Gender and Spousal Violence: A Test of Social Control and Resource Theories.

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GENDER AND SPOUSAL VIOLENCE: 
A TEST OF SOCIAL CONTROL AND 
RESOURCE THEORIES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the 
Louisiana State University and 
Agricultural and Mechanical College 
in partial fulfillment of the 
requirements for the degree of 
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Sociology

by

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December 1996

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Acknowledgements

First, and most importantly, I thank Dr. William Bankston, my major professor, for his continual support and understanding throughout my graduate school endeavors. I cannot begin to put in words how much he has meant to the successful completion of my graduate studies. Despite his busy schedule, he always put my needs first, and for this I am thankful.

I also appreciate the efforts of my committee members, who have been very accommodating with my long-distance situation. In particular, Dr. J. Jill Suitor has provided me with her guidance throughout my graduate career and has shown commitment to helping me make this dissertation the best that it can be. I express my gratitude to Dr. Dawn Robinson, who has also had a tremendous impact on my professional development throughout my tenure at Louisiana State University. I also thank Dr. Margaret Parker for her willingness to serve on this committee under very demanding circumstances.

I express my gratitude to Wanda, Colleen, and Donna in the sociology office for taking care of me during my tenure in the sociology department, making sure that everything is done correctly and on time. I don’t know what I would have done without them.

Finally, I thank my family members for their undying support and understanding throughout all my educational and professional endeavors.
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Abstract

This research provides an explanation of spousal violence that has previously been lacking in the family violence literature—a social control approach. This research tests the hypothesis that those with stronger bonds to society will be less likely to engage in spousal violence. Furthermore, this research will incorporate the role that family structures have in stratifying social control for males and females by testing power-control theory, which suggests that women from egalitarian households of origin will be more likely to commit wife-to-husband violence than those from patriarchal households. Conversely, men from egalitarian households should be less likely to commit husband-to-wife violence than those from patriarchal households. Results derived from logit models provide partial support for social control theory; however, there is a lack of evidence to support power-control theory’s explanation of wife-to-husband violence.
Chapter 1: Introduction

According to the literature, there are multiple reasons for the occurrence of spousal violence. Family violence scholars, Murray Straus and Richard Gelles, list several characteristics of American society that are associated with the likelihood of spousal violence (Gelles and Straus, 1979, 1988; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980; Straus and Gelles, 1990). Straus and Gelles (1990) contend that high levels of conflict in family life provide a suitable atmosphere for spousal violence. Additionally, Straus and Gelles attribute higher rates of spousal violence to male dominance in the family and society as well as cultural norms that permit spousal violence (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980; Straus and Gelles, 1990).

Given these factors, much of the research on spousal violence tends to focus on conflict in the family and its effects on spousal violence (Coleman and Straus, 1986; Hotaling and Sugarman, 1990; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980). Generally speaking, Gelles and Straus (1979, 1988) assert that given the intensity of relationships within the family, including the amount of time spent together, conflict becomes an inherent, normal part of family life. Too much conflict, however, may be problematic. For instance, researchers such as Hotaling and Sugarman (1990) posit that those households with higher levels of conflict are those most likely to experience instances of spousal violence. The topic over which the conflict is about is also important. For instance, Coleman and Straus (1986) argue that conflict over the marital power structure of the family may be particularly likely to result in spousal violence.
Other research has focused on male power in the family and society and their effects on spousal violence (Allen and Straus, 1980; Brown, 1980; Dobash and Dobash, 1984; Finkelhor, 1983; Schechter, 1982; Witt, 1987). This research includes a broad base of feminist research which suggests that male power in *all* of society's institutions, including the family, contributes to violence against women (Dobash and Dobash, 1984; Schechter, 1982; Witt, 1987). Resource theorists, however, focus particularly on spousal resources in the family, suggesting that those families in which husbands believe they should have more power than their wives but bring less resources into the family than their wives are most likely to encounter husband-to-wife violence (Allen and Straus, 1980; Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Brown, 1980; Hauser, 1982). In other words, if husbands have less resources than their wives the husbands may feel that their power in the family is threatened, and as a result may invoke violence against their wives as the "ultimate resource" (Allen and Straus, 1980).

Other research, rooted in symbolic interactionism, focuses on men's attempts to control their wives as being a factor related to spousal violence (Denzin, 1984; Ptacek, 1985; Stets, 1988). These researchers conceptualize control as being located within the interactive setting with one actor (i.e., the husband) manipulating another (i.e., his wife). In other words, abusive men usually attempt to control their wives in face-to-face interaction and attempt to monitor their day-to-day activities. This symbolic interactionist research shares a focus on manipulative control with feminist researchers such as Angela Browne (1987) and Lenore Walker (1989) who specifically argue that male batterers actively attempt to control their wives.
1.1 Statement of the Problem

What is lacking in the literature on spousal violence is the link to social control theory which is widely employed in the sociological deviance literature. However, no attempts to date have been made to comprehensively test social control theory's explanatory power with regard to family violence. Control in this sense (i.e., social) is based on an individual's bond to society. Social control researchers posit that as a person's bond to society is weakened, he/she will be more likely to commit deviant acts (Becker, 1960; Hirschi, 1969; Piliavin and Briar, 1964).

An application of social control theory, the power-control approach to deviance, is a synthesis of resource and social control theories due to its focus on male power in the family (i.e., the resource dimension, because power is linked to resources) and different social controls of males and females (i.e., the social control dimension) (Hagan et. al., 1979, 1985, 1987; Hill and Atkinson, 1988). Thus, power-control theory may be useful in explaining spousal violence because it can fill a void in the literature through its focus on social control while incorporating more traditional explanations of male power in the family and its effect on spousal violence.

John Hagan et. al. (1979) argue that gender variations in deviance are rooted in historical processes that have assigned men and women to different social spheres and have patterned differences in the kinds of social processes in which they engage. Men are assigned to the economic sphere where they are able to obtain economic resources, and women are assigned to the domestic sphere, which often prevents them from obtaining these resources. Having more resources results in men having more power
than women in society as well as the family. Being placed into separate spheres also
results in less direct supervision and freedom for men than women who are usually
surrounded by other family members. Thus, the presence of male power in the family
and society as well as lesser social controls placed on males results in higher rates of
deviance for males (Hagan et. al., 1979, 1985, 1987).

Just as power-control theory suggests a link between male power in the family
and deviance more generally, family violence research suggests a link between male
power in the family and society and spousal violence. For instance, family violence
researchers have found that the more patriarchal a household is, the more likely it is
that wife battering will occur (Finkelhor, 1983; Straus and Gelles, 1990). Similarly,
resource theories of spousal violence suggest that when husbands perceive themselves
to have less resources than their wives and hold traditional beliefs that their family
power should be higher than their wives, they may employ "the ultimate resource" of
violence as a means to regain their power (Goode, 1971; Allen and Straus, 1980;
Brown, 1980; Hauser, 1982). My research suggests that power-control theory might
also explain why such men resort to battering as a response to perceived
powerlessness and how this relates to processes of social control in the family.

Another problem with the spousal violence literature is lack of attention to
factors that explain wife-to-husband violence. Recent modifications of power-control
theory (Hagan et. al., 1985, 1987) provide explanations of differences in social
controls placed on women from patriarchal versus egalitarian households of origin and
how this relates to their differential participation in deviant behaviors. Thus, power-
control theory may provide a possible explanation of family of origin structure’s role in making some women more prone to commit acts of violence against their husbands.

1.2 Plan of Study

Most of the literature on social control, including power-control, has focused on delinquency (see Hagan et. al., 1979, 1985, 1987; Hirschi, 1969; Krohn and Massey, 1980; Wiatrowski et. al., 1981). It is my purpose to apply social control and resource theories collectively to the phenomenon of spousal violence. The primary advantage of employing this approach is that I integrate contributions of both deviance and family violence research in my efforts to explain spousal violence.

In order to test these ideas, I use the 1975 National Survey of Family Violence conducted by Murray Straus, Richard Gelles, and associates. This survey is based on a nationally representative sample, so their results are generalizable to other American families. Furthermore, these data were collected for the purpose of testing theories of family violence, including self-reports of one’s own wife-to-husband or husband-to-wife violence.

In my research I expect to find that those individuals with stronger bonds to society will be less likely to engage in spousal violence. An individual’s bond to society is based on Travis Hirschi’s (1969) multidimensional conceptualization of social control, which is based on: attachment to conventional others, commitment to and involvement in conventional activities, and belief in conventional norms.

Furthermore, I focus on male power in the family and its impact on the incidence of spousal violence. In order to do this, I use resource and power-control
theories to supplement the social control explanation for a better understanding of the
differences in the participation in spousal violence for men and women based on
family structures. Thus, I expect to find that gender differences in power in the family
and different types and amounts of social controls placed on men and women results
in differences in the likelihood that spousal violence will take place.

One important difference between these theories is that feminist and resource
theories focus on one’s family of procreation while power-control theory focuses on
one’s family of origin. Feminist theory focuses on male power in the family more
generally, while resource theory focuses specifically on economic power. While both
these theories focus on male power in the family of procreation, important
implications may be drawn regarding controls placed on men and women by making
links to power-control theory. Power-control theory offers a socialization perspective
on spousal violence, suggesting that when boys and girls are treated differently in
households, the gender gap in spousal violence is larger for them as adults. In this
research I will integrate both approaches to explain spousal violence, suggesting that
families of both origin and procreation are related to participation in spousal violence
for men and women.

Power-control research has shown that in patriarchal household structures
greater informal social controls are exercised toward women than men, making
women subsequently less likely to engage in delinquent behaviors (Hagan et. al.,
that the presence of male power in the family and the absence of control of men create
conditions of freedom that facilitate delinquency, and that fathers and sons in such families experience freedom that allows violence against women to occur (Cassidy, 1995).

Power-control theory also posits that males are more prone to engage in risk-taking behavior than are females (Hagan et. al., 1979, 1985, 1987), so I expect to find that men might be willing to take the risk of exceeding the patriarchy defined boundaries of controlling the behavior of their wives. Additionally, opportunities to challenge this gender stratification of social control are limited for women, particularly women restricted to the home. Thus, power-control theory assumes that patriarchy has an important role in defining conditions under which family members are free to deviate from social norms, and that both presence of power and absence of social controls on men contribute to these conditions (Cassidy, 1995).

Power-control theory also allows me to identify which men will be most likely to engage in husband-to-wife violence. According to power-control theory arguments of Hagan et. al. (1985, 1987, 1988, 1990), I expect to find that men from egalitarian households of origin will be less likely to engage in husband-to-wife violence than their counterparts from patriarchal families.

I will also draw upon power-control theory to explain differences in wife-to-husband violence. More specifically, I will employ more recent arguments of Hagan et. al. (1985, 1987, 1988, 1990), suggesting that gender differences in spousal violence are greater for individuals from patriarchal than egalitarian households of origin. According to recent modifications of power-control theory (Hagan et. al., 1985, 1987,
1988, 1990), I expect to find that women from patriarchal households of origin will be less likely to engage in wife-to-husband violence than their counterparts from egalitarian households of origin. Furthermore, I expect to find that those women from egalitarian households of origin will be more similar to men in their rates of spousal violence than those from patriarchal households of origin where gender differences are more pronounced.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

In my research I will apply Hirschi's (1969) social control theory to both husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence. The logic underlying social control approaches is that those with stronger bonds to society will be less likely to engage in deviant behaviors such as spousal violence. By employing power-control theory, a social control theory that specializes in explaining differences in men's and women's deviance, I add the dimension of male power in the family and how it affects the likelihood of spousal violence taking place. More specifically, men from egalitarian households of origin will be less likely to engage in husband-to-wife violence because they are subject to more social controls than their counterparts from patriarchal households of origin. The converse is true for women.

I also use resource theory in my explanation of husband-to-wife violence. Resource theory shares with power-control theory an interest in male power in the family. However, the focus for resource theory is on family of procreation and relative resources of spouses unlike power-control theory's focus on family of orientation and social control processes. Resource theory suggests that when a wife's resources are greater than her husband's and he feels that he should bring more resources into the household than she does, conflict is likely to occur which may in turn lead to husband-to-wife violence.

In sum, I will integrate social control, resource, and power-control theories in an effort to obtain a better understanding of the men's and women's differences in participation in spousal violence. I expect to find that gender differences in power in
the family and different types and amounts of social controls placed on men and
women results in differences in the likelihood that spousal violence will take place.

2.1 Development of a Resource/Social Control Model of Spousal Violence

2.1.1 Resource Theory and Its Application to Spousal Violence

One of the most widely used explanations of spousal violence is resource
theory, introduced by Blood and Wolfe (1960), which focuses on the relationship
between resources and power in the family (see also Foa and Foa, 1980; French and
Raven, 1959). Dyadic power was defined by Szinovacz (1987) as the ability of an
individual to pursue his/her own interests in the face of a partner's resistance or to
resist the partner's influence (see also Winter, 1988). Although there are several
theories on how power is achieved and used, most scholars agree that the availability
and distribution of resources are crucial to understanding power in marital dyads

Blood and Wolfe (1960) asserted that power was gained through individual
resources available to each spouse; however, resources may have been more
accessible to one spouse than the other. Foa and Foa (1980) argued that the power
realized through a particular resource was determined by how valuable it was to the
other spouse and how easily the resource may have been replaced.

