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Dominance in a dating relationship and violence approval as partial mediating factors between violent socialization and perpetrating dating partner violence

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DOMINANCE IN A DATING RELATIONSHIP AND VIOLENCE APPROVAL AS
PARTIAL MEDIATING FACTORS BETWEEN VIOLENT SOCIALIZATION AND
PERPETRATING DATING PARTNER VIOLENCE

BY

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B.A. Sociology, Texas Tech University, 2009

THESIS

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

Sociology

May, 2011

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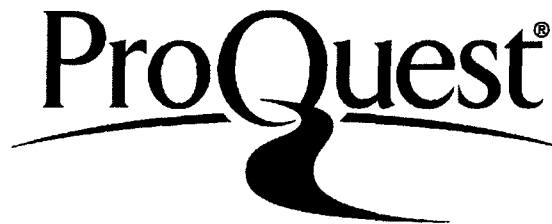
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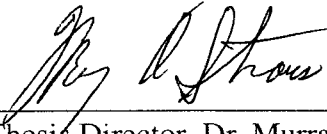
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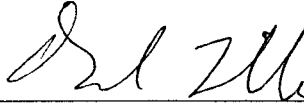


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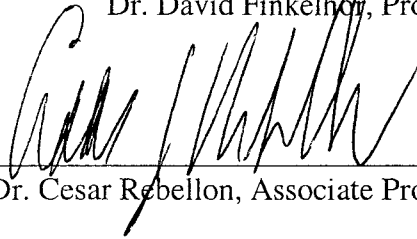
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ABSTRACT

DOMINANCE IN A DATING RELATIONSHIP AND VIOLENCE APPROVAL AS PARTIAL MEDIATING FACTORS BETWEEN VIOLENT SOCIALIZATION AND PERPETRATING DATING PARTNER VIOLENCE

by

Thomas Lopez

University of New Hampshire, May 2011

This study investigated the possible mediating relationships between experiencing corporal punishment and partner violence perpetration and witnessing parental violence and partner violence perpetration. The sample used was 14,252 university students in 32 nations who participated in the International Dating Violence Study. For both men and women, self-dominance partly mediated the relationships between corporal punishment and perpetrating minor assault and corporal punishment and perpetrating severe assault. For men and women self-dominance mediated the relationships between witnessing parental violence and perpetrating minor assault and witnessing parental violence and perpetrating both types of assault for males and females. Violence approval did not partly mediate the relationship between witnessing parental violence and minor assault for males or females. And violence approval partly mediated the relationship from witnessing parental violence to severe assault for males, but not females. In all of the relationships, regardless of sex, self-dominance was the stronger mediating factor.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that violent socialization within the family such as experiencing corporal punishment and witnessing parental violence as a child are risk factors for a variety of long-term effects such as partner violence later in life (Foshee, Bauman, and Linder 1999; Straus 1995). But neither of these two variables, even combined, explain every case of partner violence in society. Not all perpetrators of dating partner violence experience corporal punishment as a child or witness parental violence. And all children who experience corporal punishment or witness parental violence do not perpetrate dating partner violence. Therefore, it is important to bring in other variables in order to better understand the relationships between corporal punishment, witnessing parental violence and partner violence.

Both self reported dominance in a relationship and violence approval for certain situations have also been shown to be associated with a higher probability of partner violence occurring (Straus 2008). It is possible that these two variables may help explain why some people perpetrate partner violence.

Explanatory variables do not act independently of each other so it is also important to consider how each variable may affect one another. It is possible that the relationships between experiencing corporal punishment to partner violence and witnessing parental violence to partner violence are partly mediated by dominance in a relationship and violence approval.

Hence, the research questions posed are:

1. Is the relationship between experiencing corporal punishment and partner violence partly mediated by self-reported dominance in a dating relationship?
2. Is the relationship between experiencing corporal punishment and partner violence partly mediated by *violence approval*?
3. Is the relationship between witnessing parental violence and partner violence partly mediated by self-reported *dominance* in a dating relationship?
4. Is the relationship between witnessing parental violence and partner violence partly mediated by *violence approval*?

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL RATIONALE

Effects of Corporal Punishment

Dominance. A “family conflict” perspective of the family looks at family structure and conflict (Payne and Gainey 2009). In this perspective family members are within a hierarchical structure and sometimes have different competing interests. These interests are sources of conflicts and those with power and authority sometimes use their authority to get what they want.

From a family conflict approach to partner violence dominance can mediate the relationship because corporal punishment is not just a means of correcting behavior, but also a means of teaching children to have respect for authority. This can carry over to dating relationships when people who experienced corporal punishment exert their authority in the form of dominance.

A feminist approach also explains how dominance in a dating relationship may partly mediate the relationship between experiencing corporal punishment and partner violence for *males*. From a feminist approach, male privilege and power are part of the larger society and partner violence is a means of maintaining *male* dominance (Bograd 1988; Dutton and Nicholls 2005). So, it is possible that *males* who experience corporal punishment learn to be dominant by observing *male* dominance. This study does not aim to prove or disprove if male privilege exists. Instead it uses feminist theory to explain

how dominance may be a mediating factor in the relationship between experiencing corporal punishment and dating partner violence.

Violence approval. Bandura's social learning theory can be used to explain how violence approval may partly mediate the link between corporal punishment and partner violence. Bandura posits that human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others, people form ideas of how and when to perform new behaviors, and this information serves as a guide for action (Bandura 1977). In terms of partner violence, children who observe parents who use violence as a form of discipline also learn when it is appropriate or acceptable to use violence (Foshee, Bauman, and Linder 1999). This could lead some children who experience corporal punishment to more strongly approve of violence in different situations and use it to resolve conflicts with a dating partner.

Effects of witnessing parental violence

Dominance. From a family conflict perspective it is possible that people who witness parental violence also learn to be dominant in a dating relationship by observing how parents exert authority through parental violence. This can carry over to dating relationships when the person exerts their authority in the form of dominance. A feminist approach can also explain how dominance in a dating relationship may partly mediate the relationship between witnessing parental violence and partner violence. It is possible that *males* who witness parental violence learn to be dominant by observing *male* dominance in a relationship. Again, it is important to keep in mind that these are two different theoretical mechanisms. Feminist theory states that partner violence by males occurs for men because of male privilege and dominance. Family conflict perspective explains that

the mediating relationship can exist for both males and females when children learn when and how to exert authority when dealing with conflict.

Violence approval. Social learning theory can be used to explain how violence approval may partly mediate the link between witnessing parental violence and dating partner violence. It is possible children who observe parents who use violence also learn the circumstances of violence (Foshee, Bauman, and Linder 1999). This could lead some children who witness parental violence to approve of using violence in certain situations and to resolve some of their conflicts with a dating partner by using violence.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

Corporal punishment and partner violence

Corporal punishment has been shown to be associated with perpetrating partner violence. A study of 1,436 respondents from the 1976 National Survey of Family Violence by Seltzer and Kalmuss found that being hit by a parent as a teenager was associated with an increase in the probability of perpetuating spousal abuse (Seltzer and Kalmuss 1988).

Research shows that the relationship may differ for males and females though. A study using a sample of 1,965 eighth and ninth grade students by Foshee, Bauman, and Linder found that being hit by a mother was associated with an increased probability of perpetrating dating violence for females but not for males (Foshee, Bauman, and Linder 1999). A study using a sample of students from 19 countries by Douglas and Straus found that experiencing corporal punishment was associated with perpetrating minor and severe assault of a dating partner for females, but not males (Douglas and Straus 2006).

These three studies show conflicting results. In some studies an increase in corporal punishment is associated with an increase in the probability of hitting a dating partner for males but not females and in other studies corporal punishment is associated with an increased probability of hitting a dating partner for both genders.

Witnessing parental violence and partner violence

Witnessing parental violence has also been shown to be associated with perpetrating partner violence later in life. In a sample of 1,965 eighth and ninth grade students Foshee et al. found that witnessing a parent hit another parent was associated with an increased probability of perpetrating dating violence for both males and females (Foshee, Bauman, and Linder 1999). A study of students at a large public university (Gwartney-Gibbs, Stockard, and Bohmer 1987) also found that having witnessed parents engage in aggressive interaction was associated with an increased probability of male students inflicting courtship aggression. However, in a longitudinal study that followed 113 children from seventh through twelfth grade Simons et al. used structural equation modeling and found that marital violence was not associated with perpetrating partner violence independent of controls (Simons, Lin, and Gordon 1998).

These studies show conflicting conclusions regarding the relationship between witnessing corporal punishment. In some studies witnessing corporal punishment was associated with an increased probability of hitting a dating partner. In one study the association differed by sex, and in the last study there was no association for either males or females. It will be important to consider how the relationship between witnessing parental violence and later perpetration of partner violence may differ according to sex.

