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ABSTRACT

RELIGIOSITY AND MALE-TO-FEMALE PARTNER VIOLENCE: EXPLORING FEMALE SUBMISSION IN CONTEXT

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Feminist theories have long proposed that conservative religious beliefs influence male-to-female partner violence (MFPV) by contributing to a belief system supporting male dominance and female submissiveness in relationships. The present study empirically assessed this proposed relationship, exploring the extent to which men's beliefs about female submission and men's use of interpersonal control contribute to the theoretical link between conservative religiosity and MFPV within heterosexual marriages. The extent to which men's perceptions of their wives' beliefs about female submission contribute to MFPV was also assessed. A multiple mediation model was supported in which 1) men's beliefs about female submission mediated the relationship between men's conservative religiosity and men's use of interpersonal control, and 2) men's use of interpersonal control mediated the relationship between men's beliefs regarding female submission and MFPV. Men's perceptions of their wives' beliefs about female submission did not strengthen these indirect effects. These findings highlight the importance of exploring the relationship between religiosity and MFPV in context, specifically by identifying the complex process through which men's beliefs about female submission and men's use of interpersonal control increase the risk of MFPV in marriage. Implications for researchers, religious leaders, and treatment providers are discussed.

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RELIGIOSITY AND MALE-TO-FEMALE PARTNER VIOLENCE:
EXPLORING FEMALE SUBMISSION IN CONTEXT

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
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Many thanks to my advisor and mentor, Dr. Alan Rosenbaum, whose guidance and support have made this a rewarding and thoughtful journey.

DEDICATION

For J – Thank you for believing in me. You inspire and encourage me daily.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	viii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Religiosity and MFPV.....	2
Integrating Religiosity, Patriarchy, and MFPV.....	6
Religion and Patriarchy.....	6
Patriarchy and MFPV.....	7
Religiosity, Patriarchy, and MFPV.....	8
Female Submission.....	11
The Doctrine of Female Submission.....	11
Female Submission and MFPV.....	12
Interpretations of Submission.....	14
Belief Discrepancies.....	17
Female Submission, Interpersonal Control, and MFPV.....	20
Interpersonal Control and MFPV.....	22
Summary.....	23

Chapter	Page
Hypotheses and Research Questions.....	24
2. METHOD.....	27
Participants.....	27
Procedure.....	27
Measures.....	29
Demographics Questionnaire.....	29
Conservative Religiosity.....	30
Female Submission.....	30
Interpersonal Control.....	32
Male-to-Female Partner Violence Perpetration.....	32
Analytical Strategy.....	34
3. RESULTS.....	37
Hypothesized Model.....	38
Hypothesis 1.....	39
Hypothesis 2.....	39
Hypothesis 3.....	40
Exploratory Model.....	40
Hypothesis 1.....	41
Hypothesis 2.....	42
Hypothesis 3.....	42
Trimmed Model.....	43
Model Comparisons.....	45

Chapter	Page
4. DISCUSSION.....	47
Religiosity and MFPV.....	48
Female Submission in Context.....	49
Belief Discrepancies.....	51
Clinical Considerations.....	53
Limitations and Directions for Future Research.....	54
Conclusions.....	57
REFERENCES.....	58

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Descriptives and Bivariate Correlations.....	37
2. Comparisons of Model Fit.....	46

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Hypothesized conceptual path model of MFPV.....	24
2. Exploratory conceptual path model of MFPV.....	26
3. Standardized path coefficients for the hypothesized path model of MFPV.....	38
4. Standardized path coefficients for the exploratory path model of MFPV.....	41
5. Standardized path coefficients for the trimmed model of MFPV.....	44

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Feminist theories have long discussed the role of religion in relation to male-perpetrated partner violence (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Nason-Clark, 1997), particularly religious teachings that promote patriarchal beliefs in which women are expected to submit to their husbands' leadership within marriage (Smith, 2000). For instance, biblical scripture stating, "Wives, submit to your husband's as to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22, New International Version) has commonly been discussed in relation to the Christian religion's influence on male-to-female partner violence (MFPV), as some religious leaders have interpreted this passage as a marital requirement for wives to submit fully to their husbands' authority (Levitt & Ware, 2006). Power and control models of MFPV suggest that such patriarchal beliefs regarding wifely submission provide "fertile ground" for partner violence in religious homes as they serve as a mechanism for husbands to dominate and control their female partners (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Haj-Yahia, 1998; Stark, 2007).

