<i>Correlation between ODVS and question P</i>	25
Police students’ perceptions of how a case of intimate partner violence should be handled by the police based on sex of the victim, offender and respondent	25
Quantitative content analysis	26

DISCUSSION	30
Same-sex intimate partner violence perceived as less serious than men’s violence against women	30
Bias and prejudice as a potential determining factor for handling a case of same-sex IPV	32
Limitations	34
CONCLUSION	36
Suggestions for future research.....	36
REFERENCE LIST	37
APPENDIX A	42
APPENDIX B	43
APPENDIX C	46
APPENDIX D	48
APPENDIX E	49
APPENDIX F	50

INTRODUCTION

Like battered women in the 1960's had to fight for their rights before the women's liberation movement (Burke & Follingstad, 1999), battered homosexual men and women are today struggling to be recognized as victims of intimate partner violence [IPV]. Same-sex IPV received attention in the public area for the first time in the late 1980's (Jablow, 2000), but remains a hidden topic to this date (National Centre for Knowledge on Men's Violence Against Women [NCK], 2009).

Despite the amount of research done on men's violence against women, the research is limited regarding IPV in other types of relationships (Pattavina, Hirschel, Buzawa, Faggiani, & Bentley, 2007). This has resulted in IPV being more or less synonymous with men's violence against women (The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention [NCCP], 2009a). About one third of all women in the United States have experienced some form of IPV during their lifetime (Black et al., 2011). However, previous research has indicated that the high prevalence of IPV is not limited to comprise men's violence against women only, but is rather a problem that exists in all types of relationships (Holmberg & Stjernqvist, 2008; Kuehne & Sullivan, 2003; Peterman & Dixon, 2003). The research done within the field of same-sex IPV has contributed to a bigger, yet limited, understanding of IPV (Duke & Davidsson, 2009; Hassouneh & Glass, 2008).

IPV is defined as "any actual, attempted, or threatened physical harm perpetrated by a man or a woman against someone with whom he or she has, or has had an intimate, sexual relationship" (Kropp, Hart, & Belfrage, 2008, p. 2) (my translation). This definition includes any victim, independent of sex and sexual orientation. Another definition provided by the World Health Organization [WHO] is that "IPV refers to any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship" (WHO, 2012, p. 1). WHO (2012) acknowledge that IPV is not solely concentrated to men's violence against women, but states that heterosexual women are the ones at most risk of being exposed to IPV by a current or former partner and that "the overwhelming burden of IPV is borne by *women*" (WHO, 2012, p. 1) (my italics).

This study seeks to extend the knowledge of IPV in same-sex relationships. Studies on police officers perceptions of same-sex IPV has been requested due to the currently limited research field (e.g. Dawson & Hotton, 2014). The targeted population for this study was future police officers, police students. Therefore, this study was aimed at investigating Swedish police students' perceptions of same-sex IPV and proceeds from the theoretical framework of street-level bureaucracy (Lipsky, 1980).

BACKGROUND

“Society’s denial and the victims’ silence due to shame, isolation, embarrassment, and fear have prevented victims from leaving abusive relationships and perpetrators from receiving help. /.../ With acceptance, awareness, and education, domestic violence can be suppressed in all of society’s populations”. (Peterman & Dixon, 2003, p. 46-47).

Prevalence

There are a number of published studies addressing the prevalence of IPV. For example, Coker et al. (2002) used data from the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) from the United States to conduct their study. Coker et al. (2002) found that 29% out of 6790 women, and 23% out of 7122 men in their study had been victims of IPV. In the summary report of the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, also from the United States, Black et al. (2011) reported that 36 % out of the 9086 women and 29% out of the 7421 men in their study had been victims of IPV. In a study by Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, and Watts (2006) the researchers sought to estimate the prevalence of sexual and/or physical IPV against women in ten countries, such as Brazil, Japan and Bangladesh. The sample consisted of 24097 women. The results showed that the lifetime prevalence for sexual and/or physical IPV ranged between 15% and 71%, including victimization from slapping, hitting, choking, being forced into sexual activities and also controlling behavior from the partner.

NCCP (2014) in Sweden reported that the number of women who had experienced IPV during the year of 2012 (7.0% out of 6479 women) was more or less the same as the number of men who had been victimized that same year (6.7% out of 6055 men). The rates of men and women who had been victims of IPV were found to be equal even after studying different types of violence separately (i.e. physical violence and psychological violence).

Few studies have been published that explicitly maps the prevalence of same-sex IPV, but there are several published articles in which it is argued that the prevalence of same-sex IPV could and should be compared to the prevalence of heterosexual IPV (e.g. Kuehnle & Sullivan, 2003; Peterman & Dixon, 2003). Turell (2000) reported that the prevalence of victimization from physical IPV among 227 homosexual and bisexual men and 265 homosexual and bisexual women was 9 % in a current relationship and 32% in a previous relationship. The rate of emotional abuse was found to be 83%. Women reported a significantly higher rate of physical abuse (55%) than did men (44%).

In another study by Walters, Chen, and Breiding (2013) the lifetime prevalence of same-sex IPV, defined as stalking, rape, and/or physical violence, was found to be 26% for men and 44% for women in the sample consisting of 9086 women and 7421 men. The lifetime prevalence of severe same-sex IPV, which was defined as being beaten up, being hit with a fist or other hard object, and/or being thrown against something was found to be 16% and 29% for men and women respectively. Merrill and Wolfe (2000) found the rates of IPV victimization among homosexual men to be 87%, but the sample was non-representative and consisted of only 52 male respondents. The respondents however reported that the form of physical violence that they had experienced was severe and that the

violence in the majority of the cases had been repeated. 79% reported being grabbed, shoved or pushed by their partner, whereas 64% reported being punched, slapped or hit.

In a recently published meta-analysis conducted by Badenes-Ribera, Frias-Navarro, Bonilla-Campos, Pons-Salvador, and Montere-i-Bort (2015), the results showed that the mean prevalence over the lifespan of all types of IPV victimization among homosexual women was 48%. The rates of victimization from physical IPV over the lifespan was found to be 18%. The rates of emotional IPV was found to be 43% and included behaviors such as false accusations, humiliation and controlling behavior. Lastly, the rate of victimization from sexual IPV was found to be 14%. Burke, Jordan, and Owen (2002) reported that victims of same-sex IPV tended to have experienced many different forms of IPV such as being hit, slapped, or forced to sexual activities. The results showed that 68% of the sample consisting of 56 males, 13 females and 4 respondents who identified as other, had experienced some type of victimization from IPV.

In the report by Walters et al. (2013) the issues with prevalence studies regarding same-sex IPV was raised. The lack of equivalent crucial definitions of what is being asked for was argued to be of main importance for the inconsistent findings within this field. Little research has been done with representative samples, which has resulted in prevalence rates ranging from low to extremely high for same-sex IPV. Different studies include different definitions of sexual orientation where some studies include homosexual men and women, and bisexuals in the same group whereas other studies distinctively separate these groups. The type of victimization that has been investigated in different studies is also something that has varied from sexual victimization, stalking, verbal harassment, and general violence within an intimate relationship. Stalking is one example of why it becomes troubling with definitions, since stalking according to Badenes-Ribera et al. (2015) could be included in physical as well as psychological IPV.

Comparing different studies therefore becomes complicated, which leads to difficulties determining the actual prevalence rates of crimes such as IPV (Dutton, Tetreault, Karakanta, & White, 2014). Even though one should interpret the results from different prevalence studies with caution, it is impossible to disregard the fact that IPV is a problem that can occur in all types of relationships.

Violence in intimate relationships – dynamics and processes

IPV in all types of relationships holds a wide spectrum of violence with physical, mental and sexual violence being common (NCK, 2009). IPV may result in a variety of complications for the victims, such as physical injuries and emotional problems (Burke & Owen, 2006; McClennen, 2005). The systematic oppression and infringement that the perpetrator exerts toward the victim is universal and commonly referred to as the normalization process, or the cycle of violence (Lundgren, Heimer, Westerstrand, & Kalliokoski, 2001; Murray, Mobley, Buford, & Seaman-DeJohn, 2007). The normalization process is not limited to only affect the victim and prevent them from leaving the abusive relationship, but is also affecting the perpetrator. This makes the normalization process a vicious cycle that is hard to break out from (Lundgren et al., 2001; Burke & Owen, 2006).

According to Lundgren et al. (2001) it is common that the normalization process starts with the perpetrator controlling the victim in everyday activities. Suddenly

the victim receives multiple calls asking where they are, when they are coming home and who else is with them. The victim is criticized and ridiculed which results in lowered self-esteem and self-worth. While the critique escalates, the victim adjusts to the perpetrator to avoid the verbal harassment and internalizes the negative view of one self that is projected by the perpetrator. The victim becomes isolated from the outside world and loses contact with friends and relatives because of the socially controlling behavior from the perpetrator. As the utter-most extreme form of control, the perpetrator exerts physical violence, and the victim adjusts to the perpetrator even more to avoid being victimized further. The shifts between hot and cold, power, control and love evokes hope for the victims that the perpetrator will go back to the loving person that they were from the beginning.

Burke and Owen (2006) use a three stage model that is suggested to apply to same-sex IPV, which involves stages such as (1)*tension building*, (2)*acute battering*, and (3)*calming*. The first stage is suggested to prolong from days to years with arguments and verbal disputes. Potential violence is limited to minor acts that does not result in any significant injuries. In the second stage however, the violence increases by the perpetrator and becomes more severe and may result in serious injury for the victim. The third stage is also referred to as *the honeymoon stage* (Peterman & Dixon, 2003), in which the perpetrator apologizes for their behavior and ensures the victim that the violence, neglect and bad behavior will not be repeated (Burke & Owen, 2006). The progression of severity in the violent behavior expressed by the perpetrator has been suggested to be the same independent of relationship, no matter what explanatory model is used for describing the cycle of violence (Potoczniak, Mourot, Crosbie-Burnett, & Potoczniak, 2003).

Complications for victims of same-sex intimate partner violence

Research that support the notion of IPV being a problem found among all types of intimate relationships has according to Hines, Brown, and Dunning (2007) been excluded much due to the feminist theory, in which *men are the perpetrators* and *females are the victims*. It is important to remember that the women's movement and the start of the feminist theory have contributed to a lot of work being done in raising the voice for female victims of IPV (Hoyle, 2007). However, the theories that have been used to explain why crimes such as IPV occur, have been building upon male superiority in society and that men bring this power advantage into the home (Hines et al., 2007). This explanation model has been commonly used to understand and interpret the problem of IPV, but has led to female victims of heterosexual IPV being the only ones who truly deserve a victim status for this crime (Hoyle, 2007).

According to Flinck and Paavilainen (2010) there are two oppositions within the research field of IPV. On the one hand there are researchers who argue for gender symmetry, and on the other hand there are researchers who claim that IPV is the result of societal and patriarchal structures. IPV has been referred to as either "(a) deliberate mutual combat or, (b) male violence against women" (Flinck, & Paavilainen, 2010, p. 306). This indicates that unless the perpetrator is male and the victim is female, the two partners are merely involved in a cycle of violence where both partners are equally responsible and engage in mutual combat. These two available options may well have been the foundation for today's existing

myths surrounding same-sex IPV, since two partners of the same-sex in this equation equals mutual combat in a case of IPV.

According to Duke and Davidsson (2009), mutual combat is one of the many myths surrounding same-sex IPV and possibly also the most important one. Mutual combat refers to the perception of the perpetrator and the victim sharing responsibility for the violence. It is a myth that is commonly found among crisis center staff, the law enforcement and help centers in general. When same-sex IPV is perceived to be mutual, the violence is minimized and it results in false conclusions and possibly also accusations toward the victim. The line between being a perpetrator and a victim is thereby erased, and the professionals who encounter such a case may therefore not feel the need to take action.

The myth of the lesbian utopia is also something that has been described in previous research, and is according to Hassouneh and Glass (2008) something that reinforces the stereotype of women as passive and incapable of committing violent acts. Through this myth, it is assumed that violence is a latent male trait and therefore violent acts cannot occur in a relationship between two women. Homosexual women are, as a consequence of this, therefore a part of this hypothesized utopia, surrounded by love and peace, free from the risk of being victimized by an intimate partner. This may result in female victims of same-sex IPV having trouble understanding their own experiences from their victimization, and being unable to receive the support they need if they seek help (Hassouneh & Glass, 2008; NCK, 2009).

