To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Judy Allene Van Wyk entitled "Does it Matter Where You Live? Social Disorganization, Gender-Role Attitudes, Financial Satisfaction, and Male-To-Female Partner Violence." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Sociology.

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DOES IT MATTER WHERE YOU LIVE?

SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION,

GENDER-ROLE ATTITUDES, FINANCIAL SATISFACTION,

AND MALE-TO-FEMALE PARTNER VIOLENCE.

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Judy Allene Van Wyk
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter

Allyson Marie Van Wyk

who believes in me,

and to my sister

Suzanne Louis Wilson

who encouraged me to believe in myself.

I am forever grateful.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how individual and relationship-level factors interact with community context to affect male-to-female violence among married and cohabiting adults. The relevant dimensions of community context are derived from social disorganization theory. This theory indicates that disorganized areas lack formal and informal controls that inhibit violence. The data come from wave 2 of the National Survey of Families and Households that was completed in 1994, and the 1990 Census. Cross sectional analysis is used to assess relationships between individual, couple and community-level variables and male-to-female partner violence. Logistic regression is used to assess variation in the independent and dependent variables between neighborhood types and within them. The research finds that social disorganization significantly influences the likelihood of male-to-female partner violence controlling for the affects of other known individual and couple-level indicators. The affects of gender-role attitudes and financial satisfaction are assessed as are duration of union, race, socioeconomic status, and marital status among couples.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

PAGE

LIST OF FIGURES

PAGE

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This is a study of male-to-female partner violence. Partner violence typically encompasses all types of physical abuse that occurs between heterosexual intimate partners. For the purpose of this study, violence is defined as hitting, shoving or throwing something at an intimate partner, or being the recipient of such aggression. Specifically, the effects of social disorganization on partner violence against women are analyzed. Much is known about the individual-level causal mechanisms that lead to female victimization by partner violence. It is hoped that social disorganization theory will add to our understanding of why some couples are physically violent and others are not.

SIGNIFICANCE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROBLEM

Both male-to-female and female-to-male partner violence are significant social problems. The U.S. Department of Justice (1994) reports that 6.5 percent of all murder victims were killed by their spouses in 1993. Women are more likely to be

seriously injured by partners than by strangers (Bachman & Saltzman 1995). Stark et al. (1981) found that 50 percent of all injuries that forced women to seek emergency room treatment were caused by male partners, and 21 percent of women who sought treatment for their abuses required surgery.

Partner violence that is less severe than murder is difficult to measure. Seventy to 80 percent of all partner violence incidents occur in the home where no other adult witnesses are present (U.S. Department of Justice 1998). Over half of the victims of partner violence do not report victimization; making police reports an unreliable source of measurement especially in regard to nonlethal violence (U.S. Department of Justice 1998).

Self-reports of victimization gathered by the U.S. Department of Justice (1994) from women who do report victimization tell us that women age 20 to 24 experience the highest rate of partner violence. Other studies suggest that 18 to 30 year olds experience the most violence (Straus et al.1980b, Gelles & Straus 1988, Wolfner & Gelles 1993). The 1985 National Family Violence Survey reveals that partner violence for women under 30 is two times higher than for women over 30 (Gelles 1988). These statistics closely parallel official rates reported for other forms of violence.

Women of low socioeconomic status suffer partner violence most often. Women with low levels of education experience more violence, especially those with less than a high school diploma (U.S. Department of Justice Statistics 1994). Also, unemployed women, women with family incomes under $10,000, and women who

hold low-prestige jobs are victimized more often (Pelton 1978, Straus et al. 1980b, Gelles & Straus 1988, Wolfner & Gelles 1993, U.S. Department of Justice Statistics 1994).

Minority women suffer high levels of partner violence. Research consistently shows that black and Hispanic women report more partner violence than white women (Goetting 1989, Hampton et al. 1989). Analysis of the 1985 National Family Violence Survey finds that married black women were 2.36 times as likely as white wives to experience severe partner violence (Hampton & Gelles 1994). Gelles (1993b) cautions that findings such as these may be confounded with the reality that racial minorities also suffer lower socioeconomic status. Persons from lower socioeconomic statuses are more likely to report abuse to the police regardless of the number of self-reported incidents (Gelles 1993a). The effects of socioeconomic status and race are often confused in violence research.

Higher concentrations of minorities and people with low socioeconomic status in urban areas indicate that higher rates of violence should be found in urban areas. Although the U.S. Department of Justice Statistics (1998) found no significant differences between victimization rates between women who lived in central cities, suburban areas or rural locations, those in urban areas experienced slightly more of the violence. Sorenson et. al. (1996) analyze results from the second wave of the National Survey of Families and Households and find that "married respondents who live in urban areas were over 40 % more likely to report physical violence in the past year than those living in suburban areas.

Women report more violent victimization than men do. The National Crime Victimization Survey found that in 90 percent of all intimate violence recorded from 1987 to 1991, the victim was female (U.S. Department of Justice 1994). Both men and women commit violent offenses against each other; however, women suffer far greater physical harm as a result of victimization than men do (Brush 1990, Sorenson et al. 1996). About 35 per 1,000 couples suffer severe male-to-female assault (Gelles & Straus 1986). As much as 4.9 percent of men report physically abusing their partners (Brush 1990). Separated couples experience more violence than never-married or married couples (U.S. Department of Justice Statistics 1994).

Female victims of partner violence report more than simple physical harm. They suffer severe emotional effects, increased anxiety, loss of self-esteem, depression and feelings of worthlessness, increased risk of suicide, sleeping disorders, alcohol and substance abuse, and even death (Pagelow 1984, Gelles & Harrop 1989, Stets & Straus 1990, Straus & Gelles 1990, Dutton & Painter 1993, Gleason 1993, Daufman et al. 1996, Orava et al. 1996, Umberson et al. 1998). Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has also been linked to victimization by partner violence (Burge 1989, Kemp et al. 1991, Dutton 1992).

The effects of partner violence are not confined just to the immediate victims; there are collective consequences as well. More than half of all female victims of partner violence live with children under the age of 12 (U.S. Department of Justice 1998) . Children are likely to be abused in families in which women are physically abused (Walker 1984, Straus & Gelles 1990). In addition, children in families where

partner violence occurs show higher levels of aggressive and antisocial behaviors, and higher levels of depression, and anxiety (Jaffe et al. 1986, Christopherpoulos et al 1987, Holden & Ritchie 1991). Ultimately, society at large suffers from partner violence in many ways including the cost of care for abused children and adults, loss of work productivity, and occasionally the costs of incarceration for the abusers.

GATHERING SELF-REPORTED INFORMATION

In the literature on partner violence, a significant amount of attention has been paid to defining violence, differentiating between violence and aggression, and determining motives for the use of violence (see Gelles & Straus 1979). Much of the information known about partner violence is gathered by the Federal government and compiled by the US Department of Justice through the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) and the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). Information about arrests for partner violence is available from the UCR, and self-reports of victimization are available from the NCVS. Both sources of information are inherently limited for testing most theories of partner violence. The UCR misses all partners who do not officially report violence, and the NCVS includes mainly descriptive aspects of the victimization. It misses important precursors and correlates of male-to-female partner violence.

Two other sources of information about both offending and victimization

exist. These are the National Family Victimization Survey (NFVS), and the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH). The NSFH is a longitudinal panel design and the NFVS is a two-wave cross sectional design.

The NFVS surveyed 6,002, respondents in 1975, and surveyed a second national sample of respondents in 1984. Questions about partner violence address the extent of violence, and the individual-level causes of violence among partners.

The first wave of the NSFH occurred in 1987 and 1988, and the second wave was conducted between 1992 and 1994. This study surveys the same respondents in both waves. Its sample contains a much larger population (between 10,000 and 14,000). Both waves include surveys from both partners - married and cohabiting - and accounts of both offending and victimization. Most recent partner violence research analyzes results from either the NFVS or the NSFH. Both the NFVS and the NFSH are comprehensive studies of partner violence that reflect at least 20 years of theorizing about the causes and effects of partner violence.

The NFVS uses Straus' (1979a) Conflict Tactics Scale to address conflict in marriages. Straus (1979a) designed the self-report Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) for measuring various types of conflict between partners. The portion of the scale intended to measure violence consists of a seven-item sub-scale similar in content to the three items used as measures of violence in this study. They include questions that assess the frequency of hitting, slapping and other violent bodily contact between partners. This scale is intended to explain how conflict is resolved in intimate relationships.

The questions that address violence in the NSFH were designed to assess one of the many precursors to marital breakup. Neither study was constructed to investigate precursors to partner violence. Therefore, both the NFVS and the NSFH are data sets that contain a broad array of information about families, but lack depth in the area of partner violence. For instance, neither study investigates the circumstances surrounding the violent incidents, or investigates the conditions under which violence occurs. Are partners only violent when provoked, or is violence a basic condition of violent couples' lives? As yet, there is no large family data set that contains this information. What does exist however is the opportunity to investigate the effects of many potential precursors to partner violence. Once these precursors are isolated, and we know more about what causes partner violence, future studies can focus attention on the dynamics of the violence itself.

CHAPTER II

MALE-TO-FEMALE PARTNER VIOLENCE

PERSPECTIVES ON MALE-TO-FEMALE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Perspectives on the causes of partner violence against women are of two basic types: cultural and social psychological. Both victimization and abuse are explained using these perspectives. Although a plethora of research exists assessing the social psychological precursors of male-to-female partner violence, less attention is paid to cultural theories. Additionally, it is rare to find research that assesses a combination of cultural and social psychological affects. It is likely that some combination of precursors taken from each of the two perspectives best explains partner violence, and that the influence of some precursors on male perpetration and female victimization of partner violence is stronger than are others.

CULTURAL THEORIES

Cultural theories are largely macro-sociological explanations that pertain to norms, social structures, subcultures, and social systems. They theorize that violence is likely when conflict is present or where cultural norms support it. Some cultural

theories bridge the micro- macro-sociological gap by suggesting that power and status relations that exist at the macro-level are instrumental for shaping relationships among family members as well (Hagan 1989, Hartman 1992).

CONFLICT THEORY

Conflict theory is a structural theory of violence. Sprey (1969) argues that conflict is an inevitable part of family communication. Family members vie for power through conflict that can sometimes lead to physical violence. Straus (1978) identifies several reasons why conflict is high in families. Family members spend a large amount of time together, exhibit a broad range of activities and interests that may conflict with each other, are intensely involved with one another, impinge on the activities of one another, influence each other's behavior, are ascribed roles within the family, impinge on each other's privacy, experience age and sex discrepancies, partake in involuntary membership, and experience stress together (Straus 1978). Indeed, it is surprising that family members ever get along well with one another.

TRADITIONAL GENDER-ROLE ATTITUDES

Traditional gender-role attitudes are perhaps the most significant aggregate-level cultural explanation for partner violence. Traditional gender-roles are patriarchal in nature. Patriarchy "is a sex/gender system in which men dominate women, and that which is considered masculine is more highly valued than that which is considered feminine" (Renzetti & Curran 1992). In a patriarchal system, people are

socialized to support the belief that certain emotional and psychological aspects are intrinsically "feminine" and others are "masculine." Masculinity and femininity are social constructs, but in a patriarchal society, they are ascribed inherent qualities. Feminine qualities are viewed as inferior to masculine qualities. Masculinity denotes strength, courage, emotional stability, endurance and power. Femininity is described as weak, timid, emotionally unstable and inferior to masculinity. Masculinity is synonymous with males, and femininity is synonymous with females.

Traditional families are organized around a patriarchal system in which men are assigned a higher status and women accept this situation. Patriarchy supports the notion that women are the property of men and are therefore subject to their physical control (Martin 1976, Dobash & Dobash 1979, Yllo & Straus 1984, Smith 1990, Crowell & Burgess 1996). Straus (1978: 456) states that "the sexist organization of the society and its family system is one of the most fundamental factors accounting for the high level of wife beating."

Traditional gender-role attitudes dictate that women conduct their lives in a specified manner. There are norms or codes of behavior and attitudes that are prescribed for females that differ from those proscribed to males. Research suggests that when men subscribe to traditional gender-role attitudes and their partners do not conform to those standards, violence occurs (Dobash & Dobash 1979). Greater acceptance of traditional gender-role attitudes on the part of the male partner leads to greater likelihood of violence (Smith 1990). When both partners legitimize traditional gender-role attitudes, violence is particularly high (Yllo & Straus 1984).

Individual gender-role attitudes are shaped by larger normative attitudes toward gender and effect partner relationships. Patriarchy legitimizes a power differential among men and women that favors males. Men may use physical force to enforce their supposed superior status over their partners (Crowell & Burgess 1996). Likewise, men who adopt patriarchal gender-role attitudes and who feel powerless for one reason or another, may be even more likely to use force against women (Browne & Dutton 1990). Research indicates that when an imbalance of power between males and females in traditional families arises such that the female gains greater status than the male, the likelihood of violence toward women increases (Allen & Straus 1980, Straus et. al. 1980a).

Allen and Straus (1980) argue that men feel the need to validate their masculinity in the home by attaining superior resources such as money, status and valued personal traits. If the husband comes to feel inferior or even just equal to his wife, he resorts to the only means by which he may retain power in the relationship, through violence and physical dominance (Allen & Straus 1980, LaRossa 1980, Straus 1980). Therefore, when a man loses a job or cannot fulfill his financial responsibilities to his family, he may lash out in violence against his partner.

Gender-role attitudes are taught through social and individual learning processes. The family is perhaps the most influential source for learning gender-role attitudes. Blood and Wolfe (1960: 14) write,

> As people grow up under a husband dominant family system, they come to take that (im)balance of power for granted -- and even to feel

that it is right. Henceforward, the idea of patriarchy acquires momentum and influence in its own right shaping generations to come.

Research on gender-role attitudes shows that men who were raised in families that encourage traditional patriarchal male-female relations are more violent toward women in adulthood than men who are raised in more egalitarian homes (Straus et al. 1980b, Gwartney-Gibbs et al 1983, Fagot et al. 1988, Friedrich et al., 1988, Doss & Dinero 1989, Riggs & O'Leary 1989, Malamuth et al., 1991, 1995). Likewise, women who are raised in these households are more likely to adopt passive roles in adult relationships.

Other conduits for traditional gender-role attitudes include not only the family, but also schools and peers, organized religion (Fortune 1983, Whipple 1987), the media (Linz et al. 1992), the workplace (Fitzgerald 1993), and the U.S. military (Russell 1989). In fact, it is difficult to find an institution in which traditional gender-role attitudes do not present themselves, but the extent to which they permeate individual lives varies.

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES

Social psychological explanations of male-to-female partner violence focus on micro-interactions among individuals. Two related social psychological theories of partner violence against women include exchange and strain theories. Together, these

theories suggest that experiences and exchanges that appear unjust may lead to stress and strain that can lead to violence.

EXCHANGE THEORY

Exchange theory helps to explain partner violence against women. This theory posits that when people do things for others they expect certain rewards in return. Exchange does not have to be equal, but must be seen as just and fair (Homans 1961). When exchanges in a relationship are fair, couples are relatively happy. When exchanges are considered unfair, then stress occurs which can lead to violence as a way of getting even. Revenge becomes its own reward (Homans 1967).

