

# The victims of intimate partner homicide



Universiteit  
Leiden

Nina Beekman

Student number: s1650041

Word count: 17402

Supervisor: Dr. M.C.A. Liem

Second Reader: Dr. P.G.M. Aarten

Date of submission: 21<sup>st</sup> of June

# Table of contents

1. Introduction .....	2
2. Theoretical framework .....	4
2.1 <i>General strain theory</i> .....	4
2.2 <i>Male proprietariness theory</i> .....	7
2.3 <i>Self-defence theory</i> .....	9
3. Previous research .....	13
3.1 <i>The Netherlands</i> .....	13
3.2 <i>Gender</i> .....	14
3.3 <i>Relationship type</i> .....	14
3.4 <i>Previous abuse</i> .....	15
3.5 <i>Mental illness or disorder</i> .....	16
3.6 <i>Motive</i> .....	16
4. Methodology .....	20
4.1 <i>Sample &amp; selection criteria</i> .....	20
4.2 <i>Data collection</i> .....	21
4.3 <i>Operationalization of variables</i> .....	21
4.4 <i>Data analyses</i> .....	23
5. Results .....	24
5.1 <i>Descriptive statistics</i> .....	24
<i>Case Characteristics</i> .....	25
<i>Principal victim characteristics</i> .....	26
<i>Principal perpetrator characteristics</i> .....	29
5.2 <i>In-depth analysis</i> .....	32
<i>Male proprietariness</i> .....	33
<i>Self-defence</i> .....	34
<i>Triviality</i> .....	35
<i>Mental illness</i> .....	36
<i>Other</i> .....	36
6. Discussion .....	38
6.1 <i>Descriptive statistics</i> .....	38
6.2 <i>In-depth</i> .....	40
7. Conclusion .....	43
7.1 <i>Limitations</i> .....	44
7.2 <i>Recommendations</i> .....	45
References .....	46
Appendix A: overview of online court rulings .....	50
Appendix B: Overview of extra sources in-depth .....	52

## Abstract

*The aim of this study is to see what the differences are between male and female victims of intimate partner homicide. To examine this, intimate partner homicide cases in the Netherlands, between 2017 and 2019, are analysed. Data used in this study are online court verdicts and newspaper articles. The results of this study are compared to what theories and previous research say about IPH and the differences between male and female victims. In general, the motive behind the homicide is different and it appears that female victims are younger, endured more violence during the relationship, and were more often separated from the perpetrator than male victims. However, in both cases with male and female victims, violence was often present in the relationship just as mental health problems.*

## 1. Introduction

Of all homicides that occurred globally between 1990 and 2011, around 13,5 percent were committed by an intimate partner, this was 39 percent of all female homicide victims and 6 percent of all male homicide victims (Stöckl et al, 2013). These statistics are based on 66 countries, mainly high-income. Most of the victims of intimate partner homicide (IPH) are female and most perpetrators are male. The number of women murdered by an intimate partner is six times higher than for men who are murdered by an intimate partner (Stöckl, 2013, p.863). Thus overall, females have a higher risk at being killed by an intimate partner. However, it differs per region in the world how much risk a female has. Between 2016 and 2017, globally 34 percent of all female homicides were perpetrated by a intimate partner, but in Oceania this was 42 percent of all female homicides, while in European countries this was 29 percent (UNODC, 2019, p.17).

This study examines the phenomenon of intimate partner homicide (IPH). Intimate partner homicide, also referred to as uxoricide and mariticide, is the killing of an intimate partner which can be a current or former partner (Liem & Koernraadt, 2018, p.59). The partner can be a current or former partner, possible victims are, a spouse, a boyfriend/girlfriend, or a partner who has ongoing sexual contact with the perpetrator. Overall, females are the principal victims of IPH and males the principal perpetrators. However, when a female kills it is often a male intimate partner who becomes the victim. A study by Jordan et al, showed that approximately 40 percent of all female homicide offenders killed a male intimate partner (2012,

p.426). Female perpetrators and male victims are therefore also important to study. Though, when looking at literature and previous research, the majority is focussed on female victims and male perpetrators (see table 1). For females several risk factors are identified, where for males only one primary factor been identified, a history of abuse perpetration during the relationship (Belknap et al, 2012, p.362).

This study aims to better understand the phenomenon of intimate partner homicide by including male victims of IPH in the research. The research question reads: “*How do male and female victims of intimate partner homicide differ from each other?*”. This study will focus on the Netherlands and the IPH cases that occurred between 2017 and 2019. The Netherlands has been chosen because previous researched showed that the prevalence of IPH in the Netherlands is similar with other Western-European countries (Liem, de Jong & van Maanen, 2018). This study therefore has the possibility to generalize over other Western-European countries. The Netherlands is also an interesting casus, because most previous studies on IPH have been focussed on the US and the Nordic countries, such as Finland and Sweden (see table 1). Focussing on the Netherlands could give a new perspective on how IPH occurs.

To identify possible differences between male and female victims of IPH, this study will start with looking at theories of intimate partner homicide. The theories that are included in this study are general strain theory, male proprietariness theory and self-defence theory. General strain theory can be applied to both male and female victims, male proprietariness theory can be applied to female victims and self-defence theory on female victims. These theories give possible differences between male and female victims, and state why they are different. Next to focussing on theories, previous research will be studied. These previous researches have already looked into IPH and risk factors for males and females. This study tries to identify the differences between male and female victims of IPH, by studying theories and previous research on IPH and by studying IPH victims in the Netherlands between 2017 and 2019. The outcomes of the study will be compared to the theories and the previous researches.

## 2. Theoretical framework

There are several theories that look into how intimate partner homicide can occur and what the motive behind killing an intimate partner is. However, in comparison with other crimes, theories on domestic homicide, such as IPH, are relatively few (Liem & Koenraadt, 2018, p.14). In this study three theories on how IPH can occur and the motive behind the homicide, will be discussed. The first theory is general strain theory. This theory is applicable to all types of homicide and other forms of crime. General strain theory is one of the main theories used when studying homicides, especially when focussing on domestic homicides (Liem & Koenraadt, 2018, p.17). The other two theories, male proprietariness theory and self defence theory solely focus on IPH. These two theories can be seen as the main and dominant theories on how IPH occurs and why it occurs (Serran & Firestone, 2004, p.2). General strain theory is included because it is a major theory when studying homicides and domestic homicides, the other two theories are included in this study because they are the major theories that look into intimate partner homicide. These theories also give specific explanations for why males and females perpetrate IPH. Because they expect that IPH mainly occurs in heterosexual relationships they can also explain the difference between male and female victims of IPH. This study does not only look at the difference between male and female victims but also tests the accuracy of the main theories that exist on IPH.

### *2.1 General strain theory*

General strain theory does not specifically focus on intimate partner homicide but on crime in general. However, it can be applied specifically to intimate partner homicide and give explanations why males and females commit IPH (Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2013). General strain theory is developed by Robert Agnew. The theory states that people commit crime because of negative relationships with others, relationships in which the person is not treated as they prefer (Agnew, 1992, p.48). One of the key principles is that emotion is the main motive for committing all forms of crime, including homicide (Liem & Koenraadt, 2018, p.27). These emotions, which are the result of experienced strain, lead people to commit criminal offences. There are different forms of strain a person can experience that can lead a person to commit criminal offences: The experience of negative events, being prevented from achieving a positively valued goal and the loss of a positive stimuli (Liem & Koenraadt, 2018, p.27).

Agnew based his theory of general strain on Merton's strain theory. Merton (1938), also sees strain as not achieving a positively valued goal, but this goal can be seen as a societal value. He argues that strain is experienced by an individual when that person cannot achieve monetary success or gain a middle-class status (Broidy & Agnew, 1997, p.275). Merton's strain theory was an influential theory for a long time, but criticism on the theory grew. One of the main criticisms was that because strain is experienced when a person cannot achieve middle-class status, the theory cannot accurately explain criminal offences of people from a higher social economic class (Agnew, 1985, p.152). Agnew revised the theory and broadens strain theory by including more categories of strain, and does not only look at societal values but also at personal values and emphasises on the effect emotions can have. By broadening the theory, criminal offences in all social and economic classes can be analysed and understood.

According to general strain theory, strain can lead people to commit crimes, however not every individual commits criminal offences to deal with negative emotions, which result from experienced strain. Eriksson and Mazerolle argue that one explanation why some people do commit criminal offences is the magnitude of the strain, which refers to the severity, duration and extent, in which strain effects the possibility of achieving goals (2013, p.464). Other factors that increase the chance someone resorts to criminality, when experiencing strain are low self-esteem, inadequate social skills and when the individual has the tendency to blame others for their own actions (Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2013, p.464). Overall, general strain theory states that strain leads to negative emotions, and some individuals resort to crime to deal with these negative emotions. The sort of strain and magnitude of the experienced strain next to personal characteristics of an individual determine whether an individual resorts to crime or finds a legal ways to deal with the negativity.

An important assumption in general strain theory is that different types of strain lead to different emotions and different emotions lead to different types of crime (Liem & Koenraadt, 2018, p.27). Because different types of strain lead to different types of crime, general strain theory can give gender specific explanations for why males and females commit IPH and other criminal offences. According to the theory both genders experience strain and are equally as likely to respond with anger on the experienced strain. However, other emotions that come when experiencing strain differ between males and females. For females, anger is often accompanied by feelings of depression and anxiety and they often internalize the blame, while for males anger is often characterized by moral outrage and they often blame others for the strain they experience (Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2013, p465).

Nonetheless, general strain theory, has also gotten some critique. One of the main criticism is that the theory focusses too much on making strain quantifiable and objectifiable, when it is unclear whether this is possible (Polizzi, 2011, p.1067). A negative event experienced by one person could drastically change their behaviour while for another person this would not affect them, or only marginally (Froggio, 2007, p.410). Research into the theory has not proven whether strain is the main factor that leads to criminal behaviour or if other factors such as low self-esteem and criminal behaviour play a more significant role (Froggio, 2007, p.411). Overall, general strain theory has not conclusively proven a linear relationship between strain and criminal behaviour. Though, research has shown that experienced strain is an important factor in studying criminal behaviour (Froggio, 2007, p.411).

When applied to IPH, males and females experience different sources of strain that lead them to eventually kill their partner. When males kill their partner they have or believe they have lost control over the relationship, this loss of control can be seen as a source of strain (Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2013, p.465). When a male fears that their intimate partner wants to separate, they experience anticipated strain, therefore the fear of separation and separation in itself is a way of losing control, which takes a way a positive stimulus (Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2013, p.465). Another source of strain is when the partner suspects or knows his partner is committing infidelity; this can be perceived as experiencing a negative event (Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2013, p.465).

Females can also experience these sources of strain, but are according to general strain theory less inclined to resort to violence. Females more often respond to strain by getting sad and depressed where males get angry and hostile (Broidy & Agnew, 1997, p.287). For males who kill their partner anger is accompanied by both rage and jealousy and this combination can lead them to kill their partner (Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2013, p.466). Males in general respond to strain with more aggression than females do, also in the case of strain experienced in the relationship (Broidy & Agnew, 1997, p.285). This strain can lead males to act angry and violently and kill their intimate partner. Females therefore have a higher risk of victimization when they end the relationship or commit infidelity.

Females experience different forms of strain that eventually lead them to kill their partner. A source of strain that females who commit IPH often encounter is exposure to domestic abuse by their intimate partner, which is experiencing a negative event (Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2013, p.467). Domestic abuse is not only a source of strain in experiencing a negative event, but it also prevents females from achieving the goal of maintaining a healthy

relationships and often takes away the positive stimuli of freedom (Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2013, p.467). Females therefore tend not to kill because of jealousy, as males do, but they kill out of fear and the wish to end the abuse. However, the emotion of fear in general correlates less with criminal perpetration, but severe forms of strain, like continued domestic abuse, can trigger emotions of both fear and anger, which then can result in the use of violence (Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2013, p.468). When females experience strain anger is more often accompanied by guilt and anxiety, and often does not lead to aggressive crimes but more often to crimes committed to escape a situation (Broidy & Agnew, 1997, p.287). IPH from the perspective of female perpetrators can be seen as a violent crime with the goal to escape the situation. According to general strain theory females kill their intimate partner out of fear and as a reaction to the persistent abuse they receive from their intimate partner.

