“SUGAR AND SPICE AND EVERYTHING NICE?”: THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION IN IDENTITY FORMULATION AND INSTANCES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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“SUGAR AND SPICE AND EVERYTHING NICE?”: THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION IN IDENTITY FORMULATION AND INSTANCES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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Thesis

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ABSTRACT

The current study investigated the effects of religious instruction on women’s development of self and gender ideology, and how religious philosophy and affiliation, and gender role ideology affect instances of Domestic Violence (DV) victimization among women. Social Learning Theory grounded the analysis, and shed light on how, through observation and modeling, individuals develop core belief systems. Logistic regression was utilized to study the effect of religion and gender ideology on DV victimization. Results indicate that more individuals who identified as fundamentalist reported instances of having been victimized than did those who were more moderate in their religious beliefs. Fewer respondents who reported a high level of religious affiliation describe having been victims of DV, as did those who professed a belief in the Bible as the literal or inspired word of God. An inverse relationship was noted between traditional beliefs about gender roles and interpersonal violence.
DEDICATION

For my children, Terrell and Tahja, who are constant reminders of why this work is important. For Jaedan, who has been an inspiration to me. For my family, who has believed in me always.
I humbly thank Dr. Baffour Takyi, Dr. Kathy Feltey, and Dr. Robert Peralta for their guidance and patience in this endeavor. I have learned a great deal from each of them, and value their input to this project.
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CHAPTER I
OVERVIEW

Domestic Violence (DV) constitutes a serious public health and criminal justice concern in the United States (Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000). According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), roughly 5.3 million DV incidents occur yearly, victimizing or involving U.S. women over the age of 18 (CDC, 2005). The United States Department of Justice (DOJ, 2003) reports that DV constituted 20 percent of all non-fatal violent crime experienced by women in 2001. Of murder victims during that time, 33 percent of female homicide victims were killed by their intimate partners (Rennison, 2003). While these statistics outline the effects of DV against women, men too suffer at the hands of their partners (CDC, 2005; DOJ, 2003; Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000, Jasinski and Williamson, 1998; Gallup Poll Monthly, 1997).

While women overwhelmingly make up the majority of reported domestic abuse cases, during 2000, 4 percent of male homicide victims were killed by their intimate partners (Rennison, 2003). Also during that period, 7.6 percent of men surveyed by the CDC and National Institutes of Justice admitted that they had been raped and/or physically assaulted by a domestic partner (Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000). These numbers demonstrate that despite the fact that women are traditionally viewed as victims of DV, men too suffer at the hands of their intimate partners.
Most instances of DV, whether it is perpetrated against men or women, are not reported (Clark, 2004; Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000).

According to research, most victims who did not report their victimization to authorities felt that doing so would do nothing to change their situation (Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000). As such, while much information is known about the prevalence and victims of DV, there is much more to learn about DV, its victims, and the circumstances surrounding DV events.

Studies documenting the effects of DV on the health care system in the United States are enormous, and provide disconcerting data. For example, joint research conducted by the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control describe the very real public health concern that DV represents. According to the study, many victims of DV receive multiple forms of care, including emergency room treatment, ambulance services, and physical therapy. The sum total of medical personnel treating injuries directly related to instances of DV number in the thousands annually (Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000). The costs of DV against women alone include nearly $4.1 billion dollars in direct costs of both medical and mental health care (CDC, 2005).

While the most obvious consequences of DV against women are health and legal concerns, victims of DV suffer in other ways. Psychologically, women with a history of DV have been found to be at risk for substance abuse, alcoholism, and suicide (Coker, et al., 2000). Socially, women involved in violent relationships have been found to be more isolated and restricted in their access to support services and emotional assistance from family and friends (Heise and Garcia-Moreno, 2002). Economically, women who
experience male-perpetrated DV are more likely to have periods of unemployment, to have health problems which result in low productivity, and to be on welfare (Lloyd and Taluc, 1999). The startling facts and numbers associated with the victimization of women through DV, necessitates an examination of just why some men abuse to control their wives and partners, and why women are abused at a higher rate than men. It has been hypothesized that the phenomenon of DV can be analyzed and explained by investigating the structural forces which surround it (see Johnson and Ferraro, 2000; Swahnberg and Wijma, 2003; Johnson, 1995; Locke and Richman, 1999). One of these forces is organized religion (Cunradi et al., 2002; Ellison and Anderson, 2003).

According to Ellison and Anderson (2001), certain religious traditions may sanction the practice of DV by promoting patriarchal ideologies and practices. Similarly, a 2002 study of religious affiliations and DV conducted by Cunradi et al. (2002) found that women who rated religion as important to them were at a moderately elevated risk of being victims of DV. These women, according to Nason-Clark (2004) are often compelled by religious pressure to “bear the cross” of their abuse as they strive to live up to their roles as wife and homemaker. These roles are often pivotal to their sense of self-worth. As evidenced by the aforementioned, religious beliefs are not only a factor in whether or not women experience abuse, they also affect women’s response to it.
CHAPTER II
BACKGROUND

Throughout the religious world, gender ideology and roles are generated in response to scriptural teachings, and both men and women believers are charged to adhere to the gendered prescriptions of their faiths. Traditional monotheistic religious values subordinate women to men, and base their ideology on a patriarchal model, i.e.: God as the father-head of humanity (Lindley, 1996; Lummis, 1999). As a result of this patriarchal stand, monotheistic faiths have placed women secondary to men in the divine hierarchy. This gendered structure is explained in I Corinthians 11:3: God is the head of man, and man is the head of woman (Holy Bible, 1995). The Quran, Surah 4:34, states that men are the protectors of women, and are closer to Allah due to their natural “cleanliness” (Holy Quran, 1999). Jewish law outlines their accepted social structure whereby women are to be primarily responsible for the home and family but are subordinate to men in all areas, even relinquishing authority over the home to their husbands. Protestant Christianity, according to Lummis (1999) puts forth the same sort of patriarchal ideals.

Interestingly, each of these religions support women’s divine right to worship God; however, they caution that a woman’s relationship with her creator must be in some way mediated by her male superior (husband or father in most cases). These ideas affect
social interaction, and shape individual behavior, both male and female at the macro,
meso, and micro levels. This includes the negotiation of self and identity, the
undertaking of interpersonal relations, and the maintenance of structural relationships.
This paper will focus on the micro level, and examine the question of how religious
beliefs affect both women and men’s ideas about their gender identities, and their
subsequent interaction with each other.
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL ISSUES ON GENDER, GENDER ROLE IDEOLOGY, RELIGION,
AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Gender roles can be defined as the expectations and behaviors associated with a sex category within a society (Shepard, 1996). Gender is assigned to individuals at birth, based on their physical sex. This assignment, according to proponents of biological determinism, is both natural and irrevocable. It is from this premise that both Christianity and Islam base their ideology. Each explains that God created men and women with distinct differences, and that these differences determine their roles in society (Genesis, Holy Bible, 1995; Surah 34, Holy Quran, 1999). Freud, in outlining his theory of Metaphysicology, stressed, as do both Christianity and Islam, that in order to maintain social order, these natural and biological differences must be channeled properly (Estep et al., 1977; Epstein, 1991).

