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## Two Pink Lines: Exploring Florida's Pregnancy-associated Intimate Partner Homicides

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*University of Central Florida*

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TWO PINK LINES:  
EXPLORING FLORIDA'S PREGNANCY-ASSOCIATED  
INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDES

by

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B.A. University of South Florida, 2018

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of  
Sociology in the College of Sciences  
at the University of Central Florida  
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Major Professor: Lin Huff-Corzine

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## **ABSTRACT**

Pregnancy-associated Homicides (PAHs) are homicides committed while a woman is pregnant, and recent reports from Florida's Pregnancy-associated Mortality Review (PAMR) suggest that it is a leading cause of unnatural deaths for pregnant women. However, a study has not examined the motives, characteristics, and underlying factors behind these homicides. Therefore, this study explored Florida's Pregnancy-associated Intimate Partner Homicides (PAIPHs) using a sample of women that were reportedly pregnant at the time of their mortality (n=33), as well as a comparison group of not-pregnant women (n=33). To conduct the study, reported homicide data from news sources, police reports, and other public records from 2000 to 2019 were aggregated, coded, and analyzed. Findings show that there are differences between PAIPHs and Not-pregnant Intimate Partner Homicides (NPIPHs), and pregnancy is a risk factor for femicide. The primary motives were unwanted pregnancy or relationship, rejection, avoidance of prosecution, abuse exposure, doubts concerning the paternity of the child, and infidelity accusations. Although PAIPH and NPIPH victims were killed for leaving or threatening to leave the perpetrator, PAIPH victims were more likely to be killed because the perpetrator wanted to end the relationship. Most PAIPH victims were unmarried or recently married (less than a year), and Black women had the highest rate of victimization. As for PAIPH perpetrators, 78.5% were Black, 30.3% were convicted felons, and some intentionally targeted the unborn child with a knife, gun or blunt force. The findings suggest a need for Maternal Intimate Partner Violence programs, policies, and interventions targeted towards pregnant women and their intimate partners, as well as strategies to combat firearm usage amongst convicted felons.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

Department of Corrections: DOC

Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team: DVFRT

Domestic Violence: D.V.

Florida Department of Law Enforcement Supplemental Homicide Report: FDLE SHR.

Florida Department of Law Enforcement Uniform Crime Report FDLE UCR

Florida Department of Law Enforcement: FDLE.

Intimate Partner Homicide: IPH

Intimate Partner Violence: IPV

Intimate Partner: IP

Maternal Mortality Review Committee: MMRC

National Violent Death Reporting System

Not Pregnancy-related Death: NPRD

Not Pregnant Intimate Partner Homicide: NPIPH

Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System: PRAMS

Pregnancy-associate Homicide: PAH

Pregnancy-associated Intimate Partner Homicide: PAIPH

Pregnancy-associated Intimate Partner Violence: PAIPV

Pregnancy-associated Mortality Review: PAMR

Unborn Victims of Violence Act: UVVA

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

Pregnancy should be a time of peace and excitement, but for some women in Florida, it is a time of increased violence and homicide. According to Florida's 2016 Pregnancy-associated Mortality Review (PAMR), homicides are the third leading cause of Not Pregnancy-related Deaths. Not Pregnancy-related Deaths are maternal deaths that are not attributed to a woman's pregnancy (PAMR, 2018). In 2011, 2012 and 2016, Pregnancy-associated Homicides (PAHs) outnumbered Pregnancy-associated Motor Vehicle deaths, and in 2011 Pregnancy-associated Homicides exceeded Pregnancy-associated drug-related deaths (PAMR, 2018). Given this knowledge, research on this phenomenon is imperative, and the findings could lead to significant policy implications. However, PAMRs' primary purpose is to investigate deaths directly attributed to pregnancy complications, e.g., hemorrhaging; therefore, sufficient Pregnancy-associated homicide data are not available (PAMR, 2018). Even if data were available, PAMR does not distinguish Pregnancy-associated Homicides (PAHs) committed by a relative, acquaintance, or stranger from PAHs committed by an Intimate Partner (PAMR, 2018). Perpetrator characteristics such as demographics, motives, intent, and other attributes that would allow for comparison between Not-Pregnant Intimate Partner Homicides (NPIPHs) and Pregnancy-associated Intimate Partner Homicides (PAIPHs) are also omitted from PAMR statistics (PAMR, 2018).

Another reason for the lack of literature on Florida's Pregnancy-associated Intimate Partner homicides (PAIPHs) are inadequate or missing pregnancy status indicators on police reports, and other documents pertaining to homicide victims. Adding

pregnancy status to police incident reports, injunctions, and Federal Law Enforcement reports such as the Supplemental Homicide Report (SHR), would enhance research efforts. Moreover, improving data collection systems such as the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), the Domestic Violence Fatality Review (DVFR), and Florida's Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), would also be beneficial.

Even though this phenomenon is under-researched in the state of Florida, literature suggests that pregnant women might be targeted because of their perceived vulnerability or their diminished ability to defend themselves (Gelles, 1975). Pregnant women are more likely to be abused during the first three months of pregnancy (Cheng & Horon, 2010), or throughout their pregnancy (Walker, 1984). Perpetrators that abuse pregnant women are dangerous and more apt to commit femicide (Campbell, Soeken., McFarlane & Parker, 2000). In Walker (1987), some women reported that perpetrators mutilated their body, such as their nipples or vagina while they were pregnant, and that physical violence increased. Moreover, in a Maryland study of PAIPHS, firearms were the leading method of death, and the homicides were more likely to occur at a residence (Cheng & Horon, 2010). Outside of Florida, little is known about perpetrators besides the fact that an Intimate Partner commits most Pregnancy-associated Homicides (PAHs) (Cheng & Horon, 2010; Palladino, Singh, Campbell, Flynn, & Gold, 2012).

To date, a Florida study has not delved into PAIPHS to ascertain the factors contributing to its commission. Therefore, this study used aggregated data to address: (1) The victim-perpetrator characteristics of Florida's Pregnancy-associated Intimate Partner Homicides (PAIPHS), (2) The primary motives of Florida's PAIPHS and (3) The

difference, if any, between male-perpetrated PAIPHS and male-perpetrated Not-pregnant Intimate Partner Homicides (NPIPHs). Ultimately, the study's objective was to bring attention to an under-researched phenomenon occurring in the state of Florida, in hopes that it would encourage more research and decrease the rate of perpetration.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Nonlethal Pregnancy Violence

