Religiosity, Christian Fundamentalism, and Intimate Partner Violence

Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between religious behavior, religious belief, and intimate partner violence. Because intimate partner violence is both perceived and demonstrated to be a gendered crime, we also report results examining gender symmetry of the violent attitudes and behavior measured below. Survey data were gathered from a sample of undergraduates (N = 626). Our dependent variables were derived from conflict tactics scales and Strauss’s Personal and Relationships Profile measuring violence approval, psychological aggression, and intimate partner violence. Our two substantive independent variables were, first, religiosity as a scale containing questions from the General Social Survey, and second, Christian fundamentalism as a scale used in previously published research. General religiosity, measured as belief in God, strength of religious faith, church attendance, and frequency of prayer, was not associated with violence approval, psychological aggression, or intimate partner violence. However, Christian fundamentalism was positively associated with both violence approval and acts of intimate partner violence, but not psychological aggression. With regard to gender symmetry of violence, men were more likely to approve of violence in our study, but were no more or less likely than women to commit violent acts or exercise psychological aggression.
INTRODUCTION

Much research has been done over the past forty years or so seeking to explain the social antecedents and behavioral correlates associated with the increasing prominence of American Christian fundamentalism (Ammerman 1990, 1997; Finke and Stark 1992; Hunter 1983; Kelley 1972; Koch and Curry 2000; Stark and Bainbridge 1985). Recently, the influence of the Religious Right on the American political scene has gained attention (Francis, Green, Hernson, Powell, and Wilcox, 2003; Kohut, Green, Keeter, and Toth, 2000; Wilcox, 2000).

Taking a somewhat critical tone, previous studies have noted positive correlations between fundamentalist Christian beliefs and negative social outcomes such as racial and sexist prejudice and discrimination (Kirkpatrick, 1993; McFarland, 1989). This pattern replicates with regard to antipathy toward homosexuality (Fulton, Gorsuch, and Maynard, 1999; Hill, Moulton, and Burdette, 2004; Petersen and Donnenwerth, 1997).

On a more positive note, general religiosity correlates negatively with the incidence of domestic violence (Ellison and Anderson, 2001). Conservative Christian religiosity is negatively associated with behavior that is linked to domestic violence, such as excessive drinking, illegal drug use, and illicit sexual behavior (Cochran and Beeghley, 1991; Ford and Kadushin, 2002).

Causing some debate in the literature are studies which indicate that conservative Christians are more likely than other experts to endorse, or at least not explicitly oppose, corporal punishment for children (Bartkowski, 1995; Bartkowski and Ellison, 1995). Strauss (1994) argues this creates a family environment within which child abuse and partner violence are more likely. Others suggest the approval of and use of corporal punishment stands alone and is more likely a largely benign reflection of authority and patriarchal leadership in conservative
Christian families (Ellison, 1996). Even so, Nason-Clark (2000) argues patriarchal leadership and authority approving corporal punishment may also legitimate the use of force and violence by males in conservative Christian families.

This research examines the relationship between Christian fundamentalism and aggression among intimate partners. For comparative purposes, we also explore common measures of religious belief and practice in relation to partner aggression. We examined these relationships by surveying otherwise normative, middle to upper class, mainstream American college students. A college-age sample is appropriate for exploring these issues for several reasons. Renison and Welchans (2000) note that rates of non-lethal intimate partner violence are greatest among individuals aged 20-24, and next highest among those aged 16-19. The majority of college students fall into these high-risk categories. Moreover, Sugarman and Hotaling (1991) review several studies showing that incidence of physical assault among dating partners aged 18-22 ranges from 20 to 59%. College students make up about 1/3 of the 18-22 year old population; they are forming habits and patterns in intimate relationships that carry forward into the balance of their lives (O’Leary, Malone, and Tyree, 1994).

This study measures the impact of religiosity and Christian fundamentalism on three measures of aggression. These are: violence approval, psychological aggression, and physical violence. Religiosity and Christian fundamentalism are measured by indicators used in previous research (Davis, Smith, and Marsdan, 2004; Kirkpatrick, 1993; McFarland, 1989). Measures of aggression come from conflict tactics scales developed by Strauss, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman, (1996; 1999). Because intimate partner violence is widely understood as a gendered crime, we also examine gender symmetry of violence on these measures.
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY

Four bodies of previous research inform our work. These are studies which explore:

(1) Conservative religiosity, religious belief, religious practice, and social deviance;
(2) Religious practice and domestic violence;
(3) Christian fundamentalism and corporal punishment;
(4) Gender symmetry and intimate partner violence.