Thibaut and Kelley (1959) suggested that alternatives significantly dictate what is a fair exchange in relationships. Where there are few alternatives, borderline exchanges are more likely seen as unfair. However, Gelles' (1976) research finds that wives will often stay in an abusive relationship and find fairness in inequity when they have no other alternatives that are more just. Exchange relationships may be different for males and females. In more patriarchal societies, females may be socialized to expect less from exchanges in marriage than males. Thus, males and females may define just exchanges differently. Where partners differ with respect to gender-role attitudes, exchanges that appear just to one partner may seem unjust to the other.

STRAIN THEORY

Stress and strain in partner relationships are inevitable. The family, is a unique situation that places people in close proximity and forces them to communicate with each other under all types of circumstances. The family is confronted with many stresses, frustrations, and strains on a daily basis (Gelles & Straus 1979). Individual conflict that arises out of this situation has been explained using what Gelles and Straus (1979: 562) refer to as "frustration-aggression" theory. Most elements of this theory closely parallel strain theory.

Originally conceptualized as a disjunction between desired goals and available legitimate means (Merton 1938), the idea of strain as motivation has evolved into a more complex concept. Agnew (1992) identifies three different forms of strain that may lead to criminal behavior. The first is the traditional strain that results from failure to achieve positively valued goals. The American work ethic stipulates that the harder one works, the greater the financial rewards he/she receives. Unfortunately, this is not true for large segments of the population. Jobs that pay the poorest wages are often most physically challenging, and people who make less money must often work longer hours to make ends meet. Goals that are positively valued in American culture are simply not attainable by many Americans. The second form of strain arises out of the removal of positively valued stimuli, such as the loss of a job. The third form of strain involves the presentation of negative or noxious stimuli, such as an unexpected illness or injury.

SUBJECTIVE FINANCIAL SATISFACTION

An important form of strain in families involves financial satisfaction. Financial satisfaction refers to people's perception and feelings about how well they are doing economically. It concerns whether they are satisfied with their standard of living. Research supports that low levels of financial satisfaction or events that threaten financial security are related to male-to-female partner violence.

Financial dissatisfaction stems from both the failure to achieve positively valued goals and the removal of valued stimuli as in the loss of a job. Many studies show that male under- or unemployment is associated with wife abuse (Steinmetz & Straus 1974, Gelles 1978, Gelles & Straus 1978, Hornung et al. 1981, McLaughlin et al. 1992, Kaufman Kantor et al. 1994). In addition, blue-collar employment is significantly related to higher levels of wife assault (Straus et al. 1980a, Kaufman Kantor & Straus 1987, Stets & Straus 1989, McLaughlin et al. 1992). Poverty is also a high risk factor in wife assault and abuse (Dibble & Straus 1980, Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986, Straus & Gelles 1986, Conger et al. 1990, Straus & Smith 1990).

One's financial situation is evaluated not only by job security, but also by status, educational and occupational achievement. Differences in these components between partners also can create a situation conducive to violence. Most of the research indicates that more wife abuse occurs where the wife works and the husband does not, or where the wife makes more money than the husband does (Straus et al. 1980a). However, some studies show just the opposite occurs (Yllo & Straus 1990).

Financial satisfaction may be relative to one's surroundings including friends,

peers, and cultural expectations. It is more likely that one's subjective evaluation of his/her financial situation has a greater influence over whether or not stress is experienced rather than the objective evaluation of the current financial situation. Where couples are concerned, financial satisfaction may be additive in the household. For instance, the greater the satisfaction of both members of the couple, the less likely male-to-female violence is to occur.

OTHER KNOWN PRECURSORS OF MALE-TO-FEMALE PARTNER VIOLENCE

The existing research on male-to-female partner violence indicates that the effects of cultural and social psychological characteristics on partner violence are often matched by situational and demographic characteristics. These include things such as the duration of the union between a couple, marital status, race, and couple-level socioeconomic status. As discussed in the first chapter, non-white couples, and couples who are low on socioeconomic status are more likely to experience male-to-female partner violence. Research also supports the idea that partner violence against women is more likely to occur in newer unions versus unions that have existed for longer periods of time (Feld & Straus 1989) and among younger couples. Cohabiting couples also experience more male-to-female partner violence than married couples (Stets 1991). An examination of the research suggests then that couples that are

more likely to experience male-to-female partner violence are newer couples, cohabiting couples, younger couples, couples from lower socioeconomic status and non-white couples.

Previous research on partner violence against women suggests that a combination of cultural, social psychological, situational, and demographic characteristics may be necessary to explain male-to-female partner violence. Precursors to this type of violence that produce consistent results include traditional gender-role attitudes, subjective financial dissatisfaction, shorter or newer unions, younger couples, non-white racial status, low socioeconomic status, and cohabitation. Absent from existing research are community context and ecological explanations of violence among couples against women. Social disorganization theory may significantly contribute to explanations of male-to-female partner violence.

CHAPTER III

SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION

SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION THEORY

Social disorganization theorists investigate the relationship between crime and delinquency and the social and physical characteristics of geographic areas. Geographic areas differ with respect to aggregate characteristics such as unemployment rates, residential mobility, ethnic heterogeneity, population density, and uses of land. According to social disorganization theorists these characteristics influence both opportunities and motivations for crime.

Social disorganization refers to a neighborhood's inability to regulate itself. Neighborhoods are regulated through private, parochial and public institutions that serve as sources of social control (Kornhouser 1978). Certain area and social characteristics give rise to crime by reducing the effectiveness of these agents of social control. Neighborhoods that lack effective restraint mechanisms will experience a greater amount of deviance, because they are too weak to inhibit those within the community who are inclined to deviate (Kornhouser 1978:71).

From the perspective of social disorganization, the causes of crime are attributed at least in part to the place in which people reside, not solely to the attributes of those who commit the crimes. Most theories of crime focus on the

criminal, the victim, or the relationship between the two of them. This theory concentrates on the social and ecological causes of crime. Social disorganization theorists ask what it is about neighborhoods that cause them to be more or less disorganized.

THE ORIGINS OF SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION THEORY

Social disorganization theory was developed at the University of Chicago in the early 1930s. The original theory focused on ecological characteristics of neighborhoods and their effects on the populations within them. Due to advances in communication and transportation, the focus of contemporary social disorganization theorists de-emphasizes purely ecological factors and concentrates more on social differentiation as it relates to spatial differences. Rather than investigating the dynamics within urban areas, this research looks outside these areas at the larger structural changes in society that concentrate similar aggregate conditions into identifiable geographic units (for a discussion see Byrne & Sampson 1986: 4-5). Hauser and Schnore (1965:165) identify four components of what they refer to as the "ecological complex". They include the environment, the population, social organization, and technology.

Neighborhoods, police precincts, SMSA's and other politically or governmentally based groupings have been used in social disorganization research to

identify geographic areas. This variation in definitions of areas makes it difficult to clearly identify the mechanisms by with social disorganization influences crime.

The theory centers on the effects of neighborhood characteristics, but as yet, there is no definitive consensus on how neighborhoods should be identified. Williams (1984) argues that small reference areas, such as census tracts may be more appropriate for testing macro-social theories of crime than large areas. People often define their own neighborhoods as occupying relatively small geographic areas, not entire metropolitan or rural geographic units. Sampson and Goves (1989) emphasize that social disorganization theory investigates variation between neighborhood communities, not cities or SMSAs.

CONCEPTUALIZATION AND MEASUREMENT OF SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION

A central problem confronted by all who wish to use social disorganization theory is the problem of how best to measure its various dimensions. A number of different approaches have been tried. Indicators of social disorganization include low rent, low levels of education, low income, low socioeconomic status, high numbers of unattached persons, racial and ethnic heterogeneity, high rates of mental disorder, high rates of residential mobility, population density, area dilapidation, large proportions of single parents, and high percentages of young males. As Kornhouser

(1978:63) phrases it, most of the indicators of social disorganization are "conditions that would not exist if the citizenry were able to avoid them."

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

Some research suggests a greater influence of one or another indicator on crime. The variable most strongly supported as an indicator of social disorganization is socioeconomic status (SES). SES refers to a combination of aggregate income levels, assets, occupational status and level of education in a geographic area. People in neighborhoods characterized by lower SES do not have the resources, time, money, or power that are necessary for the production of well-organized areas that are able to promote social control. Related to SES are absolute poverty and relative deprivation.

POVERTY

Absolute poverty refers to a lack of resources to fulfill basic needs, such as food and shelter. Most research indicates that aggregate variation in crime and deviance is strongly related to poverty (Mladenka & Hill 1976, Sampson & Castellano 1982, Smith & Jarjoura 1988). Weak effects of poverty on crime have been found in studies that focus on larger aggregates (Watts & Watts 1981, Blau & Blau 1982, Messner 1983). This indicates that poverty alone may not lead to crime, or that poverty represents itself in many ways, and is experienced by people differently.

Relative deprivation refers to the comparison of one's resources to others in the same general area. Blau and Blau (1982) contend that conditions created by social conflict influence socioeconomic inequalities that can lead to animosity among those who compare poorly to others in their general surroundings. Animosity then is expressed through criminal violence. Rosenfeld (1986) found that crime rates are more strongly related to inequality than to absolute poverty. Relative deprivation is an interpretive measure of the level of satisfaction with ones own finances as compared to others in the same general area, or as compared to someone's expected financial situation. Therefore relative deprivation not only affects people in low income areas who cannot reach larger cultural goals, but it can also be experienced by people of higher SES. Relative deprivation is usually measured as the Gini Index of Income Concentration for a neighborhood-level measure.

EMPLOYMENT

Long periods of unemployment can lead to both poverty and relative deprivation. Areas that experience high levels of unemployment usually also exhibit high rates of violence. McGabey (1986) suggests that in areas with high unemployment, residents may participate in other illegal activities such as selling drugs and engaging in property crimes as ways of supplementing their income.

RACE

Non-white populations in the U.S. more densely populate the lower

socioeconomic statuses due to a long history of segregation and discrimination. Blau and Blau (1982) found that inequality had strongest affects on violence when coupled with race. They conclude that:

> In a society founded on the principle 'that all men are created equal' economic inequalities rooted in ascribed positions violate the spirit of democracy and are likely to create alienation, despair, and conflict. The hypothesis derived from this assumption, which is also deducible from a general sociological theory, is that racial socioeconomic inequalities are a major source of much criminal violence (Blau and Blau 1982:126).

Lander (1954) assumed that a larger proportion of blacks and other non-whites would be found in socially disorganized areas due to the underprivileged status of minorities in this country. He discovered that as the percent non-white increases from zero to fifty, so too does the delinquency rate, but as it increases from 50 to 100, the delinquency rate decreases. Lander suggested that areas comprised of 50 to 100 percent non-whites are in the primary stages of assimilation and so are becoming more socially organized. Bordua (1959) attempted to replicate Lander's (1954) study but found no relationship between percent non-white and delinquency.

Subsequent research on the effects of the percent non-white on crime is mixed. Some research supports the theory (Schmid 1960a & 1960b, Boggs 1965, Mladenka & Hill 1976). Nonetheless, other research does not. This may be the result of variations in the sources of crime rates used in these studies (Chilton 1964, Sampson 1985). Some studies use self-report data, while others use official reports.

Discrepancies in the research may also be due to what Lander (1954) discovered which led to interest in racial heterogeneity as opposed to simple measures of percent non-white.

RACIAL HETEROGENEITY

Percent non-white is only one indicator of racial composition. Another is racial heterogeneity, which captures the racial and ethnic mixture of people within a given area. It is usually measured as the probability that two randomly selected individuals in any given area would be from different racial or ethnic groups (see Smith & Jarjoura 1988, Sampson & Goves 1989). Research indicates that greater heterogeneity is associated with higher rates of crime, delinquency and other forms of deviance (Smith & Jarjoura 1988, Sampson & Goves 1989). Rosenfeld (1986) found that racial composition is a stronger predictor of crime than inequality or poverty.

SEX AND AGE

It is well known that young males engage in street crime and violence more often than older males and females of all ages. Research that investigates the life histories of offenders reveals that criminal involvement decreases with age (Shover 1996). Individual rates of index property crimes peak from age 15 through 21 (Shover 1996). Arrest statistics support the assumption that most street crimes are committed by young males (see Sellin 1958, Sagi & Wellford 1968, Chilton & Spielberger 1971, Greenberg 1977). Accordingly, neighborhoods that contain a large

percentage of young males should experience higher levels of crime and deviance in general than areas that do not.

POPULATION DENSITY AND OVERCROWDING

Density refers to overcrowded conditions within the community or within living quarters. Crowding refers to the number of people who live together within a single dwelling, and structural density refers to the number of housing units within a specified area. Research strongly supports overcrowding and structural density as indicators of social disorganization that relate positively to delinquency (Sampson 1985 & 1986, Stark 1987, Bursik & Webb 1988, Smith & Jarjoura 1988).

TRANSIENCE

Transients are homeless people. Neighborhoods that contain a high number of visible street people are less likely to be cohesive. Transients typically have low resources, move around a lot and therefore do not share a commitment to the community.

POPULATION MOBILITY

Population mobility is the length of time that people reside in one place. Areas with higher rates of population mobility produce higher rates of crime (Schmid 1960a & 1960b, Chilton 1964, Harries 1976, Crutchfield et al. 1982, Stark et al. 1983, Sampson 1985, Smith & Jarjoura 1988). Shaw and McKay (1931) conclude

that the effect of residential mobility on crime is second only to poverty.

Areas that house mobile populations exhibit low levels friendship networks, and neighborhood and community involvement in voluntary organizations. Krohn (1986) describes informal local friendship networks as the extent to which all actors in a social network are connected and communicate on a regular basis. Where informal friendship networks exist, there is greater supervision and guardianship of local surroundings. Where they are weak, opportunities for crime are high (Krohn 1986, Skogan 1986, Sampson & Goves 1989).

Regular communication among neighbors can also be formal as in participation in voluntary organizations. The greater the participation in these organizations, the tighter the solidarity in the community (Hunter 1974, Sampson & Goves 1989). Likewise, when formal institutions are separated from local residents, the likelihood of deviance increases (Kornhouser 1978). Bursik (1988:521) states that "the dynamics of social disorganization lead to variations across neighborhoods in the strength of the commitment of the residents to group standards. Thus, weak structures of formal and informal control decrease the costs associated with deviation within the group, making high rates of crime and delinquency more likely."

MARITAL DISSOLUTION AND SINGLE PARENTS

Formal voluntary organizations lack local participation in areas with high rates of family dissolution (Kasarda & Janowitz 1974, Kornhouser 1978). Usually measured as the percentage of children under the age of 18 living with single parents

(see Willie 1967, Wellford 1974, Harries 1976, Watts & Watts 1981, Sampson 1985), family dissolution significantly affects the crime rate. Sampson (1986: 25) argues that "family dissolution has important macro-level consequences for both informal and formal social control in the community." Single parent households suffer time constraints that limit the time that they have to spend in community involvement and social control.

Like most indicators of social disorganization, marital dissolution and single parents are proxies or indirect measures of disorganization. Blau and Blau (1982) argue that marital disruption is a proxy for overall disorganization, alienation and conflict in personal relations.

