MSc in Crime Science

Domestic Violence in Mexico

Leticia Lowenberg

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **MSc in Crime Science** (UCL) of the University of London in 2007

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

UCL JILL DANDO INSTITUTE OF CRIME SCIENCE

Abstract

Domestic violence is extensively examined with family violence and feminist theories. The type of domestic violence this study analyses is man-to-woman common couple violence. This type of violence happens when ordinary quarrels get out of control, thus it does not escalate in its level of violence as intimate terrorism does. This study examines domestic violence with routine activity theory, using the Mexican National Survey on Household Relationship Dynamics 2006. Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson study the convergence of three elements to explain crime: likely offenders, suitable targets and the absence of capable guardians. Thus, the study tests whether women who seem isolated and who are economically dependent make suitable targets for their partners, and whether the presence of potential guardians inside the couples' households has an effect. This study examines the couple's interaction in space and time using their employment status. Three models are analysed using a logistic regression. The first model has the variables that examine routine activity theory, the second model includes variables used with success in several domestic violence researches, and the third model controls for sociodemographic variables. The third model has the largest explanatory power. The study finds that potential guardians and men's employment status are not significant in man-to-woman common couple violence in Mexico. Isolated women are more likely to experience man-to-woman common couple violence in Mexico. Contrary to the expected, employed women and women who earn more than their partner are more likely to suffer common violence from their partners.

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank Dr. Noemie Bouhana for her interest and constant supervision of this study. I would like to thank the academic staff of UCL Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science for their interest in the alumni. I would like to add that having the chance to learn from you was a rewarding experience.

I would like to thank the Mexican National Institute for Statistics, Geography and Informatics for the database and because they answered my doubts concerning the survey used in this study.

I would like to thank Dr. Ángeles Haces for her interest in the project.

I would like to thank Dr. María de la Luz Lima Malvido for her advice about domestic violence.

I want to thank my parents, Irene and Eduardo, for their long distance moral and economic support, and for their continuous encouragement. I want to thank Pedro Constantino because he has managed to be present every day of my life, even when I am away. Finally, I want to thank Arsalan A. Shah for his encouragement and for putting a smile on my face throughout the year, even during stressful times.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Home is the place where all individuals are supposed to feel safe. Daily routines outside the house may put at risk the safety of the family, but once they return home they are in the place they know with the people they know. However, sometimes the safest place is not home, and routines known to the family can become information used against its own members.

Several theories have been developed in order to explain domestic violence; these theories examine elements that trigger the violence among the family. The elements they examine are mostly familial and sociodemographic characteristics and they focus on the differences between violent and nonviolent families. This study will try to examine domestic violence with routine activity theory; a theory that has been largely ignored by family violence theorists. Mannon's study (1997) explains that routine activity theory has not been implemented to explain domestic and intimate violence; this theory has potential to explain domestic and intimate violence. Although routine activity theory has not been referred to in several domestic violence research studies, this theory has elements that are similar to the variables explored in some of the studies.

The type of domestic violence that this study examines is domestic violence within couples, specifically that perpetrated by men. There are different kinds of couple violence, which will be explained in the next chapter; this study will examine man-to-woman common couple violence. This study examines man-to-woman violence because different research studies have found that it causes more injuries to women than to men (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997). For example, in Mexico between the year 2000 and 2005 the cause of death of 629 women was domestic violence (INEGI, 2007c). Between the same years, 3,135 men were convicted in Mexico because of family violence (INEGI, 2007d).

The objective of this study is to examine man-to-woman common couple violence with routine activity theory. Although routine activity theory and its significance for domestic violence will be explained in the next chapter, it is important to establish its basic elements since the research questions of this study are related to them: likely offenders, suitable targets and the absence of capable guardians (Cohen and Felson, 1979). These elements have to converge in time and space in order to create opportunities for offenders (Cohen

and Felson, 1979). Thus, the research questions of this study use routine activity theory elements and embed them in the domestic violence sphere.

Are women who seem weak and isolated suitable targets for their partners? Are economically dependent women suitable targets for their partners? Does the presence of potential guardians diminish common couple violence? Do continuous interactions of the couple in space and time increase the likelihood of common couple violence?

These questions will try to be answered with three models using the Mexican National Survey on Household Relationship Dynamics 2006. This survey was carried out to measure domestic violence, and violence against women in the school and work. The findings of this study aim to improve the understanding of common couple violence and its effect on women. Additionally, the study aims to encourage the use of routine activity theory in domestic violence research studies.

The second chapter explains the types of couple violence, as well as family violence and routine activity theories. Women's social support is important for the study; this will be discussed throughout the study. Family composition and familial spaces will be explained in the next chapter. The third chapter explains the survey, the sample and the variables used; as well, it explains the limitations of the survey. The fourth chapter examines the models and their findings. The fifth chapter contains a discussion of the findings and the conclusions of the study.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theories of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence has been explored through different perspectives, using various theories. The two main perspectives are the family violence perspective and what is called the feminist perspective (Steinmetz, 1987; Johnson, 1995; Johnson and Ferraro, 2000). The feminist perspective explains domestic violence in terms of patriarchy. The family violence perspective explains different variables that might trigger couple violence, however it also analyses child and elderly abuse. The researchers of domestic violence use three main family violence perspectives to analyse the phenomena: the intraindividual, the social-psychological and the social-cultural perspectives (Steinmetz, 1987; Gelles and Straus, 1988).

The intraindividual theories focus on the psychological dysfunctions of the family members. The main contribution of these theories is the introduction of alcohol and drugs as a trigger of violence within the family (Steinmetz, 1987). Most of the studies that examine substance abuse from either partner uncover a relationship with intimate violence (Stets, 1991; Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997; Robinson and Chandek, 2000; DeMaris et al., 2003; Cunradi, 2007). DeMaris et al. (2003) find that couples with substance abuse exhibit more violence than other couples. Since in their study they hold verbal conflict constant, they support the theory that substance abuse triggers violent reactions during an argument.

The social-psychological perspective embraces different theories that study the impact environment and other individuals have on the family. This perspective includes the frustration-aggression, the social-learning, role-modelling, exchange, resource, and family stress theories (Steinmetz, 1987: 742-743; Farmer and Tiefenthaler, 1997; Fox et al., 2002, Villarreal, 2007).

The frustration- aggression theory asserts that there are two reasons for becoming violent: on one hand the individual has some of his objectives blocked, therefore he expresses his anger with violence; on the other hand this way of expressing frustration can be a product of learning (Steinmetz, 1987: 742). This last assertion is linked to the next theories.

The social-learning and role-modelling theories propose imitation as a way of acquiring certain patterns of behaviour (Steinmetz, 1987: 742). Akers (1990: 659) develops the social learning theory, incorporating informal and formal rewards and penalties. Steinmetz's explanation focuses on the children of violent couples: they learn their parents' behaviour and continue with the same pattern. However, Stith et al. (2000) have carried out a meta-analysis of different research studies involving the intergenerational transmission of spouse abuse. They find a moderate correlation between being a child in a violent family and becoming part of a violent marriage (2000: 648).

The resource and exchange theories have economical grounds and could be considered the rational choice approach to domestic violence. These theories establish that women stay with an abusive husband because they do not have incentives or a better choice outside the marital home. These theories include the children in two different ways: on the one hand, the woman feels the children are better off economically staying with the abusive father, thus they act as a force to stay; on the other hand, the number of children may trigger distress in an economically disadvantaged family, which may lead to violent behaviour (Steinmetz, 1987; Gelles and Straus, 1988; Fox et al., 2002; Villarreal, 2007).

Steinmetz (1987: 743) establishes the exchange theory as a continuous interaction between the couple, where they want to "maximise the rewards and to minimise the costs". This theory has the same characteristics as the marital dependency theory described by Villarreal (2007: 418). Gelles and Straus (1988: 22) establish that domestic violence happens because there are not enough formal and informal constraints; husbands beat their wives "because they can". The exchange theory they develop is grounded mainly in the opportunity offenders have to commit their crimes without punishment. They name it exchange/social control theory because of the social approval of violence and the social omission to stop it from happening (Gelles, 1993: 38; Gelles, 1995: 469). There has been a more economical attempt to study domestic violence, like the game theoretic model used by Farmer and Tiefenthaler (1997). They develop an economic interaction of the couple, where both members of the couple act in response to the behaviour of the other, considering their income and marginal utility. Farmer and Tiefenthaler develop their theory using different types of equilibriums, and find that the male's income combined with the woman's income will determine the level of violence she is willing to tolerate. However they explain that the

woman's situation is affected by her altruism, "the greater utility she receives from his happiness, the greater the level of violence in the relationship" (1997: 343). The former assumption is not supported by less economical and more socially inclined studies, for example the review of studies that Holtzworth-Munroe et al. (1997) carry out. They study couples' interaction and communication patterns. In most of the interaction studies the differences between violent and non-violent couples are explored. They find that women with violent husbands were not satisfied with their relationships as a result of their violence.

