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# Battered Immigrant Women in the United States and Protection Orders: An Exploratory Research

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## Abstract

This article explores battered immigrant women's use of protection orders. It presents an exploratory view of battered immigrant women's knowledge of protection orders, the reasons leading them to file for protection orders, the remedies they sought in the protection orders, their views on what would improve the process of obtaining protection orders, and their experiences with the violations of protection. One hundred and fifty-three abused immigrant women were recruited from agencies serving immigrants and interviewed by advocates they knew. The results showed that, like women from other marginalized populations, battered immigrant women were unaware of protection orders as legal remedies. Other results showed some commonalities between battered immigrant women's experiences and abused women from mainstream cultures in the United States. However, unique factors such as immigration-related abuse and the unpreparedness of the justice system to serve abused women with diverse needs require further research and more appropriate personnel training and policy.

## Keywords

intimate partner violence, immigrant women, protection orders

There is an emerging body of literature that explores help seeking as a process of interplay between battered immigrant women and the justice system—the process of how women learn about the

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system, the factors influencing their decision to utilize it, and their assessments of the services (Accevedo, 2000; Ammar, Orloff, Dutton, & Hass, 2005; Erez & Ammar, 2003; McFarlane et al., 2002; Orloff, Dutton, Hass, & Ammar, 2003; Raj & Silverman, 2003; Uekert, Peters, Romberger, Abraham, & Keilitz, 2006). To contribute to this emerging body of literature, this study specifically examines battered immigrant women and their use of protection orders.

Today, all 50 states have adopted protection orders especially drafted for the use of battered women to provide them with a justice system option separate from the criminal court system, in which the victim could seek court intervention to stop ongoing abuse and to provide a broad range of victim-controlled remedies and protections (Abolfazli, 2006; Kethineni & Beichner, 2009; Klein & Orloff, 1994). Most jurisdictions have a two-tiered civil protection order system in which the victim first petitions the court on an *ex parte* basis and receives a temporary protection order (Klein & Orloff, 1994). According to Kethineni and Beichner (2009, p. 312) "civil protection orders offer victims legal recourse when they do not want to have their perpetrators arrested or formally processed in the criminal justice system." The process by which protection orders are obtained varies widely among jurisdictions and the type of orders is based on state legal provision (Kethineni & Beichner, 2009; Malecha et al., 2003).

Protection orders allow abused women to initiate a case on their own behalf and decide which legal remedies need to be included in the protection order to help deter future abuse (Murphy, 2002). The remedies each individual victim needs to include in her protection order will vary based upon the type and level of abuse suffered, the language she speaks, whether she has children, any marital property, and other factors unique to each particular victim. It is up to the victim to report any civil order violations to the police (Kethineni & Beichner, 2009; Klein & Orloff, 1993). However, such violations result in a criminal charge for the abuser and authorize law enforcement personnel to intervene without having to show evidence of occurring violence (Buzawa & Buzawa, 2003; Kethineni & Beichner, 2009).

Civil protection orders are perceived as having a unique role in providing victim empowerment coupled with deterrence (Waul, 2000). However, while research has shown the positive impact protection orders have on victims' satisfaction and empowerment, there is less consistency in the findings about their impact on reducing reabuse (Harrell & Smith, 1996; Kethineni & Beichner, 2009; McFarlane et al., 2004). The accumulating body of research examining the effectiveness of protection orders for reducing the risk to victims of intimate partner violence (IPV; Gist et al., 2001; Kaci, 1994; Holt, Kernie, Wolf, & Rivara, 2003; Malecha et al., 2003; Patacek, 1999) agrees generally that women reported a lower level of IPV for up to 2 years after obtaining a protection order. Studies of protection orders that examine only precomparisons and postcomparisons (Carlson, Harris, & Holden, 1999) without inclusion of a control group do not account for potential confounding factors, such as time. A study by Harrell and Smith (1996) found that permanent protection orders were effective in reducing recurrent psychological but not physical IPV.

There are few published articles on battered immigrant women and the use of protection orders. In 2002, McFarlane and colleagues reported on 42 women of whom 40 were born in Spanish-speaking countries. This study found that when immigrant women succeeded in accessing the justice system and obtaining protection orders, the level of violence fell significantly in a way comparable to U.S.-born women. Bui (2003) includes in her general study of help-seeking behaviors among Vietnamese women the use of protection orders by 10 Vietnamese battered immigrant women. Ammar et al. (2005) explored Latina women's use of protection orders in relation to policing domestic violence among this group of battered immigrant women. According to these articles, battered immigrant women do use protection orders at a rate ranging from 60% (among the Vietnamese women) to 32% (among the Latina women). While in most cases, protection orders work to reduce the violence, partners and husbands do violate the protection orders. Immigrant women rarely report husband's violations of protection orders (Bui, 2003). However, research has found that when battered immigrant victims do call the police for help often police responding to the scene did not arrest

many of the abusers who violated protection orders, particularly when the victim who called for help did not speak English (Ammar et al., 2005). Bui (2003, p. 221) explains that “women used ‘restraining orders’ as a bargaining tool for their safety, especially when their husbands or partners felt deterred by the order, while continuing to maintain the relationship.” Beyond these findings, there is little known about the use of protection orders by immigrant women who are victimized by IPV.

This article explores the knowledge battered immigrant women have about the existence of protection orders as a remedy in the United States for IPV victims, their experiences with obtaining protection orders, the remedies and solutions they have included in their protection orders, their experiences with the violations of these orders as well as their views on improving the content of and process of obtaining protection orders. These issues are examined through narratives obtained from the participants in the study as well as descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The objective of this research is to better understand the conditions battered immigrant women face when they seek help from the justice system. Such an understanding can contribute to the development of more effective mechanisms that facilitate immigrant women’s ability to safely seek and obtain the justice system’s assistance.

## Theoretical Background

During the past two decades, the primacy of gender in the analysis of battered women’s experiences has been a subject of critique by many scholars (Abraham, 2000a, 2000b; Crenshaw, 1994; Kulwicksi & Miller, 1998; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). The focus solely on gender prioritizes gender over other equally powerful forms of oppression and obscures our ability to see and understand the reality of immigrant women’s lives (Orloff, 2001). The “intersectionality” (Crenshaw, 1994) or “ethnogender” (Abraham, 2000a, 2000b) approaches to understanding the experiences of battered immigrant women and women of color takes into account the multiple aspects of women’s identities and argues that gender identity is influenced by other dimensions such as class, national origin, immigration status, ethnicity, and race. Battered immigrant women balance a multiplicity of identities—being new immigrants, often with temporary or no legal immigration status, victims of domestic violence, women of color, limited English proficiency, and less prevalent religious denominations (e.g., Muslim, Hindu, Baha’i). These multiple barriers converge, and are compounded by discrimination and the process of acculturation, to heighten the systemic and legal barriers that immigrant victims must overcome to attain help to leave abusive homes and build a safe and economically secure life for themselves and their children (Orloff, 2001).