The polarized research field of IPV has been suggested to be due to an effort to challenge the gender paradigm where gender is seen as dichotomous, and it has been argued that there is a need for wider approaches that goes beyond gender and sex to identify and prevent IPV (Flinck & Paavilainen, 2010). IPV in same-sex relationships has been argued to remain invisible due to the perpetrator and the victim being either two men or two women. This affects how the violence in these relationships is viewed and interpreted, not only by society but also by professionals who work in the area (Holmberg & Stjernqvist, 2008; Taylor & Sorenson, 2005).

Intimate partner violence, the law and reporting practices

NCCP (2009b) reported that two new legislations were implemented in the Swedish law in the late 1990's, as an effect from the work done by the commission for violence against women. This could be seen as an important progress of how IPV is viewed and interpreted in Sweden, which has changed over the past decades. The laws are referred to as severe violation of a woman's integrity and severe violation of integrity, which both covers offenses such as abuse, threats and breach of domiciliary peace. Both laws allows for a collection of minor offenses in combination with more severe offenses to be considered in court. The collection of offenses enables for harsher sentencing than if each offense were to be considered separately, which ultimately is a statement from society that no violence in intimate relationships will be tolerated.

These additional laws were argued to be crucial for the Swedish law enforcement in order to prevent IPV, and first and foremost men's violence against women, and to enable for the criminal justice system to acknowledge and recognize the systematic oppression that victims of IPV are exposed to (NCCP, 2009b). Severe

violation of a woman's integrity covers men's violence against women only, which means that victims of same-sex IPV are excluded from this law. However, the law of severe violation of integrity should theoretically as well as practically be applicable to same-sex IPV, but it is to this date unknown whether this law is actively used for this purpose (NCCP, 2009b; NCCP, 2014).

Same-sex IPV is starting to be recognized as a problem in Sweden, and homosexuals have the same rights as heterosexuals (Ahmed, Aldén, & Hammarstedt, 2013). In other countries however, such as parts of the United States, clear distinctions are made in the legislation regulating what type of protection that you have the right to as a victim of IPV, which depends on your sexual orientation. This means that victims of same-sex IPV are explicitly excluded from the law, stating that they do not have any legal rights to protection (Pattavina et al., 2007).

According to Pattavina et al. (2007) all states in the United States have specific laws for targeting cases of IPV in order to increase and improve the response to these cases by the criminal justice system. However, these laws are in some states only applicable to men's violence against women and explicitly exclude victims of same-sex IPV, leaving them without any legal rights to protection. In practice, this means that victims of same-sex IPV do not have the right to things such as protection- or restraining orders as stated in the IPV legislation. The excluding of victims of same-sex IPV from the law is argued to be rooted in the unwillingness to even recognize the relationships of same-sex partners, which at this point is the first step to conquer their alienation (ibid).

Regulated in the law or not, the number of reported incidents of IPV are far fewer than the actual number of crimes committed (NCCP, 2009a). The number of unrecorded crimes, the cases that never comes to the attention of the police, is assumed to be higher for same-sex IPV than for heterosexual IPV (Holmberg & Stjernqvist, 2008; Kuehne & Sullivan, 2003; NCCP, 2009a). According to NCCP (2009a) there are few male victims of IPV who report their victimization to the police. Having trust in the criminal justice system is important and needed in order to proceed with a potential prosecution and trial. Victims of IPV tend to have less confidence in the criminal justice system compared to victims of other violent crimes, which has been shown to particularly concern male victims (Finneran & Stephenson, 2013; NCCP, 2009a).

Due to the understanding and idea of the field of corrections as being an unhelpful resource for victims of same-sex IPV, few victims report their victimization to the police (Duke & Davidsson, 2009; Holmberg & Stjernqvist, 2007). For example, Renzetti (1992) reported that only 19 out of 100 victims who had experienced same-sex IPV made contact with the police post victimization. The majority of these 19 victims did not feel that the contact lived up to their expectations. Compared to for example robbery, which is a crime that is reported in approximately 60 % of the cases (NCCP, 2015), this number is quite small. A more recent study by Finneran and Stephenson (2013) confirmed these results with victims of same-sex IPV perceiving the police as lacking adequate potential to help. Finneran and Stephenson (2013) reported that gay men who had been victimized by their partner did not think that the police would be of any help if they were to press charges. This may in turn lead to service providers, law enforcement and other help related services being indifferent to, and neglect the

need for additional training and education in order to provide the help needed (Duke & Davidsson, 2009).

Intimate partner violence and the police

“By virtue of their power to arrest, police have been described as the most powerful of all criminal justice actors” (Simpson, Bouffard, Garner, & Hickman, 2006, p. 298). Because of the powerfulness of the police, several studies have been conducted aiming toward investigating how charge and arrest practices are influenced by legal (e.g. seriousness of the crime) and extralegal (e.g. sex of victim and offender) factors in IPV cases. Several published studies are witnessing about affecting factors, such as sex of victim and offender, on the practices of police officers when handling cases of IPV (Hamilton & Worthen, 2011; Simpson et al., 2006). There has also been some contradictory evidence stating that sex of victim and offender does not have an effect on the police response to IPV cases (Hirschel, Buzawa, Pattavina, & Faggiani, 2008). Despite these contradictory results, the interest in police response to cases of IPV remains high within the field of criminology (Dawson & Hotton, 2014).

It has been suggested that police officers treat victims of same-sex IPV different from victims of heterosexual IPV, and that this might be due to homophobia and prejudice (Connolly, Huzurbazar, and Routh-McGee, 2000). Connolly et al. (2000) reported that the police were less likely to arrest, intervene and enforce factors of protection if the concerned parties were not in a traditional heterosexual relationship with a woman being the victim of male abuse. However, Younglove, Kerr, and Vitello (2002) found little evidence that police officers would have any prejudice or be biased against homosexual couples and treat them differently. Still, it was suggested by the researchers that this might have been a result from the police officers understanding what the study really was about and that they therefore answered socially desirable according to their role as police officers.

When police responses to IPV have been investigated, the research has foremost been focusing on heterosexual relationships and how the sex of the victim matters in arrests (Dawson & Hotton, 2014). Even though research on marginalized groups, such as same-sex couples, has been requested we still lack empirical research on this topic today (ibid).

Perceptions of intimate partner violence in other samples

Existing perceptions of IPV influence the perpetration of such violence as well as the responses by the victim, bystanders and professionals (Sylaska & Walters, 2014; Cormier & Woodworth, 2008). Therefore, additional studies on perceptions of IPV are a crucial step toward developing strategies on how to handle such cases (Sylaska & Walters, 2014).

In a study by Ahmed et al. (2013) it was concluded that there are some important factors that have an effect on how heterosexual and same-sex IPV is perceived. For example, the perceived seriousness of IPV and the extent to which the victim was deemed responsible for their own victimization was found to be influenced by the sex of the respondent, perpetrator and victim, and the sexual orientation of the couple in a sample of University students. It was also reported that male respondents perceived IPV as less serious than did female respondents which confirmed the results from previously published studies (e.g. Harris & Cook,

1994; Hilton, Harris & Rice, 2003; Pierce & Harris, 1993; Seelau, Seelau, & Poorman, 2003; Simon, Anderson, Thompson, Crosby, Shelley, & Sacks, 2001).

Ahmed et al. (2013) also reported that same-sex IPV was perceived as less serious than male on female violence, but more serious than female on male violence. However, Hilton et al. (2003) found that same-sex IPV was perceived as less serious than any other case of heterosexual IPV. Other studies have stressed the need for including sexual orientation as a factor of influence when investigating perceptions of IPV, to get a fuller understanding of affecting factors (e.g. Duke & Davidsson, 2009).

Brown and Groscup (2009) studied perceptions of heterosexual versus same-sex IPV among crisis center staff, and found that same-sex IPV was perceived as less serious than heterosexual IPV. Crisis center staffs also perceived same-sex IPV as less likely to be repeated, continued and evolve to get worse than was heterosexual IPV. Following these perceptions, the crisis center staff considered victims of IPV to have an easier time to leave the abusive relationship compared to victims of heterosexual IPV, but were less likely to recommend the victims of same-sex IPV to do so. These results were suggested to possibly interfere with the potential advices and treatments provided by the crisis center staff (Brown & Groscup, 2009) which may explain why victims of same-sex IPV report feeling neglected and ridiculed when seeking help (NCK, 2009; Holmberg & Stjernqvist, 2008).

Street-level bureaucracy

“Street-level bureaucrats make policy in two related aspects. They exercise wide discretion in decisions about citizens with whom they interact. Then, when taken in concert, their individual actions add up to agency behavior” (Lipsky, 2010, p. 13).

Street-level bureaucrats are officials who work in the public sector, such as police officers and social workers who according to Lipsky (2010) exemplify the core of what street-level bureaucracy is about. Police officers have the advantage of making decisions on whom to arrest and when to look away, which exemplifies their autonomy within the organization. Lipsky (2010) do argue that police officers however are not unrestrained from laws, the superiors within the force, norms and directions but do have a wide spectrum of discretion within their occupation.

Street-level bureaucracy was coined by Lipsky in the 1980's and has since then been used in a variety of settings to increase the knowledge of workers in the public sector (e.g. Johansson, 1992). Ekman (1999) applied street-level bureaucracy on police officers in a Swedish context in his dissertation, and concludes that the theory is just as applicable in Sweden as in the United States where the theory was evolved. Ekman (1999) uses the key aspects of the theory but also extends Lipsky's (1980) arguments, making it suitable to explain everyday actions taken by police officers. Ekman (1999) highlights that police officers has the power and freedom that Lipsky (1980) assigns to street-level bureaucrats, which is the core argument for the importance of doing police research.

Police officers are according to Lipsky (2010) expected to make use of the law in a not subjective but selective way since it would be impossible to arrest each and every person who they encounter on a daily basis violating the law. In order to be effective, police officers need to construct some kind of stereotype which is referred to as categorizing. Through the categorization of people it is possible to handle the wide range of different situations that police officers find themselves in on a daily basis, and come up with quick solutions for their specific encounters. People are in this categorization process divided into groups based on the mirrored bias and stereotypes by society that police officers make use of, which then simplifies the task of determining what to do and how to handle that specific situation. Despite this being an easy solution to handling complex work tasks, this also leads to differential treatment of victims and perpetrators who happen to fall into one category or the other (Ekman, 1999; Lipsky, 2010).

Police officers need to make difficult and sometimes fast decisions on how to act when they face a work task (Lipsky, 2010). Even though the work of police officers is regulated by the law, directions from the superior etc., the actions taken in each and every situation involves possible discretion and it is the single police officer who ultimately determines how to handle a case. This makes the police officers a part of the policy making context where the single officer needs to decide on whether to consider the legal context or their own decision making (ibid). Through the variety of possible situations that a police officer may encounter, the power advantage of the officer is palpable since it then and there is the police officer who decides who will receive help quickly, or at all (Ekman, 1999).

The relevance of the study

According to NCK (2009), the first step in working against IPV in same-sex relationships is to open up for discussion and increase knowledge about the existence of this type of violence. IPV in same-sex relationships will continue to be neglected and ridiculed unless the knowledge is increased, especially within the police force. The police is the main authority that are among the first persons to meet victims post victimization, and it is therefore important to study this group's perceptions of same-sex IPV. There is a clear need for visibility of this crime since most of the attention regarding IPV is targeted toward men's violence against women (Dawson & Hotton, 2014).

Victims of same-sex IPV has been suggested to be treated differently than female victims of male violence due to police officers mirroring the societal stereotypes of who constitutes a victim and a perpetrator (Younglove et al., 2002) (i.e. females and males respectively) (NCCP, 2009a). This would somewhat confirm the categorization process suggested to be exercised by street-level bureaucrats, such as police officers (Lipsky, 2010) and bring about a need for a discussion within the police force as to how this could be improved.

The purpose of this study could therefore be seen as multifaceted. It is a request for targeting more attention toward this crime, but also to potentially increase the discussion among students and teachers during the police education process. By developing the discussion in this area, it is possible that our future police officers in Sweden will have a needed increased knowledge about this crime and may therefore be able to identify and handle situations of same-sex IPV correctly.