Blood and Wolfe (1960) defined individual resources as anything that one
spouse made available to the other, helping the latter satisfy his/her needs or to attain
his/her goals. According to their definition, resources did not necessarily have to be
economic (i.e., money and wealth). For instance, they also included interpersonal
skills (i.e., sociability), prestige-conferring characteristics (i.e., education and occupation), or personal attributes (i.e., self-esteem, achievement orientation, and low anxiety) (see also Allen and Straus, 1980; Foa and Foa, 1980; French and Raven, 1959). Whether and how spouses used these resources to gain power depended on several factors, including: personality, trust in the other spouse, family composition, and ideology (see also Bird and Melville, 1994).

Blood and Wolfe (1960) found that the individual with the greater resources was the one who had more power over his/her spouse (see also Foa and Foa, 1980; French and Raven, 1959; Komter, 1989, 1991). They based individual resources on the relative resources of husbands and wives, so that as the wife's resources increased (such as from employment income or increasing educational level) and her husband's resources remained the same, her power in the household also increased relative to her husband.

Individual resources were not the only sources of power for spouses according to Blood and Wolfe (1960). Cultural expectations also played a role in each spouse's ability to obtain power (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Komter, 1989, 1991). Their cultural explanation of power suggested that power belonged to the spouse whom the culture dictated should have that power. Rodman (1972) provided support for this argument based on his cross-cultural analysis of marital power, concluding that the marital dyad can only be understood in the context of the culture of which the dyad is a part.

Given American society's foundation in patriarchy, Blood and Wolfe (1960) asserted that the male is the one who is usually perceived to be the person in the
household with the most resources and therefore is perceived as being the spouse who should have the most power in marital relationships (see also Komter, 1989; Rodman, 1972). Much of the research on spousal violence following the research of Blood and Wolfe (1960) tended to focus on male power in the family and society as being the norm and having a positive relationship with spousal violence (see Allen and Straus, 1980; Brown, 1980; Dobash and Dobash, 1984; Finkelhor, 1983; Schechter, 1982; Witt, 1987). This research was based on data collected through both quantitative and qualitative methods from various types of sources, ranging from historical accounts (see Dobash and Dobash, 1984; Schechter, 1982; Witt, 1987) to interviews (see Browne, 1987; Dobash and Dobash, 1984; Walker, 1989) and surveys (see Allen and Straus, 1980; Brown, 1980; Finkelhor, 1983; Yllo and Straus, 1990). Komter's (1989) research indicated that both men and women placed less value on women’s roles in the family, which resulted in greater marital power for men; however, employed wives developed higher self-esteem and were able to exert more influence in their marriages (see also Bird and Freeman, 1993). The impact of employment on women’s marital power also depended upon women’s gender role attitudes. So, for instance, if a woman had traditional gender role attitudes she would exert less influence in the marriage, regardless of her resources.

In sum, both cultural expectations and individual resources must be taken into account upon determining one’s marital power, according to Blood and Wolfe (1960), who also argued that these two sources of power may be inconsistent with one another (see also Rodman, 1972). For instance, while the cultural expectation in the United
States is that the husband should be head of the household, a husband may bring less individual resources into his own household than does his wife. According to researchers who have used resource theory explanations in their studies of family violence, this situation is likely to result in conflict and the possibility of husband-to-wife violence (see Allen and Straus, 1980; Brown, 1980; Goode, 1971; Hauser, 1982). This argument is consistent with the work of resource theorists such as Goode (1971) who suggested that families rest on some amount of force or threat of force (see also Allen and Straus, 1980; Brown, 1980; Hauser, 1982) and that the more resources (i.e., social, economic, and personal) a person had, the more force that person had available to him/her.

Goode (1971) argued that violence was a resource invoked when an individual lacked other legitimate means to serve as the basis for one's power. Thus, the relationship between power and spousal violence was dependent upon what resources other than violence were available. Family violence scholars such as Allen and Straus (1980) asserted that the spouse who lacked the resources necessary to get the other spouse to comply with his/her demands might resort to violence as the final resource (see also Brown, 1980; Goode, 1971; Hauser, 1982; LaRossa, 1980). Rodman (1972), however, suggested that this pattern was found only in societies in which norms of legitimate power were ambiguous and/or weak, and the use of legitimate power was supported by social and/or economic resources.

These characteristics listed by Rodman (1972) described American society in which egalitarian norms have been replacing patriarchal norms in spousal
relationships, so there has been confusion over norms regarding the distribution of marital power. Many scholars have attributed this trend toward egalitarian norms to the large increase in the number of wives employed outside the home. Brown (1980) asserted that the increased resources of working wives had important implications for marital power and for ideology concerning marital authority. Employment increased the wife's income, an important resource in marriage, which increased her power in the marital dyad often in the form of exerting more influence in decision-making. As a result, Brown (1980) argued that the wife was in a better bargaining position to suggest or demand a more egalitarian marital authority structure. The research findings of Allen and Straus (1980) indicated that if the husband perceived this to be a threat, conflict was likely to occur, which, in turn, may lead to husband-to-wife violence (see also Coleman and Straus, 1986; LaRossa, 1980; Whitehurst, 1974).

Prior research has found that the higher the level of conflict, the greater the probability of husband-to-wife violence (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980; Coleman, Weinman, and Hsi, 1980). Gelles and Straus (1979; Gelles, 1993) contended that high levels of conflict were present in many families because of the structure of the American family itself. They also argued that the amount of time spent interacting with family members as well as the intensity of involvement with family members may lead to conflict (Gelles and Straus, 1979, 1988; Gelles, 1993). Families are also based on involuntary membership and involve personal, social, material, and legal commitment (Gelles and Straus, 1979, 1988). Furthermore, prior research has suggested that egalitarian marriages in contemporary American society
have been characterized by a high level of conflict (Coleman and Straus, 1986) because males have been reluctant to give up their traditional prerogatives (Whitehurst, 1974) and dislike negotiating issues that had once been determined by well-defined traditional gender roles (Brown, 1980; Kolb and Straus, 1974; Scanzoni, 1970). However, prior research also indicated that egalitarian marriages have had the lowest incidence of husband-to-wife violence (Straus, 1973; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980; Coleman and Straus, 1986).

These conclusions drawn from prior research on resource theory may be supplemented by research conducted by Coleman and Straus’s (1986) research on the interrelationships of the power structure of marriage, power norm consensus, and levels of marital conflict to provide a more comprehensive understanding of husband-to-wife violence that may account for the contradictions inherent in the research indicating that egalitarian marriages have the highest rates of conflict and the lowest rates of husband-to-wife violence. Coleman and Straus (1986) focused on degree of consensus concerning the marital authority structure as the primary determinant of whether conflict took place (see also Scanzoni, 1975; Sprey, 1971; Verhoff and Feld, 1970; and Brown, 1980). Thus, Coleman and Straus (1986) found that those couples who agreed on the marital structure were least likely to have conflict over family responsibilities, and, as a result, were the least likely to engage in husband-to-wife violence. Coleman and Straus (1986) also found that when conflict occurred among male-dominated power structures there was a much greater risk of violence than when conflict occurred among egalitarian couples, indicating that the marital power
structure had an effect on the relationship between conflict and husband-to-wife violence.

In sum, resource theory suggests that when a wife's resources are greater than her husband's and he feels that he should bring more resources into the household than she does, conflict is likely to occur which may in turn lead to husband-to-wife violence. Furthermore, disagreement over legitimacy of the marital power structure and family responsibilities may also lead to husband-to-wife violence.

The following propositions may be derived from resource theory:

* **Proposition 1**: If the wife's combined resources are greater than the husband's, the likelihood of husband-to-wife violence will increase (Allen and Straus, 1980; Hauser, 1982).

* **Proposition 2**: Disagreement over the legitimacy of the marital power structure increases the likelihood that husband-to-wife violence will occur (Coleman and Straus, 1986).

* **Proposition 3**: Higher levels of husband’s dissatisfaction with household responsibilities increase the likelihood that husband-to-wife violence will occur (see Suitor, 1991 regarding verbal aggression).

* **Proposition 4**: Higher amounts of marital conflict increase the likelihood that husband-to-wife violence will occur (Suitor, Pillemer, and Straus, 1990; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980; Hotaling and Sugarman, 1990; Coleman, Weinman, and Hsi, 1980).
Resource theory argues that men gain from spousal violence because they are able to maintain their dominance either legitimately through resources or illegitimately through spousal violence. However, what is missing is an explanation of why a relatively small percentage of men batter given the advantages to be gained. This explanation can be derived from social control theory.

2.1.2 Social Control Theory and Its Application to Spousal Violence

One of the foundations of social control theory is Travis Hirschi's "A Control Theory of Delinquency." According to Hirschi (1969), deviance was a part of the natural order in society. In other words, he suggested that violation of norms was appealing to most individuals so that most individuals were inclined to commit deviant acts. Thus, there was often something to be gained through deviance. However, deviant motivation alone did not account for why individuals engaged in behavior that violates norms. Because people did not engage in deviance most of the time, the important questions for Hirschi (1969) were: Why do individuals generally conform? Why do they generally follow the rules? Thus his focus was on those factors that prevented individuals from committing deviant acts.

Hirschi (1969) asserted that it was the individual's bond to society that was the explanatory factor of why one conformed to conventional behavior and followed accepted rules. This was an extension of Durkheim's (1961) idea that the degree of integration of individuals in society largely explained their participation in either conformity or deviance. According to Hirschi (1969), individuals deviated unless prevented from doing so by conformity-demanding commitments to others. Thus, the
internalization of societal norms and sensitivity to the expectations of others were the central elements that explained conformity for Hirschi (1969).

Hirschi (1969) established four elements of the individual's bond to society, which included: 1) attachment to conventional others, 2) commitment to conventional behavior, 3) involvement in conventional behavior, and 4) belief in conventional behavior. He argued that each of the elements of the social bond was related to one another and influenced the likelihood of whether an individual decided to engage in deviant behavior.

Attachment was based on Durkheim's (1961, p.64) assertion that "we are moral beings to the extent that we are social beings." Hirschi (1969) described attachment as consisting of those affective ties individuals had to significant others. As individuals developed ties to conforming others in society they internalized the norms that are shared and defined by society. To violate these agreed upon norms was to go against the expectations of others. Attachment to others assumed that people were sensitive to the opinions of others, and to the extent that one was concerned about jeopardizing his/her ties to conventional others he/she was less likely to commit deviant acts. Much support can be found in the literature for Hirschi's (1969) assertion that attachments to others had an inverse relationship to committing deviant acts (see Hagan and Simpson, 1978; Hindelang, 1973; Jensen and Eve, 1976; Nye, 1958; Toby, 1957; Wells and Rankin, 1988; Wiatrowski et. al., 1981).

Commitment was what Hirschi (1969) partly described as "acquiring a reputation for virtue" by investing time and energy in conventional activities. He
assumed that when one considered deviant behavior costs were calculated. The cost factor was losing his/her investment in conventional behavior. These investments were also referred to as "stakes in conformity" (Piliavin and Briar, 1964) or "side bets" (Becker, 1960). These investments were either economic (i.e., losing one's job) or relational (i.e., losing one's spouse). In other words, Hirschi (1969) argued that investments were society's insurance that people abided by the rules.

Involvement was the amount of time one spent engaging in conventional activities. Hirschi (1969) asserted that the more time that one spent engaging in conventional behavior, the less time one had left over to participate in deviant behavior. Krohn and Massey (1980) have suggested that involvement constitutes the temporal dimension of commitment (see also Conger, 1976). Much support can be found in the literature for Hirschi's (1969) assertion that commitment and involvement tended to vary together and shared an inverse relationship to deviant behavior (see Hagan and Simpson, 1978; Hindelang, 1973; Jensen and Eve, 1976; Kelly and Pink, 1973; Krohn and Massey, 1980; Rankin, 1976; Rhodes and Reiss, 1969; Wiatrowski et. al., 1981).

Belief was one's assessment of the moral validity of society's values. To the extent that one believed in the shared value system within society he/she was more likely to conform to norms and believed that deviant acts were morally wrong (Hirschi, 1969). Hirschi's (1969) finding of the inverse relationship between belief in legitimacy of conventional rules and deviant behavior has additional empirical support in the literature (see Cernkovich, 1978; Hindelang, 1973; Jensen, 1969).
Each of the elements of the social bond was related to the others. Hirschi (1969) noted that each of the elements tended to vary together so that, for example, those individuals who were more attached to conforming others were also more likely to be more committed to conventional behaviors. Likewise, as any of the elements of the bond were weakened, it was likely that other elements weakened as well. For example, if one lost ties with conventional others it was likely that this person was less likely to believe in conventional behavior. In addition, attachment and commitment were the most important of the elements, according to Hirschi (1969), and served as the foundation of the other elements of the social bond.

Hirschi's (1969) formulation of social control theory was employed to explain delinquency. Likewise, most social control theories have been used to explain delinquency by applying and revising Hirschi's work (see Krohn and Massey, 1980; Wells and Rankin, 1988; Wiatrowski et al., 1981). However, it is my goal to apply Hirschi's theory to spousal violence initiated by both husbands and wives.