Battered immigrant women’s overlapping identities directly affect their access to victim services, public benefits, and legal remedies designed to help domestic violence victims. Any exclusive focus on any one of an immigrant victim’s identities (e.g., gender, national origin) to the exclusion of her other identities is a flawed approach that is at best not helpful and at worst harmful for battered immigrants. This approach is particularly harmful in that it treats immigrant victims as “other” (Rodriguez, 2004) and absolves mainstream societal institutions of any responsibility to reach out to immigrant victims and serve them in an effective way (Gallin, 1994; Sacks, 1996; Rodriguez, 1995). “[T]he focus on culture quickly becomes one of implicitly or explicitly comparing a seemingly backward, traditional, and oppressive cultural system to the modern, progressive, and egalitarian culture of the U.S.” (Jiwani, 2005, p. 852).

Research has found that battered immigrant women face unique patterns of violence beyond the influence of cultural values and norms. Abusers use immigration status to lock foreign-born women in violent relationships (Abraham, 2000a, 2000b; Ahmad, Riaz, Barata, & Stewart, 2004; American Bar Association, 1994; Ammar, 2000; Hass, Dutton, & Orloff, 2000; Natarajan, 2003; Raj & Silverman, 2003; Raj, Silverman, McCleary-Sills, & Liu, 2005; Runner, Yoshihama, & Novick, 2009). The

following section discusses some of the elements of these beyond-culture forces influencing battered immigrant women's experiences of IPV.

## Immigrant Women's Experience With IPV

Studies have found that the lifetime prevalence of IPV among immigrant women is higher than the general population (Hass et al., 2000; Perilla, Bakerman, & Norris, 1994; Raj & Silverman, 2002). Research about the prevalence and severity of IPV among immigrant women in Latino, South Asian, and Korean communities report abuse rates that range from 30% to 50% (Dutton, Orloff, & Hass, 2000; Raj & Silverman, 2003; Rodriguez, 1995; Song, 1996). This compares to a lifetime prevalence of domestic violence in the United States in the general population that is estimated at 22.1% (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

Battered immigrant women face a unique form of abuse, namely immigration-related abuse. This form of abuse includes abusers threatening deportation of immigrant victims or their children, threatening to take the children (Ammar & Orloff, 2006; Raj & Silverman, 2002), and controlling whether or not spouses or partners attain legal immigration status in the United States (Orloff & Kaguyutan, 2002; Pendleton & Block, 2001).

For foreign-born women immigrants the process of acculturation plays an important role in increasing or decreasing an immigrant victim's isolation (Ammar & Orloff, 2006; Raj & Silverman, 2003). It also affects when, whether, how, and from whom the battered immigrant learns about services, assistance, and legal relief that is available to help those who suffer domestic abuse. The longer battered immigrant women have lived in the United States the more their help seeking shifts from informal (talking to a friend or family member) to formal approaches—mustering the courage to call the police for help (Ammar et al., 2005; Dutton et al., 2000; Orloff et al., 2003; Yoshihama & Dabby, 2009). During acculturation, immigrant women move through a process in which they are called upon to navigate and balance the gender expectations from their home country, from the immigrant community they may live within in the United States, and from the mainstream U.S. community to which they are adapting (Dutton et al., 2000). Unlike immigrant men, during the acculturation process immigrant women have to cope with limitations due to gender discrimination and patriarchal norms and values of both the immigrant and mainstream cultures (Runner et al., 2009). Immigrant women of color and immigrant women with other visible traits (e.g., dress, religion, etc.) encounter semipermeable boundaries that allow them to partially internalize the norms and values of the dominant culture while being excluded by the dominant group from total membership in the dominant culture (Abraham, 2000a, 2000b; Orloff, 2001). The attitudes regarding violence toward women embedded in the battered immigrant's cultural, ethnic, and social class are intertwined with the attitudes she encounters in the host society (Dutton et al., 2000).

Economic insecurity for battered immigrant women significantly prolongs dependency on their abusers (Ingram et al., 2010). The immigrant victim of interpersonal violence often has less vocational skills than her abuser, which could be due to the isolation imposed on her by the abuser, U.S. immigration law limitations on access to legal work authorization, or the gender asymmetry experienced by women in the educational and labor market spheres (Ammar & Orloff, 2006; Ingram et al., 2010; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002).

Many courts, police departments, prosecutors, and social services in the United States are not accessible to limited English proficient immigrant victims of IPV (Ammar et al., 2005; Orloff, et al., 2003; Runner, et al., 2009; Uekert et al., 2006). Research findings about battered immigrant women (Acevedo, 2000; Bui, 2003; Hass et al., 2000; Ingram et al., 2010; Rodriguez, 1995; Runner et al., 2009; Uekert et al., 2006) and information from victim advocates (Orloff & Kaguyutan, 2002) and data from the countries of origin of recent immigrants to the United States (Greico, 2003) indicate that many immigrant victims of IPV in the United States are not fluent in English. Studies have

shown that when battered women whose English is not fluent sought help from the justice system language barriers impede their ability to communicate effectively with police (Ammar et al., 2005; Erez & Ammar, 2003; Orloff et al., 2003).

This article is guided by the theoretical framework that battered immigrant women's experiences of violence and help seeking are complex and interlocking processes that are affected by forces at work beyond culture and extend to barriers existing outside the women's control. It is further guided by the knowledge that battered immigrant women (and minority women) actively seek help to reduce the violence in their lives (Ammons, 1995; Richie, 1996). Where and how they seek protection orders for help is the focus of this article. More particularly, the article explores the beyond-culture factors that contribute to battered immigrants' decisions to seek protection orders; their experiences when seeking protection orders and the effectiveness of obtaining protection orders for immigrant victims.

## Method

### *Participants*

The study used a convenience sample consisting of predominately low-income study participants. The participants are women who agreed to be interviewed by advocates. No record was kept on the women who refused to participate to reduce any risk such documentation would cause. The participants were recruited from 14 service organizations, shelters, or legal aid agencies who offered advocacy services to battered immigrant women. The organizations were located in Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Minnesota, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, Texas, Wisconsin, and Washington, DC.

### *Data Collection*

This article is part of a larger study that examined the decision-making factors, accessibility, and effectiveness of civil protection orders for immigrant women abused by their intimate partners. The large study used a purposive sample consisting of 153 predominately low-income battered immigrant women who sought services from social service organization, shelters, or legal aid agencies. One hundred and fifteen of the women (75%) initially sought services from the agencies due to problems with IPV. The rest of the women (48, 41.7%) were included in the sample because they experienced IPV in the last 12 months but not necessarily seeking help for it at the time of contact with the organization. The participants were recruited from 14 service organizations, shelters, or legal aid agencies who offered advocacy services to battered immigrant women. The organizations were located in Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Minnesota, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, Texas, Wisconsin, and Washington, DC. The identities of the women participants were kept anonymous by having advocates assign each participant a number which was later indicated on the survey instrument.