Aim and research questions

The overall aim with this study was to investigate how Swedish police students perceive intimate partner violence in same-sex relationships. The more specific research questions were,

- How do police students' perceptions of the severity of intimate partner violence differ depending on sexual orientation and sex of victim and offender?
- How do police students' perceptions of how a case of intimate partner violence should be handled by the police differ depending on sexual orientation and sex of victim and offender?
- What differences can be found regarding perceptions of intimate partner violence depending on the sex of the respondent?

METHOD

The empirical foundation for this study consisted of a questionnaire construction with pertaining vignettes. The vignettes and questionnaires were available in four different versions portraying an intimate relationship between a man and a woman, a woman and a man, two men or two women.

Design

For this study, a quantitative, cross-sectional design was utilized (Pagano, 2013). A quantitative approach has been used in the majority of previous studies when perceptions of IPV has been investigated (see e.g. Ahmed et al., 2013), which also strengthened the choice of design for this study. This study has a multifactorial between subject design since there is more than one independent variable being examined (Pagano, 2013). This design was further appropriate considering the aim of having each respondent reading only one vignette and answering only one questionnaire.

The vignette method is commonly used in many disciplines and has previously been used in the field of criminology for research on perceptions of IPV (e.g. Ahmed et al., 2013). The method made its way to Sweden in the 1990's but has been acknowledged as a research method since the 1950's (Jergerby, 1999). The method could be argued to have several advantages compared to using questionnaires only, especially when such a thing as comparing perceptions between groups is the aim of the study. While questionnaires are good for collecting data on people's knowledge, perceptions and attitudes (Ejlertsson, 2005), adding a vignette to the questionnaire provides the respondents with a common ground to proceed from when stating their answers. As a researcher it is therefore possible to manipulate the variables that are being investigated and to draw quite certain conclusions from the results (Jergerby, 1999).

The characteristics in a vignette could be described as the independent variables that the researcher manipulates to study the effects on the dependent variable. This means for this study, that the characteristics or independent variables that are being manipulated are the sex of the offender and the victim, and therefore indirectly sexual orientation of the couple. The vignettes are, besides from these variables, identical which enables for drawing conclusions based on the results. In this study, the dependent variable was perceptions of IPV as measured by Opinions of Domestic Violence Scale [ODVS] (Ahmed et al., 2013) and complementing questions constructed for this study (See Material section for a thorough review of the instrument and complementing questions).

Sample

The targeted population for this study was Swedish police students who were currently enrolled in a two year program to become police officers. After email correspondence with the Police Academy, the current number of the total population of students in Sweden was obtained ($N=1329$). Due to the aim and design of this study, as well as the field of research, a confidence level of 95% was considered to be appropriate which is based on recommendations by Denscombe (2014). With a confidence level of 95% the total number of respondents needed in a population of 1329 individuals was 298. This was then considered a big enough sample to balance type I and type II errors. If the sample

size is too big, the risk increases of rejecting the null hypothesis even if there are no significant differences, since even the slightest difference would be significant. In a sample too small however, the statistical power may be too weak to detect any significant differences even though they are there, but the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

The sampling procedure was what Ejlertsson (2005) referred to as convenience sampling, which indicates that the included respondents were included because they were the easiest to access. Convenience sampling has limitations since the generalizability may be questioned, but the advantages of such sampling for a thesis of this kind could be argued to outweigh the limitations.

The inclusion criteria for this study consisted of three requirements; education, age, and language. The age requirement referred to the respondents needing to be 18 years of age or older, and the language requirement meant that the students needed to be Swedish speaking. Due to the admission requirements of the Police Academy (The Swedish National Police Agency, 2014), the applicants need to be 18 years of age to be able to apply to the education. The applicants further needs to have basic knowledge of the Swedish language. Therefore, these criteria's were fulfilled by all respondents at the Swedish Police Academy.

Considering the number of respondents needed, the facility in Växjö was chosen to be appropriate for data collection since Växjö holds a total number of 346 police students (68% males and 32% females). Due to the limited time frame for data collection, the included students were currently enrolled in semester 1, 2 and 3. The total number of respondents in this study was 248, with 170 males (69%) and 77 females (31%). The education requirement for the inclusion criteria meant that the respondents needed to be currently enrolled in the police education at the Linnaeus University in Växjö, which then also was met by all the respondents. There was no significant difference between the number of men and women who were enrolled in each of the three semesters ($\chi^2(2, n = 247) = .52, p = ns$). See distribution of respondents between the semesters in table 1.

Table 1 Distribution of the male and female respondents between semesters at the police education in Växjö ($n = 248$)¹

Semester	Males	Females	Total n (%)
	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>n (%)</i>
1	47 (28)	18 (23)	65 (26)
2	61 (36)	30 (39)	91 (37)
3	62 (37)	29 (38)	91 (37)
Total	170 (100)	77 (100)	247 (100)

¹Note: 1 respondent did not report their sex but was included in further analyses since the majority of analyses were conducted based on the four vignettes and not on the sex of the respondents.

When data was collected, the median age for the men was 26 years ($q_1 = 25, q_3 = 28$ Range = 20-43), and the median age for the women was 24 years ($q_1 = 23, q_3 = 26, Range = 20-40$). 31 men (18%) and 8 women (10%) did not report their age and 1 respondent (0.4%) did not state their sex. There was a significant difference in age between the men and the women ($U = 3278.5, z = -3.73, r = .26, p < .001$), but no significant age difference between the respondents based on what vignette they had read ($\chi^2(3, n = 208) = 1.47, p = ns$).

There was some internal missing data due to misunderstanding of questions, and respondents leaving some questions blank. A total of 3 respondents (1%) had missing data on one or more questions on ODVS, which excluded them from receiving a total score. 1 respondent (0.4%) did not answer correctly to question P by not marking an x on the line, and was therefore excluded from further analysis. The missing data for questions J-O was less than 1% (0.4%-0.8%). However, the missing data on the open ended questions ranged from 2%-7% with question La having the highest missing data percentage. Some respondents also clearly misunderstood this question and were excluded from further analysis, resulting in a missing data of 13% for question La. The number of respondents included in each analysis is given in the result section in each table.

Material

As previously stated, the empirical foundation of this study was a questionnaire construction with vignettes and questions pertaining to the vignette. The vignettes and questionnaires was available in four versions (see Appendix A, and B).

Vignettes

The construction of the vignette was done in two steps. The vignette constructed for the bachelor's thesis was used as the foundation for developing the vignette further in order to make it appropriate for the aim with this study. The vignette was revised and made neutral in terms of sex and sexual orientation, and further revised to highlight the specific actions and mechanisms that usually are found in a relationship where violence is exerted (Lundgren et al., 2001; Peterman & Dixon, 2003; Burke & Owen, 2006). To make sure that the content of the vignette was as relevant as possible in relation to the aim with this study as well as to the questionnaire, the vignette was reviewed and systematically connected to the questionnaire. The vignette was in turn discussed with the supervisor of this study before it was finalized and distributed.

The vignette portrayed a couple that has been in an intimate relationship for about six months. The offender was portrayed as a worker and the victim as a student. The distinction between their occupation highlights the unbalanced power structure that the offenders often use as a method to oppress the victims (Lundgren et al., 2001). Besides an unbalanced power structure, another mechanism that was incorporated into the vignette was controlling behavior from the offender. The use of power and control is not necessarily a criminal act per se, but is still a common part of the systematic pattern of IPV (Peterman & Dixon, 2003; Lundgren et al., 2001; Burke & Owen, 2006) that is just as important to highlight.

Following the use of power and control, is the isolation and adjustment made by the victim to adapt to the prevailing situation (Lundgren et al., 2001) which also was portrayed in the vignette. Jealousy was also included as an aspect, since research has shown that this type of behavior is common among offenders of IPV (ibid). The couple in the vignette has an argument that develops and grows into a fight, culminating in physical violence.

The physical violence was described as the offender pushing the victim toward a door frame, resulting in the victim hitting their head. This type of violence has been used in previous research (e.g. Bethke & DeJOY, 1993; Hilton et al., 2003) and research has shown that this is a common form of physical IPV (Lundgren et

al., 2001) also in same-sex relationships (Merrill & Wolfe, 2000). It could be argued that it is important that the physical violence is not too obviously violent but still obvious enough for it to be considered as harmful. The balance between these two extremes is therefore of magnitude for such a study like the present one.

Questionnaire

Following the vignette was a questionnaire consisting of the instrument ODVS (Ahmed et al., 2013) and questions specifically constructed for this study. After the respondents read the vignette, they answered to three background questions; sex, age, and current semester at the police education. The inclusion of each of the three background questions could be motivated by the use of descriptive statistics and also for controlling for possible effects that these variables may account for.

The foundation for ODVS was created by Pierce and Harris (1993) and was thereafter developed by Swedish researchers at the Linnaeus University; Ahmed et al. (2013). The instrument was therefore adjusted to fit the Swedish context, and has been used previously when perceptions of IPV in heterosexual as well as same-sex relationships have been studied (Ahmed et al., 2013). For a full review of all the questions on ODVS, see table 2.

Table 2 Questions in ODVS

	Question	Range
A	How serious was the incident?	1-7
B	If you had witnessed this incident as a third person, how likely would it have been that you would have called the police?	1-7
C	How violent was this incident?	1-7
D	How responsible was the batterer for the incident?	1-7
E	The batterer's actions were justified	1-7 (scored inversely)
F	Overall, how much do you sympathize with the batterer?	1-7 (scored inversely)
G	How responsible was the victim for the incident?	1-7 (scored inversely)
H	The victim suffered serious abuse from the batterer	1-7
I	Overall, how much do you sympathize with the victim?	1-7

The respondents answers were scored and then summed to a total score (*Range* = 9 - 63) for each participant, where a high score indicated that the violence was perceived as more serious than a lower score.

In previous research (Ahmed et al., 2013), the internal consistency for ODVS has been high with a Cronbach's alpha of .82. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was .76 which is somewhat lower but still well above the recommended value of .70, and would not improve if any item was to be removed. This indicated that all items included in ODVS were measuring the same thing; perceived seriousness of IPV (Pallant, 2010).

The remaining questions that were constructed for this study were each motivated by previous research within this field as well as the theory that the research questions were derived from. Since ODVS was used to answer the first research question, and partly the third, the second research question needed to be measured with additional questions. Each question on the questionnaire was systematically connected to the research questions to make sure that the questionnaire in fact did measure what was intended to be measured. All questions were developed from previous research and a more thorough review on how the questions pertain to previous research could be found in Appendix C. For a full review of the questions, see table 3.

Table 3 *Additional questions in the questionnaire*

	Question	Range
J	Do you think that the victim and the offender share responsibility for what happened?	1 “Yes indeed” – 4 “No, not at all”
K	If you received this information from someone close to you, would you then as a future police officer advice the victim to report the incident to the police?	1 “Yes, indeed” – 4 “No, not at all”
Ka	Motivate your statement	Open answer
L	Do you see any difficulties with how you, as a future police officer, would handle this case if a report came in to you from the victim?	1 “Yes, indeed” – 4 “No, not at all”
La	Motivate your statement	Open answer
M	Do you think that the victim should leave the relationship with the offender?	1 “Yes, indeed” – 4 “No, not at all”
N	I would have a hard time taking the victim seriously if they reported their victimization to me as a future police officer	1 “Yes, indeed” – 4 “No, not at all”
O	Would you, as a future police officer, refer the victim to a help organization?	1 “Yes, indeed” – 4 “No, not at all”
P	The relationship between the offender and the victim has been stormy from start, and they have slowly but steadily been normalized into the conflictual relationship that is portrayed in the story. How serious do you consider the problematics in this relationship to be from what you have read?	1 “Not problematic at all” – 10 “Very problematic”
Pa	Motivate your statement	Open answer
Q	What would you advice the victim to do now?	Open answer
R	Do you have anything else that you would like to add?	Open answer

Question P was measured with a visual analogue scale [VAS] (Ejlertsson, 2005) and was scored with one decimal. Questions K, M and O were inversely coded so that all questions would have a high score that could be interpreted as a more preferable answer, as with the questions on ODVS.

Procedure

Pilot study

Before the data collection, a pilot study was conducted. The questions in ODVS were not changed due to the risk of decreased validity and reliability. The 10 persons who took part in the pilot study were all criminology students with some kind of experience of practical work in the area and were therefore thought to be an appropriate group of respondents for the pilot study.