## *2.2 Male proprietariness theory*

Male proprietariness theory is created by Wilson and Daly (1988), and it states that marriage and other intimate relationships must be seen as sexual and reproductive in nature. In intimate relationships males view their female partner as a highly valued reproductive and sexual commodity, that could be taken away by other male rivals (Wilson & Daly, 1993, p.13). According to male proprietariness theory males have the feeling they need to protect their property, the productive and reproductive capacities of their wife or girlfriend, from becoming the property of another male. This theory can be seen as an evolutionary theory, where sexual possessiveness and jealousy is an exclusive male trait (Belknap et al, 2012, p.360). This sexual jealousy trait can lead males to kill their intimate partner when, real or imagined, they believe their partner is having an affair with another man or tries to end the relationship (Wilson & Daly, 1996, p.5). However, the majority of males do not kill their partner, also not when they suspect infidelity or when the relationship is ending. According to this theory, females have a higher risk of IPH victimization when they commit adultery or when they want to end the relationship, because males no longer can control the reproductive capacities of their wife or girlfriend.

When a female commits infidelity or wants to end the relationship with her partner, the male partner can perceive this as losing control over the relationship and the reproductive capacities of their intimate partner. Males then could respond with violence, and potentially lethal violence, against this loss of control. Killing the partner is often not the goal of the violence, it is actually counterproductive to the perpetrator, because the aim is to make sure the



partner stays in the relationship (Wilson & Daly, 1993, p.12). Violence or threats of killing by the male partner against the female partner can be perceived as a coercive tactic, to keep the partner and their reproductive capacities under their own control (Serran & Firestone, 2004, p.3). The killing of the intimate partner can then be seen as an accident, where the violence used to threaten the partner ends up being lethal.

Violence and the threats of killing to make the partner stay in the relationship are not always perceived as credible. This is because, next to the fact that the killing of the intimate partner is often not the aim of violence, there are other factors that can make the threat of killing less credible. Such factors can be imprisonment and the likely loss of contact with children or other family members. When a threat is not perceived as credible the female might still end the relationship. As stated before most males will not kill their partner when the relationship ends, however sometimes the sexual possessiveness and jealousy of a male is so high that he kills his intimate partner. Thus, males might kill their intimate partner when they end the relationship because they feel their partner wronged them and they need to restore their self-esteem, or because the male is emotionally dependent on his partner and feels that he will lose his identity and in response he kills his intimate partner (Belknap et al, 2012, p.361). So, according to male proprietariness theory the main reason females become victim of IPH, is because males lose control over the reproductive capacities of their female partner when the relationship is ending or their partner is having an affair and respond violently to this loss with a lethal outcome.

Historically, for example in the US, males were allowed to punish a female when adultery was committed and females did not have the capability to divorce their husband (Serran & Firestone, 2004, p.2). Nowadays, in especially western societies, there are several laws that protect both males and females when they want to end a relationship or when they have committed adultery (UN Women, 2011). Even though, females have gained more equality over time, it does not necessarily follow that males change their behavior when infidelity occurs or when their intimate partner wants to end the relationship. Thus, even though more equality exists, according to male proprietariness theory, males still desire to control the reproductive capacity of their intimate partner (Serran & Firestone, 2004, p.2). This ties in with the backlash effect, which states that when females get more equality males will become more violent against females, because they feel threatened and want to regain their dominant position (Whaley & Messner, 2002, p.191). The same happens when a female leaves or wants to leave the relationship, the male responds with violence to assert dominance (Whaley & Messner, 2002, p.191).

Another assumption this theory brings forward is that the type of relationship between intimate partners influences the risk a female has on IPH victimization. A study about the difference between married and cohabitating couples in the US between 1976 and 1994 showed that females in cohabitating relationship are nine times more likely to become a victim of IPH than married females (Shackelford, 2001). According to male proprietariness theory this is the case, because marriage is still viewed in property terms, where the male is allowed to control the female more, than in other forms of relationships (Wilson & Daly, 1996, p.6). However, marriage nowadays has a high chance of dissolving, which increases insecurity among males about their property claims, over the reproductive capacity of their partner when married (Wilson & Daly, 1996, p.6).

Thus According to this theory, unmarried females of who the partner rightfully or wrongfully suspects that the female is having an affair with another male or is trying to end the relationship, have the highest risk of becoming a victim of intimate partner homicide. There are however some critiques on this theory. The occurrence of IPH is relatively rare especially if you compare it to the risk factor, separation (Serran & Firestone, 2004, p.5). Following this theory a higher number of IPH cases would be expected, because more relationships end than there are IPH cases. This ties in with one of the main criticisms, that male proprietariness theory is an evolutionary theory and therefore often excludes factors as personality, social support and life events (Serran & Firestone, 2004, p.6). The theory gives separation as a risk factor for IPH, but does not give specific context to why in one case this does lead to IPH and in another case it does not. However, male proprietariness theory is still seen as one of the major theories when studying IPH. Interestingly the theory overlaps with general strain theory in the motive behind the homicide. In both theories males kill their partner because they lost control over the relationship, the partner had an affair or ended the relationship, either real or imagined.

### *2.3 Self-defence theory*

Whereas the male proprietariness theory focusses on male perpetration and female victimization in IPH, self defence theory focusses on female perpetration and male victimization. Self-defence theory is a feminist or even radical feminist theory. Feminist theory about domestic abuse, see domestic physical abuse as an almost only male perpetrated phenomenon, where the intent of the abuse is to keep a power advantage over the female partner (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005, p.682). When domestic physical abuse is female perpetrated this can be perceived as defensive violence, used for protection of themselves or other people in the

household, for example children (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005, p.682). Self-defence theory means the response with lethal violence to protect yourself or others in the house against violence of another. The past decades, self-defence theory has been the dominant theory on why females kill their intimate partner (Serran & Fireston, 2004, p.7). This means that most attention in IPH literature on female perpetrated IPH, is on battered or abused females who kill their partner.

According to this theory females who kill their intimate partner, are in an abusive relationship where the male is the abuser. Males batter their female partners to enforce dominance and give the female a subordinate role in the relationship, enforcing the patriarchal system (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005, p.683). The self-defence theory ties in with the male proprietariness theory in that they both state that males use violence to dominate and control women and view women in property terms. The effect of battering and controlling the female partner, is that the female will feel trapped in her relationship. These females often receives little support from society, medical institutions, legal system or the family (Serran & Firestone, 2004, p.7). This gives the females a feeling of entrapment, they feel they cannot leave the abusive relationship and eventually respond with lethal violence against the domestic abuse of their male partner.

A term closely linked with the self-defence theory is the phenomenon of *the battered women syndrome* first offered as an explanation by Walker (2017). In this syndrome females experience learned helplessness because of the feeling of being trapped without the option of leaving and they often view battering as normal (Serran & Firestone, 2004, p.7). Because the females have this feeling of not being able to leave, the only way to end the abuse is to respond with violence against the male partner, eventually killing him. This creates a victim offender overlap where the female is the victim of domestic abuse during the relationship but becomes the offender when killing her partner in response to the domestic violence. According to Tillyer and Wright offending increases the change at victimization and that victimization increases the change at offending (2014, p.34). The ongoing abuse that the female has endured eventually leads to her becoming the offender.

A critique on the self-defence theory is that it gives previous assault as a risk factor, but not every female who experiences abuse from her male partner commits IPH. Self-defence theory does not include other factors such as life events, substance use and childhood experiences that could potentially explain why in certain cases IPH occurs and in other cases it does not (Serran & Firestone, 20014, p.10). Another critique is that it sees abuse as a solely male perpetrated offence. Dutton and Nicholls state that males are reluctant to report violence

by their female partner to the police (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005, p.692). In Canada it is suspected that only around two percent of female perpetrators of intimate partner violence get arrested (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005, p.692). Violence against males by the female partner can therefore be seen as underreported. This underreporting makes it possible that in cases where it is suspected that self-defence is the motive it actually is both parties being violent against each other and females might not always be helpless in a relationship.

Nonetheless, according to this theory males have a higher chance of becoming a victim of intimate partner homicide when they are abusive against their partner. Next to being abusive against the partner, the chance increases when the partner feels trapped in the relationship and has no social support helping her leave the relationship. Abuse is not only physical but can also include intimidation, isolation and regulation of everyday behaviour by the abuser (Polletta, 2009, p.1491). The abuser in the relationship has coercive control over the other person in the relationship, often the female. The female sees killing her intimate partner as the only solution to escape the situation. Where for male proprietariness theory the chance of IPH increases when the relationship is ending, in this theory the chance of IPH is highest when the relationship is still intact. What is expected next to that the relationship is intact, is that most males who become victim of IPH have a previous record of assault, where females who kill their partner have no record of previous assault but do have a record of previous assault victimization (Belkanp et al., 2012, p.362). Self-defence theory overlaps with general strain theory on the motive behind why females kill their intimate partner, in both theories self-defence and wanting to escape the relationship are the reason for IPH.

All in all, these theories are compatible in explaining the motive behind intimate partner homicide. They are not the only theories looking into IPH but they are the dominant theories when discussing IPH. According to these theories female victimization happens because males lose control or believe they have lost control over the relationship and respond violently to this loss. There are different explanations for why they respond violently and whether the aim was to kill them or to force them to stay, but females are killed because they want to end the relationship or had an affair. Male victimization happens according to these theories because the female tries to protect herself and reacts on domestic abuse perpetrated by the male. In these cases there is a victim offender overlap, in the relationship the female was the victim but became the offended when trying to end the abuse. The ongoing systematic abuse of the male perpetrated against the female, eventually leads the female to respond with lethal violence.

The theories do not only overlap but there are also differences. General strain theory and male proprietariness both give separation and sexual jealousy as motive for killing an intimate partner. However, male proprietariness theory states that all males have this jealousy trait and could kill their intimate partner, but does not give other factors that could play a significant role. General strain theory does include more factors, such as personal characteristics and social skills, that can influence if someone commits intimate partner homicide or refrains from doing this. Both self-defence and male proprietariness theory give only one main motive behind IPH, either sexual jealousy or self-defence. General strain theory also concludes to these motives, based on how strain can influence people. However, it leaves space for other forms of strain which influence people to commit crimes, including all types of homicide. Another difference is that self-defence theory and male proprietariness theory focus on heterosexual intimate relationships while general strain theory could also be applicable in same-sex couples.

If we follow these theories when studying intimate partner homicide victims, certain trends are expected to be seen in the data. For female victims of IPH it is expected that the motive for their homicide would have been sexual jealousy or separation. Next to the motive it is expected that the victim and perpetrator would be going through a separation, or the perpetrator is unsure about the relationship status. It is also expected to see more victims who are in a boy-girlfriend relationship but are not married. Looking at male victims, it is expected that the motive behind their homicide would be self-defence. Next to that it is expected that the victim has a history of abuse perpetration and the perpetrator a history of abuse victimization. Finally, it is expected that the relationship is still ongoing.

### 3. Previous research

Over the years, researchers studied the phenomenon of IPH and in table 1 an overview is given of studies that focused on IPH. However, when studying previous research in IPH, it becomes clear that most research has focussed on male perpetration and female victimization, but it rarely compares male and female victims of IPH with each other. (Caman et al, 2016, p.26). Also, most research is conducted in the US or in one of the Nordic states as Sweden and Finland (see table 1). The over representation of the US and the Nordic states can influence how intimate partner is perceived. For example, in the US, the majority of IPH cases is perpetrated with a firearm while in European countries knives or other sharp objects are commonly used (Liem & Koenraadt, 2018, p.66). In this chapter previous research on IPH will be discussed, especially on variables and risk factors that will be taken into consideration in this study. Attention will be given to IPH in the Netherlands, the main motive males and females give for committing IPH and possible risk factors that will be discussed are the gender, relationship type, previous abuse and mental history.