Lack of parental supervision or guardianship has been closely linked to delinquency (Riley 1985, McGahey 1986). This association is connected to opportunity. Many theorists suggest that delinquency depends in part on available illegitimate opportunities (Cohen 1955, Cohen & Felson 1979). Assuming that two or more adults can more effectively supervise children than single adults, it makes sense to assume that children from single parent families are supervised less so have greater opportunity for deviance than children from two-parent families.

This does not necessarily mean that children from single-parent families are more likely to be deviant than those from dual-parent households. Families and neighborhoods are closely connected to each other (Kornhauser 1978, Sampson 1985:27 & 1986b:279). Thus, areas that contain large numbers of single-parent households are more likely to experience greater levels of delinquency. Some

researchers suggest that high rates of single parents and marital disruption in a given area are indicative of large-scale disorganization and alienation (Blau & Blau 1982, Sampson 1986).

SOCIAL CONTROL AND SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION

A high proportion of single parent households to duel- parent households, transience, and many of the other features of social disorganization hinder positive interaction among individuals in a community. They inhibit informal and formal communication and weaken the effect of formal institutions on the control of behavior within a community. People who do not live long with one another may have fewer opportunities or less desire to communicate with each other. Low levels of communication weaken the existence of informal social control mechanisms (Clinard 1968, Suttles 1968, Kornhouser 1978, Smith & Jarjoura 1988, Sampson & Goves 1989).

Kornhouser (1978:69) states that "Social disorganization means the ineffective articulation of values within and between culture and social structure; it does not include the delinquent or criminal system." She continues; "according to this model, all effects flow through weak controls." Bursik (1988:521) refers to the process as "a group-level analog of control theory."

Kornhouser (1978) describes four types of control relating to the micro/macro

interaction suggested by social disorganization theories. She derives her control types from a combination of former control theories. They include:

> Direct internal controls resulting from socialization to cultural values; direct external controls resulting from scrutiny, supervision, and surveillance; indirect internal controls resulting from rewarding social relationships and represented in the self by stakes in conformity, which include both rational awareness of interests and sentiments of attachment; and indirect external controls, resulting from the power of others to enforce role obligations, which is a function of both the saliency of the rewards they command and the form and composition of the role networks through which they have access to ego (Kornhouser 1982:74).

These four forms of social control are weakened by social disorganization such that deviance results. Seen in this way, social disorganization is caused by macro-factors such as structural geographical and economic conditions in a society that make areas unsafe. Such conditions weaken a community's ability to regulate itself through social control, thus leading to deviance and crime.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL PATHOLOGIES

Although most research finds significant bivariate relationships among the individual measures of social disorganization and delinquency, multivariate analyses

often show mixed results (see Baldwin 1979 for a review). This may be due to strong covariance among many of the indicators of social disorganization (Byrne & Sampson 1986:3). Kornhouser (1978:107) concludes that residential mobility, population density and socioeconomic status are intercorrelated. Hauser and Schnore (1965:165) view social disorganization variables as "functionally interrelated," meaning that "a change in one leads to modifications in the others."

Rodney Stark (1987) best conceptualizes the interrelated nature of social disorganization indicators by identifying and describing the relationship between five essential factors: density, poverty, mixed-land use, transience and dilapidation. He argues that population density leads to greater association among deviants, higher levels of moral cynicism, greater criminal opportunities, lower levels of supervision that leads to lower academic achievement, and weakened attachments.

Mixed land-use of homes, apartments, industry and retail establishments coexist with transience, poverty, low levels of community surveillance, dilapidation, poor social stigma, lenient law enforcement, and a loss of successful and conventional people (see also Anderson 1990). Each indicator is interrelated with the next in a reciprocal spiral leading to deviance and crime. Stark (1987:904) states:

> The theory would predict less deviance in poor families in situations where their neighborhood is less dense and more heterogeneous in terms of income, where their homes are less crowded and dilapidated, where the neighborhood is more fully residential, where the police are not permissive of vice, and where there is no undue concentration of the demoralized.

Some research suggests that social disorganization indicators may be related conditionally to violence. For instance, Smith and Jarjoura (1988) find that violent crime is influenced by residential mobility in areas that experience high levels of poverty and not in more affluent communities. Economic conditions may be the pivotal factor around which other aspects of social disorganization coalesce.

On the other hand, high concentrations of poor families, overcrowded conditions and other indicators of social disorganization may have an exponential effect on crime. Highly disorganized neighborhoods may be more likely to contain higher rates of violence simply because people who are more prone to violence for individual reasons may not be able to live in neighborhoods free from violence.

William Julius Wilson (1987) was first to describe the consequences that structural transformations of the urban economy have for communities. Disadvantaged groups have been concentrated into urban ghettos through economic conditions and social policies such as government subsidized housing (Massey & Kanaiaupuni 1993). Socially disadvantaged groups include racial minorities, female-headed households, the indigent, undereducated, unemployed, and the unemployable. These people have little choice but to reside in neighborhoods that exhibit the characteristics of socially disorganized neighborhoods.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION AND MALE-TO-FEMALE PARTNER VIOLENCE

EXPLAINING MALE-TO-FEMALE PARTNER VIOLENCE

The Violence Against Women Panel who assembled as a result of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, notes that explanations for violence against women should take into account both its structural and contextual causes as well as personality and cognitive factors (Panel 1996). Little is known about how these factors work together with community context.

Just as social disorganization is related to violence in general, there are many reasons why it also may be related to patterns of partner violence against women. In a pioneering attempt to address this issue, Miles-Doan (1998) recently found that social disorganization does explain a significant amount of the variance in violence against women in intimate relationships, as well as community violence.[1] Male-to-female partner violence is more prevalent in socially disorganized areas as is community violence.

Socially disorganized areas are low on social control. These areas provide

[1] Due to restrictions in the data, Miles-Doan (1998) is unable to consider the effects of individual-level influences in conjunction with area characteristics on male-to-female homicide.

opportunities for violence against women because abusive men who reside in them are not constrained by strong normative expectations against violence. Hence, they are free to commit violence against their partners without fear of social disapproval. Recent ethnographic research suggests that among residents in disorganized areas, violence, as a means of settling interpersonal disputes, may be viewed not only as normatively acceptable, but as virtually required by local cultural codes (Anderson 1990). Moral codes that legitimize violence against women include traditional attitudes toward gender roles.

Research indicates that racial minorities and people who have lower levels of education, income, and those who generally are of lower socioeconomic status express stronger patriarchal gender-role attitudes (Bowker 1983, 1985, Smith 1990). These populations are most prevalent in socially disorganized areas further intensifying the likelihood of violence against women in these areas. Additionally, Bowker (1983) suggests that where financial dissatisfaction is coupled with traditional gender-role attitudes, partner violence is more likely.

Residents of socially disorganized areas also are more likely to have weak social bonds to their neighbors. Women involved with potentially abusive partners are more likely to be isolated and thus at greater risk of violent victimization (Stets 1991). Also, social isolation is most prevalent in large urban areas where social disorganization is most likely (House et al. 1988). Women who suffer violence are also more likely to live in overcrowded conditions (Gove et al. 1979). To exit an abusive relationship requires resources. Women who want to leave men who beat

them need money and friends. These resources are likely to be less accessible to women who live in poverty stricken and socially disorganized areas.

Fagan and Browne (1994) hypothesize that life transitions that cause economic distress (e.g. becoming unemployed) may be particularly important precipitating factors of violence by men against women in relationships. People who reside in socially disorganized areas are more likely to experience changes in their employment status than those in more affluent areas are. Burgess and Draper (1989) likewise argue for the salience of ecological instability, which is generally indicated by economic constraints and job loss, in increasing the probability of marital violence under certain circumstances.

Although poverty and violence often go together, it would be a mistake to think that partner violence is restricted to disadvantaged areas. Abusive men and victimized women also are found in well-to-do suburbs and small towns. Little is known about how community context influences partner violence in these places. Financial dissatisfaction at the individual-level may trigger intimate violence more often among well-to-do men who see their neighbors moving ahead while they are suffering financial difficulties than it does among disadvantaged men who see hard times all around them.

PREDICTIONS

This study investigates the relative effects of ecological, social and individual factors on the likelihood of male-to-female partner violence. It measures the extent to which individual-level and partner-level precursors predict violence, and whether or not neighborhood-level characteristics significantly strengthen predictions of male-to-female partner violence (figure 1). This study also permits closer inspection of the influence of individual-level characteristics within various neighborhood types. It is a pioneering attempt to measure the relative impact of variables measured at different levels on male-to-female partner violence.

Based on the theories reviewed above, several hypotheses are investigated using individual, partner, and community-level precursors of male-to-female partner violence. It is predicted that male-to-female partner violence is more likely to occur among couples who are less satisfied with their finances, couples in which either the male or both partners hold traditional gender-role attitudes, among non-white couples versus white couples, among couples from a lower socioeconomic status, couples in which the female has attained a higher education than the male, younger couples, couples whose union is more recent, and cohabiting couples versus married couples.

It is also predicted that couples who reside in neighborhoods characterized by higher social disorganization experience a greater likelihood of male-to-female partner violence. Social disorganization is predicted to significantly affect the likelihood of male-to-female partner violence even in the presence of known individual and couple-level variables. Finally, relationships among the individual and couple-level variables and male-to-female partner violence are expected to differ within neighborhood types.

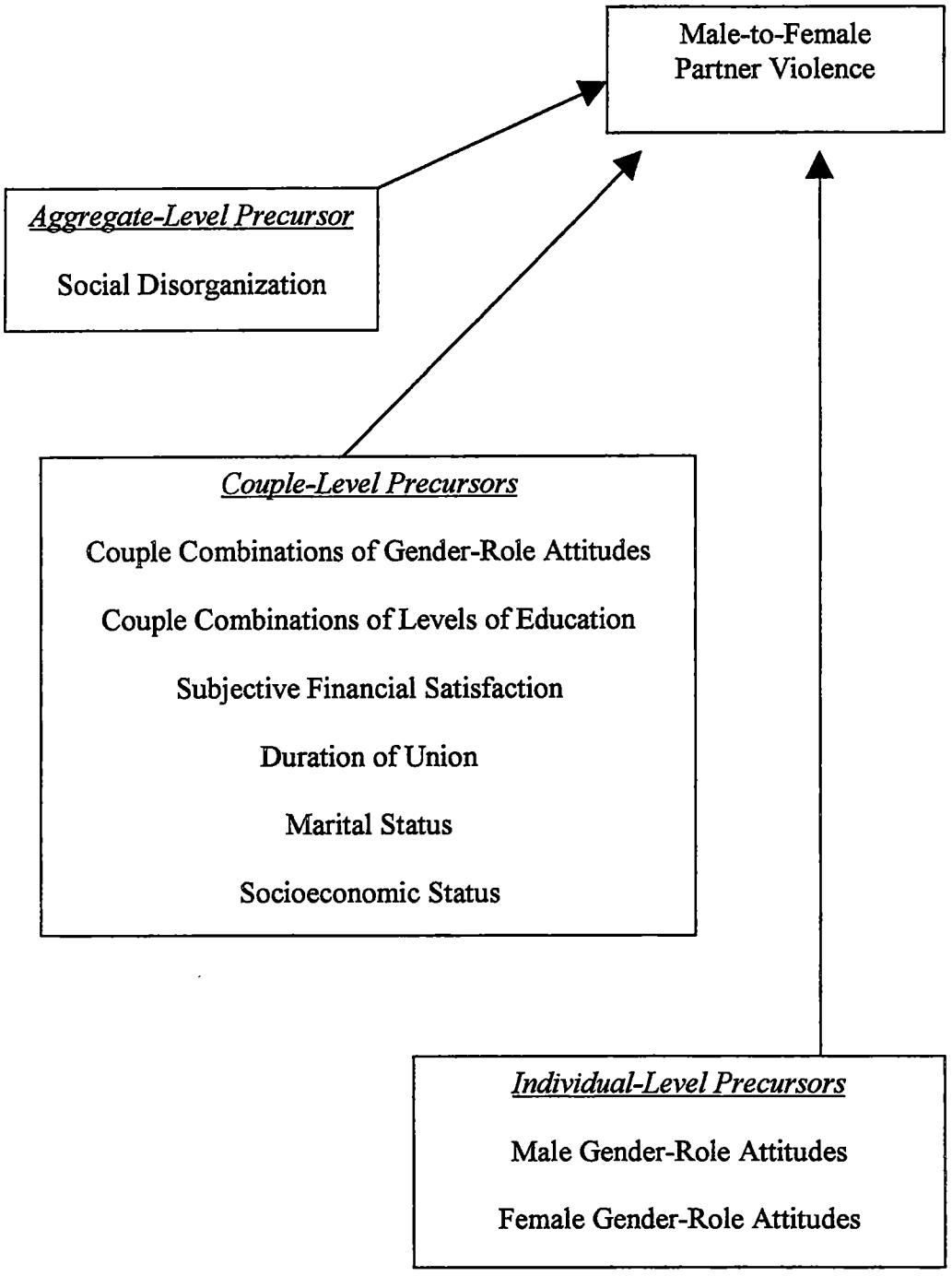


Figure 1: Aggregate, Couple, and Individual-Level Precursors to Male-to-Female Partner Violence

CHAPTER V

METHODS

DATA SOURCES

The project uses data from wave 2 of the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) which was conducted from 1992 through 1994 and data from the 1990 U.S. Census.[2] The NSFH is a national probability sample in which minorities and cohabiting couples are over represented. The second wave was completed in 1994 and includes interviews with all surviving members of the original sample (n = 10,005), and their partners (n = 5, 624). Surveys lasted about one hour and forty minutes, and some portions of the survey were self-administered.

The sub-sample used for this research includes households in which heterosexual respondents were married, separated or cohabiting and that had complete data on the variables used in this analysis. This data set includes 6636 main respondents and 5407 of their partners. Most of the analysis includes only 6610 couples instead of 6636 couples because census tract data was not available for 26 couples. Neighborhood information was not available for main respondents who

[2] Bursik and Webb (1982) and Haggerety (1971) discuss differences between static and dynamic approaches to delinquency and crime. A cross sectional analysis can only produce static explanations of crime. It is, however, appropriate to employ cross sectional methods in social disorganization research where the dependent and independent measures are separated in time by a relatively short span. In this study, census and NSFH data were gathered between only two and four years apart.

were not residing in the United States, who were in the military, or in prison at the time of interviewing.

INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL VARIABLES

NSFH DATA

We want to know whether neighborhood social disorganization affects the likelihood of intimate violence independent of other known precursors. The National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) contains many of the variables traditionally associated with intimate violence. Both individual-level and couple-level measures are available in the NSFH. They include age, educational attainment, race, gender-role attitudes, subjective financial satisfaction, duration of union, household income, and marital/cohabitation status. Descriptions of the variables used in this study follow, and descriptive statistics for these variables are reported in tables 1 and 2.