Nevertheless, Farmer and Tiefenthaler's (1997: 346) study predicts that, as the woman's income increases, it is less likely that their partner will be violent. If only the income and employment are considered this conclusion is moderately supported by research studies that use family stress theories (DeMaris et al., 2003; Villarreal, 2007). In addition, some studies consider social structure as an extra income for women (Stets, 1991; Díaz Olavarrieta and Sotelo, 1996; Ellsberg et al., 2001; Fox et al., 2002; DeMaris et al., 2003). These researchers consider that women with access to shelters, more legal rights and to a sympathetic society will have more incentives to leave a violent relationship. On this subject, Díaz Olavarrieta and Sotelo (1996) explain that in Mexico women perceive that the judicial system is biased in favour of men. They refer to a research study by Azaola-Garrido (1994)[1], which establishes that women convicted of homicide in Mexico receive longer sentences than men. For example, men who have killed a relative receive on average a sentence of 18.6 years, while for the same crime women receive on average a prison term of 23 years (1996: 1939). This lack of empathy from society and the legal obstacles are also mentioned as reasons for the underreporting of domestic violence (Ferguson et al., 1986; Stets, 1991; Díaz Olavarrieta and Sotelo, 1996; Di Bartolo, 2001; Ellsberg et al., 2001; Browning, 2002).

Resource theory states that the couple's asymmetry of income will predispose them to violence (Macmillan and Gartner, 1999; Fox et al., 2002; Villarreal, 2007). This theory

---

[1] Azaola-Garrido E. (1994). Estudio Comparativo del Delito en el Hombre y la Mujer [Comparative Study of Crimes between Men and Women], *Programa Interdisciplinario de Estudios de la Mujer*, Mexico City: El Colegio de México. Quoted by Díaz Olavarrieta and Sotelo (1996).

links employment status with power exercised by the members of the couple, particularly the man. Villarreal asserts that males want to dominate in an economic way, thus if they do not have this possibility they will become violent "to assert their dominance in the relationship" (2007: 418). This theory expects violence if the man is unemployed or if he earns less money than the woman. Unlike exchange theory, in resource theory women's income will put them in more danger. On this matter, Macmillan and Gartner (1999), Fox et al. (2002), DeMaris et al. (2003) and Villarreal (2007) analyse employment status. Macmillan and Gartner (1999) find that women in the labour force are more likely to suffer spousal violence. These studies also include education as a variable; this variable is constantly used with interesting results. For example, DeMaris et al. (2003: 664) find "that couples in which both partners had low education were at lower risk than others for physical aggression". This might have two probable explanations: on the one hand, the apparent equilibrium between both partners makes them see each other as equals, supporting the resource theory; on the other hand, the same level of education might create a balanced interaction, supporting the exchange theory.

Family stress theory is included here, because of its economic implications. This theory establishes that stressors will provoke an eventual breakdown (Steinmetz, 1987; Fox et al., 2002). Thus, the perception of the economy is an important ingredient. This theory is seen as cyclical because the stressors eventually generate violence; subsequently, there is a break of serenity, and then the stressors accumulate again to generate a violent outburst. In research studies based on family stress theory, the number of children is usually included: children cause distress or create a greater economic burden for the couple (Ferguson et al., 1986; DeMaris et al., 2003, Villarreal, 2007).

Fox et al. (2002:804) also look at employment status and women's income. They find that women who want their partners to work more are at higher risk of violence. As the authors conclude, the violence in this case might be a result of economic stress. However, what if women want their husbands to work more hours to keep them away from home? This assumption will be analysed later. Fox et al. (2002) maintain that financial stressors are significant, especially the perceptions each partner has of their wealth. DeMaris et al. (2003) find that employment is significant, especially the "male unemployment coupled with female employment" (2003: 664). An important conclusion of DeMaris et al. is that

the risk of violence increases when only one of the couple is working. Villarreal (2007), who uses ENDIREH 2003[2], explores employment as an endogenous variable of the relationship itself. He argues that a man who wants to control a woman will not allow her to work, thus this will affect her employment status. He finds that employed women have a lower risk of experiencing domestic violence, which supports exchange and family stress theory. Women who must ask permission to their partner to work for pay are dependent and predisposed to suffer violence (Villarreal, 2007).

The social-cultural perspectives (Steinmetz, 1987: 748) examine the environment in which the families are embedded. An overview of the structural and the cultural theory will be provided. Social disorganization theory could be included within this perspective because it takes into account the environment and the perception of violence (Reiss, 1993; Miles-Doan, 1998; Browning, 2002).

Structural theory establishes that people with certain characteristics will be more likely to suffer domestic violence. The difference between this theory and the resource and family stress theories is the addition of the characteristics of the neighbourhood, such as its poverty level. Cultural theory adds the informal acceptance of violence. It establishes that neighbourhoods with a high level of street criminality will also have domestic violence. The social acceptance of violence diminishes the risks to the offender, thus he can offend more easily and more frequently.

Social disorganization theory explains how the neighbourhood characteristics affect the community-level ability to control crime (Reiss, 1993; Sampson, 1993; Sampson et al., 1997). Browning (2002) analyses partner violence and collective efficacy; neighbourhood networks, social reliance, and community attachment have an effect "in the local guardianship of women who are experiencing the threat of intimate violence" (2002: 835). Browning includes an analysis of the neighbourhood: its concentrated disadvantage, the residential stability, the immigrant concentration and the "effect of community-level non-intervention norms" (2002: 838). It is important to emphasise that Browning uses four data sources: a National census, the Chicago neighbourhood community survey, Chicago

---

[2] Villarreal (2007) uses the Mexican National Survey on Household Relationship Dynamics 2003.

homicide data and the Chicago Health and Social Life Survey. He finds residential stability and immigrant concentration are not directly connected with intimate partner violence and intimate partner homicide (2002: 844-845). Browning finds that as non-intervention norms are more prominent, the impact of collective efficacy decreases. He concludes that collective efficacy works in two ways: on the one hand women perceive support and can disclose that they are in a violent relationship; on the other hand, an organised community can better deal with domestic violence.

The theories formerly discussed are regularly used to examine domestic violence, focusing on husband-to-wife aggression. Controversies within the family violence perspective come from its focus and the variables it introduces. Since this perspective is developed as a familial analysis its focal point is not only the couple's violence. These theories of violence "are made to fit intimate violence whether accurately or not" (Mannon, 1997: 10). Another controversy is the common use of the terms "husband-to-wife violence" or "wife-beating" throughout the literature. The usage of this terminology is criticised by Johnson (1995), since other types of relationships can be violent. There are several studies that explore cohabitation, same sex, and dating relationships (Stets and Straus, 1989; Johnson, 1995; Johnson and Ferraro, 2000). The cohabitation variable is largely used since Stets and Straus (1989) carried out an analysis of violence in cohabiting, married and dating couples. Most studies which include the cohabitation variable find that married couples are at lower risk of violence compared to cohabiting couples (Stets, 1991; Johnson, 1995; Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997; Johnson and Ferraro, 2000; Fox et al., 2002; Villarreal, 2007). Stets (1991) maintains that this might be a product of the couple's isolation.

Some findings of the family violence perspective are criticised by the feminist approach. The feminist approach to domestic violence considers that women are embedded in a patriarchal society. This society gives better opportunities to men, thus women have more limited access to resources; this generates less independence (Yllö, 1993). A controversial finding of family violence research is that not all socioeconomic statuses have the same level of domestic violence. The findings show that women of certain economic strata are less likely to experience a violent relationship (Di Bartolo, 2001). However, for the feminist perspective all women are at the same risk because of the power asymmetry between woman and man. Feminists contest the finding, claiming that the level of underreporting is

high in individuals of medium and high socioeconomic status. Another controversial finding of family violence theorists is that both men and women can initiate violent arguments; the proportion is equivalent (Gelles, 1993). The feminist theory establishes that an analysis of who initiates a violent argument makes the analysis lose focus since the importance relies on the violence and who is most affected by it (Yllö, 1993; Kurz, 1993). Gelles (1993: 42-43) believes the feminist theory cannot explain changes through cultures and times, he believes it does not use a "wide-angle lens", losing sight of very important variables. The critiques of the family violence perspective can be easily overcome, because they depend on delimiting who is the offender and what kind of relationship the offender has with the victim.