After the pilot study, two of the additional questions were revised due to comments from the respondents. Some rephrasing was also done in the vignette, but the vignette and the questionnaire as a whole was in general found to be satisfying among the respondents. The answers to the open-ended questions were also studied to make sure that the intentions with the questions were clear to the respondents. The written answers were in line with the expectations when constructing the questions, and were therefore seen to be valid for the current study.

Study Procedure

When this project was initiated, the head of the police education program in Växjö was contacted via email in which the study was described and useful information was submitted. After being approved to visit the Linnaeus University, the schedule for the police students currently enrolled in the first three semesters of the program was consulted to find an appropriate time to visit the University to distribute questionnaires. The next step was to contact the concerned teachers for each lecture by email, and all three teachers approved of the visit.

The data collections took place on March 25th and April 20th respectively, on the campus of the Linnaeus University in Växjö. During the first visit, the police students in the first and second semester were met separately and informed about the project. All students who participated received a consent form (see Appendix D), an accompanying letter (see Appendix E) and a questionnaire, which was alternated between the four scenarios when distributed (see table 4 for the distribution of questionnaires between the respondents).

Table 4 *Distribution of male and female police students in Växjö between the four vignettes (n = 248)*¹

	Female respondent		Male respondent	
	Female victim	Male victim	Female victim	Male victim
	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)
Female offender	20 (8)	18 (7)	43 (17)	44 (18)
Male offender	19 (8)	20 (8)	42 (17)	41 (17)
Total	39 (16)	38 (15)	85 (34)	85 (34)

¹Note: The total number of respondents was 248. 1 respondent is missing from the table due to not stating their sex.

When the respondents had filled out the consent form and the questionnaire, the consent forms and questionnaires were collected by the author. The questionnaires and consent forms were thereafter organized into two separate piles in order to avoid being able to connect the consent forms to the pertaining questionnaires. A total of 252 questionnaires were handed out and 248 were collected during the two visits. The response rate therefore was 98%, with a total of 4 (2%) students declining to participate.

Statistical analyses

Data was initially plotted in IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 21 [SPSS]. The skewness and kurtosis for the total score on ODVS was -.38 and -.25 respectively. The acceptable range for skewness is +/- 1 and +/- 3 for kurtosis and these values therefore indicated a normally distributed data (Tabachnik & Fidel, 2007). This supported the possibility to use parametric statistics on the data from ODVS. Statistical analyses were thereafter calculated for descriptive statistics. Significant results were reported with the value of *p*, whereas not significant results were stated with *p* = ns. The alpha level was set at .05 for all analyses, with the exception of bonferroni adjustments in post hoc analyses.

Data from ODVS was analyzed using one way analysis of variance [ANOVA]. The use of parametric tests was mainly supported by the use of a validated instrument, normally distributed data and how data from ODVS has been treated in previous research (Ahmed et al., 2013). Tukey was used as post hoc-test, as recommended by Pallant (2010). The effect size was further calculated with Eta² and was interpreted according to Cohen's guidelines (referred in Pallant, 2010).

Due to the controversy of using parametric tests on actual ordinal scale leveled data, the questions constructed for this study was analyzed separately from ODVS. This was because these questions do not comprise of an instrument, scale or index. Data obtained from the additional questions violated several of the

assumptions needed for using parametric tests, which is why Kruskal-Wallis H test was used, as well as Mann-Whitney U test (Pallant, 2010).

Follow up Mann-Whitney U tests were used for post hoc analyses when significant results were obtained from the Kruskal-Wallis H tests. The effect size was calculated for each of the follow up Mann-Whitney U tests, using formula $r = z / \sqrt{N}$, and was interpreted in accordance with Cohen's guidelines (referred in Pallant, 2010).

The exception from the use of non-parametric tests on the additional questions was data obtained from question P, which was treated as a continuous variable. Pearson's R was used for correlation analyses. χ^2 was used for data on nominal scale level. For 2x2 cross tabulations, the value of Yates' continuity correction were used instead of χ^2 . The value of *phi* was used for reporting effect sizes in 2x2 cross tabulations, and *Cramer's V* was used when cross tabulations were bigger. Effect sizes were interpreted in accordance with Cohen's guidelines (referred in Pallant, 2010).

Quantitative content analysis

The open-ended questions in the questionnaire were analyzed using manifesto quantitative content analyses. The analyses were conducted based on the recommendations provided by Boréus and Bergström (2005). All answers given to the questions were in Swedish, but were translated to English before reporting the results in this thesis.

There were five open-ended questions, but only four questions were analyzed since the last question in the questionnaire was excluded from further analysis. The last question had a twofold purpose since it gave the respondents an opportunity to express any other thoughts than the ones that were covered by the rest of the questions. It was also possible that the answers to that question would generate statements that had not been thought about before this study was conducted, and provide an opening for a different perspective on the upcoming analyses. However, few respondents used this question and it was therefore no need to proceed with the answers.

The four remaining questions were analyzed separately which resulted in four separate content analyses, one for each question. The overall themes were pre-determined and based on the questions. Categories and subcategories were generated from the coding units which consisted of the respondents answers. The open-ended questions were the unit of analysis, with a total of 9 categories and 18 subcategories found in the material.

All the written answers from the respondents on the questions were transferred into one document and sorted under each theme and was thereafter printed out. To be acquainted with the material, all the respondents' answers were read through several times. When an overview of the answers was obtained, the first thorough read through was done. During this step, preliminary categories and subcategories were created and a temporary coding scheme was elaborated. The material was then read through again while coding each answer and connecting each answer to a subcategory. The coding scheme was during this phase revised to fit the material, resulting in some subcategories being re-named, two subcategories being merged into one, and one subcategory being divided into two. When this step was

finalized, the material was read through for the last time, to make sure that the coding was accurate. No further changes were made in the coding scheme or in the coding of the material (for a full review of the final coding scheme, see Appendix F). When the four separate content analyses had been conducted, all subcategories were quantified and compiled into frequencies. The data was further analyzed with χ^2 tests.

Ethical considerations

In all research that involves the participation of people, there are a number of ethical considerations that needs to be considered. First and foremost, an application to the ethics council at Malmo University was submitted in the beginning of March, and the project was approved for further proceedings.

The respondents were informed orally and in written about the overall aim with the research project. The specific research questions were not stated to avoid biased answers as in the case with the study by Younglove et al. (2002). All respondents were informed that participation was voluntary. The respondents who took part in the study filled out a written consent by stating the date and signing the form. The respondents were further informed that they could withdraw their participation at any time they wanted before they handed in the questionnaire.

No questions were asked about direct or indirect victimization or perpetration, but this remains an important issue to address since there was a risk of victims and perpetrators being included in the sample. It was therefore argued that preventive measures needed to be made in order to decrease the likelihood of these potential respondents being negatively affected by this research. A contact was therefore established at the Swedish Association for Victim Support in Växjö which was conveyed to the respondents through the accompanying letter.

The respondents were further guaranteed confidentiality, but due to the relatively small sample it was not possible to guarantee anonymity. The respondents were also informed that all answers would be presented on a group level and that all questionnaires would be destroyed after the data had been coded into SPSS.

RESULTS

Police students' perceptions of the severity of intimate partner violence based on sex of the victim, offender and respondent ODVS

The mean for the total sample on ODVS was 49.8 ($SD = 6.0$, $Range = 32-63$). The respondents were divided into four groups based on the vignettes. ANOVA was used for investigating potential differences between the four groups based on the scenarios, and the results showed significant differences between the groups ($F(3, 241) = 15.1$, $Eta^2 = .16$, $p < .001$). Tukey's post hoc test showed that there were several significant differences between the groups. The respondents who had read about a heterosexual relationship with a female victim (group 3) had the highest total score on ODVS. This scenario was perceived as the most serious by the respondents. This scenario was perceived as more serious than both the same-sex relationship with a female victim (group 2) and the same-sex relationship with a male victim (group 1).

However, the respondents who had read about a heterosexual relationship with a male victim (group 4) had the lowest total score on ODVS. This scenario was perceived as less serious than both the same-sex relationship with a female victim (group 2) and the heterosexual relationship with a female victim (group 3). No differences were found between the male and the female respondents on the total score on ODVS, based on the vignettes.

Kruskal-Wallis H test was used for investigating differences between the groups based on the four scenarios for each separate question on ODVS. For a full report of the results, see table 5.

Table 5 All questions on ODVS with descriptive statistics, calculated with Kruskal-Wallis H test¹, based on the four scenarios ($n = 248$).

Question	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	χ^2	df	p
	Same-sex Male victim ($n = 61$)	Same-sex Female victim ($n = 63$)	Heterosexual Female victim ($n = 61$)	Heterosexual Male victim ($n = 63$)			
A	4.9 (1.4)	5.2 (1.0)	5.8 (1.0)	4.7 (1.1)	30.28	3	***
B	3.8 (1.8)	4.0 (1.6)	5.0 (1.8)	3.5 (1.8)	22.15	3	***
C	4.2 (1.1)	4.3 (1.0)	4.9 (1.0)	3.7 (1.2)	31.87	3	***
D	6.8 (.5)	6.8 (.4)	6.8 (.4)	6.7 (.6)	2.12	3	ns
E	6.8 (.9)	6.9 (.3)	7.0 (.2)	6.7 (.6)	10.35	3	*
F	6.5 (.8)	6.6 (.6)	6.7 (.6)	6.5 (.8)	5.08	3	ns
G	6.5 (.8)	6.4 (1.0)	6.7 (.7)	6.1 (1.2)	12.67	3	*
H	3.6 (1.5)	3.9 (1.3)	4.3 (1.5)	3.3 (1.5)	15.33	3	**
I	5.8 (1.3)	5.9 (.9)	6.3 (.9)	5.8 (1.1)	11.39	3	**
Total	49.0 (5.4)	50.1 (4.8)	53.5 (5.3)	47.0 (6.5)	-	-	***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, ns = $p > .05$

¹ Note: Kruskal-Wallis H tests were calculated for each separate question while ANOVA was calculated for the total score.

Significant differences between the groups were found on all separate questions but question D and F. Post hoc analyses showed that the differences between the four groups that were found for the total score on ODVS, in general was consistent for each separate question as well. The scenario with a heterosexual

relationship with a female victim (group 3) received high scores throughout all the questions, while the scenario with a heterosexual relationship with a male victim (group 4) received the lowest scores. The scenarios with the same-sex couples (group 1 and 2) were in general found in the middle on all separate questions.

Control for education level as an influencing factor

The vignettes were equally distributed between the three semesters. About 25 % of each vignette was distributed in each of the three semesters, no significant difference was found ($\chi^2(6, n = 247) = .19, p = ns$). To control for the level of education as a potential influencing factor, ANOVA was calculated for the total score on ODVS based on the three semesters. ANOVA showed that there was a significant difference in the total score on ODVS between the students, based on their current semester of studies ($F(2, 241) = 4.8, \text{Eta}^2 = .04, p < .05$). The post hoc analysis showed that students in the third semester perceived IPV as portrayed in the vignette as less serious than students in the first semester did ($M = 48.6, SD = 6.0$ vs $M = 51.6, SD = 5.9$).

Perceived seriousness of the overall problematics in the relationship, question P

Significant differences between the groups based on the four scenarios were also found on question P “How serious do you consider the problematics in this relationship to be?” ($F(3, 243) = 3.04, \text{Eta}^2 = .04, p < .05$). Tukey’s post hoc test showed that respondents who had read about a same-sex relationship with a male victim perceived the problematics in the relationship to be less serious than the respondents who had read about a heterosexual relationship with a female victim ($M = 8.0, SD = 1.4$ vs $M = 8.5, SD = .9$).

No differences were found between the respondents based on current semester of studies ($F(2, 243) = 1.93, p = ns$). No differences were further found between the male and the female respondents on question P, based on the vignettes.

Correlation between ODVS and question P

The relationship between the total score on ODVS and the score on question P was investigated using Pearson’s R. Preliminary analyses showed no violation of normality, linearity or homoscedasticity. The two variables were moderately, positively correlated ($r = .47, n = 244, p < .001$), indicating that a high total score on ODVS was associated with a high score on question P. Perceived seriousness of IPV as measured by ODVS explained 22% of the variance in the respondents score on question P.