Despite the many theoretical works within the feminist literature emphasizing the potential influence of religious beliefs regarding wifely submission as they relate to male control and aggression within marriage (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Nason-Clark, 1997; Stark, 2007), relatively few studies have empirically explored specific relationships between religiosity, beliefs regarding wifely submission, and MFPV. Instead, researchers have often limited their studies to broadly assessing religious factors (e.g., denominational affiliation, attendance at

church services) and general patriarchal ideologies (e.g., beliefs regarding women's employment outside of the home) as they relate to MFPV. The current study argues that by focusing on these more general religious and patriarchal constructs, previous research has failed to thoroughly assess beliefs regarding female submission as a primary factor influencing the link between religiosity and MFPV. To address this limitation in the literature, the current study outlines and assesses an integrative model that more specifically explores the extent to which men's religious beliefs are associated with their beliefs regarding female submission in relationships and whether such beliefs regarding female submission are associated with interpersonal control and MFPV.

Religiosity and MFPV

Early research exploring the link between religiosity and MFPV sought to establish direct associations between religious factors and MFPV; however, findings from these studies have been inconsistent. For instance, using data collected from a national Canadian survey, Brinkerhoff, Grandin, and Lupri (1992) explored associations between religious factors (i.e., denominational affiliation, frequency of church attendance) and MFPV. Patterns emerged in which non-religious males reported the highest levels of perpetration when compared with religiously affiliated males. Looking more specifically among religious males, moderate church attendance was associated with higher rates of perpetration compared with males either low or high in church attendance. However, when incorporating church attendance into a model controlling for relational (e.g., marital satisfaction) and male partner personality (e.g., self-esteem) factors, the association between church attendance and MFPV was no longer significant. Comparisons across different religious denominational affiliations (broadly categorized as

Catholic, mainline Protestant, conservative Protestant, other, and no religious affiliation) were also not significantly related to MFPV.

Using the National Study of Families and Households, Ellison, Bartkowski, and Anderson (1999) also assessed religious factors in relation to MFPV. Religious ideology (assessed by comparing individuals affiliated with either traditional/theologically conservative or egalitarian/theologically liberal denominations) was not associated with MFPV, whereas more frequent attendance at religious services was associated with decreased perpetration. Meaningful associations also emerged regarding religious heterogamy (i.e., religious differences between male and female partners) within heterosexual marriages. Specifically, males who attended church more frequently than their female partners were more likely to report perpetrating MFPV. Additionally, Ellison et al. (1999) found that males reporting stronger conservative beliefs regarding the authority of the Bible (i.e., the Bible as literal truth) were also at higher risk of perpetrating MFPV compared with religious males who viewed biblical scripture more liberally (i.e., fictional stories guiding morality).

Interpreting these findings, Ellison et al. (1999) concluded that while denominational affiliation was not a significant predictor of MFPV, church attendance may be important for reducing rates of MFPV. Further, results linking strict adherence to religious scripture with higher rates of MFPV may suggest that males interpreting the Bible as literal truth hold more patriarchal views regarding male and female roles in relationships. Combined with findings demonstrating the potential influence of religious heterogamy on MFPV, it may be that males who hold values based on strict interpretations of scripture (e.g., the full submission of women to their husbands) while also engaging in a relationship with a less religious female partner may be more likely to perpetrate MFPV.

As part of the 1995 National Study of Couples, Cunradi, Caetano, and Schafer (2002) also explored religiosity in relation to MFPV. Using items adapted from the Conflict Tactics Scale-Form R (Straus, 1990), male participants were asked about their perpetration of physically aggressive behaviors toward their female partners. Religious denomination, religious homogamy or heterogamy within one's relationship, church attendance, and importance of religion in one's life were included as religious factors. Consistent with findings from Ellison et al. (1999), results demonstrated that men who attended church more regularly were less likely to perpetrate MFPV. This protective effect was reduced when also assessing the impact of alcohol consumption among religious males. Patterns also emerged in which religiously homogamous couples and individuals identifying with fundamentalist denominations (e.g., Baptist, Mormon, Evangelical) reported the lowest rates of partner violence; however, these patterns were not statistically significant. The importance of religion in one's life was also not related to MFPV.