Violence Against Women

Partner violence against women is the dependent variable. It is defined as physical violence that women experience at the hands of their heterosexual partners. The NSFH measures partner violence by items asking how often during the past year fights with respondents' spouses or partners became physically violent resulted in

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Continuous Variables

Variables	n	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social Disorganization Index	6610	.22 - 5	1.2803	.6869
SFS for Couples	4983	4 - 24	15.345	4.2705
GRA for Females	5889	11 - 54	30.356	6.2807
GRA for Males	6477	11 – 94	53.294	13.4278
Education for Males	5736	1 – 7	3.043	1.7085
Education for Females	6258	1 – 7	2.878	1.5182
SES for Couples	5328	-2.57 – 22.69	.006	1.6785
Household Income	6529	0 – 999995	54226.	45898.
Couple Education	5361	2 – 14	5.986	2.8797
Age for Males	5761	22 – 97	47.638	14.3278
Age for Females	6277	19 – 92	45.164	13.8047
Duration of Union	6619	49 – 835 (approx. 4 ½ to 69 ½ years)	207.727 (approx. 17 years)	166.6130

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Categorical Variables

Variables	n	% of Total
GRA for Couples		
Both Non-Traditional	1467	24.9%
Male NT/Female T	0	0%
Male T/Female NT	4415	75%
Both Traditional	7	.1%
Male-to-Female Partner Violence		
Violence	350	5.3%
No Violence	6280	94.3%
Social Disorganization Typology		
Neighborhood Type 1: low SD	974	14.7%
Neighborhood Type 2: medium SD	4411	66.7%
Neighborhood Type 3: high SD	1225	18.5%
Education for Couples		
Both college educated	1852	34.5%
Male CE/Female not	805	15%
Male not/Female CE	761	14.2%
Neither is college educated	1943	36.2%
Marital Status		
Married	6108	92%
Cohabiting	528	8%
Race for Couples		
White	5010	79.9%
Non-white	1263	20.1%

their hitting, shoving, or throwing things at them. Respondents were also asked how often these things happened to them. To measure violence against women, a partner violence variable is created that indexes male respondents who admit physically abusing their partners, and female respondents who report victimization by their spouses.

Information about the prevalence of male-to-female partner violence is also available. One hundred and eighty three (2.8%) couples in the sample report violence against women occurring once in the reference period. Eighty-four (1.4%) couples report two incidents, 47 (.7%) couples report three incidents, and 36 (.5%) couples report four or more incidents of male-to-female partner violence. Since the incidents of violence are skewed in the sample, the necessary regression assumption that the variable is symmetrically distributed is not met. Thus, violence is used in the following analysis as a dichotomous variable, and the appropriate statistical procedures are run. Violence is coded so that if a respondent is involved in a relationships in which either the female or the male reports male-to-female violence then that respondent receives a code of "1" (5.4%) for the presence of violence. If no male-to-female violence is reported, then those couples receive a "0" for no violence.

Gender-Role Attitudes (GRA)

A numerical and a categorical gender-role attitude (GRA) variable are created that are designed to test theoretical assumptions discussed in Chapter II. Much research supports the hypotheses that men who hold traditional GRAs will be more

violent against their partners. The research also supports the hypotheses that violence will be most likely among couples in which both partners hold traditional gender-role attitudes, less likely among couples in which the male holds traditional GRA and the female holds non-traditional gender-role attitudes, still less likely among couples in which the male holds non-traditional GRAs and the female holds traditional GRAs, finally least likely among couples where the female and male both hold non-traditional gender-role attitudes (Dobach & Dobash 1979, Allen & Straus 1980, Straus et al. 1980a, Yllo & Straus 1984, Smith 1990).

Summing Likert responses from 11 statements on GRAs creates male and female numerical GRA variables. These include statements such as "Both the husband and wife should contribute to family income", and "A woman can have a fully satisfying life without children" (see appendix A for the complete list of statements). Cronbach's alpha scores for the male gender-role attitudes index is .82 (n = 6477), and for the female GRA index .76 (n = 5889). Low scores on these two variables represent non-traditional gender-role attitudes and high scores represent traditional attitudes.

A categorical male-to-female partner GRA variable is created. The male and female GRA variables are dichotomized at the mean. Those in the upper half are considered traditional GRAs, and those in the lower half are considered non-traditional GRAs. The final GRA variable represents couple combinations of male and female gender-role attitudes. This variable ranges from 1 to 4; 1 = traditional gender-role attitudes for the male and female, 2 = male traditional/female non-

traditional, 3 = male non-traditional/female traditional, and 4 = male and female non-traditional.

Subjective Financial Satisfaction (SFS)

As discussed in chapter two, couples' subjective financial satisfaction may be more telling of satisfaction with finances than actual job security, household income or other objective measures of the economic circumstances of couples. The subjective financial satisfaction (SFS) variable is an additive indicator of couple satisfaction with finances that combines partner's scores. SFS is constructed from two items that ask respondents to rate their level of satisfaction with their "financial situation" and their "worry about income sufficiency." Responses include a six point Likert scale. Cronbach's alpha for male SFS is .68 (n=5486), and for female SFS .73 (n=6017). The combined index ranges from 4 to 24. Low scores represent dissatisfaction with finances and high scores represent satisfaction.

Control Variables

As discussed in chapters I and II, variables that are commonly used in partner violence research include duration of union, marital status, age, race, education, and socioeconomic status. Duration of union refers to the length of time that a couple has been living together. It is measured in century months that refer to the month and year that the couple first began living together. This score is subtracted from the century month of the interview date. The resulting variable refers to the length of

time (in century months) that each couple had been together on the date of the interview. Low scores represent shorter unions and high scores represent longer unions. Century month of union for new partners appearing in the second NSFH wave were not available. Instead, each new couple was assigned a score that estimates the century month of union as the last date of the last interview in the first wave (June 1988). This is the earliest possible date of union.

Marital status refers only to married, separated (coded 1), or cohabiting couples (coded 2) since the data subset used for analysis only contains current partners. Separated couples were included since many separated couples still engage in partner violence, and research indicates that partner violence often leads to marital breakup (DeMaris 1998).

The ages of male and female respondents are measured in actual years so that younger people have low scores and older people have higher scores.

Race for partners in the second wave of the NSFH is not available; however, race for the main respondent from wave 1 is available, as is race for partners who remained together since the first wave. Since interracial marriages are relatively rare in the general population, new partners who were not present for the first wave were assigned the same race as the main respondent for each couple. Race for females is used as the couple race variable, and it is coded 1 for whites and 2 for non-whites.

Education is a ordinal couple-level variable created much like the GRA variable. First, female and male education variables are created. Female and male education range from 1 to 7; 1 = not a high school graduate, 2 = high school

graduate, 3 = some college, 4 = associate degree, 5 = bachelor degree, 6 = masters degree, and 7 = doctorate degree. The final education variable is a categorical combination of male-to-female education within couples. It ranges from 1 to 4; 1 = male and female are both college educated, 2 = male is college educated/female is not, 3 = male is not college educated/female is, and 4 = male and female are not college educated.

Couple-level socioeconomic status (SES) is usually measured as some combination of income, education and/or occupational status. As discussed in chapter I, women who are of low socioeconomic status are more likely to experience partner violence (Pelton 1978, Straus et al. 1980b, Gelles & Straus 1988, Wolfner & Gelles 1993, U.S. Department of Justice Statistics 1994). A SES couple-level continuous variable is created that combines income and education. The SES variable used in this analysis combines household income and an additive index of male and female education for each couple. Household income is a combined measure of income measured in real dollars for everyone living within each household. Male and female education is added together for each couple. As expected, household income and couple-level education are strongly correlated with each other at the bivariate level (.458, p = .000). Z-scores for couple education and household income are combined for the final SES variable.

SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION

CENSUS DATA

Census tracts are the smallest location identifiers available for each respondent in the NSFH.[3] Accordingly, census tract information was assembled for each respondent from the US Census Bureau. Combining the NSFH with 1990 census data permits the assessment of community context and individual variation on partner violence.

As discussed in chapter III, geographic and social variables identified by social disorganization theories that may affect violence include transience, overcrowding, area dilapidation, urbanness, marital dissolution, percent of single-parent households, percent non-white, racial heterogeneity, percent of young males, and various socioeconomic indicators. These variables have been created from data retrieved from the census via the Internet.

Transience

Transience is the presence of homeless individuals or "street people" (Stark 1987). It is measured as the number of visible street people observed by the census taker.

Residential Mobility

[3] Census tracts can house very unusual populations. For instance, only one household appeared in one of the census tracts consisting of a single woman and her six children. Another consisted of only a prison. Since dividing by the total number of households created most of the indicators, this particular census tract was often automatically eliminated from the computation of some of the variables.

Residential mobility is measured as the percent of persons who have lived in the same household for 5 years or less. This variable is constructed by adding together two of the categories (1989 - March 1990 and 1985 - 1988) of the census question that asks respondents what year a householder moved into a unit, then dividing it by the total number of housing units.

Household Overcrowding

Household overcrowding is a measure of density that may directly affect family relations (Gove et al. 1979, Stark 1987). It is measured as the percent of the population that lives in housing units with five or more people in each unit. It is calculated from a series of variables that assess the number of people living in households of various crowding conditions.

Dilapidation

Area dilapidation is measured as the number of vacant housing units divided by the total number of housing units in a given census tract.

Urbanness

Urbanness measures the percent of the population living in an urban area. The census provides the number of persons who live inside urban areas within each census tract. This number divided by the total number of persons within each census tract provides the percentage of people who live in a given census tract who reside in an

urban area.

Single Parents

The percent of single parent households is calculated by the number of female and male headed households where the head of household is not currently living with a partner and in which the adult's own children under 18 years old live. This number is then divided by the total number of households.

Race

There are two variables representing different aspects of race – percent non-white, and racial heterogeneity. Percent non-white is measured by combining categories of non-white races. Racial heterogeneity is measured using Blau's (1977) index of heterogeneity. The index is defined as $1 - \Sigma pi^2$, where pi is the fraction of the population in each racial category in a given tract. This measure takes into account the relative size and number of racial groups in an area, with a score of one representing maximum heterogeneity.

Young Males

The percent of young males in an area is calculated by adding together the number of males in the age categories 15 through 24 and dividing that total by the total number of people in each census tract.

Socioeconomic Status

The census provides several indicators of socioeconomic status that tap relatively different dimensions. The percent of people living in poverty is one measure, as are the percent living on public assistance, percent with no college education, percent in non-professional and non-managerial positions, percent with annual incomes of 20k or less, and the unemployment rate.

INDEXING SOCIAL DISORGANIZAITON

All eleven indicators produce a Cronbach's alpha score of .62. To create a social disorganization index, eight of the indicators described above correlate well with one another producing the highest Cronbach's alpha score of .79. The social disorganization index is created using these eight indicators. They include overcrowding, single parents, percent non-white, racial heterogeneity, and four of the socioeconomic indicators that include low education, percent on public assistance, percent below the poverty line, and percent unemployed. Each of the social disorganization indicators is coded in the same direction so that low scores represent low social disorganization and high scores mean high social disorganization. Table 3 shows descriptive statistics for the eight indicators of social disorganization that are used in the remaining analyses.

A social disorganization variable is constructed by adding responses to all eight indicators. Construction of this variable is modeled after Simcha-Fagan and Schwartz (1986) who summed z-scores to create social disorganization indexes.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for the Social Disorganization Indicators

Variable	N	Minimum % of Population	Maximum % of Population	Mean % of Population	Std. Deviation
Population Density	6610	0%	45%	4.5%	.044
Single Parents	6610	0%	100%	8.0%	.059
% Non-White	6610	0%	100%	17.3%	.241
Racial Heterogeneity	6610	0%	79%	18.7%	.182
Low Education	6610	0%	100%	55.5%	.176
Unemployment	6610	0%	21%	4.0%	.024
Poverty	6610	0%	100%	12.5%	.112
Public Assistance	6610	0%	100%	7.5%	.073

However, for the present study it was not necessary to convert the indicator scores to z-scores since all of the indicators were measured using the same metric.

NEIGHBORHOOD TYPOLOGY

A categorical neighborhood typology variable is created from the social disorganization index that is used in chapter VII to assess variation within neighborhood types. It is constructed by dividing the index described above into three parts representing low, medium and high social disorganization. Cutoff points were estimated from a histogram of the ratio level variable. Assuming that a large proportion of the population would be in the middle category (middle class), the variable was constructed so that the largest proportion of the sample is in the middle category.[4]

A closer look at neighborhood types is necessary to assess the theoretical relevance of this variable. The typology of neighborhood types would be theoretically relevant if means for each of the individual indicators rose from one neighborhood type to the next since type 1 is low social disorganization, 2 is medium, and 3 is high.

For example, the mean score for overcrowding should be highest for type 3, lower for type 2, and lowest for type 1 neighborhoods. Highly disorganized areas

[4] Neighborhood typologies were also created using cluster analysis. Cluster analysis groups cases together with similar profiles for the ecological and social variables taken from the census. Results indicate that this procedure may not be appropriate for identifying neighborhood types based on census data. Cluster analysis identified three neighborhood types and grouped cases together so that 72.5 percent of the sample fell into the neighborhood type that is most highly socially disorganized. Since it is unrealistic to believe that such a large percentage of the population resides in areas so highly disorganized, the typologycreated by the index was chosen for analysis instead of the typology created by cluster analysis.

should be more crowded than areas low on social disorganization. This pattern should and does persist throughout all three neighborhood types for each of the indicators. Table 4 illustrates theoretically predicted patterns of mean scores for each of the indicators.

Table 4: Social Disorganization Index

Variable	Minimum % of Population	Maximum % of Population	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overcrowding				
SD Type 1, n = 974	0%	18%	2.5%	.018
SD Type 2, n = 4411	0%	33%	3.5%	.027
SD Type 3, n = 1225	0%	45%	9.3%	.067
Single Parents				
SD Type 1, n = 974	0%	11%	3.9%	.017
SD Type 2, n = 4411	0%	19%	6.6%	.028
SD Type 3, n = 1225	2%	100%	16.0%	.084
% Non-White				
SD Type1, n = 974	0%	16%	3.9%	.028
SD Type 2, n = 4411	0%	87%	8.7%	.099
SD Type 3, n = 1225	6%	100%	59.2%	.243
Racial Heterogeneity*	0%	28	7.5	.052
SD Type 1, n = 974	0%	67	14.5	.140
SD Type 2, n = 4411	0%	79	42.3	.182
SD Type 3, n = 1225				
Low Education				
SD Type 1, n = 974	6%	57%	31.1%	.111
SD Type 2, n = 4411	5%	87%	87.0%	.143
SD Type 3, n = 1225	25%	100%	100.0%	.117
Unemployment				
SD Type 1, n = 974	0%	9%	2.2%	.010
SD Type 2, n = 4411	0%	13%	3.6%	.015
SD Type 3, n = 1225	0%	21%	7.1%	.031
Poverty				
SD Type 1, n = 974	0%	24%	3.4%	.024
SD Type 2, n = 4411	0%	66%	10.3%	.069
SD Type 3, n = 1225	2%	100%	27.7%	.138
Public Assistance				
SD Type 1, n = 974	0%	7%	2.2%	.011
SD Type 2, n = 4411	0%	22%	5.8%	.035
SD Type 3, n = 1225	0%	100%	17.9%	.102

* Although racial heterogeneity ranges from zero to one, it is not interpreted as a percentage.