2.2. Routine Activity Theory as explanation for Domestic Violence

Routine activity theory was developed by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson (1979). This theory is usually used to explain crimes other than domestic violence (Mannon, 1997). The theory articulates the convergence of three elements to explain crime: likely offenders, suitable targets and the absence of capable guardians (Cohen and Felson, 1979). As the authors explain, they "take criminal inclination as given" (1979:589); this theory focuses on the three elements and their intersection in space and time. As Cohen and Felson establish, crime rates have changed because of the evolution of habits and opportunities.

In man-to-woman domestic violence, what is a suitable target? As mentioned before, Gelles and Straus (1988: 17-36) explain that domestic violence offenders do it "because they can"; they depict a routine activity theory since the weakest members suffer violence and the number of violent events increase as there are no guardians to stop it from happening. Domestic violence is high because of family privacy, making it difficult for external guardians to get involved. Furthermore, they explain how children stopped being beaten by their parents, because they got taller and stronger and could fight back. The wish to beat their children was there, but the target changed. This cannot happen to an adult, an adult is unlikely to grow any stronger.

As described before, Fox et al. (2002) find that women who want their partners to work more hours are at a higher risk of intimate violence. Perhaps these women are already

suffering from domestic violence, and that is why they want their partners to stay more hours away from home. Domestic violence is usually suffered when both members are at the home; unemployed men are more often at home than working men thus the couple is more exposed to violence. Steinmetz explains that Gelles and Straus believe women become victims once they display the characteristics of a defenceless individual, showing they are isolated (Steinmetz, 1987: 739). Steinmetz disagrees with such affirmation; she believes that these characteristics are a result of the continuous beating. However, both arguments might be correct in taking account of the state-dependent risk, also called victimisation-induced or event-dependent (Farrell et al., 1995:386). This victimisation explanation states that events are linked; the offender takes into account his prior experiences with the target. This means, if the man could beat his wife without any costs to him, he will do it again. The personality of the woman is affected by a continuous beating (Steinmetz, 1987; Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997), but her reaction during the first event would have changed the reward-cost balance for the man. The amount of support she has from her family, neighbours and institutions can be perceived by her partner, curtailing his future actions. Gelles and Straus (1988) report different true stories, most of them showing indifference from neighbours and police; there is a total absence of guardians.

Changes in family composition have also affected women. A smaller number of children and a tendency to live in nuclear families generate fewer guardians (Gelles and Straus, 1988; Mannon, 1997). This assertion is disputed by studies that develop exchange, resource and family stress theories where the number of children increases the risk of violence (Ferguson et al., 1986; DeMaris et al., 2003). Villarreal (2007) explains that women with young children have difficulty finding a job, which increases their dependency. In his model he does not find a relationship between the number of children and risk of violence, but he finds a relationship between having young children and being unemployed (2007:430). Isolation also means fewer guardians. Some theorists argue that this isolation might be a result of the partner's coercive control over the woman: limiting her friends and how often they meet (Villarreal, 2007). Stets (1991) analyses cohabitation and isolation of the couple. He finds that cohabiting individuals have not developed networks with organisations and have less attachment to their partners in comparison to married couples.

Thus there are fewer costs, financial and emotional, for being aggressive in a cohabiting couple compared to a married couple (1991:677).

Potential guardians have also been affected by the evolution of familial spaces. Houses used to be small or with few rooms, thus everyone would notice the behaviour of all the family members. The concept of "privacy" developed and houses changed, allowing different actions to happen without the rest of the family noticing (Gelles and Straus, 1988; Mannon, 1997[3]).

Routine activity theory has not been used as much as sociological theories to study domestic violence. Gelles and Straus (1988) explain that the weakest family members suffer domestic violence. In other words, they are suitable targets. In addition, household routines have a time and a space, and offenders know where and when there are no capable guardians.

2.3. Two Types of Couple Violence Against Women

Steinmetz differentiates two types of couple violence: "Saturday night brawlers" and "the chronic battered syndrome" (1987: 743). Johnson (1995) develops this idea, calling them common couple violence and patriarchal terrorism. Common couple violence describes the violence when sporadic discussions get out of control "rarely escalating into serious" forms of violence, and it "is more likely to be mutual" (1995:285, 2000:949). Patriarchal terrorism, later called intimate terrorism, describes a frequent pattern of violence "less likely to be mutual", and it includes "economic subordination, threats, isolation, and other control tactics" (1995:285). Johnson and Ferraro (2000) add two types of couple violence: violent resistance and mutual violent control. Violent resistance is the response of intimate terrorism, and mutual violent control is described as two intimate terrorists together (2000:949).

When feminists and family violence researchers discuss their findings, they are not describing the same types of violence (Johnson, 1995). On the one hand, clinical data,

---

[3] This is mostly exemplified with child sexual abuse.

shelters data, and shelters surveys are usually the sources of feminist researchers; these sources provide information about intimate terrorism since the samples are made up of women who have serious injuries and have been victims of repeated aggression. On the other hand, national domestic violence surveys provide information on the whole population; its findings have a lower number of escalating violence and serious aggressions, and are mostly gender balanced (Johnson, 1995).

Ellsberg et al. (2001) compare three surveys: one national health survey and two regional studies focused on women's experiences of violence. They conclude that national surveys relying on one question about violence underestimate the problem. Since the national survey was long and the questions about violence were unexpected and asked at the end, women were less likely to disclose their experiences.

The former demarcation is important in order to understand the sources' different results. This difference has policy implications (Farrell and Pease, 1993; Johnson, 1995; Ellsberg et al., 2001).

This study examines common couple violence with routine activity theory, using a national survey created to measure domestic violence against women. The objectives of this study are: first, to find out if the presence of potential guardians diminishes common couple violence; second, if weak, isolated or economically dependent women are suitable targets for their partners; and third, if the constant interaction of the couple increases the likelihood of common couple violence. The kind of survey and the variables obtained from it will be analysed in the next chapter.

3. Research Methodology

As mentioned in the previous chapter, some clinical and official reports consider the proportion of women who suffer intimate terrorism, while family violence surveys measure common couple violence (Johnson, 1995). Murray Straus (1979) designs the Conflict Tactics Scales, a survey that describes physical assaults on a partner. The modifications made to the questionnaire (Straus et al., 1996) aim to depict both types of couple violence with five scales: psychological aggression, negotiation, physical assault, sexual coercion and injury.

This study uses data from the Mexican National Survey on Household Relationship Dynamics 2006 (ENDIREH 2006), which has most of the scales. It includes questions about physical aggression and harassment in school and work, plus some questions about the respondent's social support. This survey was carried out by the Mexican National Institute for Statistics, Geography and Informatics in 128,000 randomly selected dwellings throughout the country (INEGI, 2007b). It was answered by women 15 years of age or older considering heterosexual relationships. Three types of surveys were created: one for women living with their partners, another one for divorced, separated or widowed women, and a third one for single women. Women with any of these characteristics in the randomly selected houses were interviewed. This study analyses the answers of women currently living with their partners, a sample that consists of 83,159 cases.

3.1. Variables

This research study tries to prove that routine activity theory can explain common couple violence, thus some variables are chosen to create the likely offenders, suitable targets and guardians. These variables are introduced in the first model. However, variables that are considered in other theories but that can be explained with routine activity theory are included in the second model. Finally, in the third model sociodemographic variables are examined.

The dependent variable was chosen from the strain and conflict section of the survey, when women were asked about their partner's common reaction when he is upset with her. The variable is violence of men towards their partner when upset; it does not include severe

forms of violence such as the use of weapons or threats to kill. The dependent variable includes insulting, throwing things, shoving, threatening to hit and beating her. Thus, the dependent variable is whether the woman experiences man-to-woman common couple violence.

A variable for suitable guardians was created considering all the people 15 years of age or older who live in the house, other than the woman and her partner. Only the unemployed or employed at home were considered since they could prevent wife beating from happening in the house; they are potential guardians. Other research studies include the variable of nonnuclear household (Villarreal, 2007). Villarreal, using ENDIREH 2003, finds that "the presence of extended family members in the household does not discourage the use of violence" (2007:428). Nonetheless, this study expects a negative relationship between man-to-woman common couple violence, and potential guardians.

Women's isolation depicts weak women (Steinmetz, 1987: 739) and represents fewer guardians and less social support (Gelles and Straus, 1988; Stets, 1991; Benson et al., 2003). The variable is made up of responses about going out with friends, talking to neighbours, and going to family, religious, or neighbourhood meetings. This study expects a positive relationship between the dependent variable and the first category of isolation.

Employment status of both partners is analysed separately. Most of the research studies show that unemployment and employment instability increase the likelihood of domestic violence, since it can produce stress (Fox et al., 2002; Benson, et al., 2003; DeMaris et al., 2003). This study tries to find out whether unemployment increases the interaction in space and time of likely offenders and suitable targets. Women who work at home are not excluded from the employment status because the question does not specify if she is alone[4].