Conservative religiosity, religious belief, religious practice, and social deviance.

There is wide support for the hypothesis that religious belief and practice suppress social deviance. People of strong religious faith are less likely to drink illegally and abusively, and by extension, behave violently. They are also less likely to engage in pre or extra marital sex, or use illegal drugs (Brown, Parks, Zimmerman, and Phillips, 2001; Jaynes, 2001; Nelson and Rooney, 1982). Regular church attendance is negatively correlated with illegal alcohol and drug abuse (Cochran and Beeghley, 1991; Richard, Bell, and Carlson, 2000). These correlations and relationships are more prominent among Christian conservatives (Bock, Cochran, and Beeghley, 1987; Cochran, Beeghley, and Bock, 1988; Peek, Chalfant, and Milton, 1979). Choosing not to use illegal drugs, drink alcohol while under-age, or engage in pre-marital sex seems thus associated with being socialized, or living in, a strongly religious environment, especially among religious conservatives. However, these studies tend to focus on defining conservative religiosity in terms of respondents’ affiliation with Baptist-like organizations (Ammerman, 1990; 1997) rather than specifically probing the content of their individual beliefs.

Taken as a whole, this body of research supports the argument that religious belief and practice suppress social deviance. Therefore, we propose that respondents who attend worship,
pray regularly, and who strongly believe in God may also be less likely than others to approve of violent behavior, or to use psychological and physical aggression in their intimate relationships. Moreover, the literature on religion and deviance leads us to expect this negative relationship to be more prominent among Christian fundamentalists.

*Religious practice and domestic violence.*

Regular church attendance is inversely associated with domestic violence for both men and women (Ellison and Anderson, 2001). This inverse relationship holds for male perpetrators who attend weekly or more often and for females who attend monthly or more. It holds as well for both male and female victims (Cunradi, Caetano, and Schafer, 2002). These results support other research suggesting that church attendance maintains individuals’ contact with normative reference groups (Roberts, Koch, and Johnson, 2001). We imagine this to be particularly evident among church attendees who would avoid the risk of having fellow congregants witness the effects of domestic violence such as visible bruising, seasonally inappropriate clothing to hide bruises, or other more subtle signs of marital discord and trauma that may become evident through interacting with others in a religious setting.

Even so, a conservatively religious sub culture that supports the use of corporal punishment, and also uses Biblically based family life education may also create a context conducive to hierarchical, if not overtly abusive family dynamics (Capps, 1992; Nason-Clark, 2000). However, data cast some limited doubt on making these assumptions (Brinkerhoff, Grandlin, and Luperi, 1992; Ellison, 1996). Thus, this body of research leads us to initially propose that religiosity itself is not likely associated with intimate partner violence.
Christian fundamentalism and corporal punishment.

There is a debate among scholars and practitioners over the appropriate use of corporal punishment with children. Conservative Christian parenting specialists tend to support its limited use (Bartkowski, 1995). Survey data also show that parents holding conservative Christian beliefs are more likely to use corporal punishment than are others (Ellison, Bartkowski, and Seagal, 1996; Grasmick, Bursick, and Kimpel, 1991). There is a shortage of direct empirical evidence linking support for and use of corporal punishment with the increased likelihood of child abuse or domestic violence, even among religious conservatives (Ellison, 1996). However, others argue that, at a minimum, corporal punishment creates a family environment more tolerant of other forms of violence (Strauss, 1994; Strauss and Gelles, 1990). Moreover, Nason-Clark (2000) cautions that institutionalized norms of patriarchal authority among Christian fundamentalists elevate the risk for child and spouse abuse.

This study tries to partially adjudicate that debate. Rather than making assumptions about the beliefs and behavior of individuals resulting from attending a conservative church, or declaring themselves to be part of a conservative religious tradition or denomination, we directly compare respondents’ expression of Christian fundamentalist beliefs with their tolerance for, or engagement in, violence approval, psychological, and physical aggression. A positive correlation among these variables strengthens the case for linking corporal punishment with an enhanced likelihood of domestic violence in Christian fundamentalist families. We propose that authoritarian and patriarchal norms emerging from a fundamentalist faith ultimately makes violence more likely.
Gender symmetry and intimate partner violence.