CHAPTER VI

ANALYSES BETWEEN NEIGHBORHOOD TYPES

One of the assumptions of this investigation is that the individual and couple-level variables that influence male-to-female partner violence tend to be more concentrated in socially disorganized areas. Thus I expect that low levels of financial satisfaction are more prevalent in disorganized neighborhoods than in well-organized areas. Therefore, to begin the analysis, I first examine the bivariate relationships between my independent and contextual variables as well as the relationships with the dependent variable, male-to-female partner violence. Bivariate analysis is also a preliminary step to identifying multicolinearity problems that may arise in model construction.

BIVARIATE ANALYSES

Bivariate analyses is performed between each of the predictor variables and male-to-female partner violence (table 5). Social disorganization is expected to correlate with several of the independent variables as well as with partner violence against women.

All of the independent variables except female gender-role attitudes are significantly related to male-to-female violence at the .01 level or better in their

Table 5: Bivariate Analyses.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Violence										
2. Social Disorganization	.065**									
3. SFS for couples	-.155**	-.144**								
4. SES for couples	-.048**	-.338**	.269**							
5. Race for couples	.057**	.602**	-.139**	-.170**						
6. Marital Status	.112**	-.009	-.103	-.088**	.024					
7. Duration of union	-.126**	-.052**	.238**	-.140**	.074**	-.228**				
8. Age for males	-.159**	.012	.287**	-.119**	-.036**	-.155**	.779**			
9. Age for females	-.155**	.002	.190**	-.104**	-.025*	-.166**	.779**	.940**		
10. GRA for males	.033**	-.134**	.046**	.007	-.145**	-.123**	.112**	-.037**	-.013	
11. GRA for females	-.013	.023	.013	-.206**	.002	-.126**	.191**	.126**	.139**	.374**

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

predicted directions. More violence is predicted in areas that are more socially disorganized, for people and couples who subjectively evaluate their financial situations as unsatisfactory, for non-whites as for whites, for more recent marriages, for couples with low SES, in relationships where the male holds traditional GRAs, and for younger versus older couples. Although female GRAs are not significantly related to violence, it is interesting to note that the relationship runs in the opposite direction from what is predicted. Females who hold more non-traditional GRAs are more likely to be victimized by male-to-female partner violence. In retrospect, this may make sense because their less traditional attitudes may mean they are more likely to defend themselves or speak their minds which may actually encourage violence from partners who hold more traditional gender-role attitudes.

Several of the predictor variables are significantly correlated with social disorganization. They include male gender-role attitudes, couple SES, couple SFS, duration of union, and race. All of these relationships are in the direction theoretically predicted in previous chapters. People and couples in more socially disorganized areas have lower SES, have experienced a shorter union, express less satisfaction with finances, and are more likely to be non-white than white.

Several researchers have found that people from lower socioeconomic status typically hold traditional GRAs (Bowker 1983, 1985, Smith 1990). This study finds that males in more socially disorganized areas hold more non-traditional GRAs.

COLLINEARITY AND COVARIANCE AMONG INDICATORS

Several of the independent variables in this study are highly correlated, such as couples' ages (.940, p = 000). This makes sense because most unions are between people of relatively the same ages. Male and female ages are also highly correlated with the duration of union (.779, p = .000 for each) which is also reasonable to assume. The longer two people are together, the older they become. Race is strongly associated with social disorganization (.602, p = .000). Since two of the indicators used to create the social disorganization variable deal with race (% non-white and racial heterogeneity), this correlation is no surprise. In fact, some measures were created anticipating high correlation. For instance, the couple-level SES variable is computed from a combination of partner's education and household income, female race is used to represent couples' race, and a combined SFS variable is used as couples' financial satisfaction.

Age and duration of union, and individual-level race and social disorganization are variables that cannot be combined into single indexes but are suspected to cause multicolinearity problems. To check for multicolinearity among these variables colinearity diagnostics were assessed in a simple linear regression model. This analysis confirms that combining certain variables in the same models might produce type II errors in which the null hypothesis is incorrectly accepted. In other words, independent variables in a logistic regression model might produce insignificant results when indeed the effects on the dependent variable are significant.

This assumption is tested. A logistic regression model is assessed in a backward conditional method containing age, duration, race, social disorganization and the remaining independent variables and violence. Age and duration drop out of the model early followed by race and social disorganization in the same step. Therefore, in all subsequent analyses, age and race are not included in the model to reduce colinearity problems.

Eliminating age and race from the models does not jeopardize their specification. Age is often a function of other, more relevant aspects of a union, such as duration, marital status, and financial security. Race is captured in the social disorganization variable. More detailed analysis of individual-level race will follow when variation within neighborhood types is assessed in chapter VII.

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Because the dependent variable is dichotomous, logistic regression is used to analyze the multivariate effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Logistic regression produces logit estimates that represent the change in the log of the odds of the dependent variable associated with a unit change in each of the independent variables controlling for the effects of all other variables included in the model. The odds of an event occurring, male-to-female partner violence in this case,

are defined as the ratio of the probability that it will occur to the probability that it will not.

Two separate models are used to assess the relationship between the independent variables and male-to-female partner violence. The first model includes all of the theoretically important predictors of violence at the individual and couple levels. They are SFS for couples, socioeconomic status (SES), marital/cohabitation status, male and female GRAs, and duration of union. The second model includes social disorganization in addition to all of the individual and couple level variables.

Predictions are confirmed that area characteristics significantly affect male-to-female partner violence in the predicted direction controlling for individual and couple level variables traditionally associated with violence among partners (see table 6). In addition to social disorganization, SFS and duration of union significantly predict male-to-female partner violence. Predictions are also confirmed that social disorganization significantly adds to the explanation of violence. When social disorganization is added to the model, the Wald statistics for SFS and duration remain relatively stable. In model 1, the Wald for SFS is 53.63 compared to 51.45 in model 2. The Wald statistic for duration in model 1 is 55.33 compared to 55.93 in model 2. These findings suggest that SFS and duration affect violence in the same way for various levels of social disorganization. The two models were entered in two separate blocks so the difference in model effectiveness could be assessed.[5] The

[5] Entering variables into a second block in the SPSS logistic regression procedure produces a change score for the chi-square statistics. The statistic for testing the significance of the term not included in the reduced model is $X^2 = 218.095 - 203.917 = 14.178$ with 6 degrees of freedom that has an associated p-value of .0002.

Table 6: Full Logistic Regression Models: Assessing the Effects of Individual, Couple and Aggregate-Level Characteristics on Male-to-Female Partner Violence

Independent Variables	Model 1 Without Social Disorganization	Model 2 Including Social Disorganization
Social Disorganization		
B		.3584
Standard Error		.0923
Wald Statistic		15.0631***
SFS for Couples		
B	-.1157	-.1134
Standard Error	.0158	.0158
Wald Statistic	53.6392***	51.4481***
Duration of Union		
B	-.0056	-.0057
Standard Error	.0008	.0008
Wald Statistic	55.3381***	55.9335***
Marital/Cohab. Status		
B	.3760	.3306
Standard Error	.1881	.1889
Wald Statistic	3.9961*	3.0624
SES		
B	-.0750	-.0188
Standard Error	.0493	.0505
Wald Statistic	2.3180	.1391
GRA for Males		
B	.0040	.0049
Standard Error	.0096	.0095
Wald Statistic	.1704	.2607
GRA for Females		
B	.0015	.0024
Standard Error	.0123	.0123
Wald Statistic	.0156	.0370
	n = 4666	n = 4666
* p < .05	Constant = -.9448	Constant = -1.4628
** p < .01	Chi^2 = 203.917	Chi^2 = 218.095
***p < .001	p = .0000	p = .0000

overall model chi-square increases when social disorganization is added to the model by 14.178.[6] The increase in the overall power of the model is significant at the .001 level, suggesting that social disorganization significantly adds to the understanding of male-to-female partner violence.

Since previous research in male-to-female partner violence suggests that all of the variables in the full model would significantly predict violence, it is important to briefly discuss the variables that produce insignificant results. Marital status, SES, and gender-role attitudes for males and females do not significantly predict partner violence in the model. When a full model containing all of the variables except duration of union is run, marital status remains a significant predictor of partner violence. These results suggest that marital status is a function of duration. Many partners live together before they are married. Thus, it makes sense that these two variables might equally affect partner violence against women. Results indicate, however, that duration of union is a better predictor of violence than marital status. In the model that does not contain social disorganization, marital status produces slightly significant results. But, when social disorganization is added to the model, the affect of marital status on partner violence diminishes. These results indicate that marital status may also be influenced by the type of neighborhood in which a couple resides. Couples are more likely to cohabitate in socially disorganized areas than in more organized areas. This assumption is verified by a bivariate correlation of the

[6] In logistic regression, the model chi-square tests the null hypothesis that the coefficients for all of the terms in the model, except the constant, are zero. This is comparable to the overall F-test in regression analysis.

two variables. Thus, when social disorganization and duration are added to the model, the effect of marital status diminishes significantly.

Couple-level socioeconomic status does not produce significant change in partner violence against women in either model, although the relationship is in the predicted direction. As SES decreases, the likelihood of male-to-female partner violence increases.

Gender-role attitudes for males or females do not predict partner violence in either model. Research discussed in chapter II suggests that the relationship between GRAs is more complex, requiring categorical analysis of couple-level combinations of GRAs on violence. Further analysis on GRAs is analyzed in the following section of this chapter.

A reduced logistic regression model is tested containing only those variables that are significant in the previous models since many of the variables in the first two models are not significantly related to male-to-female partner violence (table 7). The result is a more parsimonious model. Criteria for inclusion in the model included variables of theoretical interest and significance at the .05 level. Reduced model 1 assesses the effects of SFS and duration on male-to-female partner violence, and reduced model 2 includes social disorganization as an explanatory variable.

Results show that couple's subjective financial satisfaction, and duration of union significantly explains male-to-female partner violence. More importantly, social disorganization significantly adds to the explanatory power of the model increasing the model chi-square by 20.885 ($p = .0000$). Male-to-female partner violence is more

Table 7: Reduced Logistic Regression Models: Assessing the Effects of Individual, Couple and Aggregate-Level Characteristics on Male-to-Female Partner Violence.

Independent Variables	Model 1 Without Social Disorganization	Model 2 Including Social Disorganization
Social Disorganization		
B		.3925
Standard Error		.0828
Wald Statistic		22.4823***
SFS for Couples		
B	-.1286	-.1193
Standard Error	.0145	.0147
Wald Statistic	78.5116***	65.8800***
Duration of Union		
B	-.0060	-.0061
Standard Error	.0007	.0007
Wald Statistic	68.0004***	69.5142***
	n = 4955	n = 4955
* p < .05	Constant = -.0158	Constant = -.6554
** p < .01	Chi^2 = 218.547	Chi^2 = 239.432
***p < .001	p = .0000	p = .0000

likely to occur in neighborhoods that are more socially disorganized, among couples who are less satisfied with finances, and have experienced a shorter union. In the reduced models, the Wald statistic for SFS decreases a little in the larger model suggesting that some of the variance that it produces in violence is due to neighborhood characteristics. It makes sense that financial satisfaction would be significantly related to social disorganization. The bivariate relationship between these two variables supports this assumption, but SFS and social disorganization affect partner violence independently enough not to produce multicolinearity.

The Wald statistic for duration increases in the larger model suggesting that some of the excluded variables helped to explain a small portion of the variance that duration produces in violence in the reduced model. Duration of union is the strongest predictor of male-to-female partner violence in these models. Since some of the couples in the sample have been together up to 71 years, it is likely that a large proportion of long unions in the sample could skew the affects of duration on violence. More importantly, some of the variables dropped from the previous model may significantly affect violence in a population that has a shorter range of the duration of unions.

Duration Less Than 21 Years

Since older couples and couples who have been together longer are reported significantly less male-to-female partner violence, a closer look at more recent unions is justified. Seventy percent of the sample has been together less than 21 years. The

following logistic regression model includes only those who have been together less than 21 years (table 8). The full logistic regression model includes the same variables as are in the previous model 2 (social disorganization, SFS, duration of union, marital/cohab. status, SES, and GRAs for males and for females).

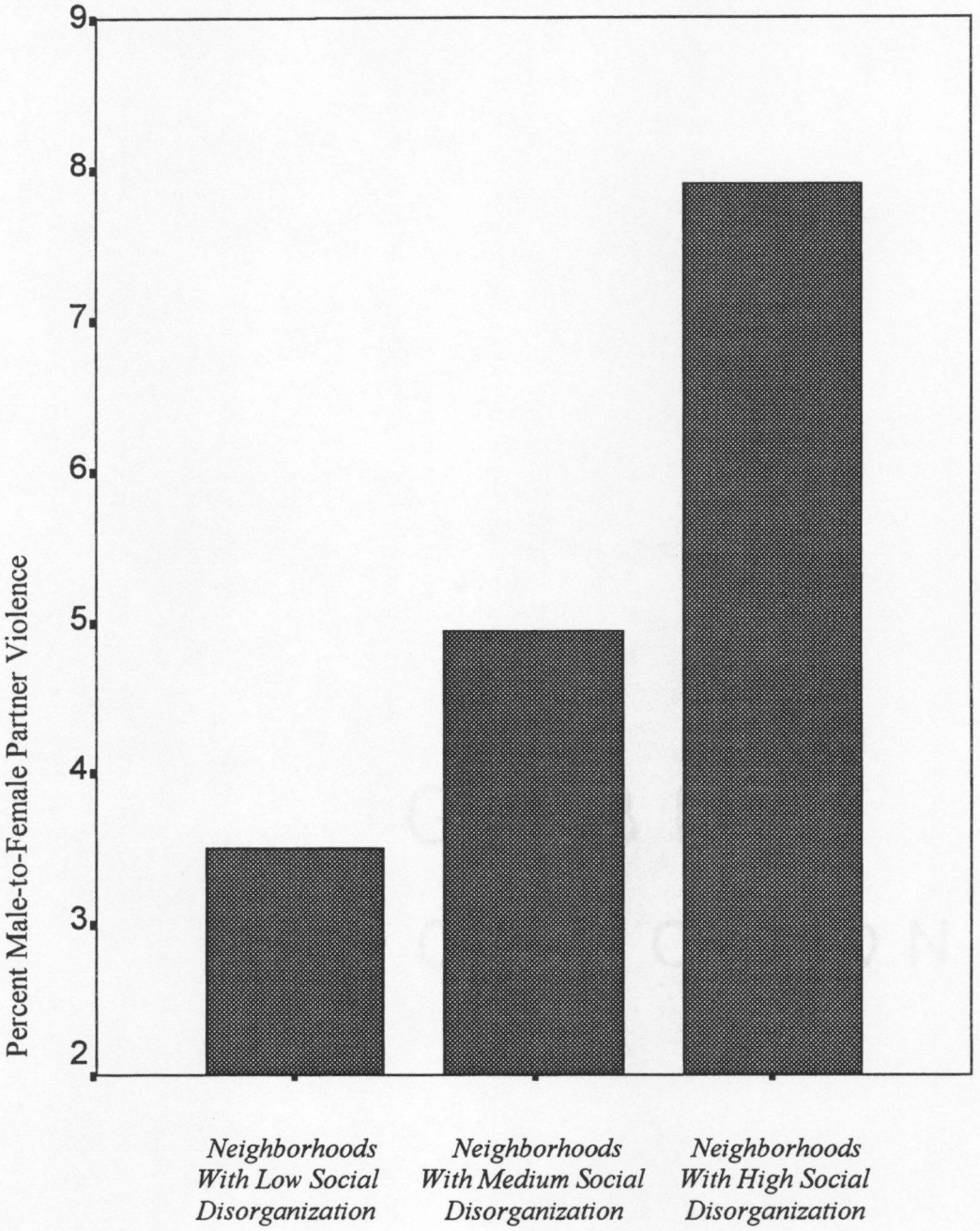
Again, social disorganization, SFS and duration of union significantly affect violence in the predicted direction. The reduced model includes only these three predictor variables. The only striking difference between the reduced models for the whole sample and for the sample containing only couples who have been together less than 21 years is a decrease in the effect of duration on violence, which makes sense. It does not appear that other results are affected much by the 25% of the couples in the sample who have been together over 20 years. These couples are included in the remaining analyses.

