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It happens here too: examining community newspaper coverage of gender roles and intimate partner violence in rural Iowa

Erin K. O'Gara
University of Iowa

IT HAPPENS HERE TOO: EXAMINING COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF GENDER ROLES AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN RURAL IOWA

by
Erin K. O'Gara

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Thesis Supervisor: Professor Julie Andsager

Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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PH.D. THESIS

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This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

Erin K. O'Gara

has been approved by the Examining Committee
for the thesis requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy
degree in Mass Communications at the August 2014 graduation.

Thesis Committee:_____
Julie Andsager, Thesis Supervisor

_____
Meenakshi G. Durham

_____
Petya Eckler

_____
Michelle Campo

_____
Corinne Peek-Asa

To Tyler

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ABSTRACT

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a major social and public health issue in the United States, particularly in rural locations. However, little is known about the context in which IPV occurs in rural areas.

The goal of this dissertation was to examine the ways in which rural communities consider gender norms and the implications that might have for coverage and discussions of IPV. Since rural community newspapers have a uniquely important point of access by reporting on local news in a way that is not done by any other media source, newspaper content was analyzed. A content analysis was conducted of ten weekly, rural community newspapers in Iowa over one year, and comparisons were made with the state's largest paper, the *Des Moines Register*. The content analysis examined gender roles in articles, photographs and photograph captions.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with editors of most of the same rural community newspapers. Editors were asked about their community culture, gender roles within the community, and their awareness and knowledge of IPV. The dissertation was conducted through the framework of feminist positions on gender and violence, and also examined the nature of discussions surrounding gender roles and IPV in rural community newspapers photographs, through the concept of gender display, which considers how gender, power and subordination are reflected through mediated images. Additionally, news gatekeeping theory, which examines the way that newspapers operate within their communities and

make day-to-day decisions about how to cover certain topics was used as a framework to guide the semi-structured interviews with editors.

Results of the content analysis revealed that while IPV was rarely discussed, gendered coverage reflected traditional ideals of femininity and masculinity, although not to the extent expected. The content analysis analyzed various forms of gender display in photographs of men and women in their occupations, community and social roles. Overall, rural communities experience gender disparities, but this was in subtle representations of power differences in newspaper photographs. Results of the interviews indicated that rural community editors rarely think of gender roles within their community. When editors did talk about gender roles, the word "traditional" was frequently used, and most editors felt that men still held the majority of prominent positions within the community, while women also worked outside of the home, usually in less powerful jobs. Interviews indicated that rural community members have a very active role in the gatekeeping process.

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Every year in the United States, it is estimated that 1.3 to 4 million people are physically assaulted by their intimate partners (Yamawaki, Ostenson, & Brown, 2009). The effects of intimate partner violence (IPV) on victims are far more extensive than the common images of black eyes and bruises from battering. Among the myriad repercussions include physical health problems like sexually transmitted infections, gastrointestinal and gynecological disorders, heart and central nervous system complications; mental health issues such as depression, anxiety disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder; increased risk of substance use or abuse and likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2013c). In addition to creating numerous issues for victims that may continue years after the abuse has ceased, IPV also has a staggering economic impact on society. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has estimated that in work, lives, and productivity lost due to IPV, the U.S. experiences losses greater than $8.3 billion annually (2013a). Although intimate partner violence is recognized as a severe and pressing public health and social issue in the United States (CDC, 2013a; Roberts, 2002; Wathlen & MacMillan, 2003), research in a variety of contexts is still desperately needed.

The social implications of IPV include loss of job or income (Goodman, Smyth, Borges, & Singer, 2009); victim blame attribution (Berns, 2009; Leonard, 2002; Lila, Oliver, Catalá-Miñana, Galiana, & Gracia, 2014; Meyers, 1997; Thapar-Bjorkert & Morgan, 2010), which allows for the excuse of violence as something situational and within the victim's control; stigmatization that can prevent victims from seeking and obtaining outside intervention from health or advocacy groups or support from their social networks (Jennings & Piquero, 2008); and social isolation from friends and family, among many others (Domestic Violence Intervention Program [DVIP], 2014; National

Coalition Against Domestic Violence [NCADV], 2010). Each of these implications contributes to the social acceptance of, and lack of awareness on, IPV and the impact that it has on victims.

IPV – preferred for its inclusiveness over the previous term "domestic violence" – is defined by the CDC as "a serious, preventable public health problem that affects millions of Americans. The term 'intimate partner violence' describes physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse" (2013b, para. 1). Intimate partner violence can and does occur among heterosexual and same-sex couples, and, despite what the name might suggest, it can occur in relationships without sexual intimacy.

For a point of clarification – although there are certainly instances of mutual violence in relationships that do not alter the power dynamic (Goodkind, Sullivan, & Bybee, 2004; Tillyer & Wright, 2014) – advocacy organizations indicate that the vast majority of intimate partner violence victims (85% to 95%) are women (DVIP, 2014; Goodkind et al., 2004; NCADV, 2010). Because the root of IPV is in power and control imbalances within a relationship, that results in a heterosexual male in the dominant position in heterosexual couples in most cultures around the world (NCADV, 2014). Despite beliefs that there are equal distributions of violence between men and women (Dutton, Hamel, & Aaronson, 2010), IPV is not a gender-neutral issue in our society (DVIP, 2014; Johnson, 2011). Since the social standing of men places them in a position of much greater power than women (Anderson, 2005; Berns, 2001; Brownmiller, 1975; French, 1992; NCADV, 2014), we often see this norm reinforced.

It is important, however, to recognize the fact that the dominant model of the heterosexual male as primary perpetrator is still a somewhat controversial topic in IPV research (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010). Some schools of thought argue that violence is just as likely to happen with women as perpetrators (Hall, 2012) or instigators (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010), and that the recognition of IPV as a gendered crime is

largely the work of feminists and other activists (Hall, 2012). Controversy also lies in the belief that rather than being part of a patriarchal culture that promotes dominance of women (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010), IPV is actually more likely to be instigated by women. Additional issues of contention within IPV research include instances of mutual violence and how to categorize them (Gerstenberger & Williams, 2013), and attitudes and beliefs surrounding the effectiveness of batterer treatment programs (Hamberger, 2008), among others. Although some aspects of the controversy surrounding IPV research can be attributed to ideological differences, many of these debates can be traced back to survey techniques and other methods of measurement (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010).

Also important to note is the fact that the majority of research on IPV looks at abuse that takes place within heterosexual relationships and places the man in the role of perpetrator, with the women as victim (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010). Although this should not be inferred as a statement of IPV impacting only women in relationships with men, it is important to recognize the unequal distribution in research, public knowledge, and societal education (Baker, Buick, Kim, Moniz, & Nava, 2013) that focuses on heterosexual relational abuse. IPV also occurs at approximately the same rates in same-sex relationships (Blosnich & Bossarte, 2009; McKenry, Serovich, Mason, & Mosack, 2006). Same-sex and transgendered IPV are equally as severe – and often may place victims at an even greater risk of isolation and adverse consequences because of the discrimination or health barriers that they may already be facing because of their gender identity or sexual orientation (Baker, et al., 2013).

Because IPV is so rarely discussed in rural newspapers (O'Gara, 2011), this dissertation will focus on gender role representations – which are likely to be especially traditional and heteronormative in these locations (Swank, Frost, & Fahs, 2012). So although there are many important forms of IPV to consider, this dissertation will look at IPV in rural communities where heteronormative culture is dominant and representations will likely be predominantly in male-female scenarios (Swank, et al., 2012). In this

instance, it is likely that although important and undoubtedly occurring in rural areas, issues of IPV among local members of the LGBT community will not be discussed frequently enough in newspaper coverage to provide meaningful data.

Although it occurs among virtually all population groups in the U.S., IPV is most severe in rural areas (Grama, 2000; Jennings & Piquero, 2008; Peek-Asa et al., 2011; RAC, 2014). Despite the well-documented existence and ramifications of IPV, victims in rural locations remain largely outside of the access of many advocacy and research groups, and they may be inconsistently tracked by public health and legislative organizations (Grama, 2000; Jennings & Piquero, 2008; Peek-Asa et al., 2011; U.S. Census, 2012; Van Hightower & Gorton, 2001). As IPV is a public health problem rooted in social constructions of gender inequality (Riddell, Ford-Gilboe, & Leipert, 2008), it is pertinent to consider the representations of gender and IPV in rural areas, where more traditional gender roles are emphasized (Eastman & Bunch, 2007; Jennings & Piquero, 2008), and gender inequalities are greater (Eastman & Bunch, 2007; Grama, 2000; Riddell et al., 2008).

Because the news media serve as a vital channel for public information, as well as a way in which social norms are often reflected and reinforced, examining media coverage is an ideal access point for discussions surrounding important public issues, including the roles of gender in a community. In the instance of IPV, several scholars have made the link between news media descriptions and the public's knowledge and attitudes surrounding IPV and victims in their communities (Berns, 2009; Meyers, 1997; WSCADV, 2002). Most of this research has been conducted on major news organizations in urban areas (Ferrand Bullock, 2008; Meyers, 1997), which does not likely translate well in rural locations. In fact, knowing exactly how to approach rural communities about the topics of abuse, healthy relationships, and gender roles remains somewhat of a mystery to many health communication scholars in general, as little is known about the

coverage of gender and IPV in rural media as smaller, community newspapers are often omitted from research on media coverage (including studies concerning IPV).

Although there are many important forms of IPV to consider, this dissertation will examine IPV in rural communities where heteronormative culture is dominant (Swank, Frost, & Fahs, 2012), and news media discussions of IPV are rare (O'Gara, 2011). In this instance, it is likely that although important, issues of IPV among local members of the LGBT community will not be discussed frequently enough to provide meaningful data.

Purpose of study

The goal of this dissertation is to create a better understanding of the relationship between the portrayal of gender roles and the ways in which rural, community news media report about IPV. Understanding this link will allow for a new way to consider IPV in rural areas, as well as create public health and advocacy opportunities to address the systemic nature of abuse as it relates to gender roles. Gender roles and the status ascribed to them are not static, and recognizing the particularities about these roles and attitudes toward IPV in rural locations provides new insight for how to best address them in the future. To do this, I studied 10 rural community newspapers in Iowa, as well as the state's largest newspaper, the *Des Moines Register*, as a point of comparison. In this study, Iowa rural community newspaper coverage of gender roles and IPV were examined, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with rural community newspaper editors and journalists to better understand the context of both gender and IPV in rural Iowa communities. This is important because, at this time, little research has considered how gender and IPV are discussed by news media in rural locations, and the social implications that this coverage may have. Coverage of gender roles is particularly of interest in the study of IPV, because although there is clearly a connection between the reliance on traditional gender roles in many cultures and social structures that are

somewhat accepting of IPV (Eastman & Bunch, 2007; Jennings & Piquero, 2008; Yamawaki et al., 2009), there remains very little knowledge of how gender role construction might be reflected in rural news media coverage in the U.S. (The gender component of this study will be explored more fully in Chapter II.)

Understanding this unique context may allow for the future creation of rural-targeted advocacy and public health messages on a variety of topics, including IPV. Since rural areas often have higher rates of abuse than urban areas for a variety of reasons involving cultural norms, isolation, and reduced access to aid, among other issues (Few, 2005; Grama, 2000; RAC, 2014), it is extremely beneficial to understand more about the messages that members of the community receive through the local newspaper on the topics of gender and IPV. Although IPV is a cyclical process that is often hidden from the public view (DVIP, 2014), recognizing community media as a potential access point for education may be a helpful tool in intercepting the cycle by creating greater awareness. This study will also serve to set a benchmark for the current status of IPV discussions in rural community newspapers.

The findings of this study have the potential to lead to an improved understanding of communication about gender in some rural areas and may have implications for future IPV campaign messages. Beyond IPV and rural media, these findings could impact public health and communication through an understanding of what motivates rural journalists and editors to possibly place a controversial gender- or health-related item on the agenda in their community. With this information, we can begin to have a greater potential for outreach opportunities among other traditionally hard-to-reach demographics, such as individuals with low health literacy, rural residents, and those involved in a stigmatized or taboo health situation.

Guided by a theoretical understanding of gender, power, and violence (DVIP, 2014; Hultzworth-Munroe, Herron, Rehman, & Stuart, 2000; Johnson, 2011; NCADV, 2014; Sugarman & Frankel, 1996), and using the tenets of gender display (Goffman,

1976), as well as the news gatekeeping theory (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009), this dissertation examines the social context of gender roles in rural areas through depictions in rural Iowa community newspapers, as well as the type of coverage surrounding IPV. For the purpose of this study, "gender roles" will refer to the apparent norms, values, and positions within a community that individuals are ascribed based on their gender as ascertained in the examination of news coverage.

The state of Iowa was selected for analysis because it is located squarely within the U.S. Census division of the Midwest and is considered in large part to be a rural state, with 45% of the population living outside of urban areas (State Data Center of Iowa, 2012). Iowa's economy relies heavily on agriculture (USDA, 2012) – a characteristic that emphasizes its relatively homogenous, rural nature. Further adding to the relevance of selecting Iowa for analysis is the fact that more than 70,000 calls are placed to IPV hotlines in Iowa in just one year's time (ICADV, 2012a). Particularly since so few Iowans have access to IPV shelter resources (Peek-Asa et al., 2011) and may not even be aware of resources such as the hotline, the actual number of victims likely far surpasses current estimates.

In accordance with the U.S. Census (2012) urban/rural classification system, only weekly newspapers published in communities with a population of less than 2,500 were included in the content analysis. For the purposes of this study, the 2,500-population parameter also served to ensure that these communities were small enough to be unlikely to have an IPV shelter located there – which might skew the culture regarding gender norms and reporting on IPV in a way that would render them unrepresentative of many other rural communities. Since the Stanford University Rural West Initiative considers rural newspapers to be anything with a circulation of less than 30,000 (McGhee, 2011), the rural community newspapers published in Iowa towns of 2,500 or fewer residents also fall far below those minimum guidelines. Because Iowa has so many rural communities too small to maintain their own newspapers, many rural newspapers serve small areas

that stretch beyond the town in which they are published. Although a town may have 2,500 residents or fewer, circulation may be higher because that newspaper also serves local residents living in much smaller surrounding towns, often in the same county.

Before discussing the characteristics of rural community newspapers, it is necessary to fully explore IPV, and the particular circumstances in which it occurs in rural areas.

Historical context of IPV

IPV was not historically recognized in the U.S. as a public health issue – as opposed to an unfortunate, but common and acceptable part of relationships (Berns, 2009). The first wide-scale public acknowledgement of IPV as being seriously rooted in gender inequalities was during the second-wave feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s, where much focus was placed on social and political inequalities between the sexes (Bevacqua, 2008). It was during this time that the very first women's shelters opened in the United States (Office on Violence Against Women, 2009). A wider recognition of IPV and the need for victim assistance gradually spread across the country over the next few decades (Bevacqua, 2008; OVW, 2009).

The second-wave feminist movement in the U.S. fought for gender equality and their right to reproductive freedom. It championed developments like passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, introduction of oral contraception in 1960, creation of the National Organization for Women in 1966, the Title IX Education Amendment in 1972, which guaranteed that no person could be denied or discriminated against on the basis of sex for receiving federal financial assistance, and the historical 1973 Supreme Court case on abortion rights, *Roe v. Wade* (Harrison, 2008). The feminist movement also led to a public opinion shift regarding relationships, including the previous beliefs that while domestic abusers should be held somewhat accountable, the real focus of IPV should be on the battered women who needed help in leaving their situation, thereby "ending" the

abuse (Berns, 2009; Bevacqua, 2008). In 1985, IPV was first recognized as a public health problem in the U.S. (OVW, 2009), and, in 1994, the U.S. Congress first passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) to protect victims of IPV and to bring their abusers to justice (OVW, 2009). The act never failed to gain reauthorization until its expiration in 2011, after which it was not signed back into law until the spring of 2013 (NNEDV, 2013).

Societal beliefs about IPV

Due to the considerable amount of social stigma surrounding the issue of IPV, it is pertinent to consider the most common perceptions, stereotypes, and misunderstandings that society holds, as these have very real impacts. Community perceptions of abuse (including type of abuse and relationship between the victim and abuser) have been identified as influencing a victim's reporting of abuse and help-seeking behavior (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2004).

A large amount of existing research on the issue of blame attribution in IPV focuses around certain attributes of the crime committed (whether it was physical, verbal, or if there was the use of a weapon, for instance) and the assumptions made based on its perceived severity (Leonard, 2002). Although these attributes range considerably depending on various issues, including culture, visibility of the case, and individual perception, among the most thoroughly analyzed have been the consumption of alcohol in the violent situation (Leonard, 2002; Thapar-Bjorkert & Morgan, 2010; Yamawaki et al., 2009), severity and type of injury (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2004; Shlien-Dellinger, Huss, & Kramer, 2004; Yamawaki et al., 2009), frequency of violence, whether the violence occurred between spouses or acquaintances (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2004; Muhammad & Schiff, 2007), personal characteristics of the victim (Muhammad & Schiff, 2007; Taylor, 2008; Yamawaki et al., 2009), and whether the

violence was somehow "provoked" by actions or verbal exchanges with the victim (Meyers, 1997).

In the case of marital status, research suggests that people perceive victims who are married to their abusers as more "damaged" and psychologically disturbed than those who experienced abuse as part of dating or acquaintance violence (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2004). Because most people assume that victims married to their abusers have experienced violence over a period of time, they are blamed for their involvement in the abuse and their "failure" to notify authorities more often than are victims of dating or acquaintance violence (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2004; Taylor, 2008).

In terms of the type of abuse, the general societal perception is that physical (and sexual) abuse is more serious, violent, and harmful than psychological abuse (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2004). Although physical violence in particular does present unique concerns for the immediate safety of victims, research consistently indicates the negative health outcomes of psychological abuse may be equally persistent (CDC, 2013c). Thus, the public perceptions of relatively innocuous psychological abuse are misguided. By CDC definition, the threatening, coercive, humiliating, and controlling (among many other) actions displayed by abusers are only considered psychological abuse if there has been previous physical or sexual violence, or the threat of such acts (CDC, 2013b). Additionally, victims of IPV typically experience more than one type of abuse, and the occurrence of psychological abuse is a strong predictor of future physical violence (Krebs, Breiding, Browne, & Warner, 2011).

Despite advocacy efforts, many stereotypes and stigmatizations of IPV victims continue to hold a persistent role in public knowledge. Since the news media are so influential to community understanding, an undeniable significance is placed upon the way in which they choose to discuss IPV in their community, as well as its status as a wider social issue. Particularly for individuals who may be relatively unaware of IPV, the news media may provide an important opportunity for gaining knowledge and

understanding – or, depending on the coverage, the news media may instead unintentionally perpetuate harmful stereotypes through incorrect or uneducated coverage. An example of the latter can be found on research of IPV-related homicides. A study examining news coverage of homicides found that the media descriptions of the mental state of either the victim or abuser as a potential explanation for provoking or being provoked (Taylor, 2008). News media depictions of the mental status of abusers may also include comments about the temporary state of mind, financial hardships, or traumatic personal history (Taylor, 2008). They may also include quotes from the perpetrator's friends and family insisting that the violence was wildly out of character, and indicative of a volatile situation or relationship (Meyers, 1997). Although circumstantial information might serve as a way to attempt to explain a horrific crime, focusing on the mental state at the time of the violence fails to address the systemic nature of IPV and instead allows for the victim to have some role in the incident.

Victim-blaming in IPV

The second-wave feminist movement brought to light the faulty reasoning in pervasive thinking about IPV – one that inadvertently places a degree of blame on the victim for making the choice to stay. What remains troublesome is how routinely victim-blaming still takes place in contemporary discourse – despite the increased knowledge and public awareness regarding the complexity and gendered nature of IPV (Berns, 2009).

An example of societal victim-blaming can be seen in perhaps the one of the most common reactions to IPV that surrounds the question, "Why doesn't (didn't) she just leave?" (Berns, 2009; Lila et al., 2014). This frequent position in public discourse seems to suggest that the victim holds at least some responsibility in IPV for not leaving the situation, rather than acknowledging the fact that the abuse should never have occurred in

the first place and that preventing violence should be the ultimate goal to ending IPV. Because IPV is so intricately linked to societal perceptions of violence, control, and acceptable behaviors within relationships (DVIP, 2014), public information and attitudes surrounding these issues are important to consider.

One of the most thoroughly studied attributes relating to IPV stereotypes is alcohol consumption by both the victim and perpetrator. Although there has been some debate over the generalizability of the findings, previous research has suggested that when the perpetrator is said to have been under the influence of alcohol, the amount of blame placed upon the individual person is reduced, and instead blame is shifted to the state of intoxication (Leonard, 2002). Contrary to this, when the victim is described as being under the influence of alcohol, the amount of blame placed upon her is increased, suggesting that intoxication and her own behavior may have led to the violence committed against her (Leonard, 2002; Thapar-Bjorkert & Morgan, 2010; Yamawaki et al., 2009). In most of the research that has focused on alcohol consumption in IPV, the victim's consumption has also meant certain connotations for other individual characteristics – such as her social standing and perceived morals (Leonard, 2002).

Unfortunately, in addition to public perception, the victim-blaming mentality has also often been reflected in news media coverage (Berns, 2009; Bullock, 2007). Media portrayals that blame victims typically focus not on the issue of IPV, but rather give considerable attention to either the victim or the abuser personally as individuals – often by implying judgment about role and responsibility, or by ignoring the fact that IPV is in fact is a greater cultural issue impacting millions of women in radically different situations (Berns, 2009; Meyers, 1997). However, media depictions of victims and abusers have impacts that can surpass their individual situations of IPV. When the important societal aspect of IPV is not recognized, it helps to normalize violence by minimizing the agency of the abuser in making the decision to exert power over a partner. Additionally, ignoring the wide-scale societal nature of IPV misinforms public

knowledge of the causes and frequency by treating each IPV event as an isolated issue, rather than just one example of a much larger societal problem (Berns, 2001; Meyers, 1997; Taylor, 2008; Webster & Dunn, 2005).

IPV remains among the most underreported crimes (NCADV, 2011). The immense underreporting of IPV cases can be attributed to a variety of factors, but some of the most noteworthy have to do with the considerable social stigma attached to these issues and the often significant amounts of control and manipulation that abusers have over their victims (NCADV, 2011). As with most intimate crimes, most victims are or have been otherwise involved with their abusers, complicating the situation and making leaving or taking legal action very difficult. In addition to this, victims are often concerned about losing their existing community support by reporting someone with whom they may share deep social ties (DVIP, 2014).

Despite many stereotypes that suggest otherwise (DVIP, 2014; Meyers, 1997), it is very often and accurately emphasized that IPV occurs among all racial, economic, social, and religious levels (DVIP, 2014). Of these variables, socioeconomic status is important in that the women who most often utilize shelters for extended periods of time typically have household incomes that place them at or below the poverty level – a common occurrence in many rural communities (Goodman et al., 2009; Lown, Schmidt, & Wiley, 2006). In fact, the intersection between recurrent intimate partner violence and poverty is so strong that some estimates place the proportion of female welfare recipients who have been victims of IPV at anywhere between 50% and 82%, far above the national average (American Bar Association Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2011). For women in this situation, dire financial circumstances, limited resources, and support systems may position them at increased risk of returning to their abusive partners or of finding themselves in another abusive relationship because of lack of financial support to achieve independence. Research has suggested that because there are so many immediate and significant stressors on victims of both poverty and IPV, women in these

circumstances may be forced to focus on solving only one crisis at a time, which may result in their own personal safety being placed at a lower priority level than things like food, housing, and community acceptance for their children and themselves (Goodman et al., 2009).

Although IPV is equally likely to occur among all racial and ethnic groups, it is necessary to point out that differences in race or ethnicity also greatly impact the barriers to overcoming IPV and accessing resources (Few, 2005; Golden, Perreira, & Piette Durrance, 2013). For women in racial or ethnic minority groups, IPV and institutionalized racism often mean increased difficulty in seeking and receiving assistance from law enforcement and legal sources (Few, 2005), as well as increasing their likelihood of living in poverty and being unable to successfully obtain intervention services (Few, 2005; Grossman, Hinkley, Kawalski, & Margrave, 2005), among other social and discrimination issues.

Race and ethnicity may have important implications for IPV victims in otherwise homogeneous, predominantly white rural locations (Few, 2005), such as the demographic makeup of many Iowa communities. Rurality combined with the marginalization of many racial/ethnic minority group women (Hightower, Gorton, & DeMoss, 2000) make it increasingly unlikely that such victims of IPV will receive the services they need (Goodman et al., 2006). Although racial and ethnic minority populations have been growing over the past couple decades in many locations throughout the state of Iowa (Merchant, Coussens, & Gilbert, 2006), the populations are still relatively small in rural locations (U.S. Census, 2012). Particularly because IPV is so unlikely to be covered in rural community newspapers to begin with (O'Gara, 2011), it could be surmised that issues of race or ethnicity in relation to IPV would not be recognized or addressed. Even if the race of a victim or perpetrator were mentioned in an article discussing IPV, it is likely that the numbers would be too few to provide any meaningful data in a content analysis. Thus, although race and ethnicity certainly have unique implications for IPV

and may have important implications for victims, the homogeneity of rural Iowa and likelihood of having little data led to my decision to not include these as variables.

Once a victim leaves the relationship or living situation, abusive and controlling partners may attempt to sabotage other personal relationships and job opportunities in a variety of ways (Goodman et al., 2009). Unfortunately, these attempts often succeed, especially when women hold low-earning jobs where they may struggle financially or be viewed as expendable (Goodman et al., 2009). For this reason, it is common for victims to try to hide their abuse from others – for fear of being ostracized or considered a liability (DVIP, 2014). Even if they are able to successfully obtain a job without ongoing interference from their abuser, many victims of IPV continue to suffer emotional and psychological trauma so great that it may make maintaining that job very difficult (Lown et al., 2006).

Many IPV survivors may be completely emotionally unprepared to begin work full-time, and frequently must return to their abusive situation out of necessity very soon after leaving (Goodman et al., 2009). Because of limited resources within the social services, as well as shelter and welfare guidelines with a lifetime cap of several years regardless of the circumstances, many women must resort to more dangerous methods of earning money, or they may find themselves in their prior, or another, abusive relationship (Lown et al., 2006; Goodman et al., 2009).

Causes of IPV

Although as of 2014 much is known about the actual causes of IPV – which have much less to do with anger than about demonstrating power and control over another person (NCVC, 2012) – this is not common knowledge among the general public (DVIP, 2014) or a topic frequently covered by the news media (Bullock, 2007; Leonard, 2002; Meyers, 1997; O'Gara, 2011). However, to reduce the occurrence and impact of IPV, it is

important for the general public to recognize its social significance to a culture that largely accepts, or at least tolerates, that type of power imbalance. Because of continued gender disparities in many cultures and social groups, this same tolerance of power roles within a relationship results in a positioning of women as less than men in society, and it allows for some degree of acceptance for violence in relationships as a form of keeping control or order (Berns, 2009; NCADV, 2011).

Often beginning with verbal abuse, once relationships become physically abusive, the severity and frequency of violence often escalates over time (Goodkind et al., 2004; NCADV, 2011). After abuse has begun, many victims resort to a variety of mechanisms in an attempt to cope. While many of these actions are perceived as positive – contacting the police, seeking shelter services, ending the relationship – many others are much more dangerous: substance use or abuse, fighting back in altercations, or engaging in other high-risk behavior (Goodkind et al., 2004). Since the abuse is about the abuser claiming control of the relationship (Goodkind et al., 2004), these coping mechanisms – both positive and negative – often do little to nothing in stopping or changing abusive behavior (Hoschstein & Thurman, 2006), and unfortunately they are not effective in preventing it from recurring. The risky or dangerous behaviors that sometimes result from attempts at coping can be somewhat shocking and misunderstood by many members of society, which leads to a murkier understanding of the cycle of violence and blame attribution (Goodkind et al., 2004; Leonard, 2002). At this point is the critical inquiry for research – to somehow address the link between the social perceptions and attitudes that allow for IPV to occur.

IPV and gender roles in rural locations

Contrary to popular belief that they are often immune from such problems, rural areas in the U.S. are believed to actually have the highest instances of IPV (Grama, 2000;

Jennings & Piquero, 2008; Peek-Asa et al., 2011). Additionally, rural victims of IPV often face additional barriers to leaving abusive situations (Eastman & Bunch, 2007; Grossman et al., 2005; Hightower, Gorton, & DeMoss, 2000; Jennings & Piquero, 2008). These include geographic isolation, little to no access to IPV services, healthcare, or legal advocacy – which are primarily centered in more urban areas (Grama, 2000; Hightower et al., 2000) -- as well as increased stigmatization.

Stigmatization is widely cited in sociological and health literature as the "occurrence of labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination in a context in which power is exercised" (Hatzenbuehler, Phelan, & Link, 2013, p. e1). Stigma is often placed upon individuals possessing certain personality, physical, or personal characteristic traits, or having a group identity that prevents them from obtaining social acceptance (Goffman, 1963). Research on stigma suggests that those impacted may react in a number of ways of attempting to compensate for the stigma, or they may withdraw and exclude themselves into further isolation (Goffman, 1963). The isolation that comes with being stigmatized can lead to depression, anxiety, and reluctance to behave normally or honestly with others (Goffman, 1963). In the case of IPV, this may likely result in a reluctance among victims to speak out about their abuse or request assistance, leading to further isolation for those impacted and a lack of knowledge and understanding on behalf of the community. Much of the stigma surrounding IPV is higher in rural areas due to a lack of anonymity and more conventional gender roles (Jennings & Piquero, 2008; Yamawaki et al., 2009).

Often in rural areas, many individuals live in the country outside of nearby towns. In fact, it is not uncommon to have distances of miles between people in many parts of rural America (Peek-Asa et al., 2011). The isolation of rurality combined with decreased access and support for medical, shelter and advocacy services means that many victims of IPV may live a significant distance (frequently greater than 40 miles in Iowa) from their nearest shelter or source of medical attention, placing them at a major health disparity

(Peek-Asa et al., 2011). This is made even greater by the likelihood that community members may have little knowledge of the abusive situation or the dangers that may be faced daily.

The beliefs surrounding conventional marriage norms and IPV are often exacerbated in rural areas, placing the woman in a position of lesser power in relationships (Eastman & Bunch, 2007; Grama, 2000; Hightower, Gorton, & DeMoss, 2000; Hoschstein & Thurman, 2006). The gender roles that often lead to power differences between men and women in rural communities include traditional heterosexual courtships and marriage, the belief that men should be the sole breadwinners for the family, and that a woman's jobs, social activities, and roles should largely consist of those within, or related to, the home (Eldrige, Mack, & Swank, 2006; Sherman, 2009). These distinctions are particularly of interest to this study because research indicates that gender-role traditionalists are more likely to blame the victim and minimize the impact of IPV than those who hold more egalitarian beliefs about the sexes (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2004). Because of the stricter adherence to traditional gender roles and taboo of IPV common to rural areas, IPV is seldom discussed interpersonally (Grama, 2000). These factors have actually been identified in public health practice as a barrier to seeking aid, and they are associated with increased feelings of self-blame and shame among survivors (Dudgeon & Evanson, 2014).

A study of IPV survivors in rural Canada found that the patriarchal and stereotypically traditional gender roles that they were raised with encouraged women to stay or feel that they deserved the abuse because the man should be the head of the household, and women need to abide by his rules (Riddell, Ford-Gilboe, & Leipert, 2009). This particular set of interviews with survivors suggested that gender role traditionality was a widely accepted norm, as interview subjects reported that some of the community or spiritual leaders they reached out to reinforced these beliefs and encouraged them to placate their abuser in the future (Riddell et al., 2009).

Individuals in rural communities may frequently find themselves in an especially difficult situation to seek outside intervention and report their status as experiencing IPV, particularly since victims – as well as their abusers – may have strong community ties. Even if they were to choose to seek help, legal intervention is often unsuccessful at deterring battering in rural areas (Hoschstein & Thurman, 2006), and the judicial process and the challenges that can come with facing one's abuser – as well as the abuser's family and friends – prevents many victims from reaching, or even pursuing, legal intervention (Koss, 2000). Although many cultures may consider it somewhat taboo, the emphasis on traditional gender roles in some rural locations is so profound that using violence in subordination of women is accepted as relatively normal (Annan, 2008). All of these factors combined make it very unlikely that IPV would be an issue that most community members would be aware of, or knowledgeable about – despite how frequently it may occur.

An important aspect of the emphasis on traditional gender roles in rural communities is that individuals living there may become socialized to the wide differences in power ascribed by gender. In this sense, girls grow up learning that to be a woman is to defer to men, and boys grow up learning that they need to be physically strong and dominant in relationships. The consequences for this socialization and gender ideology may be severe, as research has indicated that stronger beliefs about stereotypical masculinity are positively correlated with abuser status, or propensity for abuse (Schwartz, Kelley, & Kohli, 2012). The connection between attitudes toward traditional gender role and IPV is so strong that some remedial programs for abusers use gender role ideology theory to guide the work that they do in changing attitudes regarding gender inequality and masculinity (Schwartz et al., 2012). Broadly defined, gender role ideology refers to the attitudes and beliefs toward appropriate or traditional gender roles versus nontraditional roles and social standing of men and women (McHugh & Frieze, 1997; Schwartz, et al., 2012; Spence, 1993). Although this study does not use gender ideology

as a guiding concept, it is important to recognize the significance of this body of research on gender roles and IPV.

Though they may be exacerbated in rural areas, misunderstandings of IPV are certainly not limited to those geographic locations. In fact, despite the advancements in IPV legislation and advocacy attempts overall, many incorrect perceptions remain very present in the public sphere.