Existing literature on nonlethal forms of pregnancy violence postulates that victims are usually young, unmarried, undereducated women in abusive relationships (Bohn, Tebben, & Campbell, 2004; PRAMS, 2018; Rodrigues, T., Rocha, L., & Barros, 2008; Samankasikorn, Alhusen, Yan, Schminkey, & Bullock, 2019; Stewart & Cecutti, 1993). Other literature indicates that Black women are more likely to experience pregnancy violence (Mcfarlane, Campbell, Sharps & Watson, 2002; Palladino et al., 2012; PRAMS, 2018); however, Samankasikorn et al. (2019) suggests that Black women experience the same rate of pregnancy violence as Hispanics. Conversely, Mcfarlane, Parker, Soeken, & Bullock (1992) found equivalent rates of sexual and physical violence in Black and White women and higher rates of frequent, severe abuse in White women. Irrespective of race, some studies suggest that Pregnancy-associated Intimate Partner Violence (PAIPV) starts or increases during pregnancy (Martin, Harris, Li, Moracco, Kupper & Campbell, 2004; Mcfarlane et al., 2002; Walker, 1987), while others posit that pregnancy is a 'protected' status where women experience little to no violence (Decker, Martin, & Moracco (2004); Jasinski, 2001). An explanation given by Decker et al. (2004) is that abusers might not feel the need to use violence as a control tactic because the victims' pregnancy status ties her to them. Moreover, in a 2004 study, Martin et al. observed an increase in psychological and sexual abuse but a decline in physical assaults. The contradictory findings point to a need for more pregnancy violence research. Even so, a few studies agree that the greatest risk factor for physical violence during pregnancy is

violence before pregnancy (Helton, McFarlane & Anderson, 1987; Martin, 2001; Stewart & Cecutti, 1993). For example, a 1987 study by Helton et al. found that 87.5% of women abused before pregnancy were also abused during and after pregnancy. More importantly, whether the abuse is physical or psychological, it can cause the woman to experience stress or bodily injuries, which increases the risk of miscarriage (Alhusen, Ray, Sharps & Bullock, 2015; Block, 2000; Gelles, 1975; Morland, Leskin, Block, Campbell & Friedman, 2008; Walker, 1987). For instance, some abusers intentionally target the woman's abdomen, and others strike the victim because of jealousy or an unintended pregnancy; this inevitably puts her as well as her unborn child at risk (Bacchus, Mezey & Bewley; Block, 2000; Campbell, Pugh, Campbell & Visscher, 1995; Helton et al., 1987; Gelles, 1975; Jasinski, 2001; Mcfarlane et al., 1992; Rodrigues et al., 2008; Samankasikorn et al., 2019; Stewart & Cecutti, 1993; Walker, 1987). Victims who experience extreme violence during pregnancy tend to leave but, leaving puts them at an even greater risk of femicide (Decker et al., 2004). Other femicide risk factors are violence during pregnancy (Campbell et al., 2003; Decker et al., 2004; Martin, Macy, Sullivan & Magee, 2007; Mcfarlane et al., 2002), the presence of a gun in the home (Block, 2000), and children in the home from the victim's former relationship (Campbell et al., 2003). At present, other literature does not provide details about the PAIPH victim's Unborn child or other children in the home.

## Measuring Pregnancy Violence

The Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS1-2), is a commonly used assessment for evaluating and measuring family violence. Since the assessments 1979 creation by Murray Straus, studies have used it to evaluate Intimate Partner Violence (Gelles, 1988; McFarlane et al., 1992; Strauss, 2007), but it is not without limitations (Strauss, 2007). The CTS is unable to determine the motives behind the reported acts of violence, it omits pregnancy status, and it is unable to gauge every type of violence. Since the assessment omits pregnancy status, studies must integrate that line of questioning into CTS assessments. Other studies have used the Danger Assessment Scale (DAS), a tool created in 1986 by Jacquelyn Campbell to determine a woman's risk of serious injury or homicide (Campbell, Webster, & Glass, 2009; Decker et al., 2004; McFarlane et al., 2002; McFarlane et al., 1992). Although the Danger Assessment Scale is useful for gathering data on victims and perpetrators to assess the need for domestic violence intervention, it has not been shown to predict lethality (Campbell, Webster, & Glass, 2009). Nevertheless, unlike the CTS, it asks about the victim's experience with pregnancy violence.

## Pregnancy-associated Mortality Review Committee

Most Maternal Mortality Review Committees (MMRCs) do not provide comprehensive data on Not Pregnancy-related Deaths (NPRDs). NPRDs are deaths that are not attributed to pregnancy complications, such as homicides, suicides, car accidents, and cancer (PAMR, 2018). Other limitations of MMRC data are the exclusion of perpetrator data, the absence of motives or intent, and the lack of distinction between the reported homicides.

Combining all homicides into one category instead of separating them by type, such as PAIPH versus familial or acquaintance domestic violence, hinders research. Another limitation of most MMRC's is the inclusion of postpartum women who bore children within 42 days or one-year of mortality.

Florida's MMRC, the Pregnancy-associated Mortality Review (PAMR), provides a combined Homicide percentage, which includes postpartum women that were killed within one-year of delivery (PAMR, 2018). Again, combined Homicide rates do not allow for the distinction between PAIPH and other homicides, and the inclusion of postpartum women might affect research results. Another limitation of PAMR data is the exclusion of Perpetrator data, such as demographics, as well as intent. Since intent and or malice is an important component of Murder, excluding it limits the data's usefulness.

#### National Violent Death Reporting System

The Center for Disease Control (CDC), National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), is a funded, violent crime surveillance system that consists of data from various government agencies (e.g., law enforcement, medical examiners, coroners, and vital statistics). Although the NVDRS contains Pregnancy-associated IPH victim data, Florida was not funded by the CDC until September of 2018 (CDC, 2018). Therefore, sufficient PAIPH data will not be available for quite some time.

#### The Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team

Florida's Domestic Violence Fatality Review (DVFR) team, headed by the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV) and co-chaired by Florida's State

Attorney General's office, convenes semi-annually to review selected Domestic Violence (DV) homicides. Once the selected homicides are reviewed, results and recommendations are published in annual Faces of Fatality (FOF) reports (FCADV, 2019). FOF reports might be useful to estimate the prevalence of Florida's DV homicides, but they are not useful for PAIPH research. Since 2009, the DVFR has only selected two PAIPH cases for a comprehensive review. The 2018 report provided data on the PAIPH victim's pregnancy length (5 months) and stated that it was Unknown if the perpetrator fathered the Unborn child (FCADV, 2019). The 2014 report contained a more thorough review of a PAIPH murder-suicide committed at a residence with a knife. The case involved a 23-year old, 8-week pregnant victim and her recently estranged 26-year old boyfriend. The couple had a history of pregnancy violence, death threats, suicide ideation, and an active order of protection (FCADV, 2019). Other than those two cases, the DVFR has not comprehensively reviewed PAIPH.

After the DVFR reviews a selected case, they fuse all DV homicide types; e.g., PAIPH, female-perpetrated, and filicides, into one category (DV Homicides) and publishes the results. For example, Race and Age pie charts do not separate the results by homicide type; therefore, one cannot use FOF reports to ascertain the race or age of PAIPH victims or perpetrators. Another limitation of FOF reports is the inclusion of attempted or near-death homicides.