DO NEIGHBORHOODS MATTER?

As described in chapter V, a second variable is created from the continuous social disorganization variable. This variable represents three neighborhood types characterized by three levels of social disorganization, low, medium and high. Categorical analysis is performed assessing the relationship between neighborhood types and male-to-female partner violence. The histogram presented in figure 2 clearly illustrates a strong correlation between these two variables in the predicted

Table 8: Full and Reduced Logistic Regression Models Among Couples Who Have Been Together Less Than 21 Years

Independent Variables	Full Model	Reduced Model
Social Disorganization		
B	.3402	.3726
Standard Error	.0970	.0869
Wald Statistic	12.3117***	18.3672***
SFS for Couples		
B	-.1240	-.1303
Standard Error	.0166	.0154
Wald Statistic	55.7580***	71.3130***
Duration of Union		
B	-.0040	-.0048
Standard Error	.0013	.0013
Wald Statistic	9.0397**	14.9358***
Marital/Cohab. Status		
B	.3583	
Standard Error	.1920	
Wald Statistic	3.4837	
SES		
B	-.0079	
Standard Error	.0531	
Wald Statistic	.0221	
GRA for Males		
B	.0032	
Standard Error	.0099	
Wald Statistic	.1003	
GRA for Females		
B	.0009	
Standard Error	.0127	
Wald Statistic	.0049	
	n = 3237	n = 3408
* $p < .05$	Constant = -1.3449	Constant = -.5964
** $p < .01$	$Chi^2 = 110.679$	$Chi^2 = 121.490$
***$p < .001$	$p = .0000$	$p = .0000$



n = 4983
Chi-square = 24.292
p = .000

Figure 2: Neighborhood Types by Male-to-Female Partner Violence

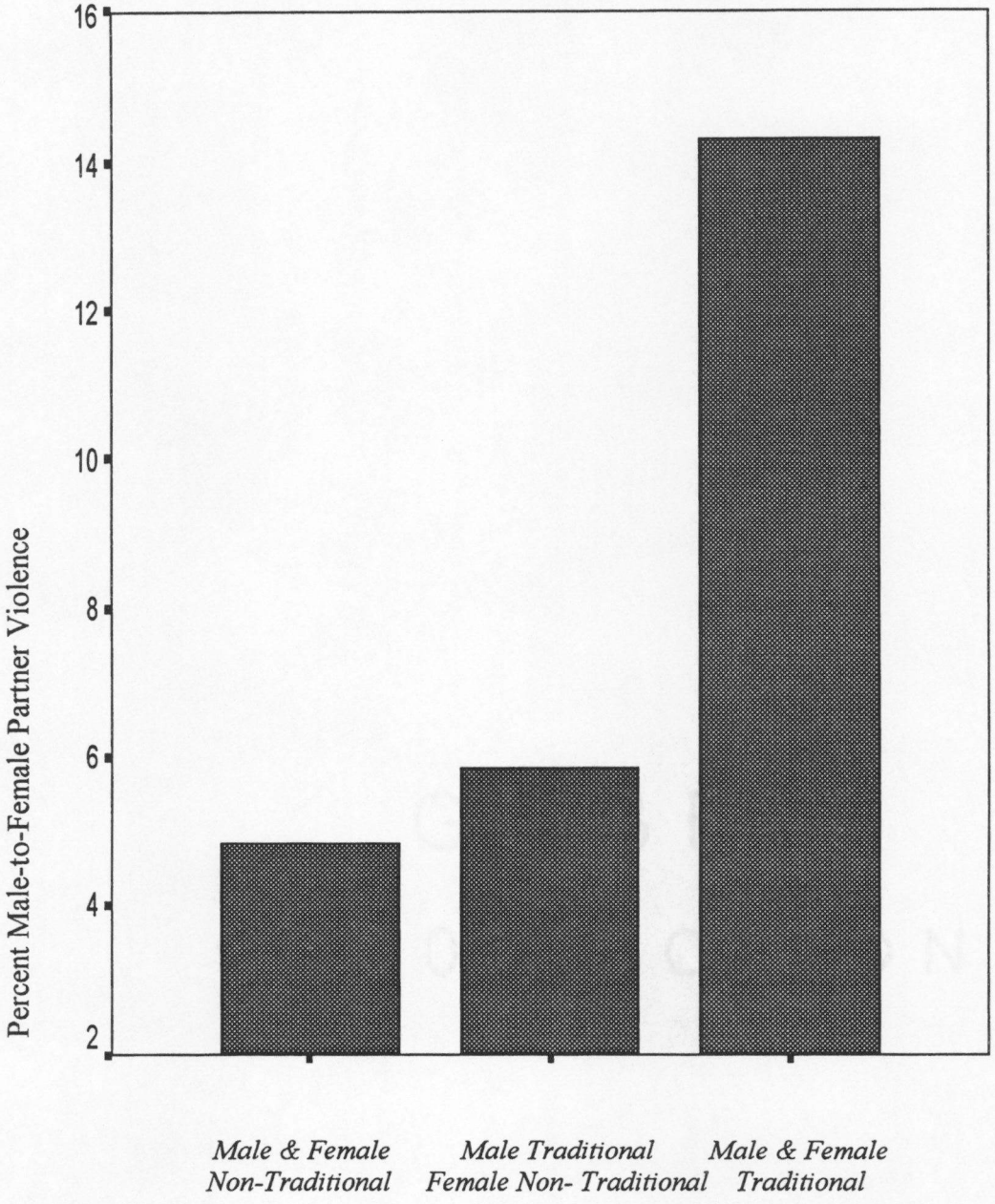
direction (chi-square = 24.292, p = .000).

Male-to-female partner violence is lowest for couples who reside in neighborhoods that are less socially disorganized (3.5%). It is more likely in neighborhoods that are more socially disorganized (4.9%). In neighborhoods that are highly disorganized, male-to-female partner violence jumps to 7.9%. These results strongly support theoretical predictions that the likelihood of male-to-female partner violence significantly increases in more highly disorganized neighborhoods. The likelihood of violence increases by one hundred percent from well-to-do neighborhoods to highly socially disorganized neighborhoods.

GENDER-ROLE ATTITUDES AND MALE-TO-FEMALE PARTNER VIOLENCE

As discussed in the theoretical chapters, the effect of gender-role attitudes on male-to-female partner violence may be influenced by the specific combination of attitudes among couples (Allen & Straus 1980, Straus et. al. 1980a, Yllo & Straus 1984, Smith 1990). Theory predicts that violence is particularly high among couples who both hold traditional GRAs (Straus 1978, Yllo & Straus 1984), and that it is the male's adherence to traditional GRAs that significantly affects the likelihood of partner violence, not necessarily the female's (Dobash & Dobash 1979, Smith 1990).

Figure 3 presents result for the bivariate relationship between male-to-female partner violence and various combinations of couple GRAs. It is important to note that no couples in this sample include a male with non-traditional GRAs and a female



n = 5889
Chi-Square = 3.097
p = .213

Figure 3: Gender–Role Attitudes (GRA) by Male-to-Female Partner Violence

with traditional GRAs. This is of some significance since there are 5889 representative couples in the sample. Such unions must be rare in the population. As theory predicts, male-to-female partner violence is most common among couples in which both the male and female hold traditional GRAs (14.3%), but this should be viewed with some caution since there are only seven couples in this sample in this category. Male-to-female partner violence is least likely among couples who hold non-traditional GRAs (4.8%). The bivariate analysis between GRAs and partner violence does not produce significant chi-square results (3.098). It is important to note that where couple attitudes are mixed – male traditional and female non-traditional, violence is higher than in non-traditional couples and lower than traditional couples.

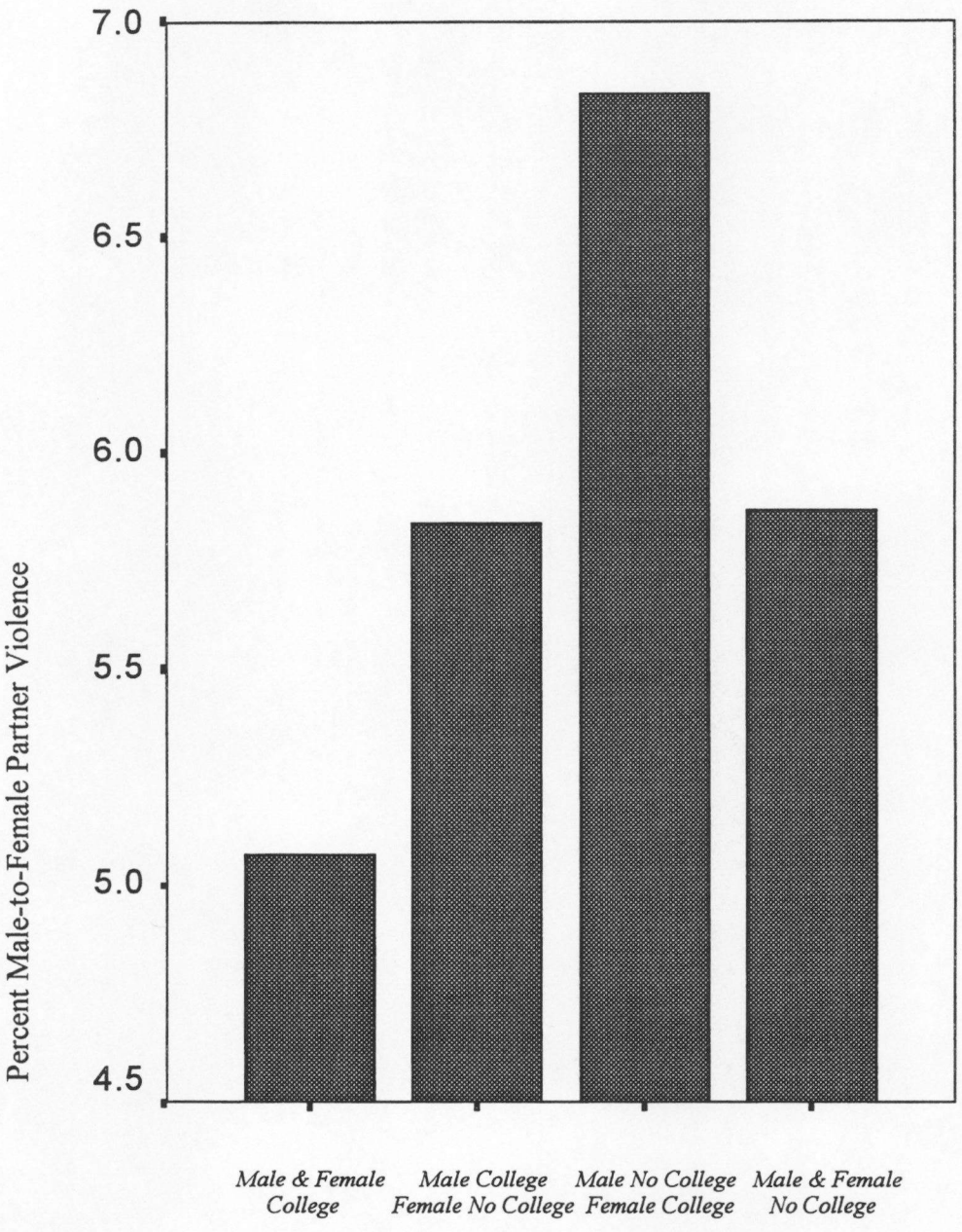
EDUCATION AND MALE-TO-FEMALE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Research shows that status relationships among couples, including gender-role relationships may affect the likelihood of violence among couples (Browne & Dutton 1990, Crowell & Burgess 1996). Males are expected to hold more status in relationships than women. Status can also be determined by earning potential, which also increases the likelihood of male-to-female partner violence (Steinmetz & Straus 1974, Gelles 1978, Gelles & Straus 1978, Hornung et al. 1981, McLaughlin et al. 1992, Kaufman Kantor et al. 1994) or education. It is predicted that violence most likely will occur among couples where the female is college educated, and the male is not.

Bivariate analysis between combinations of couple education and male-to-female partner violence support this prediction. Figure 4 illustrates that partner violence is highest among couples in which the male has no college education and the female is college educated (6.8%). Violence is least likely among couples who are both college educated (5.1%).

The small difference in the likelihood of violence between couples who are not college educated (5.9%) and couples in which the male is college educated and the female is not (5.8%) is likely to produce the insignificant chi-square statistic for the bivariate association (3.20). Nonetheless, results support existing theory.

Of primary importance to the theory is the difference between couples mixed on education. Couples in which the male is educated and the female is not experience one percent less likelihood of violence than couples in which the female is the one who is college educated. This suggests that when higher status shifts to the female in a relationship, the likelihood of male-to-female partner violence increase as the theory predicts.



n = 5361
Chi-square = 3.20
p = .352

Figure 4: Education by Male-to-Female Partner Violence

CHAPTER VII

ANALYSES WITHIN NEIGHBORHOOD TYPES

Analysis up to this point has been conducted on the entire sample of couples assessing male-to-female partner violence between the three neighborhood types. It is indicated in the previous analysis that some of the independent variables may affect partner violence differently within each of the three neighborhood types. Assessing differences within neighborhood types also makes it possible to look at the effects of race on male-to-female partner violence.

BIVARIATE ANALYSES

Bivariate correlations between male-to-female partner violence and the independent variables within each of the three neighborhood types are presented in tables 9 through 11.

