

GENDER AND SPOUSAL VIOLENCE: A TEST OF SOCIAL CONTROL AND POWER-CONTROL THEORIES

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ABSTRACT

This research will provide an explanation of spousal violence that previously has 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. This theory suggests that women from egalitarian households of origin will be more likely to commit wife-to-husband 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.

INTRODUCTION

According to the literature, there are multiple reasons for the occurrence of spousal violence. Scholars of family violence note several characteristics of American society that are associated with the likelihood of spousal violence, including male dominance in the family and society as well as cultural norms that permit spousal violence (Straus, Gelles 1990; Straus, Gelles, Steinmetz 1980).

What is lacking in the literature on spousal violence is the link to social control theory which is employed in the sociological deviance literature. One exception, Richard Gelles (1993), contends that privacy of the home contributes to the problem of family violence (Gelles 1983; Gelles, Straus 1988); however, no comprehensive attempts to date have been made to test social control theory's explanatory power with regard to family violence. Control in this sense (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, Briar 1964).

The power-control approach to deviance is an application of social control theory that synthesizes resource and social control theories. Its focus is the influence of male power in the family & different social controls of males and females (Hagan, Simpson, Gillis 1979, 1985, 1987, 1990; Hill, Atkinson 1988). Most generally, Hagan et al (1979) argue that male power in the family and society results in men's higher rates of deviance (Hagan et al 1985, 1987, 1990). More specifically, Hagan et al (1987) assert that it is within patriarchal families that males are more likely to deviate because they possess more power and more freedom to violate norms.

Hagan et al (1987) contend that

presence of male power in the family and the absence of control create conditions of freedom that enable delinquency (Hagan et al 1979, 1985, 1990). From their research one may also deduce that fathers and sons in such families also may be endowed with conditions of freedom that allow battering to occur (Cassidy 1995). This research will show 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.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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), violation of norms is appealing to most individuals, so they are inclined to commit deviant acts. However, deviant motivation alone does not account for why individuals engage in behavior that violates norms. Because people do not engage in deviance most of the time, the focus here is on factors that prevent individuals from committing deviant acts.

Hirschi (1969) asserts that it is the individual's bond to society that is the explanatory factor of why one conforms to conventional behavior and follows accepted rules. He establishes four elements of the individual's bond to society, which include: 1) *attachment* to conventional others, 2) *commitment* to conventional behavior, 3) *involvement* in conventional behavior, and 4) *belief* in conventional behavior (Hirschi 1969). Each of the elements of the social bond is related to one another and may influence the likelihood of whether an individual decides to engage in deviant behavior.

Attachment consists of those affective ties individuals have to significant others (Hirschi 1969). As individuals develop ties to conforming others in society they internalize the norms that are shared and defined by society. To violate these agreed upon norms is to go against the expectations of others. Attachment to others assumes that people are sensitive to the opinions of others. Thus, to the extent that one is concerned about jeopardizing his/her ties to conventional others he/she will be less likely to commit deviant acts. Much support can be found in the literature for Hirschi's (1969) assertion that attachments to others has an inverse relationship to committing deviant acts (Hagan, Simpson, 1978; Hindelang 1973; Jensen, Eve 1976; Nye 1958; Toby 1957; Wells, Rankin 1988; Wiatrowski, Griswold, Roberts 1981).

Commitment is what Hirschi (1969) describes as "acquiring a reputation for virtue" by investing time and energy in conventional activities. The assumption here is that when one considers deviant behavior that costs must be calculated. The cost factor is losing his/her investment in conventional behavior. These investments are also referred to as "stakes in conformity" (Piliavin, Briar 1964) or "side bets" (Becker 1960). These stakes are society's insurance that people will abide by the rules.

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

Belief is one's assessment of the moral validity of society's values. To the extent that one believes in the shared value system within society, one will be more likely to conform to norms and believe that deviant acts are 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 (Cernkovich 1978; Hindelang 1973; Jensen 1969).

While most tests of social control theory have been conducted with regard to delinquent behavior, Richard Gelles (1993) has suggested that social control theory may also be useful in explaining spousal violence (Gelles 1983). Partial tests of social control theory have been conducted (Cazenave, Straus 1990; Smith, Straus 1988); however, no comprehensive attempts have been made to test social control theory's explanatory power when applied to spousal violence.

Gelles (1993) defines social control with regard to spousal violence as those ways in which spousal violence may be prevented through formal and informal sanctions that raise the cost of participating in spousal violence (Gelles 1983). These sanctions may range from police intervention (e.g., direct controls—see Nye 1958; Wells, Rankin 1988) to disapproval of friends and relatives (e.g., attachment). According to Gelles (1993), violence in the family should be more prevalent where costs of committing violence are low (e.g., in the absence of effective social controls over family relations).