Both Foucault (1978) and Connell (2000) further Freud’s contention, and state that gender construction is an attempt, through social institutions, to control individual behavior. Marxist/Conflict theory posits that social institutions are formed through and function for the dominant hegemonic structure. As such, all that society is built upon ultimately works for the good of those in power (Ashley and Orenstien, 2001). The
construction of sex and gender, and the subsequent belief systems and roles associated with the perpetuation of the hegemonic norm are no different. The rise of the modern institution of marriage, according to Engels (Collins and Makowsky, 1998), is but one example of how the concept of gender has been used by men to establish and maintain dominance over women. According to Marxist arguments, the rise of patriarchy and capitalism, bolstered by religious ideology that claims biological determinism, has forced women into the hidden role of labor force reproduction (Collins and Makowsky, 1998). This “hidden” identity is shaped for women at an early age, and reinforced through gender play (Thorne, 1993), primary group identification, and religious dogma (Baker-Sperry, 2001). Socialist, Marxist, and Radical feminism also work from this premise, espousing that gendered roles and systems perpetuate the patriarchal model, which works for the good of men, at the expense of women – their social and human capital, and their identity salience.

The construction of gender takes place in many ways. One is through sex-role socialization. Another may be via institutionalized religious teachings and practices. According to research (Thorne, 1993; Bandura, 1977), socialization begins in childhood, and lays the foundation for gendered interaction. Further, it provides the cultural basis for the reinforcement of gendered identity and subsequent roles (Anderson, 2003).

As noted above, traditional monotheistic religious tenets categorize men and women into two distinct and dichotomous groups, each with specific prescriptions for behavior. For example, biblical text describes a “good wife” as one who is obedient to her husband, pious, demure, and maintains her husband’s property and reputation (Proverbs, 19, Holy Bible, 1995). Conversely, the portrait of a “good” husband provided
by the Bible is one who loves his wife as Christ loves the church (I Corinthians, 7, Holy Bible, 1995). Following the logic of both Swann (1997) and West and Zimmerman (1987), and in view of the religious dichotomization of the sexes, women are expected to behave in an explicit way, which simultaneously reinforces religious authority, and bolsters their assigned identity.

Feminist theory asserts that economic, social, and historical institutions operate in concert to support a patriarchal social order and male-headed familial structure. According to Gelles (1997), the patriarchal hegemonic structure has led to the subordination of women, and wife beating is but one of the devices that is used by males to maintain their dominance. While it is obvious that the lower hierarchical positioning of women is reinforced through DV, the hegemonic structure outside of the home buttresses this ideology. The media, the economic structure, and the educational structure all work together to promote and proffer the concept of female subordination (Anderson, 2003).

One area that has only recently been investigated in this realm is religion. Sakalli (2001) concludes that both religion and patriarchal ideology affect attitudes towards wife beating. His study of the attitudes of male Turkish students towards DV against their wives determined that religion played a part in the students’ formulation of gender roles and gender identity, and that these beliefs had a hand in fostering the men’s beliefs that it was acceptable to physically beat their wives (Sakalli, 2001). Other studies (Baker-Sperry, 2001; Regnerus et al., 2002; Guiso et al., 2002; Laythe et al., 2002; Lobel et al., 2002) reveal the overwhelming influence that religion has in the formulation of gender ideology. This includes the negotiation of self and identity, the undertaking of
interpersonal relations, and the maintenance of structural formulations, such as the family. However, while these studies have provided significant insight into religion and gender issues, more study is necessary to uncover the effects that this ideology has on the perpetration of DV.
CHAPTER IV
THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON CORE BELIEFS

Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) posits that behavior is influenced by childhood experiences. Through observation and subsequent modeling, children learn to conduct themselves in socially appropriate ways. The acceptance of religious tenets and display of religiosity provides an example of this. Baker-Sperry (2001) explains that groups which provide individuals with steady exposure to institutional norms and representatives will have sway on later preferences through implementation and/or learning. The family unit, according to Baker-Sperry, is an example of such a group. Children who are exposed to religion and religious practices through their parents are more likely to display religious behavior later in life (Baker-Sperry, 2001; Regnerus, et al., 2003). Likewise, the belief systems that are espoused through religion are learned by children, and carried into adulthood. Baker-Sperry (2001:188) states, “Through the modeling process, children will become religious themselves when they have religious parents.”

Similarly, Regnerus, Smity, and Fritsch (2003) posit that religiosity, like social class, is inherited. Just as social class is reinforced and reproduced through structural mechanisms, religious affiliation and beliefs are framed and regenerated by education, family, and community structures. Mekolochick (2002) frames this idea through the use
of Identity Theory. She notes that structure influences the opportunities for, and commitment of individuals to achieve self-identity, affects the salience of self identity and influences role performance. For example, religiosity has been shown to be fostered in “traditional” family structures. Regnerus et al. (2002) note that children from stable, single-earner, two-parent homes where they enjoy an affectionate relationship with their family and moderate structure are more likely to exhibit religious behavior as adults. Children’s involvement in Sunday schools, parish schools, religious practices, and church attendance are also mechanisms through which religiosity is reinforced, and are measurements through which it may be gauged (Regnerus, et al., 2003; Guiso et al., 2002).
CHAPTER V
HOW DOES RELIGION AFFECT GENDER IDEOLOGY?

The role of religion in our understanding in the process of gender role socialization takes many forms. As noted earlier, Biblical and Quranic texts endorse and reinforce patriarchal ideology and traditional gender roles. Men are seen as the maintainers and protectors of women and women are instructed to submit to the authority of man as a sign of their obedience to God (Holy Bible, 1995; Holy Quran, 1999). Religion has, as a result, proven to be an unquestionable source of legitimacy, and has allowed men to dictate many aspects of women’s lives.

The argument that patriarchy and religion are ideologies which have been used by men to frame the lives of women can be seen from a conflict perspective. According to Hurst (2000), ideologies which replicate the interests of those with power are used to justify laws and existing socio-structural arrangements. He notes that “…education and religion play prominent roles in this area since they socialize (individuals) to become good citizens and play by the rules.” (Hurst, 2000:35). Reflective of this notion, religiosity has been shown to have a negative effect on attitudes towards women. Regnerus et al. (2003) note that traditional gender roles, including the belief that women should be excluded from church office, are more pronounced in highly religious
individuals (Regnerus et al., 2003). Similarly, increased participation in religious practices has been shown to promote less tolerant attitudes towards women and women’s rights (Guiso et al, 2002; Petola, Milkie, and Presser, 2004). Individuals identifying as conservative Protestants have been shown to hold the most traditional beliefs about women and gender roles (Sherkat, 2000; Regnerus, 2002). Conversely, individuals self-identifying as atheist are likely to have more progressive and tolerant beliefs about women (Guiso et al, 2002). Interestingly, Laythe et al (2002) posit that individuals, who display right wing authoritarianism and fundamentalism, more so than those who merely hold and adhere to Christian beliefs, are more prejudiced and less tolerant of non-traditional gender roles. They note, “…Christian Orthodoxy per se is related to the tolerant, love-the-sinner half of the pronouncement, whereas fundamentalism per se is associated more strongly with the hate-the-sin half…” (Laythe et al. 2002:631).