Dominance by one partner and partner violence

Dominance by one partner in a relationship has also been used to explain partner violence. Using a sample of 854 undergraduate students from two different universities who were enrolled in sociology courses or introductory psychology who were unmarried and were or had been in a heterosexual romantic relationship of a month or longer

Medeiros and Straus found that dominance by one partner was associated with a higher probability of perpetrating minor assault, but not severe assault for males and females (Rose A. Medeiros, Murray A. Straus 2006).

A study of partner violence by 14,239 male and female students at 68 universities in 32 nations found that an increase in male dominance is associated with an increase in the probability of perpetrating partner violence by males and females. Female dominance as reported by women was also associated with partner violence by both males and females (Straus 2008a). Using data from the 2002 Cebu Longitudinal Health and Nutrition Survey which is an ongoing survey of a cohort of 1,860 Filipino women and their children, Ansara and Hindin found that husband dominance was associated with a higher risk of physical aggression by male partners (Ansara and Hindin 2009). Lastly, using the Conflict Tactics Scales and a nationally representative sample of Korean men, Kim and Emery found that male and female dominance were both associated with both minor and severe, husband to wife, and wife to husband violence (Kim and Emery 2003). These studies show similar relationships for both males and females but differences according to severity of violence.

These studies show that it is important to consider different measures of partner violence, because not all partner violence is the same. And using a measure of partner violence that measures various degrees of partner violence may produce results showing that there are differences in the relationships in this study according to severity.

Approval of violence and partner violence

Studies specifically analyzing the relationship between approval of violence in different settings and hitting a dating partner could not be found, but there is research that

examines the relationship between approval of violence in certain situations and perpetrating other violence. McConnell et al found that among a sample of high school and middle school students in a South Carolina county holding the belief that violence is justified to meet personal needs increased the likelihood of perpetrating violence against a dating partner for both males and females (McDonell, Ott, and Mitchell 2010). Using a sample of 859 university students enrolled in an introductory a course on families across lifespan Fincham et al. found that approval of violence measured by the Intimate Partner Violence Attitude Scale was associated with later destructive conflict behavior in a relationship (Fincham, Ming, Braithwaite, and Pasley 2008).

Also, in a study of 823 Canadian students boys' acceptance of dating violence was associated with their use of violence with a girlfriend and girls' acceptance of violence was associated with their use of violence with a boyfriend (Price, Byers, Belliveau, Bonner, Caron, Doiron, Greenough, Guerette-Breau, Hicks, Landry, Lavoie, Layden-Oreto, Legere, Lemieux, Lirette, Maillet, McMullin, and Moore 1999). In another study Josephson et al. found that tolerant attitudes towards relationship violence increase the likelihood of perpetrating physical towards a dating partner for both men and women (Josephson and Proulx 2008).

Violence approval in certain situations has been shown to be associated with being violent in other social situations. But, it may be possible that the association is spurious because attitudes may be associated with violent socialization. The current research has not tested a model that tests whether or not the relationship between approval of violence and dating violence is significant after accounting for violent socialization variables such as corporal punishment or witnessing parental violence.

Corporal punishment, witnessing parental violence and dominance.

Research on the relationship of experiencing corporal punishment or witnessing parental violence to dominance by one partner in a dating relationship is scarce. However, Authoritarian Personality research has found that there is a correlation between experiencing corporal punishment and developing an authoritative personality (Hart 1957). And that an authoritarian personality increases the likelihood of physical aggression for males (Schumacher et al. 2001).

Corporal punishment and approval of violence

Previous research shows an association between corporal punishment and attitudes about violence. Using data on university students in 32 nations Straus found that the higher the percent in each nation who experienced CP, the higher the percent who approved of hitting a partner under some circumstances. Other results examining the relationship between childhood experience of corporal punishment and attitudes towards hitting a dating partner could not be found. But there is research that focuses on corporal punishment and approval of violence in other situations.

Using the same sample of students in 32 nations Straus found that the higher the percentage of students at a university who were spanked or hit a lot before age 12, the higher the percentage of students who agreed that a “A man should not walk away from a physical fight with another man”. Using a sample of 134 parent-child units in a primary care-based intervention study Ohene et al found that youth report of corporal punishment as discipline by the parent was significantly found to be “inversely associated with a prosocial attitude toward interpersonal peer violence” (Ohene, Ireland, McNeely, and Borowsky 2006).

It is important to investigate the possible relationship between corporal punishment witnessing parental violence, violence approval, and partner violence because it may explain why some people who experience violent socialization hit a dating partner.

Witnessing parental violence and approval of violence

Research investigating the relationship between witnessing parental violence and approval of violence was difficult to find. But one study was found. Using a sample of 193 undergraduate and graduate students at Middle Tennessee State University Heritage et al. found that as the extent of violence witnessed between parents increased the less aggressive the child victim would perceive a violent scenario. The author suggests that this may show that children who see violence in the home when growing up have more accepting attitudes of violence later in life (Heritage, Carlton, and West 1996). It is important to test the hypothesis that children may be desensitized to violence and more accepting of violence in other social situations due to parental violence because it may explain the link between parental violence and partner violence.

Dominance and violence approval as mediating factors

Research investigating how dominance and violence approval can mediate the relationships between corporal punishments and witnessing parental violence to partner violence is scarce. But, theoretically it is possible that there is a link between these variables. So it is important to test these relationships.

CHAPTER IV

HYPOTHESES

All of the hypotheses are visually illustrated in figure 1.

Corporal punishment

H₁: More corporal punishment is associated with *minor* assault for the total, male, and female samples.

H₂: More corporal punishment is associated with *severe* violence for each student sample.

H₃: The relationship between corporal punishment and perpetrating *minor* assault is partly mediated by dominance in a dating relationship for the total, male, and female samples.

H₄: The relationship between corporal punishment and perpetrating *severe* assault is partly mediated by dominance in a dating relationship for each student sample.

H₅: The relationship between corporal punishment and perpetrating *minor* assault is partly mediated by violence approval for the total, male, and female samples.

H₆: The relationship between corporal punishment and perpetrating *severe* assault is partly mediated by violence approval for the total, male, and female sample.

Witnessing parental violence

H₇: More witnessing parental violence is associated with perpetrating *minor* assault for the total, male, and female samples.

H₈: More witnessing parental violence is associated with perpetrating *severe*

violence for each student sample.

H₉: The relationship between corporal punishment and perpetrating *minor* assault is partly mediated by dominance in a dating relationship for the total, male, and female samples.

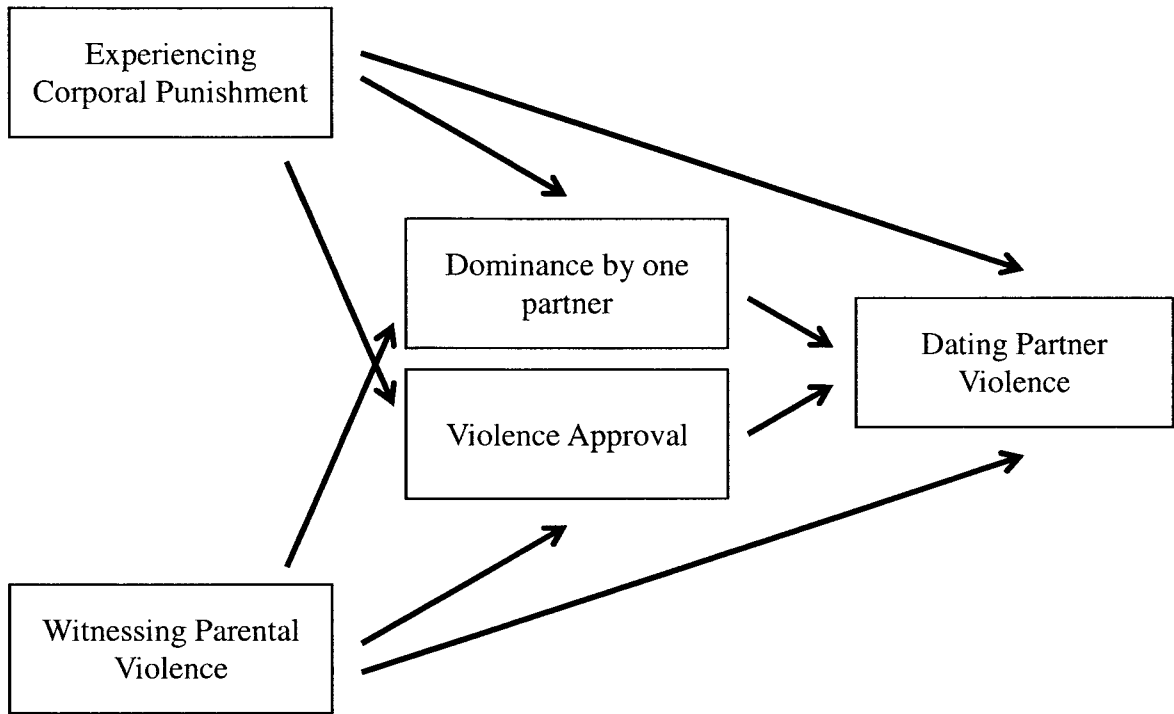
H₁₀: The relationship between corporal punishment and perpetrating *severe* assault is partly mediated by dominance in a relationship for the total, male, and female sample.