#### *3.1 The Netherlands*

As previously mentioned 13,5 percent of all homicides were committed by an intimate partner, of which females were the principal victims and males the principal perpetrator. Comparing these statistics, the Netherlands is not an outlier. In the Netherlands, in the past 25 years approximately 17 percent of all homicides were intimate partner homicides, which account for around 32 IPH cases per year (Liem & Koenraadt, 2018, p.62). Statistic from 1992 till 2001 show that there were around 50 cases of intimate partner homicide per year, and IPH cases accounted for about 25 percent of all homicide cases. Of these IPH cases around 90 percent were perpetrated by a male and 10 percent by a female perpetrator (Leistra & Nieuwbeerta, 2003, pp.53-54). A study by Liem, de Jong en van Maanen in the Netherlands, between 2009 and 2014, showed that there were around 29 IPH cases per year and the victimization rate is 0.2 per 100.000 citizens (2018). Recent data shows that between 2010 and 2016 there were 215 IPH cases, which accounts for 28 percent of all homicides between 2010 and 2016 (Aarten & Robertus, 2019). Of these cases 80 percent were males who killed their female (ex-)partner and 13 percent were females who killed their (ex-)partner (Aarten & Robertus, 2019).

### *3.2 Gender*

As already mentioned females are the main victims of intimate partner homicide and males the principal perpetrator. The global statistics showed that the proportion of females who are victim of IPH is around six times higher than the proportion of males who are victims of IPH (Stöckl et al, 2013). However, when comparing IPH cases with non-IPH cases, it becomes clear that IPH is more likely to involve females as both victim and perpetrator than non-IPH homicides (De Jong et al, 2011). This shows the importance of studying females as both victim and perpetrator. In general females kill less than males do, but when a female kills it is often a male intimate partner who becomes the victim. a US study by Jorden et al., between 1990 and 2004 found that of female homicide offenders around 40 percent killed a male intimate partner (Jordan et al, 2012, p.426). Of male homicide offenders in this study, only around 7 percent killed an intimate partner (Jordan et al, 2012, p.426).

In recent years an important debate has started about gender identity, and what it means to be a male or a female. There are transgenders who feel like the opposite gender from the sex they were assigned at birth and those who feel neither male or female (Human Rights Campaign). In previous research (table 1) and in theories looking at IPH such as male proprietariness theory and self-defence theory gender fluid people and transgenders are not represented. Overall, male proprietariness theory and self-defence theory can be seen as gendered theories who only look at the binary, biological definition of gender. In this present study there are no cases of either victims of perpetrators who are transgender or are gender fluid. However, in future studies cases with transgender or gender fluid people can occur and they should be given attention to better understand the phenomenon of IPH.

### *3.3 Relationship type*

Some previous research focussed on the type of relationship the intimate partners have with each other at the moment of the homicide. Shackelford did research in the US, that showed that married females were killed by an intimate partner at a rate of 13.11 females per million married females per year. As opposed, for unmarried cohabitating females this rate was 116.06 per million unmarried cohabitating females per year (Shackelford, 2001). Overall unmarried females have a nine times higher risk of victimization than married females have. Wilson and Daly (1993) examined into the effect of separation on IPH victimization and concluded that the risk for females increases when they are separating from their partner. Jorden et al. (2012),

confirms this and states that male perpetrators were more likely to kill a former partner while female perpetrators are more likely to kill their current partner. These US based researches show that overall unmarried cohabitating females who are going through a separation have the highest chance of becoming a victim of intimate partner homicide, while males have the highest risk of victimisation in a current relationship.

### *3.4 Previous abuse*

Previous abuse is an important risk factor for both male and female perpetration and victimization. A study by Caman et al., in Sweden, between 2007 and 2009 showed that 50 percent of female perpetrators experienced physical abuse by their partner (2007). Another Swedish study by Belfrage and Rying, between 1990 and 1999 showed that of all female victims 40 percent was threatened by her perpetrator and in 36 percent of all cases there were also indications of physical violence by the perpetrator (2004). A British study by Dobash et al., looked at the differences between male IPH perpetrators and male perpetrators who killed other men, showed that male IPH perpetrators are more likely to have abused the victim they killed (2004). Of the 106 IPH cases they studied, almost 60 percent of the cases showed that the perpetrator physically abused the victim (Dobash et al., 2004). These researches show that there is a relationship between previous abuse and IPH victimization.

However, in the Netherlands between 2010 and 2016 only in one-third of the cases it was known that abuse was present in the relationship, and for two-thirds of the cases this was not the case or it was not reported to the police (Aarten & Robertus, 2019). As this data of the Netherlands shows it is possible that physical abuse was unreported. It is expected that physical abuse against female intimate partners is underreported, but physical abuse against male intimate partners would even be more underreported (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005, p.691). A reason for male underreporting and the lesser academic attention it gets is because of the patriarchal idea that the male is the stronger physical gender and the female the weaker gender (George, 2003, p.52). A male is weak when he admits to being physically abused, he should be the strong one. Even though there is a high dark number of physical abuse in intimate relationships, it remains an important risk factor to study.



### *3.5 Mental illness or disorder*

Another possible risk factor that could influence the occurrence is the mental history of the perpetrator. Some previous research highlight the importance of mental illnesses and mental disorders while others state the influence is not significant. For example the study by Belfrage and Rying, with 164 male perpetrators of IPH showed that 80 percent of these perpetrators could be characterized as mentally disordered (2004). A study in the Netherlands by de Boerr showed that of the 124 IPH perpetrators 30 percent had a psychiatric history before committing the offence (1990, p.66). On the other side the study by Camen et al., showed that none of their perpetrators seemed to be characterized by mental health issues (2016). Thus, according to some studies mental health is not a common risk factor. While other studies conclude that mental health problems were common among perpetrators of IPH.

### *3.6 Motive*

Research done into the motives behind IPH, mainly follow the above mentioned theories. Research performed by Elisha et al., in Israel, where 15 convicted males of IPH or attempted IPH are interviewed on the motive behind the homicide, shows that there were three central motives, betrayal, abandonment and control (2010). A research by Campbell et al. (2007) supports this and claims that especially separation is one of the main motives for males for killing an intimate partner. This follows the male propretarianess theory and general strain theory. Betrayal, abandonment and separation are forms of losing control and can be a source of strain. Research done by Belknap et al (2012), looked into the motives behind female perpetrated IPH. In this research 12 cases of female perpetrated IPH where studied in depth and the results show that 5 of the 12 cases clearly showed self-defence and another 4 cases were very similar with self-defence but the females were still convicted (Belknap et al, 2012). However, the same research shows that in three of the twelve cases the motive followed the male propretarianess theory, where the female killed their partner because of sexual jealousy (Belknap et al, 2012). In general, research agrees that most females kill their partner out of self-defence but that it is not the sole reason (Belknap et al, 2012; Weizmann-Henelius, 2012).

**Table 1. Review table pervious IPH research**

Author(s)	Period	Country	N	Data	Focus	Findings
Aarten & Robertus	2010-2016	The Netherlands	215	Data from the DHM	Characteristics of IPH	2015 IPH cases, around 28 percent of all homicide cases. 80 percent male perpetrator, female victim.
Belfrage & Rying (2004)	1990-1999	Sweden	164	Data collected by the police on all perpetrators of IPH between 1990-1999	Characteristics of IPH perpetrators	Suicide rates are higher among perpetrators of IPH than of other homicides.
Belknap, et al. (2012)	1991-2009	The US	117	Case files of the Dever Metro DVFRC,	Motives for females committing IPH	Females mainly kill out of self-defence, but proprietariness theory is sometimes also applicable.
Caman, et al. (2016)	2007-2009	Sweden	47	National registries and police files	Characteristics of IPH perpetration	Female perpetrators are more likely to be unemployed, suffer from substances abuse and have been victim of previous abuse, than male perpetrators.
De Boer, A.P.	1950-1989	The Netherlands	124	PBC data	Psychiatric problems with IPH cases compared to people committing other criminal offences	IPH perpetrators significantly differ from perpetrators of other offences
Dobash, et al.	?	Britain	530	2 Homicide indexes	Difference between males who killed males and males who killed their female intimate partner	Male who commit IPH are more likely to have previously abused their victim and to specialize in violence against females
Elisha, Idisis, Timor & Addad (2010)	1994-2005	Israel	15	In depth interviews with male perpetrators	Characteristics of male perpetrators	Three types of motives for committing IPH, the betrayed, abandoned and the tyrant.
Jordan, et al. (2012)	1990-2004	The US	379	Institutional records	Characteristics of female perpetrators	Female perpetrators do not only commit IPH out of self-defence and do not always fit the image of a battered women.
Leistra & Nieuwbeerta (2003)	1992-2001	The Netherlands	474	Database "Moord en doodslag 1992-2001"	Frequency and characteristics of IPH	In 10% of the cases a female is the perpetrator. Around 5% occurs in male homosexual relations, no IPH cases found in lesbian relations.

**Table 1. Review table pervious IPH research**

Author(s)	Period	Country	N	Data	Focus	Findings
Liem, de Jong & van Maanen (2018)	2009-2014	The Netherlands	173	Police files, court files & Elsevier	Frequency and characteristics of IPH	Main perpetrators of IPH are male and victims mainly female. Annually there are around 29 IPH cases with a victim ratio of 0,2 per 100.000.
Liem & Roberts (2009)	1980-2006	The Netherlands	341	Clinical records of forensic psychiatric hospital, the Pieter Baan Centre	Characteristics and frequency of homicide-suicide	Perpetrators that attempted homicide were more likely to have a depression and to have previously threatened with suicide. Perpetrators showed evidence of being dependent of the victim and have a fear of abandonment.
Reckdenwald & Parker (2010)	2000	The US	178	Domestic Violence Service Directory, Supplemental homicide files and Uniform Crime Reports	Characteristics and frequency of IPH	Factors that influence IPH differ for male and females. Increase in the number of legal services per 100,000 females relates to a decrease in both male and female IPH victimization.
Shackelford (2001)	1976-1994	The US	15,670	US homicide database	Frequency and characteristics of IPH	Females in cohabitating relationships have a nine times more likely to be killed by their partner. In marriage the risk of IPH decreases when females get older. For males rates are higher for young married men and middle-aged cohabitating men. Overall IPH more likely when age difference is high.
Spencer & Stith (2018)	1980-2017	?	17	Meta-analysis of previous studies on IPH	Characteristics of IPH	Strongest risk factors for IPH were the perpetrator having direct access to a gun, previous abuse and threats of abuse.
Stöckl, et al. (2013)	1990-2011	66 countries	492,340	Five databases. Medline, Global Health, Embase, Social Policy & Web of Science	Frequency of IPH	In general 13,5 % of all homicides committed by an intimate partner. Proportion of female victimization six times higher than male victimization

**Table 1. Review table pervious IPH research**

Author(s)	Period	Country	N	Data	Focus	Findings
Swatt & He (2006)	1995-1999	The US	85	Chicago Women's Health Risk Study	Characteristics of male and female perpetrators	Female perpetrators are more likely to have a history of abuse victimization than male perpetrators.
UNODC	2016-2017	World	?	UN Data	Frequency of homicides with female victims, including IPH	137 women killed by member own family every day.
Weixmann-Henelius, et al. (2012)	1995-2004	Finland	642	Finnish National Authority for Medico Legal Affairs	Characteristics and frequency of IPH	Significant gender differences in four risk factors. Employment, intoxication of the victim, self-defence and quarrelling. Supporting the notion that female IPH perpetration often linked to self-defence.
Wilson & Daly (1993)	1965-1990	The US, Australia & Canada	?	Police files	Characteristics of female victimization	Females have a elevated risk of IPH when separated in comparison whit coresiding with the partner.