Lobel, et al. (2000) studied the effect of culture (in this case, religious identity) on gender ideology. One hundred sixty 7th graders (80 Islamic Arabs – 40 girls and 40 boys; and 80 Jews – 40 boys and 40 girls) participated in a study where male candidates for class president were selected. The Arab children were selected from a segregated town characterized by strong collective/religious ties. Both sets of children’s socioeconomic status were similar. Once the children were selected, two descriptions of the candidates were given. One child was an average candidate, but possessed masculine traits. The other was an outstanding candidate, but possessed feminine traits (traits were both physical and affectual). The results showed significant differences between the populations of children. The Arab children preferred the more masculine candidate. Not only did they believe him more likely to succeed as class president, they actually liked
him more. Further, they were less willing to engage the more feminine candidate, and believed that he would be less likely to succeed in the job. The authors concluded that due to the Arab children’s collectivistic and traditional culture (based in Islam), any transgression from the prescribed norm of behavior is marginalized (Lobel, et al., 2000).
CHAPTER VI
THE EFFECT OF RELIGIOSITY ON THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL IDENTITY OF
WOMEN

“Religious identity is inextricably tied to understandings of gender and
sexuality…” (Neitz and Goldman, 1995 as cited by Zuckerman, 1997). This statement
illustrates just how intricate a part religion plays in the formulation of attitudes towards
sex and gender. These attitudes play an important role in the development of self-concept
for both men and women. Katz (1960) explained that attitudes function in four ways –
need satisfaction, ego defense, value expression, and cognitive organization (Katz, 1960).
Important to the discussion of religiosity is the concept of value expression, or the
maintenance of self-identity. To explain this phenomenon, Katz states the following:

“The value-expressive function in which the individual derives satisfactions from
expressing attitudes appropriate to his personal values and to his concept of
himself…The gratifications obtained from value expression may go beyond the
confirmation of self-identity. Just as we find satisfaction in the exercise of our
talents and abilities, so we find reward in the expression of any attributes
associated with our egos” (Katz, 1960:170, 173).

Organized religion, in this respect, provides a basis from which individuals generally, and
women particularly, find a blueprint from which to formulate concepts about self and
others. It has been noted above that both Christianity and Islam promote gendered
prescriptions for both men and women, and that those who subscribe to either religion often correlate their adherence to these prescriptions to both their attachment to God and their integrity as individuals. Rowatt and Kirkpatrick (2002) note that religiosity and attachments to God are associated with meaningful aspects of personal affect and personality. They found religious attachment to promote better psychological health, and discovered that it correlates inversely with loneliness among women (Rowatt and Kirkpatrick, 2002).

Wuthnow (2002) notes that religion and religious involvement allows for identity building. It provides the social capital through which individuals focus on the ways that they think about themselves in relationship to others – a dimension of “us” and “them”. Lobel (2000) reinforces this notion in her study of gender discrimination and group identity. She noted that among Jewish and Arab-Islamic women, notions of gender identity for Arab women were much more traditional than those of their Jewish counterparts (Lobel et al. 2000). This phenomenon has also been found to be true among fundamentalist Christian women as well. Laythe et al. (2002) defines religious fundamentalism as one characterized by, “…a sense of one absolute truth, and a sense of a special relationship with God.” (Laythe et al. 2002:624). Peek et al. (1991) notes that the identification of women as fundamentalist Christian is linked to more non-egalitarian and sexist attitudes among them, as opposed to those women who do not self-describe as fundamentalist. The notion of biblical literalism was found to be a determining factor to whether women subscribed to the belief of women’s equality (Peek, et al. 2002; Laythe, et al., 2002). Interestingly, studies, including a 1982 analysis by Powell and Steelman,
and a 1983 study by Burris, found that women, but not men in fundamentalist groups are more sexist than women in non-fundamentalist groups (Peek et al., 1991). However, while women may reflect this type of religious ideology, their gender attitudes may be less affected by it than males.

According to research, women appear to self-identify by focusing on small, interpersonal relationships, and identifying with small groups. These groups simultaneously reinforce the paradigm of gender roles inherent in patriarchal religious systems (Zuckerman, 1997) and buffer their self-attitudes from male-dominated beliefs (Peek, et al., 2002). An example of this phenomenon can be found in the Shi’a rituals undertaken by women in Iran (Torab, 1996). Islamic Iranian women subscribe to the very gender-specific teachings of the Holy Quran, and live their lives according to the prescriptions associated with their faith. However, as Torab (1996) notes, the women engage in Jalaseh, monthly small-group meetings of women. These gatherings are held in deference of, and dedicated to the Prophet Mohammed’s daughter, Fatima, according to Hadith (Islamic prescriptions on every day life); however, they have, according to Torab, become sites for interpreting and dissecting cultural and religious notions regarding gender. It is at these meetings that women reinforce, but also dissect and challenge traditional Islamic notions of womanhood (Torab, 1996).

A similar phenomenon is also noted in Christianity. For example, at the Community of Hope, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, women are encouraged to participate in women’s group, entitled “Women of Hope”. During the group’s monthly meetings, women are encouraged to engage in Bible study and interpretation according to
church teachings; however, they are also free to discuss issues of home and marriage, conversations which often converge with notions of sex and gendered religious prescriptions (Sharp-Grier, 2004). Unlike their Islamic counterparts, the Women of Hope do not challenge their religiously prescribed position; however, the atmosphere does allow them to discuss, and at times lament, the fundamentalist ideology that they reinforce through religious involvement (Sharp-Grier, 2004).

The cases cited above represent examples of how women both embrace and question gendered religious prescriptions. Peek et al. (1991) notes that fundamentalist women often develop skepticism about the overtly sexist attitudes reflected in their religion because of their day-to-day confrontation with them. In place of their acquired cynicism, they develop their own belief systems, based on their notions of spirituality (Peek, et al., 1991). However, when women’s’ personal beliefs mirror more traditional ideology (as is, according to research, the case with biblical literalists); reinforcement of traditional views occurs (Peek, et al., 1991).
CHAPTER VII
SUMMARY AND HYPOTHESES

Based on the review of the existing literature, this paper will explore the effects of religion and gender role ideology on instances of DV. Utilizing both social learning theory and feminist theory, logistic regression will be used to determine whether or not men and women having traditional, fundamental religious and gender ideological beliefs are more likely to hold conservative views towards gender roles, and whether those conventional views render women more likely to be victims of DV than their less fundamentalist and/or non-religious counterparts.

Religion, as noted by Baker-Sperry (2001) is a key variable in the formulation of both identity and attitudes towards gender roles. It is also a determinant of views on DV (Sakalli, 2001). Given the above, it is hypothesized that:

1) Highly religious women are more likely to be victims of DV than non-religious women;

2) Religious denomination will directly affect instances of DV (Cunradi et al., 2002); and

3) Affiliation with Protestantism renders women more likely to be exposed to increased instances of DV.
CHAPTER VIII
DATA MEASURES AND METHODS

The data used for this study are drawn from the 1994 General Social Survey (GSS; N=2991). The GSS is a nationally representative public opinion survey that has been administered since 1972 by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) (Losh, 2002). The survey is conducted every two years employing a split ballot method. This technique utilizes two parallel subsamples of approximately 1500 cases each, allowing for a much larger sample size (approximately 3000).