It is a bit more complicated applying social control theory to spousal violence than delinquency, because there are conflicting norms concerning the use of violence in families and thus some confusion as to whether the normative social order in families is one of harmony and peace or conflict and violence. Publicly, we think of the family as a peaceful and loving social institution. However, privately, the family may be one of society's more violent social institutions (Straus et al 1980). There is a general acceptance of some forms of violence in families, such as corporal punishment. However, when asked about spousal slapping, at least 70 percent of Straus and Gelles' sample disapprove of such violence.

Furthermore, Gelles (1983) asserts that the private nature of the modern family serves to reduce the degree of social control exercised over family relations (Laslett 1973, 1978). Gelles and Straus (1979, 1988) posit that the contemporary American family is believed to be a private institution, often insulated from the rules of the rest of society. According to Gelles (1983), privacy of the family results in a lack of formal and informal social control of behaviors taking place "behind closed doors." Privacy reduces 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 is more common when friends and relatives outside of the nuclear family are 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) is suggesting that lack of attachments to conforming others outside of the family increases the possibility of spousal violence taking place. Research findings based on feminist studies of wife abuse also indicate that social isolation contributes to violence against wives (Browne 1987; Walker, 1989).

This lack of attachments to conforming others is included as an explanation of spousal violence in both the deviance and spousal violence literatures (Browne 1987; Carlen 1983; Cazenave, Straus 1990; Eaton 1986; Gelles 1983, 1993; Walker 1989). Within the spousal violence literature, Cazenave and Straus (1990) test the relationship between social isolation (e.g., 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 increases the likelihood of deviant behavior (e.g., spousal violence) taking place. Similarly, feminists such as Walker (1989) and Browne (1987) find support for the relationship between lack of ties to conventional others and being victims of wife abuse from their interviews with battered women.

Gelles (1993) adds that certain family structures reduce social control in family relations and therefore reduce the costs and increase the rewards of being violent. More specifically, Gelles (1993) asserts that in more patriarchal households husbands tend to have more resources (e.g., higher status and more money), so wives lacking these resources cannot inflict costs on their attackers. Because of this, husbands are not likely to lose their investments in society. Thus, Gelles (1993) makes reference to the commitment dimension of the social bond as part of his explanation of an individual's propensity to engage in spousal violence. More specifically, men's "stakes in conformity" are not at high risk due to gender inequality in patriarchal family

structures that prevent women from inflicting social costs on their violent husbands (e.g., leaving, divorce, police intervention) due to a lack of resources (Gelles 1983).

Smith and Straus (1988) tested for the relationship between commitment and spousal violence proposed by Gelles (1993). They suggest that couples who are cohabiting are less committed to conventional rules than married couples and would be more likely to engage in violence against their partners. Smith and Straus (1988) provide partial support for Hirschi's (1969) social control theory, because they found that cohabiting couples were more likely than married couples to engage in violence against one's partner.

While research has been conducted to test the relationship between the attachment and commitment dimensions of the social bond and spousal violence, there is a lack of research conducted on how well *all* the dimensions of the social bond simultaneously explain participation in spousal violence. This research will attempt to confirm prior research on attachment's and commitment's inverse relationships to spousal violence. Thus, I plan to show that 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 (e.g., commitment and involvement dimensions) will be less likely to commit spousal violence due to risks incurred by such behavior. This research will also incorporate the notion that one's belief that spousal violence is not appropriate will reduce the likelihood that one will commit acts of spousal violence (Cazenave, Straus, 1990).

In sum, the structure and privacy of the family may lessen social controls over family interaction and allow 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 2: (Commitment) The more investments one has in conventional behavior the less likely one will be to commit spousal violence.

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

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 sensitivities to others' opinions (e.g., attachment) and their investments in conventional society (e.g., commitment). What is missing from social control theory is an explanation of why women's participation in deviance, including spousal violence, is usually less than 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 (Yllo 1990). Power-control theory incorporates gender stratification into a social control model. More specifically, power-control theory demonstrates that males and females are subject to different types and amounts of social controls and that this accounts for the gender gap in committing deviant behaviors.

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) joined parts of these theoretical traditions to form a power-control theory of deviance (Hagan et al 1985, 1987, 1990).