The interview schedule, the COSMOS Study Questionnaire, included both open-ended and closed ended questions designed for use with a diverse immigrant population (Dutton, Ammar, Orloff, & Terrell, 2006). The COSMOS Study Questionnaire consisted of seven sections including demographic characteristics, Acculturation (using an adapted version of Stephenson Multigroup Acculturation scale [SMAS]), measurements of prevalence, severity, types, risk, and lethality of IPV, protection order information, symptoms of posttraumatic stress and depression (using two scales, an adapted form of the Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Checklist and the Center for Epidemiological Studies–Depression scale), exposure to traumatic event (using 10 items from the lifetime Trauma and Victimization History, Widom, Dutton, Czaja,

& DuMont, 2006) and social support (using the Interpersonal Support Evaluation List, Cohen et al., 1985). The demographic measure included items to assess the subjects' age, number of children, immigration status (naturalized citizen/lawful permanent residency, temporary legal immigration status, undocumented immigration status), country of origin, ethnicity, marital relationship status with abusive partner for whom the participant is seeking services, intent regarding the relationship (remain in, leave, or return to relationship), and other demographics. Acculturation measures used a modified version of the SMAS (Stephenson, 2000). The measure included 19 items to assess the women's level of integration in the U.S. culture. The acculturation scale's reliability coefficient  $\alpha$  was .6298.<sup>1</sup>

The frequency, type, and severity of violence were measured by three scales. The first scale, the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory–Short Form (Tolman, 1989, 1999), which is a 19-item measure of dominance/isolation and verbal/emotional types of psychological abuse. The second scale, the IPV Threat Appraisal scale (Dutton, 2001) is a 19-item scale that was used to assess subjects' expectation that IPV will occur within the next 12 months. The Conflict Tactic scale (CTS-2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1995), a revision of the original CTS (Straus & Gelles, 1990) with 25 items, was used to measure the frequency of physical violence, injury, and sexual coercion by the partner. Those three scales were redesigned to construct four scales measuring verbal abuse (19 items with a reliability coefficient  $\alpha = .9259$ ), physical abuse (20 items with a reliability coefficient  $\alpha = .9028$ ), sexual abuse (3 items with a reliability coefficient  $\alpha = .6645$ ), and immigration abuse (5 items with a reliability coefficient  $\alpha = .8274$ )<sup>2</sup>

Ten items from the Lifetime Trauma and Victimization History scale (Widom, Dutton, Czaja, & DuMont, 2005) were used to construct a scale for mental health symptoms associated with the participants' exposure to traumatic events during their lifetime. The scale has a reliability coefficient  $\alpha = .7220$ .<sup>3</sup>

Economic survivor is measured through socioeconomic variables such as level of education, employment, personal income, ability to get a job any time, ability to have dependable transportation.

Information pertaining to the participant's experience with protection orders was assessed quantitatively and qualitatively using self-reporting about whether the participant (1) knew about protection orders; (2) reasons leading women to file for protection orders; (3) effects of protection orders on the interpersonal violence they have experienced; (4) experiences in the courts; and (5) their experiences with protection order violations. Qualitative questions were included to capture each participant's experience in pursuing a protection order, any decisions to drop the petition or have the protection order rescinded, specific remedies requested and obtained, and level of satisfaction with the protection order process.

There were few qualitative questions included to capture each participant's experience in pursuing a protection orders including any decisions to drop the petition or have the protection order rescinded, specific remedies requested and obtained, and the level of satisfaction with the protection order process. Frequencies and participants' narratives provide the measures for the descriptive part of the article which examines battered immigrant women's experiences with protection orders. They help provide answers to questions about battered immigrant women's knowledge about protection orders, their experiences with obtaining protection orders, the remedies (solutions) they seek in the protection orders, their experiences with the courts, and with the violations of these orders as well as their views on improving the content and process of obtaining protection orders.

Quantitative data were entered into statistical package for social sciences (version 17.0) for analysis. The analysis in this article includes descriptive and frequencies, cross tabulations, linear, and logistic regression.

## Research Questions

The research questions focused on the participant's experiences, perspectives, and views on six issues that will help advocates, attorneys, service providers, and the justice system to better serve immigrant victims of domestic violence to obtain protection orders. These issues include:

- the battered immigrant women's use and knowledge of protection orders,
- the remedies (solutions) sought in the protection orders,
- victims' opinions about the process of filing for protection orders,
- victims' perceptions about the effects of protection orders on IPV,
- victims' experiences with protection order violations; and
- survey participants' opinion on improvements that can be made to the protection order content and process.

## Survey Language

The instrument was written originally in English with the help of a cross-cultural/multilingual committee. In many cases, interpreters or translators were sought in the interview interaction. The researchers were very aware of the problems that emerge in translation (and using English as a base language), however limited resources lead to adapting the instrument conceptually to a variety of immigrant communities. This required the team to focus more on the meaning or validity of the questions across languages and cultures when formulating them (see Dutton et al., 2006). A number of multicultural/multilingual teams were involved in developing the survey questionnaire used in this research. An initial committee comprised of persons bilingual in English and Arabic (multiple dialects), French, Hebrew, Spanish, Tagalog, and Urdu formulated the questions of the central questionnaire. This initial committee included social scientists, lawyers, advocates, and direct-service providers. This team held numerous conference calls over the 6-month period during which the questionnaire reached a coherent draft. The questionnaire developed by this committee was then reviewed by immigrant advocates from diverse backgrounds and was pretested by bilingual persons in a number of languages. Finally, during the training of the initial groups of questionnaire administrators (who spoke a variety of the above mentioned languages, and in addition, Persian) feedback was received.

## Research Questions

The research questions in this article focus on the participant's experiences, perspectives, and views on three issues that will help advocates, attorneys, service providers, and the justice system to better serve immigrant victims of domestic violence to obtain protection orders. These issues include:

- the battered immigrant women's knowledge of protection orders,
- the remedies (solutions) solutions sought in the protection orders,
- victims' opinions about the process of filing for protection orders,
- victims' perceptions about the effects of protection orders on IPV,
- victims' experiences with protection order violations, and
- survey participants' opinion on improvements that can be made to the protection order content and process.



## Results

### Sample Characteristics and Experience With Violence

The sample included 153 women participants. The age of the women in the sample ranged from 21 to 46 years (with a median age of 31 years). The majority (86%,  $n = 132$ ) of women in the sample had a range of 0–10 children and a mean number of 2.4 children. Seventy-five percent of the battered immigrant participant's children ( $n = 265$ ) were U.S. citizens who had been born in the United States. Ninety-one percent (91%,  $n = 337$ ) of the children lived with their mothers. Only 9% ( $n = 14$ ) of the women's children lived with their fathers. A slight majority of battered immigrants were victims of IPV perpetrated by their spouse or former spouse (57%,  $n = 86$ ).

Most battered immigrant women (67%,  $n = 103$ ) had lived in the United States for 10 years or less with a range of 1–30 years and a mean of 9 years. By the time battered immigrants had found their way to service providers for help with domestic violence the vast majority had been in the United States for at least 3 years (87%,  $n = 134$ ). Those residing in the United States for 2 years or less represented 14% ( $n = 21$ ) of immigrant women participating in the survey. Victims residing in the United States for 3 to 5 years made up 21.2% ( $n = 34$ ) of survey participants. Many others had been in the United States for longer periods of time: 6–10 years 32% ( $n = 48$ ) and over 10 years 36% ( $n = 51$ ).

The total family income of the sample reflected relatively low incomes: Sixty-seven percent ( $n = 103$ ) had incomes of less than \$15,000 and another 18% ( $n = 26$ ) had incomes under \$25,000. Only 8% ( $n = 12$ ) had household incomes above \$25,000 per year. Sixty percent ( $n = 92$ ) of the women were employed full time or part time and 31% ( $n = 48$ ) were unemployed. Only 9% ( $n = 13$ ) received public benefits assistance for their U.S. citizen children.