Data are collected utilizing a national random sample (General Social Survey Series, 2005). Participants are examined in person, with interviews lasting approximately 90 minutes. The response rates for the GSS are generally high (over 70 percent), with the rate for the 1994 sample being 78 percent (NORC, 2005). The main topics covered by the GSS include socioeconomic status, social mobility, sex and race relations, civil liberties, and morals. Special topical modules have been generated throughout the years, and have included work, government, religion, and politics (The General Social Survey, 2004, Losh, 2002, The General Social Survey Series, 2005; NORC, 2005). The 1994 survey included questions on religion that I use in this analysis.

The GSS was chosen for the current investigation due to its national scope and its longstanding reliability within the field of sociological research. The 1994 subset of the
GSS was chosen for this study due to its inclusion of measures referencing religion, gender ideology, and attitudes towards violence. More recent subsets were available; however, attitudes towards violence were not available after 1994. While measures of violence were available in the data, only a small proportion of respondents answered queries about the topic. Given the limitation of the data for DV, the sample size utilized for DV analysis is quite modest.

In the 1994 GSS, whites were overrepresented, comprising 83 percent of respondents. Forty three percent of the sample was female, and 55 percent listed total family income of $25,000 or more.

**Dependent Variable: DV**

In the 1994 GSS data, two items measuring violence were used as outcome variables. These are, “Ever Punched or Beaten by Another Person”, and “Ever Threatened with a Gun or Shot At” (N=510, and N=509, respectively). Each of these questions was originally coded as “yes” or “no”. In an attempt to investigate the effect of having been subjected to these types of physical violence, in addition to utilizing the two variables listed, they were recoded into two additional variables, “Ever Punched or Beaten by Another Person or Threatened with a Gun or Shot At”, and “Ever Punched or Beaten by Another Person and Threatened with a Gun or Shot At”. All four variables were dummy coded due to their categorical status, with “1” indicating an affirmative response to the question, and “0” indicating a negative response. Of the 510 valid responses to “Ever Punched or Beaten by Another Person”, 61.8 percent indicated that they had not been. Of the 509 valid responses to “Ever Threatened with a Gun or Shot
at”, 79.6 percent indicated that they had not been. Of the 510 valid responses to “Ever Punched or Beaten by Another Person” or Threatened with a Gun or Shot At”, 44.8 percent indicated that they had. Of the 509 valid responses to “Ever Punched or Beaten by Another Person and Threatened with a Gun or Shot at”, 13.9 percent indicated that they had.

While these variables are not measures of DV exclusively, they are appropriate for use in this study. According to Carlson (2005), and Langhinrichsen-Rohling (2005), violence of all types against women is most often perpetrated by partners or acquaintances of the victims. Bolstering these findings, the U.S. Department of Justice National Crime Victimization Survey (Maston and Klaus, 2006) reports that crimes of violence are committed by individuals that are well-known to their victims. Further, of offenses committed against family members, the majority are committed by spouses or ex-spouses. Given these particulars in that the measures utilized in this study are markers of violent crimes, they are adequate proxy measurements for DV against women.

**Key Independent Variables: Religious Measures**

Religious measures included items outlining religiosity and denomination. Each is described separately below:

**Religiosity**

Religiosity was measured by three variables which gauged several aspects of religion. Barro and McCleary (2003) note that beliefs about the written word and self-religiosity are independent influences on religion outcomes. In operationalizing religiosity, variables were used that assessed the respondents’ strength of religious
affiliation and feelings about the Bible. Other measures gauged the level of fundamentalism reported by respondents, and frequency of prayer. Overall the items, “Strength of Affiliation”, “How Fundamentalist is Respondent”, “How Often does Respondent Pray”, and “Feelings about the Bible”, had an alpha reliability of .64.

Of the 2878 valid responses to the item on strength of affiliation, 38.3 percent of respondents indicated strong ties to religion. The remaining respondents reported “not very strong” to no religious ties. These items were dummy-coded and used as individual measures in analysis. Respondents who answered the question, “How Fundamentalist is Respondent Currently?” (N=2846) ranged from 32.9 percent who considered themselves fundamentalist, to 67.1 percent who rated themselves as moderate or liberal.

Out of 1953 valid responses to the query of how often respondents prayed, 36.8 percent indicated that they prayed at least once daily, 13.2 percent noted that they prayed at least once per week, and the remaining responses were less than once per week/never. As was the case with religiosity, these items were dummy-coded and used as individual measures during the study.

The last item used to measure religiosity gauged feelings about the Bible. Of the valid 1928 responses, 32.0 percent indicated that the Bible represented the word of God. The remaining responses ranged from the belief that the Bible represented the inspired word to a book of fables. These variables were dummy coded so to allow analysis of their individual effects on the dependent variables.

**Denomination**

The identification of respondents’ religious affiliation was made by preparing dummy variables for the five religious categories: none, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and
other. Of the responses, 1774 identified as Protestant, 759 as Catholic, 59 as Jewish, 274 as no religious preference, and 115 as other. The omitted category in this instance was none.

Control Variables

Control variables included measures outlining gender role ideology ad demographics. Each is described separately below:

Gender Role Ideology

The control variable, gender ideology, was measured by two variables that addressed gender role attitudes. The two variables, “Gender Role Reversal Hurts Family”, and “Better for Man to Work, Women to Tend Home”, were measured ordinarily, with responses ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”, and had an alpha reliability of .582. The responses were coded so that higher scores reflected more traditional beliefs. Of 1916 valid respondents to the question “Better for Man to Work, Women to Tend Home”, 34 percent agreed that women tend home. The remaining valid respondents disagreed.

With respect to the variable, “Gender Role Reversal Hurts Family”, of the 1405 valid respondents, 44.1 percent of respondents either agreed or had no stance on the issue. The remaining respondents disagreed.

Demographic Characteristics

Most likely, other factors in addition to religiosity, denomination, and gender role ideology impact the incidence of DV. As such, the analysis will include the following measures, which have been used in previous studies on DV: race, sex, age, income,
region, marital status, and educational degree (Guiso et al., 2002; Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000; CDC, 2005; Coker, et al., 2000).

Race was measured as “black” and “white” Other was the omitted category. Sex was also dummy coded, and was measured as female. Male was the omitted category. Age was treated as a continuous variable. The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 89 years. Income was also treated as a continuous variable, and ranged from “under $1000” to “$25,000 or more” (income was measured in yearly amounts). Region was coded as a series of dummy variables. The categories included “Northeast”, “Midwest”, “South”, and “West”. Northeast served as the omitted category. Educational degree was measured as a single variable which reflected whether or not respondents obtained a college degree. Marital status was coded as a combination of dummy variables, “Married”, Separated”, and “Divorced”. The dummies were combined to create a variable which reflected whether respondents had ever been married.