A second matter of debate in the literature which we tried to partially adjudicate is the matter of gender symmetry and violence. It is widely believed that intimate partner violence is primarily committed by men. Strauss (1999) demonstrates when the comparison is based on police reports or surveys on crime victimization, more than three-fourths of violent perpetrators are men. However, results of nearly two-hundred studies that use data from surveys relating to family problems (Archer, 2000; Feibert, 1997) show that “… women are as physically aggressive, or more aggressive, than men in their relationships.” (Feibert, 1997: 273). Moreover, Strauss and Ramirez (2007) showed that gender symmetry for severe as well as for chronic minor assaults, persisted after controlling for respondents’ age, severity and chronicity of violence, SES, and response bias. The design of this study is very much like those in the latter body of research; we thus propose gender symmetry will be apparent on our indicators of intimate partner violence.

Based on the review of literature, we offer the following hypotheses:

Hypotheses

H1: As religiosity increases violence approval decreases.
H2: As fundamentalism increases, violence approval increases.
H3: As religiosity increases, psychological aggression decreases.
H4: As fundamentalism increases, psychological aggression increases.
H5: As religiosity increases, intimate partner violence decreases.
H6: As fundamentalism increases, intimate partner violence increases.
H&: There will be gender symmetry for all aspects of intimate partner violence.

SAMPLE AND METHODS

The sample is comprised of 626 undergraduate students from two universities in the southwestern United States. Data were collected during the Fall of 2003 and the Spring of 2004.
After IRB review and obtaining informed consent, students enrolled in undergraduate Sociology classes responded to questions administered through an anonymous questionnaire. They were offered nominal extra credit for participating and all in attendance on the data collection days chose to do so. Table 1 details basic demographics of the sample. Note that nearly all (88%) reported currently being in a dating relationship. Nearly half (48%) reported being in a dating relationship for a year or longer.

Table 1 about here

We also included a measure of social desirability to indicate the extent to which respondents answered the questions truthfully. We are aware that, especially when asking for anonymous responses concerning religion and deviance, there may be a propensity to shade the truth, especially when true responses put individuals at odds with their stated beliefs or the norms of religious groups to which they belong. Following Reynolds’ (1982) guidelines, our sample’s mean social desirability score of 34 was deemed an acceptable indicator of truth-telling among our respondents.

Dependent Variables

There are three dependent variables. The first is violence approval and is measured with the Personal and Relationships Profile (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugerman, 1999). The next two independent variables are Conflict Tactics Scales measuring psychological aggression and intimate partner violence (Straus, et al. 1996). Possible responses were “Yes” or “No” during the relationship for these two variables. Each scale measures minor, severe, and total psychological aggression and intimate partner violence. Specific questions response choices are noted in the appendix.
Independent Variables

Two substantive independent variables measure dimensions of religious belief and practice. The first is religiosity, a four item scale using questions taken from the General Social Survey (Davis, Smith, and Marsdan, 2004). The second is Christian fundamentalism, a six-item scale using questions from previously published research (Kirkpatrick, 1993; McFarland, 1989). The specific questions that comprise these scales are detailed in the appendix.

Demographic Variables

Basic demographic variables were measured. These included: gender, ethnicity, relationship type, length of relationship, year in university, cohabitation status, age, and whether respondents were sexually active with their partners. Socioeconomic status was computed using an index of father’s education, mother’s education, and family income. Multivariate analysis assesses the impact of our substantive variables in the presence of these controls, and also allows us to assess gender symmetry of violence.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The data were analyzed using OLS and Logistic Regression Multivariate Analysis.

Table 2 reports results testing hypotheses 1 and 2 and examines the relationships between religiosity, Christian fundamentalism, and violence approval. The analysis indicates that fundamentalism is positively associated with violence approval while religiosity is not. As fundamentalism increases violence approval also increases slightly. For each one point increase in the fundamentalism scale score there is .63 point increase in violence approval. Controlling for gender in this model indicates that males are significantly more likely to approve of violence than females. This lends support for linking the approval or corporal punishment among
fundamentalist males with an elevated tolerance for other forms of violence.

Table 2 about here

Table 3 reports results testing hypotheses 3 and 4 and examines the relationships between religiosity, Christian fundamentalism, and psychological aggression. Logistic regression reports the odds ratios; no relationships were found. Neither religiosity nor fundamentalism effect the likelihood of psychological aggression in intimate relationships among our respondents. Gender is also not a significant predictor of psychological aggression, indicating gender symmetry on this measure of violence.

Table 3 about here

Table 4 reports results testing hypotheses 5 and 6 and examines the relationships between religiosity, Christian fundamentalism, and physical violence. The analysis again indicates that fundamentalism is positively associated with physical violence while religiosity is not. For each one point increase in the fundamentalism scale, the odds of physically assaulting a partner increase by 5%. However, gender is not a significant predictor of physical violence, indicating again there appears to be gender symmetry on this measure of violence.