#### Florida's Federal Department of Law Enforcement: Supplemental Homicide Report

Florida's Domestic Violence, Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR) include former or current Spouses, co-habitants, and those who have a child together but have

never lived together or married (FDLE, 2019). SHR data for 2018 indicates that there were 118 IPHs; Spouses accounted for 59.32% of the homicides followed by Co-habitants (29.66%) and those with a child together (11.02%). However, a limitation of the DV SHR is the inclusion of female perpetrated IPH. To assess male-perpetrated IPH committed by a Spouse or co-habitant, one must download the state-wide Homicide SHR excel spreadsheet, then sort through all homicides committed in the State of Florida. Next, for the ‘child but never married or lived together’ status, you must contact the local reporting agency that handled the case to confirm the relationship status. Contact is required because unlike the DV SHR; the state-wide homicide SHR labels that status as ‘other’ along with other uncategorized homicides. Nevertheless, some ‘child but never married or lived together’ cases are classified as Victim relationship: other, with a ‘circumstance’ label of ‘lovers quarrel,’ which is indicative of IP status (FDLE, 2019). After removing female-perpetrated cases, the remaining 103 cases are Spouses (64.08%) followed by Co-habitants (24.27%) and other-lovers-quarrel (11.65%).

Even though Race is an important variable, SHRs classify all victims and perpetrators as either white or black, which is an inaccurate depiction of Florida’s diverse maternal population. Other limitations of SHR data are missing or ambiguous motives, the omission of pregnancy status, and the exclusion of ex-girlfriend or ex-boyfriend status. Since separation was shown to be a risk factor for femicide, ex-boyfriend, and ex-girlfriend status is an essential component of IPH research and statistics (Decker et al., 2004; Szalewski, 2017). Incidentally, some studies have found incorrect data in Florida’s SHR data, such as relationship status and or type of homicide (King, 2019; Websdale, 1999).

### Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System

Since 1993 the CDC, in conjunction with the Florida Department of Health (DOH), has published data collected from Florida's Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS). Florida's PRAMS is a self-reported, population-based survey that randomly selects 200 respondents using a strata sampling technique (PRAMS, 2018). The surveys are sent out every month to New mothers, and nonrespondents are contacted multiple times by mail, followed by a phone call (PRAMS, 2018). In 2015, 1,037 new mothers completed the questionnaire, and the variables included were age, race/ethnicity, education, marital status, household income, and Medicaid status (PRAMS, 2018). The PRAM questions relevant to this study are:

1. "During the 12 months before you got pregnant with your new baby, did your husband or partner push, hit, slap, kick, choke, or physically hurt you in any other way?"
2. "During your most recent pregnancy, did your husband or partner push, hit, slap, kick, choke, or physically hurt you in any other way?"
3. "When you got pregnant with your new baby, were you or your husband or partner doing anything to keep from getting pregnant?"

The 2015 PRAMs data shows that "before pregnancy," Non-Hispanic Black women experienced the highest rate of pregnancy violence (5%), followed by Hispanic women (1.8%), then Non-Hispanic White women (1%). Also, "during pregnancy," non-Hispanic Black women experienced the highest rate of pregnancy violence (5.1%); however, this time they were followed by Non-Hispanic White women (1.7%) then Hispanic women (1.3%). To summarize, Non-Hispanic Black women experienced equivalent rates of

violence before and during pregnancy, which implies that pregnancy was a continuation of violence instead of a protected status or a time of increased violence. Next, Non-Hispanic White women experienced slightly higher rates of violence during pregnancy than before pregnancy, which connotes that violence is a continuation for some women and a starting point for others. Conversely, Hispanic women experienced slightly higher rates before pregnancy than during pregnancy, which points to pregnancy as a protected status for some. Since each group experienced violence “before pregnancy,” that could be the predictor for pregnancy violence (Helton, McFarlane & Anderson, 1987; Martin, 2001; Stewart & Cecutti, 1993). However, to properly estimate the rates, one would have to know more details about the individual responses.

Furthermore, PRAMS (2018) shows that “unintended pregnancies” were highest amongst Non-Hispanic Blacks (61%), followed by Hispanics (38.3%) then Non-Hispanic Whites (37.1%). The rate of unintended pregnancies was somewhat equal across the board for household income, educational attainment, Medicaid status, and marital status. However, Age had an impact on “unintended pregnancies.” Women under 19 experienced the highest number of unintended pregnancies followed by women age 20-24, women over 35, and women 25-34.

Most women experiencing abuse during pregnancy were under 25, unmarried, and on Medicaid (PRAMS, 2018). Also, the higher the woman’s education and or income, the less she experienced violence during pregnancy (PRAMS, 2018). Remarkably, women with household incomes of less than \$15,000 experienced more pregnancy violence than the combined total of women with incomes over \$15,000 (PRAMS, 2018). This suggests

that women at the lowest levels of poverty experience a great deal of pregnancy violence (PRAMS, 2018).

There are several limitations to PRAM data. First, only new mothers are monitored; this excludes women that already have children. For a better representation of pregnancy violence, prevalence, or otherwise, all maternal women and births should be surveyed and counted. Second, the report does not ask about other forms of abuse, i.e., verbal and psychological abuse that were found to have an impact on some pregnant women (Martin et al., 2004). Other limitations are the narrow race/ethnicity categories that leave out groups such as Asians or Other and the exclusion of women who did not have a live birth. Since abuse during pregnancy has been shown to cause miscarriages or stillbirths (Alhusen, Ray, Sharps & Bullock, 2015; Block, 2000; Gelles, 1975; Morland, Leskin, Block, Campbell & Friedman, 2008; Walker, 1987), all pregnancy outcomes should be included. Also, adding more relationship status categories would improve research efforts.

#### Websdale's Study of Florida's Not-Pregnant Intimate Partner Homicides

Websdale's 1999 study of 314 Domestic homicides provides data on NPIPHs and is the only known Florida study that can be used for comparison. Websdale (1999) used various documentary sources, agencies, and strategies to gather data on Florida's domestic homicides. The study found that males perpetrated 67 of the 78 domestic homicides involving a female victim in a single killing. While the study found an equivalent number of white and black victims, factoring in Florida's racial makeup and population size places black women at a higher risk of victimization. Overall, most victims were

unmarried, but once Race was factored in, black women were more likely to be unmarried. Moreover, Websdale (1999) found that male-perpetrators killed biological children just as often as non-biological children.

*Multiple Killings:*

Websdale (1999) defines multiple killings as killings involving the death of two people, including the perpetrator, such as parricides, familicides, and homicide-suicides. Further, Websdale argues that single victim IPH differs from multiple-victim IPH. First, black victims in multiple killings were more likely to be married than unmarried. Websdale (1999) attributes the difference to 'relationship closeness,' in other words, the closer the perpetrator is to the victim; e.g., married, the more likely he is to commit a multiple killing. Second, in multiple killings, white victimization rates did not decline as much as black victimization rates, and interestingly, Hispanic rates remained the same. Third, compared to single killers, multiple killers were less likely to have prior police contact, violent criminal histories, or significant economic issues. Websdale (1999) argues that Homicide-suicides are the most common type of IPH multiple killings. However, most studies do not count homicide-suicide perpetrators as DV victims; therefore, his definition of multiple killings and subsequent analysis does not always align with multiple killing statistics.