## 4. Methodology

In this study, the differences between male and female victims of intimate partner homicide and the motive behind these homicides, is examined. All types of IPH are included, also gay couples. The theories described in the previous chapter are used as a guideline to identify factors that can influence the occurrence of intimate partner homicide. Because theories are used to guide the research, this study is of a deductive nature (Bryman, 2016, p.21). Factors that are considered in this study are, the motive for the homicide, history of abuse perpetration, the relationship between the partners, housing situation of both victim and perpetrator and if there is a history of mental illness.

### *4.1 Sample & selection criteria*

To see whether there is a significant difference between male and female victims of IPH, a populations study will be done. The study will be conducted using intimate partner homicide cases in the Netherlands between 2017 and 2019. The choosing of this time period was influenced by the Corona virus, that affected accessibility of the data. This time period is also chosen, because it includes recent cases that can accurately show the phenomenon of IPH nowadays. The study focusses on the Netherlands because previous research by Liem, de Jong and van Maanen has shown that the prevalence of IPH in the Netherlands is similar to other Western-European countries (2018). Therefore, This study has the possibility to generalize over other countries, because of their similarities.

Intimate partner homicide cases have been included in this study when a suspect went to trial for either murder or manslaughter charges, for the homicide on the intimate partner. Cases where the perpetrator committed suicide have also been included in the study. This study therefore includes cases where the perpetrators has been cleared of homicide charges and cases where the perpetrator has not yet received a verdict. In the cases where the perpetrator was not convicted of a homicide charge, it could not be proven beyond reasonable doubt that they committed the crime or that their actions were the cause of death. However, in most cases there was a fight just before the victim died and therefore, the interaction between partners is still of interest to this research.

## 4.2 Data collection

To collect data on IPH cases, between the period of 2017 and 2019, the Dutch Homicide Monitor will be used (DHM). The DHM consists all cases of murder and manslaughter in the Netherlands, from 1992 onwards (Dutch Homicide Monitor, 2019, p.1). This study and the DHM started collecting data by using the *Elsevier-homicide report*. Annually, this magazine publishes an overview of all homicides committed in a year, in the Netherlands. The report of the Elsevier is a starting point for collecting data, but not the only source used to identify cases and validate data. In this study, two types of sources, online court-verdicts and media sources, are used to collect data on the IPH cases. The most reliable source are the online court-verdicts, these verdicts are supplemented by media articles.

Online court-verdicts are found through Rechtspraak.nl using European Case Law Identifier numbers. An overview of the used court verdicts can be found in Appendix A. Additional media sources and newspaper articles, on the IPH cases identified by the Elsevier, are found through the database of *LexisNexis*. Keywords to find other news articles are the name of victim or perpetrator, location of the offence and date of the offence. Several different national and regional newspapers were used to get additional data, such as Algemeen Dagblad, De Volkskrant, De Telegraaf, NRC Handelsblad, RTL Nieuws, De Twentsche Courant Tubantia, Dagblad van het Noorden and De Stentor. Newspaper articles were used when multiple sources gave the same information. If only one source gave information the variable is classified as unknown, which is done to create more reliable data.

## 4.3 Operationalization of variables

To use the gathered data, the data must be coded and operationalized. Coding is being done by the guidelines of the European Homicide Monitor (EHM), a validated European coding system (Ganpat et al., 2011). The DHM also follows these guidelines, which makes it possible to compare research and data with other countries. The EHM and the DHM both consist of 85 variables, focussing either on case, principal victim or principal perpetrator characteristics (Liem et al., 2013). In this study the variables are also divided in case, principal victim and principal perpetrator characteristics. Most variables will use the operationalisation of the DHM but some are adjusted to better fit the current study.

These case characteristics include crime scene, modus operandi and if there was physical abuse or threats of violence present in the relationship. Crime scene follows the

operationalisation of the DHM just as *modus operandi* (DHM). With *modus operandi*, if the fatal *modus* could not be determined, but multiple *modus operandi* were present, the *modus* highest on the list was coded. For case characteristics the variable previous threats and previous physical abuse have been put together. No differentiation has been made between if the threats and violence were perpetrated by the principal victim or principal perpetrator, only if this variable was present in the relationship.

In the principal victim characteristics the variables age, relationship with perpetrator, violence immediately prior to the offence, previous use of violence or threats of violence in the relationship and the housing situation at the time of the offence are taken into account. The variable age has been transformed into a categorical variable. The variable relationship has been changed into the categories husband or wife, ex-husband or ex-wife, boyfriend or girl-friend and ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend. Violence immediately prior to the offence follows the DHM. Previous violence or threats of violence in the relationship is the same as for the case characteristics, except this time it focusses on if the victim of the homicide was the perpetrator. The last variable is housing situation at the time of the offence, it mainly follows the DHM, except that the categories where the victim is cohabitating with someone else than his or her partner has been made into one category.

The principal perpetrator characteristics include age, motive, housing situation, previous use of violence or threats of violence during the relationship, history of mental illness or psychological disorder, if the perpetrator committed suicide and if the perpetrator was convicted. The variables age, housing situation and previous use of violence or threats of violence are the same as in the principal victim characteristics. The variables mental illness and suicide follow the DHM. For the variable motive, only the main motive has been considered in this study. Per case more motives could be present, for example both separation and triviality can be present in one case. If in this case the reason for fighting is separation and that fight leads to a homicide, separation is seen as the main motive. The motive triviality, is given when it is known that there was a fight during of prior to the offence, but the reason for fighting is unknown or when there are multiple reasons why they could be fighting. The motive other is given when the reason for the homicide does not fit any other category but the reason for why the homicide occurs is clear. The last variable, if the perpetrator was convicted does not follow the DHM but takes the information from different variables in the DHM. The variables this information comes form are if the perpetrator was deceased, if he had been charged with a crime and if the perpetrator had been sentences.

Overall it must be kept in mind that some errors can occur in coding the data. Some variables are open to interpretation such as motive. Another point is that over time new information can be found that contradicts the information now available.

#### *4.4 Data analyses*

To see if there is a difference between male and female victims of IPH, descriptive statistics will be given on the variables mentioned above. These statistics will be summarized to see if there are any differences. However, the sample size is 79 cases of which 9 contain a male victim. Because of this low sample size, mainly on the male victim side, it is not possible to do a statistical test and accurately see if there is a significant difference between male and female victims on any of the variables or not. For a Chi-square test with tables larger than 2 X 2, the expected count should be greater than 1 for all cells and not more than 20 percent of the expected count should be less than 5, or the test is not reliable (Field, 2013, p.735). In this research the tables are bigger than 2 X 2, but often have an expected count below 1. A Fisher's exact test could be used to overcome the problem of expected counts but can only be used on 2 X 2 tables (Field, 2013, p.735). The tables in this study are bigger than 2 X 2, so this test is neither a solution. It, therefore, is not possible to do statistical tests.

Because it is not possible to do statistical tests on the variables, an in-depth analysis will be done. This in-depth analysis will be done looking at the motive given for the homicide of the intimate partner. The variable motive has been chosen because the theories state that one of the main differences between male and female victims comes from the motive behind their homicide: sexual jealousy or self-defence. The motives will be discussed in-depth, many of the same variables will be discussed as in the descriptive part, but this time to see if they are present in any of the motives. New aspects will also be discussed, for example if other stressors were present, such as financial problems. Most of the data will be collected using the DHM of the online court verdict. In appendix B sources will be given that were used to supplement the DHM data and online court verdicts on factors such as new stressors.



## 5. Results

### 5.1 Descriptive statistics

Between 2017 and 2019 there were 79 cases of intimate partner homicide in the Netherlands, which is around 26 cases per year (see table 2). Most of the IPH cases occurred in 2018, a total of 33 cases. In total, there are 9 male victims and 70 female victims, 71 male perpetrators and 8 female perpetrators. This means, 11 percent of the victims were male and 10 percent of the perpetrators was female. The majority of the cases happened in heterosexual couples, only in one case there was a male who killed his male intimate partner. There are no cases where a female kills her female intimate partner.

**Table 2. Frequency of intimate partner homicide in the Netherlands between 2017-2019**

	2017	2018	2019	Total
<b>Cases</b>	22	33	24	79
<b>Victims</b>				
<i>Male</i>	4	1	4	9
<i>Female</i>	18	32	20	70
<b>Perpetrators</b>				
<i>Male</i>	18	32	21	71
<i>Female</i>	4	1	3	8
<b>Perpetrator-victim constellation</b>				
<i>Male-male</i>	0	0	1	1
<i>Male-female</i>	18	32	20	70
<i>Female-female</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Female-male</i>	4	1	3	8

For the rest of the case characteristics (table 3), principal victim characteristics (table 4) and principal perpetrator characteristics (table 5) the descriptive statistics will be given. These descriptive statistics are given for all IPH cases and divided in cases with either male or female victims. The percentages are given for either all cases, or cases with male or female victims. Cases who are coded as unknown are not considered in the statistics. This study focusses on intimate partners, in IPH cases this being the principal victim or perpetrator. Therefore, this study only takes in account the principal perpetrator and victim of these homicides.

### Case characteristics

Most IPH cases were committed in the shared private home of victim and perpetrator, in approximately 65 percent of the cases (N=77). Another 20 percent of the IPH cases occurred in the home of the victim and only around 4 percent took place in the house of the perpetrator. Most common place for IPH to take place was in a private home, most likely the shared home. For both cases with male and female victims the shared private home is the most common place. For male victims, almost 80 percent took place in the shared home and no cases took place in the private home of the victim (N=9). In cases with a female victim, around 63 percent took place in the shared home and 22 percent in the home of the victim (N=68).

**Table 3. Case characteristics of intimate partner homicide in the Netherlands between 2017-2019**

	All cases		Cases with male victims		Cases with female victims	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Crime scene</b>						
<i>Private home of victim and perpetrator</i>	50	64.9	7	77.8	43	63.2
<i>Private home of victim</i>	15	19.5	0	0	15	22.1
<i>Private home of perpetrator</i>	3	3.9	0	0	3	4.4
<i>Park or recreational area</i>	2	2.6	1	11.1	1	1.5
<i>Street or other public space</i>	3	3.9	0	0	3	4.4
<i>Other</i>	4	5.2	1	11.1	3	4.4
<i>Unknown</i>	2		0		2	
<b>Modus operandi</b>						
<i>Knife or other sharp item</i>	32	46.4	5	55.6	27	45
<i>Firearm</i>	10	14.5	1	11.1	9	15
<i>Blunt object</i>	5	7.2	1	11.1	4	6.7
<i>Strangulation/Hanging/Suffocation</i>	14	20.3	0	0	14	23.3
<i>Hitting, kicking or other physical violence without a weapon</i>	4	5.8	1	11.1	3	5
<i>Other</i>	4	5.8	1	11.1	3	5
<i>Unknown.</i>	10		0		10	
<b>Previous abuse or threats of violence present in the relationship</b>						
<i>No</i>	1	2.7	1	11.1	0	0
<i>Yes, but not reported to the police</i>	27	70.3	7	77.8	20	69
<i>Yes, and known to the police</i>	10	27	1	11.1	9	31
<i>Unknown</i>	41		0		41	

The most used modus for committing IPH, is using a knife or other sharp item, in around 46 percent of the cases (N=69). A firearm was only used in 10 cases, which accounts for 15 percent. More violent modus operandi as strangulation and suffocation occurred in 20 percent of the cases and hitting or kicking in 6 percent of the cases. For both male and female victims the use of a knife or other sharp item was the most common modus operandi. In case of male victims this was around 56 percent and no cases are reported where strangulation or suffocation occurred (N=9). For female victims a knife or other sharp item was used in 45 percent of the cases (N=60). Strangulation or suffocation occurred in 23 percent of the cases. Overall, in cases with female victims, more violent modus operandi were used.