Generally speaking, Hagan et al (1979) maintain that gender variations in deviance are rooted in historical processes that have assigned men and women to different social spheres: a sphere of consumption composed mostly of women and a sphere of production occupied primarily by men (Hagan et al 1985, 1987, 1990). These separate spheres contain patterned differences in the kinds of social control processes men and women engage in and to which they are under influence.

Hagan et al (1979) argue that the family and household, which compose the sphere of consumption, have come to be characterized by informal control (e.g., exercised by family and community) processes in which women are more involved than men. Thus, social control processes are stratified, asserted

Hagan et al (1979), such that women more than men have become the instruments and objects of informal control (Hagan et al 1985, 1987, 1990).

In addition, Hagan et al (1979, 1985) maintain that because the family is the social agency responsible for primary socialization, it provides the fundamental means by which these gender differences are reproduced across generations. The implication of the stratification of social control is that mothers more than fathers are assigned responsibility for the control of children, and daughters more than sons are subjected to these control processes. Hagan et al (1979, 1985) argue that the foremost mechanism through which this takes place is a differential effect of these control processes upon children's attitudes toward risk taking. Female socialization encourages passivity and discourages risk in order to prepare daughters for their future roles in the sphere of consumption; however, the socialization of sons frees them from many of the controls that might discourage risk taking and prepares sons for their future roles in the sphere of production (Hill, Atkinson 1988; Linden, Fillmore 1977; Morris 1964). Because deviance 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 (Austin 1978; Datesman, Scarpitti 1975; Krohn, Massey 1980).

Since its earlier conception, Hagan et al (1987, 1990) have developed more explicit theoretical links between family and class relations. Hagan et al (1987, 1990) argue that the variable role of women in the workplace affects the social organization of domestic control such that as mothers gain power in the sphere of production, daughters gain freedom relative to sons in the home. This modification suggests that domestic control processes interact with family class position to affect gender differences in deviant behavior (Hagan et al 1987, 1990).

More specifically, two ideal forms of class relations are identified by Hagan et al (1987, 1990). First, Hagan et al (1987, 1990) identify patriarchal households as maintaining strict gender separation of production and consumption. In other words, the household consists of a father as breadwinner holding authority in the workforce, while the mother stays home to be a homemaker. According to Hagan et al (1987, 1990), it is in this environment that males and females are most

different in how they define risk taking. In egalitarian households, both mothers and fathers are employed in authority positions outside the home and take more equal roles in childrearing. Hagan et al (1987, 1990) posit that it is in this environment less gender differences in defining risk taking will result.¹

Hagan et al (1987, 1990) suggest that parental control is stratified by gender, concluding that girls are not inherently different but treated differently than boys in terms of types and amounts of social controls placed on them (Hill, Atkinson 1988). More specifically, girls are exposed to more informal controls than boys (Austin 1978; Datesman, Scarpitti 1975; Morris 1964); this causes them to be more averse to risk taking. This is part of the explanation for their lower rates of delinquency and deviance more generally (Hagan et al 1987, 1990).

In sum, power-control theory predicts that the link between gender and deviance 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 deviance.

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 (Dobash, Dobash 1984; Schechter 1982; Walker 1989; Witt 1987), a concern shared with that of power-control theory (Hagan et al 1985).

Both of these 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 (Hagan et al 1979, 1985, 1987, 1990), 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 (Dobash, Dobash 1984; Schechter 1982; Walker 1989; Witt 1987).

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 (Straus, Gelles 1990; Straus et al 1980), power-control theory has investigated the relationship between family structure and delinquency (Hagan et al 1979, 1985, 1987, 1990).

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.

Power-control research has shown that in patriarchal household structures greater informal social controls are exercised toward women than men, making them subsequently less likely to engage in delinquent behaviors (Hagan et al 1979, 1985, 1987, 1990). From Hagan et al's 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 (Cassidy 1995).

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 (Gelles 1983, 1993 for exceptions). The following propositions may be derived from power-control theory:

Proposition 3: Amounts of informal social controls placed on individuals is related to family structure.

P3A: In patriarchal family of origin structures, higher amounts of social controls are placed on women, making women subsequently less likely to engage in spousal violence.

P3B: In egalitarian family of origin structures differences in amounts of social controls placed on males and females are smaller, subsequently making women and men similar in their rates of spousal violence.

In sum, power-control theory asserts that as a result of male dominance within and outside of the family that gender stratification of social control exists. Furthermore, this process is related to family structure where these differences are more pronounced in patriarchal families.

METHODS

Sample

This study employs data from the 1975 National Family Violence Survey,² which is a national probability sample of 2,143 families in which one adult family member was interviewed (960 men; 1183 women). These households were drawn from a sample of locations that were stratified by geographic region, type of community, and other population characteristics (Straus, Gelles 1990).