Analysis

To test the hypotheses about the links between religion and DV, bivariate and multivariate models were used in the analyses. In the bivariate models, chi square analyses were used to assess or determine the relationship between the religious measures and DV. For the multivariate equations, because the dependent variable was dummy coded the preferred method used was the logistic regression technique. In all, three waves of multivariate investigation were utilized which examined the effect of selected measures on our dependent variables. Appendix I provides an overview of the models estimated.
Table 8.1: Frequency Table for Raw Study Variables, GSS 1994

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Age</td>
<td>2986</td>
<td>18 - 89</td>
<td>45.97</td>
<td>17.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>2982</td>
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<td>1.164</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>1.596</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>2992</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>0.497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>2812</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.72</td>
<td>2.425</td>
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<td>Ever Punched or Beaten by Another Person*</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.486</td>
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<td>Ever Threatened with a Gun or Shot At*</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Sex</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>0.495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Preference</td>
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<td>1.72</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
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<td>Gender Role Reversal Hurts Family</td>
<td>1405</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Often do You Pray</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of Affiliation</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>0.931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings About the Bible</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>0.697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Fundamentalism</td>
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<td>0.776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2.76</td>
<td>0.826</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>2992</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>1.102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dependent Variable

Frequency Table for Raw Study
CHAPTER IX

FINDINGS/RESULTS

Bivariate Analyses

Table 9.1: Crosstabs Relationships Between Religious Variables and Domestic Violence, GSS 1994

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Panel I (HIT Alone)</th>
<th>Panel II (GUN Alone)</th>
<th>Panel III (HIT or GUN)</th>
<th>Panel IV (HIT and GUN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Yes</td>
<td>%No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamentalism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>21.40</td>
<td>78.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>19.10</td>
<td>80.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamentalist</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>21.00</td>
<td>79.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
<td>.637</td>
<td>.907</td>
<td>.369</td>
<td>.908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>481</td>
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<td>480</td>
<td>481</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biblical Interpretation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book of God</td>
<td>30.50</td>
<td>69.50</td>
<td>17.80</td>
<td>82.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
<td>10.20***</td>
<td>1.748</td>
<td>6.122**</td>
<td>5.937**</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Preference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>36.60</td>
<td>63.40</td>
<td>21.80</td>
<td>78.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
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<td>.073</td>
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<td>Catholic</td>
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<td>60.80</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>84.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>2.337</td>
<td>.558</td>
<td>.338</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>33.30</td>
<td>66.70</td>
<td>16.70</td>
<td>83.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
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<td>.062</td>
<td>.555</td>
<td>.026</td>
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<td>N</td>
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<td>486</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of Affiliation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Religion</td>
<td>38.30</td>
<td>61.70</td>
<td>18.80</td>
<td>81.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
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<td>.581</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Religion</td>
<td>35.20</td>
<td>64.80</td>
<td>20.30</td>
<td>79.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
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<td>.000</td>
<td>1.277</td>
<td>.090</td>
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<tr>
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<td>491</td>
<td>492</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pray Daily</td>
<td>30.60</td>
<td>69.40</td>
<td>21.00</td>
<td>79.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
<td>5.639**</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>1.999</td>
<td>1.142</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pray Weekly</td>
<td>43.20</td>
<td>56.80</td>
<td>18.20</td>
<td>81.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
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<td>.150</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>.003</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>510</td>
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<td>509</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p < .01
**p < .05
*p < .10
Table 1 presents the results for the bivariate analyses which examined the links between religion and DV measures: (1) Ever Been Punched or Beaten by Another Person, (2) Ever Been Threatened with a Gun or Shot At, (3) Ever Been Punched or Beaten or Threatened with a Gun or Shot At, and (4) Ever Been Punched or Beaten and Threatened with a Gun or Shot At.

Table 1 (Panel I) investigated the relationship between the religious variables and ever having been punched or beaten by another person. Of the 481 respondents, 37 percent of those individuals who self-identified as fundamentalist in their religious beliefs reported having been hit by another person. In contrast, 41 percent of moderates and 39 percent of liberals reported having been struck. Even though the findings were not significant, it appears from Panel I that individuals who self-identify as fundamentalist are less likely to report instances of physical violence at the hands of another person than their non-fundamentalist counterparts.

Findings between biblical interpretation and whether a respondent reported having been punched or beaten yielded similar results. Among respondents who expressed a belief in the Bible as the inspired or literal word of God, 30.5 percent indicated that they had been victims of hand-to-hand violence. The results were significant at the .001 level.

Turning to the relationship between having been punched or beaten by another person and the various religious denomination variables, Panel I indicates that 37 percent of Protestants, 39 percent of Catholics, and 33 percent of individuals proclaiming the Jewish faith indicated that they had been punched or beaten by another. These results
were not significant, as was the case with variables indicating strength of affiliation. Thirty eight percent of respondents who professed some religious affiliation, and 35 percent of those who asserted that they had strong religious ties admitted to having been punched or beaten.

An analysis of the relationship between the frequency of an individual’s prayer and whether or not they reported being punched or beaten revealed interesting results. Of individuals who practiced daily prayer, 31 percent admitted to having been punched or beaten by another person. The numbers of individuals who carry out weekly prayer were significantly higher. Forty three percent of individuals who prayed weekly also reported having been punched or beaten by another person. The results were significant at the .05 level.

In Panel II, the religious variables were studied against the dependent variable, “Ever Been Threatened with a Gun or Shot At”. None of the relationships were significant. However, as the data presents, individuals who expressed fundamentalism, literal or inspired interpretation of the Bible, religious affiliation, or prayer (daily or weekly) were less likely to report that they had been threatened with a gun or shot at. The results remained similar during a review of individuals’ denominational membership.

Panel III of the bivariate analysis examined the relationship between “Level of Fundamentalism” and “Ever Been Punched or Beaten or Threatened with a Gun” (N=480). The results indicated that individuals who self described as moderate or fundamentalist reported having been punched or threatened with a gun in higher numbers than those individuals who reported as liberal. Forty three percent of individuals who
described themselves as liberal reported being hit or threatened, as opposed to 45 percent of moderates and 47 percent of fundamentalists. While these results prove interesting, the resulting Chi-Square value was .369, with a consequent significance level of .832. Thus, the results were not significant.

The examination of the association between how respondents viewed the Bible and whether they reported having been punched by another person or threatened with a gun/shot at proved to be significant. The results showed that 39 percent of those who believed that the Bible is either inspired by God or the literal word of God reported having been punched or threatened with a gun. On the contrary, individuals who did not believe that the Bible is the inspired or literal word of God reported having been punched or threatened with a gun at a higher percent (50). This initial bivariate analysis, presents an inverse relationship between how respondents viewed the Bible and whether or not they experienced interpersonal violence. The analysis of the relationships between specific religious denomination and whether respondents reported having been punched or threatened with a gun/shot at (N=486) yielded no significant results.

Strength of Religious Affiliation was measured by two separate variables, “Some Religion” and “Strong Religion”. The relationships between each of these variables and the variable “Ever Been Punched or Beaten by Another Person or Threatened with a Gun or Shot at” (N=491) were found not to be significant, but worthy of discussion. In the analysis of the association between “Some Religion” and whether respondents reported having been punched/threatened with a gun, 45 percent of individuals who did not describe having some religious affiliation reported having been the victims of one or the other type of interpersonal violence. Interestingly, but not statistically significantly, 45
percent of individuals who expressed having some religious affiliation reported having been punched or threatenedSHOT at. In contrast, the relationship between “Strong Religion” and interpersonal violence yielded results which indicated that 42 percent of individuals who professed a strong religious affiliation reported having been punched/beaten or threatened/SHOT at, as opposed to 48 percent of those respondents who did not acknowledge strong religious ties.