## Characteristics and Motives

Websdale (1999) found that 50.7% of the 67 male perpetrators exhibited obsessive possessiveness and or extreme jealousy towards the victim. Obsessive possessiveness was described as an abnormal degree of possessiveness towards the victim that led to behaviors like stalking, suicide ideation, or dangerous obsession with the relationship. The extreme jealousy stemmed from the victim's single or multiple actions, real or perceived that the perpetrator deemed as betrayal, rejection, or a threat to himself, socially or emotionally.

Before the incident, 47.8% of the 67 perpetrators made Death threats, 50.7% had police contact, 43.3% had a criminal history, and 41.8% consumed drugs or alcohol. Websdale (1999) asserts that some perpetrators were not deterred by restraining orders, law enforcement, or criminal intervention, and others informed someone other than the victim of their desire or intent to kill her. As for victims, before the incident, most experienced battering (86.6%) and some sought restraining orders (28.6%). The considerably low amount of restraining orders indicate that victims of domestic violence do not always file restraining orders. In fact, King (2019) found that victims who do not report their abuse to law enforcement are significantly more likely to be killed. Another finding in King's (2019) study of 62 Marital restraining orders is evidence of physical and nonviolent coercive control tactics. The latter signifies the importance of including all types of abuse in criminal, social, and legal interventions. Additionally, Websdale (1999) found that estranged, divorced, or separated victims, as well as victims who threatened or were in the process of leaving, were killed by perpetrators. Therefore, actual or threatened separation from the perpetrator is a risk factor or motive for Florida's NPIPHs (Websdale,

(1999). Of note, Websdale's (1999) study did not find significant personality disorders or mental illness within its perpetrator sample.

### Unborn Victims of Violence Act

The Government at the Federal and state-level have enacted laws to deter Pregnancy-associated Homicides committed by an IP or other person. In 2004, The United States enacted the Unborn Victims of Violence Act (UVVA). This act deems fetuses at any stage of development as victims if they are killed or injured during the commission of certain crimes within Federal jurisdiction. Crimes outside of Federal jurisdiction are handled at the state level, and presently 38 states have feticide laws (NRLC, 2018). Still, some states do not add additional charges unless the fetus is viable (able to survive outside of the womb) or has reached a certain gestational age (NRLC, 2018). Florida's first feticide law was enacted in 2005, but it only penalized perpetrators who killed a viable fetus (FL Stat § 782.09 (2005)). However, on June 20, 2014, Florida concurred with Federal law and enacted its own Unborn Victims of Violent Act (UVVA). Florida's UVVA allows additional charges to be added to those who kill or injure a fetus at any stage of gestation (Fla. Stat. Ann. §775.021(5)). Since the law was enacted, a study has not examined its enforcement rate.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

This Exploratory, Qualitative Content Analysis uses aggregated secondary data collected from online news sources and public records to analyze a sample of Pregnancy-associated Intimate Partner Homicides (n=33) and a comparison sample of Not-Pregnant Intimate Partner Homicides (n=33) committed in Florida between 2000 and 2019. Content analysis allowed the study to extract contextual inferences and interpretations from the words and images in the secondary data to determine victim-perpetrator characteristics, motives, and commonalities. Content analysis was also used to extract data from media such as news footage, social media, interrogations, 911 audios, confessions, court proceedings, interviews, and other media containing visual or auditory information about the victim or perpetrator. The inclusion criteria for both groups were homicides committed in Florida between 2000 and 2019 with intent and, or malice, and the exclusion criteria were Intimate Partner homicides committed without intent or malice or homicides caused by someone other than an Intimate Partner.

### Target Population

The Pregnant population is mostly comprised of women in their 'reproductive age.' The World Health Organization (WHO) defines the reproductive age as women between the age of 15-49 (WHO, 2014). Since some Pregnant women fall outside of the spectrum, this study targeted PAIIPH and NPIPH victims in and outside of the reproductive age, that were killed in Florida from 2000 to 2019. Florida was targeted for the following reasons: lack of research on the targeted maternal population, the availability of public records, its feticide law, and its diverse population. To obtain the PAIPH and NPIPH sample, keyword phrases were typed into

online search engines such as Google, Internet Explorer, Edge, and Yahoo using a purposive sampling technique. At the conclusion, 33 PAIPH cases and 33 NPIPH cases, comprised of victim-perpetrator characteristics as well as motives, were collected.

### Research Design and Procedures

This study followed a content analysis strategy. To begin, documentary evidence was gathered from newspapers using the following keyword phrases; pregnant woman killed in Florida, pregnant woman murdered in Florida, pregnant woman killed by husband in Florida, and pregnant woman killed by boyfriend in Florida. Then, to avoid city-county level bias, a search was performed using the name of all 67 of Florida's counties. For example, pregnant women killed in Orange County, Florida, followed by Pregnant women killed in Broward County, Florida, and so forth until all 67 counties were searched. This strategy continued until an exhaustive, purposive sample of 33 PAIPHS comprised of victim-perpetrator characteristics were collected.

To account for media inaccuracies, newspapers served as a starting point, then other documentary sources pertaining to injunctions, sentencing, jury trials, appeals, marriage licenses, past deviance, and other variables were collected using online public record databases such as the clerk of court office of the respective county. If the latter were not feasible due to lack of access, or other reasons; the documents were requested from the appropriate agency, or multiple news sources were used instead of government documents.,

Although the sample selection was purposive, cases were chosen in order of online search results, and to further ensure the validity of the study, truthfulness was established by using multiple sources to verify the data. As for reliability, each case study, along with

supporting documentary evidence, was updated throughout the study and stored in Evernote, a note-taking application that allows users to clip online content and archive it (Evernote, 2019).

Using the same collection method, a Quota sample of NPIPH victims and perpetrators were found with the following keyword phrases; woman killed in Florida, woman murdered in Florida, woman killed by husband in Florida, and woman killed by boyfriend in Florida. While searching, every incident of NPIPH was added to a chart containing the age/race of the victim and perpetrator. After an extensive search, the collected NPIPH cases (289) were paired with PAIPH cases based on the age/race of the victims and perpetrators. For instance, a white PAIPH victim (24) and a white PAIPH perpetrator (25) were paired with a white NPIPH victim (24), and a white NPIPH perpetrator (24). Despite having a collection of 289 NPIPH cases and performing another search, an exact match for the PAIPH case was not found. Therefore, the next closest match to the PAIPH perpetrators age was used. Subsequently, the paired groups were identical in Race but slightly different in Age. The mean age for PAIPH victims was 25.3, NPIPH victims 25.4, PAIPH perpetrators 28.9, and NPIPH perpetrators 29.8.