When looking at if previous abuse or threats of violence were present in the relationship or not, only in 38 of the cases this was known. For the cases where it was known, only in one case there was no previous abuse or threats of violence. In 27 percent of the cases the threats and abuse were known to the police and in 70 percent people stated it was present in the relationship but not reported to the police. In cases with female victims the abuse was more often reported to the police, in 31 percent of the cases (N=29) against 11 percent in cases with male victims (N=8). Of the 38 IPH cases, in most of the relationships some form of abuse and threats of violence was present.

Overall, most IPH cases were committed in the shared private home of perpetrator and victim. For both male and female victims the use of a knife or other sharp item was the most common modus operandi. However, in cases with female victims, more violent modus operandi were used than in cases with male victims. Whether previous abuse was present in the relationship or not was often unknown, but for the cases it is known, both in cases with male and female victims abuse was often present.

### *Principal victim characteristics*

Most victims of IPH were between the age of 31 and 45, in approximately 39 percent (N=72). Only in two cases the victims were below the age of 18 or over the age of 65. For male victims the majority, 56 percent, was between the age of 46 and 64. 33 percent was between the age of 31 and 45 and 11 percent was between 18 and 30 (N=9). For female victims, 40 percent was between the age of 31 and 45 and 30 percent was between 18 and 30 years old (N=63). So, overall male victims appear to be older than female victims.

**Table 4. Principal victim characteristics of intimate partner homicide in the Netherlands between 2017-2019**

	All cases		Cases with male victims		Cases with female victims	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Age</b>						
<i>&lt;18</i>	2	2.8	0	0	2	3.2
<i>18-30</i>	20	27.8	1	11.1	19	30.2
<i>31-45</i>	28	38.9	3	33.3	25	39.7
<i>46-64</i>	20	27.8	5	55.6	15	22.8
<i>65+</i>	2	2.8	0	0	2	3.2
<i>Unknown but over 18</i>	7		0		7	
<b>Relationship with perpetrator</b>						
<i>Husband or wife</i>	35	44.3	5	55.6	30	42.9
<i>Ex-Husband or ex-wife</i>	3	3.8	0	0	3	4.3
<i>Boyfriend or girlfriend</i>	27	34.2	4	44.4	23	32.9
<i>Ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend</i>	14	17.7	0	0	14	20
<b>Violence against perpetrator during or immediately prior to the offence</b>						
<i>No</i>	6	35.3	1	33.3	5	35.7
<i>Yes, used in self-defence</i>	5	29.4	0	0	5	35.7
<i>Yes, used in non-defence manner</i>	6	35.3	2	67.7	4	28.6
<i>unknown</i>	62		6		56	
<b>Previous abuse or threats of violence present in the relationship</b>						
<i>No</i>	3	33.3	1	16.7	2	66.7
<i>Yes, but not reported to the police</i>	6	66.7	5	83.3	1	33.3
<i>Yes, and reported to the police</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Unknown</i>	70		3		67	
<b>Housing situation at the time of the offence</b>						
<i>Cohabiting with partner</i>	45	70.3	7	100	38	66.7
<i>Cohabiting with other person either relative, friend or housemate</i>	5	7.8	0	0	14	24.6
<i>Living alone, with or without children</i>	14	21.9	0	0	5	8.7
<i>Unknown</i>	15		2		13	

When looking at the relationship between perpetrator and victim, most victims, 79 percent, were still in an active relationship with the perpetrator at the time of the offence (N=79). In 44 percent of the cases the victims were married to their partner, this was the most

common form of relationship type. All male victims were in an active relationship with their perpetrator, in 56 percent of the cases they were married, and in 44 percent of the cases they were in a boy/girlfriend relationship. For female cases the majority was married, 43 percent. In 20 percent of the cases the perpetrator was the ex-boyfriend and in around 4 percent it was the ex-husband. So, only in cases with female victims a former partner was the perpetrator of the homicide.

For both violence during or immediately prior to the offence and previous abuse or threats of violence in the relationship, there is little known. The majority of the cases are coded as unknown. For violence during or immediately prior to the offence, only 17 cases can be used. Of these cases, 35 percent of the victims did not use violence, around 29 percent of the victims used violence in a defensive matter and 35 percent in a non-defensive matter. For previous abuse in the relationship, for only 9 cases it is known if this was present or not. Not in any of the cases the abuse was reported to the police. For both variables, more information was known for male victims. Out of the data it appears that male victims might be more aggressive against their partner than female victims of IPH were.

Looking at the housing situation of the victim, the majority of the victims, 70 percent, was cohabitation with his or her partner (N=64). 22 percent of the victims lived alone with or without children and 8 percent of the victims cohabitated with another person, family, friend or house mate. All of the male victims lived together with their intimate partner (N=7). The majority of female victims also lived with their intimate partner, around 67 percent (N=57). Around 25 percent cohabitated with another person and around 9 percent lived alone with or without children.

In general, male victims were older than female victims, most of the victims were in an active relationship and married with their perpetrator. Only in cases with female victims a former partner committed the homicide. Overall, most victims cohabitated with their partner at the time of the offence, however female victims also lived alone or with other persons. About violence perpetrated by the victim either during the offence or during the relationship much is unknown, but it appears male victims have been more aggressive in their relationship than female victims were.

### *Principal perpetrator characteristics*

Most perpetrators of IPH were male, around 90 percent (N=79). All female victims were killed by a male intimate partner (N=70). Of the male victims 8 were killed by a female intimate partner and 1 was killed by a male intimate partner.

The age of most perpetrators was between the age of 46 and 64 in total 37 percent, another 35 percent was between the age of 31 and 45 (N=75). The difference between perpetrators killing a male intimate partner or a female intimate partner is minimal. The majority, 44 percent, of perpetrators killing a male partner are between the age of 46 and 64 (N=9). Of the perpetrators who kill a female intimate partner 36 percent is between the age of 31 and 45 and also 36 percent between 46 and 64 (N=66).

**Table 5. Principal perpetrator characteristics of intimate partner homicide in the Netherlands between 2017-2019**

	All cases		Cases with male victims		Cases with female victims	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Gender</b>						
<i>Male</i>	71	89.9	1	11.1	70	100
<i>Female</i>	8	10.1	8	88.9	0	0
<b>Age</b>						
<i>&lt;18</i>	2	2.7	0	0	2	3
<i>18-30</i>	13	17.3	2	22.2	11	16.7
<i>31-45</i>	26	34.7	2	22.2	24	36.4
<i>46-64</i>	28	37.3	4	44.4	24	36.4
<i>65+</i>	6	8	1	11.1	5	7.6
<i>Unknown but over 18</i>	4		0		4	
<b>Motive</b>						
<i>Male proprietariness</i>	30	49.2	0	0	30	56.6
<i>-Jealousy</i>	8	13.1	0	0	8	15.1
<i>-Separation</i>	22	36.1	0	0	22	41.5
<i>self-defence</i>	5	8.2	5	62.5	0	0
<i>Triviality</i>	16	26.2	2	25	14	26.4
<i>Mental illness</i>	6	9.8	0	0	6	11.3
<i>Other</i>	4	6.6	1	12.5	3	5.7
<i>Unknown</i>	18		1		17	

**Table 5. Principal perpetrator characteristics of intimate partner homicide in the Netherlands between 2017-2019**

	All cases		Cases with male victims		Cases with female victims	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Housing situation at the time of the offence</b>						
<i>Cohabiting with partner</i>	46	85.2	7	100	39	83
<i>Cohabiting with other person either relative, friend or housemate</i>	3	5.5	0	0	3	6.4
<i>Living alone, with or without children</i>	5	9.3	0	0	5	10.6
<i>Unknown</i>	25		2		23	
<b>Previous abuse or threats of violence present in the relationship</b>						
<i>No</i>	1	2.9	1	20	0	0
<i>Yes, but not reported to the police</i>	23	68.6	3	60	20	69
<i>Yes, and reported to the police</i>	10	28.6	1	20	9	31
<i>Unknown</i>	45		4		41	
<b>History of mental illness or psychological disorder</b>						
<i>No</i>	6	15.8	0	0	6	17.6
<i>Yes, some indications</i>	24	63.2	3	75	21	61.8
<i>Yes, sure indications</i>	8	21.1	1	25	7	20.6
<i>Unknown</i>	41		5		36	
<b>Did perpetrator commit suicide?</b>						
<i>No</i>	59	74.7	9	100	50	71.4
<i>No, but attempted</i>	4	5.1	0	0	4	5.7
<i>Yes</i>	16	20.3	0	0	16	22.9
<i>Unknown</i>	0		0		0	
<b>Is the perpetrator convicted?</b>						
<i>Deceased before or during the trial</i>	16	24.6	0	0	16	27.1
<i>Convicted for manslaughter</i>	36	55.4	2	33.3	34	57.6
<i>Convicted for murder</i>	8	12.5	3	50	5	8.5
<i>Cleared of homicide charges</i>	4	6.2	1	16.7	3	3.4
<i>Perpetrator fled the country</i>	1	1.5	0	0	1	1.7
<i>Trial is ongoing</i>	14		3		11	

The motive most given for killing an intimate partner was separation, in 36 percent of the cases (N=61). Triviality, a fight between the partners, is in 26 percent of the cases the motive for killing the intimate partner. There are big differences in motive between those who kill a

male intimate partner and a female intimate partner. In cases with female victims in 42 percent of the cases separation was given as a motive, combining that with the 15 percent that gave jealousy as motive, 57 percent of the cases have a motive that follows male proprietariness theory (N=53). The motive self-defence was not used and mental illness was in 11 percent of the cases the motive. In 26 percent of the cases the motive was triviality, this is similar to male victims of IPH where 25 percent of the motive was triviality (N=7). Motives that fall under male proprietariness theory were not present for the male victims, neither was mental illness. The motive most given was self-defence in 63 percent of the cases.

The housing situation of the perpetrator at the time of the offence is similar tot that of the hosing situation of the victim at the time of the offence. In 85 percent of the cases the perpetrator was cohabitating with his or her intimate partner (N=54). All perpetrators who killed a male intimate partner were cohabitating with his or her intimate partner (N=7) and for perpetrators of female victims this was 83 percent (N=47).

Looking at if the perpetrator has previously been abusive or made threats of violence in the relationship, not much is known. Only in 34 cases it was known it this had happened or not. In 29 percent of those cases previous abuse had been present and reported to the police. In 69 percent of the cases people state that abuse was present, but it had not been reported to the police. For both male and female victims abuse was often present in the relationship. For male victims in 60 percent of the cases abuse was present but not reported to the police and in 20 percent is was reported to the police (N=5). For female victims in 69 percent of the cases abuse was present but not reported and in 31 percent of the cases it was reported (N=29). In cases with female victims it appears abuse from the perpetrator is slightly more common and more often reported to the police.

For a lot of cases the history of mental illness of the perpetrator was unknown. Of the 38 cases it is known, 63 percent has some indications of a mental illness of psychological disorder and 21 percent had sure indications. For perpetrators of male victims in only 4 cases information was available. In 3 cases there were some indications and in 1 case there were sure indications. For perpetrators of female victims in 62 percent of the case there were some indications and in 21 percent there were sure indications that the perpetrator had some mental problems.

Suicide was committed in 20 percent of all cases, the perpetrator attempted suicide in 5 percent of the cases (N=79). In cases with male victims none of the perpetrators attempted or committed suicide. In cases with female victims in 23 percent the perpetrator committed suicide and in 6 percent they attempted it.



In more than half of all IPH cases the perpetrator was convicted for manslaughter, and in around 13 percent of the cases for murder (N=64). In around 6 percent the intimate partner of a victim was cleared of homicide charges. For male victims, the perpetrator was in 50 percent of the cases convicted for murder and in 33 percent of the cases for manslaughter (N=6). In one case the partner of the victims was cleared of homicide charges. In cases with female victims the perpetrator was in 58 percent of the cases convicted for manslaughter and in around 9 percent for murder (N=59). In three cases the intimate partner was cleared of homicide charges.