H₁₁: The relationship between witnessing parental violence and perpetrating *minor* assault is partly mediated by violence approval for the total, male, and female samples.

H₁₂: The relationship between witnessing parental violence and perpetrating *severe* assault is partly mediated by violence approval for each student sample.

H₁₃: There are no significant interaction effects by sex.

Figure 1. The Relationship between Corporal Punishment, Interparental Violence, Dominance, Violence Approval and Dating Partner Violence*



*Moderator Variable: Gender

*Control Variables: Age, socioeconomic status, length of relationship, GDP Index score, and the Limited Disclosure scale score.

CHAPTER V

METHODS

Sample

The International Dating Violence Study. The research will use data from the International Dating Violence Study, which was conducted by a consortium of researchers in all major world regions. Each consortium member used the same core questionnaire, except for the final section, which was reserved for each member to add questions about issues of specific local or theoretical interests. A detailed description of the study, including the questionnaire and all other key documents, is available on the website <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~mas2>, and in previous articles reporting results from this study (Douglas and Straus 2006; Straus 2004).

Questionnaire administration. The data were gathered using procedures reviewed by and approved by the boards for protection of human subjects at each of the universities in the study, or where such a board was not in place, a Dean or other administrator with responsibility for reviewing research ethics. The purpose of the study and the right to refuse to participate were explained to all students. They were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, and given a debriefing form that explained the study in more detail. The students were also provided contact information for area social service agencies should they need assistance (Straus 2008).

Study participants. The participants are a convenience sample of students at 68 universities in 32 nations (Straus 2009a). The regional coverage includes two countries

in sub-Saharan Africa, seven in Asia, 13 in Europe, four in Latin America, two in the Middle East, two in North America, and two in Oceania. The data were obtained by administering a questionnaire during regularly scheduled classes. Most of the classes were in psychology, sociology, criminology, and family studies. The median sample size is 285 (range = 99 to 4,533). Seventy percent of the students were female because the questionnaires were administered in social science courses that tend to have a large percentage of female students.

About 20,000 questionnaires were administered. About four percent could not be used because of a large number of unanswered questions. The questionnaires with sufficient data were examined for aberrant response patterns such as inconsistent answers such as reporting injury and no assault; or an implausibly high frequency of rare events, such as 10 instances of attacking a partner with a knife or gun in the past year. Based on this screening method, 6.2% of the approximately 19,200 completed questionnaires were dropped from the sample (Straus 2009a). This resulted in a sample of 17,404. Of these, 3,252 or 18% were not in a relationship that lasted at least one month or more. Therefore, when the analysis involves students in a relationship, the sample N is 14,252.

Validity of data. The use of a convenience sample means that results from the International Dating Violence data set describe what was found for the students in those classes in each country and cannot be taken as representative of the nation, or even of students in general; however, there is evidence that the behavior and beliefs of these students reflects the national context in which the students lived. Analyses of the degree of correspondence between seven concepts as measured by studies using representative samples and as measured by the International Dating Violence Study found correlations

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that ranged from .43 to a high of -.69 (Straus 2009b). The -.69 correlation was between scores on a scale to measure male dominance in dating relationships-- the more male dominance reported by the students in this study, the lower the score on the Gender Empowerment Measure published by the United Nations Development Program (United Nations Development 2007).

Measures

Corporal punishment. The Personal and Relationship Profile was used to measure corporal punishment (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman 1999 (Revised 2007)). Two questions were asked: "I was spanked or hit a lot by my parents before age 12" and "When I was a teenager, I was hit a lot by my mother or father." The response categories are 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman 1999 (Revised 2007)). Each measure of corporal punishment is used to create a scale. Values range from 0 to 6.

Witnessing parental violence. Witnessing parental violence as a child was measured by the question "When I was a kid, I saw my mother or father kick, punch, or beat up their partner." The response categories are 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman 1999 (Revised 2007)). Validity has not been demonstrated for the measure of witnessing parental violence.

Dominance in a dating relationship. Dominance was measured by the Dominance Scale of the Personal and Relationships Profile (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman 1999 (Revised 2007)), which measures three aspects of dominance: authority, disparagement, and restrictiveness. Each dimension is measured by

three questions. Examples of questions asked are “Sometimes I have to remind my partner of who’s boss”, “My partner is basically a good person”, and “I have a right to know everything my partner does.” The response categories are 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree. The alpha coefficient of reliability for all nine questions using the International Dating Violence Study sample is .55 (.58 for male students and .54 for female students) (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman 1996). Even though the scale created has values that range from zero to nine a dichotomous variable was used in the regression analysis where 1 = high dominance and 0 = not. This variable was created by assigning scores into quintiles and using the highest quintile as a measure of high dominance. This allowed for logistic regression to be used in this analysis, which is required for the path analysis testing the possible mediating relationships.

Validity of the Dominance Scale. A standard way of examining the validity of a measure is to determine the degree to which it is correlated with another measure of known validity. This was done by correlating the Dominance scale with scores for the United Nations Gender Empowerment Index (as given in the Human Development Report 2005, an independent report commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme [<http://hdr.undp.org/>]) (Straus 2009b). The Gender Empowerment scores were added to the data file for the 29 nations included in both this study and the UN study. Partial correlation analysis, controlling for the mean score of students in each national setting on the Limited Disclosure Scale, were computed. The partial correlation of $-.69$ indicates that the more Gender Empowerment, the lower the Dominance score of the men in this study. For example, Tanzania has the lowest Gender Empowerment score

and also the highest Dominance score of the 29 national settings where both measures were available; and Sweden has the highest Gender Empowerment score and the lowest Dominance scale score. Thus, the Dominance scale scores for the men in this study are highly consistent with the widely used Gender Empowerment Measure. The alpha coefficient for the overall all scale is .67. For males the alpha coefficient is .69, and it is .66 for females.

Violence approval. Violence approval was measured by the Violence Approval Scale of the Personal and Relationships Profile. This scale measures the “extent to which use of physical force is acceptable in a variety of interpersonal situations” (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman 1999 (Revised 2007)). It consists of three subscales. Examples of questions asked are “I can think of a situation when I would approve of a wife slapping a husband’s face”, “Once sex gets past a certain point, a man can’t stop himself until he is satisfied”, and “A man should not walk away from a physical fight with another man”. The response categories are 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree. The alpha coefficient of reliability for all nine questions using the International Dating Violence Study sample is .72 (Douglas 2006). Even though the scale created has values that range from zero to ten a dichotomous variable was used in the regression analysis where 1 = in the highest quintile of violence approval and 0 = not. This variable was created by assigning scores into quintiles and using the highest quintile as a measure of high dominance. This allowed for logistic regression to be used in this analysis.

Partner violence. Physical assault was measured by the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS2) (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman 1996). Students were asked to

respond to items that measure minor and severe assault. For minor assault, questions include “I threw something at my partner that could hurt, twisted my partner’s arm or hair, pushed or shoved my partner, grabbed my partner,” and “slapped my partner.” Items that measure severe assault include “I used a knife or gun on my partner, punched or hit my partner with something that could hurt, choked my partner, slammed my partner against a wall, beat up my partner, burned or scalded my partner on purpose,” and “kicked my partner.” The response categories ranged from “This has never happened” to “More than 20 times in the past year.” For this study participants will be classified as having 0 = perpetrated no assault, 1 = perpetrated minor assault (only), and 2 = perpetrated severe assault. The alpha coefficient for the entire physical assault scale is .86 (Straus 2004). The validity of the CTS have been shown in hundreds of studies, mostly in North America, but also in many other countries, and in studies by the World Health Organization and many other organizations (Archer and Webb 2006; Straus 1990; Straus 2004).

Control Variables

Age. It is important to control for age because research has shown that younger ages are associated with more violent crime such as partner violence (Stets and Straus 1989).

Relationship length. It is important to control for the length of time couples had been together because relationships change over time. The length of the relationships varied greatly. Only 9.7% had been in their current relationship for the minimum length to be included in the study, one month, and 38% had been in their current relationships from 2 to 12 months (Straus 2008).

Socioeconomic status. It is important to control for the socioeconomic status (SES) of a student's family because SES can be correlated with the key variables of the study. The SES scale for this study combines father's education, mother's education, and family income. Because income has such different values in different nations, and because years of education may have different meanings in different nations, it was not appropriate to use raw scores for these variables. Instead, the SES of each student was measured relative to others at the student's university. This was done by first transforming the three SES variables into z-scores for the site, summing the three of them, and then calculating the z-score of that sum. The result is a scale that has a mean of zero and a standard deviation of 1 for each of the nations in the study. This scale cannot be used to compare nations. It measures SES as the number of standard deviations each student was above or below the mean of his or her respective site (Straus and International Dating Violence Research Consortium 2004).