This study used Google Forms to create a PAIPH questionnaire that aligned with the study's research questions. Akin to a survey, each question was constructed to measure key variables. The initial questions included demographics such as age and race, as well as questions derived from literature and existing limitations. Emerging themes guided subsequent questions, and the Google Form was password protected to prevent unwanted access. Following the creation of the questionnaire, the collected documents were thoroughly read and discovered answers were inputted into the questionnaire.

## Data Analysis and Findings

Google Sheets built-in 'Explore' feature allows you to descriptively analyze Questionnaire responses and build charts. Also, Google Forms automatically creates an exportable linked spreadsheet that contains the questionnaire responses; therefore, an excel spreadsheet was exported from Google forms and imported into SPSS; a widely used software tool for coding, analyzing, and visualizing data (Pallant, 2016). Once imported, SPSS was utilized for its descriptive statistics.

### Age and Race: Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 is comprised of demographic and household descriptive statistics for Pregnancy-associated Intimate Partner Homicides (PAIPHs) and Not-Pregnant Intimate Partner Homicides (NPIPHs). Since Quota sampling was used to gather the comparison group based on the age and race of the victims and perpetrators, those variables will not be analytically compared. However, due to the exploratory nature of this study, it is important to describe the breakdown of all PAIPH variables, comparable or not. The mean age for PAIPH victims was 25.33, and the mean age for PAIPH perpetrators was 28.87. As for Race, 60.6% of the PAIPH victims were black; a number double that of Whites (30.3%) and ten times that of Hispanics (6.1%). Moreover, PAIPH black perpetrators (75.8%) outnumbered Whites (12.1%) and Hispanics (12.1%) by six-fold.

### Pregnancy

For this study, "trimesters" were defined by the following gestational age, 1-12 weeks (first), 13-26 weeks (second), and 27 weeks to term (third). In Table 1, 39.4% of the PAIPH victims were in the first trimester of pregnancy, 30.3% (second), 24.2% (third), and 6.1% were unknown. The average gestational age for PAIPH victims was 4.67 months, and the

perpetrators knew of the victim’s pregnancy status. There were some outliers, some victims were killed shortly after their pregnancy announcement, and others were killed right before their due date. Overall, victimization occurred in all three trimesters, with a slight increase of victimization in the first and second trimesters. In 13 cases, the sex of the Unborn child was known; 7 were male, and 6 were female.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics: Demographics

Variable	PAIPH (n=33)	NPIPH (n=33)
	Mean or Percent %	Mean or Percent %
<b>Average Age</b>		
Victim	25.33	25.42
Perpetrator	28.87	29.78
<b>Average Months Pregnant</b>		
	4.67	n/a
<b>Pregnancy trimester %</b>		
First	39.4%	n/a
Second	30.3%	n/a
Third	24.2%	n/a
Unknown	6.1%	n/a
<b>Victim Race %</b>		
Black	60.6%	60.6%
White	30.3%	30.3%
Hispanic	6.1%	6.1%
Asian	0%	0%
Other	3%	3%
<b>Perpetrator Race %</b>		
Black	75.8%	75.8%
White	12.1%	12.1%
Hispanic	12.1%	12.1%
Asian	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%

### Marital Status

Table 2 shows that PAIPH and NPIPH victims were more likely to be unmarried. Given the age group of the PAIPH victims and the use of Quota sampling to collect the comparison group, the small number of married couples were expected. Still, PAIPH victims were more

likely to be married than NPIPH victims, and the study found that 75.8% were killed within one year of marriage.

### Children

As illustrated in Table 2, there are four categories for this variable. “None” defines PAIPH victims that were having their first child (39.4%) or NPIPH victims without children (30.3%). “Children with perpetrator” defines victims that only have children with the perpetrator, PAIPH (9.1%), and NPIPH (18.2%). “Children with former” defines victims that only have children from a previous relationship; PAIPHS (39.4%) and NPIPHs 24.2%. “Children with both” define victims that have children with both the perpetrator and a former partner(s); PAIPHS (12.1%) and NPIPHs (27.3%). After combining categories based on the presence of former children or lack thereof, there was not a substantial difference in having or not having former children in the home. However, PAIPH victims with at least one child with the perpetrator had lower rates of victimization.

### Living Status

In Table 2, this study defined “living with the perpetrator” as currently living with the perpetrator at the time of the homicide. In some cases, the victim had recently moved out of a shared residence with the perpetrator. Since they were not currently residing with him, the cases were coded as “not living with the perpetrator.” PAIPH victims (48.5%) were living with the perpetrator, and 51.5% were “not living with the perpetrator.” This suggests that living status does not impact the rate of PAIPH victimization. For NPIPHs, 36.4% lived with the perpetrator, and 63.6% did not live with the perpetrator. This suggests that “not living with the perpetrator” decreases NPIPH victimization.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics: Household

Variable	PAIPH (n=33)	NPIPH (n=33)
	Percent %	Percent %
<b>Marital Status %</b>		
Married	21.2%	0%
Unmarried	72.7%	87.9%
Engaged	3%	6.1%
Divorced	0%	3%
Separated	3%	3%
<b>Marriage length (n=7)</b>		
Less than a year	85.7%	0%
5-6 years	14.3%	0%
<b>Children</b>		
None	39.4%	30.3%
Children with perpetrator	9.1%	18.2%
Children with former	39.4%	24.2%
Children with both	12.1%	27.3%
<b>Living with Perpetrator</b>		
Yes	48.5%	36.4%
No	51.5%	63.6%

### Perpetrator Convicted Felon

Table 3 provides descriptive statistics on perpetrators and incident characteristics. This study defined a “convicted felon” as a perpetrator that was convicted of any degree of a felony; first, second or third. PAIPH perpetrators (30.3%) were “convicted felons,” and NPIPH perpetrators (67.7%) were “convicted felons.” This suggests that NPIPH perpetrators were twice as likely to be a convicted felon than PAIPH perpetrators.

### Perpetrator Arrest History

In Table 3, “arrest history” is defined as crimes committed in the perpetrator’s past, before he committed the homicide. All arrests were recorded, whether the perpetrator was convicted of the allegations or not, except for driving without a license or driving with a suspended license. Depending on the jurisdiction and the perpetrator's habitualness, driving without a license or driving with a suspended license is labeled as criminal or traffic; therefore,

it was not coded for any jurisdiction. If a perpetrator had multiple past arrests, each type of arrest was counted once; thus, the results include multiple responses from some of the perpetrators. For instance, even though some perpetrators had multiple battery charges, it was only counted once per perpetrator. Arrests that did not result in a conviction such as no information or nolle prosequi cases were counted because of information in the corresponding police reports, injunctions, or victim or witness statements about the alleged offense. Victims of domestic violence and other victims do not always cooperate or participate in the prosecution of their intimate partner, stranger, or other association for various reasons. Therefore, no conviction does not always mean that the perpetrator was innocent of the alleged offense. The most frequent past arrest for PAIPH perpetrators were battery (18.3%) domestic violence (12.7%), drug possession (9.9%), Theft (9.9%), and burglary (7.0%). The most frequent past arrest for NPIPH perpetrators were battery (12.9%), drug possession (10.5%), theft (10.5%) burglary (8.1%), and Domestic Violence (7.3%). Overall, the results were similar, but PAIPH perpetrators were slightly more likely to have a history of battery or domestic violence than NPIPH perpetrators. Moreover, some perpetrators had numerous arrests but a low number of convictions.