All in all, most perpetrators of IPH are male and mostly between the age of 46 to 64. Most victims were cohabitating with their partner at the time of the offence. The motive behind the homicide differs for if it was a male or female victim. In case of a male victim the motive was often self-defence and if it was a female victim the motive was most likely separation. However, for both male and female victims about 25 percent of the cases triviality was given as the motive. Looking at previous abuse, for the cases where it is known if abuse was present, most relationships had a form of abuse though often not reported to the police. The mental history of many of the perpetrators is unknown but for the cases it is known, especially for male perpetrators killing a female intimate partner, some form of mental illness or psychological disorder was present. In most cases the perpetrator did not commit or attempt to commit suicide, only in cases with female victims did a perpetrator commit or attempt suicide. Overall most victims of IPH are convicted for manslaughter except for perpetrators killing a male intimate partner there the majority is convicted for murder.

### *5.2 In-depth analysis*

To further see if there are differences between male and female victims of IPH and to see if the theories about IPH are correct, the motives given for the IPH cases will be studied in depth. Per motive several variables will be discussed, such as if abuse was present in the relationship or if the perpetrator had a history of mental illness. New aspects, not mentioned in the descriptive statistics are also discussed, for example if other stressors such as losing a job were present.

### *Male proprietariness*

Looking at the motives that fall under male proprietariness, jealousy and separation, only in cases with a male perpetrator and a female victim this motive was present. In total there were 30 cases that follow male proprietariness motives, for 8 cases the main motive was jealousy and for 22 cases separation. In 10 of the cases the perpetrator was separated from the victim, and in 20 cases they were still together. Though in a majority of the cases (around 13) the relationship was still intact, the victim wanted to end the relationship. In 11 cases the victim was the wife, in 2 cases the ex-wife, in another 9 cases it was a girlfriend who was killed and in 8 cases an ex-girlfriend. So, wives were the biggest category, but overall the majority of females killed was not married to her intimate partner.

Looking at previous violence in these cases, in 17 cases it was known if the perpetrator had previously been violent against the victim or threatened the use of violence. Of these 17 cases all showed that the perpetrator had been violent or threatened with violence, though in 12 cases this abuse was not reported to the police. Thus, in majority of the cases the perpetrator had previously been violent against his partner. Whether the victims used violence during the relationship is often not known, only in 2 cases it is. In these cases, the victims were not violent during the relationship. For only 7 cases it was known if the victims used violence during or immediately prior to the offence. In 2 cases no violence was used, in 4 cases they used it out of self-defence and in 1 case they used violence in a non-defensive manner. So, overall it appears that males who killed out of either separation or jealousy are quite aggressive during their relationship. For females not much is known but they appear to be less violent.

In 4 of the 30 cases a perpetrator committed suicide and in 2 cases a perpetrator attempted to commit suicide. These suicides and suicide attempts were all committed by perpetrators who killed their intimate partner because of separation. Overall, in majority of the cases the perpetrator did not commit suicide. However, in a majority of the cases, in total 16 the perpetrators showed signs of a mental illness or mental disorder. In total of 20 cases it was known if the perpetrator had a history of mental illness or mental disorder. Of these cases 4 perpetrators did not show any mental problems, in 12 cases there were some indications and in 4 there were sure indications.

Looking at these cases where either jealousy or separation was the motive, the majority of the victims were not married to their partner and a majority of perpetrators had not committed suicide. In more than half of these cases the perpetrators had been abusive against their partner during the relationship. Mental problems were also present in more than half of the cases. So,

in a majority of cases the perpetrator not only had to deal with jealousy or separation but also had mental problems. In one case a male had caught his wife with another man, after which they were getting a divorce. Next to this he also lost his job and had mental problems. So, in majority of the cases the perpetrator had multiple stressors or factors, such as a mental illness, that made dealing with something as separation harder to deal with.

### *Self-defence*

The motive self-defence was given in five cases, only female perpetrators who killed a male intimate partner gave this motive. In all these cases the victim and perpetrator were in an active relationship, in three cases they were married and in two cases they were in a cohabitational relationship. None of these perpetrators had committed suicide or had attempted it.

In these cases, abuse was quite common during the relationship. It was known in four out of five cases if the victim of the homicide had previously been abusive in the relationship or not, in all those four cases the victim had been abusive. In only two cases it was known if the perpetrator had been abusive during the relationship, but in these two cases the perpetrator had been abusive. So, in the cases where self-defence was given as motive abuse was often present in the relationship. Though, this abuse was not only perpetrated from the side of the male victim. The killing of the intimate partner in these cases was often not done because of an immediate threat but to stop systematic abuse during the relationship. In only one case it is known that the victim used violence immediately prior to the offence. Also, in one case it was known that the perpetrator was asleep during the offence, so did not use any violence during the offence. In three of the five cases the females stated that they saw killing their intimate partner as the only solution to stop the abuse and to feel safe.

Another factor that was common in these cases was a history of mental problems. In four cases it is known that the perpetrators had mental problems, that were conducive to killing their intimate partner. In the one case where this is not known, the perpetrator still has to be tested to see if there are mental problems. In one case the perpetrator also had alcohol abuse problem that influenced her abilities to make choices. Overall, physical abuse was commonly present in these relationships, just as mental problems were. It was often not only the abuse they experienced in the relationship that led them to kill their partner, but a combination of abuse and mental problems that influenced them to make this decision.

### *Triviality*

Triviality was given as a motive in sixteen cases as and, of these cases two perpetrators were female and the others were male. All relationships in these cases were heterosexual. Of the female perpetrators one was married with the victim and the other was the girlfriend of the victim. For male perpetrators, five were married to the victim, seven of them killed their girlfriends and two killed their ex-girlfriends. So, overall the perpetrators were in an active relationship with the victim. Suicide was not often perpetrated by the perpetrators of these cases, in one case it occurred and in another case a perpetrator attempted suicide. The suicide and attempted suicide happened in cases with a male perpetrator and a female victim.

Looking at violence and threats of violence in the relationship, much is unknown. In the cases with a female perpetrator and male victim, in one case no previous abuse was present from either side. In the other case it was the female perpetrator that was abusive during the relationship. For the cases with male perpetrators and female victims, nothing is known on violence perpetrated by the female victims. In four of these cases the male perpetrators did use violence during the relationship. If violence was used immediately prior to the offence by the victim was only known for six cases. For one of the cases with a female perpetrator this was known and there the victim used violence in a non-defensive matter. In this specific case, victim and perpetrator had previously not been abusive but got into a fight during a party where they both drank alcohol and, the female ended the fight by stabbing her boyfriend. For the cases with male perpetrators, violence immediately prior to the offence occurred three times in a non-defensive matter, one time out of self-defence and one time the victim did no use any violence. Overall, not much is known on violence in the relationship, but where it is known both males and females are perpetrators of violence during the relationship

If the perpetrators had a history of mental illness or psychological disorders, was known in six cases. In one of these cases the perpetrator had no history of mental problems and in five cases there were some indicators that mental problems were present. These five cases where there were indications of mental problems, were all cases with a male perpetrator and female victim. Not for all cases it is known what the reason was for the fights that led to the killing of an intimate partner. However, in two of the cases where it is known, financial problems were the reason of fighting. In another case the alcohol use of the partner was the reason of the fight and in another case the reason to fight was because the perpetrator had wanted to kill himself and the victim wanted him to stop. Of another case the fight was about the gender of the child they were having, the perpetrator did not want to have a boy so forced the female to commit

abortion which led her death. Overall, in most cases within this motive, the perpetrator and victim were in an active relationship. Not much is known about violence in the relationship, but it appears that both males and females perpetrate violence in the relationship. The reasons for fighting and eventually killing the intimate partner are wide and divers.

### *Mental illness*

In all the cases where mental illness is given as the main motive, males are the perpetrators and females the victims. In total there are six cases where mental illness is the main motive. In three cases the perpetrator and victim were married, in one case the victim was the girlfriend of the perpetrator and in two cases the victim was the ex-girlfriend. Suicide occurred in one case and was attempted in another case.

In four out of the six cases it was known if the perpetrator had previously been violent in the relationship, or threatened to be. In all of these four cases the perpetrator had been violent, three times this violence was also reported to the police. In all cases it was unknown if the victim had used or threaten to use violence. Overall, perpetrators of these cases have been violent during the relationship.

All perpetrators in these cases had mental problems, though they are different per perpetrator. In one case the perpetrator showed symptoms of dementia and had depressive symptoms because of an isolated live, which were conducive to killing his intimate partner. In another case the perpetrator had a psychosis where he thought his intimate partner was a vampire who wanted to kill him. So, while all in all of these cases mental problems are common, they were often very different per case.

### *Other*

In the category other motive there are four cases. One was perpetrated by a female killing a male intimate partner the other cases were males killing their female intimate partner. In two cases the perpetrator and victim were married and in the other two cases the victim was the girlfriend of the perpetrator. None of the perpetrators had committed suicide. In one case the male victim was violent against the female perpetrator during the relationship, for the other cases it is unknown whether violence was present during the relationship. In only one case it was known if the perpetrator had any mental problems, as was not the case.

The motives behind these homicides differ per case. In the case with the female perpetrator and a male victim the motive appears to be financial. The victim had a financial

insurance the perpetrator would get if the victim would die, the perpetrator had already made plans with this money. She had planned a plastic surgery intake at the same time they were supposed to have a family vacation. In one of the cases with a male perpetrator and a female victim, the perpetrator had killed his intimate partner because she got pregnant and this could not be known. The female he killed was not his wife but one of his many mistresses, which he wanted to keep a secret.

In another case the female victim had found out that they would be evicted the next day. The perpetrator stated they fought over this, and he killed her so that she would not have to deal with this situation. In the last case the perpetrator claims he killed his girlfriend to help her because she was feeling sad after her mother passed away. However, the court believes his actual motive was financial because he stole several of her personal belongings, such as expensive jewellery. The motives in this category vary but do not fit any of the motives set out by any of the theories.

## 6. Discussion

### *6.1 Descriptive statistics*

Between the period of 2017 and 2019 there were 79 IPH cases, around 26 per year. In a study between 2009 and 2014 there were around 29 cases per year in the Netherlands (Liem, de Jong & van Maanen, 2018). This is a reasonably similar outcome. Looking at the who were the perpetrators of these cases, around 10 percent of the perpetrators were female and 90 percent were male. For the victims, 11 percent was male and 89 percent female. This follows previous research, a study by Leistra and Nieuwbeerta in the Netherlands between 1992 and 2001, had a similar outcome (2003, pp.53-54). So, overall most intimate partner homicide cases are perpetrated by a male, and the victim is most often a female.

Looking at case characteristics, most IPH cases were committed in the shared house of the victim and perpetrator, what already shows most couples were living together at the time of the offence. Another case characteristic, *modus operandi*. In both cases with male and female victims stabbing with a knife or other sharp item is most common. This follows previous research that showed that in Europe a knife or other sharp item is most commonly used (Liem & Koenraadt, 2018, p.66). Looking further at *modus operandi*, in this study, it appears that female victims more often are killed with a more violent *modus*, such as strangulation, than male victims.

In most of the cases in this study it was unknown if there was violence or threats of violence present during the relationship. This is in agreement with another Dutch study between 2010 and 2016 where in the majority of the cases it was not known if abuse was present or not (Aarten & Robertus, 2019). What is clear is that in the cases where it is known if violence was present or not, violence often occurred during the relationship. This violence was present in both relationships with male and female victims. showing that previous abuse in the relationship can be an important risk factor in IPH cases.

A difference between male and female victims is that female victims appeared to be younger than the male victims. Also, only in cases with female victims the perpetrator has committed suicide. Looking at the conviction the perpetrator gets, there is a difference. Most perpetrators killing a female victim got convicted for manslaughter, however in cases with male victims the majority of perpetrators were convicted for murder. In both categories most perpetrators did get convicted, only a small percentage got cleared of homicide charges.