Gross Domestic Product Index. The GDP index (United Nations Development 2007) is calculated using the adjusted GDP per capita (PPP US\$). GDP per capita is the total value of goods and services produced by a country in a year and is measured in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) in order to account for price differences between countries. Therefore, it better reflects people's living standards than using a traditional exchange rate. In theory 1 PPP dollar has the same purchasing power in the domestic economy of a country as 1 U.S. dollar has in the U.S. economy. The GDP Index is computed using an income of \$40,000 (PPP US\$) per capita as a maximum goalpost and \$100.00 (PPP US\$) is the minimum goalpost. To obtain the index for each nation the log of the GDP per capita of a nation is divided by a log of 40,000. The following formula is

used:

$$\text{GDP Index} = \frac{\log(\text{Nation GDP}) - \log(100)}{\log(40,000) - \log(100)}$$

Limited Disclosure Scale. Differences in self-reported criminal behavior between groups could reflect differences in willingness to report socially undesirable behaviors as much or more than real differences in crime. To deal with this threat to validity, we controlled for scores on a scale which measures the tendency to avoid reporting socially undesirable behavior -- the Limited Disclosure scale of the Personal and Relationships Profile (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman 1999 (Revised 2007); Straus and Mouradian 1999). This is a 13-item scale asking about behaviors and emotions that are slightly undesirable but true of most people, such as “I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.” The more items a participant denies, the more likely a participant will avoid reporting partner violence. The response categories range from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree.

Method of analysis

The analysis will begin with descriptive statistics using cross tabulations and an analysis using bivariate correlations. Even though the categories for the measure of assault used in this study seem to be ordered there is reason to believe that minor assault and severe assault are two similar, but not ordered phenomena (Johnson and Leone 2005). So, a multinomial logistic regression will be used with partner violence as the dependent variable. The reference category used will be no partner assault. This will allow for easier comparison. Then logistic regression will be used with violence approval and dominance as the dependent variables since they are binary variables.

CHAPTER VI

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN STUDY VARIABLES

Independent and dependent variables

Corporal punishment. The first row in Table 1 shows that 19.9% of students in the study were “spanked or hit a lot” before the age of 12. Although a prevalence rate of being “spanked or hit a lot” for children less than 12 years of age could not be found in another study, one study, using a nationwide representative sample of 1,213 respondents, found that 44% of children 8 to 10 years old reported being corporally punished (Martin 2006). Another U.S. national representative study found that 64% of mothers reported being corporally punished (Giles-Sims, Straus, and Sugarman 1995). The rate of 64% could be an underestimation because of the question asked. Students were asked if they agreed to experiencing a lot of corporal punishment instead of experiencing any amount of corporal punishment under the age of 12.

The first row in Table 1 also shows that a higher percentage of males (23.2%) than females (18.5%) were “spanked or hit a lot” before the age of 12. A study of U.S. children using Gallup Poll data shows similar results by gender. Boys experience corporal punishment at a higher rate than girls (65% versus 58%) (Straus and Stewart 1999). A study of 1-11 year old boys and girls conducted by Day also found that males experience corporal punishment at a higher rate than girls (Day, Peterson, and McCracken 1998).

The second row of Table 1 presents rates of CP for teenagers. It shows that 7.9%

of the students were “spanked or hit a lot” as a teenager. Males were hit at a higher rate than females (9.9% versus 7.0%) as teenagers. A similar rate was found in a study of 6,002 families involved in the 1985 National Family Violence Survey. Straus and Kantor found that 17% of the adults were corporally punished thirty or more times as a teenager at a rate of 5% and 3% corporally punished their teenage child 30 or more times (Straus and Kaufman Kantor 1994).

The third row of Table 1 presents the mean corporal punishment scale score by gender. Even though the mean score for males (1.3) is slightly larger than the mean score for females (1.0) the difference is not statistically significant as shown by the chi-square test.

Witnessing parental violence. The third row shows that 13.7% of students in this study reported seeing their mother or father kick, punch, or beat up a partner. The difference between the rates of males and females who saw their mother or father “kick, punch, or beat up a partner” is not significant. This is similar to previous studies. In a study of 1,313 university students enrolled in psychology courses 10% of the sample witnessed parental violence as a child (Straus 2009c). Straus found that male students witnessed a parent “push, shove, slap, punch or kick, or beat up a partner” at a rate of 9.7% versus a rate of 10.4% for female students. The authors does not state whether the difference between males and females witnessing parental violence as a child is significant or not.

Assault. The fourth row shows that 18% of students in the study reported perpetrating minor assault on a partner. Males perpetrate only minor assault of a partner at a lower rate than females (16% versus 20%). This gender difference is consistent with

other studies showing that females perpetrate assault at equal or higher rates than males. For example, an analysis using data from the National Comorbidity Study (NCS) found that females perpetrated minor assault at a slightly higher rate than males (17.7% versus 17.4), but the difference is not statistically significant (Kessler, Molnar, Feurer, and Appelbaum 2001).

The results are in contrast to the belief that men perpetrate violence at a higher rate than females but are supported by over 200 studies showing that females perpetrate assault, both minor and severe at equal or higher rates (Archer 2002; Fiebert 2004). The last row shows that 10% of the students severely assaulted a partner is 10%. Males perpetrate severe assault at a lower rate than females (8% versus 11%). The 1985 National Violence Survey found similar results (Straus 2001). Both the female and male rates for severe assault (3% versus 5%) are lower than the rates in this study, but the rate of women perpetrating severe violence is higher than the rate of male perpetration in both studies. This is also inconsistent with the widespread idea that men are the perpetrators of assault and women are victims.

Mediating variables

Dominance. The first row in Table 2 shows the mean percentage score for the overall dominance scale is 31.32. This means that on average each person agrees to 31% of the items in the 9-item overall dominance scale. Males have a slightly higher mean score than women (31.82 versus 31.12). The difference is statistically significant. This finding is in contrast to numerous studies comparing relationship dominance by men and women (Ehrensaft and Vivian 1999; Felson and Outlaw 2007; Laroche 2005; Oswald and Russell 2006; Stets 1991; Stets and Hammons 2002). These studies show no difference.

The second row in Table 2 shows the percent of students who are in the highest quintile of dominance. In other words, the second row shows the percentage of students that are the most dominant in a relationship. 17.87% of all students are in the highest quintile of dominance. More males than females are in the highest quintile (18.91 versus 16.76). The difference is statistically significant. While studies have shown overall relationship dominance does not differ by gender it is assumed that males would have a higher proportion of high dominance (I need a source). The data from this study supports that idea.

Violence Approval. The third row in Table 2 shows the mean percentage score for the overall violence approval scale is 30.98. This means that on average each person agrees to 30.98% of the items in the 9-item overall violence approval scale. Males have a higher mean score than women (36.44 versus 28.79). The difference is statistically significant. No research could be found examining the extent of violence approval by sex.

The last row in Table 2 shows the percent of students who are in the highest quintile of violence approval. In other words, the last row shows the percentage of students that approve of violence the most. 19.89% of all students are in the highest quintile of dominance. More males than females are in the highest quintile (29.38 versus 16.09). The difference is statistically significant. This difference in violence approval is consistent with previous studies (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz 1980 (2006); Straus, Kaufman Kantor, and Moore 1997). For example, using data from four different studies that use the same measure of violence approval Straus found that a higher percentage of males approve of violence than females (16.1% versus 11.6%) (Straus, Kaufman Kantor, and Moore 1997).

Control Variables

Age and Relationship Length. The first row shows the minimum age of students in this study is 18 years old and the maximum is 55 years old. It also shows the mean age of the students in this study is 23.11. The second row shows the minimum length of a relationship considered in this study is less than one month and the maximum length of relationship is 50 months.