2.1.3 Social Control Theory Applied to Spousal Violence

While most tests of social control theory have been conducted with regard to delinquent behavior, Richard Gelles (1983) has suggested that social control theory may also be useful in generally explaining spousal violence. Partial tests of social control theory have been conducted (see Cazenave and Straus, 1990; Smith and Straus, 1988); however, no attempts have been made to comprehensively test social control theory's explanatory power when applied to both husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence.
Gelles (1983) defined social control with regard to spousal violence as those ways in which spousal violence may be prevented through formal and informal sanctions that raised the cost of participating in spousal violence. These ranged from police intervention (i.e., direct controls—see Nye, 1958; Wells and Rankin, 1988) to disapproval of friends and relatives (i.e., attachment) whereby violence in the family was more frequent in societies that had no normative structure to prohibit it (Gelles, 1983). In other words, the absence of effective social controls over family relations increased the likelihood that one family member was violent toward another.

Furthermore, Gelles (1983) asserted that the private nature of the modern family served to reduce the degree of social control exercised over family relations (see also Laslett, 1973; 1978). Gelles and Straus (1979, 1988) posited that the contemporary American family was believed to be a private institution, often insulated from the rules of the rest of society. According to Gelles (1983), privacy of the family resulted in a lack of formal and informal social control of behaviors taking place “behind closed doors.” Privacy reduced accessibility of outside agencies of social control. For instance, neighbors don’t want to be involved. Thus, Gelles (1983) asserts that while the family tended to have strong attachments within, it often lacked attachment to members outside of the family due to the modern family’s private nature. Additionally, family violence was more common when friends and relatives outside of the nuclear family were unavailable, unable, or unwilling to be part of the daily system of family interaction and thus unable to serve as agents of formal and informal social control (Gelles, 1983; 1993). Thus, Gelles (1983) was suggesting that
lack of attachments to conforming others outside of the family increased the possibility of spousal violence taking place. Research findings based on feminist studies of wife abuse also indicated that social isolation had been found to contribute to violence against wives (Browne, 1987; Walker, 1989).

Lack of attachments to conforming others has been included as an explanation of spousal violence in both the deviance and spousal violence literatures (see Gelles, 1989, 1993; Cazenave and Straus, 1990; Eaton, 1986; Carlen, 1983; Walker, 1989; Browne, 1987). Within the spousal violence literature, Cazenave and Straus (1990) tested the relationship between social isolation (i.e., lack of embeddedness in social networks) and spousal violence based on a large, representative sample and found partial support for Hirschi's (1969) assertion that lack of attachment increased the likelihood of deviant behavior (in their research wife-to-husband and husband-to-wife violence) taking place. When Stets and Straus (1990) compared cohabiting and married couples' rates of spousal violence, they argued that higher rates for cohabiting couples were likely due to social isolation.

Similar findings can be traced to the feminist literature on wife abuse. Walker (1989) and Browne (1987) found support for the relationship between lack of ties to conventional others and being victims of wife abuse from their interviews with battered women.

Gelles (1983) added that certain family structures reduced social control in family relations and therefore reduced the costs and increased the rewards of being violent. More specifically, Gelles (1983) asserted that in more patriarchal households
husbands tended to have more resources such as higher status and more money so that wives lacking these resources cannot inflict costs on their attackers. Because of this, husbands were not likely to lose their investments in society. Thus, Gelles (1983) made reference to the commitment dimension of the social bond as part of his explanation of an individual’s propensity to engage in husband-to-wife violence. More specifically, men’s “stakes in conformity” were not at risk due to inequality in patriarchal family structures that prevent women from inflicting social costs (i.e., leaving, divorce, police intervention) due to a lack of resources.

While Gelles (1983) suggested a relationship between commitment and likelihood of engaging in husband-to-wife violence, Smith and Straus (1988) tested for the relationship between these two variables, suggesting that couples who were cohabiting were less committed to conventional rules than married couples and were more likely to engage in violence against their partners. Smith and Straus (1988) provided support for Hirschi’s (1969) social control theory, because they found that cohabiting couples were more likely than married couples to engage in a number of deviant behaviors, including husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence.

Furthermore, Straus and Gelles (1990) found that those men who belonged to organizations (i.e., clubs, business or professional organizations) and who attended religious services more often had a lower rate of domestic violence than those who did not. Social control theory may explain why this is true. It may be true that those men who are involved in such activities may be more committed to and involved in
conventional behaviors to have the time to commit deviant acts such as spousal violence or be able to incur risks due to such behavior.

Straus and Gelles (1990; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980; Allen and Straus, 1980) also found that those men who work part-time or are unemployed rather than full-time were more likely to commit husband-to-wife violence. Their reasoning for this relationship is based on a resource theory argument that those who either did not have jobs or had part-time jobs were more likely to have less resources than individuals who worked full-time and resorted to husband-to-wife violence to reassert their power because they lacked other resources (see Allen and Straus, 1980; Brown, 1980). However, social control theory provides us with another possible explanation, suggesting that men who spend less time engaging in conventional behavior will have more time to commit deviant acts (see Becker, 1960; Hirschi, 1969), in this case husband-to-wife violence. The logic is that men who do not have jobs have less involvement spent in conventional activities and will have more time for deviant activity such as husband-to-wife violence. Furthermore, men who have full-time jobs have more at risk if they engage in husband-to-wife violence, so they are more likely to refrain from such violence. Thus, a social control interpretation may also be true of these findings of the negative relationship between full-time employment and participation in spousal violence.

While research has been conducted to test the relationship between the attachment and commitment dimensions of the social bond and spousal violence, there is an absence of research conducted on how well all the dimensions of the social bond...
bond explain participation in spousal violence. My research will focus on all the
dimensions in a couple of ways. First, I will examine the effects of the totality of the
dimensions on one’s own husband-to-wife or wife-to-husband violence (depending on
the gender of the respondent). In other words, all the dimensions will be included in
the both the wife-to-husband and husband-to-wife violence models to determine how
well overall social control theory explains spousal violence initiated by either spouse.
Second, I will simultaneously examine all of the dimensions separately to assess each
dimension’s explanatory powers relative to the other dimensions to determine which
ones best explain self-reports of husband-to-wife or wife-to-husband violence
exhibited by the respondent. Both are important issues that have not been addressed
in prior research. Only partial tests of social control theory have been conducted to
date: no overall tests of social control theory nor tests for relative effects of separate
dimensions have been done.

More specifically, I will attempt to confirm prior research on attachment’s and
commitment’s inverse relationships to spousal violence whereby those who form
attachments to conventional others and are sensitive to their opinions will be less
likely to engage in spousal violence. Furthermore, those who devote more time and
energy to conventional activities (i.e., commitment and involvement dimensions) will
be less likely to commit spousal violence due to risks incurred by such behavior.

In sum, the structure and privacy of the family may lessen social controls over
family interaction, allowing spousal violence to occur. Propositions can be derived
from social control theory to explain spousal violence more generally. These
propositions are organized around the four elements of the social bond. These propositions include:

**Proposition 1:** (Attachment) The more affective ties one has to conventional others the less likely one is to commit spousal violence.

*Proposition 1A:* Those individuals with more nearby relatives present will be less likely to commit spousal violence (Cazenave and Straus, 1990).

**Proposition 1B:** Those individuals with more significant others around that they can turn to for help will be less likely to commit spousal violence.

**Proposition 2:** (Commitment) The more investments one has in conventional behavior the less likely one will be to commit spousal violence.

*Proposition 2A:* Those who perceive their marriages are more important to them will be less likely to commit spousal violence (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980).

**Proposition 3:** (Involvement) The more time one spends performing conventional behaviors the less likely one will be to commit spousal violence.

*Proposition 3A:* Those who go to meetings more often will be less likely to commit spousal violence (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980).

*Proposition 3B:* Those who go to church more often will be less likely to commit spousal violence (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980).

*Proposition 3C:* Men who have full-time jobs will be less likely to commit husband-to-wife violence (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980).²
Proposition 4: (Belief) If one believes that spousal violence is wrong one will be less likely to engage in it.

In sum, social control theory demonstrates why individuals do not engage in spousal violence based on their sensitivity to others' opinions (i.e., attachment) and their investments in conventional society (i.e., commitment). One advantage of using social control theory to explain spousal violence is its gender neutrality because that it applies to both men and women. However, what is missing from social control theory is an explanation of why women's participation in deviance, including spousal violence, is usually less that that of men. Social control theory, for the most part, has ignored gender and is not as fruitful as it might be if a feminist lens sharpened its focus. Power-control theory incorporates gender stratification into a social control model, demonstrating that males and females are subject to different types and amounts of social controls and that this accounts for their different amounts of participation in deviant behaviors.

2.1.4 Power-Control Theory and Its Application to Spousal Violence

Power-control theory combines assumptions of social control theory with neo-Marxian analyses of social structure and feminist analyses of family and gender. Hagan et. al. (1979, 1985) joined parts of these theoretical traditions to form a power-control theory of common delinquent behavior.

Generally speaking, Hagan et. al. (1979, 1985) maintained that gender variations in delinquency were rooted in historical processes that have assigned men and women to different social spheres: a sphere of consumption composed primarily
of women and a sphere of production primarily occupied by men. These separate spheres contained patterned differences in the kinds of social control processes men and women engaged in and to which they were under influence.

Hagan et. al. (1979, 1985) argued that family and household, which composed the sphere of consumption, have been characterized by informal control (i.e., exercised by family and community) processes in which women have been more involved than men. Thus, social control processes have been stratified, asserted Hagan et. al. (1979, 1985), such that women more than men have become the instruments and objects of informal control (Hagan et. al., 1979, 1985).

In addition, Hagan et. al. (1979, 1985) maintained that because the family has been the social agency responsible for primary socialization, it has provided the fundamental means by which these gender differences have been reproduced across generations. The implication of the stratification of social control for Hagan et. al. (1979, 1985) was that mothers more than fathers have been assigned responsibility for the control of children, and daughters more than sons have been subjected to these control processes. Hagan et. al. (1979, 1985) argued that the foremost mechanism through which this takes place was a differential effect of these control processes upon children's attitudes toward risk taking. Female socialization encouraged passivity and discouraged risk in order to prepare daughters for their future roles in the sphere of consumption; however, the socialization of sons freed them from many of the controls that might discourage risk taking and prepared sons for their future roles in the sphere of production (see also Hill and Atkinson, 1988; Morris, 1964; Linden
and Fillmore, 1977). Because much delinquency, and deviance in general, contains forms of risk taking, the gender differences in such behavior follow logically from the way in which social control is structured in the family (see also Datesman and Scarpitti, 1975; Austin, 1978; Krohn and Massey, 1980).

Since its earlier conception, Hagan et. al. (1985, 1987) have clarified power-control theory in important ways. They argued that the variable role of women in the workplace affected the social organization of domestic control such that as mothers gained power in the sphere of production, daughters gained freedom relative to sons in the home. This modification suggested that domestic control processes interacted with family structures to affect gender differences in delinquency (Hagan et. al., 1985, 1987).

More specifically, two ideal forms of family structures were identified by Hagan et. al. (1985, 1987). First, they identified patriarchal households as having maintained strict gender separation of production and consumption. In other words, the household consisted of a father as breadwinner holding authority in the work force, while the mother stayed home to be a homemaker. According to Hagan et. al. (1985, 1987), it was in this environment that males and females were most different in how they defined risk taking. In egalitarian households, both mothers and fathers were employed in authority positions outside the home and took more equal roles in childrearing. Hagan et. al. (1985, 1987) posited that it was in this environment less gender differences in defining risk taking resulted.
Hagan et. al. (1988, 1990) suggested that parental control was stratified by gender, concluding that girls were not inherently different but treated differently than boys in terms of types and amounts of social controls placed on them (see also Hill and Atkinson, 1988). More specifically, girls were exposed to more informal controls than boys (see also Morris, 1964; Datesman and Scarpitti, 1975; Austin, 1978); this caused them to be more averse to risk taking. This had been part of the explanation for their lower rates of delinquency (Hagan et. al., 1988, 1990).

In sum, power-control theory predicts that the link between gender and delinquency is more evident in patriarchal than egalitarian families. In other words, gender relationships that involve male dominance and women's subordination are a source of differences in controls that serve the function of intervening variables in the relationship between gender and delinquency.

Power-control theory and social control theories have successfully been applied to studying the relationship between gender and delinquency (see Hagan et. al., 1979, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1990; Hill and Atkinson, 1988; Hirschi, 1969; Krohn and Massey, 1980; Morris, 1964; Datesman and Scarpitti, 1975, Austin, 1978; Linden and Fillmore, 1977). Power-control theory has also been applied to explain homicide (Riedel, 1988), homicide victimization (Gartner et. al., 1990), and fear of victimization (Sacco, 1990). Cassidy (1995) suggests that power-control theory may be applied to issues regarding husband-to-wife violence.
2.1.5 Power-Control Theory Applied to Spousal Violence

Power-control theory shares many similarities with research offering a feminist perspective on spousal violence. Both traditions investigate how social conditions produce and maintain differences in men's and women's participation in deviant behaviors. Both power-control theory and feminist perspectives on spousal violence share an interest in the repercussions that result from male domination within and outside of the family. An important issue for feminist scholars of spousal violence is how macro-level institutions represent and uphold male authority (see Dobash and Dobash, 1984; Schechter, 1982; Walker, 1989; Witt, 1987), a concern shared with that of power-control theory (see Hagan et. al., 1985). Schechter (1982) discussed the history of male domination within and outside of the family and focused on how macro-level social institutions represented and upheld male authority. Witt (1987) asserted that the economy relied on the traditional structure of monogamy and the nuclear family to realize economic growth. Additionally, men's control over women's labor power and family structure were seen as being main factors in the subjugation of women (Witt, 1987).