Alcohol or drug consumption is analysed for both partners jointly. Most studies find a correlation between intimate violence and alcohol or drug abuse (Stets, 1991; Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997; Robinson and Chandek, 2000; DeMaris et al., 2003; Cunradi, 2007). The reason for analysing both partners' consumption is that substance abuse operates in

---

[4] From 83,159 women only 2,626 work at home.

two ways. On one hand, it makes the sober partner angry. On the other hand, during an argument drugged or alcoholised partners have more aggressive behaviours and their negotiation skills diminish (DeMaris et al., 2003). It is also considered that a drugged or alcoholised person makes a suitable target, since the individual might have less ability to defend himself.

The resource theory maintains that women with higher incomes than their partner are more likely to undergo intimate violence (Fox et al., 2002; Villarreal, 2007). In this study this variable is expected to have a negative effect on the dependent variable; as discussed in Farmer and Tiefenthaler's study (1997) women with higher incomes than men are expected to be less likely to experience common couple violence, since it increases the cost for men and diminishes the cost for women. This variable is the comparison of the respondents and their partner's wages; it excludes loans and governmental benefits. This study also examines a variable about the respondent's money for personal needs. This variable implies that women who do not have access to economic resources for their own needs may be seen as weak or isolated.

Stets (1991) asserts that cohabiting partners have a lower investment in the relationship; there is less to lose. This investment covers the social and financial spheres; thus, women are more likely to suffer domestic violence. Thus, this study introduces the variable of marriage and cohabitation.

Although this study explores common couple violence through the routine activity theory, a variable to show the intergenerational transmission of violence in women is added because they may see aggressive reactions as acceptable behaviour. The variable only considers violence between her parents. Nonetheless, a meta-analysis of this variable does not show a high correlation with intimate partner violence (Stith et al., 2000).

Sociodemographic variables are used as controls in several domestic violence studies. This study includes: length of relationship, number of children, as well as the respondent's age and education. The number of children includes the respondent's children with former partners.

3.2.   Limitations

Police records related to domestic violence in Mexico were unavailable. The records would be useful to examine the couples that suffer chronic common couple violence.

The survey used, ENDIREH 2006, has a representative sample in national and state levels, but it is not representative at a municipal level. In addition, even when the survey has questions about the respondents' dwellings it does not have questions about the type of neighbourhood. For these two reasons it was impossible to examine neighbours as potential guardians or the effect of collective support on common couple violence.

In order to depict routine activity theory the analysis of space and time are required, however the survey lacks questions concerning time schedules and routines. Time and space are examined with the same variables, potential guardians and the employment status of both partners.

Physical disability is examined separately because few of the interviewees are disabled. This variable tries to depict if disabled women are seen as weak and consequently are more likely to undergo common couple violence.

In the section used to create the dependent variable women are asked about their own reactions. The interviewees who say they are aggressive when upset with their partner are 21.6 percent (*Table 1*). However, several studies assert that women use violence against their partners mostly as self-defence (Yllö, 1993; Kurz, 1993). A chi-square test shows there is correlation between the dependent variable and women's aggressive behaviour when upset with their partner (Table 1). The percentage of couples where both partners have violent behaviour is high. Although this finding could support the self-defence claim, the questions used to form these variables concern behaviours when upset with the partner and not reactions to the partner's behaviour.

This study only considers man-to-woman violence because physical assaults have a higher consequence on women's health (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997). Across several studies, Holtzworth-Munroe et al. (1997:302) consistently find that "husband violence results in more injury, fear, and psychological problems than wife violence". In addition, some

variables cannot be measured for men, such as isolation. Furthermore, in the case of the intergenerational transmission of violence 31 percent of the interviewees do not know if their partner's parents suffered domestic violence.

Table 1. Man-to-woman and woman-to-man common couple violence

		Woman-to-man common couple violence		Total
		No	Yes	
Man-to-woman common couple violence	No	58335 (92.5%)	4697 (7.5%)	63032 (100%)
	Yes	6619 (33.4%)	13228 (66.6%)	19847 (100%)
Total		64954 (78.4%)	17925 (21.6%)	82879 (100%)

Number of cases: 82,879. p<.0001
Source: Variables were created using the Strain and Conflict section of ENDIREH 2006, INEGI.

Another limitation is the way the study asks about the consumption of alcohol or drugs. Although this variable is included in the analysis, it is asked as a cause of problems between the couple. The woman has to perceive that alcohol or drug abuse of either partner irritates the other partner. The two questions, one about her and the other one about her partner, do not ask directly about substance abuse thus their answers are perceptions of the abuse as the origin of conflict.

A limitation of this survey is that in the strain and conflict section it does not have chronicity questions[5], it only shows prevalence with its dichotomous answers. There is no way of measuring how often they are aggressive when upset, because the prevalence "is not a meaningful statistic for the negotiation and aggression scales" (Straus et al., 1996: 296).

This study develops three models in order to examine common couple violence with routine activity theory. The next chapter shows the models' outcomes and their explanations.

---

[5] In the questions that may depict intimate terrorism, not used in this study, the survey adds prevalence answers but only three categories: once, more than once and never. The frequency levels should be less compressed to depict chronicity.

4. Data Analysis

This study uses binary logistic regression because the dependent variable is dichotomous: whether there is man-to-woman common couple violence or not. With this type of regression "we can predict which of the two categories a person is likely to belong to given certain other information" (Field, 2005: 218). The variables were tested for collinearity. All the variables, except women's age and length of relationship[6], have a VIF less than 2. The former correlation is obvious, because young women will not have long relationships. However, this study will keep both variables because they are analysed separately in several studies (Macmillan and Gartner, 1999; DeMaris et al., 2003; Villarreal, 2007).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Variables

Variables	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
Independent			
Homes with potential guardians [a]	15.2		
Isolation			
Woman is isolated	2.7		
Woman goes out to friends and family meetings	50.1		
Woman goes out to friends, family, neighbourhood and religious meetings [a]	47.2		
Employment status			
Man works [a]	88.5		
Woman works [a]	35.5		
Woman earns more money than man [a]	7.9		
Drinking or drug problem [a]	23.1		
Woman has money for personal needs [a]	75.5		
Cohabiting couples [a]	20.5		
Her family of origin was violent [a]	26.0		
Sociodemographic variables			
Woman's age		40.74	13.39
Woman's education			
Basic education	43.8		
Middle and high school education	44.3		
College education or more [a]	11.8		
Length of relationship		19.08	13.74
Number of children		3.26	2.38
Dependent			
Man-to-woman common couple violence	23.9		

[a] These variables are the reference categories in the regressions.
Source: ENDIREH 2006 database, INEGI.

---

[6] And the highest condition index is 28, because of women's age and length of relationship.

The reason for making three models is that in the first model the analysis integrates variables that, as mentioned before, try to test for routine activity theory such as: potential guardians, women's isolation, and employment status. The second model integrates variables that have correlation with intimate violence throughout the research studies; however they are explored through a routine activity theory perspective. The third model controls for sociodemographic variables that also have correlation with intimate partner violence.

Table 3. Logistic Regression Models of Man-to-Woman Common Couple Violence

Variables	Model 1 B (S.E.) Odds Ratio	Model 2 B (S.E.) Odds Ratio	Model 3 B (S.E.) Odds Ratio
Constant	-1.11 (.026)* .328	.558 (.045)* 1.748	.612 (.068)* 1.845
Homes with potential guardians	-.095 (.022)* .909	-.033 (.024) .967	.019 (.024) 1.019
Woman is isolated	.642(.046)* 1.900	.457 (.051)* 1.580	.439 (.051)* 1.551
Woman goes out to friends and family meetings	.195 (.017)* 1.216	.138 (.018)* 1.148	.135 (.018)* 1.144
Woman's employment status	-.139 (.017)* .871	-.271 (.021)* .763	-.327 (.021)* .721
Man's employment status	.068 (.025)** 1.070	.140 (.029)* 1.151	.042 (.031) 1.042
Alcohol or drug abuse		-1.51 (.018)* .221	-1.486 (.019)* .226
Woman earns more than man		-.063 (.036) .938	-.097 (.036)** .908
Cohabiting couples		-.165 (.021)* .848	-.222 (.022)* .801
Her family of origin was violent		-.723 (.019)* .485	-.706 (.019)* .494
Woman has personal money for needs		.508 (.020)* 1.662	.465 (.020)* 1.592
Woman's age			-.014 (.002)* .986
Basic education			.156 (.035)* 1.169
Middle and high school education			.172 (.033)* 1.188
Length of relationship			.015 (.002)* 1.016
Number of children			.041 (.005)* 1.042

N=82521
*p<0.001
**p<0.01

In the first model we have a $\chi^{2=}$ 358.947 and 5 degrees of freedom, the independent variables have an impact on the man's behaviour when upset with his partner. The model successfully predicts 76.1 percent of the cases. This model has an unexpected result with the potential guardians. According to the model there is a smaller likelihood of experiencing common couple violence when there are no potential guardians. This unexpected result may be a result of overcrowding and stress when there is a lot of people in the house (Villarreal, 2007). Taking into consideration that only 0.1 percent of potential guardians are people hired to work in the house, the rest of the potential guardians are family or friends who are unemployed or inactive; thus they represent an economic burden on the family. The former assertion is supported by the family stress and exchange/social control theories (Gelles, 1993; Gelles, 1995).