Table 1. Prevalence of Independent and Dependent Variables

Measure	% Agree or Strongly Agree			χ^2	<i>p</i>
	Total	Males	Females		
Spanked or hit a lot before age 12	19.9	23.2	18.5	50.3	<.001
Spanked or hit a lot as a teenager	7.9	9.9	7	42.6	<.001
Corporal punishment scale (mean)	1.1	1.3	1.0	0.59	.444
Saw mother or father kick, punch, or beat up a partner	13.7	13.3	13.8	0.96	0.327
Perpetrated minor assault (only)	18.9	16.3	20	71.2	<.001
Perpetrate severe assault	10.4	8	11.3	71.2	<.001

N=14,252

Table 2. Prevalence of High Dominance and Violence Approval

Measure		Total	Males	Females		<i>p</i>
Dominance	Mean	1.98	1.96	1.99	F = 1.50	0.22
	% High*	17.37	18.91	16.76	F=8.45, $\chi^2=9.41$	<.01
Violence Approval	Mean	2.74	3.40	2.47	F = 66.48	<.001
	% High*	19.89	29.38	16.09	F= 953.2, $\chi^2=323$	<.001

N=14,252

*Percent in highest quintile of scale

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Control Variables

Measure	Mean	Std. Dev.	Median	Min	Max
Age (Years)	23.11	6.26	21	18	55
Relationship Length (months)	14.46	9.03	18	0.6	50
Limited Disclosure	6.97	2.65	7	0	13
Socioeconomic Status (deciles)	5.60	2.87	6	1	10
GDP Index Score	0.90	0.13	0.96	0.32	1

N=14,252

CHAPTER VII

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Relation of perpetrating partner violence to the independent variables

In Table 4, column one, the section labeled independent variables shows the correlations between the degree of assault and the independent variables in Figure 1. All the relationships are statistically significant. First, the more strongly students in the study agree that they experienced corporal punishment the more severe the level of assault perpetrated. Second, the more strongly students in the study agreed that they witnessed parental violence as a child the more severe the level of assault perpetration.

Relation of perpetrating partner violence to the mediating variables

The next section in column one shows the correlations between degree of assault and the mediating variables in Figure 1. Both relationships are statistically significant. First, the more dominance by one partner the more severe the level of assault. Second, the more approval of violence increased the more severe the level of assault perpetration.

Relation of the independent variables to the mediating variables

Row 4 of Table 4 shows the correlations between dominance and the independent variables shown in Figure 1. Both relationships are statistically significant. First, the more strongly students in the study agreed that they experienced corporal punishment the more dominance by one partner. And the more strongly students in the study agreed that they witnessed interparental violence as a child the more dominance by one partner.

Row 5 of Table 4 shows the correlations between violence approval and the independent variables shown in Figure 1. Both relationships are statistically significant. First, the more strongly students in the study agreed that they experienced corporal punishment the more approval of violence in certain situations. Lastly, the more strongly students in the study agreed that they witnessed parental violence as a child the more approval.

Table 4. Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Dependent Variable											
1. Degree of assault	-										
Independent Variables											
2. Corporally Punished	.13**	-									
3. Witnessed Violence	.10**	.35**	-								
Mediating Variables											
4. Dominance	.20**	.16**	.13**	-							
5. Violence Approval	.13**	.20**	.11**	.25**	-						
Control Variables											
6. Female	.07**	-.09**	-.01**	-.02**	-.18**	-					
7. Age	-.06**	.00	.03	-.05**	-.06**	.01	-				
8. Relationship Length	.13**	-.03**	-.02**	-.01	-.06**	.12**	.20**	-			
9. SES	.00	-.06**	-.11**	-.02	.01	-.05**	-.10**	-.05**	-		
10. Nation GDP	-.05*	-.08**	-.13**	-.23**	-.23**	.06**	.07**	.05**	-.03**	-	
11. Limited Disclosure	-.18**	-.15**	-.07**	-.15**	-.18**	.04**	.04**	.06**	-.03**	-.01	-
Mean	0.40	1.17	1.43	31.32	30.98	1.71	23.12	14.46	5.60	0.90	6.97
Standard Deviation	0.67	1.36	0.83	12.85	14.83	0.45	6.28	9.03	2.87	0.13	2.65

*p<.05, **p<.01

CHAPTER VIII

LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The first half of this section focuses on the model with minor assault as the dependent variable. And the second half repeats the analysis using severe assault as the dependent variable.

Corporal punishment and perpetrating minor assault

Direct effects. Figure 2 gives the odds ratios for the model with minor assault as the dependent variable. The path from corporal punishment to minor assault shows that each unit increase in corporal punishment is associated with a 7% increase in the likelihood of minor assault perpetration for the total sample, 7% for the male sample and 7% for the female sample. Thus, the effect of corporal punishment does not differ by sex. The findings support the hypothesis that an increase in corporal punishment is associated with an increase in the likelihood of minor assault for each student sample.

Indirect effects. The path from corporal punishment to high dominance shows each unit increase in corporal punishment increases the likelihood of high dominance in a dating relationship 19% for the total student sample, 25% for the males sample, and 16% for the female sample. Even though the increases of likelihood for males and females look different, the difference is not significant. In fact there is only one relationship that has a moderating effect by sex where the increase in likelihood differs by sex. This will be discussed in a later section.

The path from high dominance by a partner to minor assault shows that high

dominance by a partner is associated with a 70% increase in the likelihood of perpetrating minor assault for the total student sample, 56% for the male sample, and 77% for the female sample. There is no difference by sex. These findings support the hypothesis that the relationship between corporal punishment and minor assault is partly mediated by high dominance by a partner for each student sample.

The path from corporal punishment to violence approval shows that each unit increase in corporal punishment is associated with a 28% increase in the likelihood of high violence approval for the total student sample, 27% for the males, and 30% for the females. The effect does not differ by sex.

The path from high violence approval to minor assault shows that high violence approval is associated with a 35% increase in the likelihood of minor assault for the total student sample and 51% for the female sample. High violence approval is not associated with an increase in the likelihood of minor assault for the male sample. The findings do not support the hypothesis that the relationship between corporal punishment and minor assault is partly mediated by high violence approval for the male sample. But the findings do support the hypothesis that the relationship exists for the total and female student samples.

Witnessing parental violence and perpetrating minor assault

Direct effects. The lower path from witnessing parental violence to minor assault perpetration shows that each unit increase in witnessing parental violence is associated with a 7% increase in the likelihood of perpetrating minor assault for the total sample and 13% for the male sample. There is no relationship between witnessing parental violence and minor assault for females. The findings do not support the hypothesis that the

relationship exists for females. But the findings do support the hypothesis that witnessing parental violence is associated with an increase in the likelihood of minor assault for the total and male student sample.

Indirect effects. The path from witnessing parental violence to high dominance shows that each unit increase in witnessing parental violence is associated with an 18% increase in the likelihood of high dominance in a dating relationship for the total student sample, 16% for the males, and 19% for the females. As noted before there is no difference in the relationship according to sex even though the percentages are different.

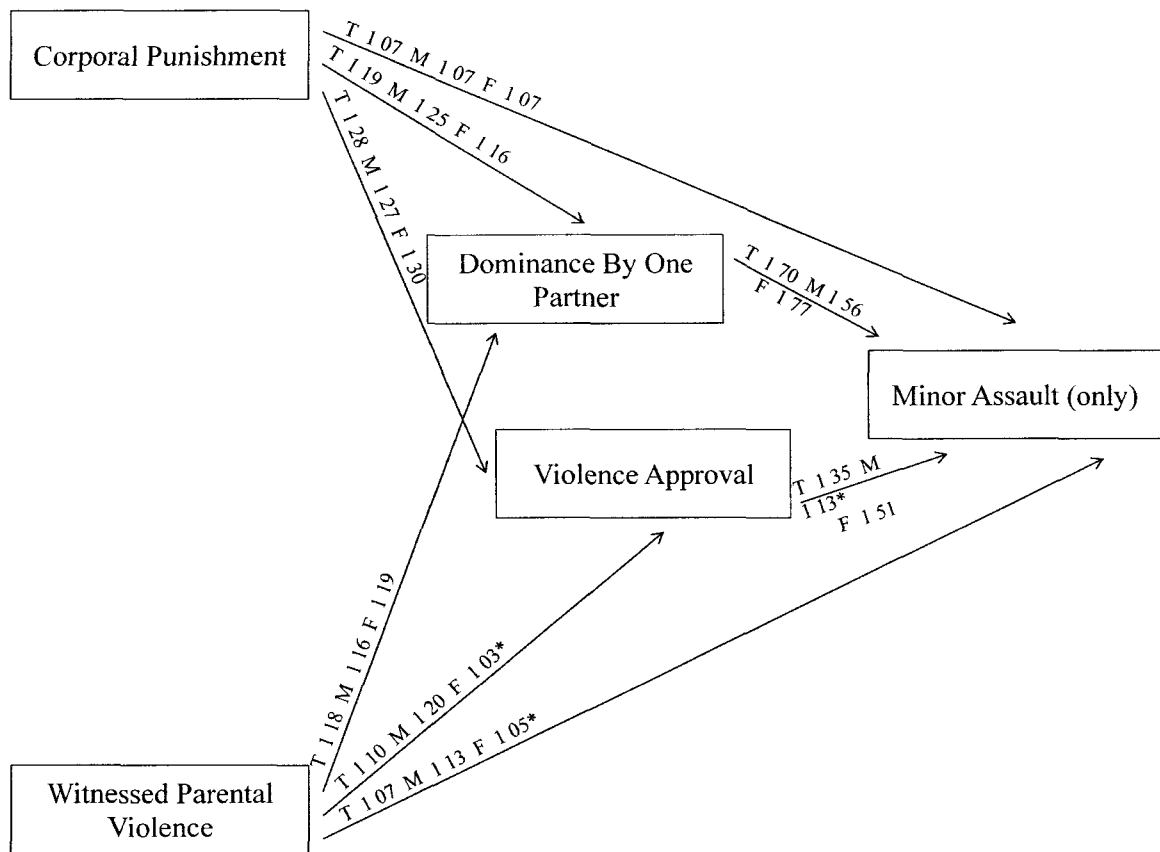
As found in the corporal punishment and minor assault section high dominance by a partner is associated with an increase in the likelihood of perpetrating minor assault for the total, male, and female samples. The relationship does not differ by sex. These findings support the hypothesis that the relationship between witnessing parental violence and minor assault is partly mediated by high dominance in a relationship for each student sample.