#### Method of Death

As shown in Table 3, the most frequent “method of death” for both groups was firearms followed by cut, pierce, or stab. In PAIPHS, firearms were used 63.6% of the time and in NPIPHs, 57.6% of the time. For both groups, ‘handguns’ were the most frequent type of firearm. Cut, pierce, or stab was the method of choice for some PAIPHS (8.2%) and NPIPHs (15.2%). Both groups experienced an equivalent number of strangulations/suffocations (12.1%), but a greater percentage of NPIPH victims died from blunt force.

### Restraining Orders

In Table 3, this study defines “restraining orders” as a civil request for an order of protection against domestic violence. Past or current “restraining orders” naming the perpetrator as the respondent were counted, even if the order was denied or temporary. Most PAIPH victims (69.6%), did not file a restraining order against the perpetrator; however, 9.1% had a current order, and 6.1% had a past order. As stated, King (2019), also found that Intimate Partner Homicide victims were unlikely to have filed a restraining order before the homicide. Furthermore, 15.2% of the PAIPH perpetrators were named as a respondent in a past “restraining order,” filed by a former partner.

### Multiple deaths and Injuries

In Table 3, this study defines “multiple deaths and injuries” as the intentional killing or injuring of victims other than the primary victim or fetus. Since the perpetrator intended to kill the injured victims, they were counted as attempted cases. “For this study, “Double Homicide” is the killing of two secondary victims and “Mass Murder” is the killing of 3 or more secondary victims. Most PAIPH perpetrators (27) and NPIPH perpetrators (25) did not kill a secondary victim.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics: Perpetrators and Incident

Variable	PAIPH (n=33)	NPIPH (n=33)
	Percent %	Percent %
<b>Perpetrator Convicted felon</b>		
Yes	30.3%	67.7
No	69.7%	33.3
<b>Arrest history (Most Frequent)</b>		
Battery	18.3%	12.9%
Domestic Violence	12.7%	7.3%
Burglary	7.0%	8.1%
Drug Possession	9.9%	10.5%
Theft	9.9%	10.5%
Assault	5.6%	6.5%
Resist without Violence	4.2%	2.4%
Robbery	5.6%	2.4%
Trespass	5.6%	4%
Drug Distribution	2.8%	5.6%
<b>Method of death</b>		
Firearm	63.6%	57.6%
Cut/Pierce/Stab	18.2%	15.2%
Strangulation/Suffocation	12.1%	12.1%
Blunt force	3%	12.1%
Unknown	3%	3%
<b>Restraining Order</b>		
None	69.6%	n/a
Current order with the victim	9.1%	n/a
Past order with the victim	6.1%	n/a
Past order with former	15.2%	n/a
Frequency	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>
<b>Multiple deaths and injuries</b>		
No	27	25
Double Homicide	4	2
Mass Murder	0	2
Attempted Double Homicide	1	2
Attempted Mass Murder	1	2

### Location of Homicide

As expected, in Table 4, both groups were more likely to be killed at a residence, including apartments, driveways, porch, yard, or areas considered part of or near a residence. PAIPHS (75.8%) were committed at a residence, and NPIPHs (81.8%) were committed at a residence. The next most frequent location was inside of a motor vehicle, PAIPHS (9.1%), NPIPHs (12.1%).

## Murder-Suicide

This study defined “murder-suicide” [Table 4] as suicide committed by the perpetrator following the homicide. The time frame for the murder-suicides were immediately after the homicide or within a week of the incident. In two cases, the perpetrator fled the scene but subsequently committed suicide. PAIPH perpetrators (21.2%) committed murder-suicide, and 6.1% attempted to. For NPIPHs, 9.4% of the perpetrators committed suicide, and 6.3% attempted to. This suggests that PAIPH perpetrators were twice as likely to commit murder-suicide than NPIPH perpetrators. In some cases, the perpetrator threatened to commit suicide to avoid imprisonment but decided to flee the state or country. However, threats to commit suicide were not coded as attempted or completed murder-suicide.

## Motives

For Table 4, this study defined “motives” as reasons for the commission of the homicide. The motives were determined by the perpetrator’s confession, victim statements, witness statements, and others with insight into the victim or perpetrator’s life. All disputes and arguments that transpired shortly before the homicide, if known, were counted as a possible motive; therefore, this variable includes multiple responses from some PAIPH and NPIPH cases.

“Perpetrator rejected victim” is defined as a perpetrator that wants to leave the relationship because he is no longer interested in the victim, he wants to pursue another relationship, or he is currently in another relationship. This occurred 11.6% of the time in PAIPHs and 3% of the time in NPIPHs and suggests that PAIPH victims are almost 4 times as likely to be rejected by the perpetrator. Conversely, “victim rejected perpetrator” is defined as a victim that wants to leave the relationship for various reasons. She has left the relationship or

has threatened to leave the relationship. This occurred 12.6% of the time in PAIPHS and 32.8% of the time in NPIPHs. Although both groups were killed for leaving or threatening to leave the perpetrator, NPIPH victims were almost 3 times as likely to be killed for this reason.

“Unwanted pregnancy” is defined as an unwanted pregnancy by the perpetrator, and 12.6% of PAIPH victims were killed because of an unwanted pregnancy. “Doubts about paternity” are defined as the perpetrators questioning of his biological relationship to the Unborn child. Some perpetrators were upset about the possibility of being the father, and others were distraught about the possibility of not being the father. This occurred in 3.2% of the PAIPHS.

“Perpetrator infidelity” is defined as the perpetrator's alleged infidelity that led to an argument or friction. This occurred in 3.2% of PAIPHS and 7.5% of the NPIPHs and suggests that NPIPHs victims are more likely to be killed for this reason. “Victim infidelity” is defined as the victim's alleged infidelity that led to an argument or friction. This occurred in 4.2% of PAIPHS and 4.5% of NPIPHs and suggests that both groups are equally likely to be killed for this reason.

“Victim testifying” is defined as the victim pursuing help from others regarding incidents relating to the perpetrator. The victim is pursuing an injunction, has been given a temporary injunction, has called the police, has threatened to call the police, or has an upcoming court date concerning the perpetrator. This occurred in 4.2% of the PAIPHS and 7.5% of the NPIPHs and suggests that NPIPH victims are more likely to be killed for this reason.