The case of isolation supports the findings of most studies; isolation increases the likelihood of undergoing common couple violence (Stets, 1991). The baseline category is Mexican women who go out to friends, family, neighbourhood and religious meetings. Changing from isolated to the baseline category reduces the odds of suffering common couple violence by 90 percent. The same occurs when changing from a small circle of friends to a larger circle; having greater social support decreases by 21 percent the odds of suffering common couple violence. This satisfies the expectation, thus it is reasonable to assert that isolation makes women seem weak (Gelles and Straus, 1988), consequently they become suitable targets.

Employment status is a difficult variable because employment itself may be an agreement between the couple (Macmillan and Gartner, 1999; Villarreal, 2007). In this case, there is a greater likelihood of experiencing common couple violence if the woman works. This is opposite to the expected result that fewer interactions in space and time would prevent women from suffering violence. However, the former is clarified by the man's employment status because his unemployment increases the likelihood of aggressive behaviour when upset with his partner.

The second model explores five variables widely used in domestic violence studies which are used as instruments to increase the predictability of the model. The χ^2=10452.127 and 10 degrees of freedom. This model has a Nagelkerke R Square of .178, and although this

pseudo square has to be used with caution it is important to compare it with the first model's Nagelkerke R Square which is .007. The second model predicts 77.7 percent of the cases correctly; there was an improvement of 1.6 percent in the classification of cases.

In this model the variable of potential guardians is no longer significant. This result confirms the acceptance of domestic violence as a private matter (Straus and Gelles, 1986). Potential guardians do not increase the risks of offenders; their presence does not make a difference in Mexican common couple violence.

 The categories of isolation have the same result. In this model an isolated woman increases the odds of experiencing common couple violence by 58 percent. Thus, although potential guardians inside the house are not significant, the woman's social support is.

Mexican women's employment has the same finding; when the woman is employed the odds of experiencing domestic violence increase by 76 percent. Then again, employed men are less likely to present aggressive behaviour. Additionally, whether a Mexican woman earns more than her partner is not significant. Thus, only the fact of a woman being part of labour force is increasing her risks, and not her income.

The variable of alcohol and drug abuse has a strong significance with a Wald of 6685.462. Women who consider that alcohol or drugs do not cause distress between the couple are less likely to undergo common couple violence. Alcohol and drug abuse of either partner increase by 22 percent the odds of experiencing common couple violence in Mexico. As explained before, substance abuse reduces the negotiation skills (DeMaris et al., 2003). In their research study, DeMaris et al. (2003:664) conclude that "rather than inciting verbal conflict, the role of substances may be to disinhibit violent responses to that conflict". Alternatively, an alcoholised woman makes a more suitable target since she may not defend herself. The cases where Mexican women perceive that their partner gets angry when she drinks or uses drugs are described in *table 4*. The table shows that 61.5 percent of the Mexican women who consider that their drinking or drug abuse generates distress to their partner, experience common couple violence. Although only a small number of women claim that their substance abuse provoked problems, the percentage of these women who undergo common couple violence is high. Furthermore, 47.8 percent of the women who

consider that their substance abuse generates problems are in a relationship where both partners have aggressive behaviour. This supports the research studies that claim that alcohol diminishes the abilities to carry out an argument peacefully (DeMaris et al., 2003). Men may perceive women as weak when they are alcoholised, thus they make suitable targets. Nevertheless, women's substance abuse may be the partner's excuse to be aggressive, and the partner is not necessarily aggressive when she is intoxicated.

Table 4. Man-to-woman common couple violence and woman's substance abuse

| | | Woman drinks or uses drugs | | |
		No	Yes	Total
Man-to-woman common couple violence	No	62657 (76.7%)	537 (38.5%)	63194 (76.1%)
	Yes	19021 (23.3%)	859 (61.5%)	19880 (23.9%)
Total		81678 (100.0%)	1396 (100.0%)	83074 (100.0%)

N: 83074 cases
Source: ENDIREH 2006 database, INEGI.

Several research studies conclude that cohabiting couples are at a higher risk of experiencing domestic violence (Stets, 1991; Johnson, 1995; Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997; Johnson and Ferraro, 2000; Fox et al., 2002; Villarreal, 2007).This finding is supported with this analysis; the odds of suffering common couple violence increase by 84 percent for a cohabiting woman in Mexico.

The model shows that women whose parents experienced domestic violence are more likely to undergo common couple violence. The odds of suffering common couple violence when the woman comes from a violent family increase by 48 percent.

The personal money variable confirms that women who have access to resources for personal needs are less likely to undergo common couple violence. Mexican women who have money for personal needs do not necessarily work as shown in *table 5*. More than half the women who have money for personal needs do not work, thus the money comes from family members, friends and their partner. The concept that social support is important to prevent common couple violence is confirmed (Benson et al., 2003).

*Table 5.*Women who work and women with money for personal needs

		Woman has money for personal needs		Total
		No	Yes	
Woman works	No	17203 (84.8%)	36184 (57.9%)	53387 (64.5%)
	Yes	3093 (15.2%)	26337 (42.1%)	29430 (35.5%)
Total		20296 (100.0%)	62521 (100.0%)	82817 (100.0%)

N: 82817

Source: ENDIREH 2006 database, INEGI.

The third model examines the former two models but controls for sociodemographic variables. The χ^2=10771.893 and 15 degrees of freedom. This model has a Nagelkerke R Square of .183; this is a difference of .176 with the first model. This model predicts 77.7 percent of the cases correctly and although there is no change with the second model, this model has an improvement in the prediction of cases where the man has violent behaviour.

In this model the man's employment status is not significant; however, the woman's employment status maintains that women who work are more likely to experience common couple violence. In addition, women who earn more money than their partner are more likely to undergo common couple violence. In the second model this variable is not significant, however controlling for sociodemographic factors it turns out to be significant. Woman's employment and income have an effect on couple violence; this may support resource theory (Macmillan and Gartner, 1999; Fox et al., 2002; Villarreal, 2007). In fact, 17.8 percent of the women interviewed said that they must ask permission from their partner to work for pay (INEGI; 2007a).

Isolation is significant and potential guardians are not. The routines outside the home have a major effect on common couple violence. Social support outside the home is more important than the potential guardians inside the home.

The sociodemographic variables examined in the model are significant. This model confirms that Mexican women who are more educated are less likely to suffer domestic

violence, because the odds of experiencing common couple violence decrease approximately by 20 percent when women have college education and more.

On the one hand, age has a negative effect on man-to-woman common couple violence in Mexico. Older people may have fewer arguments, or less energy to be aggressive. On the other hand, the length of relationship has a positive effect on the dependent variable. Although this may seem as a contradictory finding this is caused by the relationship between man-to-woman common couple violence and length of relationship, which is a curve (*Graph 1*). Women in less than a year-long relationship are less likely to experience, or to report, common couple violence compared to women in longer relationships. Afterwards, the curve stabilises and once the length of relationship reaches 18 years it starts decreasing. Thus, this finding does not oppose the negative effect that age has on the dependent variable. Stressors have to be taken into account; conflicts between the couple may begin after the first year of the relationship and not at its early stages. The length of relationship curve resembles the offending trajectory of a "moderate rate desister" examined by Sampson and Laub in a longitudinal study (2003:582).