Similar result patterns were noted in the analysis of the dependent variable and variables measuring the amount of time that respondents indicated they spent in prayer. The results for each in relationship to the dependent variable, “Ever Been Punched or Beaten by Another Person or Threatened With a Gun or Shot at” (N=509), yielded 40 percent of individuals who admitted that they prayed daily reported having been victims of interpersonal violence. The results were not significant under the study guidelines of p=<.10. Results from the analysis of the relationship between weekly prayer and the dependent variable indicated that 47.7 percent of those who admitted to praying weekly reported having been punched or threatened/SHOT. These outcomes were not significant.

In Panel IV, the study of the relationships between the religious markers and the dependent variable, “Ever Been Punched Beaten by Another Person and Threatened with a Gun or Shot At” only biblical interpretation proved significant (sig. = .015). Other indicators of religiosity showed similar patterns as noted above, including Protestantism (not significant), Catholicism (not significant), strong religious affiliation (not significant), and daily prayer (not significant). Noteworthy differences were found in the analysis of level of fundamentalism, Judaism, and weekly prayer.

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The results for the analysis of “Ever Punched and Ever Threatened/Shot” and fundamentalism (N=481) were in direct contrast to those noted in the study of fundamentalism and “Ever Punched or Ever Threatened/Shot”. Only 13 percent of self-proclaimed Fundamentalists reported having been hit and threatened/shot, while 14 percent of moderates and 16.8 percent of those who identified as liberals reported abuse. While the results were interesting, and markedly differ from those noted previously, they were not significant within the parameters of the study.

As noted above, the analysis of biblical interpretation and whether or not one reported having been beaten and threatened/shot (N=510) yielded significant results. Of individuals who believed that the Bible is the inspired or literal word of God, 10 percent admitted to having been victims of interpersonal violence. The significance level was .015, well within the established parameter of p=<.10 adopted for the study.

The study of the relationship between the dependent variable, “Ever Punched/Beaten and Threatened/Shot” and the religious affiliation variables (N=492) yielded results which differed slightly from those observed in the analysis of religious affiliation and “Ever Punched/Beaten or Threatened/Shot”. Twelve percent of individuals who reported some religious affiliation also reported having experienced interpersonal abuse, as described by the dependent variable. These figures are in sharp contrast to those noted in the former analysis, where a greater percentage of individuals who reported having some religious affiliation reported having been abused than their counterparts who did not acknowledge some religious attachment. The end result for the analysis of the dependent variable and “Strong Religion” illustrated that 13 percent of individuals who acknowledged that they had strong religious affiliation reported that they
had been punched and threatened/shot. The results were not significant within the accepted study parameters.

The relationship between “Ever Punched or Beaten by Another Person and Threatened with a Gun or Shot at” and frequency of prayer (N=510) showed that of those individuals who reported that they pray daily, 12 percent admitted that they had been victims of abuse. The results were not significant, as was the case with results for those individuals who reported weekly prayer. Thirteen point six percent of those individuals reported abuse.

**Multivariate Assessments**

Table 2 presents logistic regression estimates for (1) Ever Been Punched or Beaten by Another Person”, (2) “Ever Been Threatened with a Gun or Shot At”, (3) “Ever Been Punched or Beaten by Another Person or Threatened with a Gun or Shot At” and (4) “Ever Been Punched or Beaten by Another Person and Threatened with a Gun or Shot At”. The regression was conducted stepwise, with each block of the models being analyzed individually.

The outcomes noted in the initial stage (i) of each panel mirrored those of the Chi-Square analysis listed above, in that the biblical interpretation variable proved significant. Interestingly, the relationship was inverse, indicating that individuals who believed that the Bible is the inspired or literal work of God were less likely to be victims of abuse. Additionally, weekly prayer proved significant in panel I, and indicated a positive relationship between weekly prayer and respondents reporting that they had been punched or beaten by another person.
Table 9.2: Logistic Regression Estimates (Odds Ratios) of Religion, Gender Ideology, and Domestic Violence, GSS 1994

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Preference</th>
<th>Panel I (Hit Alone)</th>
<th>Panel II (Gun Alone)</th>
<th>Panel III (Hit or Gun)</th>
<th>Panel IV (Hit and Gun)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i</td>
<td>ii</td>
<td>iii</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>.888</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>.347</td>
<td>1.230</td>
</tr>
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<td>Catholic</td>
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<td>.660</td>
<td>.892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical Interpretation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book of God</td>
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<td>.366**</td>
<td>.251**</td>
<td>.599</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundamentalism</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamentalist</td>
<td>1.114</td>
<td>1.292</td>
<td>.999</td>
<td>1.107</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Some Religion</td>
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<td>1.367</td>
<td>1.715</td>
<td>.491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pray Daily</td>
<td>1.270</td>
<td>1.040</td>
<td>2.293</td>
<td>1.733</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.387*</td>
<td>4.071*</td>
<td>1.409</td>
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<td>Gender Identity Beliefs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better for Men to Work</td>
<td>.909</td>
<td>.872</td>
<td>.546***</td>
<td>.480***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Role Reversal Hurts</td>
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<td>.954</td>
<td>1.063</td>
<td>.845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.133</td>
<td>2.742*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>2.711*</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.231</td>
<td>3.030**</td>
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<td>West</td>
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<td>1.308</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>.197***</td>
<td>.250***</td>
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<td>Ever Married</td>
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<td>1.809</td>
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<td>.932</td>
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<td>224</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p<.01  
**p<.05  
p<.10
In Panel I, stage ii, the religious and gender ideology markers were regressed onto variable, “Ever Been Punched or Beaten by Another Person” (N=224). The study generated significant results for two variables, biblical interpretation and weekly prayer. The outcomes indicated that persons who interpreted the Bible as the literal or inspired word of God were 63 percent less likely to report that they had been punched or beaten (OR =.366). Weekly prayer, however, did not provide such an effect. Results indicated that those individuals who admitted to praying weekly were twice as likely to report having been physically abused (OR=2.387). These results were significant at the .05 and .10 level, respectively.

In Panel II, stage ii, the relationship between the variable “Ever Been Threatened with a Gun or Shot At” and the religious and gender ideology variables was explored (N=223). Results of the study were interesting, and varied greatly from those observed in the previous model. Both fundamentalism and “better for man to work, women tend home” proved significant, with respective OR’s of 1.699 and .546. These figures suggest that individuals who self-described as fundamentalists were almost twice as likely to report having been threatened with a gun or shot at. Individuals holding traditional gender work role beliefs however, were 45 percent less likely to report having been threatened with a gun or shot at.