The majority of the women in the sample were undocumented immigrants (44%,  $n = 67$ ). The immigration status of the remainder of the battered immigrants participating in the survey was as follows, 24% ( $n = 36$ ) lawful permanent residents; 22% ( $n = 32$ ) on temporary immigration visas; 8% ( $n = 12$ ) naturalized U.S. citizens; 2% ( $n = 3$ ) with refugee/asylee status; and 1% ( $n = 2$ ) did not know what immigration status, if any, they had.

The battered immigrant women participating in the survey spoke 19 different languages and represented nine world geographic regions/ethnicities including Asian, Latin America, African, Middle Eastern, and various Eastern and Western European communities. The majority of the women in the sample (52%,  $n = 81$ ), did not speak English fluently.

One hundred and fifteen (75%) of the women sought services from the agencies due to problems with IPV. The remaining 25% ( $n = 38$ ) of the immigrant women interviewed had experienced IPV in the last 12 months but had been seeking other services from the agency that helped recruit them as interviewees.

Battered immigrant survey participants reported experiencing high levels of physical abuse over the past year. Many types of physical abuse occurred repeatedly over the past year, with over a third of survey participants reporting experiencing three or more incidents of pushing or shoving (64%,  $n = 35$ ); grabbing (60%,  $n = 32$ ); having something that could hurt thrown at them (48%,  $n = 26$ ); causing pain that lasted for more than 1 day (46%,  $n = 24$ ); being slammed against the wall (40%,  $n = 22$ ); abuse lead to sprains, bruises, or cuts (39%,  $n = 21$ ), and being slapped (39%,  $n = 21$ ); beat up (36%,  $n = 19$ ); or having their hair pulled (34%,  $n = 18$ ). Previous year sexual assault rates were also high. Almost 57% ( $n = 88$ ) of victims reported having sex with their partners because they were afraid of what would happen if they did not and 44% ( $n = 67$ ) reported that this occurred more than 3 times over the past year.

Participants reported *sometimes*, *often*, or *very often* experiencing forms of psychological abuse. This included abuse related to their immigration status (e.g., not sponsoring her or her children for a

green card or a visa [34%,  $n = 48$ ], threatened or actually withdrew immigration papers [39%,  $n = 57$ ]. Fifty-one percent ( $n = 78$ ) of participants' abusers *sometimes, often, or very often* threatened or actually reported their victims to immigration officials.

## Battered Immigrant Women and Protection Orders

### *Immigrant Women's Use and Knowledge About Protection Orders*

Eighty-nine percent of the participants in the sample ( $n = 93$  of the 104 who answered the question) had no prior knowledge of protection orders before they turned to the legal or social services organization for help. They first learned that protection orders were a civil legal remedy that could help protect them against and potentially reduce the incidence and/or likelihood of future abuse from legal and social services agencies that specialize in serving domestic violence victims.

A total of 124 (81%) of the women obtained protection orders. Almost 58% ( $n = 60$ ) had current protection orders. Of those 124 women, 108 (87%) filed for both temporary and permanent protection orders. The remainder (13%,  $n = 16$ ) sought only temporary protection orders and did not pursue full protection orders. Among the women who filed for full protection orders, the majority (87%,  $n = 71$ ) did so to protect themselves against abusers who were also the fathers of their children. The vast majority of these women (85%,  $n = 104$ ) did not live with their husband/partner. However, over 15% ( $n = 19$ ) of the battered immigrants who sought protection orders were living with their husband/partner at the time of the interview.

### *Reasons Leading Battered Immigrant Women to File for Protection Orders*

From the theoretical framework of intersectionality, there are a large number of variables (e.g., gender, class, immigration status, cultural heritage) that could influence women's willingness to file for protection orders. Previous research has such variables to include, acculturation (i.e., women's familiarity with the U.S. culture including knowledge of English; Ammar et al., 2005), level of abuse (Raj & Silverman, 2002; Smith & Farole, 2009); economic security/independence (Ingram et al., 2010; Raj & Silverman, 2002; Runner et al. 2009), immigration status (Ammar et al., 2005; Raj et al., 2005), as well as other factors including fear of partner's threats and the victim's experience with multiple traumas (Dutton et al., 2006; Runner et al., 2009). We explored the influence of each variable and their potential multicollinearity in a multivariate analysis. All of the variance inflation factors are below the acceptable standard of 2.5, indicating that there are no issues with multicollinearity. A backward regression was conducted to examine the independent contribution each factor to battered immigrant women's decisions to file for protection orders (see Table 1). The model shows that the two three largest factors independently contributing to battered immigrant women having filed for protection orders were fear from threats ( $B = .021$ ), exposure to previous trauma ( $B = -.050$ ), and economic security ( $B = -.020$ ).

Thirty women (20% of the total 153 participants) did not file for protection orders. This group of women identified the following reasons for their decision: did not think they needed a protection order (33%,  $n = 10$ ), thought it would make things worse with their partner (23%,  $n = 7$ ), did not know about protection orders (17%,  $n = 5$ ), were afraid of what law enforcement would do (13%,  $n = 4$ ), did not want to file for protection orders (7%,  $n = 2$ ), and listed other as reasons with no further details (7%,  $n = 2$ ).

### *Protection Order Remedies*

All state protection order statutes allow issuance of full contact protection orders. Such orders can offer protection from ongoing abuse to victims who continue living with their abusers. Stay away

**Table 1.** Multivariate Predictors of Battered Immigrant Women's Filing for Protection Orders

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients $\beta$	T	Sig	Collinearity statistics VIF
	B	SE				
(Constant)	1.026	.384		2.669	.009	
Fear for their lives from threats	.021	.009	.310	2.235	.028	2.218
Exposure to previous trauma	-.050	.020	-.245	-2.477	.015	1.124
Economic security	-.020	.009	-.223	-2.257	.026	1.124
Knowledge of English	-.078	.052	-.172	-1.498	.138	1.518
Verbal Abuse scale	-.005	.004	-.148	-1.212	.228	1.717
Immigration status	.014	.013	.123	1.101	.274	1.436
Living with husband	-.126	.149	-.082	-.843	.401	1.080
Acculturation scale	.008	.014	.061	.542	.589	1.464
Physical Abuse scale	-.001	.004	-.031	-.227	.821	2.178
Sexual Abuse scale	-.001	.012	-.006	-.050	.960	1.544

Note. VIF = variance inflation factor. Predictors entered into the regression included Acculturation scale, Physical Abuse scale, Immigration Status: citizen, legal permanent resident, undocumented, living with husband, Economic Security scale, Physical Abuse scale, Verbal Abuse scale, Sexual Abuse scale, Fear of Threats scale, Exposure to Trauma scale, Knowledge of English.

orders on the other hand are protection orders requiring no contact with the abuser. Most of the victims seeking permanent protection orders obtained stay away orders requiring no contact with the abuser (87%,  $n = 108$ ). In addition to ordering the abuser to stay away from the victim and to not abuse her further, the remedies most often included in full protection orders were partner cannot abuse, regulating partner visitation rights, women can use home on her own, partner should turn over property, and partner is not to remove children from court jurisdiction. Table 2 lists the remedies obtained in the full protection orders and temporary protection orders.

### Opinions About the Process of Filing for Protection Orders

A little more than half of the battered immigrant women participants (53%,  $n = 65$ ) answered the survey questions addressing their experiences with the process of filing for protection orders. Although almost a quarter of the participants (27%,  $n = 17$ ) of the battered immigrant women found it difficult, the majority (54%,  $n = 34$ ,) found the experience easier than they expected. Almost 12% ( $n = 14$ ) reported they had no expectations, were unsure what to expect, or did not know.