Looking at the relationship type between victim and perpetrator, in a majority of the cases they were in an active relationship. There were slightly more married victims than victims who were in a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship, for both cases with male and female victims. This is in disagreement with an US based study that states that unmarried cohabitating females run a higher risk at victimization, than married females (Shackelford, 2001). Following Male proprietariness theory it was also expected that most victims would not be married, because marriage is still viewed in property terms where males have more control over their female intimate partner (Wilson & Daly, 1996, p.6).

All male victims were killed by their current intimate partner, while female victims were also killed by former intimate partners. That male victims are only killed by their current partner is in agreement with previous research, that stated that males have the highest risk of victimisation in a current relationship (Jordan et al., 2012). Self-defence theory (Serran & Fireston, 2004, p.7) and general strain theory (Broidy & Agnew, 1997, p.287) also both state that males run a higher risk at victimization in a current relationship. This because the perpetrators are trying to escape the situation there in, in this case their relationship.

Delving deeper into violence during the relationship, most is known about whether the perpetrator had used violence. In 34 cases it was known if the perpetrator had been violent during the relationship or not. Overall, in cases with female victims the perpetrators were more violent than perpetrators who killed a male intimate partner, and this violence was more often reported to the police. However, perpetrators of cases with male victims, thus females, have also been violent during the relationship. For the victims of IPH, only in 9 cases it is known if they were violent during the relationship or not. Of these cases most is known about the male victims of IPH, who were often violent during the relationship. That most male victims were violent during the relationship is something to be expected when following self-defence theory. However, it was not expected that female perpetrators would have used violence during the relationship. Self-defence theory would only expect that the male victim would have a history of assault while the female perpetrator would have no record of this, only a record of assault victimization (Belknap et al., 2012, p.362).

Though the history of mental illness and psychological disorders for the perpetrator is only known in 38 cases, the variable could still be relevant. Because in 32 of these 38 cases the perpetrators did have a history of mental health problems. Thus, in 40 percent of all cases it is known that the perpetrator had mental problems. A history of mental problems for the



perpetrator, occurred in both cases with male and female victims. This study agrees with studies that state that mental illness and psychological disorders are a risk factor for IPH victimization. Male proprietariness theory and self-defence theory have not given attention to personal risk factors, such as mental illness in explaining IPH. General strain theory (Eriksson & mazerolle, 2013, p.464) does state that personal circumstances and personalities can influence how people deal with negative events and respond to certain events. However, the theory does not go into-depth into how mental illness and psychological disorders can be of influence in IPH cases.

Looking at the variable motive, this variable differs between male and female victims of IPH. In cases with male victims the motive most commonly used is self-defence. This motive is given in around 62 percent of the cases. That self-defence is most used is in agreement with self-defence theory and general strain theory. However, around 38 percent of the time another main motive was given. This follows the research of Belknap et al. where self-defence was also the most common motive in IPH cases with female perpetrators and male victims, but not the sole motive of all cases (2012).

Looking at female victims and male perpetrators, in around 57 percent of the cases the motive was either jealousy or separation. Thus, in a majority of the cases the motive follows male proprietariness theory, what was also expected according to General strain theory. That separation and jealousy are the main motives follows previous researches of Elisha et al. (2010), and Campbell et al. (2007). Though, still in around 43 percent of the cases another motive has been given. In both cases with male and female victims around 25 percent of the cases has as main motive triviality, fighting between victim and perpetrator that led to the death of the victim. So, even though in majority of the cases the motive follows the theories, there is still a significant part of the cases, for both male and female victims, around 40 percent that does not follow the theories.

## *6.2 In-depth*

### *Male proprietariness*

Looking at the cases where either separation or jealousy was given as motive, there were only male perpetrators and female victims. In majority of these cases the perpetrator was not married to the victim, though the difference is not big. Thus, it does follow male proprietariness theory, in stating that females have a higher risk at victimization when they are unmarried (Wilson & Daly, 1996, p.6). However, the difference is not as big as previous research had

shown. Though most relationships were still intact, most victims in these cases had wanted to separate from their intimate partner.

Another point is that in majority of these cases the perpetrator had been violent against their intimate partner during the relationship, while for the victims in these cases not much is known about if they were violent. This shows that previous abuse could be an important risk factor for IPH victimization. Next to being violent, most perpetrator in these cases had a history of mental problems. However, male proprietaries does not give attention to this risk factor. So, in a majority of the cases the victims was not married and had or were trying to end the relationship, the perpetrator often had been violent during the relationship and a majority of the perpetrators had a mental illness or psychological disorder.

### *Self-defence*

In cases where self-defence is given as main motive, all perpetrators were female and all victims were male. In all these cases the victim and perpetrator were in an active relationship as expected by the theory and previous research. Violence was common during the relationship, especially the male victim was a perpetrator of violence during the relationship. Though in some cases the female had also been violent during the relationship. In these cases the perpetrators often did not respond to an immediate threat of violence, but they wanted to stop the systematic abuse they encountered in their relationship. This ending of systematic abuse is also what comes back in self-defence theory, especially with the battered women syndrome (Walker, 2017).

Self-defence theory does not give attention to mental problems in explaining IPH, it does not mention it as a risk factor. However, of the five cases, in four it is known the perpetrator had mental problems that were conducive to committing homicide. In the other case they are still testing whether she had a history of mental problems. This does show that mental problems are of importance, at least in these cases.

### *Triviality, mental illness and other*

Triviality is one of the motives that does not follow the theories. All types of relationships are present in this category, both married and unmarried and current or former intimate partner. There are slightly more unmarried couples in this category and most victims were killed by their current partner. In two of the sixteen cases the perpetrator was female. In

one of these cases no violence was present during the relationship only at the night of the offence and in the other case it was the female perpetrator that had been violent. These triviality cases do not follow self-defence theory or general strain theory because these females did not endure systematic abuse during the relationship that led them to kill their partner, in one case it was even the female who was the abuser in the relationship. For the cases with female victims not much is known about violence perpetrated by the victim. In four of the fourteen cases the perpetrator had been violent during the relationship. Mental problems occurred in five out of the fourteen cases. So for both cases previous abuse and mental problems can play a role in IPH cases.

Cases where the main motive was mental illness were only perpetrated by males. In majority of these cases the perpetrator and victim were married. In four of the six cases the perpetrator had previously been violent. The mental problems the perpetrators had in these cases were diverse from a psychosis to having dementia. But mental problems were present in all of the cases, and often accompanied by violent behavior during the relationship.

For the category other, not much is known about violence or mental problems of perpetrator or victim. However, the motives that were given in these cases do not follow any of the theories. In the case with a female perpetrator and a male victim, the motive appeared to be financial and just as in a case with a male perpetrator and a female victim where it is likely he killed her to sell her personal belongings.

## 7 Conclusion

In this study the IPH cases between 2017 and 2019 were examined to see what the differences are between male and female victims of IPH. The DHM has been used to code all these cases and give descriptive statistics of these cases. After that the cases have been separated by the motive behind the homicide to see if this could give more insight. The variable motive had been chosen because the three main theories on IPH, see motive as the main difference between male and female victims. These three theories on intimate partner homicide state they know the difference between male and female victims. The theories are male proprietariness theory, self-defence theory and general strain theory. According to these theories, the main difference between male and female victims would be the motive behind their homicide. In cases with male victims self-defence and in cases with female victims separation or jealousy. Other aspects in which they would differ is that in cases with male victims it would more often be a current partner that would perpetrate the homicide. In cases with female victims, this more often would be a former partner, and it would more often be occurring in relationships where they are unmarried. Violence during the relationship would in both cases most often be perpetrated by the male, regardless if they are a victim or a perpetrator.

Looking at the descriptive statistics, the theories are accurate in the main motive behind the homicides. However for both cases with male and female victims self-defence or separation and jealousy occur in around 60 percent of the cases which is the majority but 40 percent is still a significant percentage that does not follow the theory. And in 25 percent of these cases the motives between male and female victims overlap. Considering the relationship between victim and perpetrator, the expectations of the theories are accurate for cases with male victims. However, for cases with female victims, the majority of the victims were married to their intimate partner. Though this could be the case because nowadays marriage has a higher rate of dissolving than it did previously (Wilson & Daly, 1996, p.6). For the variable violence during the relationship, much is unknown but it does appear males in these relationships were more violent than females in these relationships. However, females were also perpetrators of violence during the relationship.

Delving into the cases where separations or jealousy was the motive, male proprietariness theory is reasonably accurate. However, in the majority of these cases the perpetrator had a history of mental problems and the theory does not take this factor into consideration. The same is for the motive self-defence, most perpetrators had mental problems while self-defence theory does not consider this variable in explaining IPH. Next to that, would

self-defence theory not expect that the female would have used any violence during the relationship and this did occur in some of the cases.

Overall, the main difference between male and female victims is the motive behind their homicides. Next it appeared that female victims of IPH were younger than male victims. Another difference is that in cases with male victims only current partners were the perpetrators, while in cases with female victims former intimate partners also perpetrated the homicide. Both males and females, regardless if they were victim or perpetrator used violence during the relationship. However, males appear to be more violent. So, overall, in cases with male victims, the victim was most violent and in cases with female victims the perpetrator was most violent. Mental problems were also present for the perpetrator in both cases with male and female victims, however they seemed to occur more in cases with female victims.

So, the theories can explain the differences between male and female victims to a certain extent. They are accurate in the main motive behind the homicide, in that overall males are more violent than females during the relationships. However, females did use more violence than expected by the theory, especially looking at self-defence theory. Another critique is that mental problems were often present in IPH cases, but are not taken into consideration by the theories. General strain theory is best equipped to overcome this critique because it already states that personal circumstances and characteristics have an influence on how people deal with the strain they experience. In the end, the effect of mental health problems should get more attention in IPH studies and theories, and females should not only be viewed as passive but also as possible aggressors of violence during relationships.

### *7.1 Limitations*

Due to the Corona virus the access to the data changed. During this epidemic, the university was closed, at the university it was possible to get access to protected data. The influence of the virus was that a smaller time period had to be used and that protected data such as police information were not accessible. Because a smaller time period had to be used, there were less cases taken into consideration. Because of the smaller amount of cases it was not possible to do statistical tests which makes the decreases the validity of this study.

A more general limitation is the large amount of dark figures that are present in homicide cases (Belfrage & Rying, 2004, p.122). Some cases might have been misclassified, they were actually an IPH case but are not taken into consideration or vice versa. This affects the outcome

of the study. Another point is that a lot of information is still unknown and that over time information can change because new information comes to light. One of the main variables where this is the case is the variable previous abuse or threats of violence. As previously mentioned this variable is often underreported. Because of these limitations it is possible that if this study is replicated that the results would be slightly different.

## *7.2 Recommendations*

A recommendation for further research is to take a bigger sample of IPH cases, which does make it possible to do statistical tests. This research could be a good start to do further research into the differences between male and female victims. Another recommendation is to start focussing more on Western-European countries, most IPH researches are focussed on the US. In the Netherlands and other Western-European states there are relatively little studies into IPH. Focussing on these countries could give different results in several of the variables.