Of the 510 cases available for analysis, 223 cases were included in Panel III, stage ii, the examination of how the multiple religious and gender ideology variables impacted the odds of respondents reporting that they had been punched or threatened/shot. Regression analysis listed significance for fundamentalism, with an odds ratio of 1.56,
biblical interpretation, with an odds ratio of -.368, and Better for Man to Work, Women Tend Home, with an odds ratio of -.785. The results indicated that net of all other variables included in the analysis, as an individual reported that they were religiously moderate and fundamentalist, their odds of their reporting an instance of being punched or threatened/shot were 1.6 times higher than for persons who did not self-describe as moderate or fundamentalist. Additionally, as individuals reported a belief that the Bible is the inspired or literal word of God, the odds of their reporting an instance of being punched or threatened/shot at decreased by 63 percent. Lastly, as individuals reported more traditional beliefs regarding whether a man should work and women tend home, the odds of their reporting interpersonal victimization as operationalized by the dependent variable decreased by a factor of 21.5 percent (Pallant, 2005; Zipp, 2004).

Similar results were noted during Panel IV, stage ii, the regression of religious and gender ideology variables on “Ever Punched or Beaten by Another Person and Ever Threatened with a Gun or Shot At”. Forty-four percent of the available 510 cases were available for review. Weekly prayer and an individual’s belief in traditional gendered work roles were significant, with corresponding odds ratios of 4.914 and .573 respectively. These results indicated that net of all other variables, the odds of individuals who engage in weekly prayer reporting that they had been punched and threatened/shot were 5 percent higher than those who do not pray weekly. Interestingly, Chi-Square analysis of the relationship between weekly prayer and punched and threatened/shot resulted in a virtual deadlock between individuals who did, and did not pray weekly (see Table 1). It appears that multivariate analysis, rather than bivariate, provided greater insight into the affect of weekly prayer on whether or not one reports
having been the victim of interpersonal abuse as described by the dependent variable. Similarly, the results showed that as an individual reported more traditional beliefs concerning the work roles of men and women, the odds of their reporting an instance of being punched and threatened/shot decreased by 43 percent.

Stage iii of each panel lists the results for full-model logistic regression of the predictor and control variables on dependent variables, (1) “Ever Punched or Beaten by Another Person”, (2) “Ever Threatened with a Gun or Shot At”, (3) “Ever Punched or Beaten by Another Person or Threatened with a Gun or Shot At” and (4) “Ever Punched or Beaten by Another Person and Threatened with a Gun or Shot At”.

In Panel I, results of the study yielded significant outcomes for six variables, weekly prayer (OR 4.071), biblical interpretation (OR =.251), Midwest (OR 2.686), South (OR= 2.711), female (OR =.457), and age (OR =.577). The outcomes suggest that individuals who reported weekly prayer or resided in the Midwest or South were more likely than those who did not to report having been punched or beaten by another person. Conversely, those persons who interpreted the Bible as the literal or inspired word of God, women, and older persons were less likely to report having been punched or beaten by another person.

In Panel II, significant results were noted for daily prayer (OR =2.767), fundamentalism (OR =1.988), better for man to work (OR =.489), and female (OR= .199). The outcomes suggested that individuals who pray daily were 2.767 times more likely to report gun violence, as were individuals who self-identified as fundamentalist, who were 1.988 times more likely than those who did not identify as fundamentalist to report gun violence. Conversely, women were 80.1 less likely to report gun violence.
Persons who expressed a belief that it was better for a man to work and women to tend home were 51.1 percent less likely to report gun violence.

In the examination of “Ever Punched or Threatened/Shot, (Panel III) the number of observed cases was 211, forty-one percent of the 510 cases available for analysis.

Although during the initial steps of the regression, several variables gained and lost significance, the results of the full-model regression yielded significance for multiple variables, including weekly prayer (OR = 2.905); interpretation of the Bible (OR = - .280); gender work role ideology (OR = -.712); Midwest (OR = 2.74); female (OR = -.236); age (OR = -.735); and college degree (OR = 1.97). Per these results, individuals who pray weekly were 2.9 times more likely than those who do not pray weekly to report having been punched or threatened with a gun/shot at. Additionally, the results suggested that the odds of respondent who expressed a belief in the Bible as the inspired or the literal word of God reporting an instance of abuse were decreased by 72 percent.

Likewise, as individuals professed traditional beliefs regarding gendered work roles, the odds of their reporting an instance of being punched or threatened/shot at decreased by 29 percent. Interestingly, persons living in the Midwest were nearly three times more likely to report abuse than those not living in the Midwest, and individuals who resided in the South were three times more likely to admit that they had been victims of interpersonal violence than those not residing in the South. Further, given the above-listed results, the odds of females reporting that have been punched or threatened/shot at are decreased by 76 percent than those of males. As their age increased, the odds of respondents reporting an instance of being punched or threatened/shot at decreased by 27 percent. Lastly, individuals holding a college degree
were almost twice as likely to report abuse than individuals holding no degree. As noted above, during the stepwise analysis of the model, several variables gained and lost significance. The variation in significance levels of the predictor variables when subsequent variables were introduced was indicative of a weak causal order (Bahr, 2006) between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

In reviewing Panel IV, the analysis of the predictor and control variables on “Ever Been Punched or Beaten by Another Person and Ever Been Threatened with a Gun or Shot At”, only 212, or 42 percent of the available 510 cases were included in the study. Three variables, daily prayer, weekly prayer, and “Better for Man to Work, Women Tend Home” were significant in the final step of the model. Two variables, weekly prayer and “Better for Man to Work, Women Tend Home” were significant at the time that they are introduced, and maintained their p-values throughout the analysis. Daily prayer, however, gained, lost, and regained significance throughout the examination.

The significance of daily prayer and the corresponding OR of 5.066 indicated that the odds of individuals who pray daily reporting having been victimized in the manner did not report daily prayer. The OR of 5.769 for weekly prayer indicated that the odds of individuals who pray weekly reporting victimization in the manner outlined by the dependent variable were 5.769 times higher than for those individuals who do not report weekly prayer. Lastly, the OR of -.529 associated with the variable, “Better for Man to Work, Women Tend Home” suggested that the odds of individuals holding more traditional gender work role ideology reporting abuse were decreased by 47 percent.
CHAPTER X

STUDY LIMITATIONS

Prior to examining the results any further, it is necessary to discuss the limitations to the current study.

First, while the GSS data set does provide information regarding both religion and violence, it does not disentangle reports of violence in general and DV in particular. As such, results of the current analysis may provide a lesser understanding regarding the intersection of DV and religious identity than would be the case if specific indicators of DV were studied.

Second, the current study relies on data that are drawn from the general population. A survey which investigates the prevalence of DV within the self-identified religious population may prove to be more of an informative and valuable tool than the current one, within which individuals may over-report their religious involvement. Further, the current data is not drawn from national DV data sets. It relies on self-reporting by respondents, which may be problematic in determining validity.

Lastly, the sample size of the current study is quite small. Although the N=510 survey population falls within minimal study guidelines for validity, in order to gain a broader understanding of both the incidence and prevalence of DV amongst the religious community, a much larger study should be undertaken.
Hypothesis 1 asserts that highly religious women are more likely to be victims of DV than their non-religious counterparts. Hypothesis 2 maintains that religious denomination affects instances of DV. Hypothesis 3 posits that affiliation with Protestantism places women at higher risk for experiencing DV. Results from the current study do not support these hypotheses.