Health impacts

Mental health problems in particular may go untreated for significant periods of time – particularly because they may not be easy to speak out about, especially in rural communities (Kutek, Turnbull, & Fairweather-Schmidt, 2011). This can be especially true in cases of individuals who have already been marginalized in another aspect of their health or personal lives (Sharf & Vanderford, 2008). Many of the most common consequences of IPV – depression, anxiety, and other mental health complications -- often go untreated and can contribute significantly to the difficulties faced in leaving an abusive situation (CDC, 2013b; NCADV, 2011). This can be an area of misunderstanding for many members of the public, as identifying the myriad psychological implications can be more difficult to assess than the many of the physical effects of IPV (Goodman et al., 2009).

Because the ramifications of IPV may pass through families generationally, and the effects may be life-long for survivors (Goodman et al., 2009; NCADV, 2011), seeking an end to this issue is paramount. Crucial to reducing the occurrence of IPV, however, is creating a deeper understanding of the complexity of violent relationships, and the rate at which they happen – particularly in rural areas, where intimate partner violence may actually be more severe, and the challenges to leaving the relationship much greater (Peek-Asa et al., 2011; RAC, 2014). As such, it is important to recognize how gender roles relate to the unique characteristics of IPV in rural areas.

News media coverage of IPV

Even in circumstances of news media portrayals about intimate partner violence that are intended to empower women (often found in the advice columns of newspapers [Berns, 1999, 2009; O'Gara, 2011]), the message is frequently about picking oneself up by the bootstraps and fixing the problem (i.e., abuse) by either seeking couple's therapy or leaving the relationship (Berns, 1999, 2009). Often these depictions perpetuate an idea that women must take responsibility for abuse and acknowledge their own agency in taking control of the situation (thereby placing blame on them, if they do not leave) or their role in the cycle of violence surrounding the relationship. This is potentially dangerous, not just in the fact that it misleads audiences about the "normalcy" of violence in relationships and perpetuates myths about the role of victims in intimate partner violence, but because it also misses an important opportunity to inform the public about IPV and start a mainstream discourse on the aspects of culture that allow for violence against women (Berns, 2009).

Many other methods of covering IPV in the news media are equally problematic. For instance, rather than acknowledging IPV as what it is – violence, abuse, control, and sometimes murder – it has often instead been referred to it as a "crime of passion," "domestic dispute," or "family disturbance" in the news media (Ferrand Bullock, 2008; Meyers, 1997; Yamawaki et al., 2009). Doing so belittles the severity of what actually occurred, as well as gives the impression that the violence was an isolated incident not connected to the greater societal issue of IPV. Other ways of discussing IPV have been to rely on friends, neighbors, or family members of the perpetrator – who were often "shocked" to hear that an abuser could have ever been violent – again, implying that perhaps the victim played a large role in the abuse or downward turn of the relationship (Meyers, 1997; WSCADV, 2002).

Possibilities for change

Despite the inconsistencies and occasional victim-blaming approach in reporting on IPV, there has also been encouragement for news media to work with advocacy organizations in their coverage (Ferrand-Bullock, 2008) as this has been found to significantly improve the fairness and accuracy of coverage (WSCADV, 2002). Some changes that occur when reporters follow advocacy organization recommendations involve using fewer descriptions of the personal characteristics of the victim and perpetrator, providing more domestic violence advocates/shelter employees as sources, and to changing the language in which IPV is described to truly reflect what occurred (Ryan, Anastario, & DaCunha, 2006). In the case studies conducted by following advocacy recommendations, results indicate that the more equitable coverage has led to far fewer instances of blatant victim-blaming and has allowed experts on IPV to occasionally speak, rather than uninformed commentators (Ryan et al., 2006).

Fortunately, gradual progress has certainly been made regarding the ways in which news media cover IPV – particularly when they are willing to work with advocacy organizations (Ryan et al., 2006; WSCADV, 2002). Even outside of working closely with advocacy groups or trained professionals, research has indicated a dramatic decrease in coverage that excuses the perpetrator and blames the victim after journalists undergo a brief informational training on IPV (Park & Gordon, 2005). However, this practice is still not reliably the norm, and there is still progress to be made before coverage is consistently accurate or sensitive to victims. As it stands now, particularly in rural areas, IPV remains very rarely covered in news media coverage, and it is almost never presented as a larger societal issue, but instead, individual, isolated incidents are portrayed (O'Gara, 2011).

The event-driven nature of IPV coverage in particular is an important point, since one of the dangers of isolated or episodic media coverage is that it perpetuates the belief that IPV rarely happens. Because it is portrayed as a rare occurrence in a unique situation, IPV is unlikely to seem like something that all community members should be concerned about – and, perhaps, more importantly – it has the potential to downplay the frequency, severity, and reality of IPV in most communities. With coverage that accurately depicts IPV, as well as defines what constitutes healthy relationships, it is possible for community awareness to increase and stigmatizations surrounding victims to decrease – thus achieving an important educational opportunity for IPV and an improvement in rural community health. This study will also serve to set a benchmark for the current status of IPV discussions in rural community newspapers.

The role of the rural newspaper

Because IPV remains a topic often not recognized or correctly identified for many individuals living in rural communities (Grama, 2000), the news media may play an especially important role in awareness and education – addressing and influencing public opinions and stigma as well as providing information about resources. Thus, the information available in the news media is necessary for the awareness and understanding of IPV among community members. Although there is research on the general discussions of IPV in more mainstream, urban media, little is known about the ways in which IPV is covered in rural community news media, aside from the fact that it is very rarely mentioned (Eastman & Bunch, 2007; Ferrand-Bullock, 2008; Grama, 2000; O'Gara, 2011). To best understand the social system in which rural IPV may occur, it is beneficial to also capture perceptions of the community from local newspaper editors.

For most news media organizations, journalists and editors work daily in a position that allows them to reflect and report – at least in part – on their own

communities. The issues they discuss are not only relevant to and experienced by the public in their readership, but also by the journalists themselves (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1980). However, unlike many larger or urban areas where journalists may lead relatively anonymous lives outside of their place of employment, in rural areas journalists have a much more highly visible role within the community (Tichenor et al., 1980). This means that in an often tightly knit, homogeneous social system (Hindman, Littlefield, Preston, & Neumann, 1999), the stories journalists choose to report on and the ways in which they cover them may have very personal and social, as well as professional, repercussions (Hindman et al., 1999; Tichenor et al., 1980). Particularly in communities where there is a high homogeneity among members, editors and journalists are more likely to write about things that they personally deem relevant to that particular group of people (Hindman et al., 1999). If these issues are somewhat contentious or have the potential to create conflict, small community newspapers frequently downplay or omit them entirely (Tichenor et al., 1980). This raises questions on how coverage of IPV may be depicted in rural newspapers – especially if it is regarding an incident between community members.

Although most rural areas of the United States have full access to nationwide and international news media online, there remains a strong significance to local newspapers, which might be one of the only mediated representations of many small communities (Hubbell & Dearing, 2003; McHee, 2011; Stanford University, 2012; Tichenor, et al., 1980).). In fact, recent data obtained from the Pew Research Center indicates that 72% of U.S. adults currently depend on their local newspapers as their primary source of information (2012). This is especially true in Iowa, where rural community newspapers have continued to maintain a very strong reader base (Iowa Newspaper Association [INA], 2013) that approximately 86% of Iowans read newspapers consistently, with 74% regularly subscribing to and reading all of their local community paper (INA, 2010). Newspapers in rural communities continue to play an extremely important role in

providing public information and often serve as one of the only sources of news for those particular areas (Hubbell & Dearing, 2003; McHee, 2011; Stanford University, 2012; Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1980) and thus serve an extremely important social role within the communities (McHee, 2011).

Of particular interest to this study is the fact that in relatively homogenous areas (such as those found in Iowa), rural newspapers have been identified as having somewhat more traditional, less diverse, or progressive coverage than their urban counterparts (Hindman et al., 1999). It stands to reason that although most research on coverage of women and the issue of IPV in the news media suggests that coverage may have become more progressive, since most of these studies have been conducted in urban areas, the same may not hold true for rural newspapers.

Outside of merely reflecting the news happening within that community, rural media have a potentially important influence on the social norms for that locale – which may be influenced by whether or not these issues are discussed, and in what way they are talked about. Because of the strong relationship between IPV, misogyny, and gender traditionalism (Hultzworth-Munroe et al., 2000; Johnson, 2011; Sugarman & Frankel, 1996), it is pertinent to examine the messages about gender roles in rural media, where previous research indicates that conventional depictions may be more common (Eastman & Bunch, 2007; Grama, 2000; Hightower, Gorton, & DeMoss, 2000; Hoschstein & Thurman, 2006).

In the case of IPV and rural newspapers, journalists and editors may be in a difficult situation to write about instances of IPV because it might mean identifying other members of the community or bringing up the fact that IPV is a common issue in many rural areas (Peek-Asa et al., 2011) – something that might be a contentious issue once discussed in the local newspaper, particularly as it relates to conventional gender roles.

In addition to understanding the significance of rural, community newspaper coverage of any issue, it is imperative to consider the implications of what some types of

coverage may mean for community norms. Since IPV is so deeply rooted in society's constructions of gender, it is necessary to consider the issue within in a feminist framework.

Chapter I Summary

This chapter described the ways in which intimate partner violence is a significant public health problem, particularly for women (CDC, 2013c), and how the dangers and circumstances surrounding IPV are often exacerbated in rural areas, where gender traditionality and isolation from services place victims at a greater disadvantage (Grama, 2000; Jennings & Piquero, 2008; Peek-Asa et al., 2011; RAC, 2014).

Because the causes of IPV are primarily learned from society, the only way to end the cycle and stop IPV is by changing social norms and tolerance of gender and violence. Although considerable improvements have been made to how we approach the issue of IPV (both in practice and in research), there are still many misconceptions surrounding the causes, victims, and abusers. Victims are still commonly blamed and stigmatized for the violence committed against them (Berns, 2009; Bullock, 2007; Meyers, 1997). These issues may be especially pronounced in rural areas, where communities are often tightly-knit socially, and may know many private details in the lives of others (Eastman & Bunch, 2007; Grama, 2000; Hightower, Gorton, & DeMoss, 2000; Hoschstein & Thurman, 2006).

Rural community newspapers have a uniquely important point of access, since they directly report on local news in a way that is not done by any other media source. Although there is little information surrounding the nature of depictions of gender roles and IPV in rural community newspapers, this study attempts to examine this coverage to gain a better understanding for the environment in which IPV occurs, as well as the rationale editors have for they way that they currently cover their communities and issues

of gendered violence.

The following chapter will present the theoretical framework for considering the relationship among gender roles, IPV, and news media coverage, and it will also provide background information on rural news media.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Intimate partner violence is a systemic issue linked to cultural norms and values that – often implicitly – consider women as less than men. As such, it is important to consider the social norms surrounding gender roles and gender-related violence in types of communities, especially since these norms are often reflected in media coverage (Berns, 2009). Unlike many other forms of violence, IPV is deeply rooted in gender inequalities that have existed for centuries, thus placing a great significance on the role that gender has in society today (Russo & Pirlott, 2006). As the news media help to give us an understanding of how we relate and should react to certain issues surrounding us, it is worth examining news media representations of gender and how they might reflect and shape social positions on gender roles in a community.

Because this study attempts to understand rural news media coverage of gender roles and IPV, as well as the explanation for how the coverage was developed, it is necessary to consider gender and IPV through theoretical positions that consider the overall culture of gender and power dynamics in rural communities and how they might influence IPV, as well as the individual news routines and values that might shape news construction of gender roles. The entire study will be viewed through a feminist perspective of the connections among gender, power, and violence. In examining news construction of gender and IPV, the study employs the theoretical model of gatekeeping (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Newspaper photographs will be examined through Erving Goffman's (1976) conceptualization of "gender display." Gender display provides a framework for the analysis of visual displays of power in terms of elements such as relative size of men and women and their prominence in the photograph, facial expressions, and positions of the body.

Feminist perspectives on gender and violence

Just as there are several forms of IPV, there are varying feminist perspectives on the topic. However, the vast majority – as well as the overwhelming conclusion of research – centers on the recognition that gender-role traditionalism and misogynistic culture play the greatest role in heterosexual IPV (DVIP, 2014; Hultzworth-Munroe et al., 2000; Johnson, 2011; NCADV, 2014; Sugarman & Frankel, 1996). Although in general there is little debate surrounding the links among society, gender, and IPV as described in the overwhelming amount of feminist, advocacy, health, and governmental literature (Anderson, 2005; Berns, 2001; Brownmiller, 1975; CDC, 2013b; CDC 2013c; Dutton, Hamel, & Aaronson, 2010; DVIP, 2014; French, 1992; Murray & Powell, 2009; NCADV, 2014), there is a small vein of scholarship that instead chooses to refer to IPV as a "family violence" issue that is merely reflective of a dysfunctional family culture (Anderson, 2005; Melton, 2012). However, most of the research that has examined these claims has found that, by far, victims of IPV are female, and that when women are acknowledged as perpetuating abuse upon their male partners, it is almost always as self-defense (DVIP, 2014; NCADV, 2014; Melton, 2012; Noh, Lee, & Felty, 2010). The same can be said of homicide of male partners committed by women – an act almost never done outside of long-term and severe abuse (Noh et al., 2010).

Before delving into the dynamics of gendered violence, it is worthwhile to consider some of the background surrounding gender in current U.S. culture. Pioneering feminist scholar Simone de Beauvoir famously wrote "one is not born, but rather becomes, woman" (de Beauvoir, 2011 [1949], p. 283). Although this assertion has been somewhat contested among various feminist authors and researchers, many agree that despite obvious physical differences between the sexes, in patriarchal cultures such as those in many Western countries, many of the roles (societal and familial, for instance), obligations, and stereotypes of women are socially constructed rather than innate characteristics or traits (Bartky, 1988; Lucal, 1999). Through these constructions and

expectations, gender is treated as a personal attribute resulting from social practices, rather than an inherent quality of an individual (Anderson, 2005; Archer, 2002; Russo & Pirlott, 2006). In this sense, gender may represent the many traits that an individual has – personality, roles, relationships, values, expectations, and appropriate behaviors, among many others – in addition to their biological or anatomical sex (Bourne & Russo, 1998; Russo & Pirlott, 2006). So, as we begin to understand our biological sex, we also begin to recognize our gender and what that means as proscribed by our culture and social interactions. We can therefore think of sex as biological and gender as being socially constructed. The fact that the concept of gender (and therefore gender roles and gender standing within society) is socially constructed is integral to the power differences and subordination in IPV. Because it would not be possible to understand any differences between the sex and gender of individuals included in articles, photographs, or captions, in this dissertation I will consider the individuals' gender by the pronoun used to describe them in the caption or article, or the way that they are depicted through the photograph, if it is possible to determine. Additionally, I did not ask any specific questions about the gender of the editors that I interviewed, and instead made assumptions about this based on their sex and the specific ways that they described themselves.

The constructions of gender, and subsequently gender roles, are particularly important to understanding IPV as a gender-based crime. Referring to IPV as "gender-based" in this sense means that, unlike other violent acts that a woman might experience in her lifetime, IPV is largely shaped by status, societal gender roles, objectification, and discrepancies in power (Russo & Pirlott, 2006). Though not a universal phenomenon, women in many parts of the world have long experienced inferior status based on gender (Brownmiller, 1975).

Throughout history, the positioning of women as secondary to men was reflected in society by the fact that they often were allowed very few or no legal rights and could not act as autonomous individuals (Bakken, 1998; Brownmiller, 1975; Dow, 1996;

Einsenstein, 1999; Kahlor & Eastin, 2011; Kouvo, 2008; van Zoonen, 1994). This legal constriction went beyond women not having the right to own property or have and use their own money (even if they earned it), but went as far as to not having the ability to take legal recourse over what happened to their bodies (Bakken, 1998; Brownmiller, 1975; Kahlor & Eastin, 2011). Research has pointed out that even the earliest rape legislation was introduced not for the woman's sake, but for her father's because her virginal "value" as a bargaining tactic in arranged marriages would decrease significantly after she was "deflowered" (Brownmiller, 1975). Even after women gained the right to vote and were active members of the workforce, popular messages in society and the mass media still reinforced the idea that their physical labor was not valued outside of housework, and they should embrace qualities such as timidity, physical beauty, and sweet dispositions – women should be seeking compliments, rather than social and legal equality (Smith, 1982).

A consistent theme throughout much of the evolution of gender equality was not only that women had varying degrees of rights or control over their own bodies, but also that it was perfectly acceptable for men to use physical force, violence, or coercion to dominate women according to men's will (Brownmiller, 1975; Kahlor & Eastin, 2011; van Zoonen, 1994). In fact, spousal rape didn't become a crime in all 50 states in the U.S. until as recently as 1993 (McMahon-Howard, Clay-Warner, & Renzulli, 2009). Though now it is theoretically a thing of the past, this legally sanctioned subordination and essentially ownership of women continues to have lasting impacts.

In the U.S., we have yet to elect a female president or vice president; women still earn less money than men for the same jobs, despite having the same education and skills (Fitzpatrick, 2010; Moore, 2014) and political debate continues over who has rights to certain aspects of a woman's body, especially those concerning reproduction (Eilperin, 2013; Martin, 2012). In fact, the last several decades have seen the political climate so rife with contentious – and often outlandish – comments and attempts at regulating

women's reproductive rights and access to health care that many groups within the public feel that a "war" has been declared on all women – a phrase that has more recently come into larger public dialogue (American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU], 2014; O'Donnell, 2013).

In Iowa, the state where this study is focused, there has yet to be a woman elected as a U.S. senator, representative or governor. The fact that the majority of laws in this country are still made predominantly by men is significant, especially when considering the substantial impact that public laws may have on the private lives of individuals (French, 1985; Lipman-Blumen, 1984). For women in the U.S., this means that male legislators are primarily in charge of creating laws that permit what reproductive rights women may have. Laws impacting reproduction have particular importance to the social standing of women, as it has been suggested that attempts to legislate abortion are actually an attempt to manage one of the last aspects of women's lives that they were able to take control of with the advent of the birth control pill (Lipman-Blumen). Still others make the connection to strong religious movements in the U.S. that equate virginity with virtue – implying that a woman who has sex for any reason other than to reproduce is essentially bad and therefore unworthy of making certain decisions for herself (McDonough, 2014).

The patriarchal culture that must be in place to allow some of these inequalities to survive is not just one where men are explicitly valued more than women, but rather one in which traits that can be linked with violent attitudes – aggressiveness, using physical force to achieve a goal or prove a point, and dominance – are culturally valued and praised (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Lawson, 2012). Not only are the stereotypically masculine traits of aggressiveness and dominance valued in our business culture and capitalist society, the U.S. legal system is largely composed of male politicians who proudly demonstrate them while creating and enforcing laws for the rest of the country (French, 1992; Lipman-Blumen, 1984). This remains such a significant topic in society

that some – both in and outside of academia – have pointed to a modern "rape culture" that seems to excuse (and sometimes even celebrate) the actions of people who use force on a woman's body against her will (Brownmiller, 1975; O'Donnell, 2013; Valenti, 2013).

Unfortunately, there have been no shortages of high-profile examples in popular culture and the national news that help reinforce this point (Levy, 2013; Locker, 2013; Plank, 2014). From popular song lyrics that state "I know you want it" to an apprehensive partner (Locker, 2013; Romano, 2013), to the defense and continued praise of athletes who have been accused or convicted of rape and blaming their victims for hurting their careers (Levy, 2013; Edwards, 2013), to politicians who attempt to make a distinction regarding what constitutes "legitimate rape" (Jaco, 2012) and refusing a woman's right to abortion even in the case of rape because the baby would have been "what God intended" (McAuliff, 2012), we are culturally surrounded by examples of mediated images that degrade women and permit the use of force on their bodies. What all of this seems to indicate is that although progress has certainly been made toward equality in many aspects of contemporary society and life, gender inequity and subordination is still alive and well, and in need of scholarly and public attention.

Combined with the fact that legislation exists dictating what women, unlike men, may or may not do with their own bodies, the societal expectations and regulations on what a woman "should" be positions them as somewhat less of their own being compared to men (Bordo, 1995; Meyers, 1997). The implications of what this means to society are that since a woman is not her own person in the same way that a man is, she can therefore be molded, controlled, adapted, and required to fit predetermined ideals of femininity. Since primarily male politicians continue to debate the rights of women to make personal decisions regarding their own contraception and sexual health (ACLU, 2014), we may assume that any female body is not off-limits for other types of subordination. This positioning of woman as "other" (Bordo, 1995; de Beauvoir, 2011 [1949]) is at the root

of a culture that often promotes, or at the very least tolerates, violence against women (Meyers, 1997).

The concept of women as "other" is often reflected in media representations that reinforce the constructions of who and what women should be (Greenwood & Lippman, 2010). These representations exist everywhere from the belief that, as a woman, one's primary duties (even goals) should be to have and raise children, to please men, and to take care of the home, all the while being docile and delicate (de Beauvoir, 2011 [1949]; Greenwood & Lippman, 2010); to the societal expectations of the "ideal" woman's body, hair, face, and dress (Bartky, 1988; Bordo, 1995). Not only do these depictions reinforce the idea that the most appropriate and virtuous actions for women are to behave in stereotypical gender roles, but they also imply that even something as uniquely personal as an individual's physical appearance should be determined for the viewing pleasure of others.

In addition to representations of what a woman should or should not be, reminders that the female body is fair game to be conquered and used consistently surround us. As a society we have mainstream, mediated messages that explicitly excuse or condone violence or domination, and we regularly receive these images as sexualized for the purposes of advertising and selling material items (Kilbourne, Sut, & Rabinovitz, 2010). Violent sexual depictions are romanticized in popular culture (Durham, 2012), used as part of popular games (Beck, Boys, Rose, & Beck, 2012), and treated as relatively unimportant on the national political stage (Davis, 2012). Each of these representations – while not all specifically about IPV – normalizes the societal standards that accept domination of women and the politicization of women's bodies. The implication of these issues is an environment where violence against women –in the forms of coercion, threats, stalking, rape, or abuse – seems within the realm of acceptability.

Despite what is known about IPV, its prevalence and effects, domination and violence remain present in mass media content. Although many of the mediated messages

recognized for depicting and condoning violence and sexual force may demonstrate the more extreme examples of culturally accepted subordination of women (Kilbourne et al., 2010; Locker, 2013; Plank, 2014), we are surrounded by many more subtle versions of gender stratification every day (Collins, 2011). Perhaps what makes the latter so worrisome is that they may often appear in situations that seemingly have nothing to do with control, relationships, or even gender. By demonstrating gender roles and inequalities in a way that reinforces stereotypes and power imbalances as being perfectly normal, the mass media may be (unintentionally) solidifying an idea of what it means to be male and female in contemporary society.

News media depictions of gender

Although there are obvious biological differences between the sexes, most research on media construction of gendered issues and the disparity in mediated representations between men and women is concerned with the portrayals of gender and the impact of these depictions on perceptions of what it means to be male or female in society (Collins, 2011; Greenwood & Lippman, 2010). Research has noted that women have been largely excluded in both news and entertainment media for decades – a term referred to as "symbolic annihilation," which also includes the ways in which women are many times trivialized, condemned, and denied their own specific identities through media representations (Tuchman, 1978). The implication of this is that women are disenfranchised by not being included in mediated depictions of culture, thereby implying that their status as female prevents them from being important or valued. For example, despite the fact that they make up more than half of the general population, women are pictured and quoted significantly less often than their male counterparts in various forms of the news media (Armstrong, 2004; Armstrong & Gao, 2011; Lobo & Cabecinhas, 2010; Serini, Powers, & Johnson, 1998; van Zoonen, 1994). By failing to represent

women equally as often as men in the mass media, clear cultural messages are given about the role of women as the inferior gender – helping to create a cultural norm based on the same views.

Beyond the disparity in sheer frequency of inclusion, in news media, women are typically described in far more simplistic ways than are men (Byerly & Ross, 2006). In fact, research has indicated that even when news media cover women for important (and seemingly gender-neutral) topics like running for political office, women consistently fail to receive the same opportunity to discuss policy issues and receive less credible editorial treatment than males in the same position – regardless of their poll standings (Serini et al., 1998). While women are often depicted in terms of their roles in heterosexual relationships, and as holding non-professional and often subordinate, unpaid, and domestic-type positions, men are much more likely to be portrayed as professional, powerful, and assertive (Byerly & Ross, 2006; Lobo & Cabecinhas, 2010; Media Watch, 2005). Women are also far less likely to be used as official sources, and when they are quoted, it is typically peripheral to the story (Andsager, 2014; Armstrong, 2004; Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2005), which may lead to the assumption that, in general, men are more knowledgeable, trustworthy, and important than women (Armstrong, 2005).

Women continue to comprise a minority of news coverage (Byerly & Ross, 2006; Lobo & Cabecinhas, 2010), and they are much more likely to be the source of a major news discussion or story if they are a celebrity (Media Watch, 2005) – an occupation that commonly gains media attention by focusing on the superficial aspects of women such as their physical appearance and sexuality (Durham, 2008) – or if they fall into a traditionally feminine role such as a caregiver or a passive character in the overall news narrative (Lobo & Cabecinhas, 2010; Media Watch, 2005).

Females are significantly more likely to be described in terms of their physical appearance than are males, who are more likely to be described based on their

intelligence or accomplishments (Byerly & Ross, 2006; Collins, 2011), which implies that women are less worthy of coverage on more substantive grounds. Often, the emphasis on physical appearance is done in terms of rather sexist descriptions that describes or depicts their bodies, expressions, or posture in detail not given to men (Collins, 2011). Research has indicated that when women are consistently portrayed and described in terms of their physical appearance more than their male counterparts, it places them in a position of diminished power and implies that they are not physically, mentally, or socially equals (Greenwood & Lippman, 2010). The consequence is a culture that is familiar with, and condones, an objectification of women. This continued objectification undoubtedly reflects and contributes to harassment and violence against women (Greenwood & Lippman, 2010; Rudman & Borgida, 1995).

The relationship between media coverage and subsequent perceptions of gender and IPV presents an important opportunity for research and intervention, because – just as negative or stereotypical coverage can reinforce stigmas and unfavorable opinions – accurate information has the potential to improve education and understanding. News media coverage that reinforces stereotypical or gendered portrayals of women helps to reinforce existing disparities between the genders (Entman, 2011; Knobloch-Westerwick & Hoplamazian, 2012).

Feminist communication scholar Liesbet van Zoonen (1994), in her comprehensive look at female representation in the media, argued that the need for accurate, politically, and socially responsible coverage of gendered issues is even more important in the news media than in other forms of communication, because it is through the news media that we gain much of public knowledge, and it is there that feminist issues might be communicated with the greatest effectiveness. She emphasized this point by suggesting that, in their very role of informing on some "truth," the news media have an obligation to cover things through multiple perspectives. For the many issues relating to excluded or marginalized women's issues, the most honest, ethical way of reporting

includes a perspective considerate of feminist issues of the time (van Zoonen, 1994). The point here is that, if most people are getting their information about current events and some form of an understanding of the world around them through news media, the fact that feminist issues are not included in this information – even in discussions on so-called gendered topics – is troubling.

However, perhaps of greater concern than the fact that feminist issues and ideas are so rarely discussed or represented accurately in the news media (Schreiber, 2010; van Zoonen, 1994) is the fact that when they are discussed, it can often be in ways that seem rather pejorative and, as van Zoonen claimed, "hostile" (1994, p. 152). She suggested that because the news media focus so heavily on presenting material intended to be completely free of bias or agenda in a professional and detached manner, they focus on events rather than the analysis of ideas or issues (van Zoonen, 1994). Other scholars have found that, in fact, especially when feminist topics are covered by the news media, they are portrayed in a way that suggests they are a very small set of issues, which apply (or matter) only to a certain, lesser minority with a very clear (and, again, small) group of leaders (Schreiber, 2010). This specifically seems especially relevant to news media coverage of IPV.

Since IPV is something that is so intrinsically linked to social inequalities, relating it to the greater issue of violence, control, and unhealthy relationships (as opposed to episodic, isolated events) seems of great importance to public knowledge.

Gender display and visual image

Though women are not often depicted as the focus of serious news issues, research has indicated that images of women are occasionally shown alongside a news story as a dramatic addition (Lobo & Cabecinhas, 2010). Further, women are depicted in news photographs as showing far more emotion than males – particularly happiness or

displaying a pleasant disposition (Rodgers, Kenix, & Thorson, 2007). While not quite the same as exploiting women for sexual objectification, the use of female images to build an emotional aspect to a story still perpetuates the idea that women are only tangentially related to issues of substance.

In an attempt to further explain the often-stereotypical coverage of men and women in the media, especially in advertisements, Erving Goffman proposed the concept of "gender display" (Goffman, 1976). Gender display provides a lens through which to identify the theoretical linkage of the social construction of power and gender in media depictions – an important issue to consider since mediated images play a powerful role in shaping our conceptualizations of gender and accompanying values and beliefs (Andsager, Hust, & Powers, 2001; Jhally, 1995).

Goffman (1976) suggested that by enacting socially reinforced rituals, individuals learn how to "perform" in expected ways, and, thus, put on a display for one another – actions that can inform about people, positions, and social identities without actually saying anything. Rather than representing innate male or female behaviors, gender display suggests that many photographic depictions more accurately demonstrate idealized versions of what society wants to convey about gender roles (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Through looking at photographs of men, women, and children in advertisements, Goffman attempted to understand various societal rules by merely examining the displays put on by the individuals posing in the photos.

From this, he was able to make assertions about positions of power, as well as those of inferiority that were often correlated with gender. Though depictions have somewhat improved in terms of stereotypical gender representations, continued research using Goffman's (1976) conception of gender display has demonstrated that much of the representation that women continue to get in mass media images still fall into the same categories that Goffman originally noted (Andsager et al., 2001; King, 2012).

For instance, by identifying the ways in which camera angles consistently

emphasize a man's size relative to women's, certain assumptions can be made about who is allowed to occupy the most space, as well as the fact that the men are stereotypically supposed to be portrayed as larger and stronger than women (Goffman, 1976; Kilbourne et al., 2010; Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000). This may hold a certain level of significance in relation to gender norms that consider stereotypical traits such as physical strength or aggressiveness desirable in men (Kahlor & Eastin, 2011). Research looking at patient-blaming in breast cancer images examined the way that various postures and self-touch of women can have different meanings in the way that they are being portrayed in subordination and powerlessness (Andsager, et al., 2001). Other studies have looked at the way that the posturing of women in popular music videos provides non-verbal cues about their sexuality or docility (Wallis, 2011). Similar gendered representations continue to be identified in a wide variety of mediated formats. For example, research has shown that men are much more likely to be posed as standing or moving about, while women might be shown sitting or holding still – likely in an (perhaps subconscious) attempt to reinforce the idea of male physical (if not also social) superiority over women because of their assertiveness, compared to a woman's docility (Conley & Ramsey, 2011; Kilbourne et al., 2010; Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000; Wallis, 2011). The issue of depictions of gender roles is especially relevant when discussing community norms and acceptance of IPV.

Many of the original stereotypical depictions of women recognized in the earliest conceptions of gender display (Goffman, 1976) still hold true today – though not necessarily to the same extent (Collins, 2011). For instance, images continue to depict women as more passive (Andsager, et al., 2001), soft, and familial while posing, and deferring to men, and images tend to show men as assertive, alert, powerful, physically active, and dominant (Conley & Ramsey, 2011; Goffman, 1976; Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000; Wallis, 2011), perpetuating a stereotype of male power and female subordination. Women are also depicted more frequently in terms of their physical beauty and self-touching (Conley & Ramsey, 2011). Additionally, Goffman noted that in many images,

women appear to be looking down or to the side, but rarely directly at the camera – as though this act may have been too assertive for stereotypical roles (Andsager et al., 2001; Conley & Ramsey, 2011; Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000). One attribute of the docile, passive role of women in photographs has also been recognized as how often the women appear to be social and smiling (Dodd, Russell, & Jenkins, 1999). In fact, this particular aspect of gender representation may be so profound that it reaches people at a very young age even outside of the mass media at a local level. Research on school yearbooks has documented significant increases in the number of photos of girls smiling and boys looking serious in their yearly school pictures from adolescence onward – presumably an indication of their socialization for how their own gender roles should behave (Dodd et al., 1999). In addition to assumptions that can be made about likeability and assertiveness in these photos, there are also implicit messages about an increased focus on physical appearances for young women, and taking a more serious, intellectual position for young men.

In addition to the stereotypical portrayals of certain characteristics surrounding men and women, Goffman (1976) also noted the use of rank order in gender. By this, he meant that a viewer could often infer the roles of individuals in terms of employment and hierarchy by the ways that they were photographed. For instance, by looking at a photo and the positioning and body language in the pose, the viewer could often see who was presumably in charge; those in lesser, but still substantial positions of power; and those who were not crucial to the work team (Goffman, 1976). Other factors to consider in the examination of work-related images might be whether men and women are represented equally in the workforce, and whether the depiction of the person in the highest rank order also corresponds with jobs of power, rather than gender alone.

Independent of the work place, the location of the photographs also holds significance in its meaning. Despite the fact that they make up such a significant proportion of the workforce, women remain much more likely to be represented in

stereotypical positions of homemakers, caretakers and nonprofessionals (Collins, 2011). This might include being part of groups or clubs relating to domestic roles, or in a position of organizing and holding non-work related events. Women also continue to be frequently depicted and described through their familial role – largely as a wife, girlfriend, or mother, and less about them as their own person, which demonstrates their lower social status (Collins, 2011; Goffman, 1976). Thus, women are more likely to be pictured in the home or similarly domestic setting, while men's autonomy is illustrated through a variety of locations outside the home, often in the workplace (Collins, 2011; King, 2012), providing statements about their respective importance and role within the family structure. In research done on commercial representations of both genders as parents, women were much more easily recognizable in their depiction as a mother – caretaking, comforting – while fathers typically appeared to have a role that was centered on companionship and being the child's friend (Drewniany, 1996).