Finally, Todhunter and Deaton (2010) explored the link between religiosity and MFPV among males aged 18-26 who were completing wave three of the Add Health study (Harris et al., 2008). Males identifying as Christian, Protestant, or Catholic were included. Across these three religious groups, Todhunter and Deaton (2010) found no significant associations between religious faith (e.g., importance of one's spiritual life), religious behaviors (e.g., church attendance, prayer), and MFPV. However, given that a comparison group of non-religious males was not included in the study design, these findings are limited in the conclusions that can be drawn regarding the impact of religiosity on MFPV.

While few in number, previous studies assessing the relationship between religiosity and MFPV suggest that religiosity, assessed through a variety of religious measures (e.g., church attendance, denomination, strength of faith), may have little or no *direct* effect on MFPV. While

some studies found no association between religious factors and MFPV, others found trending relationships that were no longer significant when accounting for the influence of additional factors such as relationship quality, alcohol use, and personality. This is not surprising given that feminist theories linking religiosity and MFPV have emphasized the importance of patriarchal messages communicated *through* religious doctrines in relation to MFPV, not necessarily the direct effect of religious faith on MFPV. By focusing directly on denominational affiliation and frequency of attendance at church services in relation to MFPV, these studies have not assessed potentially important relationships between religion and patriarchal ideologies and patriarchal ideologies and MFPV among religious couples. Results from Ellison et al. (1999) provide some data to support this supposition as they found that males reporting strict beliefs regarding biblical inerrancy were more likely to perpetrate MFPV. Ellison et al. (1999) interpreted this finding to suggest that biblical inerrancy may be associated with more traditional beliefs regarding the roles of men and women in relationships. Therefore, such traditional gender role beliefs may be one mechanism that explains the theoretical relationship between religiosity and MFPV posed by feminist theorists (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Stark, 2007). Additional studies exploring patriarchy more specifically in relation to religiosity and MFPV provide initial support for this hypothesis.

Integrating Religiosity, Patriarchy, and MFPV

Religion and Patriarchy

In an early investigation of the relationships between religious denomination, attendance at religious services, and patriarchal beliefs (i.e., reporting of traditional gender role beliefs), Brinkerhoff and Mackie (1984) found that both denomination and attendance were associated with one's gender role beliefs. Traditional gender role beliefs were assessed through questions regarding family responsibilities (e.g., "When a husband and wife both work, housework should be shared equally.") and expectations of women in marriage (e.g., "Women should be encouraged to keep their maiden name in addition to their married name."). The most traditional gender role beliefs were reported by individuals adhering to more conservative religious doctrines, such as those of the Mormon and Pentecostal churches. Individuals identifying with no specific denomination or as Presbyterian reported more egalitarian views regarding gender roles. Additionally, church attendance was positively associated with more traditional gender role beliefs. Findings linking church attendance with more traditional gender role beliefs appear to be a cross-cultural phenomenon given that this relationship has also been demonstrated among university students in the U.S., Slovenia, and Croatia (Frieze, Ferligoj, Kogovsek, Renner, Horvat, & Sarlija, 2003) and among Muslim males internationally (Alexander & Welzel, 2011).

Gay, Ellison, and Powers (1996) also explored religious denomination in relation to gender role attitudes (i.e., attitudes regarding women's political power and employment outside of the home) among White U.S. citizens. Denominational affiliation was significantly related to gender role attitudes in the expected direction (i.e., strong traditional gender role attitudes among

Baptists, moderate attitudes among Catholics, and liberal attitudes among Jews). Within-denomination heterogeneity was also assessed in order to determine whether gender role attitudes varied within each denominational group. An interesting pattern emerged in which more heterogeneity was found among more conservative Protestant groups (e.g., Baptists) while more liberal religious groups (e.g., Jews, Episcopalians) demonstrated within-group homogeneity in their gender role attitudes. These findings suggest that while more conservative religious groups are higher on average in their beliefs regarding the traditional roles of women in society, such groups also demonstrate a considerable degree of variability in the strength of these attitudes across individuals.