Chi-Square analysis revealed mixed results, but overall, indicated that individuals who reported a high level of religious affiliation are less likely to have been punched or threatened, or punched and threatened than their counterparts who reported either a moderate religious affiliation or none at all. The results were similar for the analysis of the relationship between interpretation of the Bible and having been punched and threatened, showing that fewer individuals who view the Bible as the inspired or literal word of God report instances of having experienced hand-to-hand violence. Interestingly, more individuals who identified as fundamentalist and reported instances of having been punched or threatened with a gun or shot at than their counterparts who were more moderate in their beliefs.

Output from the analysis between religious denomination and violence yielded interesting results. Fewer persons who identified as Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish
reported instances of having been punched or threatened. However, the results differed during the analysis of the dual variable, “punched and threatened”, when 33 percent of Jewish respondents reported having experienced abuse.

In full-model regression analysis, the odds of women reporting that they had been punched or beaten by another person or threatened with a gun or shot at were less than men. During analysis of both dependent variables, weekly prayer served as an indicator or higher reports of interpersonal violence. However, biblical interpretation served as a prohibitor to reporting being punched or threatened, while daily prayer proved significant in increased reporting of dual abuse. The gender ideology variables, which as Sakalli (2001), Guiso et al. (2002), and Lathe et al. (2002) note are often indicators of religious conservativism, showed an inverse relationship between traditional beliefs about gender roles and interpersonal violence. While these results appear to fly in the face of the hypotheses set forth initially, they merely prompt questions regarding just how powerful a social control religion represents.

Religious individuals, women, in particular, are more prone to minimize or hide instances of physical violence inflicted by their husbands (Nason-Clark, 2004). Both DV and marital strife often carry with them a stigma in religious communities, where due to gendered prescriptions regarding family, women feel responsible for the maintenance of the familial unit, and are sometimes blamed for their own abuse (Nason-Clark, 2004; Ellison and Anderson, 2001). Pressure for women to forgive their abusers in order to preserve their marriages, and pressure for women to “bear the cross” of their abuse as homage to Christ’s sufferings for the church (Nason-Clark, 2004) is great, and may result
in their reluctance to come forward as victims of DV. As a result, it can be expected that, as Cunradi et al. (2002) indicate, women who are frequent attendees at religious services report significantly lower rates of DV than those women who do not attend frequently.

In addition to the religious pressure felt by women to either cover-up or bear their abuse silently, individuals may over-report their religious attachment/involvement in an attempt to provide socially desirable responses (Rowatt and Kirkpatrick, 2002; Ellison and Anderson, 2001). Both Rowatt and Kirkpatrick and Ellison and Anderson found that individuals, in an attempt to posit themselves in a more favorable light to interviewers, often bias their responses to questions regarding religious attendance and devotion, and domestic abuse based on what they feel are socially accepted values, which will cast them in a favorable light (Rowatt and Kirkpatrick, 2002; Ellison and Anderson, 2001). As such, studies investigating and finding an inverse relationship between religious variables and DV which utilize self-report data may be skewed due to response bias (Ellison and Anderson, 2001). Of course, the above should not be interpreted to say that research which includes the statements of religious women should be entirely distrusted; rather, their perceived responsibility to maintain the marital relationship should be kept in mind when conducting and analyzing the surveys themselves. It is important to keep in mind that in this type of research (as in all survey research), the possibility exists for individuals to provide socially desirable responses in order to preserve allegiance to what they believe (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005; Rowatt and Kirkpatrick, 2002; Ellison and Anderson, 2001).
CHAPTER XII

FUTURE RESEARCH

While the results of this study appear to confirm previous research which indicates that religious conservativism does not result in increased instances of DV among those individuals who report strong religious ties, it does not resolve several questions which may be pursued in future research.

First, during regression analysis, it was noted that individuals who reported living in the south were more likely than others to report DV. These regions, particularly the south, are part of the “Bible Belt” (Wikipedia, 2007), where conservative Evangelical Protestantism is popular. The prevalence of strong religious ties and subsequent traditional beliefs regarding gender roles may account for the results observed. Previous research does support that the region of a respondent’s residence affects religiosity and how DV is dealt with in the context of the church (Guiso et al., 2002; Nason-Clark, 2004). Nason-Clark noted that the method by which clergy in Jamaica, Croatia, and the United States attend to reports of DV in their congregations differs based on societal and community norms and goals (Nason-Clark, 2004). Future studies may delve into the specific determinants of this phenomenon, and determine which attenuating circumstances affect DV and how it is reported.
Next, the current study found that individuals identifying as fundamentalist were more likely to report having been victimized by gun violence, and that persons who against women who identify as non-Catholic Christians. Blohm (2006) noted that women’s permissible involvement in performing religious rituals differs between Anglicans and Baptists. Such differences are indicative of the often conflicting interpretations of women’s acceptable roles within the greater Protestant community. The variation in acceptable religious, familial, and social expression and self-acceptance for women is often related to their faith’s interpretation and adaptation of scripture surrounding gender roles (Regnerus et al., 2003). Peek et. al., (1991) noted that fundamentalist women are prone to hold non-egalitarian and sexist attitudes towards themselves. Given this ideology, they may be more apt to accept domestic violence as permissible. Narrowing the scope of the current analysis to study the effects of fundamentalism on Protestantism may provide more of an understanding of this phenomenon.

Additionally, the phenomenon of domestic abuse among same-sex couples cannot adequately be discussed within the context of biblical reference. To be sure, many of the same issues that bring about DV in heterosexual couples instigate violence in gay and lesbian homes (Johnson and Ferrarro, 2000). However, biblical prescriptions of male-female relationships may not attenuate the prevalence of domestic abuse that has only recently been studied in depth. Future research may take into account the effect of perceived gender identity and its effect on role performance in the GLBT community, with a specific emphasis towards disentangling the relationship between gender role performance, religiosity, and DV among the GLBT community.
While the hypotheses posited above were not supported by the current study and beg the question of “why”, it is possible that in actuality, religious affiliation and involvement provide the opposite effect – a protective one. Future research may provide an understanding not only of whether or not the phenomenon of the protective effect of religion against domestic violence actually exists, it may also extend the knowledge base of the social and psychological benefits that shelter women against violence endured at the hands of their spouses.

Lastly, while quantitative research presents both a snapshot of reported data and predicted outcomes based on that data, a qualitative approach to understanding the relationships between religion and DV may provide a richer understanding of the phenomenon, and may serve to negate the social desirability bias (Ellison and Anderson, 2001) that has been found in previous quantitative research. Integrating a qualitative approach to the current quantitative study would allow for inquiry into the personal journeys of abused women who wrestle with their faith. Questions regarding the response of clergy, family, and the greater congregation to women who choose to disclose their abuse could be asked. What advice were they given? Were they supported? How did they reconcile their faith with their experience? Did they feel obligated to endure? What did they believe their role was as a wife? As a mother? As a good Christian? By utilizing both methods of analysis, future research may provide insight into the phenomenon that has yet to be discovered.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX

ANALYTICAL MODEL

Models I-III (Chi-Square Analysis)

Religion Variables:
- Religiosity
- Denomination
- Fundamentalism

Model IV (Logistic Regression)

Religion Variables
- Gender Ideology Variables

Model VI (Logistic Regression)

Religion Variables
- Gender Ideology Variables
- Other Control Variables