In addition to being more likely to be covered in stereotypical or traditionally gendered ways, women are also not included nearly as much as men in a variety of media formats (Collins, 2011; King, 2012). In fact, women continue to be severely underrepresented in news, as sources or experts, in advertisements, and as characters in popular culture images and programming (Collins, 2011). By not focusing on women at the same rate as men, the impression is given that they are not nearly as valued or important to society, and may be essentially ignored when considering something significant enough to garner media attention.

Though Goffman's (1976) original research was done at a time when traditional gender roles were certainly more emphasized by society as a whole, and women did not experience the same comparative equality as contemporary females, subsequent research has shown that many of the same traditionally gendered trends and stereotypes are still present (Byerly & Ross, 2006; Collins, 2011; Glascock & Preston-Schreck, 2004; Greenwood & Lippman, 2010; Lobo & Cabecinhas, 2010; Media Watch, 2005; Stern,

2005).

Rural gender displays

Though stereotypical gender depictions remain an issue with mass media coverage as a whole, it is possible that these might be exacerbated in rural areas, where news can be especially traditional (Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1980). Rural communities in Iowa tend to be very homogenous (US Census, 2010a), and research on rural newspapers suggests that they may include somewhat more traditional, less diverse, or progressive coverage than their urban counterparts (Hindman et al., 1999). Partially as result of their population size, rural community newspapers may have a more narrow representation of gender roles than more urban areas. This is potentially of concern because gender ideology research has indicated that attitudes about traditional gender roles and division between men and women in society is linked to abuser behavior and proclivity to commit abuse (McHugh & Frieze, 1997; Schwartz, 2012; Spence, 1993).

While images of men and women in the workplace make up only part of Goffman's (1976) gender display categories, such considerations are particularly pertinent when considering gender roles in a community newspaper that may include a large focus on such depictions of local residents. Research examining depictions of gendered occupations has indicated certain careers that seem especially stereotypically or traditionally masculine, as well as those that appear stereotypically feminine and gender-neutral (Glick, Wilk & Perreault, 1995; Rudman & Glick, 2008). Typically, the specific jobs that are most likely to be depicted as stereotypically feminine careers are things like teaching, childcare, and subordinate office positions, while the stereotypically masculine jobs are things that require physicality or advanced social status, such as farming, laboring occupations, and many positions of authority (Glick, Wilk & Perreault, 1995; Rudman & Glick, 2008). Because rural communities can sometimes have very traditional gender ideals (Eastman & Bunch, 2007; Grama, 2000; Hightower, Gorton, & DeMoss,

2000; Hoschstein & Thurman, 2006), the representations of gender roles within places of employment may serve as an additional source of telling information on the status of gender relations.

Because rural community newspapers primarily cover events and issues concerning their communities, they hold a great deal of influence in their coverage. It is especially worth considering the depictions of gender displays during social events and overall depictions of community standing in rural newspapers because strong stereotypical (traditional) attitudes toward gender are typically much more accepting of IPV than more progressive locations (French, 1992; Yamawaki et al., 2009).

Since this study is considering the relationships between stereotypical depictions and representations of gender, and a greater tolerance for IPV, utilizing Goffman's (1976) gender display framework as part of the content analysis is appropriate and beneficial to understanding the role of gender in rural communities. In this study, considering the representations of gender roles in photographs, captions and news stories through Goffman's (1976) gender display will help provide insights to the social mores in rural communities. For instance, if women are primarily being the focus of news articles for topics that have to do with their physical appearance or traditionally feminine activities or occupations, and males are presented for a wide variety of topics, through the lens of gender display, we can make assumptions about hierarchical gender differences within those communities. Likewise, if men are consistently shown as more physically active or powerful than women, inferences can made about the culture surrounding physical expressions of masculinity – an issue perhaps especially relevant when considering community recognition of IPV.

Hypotheses: Gender roles in rural newspapers

Examining the portrayal of gender roles in rural communities may lead to a greater understanding of social attitudes toward equality between men and women, and the gendered culture in which IPV occurs. Especially because attitudes about gender role traditionality are correlated with acceptance of beliefs about or willingness to commit IPV (McHugh & Frieze, 1997; Schwartz, et al., 2012; Spence, 1993), understanding gender roles as they are depicted in rural community newspapers provides a valuable opportunity to see the relationship between social status and gender in rural communities. Based on the current research suggesting continued stereotypical representations of gender, as well as through the framework of Goffman's (1976) gender display, and because women still do not receive equitable coverage to men in the news media (Armstrong, 2004; Greenwood & Lippman, 2010; Lobo & Cabecinhas, 2010; van Zoonen, 1994), and rural community media typically are less progressive than their urban counterparts (Hindman et al., 1999), the following hypotheses are posed:

H1. Rural newspaper coverage will include more overall stories about men than women.

H1a. The proportion of stories about men to those about women will be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper.

H2. Women in rural community newspaper coverage will be more often defined by their familial role than men.

H2a. Women in rural community newspaper coverage will be more often identified by a familial role than as an individual.

H2b: Rural community newspaper photographs will contain displays of women in familial roles more frequently than as individuals.

H2c. The proportion of women defined by their familial role to men defined by familial role will be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban

newspaper.

H3. Occupations for women in rural community newspapers will contain more stereotypically feminine jobs than traditionally masculine jobs.

H3a. The proportion of occupations for women containing more stereotypically feminine jobs than traditionally masculine jobs will be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper.

H4. Men will appear in rural community newspaper photographs more often than women.

H4a. The proportion of photographs including men to those including women will be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper.

H5. Men in rural community newspaper photographs will be more often depicted as physically active than women.

H5a. The proportion of photographs depicting men as physically active to those depicting women as physically active will be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper.

H6. Men in in rural community newspaper photographs will be portrayed as more prominent than women.

H6a. The proportion of photographs depicting men as prominent to those depicting women as prominent will be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper.

H7. Men in in rural community newspaper photographs will be more often pictured in business roles outside of the home than women.

H7a. The proportion of photographs depicting men as in business roles outside the home to those depicting women in business roles outside the home will be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper.

H8: Rural newspaper coverage will contain more descriptions of women's physical appearance than men's physical appearance.

H8a. The proportion of descriptions of women's physical appearance to descriptions of men's physical appearance will be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper.

Hypotheses: IPV coverage

Although the rural community newspaper coverage may be potentially informative regarding social norms and the context in which IPV occurs in rural areas, exploring news coverage of gender alone will not completely provide a basis for examining the connection between IPV and gender positions within a community. In an attempt to more fully understand this issue, it is necessary to consider the connection between gendered news media coverage and discussions of IPV in terms of what they might mean for rural culture. Especially since previous research has indicated that there is an increased acceptance of IPV and greater levels of victim-blaming in cultures that hold more traditional gender roles (Yamawaki et al., 2009), it is possible that in communities with very stereotypical news media coverage of gender, they may also appear to hold more accepting positions of IPV, at least as depicted in rural newspapers. Therefore, I posed the following hypotheses:

H9: In the majority of instances where IPV is apparent, the victim will be depicted in rural newspaper coverage as at least partially to blame.

H9a: IPV victims in rural newspaper coverage will be more often depicted as at least partially to blame than IPV victims in a more urban newspaper.

H10: In the majority of instances where IPV is apparent, rural newspaper coverage will mention specific behavioral or mediating factors (such as substance use, or mental issues) that attribute responsibility to the victim.

H10a: Rural newspaper coverage of IPV will more often mention specific

behavioral or mediating factors (such as substance use, or mental issues) that attribute responsibility to the victim than coverage of IPV in a more urban newspaper.

H11: In rural community newspapers, IPV will more frequently be described as part of an isolated incident, rather than as a societal issue.

H11a: Rural newspaper coverage of IPV will more often mention describe IPV as part of an isolated incident than will coverage of IPV in a more urban newspaper.

Gatekeeping theory and portrayal of social issues

It is critical to consider the perceptions of the journalists and newspaper editors, and a rationale for the manner in which they describe and view gender roles and IPV in their communities. Although much research has focused on how IPV may be described in an urban context (Berns, 2009; Meyers, 1997), such is not the case for rural areas – nor for the explanation of why journalists cover these issues in a particular manner. Since rural journalists are *members* of their tightly knit communities as well as those who write about them (Tichenor, et al., 1980), their understanding of this position provides a unique opportunity to assess their perceptions of the community culture as it relates to gender and violence.

Before any event or piece of information becomes "news," a process of decision-making on behalf of journalists and editors must take place. This practice of forming news content from limitless information is referred to in media research as gatekeeping:

> Gatekeeping is the process of culling and crafting bits of information into the limited number of messages that reach people through the news each day. People rely on mediators to transform information about billions of events into a manageable subset of media messages. On the face of it, narrowing so many potential messages to so few seems to be impossible, but there is a lengthy and long-established process that makes it happen day in and day out. This process determines not only which information is

> selected, but also what the content and nature of messages, such as news, will be. (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p. 10)

The theoretical position of media gatekeeping posits that a series of forces and mediating factors influence a journalist or editor's decision about what stories to cover, the facts and information that are included or excluded, and judgment calls about what is most relevant to the audience (Lewin, 1947; Shoemaker, 1991).

Gatekeeping suggests that journalists and editors participate in this process of selecting what information to cover in the news media unconsciously, while still adhering to the goal of steering clear of bias (Cuillier, 2012). Because it would be impossible for the news media to know about and report on everything going on in the world, country, and local community, such decisions are, to some extent, unavoidable and integral to the news-making process.

There have been several theorized models of how gatekeeping works. Although the various iterations of the model have worked in limited situations, not all seemed to apply to the way that the communication channels perform in a contemporary media environment while taking into consideration audience involvement and feedback as accurately as that proposed by gatekeeping researchers Shoemaker and Vos (2009). Before examining the current model suggested in this study (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009), it is worthwhile to consider the various forms that gatekeeping has held in media research.

Perhaps the most well-known groundbreaking study on media gatekeeping was initially done by David Manning White (1950) with the famous "Mr. Gates." Mr. Gates, as he was referred to in the research, was a small-town newspaper editor through whom White was able to track the decision-making process for what would be included in and excluded from daily news (White, 1950). In the initial research looking at Mr. Gates, the gatekeeping process was described as something that was highly subjective – with as many as one-third of the decisions he made about what should be included or excluded from the newspaper based on his personal evaluations or interest in that topic (Shoemaker

& Vos, 2009; White, 1950). Although little subsequent research followed this exact model closely, many studies continued to use the idea of the gatekeeping process as a metaphor for how information made its way through the media system and eventually to the public (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

Research that followed White's (1950) initial work resulted in varying impressions of the same level of subjectivity in the news-making process. Throughout the early years of its conception, at least, the majority of research on gatekeeping chose to consider it from the perspective of internal and external restraints (Bleske, 1997). Over time, the general consensus of academic work on gatekeeping seemed to prefer a model that suggested multiple "gates" of access or denial for certain information (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). In fact, while "Mr. Gates" was considered to be largely motivated by his personal beliefs and interests (White, 1950), studies looking at a greater variety of news organizations later suggested that the environmental and organizational constraints placed upon editors may actually play a greater role in the formation of news media content (Cassidy, 2006; Gieber, 1956, 1964; Shoemaker, 1997; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Westley & MacLean, 1957).

However, even within most recent theorizations of gatekeeping (Shoemaker &Vos, 2009), the framework continues to suggest that certain judgment calls must be made on the part of both the journalist and editor (playing very different roles in the same process) to determine what topics should be covered, and of those, what will be placed into the news and where. Within these guidelines, the decisions about what to include are based on several personal factors, including what editors or journalists consider as necessary to public knowledge, as well as what sources they use, what information they consider relevant to their audiences, time, staff and resource constraints, and outside factors, such as economic pressures, infotainment trends, or new technologies (Livingston & Bennett, 2003). As such, rather than identifying these as a particular decision to include or exclude certain content, the process serves as an unconscious way

of operating by journalistic norms and practices (Livingston & Bennett, 2003). In fact, gatekeeping research has also recognized the ways in which many unrelated media organizations tend to cover news in related ways – implying that it isn't uncommon for the news to look similar, despite coming from completely separate sources (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). This inter-media agenda setting (McCombs & Ghanem, 2001) takes place when one many of the journalists and editors are following the same journalistic guidelines, and potentially receiving the same source information and same messages about how their news will be delivered from owning organizations. However, there are also situations where individuals go outside of the normal journalistic routines and include different information than the mainstream. In both the similarities of coverage from most news organizations, and in the impact of stories that move beyond these norms, explanations can come from the process of media gatekeeping.

In addition to creating news content, media gatekeeping has the potential to shape the way that information is perceived among audiences. If the presentation of information varies greatly among media organizations based on editor preference or norms within those areas, it creates the potential for those media audiences to have very specific views of their community and the rest of the world (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Particularly because rural community newspapers are so rarely the source of scholarly examination, it is possible that the way they present information could inform their audiences in a way completely unique from other media organizations.

Some scholars have identified a hierarchical model of outside influences that are likely to have the greatest impact on the gatekeeping decisions of journalists. Included in these hierarchical pressures are things such as the organization's social environment, editors, professional and social norms, and journalistic processes (Cuillier, 2012; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the outside pressures actually play a larger role in influencing news content than do the personal standpoint,

opinions, and gender of journalists (Bleske, 1997; Cassidy, 2006; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

There are three primary channels in the gatekeeping model. The first of these channels is the source, which refers to the individuals or organizations where the information comes from. Sources are typically divided into three additional channel categories – routine channels, informal channels, and enterprise channels. Routine channels include public records and information about other public events or issues and public relations practitioners; informal channels can include other media organizations, off-the-record sources, and information briefings; and enterprise channels are the sources that the journalist must seek out him or herself – such as public records, eye witnesses, and people involved in or knowledgeable about a certain event or issue (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). The second channel in gatekeeping is the media, which refers to the process that takes place when a "communication worker forms information about an event into a message." (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p. 31). This channel refers to the individual and organizational aspects in which that particular form of media operates. Both source and media channels also include a variety of factors that impact their development, such as economic and political interests, revenue, and social norms or beliefs – among many others. The final channel of the gatekeeping process is the audience, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Not all researchers who study gatekeeping choose to conceptualize additional sources of influence in the model, but influential scholars Shoemaker & Vos(2009) have recognized five major levels of influence that are present in the gatekeeping process. The levels of gatekeeping as identified by researchers Shoemaker and Vos (2009) are: individual communication workers and all of the personal beliefs and traits that they possess, the practices and routines involved in media communication, variables that make up the organizational level and organization culture, the social institutions upon which the media source relies (such things as advertising, politics, and other interest groups),

and norms within the social system in which the organization operates (p. 40). The combination of these five levels provides a complex way for understanding the negotiations that media organizations make with every story they cover (or perhaps choose not to cover). Each of these issues independently creates a system of influence on the media organization, their funding and operation budget, as well as the personal beliefs and values of the journalists and editors producing media content. It is worth noting that many aspects of gatekeeping often take place with self-imposed restrictions or requirements on the part of the editor (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

Approaches to theorizing about the gatekeeping model moved from a recognition of several internal and external forces that demanded editors and newspaper employees to make judgment calls on the material they would eventually publish, to a later realization that even the journalists who were chasing stories and conducting interviews had already participated in some form of gatekeeping, before the news item even reached the "gates" at the level of editorial issues and the climate of the organization (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

Focusing on the fact that even those making the "news" still had to learn about the events from another source (publicists, wire services, people at the scene) is part of what complicates the gatekeeping process from a simple decision-making routine of news work to something involved in a complicated system of gates and judgments (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). It is also worth noting that many of the differences in coverage and range of topics among various media organizations are often essential to receiving a wide range of views. Despite these varied gates, most of the time the events and topics – the actual "news" portion of what is covered -- stays the same, but the editorial influence on it makes the difference in how this news is presented and discussed (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). The importance here lies not in the explanations that can be made about certain events and the ways in which they are covered in the news media, but instead, in the overall theory that leads to this variation (and sometimes similarities) in coverage.

The factors that have influenced gatekeeping have changed somewhat over time. For instance, Shoemaker & Vos, (2009) argued that in an ever-monopolized media landscape, the differences that could have once been attributed to individuals within the organization are now largely overshadowed by the organization and its overarching ideological and cultural positions. So, rather than seeing certain topics covered, sources selected, and information discussed in specific ways, in the contemporary media environment it is more likely that variation in these news stories among media organizations would be largely as result of the conglomerates that own them. However, this is not entirely true across the board. In smaller or independent newspapers that may not feel the same corporate pressure, individual beliefs and preferences have a greater impact than the positions of the owning organization or person (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). This places rural community newspapers in a very specific segment, since not only are most operating outside of the constraints of large media organizations (even if they may be owned in part by a larger organization), but also because the number of individuals who may exert their influence over the content and sources are much smaller than in many other forms of news media – since the editor often acts as journalist as well.

Thus, as in most media organizations, it is possible that in the situation of community newspapers in rural Iowa, the predominant social norms, funding, and editorial practices may have a large influence about the ways in which certain topics are covered or not covered, described, and the perceived level of relevance that they may hold within the community.

The audience's role

It is generally recognized that there is more than one gatekeeping role – though this was previously identified as having the primary gatekeeper as the source, and the secondary gatekeeper as the editor, contemporary and more sophisticated research

emphasizes the important role of the audience (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). In the current, widely interactive media landscape, the audience comprises a very important third component in the gatekeeping process through their ability to create and heavily influence news media topics and information (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). The use of the Internet as a medium for news media has created an entirely new format wherein the specific likes and interests of media audiences can become immediately visible (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). This has allowed media organizations to see the exact types of content that audiences prefer and what they skip, and through audience comments, media organizations can almost instantly assess audience reaction to their news stories. In addition to allowing news organizations to shape content to audience preferences, changing according to audience feedback ultimately allows for a more secure bottom line. If the media organization can ensure that it is giving audience members what they want and in a way that they like receiving it, the media ensures that those consumers will continue coming back for more.

In our present society of citizen journalists and user-generated content (Singer & Ashman, 2009), ubiquitous social networking sites and nearly constant connectivity, mediated messages are now rarely one-way communication. The audience can exert its gatekeeping influence by providing feedback on the type of topics and coverage that it is interested in seeing. Because the media depend on the audience interest and participation in their product (the news itself), they now have the ability to influence content (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). So, for example, if the community disliked the way that their rural community newspaper was reporting on issues related to gender representations or IPV, and they decided to speak out or protest, they might have enough influence to persuade the newspaper to change the type of coverage it delivers. In this sense, audience influence may go beyond pressure applied directly through communication with editors and journalists at the newspaper to also include important things like interpersonal discussions among community members about the newspaper and their perceptions of

whether it should continue to be supported with their readership. Since rural communities are often tightly knit socially, information and perceptions might travel faster than in many other circumstances.

The role of the audience in gatekeeping allows for this process to be seen as the realistic news making method that reflects today's media environment – something previous conceptions of gatekeeping lacked. Whereas journalists have always had to receive their information from other sources within the news world, audiences have typically had to receive all of their information on events happening around them through the news media. In the current interconnected social world, however, the news media are not always the first source of access to breaking current events and world happenings, and the audience has a much more active role. The role of a journalist – and of news media in general – has changed, and the audience has become an important part of that process.

The new conception of the gatekeeping model theorized by Shoemaker and Vos (2009) not only places the audience as an important third gatekeeper, for "breaking" news, but it also demonstrates how audience interactivity has entirely shaped the type of media content that they get. By using the example of online sites for most major news organizations, we can see how the news media can take the messages and events that they have already deemed important for public knowledge in their original broadcast or print version, and how these become changed in priority online by the feedback and personal characteristics of their audience who might seek to access information through that medium (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Particularly when considering the various levels at which gatekeeping operates, the audience has the potential to play an important role in influencing the economic interests of the media organization through online feedback – both in terms of making certain organizations successful through sharing content and also in hurting other organizations through negative online feedback.

Thus, through the revisited gatekeeping model of Shoemaker and Vos (2009), the audience becomes both recipient and producer of news in a way unseen before. In this sense, information flows through three channels in the gatekeeping process. Not only do journalists and editors still hold their gatekeeping roles, but audience members become intricately involved in the process by providing feedback on news, and making decisions about passing information along to others through their own gates (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). For a visual representation of the gatekeeping model, see Figure I.

Gatekeeping in rural communities

Because journalists for rural media have unique connections to the small homogenous communities in which they both work and live (Hindman et al., 1999), it becomes especially interesting to consider the gatekeeping model through this context. In a location with clearly set social mores and personal relationships with many of the residents, the role of audience involvement in media content may be even more significant than previously suggested. Not only can we make inferences about the gatekeeping conducted by the journalists and editors, but in examining news coverage of gender and IPV, it is also possible to glean a certain understanding of the community culture as well.

Although the majority of media research on gatekeeping theory is not focused on community newspapers specifically, gatekeeping scholar Gans (1979) included discussions of rural communities as embodying one of the core values that all journalists in the U.S. share. Described as “small town pastoralism” (Gans, 1979), this refers to the way that many journalists and media organizations idealize small towns as free of the many problems and troubles faced in urban communities. In addition to depicting small towns as idyllic and their residents as virtuous, pastoralism considers it common practice for news media to continue to emphasize the strong shared values of small towns even in

situations where the topic of the article might be violence in those locations (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p. 45). Though the journalistic values as identified by Gans (1979) are not specific to rural locations, this value in particular holds significance to this study. If the news media depict rural communities as isolated from crime, violence and other negative issues that are only described as happening to urban locations, it is likely that rural community newspapers only exacerbate these news values in their coverage. Since IPV is an issue that affects people in all locations, describing it as something that only occurs in urban areas can perpetuate untrue information among community members.

Most of the research conducted on the audience as a gatekeeper has been done on major news organizations where audience participation can be easily seen through content sharing and online feedback (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009), yet rural newspapers present a unique opportunity for this analysis. While rural audiences might not have the mobile or networking capacity that many of their urban counterparts do, we can further assess the role of the audience as gatekeeper in other ways – such as the decision-making process that takes place when journalists and editors receive police reports. Additionally, making decisions about what information to include or exclude in rural communities may not be as simple as reporting all local news. Some research suggests that community newspapers are viewed as "community boosters" whose purpose is in part to provide positive information to and about the area they serve (Pantera, 2013). In this situation, many more factors than whether information becomes available may be taken into consideration in reporting local stories.

Although a large amount of audience feedback is tracked and identified through direct information in the form of online comments, virality (or likelihood of being shared among social networking sites) and receiving user-generated content may not be the same in rural locations where there may be fewer organization websites than in more urban news sources. In the circumstance of rural locations, one might predict that since many community newspapers do not have newspaper websites with active and current

information presented and archived, the audience would make their opinions and likes known through other channels such as their social networking sites and word of mouth throughout the community.

Research Questions

Since many journalists receive tips on news topics through wire services, press releases, community suggestions, and police information in urban areas (Zelizer, 2004), it is worthwhile to understand the process that takes place when routine IPV police issues come through and whether these are generally regarded as assault, altercations, or IPV for community newspapers. While the difference in word choice might seem like a minute detail compared to whether or not the topic is covered at all, the change of description can place a crucial emphasis on acknowledging the reality of what IPV, abusers, and victims look like in a relevant context. This not only fulfills the important social function of addressing a preventable public health problem, but it also allows for more consistent surveillance to determine the magnitude of IPV, trend examination, as well as information that may lead to prevention and intervention efforts, and legislative decisions (CDC, 2010a).

Since rural journalists must make important decisions about what issues are covered in their community, and the ways in which they are discussed in rural community newspapers, the following research questions are posed:

RQ1: What role(s) do journalists perceive that community members have in shaping newspaper content?

RQ2: What meaning(s) do rural community newspaper journalists give to gender roles within their communities?

RQ3: How do rural journalists explain or describe their coverage of violent crime (or assaults) in their community?

RQ4: What are the perceptions of the frequency of local IPV among journalists of rural community newspapers?

RQ4a: How do rural journalists and editors explain or describe their coverage of IPV?

RQ5: What is the relationship between the level of relevance of IPV to their communities as perceived by the journalist and the amount of coverage given to IPV?

RQ5a: What is the relationship between the level of relevance of IPV to their communities as perceived by the journalist and the nature of coverage on IPV?

Each of the research questions and hypotheses will be answered by the data collected through content analyses and interviews. To ensure the validity of the study's findings, the same rural newspapers will be used for both the content analysis and the interviews of editors and journalists.

Chapter II Summary

This chapter has explored feminist perspectives on the connection between gender and violence, and the strong links that this holds with the nature of IPV as a gender-based crime (Anderson, 2005; Berns, 2001; Brownmiller, 1975; CDC, 2013b; CDC 2013c; Dutton, Hamel, & Aaronson, 2010; DVIP, 2014; French, 1992; Murray & Powell, 2009; NCADV, 2014). The patriarchal nature of U.S. culture (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Lawson, 2012) reveals inequalities between the genders in a variety of ways, which are also frequently reflected in media coverage that provides meanings about what it means

to be a man or woman in contemporary society (Collins, 2011; Greenwood & Lippman, 2010).

In addition to considerations of feminist positions on gender and violence, this dissertation also examined the nature of discussions surrounding gender roles and IPV in rural community newspaper photographs, through Goffman's (1976) gender display, which considers how gender, power and subordination are reflected through mediated images, and the news gatekeeping theory, which examines the way that newspapers operate within their communities and make day-to-day decisions about how to cover certain topics.

The following chapter will present the methodologies for the dissertation, and will include a full list of variables examined, as well as the codebook and interview guide materials used.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

In order to gain an understanding of the role and meaning of gender and intimate partner violence in Iowa, a Midwestern, rural state of the U.S., the research for this dissertation was conducted in two distinct parts: a content analysis of rural community newspapers considering depictions of gender roles and IPV in local communities, and semi-structured interviews with a census of editors of these same newspapers to assess their perceptions of both gender roles and IPV in their communities, as well as their explanation for the newspaper's coverage of local stories and instances of IPV. I will explain each method separately and in detail here.

Content analysis

The first portion of the study examined the ways in which rural newspapers depict gender role expectations and describe IPV. This was done through a content analysis. Local news coverage is particularly important to assess in rural newspapers, as it will help to understand the role of gender in these communities and thus the context of gender and power relations in which IPV occurs in those locations. Community newspaper readership remains high in Iowa communities (INA, 2013), and research has indicated that rural areas of the United States also use the Internet and social media sites frequently to access media information (Han, LaRose, Steinfield, & Velasquez, 2011; Plopper & Conaway, 2013). This is worth noting in this study because although many people subscribe to the rural community newspapers, the newspapers' reach expands beyond subscribers because nonsubscribers are still able to access this information from the websites or Facebook pages of those newspapers that have them. Editors interviewed also reported that many local businesses and organizations subscribed and made their newspapers available to customers.

Because the media source of interest for this study is rural community newspapers, only weekly newspapers were analyzed. Weekly newspapers were used because they are the most common type of small, community newspaper in Iowa (INA, 2013; Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1980) and therefore would be the most representative of the population being studied. Additionally, because the Stanford University Rural West Initiative criterion for *rural newspapers* is composed of publications with a circulation less than 30,000 (McHee, 2011), and the U.S. Census extends the definition of *rural* to communities with a population of less than 2,500 (U.S. Census, 2012), weekly newspapers were the only data source that fit into all categories. Thus, weekly newspapers with a circulation of less than 30,000 published in communities with populations of fewer than 2,500 residents were considered for analysis.

Sample: Counties

To determine the sample of newspapers for analysis, the demographic information for all 99 Iowa counties was obtained from the U.S. Census data (U.S. Census, 2010a). Counties were then divided into categories based on their population, in accordance with the National Center for Health Statistics Criteria (NCHS) urban-rural classification scheme for counties (CDC, 2014; Ingram & Franco, 2012). Because the U.S. Census does not make urban-rural classifications at the county level, and because the Census definitions of urban-rural classifications generally start at community population levels that are greater than the population in many rural Iowa towns, the NCHS (Ingram & Franco, 2012) scheme is the appropriate system to use for this study.

The NCHS urban-rural classification system (Ingram & Franco, 2012) divides county populations into six categories, ranging from large metropolitan counties (with populations greater than one million) to counties with fewer than 10,000 residents. To obtain a representative sample of rural Iowa newspapers at the county level, Iowa's 99

counties were divided into two main rural categories of the NCHS (Ingram & Franco, 2012) and a stratified sample was conducted to select counties from which newspapers would be used for analysis. The communities from each county, as well as the newspapers selected, are still in accordance with the rural classification of 2,500 residents or fewer (U.S. Census, 2012) as well as being in accordance with the classification for rural community newspapers (circulations of fewer than 30,000; McHee, 2011). Although several counties in Iowa exceed the NCHS (Ingram & Franco, 2012) classification for rural, they are composed of multiple small towns (many of which are still considered rural by U.S. Census [2010] standards) and not urban areas (US Census, 2010a). It is especially important to be able to assess rural communities based on both criteria for this study, since many rural newspapers serve surrounding towns including the one in which they are published.

Once the counties were divided into the NCHS categories, 10 were selected via stratified sampling. (See Figure II.) In accordance with the NCHS (Ingram & Franco, 2012) categories, five counties were randomly selected from the non-metropolitan, fewer than 10,000 population category, and five counties from the non-metropolitan, greater than 10,000 population category. Although Iowa has county population sizes that allowed for division into more specific NCHS (Ingram & Franco, 2012) categories, the majority of rural counties fell into the more than 10,000 population and fewer than 10,000 population groups. These also ensured that the sample would be representative of different levels of rurality, while still potentially being large enough to contain a newspaper. Though Polk County is in the medium metro category, and contains Iowa's largest city of Des Moines and its suburbs, I included it as a source of more urban comparison with the analysis of the rural newspapers, resulting in a complete sample of newspapers from 11 counties. It should be noted that the inclusion of this more urban area does not assume that any differences between it and the rural counties are due to population alone, but instead are likely owed to much different demographic and cultural

environments. As such, the inclusion of the *Des Moines Register* is still worthy of comparative analysis as it too represents a perspective on gender and IPV that many Iowans may see, and is the newspaper of record for Iowa. Since Polk County will be used only as a source of urban comparison, it will not be included in the main analysis of the 10 rural newspapers for the main hypotheses unless otherwise specified, or research questions 1-5a.

Newspapers with a circulation under 30,000 (McHee, 2011) and published in communities with a population under 2,500 (U.S. Census, 2012) from each of the 10 selected counties were identified. From this list, one newspaper from each was randomly selected. This resulted in a total of 10 rural, community newspapers for the final sample (plus the *Des Moines Register*). Counties selected are representative of the state of Iowa in terms of demographics (US Census, 2010a), newspapers (INA, 2013), and IPV resources (ICADV, 2013). For demographic descriptions of the counties and newspapers, see Figure II and Figure III, respectively. For the actual reported instances of IPV by county, in 2009 according to the Iowa Department of Public Safety as well as information about distance to the nearest shelter according to the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2013), see Figure IV.

Content analysis procedures

The unit of observation was the newspaper issue, and the entire newspaper (every headline, photograph, caption, and text for each article) was analyzed. News articles, photographs, and photograph captions were the units of analysis. Stories, photographs, and captions in the sports sections, the classified ads, syndicated columns, marriage/engagement announcements, and obituary sections, as well as school announcements, were not coded because the newspapers have no control over these sections because they are paid or provided by readers. Additionally, sports sections are based primarily on reports of specific events that are already inherently more male-

dominated (Hardin, 2009). Some of these items (such as school or sports photographs and stories) may have appeared in other portions of the newspaper, in which case they were included in the sample, as were editorials and letters to the editor. It was important that the majority of the newspaper issue be coded in order to capture most of the gender representations of the community and community members, with the exceptions noted. Further, with the issue of IPV, there is the possibility that it may have occurred but is not being recognized as such in rural newspapers. For instance, a murder or attempted murder of a former partner may have been depicted as a murder or assault – not IPV or domestic violence – a distinction that may have implications for law enforcement, funding, and legislation, among other policy decisions. For this reason, the CDC (2013b) criteria was used to determine if a reported instance would be considered IPV.

To develop an adequate understanding of current rural community norms surrounding gender roles and coverage of IPV, one year of coverage was analyzed from each of the papers – from October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013. That time period allows for a thorough analysis of the period leading up to the time of study and subsequent interviews with journalists and editors. Additionally, this time frame captures the year immediately following a large, well-publicized legislative decision regarding dramatic restructuring and allocation of Iowa's IPV shelter funding (Iowa AG Office, 2012). There was a risk that this legislation may have skewed results for a period of time, but it also allowed for the opportunity to examine any existing dialogue surrounding the issue.

For accurate analysis of weekly newspapers, one randomly selected issue per month for 12 months is adequate to be representative of an entire year (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005). However, experts recommend randomly selecting 14 issues for each year as a more statistically reliable method (Riffe et al., 2005). For the purposes of this study, a sample of 14 issues a year were randomly selected from each of the 10 newspapers. Thus, a total sample of 140 community newspaper issues were analyzed, resulting in a total of

2,334 articles, photographs, and captions. For daily newspapers such as the *Des Moines Register*, a randomly constructed two weeks is representative of a 12-month period (Riffe et al., 2005). In total, 14 issues of the *Des Moines Register* were also analyzed, resulting in 538 articles, photographs, and captions, and an overall total of 2,872 cases from rural community newspapers, as well as the *Des Moines Register*. Table 3.1 includes the number of overall cases by newspaper for both the *Des Moines Register* and the rural community newspapers.