Measures

Dependent Variable: Spousal Violence is measured by the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS) developed by Straus and Gelles (1990). This scale is designed to measure a variety of behaviors used to settle conflicts among family members during the past year. This research employs the minor violence rate for

husbands and wives, which includes: 1) items being thrown at the spouse, 2) pushing, grabbing, or shoving, and 3) slapping a spouse.³ Minor violence is collapsed into a dichotomous measure of two categories, including: no violence and minor violence.⁴

Attachment: Nearby Relatives is measured as the number of family members of the respondent and his/her spouse who live within an hour of the respondent. **Interpersonal Resources** is measured as whether or not one has friends or relatives someone to turn to when a problem arises.

Commitment: Commitment to Institutions is measured as how connected the respondent is to institutions in society. Specific measures include: 1) how many organizational meetings one attends in a month and 2) how often one attends church services. **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. **Involvement: Employment Status** is measured as whether one works full-time, part-time, or is unemployed.⁵

Belief: Belief in Spousal Violence is determined by whether or not the respondent believes that slapping of a spouse is normal as measured by a Likert scale.

Gender is measured as male or female as reported by the respondent.

Power-Control Measure: Family of Origin Authority Structure is determined by mother's educational attainment in years.⁶

Controls: Education is measured as the number of years of education reported by the respondent. **Husband's/Wife's Age** is measured in years as reported by the respondent. **Household Race** is measured as white or nonwhite/mixed as reported by the respondent. **Household Income** is measured as total family income before taxes.

Analysis

This research employs a statistical model which allows for the estimation of the conditional probabilities of spousal violence under different conditions of social control and power 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) that may be converted into

Table 1: Social Control Model of Husband-to-Wife Violence

Variables	B	Sig	S.E.
Nearby Relatives	0.0040	0.6373	0.0084
Interpersonal Resources	-0.9152	0.0001	0.2296
Meetings Attended	0.0017	0.9627	0.0359
Church Attendance	-0.0350	0.5132	0.0536
Marriage Importance	-0.0142	0.9206	0.1424
Employment Status	-0.2824	0.4104	0.3431
Slapping Normality	0.2772	0.0001	0.0686
Education	0.1172	0.0651	0.0635
Age	-0.0328	0.0584	0.0173
Household Race	-0.2239	0.5599	0.3841
Household Income	-0.1688	0.0030	0.0569
Constant	1.3439	0.1316	0.8913
-2 Log Likelihood	513.0610		
Goodness of Fit	811.5600		
Model Chi Square	140.0840		
Significance	0.0000		
Degrees of freedom	12		
Percent Predicted Correctly			
Overall	86.0700		
Nonviolent Cases	97.5500		
Violent Cases	27.5000		
N	722		

probabilities.

The first model will determine how well the variables derived from social control theory explain husband-to-wife violence. The second model will determine how well these variables explain wife-to-husband violence. Furthermore, comparisons will be made to determine which variables best explain husband-to-wife versus wife-to-husband violence.

A third model will be employed to investigate power-control theory's assertion that women from egalitarian families of origin will be more likely to commit spousal violence than are those from patriarchal families of origin. In order to do this, mother's education will be added to the social control model of wife-to-husband violence to determine whether or not there is a difference in rates of violence in patriarchal and egalitarian households of origin.⁷

RESULTS

The findings presented in Tables 1 and 2 provide partial support for the hypothesis that that the stronger one's bond is to society, the less likely one will be to commit acts of

Table 2: Social Control Model of Wife-to-Husband Violence

Variables	B	Sig	S.E.
Nearby Relatives	-0.0056	0.5766	0.0101
Interpersonal Resources	-0.9250	0.0000	0.2043
Meetings Attended	-0.0457	0.1602	0.0326
Church Attendance	-0.0301	0.4645	0.0411
Marriage Importance	-0.0150	0.8991	0.1183
Slapping Normality	0.2980	0.0000	0.0618
Education	0.0477	0.4345	0.0611
Age	-0.0169	0.2366	0.0143
Household Race	0.1209	0.7510	0.3538
Household Income	-0.1168	0.0045	0.0411
Constant	0.6116	0.4133	0.7477
-2 Log Likelihood	738.3330		
Goodness of Fit	812.9690		
Model Chi Square	131.1710		
Significance	0.0000		
Degrees of freedom	11		
Percent Predicted Correctly			
Overall	80.9100		
Nonviolent Cases	96.7500		
Violent Cases	15.7000		
N	944		

violence against one's spouse. The overall predictive power of the social control models is not significantly better than that of the modal category. While these models are able to correctly predict nonviolence toward spouses 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. In addition, the social control model has slightly more predictive power for husband-to-wife violence and nonviolence.