Police students’ perceptions of how a case of intimate partner violence should be handled by the police based on sex of the victim, offender and respondent

Kruskal-Wallis H test was used for investigating potential differences between the groups based on the four vignettes on questions J – O. When significant differences were found, Mann-Whitney U tests were calculated as post hoc analyses. Post hoc analyses were calculated for group 1 and 3, group 1 and 4, group 2 and 3, and group 2 and 4.

The analyses showed no significant differences between the groups on question J “Do you think that the victim and the offender share responsibility for what happened?” ($\chi^2(3, n = 247) = 3.91, p = ns$). There were further no significant

differences between the groups on question L “Do you see any difficulties with how you, as a future police officer, would handle this case if a report came in to you from the victim?” ($\chi^2(3, n = 246) = 1.30, p = ns$) or on question M “Do you think that the victim should leave the relationship with the offender?” ($\chi^2(3, n = 247) = 5.93, p = ns$).

Significant differences between the groups based on the four vignettes were found on question K “If you received this information from someone close to you, would you then as a future police officer advice the victim to report the incident to the police?” The scenario that received the highest score was the heterosexual relationship with a female victim (group 3), and the lowest score was found among the respondents who had read about a heterosexual relationship with a male victim (group 4). The two groups of respondents who had read about the same-sex relationships (group 1 and 2) were found in the middle ($\chi^2(3, n = 248) = 29.45, p < .001$).

There were also significant differences between the groups on question N “I would have a hard time taking the victim seriously if they reported their victimization to me as a future police officer”. However, no significant differences were found in the post hoc analyses ($\chi^2(3, n = 248) = 8.68, p < .05$).

Lastly, significant differences between the groups based on the four scenarios were found on question O “Would you, as a future police officer, refer the victim to a help organization”? Respondents who had read about the two same-sex relationships (group 1 and 2) had a significantly higher score than the respondents who had read about a heterosexual relationship with a male victim (group 3) ($\chi^2(3, n = 246) = 15.84, p < .01$).

A full report of the results from the post hoc analyses is shown in table 6. No differences were found between male and female respondents based on the vignettes.

Table 6 Post hoc analysis for Kruskal-Wallis H test with four comparisons based on the four scenarios ($n = 248$).

Question	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Post hoc test ¹
	Same-sex Male victim ($n = 61$)	Same-sex Female victim ($n = 63$)	Heterosexual Female victim ($n = 61$)	Heterosexual Male victim ($n = 63$)	
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	
K.	2.98 (.72)	3.10 (.73)	3.39 (.71)	2.60 (.85)	1<3 4<1, 2
N.	3.79 (.41)	3.73 (.48)	3.79 (.45)	3.54 (.62)	ns
O.	3.20 (.57)	3.27 (.71)	3.28 (.58)	2.87 (.69)	4<1, 2

¹Note: Only significant results are reported. Mann-Whitney U tests were calculated for post hoc analyses, with Bonferroni adjusted alpha-level. The significance level was .013

Quantitative content analysis

The four separate quantitative content analyses resulted in 9 categories and 18 subcategories. See table 7 for a review of the results. For a more thorough review of the content analysis and the coding scheme, see Appendix F.

Table 7 Quantitative content analysis with themes, categories, subcategories and examples of coding units¹

Themes	Categories	Subcategories	Coding units
Advice to report ^a	Crime	Serious incident	"A crime has been committed"
		Will get worse	"This will probably be repeated and get more serious"
		Not serious enough	"Not serious enough for a police report, it wouldn't result in anything"
	Help source	Non-police action	"Maybe consult a psychologist before you involve the police"
Difficulties with handling the case ^b	Police work	Decision	"I want to leave that decision completely to the victim"
		Evidence	"Hard to prove what really happened"
		A police matter	"It is abuse, so you should handle it objectively according to the law"
		Not serious enough	"It is not likely that this incident would lead to anything"
Serious problems ^c	Crime	Participation	"To get the victim to stand by their case and not back away"
		Serious incident	"It is problematic because both physical and psychological violence is present"
		Will get worse	"It doesn't seem like this relationship will get better, more likely escalate"
	Relationship	The offender's behavior	"The offender is very jealous and manipulative"
Action now ^d	Relationship	Unhealthy relationship	"Does not sound like a healthy relationship"
		Leave	"End the relationship"
		Work together	"Talk to someone professional together"
	Help source	The victim	"Consider the life situation"
	Police action	"Report to the police"	
	Non-police action	"Talk to family and friends"	

¹Note: All names stated in the answer have been replaced with "the victim" or "the offender".
Note: ^aIf you received this information from someone close to you, would you then as a future police officer advice the victim to report the incident to the police?

^bDo you see any difficulties with how you as a future police officer would handle this case of a report came in to you from the victim?

^cHow serious do you consider the problematics in this relationship to be?

^dWhat would you advice the victim to do now?

The subcategories from the content analyses were analyzed with χ^2 test for independence. χ^2 tests were calculated to investigate potential differences between the groups based on the four vignettes and five significant differences were found. For a full review of the results from the χ^2 analyses, see table 8.

Table 8 Full report of the result from the content analysis calculated with χ^2 based on the four scenarios ($n = 248$).

	Group 1 Same-sex Male victim ($n = 61$) <i>n (%)</i>	Group 2 Same-sex Female victim ($n = 63$) <i>n (%)</i>	Group 3 Heterosexual Female victim ($n = 61$) <i>n (%)</i>	Group 4 Heterosexual Male victim ($n = 63$) <i>n (%)</i>	χ^2 <i>p</i>
Advice to report^a					
Crime					
Serious incident	18 (32)	24 (41)	22 (39)	15 (25)	ns
Will get worse	21 (38)	16 (27)	28 (50)	12 (20)	**
Not serious enough	13 (23)	7 (12)	2 (3)	17 (28)	***
Help source					
Non-police action	8 (14)	11 (19)	12 (21)	20 (33)	ns
The victim					
Decision	1 (2)	3 (5)	2 (3)	0 (0)	-
Difficulties with handling the case^b					
Police work					
Evidence	12 (23)	15 (27)	12 (24)	15 (27)	ns
A police matter	28 (53)	25 (45)	24 (47)	26 (47)	ns
Not serious enough	1 (2)	4 (7)	0 (0)	7 (13)	-
The victim					
Participation	12 (23)	12 (21)	17 (33)	7 (13)	ns
Serious problems^c					
Crime					
Serious incident	8 (15)	8 (14)	11 (19)	5 (9)	ns
Will get worse	29 (53)	32 (56)	33 (56)	23 (40)	ns
Relationship					
The offender's behavior	7 (13)	6 (11)	7 (12)	9 (16)	ns
Unhealthy relationship	11 (20)	11 (19)	8 (14)	18 (31)	ns
Action now^d					
Relationship					
Leave	31 (53)	36 (58)	36 (60)	30 (48)	ns
Work together	14 (24)	15 (24)	9 (15)	25 (40)	*
The victim	6 (10)	7 (11)	7 (12)	1 (2)	ns
Help source					
Police action	19 (33)	10 (16)	30 (50)	13 (21)	***
Non-police action	15 (26)	21 (34)	24 (40)	11 (18)	*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, ns = $p > .05$

Note: ^aIf you received this information from someone close to you, would you then as a future police officer advice the victim to report the incident to the police?

^bDo you see any difficulties with how you as a future police officer would handle this case of a report came in to you from the victim?

^cHow serious do you consider the problematics in this relationship to be?

^dWhat would you advice the victim to do now?

To find out which groups that were significantly different, χ^2 tests were calculated for post hoc analysis. Four post hoc analyses were conducted between group 1 and 3, group 1 and 4, group 2 and 3, and lastly between group 2 and 4. The analyses were calculated with a bonferroni adjusted alpha level, which resulted in a significance level of .013. Two significant results were found.

The respondents who had read about a same-sex relationship with a male victim (group 1) stated more often that the situation was not serious enough for police intervention on question K than did respondents who had read about a heterosexual couple with a female victim (group 3) ($\chi^2(1, n = 114) = 8.09, phi = -.29, p < .05$). The respondents who had read about a heterosexual couple with a

female victim (group 3) stated more often that police action was needed on question Q, than did respondents who had read about a same-sex couple with a female victim (group 2) ($\chi^2(1, n = 122) = 14.37, phi = .36, p < .001$).

Based on the results from the previous sections, χ^2 tests were also calculated based on the respondent's current semester of studies. These analyses showed only two significant differences. See table 9 for a report of these results.

Table 9 Results from the content analysis calculated with χ^2 test based on current semester of studies¹ ($n = 248$)

	1 st semester ($n = 65$)	2 nd semester ($n = 91$)	3 rd semester ($n = 91$)	χ^2
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	p
Participation ^b	9 (19)	24 (50)	15 (31)	*
Other help source ^d	21 (30)	36 (51)	14 (20)	***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, ns = $p > .05$

¹Note: Only significant results are reported

Note: ^bDifficulties with handling the case

^dAction now

To find out which groups were significantly different, χ^2 tests were calculated for post hoc analyses. Post hoc analyses were calculated between the first and the third semester, and between the second and the third semester. A bonferroni adjusted alpha level resulted in a significance level of .025.

No significant differences were found in the post hoc analyses between the respondents on their statements regarding the victim on question L. There was a significant difference between the respondents in the first semester and the respondents in the third semester on their statements regarding the need for contacting some other source of help than the police on question Q. Respondents in the first semester stated more often the need for another help source than did respondents in the third semester ($\chi^2(1, n = 152) = 5.49, phi = -.21, p < .05$). Respondents in the second semester also stated the need for another help source more often than did respondents in the third semester ($\chi^2(1, n = 178) = 12.27, phi = -.28, p < .001$).

DISCUSSION

The overall aim with this study was to investigate Swedish police students' perceptions of same-sex IPV. The main findings were that police students' perceived the same-sex scenarios as less serious than the scenario with a heterosexual female. However, the same-sex scenario with a female victim was perceived as more serious than the scenario with a heterosexual male victim. Previous results of female respondents perceiving IPV as more serious than male respondents (e.g. Ahmed et al., 2013) were not supported. There were no differences between the male and the female respondents, and this will therefore not be brought up within this discussion. All four vignettes were identical in terms of storyline and occurrence of physical and psychological IPV. The only thing separating the vignettes was the manipulation of sex of the offender and the victim. This indicated that there was an actual difference in how IPV was interpreted and viewed by the respondents, depending on the relationship constellation. These overall results suggest that there is room for an increased knowledge and awareness of same-sex IPV in this sample.

Same-sex intimate partner violence perceived as less serious than men's violence against women

The results from ODVS were in line with the study by Ahmed et al. (2013), and are in general consistent with other previous research in the field as well, in which IPV against a heterosexual female victim has been found to be perceived as more serious than same-sex IPV (e.g. Harris & Cook, 1994; Seelau et al., 2003). Unlike the current study, Ahmed et al. (2013) included two levels of severity in their research and found the differences in perceptions based on sex of the offender and the victim to be the largest in the less severe case. When the violence was described as more severe, the differences were evened out. It is possible to speculate that the results from this study would follow the same pattern if another more severe scenario would have been included. However, as Jablow (2000) argues, violence is still violence independent of context and between which actors it takes place, and it is still crucial that all victims of IPV are perceived as equally deserving the right to receive the help that they need. This becomes a relevant matter especially when the prevalence of same-sex IPV is considered. It has been argued in previous research that the prevalence rates for same-sex IPV are high, and Turell (2000) reported that the rates of physical abuse varied from 44% for male victims to 55% for female victims. If this is an accurate estimate of the actual prevalence of same-sex IPV, the need for a bigger recognition of this crime within the law enforcement becomes an important matter.

Fifty per cent of the respondents in this sample who had read about a heterosexual female victim would advise the victim to contact the police, while only 16% would advise this to the female victim in the same-sex relationship (see table 8). Despite the high prevalence of same-sex IPV, victims have been argued to seldom report their victimization to the police which has been established in a variety of research (e.g. NCCP, 2009a). Victims of same-sex IPV have been found to have trouble identifying themselves as victims (McClennen, 2005), which potentially contributes to the unwillingness or inability to report their victimization to the police. What the results in this study demonstrate is that police students do not view the police as a potential help source for victims of same-sex IPV either. If this reasoning and these perceptions were to be found also within the police force,

it is possible to speculate that one of the most important reasons to why victims do not report their victimization, may be because the people actually providing these services do not believe the police to be an available option for these victims. However, as Duke and Davidsson (2009) argued, the reason as to why same-sex IPV is perceived as less serious than men's violence against women could potentially be just because there are few victims who seek help from the police. This would then create a vicious cycle where the knowledge about the existence of this crime does not progress due to the perception of same-sex IPV as non-existent.