## References

- Aarten, P., Robertus, C.B. (2019, May 13). Understanding domestic homicide: A quick overview of the Dutch context. Retrieved from <https://leidensecurityandglobalaffairs.nl/articles/understanding-domestic-homicide-a-quick-overview-of-the-dutch-context>
- Agnew, R. (1985). A revised strain theory of delinquency. *Social Forces*, 64(1), 151-167.
- Agnew, R. (1992). Foundation for a general strain theory of crime and delinquency. *Criminology*, 30(1), 47-87.
- Belfrage, H., & Rying, M. (2004). Characteristics of spousal homicide perpetrators: A study of all cases of spousal homicide in Sweden 1990-1999. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental health*, 14, 121-133.
- Belknap, J., Larson, D., Abrams, M.L., Garcia, C., & Anderson-Block, K. (2012). Types of intimate partner homicides committed by women: Self-defence, proxy/retaliation, and sexual proprietariness. *Homicide Studies*, 16(4), 359-379.
- Broidy, L., & Agnew, R. (1997). Gender and crime: A general strain theory perspective. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 34(3), 275-306.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Methods: fifth edition*. New York, United States of America: Oxford University Press.
- Caman, S., Howner, K., Kristiansson, M., & Sturup, J. (2016). Differentiating male and female intimate partner homicide perpetrators: A study of social, criminological and clinical factors. *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health*, 15(1), 26-34.
- DeJong, C., Pizarro, J.M., & McGarrell, E.F. (2011). Can Situational and Structural Factors Differentiate Between Intimate Partner and "Other" Homicide? *Journal of Family Violence*, 26(5), 365-376.
- De Boer, A.P. (1990). *Partnerdoding: Een empirisch forensisch-psychiatrisch onderzoek*. Gouda Quint bv: Arnhem
- Dutch Homicide Monitor (2019). The Hague: Leiden University, Institute of Security and Global Affairs.
- Dobash, R.E., Dobash R.P., Cavanagh, K., & Lewis, R. (2004). Not an ordinary killer – Just an ordinary guy: When men murder an intimate woman partner. *Violence Against Women*, 10(6), 577-605.

- Dutton, D.G., & Nicholls, T.L. (2005). The gender paradigm in domestic violence research and theory: Part 1 – the conflict of theory and data. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 10*, 680-714.
- Elisha, E., Idisis, Y., Timur, U., Addad, M. (2010). Typology of intimate partner homicide. Personal, interpersonal, and environmental characteristics of men who murdered their female intimate partner. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and comparative Criminology, 54*(4), 494-516.
- Eriksson, L., & Mazerolle, P. (2013). A general strain theory of intimate partner homicide. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 18*, 462-470.
- Field, A. (2013). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics: 4<sup>th</sup> edition*. London: SAGE Publications
- Froggio, G. (2007). Strain and juvenile delinquency: A critical review of Agnew's general strain theory. *Journal of Loss and Trauma, 14*(4), 383-418.
- Ganpat, S.M., Granath, S., Kivivuori, J., Lethi, M., Liem, M.C.A., & Nieuwebeerta, P. (2011). *Homicide in Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden: A first study on the European homicide monitor data*. Stockholm: Brå.
- George, M.J. (2003). Invisible touch. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 8*, 23-60.
- Human Rights Campaign. (n.d.) Sexual orientation and gender identity definitions. Retrieved from <https://www.hrc.org/resources/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-terminology-and-definitions>
- Jordan, C.E., Clark, J., Pritchard, A., & Charnigo, R. (2012). Lethal and other serious assaults: Disentangling gender and context. *Crime & Delinquency, 58*(3), 425-455.
- Leistra, G., Nieuwebeerta, P. (2003). *Moord en doodslag in Nederland, 1992-2001*. Amsterdam: Prometheus.
- Liem, M.C.A., de Jong, I., & van Maanen, J. (2018). Partnerdoding in Nederland. *Tijdschrift voor Veiligheid, 17*(4), 34-53.
- Liem, M.C.A., Ganpat, S., Granath, S., Hagstedt, J., Kivivuori, J., Lethi, M. & Nieuwebeerta, P. (2013). Homicide in Finland, the Netherlands, and Sweden: First findings from the European homicide monitor. *Homicide Studies, 17*(1), 75-95.
- Liem, M.C.A., & Koenraadt, F. (2018). *Domestic Homicide: Patterns and Dynamics*. London, England: Routledge.
- Merton, R.K. (1938). Social structure and anomie. *American Sociological Review, 3*(5), 672-682.



- Polizzi, D. (2011). Agnew's general strain theory reconsidered: A phenomenological perspective. *International journal of offender therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 55(7), 1051-1070.
- Polletta, F. (2009). How to tell a new story about battering. *Violence Against Women*, 15(12), 1490-1508.
- Reckdenwald, A., Parker, K.F. (2010). Understanding gender-specific intimate partner homicide: A theoretical and domestic service-oriented approach. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38, 951-958.
- Serran, G., & Firestone, P. (2004). Intimate partner homicide: A review of the male proprietariness and the self-defence theories. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 9, 1-15.
- Shackelford, T.K. (2001). Cohabitation, marriage and murder: Woman-killing by male romantic partners. *Aggressive Behavior*, 27, 284-291.
- Spencer, C.M., & Stith, S.M. (2018). Risk factors for male perpetration and female victimization of intimate partner homicide: A meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 1-14.
- Stöckl, H., Rotstein, A., Abrahams, N., Campbell, J., Watts, C., & Moreno, C.G. (2013). The global prevalence of intimate partner homicide: A systematic review. *The Lancet*, 382(9895), 859-865.
- Swatt, M.L., & He, N.P. (2006). Exploring the difference between male and female intimate partner homicides: Revisiting the concept of situated transactions. *Homicide Studies*, 10(4), 279-292.
- Walker, L.E.A. (2017). *The battered woman syndrome* (Fourth ed.). Springer: New York.
- Weizmann-Henelius, G., Grönroos, M., Putkonen, H., Eronen, M., Lindberg, N., & Häkkänen-Nyholm, H. (2012). Gender-specific risk factors for intimate homicide – A nationwide register-based study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 27(8), 1519-1539.
- Whaley, R.B., & Messner, S.F. (2002). Gender equality and gendered homicides. *Homicide Studies*, 6(3), 188-210.
- Wilson, M.I., & Daly, M. (1988). *Homicide*. Aldine de Gruyter: New York
- Wilson, M.I., & Daly, M. (1992). Who kills whom in spouse killings? On the exceptional sex ratio of spousal homicides in The United States. *Criminology*, 30(2), 189-215.
- Wilson, M.I., & Daly, M. (1993). Spousal homicide risk and estrangement. *Violence and Victims*, 8(1), 3-16. refer

Wilson, M.I., & Daly, M. (1996). Male sexual proprietariness and violence against wives.  
*Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 5(1), 2-7.

## Appendix A: overview of online court rulings

**Table 6. Overview of European Case Law identifier numbers on IPH cases**

---

09/842049-17

08/952381-17

02/800374-17

09/857164-17

08/760115-17

18/750126-17

16/659792-17

16/700126-17

16/706612-17

09/809151-17

08/910056-17

13/665336-17

10/811186-17

18/830363-17

21-003557-18

09/827708-17

10/810630-17

05/860000-18

09-842010-18

10/740022-18

18/830030-18

05/720087-18

15/028480-18

09/842080-18

16/700047-18

02-820450-18

02-800273-18

**Table 6. Overview of European Case Law identifier numbers on IPH cases**

---

09/857107-18

02-800335-18

05/780043-18

16/659455-18

16/706278-18

02-800431-18

16/659501-18

13/654136-18

02-800545-18

05/720389-18

10/700267-18

16/257208-18

15/259156-18

10/810487-18

16/023019-19

18/830035-19

16-137265-19

01/865080-19

18/930065-19

18/930071-19

10/700319-19

## Appendix B: Overview of extra sources in-depth

- Altena, S. (2019, July 11). *Twintig jaar cel voor weduwe voor moord op Tjeerd van Seggeren*. Retrieved from [https://www.lc.nl/friesland/Twintig-jaar-cel-voor-weduwe-voor-moord-op-Tjeerd-van-Seggeren-24642916.html?harvest\\_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F](https://www.lc.nl/friesland/Twintig-jaar-cel-voor-weduwe-voor-moord-op-Tjeerd-van-Seggeren-24642916.html?harvest_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F)
- Berkelder, N. (2018, August 17). *Justitie eist 10 jaar cel en tbs voor doden Adyan Koeiman*. Retrieved from <https://www.ad.nl/rotterdam/justitie-eist-10-jaar-cel-en-tbs-voor-doden-adyan-koeiman~ad953144/>
- Cate ten, A. (2018, May 3). *Twaalf jaar cel voor Grietje B. na moord op haar man Lauwie van Lies*. Retrieved from <https://www.destentor.nl/deventer/twaalf-jaar-cel-voor-grietje-b-na-moord-op-haar-man-lauwie-van-lies~afba4f6c/>
- Enthoven, A. (2019, March 6). *Vier jaar cel en tbs voor man die Russische Julia doodde en in stukken zaagde*. Retrieved from <https://www.omroepwest.nl/nieuws/3773504/Vier-jaar-cel-en-tbs-voor-man-die-Russische-Julia-doodde-en-in-stukken-zaagde>
- Enthoven, A. (2019, June 17). *Tbs met dwangverpleging voor man die eigen vrouw doodde 'omdat ze een vampier was'*. Retrieved from <https://www.omroepwest.nl/nieuws/3855801/Tbs-met-dwangverpleging-voor-man-die-eigen-vrouw-doodde-omdat-ze-een-vampier-was>
- Erp van, R. (2019, July 11). *Verdachte dodelijk steekpartij Kerkrade doode eerder een man in 1994*. Retrieved from [https://www.limburger.nl/cnt/dmf20190711\\_00114269/familie-slachtoffer-dodelijke-steekpartij-verdachte-doodde-al-eerder-iemand](https://www.limburger.nl/cnt/dmf20190711_00114269/familie-slachtoffer-dodelijke-steekpartij-verdachte-doodde-al-eerder-iemand)
- Gerling, M. (2020, Februari 6). *Mimoun H. (71) hoort opnieuw 20 jaar cel eisen voor doden van zijn vrouw en gigantische brand*. Retrieved from <https://www.ad.nl/utrecht/mimoun-h-71-hoort-opnieuw-20-jaar-cel-eisen-voor-doden-van-zijn-vrouw-en-gigantische-brand~a57184b5/>
- Jansen, E.J. (2019, August 19). *Verdachte 'nieuwjaarsmoord' Losser naar Pieter Baan Centrum*. Retrieved from <https://www.tubantia.nl/losser/verdachte-nieuwjaarsmoord-losser-naar-pieter-baan-centrum~a9d05b20/>
- Lelieveld, B., & Dollen, C. (2018, December 11). *OM: 11 jaar cel voor doodslaan echtgenote na ruzie over koopverslaving*. Retrieved from <https://www.ad.nl/zoetermeer/om-11-jaar-cel-voor-doodslaan-echtgenote-na-ruzie-over-koopverslaving~afca3c3c/>

- Meer van der, T. (2019, Februari 25). *13 jaar cel voor echtgenoot om doden Ingrid (46) uit Wernhout*. Retrieved from <https://www.bndestem.nl/breda/13-jaar-cel-voor-echtgenoot-om-doden-ingrid-46-uit-wernhout~a0d90885/>
- Moor de, D. (2018, September 5). *Amersfoorter (74) die echtgenote wurgde: 'We hadden een goed huwelijk'*. Retrieved from <https://www.rtvutrecht.nl/nieuws/1814758/>
- Oosterom, E. (2019, January 23). *Vlaardinger Jan V. moet elf jaar de cel in voor doodslaan van zijn partner*. Retrieved from <https://www.ad.nl/waterweg/vlaardinger-jan-v-moet-elf-jaar-de-cel-in-voor-doodslaan-van-zijn-partner~a8d1fc4b/>
- Teeffelen van, K. (n.d.) *Slachtoffer van de liefde*. Retrieved from [https://verhalen.trouw.nl/partnergeweld/?referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F?redirectUri=%2Fpartnergeweld%2F%3f&pwv=1&pws=functional%7Canalytics%7Ccontent\\_recommendation%7Ctargeted\\_advertising%7Csocial\\_media&days=390&referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F](https://verhalen.trouw.nl/partnergeweld/?referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F?redirectUri=%2Fpartnergeweld%2F%3f&pwv=1&pws=functional%7Canalytics%7Ccontent_recommendation%7Ctargeted_advertising%7Csocial_media&days=390&referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F)