Mixed support exists for how well each of Hirschi's (1969) dimensions explains spousal violence. Interpersonal resources has a significant, negative relationship to spousal violence. 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. However, I am unable to account for why nearby relatives did not have a significant effect on either husband-to-wife or wife-to-husband violence.

Additionally, one's belief in the normality of slapping one's spouse has a significant,

Table 3: Power-Control Model of Wife-to-Husband Violence

Variables	B	Sig	S.E.
Nearby Relatives	-0.0002	0.9963	0.0105
Interpersonal Resources	-1.1014	0.0000	0.2281
Meetings Attended	-0.0378	0.2622	0.0337
Church Attendance	-0.0164	0.7102	0.0442
Marriage Importance	-0.0274	0.8305	0.1281
Slapping Normality	0.3254	0.0000	0.0666
Family of Origin Structure	-0.0509	0.8762	0.3268
Education	0.0429	0.5399	0.0699
Age	-0.0107	0.4955	0.0156
Household Race	0.0061	0.9884	0.4172
Household Income	-0.0966	0.0319	0.0450
Constant	0.2857	0.7332	0.8382
-2 Log Likelihood	631.0740		
Goodness of Fit	670.8970		
Model Chi Square	114.0780		
Significance	0.0000		
Degrees of freedom	12		
Percent Predicted Correctly			
Overall	80.6500		
Nonviolent Cases	96.6400		
Violent Cases	16.7800		
N	944		

positive relationship to incidence of spousal violence. This confirms Hirschi's (1969) notion that one's belief system has an impact on one's actions and participation or non-participation in deviant behaviors.

The dimensions of commitment and involvement did not have significant relationships with either wife-to-husband or husband-to-wife violence.

Adding the power-control measure of family of origin structure does not improve the model for wife-to-husband violence (see Table 3). In fact, this variable failed to produce a significant effect on spousal violence. This is unusual, considering that one's family of procreation structure is largely documented in the spousal violence literature as having a significant effect on spousal violence (Straus et al 1980; Straus, 1990).

CONCLUSIONS

The findings here indicate that one's participation in spousal violence is partly based on one's bond to society. In particular, those individuals who have interpersonal resources and beliefs that spousal violence is not a

normal response to marital conflict are least likely to engage in such behavior. These findings provide qualified and limited support for Hirschi's (1969) social bond theory. What is surprising is the lack of support for Hagan et al's (1979, 1985, 1987, 1990) power-control theory. The problem may be due to the measure employed in this analysis. If additional measures are available that could gauge mothers' and fathers' gender role attitudes one could more accurately assess the relationship between family structure and 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.

Although the models failed to produce strong empirical evidence to support social control and power-control theories, this study is among the first to assess the existence of a relationship between one's social bond to society and whether or not one engages in spousal violence. Only partial tests of social control theory had been conducted prior to this study (Cazenave, Straus 1990; Smith, Straus 1988). Cazenave and Straus (1990) concluded their study by stating 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. This research included variables such as importance of marriage, interpersonal resources, and beliefs in an attempt to add such variables to the structural measures used by Cazenave and Straus (1990).

Future research should be directed toward additional tests of social control theory's and power-control theory's ability to explain participation in spousal violence. If additional measures become available, one could more accurately assess how well these theories explain spousal violence. Furthermore, one may have the ability to assess the effects of each dimension of the social bond which would provide us with preliminary information on determining how to eliminate this social problem.

END NOTES

¹ Traditional families only represent approximately 12-15% of current American households. Thus, one should keep this in mind when applying the theory. However, regardless of how many households

- comprise traditional families, the same social control processes Hagan et al refer to are present.
- 2 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 1985 survey was designed to collect information on how families cope with violence and the consequences of violence.
 - 3 One shortcoming of the National Family Violence Survey is that it does not account for reactive versus initiative violence. Furthermore, violent acts are measured the same regardless of whether they are initiated by men or women despite the fact that men on average are stronger and bigger than women and produce more injuries as a result of their violence.
 - 4 Subjects who committed higher levels of violence but not minor violence are not included in the analyses.
 - 5 Employment status will only be employed in the men's analysis.
 - 6 Mother's employment was not used 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.
 - 7 Power-control theory may also be applied to investigate the difference in spousal violence rates for men from patriarchal versus egalitarian households of origin.

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