“Child support” is defined as ongoing financial obligations for a child that one is responsible for. In these cases, the perpetrator complained about child support, or the victim threatened to put him on child support. This occurred 1.1% of the time in PAIPHS and 3% of

the time in NPIPHs. “Custody” is defined as a court judgment that determines parental responsibility for the care of a minor child, e.g., where the child will reside. This occurred 0% of the time in PAIPHs and 4.5% of the time in NPIPHs.

Abdominal Wound Injury

This study defined an “abdomen wound injury” [Table 4] as a wound or injury to the victim’s abdominal region that was inflicted by a gun, knife, or blunt force. In total, there were 27 known PAIPH cases for this variable and 6 missing cases. Of the 27 known cases, 9 victims (33.3%) were injured in the abdominal region. One perpetrator shot an 8-months pregnant victim in her head and abdomen because he did not want to be a father.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics: Location, Injury, and Motives

<b>Variable</b>	<b>PAIPH (n=33) Percent %</b>	<b>NPIPH (n=33) Percent %</b>
<b>Location of Homicide</b>		
House, apartment, including driveway, porch, yard	75.8%	81.8
Transportation area inside, motor vehicle	9.1%	12.1%
<b>Abdomen Injury (n=27)</b>	33.3%	n/a
<b>Murder-Suicide</b>		
Attempted	21.2%	9.4%
	6.1%	6.3%
<b>Motives</b>		
Perpetrator rejected victim	11.6%	3%
Victim rejected perpetrator	12.6%	32.8%
Unwanted pregnancy	12.6%	n/a
Doubts about Paternity	3.2%	n/a
Perpetrator Infidelity	3.2%	7.5%
Victim infidelity	4.2%	4.5%
Victim testifying	4.2%	7.5%
Child support	1.1%	3%
Custody	0%	4.5%

### County-Level

As noted, Quota sampling was used to collect the comparison group; therefore, county-level data for the comparison group is reflective of the study's intentional targeting of a match for the PAIPHS sample racial makeup, comprised mostly of black victims and perpetrators. In Table 5, the most frequent counties for PAIPHS were Broward (15.2%), Palm Beach (15.2%), and Orange (12.1%). For NPIPHs, the most frequent counties were Duval (18.2%), followed by Broward, Miami-Dade, Hillsborough, and Volusia County at (9.1%). All Duval County cases (n=6) occurred in Jacksonville, Florida; however, only one PAIPH case occurred there. Similarly, all Orange county PAIPH cases (n=4) occurred in Orlando, Florida. Therefore, city-level descriptive statistics are the best way to pinpoint the location of these occurrences.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics: County-level (n=33)

Variable	PAIPH (n=33)	NPIPH (n=33)
	Percent %	Percent %
<b>County</b>		
Broward	15.2%	9.1%
Palm Beach	15.2%	6.1%
Orange	12.1%	3%
St. Lucie	9.1%	0%
Alachua	9.1%	3%
Miami-Dade	6.1%	9.1
Leon	6.1%	0%
Duval	3%	18.2%
Hillsborough	3%	9.1%
Volusia	0%	9.1%
Pinellas	3%	6.1%
Pasco	0%	6.1%
Manatee	0%	6.1%

### Unborn Victims of Violence Act

Table 6 shows the frequency of PAIPHS committed before and after the enactment of the Unborn Victims of Violence Act that was signed by Gov. Scott on July 20, 2014. This study

defined “additional charge” as perpetrators that were charged with more than one count of murder for the death of the victim and her Unborn child(ren). Cases, where the perpetrator died before prosecution or committed murder-suicide, were not included in UVVA enforcement rate calculations. Before the enactment, the fetus had to be ‘viable,’ able to survive outside of the womb. However, after the enactment, perpetrators could receive an additional charge at any stage of gestation. Before the enactment of the UVVA law, 16.7% of the perpetrators received an “additional charge,” and after the enactment, 54.6% received an “additional charge.” Initially, some perpetrators received an additional charge, but the charge was dropped during plea bargaining; these cases were coded as “No.”

**Table 6: Unborn Victims of Violence Act Enforcement Rate (n=33)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unborn survived</b>	<b>N/A Murder-suicide/deceased</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>
Frequency	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>
<b>Additional charge</b>					
Before enactment	2	10	2	7	21
After enactment	6	5	0	1	12
Total	8	15	2	8	33

## CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

As stated, the study's objective was to explore Florida's PAIPHs to determine the victim-perpetrator characteristics, the primary motives, and differences, if any, between PAIPHs and NPIPHs. Some victim findings aligned with non-lethal pregnancy violence literature that suggests that victims are usually young and Black ((Mcfarlane, Campbell, Sharps & Watson, 2002; PRAMS, 2018). With that in mind, a study on pregnancy violence is likely to garner a higher percentage of women in the reproductive age than a study on abused women of all characteristics and statuses. Thus, age may or may not be as significant as it appears. However, a troubling finding is that victims and perpetrators were more likely to be black, even though black people only account for 16.9% of Florida's population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018)

### Pregnancy Status

Other victim findings were the average gestational age of 4.67 months and the victim's risk of femicide throughout pregnancy. Women at any stage of gestation, including those close to term, were at risk of femicide, and perpetrators were privy to the victim's pregnancy status. Given that the average gestational age was 4.67 months, some victims were also showing signs of their pregnancy status.

### Motives

Another objective of the study was to determine the primary motives for PAIPHs and compare it to NPIPHs. While some motives were similar, others were remarkably different. PAIPH victims were nearly 4 times as likely to be killed because of an unwanted relationship by the perpetrator than NPIPH victims. The perpetrators were no longer interested in the relationship, they were currently involved in another relationship, or they wanted to pursue

another relationship. In PAIPHs, the victim's pregnancy status hinders the perpetrator's ability to completely disconnect from her, and he knows that he will be partially responsible for the Unborn child's care. Conversely, men in relationships with not-pregnant women can detach from them without further obligations or expectations, unless they have children with them. Other PAIPH perpetrators, perceived the Unborn child and the unwanted relationship as something that would destroy or end their current relationship with another woman. One married perpetrator stated that the victim was getting too attached to him and that he could no longer be involved with her. His wife and daughter were in the process of moving closer to him, and he complained about the victim's request for assistance with preparations for the Unborn child, e.g., buying diapers. He handled this conflict by murdering the victim, one week before the arrival of his wife and child.

Furthermore, pregnancy in and of itself was a risk factor for PAIPHs. Most often, the victim was asked to get an abortion, but she refused to do so. To handle this conflict, the perpetrator used murder to force her to have an abortion. Another motive connected to pregnancy status were doubts about the Unborn child's paternity. The latter, coupled with the motive of unwanted pregnancy, indicates that PAIPH victims are often killed because of an issue relating to their pregnancy status. Also, akin to existing literature, both groups were at risk of femicide for leaving or threatening to leave the perpetrator (Campbell et al., 2003; Decker et al., 2004; Websdale, 1999), but NPIPH victims were more likely to be killed for this reason.