Subjective financial satisfaction is significantly related to male-to-female partner violence within each of the three neighborhood types in the predicted direction, as are duration of union, and age. Gender-role attitudes are only significantly related to violence in the highest social disorganization category. SES for couples is significantly related to violence within neighborhoods that are of

Table 9: Bivariate Analyses for Neighborhoods with *Low* Social Disorganization

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Violence									
2. Duration of union	-.121**								
3. SFS for couples	-.152**	.219**							
4. SES for couples	-.009	-.152**	.261**						
5. Race for couples	-.035	-.111**	-.052	-.013					
6. Marital Status	.112**	-.233**	-.133**	-.073*	-.015				
7. Age for males	-.154**	.794*	.283**	-.116**	-.085*	-.144**			
8. Age for females	-.150**	.821**	.286**	-.103**	-.077*	-.163**	.947**		
9. GRA for males	.046	.112**	.002	-.055	-.075*	-.153**	.035	-.001	
10. GRA for females	.031	.190**	-.019	-.186**	-.035	-.098**	.106**	.142**	.331*

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

Table 10: Bivariate Analyses for Neighborhoods with *Medium* Social Disorganization

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Violence									
2. Duration of union	-.123**								
3. SFS for couples	-.135**	.256**							
4. SES for couples	-.043**	-.178**	.237**						
5. Race for couples	.052**	-.058**	-.073**	-.007					
6. Marital Status	.074**	-.215**	-.130**	-.082**	.036*				
7. Age for males	-.151**	.785**	.302**	-.152**	-.047**	-.149**			
8. Age for females	-.152**	.799**	.301**	-.139**	-.040*	-.152**	.942**		
9. GRA for males	.020	.098**	.054**	.011	-.096**	-.143**	-.033*	-.004	
10. GRA for females	-.002	.195**	.022	-.194**	.008	-.128**	.132**	.142**	.382**

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

Table 11: Bivariate Analyses for Neighborhoods with *High* Social Disorganization

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Violence									
2. Duration of union	-.134**								
3. SFS for couples	-.178**	.186**							
4. SES for couples	.004	-.124**	.164**						
5. Race for couples	-.015	-.076*	-.103**	-.196**					
6. Marital Status	.178**	-.266**	-.083**	-.040	.001				
7. Age for males	-.203**	.679**	.249**	-.159**	-.055	-.199**			
8. Age for females	-.173**	.673**	.251**	-.140**	-.032	-.221**	.922**		
9. GRA for males	.093**	.148**	.040	.020	-.118**	-.027	-.097**	-.045	
10. GRA for females	-.081*	.184**	.066	-.237**	-.011	-.147**	.139**	.146**	.404**

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

medium disorganization, but not the other two types of neighborhoods. Bivariate relationships between violence and precursors to violence differ between neighborhood types. This suggests that violence *is* precipitated by different factors depending on the type of neighborhood in which a couple resides.

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSES

LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSES

Full logistic regression models for each of the neighborhood types are presented in table 12. These models include the same variables as the full model does for the entire sample for which results are reported in chapter VI, except for race. Race is included in the following analysis. Since the sample is sorted by neighborhood type, colinearity between race and social disorganization is not of issue.

Results indicate that SFS and duration of union strongly predict male-to-female partner violence in all three neighborhood types. This model adequately explains violence in neighborhoods low on social disorganization controlling for other predictors, but not the other two types. For neighborhoods characterized by medium social disorganization, race also predicts violence. For highly disorganized neighborhoods, race does not predict violence, but female gender-role attitudes do, in addition to SFS and duration.

Three reduced models containing relationships of significance found in the full

Table 12: Full Logistic Regression Models for Neighborhood Typology

Independent Variables	*Low* Social Disorganization	*Medium* Social Disorganization	*High* Social Disorganization
Race			
B	-5.3694	.7448	.0179
Standard Error	12.6739	.2158	.2882
Wald Statistic	.1795	11.9077***	.0039
SFS for Couples			
B	-.1620	-.0941	-.1272
Standard Error	.0467	.0200	.0324
Wald Statistic	12.0489***	22.1972***	15.3985***
Duration of Union			
B	-.0067	-.0056	-.0059
Standard Error	.0025	.0009	.0016
Wald Statistic	7.2606**	36.4192***	13.9265***
Marital/Cohab. Status	.9545	.2370	.1122
B	.5461	.2511	.3508
Standard Error	3.0549	.8912	.1024
Wald Statistic			
SES			
B	.1120	-.1189	.0074
Standard Error	.0933	.0677	.1208
Wald Statistic	1.4424	3.0800	.0037
GRA for Males			
B	.0210	-.0028	.0169
Standard Error	.0324	.0118	.0185
Wald Statistic	.4202	.0573	.8352
GRA for Females			
B	.0286	.0140	-.0526
Standard Error	.0373	.0153	.0263
Wald Statistic	.5877	.8347	3.9663*
	n = 753	n = 3234	n = 676
* p < .05	Constant = 2.4436	Constant = -2.0135	Constant = .8267
** p < .01	Chi^2 = 38.053	Chi^2 = 126.523	Chi^2 = 53.468
***p < .001	p = .0000	p = .0000	p = .0000

models are presented in table 13. For areas characterized by low social disorganization, dissatisfaction with finances and shorter unions significantly predict male-to-female partner violence. For neighborhoods characterized by medium social disorganization, dissatisfaction with finances, shorter unions and race significantly predict partner violence against women. Race only affects male-to-female partner violence in medium socially disorganized areas. In these neighborhoods, non-white couples are more likely to experience violence than white couples. In highly disorganized neighborhoods, couples dissatisfied with finances, couples with shorter unions, and couples in which the female holds non-traditional gender-role attitudes are more likely to experience male-to-female partner violence. As indicated by previous research, females in highly disorganized neighborhoods may not have the resources to leave abusive situations (House et al. 1988). More liberal females, who experience this situation are more likely to be victimized by male-to-female partner violence than traditional females.

Table 13: Reduced Logistic Regression Models for Neighborhood Typology

Independent Variables	*Low* Social Disorganization	*Medium* Social Disorganization	*High* Social Disorganization
Race			
B		.6982	
Standard Error		.2079	
Wald Statistic		11.2748***	
SFS for Couples			
B	-.1460	-.1110	-.1245
Standard Error	.0427	.0186	.0314
Wald Statistic	11.6699***	35.5373***	15.7737***
Duration of Union			
B	-.0072	-.0057	-.0062
Standard Error	.0025	.0009	.0015
Wald Statistic	8.5701**	40.0038***	16.5301***
GRA for Females			
B			-.0458
Standard Error			.0220
Wald Statistic			4.3459*
* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ ***$p < .001$	n = 790 Constant = .1366 $Chi^2 = 30.566$ p = .0000	n = 3411 Constant =-1.1825 $Chi^2 = 131.503$ p = .0000	n = 694 Constant = 1.7564 $Chi^2 = 53.772$ p = .0000

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

This study was motivated by the recognition that existing explanations of male-to-female partner violence ignore community context even though most official statistics indicate that women who live in poor neighborhoods experience more victimization. Current explanations of female victimization by partner violence include individual and couple-level predictors, and some research explores the cultural context in which this type of violence occurs. Studies of street violence indicate that community context influences the likelihood of violent victimization (Miethe & McDowall 1993). Because community context is known to influence the likelihood of victimization via street crime, it is important to investigate whether it also influences other forms of victimization. Accordingly, this project investigated the effect of community context on violence against women by their intimate partners.

Financial well being plays a significant role in the everyday lives of families in the United States. A family's ability to provide food, shelter, clothing and other necessities is determined by their finances. When necessities cannot be met, family members suffer physically and emotionally. The quality of the neighborhood in which a family is able to live is also dependent on the family's financial situation. The stresses and strains often produced among family members by insufficient finances and poor living conditions are expressed in many ways, some of which can be violent.

Families living in impoverished neighborhoods are confronted with financial

inadequacies everywhere they turn - both inside and outside their homes. It would be a mistake, however to assume that families living in good neighborhoods do not experience financial problems as well.

Many families experience some financial hardship at some time in their lives. Why is it that some couples are more likely to respond to the stresses of financial hardship with violence and others are not? Does the neighborhood in which a couple lives make a difference or is male-to-female partner violence best explained by cultural, individual and couple-level characteristics?

Answers to these questions could significantly inform public policy. If a neighborhood's inability to provide social support and control for its residents increases the likelihood of male-to-female partner violence as social disorganization theory predicts, then public policy directed toward helping communities in addition to policy aimed at helping individual families may more effectively curb the violence.

This study combines two secondary data sets in order to analyze the effects of individual, couple, and neighborhood characteristics on the likelihood of male-to-female partner violence. Results indicate that each dimension contributes to the explanation of this type of violence. Furthermore, the relative effects of these factors are strong suggesting that explanations of partner violence against women that include individual, couple *and* neighborhood characteristics more comprehensively explain this type of violence than any single area of influence can.

This study is important because it draws together two levels of explanation for violence that have previously been kept separate in research. The results carry

implications for future research on male-to-female partner violence. Additionally, it is a positive contribution to the existing literature on social disorganization theory. Results indicate that the implications of social disorganization theory are more far-reaching than originally conceptualized.

INDIVIDUAL AND COUPLE-LEVEL EFFECTS ON MALE-TO-FEMALE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Cultural and social psychological theories are often used to explain male-to-female partner violence. Drawing from cultural theories, it was predicted that male-to-female partner violence is more likely to occur among couples in which either the male or both partners hold traditional gender-role attitudes (GRAs). From social psychological theory, I expected to find that couples who are less satisfied with their finances are more likely to experience male-to-female partner violence. Finally, based on previous research, several other known precursors were expected to significantly predict partner violence against women. Violence was predicted for non-white couples versus white couples, among couples from a lower socioeconomic status, couples in which the female has earned a higher education than the male, among younger couples, couples whose union is more recent, and cohabiting versus married couples. Bivariate analyses confirmed prior research on the family. All of the predicted cultural and social psychological precursors significantly increase the

likelihood of male-to-female partner violence.

The effect of individual-level GRAs on male-to-female partner violence differs for males and females. As predicted, males who hold more traditional GRAs were more likely to perpetrate violence against their partners. The role of female GRAs is not significant.

Previous research on gender-roles among couples indicates that certain combinations of gender-role attitudes among couples may affect partner violence more strongly than individual-level GRAs (Dobash & Dobash 1979, Yllo & Straus 1984, Smith 1990). Traditional gender-roles grant the male a higher status than the female, and any factors that threaten the male's superior standing increase the likelihood that he will be violent. When the male's status is challenged, he is likely to secure his role as head of household through physical force.

Gender role theories predict that among couples in which both partners hold traditional gender-role attitudes, violence is most prevalent because these roles dictate that women submit to the authority of their male partners. This prediction is tentatively supported by this study. Couples in which both the male and female hold traditional GRAs are two to three times as likely to experience male-to-female partner violence as couples who hold non-traditional GRAs, or couples in which the male is non-traditional and the female is traditional.

No couples are present in this very large nationally representative sample in which the male holds non-traditional GRAs and the female holds traditional GRAs. As a result, assessing the likelihood of violence among this type of couple is not

possible in this study.

Relations among couples may be influenced not only by gender-role attitudes but also by status differentials in educational attainment. Educational attainment is a source of status. Among couples, the partner who has the higher educational attainment may also hold a position of greater status and influence over the other. The literature reviewed in chapter II indicates that violence is more likely to occur in relationships in which the female has higher education than the male. This prediction is supported by the analyses. Male-to-female partner violence is most common among couples in which the male is not college educated, and the female is. As suggested by the literature, when the female holds a higher status than the male, he is more likely to assert his power by physical force. A lower likelihood of male-to-female partner violence is experienced if the male is college educated and the female is not, or if neither partner is college educated.

The primary focus of this research investigates how economic conditions among couples influence violence against women. All couples can at times be dissatisfied with their finances, regardless of how much capital they have. Financial satisfaction is the individual's subjective evaluation of his or her financial situation. Research discussed previously indicates that the likelihood of male-to-female partner violence increases for couples who are dissatisfied with their financial situation. This prediction is strongly supported in this study. Couples who are relatively satisfied with their finances experience less partner violence against women regardless of couple-level objective socioeconomic status.

Other couple-level predictors of partner violence identified by previous research include age, duration of union, marital status, and race. This research confirms predictions that couples are more likely to experience male-to-female partner violence if they are younger, have experienced shorter unions, are cohabiting versus being married, and are non-white. It should not be overlooked that the duration of a union is influenced by the age of the couple, which may also affect the likelihood that the couple is married or cohabiting. It is not uncommon today for couples to live together prior to marriage, and younger people are more likely to live with partners before marriage than are older people. Multivariate analyses and colinearity diagnostics helped to disentangle the effects of individual and couple-level precursors on male-to-female partner violence in this study.

Colinearity diagnostics confirmed that the duration of union and the couple's age are highly correlated, and separate models suggest that their effects on partner violence are equally strong. Since duration of union is the more theoretically relevant concept, age was excluded from the models. Race was also excluded from early analysis because of its high correlation with couple-level socioeconomic status, but race was revisited in a later chapter.

Multivariate analysis was conducted using logistic regression to analyze the effects of the individual and couple-level indicators on partner violence against women. Duration of union, subjective financial satisfaction and marital status significantly influence the likelihood of male-to-female partner violence, after controlling for other known precursors. The effects of individual-level gender-role

attitudes and couple-level SES on partner violence diminish when combined with the other individual and couple-level predictors.

It is interesting that a couple's subjective evaluation of finances appears more important than their objective socioeconomic status which does not significantly affect violence against women. These findings indicate that the relationship between individual-level socioeconomic status and male-to-female partner violence may be more complex than traditionally recognized. Wright et al. (1999) suggest that the traditional assumption about the relationship between SES and violence - that low SES causes violence - is oversimplified and misleading. Some explanations of violence predict that the opposite may be true. Intervening conditions, such as risky-taking behavior for persons with high SES and strain for people with low SES, cancel out the effects of SES on violence in statistical models.

Duration of union is the strongest indicator of male-to-female partner violence. Because the effects of duration on partner violence might have been inflated by the 25 percent of the sample who have been together for over 20 years, these couples were excluded and an additional model was analyzed without them. Results indicated that duration of union and subjective financial satisfaction are the strongest predictors relative to other individual and couple-level precursors of male-to-female partner violence. This relationship remains regardless whether couples with long unions are included in the sample or not.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

Another focus of this study was to assess the effects of neighborhood characteristics on male-to-female partner violence. Drawing from social disorganization theory, a number of neighborhood characteristics were identified and measured at the census tract level. These characteristics were then combined into a index of neighborhood social disorganization and predictions drawn from social disorganization theory were investigated. This theory predicts that highly disorganized neighborhoods have greater difficulty promoting social control than more organized neighborhoods, and this condition increases the likelihood of violence in the community. This study investigates the effect of social disorganization on female victimization among couples, and assesses the relative effects of social disorganization and individual and couple-level precursors on male-to-female partner violence.

As predicted in this study, male-to-female partner violence is more common among couples who reside in socially disorganized areas than in socially organized areas. In fact violence is nearly three times as likely to occur in highly socially disorganized neighborhoods as in well-to-do neighborhoods.

The relative effect of social disorganization compared to individual and couple-level precursors was evaluated using logistic regression. The results confirm predictions made in this study. Social disorganization significantly adds to the explanation of male-to-female partner violence. In the presence of all of the other

indicators, the effects of social disorganization on partner violence against women remain strong. The model confirms that social disorganization, duration of union and subjective financial satisfaction influence the likelihood of male-to-female partner violence. Importantly, the overall ability of the model to predict male-to-female partner violence increases significantly when the index of social disorganization is added to the model. Couples at high risk for male-to-female partner violence include those who live in socially disorganized areas, couples who are dissatisfied with finances, and couples who have shorter unions. Studies that fail to include neighborhood characteristics in explanations of partner violence ignore important aspects of this very complex problem. Additionally, studies that ignore individual and couple-level characteristics and focus solely on aggregate affects equally suffer.