Both power-control and feminist traditions view the consequences of the subordination of women as being their lesser participation in deviance. While power-control theory examines gender stratification of social control and males' greater participation in delinquent behaviors (see Hagan et. al., 1979, 1985, 1987), feminist theories on spousal violence discuss how patriarchal societies render women "appropriate victims" of violence and make men more likely to be perpetrators of
spousal violence than are women (see Dobash and Dobash, 1984; Schechter, 1982; Walker, 1989; Witt, 1987). Yllo and Straus (1990) provided empirical support for this assertion from their comparative study of woman abuse in which they found the highest wife abuse rates present in the most male-dominated states.

Another similarity of power-control theory and feminist research on spousal violence is a focus on family structures and the occurrence of deviant behaviors. While family violence research offering a feminist perspective has focused on the relationship between family structure and wife battering (see Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980; Straus and Gelles, 1990), power-control theory has investigated the relationship between family structure and delinquency (see Hagan et al., 1979, 1985, 1987).

One difference, however, between these theories is that feminist and resource theories focus on one's family of procreation while power-control theory focuses on one's family of origin. In other words, by employing a power-control perspective there is a focus on one's past household rather than one's current household and its relationship to one's participation in spousal violence. Thus, power-control theory offers a socialization perspective on spousal violence, suggesting that where boys and girls are treated differently in households, the gender gap is larger for them as adults in their participation in spousal violence. This research will integrate both approaches in its explanation of spousal violence suggesting that both families of origin and procreation share a relationship to one's participation in spousal violence.
Both power-control theory and feminist traditions suggest that male power in the family has consequences for gender differences in participation in deviant behaviors such that males are more likely to be perpetrators than females. Family violence research has found that the more patriarchal a household is, the more likely it is that wife battering will occur (Finkelhor, 1983; Straus and Gelles, 1990). Likewise, Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz (1980) found that in households where women have less power due to lack of employment outside the home coupled with no voice in decision-making they are at greater risk of abuse. Similarly, resource theories of spousal violence have suggested that when husbands perceive themselves to have less resources than their wives and they hold traditional beliefs that their family power should be higher than their wives, they may employ “the ultimate resource” of violence as a means to regain their power (Goode, 1971; Allen and Straus, 1980; Brown, 1980; Hauser, 1982). Cassidy (1995) suggested that power-control theory might also explain why such men resort to battering as a response to perceived powerlessness and how this relates to processes of social control in the family.

Power-control research has shown that in patriarchal household structures greater informal social controls were exercised toward women than men, making women subsequently less likely to engage in delinquent behaviors (Hagan et. al., 1979, 1985, 1987). From Hagan et. al.’s (1979, 1985, 1987) research one may deduce that because presence of male power in the family and the absence of control create conditions of freedom that enable delinquency, that fathers and sons in such families
are also endowed with conditions of freedom that allow battering to occur (Cassidy, 1995).

According to power-control theory males are more prone to engage in risk taking behavior than are females, so they might be willing to take the risk of exceeding the patriarchally defined boundaries of controlling the behavior of their wives. Additionally, opportunities to challenge this gender stratification of social control are limited for women, particularly women restricted to the home (Cassidy, 1995). Thus, power-control theory assumes that patriarchy has an important role in defining conditions under which family members are free to deviate from social norms, and that both presence of power and absence of social controls contribute to these conditions (see also Cassidy, 1995).

Power-control theory also provides explanations of differences in wife-to-husband violence by employing more recent arguments of Hagan et. al. (1985, 1987, 1988, 1990), suggesting that gender differences in spousal violence is greater for individuals from patriarchal rather than egalitarian households of origin. According to recent modifications of power-control theory (Hagan et. al., 1985, 1987, 1988, 1990), one may deduce that those women from patriarchal households of origin will be less likely to engage in wife-to-husband violence than their counterparts from egalitarian households of origin. Furthermore, those women from egalitarian households of origin will be more similar to men in their rates of spousal violence than those from patriarchal households of origin where gender differences are more pronounced.
What is particularly interesting to spousal violence is that little research to date has linked spousal violence to processes of social control and how this relates to family structure (see Gelles, 1983; 1993 for an exception). I expect to find that Hagan et. al.'s ideas (1979, 1985, 1987) may be applied successfully to spousal violence. Upon applying Hagan et al.'s (1979, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1990) power-control theory to spousal violence the following propositions may be derived:

**Proposition 1**: Family of origin structure affects one's participation in spousal violence as an adult.

**Proposition 1A**: Women from patriarchal households of origin are less likely than those from egalitarian households of origin to engage in spousal violence.

**Proposition 1B**: Women from egalitarian households of origin are more likely than those from patriarchal households of origin to engage in spousal violence.

**Proposition 1C**: Men from patriarchal households of origin are more likely than those from egalitarian households of origin to engage in spousal violence.

**Proposition 1D**: Men from egalitarian households of origin are less likely than those from patriarchal households of origin to engage in spousal violence.

In sum, power-control theory asserts that as a result of male dominance within and outside of the family, gender stratification of social control exists. Furthermore, this process is related to family structure whereby these differences are more pronounced in patriarchal families. Power-control theory is a social control theory that specializes in explaining differences in men's and women's deviance. The logic
underlying social control approaches more generally is that those with stronger bonds to society will be less likely to engage in deviant behaviors such as spousal violence.

I also incorporate resource theory in my explanation of husband-to-wife violence. Resource theory shares with power-control theory an interest in male power in the family. Resource theory also suggests that when a wife’s resources are greater than her husband’s and he feels that he should bring more resources into the household than she does, conflict is likely to occur which may in turn lead to husband-to-wife violence.

In sum, I integrate social control, resource, and power-control theories to develop a resource/social control model in an effort to obtain a better understanding of the men’s and women’s differences in participation in spousal violence. Integrating these approaches to husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence suggests that both families of procreation and origin are related to participation in spousal violence for both men and women.

1 An asterisk (*) is used to denote propositions tested in previous research. Researchers who used identical or similar propositions in their research are listed after each proposition.

2 Only men’s full-time work status will be tested. Straus and Gelles (1990; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980) found a relationship between work status and spousal violence for men. Many women during the time of the survey were full-time housewives and cannot be separated from those who work full-time or part-time because all of these activities may be seen as conventional for women.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Sample

This study employs data from the 1975 National Family Violence Survey, which is a national probability sample of 2,143 families in which one adult family member was interviewed. A random half of the respondents is men (n=960); the other half is women (n=1183). Each respondent was interviewed face-to-face by an interviewer for approximately an hour. The 2,143 households included in this sample were drawn from a sample of locations that were stratified by geographic region, type of community, and other population characteristics (Straus and Gelles, 1990).

Descriptive characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1. The mean age of the sample is 42.9 years (SD=14.0) for men and 39.8 years (SD=13.5) for women. Approximately 91.1 percent of the sample is white and 8.9 percent is nonwhite. The mean for education of the sample is 4.7 (SD=2.2) and 4.4 (SD=1.8) for men and women, respectively, which means that both genders on average have some college or post high school training. Mean family income is 9.12 for the sample, meaning that the average income of these families is slightly above the $15,000 range. This is slightly lower than the $20,000 average income reported for married couples in the sample.

3.2 Data

The National Family Violence Surveys (1975 and 1985) are the only nationally representative studies of spousal violence to date, so their results are the only ones which may be generalizable to other American families. Another major advantage of
Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations for Independent and Dependent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Family Income</td>
<td>9.1237</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Race</td>
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<td>Husband's Age</td>
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<td>Husband's Church Attendance</td>
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<td>Husband's Dissatisfaction with Household Labor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Husband's Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Husband's Employment Status</td>
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<td>Husband's Perception of Marriage Importance</td>
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<td>Husband's Resources</td>
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<td>Respondent's Minor Violence</td>
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<td>Slapping Normality</td>
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<td>Wife's Perception of Marriage Importance</td>
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these surveys is that they were designed to collect information on both aggressors and victims. Before these surveys were conducted, samples consisted primarily of battered women from battered women's shelters. Thus, these data provide for a more comprehensive measure of violence than is usually found in studies of domestic violence (Straus and Gelles, 1990).

This study uses the National Family Violence Survey conducted in 1975 rather than that of 1985. This is because the main objective of the 1975 survey was to gather data that could be used to test causal theories. The 1975 survey also contained measures such as decision-making power in the family to test whether more patriarchal families have higher incidence of wife beating. The 1985 survey lacks this measure as well as many others necessary to test the proposed model because it was designed to collect information on how families cope with violence and the consequences of violence, not the causes of violence. Furthermore, the same causal mechanisms are in place whether I use the 1985 or 1975 data.

3.3 Operationalization of Concepts

3.3.1 Dependent Variable Measure

*Spousal Violence* is measured by the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS) Form N developed by Straus and Gelles (1990: Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980). This scale was designed to measure a variety of behaviors used to settle conflicts among family members. The tactics were arranged into one of three general categories, which included: 1) rational discussion (reasoning), 2) verbal or nonverbal acts that symbolically hurt the other (verbal aggression), and 3) the use of physical aggression.
(violence). The CTS measured behaviors used in response to a conflict during the past year.

Each respondent was handed a card that asked how times in the past year when he/she and his/her spouse were involved in conflicts and how they resolved these conflicts. Each respondent was asked separately about violence he/she exhibited toward his/her spouse as well as violence that he/she received from his/her spouse. This means that data were collected on both respondent-to-spouse and spouse-to-respondent violence. The gender of the respondent determines whether these instances of violence are husband-to-wife or wife-to-husband. I use the data on husband-to-wife violence and wife-to-husband violence separately in the analyses. I specifically include only violence exhibited by the respondent (i.e., one’s own self-reported violence) in each model. Therefore, if the respondent is a man, then husband-to-wife violence is used in the analysis; if the respondent is a woman, then wife-to-husband violence is used in the analysis.

Respondents read a list of possible tactics they may have used to resolve disputes, ranging from discussing an issue calmly (reasoning scale) to insulted or swore at the other (verbal aggression scale) to threw something at spouse (physical aggression/ violence scale). Possible responses included: never, once, twice, 3-5 times, 6-10 times, 11-20 times, and 20 or more times.

Straus and Gelles (1990) also divided violence items into minor and severe forms. Minor violence included: 1) items being thrown at the spouse, 2) being pushed, grabbed, or shoved, and 3) slapped. Severe violence includes: 1) kicked, bit,
or punched, 2) hit or tried to hit with an object, 3) beat up, 4) choked, 5) threatened with a knife or gun, 6) used a knife or gun.

I use the minor violence index rate for husbands and for wives, collapsing it into a dichotomy of either minor violence being present or absent. The theoretical reason for using minor violence is the recognition that all acts of violence are important, even minor violence such as slapping or shoving. When this type of violence occurs and is labeled as "only" minor violence, it suggests that violence can be used when it is deemed necessary. Although these acts are minor in terms of physical harm, it is very important in understanding the balance of power between husbands and wives. For instance, one is at risk of assault if he or she does not submit to their spouses' demands. In addition, minor violence often precedes more severe violence (Browne, 1987; Walker, 1989; Stets and Straus, 1990).

In terms of the three theories employed for this analysis, minor violence is suitable for the analysis. First, many resource theories have successfully been tested by employing minor violence (see Allen and Straus, 1980; Hauser, 1982). Second, social control theory explains acts of deviance, and minor violence certainly constitutes deviance. For instance, analysis of responses to Straus and Gelles' 1985 survey suggests that spousal slapping is not acceptable behavior to many couples (see Straus and Gelles, 1990). Attachment and commitment should have explanatory power whether one is looking at why individuals do not slap their spouses or why they do not hit their spouses. Finally, power-control theory is interested in explaining
differences in men’s and women’s behaviors, so the focus is on consistency of type of violence compared across genders.

The empirical reason for using minor violence is that severe violence has a low base rate. This type of violence occurred between only six percent of couples during the year of this survey, compared to sixteen percent of couples who experienced minor violence. If the severe violence index had been used, there would not be sufficient cases in a cell to reach statistically reliable conclusions (see Coleman and Straus for similar justifications).

3.3.2 Resource Measures

*Wife’s Relative Resources* is measured by constructing a relative resources index which includes three characteristics related to economics, including: education, occupational prestige, and income. For each of the resources included in the index I calculated whether the wife scored higher on that resource than her husband. When the wife had a higher score, the resource was scored 1. When the wife had an equal or lower score, the resource was scored a 0. The scores on the three resources are added together into an index. The index scores range from 0 to 3, where those wives who had the same or less total resources as their husbands scored 0. If the wife exceeded her husband in educational attainment, occupational prestige, and income, she scored a 3. It should be noted that this measure accounts for how many attributes in which wives exceed their husbands, but it cannot account for the how much higher the wives scored on any particular resource. Thus, one cannot distinguish whether it makes a
difference in the rate of husband-to-wife violence if the wife makes ten dollars versus ten thousand dollars more than her husband.