Advocacy was a key reason the battered immigrant women participants found the experience of filing for protection orders easy. Forty-seven percent (47%,  $n = 31$ ) of the participants found advocacy to be a particularly effective and an important part of the protection order process. The participants noted that they appreciated and were more willing to use the protection order system when someone spoke their language and when someone understood their concerns. Advocates were particularly helpful, compassionate, and cooperative. Thirty-two percent ( $n = 21$ ) of the battered immigrant women felt that being protected from their partner/husband, obtaining custody, or being awarded financial support were the most helpful aspects of the process. A number of battered immigrants reported that everything about the protection order process was helpful and fast (13%,  $n = 8$ ). Five battered immigrant women (8%) noted that the judge, the court personnel, and the police were very helpful during the protection order process. The reasons battered immigrants cited for finding the protection order easy included "faster than I expected, did not expect to get so much help," "I=thought this would be in front of the entire court—but they took me to a separate room and I did

**Table 2.** Order of Remedies Sought By Battered Immigrant Women (in Full Protection Orders)

Protection order remedy	Percentage/number of battered immigrant women seeking the remedy	
	Full order	Temporary order
Partner must stay away	100.00%, n = 108	34.14%, n = 42
Partner cannot abuse	75.00%, n = 81	31.70%, n = 39
Partner visitation rights	25.92%, n = 28	6.50%, n = 8
Women can use home on her own	23.14%, n = 25	21.95%, n = 27
Partner should turn over property	21.29%, n = 23	15.40%, n = 19
Partner is not to remove children from court jurisdiction	21.29%, n = 23	8.94%, n = 11
Partner is not to remove children from the United States	20.37%, n = 22	5.20%, n = 7
Partner should remove weapons from possession	15.74%, n = 17	8.13%, n = 10
Partner should give financial support to children	15.74%, n = 17	2.60%, n = 3
Partner should attend anger management classes	13.88%, n = 15	0%
Provide immigration materials	11.11%, n = 12	5.20%, n = 7
Partner should give possessions back	7.40%, n = 8	3.30%, n = 5
Partner cannot contact	0%	32.52%, n = 40

not have to see him,” “it was easier because [name of the service organization] helped me,” and “judge signed immediately.”

Reasons for finding the protection order process difficult included “too much paper work,” “the court did not give me enough information about my husband’s finances,” “I expected stronger sanctions against him, expected him to be arrested,” “it was an overwhelming process,” “it took longer because I did not read English,” “I expected more remedies,” and “it is difficult to appear in court and in front of a judge.”

One hundred and thirty-six of the battered immigrant women (90%) in the sample stated that they would recommend the filing of a protection order to other women.

**Effects of Protection Orders on IPV**

Most of the battered immigrant women who filed for protection orders (n = 108) experienced changes in their partners/husbands’ attitude following the issuance of the protection order. Fifty-seven percent (57%, n = 71) of the women participants said that the protection order was very helpful, helpful, or a little helpful. The majority of the battered immigrant women (70%, n = 86) stated that filing for a protection order made them feel safer. However, a significant minority (41%, n = 50) felt that the protection order made them more vulnerable. For almost all the women, the reason for their perceived increased vulnerability was fear of retaliation from the abusive partner due to separation violence (Brownridge et al., 2008; Dutton, 1988; Saunders & Browne, 2000). The battered immigrant women who were concerned about their increased vulnerability noted that they were concerned that violence would escalate (40%, n = 20) or were concerned that obtaining the protection order could trigger the abuser reporting her for deportation (16%, n = 8).

Survey participants listed the following concerns when answering the question about listing the top five problems they expected from the spouse/partner when they filed for protection orders. These included violence will escalate (37%, n = 46), the victim’s access to legal immigration status would be affected or it would lead to the victim’s deportation (15%, n = 19), the abuser would kill or seriously hurt the victim (10%, n = 13), and the abuser would take children (7%, n = 9).

The participants also listed the top five positive outcomes they expected from filing protection orders. These included the protection order would make her and her children feel protected and safer

(59%,  $n = 73$ ), keep the abuser physically away (26%,  $n = 32$ ), prevent abuse (11%,  $n = 14$ ), give her peace of mind (4%,  $n = 5$ ), and prevent the abuser from taking the children (2%,  $n = 3$ ).

### *Experiences With Protection Order Violations*

Battered immigrant women's feelings of vulnerability following issuance of the protection order were not unwarranted. A large number of the battered immigrant women who filed for protection orders (66%,  $n = 81$ ) had an abusive partner violate the order. Although most abusers continued to threaten, harass, and attempt to exert control over their partners in violation of the protection order, it is extremely important to note that in the 6 months following issuance of the protection order the only physical violence reported was destruction of property and even that was very low (4%,  $n = 3$ ). For the participants of this research, the highest incidences of protection order violation in the past 6 months included stay away/returned to her home violations (88%,  $n = 71$ ), immigration-related violations (68%,  $n = 55$ ), destroyed, refused to turn over property (36%,  $n = 29$ ), violated protections related to children (25%,  $n = 20$ ), and refused to pay court ordered support (7%,  $n = 6$ ).

It is important to note that battered immigrant women only reported protection order violations to persons who spoke their native language. They spoke about the ongoing abuse and the protection order violations to female friends (46%,  $n = 55$ ), to their advocate (43%,  $n = 52$ ), to police officers (39%,  $n = 47$ ), and to their attorneys (30%,  $n = 36$ ). Most of the battered immigrant women received a helpful response when they told someone about their partner's violation of the protection order (48%,  $n = 38$ ).

### *Improvements to the Protection Order Content/Process*

Survey participants were asked for their suggestions on improvements to the protection order content and process. Ninety-one participants (73%) offered suggestions. These suggestions included, more remedies that protect the woman (especially in cases of child visitation), provide financial support, stricter enforcement, issue the protection order faster, have information in the victim's native language, more police protection, more education about protection orders, have two different interpreters (one for the victim and one for the abuser), educating the court staff to work with people from various cultures, and eliminate the need for victims to tell their stories to so many people.

## **Key Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

The study involved limitations that are important to the generalizability of the findings. The study used convenience sampling, which may result in systematic bias that prevents us from generalizing to the population of battered immigrant women. Alternate methods of representative sampling from the population were too difficult to implement. Another potential method, cluster sampling, was not feasible since we were unable to systematically sample all agencies providing services to immigrant women (Dutton et al., 2006). The results reported here are seen as preliminary and exploratory but important because they present us with a glimpse of an understudied area of help seeking among battered immigrant women.

The sample was small and limited to battered immigrant women who experienced IPV in the last 12 months and who are seeking assistance. This study may not represent battered immigrant women who do not seek similar services. Thus, generalization to all battered immigrant women may be limited (Dutton et al., 2006). Furthermore, we recruited exclusively from agencies providing immigrant services, including but not limited to legal services. This may present potential bias in terms of the kind of participant who seeks immigrant services versus those who seek housing or employment

services. The study included women who were both born outside the United States and who had experienced violence from an intimate partner. There were no comparison groups of either nonimmigrant women who were abused or immigrant women who were never abused.