Since the selected newspapers are small and do not have the financial resources or staff to have a comprehensive online archive, microfilm was ordered via the State Historical Society. For newspapers and dates that microfilm was not available, I traveled several times to the State Historical Society in Des Moines to photograph hard copies of the paper. Certain issues within the selected time frame of the *Des Moines Register* were accessible on microfilm through the University of Iowa library system, and the remaining issues were photographed at the State Historical Society in Des Moines. Newspaper issues were manually analyzed for depictions of gender roles within the community, as well as for coverage of IPV, as depicted and described in coverage. This included aspects of the newspaper such as the topic and purpose of the article; the individual who was the primary focus of each article, photograph, and caption (if applicable); the occupations and community roles depicted throughout the newspaper; portrayals of gender; family status; and physical descriptions – as has been done in previous research on gender portrayals in the media (Greenwood & Lippman, 2010; Signorielli & Bauce, 1999). See Figure V for complete code sheet and variable definitions.

Variables coded

Intercoder reliability testing

Two independent coders coded a random sample of 12 issues of weekly rural newspapers from other communities not included in this study, and intercoder reliability was assessed using Cohen's *kappa*, which corrects for agreement by chance (Riffe et al., 2005). Using this method, a minimum reliability of .70 must be attained to ensure internal consistency between coders (Neuendorf, 2002). I trained the coder on each of the variables using the codebook (Figure V), and coding was done twice on two separate sets of 12 issues before satisfactory reliability was reached. On the first round of intercoder testing, the following variables failed to reach adequate reliability: focus of the article gender; whether the focus of the article was portrayed in a position of prominence or authority within his or her place of employment or school; whether the focus of the photograph was portrayed in a position of prominence or authority within his or her place of employment or school; and whether IPV is characteristic of actual or threatened physical harm. After this initial round of coding was complete, the codebook was modified accordingly, and coders went through another round of training. After the second round of training and coding the second sample of newspapers, all variables reached acceptable internal consistency in reliability according to Cohen's *kappa.*

The variables coded and their corresponding *kappa* scores are as follows (see operational definitions more fully in the codebook, Figure V).

Newspaper: Coders were asked to indicate the *name of the newspaper* the article, photograph or caption was accessed from. *Kappa* = 1.0.

Date: Coders identified the *date* that the article, photograph or caption appeared in numerical form as: month/day/year. *Kappa* = 1.0.

Page number**:** Coders listed the *page* on which the article, photograph, or caption appeared. *Kappa* = 1.0.

Location in paper*:* Coders were asked to indicate whether the *article, photograph, or caption fell above or below the newspaper fold*. This was defined as where the majority of the article, photograph, or caption was located. For example, if only the headline was above the fold and the rest was below, the code would be "below." *Kappa* = .88.

Newspaper section: Coders were asked to identify the section of the newspaper where the article, photograph, or caption fit best. Options included *local news* (this was considered to be a range of general topics including any events, discussions, information in the community and surrounding areas)*; politics or political news*; *police blotter*, *crime or sheriff's report*; *community calendar events*; *special interest piece or in-depth story* (considered to be items of any length or detail that go beyond typical local news information); *business/economy*; *opinion pieces* (op-ed, letters to the editor, and editorials); *health/wellness*; and those *photographs and captions that are included only as headlines or front page banners*. All other information was entered as a string variable. *Kappa* = .80.

Article source*:* Coders were asked to indicate whether the article, photograph or caption was contributed as a *staff article; from a wire service; an editorial/op-ed; letter to the editor; other newspaper;* or *not applicable*. Since many rural newspapers have a small staff and do not include by-lines on each article, all local news was considered staff, unless otherwise specified. *Kappa* = .85.

Article type*:* Coders were asked to determine which type of article, photograph or caption was present. Options included *local information* (discussions, news); *event or calendar information*; *feature articles*; *editorials*; *letters to the editor*; *police/sheriff's reports*; or *photograph and caption without an accompanying article*. *Kappa* = .86.

Variables addressing gender roles – text

Article focus: Coders identified whether or not there appeared to be a person who was the clear *focus* of the article. This variable was only selected if the article itself was actually about a specific person. *Kappa* = .97.

Article quote: Selected if the person who was the focus of the article was the same as the *person being quoted* in the article (if applicable). *Kappa* = .94.

Article gender: Coders identified whether the focus or primary person featured in the article was *male* or *female*. The primary person was considered to be the individual who was focused on or quoted in the most detail – this was not necessarily limited to the focus, in situations where there was not a clear focus present. If the article did not include a focus and two people were discussed equally, the gender of the individual that appeared first was coded. *Kappa* = .94.

Article occupation: The *occupation* depicted or described for the focus of the article was included as a string variable. String variables were re-coded into numeric variables and were then collapsed into several recurring categories. Inter-coder reliability was calculated for the numeric values into categories. Occupations were identified as *politician (non-local); government employee and local leadership* (local government, business owners or administrators, school administration, religious leaders, and club/organization leaders); *visitors* (individuals or groups speaking at events or performing); *athlete* (student and adult); *domestic depictions* ([Glick, Wilk & Perreault, 1995; Rudman & Glick, 2008] playing or working with children, cooking, cleaning, sewing, or gardening); *miscellaneous community members. Kappa* = .84. After coding into the previously listed categories, occupations were also collapsed into one variable of the occupation gender-neutrality for further analysis. Occupation neutrality was determined by whether the job depicted was gender neutral, stereotypically feminine

(*teaching, childcare, and subordinate office positions*), and stereotypically masculine (*physical labor, farming, administration and authority roles*), as has been established in previous research (Glick, Wilk & Perreault, 1995; Rudman & Glick, 2008).

Article prominence: Coders identified whether the individual who was the focus of the article was portrayed in a *position of prominence or authority* within his or her place of employment or school. Positions of prominence or authority were considered to be any management position, spokesperson for an organization, or otherwise well-known or distinguished role. *Kappa* = .84.

Article familial role: Coders were asked to consider whether – under the criteria of Goffman's (1976) gender displays – a familial role was mentioned for the individual who was the focus of the article. Familial roles were identified as a *spouse/partner; mother; father; child; aunt/uncle; sibling; grandmother/grandfather;* or *other*. Coders were asked to identify one response, or select not applicable. *Kappa* = .82.

Article appearance: Coders were asked to consider whether – under the criteria of Goffman's (1976) gender displays – the individual who was the focus of the article's physical appearance was described in terms of *physical features or characteristics; stance or positioning of body; clothing; gestures or facial expressions; or other*. Coders were asked to identify one response, or select not applicable. *Kappa* = .88.

Article social activities: Coders were asked to consider whether – under the criteria of Goffman's (1976) gender displays – the individual who was the focus of the article was depicted in terms of social activities such as *volunteering; providing, making, or selling food; cleaning or organizing for an event; school-sponsored event* (band, debate team, FFA)*; cheerleading or school/pageant "royalty"; or competing in, or attending an athletic event as a spectator; participating in a physical activity or physical labor outside of high school; or being a member of an organization*. Coders were asked to identify one response, or select not applicable. *Kappa* = .85.

Article community role: Coders were asked to consider whether – under the criteria of Goffman's (1976) gender displays – the individual who was the focus of the article was depicted in terms of his or her role within the community as *an elected official; a business owner; successful in school or business; winning an election or award, or other*. Coders were asked to identify one response, or select not applicable. *Kappa* = .85.

Variables addressing gender roles – photographs

Photograph gender: Coders identified whether the focus or primary person featured in the photograph was *male* or *female*. The primary person was considered to be the individual who is focused on, centered, or emphasized in the photograph. If individuals are depicted equally, coders selected "both male and female depicted." *Kappa* = .76.

Photograph occupation: The *occupation* depicted for the focus of the photograph was included as a string variable. Examples of occupation being visible were things like specific work dress or uniforms, or photographs depicting someone actually performing an aspect of their occupation. Inter-coder reliability was calculated for the numeric values into categories. Occupations were identified as *politician (non-local); government employee and local leadership* (local government, business owners or administrators, school administration, religious leaders, and club/organization leaders); *visitors* (individuals or groups speaking at events or performing); *athlete* (student and adult); *domestic depictions* ([Glick, Wilk & Perreault, 1995; Rudman & Glick, 2008] playing or working with children, cooking, cleaning, sewing, or gardening); *miscellaneous community members. Kappa* = .78. After coding into the previously listed categories, occupations were also collapsed into one variable of the occupation gender-neutrality for further analysis. Occupation neutrality was determined by whether the job depicted was

gender neutral, stereotypically feminine (*teaching, childcare, and subordinate office positions*), and stereotypically masculine (*physical labor, farming, administration and authority roles*), as established in previous research (Glick et al., 1995; Rudman & Glick, 2008).

Photograph prominence: Coders identified whether the individual who was the focus of the photograph portrayed in a *position of prominence within his or her place of employment or school*. Positions of prominence or authority could be considered depictions of management position, spokesperson for an organization, or depictions of acting in otherwise well-known or distinguished roles. *Kappa* = .86.

Photograph familial role: Coders were asked to consider whether – under the criteria of Goffman's (1976) gender displays – a familial role was depicted for the individual who was the focus of the photograph. Familial roles were identified as *spouse/partner; mother; father; child; aunt/uncle; sibling; grandmother/grandfather*; or *other*. Photographic depictions of familial role included things like parents holding a newborn baby, posed family photographs, or other literal signifiers such as an event sign or item of clothing that displayed familial role. Coders were asked to identify one response, or select not applicable. *Kappa* = .89.

Photograph appearance: Coders were asked to consider whether – under the criteria of Goffman's (1976) gender displays – the individual who was the focus of the photograph's physical appearance was described in terms of *physical features or characteristics; stance or positioning of body; clothing; gestures or facial expressions; or other*. Photographic depictions of appearance included things such as individuals competing in a pageant, someone having their makeup or hair done, or deliberately posing in an unnatural way to emphasize a particular body part. Coders were asked to identify one response or select not applicable. *Kappa* = .88.

Photograph social activities: Coders were asked to consider whether – under the criteria of Goffman's (1976) gender displays – the individual who was the focus of the

photograph was depicted in terms of social activities such as *volunteering; providing, making, or selling food; cleaning or organizing for an event; school-sponsored event* (band, debate team, FFA); *cheerleading or school/pageant "royalty"; or competing in, or attending an athletic event as a spectator; participating in a physical activity or physical labor outside of high school; or being a member of an organization*. Coders were asked to identify one response, or select not applicable. *Kappa* = .85.

Photograph community role: Coders were asked to consider whether – under the criteria of Goffman's (1976) gender displays – the individual who was the focus of the photograph was depicted in terms of his or her role within the community *an elected official; a business owner; successful in school or business; winning an election or award, or other*. Coders were asked to identify one response, or select not applicable. *Kappa* = .86.

Variables addressing gender roles – photograph captions

Caption gender: Coders identified whether the focus or primary person featured in the caption was *male* or *female*. The primary person was the individual who is focused on or quoted in the most detail. If two people are discussed equally, the individual appearing first was coded. *Kappa* = .87.

Caption occupation: The *occupation* depicted or described for the focus of the caption was included as a string variable. String variables were re-coded into numeric variables and were then collapsed into several recurring categories. Inter-coder reliability was calculated for the numeric values into categories. Occupations were identified as *politician (non-local); government employee and local leadership* (local government, business owners or administrators, school administration, religious leaders, and club/organization leaders); *visitors* (individuals or groups speaking at events or performing); *athlete* (student and adult); *domestic depictions* ([Glick, Wilk & Perreault,

1995; Rudman & Glick, 2008] playing or working with children, cooking, cleaning, sewing, or gardening); *miscellaneous community members*. *Kappa* = .80. After coding into the previously listed categories, occupations were also collapsed into one variable of the occupation gender-neutrality for further analysis. Occupation neutrality was determined by whether the job depicted was gender neutral, stereotypically feminine (*teaching, childcare, and subordinate office positions*), and stereotypically masculine (*physical labor, farming, administration and authority roles*), as has been established in previous research (Glick et al., 1995; Rudman & Glick, 2008).

Caption prominence: Coders identified whether the individual who was the focus of the caption was portrayed in a *position of prominence within his or her place of employment or school*. Positions of prominence or authority could be considered any management position, spokesperson for an organization, or otherwise well-known or distinguished role. *Kappa* = .88.

Caption familial role: Coders were asked to consider whether – under the criteria of Goffman's (1976) gender displays – a familial role was mentioned for the individual who was the focus of the caption. Familial roles were identified as *spouse/partner; mother; father; child; aunt/uncle; sibling; grandmother/grandfather;* or *other*. Coders were asked to identify one response, or select not applicable. *Kappa* = .87.

Caption appearance: Coders were asked to consider whether – under the criteria of Goffman's (1976) gender displays – the individual who was the focus of the caption's physical appearance was described in terms of *physical features or characteristics; stance or positioning of body; clothing; gestures or facial expressions;* or *other*. Coders were asked to identify one response, or select not applicable. *Kappa* = .78.

Caption social activities: Coders were asked to consider whether – under the criteria of Goffman's (1976) gender displays – the individual who was the focus of the caption was depicted in terms of social activities such as *volunteering; providing, making, or selling food; cleaning or organizing for an event; school-sponsored event*

(band, debate team, FFA); cheerleading or school/pageant "royalty"; or *competing in, or attending an athletic event as a spectator; participating in a physical activity or physical labor outside of high school;* or *being a member of an organization*? Coders were asked to identify one response, or select not applicable. *Kappa* = .79.

Caption community role: Coders were asked to consider whether – under the criteria of Goffman's (1976) gender displays – the individual who was the focus of the caption was depicted in terms of his or her role as *an elected official; a business owner; being successful in school or business; winning an election or award;* or other. Coders were asked to identify one response, or select not applicable. *Kappa* = .96.

Coders were asked to identify if any aspect of *religion, scripture/sermon, religious figure or organizations* were *mentioned* in the article, photograph or caption. *Kappa* = .98.

IPV variables

The variables focused on IPV come from the CDC (2013b) definition, as well as previous research on IPV, victim-blaming, and barriers (Berns, 2009; Leonard, 2002; Lila et al., 2014; Thapar-Bjorkert & Morgan, 2010; Yamawaki et al., 2009). Particularly because it is possible that IPV might be present in newspapers without actually being identified as such, it was important to try to capture any relevant instances, and the context in which they occurred.

IPV present: Coders were asked to indicate whether, by the criteria outlined by the CDC (2013b)*, IPV was evident* in the description of the event. Coders were asked to make evaluations on this regardless of whether or not it was identified as IPV in the newspaper. *Kappa* = .98.

IPV name-calling: Using the CDC (2013b) criteria, coders determined whether the IPV characteristic of *name-calling or putdowns* was described in the article, caption

or photograph. This was also considered to be anything that appeared to be verbal abuse, or very loud animated arguments. *Kappa* = 1.0.

IPV preventing contact: Coders were asked to indicate whether, using the CDC (2013b) criteria, the IPV characteristic of *keeping a partner from contacting their family or friends* was described in the article, caption or photograph. *Kappa* = 1.0.

IPV withholding money: Using the CDC (2013b) criteria, coders were asked to determine whether the IPV characteristic of *withholding money* was described in the article, caption or photograph. *Kappa* = 1.0.

IPV preventing jobs: Using the CDC (2013b) criteria, coders determined whether the IPV characteristic of *stopping a partner from getting or keeping a job* was described in the article, caption or photograph. *Kappa* = 1.0.

IPV physical harm: Using the CDC (2013b) criteria, coders determined whether the IPV characteristic of *actual physical harm* was described in the article, caption or photograph. *Kappa* = .94.

IPV sexual assault: Coders were asked to determine whether – using the CDC (2013b) criteria, the IPV characteristic of *sexual assault* was described in the article, caption or photograph. *Kappa* = .95.

IPV stalking: Using the CDC (2013b) criteria, coders were asked to determine whether the IPV characteristic of *stalking* was described in the article, caption or photograph. This included behaviors such as following someone on a date, or confronting a new partner. *Kappa* = .92.

IPV intimidation: Using the CDC (2013b) criteria, coders were asked to determine if the IPV characteristic of *intimidation* was described in the article, caption or photograph. This was considered to be any form of threats of physical harm in the life of the victim, children, family, friends or pets or other actions intended to scare or terrorize. *Kappa* = 1.0.

IPV word: If IPV did occur, coders were asked to indicate which word or term was used to describe it*: assault; domestic violence; intimate partner violence/ domestic battery (or battery); domestic dispute; domestic assault; domestic incident,* or *other*. Coders could identify one response, or select not applicable. *Kappa* = .94.

IPV police incident: Coders were asked to indicate whether the role of IPV was described as a *police incident*. This included reports of domestic disturbance, police blotters, and sheriff or courthouse reports. *Kappa* = 1.0.

IPV in-depth story: Coders were asked to indicate whether the role of IPV was described as an *in-depth story*. In-depth stories were considered to be any article about a victim, perpetrator, or instance of domestic violence that was presented in a format outside of police reports. *Kappa* = 1.0.

IPV death or injury: Coders were asked to indicate whether the role of IPV was described as a *contributor to death or injury. Kappa* = .79.

IPV children: Coders were asked to indicate whether the role of IPV was described as it *relates to children* (describing or mentioning IPV in relation to how it impacts or affects children). *Kappa* = .80.

IPV legislative: Coders were asked to indicate whether the role of IPV was described as *legislative action.* Legislative action was considered to be any mentions of laws, legal decisions or court rulings related to IPV on a federal, state, or local level, or that which might apply to a particular case. *Kappa* = .82.

IPV sex assault: Coders were asked to indicate whether the role of IPV was described as a *sexual assault. Kappa* = 1.00.

IPV primary role: Coders were asked to determine whether the *primary role* of IPV in the article appeared as a *police incident; in-depth story; as contributing to death or injury; as it relates to children; legislative action;* or *other*. Coders were instructed to select one response or enter as a string variable. *Kappa* = 1.00.

IPV description: Coders were asked to determine whether IPV was described as *unable to determine; an argument; a physical altercation; an act of violence from one person to another; threatening behavior;* or *other*. Coders were instructed to identify one response or enter as a string variable. *Kappa* = .95.

IPV gender one: Coders were instructed to identify the *gender* of the first person mentioned in the article. The first person was considered to be the primary individual discussed in the article. If discussed equally, coders selected the first person listed. *Kappa* = .82.

IPV role one: Coders were instructed to identify the role of the first person mentioned in the article. Roles were identified as *unable to determine; victim; perpetrator* (abuser); *spokesperson* (for IPV organization or advocacy group); *law enforcement; government official;* or *other*. The first person was considered to be the primary individual discussed in the article. If discussed equally, coders were instructed to select the first person listed. Coders were asked to identify one response. *Kappa* = .82.

IPV age one: Coders identified the *age* of the first person mentioned in the article. The first person was considered to be the primary individual discussed in the article. If discussed equally, coders were instructed to code for the first person listed. *Kappa* = .90.

IPV marital status one: Coders were instructed to identify the marital status of the first person mentioned in the article. Marital status was identified as *unable to determine/not applicable; married; divorced; single; dating/living with partner*. The first person was considered to be the primary individual discussed in the article. If two or more people were discussed equally, the first person listed was coded. Coders only identified one response per photograph, caption or news article. *Kappa* = 1.00.

IPV gender two: Coders were instructed to identify the *gender* of the second person mentioned in the article. If discussed equally, coders selected the second person listed. *Kappa* = .94.

IPV role two: Coders were instructed to identify the role of the second person mentioned in the article as *unable to determine; victim; perpetrator* (abuser); *spokesperson (for IPV organization or advocacy group); law enforcement; government official;* or *other*. If discussed equally, coders were instructed to select the second person listed. Coders were asked to identify one response. *Kappa* = .88.

IPV age two: Coders identified the *age* of the second person mentioned in the article. If discussed equally, please code for the second person listed. *Kappa* = .92.

IPV marital status two: Coders were instructed to identify the marital status of the second person mentioned in the article: *unable to determine/not applicable; married; divorced; single; dating/living with partner*. If two or more people were discussed equally, the second person listed was coded. Coders only identified one response per photograph, caption or news article. *Kappa* = .97.

IPV relationship: Coders were asked to identify the relationship between the first and second people in the article: *unable to determine; married (*spouses*); ex-spouse (or ex-partners); dating;* or *other*. Coders were asked to identify one response. *Kappa* = 1.00.

IPV victim fault: Coders were instructed to identify whether the article *placed fault or responsibility on the victim.* This variable was selected if the article explicitly described the victim as responsible -- or partially responsible -- for their own outcome, or that of children. *Kappa* = .95.

IPV perpetrator fault: Coders were instructed to identify whether the article *placed fault or responsibility on the perpetrator*. This variable was selected if the article explicitly described the person conducting the violence as being responsible or a fault – either for their actions, or for any particular outcome. *Kappa* = 1.00.

IPV legal fault: Coders were instructed to identify whether the article *placed fault or responsibility on the legal system or law enforcement.* This variable was selected if the article credited existing laws, new laws, or police response for the outcome of the IPV situation. *Kappa* = 1.00.

IPV family or friend fault: Coders were instructed to identify whether the article *placed fault or responsibility on family or friends*. This variable was selected if family and/or friends were explicitly described as at fault or responsible for the IPV outcome. *Kappa* = .98.

IPV substance fault: Coders were instructed to identify whether the article *placed fault or responsibility on substance use or abuse*. This variable was selected if the article mentioned the use or abuse of drugs and/or alcohol in relation to the IPV incident. *Kappa* = .94.

IPV primary fault: Coders were instructed to identify the primary source of fault or responsibility in the article as *unable to determine; victim; perpetrator; legal system/law enforcement; family/friends; substance use/substance abuse; society/social norms; other*. The primary source was considered to be the overall reason that was recognized for the instance of IPV, if one could be identified. *Kappa* = .89.

IPV legal aid barrier: Coders were instructed to identify whether *access to legal aid* because of proximity, financial means, or immigration status was mentioned as a barrier to IPV resources or leaving the relationship. Legal aid was considered to be a lawyer, IPV advocate/representative, or cooperative law enforcement. *Kappa* = 1.00.

IPV housing barrier: Coders were instructed to identify whether *access to alternative housing* was mentioned as a barrier to IPV resources or leaving the relationship. Alternative housing was considered to be IPV shelter, emergency homeless shelter, or safe housing with a friend or family member. *Kappa* = 1.00.

IPV childcare barrier: Coders were instructed to identify whether *access to childcare* was mentioned as a barrier to IPV resources or leaving the relationship. Childcare was considered to be a safe place for children to stay, if they could not accompany the victim to other housing or needed a new form of care that the perpetrator would not know about. *Kappa* = 1.00.

IPV money barrier: Coders were instructed to identify whether *access to money* was mentioned as a barrier to IPV resources or leaving the relationship. Access to money was considered to be having the financial means to leave the immediate situation, stay in alternative housing or relocate, or to "start over." *Kappa* = 1.00.

IPV transportation barrier: Coders were instructed to identify whether *access to transportation* was mentioned as a barrier to IPV resources or leaving the relationship. Access to transportation was considered to be having the ability to use a personal vehicle or mass transit, or any means to leave through the assistance of another person. *Kappa* = 1.00.

IPV healthcare barrier: Coders were asked to identify whether *access to healthcare* was mentioned as a barrier to IPV resources or leaving the relationship. Access to healthcare was considered to be ability to utilize all health services available in the nearest location without restrictions because of location, money, or immigration status. *Kappa* = 1.00.

IPV location barrier: Coders were asked to identify whether *geographic isolation* was mentioned as a barrier to IPV resources or leaving the relationship. Geographic isolation was considered to be rural living arrangements without close proximity to neighbors, friends or family. *Kappa* = 1.00.

IPV primary barrier: Coders were asked to identify the primary barrier mentioned in the article. Primary barrier options included *none/not applicable; access to legal aid; access to alternative housing; childcare; money; transportation; access to healthcare; geographic isolation;* or *other*. Coders were asked to number all that apply, in order of mention. *Kappa* = .92.

IPV resources: Coders were asked to identify the IPV resources that were mentioned. Options for IPV resources were *none/not applicable; hotlines; shelter services; advocacy centers; healthcare facilities;* or *other*. Coders were asked to number all that apply, in order of mention. *Kappa* = 1.00.

IPV quote: Coders were asked to identify whom, if anyone, was quoted in the article as *none/not applicable; law enforcement; advocacy organizations or representation; the victim's friends or family members; the perpetrator's friends or family members; the victim; the perpetrator;* or *other*. Coders were asked to number all that apply, in order of newspaper space given to each quote. *Kappa* = .96.

IPV fundraising: Coders were asked to identify whether the *article mentioned or discussed fundraising* as related to the issue of IPV and IPV services. *Kappa* = .98.

Data analysis: Content analysis

To test each of the hypotheses and answer the research questions, a series of descriptive and analytical statistical tests were conducted using Statistical Software for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Due to the level of measurement, which was nominal for most variables, chi-square and frequency analyses were appropriate for most hypothesis testing in this study. Hypotheses refer to article coverage, unless otherwise specified by photograph or caption.

The first hypothesis stated that rural newspaper coverage would contain more stories about men than women. To address this, *z* tests for proportional differences were run on the variable concerning the focus of the article and gender. H1a predicted that the proportion of stories about men to those about women would be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper. To test this, chi-square analyses compared proportions of rural and *Des Moines Register* coverage.

The second hypothesis predicted that women in rural community newspaper coverage would be more often defined by their familial role than men. To test this, chi-square and *z* tests were performed on the variables containing gender focus and familial role. Hypothesis 2a stated that women in rural community newspaper coverage would be more frequently identified by their familial role than as individuals. To test this *z* tests

were performed on familial role by gender. Hypothesis 2b predicted that women would be more frequently identified by their familial role than as individuals in photographs. To test this *z* tests were performed on familial role in photographs by gender in photographs. Hypothesis 2c predicted that the proportion of women who were depicted by their familial role would be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper. To test this, chi-square tests were conducted between gender representations in familial roles in the rural community newspapers, and gender representations in familial roles in the *Des Moines Register*.

Hypothesis 3 stated that rural newspaper coverage would represent women in more stereotypically feminine jobs than traditionally masculine jobs. To test this, *z* tests were performed on job categories for women. Hypothesis 3a stated that coverage representing women in more stereotypically feminine jobs than traditionally masculine jobs would be greater in rural community papers than in a more urban newspaper. To test this, chi-square tests were conducted between gender representations and occupation in rural papers, and gender representations and occupation in the *Des Moines Register*.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that men would appear in rural newspaper photographs more often than would women. To test this, *z* tests were run on the variable for primary focus in photographs. Hypothesis 4a predicted that the proportion of photographs including men would be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper. To test this, chi-square tests were conducted between gender representations and photographs in rural papers, and gender representations and photographs in the *Des Moines Register*.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that men in photographs would be depicted as more active than women. To test these, *z* tests were run on gender of the individuals in photographs and Goffman's (1963) gender display variables as identified in the social activities variable. Hypothesis 5a predicted that the proportion of photographs depicting men as physically active would be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper.

To test this, chi-square tests were conducted between gender representations in photographs and social activities in rural papers, and gender representations in photographs and social activities in the *Des Moines Register*.

Hypothesis 6 stated that men would be depicted as more prominent than women in photographs. To test these, z tests were run on gender of the individuals in photographs and Goffman's (1963) gender display variables as identified in the community prominence variable. Hypothesis 6a predicted that the proportion of photographs depicting men as prominent would be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper. To test this, chi-square tests were conducted between gender representations in photographs and community prominence in rural papers, and gender representations in photographs and community prominence in the *Des Moines Register*.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that men would be more often pictured in business roles outside of the home than would women. To test this, *z* tests were conducted on photograph gender and occupations. Hypothesis 7a stated that the proportion of photographs depicting men in business roles outside the home to those depicting women in business roles outside the home would be greater in rural community papers than in a more urban newspaper. To test this, chi-square tests were conducted between gender representations in photographs and occupation in rural papers, and gender representations in photographs and occupation in the *Des Moines Register*.

Hypothesis 8 predicted that women would be described in terms of their physical appearance more frequently than men. To test this, *z* tests were conducted on gender and physical appearance for all articles, photographs and captions. Hypothesis 8a stated that the proportion of descriptions of women's physical to the descriptions of men's physical appearance will be greater in rural community papers than in a more urban newspaper. To test this, chi-square tests were conducted between gender representations and physical appearance in rural papers, and gender representations and physical appearance in the *Des Moines Register* for all articles, photographs, and captions.

Hypotheses 9 predicted that in instances where IPV is apparent, victims would be depicted as at least partially to blame. To test this, *z* tests were run on IPV blame variables. Hypothesis 9a stated that IPV victims would be portrayed as at least partially to blame more frequently in rural community papers than in a more urban newspaper. To test this, chi-square tests were conducted between IPV occurrence and blame in rural papers, and IPV occurrence and blame in the *Des Moines Register* for all articles, photographs, and captions.

Hypothesis 10 predicted that in instances where IPV was apparent, specific behavioral or mediating factors would be mentioned in blaming the victim. To test these, chi-square and *z* tests were performed on the variable identifying whether IPV is depicted by the CDC (2013b) standards and the variables asking about fault or responsibility. Additional chi-squares were performed on the variables asking about the characteristics of IPV depicted and the variables asking about fault or responsibility for all articles, photographs, and captions; and the variables asking about the role of IPV in terms of newspaper placement and variables asking about fault or responsibility for all articles, photographs, and captions. Hypothesis 10a stated that in situations where IPV was apparent, specific behavioral or mediating factors would attribute responsibility or blame to victims more frequently in rural community papers than in a more urban newspaper. To test this, chi-square tests were conducted between IPV occurrence and substance use in rural papers, and IPV occurrence and substance use in the *Des Moines Register* for all articles, photographs, and captions.

Hypothesis 11 predicted that IPV would be described as being an isolated incident, rather than as part of a larger social problem. To test this hypothesis, a series of frequencies were run on the primary source of fault and responsibility; barriers; and resource information. Chi-square and *z* tests were conducted on whether IPV was evident and the word used to describe it. Hypothesis 11a stated that IPV would be described as an isolated incident more frequently in rural community papers than in a more urban

newspaper. To test this, chi-square tests were conducted between IPV occurrence and the word used to describe it in rural papers, and IPV occurrence and the word used to describe it in the *Des Moines Register*. Chi-square tests were also conducted between IPV occurrence and the primary source of blame in rural papers, and IPV occurrence and the primary source of blame in the *Des Moines Register*.

Research questions 1-5a were answered by information obtained in the semi-structured interviews. More information on these questions follows.

Semi-structured interviews

The second part of this dissertation addressed perceptions of IPV in rural communities, as well as the meaning and motivation behind news coverage on gender, gender roles, and IPV. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with editors of most of the rural community weekly newspapers included in the content analysis. As influential figures in homogeneous, rural communities (Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1980), journalists and editors are in a unique opportunity as individuals who not only live in and are a part of the community, but who also have the potential to influence and reflect cultural and social norms for that particular area. In addition to holding roles of varying significance in the formation of news content, editors are an important element of gatekeeping theory (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009), and they may offer unique perspectives into community gender norms and community-wide knowledge and recognition of IPV.

Although the research on news media coverage of IPV typically examines the nature of that coverage as it relates to portrayals of IPV and victims (Berns, 2009; Greenwood & Lippman, 2010; Meyers, 1997; Signorielli & Bauce, 1999), it rarely, if ever, considers the rationale or explanations behind the coverage and how that relates to perceptions of gender. Since IPV is rooted in systemic gender inequality (Anderson, 2005; Berns, 2001; Brownmiller, 1975; Dutton, Hamel, & Aaronson, 2010; French, 1992;

Murray & Powell, 2009), the connection between rural community gender norms and discussions of IPV have the potential to offer new perspectives for addressing this large social problem.

Interviews offer unique insight into the attitudes and knowledge of individuals that can supersede that gleaned from many other types of research or daily experience (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Semi-structured interviews were selected as the method of choice for discussions with editors over other methods because they allow for the option of elaboration on the part of the participant, are well-suited to examining beliefs and attitudes, and also ensure that the participant cannot access other information or opinions prior to responding to interviewer questions (Barriball & While, 1994; Reinharz, 1992). These interviews are most typically used in situations where the researcher seeks to examine behavior, experience, opinion, and values of the participant, among other things (Noonan, 2013; Patton, 2002).

Unlike survey methods or experiments, which may be accurate in assessing the differences in responses among groups of people or how attitudes can change under a given set of circumstances, interviews are much more appropriate for understanding attitudes and knowledge among a small group of individuals in great depth (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Additionally, semi-structured interviews also circumvent the low response rate that often accompanies other methods designed to assess knowledge and attitudes, such as surveys (Barriball & While, 1994). Semi-structured interviews begin with a set list of questions, but allow for elaboration and follow-up questions that may lead to more fruitful responses. Unlike structured interviews, they do not stick to a rigid set of items with no room for variance, but tend to have more focus on predetermined questions than do unstructured interviews, which creates more consistency and a high degree of reliability among interviews of several participants (Noonan, 2013). Because there will be a set list of questions going into the interview, the likelihood of getting off track remains much lower than it might in more unstructured settings.

Through semi-structured interviews, participants are able to elaborate in great depth and detail, which allows for the formation of new thoughts and ideas, while still remaining on the same general path of topics that the researcher had previously identified. This increased depth on a relatively consistent set of topics leads to much greater validity than is often found in many other forms of interview or survey techniques (Noonan, 2013). Because semi-structured interviews somewhat follow the responses and discussions of the participants, they allow for more participant autonomy and may lead researchers to new questions or insights that they had not previously considered (Gray, 2004; Noonan, 2013). This serves as an advantage to participants because it allows for their perceptions to be accurately articulated without researcher interference, while also benefiting the researcher through ensured participation and reliability.