It is expected that those families in which the wife’s resources are greater than her husband’s that husband-to-wife violence will be more likely to result. Conversely, when the wife has less combined resources than her husband then husband-to-wife violence will be less likely to occur.

*Husband's Ideology* is measured by questions based on the work of Blood and Wolfe (1960) that asked the respondent to indicate who should have the final say in making decisions about the following six issues: 1) buying a car, 2) having children, 3) what house/apartment to take, 4) what job either partner should take, 5) whether a partner should go to work or quit work, and 6) how much money to spend each week on food. Responses to these six questions are used to classify each husband into one of two authority types: male dominant or egalitarian. Male dominant authority types are those in which the husband thinks he should have the final say in more decisions, while egalitarian authority types are those in which husbands feel that themselves and their wives should make decisions jointly or that the wife should be allowed to make decisions on her own. A husband’s ideology index is computed by scoring responses for each decision from 1 (wife only) to 5 (husband only) and summing those scores (for a similar index see Coleman and Straus, 1986). This scale has a Cronbach’s alpha of .5130. High scores indicate husband dominant authority types and low scores indicate egalitarian authority types. Those families in which the husband’s ideology
scores are higher will be designated as patriarchal, while those families in which the husband's ideology scores are lower will be considered as egalitarian.

*Legitimacy of Marital Power Structure* is used to measure whether or not spouses agree with the current distribution of power in the family. The actual division of power in the family may not necessarily reflect the beliefs of spouses of who should be making major decisions in the family (Coleman and Straus, 1986). This variable is measured by obtaining differences between spouses for who should make each of the six decisions mentioned above and then summing the difference. These items are combined in a scale with a Cronbach's alpha of .5867. The measure of marital power structure legitimacy is based on responses on who *should* have the final say in decisions mentioned above in determining marital power, while marital power is based on who actually does have the final say in these matters. Coleman and Straus (1986) found this to be an important variable to include when investigating power in the family. They found that when actual marital power is male-dominated and both spouses agree on the legitimacy of this arrangement the likelihood of violence is lessened.

*Husband's Dissatisfaction with Division of Household Labor* is included as an additional measure of whether family structure is considered to be either egalitarian or patriarchal. This variable is derived from responses to questions that ask the amount of responsibility had for cooking, cleaning, or repairing the house during the three previous months and the amount of responsibility each would have liked to have had. Satisfaction with the division of household labor is determined by subtracting each
respondent’s score for the amount of responsibility he would have liked to have had from the amount of responsibility he actually had (see Suitor, 1991 for similar measurement). Suitor (1991) found dissatisfaction with the division of household labor to be a strong predictor of verbal aggression or overt conflict in spousal relationships. These are both factors which strongly predict marital violence.

*Marital Conflict* is measured by constructing a marital conflict index from responses to questions which asked how often during the past year there was agreement on each of the following: 1) managing the money, 2) cooking, cleaning, or repairing the house, 3) social activities, and 4) affection and sexual relations. Response categories range from always agree (scored 1 for low conflict) to never agree (scored 5 for high conflict). The index is created by summing the scores for the four questions (see Coleman and Straus, 1986 for similar index). This scale has a Cronbach’s alpha of .7562. Those couples with higher scores are those with higher marital conflict, which increases the likelihood that spousal violence will take place (Coleman and Straus, 1986; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980; Straus and Gelles, 1990).

### 3.3.3 Social Control Measures

*Nearby Relatives* also serve the roles of surveillance and attachments that prevent spousal violence by means of informal social control. This variable is measured as the number of family members of the respondent and his/her spouse who live within an hour of the respondent. According to social control theory, individuals
are sensitive to the opinions of others, so as conventional significant others are present this should lessen the likelihood of spousal violence taking place.

This measure only accounts for the presence of relatives nearby and not actual contact between family members. However, some studies have shown that the relationship between face-to-face contact and proximity is strong (see Rossi and Rossi, 1990; Cherlin and Furstenberg, 1986). Rossi and Rossi (1990) argued that those individuals who lived near their parents saw them more often, while those who lived farther away saw their parents much less often (see also Klatzky, 1971). Similarly, Rossi and Rossi (1990) argued that more contact between family members meant stronger family ties, and increased distance created a geographical barrier to contact.

*Interpersonal Resources* is measured as whether or not one has coping networks when a problem arises. These networks may include: 1) respondent’s relatives, 2) spouse’s relatives, 3) friends, and 4) others, such as a minister or professional. These individuals serve the role of affective attachments or relational social controls against spousal violence (Cazenave and Straus, 1990). This is consistent with social control theory which suggests that individuals’ sensitivity to others’ opinions prevents them from engaging in deviance, in this case, spousal violence.

*Importance of Marriage* is measured by how important one perceives his/her marriage to be in comparison to other things such as job and friends. Social control
theory suggests that those whose marriages are more important to them have higher stakes in conformity and thus will be less likely to engage in spousal violence.

*Involvement in Institutions* is measured as how much time the respondent spends in conventional institutions in society. Specific measures include: 1) how many organizational meetings one attends in a month and 2) how often one attends church services. Straus and Gelles (1990) found that those men who belonged to organizations had a lower rate of domestic violence than those who did not. In addition, those men who attended religious services more often were less likely to commit spousal violence. Likewise, I suggest the same relationship between these variables under the assumptions of social control theory. I suggest that the more time one invests in these conventional activities the higher stakes one has in conformity, and, subsequently, the less likely one will be to commit acts of spousal violence.

*Work Hours* is measured as whether one works full-time or is part-time or unemployed. Social control theory suggests that those who have less time spent in conventional behavior will have more time to commit deviant acts. The logic is that those who do not have jobs will have more time to engage in spousal violence. Research supports this claim. For example, Straus and Gelles (1990) note that those that are unemployed or working part time are more likely to engage in spousal violence. One may also use alternative explanations that those who do not have jobs may have less stakes in conformity which is part of the commitment dimension of social control theory. One may also see the relationship to resource theory in that those who do not have jobs or have part time jobs are likely to have less resources
than someone who works full time. Resource theory may predict that husbands will resort to the “ultimate resource” of violence to reassert their power because they lack other resources (Allen and Straus, 1980; Brown, 1980).

Belief in Spousal Violence is determined by responses to a Likert scale question of whether or not the slapping of a spouse is normal. Those who responded by saying that slapping of a spouse is normal are those who are more likely to engage in spousal violence because they believe that it is acceptable behavior.

3.3.4 Power-Control Measures

Gender is measured as male or female as reported by the respondent. Data on spousal violence are often controversial. Feminist perspectives on spousal violence argue that females are more likely to be victims of spousal violence than are men. Their point of view is supported by data on wife abuse conducted in women’s shelters (see Dobash and Dobash, 1984) or other helping agencies (see Walker, 1989; Browne, 1987). Straus and others argue that there are more women using violence toward their husbands than the shelter data have shown. Although there is lack of agreement on the amount of wife to husband violence taking place, the general consensus is that husbands are more likely to be aggressors and wives the more likely to be victims of spousal violence.

Power-control theory also suggests that men are more likely to commit deviant acts than are women. As power-control theory suggests, females are less likely to be involved in deviant behavior due to the different and additional informal social
controls placed on them compared to their male counterparts (Hagan et. al., 1979, 1985, 1987).

*Family of Origin Authority Structure* is determined by mother’s educational attainment in years. Mother’s employment was not used (as was used in Hagan et. al.’s research), because when the survey was conducted (1975) only a minuscule number of mothers of respondents who were interviewed as adults in 1975 were employed in professional, managerial, or supervisory positions. In 1960, which is when the youngest cohorts of respondents were children or teenagers in the household, only 30% of all married women were employed; the percentage is even smaller when only mothers with children in the home are considered. Furthermore, the labor force participation rates for the other cohorts are even smaller.

Women’s education is used in this analysis because it is consistently related to women’s gender role attitudes, labor force participation, occupational prestige, decision-making in the household, and division of household labor. More specifically, these relationships have been found throughout the past four decades, and are similar across age cohorts. Although a relationship exists between educational level and gender role attitudes, it is not terribly strong. Therefore, education may not be a perfect surrogate for gender role attitudes, but it is the best measure available in these data.

Women with higher educations are less likely to have traditional gender role attitudes and more power in the household (Allen and Straus, 1980; Hauser, 1982). These are traits associated with egalitarian households. So those respondents whose
mothers have higher educations were more likely to be raised in egalitarian families. As a result, as power-control theory suggests, sons and daughters will be treated similarly in terms of amounts of informal social controls, so their rates of spousal violence will be similar. In contrast, patriarchal families of origin are defined here as those in which mothers have lower educations. Furthermore, patriarchal family structures promote different amounts of social controls placed on sons and daughters (Hagan et al., 1979, 1985, 1987). This will result in women having lower rates of initiating spousal violence in their present families.

3.3.5 Controls

*Education* is measured as the number of years of education reported by the respondent. Research has shown that the relationship between spousal violence and education is not a strong one. Straus and Gelles (1990) found that husbands in the high quartile of education were only slightly less violent against their wives than those in the lower quartile (see also Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980; Stets and Straus, 1990; Hotaling and Sugarman, 1986). This suggests that there is little or no difference in aggression and violence according to one's educational level. Education may also be conceived of as a measure of social control in that those who have higher educations may have higher stakes in conformity may feel less compelled to deviate based on higher costs of such behavior.

*Husband's Wife's Age* are measured in years as reported by the respondent. Spousal violence follows the same general patterns with regard to age as does violence between nonintimates. The rates of violence are highest for those between
the ages of 18 and 30 years for both victims and offenders (Gelles and Straus, 1988; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980). In fact, Straus and Gelles (1990) include youthfulness as one of the five most important factors that put individual families at risk for spousal violence. Youthful lifestyles often include lower incomes, increased stress and drinking which all have links to spousal violence. Thus, explanations of spousal violence need to consider issues such as life span development and stage in the family life cycle if they are to accurately explain the relationship between age and violence (Suitor, Pillemer, and Straus, 1990; Gelles, 1993).

Age also plays a major role in explaining deviance and violence more generally (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983; Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990). Social control theory suggests that individuals who are older may perceive greater risks in deviant behavior. In other words, as individuals age their stakes in conformity increase and they are less likely to commit deviant acts (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983).

*Household Race* is measured as white/nonwhite or mixed as reported by the respondent. Survey data suggests that violence toward women is higher among blacks than among whites (Hampton, Gelles, and Harrop, 1989). The higher rate of violence in black homes is largely a function of the strong links among spousal violence and low income, urbanization, and youthfulness, which describe the black experience (Cazenave and Straus, 1990). In other words, race does not cause spousal violence: it is the social predicament in which many black families find themselves, particularly in American society. To the extent that black families have lower incomes, younger
ages, and are more likely to live in urban areas than are other racial groups, their rates of spousal violence are higher than that of other racial groups.

*Household Income* is a categorical measure of total family income before taxes. Prior research has shown that the lower the total family income, the greater the probability of spousal violence (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980; Straus and Gelles, 1990). In contrast to higher social classes in which husbands have more money, prestige, and power, lower income men have no such resources to fall back on to control their wives. This situation may result in their using violence as the “ultimate resource” to reassert their power (Allen and Straus, 1980; Hauser, 1982; Brown, 1980).

3.4 Method of Analysis

Regression analysis is the most widely used statistical technique in the social sciences because it provides much explanatory power, especially due to its multivariate nature. However, sometimes assumptions are violated, leading to unreasonable estimates. This occurs when the dependent variable is a limited measure rather than a continuous, interval measure and can lead to serious errors in inference.

What is needed, then, is a statistical tool that can do the work of multivariate regression but does not violate critical assumptions in the presence of limited dependent variables. A logit model will be employed in this analysis to accomplish this task of validly estimating a linear regression equation with the dichotomous dependent variable, spousal violence. Assumptions for employing the logit model are
very different from the usual assumptions made in Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression.

3.4.1 Assumptions of Logit

1) The dependent random variable, Y, is assumed to be dichotomous, taking on two values, 0 and 1. The outcomes of Y are assumed to be mutually exclusive and exhaustive. The primary focus is on the value of the parameter, P, on the probability that Y equals one.

2) It is also assumed that the exogenous variables account for the variation in P. This assumption is similar to the OLS regression model in which the exogenous variables account for the variation in the mean, or expectation, of Y.

3) While in OLS regression Y and X have a linear relationship, different assumptions are made in logistic regression about the exact relationship between Y and X.

4) As in OLS regression, it is assumed that the data are generated from a random sample of size N. Additionally, the observations on Y must be statistically independent of each other.

5) As in OLS regression, highly correlated independent variables should not be included in the same equation because multicollinearity problems may arise.

6) Random errors are not assumed to be continuous, homoscedastic or normally distributed. Rather, they are assumed to be dichotomous and dependent upon the parameters and the values of the independent variables.
7) Logit parameters are typically estimated by a method called Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) which is different from regression models estimated by Ordinary Least Squares (OLS). The conceptual difference between OLS and MLE is that OLS is concerned with picking parameter estimates that yield the smallest sum of squared errors in the fit between the model and data, while MLE is concerned with picking parameter estimates that imply the highest probability or likelihood of having obtained the observed sample Y (Aldrich and Nelson, 1984).