Graph 1. Percentage of women who suffer common couple violence and length of relationship in years
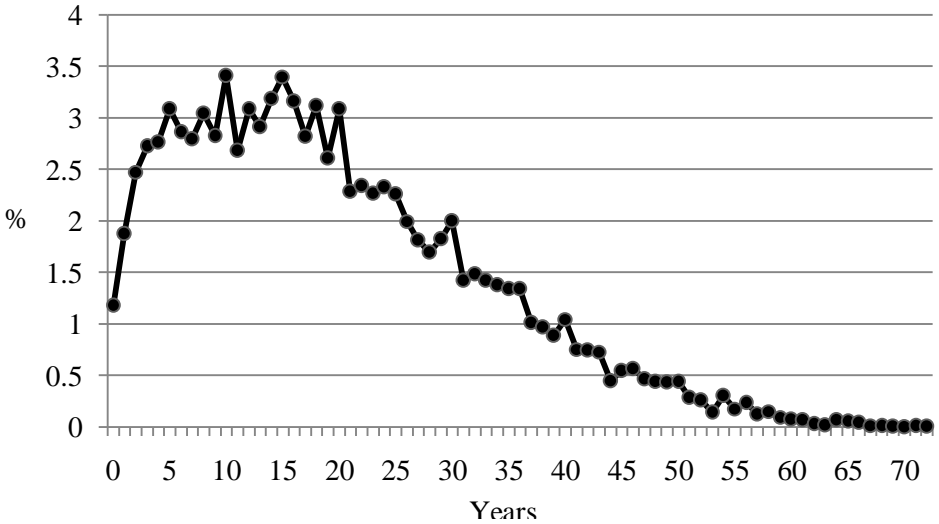
Source: ENDIREH 2006 database, INEGI

The number of children has a positive relationship with the man-to-woman common couple violence. As the number of children increases, the likelihood of suffering common couple

violence increases. This finding supports exchange, resource and family stress theories (Ferguson et al., 1986; DeMaris et al., 2003).

The first model, which examines variables that would depict routine activity theory, has weaker explanatory power compared to the other two models. The second and third models examine several variables that show significance in other research studies, they increased the explanatory power of the model.

The three models showed that working women are more likely to undergo common couple violence in Mexico. This finding supports the finding of Macmillan and Gartner (1999). They find that employed women are more likely to be abused if their partners are unemployed (1999: 957). Thus, this study examines employed women with unemployed partners and man-to-woman common couple violence. A chi-square test confirmed that these variables are significant. As *table 6* demonstrates, 31.5 percent of the women who are in the labour force and have an unemployed partner suffer common couple violence. However, only the 2.8 percent of women who answered the survey have this situation.

*Table 6.*Employed women with unemployed partners and man-to-woman common couple violence

		Employed woman with unemployed man		Total
		No	Yes	
Common couple violence	No	61591 (76.3%)	1603 (68.5%)	63194 (76.1%)
	Yes	19142 (23.7%)	738 (31.5%)	19880 (23.9%)
Total		80733 (100.0%)	2341 (100.0%)	83074 (100.0%)

N: 83074
Source: ENDIREH 2006 database, INEGI.

Disabled partners may seem to be suitable targets, thus *table 7* examines physically disabled women with non-disabled partners[7] and man-to-woman common couple violence. The chi-square test of these variables is not significant. Nevertheless, further analysis on disabled women is necessary in order to study if they are more likely to undergo domestic violence.

---

[7] In 44 couples both partners are physically disabled, these couples are not considered in the analysis.

*Table 7.*Disabled women and man-to-woman common couple violence

		Physically disabled woman with non-disabled partner		Total
		No	Yes	
Common couple violence	No	62571 (76.1%)	88 (75.2%)	62659 (76.1%)
	Yes	19675 (23.9%)	29 (24.8%)	19704 (23.9%)
Total		82246 (100.0%)	117 (100.0%)	82363 (100.0%)

N: 82363
Source: ENDIREH 2006 database, INEGI.

The next chapter discusses the models' results and their theoretical support. Additionally, these findings are compared with other research studies results. The next chapter analyses whether routine activity theory can explain common couple violence.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

Gelles and Straus (1988) and Mannon (1997) maintain that extended families living together decrease the likelihood of domestic violence. Villarreal (2007) hypothesizes that extended family may discourage the partner's aggressive behaviour. However, he finds that "the presence of extended family members in the household does not discourage the use of violence" (2007: 428). Although this study does not examine extended family, the variable of potential guardians does not make a difference in man-to-woman common couple violence. Thus, potential guardians do not seem to affect men's behaviour in Mexico. Family members may think domestic violence is a private matter (Gelles and Straus, 1988; Gelles, 1993; Gelles, 1995), thus they do not intervene. Nevertheless, further studies should examine costs and benefits of the extended family living in the same home. If the man supports the household, the extended family may have incentives to ignore the situation. The same applies to people hired to work in the house; if their payment comes from the offender an intervention may cost them their jobs. Another reason for the lack of importance of potential guardians may be the familial space, given that in big houses people cannot listen to or see what happens in other rooms (Gelles and Straus, 1988).

The variable of isolation was shown to be significant for man-to-woman common couple violence. As Mexican women have a bigger social sphere they may integrate a larger social support. On the one hand, this finding is supported by Stets (1991) and Browning (2002) who explain that women with social support may disclose to their family or friends that they are suffering violence. Therefore, women's social support may become a risk for aggressive or controlling men and they may have incentives to limit the friendships. This kind of coercive control is analysed by Stets (1991), Macmillan and Gartner (1999), and Villarreal (2007). On the other hand, Benson et al. (2003) do not find a significant link between the woman's social support and intimate violence. Alternatively, DeMaris et al. (2003) analyse men's isolation, and maintain that social networks help the couple when in trouble; thus, social networks work as shock absorbers for both partners.

Thus, potential guardians inside the home are irrelevant, but social support received from the outside is significant. The need to examine the intervention costs and benefits of potential guardians becomes relevant. The fact that external social support is more effective

than the support from home may mean that there are variables not examined in this study that are important to explain this result.

Men's employment status was not significant in the last model; this result contradicts the findings of Macmillan and Gartner (1999), Benson et al. (2003) and DeMaris et al. (2003). Family stress and exchange theories maintain that employment of either partner decreases the likelihood of domestic violence. This is an unexpected result considering routine activity theory, since the man's constant interactions in space and time with his partner do not increase common couple violence.

According to this study's findings, Mexican employed women are at higher risk of suffering common couple violence. This result is supported by the resource and feminist theories, where men feel they are losing dominance in the economic sphere (Yllö, 1993). DeMaris et al. (2003) also find that employed women are more likely to suffer domestic violence.

Conversely, Villarreal (2007) develops various models to examine employment and domestic violence in Mexico: in the simpler models he finds that employed women are more likely to experience domestic violence; in the second model, where employment is an endogenous variable and coercive control is an independent variable, he finds the opposite. He concludes that "part of the reason that a partner's control increases a woman's risk of violence is precisely that it reduces her ability to work" (2007:430). Villarreal examines coercive control in terms of "whether a woman needs permission from her partner to work" (2007: 428); in his sample almost 40 percent of the Mexican women answered that they need permission from her partner to work, while in this study's sample 17.8 percent of the Mexican women gave that answer (INEGI, 2007a). This study did not examine coercive control because it examines common couple violence, while Villarreal examines more severe physical abuse[8]. On one side, this may mean that coercive control has to be taken into consideration when analysing common couple violence. Alternatively, some jobs may

---

[8] He analyses the answers for questions such as "Has your partner: tied you up? Kicked you? Thrown an object at you? Hit you with his hands or an object? Tried to strangle you? Attacked you with a knife or blade? Fired a weapon at you?" (2007: 424).

increase women's anxiety and irritability (Fox et al., 2002), increasing the frequency of ordinary conflicts.

Macmillan and Gartner (1999) find that employed women with unemployed partners are more likely to suffer domestic violence. Resource and feminist theories share this assertion. On the contrary, in Fox et al.'s study (2002) the couple's employment status, examined separately or jointly, was not linked to domestic violence. As mentioned in the former chapter, this variable is significant with man-to-woman common couple violence in this study; however a small proportion of women in the sample are in this situation.

Mexican women who have a higher income than their partner are more likely to experience common couple violence. This finding is opposite to the expected, and it also contests the expected by Farmer and Tiefenthaler (1997). Nonetheless, this finding is supported by feminist and resource theories (Yllö, 1993; Macmillan and Gartner, 1999), where the man's last resource is to be aggressive because he is not the main economic support. Alternatively, Fox et al. (2002) examine women's contributions to the couple's earnings, but it fails to have significance in any of the models.

The increased risk to Mexican employed women and to Mexican women with higher incomes than their partners is contrary to the expected with routine activity theory. Employed women spend less time at home, thus fewer conflicts with their partners were expected. However, it may be that "job strain and job type" (Fox et al., 2002) increase the couple's conflicts when they interact. Mexican women with higher incomes than their partners were expected to be less dependent. This finding may mean that Mexican women who earn more than their partners do not necessarily keep the money they earn, thus their share to the household expenses increase. According to the feminist theory, keeping the woman's income is another type of coercion applied by men.