Feminist research techniques

Interviewing is a common technique employed in feminist research for a variety of reasons, including the ability to deeply understand a particular topic through the participant's point of view (Reinharz, 1992; Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Additional benefits of qualitative interviews are the ways in which interviewing with open-ended questions allows the participants to speak freely without the implied judgment or direction of the researcher, therefore being able to express their own ideas and thoughts free of scholarly interference (Reinharz, 1992).

Not only do open-ended research questions allow participants to express themselves freely, but they also uphold larger feminist values, such as avoiding a dominant control over others and granting participants a strong sense of agency, as well as strengthening the sense of connectedness and equality between researcher and participant (Reinharz, 1992). For these reasons (among others), interviews are often used more frequently than other survey techniques in feminist human subjects research,

because interviews offer the chance for participants to "talk back, to challenge cultural assumptions embedded within the questions, and to answer from their own experience" (Rubin & Rubin, 2011, p. 21).

Though no researcher-participant relationship is truly completely balanced (Rubin & Rubin, 2011), conducting interviews through a feminist framework of independence and equality helps to alleviate this innate power differential. This is important not only to be ethical to participants, but also because the framework of equality helps foster a more sensitive, considerate environment necessary for asking questions of the participants that are sometimes sensitive in nature. One way in which feminist researchers often achieve this is by attempting whenever possible to select interviewers who have some sort of a cultural affinity with their participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Although I am not working as a newspaper journalist or editor, as a researcher I came to the interviews with media knowledge and a familiarity with rural Iowa communities, having lived in one until my adult life.

The strong sense of equality important to feminist interview techniques becomes especially important when interviewing subjects on particularly taboo or sensitive topics. Although a concern in any research situation, it is important to consider the fact that many of the editors interviewed for this study were speaking about the communities in which they live and work, and sometimes about things that may relate to individuals with whom they have personal relationships. I reminded participants that they were free to criticize any question they choose, and that they were also free to refuse to answer any questions and stop the interview at any time with no negative consequences. Particularly because some of the questions surrounded sensitive topics, it was important to uphold the feminist position of remaining mindful to not demonstrate any judgment surrounding participant's responses – even if they seem to be things that you as a researcher may strongly oppose for personal or moral reasons (Reinharz, 1992). In terms of being neutral as an interviewer, I have extensive IPV training that first emphasized never showing any

reaction to things people told me at shelter intake or over the crisis line, regardless of how shocking or repellent something might be. This was maintained throughout the interviews, despite the fact that one editor made repeated statements that were overtly offensive. During this interview as well I remained professional and was careful to not give any impression of my surprise, shock, or disagreement with her statements.

Feminist research techniques have allowed for many previously unheard groups to tell their story and share their understanding of the world (Reinharz, 1992). In the case of rural editors, little is known about the attitudes that they personally hold about gender within their communities, or their perceptions of social beliefs and pressures surrounding men and women in rural locations. Through the use of a feminist framework in semi-structured interviews, it is possible to assess this knowledge in a way that maintains an ethical, balanced conversation while allowing participants to tell their own story.

Sample for interviews

Initially, both editors and journalists were of interest because of the differences in perspectives and experiences with gender norms and IPV that each position might have in their role at the newspaper, as well as within their own social groups in the community. However, unlike their counterparts at many larger news organizations, the editors of rural newspapers also serve largely as reporters due to budget, time, and manpower constraints (McHee, 2011; Zelizer, 2004). Since many rural newspapers may only have a very small number of staff members, it is important to try to assess the opinions of those who may be in contact with and reporting on community issues and police reports, which may be anyone working at the newspaper–unlike many larger organizations that have specialized beats. For each of the newspapers selected, there was a goal of two interviews – one for the editor, and one for the journalist contributing the largest number of articles for that newspaper's sample. This was assessed by capturing the author of each article, caption,

or attribution for each photograph coded in the sample. With the exception of one newspaper, the largest number of articles were written by the editors (who in several instances were actually the only people writing for the newspaper). Because of this, the interviews were conducted only with editors of the newspapers.

Editors of the selected rural newspapers used in the content analysis were contacted directly by the researcher via email, in accordance with University of Iowa Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies. (See Figure VII for a copy of the approved email content, as well as Figure VIII for the official IRB approval form.) Once the editors responded and gave consent for their participation, interviews were conducted over the phone at the participants' convenience. All but one of the newspapers participated in the interview, resulting in a sample of nine editors. I was unable to speak with a remaining editor or journalist from one paper, despite repeated attempts at contact. Because that particular newspaper did not have a voicemail system, public email addresses, website or social media page, reaching someone was not possible.

In each of the phone interviews, I called the participants to ensure that they were not financially hampered by the call. In all situations, participants were asked to conduct interviews in a private room or office of the newspaper facility. In several circumstances, the editors asked to be called on their private phones or at home outside of business hours. The location was ultimately left up to each editor to help reduce the burden of the interview upon the participants, while still providing the comfort of their typical surroundings and desired level of privacy. Each of the interviews took at least 30 minutes, though there was some variation, and several lasted almost an hour. In all, six hours were spent interviewing participants.

Procedures

Participation in the interviews was entirely voluntary, as no compensation was provided to participants. Prior to the start of the interviews, participants were again

informed of the voluntary nature of their participation and were reminded that they could stop the interview or decline to answer any questions with no negative consequences, in accordance with University of Iowa IRB policies. Prior to the start of the interview, participants were informed that the nature of the research is to assess their feelings and knowledge about the role of gender and IPV in their community. All of this information was also included on a verbal informed consent form that participants were read. Once the interview concluded, participants were informed of the full nature of the research in more detail, including my interest in knowledge surrounding IPV in rural locations. Although it is possible that knowing the true scope of the research topic in advance could somewhat influence the participants' responses, it was ethically more appropriate for me to approach participants openly and honestly to ensure positions of equality and mutual respect (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010; Noonan, 2013). Both prior to and following the interviews, the participants were encouraged to ask questions on anything they wished to know about in more detail.

Prior to the start of the interviews, participants were asked to not provide any specific or identifying information about their town, newspaper name, or any person or group of people within the community. In the situations regarding specific instances of gendered issues and IPV, follow-up questions were asked only as they related to the other interview questions, not to obtain any sensitive or personal information about anyone in the community.

The interviews were audio-recorded, and I later transcribed them manually. After transcripts of the interviews were made, all participants were given pseudonyms to prevent any identifying information, such as their name, title, newspaper, or town, to be evident to anyone other than me. If identifying information was disclosed accidentally, that information was not transferred to the transcript, and it will not appear or be used subsequently in the dissertation. This information was stored on a password-protected computer, and any identifying code available to me was permanently deleted upon

successful defense of the dissertation. Audio recordings were kept in a locked computer file accessible only to me and were destroyed after the dissertation was approved. The written transcripts will be saved permanently, but in a format clear of any identifying information that might be connected back to the participants, aside from their specific role and time at the newspaper and gender.

All participant information remained confidential throughout the research and dissertation process. Participants received all researcher identification and contact information, as well as contact information for the University of Iowa Institutional Review Board for any follow-up questions or concerns they may have had. Although the names of newspapers used in the content analysis (and therefore the interviews) are listed in the dissertation, no additional identifying information is given on items found in specific newspapers or comments that certain newspaper employees make.

Although the same set of questions was asked for each participant, the order of the questions changed slightly in some circumstances to create smoother transitions according to the rapport between participant and interviewer (Noonan, 2013). Semi-structured interviews are typically conducted in an open-ended, neutral fashion (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010), which means that in this case, I followed the predetermined questions, but allowed the participants to elaborate on their own, and I often asked several (though still tangentially relevant) follow-up questions.

Since each participant may interpret questions differently and may have very different reactions to certain questions than initially anticipated, it was important that I be very mindful of actually hearing the data – or being aware that just because participants were not answering the questions that I intended to ask, this does not mean that they were in any way missing the point, but rather that they had interpreted it in another, equally valid way (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Additionally, particularly in situations where participants might have been dealing with sensitive questions, I practiced responsive

interviewing – knowing when to back off from pursing a question further and being willing to explore new understandings of the responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

During a debriefing at the conclusion of the interviews, participants were given additional information on contacting the University of Iowa IRB. In the instances where issues related to IPV were discussed, the participants were also informed how to contact their local and statewide IPV hotlines for additional emotional support, as needed.

Data analysis: Semi-structured interviews

Once the interviews were transcribed, responses to all of the questions were reviewed and read in detail multiple times to identify shared themes (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002). This was done through a series of qualitative analytic coding involving both open and focused codes. In this common ethnographic practice, the researcher begins with open codes, which involve examining responses line-by-line to identify and formulate major ideas, themes, and issues, then completing analysis with a series of focused codes, which comprise a deeper analysis of the previously identified ideas, themes, and issues (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995).

Typically, after the researcher immerses herself in the responses, it is possible to sort the content into several, unrestricted broad categories (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Wolcott, 1990) where open codes allow for the identification of several prominent themes in the responses of all participants. This has also been referred to as the "orientation and overview" phase of research, where investigators understand the broader issues or themes at hand in a way that allows them to make assessments about where and how to follow up with more specific codes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 235).

After the open coding, research on the text moves into a phase of what has been referred to as "focused exploration" – during which more information and detail are drawn from recurring quotes and themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 235). During this

time, the researcher begins to move into more focused codes of the text (Emerson et al., 1995), determining the most salient feedback and quotations. This often involves deep analysis of the information obtained in the open codes, including recognizing specific variables within the categories and collapsing them into new categories – or creating overarching themes that can connect multiple categories to tell a larger story (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). The final stage of analyzing interview data in focused codes (Emerson et al., 1995) consists of writing results in a way that emphasizes the more prominent themes and ascribes meaning to the information obtained from the participants.

Answering research questions

All potential topics and scripted questions received University of Iowa IRB approval prior to research. See Figure VI for a detailed list of interview questions, Figure VII for the approved IRB email, and VIII for the IRB approval memo. The information and themes found in semi-structured interview responses were used to answer research questions 1-5a. Interview questions 1-4 did not answer any research question in particular, but rather created a basis of understanding about how editors relate to and view their community, and their perceptions of the role of their local newspaper and the constraints under which it operated. The responses to these questions were necessary to create a frame of reference for the answers to each of the following research questions.

Interview questions were designed to begin with demographic information about the participant. This was done first to ease into rapport with the individual and not abruptly begin asking difficult questions as soon as the conversation began. The questions then moved into broad questions about the community and community culture, to those about the newspaper's role within the community and the relationship between the two. Questions then became more specific, designed to understand the nature of gender roles within the community and how the editors felt this compared with other communities. Finally, the interview concluded with questions about the occurrence of

IPV within the community, and the way that each of the editors made decisions about including or excluding this from his/her newspaper, and an explanation of how they came to those decisions.

RQ1 asked about the role that community members have in shaping the content of rural newspapers. Interview questions 5-8, which asked about the editors' conceptions of what people in the community wanted to read about, what information they felt obligated to include and the amount of constraints and feedback that they frequently experienced in their community, were designed to elicit responses to this research question. The responses were analyzed and coded for consistent themes.

The second research question sought to understand rural editors' perceptions of gender roles within their communities, and the meanings that they ascribed to such roles. Interview questions 12-17, which asked about gender roles for men and women in their local community, as well as how they thought this related to other Iowa towns and more urban areas, were designed to elicit responses to this research question. The responses were analyzed and coded for consistent themes.

Research questions 3 and 4 asked about the ways in which rural editors decided how to describe assaults and violent crimes within their community, and how they explained their descriptions of IPV. The questions 22-27 were designed to elicit responses to these questions. These questions asked about what the editors personally considered to constitute IPV, how they made decisions about what to include in the newspaper regarding IPV, and why they chose to report it the way that they did. Responses were analyzed and coded for consistent themes.

RQ4a asked about the perceptions of IPV in their communities among editors of rural newspapers. Interview questions 20-21, which asked about the frequency with which editors felt IPV occurred in their communities and how often they heard about these instances, were designed to elicit responses to this question. All responses were analyzed and coded for consistent themes.

Research questions 5 and 5a sought to understand the relationship between the perceived level of relevance of IPV and their local communities, and the nature of coverage editors gave to IPV. Questions 18 and 20-27 were designed to elicit responses to this question. Question 18 asked about how involved editors felt that community members were in one another's lives, and questions 20-27 asked about perceptions of how frequently IPV occurred in their community, whether it would be included in newspaper coverage, and how they would describe it. Participant responses were analyzed and coded for consistent themes.

Chapter III Summary

This chapter has explained the combination of methods – content analysis and semi-structured interviews grounded in feminist research methods. Additionally, this chapter addresses how I attempt to explore this study to better understand the relationship between gender roles and IPV in rural communities, and how these appear in community newspapers and through the eyes of editors. Subsequent chapters will examine the results of these analyses and discuss the implications of the findings.

Table 3.1: Sample Content by Newspaper and NCHS (2006) rural county category

County	Circulation category	Newspaper	Cases
Winnebago	Rural micropolitan	*Buffalo Center Tribune*	266
Louisa	Rural micropolitan	*Columbus Junction*	216
Harrison	Rural micropolitan	*Dunlap Reporter*	209
Plymouth	Rural micropolitan	*Remsen Bell Enterprise*	183
Tama	Rural micropolitan	*Traer Star-Clipper*	218
Ida	Rural noncore	*Ida Co. Courier*	366
Decatur	Rural noncore	*Lamoni Chronicle*	209
Howard	Rural noncore	*Lime Springs Herald*	256
Palo Alto	Rural noncore	*Ruthven Zipcode*	270
Wayne	Rural noncore	*Seymour Herald*	141
Polk	Urban medium metro	*Des Moines Register*	538
Total			2,872

Note: Rural micropolitan: population > 10,000; Rural noncore: population < 10,000; Urban medium metro: population of 250,000 – 999,999 (Ingram & Franco, 2012)

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

This purpose of this dissertation is to understand the gender norms in rural communities, and the context in which IPV occurs in these areas. To examine this, I conducted a content analysis on 14 issues randomly sampled over a one-year time span from 10 Iowa weekly rural community newspapers (for a total of 140 issues) and the *Des Moines Register*. The goal of the content analysis was to provide a depiction of community culture and gender norms within the rural locations in which each of these newspapers were published. The content analysis included an examination of the coverage and discussions surrounding intimate partner violence in rural newspapers. Because one of my intentions for the content analysis was to provide an overview of rural communities with respect to the gender norms and community culture, it helped to make the findings of the content analysis more meaningful by the inclusion of a more urban source of comparison in the Des Moines newspaper – the largest in Iowa, and the state's newspaper of record.

In addition to the content analysis portion, the dissertation also contains interviews with the editors from most of the rural community newspapers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine of the 10 rural community newspaper editors. The intent of these interviews was to further discuss the perceptions of editors about their community culture, as well as the gender norms and roles of men and women in those areas. Also of interest in the interviews was the editors' knowledge about IPV in their communities, and why they made decisions about whether to include or exclude it from their newspapers. The editors were also asked about the involvement of community members in the content of the newspaper, and how this impacted what they were or were not willing to publish. Following the results of the content analysis, I will discuss the results of the interviews with community newspaper editors.

Content analysis

Before testing the hypotheses and answering research questions articulated in Chapter II, it is important to provide the findings about overall information regarding newspaper content.

Community news content

The largest portion of the content analysis comprised the 10 weekly community newspapers outlined in the preceding chapter. This portion of the study produced a total sample of 2,334 cases. With the addition of the 538 cases coded from the *Des Moines* Register, a total of 2,872 cases were analyzed. Because cases could consist of an article alone, a photo alone, or an article with a photo, and captions were not coded if they did not mention gender, each case might include multiple items to code: articles (n = 1,638), photos (n = 1,161), and captions (n = 1,009). In accordance with the NCHS urban-rural classification scheme (CDC, 2014; Ingram & Franco, 2012), the rural community newspapers can be placed in two categories based on their county population. Newspapers in counties with fewer than 10,000 people produced 1,092 cases (38.0%) and those in counties with greater than 10,000 population had 1,242 cases (43.2%). The *Des Moines Register* produced 538 cases (18.7%).

Analyses of the two categories of rural newspapers yielded some significant results in the rates of the gender of the person who was the focus of the photograph χ^2 (2, N = 995) = 19.22, $p < .001$ (see Table 4.1), gender of the person who was the focus of caption, χ^2 (2, N = 885) = 24.72, $p < .001$ (see Table 4.2), and whether IPV was identified, χ^2 (1, N = 2,334) = 7.19, $p < .05$ (see Table 4.3). However, since this dissertation sought to examine coverage in rural newspapers overall, and there were no major differences in coverage on the majority of variables, the two rural newspaper categories were grouped together to analyze the entire rural sample as a whole.

Of the entire sample of rural community newspaper issues, the majority (65.3%, *n* =1,525) of articles, photos, and captions analyzed were focused on local news. Following local news, special interest pieces and in-depth stories were the next most-often included type of article, photo, or caption (13.2%, *n* = 307). The newspapers had heavy coverage of city government, clubs and organizations within town, and a large focus on the local area schools. The feature stories were often about an extraordinary person originally from the community, or the experiences of a local resident who recently did something notable (see Table 4.4).

This study examined how the coverage of various gender and abuse issues compare in rural Iowa newspapers to their most urban counterpart, the *Des Moines Register*. Because the *Des Moines Register* is a much larger newspaper that includes many more sections than the rural newspapers, I coded the entire front section (everything considered "A") and the Metro section, as those were more focused on local news, and therefore the most applicable to the rural coverage. The majority of articles, photos, and captions in the *Des Moines Register* were about national or international political news (28%, *n* = 148), followed closely by local news (25%, *n* = 133), and opinion or op-ed columns (16%, *n* = 86) (see Table 4.5).

The majority of articles and captions (64.3%, *n* = 1,479) were written by a newspaper staff member (usually the editor), and the next-largest category (12.2%, *n* = 284) were submitted by local community members. Sixteen percent of the articles (*n* = 371) included no author or byline (see Table 4.6). The overwhelming majority of the *Des Moines Register*'s articles and captions were written by staff employees (59%, *n* = 316), followed by wire services (19%, *n* = 101), and other newspapers (15%, *n* = 83) (see Table 4.7). Editor sex had no impact on the outcome of the gender variables analyzed.

Because IPV is so rarely covered in newspapers (Eastman & Bunch, 2007; Ferrand-Bullock, 2008; Grama, 2000; O'Gara, 2011), the content analysis portion of this study included variables about its occurrence, but focused primarily on the way that

gender roles were reflected and represented among community members in the rural newspapers. The depictions of gender are significant because cultures with more rigid or stereotypical gender roles are also more accepting of IPV (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2004). Considering what past research has uncovered about the ways that gender is often depicted in the news media, several hypotheses were formed surrounding what might be expected in this sample of rural community newspapers.

Gender role coverage

H1 stated that rural newspaper coverage would be more likely to include stories about men than women. To test this hypothesis, *z* tests of proportional differences were conducted on the gender of the person who was the focus in articles in the rural newspapers. The focus was considered to be the primary person discussed or quoted in the article – just mentioning a gender or gendered topic was not considered a gender focus. In rural community newspapers, when the article included a focus, that individual was male in 60.1% ($n = 710$) of the articles, while women were the focus in 39.9% ($n = 471$). The difference between men and women as the focus of rural community newspaper articles was statistically significant, $z = -9.84$, $p < .01$. Thus, H1 was supported.

H1a predicted that the difference in coverage of men and women would be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper. Frequencies indicate that the *Des Moines Register* also contained significantly more overall stories about men (79.4%, $n = 363$) than women (20.6%, $n = 94$), $z = 16.60$, $p < .01$. A chi-square test indicated that there was a significant relationship between the gender of the person who was focus of articles and newspaper category, $\chi^2 (1, N = 1,638) = 54.39$, $p < .001$ (see Table 4.8). Men were about four times more likely to be the focus of articles in the *Des Moines Register* than women, but in rural community newspapers, the ratio of articles about men and women was about 60-40. Therefore, H1a was not supported.

H2 predicted that women in rural community newspaper coverage would be more often described by their familial role than would men. Overall, mentions of familial role appeared 171 times in articles in the rural newspapers. Women were significantly more likely to be portrayed by their familial role (29.2%, $n = 100$) than were men (9.6%, $n = 68$), $z = 5.61$, $p < .01$. Therefore, H2 was supported. Family roles were most commonly daughter or son (32.7%, $n = 56$), significant other or spouse (32.2%, $n = 53$), or parent (25.7%, $n = 44$). When they were mentioned in terms of their familial role, women were most likely to be described as a daughter (37.0%, $n = 37$) and mother (34.0%, $n = 34$), while men were most likely to be described as husbands (48.5%, $n = 33$).

H2a predicted that women would be more often described by their familial role in newspaper coverage than they would be presented as individuals. Women were described in articles by their familial role in 21.2% ($n = 100$) of articles in which they were the focus, and 78.8% ($n = 371$) did not mention their familial role, $z = 7.17$, $p < .001$. Because they were depicted much less frequently in their familial role than they were as individuals, H2a was not supported.

H2b predicted that women would be more often presented in their familial role than they would as individuals in rural community newspaper photographs. Familial roles were apparent in only 18 photographs, 6 of which included both a man and a woman. Women (77.8%, $n = 14$) were significantly more likely to be depicted in their familial roles than were men (44.4%, $n = 8$) in photographs, $z = 2.05$, $p = .02$. Therefore, H2b is supported. In the 86 photo captions containing mention of familial roles, 70.9% ($n = 61$) referred to women, and 44.2% ($n = 38$) referred to men, $z = 3.55$, $p < .001$.

H2c predicted that the proportion of women described by their familial role to men described by their familial role would be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper. In the *Des Moines Register,* familial role was mentioned 52 times. When women were the focus of the article, they were described by their familial role in 24.5% ($n = 23$) of the time, while men were described by their familial role 7.9% (n 29)

of the time. In the *Des Moines Register* too, women were significantly more likely than men to be described by their familial role, $z = 2.22$, $p < .05$. A chi-square test revealed that there was not a significant relationship between the number of depictions of women's familial role and newspaper category (the rural community newspapers and the *Des Moines Register*). As such, H2c is not supported.

The third hypothesis predicted that occupations for women in rural community newspapers would be more stereotypically feminine jobs than traditionally masculine jobs. Forty percent ($n = 162$) of the occupations women were ascribed in articles were gender-neutral. When women's gender-stereotyped occupations were included in rural newspaper articles, however, they were significantly more likely to be traditionally masculine (66.3%, $n = 161$) than feminine (33.7%, $n = 82$), $z = 7.17$, $p < .001$. The most frequently cited occupations were local community government and business leaders (37%, $n = 437$) and politicians (19.6%, $n = 232$), followed by students (7.3%, $n = 86$). Therefore, H3 is not supported.

H3a predicted that the range of women's occupations would be smaller in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper. When women's gender-stereotyped occupations were included in *Des Moines Register* newspaper articles, they were significantly more likely to be traditionally masculine (71.4%, $n = 30$) than feminine (28.6%, $n = 12$), $z = 3.92$, $p < .01$. A chi-square test indicated that there was a significant relationship between gender-stereotyped occupations for women in rural newspapers and the *Des Moines Register*, χ^2 (2, $N = 498$) = 7.16, $p < .05$ (see Table 4.9). Out of all occupations depicted for women, in both the rural newspapers (40.0%, $n = 162$) and the *Des Moines Register* (54.8%, $n = 51$), women were more likely to be depicted as holding gender-neutral jobs than a gender-stereotyped occupation. However, in rural newspapers, depictions of women in stereotypically male jobs (39.8%, $n = 161$) and gender-neutral jobs (40.0%, $n = 162$) were almost equal, while the difference between traditionally male

jobs (32.3%, $n = 30$) and gender-neutral jobs (54.8%, $n = 51$) was much greater in the *Des Moines Register*. As such, H3a is not supported.

Gender display in photographs

Photographs were coded separately because they were being examined through Goffman's (1976) concept of gender display, which emphasizes power relations as they appear through nonverbal descriptions. Considering photographs through gender display allows for observations to be made about roles of dominance and power, through depictions of physical activity and whether or not someone is pictured within a place of employment outside of the home.

H4 projected that men would appear in rural community newspaper photographs more often than women. Frequency analyses indicated that men appeared as the focus of photographs 59.6% ($n = 347$) of the time, while women appeared 40.4% of the time ($n = 235$). Men appear in significantly more photographs than women in rural community newspapers, $z = 6.57$, $p < .001$. Thus, H4 was supported. It is worth noting, however, that overall, more photographs focused equally on men and women (41.1%, $n = 409$,) than either men (34.9%, $n = 347$) or women (24.0%, $n = 239$) individually.

H4a predicted that the proportion of photographs including men compared to those including women would be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper. In *Des Moines Register* coverage, men were the focus of photographs the majority of the time (70.8%, $n = 97$), and women were the focus 29.2% of the time ($n = 40$). Men were included in significantly more photographs than were women in the *Des Moines Register,* $z = 6.89$, $p < .001$. A chi-square test indicated that there was a significant relationship between photographs including men compared to those including women in rural newspapers and the *Des Moines Register*, $\chi^2 (1, N = 723) = 6.29$, $p < .01$ (see Table 4.10). Unlike the rural community newspapers, photographs that focused on men and women equally (17.5%, $n = 29$) were much less common than photographs that

focused on either gender alone (82.5%, $n = 137$), and men were more than twice as likely to be the focus of photographs than were women. Therefore, H4a is not supported.

H5 predicted that men in rural community photographs would be more often depicted as physically active than women. In photos that depicted one gender as being physically active, men were focused on 75.4% of the time ($n = 83$), while women were shown as being physically active 24.6% of the time ($n = 27$). There was a significant relationship in physical activity depictions between men and women in rural newspaper photographs, $z = 7.55$, $p < .001$. Therefore, H5 was supported.

H5a predicted that the proportion of photographs depicting men as physically active would be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper. The *Des Moines Register* had very few photographs with depictions of physical activity, but men 70.0% ($n = 7$) were depicted as significantly more physically active than women 30.0% ($n = 3$), $z = 1.79$, $p < .05$. The unexpected difference in the number of photographs depicting physical activity in the rural newspapers and the urban newspaper made it difficult to test this hypothesis statistically. Results would have to be interpreted with caution. However, because the percentages of physically active men and women in the rural and urban newspapers were very similar, it is safe to say that H5a was not supported.

H6 stated that men would be portrayed as more prominent than women in rural community newspaper photographs. When one gender was depicted as being in a position of prominence (i.e., dominant stance, depicted as boss, manager, or authority role), 87.2% ($n = 75$) of the time it was men, and 12.8% ($n = 11$) of the time it was women. There was a significant difference in portrayals of dominance between men and women in rural newspapers, $z = 9.76$, $p < .001$. Therefore, H6 is supported.

H6a predicted that the proportion of photographs depicting men as prominent compared to the proportion of photographs depicting women as prominent would be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper. In the *Des Moines Register,*

men were portrayed in roles of prominence 66.3% (n = 59) of the time, while women were shown in roles of prominence 33.7% (n = 30) of the time. Men were significantly more likely than women to be depicted as prominent in the *Des Moines Register*'s photographs, $z = 4.35$, $p < .001$. A chi-square test indicated that there was not a statistically significant relationship in the gender prominence in rural community newspapers and the *Des Moines Register*. Therefore, H6a is not supported, although the proportions of male prominence to female prominence by newspaper category were in the predicted direction.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that men in rural community photographs would be more often pictured in business roles outside the home than would women. Because occupations were initially coded as string variables to account for the variety that may be depicted, they were later re-coded into occupation categories. When the occupation of one gender was depicted, men were significantly more likely to be shown as working outside of the home as politicians or (non-local) government employees, $z = 9.36$, $p < .001$; local government or business leaders, $z = 7.04$, $p < .001$; and coaches or athletes, $z = 6.42$, $p < .001$; while women were significantly more likely to be shown as doing domestic duties such as childcare, cooking, cleaning, or gardening, $z = 8.64$, $p < .001$. Men and women were equally likely to be depicted as students (see Table 4.11). Results indicate that H7 is supported.

Hypothesis 7a predicted that the proportion of photographs depicting men in business roles outside the home to those depicting women in business roles outside the home will be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper. When the occupation of one gender was depicted in the *Des Moines Register*, men were significantly more likely to be shown as working outside the home as politicians or (non-local) government employees, $z = 4.81$, $p < .001$; politicians or local business leaders, $z = 4.92$, $p < .001$; and coaches or athletes, $z = 1.89$, $p < .05$. Women were significantly more likely to be portrayed as doing domestic duties such as childcare, cooking, cleaning, or

gardening $z = 1.89$, $p < .05$ (see Table 4.12). A chi-square test indicated that there was not a significant relationship between depictions of men and women working outside of the home in rural newspapers and the *Des Moines Register.* Therefore, H7a is not supported.

Hypothesis 8 stated that rural newspaper coverage would contain more descriptions of women's physical appearance than of men's physical appearance. In rural newspaper coverage, women's physical appearance was mentioned a total of only 8 times, and men's a total of 6 times. There were no significant relationships between men and women in terms of descriptions of physical appearance, and as such H8 is not supported.

H8a predicted that the proportion of descriptions of women's physical appearance to depictions of men's physical appearance would be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper. In the *Des Moines Register* coverage, women's physical appearance was mentioned a total of only 3 times, and men's a total of 2 times. The *Des Moines Register* also had no significant relationships in depictions of physical appearance for men or women in articles, photographs, or captions. Therefore, H8a is not supported.

For additional photo and caption frequencies by gender for social activities, see Table 4.13. For photo and caption frequencies by gender for community roles, see Table 4.14 and 4.15.

IPV coverage

An important part of the content analysis was examining the ways that IPV is discussed in rural newspapers. Unlike the gender variables where editor sex had no impact on coverage, there was a significant relationship between editor gender and whether or not IPV was mentioned in a news article, see Table 4.16. Male editors were more likely to include information surrounding IPV – which in this case meant that they

were more likely to have IPV reports listed in police blotter or sheriff's report sections of the newspaper.

H9 predicted that when IPV was apparent in rural community newspapers, victims would be depicted as at least partially to blame. In the instances that IPV was addressed in rural community newspapers, no victim blaming occurred. Thus, H9 is not supported. H9a predicted that IPV victims in rural newspaper coverage would be more often depicted as at least partially to blame than IPV victims in a more urban newspaper. There was no blame placed upon victims of IPV in the coverage from rural community newspapers or the *Des Moines Register*, so H9a is not supported.

The tenth hypothesis stated that when IPV was apparent, rural newspaper coverage would mention specific behavioral or mediating factors that attribute responsibility to victims a majority of the time. Frequency analyses revealed that in the few instances that IPV was addressed in rural community newspapers, no behavioral or other mediating factors attributed any responsibility to victims. Because of this, H10 is not supported. H10a predicted that rural newspaper coverage of IPV would more often mention specific behavioral or mediating factors (such as substance use and mental illness) that attributed responsibility to the victim than coverage of IPV in a more urban newspaper. There were no behavioral or mediating factors mentioned in coverage of IPV for either the rural community newspaper, or the *Des Moines Register*, and thus, H10a is not supported.

The final set of hypotheses predicted that rural community newspaper coverage would more frequently depict IPV as an isolated incident, rather than as a societal issue. Frequency analyses reveal that when IPV was mentioned in rural newspaper coverage (n = 63), all but one instance were in the police blotter (this was sometimes also called the sheriff's report or courthouse news, depending on the newspaper). In the one instance that IPV was not part of the police blotter or sheriff's report, it was depicted as a societal issue. IPV was significantly more likely to appear as isolated incidents than recognized as

a social issue in rural community newspapers, $z = -10.87$, $p < .001$. Therefore, H11 is supported.

Hypothesis 11a predicted that the rural community news coverage would more often describe IPV as part of an isolated incident than would news coverage in the *Des Moines Register.* Rural community newspapers were significantly more likely to cover IPV than was the *Des Moines Register,* $\chi^2 (1, N = 65) = 10.71$, $p < .001$ (see Table 4.17). IPV was mentioned in 2 articles in the *Des Moines Register* coverage. In these two instances, IPV was not described as a societal problem. Therefore, H11a is supported.

Frequency analyses revealed that IPV was present in 1.8% ($n = 21$) of the rural community newspaper articles. Although this low incidence rate is informative in itself, it means that my hypotheses and research questions regarding IPV will not have enough statistical power to be tested.

Following the content analysis will be the results of the semi-structured interviews with editors and discussion and comments on all findings.

Semi-structured interviews

In the second portion of this study, I was interested in examining community gender norms and explanations for rural community newspaper coverage of gender and IPV. To conduct this aspect of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the editors of nine rural community newspapers. These newspapers were the same as those used for the content analysis section of this dissertation, with the exception of one editor who did not participate. The gender breakdown of the editors was six women and three men. The newspaper that I was unable to make contact with also had a female editor, though it was the one exception in which the editor wrote no articles, and instead all were written by a male journalist employee.

Before I talked to the editors from the rural community newspapers, I sent an email informing them of my study, when possible. Unfortunately, since some of the newspapers were so small, many did not have active websites or social media accounts, and the contact information for the newspapers did not list email addresses. In the event that I was not able to send an email first, I informed people at the beginning of my initial telephone contact of why I was calling and asked whether I could email them or if they would like me to give them the information about the purpose of the interview and informed consent over the phone. If they chose to receive the information via phone, I told them the nature of the study and why I wanted their participation, then asked if I could call back once they had had time to think over their response. It was important for me to provide the callback and email options so that they did not feel pressured into participating. Once they agreed, we scheduled times for interviews at their convenience. Most of the editors remained in the newspaper office for the interview, though several asked that I call their personal phones, and two interviews were conducted while the editors were at home outside of business hours, at their request. Interviews were conducted with nine out of the 10 editors, as I was never able to actually speak with the last editor despite repeated attempts – both because of difficulty reaching anyone at the newspaper office and not having my phone calls returned.