MLE estimates on logit models have nearly the same properties as do OLS estimates of the regression model. Differences between the two are that the MLE on logit models is nonlinear and the properties are asymptotic, in other words, they improve as sample size increases. Similarities between the two include: unbiasedness (the estimates are centered around the true value on average), efficiency (no other unbiased estimator has lower sampling variance), and normality (which means that we know how to perform hypothesis tests and draw other inferences) (Aldrich and Nelson, 1984).

3.4.2 Application and Interpretation of Logit

This research employs a statistical model which allows for the estimation of the conditional probabilities of spousal violence under different conditions of social control, power, and resources in the family. Because the dependent variable in this analysis is dichotomous—either spousal violence is present or not, without concern for how much may be present—OLS regression is not appropriate. The technique used to
estimate this limited dependent variable model is logit, which produces Maximum Likelihood Estimates (MLE).

It is important to note that interpreting the results from a logit model is not as intuitive as interpreting OLS regression coefficients. Although logit analysis is similar to regression, logit coefficients do not have the same straightforward interpretation as regression coefficients. Logit coefficients estimate the effect of an independent variable on the probability of an event’s occurrence (in this case spousal violence). As is the case for regression coefficients, the sign of the coefficient indicates whether a variable increases or decreases the probability, and the size of the coefficient relative to its standard error indicates the level of statistical significance. Unlike regression coefficients, however, MLEs do not directly indicate the impact of an independent variable on the dependent variable. Instead, logit coefficients are estimates of change on the cumulative normal distribution associated with a one unit change in an independent variable with all other independent variables in the model held constant. The logit coefficients themselves are not probabilities. The relationships they estimate, however, can be converted into probabilities.

Several models will be employed in the analysis. First, separate models will be run to determine how well each of the theories (i.e., resource, social control, and power-control) explains respondents’ self-reports of their own husband-to-wife or wife-to-husband violence. For resource theory only husband-to-wife violence will be tested. Thus, a total of five models will be used for this stage of the analysis. Comparisons will be made to determine which variables best explain self-reports of
one's own husband-to-wife versus wife-to-husband violence and if variables predict the same way (i.e., direction and magnitude) for each type of spousal violence.

Each model will then be examined to determine which variables have significant effects on either wife-to-husband or husband-to-wife violence exhibited by the respondent. These variables will be used to develop more comprehensive models of self-reported husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence by combining significant variables derived from each of the theories. The final model will be a gender-neutral model which integrates variables from the three theories to determine how well they predict spousal violence in general, including both wife-to-husband and husband-to-wife in the same model.

There are three forms of the Conflict Tactics Scales for couples: Form A, Form N, and Form R. Form A was an earlier version of the CTS which was in questionnaire format and distributed to college students. Form N was used in the 1975 National Family Violence Survey as part of a face-to-face interview format. Form R was used in the 1985 survey which took place through telephone interviews.

Only husband-to-wife violence will be tested due to the theory's assumption that the spouse who should have the most power has an effect on spousal violence. In American society, it is the husband who is perceived to have the most power in the family.

There are not enough cases to conduct analyses of severe violence.
Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Differences Between Means Tests

Differences in the violent and nonviolent groups as a function of the study variables were investigated using t-tests. See Tables 2 and 3 for t-tests of differences between violent and nonviolent men and women. The t-tests indicated that violent and nonviolent men differed as a function of sociodemographic variables such as: family income, age, and education. Men who did not use violence toward their wives had higher incomes, ages, and educations and were married longer than men who were violent toward their wives. These findings are not surprising, because these variables have been shown in the literature (with the exception of education) to have relationships with spousal violence (see Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980; Straus and Gelles, 1990). With regard to relationships with their wives, nonviolent men had less marital conflict with their wives and more agreement with their wives on who should have the final say on family decisions. These patterns are consistent with resource theories on husband-to-wife violence which suggest that marital conflict (see Brown, 1980) and disagreement over the marital power structure (Coleman and Straus, 1986) may lead to the occurrence of spousal violence.

The results of the t-tests also indicate that men who were not violent toward their wives went to church more often, had someone to turn to when problems arise, and believe that slapping one’s spouse is not normal. The results of the t-tests are consistent with Hirschi’s social control theory which suggests that those with more attachments to others, commitment to and involvement in institutions, and

57
Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of Selected Variables for Violent and Nonviolent Men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Income (1-14)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
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<td>Husband's Church Attendance (1-8)</td>
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<td>Husband's Dissatisfaction with Household Labor (0-15)</td>
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(Table Con'd)
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<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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* p<.05  
** p<.01
Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations of Selected Variables for Violent and Nonviolent Women

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* p < .05
** p < .01
conventional beliefs will be less likely to commit deviant acts, in this case, husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence.

T-test results showed that some of the study variables' means did not differ significantly between violent and nonviolent men. Insignificant variables include: household race, dissatisfaction with household labor, employment status, ideology, nearby relatives, perception of marriage importance, meetings attended, mother’s education, and wife’s relative resources. It is surprising that some of these variables would have insignificant differences between violent and nonviolent groups. For instance, household race is included as a control variable for the logit models due to its relationship to the occurrence of spousal violence (see Hampton, Gelles, and Harrop, 1989; Cazenave and Straus, 1990). Dissatisfaction with household labor has been shown to have a positive relationship with verbal aggression and overt conflict, which are predictors of spousal violence (see Suitor, 1991). Also surprising is the insignificant finding for husband’s ideology, which has consistently been shown in the literature to be a predictor of spousal violence (see Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980; Straus and Gelles, 1990).

The t-tests also indicated that violent and nonviolent women differed significantly as a function of sociodemographic variables such as: family income, age, and marriage length. More specifically, women who have higher family incomes, are older, and married longer are those who did not engage in violence against their husbands. Unlike for husbands, wives’ education did not show a significant difference of means across groups. With regard to relationships with their husbands,
nonviolent wives were those that had less marital conflict with their husbands and more agreement on who should have the final say in family decisions. These patterns are similar to what was observed for violent and nonviolent husbands.

Women were also similar to the men with regard to their bonds to society. For instance, women who were not violent toward their husbands attended church more often, went to meetings more often, had someone to turn to when problems arise, and believed that slapping a spouse was not normal. The only difference is that men's meetings per month did not have a significant difference in means across groups. Thus, for both men and women the results of the t-tests provide partial support for Hirschi's social control theory.

T-test results showed that some of the study variables' means did not differ significantly between violent and nonviolent women. Insignificant variables include: household race, education, nearby relatives, perception of marriage importance, and mother's education. It is not surprising that these variables would have insignificant differences between violent and nonviolent groups, because they have not been established in the literature as having strong relationships to the occurrence of spousal violence (with the exception of race, which was discussed earlier).

4.2 Correlations

By examining Table 4, one can see that some of the independent variables appear to be significantly correlated. Many of the independent variables common to both husbands and wives were found to be highly correlated, including demographic variables such as: husband's and wife's age (.9420**), and husband's and wife's

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Table 4: Correlations for Independent and Dependent Variables

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<td>0.1139**</td>
<td>-0.0648**</td>
<td>-1.1165**</td>
<td>-1.1285**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.082**</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>-1.1027**</td>
<td>-1.1250**</td>
<td>-1.1201**</td>
<td>-0.0617**</td>
<td>-0.0821**</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>-1.1483**</td>
<td>-1.114**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.0826**</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>-1.1173**</td>
<td>-0.0831**</td>
<td>-1.1012**</td>
<td>-0.0863**</td>
<td>-0.0497**</td>
<td>-0.009</td>
<td>-1.1643**</td>
<td>-1.1438**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.0792**</td>
<td>-0.0451*</td>
<td>0.0459*</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>-0.009</td>
<td>-0.0656**</td>
<td>-0.0883**</td>
<td>1.1574**</td>
<td>1.1480**</td>
<td>-0.045</td>
<td>-0.2566**</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>-1.1141**</td>
<td>-1.131**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.7949**</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>1.040**</td>
<td>1.008**</td>
<td>0.3653**</td>
<td>-1.226**</td>
<td>-0.038</td>
<td>1.1342**</td>
<td>1.1265**</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>-0.0560**</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td>0.050**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>0.3508**</td>
<td>-1.115**</td>
<td>-0.5898**</td>
<td>0.1364**</td>
<td>1.1385**</td>
<td>-0.018</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>-1.1002**</td>
<td>-0.0439**</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>0.0467**</td>
<td>0.0426*</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.1037**</td>
<td>-0.3381**</td>
<td>-0.3057**</td>
<td>-0.3831**</td>
<td>-0.011</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>1.1898**</td>
<td>1.688**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.7530**</td>
<td>0.0614**</td>
<td>-1.1074**</td>
<td>-0.034</td>
<td>-0.013</td>
<td>-0.012</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>0.0445**</td>
<td>0.1205**</td>
<td>0.1839**</td>
<td>0.038**</td>
<td>0.448**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.0603**</td>
<td>-0.0968**</td>
<td>0.0802**</td>
<td>-0.0492**</td>
<td>-0.0498**</td>
<td>0.0869**</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>1.1135**</td>
<td>1.1001**</td>
<td>0.0822**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p: 0.05
** p: 0.01
education (.7028**). Other variables shared by husbands and wives that were found
to be highly correlated are their perceptions of marriage importance (.7530**), church
attendance (.7949**), and, to a lesser extent, relatives living nearby (.4695**). These
high correlations suggest that couples in this sample are homogeneous, or share many
things in common. These high correlations are not problematic, because these
variables are not included in the same models. Separate logistic regressions were run
for men and women for the social control and power-control models, because they are
based on self-reports of one's own violence. In the final model, no gender-specific
variables are included, eliminating the problem of these highly correlated variables.

Family income has a high correlation with both husband's and wife's
education, .4914** and .4604** respectively. This is not surprising, because
education has been shown in other literatures to have a relationship with income such
that the more education one has, the higher one's income. Both education and family
income are included in the models as controls, because both have distinct
relationships with spousal violence.

4.3 Logit Results

4.3.1 Resource Theory Model of Husband-to-Wife Violence

The findings presented in Table 5 provide partial support for propositions
derived from resource theory. While this model predicts husbands' own self-reported
nonviolence toward wives with a great deal of accuracy (97.68%), it is largely unable
to predict cases in which husbands report violence taking place against their wives
(23.28%). The overall predictive power of the resource model (89.72) is not
Table 5: Resource, Social Control, and Power-Control Models of Respondent's Self-Reported Husband-to-Wife Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Resource Model</th>
<th>Social Control Model</th>
<th>Power-Control Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Sig</td>
<td>S.E.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife's Relative Resources</td>
<td>0.754</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>0.464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>-0.078</td>
<td>0.249</td>
<td>0.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with Household Labor</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>0.473</td>
<td>0.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Power Structure Legitimacy</td>
<td>0.110</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.076</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.085</td>
<td>0.276</td>
<td>0.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Race</td>
<td>-0.471</td>
<td>0.274</td>
<td>0.430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Income</td>
<td>-0.243</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.110</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>0.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearby Relatives</td>
<td>-0.016</td>
<td>0.727</td>
<td>0.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Resources</td>
<td>-0.650</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings Attended</td>
<td>-0.096</td>
<td>0.132</td>
<td>0.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Attendance</td>
<td>-0.414</td>
<td>0.262</td>
<td>0.369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage Importance</td>
<td>0.299</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.074</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-2 Log Likelihood: 369.031; Goodness of Fit: 689.288; Model Chi Square: 107.463; Degrees of Freedom: 9

(Table Con'd)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Resource Model</th>
<th>Social Control Model</th>
<th>Power-Control Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent Predicted Correctly (Overall)</td>
<td>89.720</td>
<td>86.070</td>
<td>85.850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Predicted Correctly (Nonviolence)</td>
<td>97.680</td>
<td>97.550</td>
<td>97.090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Predicted Correctly (Violence)</td>
<td>23.280</td>
<td>20.730</td>
<td>22.540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>722</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
significantly better than that of the modal category. One variable in the model predicted the opposite of what is suggested by resource theory. More specifically, husband's ideology had a negative relationship with husband-to-wife violence. However, this variable was not found to be significant at the .05 level. In addition, wife's relative resources and husband's dissatisfaction with household labor did not have a significant impact on husband-to-wife violence. Significant variables in the model include marital conflict and marital power structure legitimacy. Thus, those households in which marital conflict is high and in which there are stronger differences in husbands' and wives' opinions on who should be making household decisions are those in which husband are reporting the highest rates of violence against their wives.