Mexican women who have money for personal needs are less likely to experience common couple violence. This finding is supported by Farmer and Tiefenthaler's study (1997). They explain that women who have access to economic resources will have a lower level of tolerance towards violence. This finding is also supported by exchange theory, since women with money for personal needs have lower costs if they leave a violent relationship.

This finding seems to contradict employed women and women who earn more than their partner being more likely to suffer common couple violence. Nevertheless, as explained in the former chapter, 57.9 percent of the Mexican women who have money for personal needs do not work; consequently, the money was given by relatives, neighbours or friends. Therefore, social networks have a negative effect on common couple violence also in an economic way; this finding is supported by Villarreal (2007).

Cohabitation has a statistically positive effect on common couple violence in Mexico. This finding is supported by several research studies on domestic violence (Stets and Straus, 1989; Stets, 1991; Johnson, 1995; Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997; Johnson and Ferraro, 2000; Villarreal, 2007). This variable is linked to isolation, since Stets (1991) finds that cohabiting couples do not develop certain social networks. Additionally, Stets (1991) finds that cohabiting couples are less attached to their partners. Divorce and child support impose costs, while in cohabitation there is a lower financial investment. Therefore, cohabiting couples are more likely to suffer common couple violence because their costs, if the relationship ends, are lower compared to married couples. Alternatively, Kenney and McLanahan (2006) maintain that violent cohabiting couples do not marry, while the least violent eventually marry. In addition, there is a self selection of couples throughout time, where violent married couples chose to separate or divorce; this may have an effect on the predictor of married and cohabiting couples when analysing couple violence (Kenney and McLanahan, 2006).

Length of relationship of Mexican couples has an apparent positive effect on common couple violence. As discussed in the former chapter, this happens because common couple violence was less likely in couples together for less than a year, after which time the likelihood increases and stabilises. The likelihood of domestic violence decreases after 18 years in a relationship. On the one hand, this finding is related to the self selection of couples explained before, where the most violent couples separate or divorce (Kenney and McLanahan, 2006). This means that the couples that suffered common couple violence during the first years decide to separate or divorce, affecting the common couple violence and length of relationship curve. An alternative assumption is that common couple violence was underreported by women in less than a year-long relationship. Alternatively, this curve can be explained with family stress theory (Fox et al., 2002; Benson et al., 2003). During

the first year of a relationship the couple is adapting; in addition, there are some stressors such as economic distress, children and alcohol abuse. DeMaris et al. explain that children are a stressor because "conflicts frequently arise over such elements of childrearing as proper levels of discipline or the extent to which each partner should be responsible for the supervision of children" (2003: 654). Consequently, until the children are capable of making their own decisions the couples may have arguments related to their upbringing.

The number of children has a positive effect on common couple violence in Mexico. As mentioned before, they are considered a stressor because of the decisions related to their education. Additionally, family stress and exchange theories support the assumption that a large number of children become an economic burden for the couple (Ferguson et al., 1986; Steinmetz, 1987; Fox et al., 2002; DeMaris et al., 2003, Villarreal, 2007). Children have an impact on the common couple violence and length of relationship curve taking into account that they are economically dependent, thus they are supported by the parents. Their economic independence may contribute to the negative slope in the curve.

Age has a negative effect on common couple violence in Mexico. This finding is widely supported (Steinmetz, 1987; Gelles, 1993; Fox et al., 2002; Benson et al., 2003; Villarreal, 2007). This negative effect may be because: first, younger people may have economic stressors related to early pregnancy and employment instability (DeMaris, 2003:654); second, younger individuals may have a lower control over their anger; third, as people get older they may have less energy to behave aggressively. It is important to emphasize that this finding does not oppose the effect of length of relationship on common couple violence. The length of relationship measures the couple's years together, considering that relationships can begin at any age.

Violence between the woman's parents increases her likelihood of experiencing common couple violence. This finding is consistent with that expected by Steinmetz (1987). Further research is needed since the experiences of men have to be integrated in the analysis.

Alcohol and drug consumption from either partner was highly correlated with common couple violence in Mexico. This finding is supported by different studies (Stets, 1991;

Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997; Robinson and Chandek, 2000; DeMaris et al., 2003; Cunradi, 2007).

Education has a negative effect on common couple violence in Mexico; as a woman's education increases her likelihood of suffering intimate violence decreases. This finding may be rejected by the feminist theory, according to which all women are at the same risk of experiencing domestic violence.

According to the literature, common couple violence happens when ordinary conflicts get out of control (Johnson; 1995). The expected finding was that common couple violence increases because of the continuous interaction of the couple, lack of potential guardians' supervision, and weak targets. Therefore, women's employment and wage was expected to have a negative relationship with it. On the one hand, this may mean that employed women are irritable because of job strain, increasing their probabilities of confrontation (Fox et al., 2002). On the other hand, this may be the result of men who know that employed women are less dependent, thus they act coercively in order to keep the women's cost of leaving the relationship high. Villarreal's (2007) finding that coercive control affects Mexican women's employment decisions follows from this. Their employment decisions affect their level of economic dependency. Therefore, economically dependent women are suitable targets, and likely offenders may try to change women's employment situation in order to change her costs to leave the relationship. Nevertheless, the offender's motives are difficult to explore, and further research study has to be made on this subject.

This study supports that isolation makes Mexican women more suitable targets for common couple violence. Nevertheless, this study finds that potential guardians fail to prevent common couple violence. As mentioned before, this may be a result of the potential guardians' own cost-benefit analysis if they intervene. Additionally, the continuous interactions of the couple in space and time, examined with employment status, fail to demonstrate that they increase the likelihood of common couple violence.

Routine activity theory proved useful in the analysis of domestic violence since it embraces concepts that are useful in various theories. Further studies have to examine domestic violence with routine activity theory, since the variable of capable guardians has to be

examined on various levels and in other environments. As mentioned in the third chapter, this study has the limitation that variables related to the neighbourhood are not considered in the survey.

This study will contribute to studies of types of domestic violence, since some findings challenge the expected of common couple violence. As mentioned before, women's employment and wage should not have an effect in common couple violence, since in this type of domestic violence the partners do not want to dominate or exercise control over the other. Further studies are necessary to determine the exact differences between intimate terrorism and common couple violence. As mentioned in the second chapter, establishing the difference is vital because of its policy implications. Finally, further analyses are required to examine the costs of potential guardians and the non-intervention norms.

6. Bibliography

Akers, R. L. (1990). Rational Choice, Deterrence, and Social Learning Theory in Criminology: The Path Not Taken, *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 81 (3), 653-676.

Benson, M. L., G. L. Fox, A. DeMaris, and J. Van Wyk. (2003). Neighbourhood Disadvantage, Individual Economic Distress and Violence Against Women in Intimate Relationships, *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 19 (3), 207-235.

Browning, C.R. (2002). The Span of collective efficacy: Extending Social Disorganization Theory to Partner Violence, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 64, 833-850.

Cohen, L. E. and M. Felson. (1979). Social Change and Crime Rate Trends: A Routine Activity Approach, *American Sociological Review*, 44 (4), 588-608.

Cunradi, C. B. (2007). Drinking Level, Neighborhood Social Disorder, and Mutual Intimate Partner Violence, *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 31 (6), 1012-1019.

DeMaris, A., M. L. Benson, G. L. Fox, T. Hill, and J. Van Wyk. (2003). Distal and Proximal Factors in Domestic Violence: A Test of an Integrated Model, *Journal of the Marriage and the Family*, 65, 652-667.

Di Bartolo, L. (2001). The Geography of Reported Domestic Violence in Brisbane: a social justice perspective, *Australian Geographer*, 32 (3), 321-341.

Díaz Olavarrieta, C. and J. Sotelo (1996). Domestic Violence in Mexico, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 275 (24), 1937-1941.

Ellsberg, M., L. Heise, R. Peña, S. Agurto, and A. Winkvist. (2001). Researching Domestic Violence Against Women: Methodological and Ethical Considerations, *Studies in Family Planning*, 32 (1), 1-16.

Farmer, A. and J. Tiefenthaler. (1997). An Economic Analysis of Domestic Violence, *Review of Social Economy*, LV (3), 337-358.

Farrell, G.and K. Pease. (1993). Once Bitten, Twice Bitten: Repeat Victimisation and Its Implications for Crime Prevention. *Crime Prevention Unit Paper 46*. London, Home Office.

Farrell, G., C. Phillips and K. Pease. (1995). Like Talking Candy, Why does Repeat Victimization Occur?, *British Journal of Criminology*, 35 (3), 384-399.

Farrington, D. P. (1993). Have any Individual, Family or Neighbourhood Influences on Offending Been Demonstrated Conclusively?. In *Integrating Individual and Ecological Aspects of Crime*, ed. D. P. Farrington, R. J. Sampson, and P. H. Wikström, 7-37, Stockholm: National Council for Crime Prevention.