In order to clarify more fully the relationship between neighborhood social disorganization and partner violence, the effects of the individual and couple-level precursors were investigated within three neighborhood types – neighborhoods with low, medium, and high levels of social disorganization. Bivariate analyses indicated that the causes of partner violence vary somewhat between neighborhoods.

Full logistic regression models containing all of the individual and couple-level precursors including race, were analyzed for each neighborhood type (figure 5). Neighborhoods characterized by low social disorganization - ones that are relatively stable and well off - experience the lowest rate of male-to-female partner violence. In these neighborhoods, subjective financial satisfaction and the duration of union influence violence against women among partners. Couples who are dissatisfied with

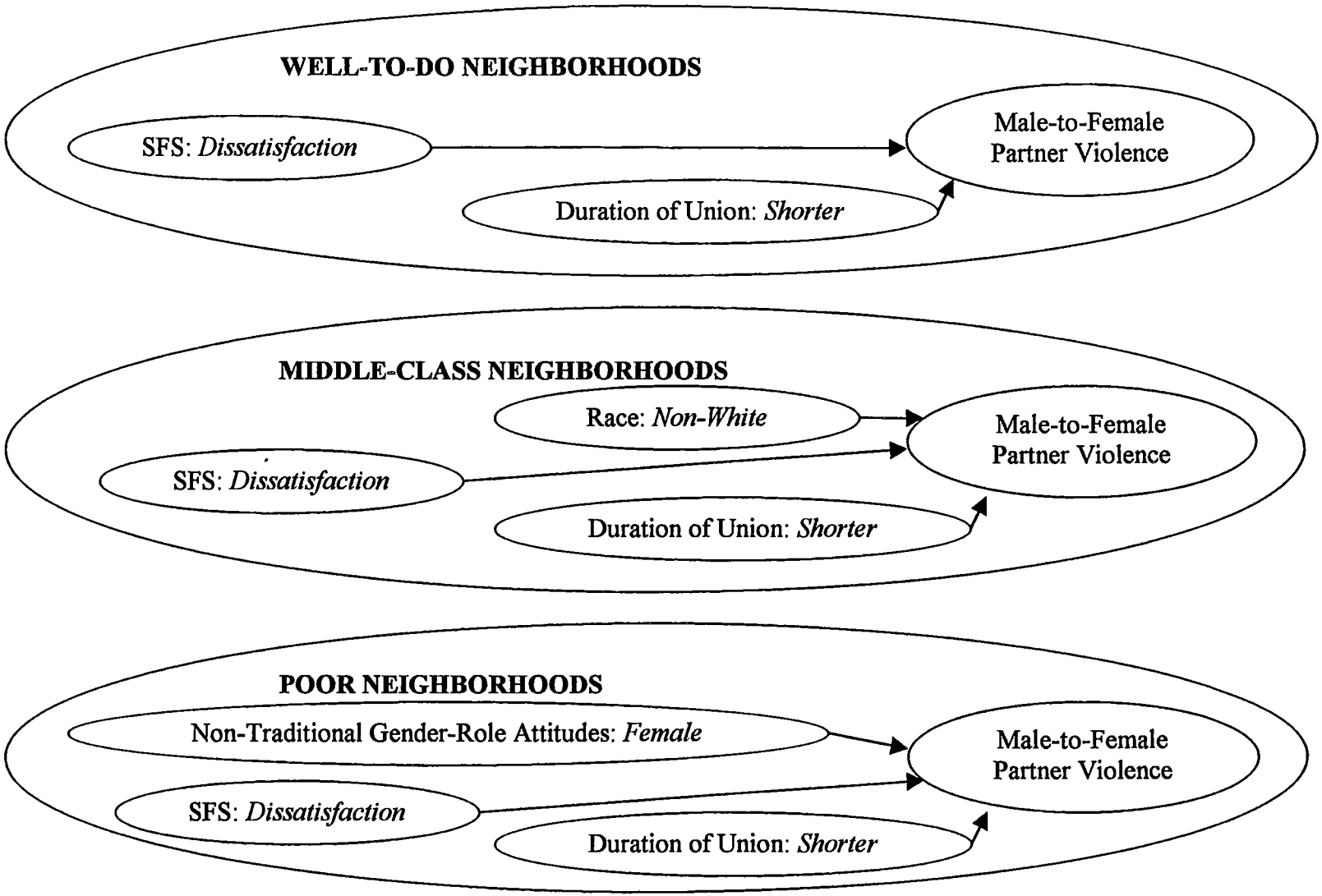


Figure 5: Findings Within Neighborhood Types: Precursors to Male-to-Female Partner Violence

finances and couples whose unions are relatively short are more likely to experience male-to-female partner violence in well-to-do neighborhoods.

Areas characterized by medium social disorganization can be envisioned as middle-class neighborhoods. Subjective financial satisfaction, duration and race influence male-to-female partner violence in these neighborhoods. Financially dissatisfied couples, those who have had shorter unions and non-white couples are more likely to experience violence against women in middle-class neighborhoods.

In the most socially disorganized neighborhoods, a high level of male-to-female partner violence – twice as much as well-to-do neighborhoods and at least 50% more than middle class neighborhoods was observed. Financial satisfaction and duration of union influence partner violence against women in poor neighborhoods, but in these neighborhoods, female gender-role attitudes also affect violence. Male-to-female partner violence in these neighborhoods is more likely to occur among couples who are dissatisfied with finances, have experienced shorter unions, and among couples in which the female holds non-traditional gender-role attitudes.

Two of the couple-level indicators affect male-to-female partner violence similarly within each of the three neighborhood types – subjective financial satisfaction and duration of union. Although couples living in well-to-do neighborhoods are typically wealthier than others, their subjective financial satisfaction has the same impact on violence against women as for couples living in middle-class and poor neighborhoods. Likewise, the duration of union affects male-to-female partner violence similarly regardless of neighborhood type.

The analyses identified some differences between neighborhoods with respect to a few of the couple and individual-level predictors of partner violence against women. It is interesting that race affects partner violence in middle-class neighborhoods and not in well-to-do or highly disorganized neighborhoods. There may be different explanations for the relationships among race and partner violence against women within each neighborhood type.

Well-to-do neighborhoods in this country are primarily white. In this study only three percent of couples living in well-to-do neighborhoods are non-white. The low level of racial variability within neighborhoods that are well off may restrict the ability to statistically determine the effects of race on male-to-female partner violence within these neighborhoods.

No effect of race on partner violence against women was found in poor neighborhoods either, and in these neighborhoods, 69 percent of couples are non-white. Variability does not appear to be a problem for assessing the effects of race within highly disorganized neighborhoods. Perhaps the stresses and stains that lead people to violence are high for everyone living in impoverished neighborhoods, regardless of race.

In this sample, eleven percent of couples living in middle-class neighborhoods are non-white. Significant racial effects on male-to-female partner violence were found in middle-class neighborhoods. One explanation for these results might consider the special strains that middle-class non-whites face versus poor non-whites. Non-whites in middle-class neighborhoods may be more socially isolated from friends

and family. Social isolation may restrict the means by which female victims can escape the violence. It may also inhibit male restraints against perpetrating violence against their partners.

Given the large body of literature that cautions against confounding the effects of race and socioeconomic status, these findings are particularly significant. Research testing the effects of race on violence that lumps together all people from all social classes may obscure the true effects of race. Sampson and Bartusch (1999) recently found evidence that there may be no race-based subculture of violence. Instead, violence is determined by the context of the neighborhood regardless of racial composition. Further investigation of racial effects on partner violence against women is needed that examines the socioeconomic context of those effects.

Another difference evidenced between the three neighborhood types is the effect of female gender-role attitudes on partner violence. In poor neighborhoods, females are at greater risk of male-to-female violence if they hold less traditional GRAs. This finding could be the result of the high concentration non-traditional females in this study. The female GRA variable constructed from responses to eleven questions ranged from 11 – 54, while the male GRA variable ranged from 11 – 94. Low scores on these variables represent non-traditional GRAs and high scores represent traditional GRAs. The mean score for men was 53.3, and the mean score for women was 30.4. Overall, females reported much more non-traditional GRAs than males. The under representation of females with traditional GRAs in this sample may have skewed the results of individual-level GRAs on male-to-female partner

violence. Further investigation of individual-level gender-role attitudes on male-to-female partner violence is needed.

DOES IT MATTER WHERE YOU LIVE?

"Does it matter where you live?" It appears clear that it does. The type of neighborhood in which couples reside significantly affects the likelihood of male-to-female partner violence. Controlling for individual and couple-level characteristics, couples living in poor neighborhoods run the highest risk of partner violence against females followed by couples in middle-class neighborhoods, then by couples living in well-to-do neighborhoods.

Social disorganization theorists argue that the causes of violence reside in part in the neighborhoods themselves and not entirely in the individuals who reside in them. Certain neighborhood conditions reduce social control. Neighborhoods are disorganized when they are overcrowded, racially heterogeneous, experience high unemployment and poverty, house a large percentage of single parents, non-whites, the under-educated, and people on public assistance. As social disorganization theory predicts these neighborhood conditions may indirectly facilitate violence by inhibiting social control within a community.

Furthermore, neighborhood conditions have a direct effect on family relationships. Traditional tests of social disorganization theory conjure up images of

street crime - gang violence, muggings, robbery, and homicide. However, violence is not confined to the streets. The extent to which violence in the neighborhood permeates private lives within the confines of home is revealed by this study. Just as social disorganization affects neighborhood violence, it also appears to affect the likelihood of violence against women among partners within the home.

Social disorganization theory accentuates the importance of the context in which people live. This research confirms that neighborhood context affects the likelihood of violence among partners against women. What this research fails to answer is whether male-to-female partner violence is caused by the context in which couples live, or by the structural conditions that determine where they live. In statistical terms, are the effects of neighborhood context endogenous or correlated (see Manski 1995 for further explanation)?

If the findings indicate endogenous effects, then we could conclude that male-to-female partner violence is more prevalent in socially disorganized neighborhoods as the result of neighborhood context. Men who reside in these areas are influenced by their neighborhood's inability to provide social control, and might not perpetrate violence against their female partners in another context. Likewise, women who are victimized by male-to-female partner violence would less likely tolerate abusive behavior if they lived in middle-class or well-to-do neighborhoods. This explanation seems appropriate since this study found significant differences in the likelihood of male-to-female partner violence between neighborhood types, and it identified some influences – race and GRAs – as being neighborhood specific.

Other evidence generated by this research supports another explanation. This study found that important conditions that lead to male-to-female partner violence - shorter unions and financial dissatisfaction - are the same for every couple, whether they reside in well-to-do, middle-class or poor neighborhoods. This evidence indicates that the effects are correlated. If the effects are correlated, partner violence against women may be more prevalent in socially disorganized areas because the couples who reside in them experience similar institutional environments or have similar individual characteristics (Manski 1995). Bivariate analyses conducted in this study show that highly disorganized neighborhoods are more likely to house couples who are financially dissatisfied and couples who do not stay together long. These results support correlated effects as suggested by Wilson (1987). Consequently, these neighborhoods may be more likely to experience violence against women among partners than more organized neighborhoods due to correlated effects.

Does the neighborhood in which couples live generate conditions conducive to male-to-female partner violence such as reduced social control, or could it be that the concentration of couples who experience similar social conditions into poor areas creates socially disorganized neighborhoods, and perhaps exacerbates the problem of partner violence against women? These are not necessarily alternative explanations. Perhaps both explanations are plausible and should be considered in social disorganization research in the future.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research generates questions for future research in several areas. It extends our understanding of the effects of social disorganization on individual lives. Communities not only affect our lives outside the home as we travel to and from work and go about our daily business, but neighborhood characteristics also may influence family relationships within the home. Analogously, conditions within the home may influence neighborhood context. Much research is needed that examines the affects of social disorganization on social control and vice versa. It is also needed for examining the effects of social control on violence and vice versa. Social disorganization research is weak in these areas and virtually nonexistent for investigating crimes of partner violence against women. Studies that combine individual and community-level characteristics may make it more feasible to investigate the dynamics of social control. These findings also hold implications for applying the theory of social disorganization to other family issues, such as child abuse.

This research enhances the understanding of male-to-female partner violence, and paves the way for new approaches to the problem. Traditional studies of partner violence imply that the best ways to combat the problem are directed toward helping the victims to escape the violence, or helping offenders to see the errors of their ways. Granted, these are worthwhile approaches founded on decades of research. Thousands of victims and offenders are helped every year from programs generated

from the research; nonetheless, these programs ignore aggregate-level causes of partner violence. Poverty, overcrowding, lack of education and other neighborhood and social conditions need to be addressed by policies and programs aimed at curbing violence of men against women among partners.

A greater understanding of individual, couple, and neighborhood level precursors of male-to-female partner violence is needed. Future research should examine the interaction effects of these three sources. Additionally, large, representative data sets are necessary for this type of research in order to insure adequate representation of each neighborhood and family type. As evidenced in the analysis of race and of gender-role attitudes, even larger samples than the NSFH may be necessary to analyze the full affects of individual and couple-level characteristics.

Longitudinal research is also needed. Panel studies hold the potential to enhance our understanding of how precursors change over time and how that change affects the onset, persistence and desistence of male-to-female partner violence.

Qualitative investigation into the dynamics of male-to-female partner violence is also needed. Most large data sets available for studying the causes of partner violence have been compiled for other reasons. Therefore, many aspects of partner violence have been brushed over or completely ignored. For instance, questions about partner violence used in the NSFH ask about fights among partners that escalate into violence. Most qualitative accounts of male-to-female partner violence suggest that volatile relationships exist in a high degree of tension. Although quantitative research indicates that verbal fights often escalate into violence (Stets

1989), qualitative accounts suggest that bouts of violence are rarely precipitated by fights. Instead, violence is an everyday condition of life for many couples. More needs to be learned about the context of violence among couples. Qualitative investigation can inform researchers how to structure questions about partner violence in quantitative studies in order to get a more realistic view of the problem.

Finally, it is important to note that the NSFH, as well as most large studies, completely miss the more serious forms of male-to-female partner violence. Women in truly dangerous relationships probably are not likely to respond to surveys that question them about abuse. They may fear their partners to the extent that they avoid participating in surveys about family relationships. Additionally, many seriously abused women reside in shelters for women or otherwise hide from their partners. Surveys cannot reach these women, and their experiences remain largely unexamined.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

GENDER-ROLE ATTITUDE QUESTIONS FROM THE NSFH

Options were 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree.

Responses to questions 1 and 4 were reverse-coded in the analysis.

1. It is much better for everyone if the man earns the main living and the woman takes care of the home and family.

2. It is all right for children under three years old to be cared for all day in a day care center.

3. A man can have a fully satisfying life without getting married.

4. Preschool children are likely to suffer if their mother is employed.

5. It is all right for a couple with an unhappy marriage to get a divorce when their youngest child is under age 5.

6. A woman can have a fully satisfying life without children.

7. A woman can have a fully satisfying life without getting married.

8. It is all right for mothers to work full-time when their youngest child is under age 5.

9. A man can have a fully satisfying life without having children.

10. Both the husband and wife should contribute to family income.

11. A husband whose wife is working full-time should spend just as many hours doing housework as his wife.

VITA

VITA

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