The path from witnessing parental violence to high violence approval shows each unit increase in witnessing parental violence is associated with a 10% increase in the likelihood of high violence approval for the total student sample and 20% for the male sample. There is no relationship between witnessing parental violence and high violence approval for females.

As found in the corporal punishment and minor assault section, high violence approval is associated with an increase in the likelihood of perpetrating minor assault for the total and female samples. There is no relationship for the male sample. These findings do not support the hypothesis that the relationship between witnessing parental violence

and minor assault is partly mediated by high violence approval for the male sample. But the findings support the hypothesis that the mediating relationship exists when using the total and female student samples.

Figure 2: Path Diagram for Minor Assault (only).



Note: Numbers are odds ratios; Not significant*; T = Total sample, M = Male sample, F = Female sample.

Corporal punishment and perpetrating severe assault

Direct effects. Figure 3 gives the odds ratios for the model with severe assault perpetration as the dependent variable. A unit increase in corporal punishment is associated with a 17% increase in the likelihood of severe assault perpetration for the total sample, 17% for male sample and 17% for the female sample. The effect of corporal punishment does not differ by sex. The findings support the hypothesis that corporal punishment is associated with an increase in the likelihood of severe assault perpetration for each student sample.

Indirect effects. As found in the corporal punishment and minor assault section corporal punishment is associated with an increase in the likelihood of high dominance in a dating relationship for each sample. The effect does not differ by sex. The path from dominance to severe assault shows that dominance by one partner is associated with a 170% increase in the likelihood of severe assault for the total student sample, 183% for males, and 170% for females. The relationship does not differ by sex. These findings support my hypothesis that the relationship between corporal punishment and perpetrating severe assault is partly mediated by high dominance by a partner for each student sample.

As found in the corporal punishment and minor assault section corporal punishment increases the likelihood of high violence approval for each sample. The effect does not differ by sex. And high violence approval is associated with a 69% increase in the likelihood of perpetrating severe assault for the total student sample, 48% for the male sample, and 84% for the female sample. The relationship between high violence approval and severe assault does not differ by sex. These findings support the hypothesis that the relationship between corporal punishment and severe assault perpetration is partly mediated by high violence approval for the total, male, and female student sample.

Witnessing parental violence and perpetrating severe assault

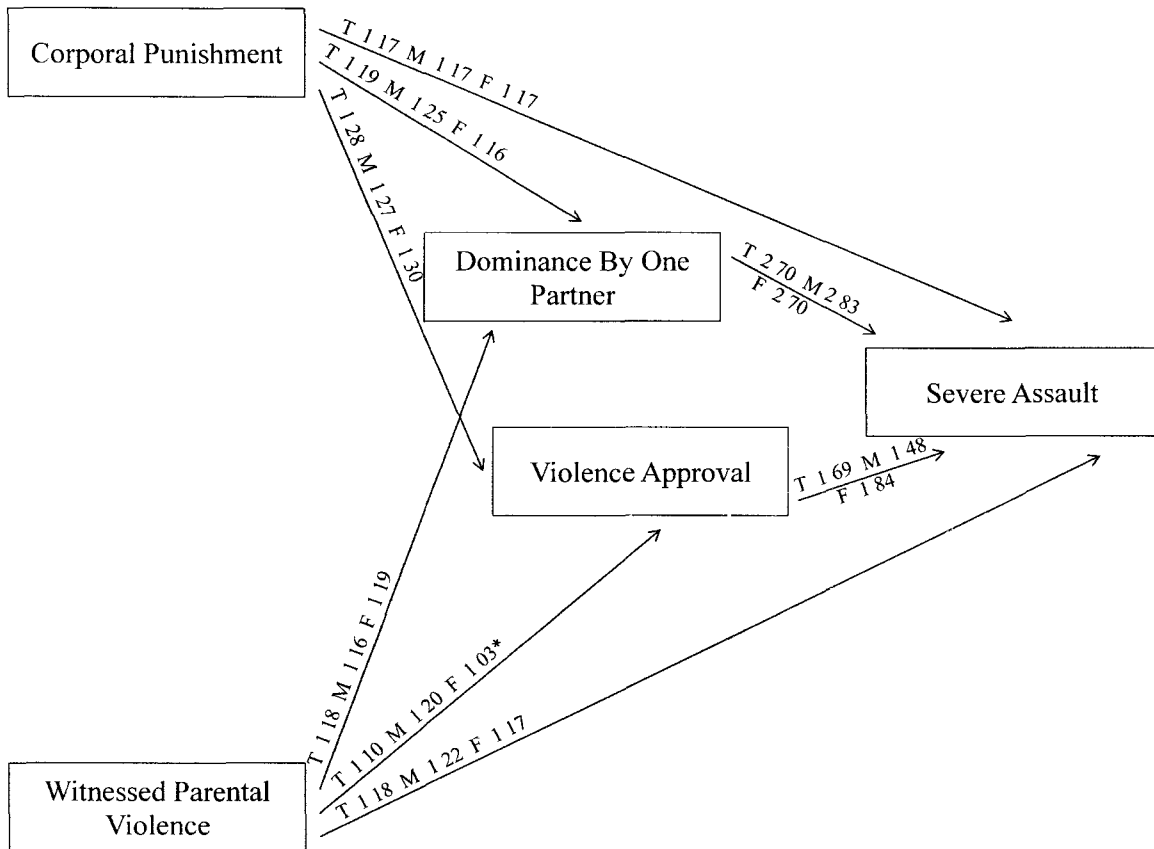
Direct effects. The path from witnessing parental violence to severe assault shows that a unit increase in witnessing parental violence is associated with an 18% increase in the likelihood of severe assault perpetration for the total sample, 22% for males and 17% for females. The effect of witnessing parental violence does not differ by sex. The findings support the hypothesis that witnessing parental violence is associated with an increase in the likelihood of severe assault perpetration for each student sample.

Indirect effects. As previously found, the path from witnessing parental violence to minor assault shows that witnessing parental violence is associated with an increase in the likelihood of high dominance by a partner for each sample. This relationship does not differ by sex. As previously found, the path from corporal punishment to severe assault shows that high dominance by a partner is associated with an increase in the likelihood of perpetrating severe assault for the total, male, and female student samples. The relationship does not differ by sex. These findings support the hypothesis that the relationship between witnessing parental violence and perpetrating severe assault is partly mediated by high dominance by a partner for the total, male, and female student samples.

As previously found, the path from witnessing parental violence to witnessing parental violence shows that witnessing parental violence is associated with an increase in the likelihood of high violence approval for the total and male samples. There is no relationship for the female student sample. As previously found, the path from corporal punishment to severe assault shows that high violence approval is associated with an increase in the likelihood of severe assault for the total, male, and female student samples. The relationship does not differ by sex. These findings support the hypothesis that the relationship

between witnessing parental violence and perpetrating severe assault is partly mediated by high violence approval for the total and male samples. But the findings do not support the hypothesis that the mediating relationship exists for the female student sample.

Figure 3: Path Diagram for Severe Assault.



Note: Numbers are odds ratios; Not significant*; T = Total sample, M = Male sample, F = Female sample

Comparison of violence approval and dominance as mediating variables.

High dominance partly mediates the link between corporal punishment and perpetrating minor and severe assault. And high dominance partly mediates the link between witnessing parental violence and minor and severe assault. The mediations occur for the total, female, and male sample. High violence approval does not mediate the link between witnessing parental violence and minor assault for males or females and does not mediate the link between witnessing parental violence and severe assault for females.

When dominance by a partner and high violence approval both have mediating effects, high dominance by a partner has a stronger effect than high violence approval. For example, high dominance by a partner increases in likelihood of perpetrating severe assault more than two times the amount that high violence approval does for the total and male student samples.

High violence approval by sex

The relationship between high violence approval and minor assault is the only relationship where the increase in likelihood differs by sex. Table 8 shows the odds ratios for the reduced model regression that includes the interaction between high violence approval and being female. Table 8 shows that being high in violence approval and being female increases the odds of perpetrating minor assault by 31%.