Felson, M. (2002). *Crime and Everyday Life*, 3rd ed. London: Sage Publications.

Ferguson, D. M., L. J. Horwood, K. L. Kershaw, and F. T. Shannon. (1986). Factors Associated with Reports of Wife Assault in New Zealand, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 48 (2), 407-412.

Ferrante, A., F. Morgan, D. Indermaur, and R. Harding. (1996). *Measuring the Extent of Domestic Violence*, The Crime Research Centre , The University of Western Australia, Sydney: Hawkins Press.

Field, A. (2005). *Discovering Statistics Using SPSS*. 2nd ed. London: Sage Publications.

Fox, G. L., M. L. Benson, A. A. DeMaris, and J. Van Wyk. (2002). Economic Distress and Intimate Violence: Testing Family Stress and Resources Theories, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 64, 793-807.

Gelles, R. J. (1993). Through Sociological Lens: Social Structure and Family Violence, In *Current Controversies on Family Violence*, ed. R. J. Gelles and D. R. Loseke, 31-46, Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Gelles, R. J. (1995). *Contemporary Families; A Sociological View*, 460-483, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Gelles, R. J. and M. A. Straus. (1988). *Intimate Violence*, 17-36, New York: Simon & Schuster.

Gotffredson, M.R. and T. Hirschi. (1990). *A General Theory of Crime*. California: Stanford University Press.

Hampton, R. L., R. J. Gelles, and J. W. Harrop (1989). Is Violence in Black Families Increasing? A Comparison of 1975 and 1985 National Survey Rates, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 51 (4), 969-980.

Holtzworth-Munroe, A., N. Smutzler, and L. Bates. (1997). A Brief Review of the Research on Husband Violence; Part III: Sociodemographic Factors, Relationship Factors, and Differing Consequences of Husband and Wife Violence, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2 (3), 285-307.

Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, INEGI. (2007a). Encuesta Nacional Sobre la Dinámica de las Relaciones de los Hogares 2006 [National Survey on Household Relationship Dynamics] http://www.inegi.gob.mx (database accessed June, 2007).

Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, INEGI. (2007b). *Operational Report [Informe Operativo],* Encuesta Nacional Sobre la Dinámica de las Relaciones de los Hogares 2006 [National Survey on Household Relationship Dynamics]. Aguascalientes: INEGI.

Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, INEGI. (2007c). Estadísticas de mortalidad [Mortality statistics], http://www.inegi.gob.mx (accessed August, 2007).

Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, INEGI. (2007d). Estadísticas judiciales en materia penal [Judicial statistics in penal law], http://www.inegi.gob.mx (accessed August, 2007).

Janson, C. (1993). Ecological and Individual Approaches in the Study of Crime and Delinquency. In *Integrating Individual and Ecological Aspects of Crime*, ed. D. P.

Farrington, R. J. Sampson, and P. H. Wikström, 39-56, Stockholm: National Council for Crime Prevention.

Johnson, M. P. (1995). Patriarchal Terrorism and Common Couple Violence, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 57, 283-294.

Johnson, M. P. and K. J. Ferraro. (2000). Research on Domestic Violence in the 1990s: Making distinctions, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62, 948-963.

Kenney, C. and S. McLanahan. (2006). Why are Cohabiting Relationships More Violent than Marriages?, *Demography*, 43 (1), 127-140.

Koenig, M. A., S. Ahmed, M. B. Hossain, and K. A. Mozumder. (2003). Women's Status and Domestic Violence in Rural Bangladesh: Individual and Community Level Effects, *Demography*, 40 (2), 269-288.

Kurz, D. (1993). Physical Assaults by Husbands; A Major Social Problem. In *Current Controversies on Family Violence*, ed. R. J. Gelles and D. R. Loseke, 88-103, Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Lee, M. R. (2000). Community Cohesion and Violent Predatory Victimization: A Theoretical Extension and Cross-national Test of Opportunity Theory, *Social Forces*, 79 (2), 683-706.

Macmillan, R. and R. Gartner. (1999). When She Brings Home the Bacon: Labor-Force Participation and the Risk of Spousal Violence against Women, *Journal of Marriage and the Family,* 61 (4), 947-958.

Maguire, M. and F. Brookman. (2005). Violent and sexual crime. In *Handbook of Crime Prevention and Community Safety*, ed. N. Tilley, 516-562, Cullompton: Wilan Publishing.

Mannon, J. M. (1997). Domestic and Intimate Violence: An Application of Routine Activities Theory, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2 (1), 9-24.

Martens, P. L. (1993). An Ecological Model of Socialisation in Explaining Offending. In *Integrating Individual and Ecological Aspects of Crime*, ed. D. P. Farrington, R. J. Sampson, and P. H. Wikström, 109-151, Stockholm: National Council for Crime Prevention.

Miles-Doan, R. (1998). Violence Between Spouses and Intimates: Does Neighborhood Context Matter?, *Social Forces*, 77 (2), 623-645.

Mirrlees-Black, C. (1999). *Domestic Violence: Findings from a new British Crime Survey self-completion questionnaire*, Research Study 191, London: Home Office.

Pease, K. (1993). Individual and Community Influences on Victimisation and their Implications for Crime Prevention. In *Integrating Individual and Ecological Aspects of Crime*, ed. D. P. Farrington, R. J. Sampson, and P. H. Wikström, 323-338, Stockholm: National Council for Crime Prevention.

Reiss, A. J. Jr. (1993). Key Issues in the Integration of Individual and Community Explanations of Crime and Criminality. In *Integrating Individual and Ecological Aspects of Crime*, ed. D. P. Farrington, R. J. Sampson, and P. H. Wikström, 339-356, Stockholm: National Council for Crime Prevention.

Robinson, A. L. and M. S. Chandek. (2000). The Domestic Violence Arrest Decision: Examining Demographic, Attitudinal, and Situational Variables, *Crime and Delinquency*, 46 (1), 18-37.

Robinson, W. S. (1950). Ecological Correlations and the Behavior of Individuals, *American Sociological Review*, 15 (3), 351-357.

Sampson, R. J. (1993). Family and Community-Level Influences on Crime: A Contextual Theory and Strategies for Research Testing. In *Integrating Individual and Ecological Aspects of Crime*, ed. D. P. Farrington, R. J. Sampson, and P. H. Wikström, 153-168, Stockholm: National Council for Crime Prevention.

Sampson, R. J. and J.H. Laub. (2003). Life-Course Desisters? Trajectories of Crime Among Delinquent Boys Followed to Age 70, *Criminology*, 41 (3), 555-592.

Sampson, R. J., S. W. Raudenbush and F. Earls. (1997). Neighbourhood and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy, *Science, New Series*, 277 (5328), 918-924.

Steinmetz, S. K. (1987). Family Violence: Past, Present and Future. In *Handbook of Marriage and the Family*, ed. M. B. Sussman and S. K. Steinmetz, 725-765. New York: Plenum Press.

Stets, J.E. (1991). Cohabiting and Marital Aggression: The Role of Social Isolation, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 53, 669-680.

Stets, J., and Straus, M. (1989). The marriage license as a hitting license: A comparison of assaults in dating, cohabiting, and married couples. *Journal of Family Violence*, 4 (2), 161-180.

Stith, S. M., K. H. Rosen, K. A. Middleton, A. L. Busch, K. Lundeberg and R. P. Carlton. (2000). The Intergenerational Transmission of Spouse Abuse: A Meta-Analysis, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, (62) 3, 640-654.

Straus, M.A. (1979). Measuring Intrafamily Conflict and Violence: The Conflict Tactics (CT) Scales, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 41 (1), 75-88.

Straus, M. A. and R. J. Gelles. (1986). Societal Change and Change in Family Violence from 1975 to 1985 as Revealed by Two National Surveys, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 48 (3), 465-479.

Straus, M. A., S.L. Hamby, S. Boney-McCoy, and D. B. Sugarman. (1996). The Revised Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS2); Development and Preliminary Psychometric Data, *Journal of Family Issues*, 17 (3), 283-316.

Villarreal, A. (2007). Women's Employment Status, Coercive Control, and Intimate Partner Violence in Mexico, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 69, 418-434.

Weiss, J. G.(1989). Family Violence Research Methodology and Design, *Crime and Justice*, 11, 117-162.

Williams, K. R. and A. B. Houghton (2004). Assessing the Risk of Domestic Violence Reoffending: A Validation Study, *Law and Human Behavior*, 28 (4), 437-455.

Yllö, K. A. (1993). Through a Feminist Lens: Gender, Power and Violence. In *Current Controversies on Family Violence*, ed. R. J. Gelles and D. R. Loseke, 47-62, Newbury Park: Sage Publications.