Table 4 about here

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This research adds to the literature cited above in three substantive ways. First, religious belief and practice (religiosity) is shown to have no impact on the likelihood of intimate partner violence. Any enhancing effect with regard to a conservative tendency to support corporal punishment is seemingly balanced by the general suppressive effect of religious practice on deviance.
Second, Christian fundamentalism is positively associated with two of the three measures of partner violence. The greater the level of Christian fundamentalist beliefs among our respondents, the more likely they were to approve of violence and to use violent behavior in their intimate relationships. This lends support to Capps (1992) and Nason-Clark’s (2000) theoretical argument that a conservative religious environment makes family violence at least more tolerable if not more overtly likely. It also lends support for the argument that approval and use of corporal punishment, which is more prominent among Christian fundamentalists, may lead to a more general level of violence approval and may increase the likelihood of violent behavior in intimate relationships.

Finally, we note gender symmetry in two of the three measures of violent behavior. Men are more likely than women to approve of violence in our sample. Violence approval is arguably similar to endorsing corporal punishment. That men in our sample are more likely to approve of violence in general perhaps indicates a level of male authoritarianism among Christian fundamentalists. Further investigation of these links is warranted by this finding. On the other hand, men and women in this study appear equally likely to perpetrate (or not perpetrate) psychological aggression and violent behavior in their intimate relationships. This lends support to previous research claiming gender symmetry of violence in studies conducted through survey research rather than police records (Strauss, 1999).

These measurable links between religious fundamentalism and aggression suggest expanding this research agenda by examining the impact of Christian fundamentalism on other social relationships. Our work here examines how fundamentalist beliefs effect intimate relationships. The logic of this work lends itself to investigating its role with other family
dynamics such as child-rearing practices and status hierarchies in marriage. Religious fundamentalism might also effect how individuals relate to one another at school or work, when seeking medical help, wrestling with bio-ethical decisions, as well as when deciding for whom to vote or what political agendas to embrace or reject based on one’s faith.


Peterson, L.R., & Donnenwerth, G.V. 1997. “Secularization and the influence of religion on beliefs about premarital sex.” *Social Forces* 75: 1071-1088.


**Table I: Respondents’ Characteristics.**

Sample of 626 Undergraduate Students from two universities in the Southwestern United States.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
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<tr>
<td>37%</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship Type</th>
<th>++Relationship Length</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dating</td>
<td>1-12 Months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>13-24 Months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>25 or more</td>
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<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father’s education</th>
<th>Mother’s education</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school/less</td>
<td>High school/less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>Some college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>College degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate school</td>
<td>Graduate school</td>
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<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Income</th>
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<tr>
<td>Median Group</td>
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<td>50-59,999</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>+ + + SES Mean Score</th>
<th>13.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year in University</th>
<th>Cohabiting</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Age (Mean)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexually Active</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship Status</th>
<th>Social Desirability</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Score</td>
<td>34.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ The categories are 18, 19, 20, 21, 22-24, 25-29, 30-39, 40 or older.
++ The categories are 1 = about one month, 2 = about 2 months, 3 = 3-5 months, 4 = 6-11 months, 5 = about 1 year, 6 = more than 1 year but less than 2 years, 7 = about 2 years, 8 = more than 2 years but less than 4, 9 = 4 years or more.
+++ Socioeconomic Status includes family income, father’s education, and mother’s education.

Table 2: OLS Regression of Violence Approval on Independent Variables.
Table 3: Logistic Regression of Psychological Aggression on Independent Variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Odds Ratios</th>
<th>P Value</th>
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<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>-.0336331</td>
<td>0.394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fundamentalism</strong></td>
<td>.0634642</td>
<td><strong>0.017</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>1.079176</td>
<td><strong>0.002</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td>-2.538284</td>
<td><strong>0.000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>-.0210577</td>
<td>0.622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Length</td>
<td>.1120113</td>
<td>0.153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Activity</strong></td>
<td>.6905253</td>
<td><strong>0.048</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.2502986</td>
<td><strong>0.007</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Desirability</td>
<td>-.3278804</td>
<td><strong>0.000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>32.39035</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of obs = 624  
F(9, 614) = 23.87  
Prob > F = 0.0000  
R-squared = 0.2592  
Adj R-squared = 0.2483  
Root MSE = 3.5807  
* p > .05; **p > .01; ***p > .001
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>P Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>0.9854053</td>
<td>0.557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamentalism</td>
<td>0.9906001</td>
<td>0.568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>2.04385</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1.288056</td>
<td>0.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>0.9803071</td>
<td>0.465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Length</td>
<td>1.309846</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Activity</td>
<td>2.109703</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.8643439</td>
<td>0.012*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Desirability</td>
<td>0.8795156</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of obs = 626
LR chi2(9) = 103.00
Prob > chi2 = 0.0000
Pseudo R2 = 0.1261
* p > .05; **p>.01; ***p>.001