Overwhelmingly, the majority of editors I spoke with were very open and willing to be part of the study – stressing their desire to see more attention paid to community newspapers in rural locations. The editors seemed, for the most part, candid and honest in their responses, and they did a nice job of articulating their thoughts throughout the interview. Several themes became apparent upon analysis of the interview transcripts – primarily on the topics of community feedback and restrictions placed upon rural editors, and gender role traditionality in their communities.

Once interviews had been transcribed, the data were separated into several broad categories, and shared themes were identified, as described in Chapter III. Five categories

became apparent: nature of the community, community feedback and rural newspapers, constraint, gender roles within rural communities, and knowledge of and attitudes toward IPV in rural communities. Open coding on these categories resulted in the identification of more specific themes within each – allowing for focused exploration and detailed analysis. The most prominent themes are identified below.

Seven of the nine editors I spoke with were originally from the area that they are currently working in, or they were from similar areas nearby in Iowa. Because of their familiarity with the local culture, this may have helped to ensure the accuracy of many of the statements they were making, but may have also made it more difficult for them to objectively view their community and gender roles since they have limited experience with communities other than theirs. However, almost all seemed to be able to easily identify positive and negative things about the community, and all were fairly consistent in the way that they viewed gender norms within their town.

Two of the editors were originally from larger, more urban areas not located in the Midwest. These individuals in particular seemed to have a very different perspective on the area and community norms because of what they still perceived as their semi-outsider status. Additionally, I felt that many of their responses seemed to be considerably more frank than the editors who grew up in the area or nearby, who seemed to be more entrenched in community norms. When asked about how he would describe the culture of the local community, one of these editors said:

> I hate to say it, but it's like going into a time machine… people here are certainly happy, and it's not my place to ever come in here and be like, 'Oh, you backward small town folks are living your lives the wrong way' but it's definitely more traditional and more old fashioned than I was used to. (Male 3)

Most editors seemed to have a very similar idea of what they should be obligated to cover in their paper and what the community expected of them at the newspaper. Most of this coverage included local city government, events with the local elementary, middle

or high schools (a major focus for all of the community newspapers), and very little focus on national events. One editor specified that if there was attention to national events, it was done through the perspective of a community member who may have a link. Most editors of newspapers that included occasional columns from state senators agreed. One editor summarized his newspaper's priorities especially well:

> Our list of priorities is anything local takes top priority. Second to that is the school and things going on with our students and the children and so forth, and then number three is town events. The various celebrations we hold and the various meetings that go on. (Male 2)

In each of the interviews, questions surrounding community culture tended to include many descriptions of "traditional," faith-based, and hard-working people. All of the editors described an idyllic picture of the community, which often included generous community members who would be willing to help one another out in their time of need. Descriptions of honest and all-around "good" people were used to describe community members in almost every interview. The tight-knit nature of these communities was also emphasized regularly in interviews – with more than one editor referring to the town as a family:

> I would describe the culture of our community as it is, a family… dysfunctional at times, but our community is a family. Of course, like most small towns we have, like, 95% solid citizens and 5% characters… but it's a very good community. (Male 2)

A very consistent theme was that each of the editors emphasized the importance of the role of community newspapers in rural towns, because no other media (including larger relational organizations) would cover things that impacted the everyday lives of their citizens. When asked specifically about the role of her paper, one editor replied:

> If you want to see a town die really fast, watch it lose its newspaper. The newspaper holds people together… it reminds them of all the activities that are going on, it keeps them up on who's having what – whether [it is] an anniversary or a death, it's something that brings everybody together. (Female 2)

In fact, each of the editors seemed very enthusiastic about this study because of its focus on rural community newspapers, which they felt were largely ignored by people outside of the towns that they served. Another editor explained:

> Well, now – I try to be humble about most things – not just my paper –but all small town newspapers are very important. The bigger towns have bigger newspapers – they have television stations. To get the news here, you do need your small town newspaper because that's where the news gets out. (Female 4)

All of the editors also reported that community members knew an incredibly detailed amount of information about one another's personal lives, but that almost all of these types of conversations were fueled by face-to-face interactions, rather than newspaper content. However, an exception to this was information occasionally printed in police blotters and sheriff's reports, for the newspapers that ran them.

> I think it's probably one–on-one [communication that spreads gossip], unless it's courthouse news, that's always controversial – you know, things that appear in the newspaper. (Female 3)

Community feedback

The first research question asked about the role that journalists felt community members had in shaping newspaper content. The answers to this question came through a series of interview questions that asked about feedback and the editors' responses to community comments and opinions on content. Most of the editors reported that it was common for community members to inform them of issues and topics that they would like to see included in the newspaper, as well as information or events they no longer want covered – and, for the most part, these requests were followed. Most editors had little to elaborate on with the kinds of suggestions they receive from the community, but one editor provided deeper insight into the way that the newspaper content adapts to reader wishes. When I asked about any issues she might feel the newspaper runs into

regarding reader feedback, she explained that regardless of what it is that a reader wants covered, she will generally try to fit it in the newspaper.

> I think everything has a place in there. Honestly… sometimes you get into this… I call it the "vegetable war." Somebody had a 12-inch carrot and they were proud of that, and they brought it in and I took a picture of it. Then somebody else had a 1 and a half foot-wide squash… so then they're all trying to brag up and it does get tedious – I'm like, "Really? You're going to show me your tomato?" but it's important to them, and if it's important to them then it's important to other people as well. As weird as it is, that is part of history – we had a good year farming and gardening, so you know… if people bring things in, for the most part I do allow them to go into the paper. (Female 4)

All of the editors stated that, in general, most of the feedback they receive about the newspaper is positive, and when they hear something negative, it frequently comes to them second-hand. In addition to adding content at the request of community members, all of the editors also reported changing existing newspaper features or coverage it if community members wanted. One editor (Male 1) even explained that doing as community members wanted with coverage rather than always sticking to his principles made his life much easier.

During several of the interviews, the topic of the individual providing feedback entered into conversation. More than one of the editors responded that their actions regarding the newspaper's response were determined by a variety of factors, including the person who was providing the suggestions or making requests, and that person's role within the community.

> Well, sometimes people give me ideas, and I try to work on them or try to get them. Sometimes it's like you know, "I think you should look into this because I think they're being crooks." Well, it's kind of hard to do that unless they're being obvious. Like the school board or something, "I think you need to dig deeper" and sometimes I ask some questions and sometimes you just gotta take the source, you know what I mean? (Female 4)

This editor went on to elaborate that some people seem to make a big deal from non-issues, and sometimes the person contacting the newspaper is very well-respected, and it may be in the paper's best interest to pay respond accordingly. Interestingly, perceptions of reader feedback seemed to be very different for the editors who were not originally from the community. Those who moved to the area as adults felt that the feedback was particularly unique to their position as outsiders. One editor (Male 3) even made the decision to move to another community, so as to avoid being approached by people at home about things written in the newspaper. The other editor not originally from Iowa told a story about her own learning curve with community culture.

> Female 2: Well, I try not to write about things that are really offensive, because that tends to get people excited. You know, in a small town you want to keep the news as "happy news" as you possibly can.
>
> EO: What would you consider offensive things you'd want to avoid?
>
> Female 2: Um, well… I don't know, because I didn't grow up here, I moved here in mid-life, or late mid-life. You know you can't talk about things in Iowa, or maybe all of the Midwest… if somebody dies in an accident, people really don't want pictures of that [accident scene]. Whereas you know like, where I grew up... if there was a really bad wreck or something, they had that on the front page and it led off the evening news on the TV. But around here they don't want to – in fact, my husband got in trouble when we hadn't been here very long. There was an accident and a woman was killed and we had – it wasn't a gory picture at all – but it was a picture of the accident [scene] and oh my goodness, we had people come in [to the newspaper office] and threaten our lives.

This began to touch onto issues of constraint, which seemed to be the most consistent theme present and a major factor in shaping newspaper content for almost all of the editors interviewed. For most of the editors – regardless of whether they were originally from the community or not – it only took one misstep or simple misunderstanding of the general sense of the community norms regarding content to know what types of things would receive backlash. Interestingly, as highlighted in the

above quotation, the example of car accidents came up for more than half of the editors interviewed. Almost all of the editors claimed that, in their experience, almost anything that might be considered controversial in any way was omitted from the newspapers.

Thus, any questions regarding the extent to which content was shaped by the community were answered by talking about constraints that the editors faced. Overwhelmingly, the answer to my question regarding the constraints editors faced was that the newspaper needed to include positive information only. One editor talked about attempting to negotiate this unofficial policy with his journalism training and feelings of ethical obligation.

> I certainly feel the pull with the – I feel like I have a... I guess I should say – journalistic ethics would say that I should report on every issue, even if it's negative and even if it affects people negatively, or if it's a negative story. But realistically in a small town it can be difficult to do that because in a smaller community obviously word travels faster than it would… and people are – you're more accessible to people in the community than you would be if you worked at a big city paper. So it can be tough to report on negative things when it's, when it's business leaders within the community or people who are on the school board. So I do feel like there's kind of a conflict there, and I do struggle with that occasionally when things like that come up. (Male 3)

Statements regarding how the newspaper culture was to convey only good news continued throughout each of the interviews. One of the editors even said that she liked to think of the newspaper as a source for people to read and feel good about their community.

> We try to never put anything negative in. We try to be as uplifting as we can and we refuse anything – like letters to the editor-- that knock a certain individual or business, we just won't print those. We use our judgment on those things; really, we try to be just an uplifting little paper. (Female 6)

Even in circumstances where an event might be considerably newsworthy, it was left out if it would portray an individual or the whole badly. One editor discussed a disaster within her community that made the national news:

> Female 1: We have a couple that has a very large [agriculture] business, and last year … [an accident happened and a large part of the business was destroyed]. Of course it was awful and … many huge TV news stations came here and interviewed… [about] all of these … issues. All our newspaper published was no pictures, just a little article that that [the owners] suffered huge losses …on such and such a date … and the building was totally lost. You know, we don't even go out and take pictures; we just don't get into anything.
>
> EO: Was there a reason for that?
>
> Female 1: I think it's been the policy of only good news, but it makes it hard for us to compete because [a neighboring newspaper] comes down and takes pictures and does all of this and [larger city] television stations came down and shot footage, but that's just been our policy.

This particular editor had a lot to say on choosing not to report on controversial issues, no matter how significant they might be. She informed me that, two years ago, a former employee of the newspaper experienced very public personal and legal issues that were significant in their small community. She discussed the newspaper's decision to not report on one particularly major event:

> I tell you, the biggest story we probably could have done was when [a controversial issue happened with a former employee] But there was no mention of that… we just act like it didn't happen. He has family here, he has children here – his business. Also, there are legal aspects there too, as far as if there's going to be a trial. (Female 1)

Similar occurrences seemed the norm for other editors as well:

> We had some people get in a fight in front of a bar and one of them got knifed and – people want to talk about it on the street, but they don't want it to be in the paper except written about in the lightest manner that doesn't give too bad a reflection. We had that happen here and I didn't really put anything about it, because everybody

> knew everybody who got in the fight. Some were friends with one side, some were friends with the other side, and I just knew I would get really hammered, so I didn't put anything in there about it at all other than "altercation at a local bar." (Female 2)

However, not all of the editors felt it necessary to entirely omit all potentially negative information. One editor described the way that she routinely handles such topics:

> I try to put a positive spin on things, and you're supposed to be even-keeled and tell the exact truth, but that doesn't mean that you can't put a positive, lift-me-up spin on things. So when you do have an ugly event that has to go in and you still have to write about it, I generally won't put it on the top fold of the paper, I'll put it on the bottom fold of the front page, where maybe our sister paper would put it on the top fold because they're pointing fingers at another town. So I may have to report it, but I have the option to put it where I want as well. (Female 4)

Another issue that came up in two interviews was the "Back When…" or "Do You Remember?" columns that most of the newspapers publish. These segments were usually in one of the first few pages, and consisted of a page (or stories) that ran in the newspaper at some time in the past. In most cases, the editors described this segment as digging up a piece of community history in the paper's vaults. Several of the editors named this section as one of the most popular for both men and women living in the community, as many of the residents are older and like to look back at the way things used to be. However, this also placed some of the editors in difficult situations. One editor (Female 1) talked about her trepidation in reprinting some of the pages because of the overt sexism present in some of the stories and comics in the paper. However, she ultimately decided that, distasteful or not, it was still an accurate portrayal of the climate toward gender at that time. Another editor discussed a page that he ran that included a photo and a report of a serious car accident that had taken place decades ago. Not from the community originally, this editor was not prepared for the backlash that he got:

> There was a car wreck from I think the late '70s, or early '80s, and it was a big story for weeks and weeks in the paper, so I decided to

> include it as a little back thing. I got a lot of angry phone calls and a lot of people who said they wouldn't subscribe anymore – because – and me not being from the community and not knowing this – apparently the person who caused that accident still lived in the community and had not told their family, their children about that, so I guess their family found out about that for the first time from the paper printing stuff like that. (Male 3)

In addition to constraints surrounding what they felt they could print within community guidelines, editors also felt constraint by frequently not having enough news, editorial, or advertising content to fill the newspaper. Many editors said that they struggled some weeks to come up with enough material.

Gender roles

The second research question asked about the meaning that rural editors gave to gender roles in their community. Although they knew the nature of the study in advance, almost every editor I spoke to seemed very surprised when the questions about gender roles were asked. Most needed a moment to think before they responded, and several made comments about how they had never thought about community members in terms of gender. A very consistent theme emerged in responses to gender questions, and editors responded first that they felt the roles for their communities were very traditional. This typically meant that often the man was the head of the household and primary breadwinner, but that usually both men and women worked outside of the home.

> I think they [men] take the role of earning the living. I mean I think most women who work – it just suffices their salary. They're [men are] active in so many things, like the fire department is all volunteer [run] and so many things. I think they play a big role [in the community overall]. (Female 6)

In several communities editors explained that this meant that men worked inside the town in leadership roles, blue-collar or agricultural jobs, while many of the women traveled to other towns or took local subordinate office jobs, and a large number mentioned healthcare as a major occupation for women in their communities. Most of the

responses to these questions pointed out men were typically in the most dominant positions socially within the home as well as in the larger community.

> I'd say most of the jobs in town are taken by men, especially like, the higher positions – board members, stuff like that. Um, most of my contacts are women, but I'd say the top jobs are mostly taken by men. They're definitely authoritative figures in town. People kind of come to them to get some of their information too… I think that they [people in the community] expect them to be respectful and kind of be the ones who take care of their family and whatnot… so kind of be the, I'd say like, be the breadwinner in the family. (Female 5)

Although several editors insisted that men had all of the leadership roles within the community as well as at home belonged to men, another suggested that these norms seemed to be changing all the time.

> Growing up, of course, it was always men dominated the businesses and whatever, and if I were to go up the street I would see that the businesses are still dominated by men. But here – I'm just telling you that you've got a business right there with three women running it. But the men tend to be the dominant ones at home, but still – we're up and coming, we're not in the dark ages. My husband would never say he was the dominant one. (Female 1)

Though all of the editors agreed that many women worked outside of the home, at least one felt that there was still a surprising number of women who stayed home, with a particular gendered significance surrounding that decision.

> It can be a more traditional community, so there's families [*sic*] where the wife is a stay at home mom… maybe more in families than I am used to, coming from a city where it's almost the opposite – I come from a – My parents were married my entire childhood, but most of my friends had single moms and didn't have their dads around, so here it's kind of, it's definitely more traditional what you think of old-fashioned kind of family – man goes to work, wife raises the kids, that kind of thing. (Male 1)

A few of the editors made a point to recognize that men and women working outside of the home was done because of financial necessity, not because of the desire for independence or self-sufficiency. One of these editors (Male 3) commented that

percentage-wise, there were probably more working families than in some larger cities, purely based on lower income and greater need.

Another editor discussed the role of women working outside of the home in relation to their role as mothers.

> The role of women in our community is, of course, mothers and caregivers, but they also go to work and bring home paychecks and try to take care of the family the best they can. There seems to be more of a [*sic*] equality… I guess with that aspect of life with working at home and so forth. I mean, I have my own feelings on the whole male-female thing, but I would say in general the women do a lot of the same things as the men do now as far as taking care of the family and going to their jobs, collecting a paycheck and everything, but they're still predominantly the caretakers of children and so forth. I mean, we, there aren't many stay-at-home dads here in [town], but um, I mean um, we do have a few, but they're few. (Male 2)

When I asked if Male 2 would be comfortable elaborating on what he meant about his feelings on the "male-female thing," he explained that he felt women working outside the home could sometimes create a different environment for children growing up.

> I was brought up with my mom at home, and my dad was [in the military] and, while I do very much agree with women being able to follow whatever their dreams are, sometimes I feel that the feminist movement made being a housewife or being a mother akin to slavery, and I think that that was… that that's wrong. That being a mother especially is the most important job that a woman can have, just as being a father is the most important job that a man can have. (Male 2)

It was common that the editors felt people expected a great deal of family involvement within their communities, and the role of men and women as parents was something frequently discussed. When family involvement was mentioned, it was largely in terms of women in the role of mothers. In fact, even beyond responses to questions of gender, many of the interviews contained comments about mothers in the community being especially involved with children and their school, extracurricular activities, and clubs. One editor described this by saying that the women in her community were

"amazing" and that they seemed to never take time for themselves because they were always running around taking care of their kids. When asked if she could describe the average woman in her community, she said:

> Some of the most incredible, hard working people I've ever met. I'm totally and completely amazed at what they do, with these lives that they have and even the ones that don't work [outside of the home], although most of them do – 99.9% of them do work – they work all day and then they have to make sure that their kids get to and from whatever events they have in school and that can go until midnight. They get off at 5, then they have to get them to practice, get them home and feed them… then they throw in a few loads of laundry and have them back to the game, then they have to stay and watch it. I say that, and that doesn't even count when they have to travel. We have a small school so we have to travel further to reach other schools now, sometimes you have an hour to and from to get them to this game. And uh, they get up and go to work again the next morning. Their lives are just incredible; I thought I had it hard when I was raising mine and I was in big cities. It was just easier than it is here. And then the husbands expect them to get out on the weekends and man the tractors or feed the animals or keep the house and keep them fed. (Female 2)

Another (Female 1) described gender roles within the community by these same guidelines, saying that women seemed to be less involved in some community activities unless they involved children, since that comprised so much of their free time. Men were generally considered to be leaders, and one editor (Female 6) also felt that men were most likely to occupy volunteer opportunities within the town as well because they worked more local jobs and had more free time, whereas the women typically had to work outside of the community and were busier with increased childcare and child-related obligations.

In general, the role of fathers was highly valued as well. Many of the editors made comments about the high level of involvement fathers in the community seemed to have in the lives of their children.

> I've noticed between the younger generation of men now compared with my men before… my dad never played with us, he didn't like kids – and you see the dads now who take their kids to

> the pool or take them to the babysitter and pick them up. They do more with their kids than other generations. (Female 4)

Several other editors commented on their level of dedication and devotion to giving their loved ones a good life.

> If I could describe the average male community member here, I would say for the most part [a] hard-working family man, goes to his job takes home his paycheck, comes home and takes care of his family and goes to all of the sporting events and things… that's how I would characterize the males here in this community, the standard male. (Male 2)

There were also differences in the types of content that editors felt men and women wanted to see or read about in their newspapers. Every editor reported that men mostly focused on sports – and to a varying degree – news items like sale bills, agriculture news, and political information, while women were mostly interested in the society pages – which included local happenings around town and club or organizational news. Each of the newspapers that included police blotters or sheriff's reports mentioned that these were always very popular sections with all readers – though the editors felt that few readers were likely to admit it.

Most of the editors seemed to have very positive perceptions of the men and women living in their communities as honest, family-oriented people. Each of the editors described gender roles within their community as very traditional, with the men in most of the leadership roles and serving as primary breadwinners and decision makers, while the women were more likely to be described in relation to their role as mothers. However, almost all of the editors discussed men and women as both working outside of the home – though the degree to which this was described as through a desire to have their own career, or done simply out of necessity varied within the interviews.

Perspectives on IPV

Research questions three and four asked about the explanations that rural editors gave for their coverage of IPV and how often they thought IPV occurs within their communities. These questions are a bit difficult to fully answer since the newspapers gave very little coverage to the issue of IPV overall. Almost all of the editors interviewed felt that IPV happened very rarely in their community. When asked about her perceptions of the occurrence of IPV, one editor replied:

> I would venture to say not very often, but people don't talk about that until they're divorced. Maybe close friends know that and maybe they don't. They keep that pretty close… you don't talk about that. (Female 4)

The most consistent theme surrounding IPV was that the editors were all in agreement that they would never include IPV in the newspaper, barring times that it might appear in a police blotter. For a few of the editors, the thought that they might include additional information seemed almost absurd:

> If there was an arrest or even just a complaint of DV, the way that we would normally get that info is through the sheriff's report. We don't have a whole lot of people writing articles in about people hurting each other. I can't say that I've heard people talking about people beating up people unless it was really bad. Several years ago we had, quite a few years ago for that matter, we had a woman who was beaten by her ex-husband and his new wife in the middle of town and that was talked about, that was event reported on in the paper. But other than something out and out blatant like that, would more likely hear it from the sheriff's report than from town folk. (Male 2)

Most of the time when the editors were asked this question they assumed that it meant they would be including information on a specific instance – which implies that they are thinking of IPV as something related to specific individuals, rather than something systemic. Although I typically responded with follow-up questions that pointed more toward educational coverage, I felt that it was also important for the editors to respond the questions about IPV way that they interpreted them – without my

interference in leading them to think of the topic in a way that they previously had not. In the case of most of the interviews with editors, this meant that when I asked about including information on IPV, they first thought of law enforcement and specific instances. Even when this was the case, many said that it still was not something they would consider including in the newspaper. One editor I spoke with (who was certainly an outlier in her comments) was particularly opinionated on the topic of IPV, how she heard about it, and the role it had in her community.

> Female 6: Oh, word on the street. Once in a while it'll be in the sheriff's news. Probably the most accurate's [*sic*] what we see in the sheriff's news. But you hear it on the street – people love to talk about stuff like that.
>
> EO: Oh, sure. Now if you were to hear it or read it in the sheriff's news, how would you determine that it's domestic violence versus something else?
>
> Female 6: Well, you kind of have to know the individuals, I think. Some individuals almost act like they ask for it, you know. Then I've known cases where I really feel sorry for them. I probably feel the sorriest for the kids. But most of the time I don't feel too sorry for them because I think the people I know an [*sic*] know about, I'm guess – I'm not there – but I'm guessing that they're asking for it, you know. Maybe the bar, or they've been in the bar or… I just don't feel as sorry for the adults as I do the kids.
>
> EO: And is any aspect of that something you would ordinarily write about in the paper?
>
> Female 6: Not really. No, no. I stay clear of it.

Several times during the interviews, the editors would state that there was very little talk of or occurrence of IPV, but they would then later go on to talk about something that happened within the community that was clearly abuse, according to the definitions outlined by the CDC (2010a). One editor told me that she couldn't think of any time that she had actually heard of IPV in her community; however, as we continued to talk about

these issues, I asked a question about police involvement with "fights" among partners in the community. When I did, her response changed significantly:

> It's funny that you just said that, because that whole big ol' spiel I just gave you was a bunch of bunk. Now that you say that, just like, [a while back] a couple down the street – the rumor was that [there was a major violent incident] – it was a drinking thing I guess. So I don't want to downplay that, so I called the sheriff because there were SWAT members there, and I called them and he said that it was a mental illness thing, and the gentleman was getting help. So, maybe our county is more of a good ol' boy county, because he suggested to me that the gentleman was getting help voluntarily and, you know, if you put something in the paper -- even not putting names in -- people have scanners, people know where the cops were, where the ambulance was, and if you put something in there then it may hurt the individuals or leave a stigma in the future. And… you know, that's kind of a judgment call – it is a small town and people do talk, do you want to add fuel to the fire? (Female 4)

When I followed up to ask if she included any part of this incident in the newspaper, she responded:

> No. Like I said, the sheriff said that, he suggested and his debate or whatever it made sense, you know. I mean, no shots were fired. If shots had been fired I probably would have put something in there. But there's kids in the family, which is terrible that they maybe witnessed something, but do they want a picture of their house on the front page of the paper with the headline, you know, "SWAT team descends on home?." (Female 4)

There was a strong reliance on sheriff's reports as the ultimate authority for information about IPV. Each of the editors confirmed that unless the information was coming from the sheriff or courthouse, they would not print it – although one editor had once run something she received from an advocacy organization. In addition to basing their newspaper coverage on information presented in the sheriff's report, several editors used the report as their rationale for why they did not think IPV was a relevant issue to their community:

> I don't think that occurs that often, because it would eventually come out in our court house news, the charges would be aired

> eventually through our sheriff's department and I don't see a lot of it – there's some, but not a lot. (Female 3)

The issue of sheriff's reports and courthouse news was interesting in its own right. Many of the editors reported that this was one of the most popular columns in their newspaper, but as one editor explained – everyone loves it until it's their friend listed. This certainly gave me some insight surrounding perceptions of taboo behavior, and the role of IPV within other acts that might involve law enforcement. Of the newspapers that included a sheriff's report, the overall impression I gleaned from editors was that if an incident was listed, they included it. However, one of my final interview participants (Female 6), who previously told me that she couldn't think of any time that her newspaper included anything related to IPV, mentioned that she did not always print everything listed in the local sheriff's report that the newspaper received. She would only typically include information that occurred within the town borders. The topic then moved to how she could recall seeing instances of IPV in the sheriff's report that she did not eventually print for the geographic reasons. To follow up on what her criteria were for this, I asked about the example of a car being pulled over or in an accident outside of town. She said that those would be different situations since they might be on a major road leading in or out of town, and therefore the news would likely be included in the newspaper.

Of important note was the fact that all of the editors told me they never had anything to do with the language used to describe IPV, whether it appeared in police blotters, sheriff's reports, or courthouse news. They received the information from the sheriff or the courthouse and ran it exactly as-is.

The fifth research question asked about the relationship between the level of relevance the editors perceived IPV as having to their communities, and the amount and type of coverage that IPV received in the newspaper. This question was difficult to

answer because of the overall lack of coverage on IPV and the editors' reliance on police blotters exclusively for coverage of the issue. However, the majority of editors thought that while IPV was an important issue, it just was not particularly relevant to their community – though most acknowledged that it could still be happening without their knowledge:

> Yeah, you hear it in other towns, you'll hear "oh, she's beat up and we're hauling [in] the husband." If it's happened [in my community], I wasn't listening to the scanner at the time, and nobody said anything about it to me the next time I went to the beauty shop. It's a very hush-hush. (Female 4)

Summary of interviews

Each of the editors seemed to think of their community as a close-knit and involved place to live. Although it sometimes contradicted statements that were made about community involvement with newspaper coverage, most also described residents as supportive, honest, and just trying to do the best for themselves and their families. Local schools and an emphasis on family were important topics that came up in each of the interviews, as was the need for all newspaper information to be positive and reflect the community in a nice way.

Questions about gender roles seemed to be very difficult for each of the editors to answer, as they all replied that they never thought of their community or community members in gendered ways. When they did talk about gender roles, the word "traditional" was frequently used, and it became evident that most of the editors felt that men still held the majority of prominent positions within the community, while women also worked outside of the home, usually in less powerful jobs. According to the editors, an important focus for both genders – but particularly for women within the community – was their role as mothers. Most editors could not easily think of gender differences in terms of newspaper content or interests, though several eventually said that they felt women were

more likely to be interested in the social or community events-related coverage, while men would be more interested in sports and agriculture business news.

Overall, editors felt that IPV was not a major issue for their communities, and it was not something that they felt comfortable covering. This was due largely to the tendency to think of IPV only in terms of specific instances, and not as an issue impacting society overall. Although several editors claimed that they could not think of a recent instance that sounded like it might constitute IPV, upon further conversation they would make statements that indicated IPV *was* something that occurred within their community, though it seemed that local people (including the editors) just did not recognize it as such. Editors also noted that when they did include something about IPV, it was only done as part of police blotters or sheriff's reports, though even this had some amount of filtering. Every newspaper editor I interviewed stated that when they ran information as part of police blotters or sheriff's reports, there was never any editorializing, and the incident was printed exactly as the newspaper received it.

Chapter IV Summary

This chapter has analyzed the way that Iowa rural community newspapers cover issues relating to gender roles and IPV. The first portion of this chapter consisted of the content analysis results, which indicated that although women were highly visible within the community newspaper coverage, it was significantly less often than men and more likely to be in connection with their familial role than would coverage of men. The interviews with editors also indicated that an important role for both genders within the community was their role as parents, though much more so for women.

The results of the content analysis indicated that women were often depicted as working outside the home in non-stereotypically feminine occupations, but they were still less likely to be shown as independent of domestic duties than were men. Although

editors did not talk in specific about occupations as related to gender stereotypes, many did report that it seemed men held most of the more powerful, authoritative positions within the community, and most local women traveled to nearby towns for their jobs.

Newspaper coverage of IPV was very infrequent and typically only occurred within the context of police reports. This was also reflected in the interviews with editors, where most seemed to only think of any inclusion of IPV in their newspaper should be in relation to a police response to a specific incident. For a visual representation of each of the hypotheses and whether or not they were supported, see Table 4.18.

The final chapter of this dissertation will discuss all results, as well as implications for theory, practice, and future research, and it will provide overall conclusions.

Table 4.1: Focus of gender in photograph by rural newspaper NCHS category

Newspaper type	Gender		
	Female (*n*)	Male (*n*)	Both (*n*)
Small rural	102	127	214
Medium rural	137	220	195
Total	239	347	409

Note: χ^2 (2, N = 995) = 19.22, p < .001

Table 4.2: Focus of gender in caption by rural newspaper NCHS category

Newspaper type	Gender		
	Female (*n*)	Male (*n*)	Both (*n*)
Small rural	76	119	195
Medium rural	121	208	166
Total	197	327	361

Note: χ^2 (2, N = 885) = 24.72, p < .001

Table 4.3: Inclusion of IPV by rural newspaper NCHS category

Newspaper type	IPV present	
	Yes (*n*)	No (*n*)
Smallest rural	19	1,073
Medium rural	44	1,198
Total	63	2,271

Note: χ^2 (1, N = 2,234) = 7.19, p < .01

Table 4.4 Frequencies of newspaper section for rural newspapers

	Frequency (*n*)	Percent %
Local news	1,525	65.3
Special interest/In-depth story	307	13.2
Opinion	217	9.3
Police blotter/Sheriff's report	135	5.8
Politics/political news	68	2.9
Health/wellness	64	2.7
Other	18	.8
Total	2,334	100.0

Table 4.5: Frequencies of newspaper section for the *Des Moines Register*

	Frequency (*n*)	Percent %
Politics/political news	148	27.5
Local news	133	24.7
Opinion	86	16.0
National/international news (non-political)	60	11.2
Business/economy	34	6.3
Special interest/In-depth story	30	5.6
Police blotter	28	5.2
Health/wellness	19	3.5
Total	538	100.0

Table 4.6: Types and frequencies of sources for rural newspapers

Source	Frequency (*n*)	Percent %
Staff article	1,479	63.4
No byline	371	15.9
Submitted by community member	284	12.2
Other newspaper	64	2.7
Letter to editor	60	2.6
Submitted by organization	37	1.6
Editorial/Op. Ed	26	1.1
Wire service	13	.6
Total	2,334	100.0

Table 4.7: Types and frequencies of sources for the *Des Moines Register*

Source	Frequency (*n*)	Percent %
Staff article	316	58.7
Wire service	101	18.8
Other newspaper	83	15.4
Editorial/Op. Ed	15	2.8
Letter to editor	12	2.2
Submitted by community member	10	1.9
No byline	1	.2
Total	538	100.0

Table 4.8: Primary gender featured in article by newspaper category

Newspaper type	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Rural newspapers	471	710	1,181
Des Moines Register	94	363	457
Total	565	1,073	1,638

Note: χ^2 (1, N = 1,638) = 54.39, $p < .001$

Table 4.9: Women's gender-stereotyped occupations in articles by newspaper type

Newspaper type	Gender stereotyped occupation			Total
	Feminine	Masculine	Neutral	
Rural newspapers	114	550	394	1,058
Des Moines Register	17	287	145	449
Total	131	837	539	1,507

Note: χ^2 (2, N = 498) = 7.16, $p < .05$

Table 4.10: Gender inclusion in photographs by newspaper type

Newspaper type	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Rural newspapers	239	347	586
Des Moines Register	40	97	137
Total	279	444	723

Note: χ^2 (1, N = 723) = 6.29, $p < .01$

Table 4.11: Rural newspaper photograph coverage of occupation by gender (H7)

	Gender		
Occupation	Female (*n*)	Male (*n*)	Both (*n*)
Politician	7	62	32
Local government/ business leader	37	94	88
Visitor/speaker/performer	24	19	9
Coach/athlete	25	69	33
Domestic depiction	43	2	29
Student	26	26	78
Total	162	272	269

Table 4.12: *Des Moines Register* photograph coverage of occupation by gender

	Gender		
Occupation	Female (*n*)	Male (*n*)	Both (*n*)
Politician	3	4	1
Local government/ business leader	5	9	1
Visitor/speaker/performer	7	11	6
Coach/athlete	0	2	1
Domestic depiction	1	4	0
Student	2	0	0
Total	18	30	9

Table 4.13: Frequencies of rural newspaper article coverage of community social activities by gender.