4.3.2 Social Control Models of Husband-to-Wife and Wife-to-Husband Violence

The findings presented in Tables 5 and 6 provide partial support for the hypothesis that the stronger one's bond is to society, the less likely he/she will be to commit acts of violence against his/her spouse. The overall predictive power of the social control models (86.07% for husband-to-wife violence, 80.91% for wife-to-husband violence) is not significantly better than that of the modal category. While these models are able to correctly predict nonviolence toward wives and husbands with a great deal of accuracy (97.55% and 96.75% respectively), they are unable to accurately predict cases in which violence is taking place against a spouse (20.73 and 15.70, respectively). In addition, the social control model has slightly more predictive power for husbands' self-reports of violence and nonviolence against their wives.
Table 6: Social Control and Power-Control Models of Respondent's Self-Reported Wife-to-Husband Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Social Control Model</th>
<th>Power-Control Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearby Relatives</td>
<td>0.0113</td>
<td>0.7337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Resources</td>
<td>-0.7634</td>
<td>0.0024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings Attended</td>
<td>-0.0531</td>
<td>0.2186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Attendance</td>
<td>-0.0611</td>
<td>0.2289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage Importance</td>
<td>-0.0643</td>
<td>0.6509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slapping Normality</td>
<td>0.2569</td>
<td>0.0003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.0668</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.0484</td>
<td>0.5296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Income</td>
<td>-0.1073</td>
<td>0.0325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Race</td>
<td>-0.1119</td>
<td>0.8102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.2178</td>
<td>0.2265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family of Origin Structure</td>
<td>-0.1086</td>
<td>0.2117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-2 Log Likelihood: 530.3540 449.9060
Goodness of Fit: 781.4960 650.4250
Model Chi Square: 98.2190 88.6760
Degrees of Freedom: 10 11
Percent Predicted Correctly (Overall): 80.9100 80.6500
Percent Predicted Correctly (Nonviolence): 96.7500 96.6400
Percent Predicted Correctly (Violence): 15.7000 16.7800
N: 944 944
Mixed support exists for how well each of Hirschi's (1969) dimensions explains violence respondents report they used against their spouses. For instance, while interpersonal resources has a significant, negative relationship to both self-reports of one's own husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence, nearby relatives produced no significant effect. This suggests that individuals with others to turn to when problems arise may be sensitive to their opinions and therefore unlikely to engage in deviant behaviors such as spousal violence. Furthermore, it is likely that even though one has relatives living nearby, one may not have close relationships with them or be sensitive to their opinions.

Additionally, one's belief in the normality of slapping one's spouse has a significant, positive relationship to incidence of both husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence reported by individual respondents. This confirms Hirschi's (1969) notion that one's belief system has an impact on one's actions and participation or nonparticipation in deviant behaviors.

4.3.3 Power-Control Models of Husband-to-Wife and Wife-to-Husband Violence

Adding the power-control measure of family of origin structure does not improve the models of respondents’ own husband-to-wife or wife-to-husband violence (see Tables 5 and 6). In fact, adding family of origin structure actually reduces the overall predictive power of the models (85.85% for husband-to-wife violence and 80.65% for wife-to-husband violence). Thus, as would be expected, the overall predictive power of the power-control models is not significantly better than that of the modal category. As with the other models, the power-control model models are
able to predict respondents' self-reports of their own nonviolence toward wives and husbands with a great deal of accuracy (97.09% and 96.64%, respectively). However, they are unable to accurately predict cases in which the respondent reports that he/she is committing violence against his/her spouse (22.54 and 16.78, respectively). What is so interesting about these findings is that self-reports of nonviolence by husbands is predicted much more accurately than the self-reports of nonviolence of wives by both the social control and power-control models.

Unfortunately, the key variable of the power-control model, family of origin structure, predicts the opposite of what was expected for men's and women's self-reported violence against their spouses. The model indicates that those men raised in egalitarian families of origin are more likely to engage in husband-to-wife violence. The model also predicts women's self-reported violence against their husbands in contrast to power-control theory. More specifically, those women raised in egalitarian families are less likely to engage in wife-to-husband violence than are those from patriarchal families. However, this variable failed to produce a significant effect on self-reports of both wife-to-husband and husband-to-wife violence at the .05 level.

4.3.4 Integrated Models of Husband-to-Wife and Wife-to-Husband Violence

Based on the results of the models for each of the three theories, the following variables are included in integrated models for self-reported own husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence: social control variables—interpersonal resources and slapping normality; resource variables—marital power structure legitimacy and marital conflict. The resource theory variables found to be significant are employed
in both husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence integrated models because they are gender-neutral and have been suggested to have an impact on self-reports of spousal violence initiated by both husbands and wives (Coleman and Straus, 1986; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980; Straus and Gelles, 1990).

The findings presented in Table 7 indicate that by integrating the theories into a single model one is better able to explain husbands' self-reports of their own violence against their wives than by testing the theories separately. Much like the separate models, this model predicts nonviolence of husbands toward wives with a great deal of accuracy (97.50%), and is largely unable to predict cases in which violence is taking place against a wife (35.96%). The overall predictive power of the integrated model of husband-to-wife violence (87.09%) is not significantly better than that of the modal category. All variables in the model predicted in the direction suggested by the corresponding theories. Furthermore, all study variables were found to be significant at the .05 level.

The integrated model for self-reported own wife-to-husband violence (see Table 7) does not provide as much explanatory power as the husband-to-wife model. The overall model predicts spousal violence reported by wives with 81.03% accuracy. As with the other models, nonviolence is predicted much more accurately than violence by wives (95.89% and 20.00%, respectively). All study variables predicted in the direction suggested by the corresponding theories and were found to be significant at the .05 level with the exception of marital power structure legitimacy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Husband-to-Wife Violence</th>
<th>Wife-to-Husband Violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Resources</td>
<td>-0.5112</td>
<td>0.0483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slapping Normality</td>
<td>0.3324</td>
<td>0.0003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Power Structure</td>
<td>0.1307</td>
<td>0.0254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Conflict</td>
<td>0.1320</td>
<td>0.0106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.0583</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.0998</td>
<td>0.1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Race</td>
<td>0.2304</td>
<td>0.6393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Income</td>
<td>-0.2027</td>
<td>0.0013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.2313</td>
<td>0.1843</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-2 Log Likelihood             | 363,4850 |                           | 493,8800 |
Goodness of Fit                | 707,8680 |                           | 707,0430 |
Model Chi Square               | 112,5150 |                           | 95,2340 |
Degrees of Freedom             | 8         |                           | 8         |
Percent Predicted Correctly (Overall) | 87.0900 |                           | 81.0300 |
Percent Predicted Correctly (Nonviolence) | 97.5000 |                           | 95.8900 |
Percent Predicted Correctly (Violence) | 35.9600 |                           | 20.0000 |
N                              | 722       |                           | 944       |
4.3.5 Comprehensive Model of Spousal Violence

The final comprehensive model is a gender-neutral model (Table 8) which determines how well the variables derived from social control and resource theory explain self-reports of one's own spousal violence committed by both husbands and wives. Overall, the model predicts spousal violence reported by respondents with 83.34% accuracy, which is slightly better than the integrated model for wife-to-husband violence and slightly worse than the integrated model for husband-to-wife violence. Thus, as expected, it is an average of the two gender-specific models. The final model explains self-reported own nonviolence and violence by either spouse with 95.97% and 27.37% accuracy, respectively. Furthermore, all study variables were found to be significant at the .05 level and predicted in the correct direction.

4.3.6 Summary

In sum, all of the models are able to at least partially explain husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence with the exception of the power-control models. Additionally, the resource model is based on resource theory which is not applicable to wife-to-husband violence. See Table 9 for a summary table of all the models’ ability to explain both husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence.
Table 8: Comprehensive Model of Respondent's Self-Reported Spousal Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>S.E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Resources</td>
<td>-0.4560</td>
<td>0.0125</td>
<td>0.1826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slapping Normality</td>
<td>0.3144</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>0.0530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Power Structure Legitimacy</td>
<td>0.0720</td>
<td>0.0496</td>
<td>0.0382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Conflict</td>
<td>0.1305</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.0663</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>0.0094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.0475</td>
<td>0.3387</td>
<td>0.0496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Race</td>
<td>0.3239</td>
<td>0.3526</td>
<td>0.3484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Income</td>
<td>-0.1631</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.8090</td>
<td>0.0968</td>
<td>0.6176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-2 Log Likelihood: 855.9120
Goodness of Fit: 1374.3960
Model Chi Square: 208.2210
Degrees of Freedom: 8

Percent Predicted Correctly (Overall): 83.3400
Percent Predicted Correctly (Nonviolence): 95.9700
Percent Predicted Correctly (Violence): 27.3700
N: 1666
Table 9: Summary of Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explains Violence</th>
<th>Resource Model</th>
<th>Social Control Model</th>
<th>Power-Control Model</th>
<th>Integrated Model</th>
<th>Comprehensive Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Husband-to-Wife</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife-to-Husband</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5: Discussion

This research tests three separate theoretical models in attempting to explain why violence occurs in the family. In doing so, this study shows how power-control theory, resource theory, and social control theory can each explain different aspects of spousal violence. After each of these theories is examined separately, they are then integrated into a comprehensive model in order to ascertain their explanatory powers with regard to spousal violence.

5.1 Resource Theory’s Ability to Explain Husband-to-Wife Violence

Based on these separate models one can formulate several conclusions with regard to spousal violence. Based on the findings from the resource theory model of husbands’ self-reports of violence against their wives, one may conclude that husband-to-wife violence is partly based on amount of marital conflict present and lack of agreement over whether husbands or wives should have final say on particular decisions. These findings provide support for assertions derived from resource theory that higher levels of marital conflict (Hotaling and Sugarman, 1990) as well as conflict over the legitimacy of the marital power structure (Coleman and Straus, 1986) may lead to husband-to-wife violence.

Some findings of the resource model of husband-to-wife violence were inconsistent with assumptions derived from resource theory. For instance, husband’s ideology and husband’s dissatisfaction of household labor failed to show significant relationships to husband-to-wife violence. The literature suggests that dissatisfaction with household labor has a positive relationship with verbal aggression and overt
conflict, which are predictors of spousal violence (see Suitor, 1991). Also surprising is the insignificant finding for husband’s ideology, because household power structure has previously been suggested in the literature to be a predictor of husband-to-wife violence (see Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980; Straus and Gelles, 1990).

With regard to husband’s dissatisfaction with household labor, there is the possibility that some husbands may have adapted previously to the division of household labor. So although they are not pleased with the division, over time they have come to terms with the situation. This may especially be true for older husbands. Dissatisfaction with household labor may be a better predictor for younger husbands who may have had other expectations with regard to the division of labor and have not had a chance to adapt to the situation like those husbands who have been married longer. The measure employed in this analysis asks about violence in the previous year, so it is likely that many husbands have come to terms with the situation before the previous year.

In addition, the literature suggests a positive relationship between husband’s dissatisfaction with household labor and conflict (Suitor, 1991), not spousal violence per se. So it may be that conflict is an intervening variable in the relationship between husband’s dissatisfaction with household labor and violence.

With regard to husband’s ideology, this variable may not on its own account for husband-to-wife violence. Coleman and Straus (1986) suggest that it is neither patriarchal nor egalitarian households alone that account for husband-to-wife violence. It is the couple’s agreement regarding the marital power structure. Thus, if
the couple agrees that the patriarchal household structure is appropriate, there should not be instances of spousal violence.

Furthermore, although the literature suggests a relationship between household authority structure and spousal violence (see Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980; Straus and Gelles, 1990), that does not necessarily mean that there must be a relationship between husband's ideology and spousal violence. While Straus et. al.'s measure of household structure accounts for actual decision-making that couples engage in, husband's ideology as measured here is based on the decision-making the husband feels should be present. Thus, there may be a difference in actual decision-making and what the husband feels would be appropriate decision-making.

The lack of significant findings for wife's relative resources was not entirely unexpected. Allen and Straus (1980) found that relative resources only had an impact on spousal violence for lower class couples. This is consistent with Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz's (1980) finding that those couples who are in or close to poverty (income under $6,000), are most worried about their financial situations or in which the wife is dissatisfied with the family's standard of living are in the most danger of wife abuse taking place.

The measure employed in the analysis focused only on wife's and husband's relative incomes, educations, and occupational prestige without accounting for the actual gap between husband and wife, so it may be that the measure is too crude to truly capture the relationship between husband's relative resources and husband-to-wife violence. For instance, if the husband makes $10,000 or $1,000 less than his
wife the scale does not take this into account. The scale simply measures whether or not the husband has a higher education, income, or occupational prestige than his wife and these are added together. Other more sophisticated scales that account for actual gaps also have not captured the relationship between relative resources and spousal violence except in the lower class bracket (see Allen and Straus, 1980).

Another concern for the resource model of self-reported own husband-to-wife violence is that it predicted nonviolence much better than violence, and resource theory is specifically designed to predict violence of husbands against wives. The social control and power-control models also predicted nonviolence better than violence. However, one may argue that social control theories seek to explain conformity, not deviance, so these models may have more explanatory merit than the resource model.

5.2 Social Control Theory’s Ability to Explain Spousal Violence

Upon reviewing the results of the models, social control theory was better able to explain self-reported own husband-to-wife violence than resource theory. Overall, the social control model explained husband-to-wife violence slightly better. In particular, social control theory explained more variance in husband’s violence than resource theory.

Based on the findings of the social control theory models of spousal violence, one can conclude that participation in spousal violence is partly based on an individual’s bond to society. In particular, those individuals who have significant others to turn to and beliefs that spousal violence is not a normal response to marital
conflict are least likely to engage in such behavior. These findings provide support for the attachment and belief dimensions of Hirschi's (1969) social bond theory.

Hirschi’s attachment dimension of the social bond theory is based on the notion that to the extent that individuals are sensitive to the opinions of others, they will be less likely to engage in deviant behaviors. In this study, those with interpersonal resources, or individuals to turn to when problems arise, are less likely to engage in violence against their spouses. Those with relatives living nearby, however, were not significantly less likely to commit spousal violence. These patterns were present for both husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence.