### Murder-Suicide

Regarding Murder-suicide, PAIPH perpetrators were more likely to commit murder-suicide. Some committed murder-suicide right after the act, others fled, then committed the act

days later, and a few threatened to commit suicide but decided to flee. This implies that murder-suicide might be carried out for various or multiple reasons. While some perpetrators had a history of suicide ideation, others were just avoiding punishment. A possible explanation for the increased likelihood of murder-suicides in PAIPHS is ‘increased guilt’ following the killing of a ‘pregnant’ woman. Alternatively, Abolarin, Mclafferty, Carmichael & Velopulos (2019) postulates that murder-suicides increase as the number of victims increase

### Abdominal Wound Injury

As discussed, Non-lethal forms of pregnancy violence literature posit that some perpetrators intentionally target the stomach or abdominal region of the victim (Bacchus, Mezey & Bewley; Block, 2000; Campbell, Pugh, Campbell & Visscher, 1995; Helton et al., 1987; Jasinski, 2001; Mcfarlane et al., 1992; Rodrigues et al., 2008; Samankasikorn et al., 2019; Stewart & Cecutti, 1993). This study also found cases where the perpetrator intentionally targeted the PAIPH victims’ abdominal region with a gun, knife, or blunt force, but due to time constraints, comparable wound data for the NPIPH sample was not feasible. Even so, intentionally targeting the abdomen region of a PAIPH victim with intent or malice, knowing her pregnancy status, is remarkably different from inflicting a wound or injury to the abdominal region of a NPIPH victim.

### Unborn Victims of Violence Act

Regarding the enforcement rate of Florida’s UVVA law, this study found that it is enforced 54.6% of the time. However, based on the data found in confessions, witness statements, and the perpetrator's actions following the homicide, the law does not appear to be much of a deterrence. Most perpetrators believed that they would get away with the crime by claiming it was accidental, fleeing out of the state or country, or by using false alibis or other

strategies; therefore, they did not believe that they would be punished for the act. For deterrence to work, a person must believe that committing the act leads to imminent punishment. As noted, some perpetrators had multiple arrests that did not lead to conviction; therefore, their ability to evade previous penalties might have led to feelings of invincibility. Still, more data is needed to determine if UVVA is effective or not at crime deterrence. Regardless of its effectiveness, the additional charge offers some solace and justice for the victim's family, especially those that were looking forward to the birth of the Unborn child.

### Strengths and Limitations

An exploratory study is bound to have limitations as well as strengths. One limitation of the study stemmed from the necessity of finding PAIPH cases to analyze. Although useful, news sources are sometimes biased in their reporting endeavors, and some geographical areas or victims might not make the headlines or receive coverage about their incident. Given the latter, other PAIPHs might have occurred but were not reported by the media or were not found in online search engines. As for media bias and race, it might have affected this study, but it is unlikely due to the high number of black victims in the dataset and the sensationalism of pregnant homicides. Pregnant homicides are likely to garner the public's attention; thus, it makes sense to report PAIPH cases, regardless of race. However, Laci Peterson and Shannan Watts, both white and married received more media coverage than other PAIPH cases; therefore, Race or even Marital status might play a role in the amount of coverage. Still, as noted, other studies have found similar results about black women being the likely victim of intimate partner violence or homicide (Mcfarlane, Campbell, Sharps & Watson, 2002; Palladino et al., 2012; PRAMS, 2018; Websdale, 1999).

Another limitation of the study is the inability to perform an international background check on the perpetrators. This study was only able to perform a search in known cities, counties, and states within the U.S, where the perpetrator currently resides or previously resided. The searches were performed using the respective clerk of court office, sheriff's office, Department of Corrections (DOC), and local police department. Therefore, past arrests in unknown locations or overseas might have been missed. Additionally, due to time constraints, this study was unable to collect data on abdominal wound injuries for a substantial number of NPIPHs for comparison. Moreover, this study was only able to run descriptive statistics on the data; therefore, an expanded study of this nature, with a larger sample size is needed.

As for strengths, performing a content analysis on multiple sources of secondary data such as court records, medical examiner reports, family interviews, witness statements, interrogations, police reports, social media, video content, confessions, injunctions, and 911 audios were beneficial in determining motives and other victim-perpetrator characteristics that were not readily available from government sources like Florida's FDLE Supplemental Homicide Reports or Florida's Pregnancy-associated Mortality Review.

#### Future Research

Future research should examine the difference between men that kill to deal with unwanted pregnancies and men that do not. For instance, are there differences in education, religion, and economic status? Perhaps black men are more likely to perceive an unwanted child as an economic stressor? Even though this study found child support and financial issues as motivating factors for some cases, a study should be conducted on a broader scale with a

comparison group. Ultimately, male attitudes and perceptions towards unwanted pregnancy, abortion, paternity, child support, and custody need to be extensively researched. Future research should also evaluate the effectiveness of state and federal UVVA laws and determine the typical length of single, cohabitating, and marital relationships that end in homicide.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Although PAIPHs are not a natural cause of maternal death, the deaths should be comprehensively included in Florida's Pregnancy-associated Mortality Review (PAMR) reports because some women are killed because of their pregnancy status and homicides are the third leading cause of Not-pregnancy Related Deaths. At any rate, the current method of handling PAHs and PAIPHs is not beneficial for Florida, pregnant women, or researchers that want to explore this phenomenon and decrease the rate of perpetration. In addition to PAMR revisions, other government agencies at the local, state, and federal level need to make changes to pregnancy status collection efforts and reporting. Simply adding pregnancy status and relationship status, current or former, to police reports, injunctions, and other documents concerning victims would aid in research. Collaborative efforts from all agencies, including health officials that have contact with pregnant victims during prenatal care, is imperative. One victim was killed shortly after a prenatal checkup; therefore, physicians and their ability to engage with pregnant victims periodically throughout pregnancy could assist with prevention efforts. Moreover, strategies that will increase the use of restraining orders and protect women from abusers that they are attempting to leave should also be implemented.

As for perpetrators, prevention efforts should include healthy relationship education and conflict resolution skills for dealing with unwanted pregnancies or relationships, custody, child support, and other stressors. Most interventions for the latter focus on women and helping them to cope or deal with unwanted pregnancies, relationship stressors, and financial difficulties; thus, there is a need for male interventions or assistance. For instance, women experiencing an unwanted pregnancy can have an abortion, but men experiencing this issue, understandably, do

not have that right. The background of some of the perpetrators indicates that some were obtaining money by illegal means, and a lot are convicted felons. Being a convicted felon can lead to employment issues, and subsequently crime to acquire income. Therefore, assisting convicted felons in obtaining a legitimate job or with training to increase employability could help. Moreover, reducing a convicted felon's access to firearms, the leading method of death for PAIPHS could decrease perpetration. Essentially, at the root of this phenomenon, there are social as well as economic issues, and similar to other acts of intimate partner violence, there are elements of control.

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