In this study, cultural heritage (as represented by country of origin, native language, length of stay, and religion) was not a statistically significant factor in the victims' decision to seek a protection order nor was it prominent in the victim's narratives about their experiences with the protection order process. However, factors related to knowledge about legal rights and options in the United States, good advocacy, limited English proficiency, victims' immigration status, the type of violence experienced, and previous experiences with trauma and violence converged in their contribution to battered immigrant women's willingness to file for protection orders.

The multiple factors shaping the knowledge, use, and experiences of battered immigrant women with protection orders underscores the importance of understanding intersectionally as a framework not only theoretically but also in the provision of protection orders as a service. For many police agencies, cultural heritage seems to dominate in their dealings with battered immigrant women generally (Ammar, 2000) and with battered immigrant women's seeking of protection orders (Ammar et al., 2005; Bui, 2003).

A significant finding of this study shows that a large number of the participating battered immigrant women (89%, 93 out of 104 who answered that question) did not know about protection orders until they reached the advocacy or service provider agencies. This lack of knowledge about protection orders by battered immigrant women is disconcerting. This is especially the case in view of the fact that protection orders are one of the 10 most commonly used legal remedies for abused women in the United States (Dutton, Goodman, & Bennett, 1999; Goldfarb, 2008). This lack of knowledge is also challenging in view of the "major national commitment of funding and encouraging the use of civil protection orders" by the Violence Against Women Acts (VAWA-II) in 2000 (Goldfarb, 2008). Hass et al. (2000) showed that only a portion of battered immigrant women seek such services. However, for the majority of the participants in this study once they learned about protection orders a large number of women decided to file to obtain legal remedies (81%,  $n = 108$ ).

This lack of knowledge about protection orders, however, is not unique to battered immigrant women alone. Gist et al. (2001) showed that in a sample of 90 women who were predominantly minority women (66%,  $n = 60$ ) including African American, Latino, and Asian, 51% ( $n = 46$ ) of the women learned about protection orders 3 months prior to making the application as part of domestic violence assistance. Hence, it is clear that there is still a great deal of work to be done in order to reach women from marginalized communities regarding protection orders and other legal remedies that protect them from IPV.

It is thus the lack of knowledge and information that created barriers to the battered women in this sample to initially seek protection orders and not their culture. Once they were in a situation to learn about them they utilized them in large numbers. It is, hence, important to foster the conditions that motivate battered immigrant women to file for the protection orders (and seek other services) that relieve them and their children from violence. There is a great need to increase outreach efforts and inform battered immigrant women about protection orders and their helpfulness.

### *The Important Role of Advocates and Attorneys*

One of the findings of this research that offsets this lack of knowledge about civil protection orders by the battered immigrant women participants was the role of good advocacy. Advocates, service providers, and attorneys in this study played a crucial role in informing battered immigrant women that domestic violence is a crime and that there are legal remedies under family and immigration laws available to help immigrants, including those who are undocumented. A significant proportion of survey participants were newcomers who had been in the United States for less than 10 years

(67%,  $n = 103$ ). Most (68.5%,  $n = 104$ ) lacked permanent legal immigration or citizenship status. Among this group most were undocumented (44%,  $n = 67$ ). Those that had some form of temporary legal immigration status often received such status with the help of advocates and attorneys based on their status as domestic violence victims (21.6%,  $n = 32$ ).

### *Battered immigrant Women's Reasons to Seek Protection Orders*

*Severity of abuse.* This research found a strong correlation between the severity of the violence the participating battered immigrants experienced and their willingness to seek protection orders. Although researchers found that the type of partner violence (physical, sexual, or psychological) did not contribute to battered immigrant's willingness to file for protection orders, the severity of the violence did affect immigrant women's decision making. The severe violence (e.g., broken bones,  $\chi^2 = .043$ , threats to kill,  $\chi^2 = .002$ ) and violations of prior protection orders ( $\chi^2 = .007$ ) identified by advocates and attorneys through safety planning and lethality assessment resulted in a significant increase in the willingness of battered immigrant women to apply for protection orders. The present results support earlier findings that greater severity of violence leads to greater help-seeking efforts insofar as their measure of abuse included both verbal and physical abuse (Ammar et al., 2005; Dutton et al., 1999; Gondolf & Fisher, 1988).

*Fear from threats.* When victims participating in this survey experienced levels of violence that included threats to kill ( $\chi^2 = .002$ ), the fear for their lives was a significant factor that motivated them to seek protection orders. Among immigrant women, this factor is particularly interesting in light of research that has found that internationally, women predominantly feared that men who were strangers to them would kill them. They did not report threats or fears that they would be killed by men with whom they were intimate (despite abuse; Johnson, Ollus, & Nevala, 2008). The fact that fear for their lives was a significant factor that drove battered immigrant participants in this study to apply for protection orders represents a glimmer of hope that with enough advocacy and support battered women (of any cultural origin) are willing to seek justice system assistance to help end the violence that plagues their lives and the lives of their children.

*Experience with multiple traumas.* Researchers studying IPV in mainstream populations (Dutton, 1993; Thompson et al., 2006; Woods et al., 2005) have noted the negative effect that multiple traumatic experiences have on battered women's ability to participate in the justice system. Although more research is needed to reach generalizable conclusions with battered immigrant women, this study found a statistically significant connection between a victim having experienced multiple traumatic events and her unwillingness to seek a protection order. The multivariate analysis demonstrated that there is an inverse relationship between women who file for protection orders and the level of multiple traumas. In other words in this study the less trauma the battered immigrant women had experienced, the more likely they were to file for protection orders.

This information is consistent with the research conducted on battered immigrant women's willingness to call the police. The more traumatic the women's abuse was (in the intensity of the physical abuse, or combination of physical and psychological abuse, or more injurious the physical abuse was), the less they were willing to call the police (Ammar et al., 2005; Orloff et al., 2003). This knowledge about the victims' multiple trauma can help the justice system and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) personnel understand victim's actions and inactions within the context of each victim's individual trauma history. Too often justice system personnel, family members, and immigration court judges use the fact that battered immigrants did not call the police to report abuse or did not seek protection orders against the victim's credibility. If the abuse really happened, they expect and assume that the battered immigrant would have reported it to the authorities. Family court judges

in custody cases may use the fact of no prior police reports as evidence that the abuse did not exist or was not as severe as the victim claims. In fact the opposite is true.

*Immigration status.* The surprising finding in this study was the number of undocumented women in the sample who sought protection orders. Forty out of the 67 undocumented participants filed for a protection order (60%). The explanation for this otherwise counterintuitive finding is that once battered immigrants obtain help from victim advocates with expertise working with immigrant victims, they learn about their legal rights, including their ability to file for VAWA or U-visa-related immigration relief. Once the victims file for and begin to receive immigration benefits as VAWA self-petitioners or U-visa victims, the victims are more willing to also seek help from protection order courts.