Table 4: Logistic Regression of Intimate Partner Violence on Independent Variables.
Religiosity               .9853233        0.619
Fundamentalism           1.055671        0.010*
Ethnicity                  1.490886        0.141
Gender                     .9814135        0.937
Socioeconomic Status       1.013688        0.680
Relationship Length       1.457656        0.000***
Sexual Activity            2.026946        0.004**
Age                        1.044114        0.546
Social Desirability       .8476436        0.000***

Number of obs = 626
LR chi2(9) = 103.08
Prob > chi2 = 0.0000
Pseudo R2 = 0.1640
* p > .05; **p>.01; ***p>.001

APPENDIX

Dependent Variables, Scales, and Questions
1. Violence Approval (Responses were “Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Sure, Disagree, Strongly Disagree”):

**Family Violence**
1) It is sometimes necessary to discipline a child with a good hard spanking.
2) It can think of a situation when I would approve of a wife slapping a husband’s face.
3) It can think of a situation when I would approve of a husband slapping a wife’s face.
4) It is sometimes necessary for parents to slap a teen who talks back or is getting into trouble.

**Male Violence**
5) When a boy is growing up, it’s important for him to have a few fist fights.
6) A man should not walk away from a physical fight with another man.
7) A boy who is hit by another boy should hit back.

**Sexual Aggression**
8) A woman who has been raped probably asked for it.
9) If a wife refuses to have sex, there are times when it may be okay to make her do it.
10) Once sex gets past a certain point, a man can’t stop himself until he is satisfied.

2. Psychological Aggression (Responses were “Yes” or “No” in relationships):

1) Insulted or swore at my partner.
2) Shouted or yelled at my partner.
3) Stomped out of the room or house or yard during a disagreement.
4) Said something to spite my partner.
5) Called my partner fat or ugly
6) Destroyed something belonging to my partner
7) Accused my partner of being a lousy lover
8) Threatened to hit or throw something at my partner.

3. Intimate Partner Violence (Responses were “Yes” or “No” in relationship):
1) Threw something at partner
2) Twisted arm or hair
3) Pushed or shoved
4) Grabbed
5) Slapped
6) Used knife or gun on partner
7) Punched or hit
8) Choked
9) Slammed against wall
10) Beat up
Independent Variables:

1. Religiosity:
   1) How often do you attend a place of worship (church, synagogue, etc.) now?
      1) Never
      2) Once or twice a year
      3) Several times a year
      4) About once a month
      5) 2-3 times a month
      6) Weekly or more often

   2) In general, would you consider your religious faith to be?
      1) Non-existent
      2) Very weak
      3) Moderately weak
      4) Moderately strong
      5) Very strong

   3) About how often do you pray?
      1) Never
      2) Several times a day
      3) Daily
      4) Several times a week
      5) Once a week
      6) Less than once a week

   4) Beliefs about God?
      1) I don’t believe in God
      2) I don’t believe in a personal God, but I believe in a higher power of some kind.
      3) I find myself believing in God some of the time, but not at other times.
      4) While I have some doubts, I feel that I do believe in God.
      5) I know that God really exists and I have no doubts about it

   5) Church attendance: How often do you attend a place of worship (church, synagogue, etc.) now?
      1) Never
      2) Once or twice a year
      3) Several times a year
      4) About once a month
      5) 2-3 times a month
      6) Weekly or more often
2. Christian Fundamentalism (Responses were “Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Sure, Disagree, Strongly Disagree”)

1) I am sure the Bible contains no errors or contradictions.
2) It is very important for true Christians to believe that the Bible is the infallible Word of God.
3) The Bible is the final and complete guide to morality; it contains God’s answers to all important questions about right and wrong.
4) Christians should not let themselves be influenced by worldly ideas.
5) Christians must try hard to know and defend the true teachings of God’s word.
6) The best education for a Christian child is in a Christian school with Christian teachers.

Jerome R. Koch is Associate Professor of Sociology at Texas Tech University. His research interests are related to the sociology of religion, medicine, and deviance. He is co-author (with Robert E. Beckley) of *The Continuing Challenge of AIDS: Clergy Responses to Patients, Friends, and Families*, published by Auburn House in 2002.
Ignacio Luis Ramirez is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Texas Tech University. His research interests are related to the study of gender, ethnicity, and religion and intimate partner violence.