The results of the heterosexual female victim being advised to contact the police more frequently than the female victim in the same-sex relationship could potentially also lead back to the reasoning by Hassouneh and Glass (2008) about the lesbian utopia, and the perception of women as incapable of being violent. Based on this myth, women's violence against other women is dismissed as not being harmful and that women are more or less incapable of inflicting *actual* pain and injury. Despite the female offender in this scenario exerting a form of physical violence toward her female partner, it is possible that it failed to be recognized by the respondents as something harmful to the victim because the offender was female. The need for police intervention may therefore not be seen as necessary at this stage because it was not perceived as serious enough. The respondents who had read about the same-sex relationship with a male victim further stated more frequently than the respondents who had read about the heterosexual female victim, that the incident was not serious enough for police intervention. Many statements in this subcategory was about the physical violence not being serious enough, that something more needed to happen such as a slap or a punch or that it was an accident without substance. With this in mind, it seems important to stress the similar patterns of IPV independent of the couple's sexual orientation. It is more or less established that controlling behavior, systematic oppression and progression of severity are the same mechanisms in same-sex IPV as in heterosexual IPV (Potoczniak et al., 2003), which may be overlooked due to stereotypical assumptions about the constellation of a relationship.

It is possible that the different perceptions among police students in this study are an effect from the concept of men's violence against women being well-established in the law enforcement as well as in our society. Flinck and Paavilainen (2010) argued that there are two ways of perceiving IPV, which either is mutual combat *or* men's violence against women. Since IPV started to be a recognized issue in the 1970's, a lot of work has been targeted toward combating this crime. The high prevalence of men's violence against women is therefore widely known, which potentially also influences that this crime first and foremost is recognized as something that primarily concerns heterosexual female victims. The positive side of the results in the current study is that the seriousness of men's violence against women seems to be acknowledged among the majority of the students, and it is recognized that IPV tend to escalate and get worse. The recognition of IPV as a problem found among all types of relationships has been argued to have been excluded due to the feminist theory which states that men are the perpetrators and women are the victims of this crime. In this view, the roles of victims and offenders are treated as something biologically stipulated (Holmberg & Stjernqvist, 2008). Even though it is a good thing that men's violence against women is a problem that is starting to be rooted in institutions and organizations such as the law enforcement, stereotypical assumptions about heterosexual

females as being the only true victims and victims at most significant risk of severe injury may prevent the possibility of identifying victims of same-sex IPV. If the knowledge about the, at this point alleged, prevalence of same-sex IPV and the potential risks for victims remaining in the relationship was extended in the same way as it has been extended regarding men's violence against women, the differences in perceptions about IPV may be evened out.

Bias and prejudice as a potential determining factor for handling a case of same-sex IPV

Same-sex IPV has been argued to remain invisible due to the perpetrator and the victim being either two men or two women, which affects the society's perception of the perpetration of as well as the victimization from this violence (Taylor & Sorenson, 2005). The results in this study do support this argument to some extent. Independent of what stereotypical assumptions can be found or what the origins of these stereotypes are, it is argued by Lipsky (2010) that bias and prejudice steer the direction of police work. Independent of what the results in this study reflects, the implications may still be relevant to stress when interpreting the results from a street-level bureaucracy perspective. The multitude of work tasks that police officers encounter on a daily basis needs to be sorted out in some way, which then potentially could boil down to who is at most risk for severe injury or what situation is perceived as a serious matter. Not only will this most likely be influenced by how severe a case of IPV is perceived, bias and prejudice, but could also in accordance with Lipsky (2010) be influenced by the frame of reference. This would then explain the different perceptions of the severity of IPV among the students, based on their level of education. The need for selectivity when working as a police officer may be something that becomes clearer to the students as the education progresses. However, this result needs to be interpreted with caution due to the small effect size which potentially could indicate a type II error. Despite a significant difference being found with the students in the first semester perceiving IPV as more serious than students in the third semester, few differences were found in the post hoc analyses. It is possible that a bigger sample would provide a better understanding of potential differences depending on students' level of education, which also then may provide additional support for Lipsky's (2010) theory of street-level bureaucracy.

As suggested by Lipsky (2010), the handling of a case by street-level bureaucrats is influenced by perceptions from many angles, such as the perceived issue by the victim and the *real* problem as perceived by the police officer. The categorization of people in which victims could fall into the category of needing help or the category of not needing help, therefore becomes the solution in critical situations where decisions need to be made. The perceptions of who constitutes a victim of IPV could therefore become an important matter when decisions are made by police officers in certain situations.

The perceptions and responses by the police students seem to be influenced primarily by the sex of the victim and the offender and not as much by the sexual orientation of the couple. It is possible to speculate that there would be little differences between the groups if the same-sex couples and the heterosexual couples were to be considered as homogenous entities. There also seems to be little difference in the police students' perceptions between the two cases of same-sex IPV, even though these claims were not investigated statistically. Based on the results in this study, it may be possible to speculate that the perceptions of IPV are

in fact primarily influenced by the sex of the *victim*. Cormier and Woodworth (2008) argued that their similar results could be due to heterosexual male victims and same-sex victims lacking credibility. Other studies have also shown that same-sex IPV is, unlike male on female violence, perceived as being mutual (e.g. Taylor & Sorenson, 2005). However, in this study these arguments cannot be supported. The two questions on ODVS that did not reach statistical significance were questions D and F (see table 2 and 5). This could indicate that even if the respondents perceived IPV as less serious when it was not concerning a heterosexual female victim, there was still no doubt about who was responsible and culpable for the action. This is somewhat encouraging in the light of the myth of mutual battering in same-sex relationships (Duke & Davidsson, 2009) where the offender and victim are seen as equally responsible for the violence, since the results in this study do not support this myth.

While the heterosexual female victim received the most favorable scores in this study, the heterosexual male victim received the least favorable scores. Seelau et al. (2003) found similar results and suggested that people might have difficulties with acknowledging a man as a victim of a crime such as IPV since this goes against the belief of men and masculinity. This was also argued by Peterman and Dixon (2003), who suggested that there are stereotypical assumptions that men cannot be victims and that women cannot be offenders. Holmberg and Stjernqvist (2008) argued that masculinity is, and has been in many ways, linked to aggressiveness while femininity is linked to passivity, which may be something that affects perceptions also about same-sex IPV. If the perception in the general public is that a victim is a passive female and an offender is an aggressive male, it is possible that the preconceived notions about who is a true victim and who is a true offender is mirrored by police officers as suggested by Lipsky (2010). This reasoning could then potentially determine what situation is deemed as serious and severe and what situation that can be overlooked. The categorization of people, who come to the attention of the police in one way or the other, enables for a quick solution to a complex situation which leads to people in some categories being treated “better” than others. While some categories of people are perceived as in need of more concern based on prejudice from society and from the single police officer, others fit into the categories of people who are perceived as not needing the same attention. Based on this reasoning by Lipsky (2010), it is possible that the heterosexual female victim was and will be perceived as a vulnerable victim in need of help and assistance based on the stereotypical assumptions about femininity. Contrary to the heterosexual female victim would then potentially be the less vulnerable female victim in a same-sex relationship, but also the invulnerable males who may have the hardest time to even be acknowledged as victims.

It is possible that the results from this study go back to the long lived theory of patriarchal structures and a male claimed power advantage that has been used to explain IPV during the previous decades. The patriarchal power structures in our society have been argued to potentially prevent the general public as well as professionals from understanding the problems of same-sex IPV (Holmberg & Stjernqvist, 2008). Holmberg and Stjernqvist (2008) argue that there is an expectation from the general public about partners in a same-sex relationship as not needing to worry about advantages and disadvantages when it comes to power and equality within the relationship. The understanding and expectation of partners in a same-sex relationship as being equal in many ways that partners in a

heterosexual relationship supposedly are not, may also play a part in the categorization process as explained by Lipsky (2010). Lipsky (2010) argued that street-level bureaucrats strive to make the situations that they encounter as easy as possible to solve, by simplifying their decision making and limit their choices of actions. The complexity of certain cases makes it impossible to follow all directions and rules which make it necessary to adjust their choice of actions to their own perceptions. If the victim and the perpetrator in a same-sex relationship are perceived as physically and structurally equal, the victim may not fit into the stereotype created by the police officer as someone who is exposed in the same way as the heterosexual female who has been victimized by her male partner. The risk is then that the victims of same-sex IPV are categorized as victims not needing the immediate intervention from the police, compared to the heterosexual female who represents the victim with the need and the right to help.

“Compared to many other countries, gay and lesbian people can live their lives openly in Sweden, where the law gives them the same privileges as others” (Ahmed et al., 2003, p. 250). Even though same-sex relationships are more accepted today than before in Sweden, same-sex partners are still excluded in our society in many ways that heterosexual partners are not (Holmberg & Stjernqvist, 2008). Unlike the United States, Swedish legislations do not exclude victims of same-sex IPV though, nor does it exclude heterosexual male victims. However, in a society where a true victim of IPV is considered and perceived to be a heterosexual female, it seems reasonable to suggest that the laws are not enough to claim that everyone has the same possibility to utilize their rights even though they have them. This becomes a particularly important matter from a street-level bureaucracy perspective. Even though Swedish laws are supposed to be possible to utilize for everyone, the power advantage of determining how the laws *should* and *will* be used lies with the single police officers when confronted with a case of IPV. The possibility of using discretion as a police officer in decisions about victims as argued by Lipsky (2010), leaves the single police officer in each situation to determine what to do and how to handle a specific case. Police officers have a lot of responsibilities and obligations within their occupation, but do at the same time have the ability to control people’s rights as regulated by the constitutional law. This becomes particularly clear, if the decision of what victim deserves and needs the help from the police is based on stereotypical assumptions. Women are expected to be the victims, but from male perpetrated IPV, which potentially forms the stereotypical categories of offenders and victims in a case of IPV. The issue from a street-level bureaucracy perspective therefore is that victims who do not fit into the stereotypical picture of a woman who is being abused by her male spouse, may be overlooked or dismissed as a case not needing the attention of the police.

Limitations

As with all empirical research, there are some limitations to this study that needs to be considered. This study consisted of a convenience sample, which brings about a need for caution when generalizing the results. It is not impossible to argue that the results could be generalized to the population of Swedish police students as a whole, but one should be aware upon what premises this could be done. The potential homogeneity of this group is important to consider, and more research is needed to establish whether this result in fact is generalizable.

There is always a need for caution when questions that are yet to be validated are analyzed. Since the second half of the questionnaire consisted of questions that were constructed for this study, these results need to be interpreted with caution. There is little support for these questions measuring what was intended to be measured. However, the questions were constructed in several steps to ensure as far as possible that they were relevant for the research question(s). The open ended answers, the correlation between ODVS and question P, and the fact that the additional questions in general were in line with ODVS do however give some support for the validity of the questionnaire.

There was not a lot of missing data in this study, which could have been due to the respondents being carefully informed about the layout of the questionnaire. However, there were some respondents who had clearly misunderstood question La (see table 3) which could be seen through their answers. This was an indication that the question could have been better stated or explained more thoroughly to ensure that the respondents knew what the intent with the question was.

In this study, a manifesto quantitative content analysis was utilized. By using such an analysis, a lot of information from the respondent's answers went missing. This was because categories and subcategories were extracted from the answers, and χ^2 tests were calculated for the subcategories. It is possible that another more qualitative analysis could have been used with this data, but considering the overall quantitative design with this study, the quantitative analysis was chosen. It would however be of interest and importance in future research to investigate perceptions among police officers or police students with a qualitative approach.

The estimation of the number of respondents needed for this study was 298, but the final sample only consisted of 248. This should however be seen as a big enough sample, and is still in line with the recommendations from Denscombe (2014).

An important thing to consider regarding the instrument ODVS, is that it does not have a cutoff point. This means that it is not possible to state at what score a person should be considered to have perceived IPV as serious or not serious. By using ODVS it is only possible to make comparisons between groups and investigate what groups perceive IPV as more or less serious. It is further important to highlight that all the respondents' scores were at the higher end of the scale, even though some groups had a higher score than others.