Figure 4 shows that the effect of high violence approval is larger for females than for males. When holding the other variables constant at their modal values being high in violence approval increases the probability of perpetrating minor assault increases about 2 percentage points from 22.2% to 24.0%. And for women with high violence approval the probability of perpetrating minor assault increases about 9 percentage points from

26.9% to 35.8%.

Control variables

Tables 5, 6, and 7 show the odds ratios for the control variables in the regression models. In all of the models more than half of the control variables are significant and show the relationships that were mentioned in the methods section. For example, as with other violent crimes an increase in age is associated with a decrease in the crime. This relationship is shown in each of the regression tables. Also, the more people are likely to withhold socially undesirable information the less likely they were to say they did not perpetrate minor or severe assault. This example is also shown in the regression tables. These findings demonstrate the importance of controlling for these variables.

Table 5: Regression Models Testing Direct And Indirect Paths For Total Sample

Variables	Dominance	Violence Approval	Minor Assault	Severe Assault
Independent Variables				
Corporal Punishment	1.19**	1.28**	1.07**	1.17**
Witnessed Violence	1.18**	1.10**	1.07*	1.18**
Control Variables				
Female	0.99	0.40**	1.40**	1.83**
Age (in months)	0.98**	0.97**	0.97**	0.97**
Length of Relationship	1.00**	1.00	1.04**	1.05
SES	0.98*	1.00	1.00	1.02
GDP	0.02**	0.02**	1.13	0.87**
Limited Disclosure	0.86**	0.83**	0.89**	0.85**
Mediating Variables				
Dominance	-	-	1.70**	2.70**
Violence Approval	-	-	1.35**	1.69**
Model χ^2	1298.88**	1871.14**	1598.41**	1598.41**
Pseudo R^2	0.10	0.14	0.07	0.07

N=14,252; p<.05*, p<.01**

Note: 1.00 odds ratios are rounded values

Table 6: Regression Models Testing Direct And Indirect Paths For Male Sample

Variables	Dominance	Violence Approval	Minor Assault	Severe Assault
Independent Variables				
Corporal Punishment	1.25**	1.27**	1.07*	1.17**
Witnessed Violence	1.16**	1.20**	1.13*	1.22**
Control Variables				
Age (in months)	0.97**	0.97**	0.97**	0.98
Length of Relationship	1.00	0.99	1.05**	1.04**
SES	0.98	1.02	0.97**	1.02
GDP	0.02**	0.06**	1.05**	1.25
Limited Disclosure	0.87**	0.81**	1.01	0.89**
Mediating Variables				
Dominance	-	-	1.56**	2.83**
Violence Approval	-	-	1.13	1.48**
Model χ^2	452.36**	539.54**	353.13**	353.13**
Pseudo R^2	0.11	0.11	0.06	0.06

N=4,077; p<.05*, p<.01**

Note: 1.00 odds ratios are rounded values

Table 7: Regression Models Testing Direct And Indirect Paths For Female Sample

Variables	Dominance	Violence Approval	Minor Assault	Severe Assault
Independent Variables				
Corporal Punishment	1.16**	1.30**	1.07**	1.17**
Witnessed Violence	1.19**	1.03	1.05	1.17**
Control Variables				
Age (in months)	0.98**	0.98**	0.97**	0.96**
Length of Relationship	1.01**	1.00	1.04**	1.05**
SES	0.98	0.98*	1.00	1.02
GDP	0.02**	0.01**	1.00	0.84
Limited Disclosure	0.85**	0.85**	0.89**	0.84**
Mediating Variables				
Dominance	-	-	1.77**	2.69**
Violence Approval	-	-	1.51**	1.84**
Model χ^2	847.74**	924.26**	1191.50**	1191.50**
Pseudo R^2	0.09	0.12	0.07	0.07

N=10,175; p<.05*, p<.01**

Note: 1.00 odds ratios are rounded values

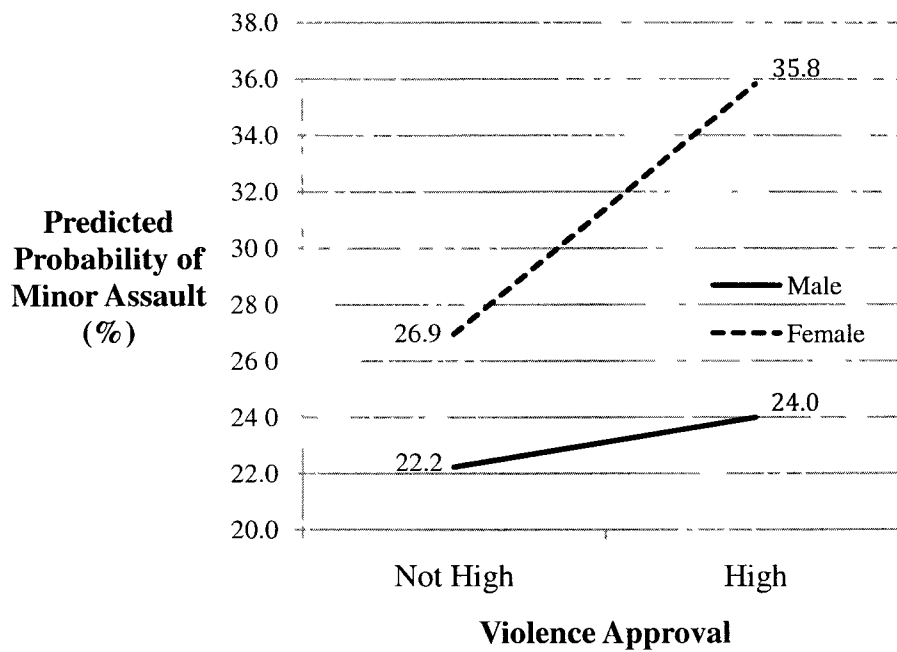
Table 8: Multinomial Logistic Regression with High Violence Approval x Female

Variable	B	SD	F-value	P-value	OR	95% C.I.	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Corporal Punishment	0.07	0.02	3.73	0.00	1.07	1.03	1.10
Witnessing Violence	0.06	0.03	2.25	0.02	1.07	1.01	1.13
High Dominance	0.53	0.10	9.30	0.00	1.69	1.52	1.89
High Violence Approval	0.10	0.11	1.04	0.30	1.10	0.92	1.33
Female	0.25	0.08	4.22	0.00	1.29	1.15	1.45
Age	-0.03	0.00	-8.31	0.00	0.97	0.96	0.97
Length of Relationship	0.04	0.00	16.54	0.00	1.04	1.04	1.05
Limited Disclosure	-0.12	0.01	-13.78	0.00	0.89	0.87	0.90
High VA x Female	0.31	0.16	2.66	0.01	1.37	1.09	1.73

N=14,252; Pseudo $R^2=0.07$

Note: 1.00 odds ratios are rounded values

Figure 4: Effect of Violence Approval By Gender



CHAPTER IX

DISCUSSION

This is a study of 14,252 students in 68 universities in 32 different nations. This section will present each hypothesis and whether or not this study supported each hypothesis.

Hypotheses about corporal punishment

H₁: More corporal punishment is associated with perpetrating *minor* assault for the total, male, and female samples. The findings support this hypothesis.

H₂: More corporal punishment is associated with perpetrating *severe* violence for each student sample. My findings also support this hypothesis.

H₃: The relationship between corporal punishment and perpetrating *minor* assault is partly mediated by dominance in a dating relationship for the total, male, and female samples. The findings support this hypothesis because more corporal punishment is associated with high dominance in a dating relationship and high dominance in a dating relationship is associated with minor assault for the total, male, and female student samples.

H₄: The relationship between corporal punishment and perpetrating *severe* assault is partly mediated by dominance in a dating relationship for each student sample. The findings also support this hypothesis because more corporal punishment is associated with high dominance in a dating relationship and high dominance in dating relationship is associated with severe assault for the total, male, and female student samples.

H₅: The relationship between corporal punishment and perpetrating *minor* assault is partly mediated by violence approval for the total, male, and female samples. My findings partly support my hypothesis because more corporal punishment is associated with high violence approval and high violence approval is associated with minor violence for the total and females student samples. But high violence approval is not associated with minor assault for the male sample.

H₆: The relationship between corporal punishment and perpetrating *severe* assault is partly mediated by violence approval for the total, male, and female sample. The findings support this hypothesis because more corporal punishment is associated with high violence approval and high violence approval is associated with severe assault for the total, male, and female student sample.

Hypotheses about witnessing parental violence

H₇: More witnessing parental violence is associated with perpetrating *minor* assault for the total, male, and female samples. The findings partly support this hypothesis because more witnessing parental violence is associated with minor assault for the total and male student samples but not for the female sample.