	Gender		
Social activities	Female	Male	Total
Cleaning, organizing, and participating in an event	64	70	134
Member of an organization	35	48	83
Cooking, providing, and selling food	27	6	33
Volunteering	23	25	48
Participating in a physical event outside of school	21	37	51
Participating in a physical event outside of school	21	37	51
Participating in a non-sport school event	8	11	19
Cheerleading/school or organization elected royalty	8	0	8
Total	200	234	434

Note: χ^2 (8, N = 1,181) = 48.91, p < .001

Table 4.14: Frequencies of rural newspaper photograph coverage of community social activities by gender

	Gender		
Social activity	Female (*n*)	Male (*n*)	Both (*n*)
Cleaning, organizing and participating in an event	23	19	65
Participating in a physical event outside of school	11	54	29
Member of an organization	8	19	28
Participating in a non-sport school event	5	4	21
Cheerleading/school or organization elected royalty	10	0	19
Cooking, providing and selling food	8	5	14
Participating in a school sport	15	29	13
Volunteering	2	3	10
Total	82	133	199

Note: χ^2 (16, N = 995) = 92.68, p < .001

Table 4:15: Frequencies of rural newspaper caption coverage of community social activities by gender

	Gender		
Social activities	Female	Male	Both
Cleaning, organizing and participating in an event	34	42	77
Participating in a non-sport school event	7	8	42
Member of an organization	12	26	38
Participating in a physical event outside of school	9	52	30
Volunteering	9	13	29
Cheerleading/school or organization elected royalty	15	0	17
Participating in a school sport	13	29	16
Cooking, providing and selling food	9	5	12
Total	108	175	261

Note: χ^2 (16, N = 884) = 108.65, p < .001

Table 4.16: IPV coverage by editor sex

Editor sex	IPV included coverage		Total
	Yes	No	
Female	30	1,611	1,641
Male	33	660	693
Total	63	2,271	2,334

Note: χ^2 (1, N = 63) = 15.97, p < .001

Table 4.17: IPV coverage by newspaper category

Newspaper type	IPV included coverage		Total
	Yes	No	
Rural newspapers	63	2,271	2,334
Des Moines Register	2	536	538
Total	65	2,807	2,872

Note: χ^2 (1, N = 65) = 10.71, p < .001

Table 4.18: Results of hypotheses testing

Hypotheses	Result
H1: Rural newspaper coverage will include more overall stories about men than women.	Supported
H1a: The proportion of stories about men to those about women will be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper.	Not supported
H2: Women in rural community newspaper coverage will be more often defined by their familial role than men.	Supported
H2a: Women in rural community newspaper coverage will be more often identified by a familial role than as an individual.	Not supported
H2b: Rural community newspaper photographs will contain displays of women in familial roles more frequently than as individuals.	Supported
H2c: The proportion of women defined by their familial role to men defined by familial role will be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper.	Not supported
H3: Occupations for women in rural community newspapers will contain more stereotypically feminine jobs than traditionally masculine jobs.	Not supported
H3a: The proportion of occupations for women containing more stereotypically feminine jobs than traditionally masculine jobs will be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper.	Not supported

Table 4.18 continued

H4: Men will appear in rural community newspaper photographs more often than women.	Supported
H4a: The proportion of photographs including men to those including women will be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper.	Not supported
H5: Men in rural community newspaper photographs will be more often depicted as physically active than women.	Supported
H5a: The proportion of photographs depicting men as physically active to those depicting women as physically active will be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper.	Not supported
H6: Men in in rural community newspaper photographs will be portrayed as more prominent than women.	Supported
H6a: The proportion of photographs depicting men as prominent to those depicting women as prominent will be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper.	Not supported
H7: Men in rural community newspaper photographs will be more often pictured in business roles outside of the home than women.	Supported
H7a: The proportion of photographs depicting men as in business roles outside the home to those depicting women in business roles outside the home will be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper.	Not supported

Table 4.18 continued

H8: Rural newspaper coverage will contain more descriptions of women's physical appearance than men's physical appearance.	Not supported
H8a: The proportion of descriptions of women's physical appearance to descriptions of men's physical appearance will be greater in rural newspapers than in a more urban newspaper.	Not supported
H9: In the majority of instances where IPV is apparent, the victim will be depicted in rural newspaper coverage as at least partially to blame.	Not supported
H9a: IPV victims in rural newspaper coverage will be more often depicted as at least partially to blame than IPV victims in a more urban newspaper.	Not supported
H10: In the majority of instances where IPV is apparent, rural newspaper coverage will mention specific behavioral or mediating factors (such as substance use, or mental issues) that attribute responsibility to the victim.	Not supported
H10a: Rural newspaper coverage of IPV will more often mention specific behavioral or mediating factors (such as substance use, or mental issues) that attribute responsibility to the victim than coverage of IPV in a more urban newspaper.	Not supported
H11: In rural community newspapers, IPV will more frequently be described as part of an isolated incident, rather than as a societal issue.	Supported
H11a: Rural newspaper coverage of IPV will more often mention describe IPV as part of an isolated incident than will coverage of IPV in a more urban newspaper.	Supported

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Intimate partner violence is a serious public health problem in the U.S., particularly in rural locations (Grama, 2000; Jennings & Piquero, 2008; Peek-Asa et al., 2011). Rural victims face a multitude of barriers to leaving, including geographic and social isolation, the latter at least partially because of the stigma that is often associated with IPV in many areas (Eastman & Bunch, 2007; Grossman, Hinkley, Kawalski, & Margrave, 2005; Hightower, Gorton, & DeMoss, 2000; Jennings & Piquero, 2008). Community awareness and education on IPV remains low, although IPV occurs frequently. The culture in which IPV occurs is something that has been the focus of little research in rural communities, although there are certainly many potential contributing factors that could be addressed with increased educational efforts and movements toward social change.

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine the culture of gender roles in rural Iowa communities as reflected through coverage in weekly rural newspapers and interviews with editors of these papers, who not only need to be well-informed on their community, but also participate in it themselves as residents. How a community perceives gender roles is reflected in its locally produced news media, as gatekeeping theory (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009) posits that the audience and the media workers influence the stories published. Gender is intricately entwined with IPV, as most violence is perpetrated against women (Berns, 2009; Hultzworth-Munroe et al., 2000; Johnson, 2011; Russo & Pirlott, 2006), so the examination of newspapers' depiction of gender roles offers some insight into the rural climate in which IPV may occur. Therefore, also of interest were newspaper descriptions of IPV, and editor perceptions of the occurrence of IPV, its relevance to their communities, and explanations for why it was or was not included in newspaper coverage. The research done in this dissertation was guided by the

tenets of feminist theories on gender and violence (Brownmiller, 1975; Kahlor & Eastin, 2011; van Zoonen, 1994), Goffman's (1976) gender display for analyzing the role of power as depicted in newspaper photographs, and media gatekeeping theory (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). In this chapter I will provide summaries and discussions for each of these topics, as well as limitations, conclusions, and implications for future research.

Rural community newspapers

Newspapers in rural communities serve as an important tool to examine community norms and the social climate surrounding a variety of issues. Additionally, because they are the only source of information that covers the daily lives of rural residents, community newspapers also serve as a rare access point to set community standards and education. However, rural community newspaper editors are placed in a uniquely difficult situation where they must report on their community professionally, but they also have a personal relationship with many of the same people that they might write about. This places them in a difficult position of negotiating professional and ethical feelings toward what the newspaper should include and personal ties to community members.

Rural community newspapers mainly consisted of upbeat, positive articles about the community, local events, and residents. It was rare that anything that could be perceived as controversial appeared in the newspapers, and most articles were relatively short and focused on interesting experiences of community members or upcoming changes. The newspapers reflected a strong sense of community, with the focus almost always being local, and a large amount of content contributed from readers, which was present in both the content analysis and editor interview portions of this study.

Gender role coverage

A major focus of this dissertation was to examine the ways in which gender was discussed in rural community newspapers. Previous research has indicated that news media gender coverage has not been equitable in the past, often prioritizing men over women (Armstrong, 2004; Armstrong & Gao, 2011; Lobo & Cabecinhas, 2010; Serini, Powers, & Johnson, 1998; van Zoonen, 1994). Because so much of gender is socially constructed – in part – through depictions in the media of what it means to be a man or a woman, understanding gender representations in rural communities can be very enlightening in the expectations and guidelines of how to behave for the individuals living there.

In this study, I examined media images of gender with Goffman's (1976) gender display. Gender display takes into consideration the way that certain behaviors depicting power are performed because they are socially expected for a person of that gender, and as such, photographs perpetuate and reinforce them.

Newspaper articles

Newspaper articles comprised a large portion of the content analysis, and provided an opportunity to see a more detailed representation of gender role discussions in rural communities. For the most part, gender coverage was relatively equitable in the rural community newspapers in terms of quantity. Comparisons of article content revealed that there were larger differences in the type of coverage that men and women received in the source of more urban comparison, the *Des Moines Register* than in rural community newspapers. Although prior research has demonstrated the differences in equity of coverage between men and women (Armstrong, 2004; Greenwood & Lippman, 2010; Lobo & Cabecinhas, 2010; van Zoonen, 1994), other work has indicated that the

gap in disparate coverage may be decreasing (Collins, 2011). However, since rural communities are often more traditional (Eastman & Bunch, 2007; Grama, 2000; Hightower, Gorton, & DeMoss, 2000; Hoschstein & Thurman, 2006), it was hypothesized in H1-H3a in this dissertation that coverage would be very gendered and contain stereotypical representations for women. For the most part, this was true, and males and females were described in stereotypical ways – such as women being identified through their familial role, and men being business, community, and family system leaders.

Consistent with previous research (Armstrong, 2004; Armstrong & Gao, 2011; Lobo & Cabecinhas, 2010; Serini, Powers, & Johnson, 1998; van Zoonen, 1994), women in this study were less likely than men to be featured in news articles. Men were more likely to be described in positions of prominence, and as participants in local events (with one exception – when making, selling, or preparing food was involved, which was more likely to be associated with women). This may have the effect of positioning men as more visible and active members of rural communities.

Women in rural newspapers were sometimes depicted as participating in various community organizations, which were often "women's groups." Occasionally these reports, which were largely submitted by members of the community and run in the newspaper, would provide details about the meetings that included stereotypical gender representations. A typical example is one May 2 (*Lime Springs Herald*, 2013, p. 7) article that explained how to call roll, with the women each naming their favorite spring flower before they appointed judges to the Fair Queen board. The implications of this are that by focusing on men significantly more than women, and perpetuating certain gendered stereotypes, men are depicted as more valuable and important members of society. At the same time, the judged "Fair Queen" competition, especially accompanied by the favorite flower in roll call, reinforces traditional stereotypes of women's interests as trivial – part of symbolic annihilation (Tuchman, 1978). When considering this within

the context of IPV, it reflects a culture that places women in a decidedly lower social status than men.

In combination with appearing as topics of stories and other items less frequently than men, women were less likely to be described by their jobs than were men. Contrary to what was hypothesized, when women were depicted as working outside of the home, they were much more likely to be shown in stereotypically masculine or gender-neutral positions than in occupations that appeared to be stereotypically feminine. The majority of coverage on women's occupations did not have any specific gender connotations in the text – with the exception of one article that repeatedly talked about a "lady doctor" (*Columbus Gazette*, October 10, 2012, p. 1). This suggests that, at least in rural communities, gender-related attitudes toward some work may be more progressive than outsiders perceive them. However, it is also possible that there are simply fewer stereotypically female-gendered jobs available in rural communities.

Compared to men, women were more likely to be described by their familial role and in ways that emphasized their domesticity. The coverage of women in relation to their familial role is significant in that it implies that women – unlike men – are not recognized independently as much as they are associated with their role as wife, mother, or daughter. When described in relation to their familial role, women were most likely to be daughters, followed by mothers. The reason for the large number of descriptions of women and girls as daughters is likely because of the sizable focus that each of the rural newspapers placed on local schools and school activities. However, school-age females were still not more likely to be covered than were boys their age, and the girls were less likely to be depicted as involved in certain school activities that received heavy coverage, such as sports articles included in the main body of the local newspaper Although there were photographs of girls in physical activities, these were almost always exclusively presented in the sports pages, which this study did not analyze. Sports stories that were included anywhere else in the newspaper (often the front page) were more likely to

feature boys. There is the possibility that the disparity in coverage of gender as it relates to school-age kids within the community is more reflective of the actual gendered nature of the events themselves, rather than any particular action on the behalf of the editor. Although this certainly depicts the importance of particular activities as varying greatly by gender, male sports receiving more news coverage than women's is not unique to rural locations (Godoy-Pressland, 2014; Kian, Mondello, & Vincent, 2009).

In terms of their familial role, men were most likely to be described as a spouse or significant other. Although this does associate them with a familial or relationship role, the implications of being a spouse or partner are far different from those for a parent or child, in that for men, the role of a husband was not historically considered to be one of submission as it was for women: It could instead imply an increased level of power and ownership (Brownmiller, 1975). For women, reproduction opens the door for discussions about remaining autonomous individuals allowed to make fundamental decisions about their bodies after they become pregnant (Brownmiller, 1975; Kahlor & Eastin, 2011; van Zoonen, 1994). Additionally, historical representations of being a daughter were also significant for women, since those who were unmarried would need to be identified through their fathers, since they had no rights on their own (Bakken, 1998; Brownmiller, 1975). Although these varied positions of power may not immediately come to mind today with familial roles, the historical implications remain relevant.

Gender display and power

Considering the depictions of women through Goffman's (1976) gender display, it is possible to more carefully examine the subtleties that are present in images and descriptions in the media. In this case, that meant that even though men and women might be covered roughly the same amount of time, the small differences in the volume of coverage and the way that they were covered can have a large impact on the meaning

that these images convey. As in news articles, men were much more likely to be the focus of newspaper photographs in rural newspapers. Newspaper photographs and their captions of women were largely in keeping with the tenets of gender display (Goffman, 1976), as hypothesized. Males were more likely than females to be depicted as being physically active, and in positions of authority or dominance. Although subtle, both of these stereotypical ways of depicting masculinity in a way that focuses on a man's physical prowess, strength, or aggressiveness may have particular relevance regarding valued gender traits in relation to IPV and community culture, as power and dominance over another person are fundamental causes of IPV (Anderson, 2005; Berns, 2001; Brownmiller, 1975; Dutton, Hamel, & Aaronson, 2010; French, 1992; Murray & Powell, 2009).

Women were also less likely to be pictured as working outside of the home, and were more likely to be shown performing domestic duties such as childcare, cleaning, cooking, or gardening. While they were also depicted as members of the community in many other ways, the disproportionate focus on domestic portrayals imply that women may experience less social freedom than men in rural communities, or at least that their occupations and life outside of home are not as worthy of visual depiction as their domestic duties. This also suggests that when it comes to representations of gender and power, the ways that men and women are depicted provide subtle, but powerful representations of their standing in society (Goffman, 1976). Although a great deal of coverage may appear gender-neutral and contain no indications of major gender inequalities, photographic depictions and positioning of men and women provide context for the complexity of gender roles in rural communities. It is one thing for women to hold gender-neutral or stereotypically masculine jobs and to be seen as active members of rural communities, but examining the subtle context of gender displays in rural community newspaper photographs provides a much more detailed explanation for the context of gender roles in rural communities. Photos in the selected rural newspapers

tended to show women in their domestic roles, while men were more likely to be depicted as being physically active and/or leading the community. Such images reinforce traditional gender roles, with women in the home and men in the public sphere (van Zoonen, 1994). Since IPV is so intrinsically linked with the roles of men and women, the representations of gender and power can provide insight into the fact that perhaps gender disparities are still much larger in rural locations than many residents recognize.

Comparisons with an urban newspaper

Although assumptions about urban newspapers' portrayal of gender roles and IPV cannot be made (and have not been attempted) from the findings of this study, comparisons with the state of Iowa's largest newspaper yielded some interesting and unexpected results. The comparisons of rural newspaper depictions of gender roles and IPV with the *Des Moines Register* almost never aligned with the hypothesized results. Although it is published in a much more urban location and with a much larger and more diverse staff, the *Des Moines Register* was actually less likely to include women in its coverage than were the rural community newspapers, with the exception of describing women by their familial role or gender differences in photographs of physical activity, which rural newspapers did with greater frequency. The *Des Moines Register* was less likely than rural community newspapers to feature women as the focus of photographs and include photographs that depicted women as working outside of the home. Research suggests several explanations for these disparities. One is the likely difference between the rural and urban newspapers in professionalism, which would include adhering to news values that have been described as male-gendered (e.g., conflict and prominence; van Zoonen, 1994). The *Register* is located in the state capital, and its news photo subjects are often state politicians (only about 20% of Iowa's state legislators are women). In contrast, the rural newspapers include photos of homecoming courts and community volunteers. The editors I interviewed repeatedly told me that their newspaper

content had to be positive, which does not suggest the consideration of news values. A second possibility is the organizational structure in the newsrooms. It is important to note that female reporters have been found to include more women as sources compared to male reporters (Armstrong, 2004). The rural newspapers I analyzed were most often edited by women who also typically wrote their own copy. At the *Register*, even if a woman writes a story it may be edited by a male editor.

Although the relative lack of women in *Des Moines Register* coverage may be indicative of its particular newspaper culture (Zelizer, 2004) toward gender issues, the variables I coded included presence or absence of men and women and their roles. I did not code for valence to determine whether the characterization of the gender items were positive or negative. It is possible, then, that some of the increased proportion of male coverage in the *Register* is due to factors that may not necessarily have been positive depictions – such as men being depicted more frequently because of criminal activities and higher reported crime rates in the city, for example.

Finally, it is likely that at least some of the disparity between the *Register* and rural newspapers can be attributed to the time in which the newspaper was sampled. The content analysis samples for all newspapers began in October 2012 – one month before major elections, including that for president of the United States. The *Register* had a very large focus on news and commentary surrounding the election – both national and local – which ran through the inauguration in January, 2013, and the start of President Obama's second term. Additionally, the *Des Moines Register* had a large focus on national and international events – far more so than any of the rural community newspapers. Because most political leaders in the U.S. and elsewhere are men, this may explain some part of their unequal gender coverage.

Semi-structured interviews

Interviews were conducted with rural editors to examine their perspectives on social and gender norms within the community, and to understand the relationship between their newspaper and community members. The interviews also sought to understand editors' perceptions of IPV within their communities and their explanations for their coverage or lack of coverage of IPV in their newspapers. In general, editors perceived their communities as friendly, close-knit communities made up of honest, hard-working people. Those who were originally from the area that they worked in seemed to especially feel this way, whereas the two editors who were originally from other locations recognized that in addition to having many wonderful community members, there were also people who could be aggressive and very invasive to their personal lives when they felt that some aspect of community norms were violated.

Initially, when the topic of gender roles came up, each of the editors was thrown and had difficulty immediately thinking of how to respond. Despite this, once given time to think, it emerged through the interviews that communities were described by editors as being largely agricultural and blue-collar, and a common trend among interviews was hearing that many of the men worked inside the town as local business leaders, factory employees, or farmers, while many of the women worked in surrounding communities or had subordinate office jobs within their town. This was an interesting aspect of the occupations of community members, particularly since, as one editor said, men tend to occupy the prominent positions within town. The trends in employment seemed to suggest that men were given some priority, since many of the desirable local jobs -- those that came with greater paychecks or involved little to no commute -- were taken by men, while women frequently traveled to other communities to work. This fit well with the results of the content analysis, which indicated that rural community newspapers were more likely to depict men as working outside of the home and having more positions of authority than women. This may also have some impact on the content analysis results

that indicated that women were most likely to have stereotypically masculine or gender-neutral jobs. If, as many of the editors suggested, women were more likely to need to commute to other communities for their employment, it might be that their full range of occupations was not depicted.

All of the editors were in agreement that community members seemed to know a very large amount about one another's personal lives and private matters. All of the editors also agreed that information and gossip involving the private lives of community members was almost exclusively spread through interpersonal communication, rather than anything printed in the local newspaper. One editor mentioned that the one exception to this was information printed in the police blotter, since that content seemed to frequently be the source of local gossip. The amount that people know about one another's personal lives may contribute to a resistance to talk about issues like IPV, which may be embarrassing or somewhat taboo in that location. However, editors reported hearing these topics gossiped about anyway, which implies that although people might not be talking about them openly in a serious way, they are still a relevant issue that is on the public radar. The implications of interpersonal communication surrounding IPV are that there has to be some acknowledgement that it is occurring in rural communities, and since it isn't spoken about publicly, probably stigmatized.

All but one of the editors interviewed explained their priorities and obligations at the newspaper in ways that were very consistent with typical, idealized journalistic values. Rural community editors consistently placed high priority on covering local news in a way that was unbiased and included a perception of all positions involved. Editors also said that they felt a strong obligation to include exclusively local news and events as the vast majority of content, and to heavily cover school activities and other local issues as they were submitted by community members. In this way there was a very clear set of guidelines about what type of information was to be covered in rural community

newspapers, and editors abided by them, allowing community members to have a role in shaping news content.

Every editor reported feeling constraints in regard to the type of content that they could include in the newspaper, as it was tradition in the community to only publish positive, "happy" news. Several editors seemed to lament this, but accepted that it was just the culture of rural communities, and not something within their power to change. Other editors seemed to acknowledge the community-imposed restrictions, but didn't seem to have any issue or concern with them, as they had either always been aware of their existence, or thought they felt that they were appropriate within the community norms. This unofficial policy meant that at each newspaper, although there might be significant news events occurring within their community, if those events could be perceived as controversial or negative to the community or to any particular community member, the events were not published. Several editors described situations where they had (unintentionally or not) violated this community norm, only to be met with anger from community members. Examples involved the inclusion of topics like local car accidents or including old stories from previously published issues that a community member (or group of individuals) found upsetting.

Intimate partner violence

An important aspect of this dissertation was the way that IPV was discussed in rural community newspapers, as well as in the more urban newspaper of comparison, the *Des Moines Register*. Previous research has indicated that IPV is not frequently discussed in the news, particularly in rural locations (Eastman & Bunch, 2007; Ferrand-Bullock, 2008; Grama, 2000; O'Gara, 2011). In addition to rarely being discussed in the media, IPV is often surrounded with misconceptions.

There was very little coverage of IPV in both rural community newspapers and the *Des Moines Register*. When the coverage did appear, it was almost exclusively included as part of a police blotter or sheriff's report (the substitute for police blotters in many rural newspapers). In rural community newspapers, it seemed that a large reason for not covering IPV was the nature of community newspapers to only provide positive, upbeat content. This seemed to prevent them from even considering something like IPV, which seemed to still be considered somewhat irrelevant and taboo by the editors interviewed. The inclusion of IPV was the only variable to have a significant relationship with editor sex. Because IPV appeared almost exclusively in police blotters and sheriff's reports, it is likely that this difference could have had more to do with which newspapers ran those columns, rather than varied perspectives on the importance of including this information.

In the case of the *Des Moines Register*, it is possible that the reason IPV was covered so rarely even in the police blotter is because a large portion of the newspaper information is available online. As I coded the newspaper, I noticed that several local stories (including police reports) included a notice at the end that directed readers to the *Des Moines Register* website, should they want more information. This was likely done because space in print is much more costly and limited than that available on their website. Although the *Des Moines Register* website might have contained more relevant information than what I was able to capture in the content analysis, using the print version was still the strongest comparison to the print-only versions of the rural community newspapers. Additionally, the *Des Moines Register* is distributed throughout Iowa, and for many readers who may not access the website, the print version is the only form of news that they would obtain from that source. The implications here are that regardless for the reason in the gender disparity in *Des Moines Register* coverage, these representations were being distributed to readers across the state and helping to set their standards for gender roles throughout Iowa.

Rural community editors were resistant to the idea of including information about IPV, as they all immediately thought that this would require that they talk about specific people, rather than IPV as the social issue. There were also differences in conceptions and understanding of IPV, and interestingly, these sometimes became evident even after I had provided a definition. It seemed that perhaps they just did not associate what happened in their community to the label "IPV."

IPV descriptions in police blotters varied significantly according to the newspaper and community. Most instances just included a notice that an arrest had been made (no gender or names listed), with a few newspapers including the name and age of the person arrested. In one paper, not only were names and ages present, but extremely graphic details of the incident were as well. A police report detailed how a man repeatedly punched his wife in the face "allegedly" hit her head against a metal pole, and choked her until she passed out (*Traer Star-Clipper*, February 22, 2013, p. 4). Another newspaper printed "courthouse news" rather than a police blotter, which would detail the convictions that people got, as well as how they might have been pled down.

The inclusion of IPV exclusively as it related to law enforcement activity is cause for concern when it comes to education and community knowledge. One of the major misconceptions about IPV is that it occurs in a vacuum – composed of isolated incidents, rather than a much larger, society-level problem. Covering the issue in terms of isolated events perpetuates this misunderstanding, and has the potential to lead to increased stigmatization for victims – which is already an issue in rural communities where there is little anonymity and most residents know a great deal about one another's personal lives. The relationship between IPV and rural community police and sheriff's departments was also complicated in the sense that everything the newspapers did write about IPV – including how it was described – was printed exactly as it was received from law enforcement. This came as a bit of a surprise and made several of my research questions regarding why editors wrote or talked about IPV in the way that they did irrelevant.

Although surprising, this also presents a new opportunity for education of IPV to officers and law enforcement organizations in rural communities, particularly in how they report such issues to local newspapers and also in setting clear and consistent language for IPV incidents to help with future health and advocacy surveillance. The fact that the rural community newspapers run information directly as they receive it from law enforcement organizations also has several implications for gatekeeping theory in the sense that official sources may have a very large role in shaping news content without input or skepticism on behalf of the newspaper journalists or editors.

Although it appeared very rarely, one positive aspect of the coverage in rural community newspapers and the *Des Moines Register* is the lack of victim blaming. This suggests that although IPV certainly is not on the public agenda or made a priority in newspaper coverage, perhaps the public (or at least newspapers) are more educated on the nature of IPV and aware of the victim-blaming that is so often present.

Theoretical implications

Several theoretical frameworks guided this dissertation. Feminist perspectives on gender and violence were used as a way to understand the gendered cultural and social background for IPV, which is an essential component of viewing it within the local social system. Goffman's (1976) gender display was utilized as a framework through which to view gendered representations in newspapers, and the subtle meanings about power and value that these images contain. Gatekeeping theory (Shoemaker &Vos, 2009) was used to examine the way that rural community newspapers operate, and their relationship with the surrounding community. The findings of this dissertation are particularly relevant to gender display and gatekeeping theory.

Gender display

Although gender display was originally conceptualized decades ago (Goffman, 1976) when gender equity was much less evolved than it is today, several of the same stereotypical gendered depictions remain. Although the coverage was not blatantly sexist or inequitable, rural community newspapers were more likely to portray men as being more physically active and prominent than women, and women were depicted as more likely to be associated with domestic responsibilities and their familial role. Somewhat surprisingly, the same aspects of gender display were also evident in coverage of a more urban newspaper, the *Des Moines Register*. Some of the results surrounding gender depictions in this study were encouraging and suggest that perhaps men and women are being increasingly recognized as equals socially and within the workforce. However, several of the findings also reinforced how much progress has yet to come in terms of equitable news media depictions – particularly those depicting women less frequently than men, less likely to be in positions of prominence, and holding a much narrower range of occupations outside of the home than were men. Each of these findings suggested that women continue to be depicted as less valued in employment positions, and less capable of holding occupations outside of the home.

Continued stereotypical coverage of gender indicates that more research is necessary on this topic. Implications of this coverage are that stereotypical gender depictions have the potential to shape understandings about men and women, their value, their importance, and their role within society. Considering that in this study, the findings related to gender display as depicted in photographs seemed to be less progressive than the depictions of men and women in articles, it seems that gender display remains relevant in rural community newspapers. Perhaps this is because photographers rely on certain types of images of men and women that are much slower to change than attitudes, language, and roles. Or, perhaps it is because editors and journalists may not be cognizant to a large amount of the gender bias that takes place in the news production process. In

this sense, journalists and editors who may have every intention of depicting men and women in a fair and equal way may simply be reflecting the stereotypical gender roles that they see, while unknowingly reinforcing them by including photographs that display men and women in particularly gendered roles.

When considered within the context of gender norms and the relation to IPV, the fact that gender display exists in both the rural community newspapers and the *Des Moines Register* depicting men and women in stereotypically gendered ways is troubling. When elements about the structure of a photograph reinforce the idea of male superiority physically and in the workplace, social messages are being sent that imply that men and women are not equal and therefore hold separate positions within the community and society as a whole. In this – and any other situation that places people in unbalanced positions of power – it becomes easier to place more value upon certain individuals over others, which leads to the subordination of other people, as is done in IPV. In cultures and social systems where one gender is inadvertently implied to be more worthy than another, these disparities can lead to widespread acceptance of subordination and violence.

Gatekeeping theory

Perhaps one of the most significant findings of this dissertation regarded the role of gatekeeping in rural communities. Gatekeeping theory describes the process by which news content is formed and delivered to an audience, which then provides feedback to the news producers in the form of letters to the editor, disseminating content on social media, and, in rural areas, speaking directly to the editor (Shoemaker &Vos, 2009). This was especially interesting in rural communities, where editors must balance living in and reporting on their small communities in a way that most urban editors do not experience. Since one aspect of gatekeeping is the role that audiences have in shaping news content,

this was particularly interesting to examine in the situation of rural community newspapers, where communities are typically close-knit.

The results from the interviews indicate that audience feedback plays an especially large role in gatekeeping in rural communities. The implications of this are that rather than including newsworthy information relevant to the lives of rural citizens, rural community newspaper editors were very unlikely to include information that could potentially be perceived as negative. If there are important topics that community members dislike or find disagreeable, they might not be included, regardless of their relevance or importance. In the case of issues like IPV, because many community members perceive it as not particularly relevant or too negative to publicly discuss, it might not be included in newspaper coverage, even though that could be an important educational opportunity to reach a large number of people. Therefore, it may be possible that there are different "levels" of gatekeeping, depending on community structure and size, similar to what Tichenor et al. (1980) described in terms of effects on news content.

The role that community members play in the formation of news content in rural community newspapers appears to be significant. Editors reported that they frequently included information or articles based on the suggestions or wishes of community members, and typically followed the feedback they received. Under the tenets of gatekeeping, this implies that community members have a large role in shaping the agenda of rural newspapers – making decisions about what type of content will be allowed for discussion, and selecting the information that they feel community members should know about. Although most editors felt a journalistic obligation to cover particular topics that they felt were most relevant to the community, a large part of how these were covered, and newspaper coverage of other topics was shaped by community feedback and control.

Additionally, certain community members may have a stronger influence than others on what eventually makes it into the newspaper. This may be a reflection of some

of the more detailed aspects of gatekeeping theory, which considers the way that a variety of economic and social aspects of the community within which the media source operates may impact the way that certain issues are covered and presented to the public. If, for instance, a certain topic may seem particularly threatening to an individual within the community who provides financial or advertising support to the newspaper, rural editors may be unlikely to cover it, lest the coverage hurt the newspaper's already small bottom line. One editor that I spoke with actually gave this example as why it is difficult to talk about anything controversial within the community – even if one is willing to upset some people by going outside of the norm and printing something other than positive news, one may risk offending someone upon whom the newspaper relies on financially, which most editors are unwilling to do.

Because rural community newspaper editors are so reluctant (or, in some cases completely refuse) to include negative information about the community or any individual within it, the resulting newspaper coverage may give the impression that nothing bad ever happens within the community. The consequences may be that community members may feel somewhat immune to threats and issues taking place in the world around them, which means that they may unknowingly place themselves in positions of greater vulnerability and ignore their risk. The characterization of rural communities as immune from any negative incidents can also lead to increased stigmatization of certain social and health issues, such as IPV. If rural community members assume from the lack of coverage on IPV that it is an issue with no relevance in their community, they may not only be less willing to listen to educational or informative messages about IPV, but they may also treat incidents that they hear about (or the individuals involved) as more isolated and taboo.

The implications of gatekeeping in rural community newspapers are that the role of editors as members of the small (and often tightly knit) community in which they work creates significant challenges to performing their journalistic duties without considerable

influence from other community members. The nature of the relationships between editors and community members means that reporting on difficult or controversial issues can be nearly impossible within the constraints of community social norms. Because of this, community members have a large role in shaping the aims, focus, and overall content of newspapers, while editors are placed in a position of needing to comply to these demands – either professionally or financially. The community members take on an interesting role in silencing rural community newspapers in their coverage about a variety of topics, which gives the audience a much more significant amount of power than that initially conceptualized by Shoemaker and Vos (2009). Community norms and feedback that editors receive are so powerful to the interests of the media organizations and their personal roles within the community that it significantly limits the newspaper's autonomy in reporting. In this sense, community members who essentially set the agenda for what can and cannot be discussed largely shape rural newspaper content.

Implications for practice and future research

In addition to the theoretical implications from this dissertation, there are several implications for practice and future research. Although the culture of rural community newspapers is one where mostly positive information is printed, community newspapers still serve an extremely important role in providing relatable material to an audience that might otherwise be ignored by more mainstream media (Hubbell & Dearing, 2003; McHee, 2011; Stanford University, 2012; Tichenor et al., 1980). Since the interviews with rural editors revealed that disagreeable or negative information is often excluded from community newspapers, health communication practitioners attempting to reach members of rural communities would do well to work directly with rural editors and influential community members to include educational or intervention messages in a way that is positive and relevant to community culture. Particularly because interviews with

rural newspaper editors indicated that community members play an important role in shaping news content, it would be important to work with community members, and conduct interviews or focus groups of community opinion leaders to study the best ways to construct such messages. Addressing and overcoming some of the taboos that might make IPV or other health topics less likely to be discussed in rural community newspapers would open the door for educational efforts that are especially relevant to the locations and residents that community newspapers serve.