CONCLUSION

The main finding in this study was that police students' perceived same sex IPV as less serious than IPV against a heterosexual woman. IPV is in many ways seen as synonymous to men's violence against women, which could bring about difficulties when the situation is different. With this perception, a true victim of IPV is a heterosexual female who is being abused by her male spouse. Despite that Sweden have laws that do not exclude victims of IPV based on sexual orientation or the victim's sex, it is ultimately the single police officer who determines how a case should be handled and which victims that will receive help. This could potentially become an important matter when decisions are made by police officers when they encounter a case of IPV. To avoid potentially biased situations where victims risk not receiving the help that they need based on stereotypical assumptions of who constitutes a victim and who does not, adequate education regarding IPV is needed within the law enforcement. The mere knowledge of the existence of same-sex IPV would probably raise awareness about the seriousness of this problem further.

Suggestions for future research

Based on the results that same-sex IPV was perceived as less serious than men's violence against women among Swedish police students, future research is suggested to be targeted toward how victims of same-sex IPV are treated and being met within the law enforcement when they seek help. The focus of such a study could preferably be on *what* questions are being asked, and *how* questions are being asked to further develop an understanding of potential prejudice found within this sector. This could also be of interest to investigate within other help agencies such as crisis centers, women's shelters and associations for victim support. Based on the results in this study that police students in the first semester perceived IPV as more serious than did students in the third semester, it is also of interest to further investigate how police students are shaped within the police organization during their education. This could advantageously be done with a qualitative as well as a quantitative perspective to gain a deeper and complementing understanding to the results found in this study.

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APPENDIX A

Vignette

Same-sex relationship with a male victim. Gabriel and Linus.¹

Gabriel och Linus är ett par sedan drygt ett halvår tillbaka, men de bor inte tillsammans. Gabriel arbetar och Linus studerar. Gabriel och Linus har sedan de träffades umgått så gott som varje dag och Linus har börjat märka att han knappt träffar sina vänner längre. När Linus får en inbjudan till en studentfest tackar han ja utan att fråga Gabriel, trots att Linus vet att Gabriel vill att han ska prata med honom först. När Linus nämner festen för Gabriel blir han irriterad över att Linus inte har sagt något till honom tidigare. Gabriel säger att han vill följa med Linus, men Linus svarar att det bara är gänget från klassen som ska träffas och att Gabriel kan följa med en annan gång. Linus märker att Gabriel blir sur, och Gabriel säger att om Linus inte vill ha med honom bland sina kompisar så kanske det är lika bra att de gör slut. Gabriel har vid tidigare tillfällen hotat med att bryta relationen när Linus inte har gjort som Gabriel har velat, och Linus blir rädd att Gabriel ska lämna honom. För att gottgöra Gabriel struntar Linus i att gå på festen. Linus frågar om de inte ska gå hem till honom och se på en film eftersom att de alltid är hemma hos Gabriel, men Gabriel säger att han trivs bäst hemma hos sig då det är större och finare. Linus blir lite ledsen, men säger inget och Gabriel verkar nöjd. De spenderar kvällen tillsammans och Gabriel berättar för Linus hur mycket han älskar honom, att han vill att det bara ska vara de två.

En eftermiddag när Linus och Gabriel ska träffas hemma hos Gabriel och äta middag, har Linus glömt bort tiden. Linus sitter på ett café med sina vänner när telefonen ringer och han går undan för att svara. Det är Gabriel som irriterat undrar var Linus är någonstans, han väntar på honom. Linus ber om ursäkt och säger att han kommer på en gång. Gabriel höjer rösten i telefonen och säger att Linus fan får snabba sig, han skulle redan ha varit där. Linus skyndar sig allt han kan och när han kommer hem till Gabriel är Gabriel förbannad. Gabriel kräver att Linus berättar var han har varit och vilka han har träffat. Linus säger att han bara fikade med några från klassen. Gabriel säger att han inte tycker att det är för mycket begärt att Linus i alla fall dyker upp när han har stått och lagat mat, och Gabriel säger även att Linus inte verkar ta deras relation på allvar. Linus ber om ursäkt och säger att han inte ska glömma tiden igen och Gabriel lugnar ner sig. De äter under tystnad.

Under middagen ringer det i Linus telefon. Linus trycker bort samtalet för att inte besvära Gabriel mer den här dagen och Gabriel undrar varför Linus inte svarar. Linus säger att det säkert inte var viktigt, att han är med Gabriel nu och att samtalet kan vänta. Gabriel brusar upp och frågar vad Linus har att dölja. ”Ingenting” svarar Linus som inte orkar ta fler diskussioner. Gabriel höjer rösten, han ger sig inte och säger att Linus alltid har kunnat svara i telefon framför honom förut och undrar vad Linus undanhåller från honom. Linus ber Gabriel att lugna ner sig, vilket leder till att Gabriel argt lämnar bordet. Linus reser sig upp och följer efter Gabriel för att försöka reda ut situationen, men när Linus närmar sig Gabriel vänder sig Gabriel mot Linus och knuffar honom hårt i riktning mot dörrkarmen. Linus tappar balansen och slår i huvudet. Han blir rädd för vad Gabriel ska göra och springer ut i hallen där han sätter sig på golvet och försöker förstå vad som just hänt. Han känner med handen mot pannan och märker att han fått en bula.

Efter en stund kommer Gabriel ut till Linus i hallen, sätter sig ned bredvid och lägger armen om Linus. Linus säger förlåt, men Gabriel kramar honom och säger att det är han själv som ska be om ursäkt. Gabriel säger att det inte var meningen att göra Linus illa, men om Linus bara hade respekterat honom så hade det aldrig hänt.

¹ Translate upon request. Observe that the vignette do not have the same layout as it did when it was distributed.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

Same-sex relationship with a male victim. Gabriel and Linus²

Enkät

Kön
(Sex)

Kvinna Man Annat
(Female) (Male) (Other)

Ålder
(Age)

_____ År
(Years)

Aktuell termin på
Polisutbildningen
(Current semester at the police
education)

1 2 3 4

Del 1.

Nedan följer några påståenden om berättelsen som Du just läst. Ringa in den *siffr*a som bäst motsvarar ditt ställningstagande. Vänligen markera *endast ett alternativ per fråga*. Frågorna kommer från Opinions of Domestic Violence Scale [ODVS] (Ahmed, Aldén & Hammarstedt, 2013).

A. Hur allvarlig är incidenten?

Inte alls allvarlig 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Mycket allvarlig

B. Hur sannolikt hade det varit att du hade ringt till polisen om du hade bevittnat denna händelse som utomstående tredje part?

Inte alls sannolikt 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Mycket sannolikt

C. Hur våldsam är incidenten?

Inte alls våldsam 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Mycket våldsam

D. Hur ansvarig är Gabriel för incidenten?

Inte alls ansvarig 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Mycket ansvarig

E. Gabriels handlande är rättfärdigt.

Håller inte alls med 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Håller helt med

² Translate upon request. Observe that the questionnaire do not have the same layout as it did when it was distributed. Also, the questions are available in English in the method section. See table 2 and 3.

F. På det hela taget, hur mycket sympatiserar du med Gabriel?

Sympatiserar inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Sympatiserar mycket

G. Hur ansvarig är Linus för incidenten?

Inte alls ansvarig 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Mycket ansvarig

H. Linus fick uthärda mycket allvarlig misshandel från Gabriel.

Håller inte alls med 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Håller helt med

I. På det hela taget, hur mycket sympatiserar du med Linus?

Sympatiserar inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Sympatiserar mycket

Del 2.

Följande frågor är samtliga relaterade till den berättelse som Du just läst. Ringa in det alternativ som bäst motsvarar ditt ställningstagande. Vänligen ringa endast in ett alternativ per fråga. Svara med egna ord på frågorna utan svarsalternativ.

J. Anser Du att Gabriel och Linus delar ansvar för det inträffade?

1. Ja, verkligen 2. Förmodligen 3. Förmodligen inte 4. Nej, inte alls

K. Om Du fick denna information av en närstående, skulle Du då i egenskap av blivande polis råda Linus till att polisanmäla händelsen?

1. Ja, verkligen 2. Förmodligen 3. Förmodligen inte 4. Nej, inte alls

K a). Motivera Ditt ställningstagande

L. Ser Du några svårigheter med hur Du i egenskap av blivande polis skulle hantera detta fall om en anmälan kom in till Dig från Linus?

1. Ja, verkligen 2. Förmodligen 3. Förmodligen inte 4. Nej, inte alls

L. a) Motivera Ditt ställningstagande

M. Anser Du att Linus borde lämna relationen med Gabriel?

1. Ja, verkligen 2. Förmodligen 3. Förmodligen inte 4. Nej, inte alls

N. Jag skulle ha svårt att ta Linus på allvar om han skulle anmäla sin utsatthet till Mig som blivande polis.

1. Ja, verkligen 2. Förmodligen 3. Förmodligen inte 4. Nej, inte alls

O. Skulle Du, som blivande polis, hänvisa Linus till en hjälporganisation?

1. Ja, verkligen 2. Förmodligen 3. Förmodligen inte 4. Nej, inte alls

P. Relationen mellan Gabriel och Linus har varit stormig redan från start, och de har sakta men säkert normaliserats in i den konfliktfyllda relation som återspeglas i berättelsen. Hur allvarligt ser Du på problematiken i detta förhållande utifrån det du har fått läsa? (Markera ditt ställningstagande med ett **x på linjen**).

Inte alls

 Mycket
problematiskt problematiskt

P. a) Motivera ditt ställningstagande

Q. Vad skulle Du råda Linus till att göra nu?

R. Har Du något ytterligare som Du skulle vilja tillägga?

Stort tack för Din medverkan!

APPENDIX C

Review of the construction of the questionnaire from previous research

Question “J” is a question commonly used in previous research regarding IPV (Taylor & Sorensson, 2005; Valor-Segura, Expósito, & Moya, 2011) and could be argued to be a relevant question pertaining to the aim with the current study. This type of question is one of the main issues that has been investigated when studying perceptions of IPV, and may provide an indication of the standpoint of the police students in these cases.

According to Peterman and Dixon (2003) there is a stereotypical assumption that men cannot be victims and that women cannot be offenders. Victims of IPV who report their victimization to the police largely consists of women being battered by their male partner (Peterman & Dixon, 2003) while victims in same-sex relationships avoids reporting to the police (Holmberg & Stjernqvist, 2008; Duke & Davidsson, 2009).

Victims of same-sex IPV who, despite the perceived difficulties with pressing charges, reported their victimization to the police have been witnessing about an ignorant attitude among police officers (Holmberg & Stjernqvist, 2007; McClennen, 2005). Several victims’ report that they were ridiculed and blamed for their victimization when trying to report their partner, and that they were requested to stand up for themselves or fight back (Holmberg & Stjernqvist, 2008; Holmberg & Stjernqvist; McClennen). With all this taken together, question “K” has a clear purpose. Further, this question goes in line with the question battery that Younglove et al. (2002) used for their study within this field of research.

Question “K” is however quite similar to question “B” in ODVS. Due to the construction of ODVS as an instrument, removing or revising items could have fatal consequences for the reliability and validity of the result. Therefore, both questions were included and question “K” was constructed a little different to distinguish between the two. Due to the potential differences in perceptions of IPV cases (Pattavina et al., 2007) it could be argued that this question is needed to measure whether or not someone in a position as a future police officer would encourage someone to report to the police, and therefore be able to compare the answers to this question between the four different vignettes.

Question “L” is purely based on the theoretical framework of street-level bureaucracy (Lipsky, 2010). It could be argued that a low score on this question could be interpreted in accordance with the theory.

Question “M” was based on the questions used in the study by Brown and Groscup (2009). Brown and Groscup (2009) found that crisis center staffs perceived victims of same-sex IPV to have an easier time to leave the abuser than do victims of heterosexual IPV, but were less likely to recommend the victims of same-sex IPV to do so. This could therefore be a measure of how a case should be handled as well as an indicator of the perceived severity.

The fact that the rights to protection for victims of IPV can vary distinctively between states in the United States, may be a reason as to why IPV cases has been argued to be handled differently by the police depending on the sexual orientation

of the concerned couple (Pattavina et al., 2007). Since there are no comparable distinctions made between homosexuals and heterosexuals in Sweden, it is possible that the potential differences in handling IPV cases among Swedish police officers are not as great as in some states in the United States. However, no research has been conducted to examine this, which is why it could be argued that such research is needed. Question “N” was therefore constructed and included to fill this knowledge gap.