### *Protection Orders: Physical Abuse Versus Immigration-Related Abuse*

This research found that protection orders are effective in helping to reduce physical abuse perpetrated against battered immigrants as they are among abused women from the mainstream culture (Hawkins, 2010). Battered immigrant women found the protection orders helpful in keeping abusive partners away and reducing the violence. Most of the women reported that the protection orders made them feel safer. This included the 29% of battered immigrant women who obtained full contact protection orders that allowed ongoing contact and cohabitation with their abusers. However, there were incidences of re-abuse when orders were violated. The most reported protection order violations were violation of the stay away/no contact orders (88.1%); immigration-related violations (68.3%) and destruction of or refusal to turn over property (35.6%). While stay away/no contact order violations are not particular to immigrant women (Kethineneni & Beichner, 2009; Harrell & Smith; 1996; McFarlane et al., 2004), immigration-related abuse is a unique form of re-abuse for this group of women. Immigration-related violations of protection orders include threats of deportation, making reports to the DHS about the immigrant victim, seeking discovery of the immigration case file in a family court proceeding in violation of VAWA confidentiality, attempting to influence DHS adjudication of an immigration case the victim may have filed, and destruction or failure to turn over documentary evidence that a victim needs for her immigration case, despite court orders to do so. This ongoing immigration-related abuse is an important issue to be addressed in future research and in training, especially that a large minority (41%) of the women participants felt vulnerable after they filed for protection orders.

### *Battered Immigrant Women's Access and English Proficiency*

A large number of the participants in this study learned about sources of help from persons who speak their language (58%,  $n = 89$ ). Those survey participants who reported that they found the civil protection order court process easy noted that they were provided interpreters. Most of the participants who found the process for filing for a protection order difficult complained that interpreters were not provided, there was no translation of documents and the process of filling out paperwork in English was overwhelming. When the protection order violations occurred, the immigrant women turned for help exclusively to persons who spoke their language. This finding highlights the importance of hiring bilingual and bicultural staff and having language accessible services including the use of qualified interpreters at social and legal service agencies. It also underscores the need for significantly greater bilingual staffing at police departments, prosecutors' offices, and courts.

The failure of most protection order courts to provide limited English-speaking immigrant victims with qualified interpreters was an issue of concern revealed by this research. Of the 59 immigrant women who reported having access to an interpreter for their civil protection order case, only



10.2% ( $n = 6$ ) of the victims were provided a qualified professional interpreter. In the remaining cases, the courts used relatives of the victim as interpreters including children, sisters, and brothers of the victim. This research confirms with the findings of other research (Uekert et al., 2006) that protection order courts are not providing qualified interpreters in protection order proceedings. These linguistic limitations seriously cripple the women's ability to escape the harm of IPV (Abraham, 2000a, 2000b; Ingram et al., 2010; Orloff et al., 2003, Runner et al 2009). Lack of language access policies and failure to access qualified interpreters for crime scene investigations lead to a range of harmful law enforcement practices. Such practices include police responding to 911 calls do not talk to the victim at the scene (Ferraro & Pope, 1993), not taking the immigrant women's calls for help seriously (Ammar et al., 2005), not respecting the immigrant woman and turning to the abuser (Orloff et al., 2003), or the abuser's family members who speak English to "interpret" for the victim (Ammar et al., 2005; Ferraro & Pope, 1993; Orloff, 2003). These practices can lead police officers to believe the abuser's version of the events and result in police not taking any action against the abuser (Ammar et al., 2005) or arresting the victim instead of the abuser (Runner et al., 2009).

Language barriers also undermine the ability of immigrant victims to learn that domestic violence is a crime in the United States and that there are services and legal protections, including immigration relief, available to protect immigrant victims in the United States (Dutton et al., 2000; Mindlin, Orloff, Pochiraju, Baran, & Echavarría, 2011; Runner et al., 2009).

### *A Call for Training*

A number of issues emerging from this study need attention at both the service provision level and the policy level. Improving law enforcement and court access to this population of abused women requires the reduction of language barriers. Not only is there a need for interpreters or personnel who speak other languages (than English) but those individuals should also receive training in domestic violence dynamics to improve their ability to provide interpretation services to immigrant victims seeking help for protection orders and other justice system services.

There is also a great need to translate the existing informational pamphlets on protection orders, protection order enforcement, custody, immigration benefits and other legal rights, health care, and social services available to help women victims of IPV into a variety of languages. Public service announcements on help for battered immigrants should be aired on radio and television and distributed widely. Conveying information through non-English language radio and TV enables women who are not literate in their own language to receive the information. The schools that immigrant women's children attend could also be a viable avenue for distribution of brochures on the protections available for immigrant crime victims in the United States.

Courts, police, prosecutors, and adjudicators need to be trained to understand that an individual victim's history of suffering multiple traumatic events explains why a victim may have declined to seek justice system assistance. Her cultural barriers are not the only obstacles in escaping IPV. The fact that the victim has a history of being reticent to seek formal help from the justice system is related to her trauma history and should not be misinterpreted to undermine the victim's credibility in a domestic violence protection order, custody, criminal investigation, or immigration case. When a victim provides evidence of abuse, but not evidence of formal justice system help seeking, justice system personnel, judges, and adjudicators should understand that the victim's trauma history and the fact of the added trauma of domestic abuse provide an explanation for the lack of evidence or prior reporting. It is particularly important that victims with multiple trauma histories be referred to victim advocacy programs with experience working with immigrant victims. This survey has found that with the support of victim advocates and attorneys trained in working with immigrant victims, many of battered immigrants will come forward and seek help.

All professionals working in the justice, health care, and social services systems, who encounter immigrant victims of interpersonal violence in their work, need training to learn about the legal rights of immigrant crime victims and immigrant domestic violence victims in the United States. All governmental and nongovernmental organizations need to implement language access plans to ensure that immigrant victims have meaningful access to the full range of services each program offers for family violence victims. Information on how to design, implement, and monitor language access plans have been developed by the U.S. Department of Justice and are available through [lep.gov](http://lep.gov).

### **Future Research Needed**

This research provided important data on battered immigrant women's willingness to obtain protection orders and the effectiveness of protection orders for this group of victims. The research found that a significant number of women who filed for protection orders were afraid of retaliation and that immigration abuse is a particular form of re-abuse for this group of women. Future research needs to address whether and how law enforcement, courts, and other justice system personnel address this type of retaliation and re-abuse. More research is also needed to understand the extent to which courts, police, and prosecutors' assistance are accessible to less English proficient (LEP) victims and the various effects that this lack of access has on immigrant crime victims. To develop better policy, there is a need to understand a variety of issues related to LEP including the range of languages needed, who translates, and what are the regional variations in the United States in terms of accessibility to courts. This research also confirmed that battered immigrant women use protection orders with no stay away options. More research is needed to answer a number of questions related to this type of protection order when used by battered immigrant women. These questions include who are the women who opt for this type of protection order? How do these forms of protection orders reduce the violence? When do the women use them? How does their effectiveness compare to stay away protection orders? All research with battered immigrant women requires collaboration between academics, advocates, and service providers. This study benefited from such an approach of collaborative research.

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### **Notes**

1. Adapted Stephenson Multigroup Acculturation Scale items: (1) I understand English, (2) My spoken English is not fluent, (3) I feel very comfortable with people from the United States as part of my social circle (as friends, neighbors, and coworkers), (4) I regularly eat traditional foods from my native culture, (5) I know how to read and write in my native language, (6) I feel at home in the United States, (7) I attend social functions with people from my native country, (8) I regularly read magazines of my native/ethnic group, (9) I only speak my native language at home, (10) I like to listen to music of my native language/ethnic group, (11) I attend social functions with people from the United States, (12) I stay in close contact with family members and relatives in my native country, (13) I like to eat the foods that Americans eat, (14) I stay in close contact with family members in the United States, (15) I am comfortable with the role of women in the United States as equal partners with men and as having more rights than women in my country, (16)

I feel a responsibility to maintain my native culture in the U.S. programs from my native country, (18) I feel afraid of the U.S. police, and (19) I watch American TV programs more than I watch TV programs from my native country.