H₈: More witnessing parental violence is associated with perpetrating *severe* violence for each student sample. My findings support this hypothesis.

H₉: The relationship between corporal punishment and perpetrating *minor* assault is partly mediated by dominance in a dating relationship for the total, male, and female samples. My findings support this hypothesis because more corporal punishment is associated with more high dominance in dating relationships and more high dominance in dating relationships is associated with more minor assault for the total, female, and male

student samples.

H₁₀: The relationship between corporal punishment and perpetrating *severe* assault is partly mediated by dominance in a relationship for the total, male, and female sample. My findings support this hypothesis because more corporal punishment is associated with high dominance in a dating relationship and high dominance in a relationship is associated with severe assault.

H₁₁: The relationship between witnessing parental violence and perpetrating *minor* assault is partly mediated by violence approval for the total, male, and female samples. My findings partly support this hypothesis because more witnessing parental violence is associated with high violence approval and high violence approval is associated with minor assault for the total student sample. But more witnessing parental violence is not associated with high violence approval for females. And high violence approval is not associated with minor assault for males.

H₁₂: The relationship between witnessing parental violence and perpetrating *severe* assault is partly mediated by violence approval for each student sample. The findings partly support this hypothesis because more witnessing parental violence is associated with high violence approval and high violence approval is associated with severe assault for the total and male student samples. But more witnessing parental violence is not associated with high violence approval for females.

H₁₃: There are no significant interaction effects by sex. The findings do not support this hypothesis. The effect of violence approval on minor assault is larger for females.

Limitations

Sample. This study does not use a probability sample. It uses a convenience sample of university students in 32 nations. And college students are not representative of each nation. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized more broadly.

Most of the students in the International Dating Violence Survey are students enrolled in social science classes. So these students may not be representative of the college students in each of the 32 nations. It is important to analyze the relationships in this study using a probability sample of college students in each nation.

Dating relationships. The study is limited to individuals in dating relationships. The relationships suggested by my analysis could be different for married, cohabiting, or people in same-sex relationships.

Method of analysis. The type of analysis used in this study does not allow for nation level characteristics to be controlled for. It is important to control for these other influences because the nation may have an effect on the individuals that live there.

Cross-sectional data. The data used in this study is cross-sectional so the relationships found may not be cause-effect because there is no way to guarantee time-order. For example, an adolescent might have experienced more corporal punishment as a result of being violent in their relationships with other people. In this case more violence would come before corporal punishment

Explained partner violence. There are many possible causes of partner violence. So, it is important to keep in mind that even though two possible mediating relationships were tested in this study the pseudo R^2 ranged from .07 to .14 (median: .09). Thus, not all cases of minor and severe assault are explained.

Future research

This study suggests that there is not one source of partner violence and that the paths to partner violence are not always direct. In future research it will be important to consider and investigate other possible mediating relationships for variables known to be associated with an increased probability of partner violence.

My findings also suggest there are differences in by severity of assault. For example, dominance by a partner is associated with an increase in the probability of both minor and severe assault. But the relationship is much stronger in the severe assault model. It is important to investigate why dominance by a partner has a much stronger association to severe assault than to minor assault.

It will also be important to more closely examine the relationships between different variables included in this study. For example, the findings in this study suggest that there is a relationship between corporal punishment and dominance in a relationship. But not all males and females who experienced corporal punishment were highly dominant in a relationship. Future research should test models that may explain how and why corporal punishment is associated with dominance by a partner for some people and not others.

The findings also suggest future research should focus on the differences between males and females. For example, in the minor assault model, witnessing parental violence is associated with an increased probability of high violence approval for males but not females. It is important to further investigate the relationship by sex because if witnessing parental violence is not associated with violence approval for females then there may be important policy implications for decreasing partner violence.

Theoretical implications

The main focus of this study is to analyze possible mediating relationships that may exist between corporal punishment, witnessing parental violence, and later dating partner violence perpetration. That being said, the study does inform specific theoretical rationales of violence.

Family conflict perspective and dominance. Dominance by one partner regardless whether it is the male or female partner mediated the relationships between experiencing corporal punishment and partner violence and witnessing parental violence and partner violence. So the findings support the family conflict approach to family violence taken in this study.

Feminist theory and dominance. Even though the results show that for males dominance by one partner can also partly mediate the relationship between corporal punishment, and partner violence and witnessing parental violence and perpetrating partner violence, the findings do not support the feminist rationale of partner violence. Firstly, in this study, partner violence was perpetrated by both female and male students. Secondly, there were both males and females that were dominant in a relationship.

Social learning theory and violence approval. A majority of the findings support the social learning theory of partner violence. The findings show that the relationships between corporal punishment and witnessing parental violence to perpetrating partner violence are partly mediated by violence approval for both males and females in all paths except one. For females, the social learning theory that violence approval can partly mediate the link between witnessing parental violence and assault is not supported, because more agreement to witnessing parental violence as a child was not

associated with high violence approval. But, the findings in this study show that this mediation does occur for males.

Policy and Practice Implications

Prevention efforts have mostly focused on raising public awareness of the frequency, pervasiveness, and severity of male partner violence. Meanwhile, research has shown that although the rates of male perpetrated partner violence have declined female perpetrated partner violence has not declined (Gelles and Straus 1988). This suggests that the efforts and programs aimed at decreasing male violence have worked, but that the same efforts should also be aimed towards decreasing the rate of partner violence for women. This following sections aim to explain how this study informs future prevention and treatment programs for both males and females.

Primary prevention. My findings suggest that in order to decrease the rate of partner violence policy should be aimed at decreasing corporal punishment, interparental violence, dominance by one partner regardless of the sex of the partner, and violence approval. It will be important to target all four of the variables because all of the variables are associated with more partner violence even after considering the mediating relationship.

It is important for policy makers to consider both the strength of the relationships in this study and prevalence of the variables when making policy decisions. For example, high dominance has the strongest association with severe violence. But only 16-18% of people are high in dominance, whereas a larger proportion in my study (55%) experienced both corporal punishment as a child and corporal punishment after the age of 12. So, to have a more broad effect on partner violence, policy could be aimed at

decreasing the rate of corporal punishment.

Another primary prevention implication is to consider the role of gender in the relationships in my study. According to the findings in this study most of the relationships do not differ by sex. For example, corporal punishment has a direct effect on partner violence and an indirect effect through dominance for both males and females. In these cases it will be important to aim efforts at decreasing corporal punishment and dominance for both males and females.

According to this study some relationships differ according to sex though. For example, in both the minor and severe assault models there is no relationship between witnessing parental violence and high violence approval or minor assault for females. So if policy is aimed at preventing high violence approval by decreasing instances of witnessing parental violence then it may be important to consider how to approach families where there are only female children.

Treatment. My findings suggest that in order to decrease the rate of assault for a population that has already experienced corporal punishment or witnessed parental violence focus should be on decreasing the rate of high violence approval or high dominance by one partner regardless whether it is the male or female partner.

According to my findings it may also be important to keep in mind the gender difference for violence approval because the findings show that violence approval is associated with minor assault for females, but not males. So if decreasing the rate of high violence approval is the primary method in decreasing rates of *minor* assault then treatment should be focused on females, not males. It is also important to consider that even though violence approval is not associated with more minor assault for males it is

associated with more severe assault for both males and females, so if prevention efforts are aimed at decreasing both minor and severe assault rates then programs should target both males and females.

Also, even though high violence approval and high dominance are both associated with more partner violence, high dominance by a partner is associated with an increase in the odds of both minor and severe assault more than twice the increase associated with high violence approval. So if treatment could only be aimed towards either rates of high dominance or rates of violence approval then efforts should be focused on decreasing rates of dominance by both females and males.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FOR THE USE OF
HUMAN SUBJECTS

University of New Hampshire

Research Integrity Services, Service Building
51 College Road, Durham, NH 03824-3585
Fax: 603-862-3564

28-Mar-2011

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IRB #: 5104

Study: Corporal Punishment, Parental Violence and Partner Violence: Mediating Factors

Approval Date: 21-Mar-2011

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) has reviewed and approved the protocol for your study as Exempt as described in Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 46, Subsection 101(b). Approval is granted to conduct your study as described in your protocol.

Researchers who conduct studies involving human subjects have responsibilities as outlined in the attached document, *Responsibilities of Directors of Research Studies Involving Human Subjects*. (This document is also available at <http://unh.edu/research/irb-application-resources>.) Please read this document carefully before commencing your work involving human subjects.

Upon completion of your study, please complete the enclosed Exempt Study Final Report form and return it to this office along with a report of your findings.

If you have questions or concerns about your study or this approval, please feel free to contact me at 603-862-2003 or julie.simpson@unh.edu. Please refer to the IRB # above in all correspondence related to this study. The IRB wishes you success with your research.

For the IRB,



Julie F. Simpson
Director

cc: File
Straus, Murray