IPV affects the body as well as the mind of a victim, independent of sex and sexual orientation (Holmberg & Stjernqvist, 2007; 2008; McClennen, 2005; Burke & Owen, 2006). This suggests that victims may be in need of some kind of additional support besides reporting their victimization to the police. According to the Swedish police website, the police can help victims of IPV with a referral to a help organization such as the women’s shelter or The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights who have a hotline for crime victims. Therefore, based on the question used in the study by Younglove et al. (2002) question “O” was constructed. This could be argued to be an important question to ask and do comparisons between the four different versions, and see if the willingness to make such a referral is affected by sex and sexual orientation of victim and offender.

Question “P” was constructed as a control question to be compared with the final score on ODVS. A higher score on ODVS should therefore be in accordance with a higher score on question “P”. To make sure that the respondents understood that the question pertained to the problematic aspects of the relationship as a whole, the question started with a sentence describing what to think about when making a statement. By doing so, it was ensured that all respondents as far as possible understood that it was not just concerning the offender pushing the victim in the end of the vignette that they should consider, but rather their entire relationship from the beginning to current state.

Question “Q” has been used frequently in studies of perceptions of IPV and could be seen as a compression of the questions used in the study by Bethke and DeJOY (1993), in which the appropriate actions following a scenario was examined. The last question, “R”, in the questionnaire was purely to enable for the respondents to express any thoughts that might have risen from reading the vignette and answering questions that was not addressed by a specific question.

APPENDIX D

Consent form³

Samtycke från deltagare i projektet

Projektets titel: <i>(ifylles av student)</i> <i>Sofi Fröberg</i>	Datum: <i>(ifylles av student)</i> 2015-02-19
Studieansvarig/a: <i>(ifylles av student)</i> Sofi Fröberg Din E-post sofiragnhild@gmail.com	Studerar vid Malmö högskola, Fakulteten vid hälsa och samhälle, 205 06 Malmö, Tfn 040-6657000 Utbildning: Criminology, masters programme
<p>Jag har muntligen informerats om studien och tagit del av bifogad skriftlig information. Jag är medveten om att mitt deltagande är frivilligt och att jag när som helst och utan närmare förklaring kan avbryta mitt deltagande.</p>	
<p>Jag lämnar härmed mitt samtycke till att delta i ovanstående undersökning:</p> <p>Datum:</p> <p>Deltagarens underskrift:</p>	

³ Translate upon request.

APPENDIX E

Ackompanying letter⁴



MALMÖ HÖGSKOLA
FAKULTETEN FÖR
HÄLSA OCH SAMHÄLLE

Till dig som studerar på polisutbildningen i Växjö!

För att avlägga magisterexamen i kriminologi avser jag att genomföra en vinjettstudie med syfte att undersöka polisstudenters uppfattningar om partnervåld. Vinjettstudien är min magisteruppsats och därmed ett led i slutförandet av min utbildning.

Föreliggande enkät distribueras till ca 300 studenter och Du tillfrågas att delta. Ditt deltagande i studien är naturligtvis helt frivilligt, men Dina svar är betydelsefulla för studiens kvalitet och genomförande. Det är av vikt att Du som respondent försöker att besvara så fullständigt som möjligt på samtliga frågor i formuläret. Du har möjlighet att avbryta Ditt deltagande om du skulle vilja, tills det att Du lämnar in enkäten.

Enkäten är uppdelad i två moment. Den första delen består av en vinjett och den andra delen består av frågor relaterade till den fallbeskrivning som Du läst. Enkäten beräknas ta ungefär 15 minuter att besvara.

Alla respondenter garanteras full konfidentialitet under hela undersökningens gång! Dina enkätsvar kommer således enbart användas i statistiska beräkningar och dina uppgifter kommer inte kunna härledas tillbaka till Dig. Samtliga enkäter kommer endast vara tillgängliga för mig, Sofi, och kommer att förvaras i låst utrymme. Efter färdigställande av information kommer samtliga enkäter att förstöras.

Om Du upplever att Du påverkats negativt av denna enkäts innehåll och vill prata med någon, så kan Du vända Dig till mig så kan jag hänvisa Dig till en kontaktperson vid Växjö Brottsofferjour. Du kan även vända Dig till *RFSL:s brottsofferjour för hbt-personer* på telefonnummer 020-34 13 16 eller maila till boj@rfsl.se. För frågor rörande aktuell studie kan du ta kontakt med mig, se kontaktuppgifter nedan.

Tack för din medverkan!

Sofi Fröberg
sofiragnhild@gmail.com

Under handledning av *Susanne Strand*
Docent i kriminologi
Adjungerad Associate Professor vid
Swinburne University of Technology
Melbourne, Australien

⁴ Translate upon request.

APPENDIX F

Coding scheme for the content analyses

Overall instructions: Some responses were two answers in one. When a respondent had made two statements in one, they were coded into two separate subcategories. This was mainly regarding the respondent's advice on question Q. One answer could therefore be coded into two or more subcategories, if the answer was stated in a way that separates the statements, making them distinctly different. (Example on question Q: "Report to the police. Seek help from family and friends". This would be coded into two separate categories: "Police action" and "Non-police action").

All answers that indicated that the question clearly had been misunderstood were coded as missing data and excluded from further analysis. The names of the offender and the victim were replaced with "the offender" or "the victim".

Ka. Advice to report

Crime

Serious incident

Coding instructions: Specific statement from the respondent that the incident in itself, as it is at this point is violent, criminal, and/or abusive.

Examples:

"A crime has been committed"/"Violent situation"/"Violence against an intimate partner is never ok!"/"It is a crime"/"Violence is never acceptable"/"The victim should not be exposed to violence at all"/"Not ok to exert violence at all"/"It is abuse after all".

Will get worse

Coding instructions: Specific statement from the respondent that the incident is likely to escalate, get worse or continue on a violent course from this point on. The focus is on what is going to happen.

Examples:

"This will probably be repeated and get more serious"/"It seems like it will escalate and get worse"/"This is 'the start' of it getting worse"/"It feels like the situation can escalate and get worse next time"/"This is something that can escalate".

Not serious enough

Coding instructions: Specific statement from the respondent that the incident is not serious enough and not violent in a criminal way. Claims of the incident as being an accident, that it could be explained away, that a police report would not lead to anything, etc.

Examples:

"If it happens again I would definitely advice to do so"/"An accident that the victim fell and got injured"/"Not serious enough to report"/"Not serious enough for a police report, it wouldn't result in anything"/"A push once is not serious to me".

Help source

Non-police action

Coding instructions: Specific statement from the respondent that the incident does not need the attention of the police. All other actions are included, such as therapy, consulting friends and family, talk to each other etc.

Examples:

"Talk to a third party"/"Maybe consult a psychologist before you involve the police"/"The victim should bring it up with the offender verbally at least once before the victim turns to the police"

The victim

Decision

Coding instructions: Respondents who did not want to take a stand, who would want to leave the decision to the victim completely.

Examples:

“The victim has to make that decision”/”I can only offer my point of view, in the end it’s the victim who has to make the decision”/”I would act from how I would have wanted to be met and then it’s up to the victim to actually take a stand”.

La. Difficulties with handling the case

Police work

Evidence

Coding instructions: Specific statement from the respondent that has to do with evidence, intent etc. Such things that could make it difficult to prove what happened.

Examples:

“Intent will be difficult to prove”/”Hard to prove what really happened”/”One person’s word against another’s”/”The question of evidence”/”Could be hard to prove if the offender denies”/”No serious visible injuries”/”Yes, it’s one person’s word against another’s, there is no evidence”.

A police matter

Coding instructions: Specific statement from the respondent that there is a need for action to be taken by the police.

Examples:

“Shall be investigated”/”All reports should be taken seriously”/”These kinds of incidents shall be investigated. I can’t see anything that would make me hesitate”/”No I see no difficulties since it shouldn’t be handled in any other way than other cases”.

Not serious enough

Coding instructions: Specific statement from the respondent that the incident was not at the level of severity needed for it to become a police matter, such as the victim and offender being able to solve their problem on their own.

Examples:

“Not much violence”/”The incident could be resolved privately”/”Carelessness is punishable but I don’t think that there will be a sentence for a one-time thing”/”It wouldn’t lead to anything”/”I think that this could be solved without involving the police”.

The victim

Participation

Coding instructions: Specific statement from the respondent indicating that the victim probably will not want to participate due to normalization, and therefore will withdraw their statement and reports, being afraid and too scared to participate in the investigation.

Examples:

“To get the victim to stand by their case and not back away”/”It could be a difficult situation for the victim which may lead to the victim withdrawing the statement to the police out of fear”/”The difficulties could be to get the victim to participate since the offender have a lot of control over the victim”.

Pa. Serious problems

Crime

Serious incident

Coding instructions: Specific statement from the respondent that is focused on the relationship, incident, or situation as violent, criminal, or abusive as it is at this point. If the respondent implies that the relationship or situation will become worse, code as “will get worse” despite the words

“violence, abuse, or criminal act” is used. It all depends on the focus of the answer, it is two different things.

Examples:

“It is serious when someone attacks someone physically”/“It is problematic because both physical and psychological violence is present”/“Psychological and physical abuse! = Serious with intimate partner violence”/“No violence is acceptable to endure. If there are tendencies about this it is very serious”.

Will get worse

Coding instructions: Specific statements from the respondent that is focused on the relationship, violent behavior or situation as likely to get worse, escalate and become more dangerous than it is at this point. If the respondent implies that the relationship or situation is violent or abusive as it is, code it as “serious incident”.

Examples:

“This will probably only get worse”/“If the offender has started to become physical with the victim it won’t take long before the violence escalates”/“This could well end badly considering that it has escalated from start”/“The level of violence will probably increase”.

Relationship

The offender’s behavior

Coding instructions: Specific statement from the respondent about the offender’s behavior, how they are manipulative, controlling, oppressing, have psychiatric problems, a need for power etc.

Examples:

“The offender is very jealous and manipulative”/“The offender has a controlling behavior”/“The offender shows multiple signs of being dominant, jealous, envious despite the victim doing everything to please the offender”/“The offender seems to be very jealous”.

Unhealthy relationship

Coding instructions: Specific statements from the respondent about the relationship being unhealthy, unstable, without trust and/or destructive.

Examples:

“Destructive relationship”/“Does not sound like a healthy relationship”/“Their relationship is destructive. It seems like they have reached a point where it is hard to go back to a healthier relationship”/“You should not limit each other in a relationship, you should help and support”.

Q. Advice to do now

Relationship

Leave

Coding instructions: Specific statements about the victim needing to leave the relationship with the offender.

Examples:

“End the relationship”/“End the relationship and see if that helps”/“Break up with the offender”/“Leave the relationship”/“Stop seeing the offender”/“End all communication with the offender”/“Break up and move on”.

Work together

Coding instructions: Specific statements from the respondent about the victim and offender needing to work together to solve their problem. Including such things as communicate with each other, the victim need to tell or confront the offender with what they feel, go to counselling together etc.

Examples:

“They need help to work on their relationship”/“Couples counselling”/“Talk to the offender, use ultimatums”/“Talk to an expert together”/“Talk to someone professional together”/“Sit down and explain to the offender how the victim feels and perceive the situation”.

The victim

Coding instructions: Specific statements about the victim needing to think about the situation and see to their own needs.

Examples:

“Consider the life situation”/”Think about what the victim really wants it to be like”/”Think about the situation”/”Think. Listen to the heart and head and follow what is best for the victim”/”Think about if the victim really wants to live life like this... - without freedom”.

Help source

Police action

Coding instructions: Specific statements about involving the police in any way, such as making a report, file for a restriction order, talk to the police for advice etc.

Examples:

“Report to the police”/”Press charges”/”Report the incident to the police”/”Report to the police that the victim has been abused”.

Non-police action

Coding instructions: Specific statements from the respondent about the victim needing to seek help from other sources such as family and friends, therapy (the victim only) etc.

Examples:

“Make contact with friends for support”/”Talk to family and friends”/”Seek help and support with family/friends”/”Seek contact with a support agency”/”Seek help from an organization”/”Seek help from a help organization/therapy/support group”.