2. Scale measure items Verbal Abuse—19 items: (1) She or he called you a bad name, swore, yelled, or screamed at you, (2) she or he treated you like less than she or he was, (3) she or he watched over your activities or insisted you tell him or her where you were, (4) she or he used your money or made financial decisions without talking to you, (5) she or he was jealous or suspicious of your friends, (6) she or he accused you of having an affair with another man or woman, (7) she or he interfered with your relationships with family or community members, (8) she or he tried to keep you from doing things to help yourself, (9) she or he controlled your use of the telephone, (10) she or he told you that your feelings were crazy, (11) she or he blamed you for his or her problems, (12) she or he told you she or he would take or actually took your children away, (13) she or he told you she or he would throw or lock or actually threw or locked you out of the house, (14) she or he told you she or he would lock or actually locked you in the house or a room, (15) she or he told you she or he would take away or not give you money, (16) she or he told you she or he would turn or actually turned you in to immigration officials, (17) she or he told you she or he would fail or actually failed to file or withdrew immigration papers, (18) she or he told you she or he would hurt you or your unborn child when you were pregnant, (19) she or he destroyed property. Physical Abuse—19 items: (1) grabbed me, (2) pushed or shoved me, (3) threw something at me that could hurt, (4) slapped me, (5) twisted my arm, (6) pulled my hair, (7) kicked me, (8) beat me up, (9) punched or hit me with something that could hurt, (10) slammed me against a wall, (11) choked me, (12) burned or scalded me on purpose, (13) I passed out because he hit me so hard, (14) used or threatened to use a knife or gun, (15) used physical force when pregnant, (18) I had a sprain, bruise, or small cut because of his abuse, (19) I passed out from being hit on the head by him. Sexual Abuse—4 items: (1) forced me to have sex, (2) refused to wear a condom, (3) I had sex because I was afraid of him, (4) how many times have you had unwanted sex. Immigration Abuse—5 items: (1) turn you to immigration, (2) would or actually did not file immigration papers, (3) call immigration authorities to get you in trouble, (4) call police to get it you in trouble, (5) not sponsor you for Green Card.
3. Lifetime Trauma and Victimization History scale
  1. At any time in your life, has anyone else [other than your partner] hit you on a part of your body other than the bottom with something like a belt, hairbrush, stick, or other hard
  2. At any time in your life, has anyone [other than your partner] thrown or knocked you down, hit you with a fist or kicked you hard, beat you up, or grabbed you around the neck and choked you?
  3. At any time in your life, has anyone [other than your partner] ever made you do anything sexual (have intercourse, touching, etc.) when you did not want to?
  4. At any time in your life, have you been in a natural disaster such as an earthquake, flood, fire, tornado, or hurricane/typhoon?
  5. At any time in your life, have you been in a war zone?
  6. At any time in your life, have you been involved in a serious accident?
  7. At any time in your life, have you been involved in a serious accident?
  8. At any time in your life, have you been held captive against your will?
  9. At any time in your life, have you been present when another person was raped, beaten, or killed?
  10. At any time in your life, have you witnessed or been exposed to physical abuse between adults in the house you grew up in?

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## Bios

**Nawal H. Ammar** is a professor and dean of the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT), Oshawa, Ontario, Canada. Ammar earned her PhD in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. Dr. Ammar's recent research includes work on women in the Middle East, Street Children in Egypt, Muslims in American Prisons, and violence against immigrant women in the United States and Canada. She is also working on projects dealing with child safety and domestic violence in battered immigrant women's families (in collaboration with Dr. Amy Leach of UOIT), she is conducting research on detecting the deception of women witnesses wearing the face veil (the niqab; funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada) and (in collaboration with Drs. Arshia Zaidi and Shanti Fernando of UOIT), they are conducting research on understanding the missing link of intimate partner violence and immigrant racialized women in Ontario. She is finishing a book on Muslims in American Prisons. Professor Ammar has authored numerous journal articles, books, book chapters, and other publications. Her work has been used in United Nations Reports such as the 2009 UNFPA's State of the World Population, 2006 Human Watch Report on Women and Violence in Egypt, 2005 Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly's resolution on Religion and Women in Europe, and 2002 United Nation's Basic Principles on Restorative Justice.

**Leslye E. Orloff** is the director of the National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project at the American University Washington College of Law, which advocates for laws, policies, and practices that enhance legal options for immigrant women and immigrant victims domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. She founded and directed the Immigrant Women Program at Legal Momentum and the National Network to End Violence Against Immigrant Women. She helped draft federal legislation offering immigration relief, welfare benefits, and legal services to immigrant victims and is a nationally respected trainer and author. For 17 years, Leslye represented immigrant victims in family court cases at Ayuda in DC. Leslye received her JD from the UCLA, and her BA from Brandeis University. She is the recipient of the 2007 Sheila Wellstone Award, a 1994 Kellogg National Leadership Fellowship, and a 2002 Harvard Law School Wasserstein Public Interest Law Fellowship.

**Mary Ann Dutton** is a professor in the Department of Psychiatry, is a codirector at the Community Engagement Component, Georgetown–Howard Universities Center for Clinical and Translational Science, and an associate director at the Center for Trauma and the Community. Dr. Dutton has been a leader in the field of research on immigrant survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, the effects of trauma on survivors and how crime victims and particularly immigrant crime victims heal after suffering trauma and often multiple traumatic events in their lives. She has published extensively on these issues. Her research on dynamics of domestic

violence and intimate partner sexual assault experience by immigrant victims has significantly influenced how advocates, attorneys, federal government agencies, courts, and Congress understand, provide effective service to and craft legal relief that will be most useful for immigrant victims and their children. Dr. Dutton has also developed and provided numerous affidavits in support of applications filed by immigrant victims in VAWA self-petitioning, U-Visa and VAWA Cancellation of Removal cases highlighting the particular effects on immigrant victims of exposure to trauma including sexual assault and domestic violence, and its impact on immigrant women. For many years, Dr. Dutton has participated in research efforts that involved a multidisciplinary multiethnic team of collaborative research partners who published our research findings in social science journals and law review publications. These publications and Dr. Dutton's research on coercive control, trauma, and the dynamics of domestic violence are well regarded, widely used, and relied upon by policy makers and experts working in the fields of domestic violence, victim advocacy, and immigrant women's issues. Dr. Dutton's research has been extensively cited in amicus briefs submitted to several Federal Circuit Courts, the Board of Immigration Appeals at the U.S. Department of Justice, and a number of State Supreme Courts considering immigration, family law, international custody, civil protection order issues in cases of domestic violence victims, including immigrant victims.

**Giselle A. Hass** earned a doctorate in clinical psychology from Nova Southeastern University in 1992. She worked as a court psychologist for the Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court for 6 years and was an associate professor at Argosy University, Washington DC School of Professional Psychology for 15 years. She is currently an adjunct professor of Law at Georgetown University Law Center, Center for Applied Legal Studies. Dr. Hass has had a private practice since 1994, conducting family law and immigration psychological evaluations for local and national attorneys, nonprofit and government agencies. Since 1998, Dr. Hass has worked in federally funded research projects regarding culturally competent interventions for women in abusive relationships and the legal and policy aspects of domestic violence.