As more than one editor pointed out in the interviews, many community newspapers struggle for content and the manpower to produce it. If they receive a well-produced product, they are very likely to run it as-is. It would be wise of health communicators to create content that can be easily tailored to rural communities and to work with local newspapers to run this as part of their weekly edition. Even done on an irregular basis, this could be a mutually beneficial relationship that ensures editors' content for their upcoming issue and allows health communicators to deliver important health messages in a format that is heavily accessed by rural community members.

Future research might consider the way that other somewhat stigmatized topics are discussed in rural newspapers, particularly less gendered topics, to explore whether the relative silence on IPV is unique. It is possible that historical attitudes about gender and violence (Brownmiller, 1975) in ways that shape coverage of women and IPV differently than other crimes. Further research should examine whether influencing the perceptions of prominent community members or organizing community educational events might change the coverage of gender or uncomfortable topics in local newspapers.

Those who work in IPV could benefit from the insight into particular gender norms within rural communities, as well as the nature of people to think of IPV solely in isolated events, rather than as a social problem. Increased advocacy efforts could address these particular areas in an attempt to improve public education. Specifically, it would be wise for advocacy groups to also work directly with law enforcement officers in rural

communities to discuss issues such as how to identify and describe IPV in police blotters, and how to work with newspapers and other local media to ensure that additional educational information or resources are included in reports.

Future research could also consider the role that specific characteristics such as race/ethnicity, income, and sexual orientation may have in the newspaper depictions and coverage of IPV. Because many individuals from racial/ethnic minorities, and members of the LGBT community face significant disparities and negative health consequences – including in IPV (Baker et al., 2013) – it would be worthwhile to examine the way that each of these characteristics is depicted and the consequences that this may have on public knowledge and behaviors.

It would also be beneficial to examine whether the same results are true in other Midwestern states, or even other regions of the United States. Since this study only looked at newspapers in rural Iowa, there could be variations based upon other norms surrounding culture and location.

Limitations

One significant limitation of this study is that it was conducted before and after a major presidential election. Although this did not greatly impact the content of rural community newspapers, it may have made a considerable difference in the coverage examined in the *Des Moines Register*. Because so much of the coverage was focused on politicians and commentary surrounding the elections of 2012, the comparisons with the newspaper may not be an accurate representation of gender distributions in its content.

Another limitation of this study was the sample size. Although results were relatively consistent among all of the rural newspapers and interviews with editors, larger sample sizes of each would have helped to ensure greater reliability. However, such expansions were beyond the time and financial scope of this dissertation. Although the *Des Moines Register* was selected as a source of more urban comparison because it was

likely to be accessed throughout the entire state as Iowa's newspaper of record, using additional urban newspapers would have allowed for greater accuracy, and helped to ensure that some of the gendered coverage present in the *Des Moines Register* was not just specific to that organization. Although it was telling to examine only what was present in the print format (which also made it more comparable to the rural community newspapers), it is possible that some of the *Des Moines Register*'s coverage in the online format was more equitable and included more discussions of IPV – particularly in the police blotter.

Additionally, this dissertation was conducted in one particular Midwestern state, and results may not be applicable for all rural locations and communities. In particular, the lack of visible LGBT relationships and the instances of IPV within them may vary significantly according to location. Additionally, it was very difficult to make any strong observations on coverage of IPV, since it almost never appeared in the newspapers analyzed.

Another limitation was not considering race or ethnicity as a variable in representations of gender and IPV. Although Iowa is largely homogeneous (U.S. Census, 2012), the population of several racial and ethnic minorities – particularly African American and Hispanic is increasing in many communities. Although it is uncertain whether individuals within racial and ethnic minorities would have received any differing coverage based on this attribute alone, such information could not be ascertained from this study. This information would have allowed for the opportunity to see any differences in representations of gender or IPV between majority and minority groups – particularly because individuals within minority groups are often met with additional barriers surrounding these issues.

It is important to note that although the communities may be homogeneous, any and all newspaper recognitions of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or any other minority group undoubtedly present in the community can reveal information about that

area's social norms and values. Although race was not coded for in this study, anecdotally, I did not come across any newspaper information including discussions of race specifically in the content analysis. One of the editors I spoke with did talk about the increasing racial diversity of her community, although I did not see this reflected in the news coverage analyzed for the content analysis. This, too, is worth noting, since the absence of racial diversity or issues of changing community culture in newspaper coverage suggests that these issues are not worthy of recognition and public visibility.

Conclusions

The goal of this dissertation was to examine the ways in which rural communities consider gender norms and the implications that might have for coverage and discussions of IPV in those locations. Content analysis of rural community newspapers and semi-structured interviews with rural editors revealed that while IPV was rarely discussed, gendered coverage largely reflected traditional ideals of femininity and masculinity, although not to the extent expected. Men were often portrayed as being more prominent, active, and successful than were women, who were often depicted in domestic roles or through their familial position. The differences in gendered coverage were much more apparent in photographs than they were in newspaper articles. When I asked the rural community newspaper editors about gender roles in their community, they were initially puzzled, implying that this coverage is not something they spend much time considering.

Each of these factors suggests that the gender roles within rural communities are largely not on the public radar, and that editors are unaware of any amount of stereotypical gendered coverage that they may include in the newspaper. This ties in with the concept of gender display (Goffman, 1976) in the sense that even when media text might be fairly equitable in coverage, the subtle meanings given to gendered photographs can suggest a great deal of information about the subject's social roles and positions of

power. In the sense of rural community newspapers, this means that while editors don't think of their community as a gendered place and may try to be gender-neutral in their newspapers, there are still subtle representations of stereotypical roles that elevate men socially above women. The implications of this are that social adherence to traditional or rigid gender roles may reflect a culture more accepting of IPV, that might allow for the stigma associated with IPV to continue and make victims less likely to speak out or seek assistance.

Although IPV was very rarely covered in rural community newspapers or the more urban source of comparison, the *Des Moines Register*, when it was included it was done almost exclusively in police blotters or sheriff's reports. Although this presented IPV as a series of isolated incidents rather than a societal issue, there were positive advances in this coverage as it contained no victim blaming.

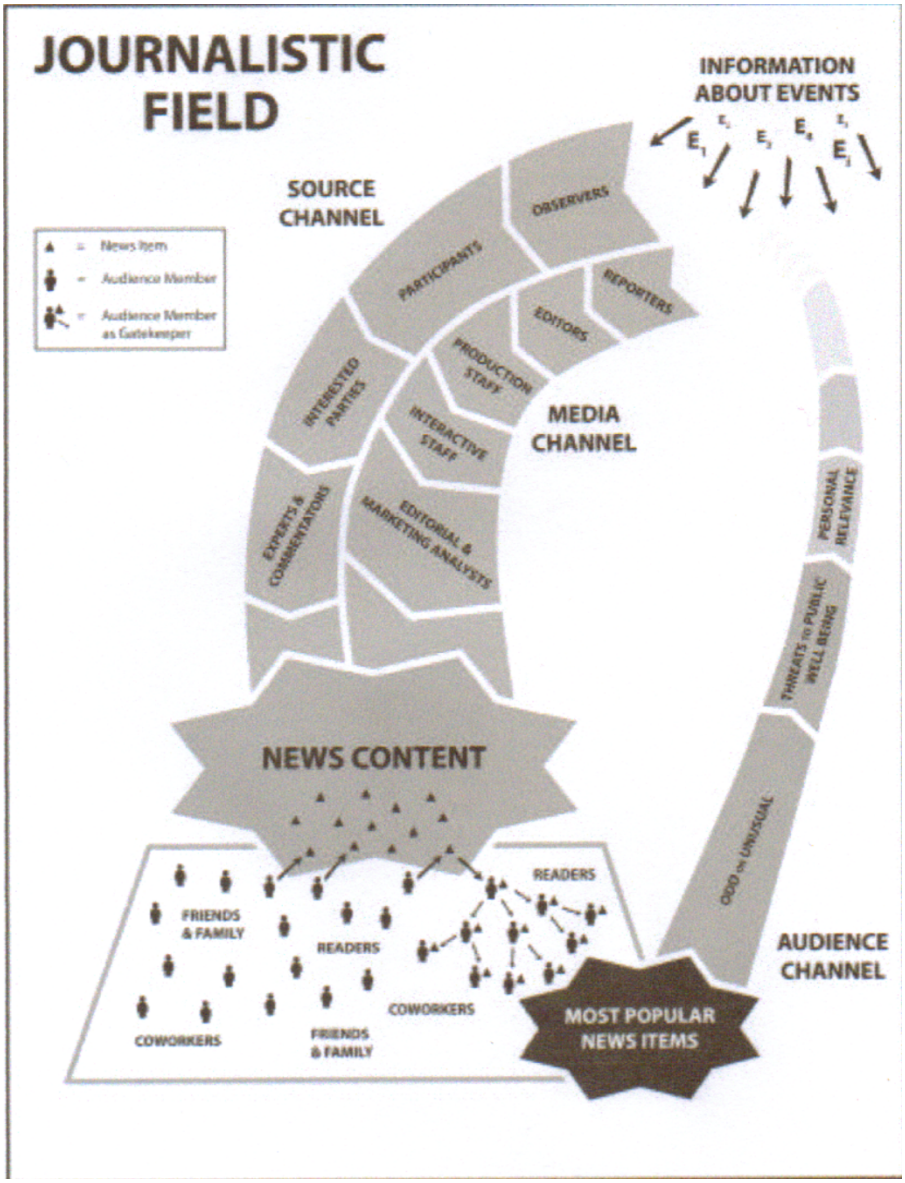
One of the most surprising findings from this study was that the newspaper source of urban comparison, the *Des Moines Register*, actually had much less equitable coverage of gender than did the rural community newspapers. This was contrary to what was hypothesized, in that rural community newspapers were much more gender-neutral than initially anticipated, and that the *Des Moines Register* focused largely on international and national events with male leaders, rather than on their community. The difference in gendered representations reflected in the *Des Moines Register*'s coverage of national and international politics highlighted the almost exclusive focus on local events that rural community newspapers contained. In this sense, that local focus helped the findings of this study to accurately reflect community culture regarding gender roles and representations of gender.

The rural newspaper editors revealed that the culture of their newspapers is to publish non-controversial content that would reflect positively on the community and community members, and that when they violate these unofficial policies, they may be met with some form of backlash from the community. Interviews also found that

community members in rural locations play a large role in determining newspaper content in that they provide feedback on current information presented, suggest and include their own topics, and have a large role in restricting any controversial or unpleasant topics from being printed. Newspaper audiences were able to have such a large impact on content because of the close, homogenous nature of their community, the role of editor as community member as well as media professional, and because of the social and economic isolation and impact that could come from alienating an influential community member. Together, these practices explain why there was virtually no attention in rural newspapers to IPV beyond the police reports.

APPENDIX A: GATEKEEPING MODEL AND COUNTY INFORMATION

Figure A1: Gatekeeping model



Source: Image from Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p. 125

Table A1: Selected Counties and Demographics

County	Population	Percent white	Educational attainment: high school or greater	Median household income	Percent pop. <18 years	Percent pop. >65 years
Winnebago	10,879	97.1	89.9	$41,871	21.3	19.4
Louisa	11,278	95.9	83.1	$49,905	24.5	15.6
Harrison	14,935	98.3	90.9	$53,939	23.1	18.3
Plymouth	24,907	97.7	92.9	$58,916	25.2	17.1
Tama	17,536	88.9	89.2	$49,244	25.0	18.8
Ida	7,086	98.4	90.1	$44,521	24.3	20.3
Decatur	8,284	95.5	83.0	$37,138	22.5	18.4
Howard	9,565	98.4	86.8	$46,068	25.0	19.2
Palo Alto	9,275	97.8	89.1	$40,500	22.3	21.0
Wayne	6,309	98.3	84.4	$35,425	23.3	22.3
Polk	443,710	87.5	91.0	$57,473	25.4	11.0

Note: Data were obtained from U.S. Census (2012).

Table A2: Selected Counties and Newspapers

NCHS category	County	Newspaper	Circulation	Readership
Rural micropolitan	Winnebago	*Buffalo Center Tribune*	1,186	2,372
Rural micropolitan	Louisa	*Columbus Junction*	1,039	2,078
Rural micropolitan	Harrison	*Dunlap Reporter*	959	1,918
Rural micropolitan	Plymouth	*Remsen Bell Enterprise*	1,217	2,434
Rural micropolitan	Tama	*Traer Star-Clipper*	1,006	2,012
Rural noncore	Ida	*Ida Co. Courier*	3,000	6,000
Rural noncore	Decatur	*Lamoni Chronicle*	603	1,206
Rural noncore	Howard	*Lime Springs Herald*	670	1,390
Rural noncore	Palo Alto	*Ruthven Zipcode*	380	760
Rural noncore	Wayne	*Seymour Herald*	1,449	2,898
Urban med. metro	Polk	*Des Moines Register*	120,654	241,308

Note: Circulation and readership data obtained from Iowa Newspaper Association (2013).
Rural micropolitan: population > 10,000 (Ingram & Franco, 2012)
Rural noncore: population < 10,000 (Ingram & Franco, 2012)
Urban medium metro: population of 250,000 – 999,999 (Ingram & Franco, 2012)

Table A3: Counties and IPV

County	IPV incidents total	IPV rate per 100,000	Distance to nearest IPV shelter (in miles)
Winnebago	7	42.3	29
Louisa	7	60	53
Harrison	6	48.3	31
Plymouth	42	39.7	25
Tama	15	99.4	56
Ida	7	103.6	84
Decatur	not reported	not reported	79
Howard	19	87.6	63
Palo Alto	12	123.7	87
Wayne	7	113	65
Polk	920	297.5	0 (located in county)

Note: Data were obtained from Iowa Department of Public Safety (2009) and Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2013).

APPENDIX B: CONTENT ANALYSIS CODE BOOK

The term "intimate partner violence" describes physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse. This type of violence can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples and does not require sexual intimacy.
IPV can vary in frequency and severity. It occurs on a continuum, ranging from one hit that may or may not impact the victim to chronic, severe battering (CDC, 2013b).

For the purposes of this study, the actual phrase “IPV”, “domestic violence”, or “domestic battery” may not actually appear in text. Using the CDC definition, please infer as to whether an instance of IPV did actually occur.

Examples of abuse include:

- name-calling or putdowns
- keeping a partner from contacting their family or friends
- withholding money
- stopping a partner from getting or keeping a job
- actual or threatened physical harm
- sexual assault
- stalking
- intimidation

Coding for gender will include:

- occupations of each gender
- captions, photographs, or text mentioning or alluding to gender
- captions, photographs, or text mentioning or alluding to gender roles
- perceived level of status associated with members of each gender

1. Article ID: Fill in the article’s ID number, as indicated on the article

2. Coder ID: Indicate the initials of the individual responsible for coding

3. Byline: Indicate the name of the article author (full name); if none is listed, enter “N/A”

4. Newspaper: Indicate the name of the newspaper the article was accessed from (full name) 1 = Pocahontas …; 2 = Leon … ; 3 = etc.

5. Date: Enter date in numerical form as: month/day/year, ex: August 6, 2011 = 08/06/2011

6. Page number: please indicate the page on which the article, picture, or caption appears

7. Location in paper: Please indicate whether article, picture, or caption falls above or below the newspaper fold

1 = above fold
2 = below fold

8. Newspaper section:

1 = local news
2 = politics/political news
3 = police blotter/crime report/sheriff's report
4 = special interest piece/in-depth story
5 = business/economy
6 = opinion
7 = health/wellness
8 = issue headline/front page banner
9 = national/international news (not political)
10 = other (enter as string variable)

9. Article source:

0 = N/A
1 = staff article
2 = wire service (AP, Reuters, etc.)
3 = editorial/op-ed.
4= letter to the editor
5 = other newspaper (please enter as string variable)
6 = submitted by community member
7 = submitted by organization

10. Article type:

0 = N/A
1 = general information
2 = event/calendar
3 = feature
4 = editorial
5 = letter to the editor
6 = police report
7 = no article – just photograph
8 = other (enter as string variable)

11. Does there appear to be a clear **focus of the article** (in terms of an individual person)**?**

0 = No
1 = Yes

12. Is the **focus** of the article **the same as the person being quoted?**

0 = N/A
1 = Yes
2 = No

Gender Depictions

13. Is the **focus of the article or person giving the quote male or female?** If two or more people are mentioned in the article and are discussed or quoted equally, code for the individual that appears first.

0. N/A
1. Female
2. Male

14. Please list the **occupation** described or depicted. **Write in.**

99 = N/A

15. Was the **focus of the article,** portrayed in a position of prominence (manager, director, group leader, etc.) within his or her place of employment or school?

0. N/A
1. Yes
2. No

16. Was the **focus of the article's familial role** identified as any of the following?:

0. N/A
1. Wife/Husband
2. Mother/Father
3. Daughter/Son
4. Aunt/Uncle
5. Grandmother/Grandfather
6. Girlfriend/Boyfriend
7. Sibling
99. Other (enter as string variable)

17. Was the **focus of the article's appearance** described in any of these terms? (please select all that apply):

0. N/A
1. Physical features or characteristics (hair or facial features, body size or height)
2. Stance or positioning of body
3. Clothing
4. Gestures or facial expressions
99. Other (enter as string variable)

18. Were **social activities** mentioned in the description for the **focus of the article?** (please select all that apply)

0. N/A

1. Volunteering
2. Providing food, cooking, or selling food
3. Cleaning, organizing or participating in an event
4. Participating in a school-sponsored event (band, debate team, 4-H, FFA)
5. Cheerleading/event "royalty"
6. Competing in, or attending an athletic event as a spectator
7. Participating in a physical activity outside of high school
8. Member of an organization
99. Other (enter as string variable)

19. How was the **focus of the article** depicted in terms of **community role**?

0. N/A
1. Elected official
2. Business owner
3. Successful in business
4. Winning an election or award
5. Status cannot be determined
99. Other (enter as string variable)

20. If a **second person was quoted** in the article, please indicate the gender:

0. N/A
1. Female
2. Male

21. Is the **focus of the photograph male or female?**

0. N/A
1. Female
2. Male
3. Both male and female depicted

22. Please list the **occupation** or **action** described or depicted. **Write in.**

99 = N/A

23. Was the **focus of the photograph,** portrayed in a position of prominence (manager, director, group leader, etc.) within his or her place of employment?

0. N/A
1. Yes
2. No

24. Was the **focus of the photograph's familial role** identified as any of the following?:

0. N/A
1. Wife/Husband
2. Mother/Father
3. Daughter/Son
4. Aunt/Uncle
5. Grandmother/Grandfather

6. Girlfriend/Boyfriend
7. Sibling
99. Other (enter as string variable)

25. Was the **focus of the photograph's appearance** is described in of these terms? (please select all that apply):

0. N/A
1. Physical features or characteristics (hair or facial features, body size or height)
2. Stance or positioning of body
3. Clothing
4. Gestures or facial expressions
99. Other (enter as string variable)

26. Were **social activities** mentioned in the description for the **focus of the photograph?** (please select all that apply)

0. N/A
1. Volunteering
2. Providing food, cooking, or selling food
3. Cleaning, organizing or participating in an event
4. Participating in a school-sponsored event (band, debate team, 4-H, FFA)
5. Cheerleading/event "royalty"
6. Competing in, or attending an athletic event as a spectator
7. Participating in a physical activity outside of high school
8. Member of an organization
99. Other (enter as string variable)

27. How was the **focus of the photograph** depicted in terms of **community role**?

0. N/A
1. Elected official
2. Business owner
3. Successful in business
4. Winning an election or award
5. Status cannot be determined
99. Other (enter as string variable)

28. Is the **focus of the caption male or female?**

0. N/A
1. Female
2. Male
3. Both male and female depicted

29. Please list the **occupation** described or depicted. **Write in.**

99 = N/A

30. Was the **focus of the caption,** portrayed in a position of prominence (manager, director, group leader, etc.) within his or her place of employment?

0. N/A
1. Yes
2. No

31. Was the **focus of the caption's familial role** identified as any of the following?:

0. N/A
1. Wife/Husband
2. Mother/Father
3. Daughter/Son
4. Aunt/Uncle
5. Grandmother/Grandfather
6. Girlfriend/Boyfriend
7. Sibling
99. Other (enter as string variable)

32. Was the **focus of the caption's appearance** is described in of these terms? (please select all that apply):

0. N/A
1. Physical features or characteristics (hair or facial features, body size or height)
2. Stance or positioning of body
3. Clothing
4. Gestures or facial expressions
99. Other (enter as string variable)

33. Were **social activities** mentioned in the description for the **focus of the caption?** (please select all that apply)

0. N/A
1. Volunteering
2. Providing food, cooking, or selling food
3. Cleaning, organizing or participating in an event
4. Participating in a school-sponsored event (band, debate team, 4-H, FFA)
5. Cheerleading/event "royalty"
6. Competing in, or attending an athletic event as a spectator
7. Participating in a physical activity outside of high school
8. Member of an organization
99. Other (enter as string variable)

34. How was the **focus of the caption** depicted in terms of **community role**?

0. N/A
1. Elected official
2. Business owner
3. Successful in business
4. Winning an election or award
5. Status cannot be determined

99. Other (enter as string variable)

35. Is any aspect of religion, church, scripture, or other **religious information mentioned** in the article, photo or caption?

0 = No
1 = Yes

Intimate Partner Violence

Please only answer the remaining questions if there appears to be an instance of IPV in the newspaper issue (either explicitly stated, or implied based on the CDC criteria). If there is no apparent instance of IPV, you may stop coding.

36. By the criteria outlined by the CDC (2013b), is IPV evident in any part of the article, caption, or photograph? Please code this whether or not it was recognized as such in the newspaper.

0. No
1. Yes

Using the CDC (2013b) criteria, which characteristics of IPV are described in the article, caption or photograph:

37. Name-calling or putdowns	0. None 1. Evident
38. Keeping a partner from contacting their family or friends	0. None 1. Evident
39. Withholding money	0. None 1. Evident
40. Stopping a partner from getting or keeping a job	0. None 1. Evident
41. Actual or threatened physical harm	0. None 1. Evident
42. Sexual assault	0. None 1. Evident
43. Stalking	0. None 1. Evident
44. Intimidation	0. None 1. Evident

45. If IPV did occur, **which word or term was used to describe it?**

0. N/A
1. Assault
2. Domestic violence
3. Intimate partner violence
4. Domestic battery (or battery)
5. Domestic dispute
6. Domestic assault
7. Domestic incident
99. Other (enter as string variable)

The **role of intimate partner violence**: Indicate whether domestic violence was described as a police incident, an in-depth story, contributor to death or injury, as it relates to children, or legislative action. Please select all that apply.

46. Police incident: a report of a domestic disturbance, or police blotter report.	0. Absent 1. Present
47. In-depth story: an article about a victim, perpetrator, or instance of domestic violence.	0. Absent 1. Present
48. Contributor to death or injury: an article mentioning domestic violence as a contributing factor to an individual's death or injury.	0. Absent 1. Present
49. Relates to children: describing or mentioning domestic violence in relation to how it impacts or affects children.	0. Absent 1. Present
50. Legislative action: mentions of laws, legal decisions or court rulings related to domestic violence.	0. Absent 1. Present
51. Sexual assault	0. Absent 1. Present

52. Is **intimate partner violence** described as: (please check all that apply, in order of prominence)

0. Unable to determine/Not applicable
1. An argument
2. A physical altercation (or a physical fight – with **both** people taking part)
3. An act of violence from **one person to another** (not mutual fighting, this may also be selected if it appears that more than one person was committing violence against an individual)
4. Psychological/emotional (threatening behavior, shouts, intimidation, showing weapons, degrading partner verbally)
99. Other (enter as string variable)

Please answer the following questions for **Person #1** in the article – consider this to be the primary individual discussed in the article. If discussed equally, please code for the first person listed.

53. Person #1 gender:

0. Unable to determine/Not applicable
1. Female
2. Male

54. Person #1 role:

0. Unable to determine/Not applicable
1. Victim
2. Perpetrator (abuser)
3. Spokesperson
4. Law enforcement
5. Government official
99. Other (enter as string variable)

55. Person #1 age: Write in.

99 = N/A

56. Person #1 marital status:

0. Unable to determine/Not applicable
1. Married
2. Divorced
3. Single
4. Dating
5. Living with partner

Please answer the following questions for **Person #2** in the article – consider this to be the secondary individual discussed second in the article. If discussed equally, please code for the second person listed.

57. Person #2 gender:

0. Unable to determine/Not applicable
1. Female
2. Male

58. Person #2 role:

0. Unable to determine/Not applicable
1. Victim
2. Perpetrator (abuser)
3. Spokesperson
4. Law enforcement
5. Government official
99. Other (enter as string variable)

59. Person #2 age: Write in.

99 = N/A

60. Person #2 marital status:

0.Unable to determine/Not applicable
1. Married
2. Divorced
3. Single
4. Dating
5. Living with partner

61. Relationship between Person #1/Person #2

0. Unable to determine/Not applicable
1. Married (spouses)
2. Ex-spouse, or ex-partners
3. Dating
99. Other

Does the article **place fault or responsibility** on any party (victim, perpetrator, legal system/law enforcement, family/friends) for the mention of IPV? This could also appear as a rationale for why the incident occurred. Please select all that apply.

62. Victim: select if the article views the victim as responsible (or partially responsible) for their own outcome, or that of children.	0. Absent 1. Present
63. 2. Perpetrator: select if the article places responsibility or fault on the person conducting the violence – either for their actions, or for any particular outcome.	0. Absent 1. Present
64. Legal system/law enforcement: select if the article credits existing laws, new laws, or police response for the outcome of the domestic violence situation.	0. Absent 1. Present
65. Family/friends: select if family and/or friends are placed with fault or responsibility for domestic violence outcome.	0. Absent 1. Present
66. Substance use/substance abuse (this can be drugs and/or alcohol)	0. Absent 1. Present

67. Which is the **primary** source of fault or responsibility in the article:

0. Unable to determine/Not applicable
1. Victim: select if the article views the victim as responsible (or partially responsible) for their own outcome, or that of children.
2. Perpetrator: select if the article places responsibility or fault on the person conducting the violence – either for their actions, or for any particular outcome.
3. Legal system/law enforcement: select if the article credits existing laws, new laws, or police response for the outcome of the domestic violence situation.
4. Family/friends: select if family and/or friends are placed with fault or responsibility for domestic violence outcome.
5. Substance use/substance abuse (this can be drugs and/or alcohol)
6. Society/social system: select if IPV is blamed on or attributed to a social system or society.
99. Other (enter as string variable)

What barriers to intimate partner violence resources/leaving relationship were mentioned?

68. Access to legal aid – such as a lawyer, domestic violence advocate/representative, or cooperative law enforcement because of proximity, financial means, or immigration status	0. Absent 1. Present
69. Access to alternative housing – such as a domestic violence shelter, emergency homeless shelter, or safe housing with a friend or family member	0. Absent 1. Present
70. Childcare – safe place for children to stay, if they could not accompany to other housing	0. Absent 1. Present
71. Money – not having the financial means to leave the immediate situation (whether by bus, car, plane, etc.), or to stay in alternative housing (such as a hotel), or to "start over"	0. Absent 1. Present

72. Transportation - not having access to a personal vehicle, or any means to leave in another's vehicle (friends, family)	0. Absent 1. Present
73. Access to healthcare – reduced, little, or no access to healthcare because of location, money, or immigration status	0. Absent 1. Present
74. Geographic isolation – referring to rural living arrangements without close proximity to another	0. Absent 1. Present

75. What is the **primary barrier** mentioned in this article?

0. None – select if the article does not mention any barriers (or challenges) to leaving an abusive relationship
1. Access to legal aid – such as a lawyer, domestic violence advocate/representative, or cooperative law enforcement because of proximity, financial means, or immigration status
2. Access to alternative housing – such as a domestic violence shelter, emergency homeless shelter, or safe housing with a friend or family member
3. Childcare – safe place for children to stay, if they could not accompany to other housing
4. Money – not having the financial means to leave the immediate situation (whether by bus, car, plane, etc.), or to stay in alternative housing (such as a hotel), or to "start over"
5. Transportation - not having access to a personal vehicle, or any means to leave in another's vehicle (friends, family)
6. Access to healthcare – reduced, little, or no access to healthcare because of location, money, or immigration status
7. Geographic isolation – referring to rural living arrangements without close proximity to neighbors, friends or family
99. Other (enter as string variable)

76. What **intimate partner violence resources** were mentioned? (please select all that apply):

0. None – select if the article does not mention any domestic violence resources
1. Hotlines – domestic violence, depression, substance abuse hotlines or phone numbers
2. Shelter services – both domestic violence shelters, and emergency housing shelters
3. Advocacy centers – including legal aid options and counselors
4. Healthcare facilities – doctor's offices, mental health facilities, hospitals and clinics
99. Other (enter as string variable)

77. Who is **quoted in the article** discussing IPV? (if more than one person is quoted, please select all that apply in order of space given to each quote):

0. None – select if the article does not quote any person or individual
1. Law enforcement – select if police officers, dispatchers, or sheriff are quoted

2. Advocacy - select if an employee of a domestic violence shelter or organization, legal representative, or other emergency housing employee is quoted
3. Victim's friends or family
4. Perpetrator friends or family
5. Victim
6. Perpetrator
99. Other (enter as string variable)

78. The article mentions money or funds (fundraising) as related to IPV?

0. Absent
1. Present

APPENDIX C: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How long have you lived in your community? Are you from a small town originally?
2. How long have you worked for this newspaper? (for editors: How long have you been the editor?)
3. How would you describe the culture of your community?
4. What role do you believe your newspaper plays in the community?
5. What kinds of things do you think people expect to read about in your paper?
6. What kinds of things do you think you have an obligation to write about in your paper?
7. How do you determine what makes it into the newspaper and what doesn't?
   Probe: What kinds of constraints does your newspaper face regarding content?
8. What kinds of feedback to you get from community members regarding newspaper content?
   a. How do you typically react to community feedback?
9. What kinds of jobs do people in your community have?
10. How would you describe your average community member?
11. How do you think this relates to other parts of Iowa?
12. How would you describe the role of men in your community?
13. What do you think most people expect of men in your community?
    a. What kinds of stories or event coverage is most likely to focus on male subjects? … to appeal to male readers?
14. How would you describe the role of women in your community?
15. What do you think most people expect of women in your community?
    a. What kinds of stories or event coverage is most likely to focus on women as subjects? … to appeal to female readers?
16. Do you think your community is about the same as other rural communities when it comes to gender roles?
17. How would you compare rural gender role expectations to those in big cities?
18. Do people in the community seem to know much about one another's family relationships or personal lives?
19. In your opinion, how much talk about community members comes from interpersonal communication, and how much comes from things printed in the newspaper?

Before the questions addressing IPV began, I first asked participants to tell me what they thought of when they heard the phrase IPV. Before proceeding, I explained IPV given the CDC (2013b) definition to ensure that everyone received the same explanation of what it is that I'm attempting to understand. Any interpretations about IPV from that point further were at the individual perceptions of the participants.

20. How often do you think IPV (or abuse) happens in relationships in your community?

21. About how often do you hear of something that sounds like an instance of IPV in your community? Where do you hear about it?
22. How do you determine what *is* IPV?
23. Is IPV something you would ordinarily write about for the newspaper?
24. How do you describe these instances?
25. Can you explain why you talk about them that way?
26. Do you think IPV is something people in your community know about?
27. Do you think IPV is something people in your community should know more about?

APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVED CONTACT EMAIL

FOR IRB USE ONLY
$STAMP_IRB
$STAMP_IRB_ID
$STAMP_APPRV_DT
$STAMP_EXP_DT

We invite you to participate in a research study being conducted by investigators from The University of Iowa. The purpose of the study is to **understand how rural community newspapers perceive and describe gender roles and intimate partner violence within their community.**

If you agree to participate, we would like you to **participate in a one-time interview with our researcher:** You are free to skip any questions that you prefer not to answer. It will take approximately **forty-five minutes to one hour.**

We will make an audio-recording of the interview, which will be transferred to a password protected computer and later transcribed. The audio file and transcriptions will not contain your name, the name of your town or newspaper, and will be given a pseudonym. It will not be possible to connect you back to your responses in any papers or publications.

Taking part in this research study is completely voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this study, **you may refuse to answer any questions, and the interview may be stopped at any time.**

If you have questions about the rights of research subjects, please contact the Human Subjects Office, 105 Hardin Library for the Health Sciences, 600 Newton Rd, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242-1098, (319) 335-6564, or e-mail irb@uiowa.edu.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this research study.

APPENDIX E: IRB APPROVAL MEMO

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Human Subjects Office/
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
305 Hardin Library for the Health Sciences
600 Newton Road
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1098
319-335-6564 Fax 319-335-7310
irb@uiowa.edu
http://research.uiowa.edu/hso

IRB ID #: 201310715

To: Erin O'Gara

From: IRB-02 DHHS Registration # IRB00000100,
Univ of Iowa, DHHS Federalwide Assurance # FWA00003007

Re: It happens here, too: Examining community newspaper coverage of gender roles and intimate partner violence in rural Iowa

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Approval Date: 10/09/13

Next IRB Approval Due Before: N/A

Type of Application:	**Type of Application Review:**	**Approved for Populations:**
☒ New Project	☐ Full Board:	☐ Children
☐ Continuing Review	Meeting Date:	☐ Prisoners
☐ Modification	☐ Expedited	☐ Pregnant Women, Fetuses, Neonates
	☒ Exempt	

Source of Support:

This approval has been electronically signed by IRB Chair:
Janet Karen Williams, PHD
10/09/13 0724

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