One reason for the insignificant relationship between nearby relatives and spousal violence is that due to the measure employed in the analysis one cannot tell if the respondent is sensitive to the opinion of his/her relatives living nearby. One may not automatically assume that everyone is affected by the opinions of their relatives. There is also the possibility that one’s relatives living nearby may not be conforming others, so they may not disapprove of spousal violence to begin with. In fact, the couple may have learned from nearby relatives that spousal violence is acceptable behavior and as a result they may be more likely to engage in it. Another possibility may be that relatives living nearby may take sides and intensify conflicts taking place between the couple, which may in turn lead to spousal violence.

With regard to the belief dimension of the social bond, Hirschi asserts that those individuals who believe in conventional norms will be less likely to engage in deviant behavior. This is exactly what the findings here show. Cazenave and Straus
(1990) also found belief in spousal slapping to be a factor in whether or not couples engaged in spousal violence.

Those who attended more organizational meetings, went to church more often, and felt their marriages were more important were not significantly less likely to engage in spousal violence. This was true for both husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence reported by the respondent. With regard to meetings attended, the problem may be the measure of this variable. There is no way to know what types of meetings were included. Some may include business meetings during business hours a meeting while others may not. Thus, there are problems with the measurement that would make it difficult to assess a relationship between this variable as part of the involvement dimension and self-reported violence against one's spouse. Church attendance and meetings attended were significantly correlated with one another at .34 for husbands and .35 for wives, so there is the possibility of multicollinearity clouding the relationship between these variables and spousal violence. Organizational membership (how many organizations one is a member of) may be a better measure in terms of having less ambiguity, but one would have the problem of how committed one is to the organization (i.e., is this a membership that is simply part of a vita, or is the membership one in which the respondent is very involved).

Marriage importance also produced no significant effect on self-reports of spousal violence for both men and women. Based on the descriptive statistics, there does not seem to be much variation in this variable. Most men and women included
in the sample feel that their marriages are very important to them, which may account for the lack of findings between this variable and one's own spousal violence.

The social control model would probably predict severe violence better than mild violence.\(^5\) One reason for this is that severe violence would be more difficult to hide from others due to physical evidence such as bruises or visits to the hospital emergency room which may not easily be explained, so the likelihood of being caught for severe violence would be greater than for mild violence. Furthermore, there is more at stake if one gets caught doing severe violence as opposed to mild violence, because he/she could go to jail or risk his/her spouse leaving. Those sensitive to the opinions of others would not want to be caught because individuals would likely be less forgiving of severe violence than minor violence.

Overall, the social control model provides a better explanation of husband violence and nonviolence. One reason for this may be that there are more cases of violence to explain, so there is more variance in the dependent variable for men than for women. What is particularly interesting is that the social control model explains self-reported spousal violence much better for men than it does for women. This is interesting, considering that earlier versions of power-control theory (Hagan et. al., 1979) maintain that informal social controls are more likely to have an impact on women's behaviors than on men's due to the separate spheres of which they are a part.

5.3 Power-Control Theory's Ability to Explain Spousal Violence

Perhaps what is most surprising of the separate models is the lack of support for Hagan et. al.'s (1979, 1985, 1987) power-control theory. Adding the dimension of
family of origin authority structure does not improve the social control models of
either self-reported own husband-to-wife or wife-to-husband violence. These findings
are surprising, considering that one's family of procreation structure is documented in
the spousal violence literature as having a significant effect on husband-to-wife

One problem may be due to the measure employed in this analysis.
Theoretically speaking, Hagan et. al.'s (1979, 1985, 1987) model uses mother's
employment status as a measure of family of origin authority structure. More
specifically, households with mothers who hold authority and supervisory positions in
the work force are considered egalitarian while others are considered patriarchal. In
this analysis, mother's education is used instead because of the lack of working
mothers for the time period considered. Using mother's education produced no
significant effect on self-reports of own husband-to-wife or wife-to-husband violence.

It may be that additional measures are needed that could gauge both mothers'
and fathers' gender role attitudes. Then one could more accurately assess the
relationship between family structure and spousal violence, because one would have
the perspective of both husbands and wives and their agreement on the authority
structure which Coleman and Straus (1986) have shown to be important in predicting
spousal violence. Gender role attitude measures are similar to measures of family
structure in family of procreation households that are documented in the literature as
having a significant relationship to incidence of spousal violence (Straus and Gelles,
Further research may be directed to determine whether both husband’s and wife’s household of origin has an effect on spousal violence. For instance, one could examine if both spouses come from egalitarian or patriarchal households or if spouses come from different types of household of origin structures.

5.4 Integrated/Comprehensive Models’ Ability to Explain Spousal Violence

After conducting the separate theoretical analyses of spousal violence, these theories are interrelated into a larger theoretical design in order to gain the most comprehensive knowledge of spousal violence possible. The integrated and comprehensive models for self-reported husband-to-wife violence and wife-to-husband violence indicate that both resource and social control theories may effectively be combined to explain violence taking place against spouses.

The findings of the integrated models show that by integrating the theories into a single model one is better able to explain husbands’ and wives’ self-reports of their own violence against their spouses than by testing the theories separately. These models predict nonviolence of husbands and wives with a great deal of accuracy, however they are largely unable to predict cases in which violence is taking place against a spouse. A strength of the integrated models is that they are designed to explain both husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence.

Furthermore, in the comprehensive model of respondents’ self-reported violence these variables showed an impact on spousal violence regardless of who initiates the violence. Much research to date has focused exclusively on husband-to-wife violence without much concern for how well particular theories may explain
wife-to-husband violence. Thus, I address this void in the spousal violence literature and offer a model which is gender-neutral in its explanation of spousal violence.
Chapter 6: Conclusions

Upon closing his book on resource theory and spousal violence, Hauser (1982) suggested that future research be oriented toward testing theoretical models in attempting to explain why violence occurs in the family. Hauser (1982) recommended that resource theory be examined alongside other theories in order to obtain a more complete and accurate picture of the phenomenon of spousal violence. This study attempted to do just that by showing how power-control theory, resource theory, and social control theory can each explain different aspects of spousal violence.

First, I used resource theory in my explanation of husband-to-wife violence. Resource theory shares with power-control theory an interest in male power in the family. However, the focus for resource theory is on family of procreation and relative resources of spouses unlike power-control theory’s focus on family of orientation and social control processes. Based on my model of resource theory, I confirmed prior research findings that marital conflict, particularly conflict over the legitimacy of the power structure is likely to lead to husband-to-wife violence (Coleman and Straus, 1986; Hotaling and Sugarman, 1990). This finding merely confirms prior research, without adding anything new to the literature on spousal violence.

Much of the merit in my research lies in the application of social control theories in explaining one’s self-reported own husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence. Prior to my research, social control theory had been applied to spousal violence primarily on a theoretical level. Few partial tests of the theory have been
conducted. One of the only published studies to date that tests part of social control theory is that of Cazenave and Straus (1990) who studied networks and spousal violence. By studying networks, Cazenave and Straus (1990) were in a sense conducting a partial test of social control theory with a focus on the attachment dimension. Their research was limited, however, because it used only structural measures of network embeddedness but included important implications for future research. Cazenave and Straus (1990) noted that future research should stress "interactive and more dynamic aspects of primary networks," including variables that capture the intensity, nature, quality, and meaning of relationships that are important in further delineating differential rates and outcomes of spousal violence. I do just that by including variables such as importance of marriage and interpersonal resources in an attempt to add other explanatory variables to the structural measures used by Cazenave and Straus (1990). However, my research goes beyond simply adding additional variables; I include all the other dimensions of social control theory, including involvement in, commitment to, and belief in conventional behavior.

Upon applying Hirschi’s (1969) social control theory to both husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence, I provide support for his theory with my findings that those with stronger bonds to society will be less likely to report engaging in deviant behaviors such as spousal violence. More specifically, I found that the dimensions of attachment and belief have the best explanatory value with regard to one’s self-reported own violence against one’s spouse.
By employing power-control theory, a social control theory that specializes in explaining differences in men’s and women’s deviance, I added the dimension of male power in the one’s family of origin and how it affects the likelihood of spousal violence taking place. Unfortunately, I did not find that men from egalitarian households of origin were less likely to engage in husband-to-wife violence because they were subject to more social controls than their counterparts from patriarchal households of origin. Nor did I find support for the theory’s implication that women from egalitarian households of origin would be more likely to engage in wife-to-husband violence than their counterparts from patriarchal families.

Although there is a lack of support for power-control theory, there is still the possibility that the presence of male power in the family and the absence of control of men create conditions of freedom that facilitate deviance, and that fathers and sons in such families experience freedom that allows violence against women to occur. I believe that the primary reason I did not find what I expected with regard to power-control theory is related to the measure employed in the analyses. The measure of mother’s education was used in the analyses, because the amount of respondents’ mothers in the work force (Hagan et. al.’s measure) was minuscule. A more accurate measure of patriarchal households of origin would probably be mother’s and father’s gender role attitudes. Unfortunately, these variables were not included in Straus, Gelles, and associates’ data, because these data were collected with other research questions in mind. This is a common limitation of secondary analysis.
Straus, Gelles, and associates' data does include father's education, which may be a better indicator of a patriarchal household of origin than mother's education. Recent research has shown that husband's education is a better predictor of husband's contribution to the division of household labor. Future research may be directed toward the possibility that father's education may be a better indicator of patriarchal household of origin and perhaps a better predictor of future spousal violence.

Although there were limitations due to using secondary analysis, there were also advantages to be gained. Straus, Gelles, and associates collected their data on spousal violence to include one's own self-reported husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence as well as violence reported by one spouse with regard to the other spouse's violence against himself/herself. This allowed me to focus not only on self-reported own husband-to-wife violence but also self-reported own wife-to-husband violence which has often been neglected in prior research.

There are limitations of using one's self-reported violence because one may be less forthcoming in admitting one's own violence than violence committed by someone else. Collecting data on sensitive issues such as this are difficult more generally, regardless of who is violent. The advantages to be gained though using one's self-reported violence is that it allows for a truer test of social control theory because it focuses on individuals and their perceptions.

My application of power-control theory also contributes to the literature because it suggests spousal violence may also be linked to one's family of origin. This had not been suggested in the literature to date other than through social learning.
theories. These learning theories suggest that when one's father or mother is violent toward a spouse, then there is a greater likelihood that the children in these homes will be more likely to engage in spousal violence as adults (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980; Pagelow, 1981). The reasoning behind these theories is that children in families where spousal violence is present learn that violence is an appropriate way to deal with one's problems, which may in turn lead to violent behavior against their spouses as adults.

While prior research has shown a connection between one's family of origin and instances of spousal violence as an adult, this research is based on social learning theories. My research suggests that family of origin may have an effect due to differences in informal social controls placed on boys and girls in family of origin and their differences in participation in spousal violence as adults. Thus, children may not be learning how to be violent per se, their opportunities to be deviant may differ depending on one's gender and whether one was raised in an egalitarian or patriarchal household of origin.

After conducting the separate theoretical analyses of spousal violence, these three theories were interrelated into a larger theoretical design in order to gain the most comprehensive knowledge of spousal violence possible. The integrated and comprehensive models for self-reported husband-to-wife violence and wife-to-husband violence indicated that both resource and social control theories may effectively be combined to explain violence taking place against spouses. Furthermore, in the comprehensive model of respondents' self-reported violence these
variables showed an impact on spousal violence regardless of who initiates the violence. Much research to date has focused exclusively on husband-to-wife violence without much concern for how well particular theories may explain wife-to-husband violence. Thus, I addressed this void in the spousal violence literature and offered a model which is designed to explain both wife-to-husband and husband-to-wife violence.

A concern with this research is that it explained husbands' and wives' nonviolence much better than their violence. One may argue that social control theories seek to explain conformity, not deviance, so this may not be as problematic as one would initially think. However, resource theory is designed to explain deviance, not conformity, so one may not totally dismiss these concerns. One must keep in mind, though, that other studies have also shown a lack of support for resource theory. For instance, Allen and Straus (1980) found that relative resources only had an impact on spousal violence for lower class couples. Also, Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz's (1980) found that those couples who are in or close to poverty, are most worried about their financial situations or in which the wife is dissatisfied with the family's standard of living are in the most danger of wife abuse taking place. Thus, this study is not the first in which a strong relationship between one's relative resources and husband-to-wife violence was not found.

In sum, I integrated social control, resource, and power-control theories in an effort to obtain a better understanding of the men's and women's differences in participation in spousal violence. I found that gender differences in power and
different types and amounts of social controls placed on men and women in their families of procreation results in differences in the likelihood that spousal violence will take place. However, I found that one's family of origin did not have an impact on future acts of husband-to-wife or wife-to-husband violence.

My research makes important contributions to sociology and studies of spousal violence because I employ widely used theories on spousal violence combined with other theories from the discipline of deviance to provide a more comprehensive understanding of spousal violence. There has been a preoccupation of the literature on spousal violence to focus on male dominance in society and the family to explain spousal violence. Other conventional explanations of spousal focus on control of women by men in a manipulative sense. My research goes beyond these widely used explanations by focusing on both power/conflict in the family and different social controls placed on males and females discussed by social control and power-control theorists. Thus, I integrated research from family violence and deviance disciplines to develop a greater understanding of spousal violence.
References


Vita

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Date of Examination: July 25, 1996

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