Patriarchy and MFPV

While individuals affiliated with conservative religious denominations and groups have demonstrated more traditional views regarding the roles of men and women in heterosexual relationships, results from studies assessing the direct link between patriarchy and MFPV have been less clear. For instance, a meta-analysis conducted by Sugarman and Frankel (1996) found that the relationship between patriarchal ideology and MFPV depended on the manner in which patriarchy was assessed. Comparing non-assaultive with assaultive husbands, the authors reviewed studies operationalizing patriarchy in one of three ways: 1) attitudes supporting violence against women, 2) traditional gender role beliefs regarding the roles of men and women in relationships, and 3) gender schemas reflecting masculine dominance and assertiveness and female nurturance and emotional expressiveness. Sugarman and Frankel (1996) found a strong effect when comparing assaultive with non-assaultive husbands on their attitudes toward

violence against women, concluding that assaultive husbands were more likely to endorse attitudes supporting violence against women compared with non-assaultive husbands.

Traditional gender role beliefs demonstrated a moderate effect, with assaultive husbands reporting more traditional gender role beliefs compared with non-assaultive husbands. This finding was particularly salient when asking female partners about their perceptions of their husbands' traditional gender role beliefs. Regarding the association between gender role schemas and MFPV, assaultive husbands were more likely to score lower on scales of masculinity and femininity (i.e., an undifferentiated gender role orientation) compared with non-assaultive husbands; however, the overall strength of this relationship was weak (Sugarman & Frankel, 1996). Combined, these results suggest that men's specific beliefs supporting traditional gender roles and violence against women may be particularly salient in relation to MFPV.

Religiosity, Patriarchy, and MFPV

Integrating religiosity and patriarchy as they both relate to MFPV, Haj-Yahia (1998) found that among a sample of religious, married men living in Palestine, religiosity (i.e., strength of faith and attendance at religious services) and familial patriarchal beliefs (e.g., the husband's role in deciding whether his wife will work outside of the home) were significantly related to beliefs supporting wife abuse. However, when simultaneously regressing both factors within the same model, only familial patriarchal beliefs explained a significant proportion of the variance in respondents' support of wife abuse. Further, justification for wife beating was strongest in circumstances in which the wife was viewed as sexually unfaithful or as challenging her husband's role as leader within the home. Haj-Yahia (1998) concluded that a husband's

patriarchal beliefs regarding male authority in making decisions regarding his wife's behavior and life circumstances influence male support for wife beating, particularly in circumstances where women are perceived as challenging traditional gender role expectations.

In a study examining beliefs about wife abuse among ultra-Orthodox Jewish men living in Israel, Steinmetz and Haj-Yahia (2006) explored whether men's patriarchal beliefs (e.g., the husband's role in deciding whether his wife will work outside of the home) were associated with the approval of wife abuse and men's interpretations of specific behaviors (e.g., punching, yelling, denying access to money, forbidding access to events outside of the home) as wife abuse. Findings demonstrated that males reporting more traditional attitudes regarding marital roles were more likely to approve of wife abuse. Additionally, males with more conservative and traditional attitudes regarding marital role expectations were more likely to minimize physical, verbal, and psychological aggression as incidents of wife abuse (Steinmetz & Haj-Yahia, 2006).

Among a sample of undergraduate college students, Berkel, Vandiver, and Bahner (2004) similarly found that traditional gender role beliefs (e.g., beliefs regarding the equality versus inequality of males and females in marriage, expectations of employment status among males and females in relationships) were associated with attitudes supporting violence against women, while spiritual actions (i.e., attitudes toward the treatment of others) were associated with sympathy for battered women. Additional religious factors including religious denominational affiliation, intrinsic religiousness (i.e., importance of religious teachings in one's life), and extrinsic religious motivations (i.e., external gains such as personal comfort and social connection) were not associated with attitudes toward MFPV. Berkel et al. (2004) reported that the relationship between traditional gender role beliefs and attitudes supporting MFPV was particularly strong among male compared with female participants.

Overall, when directly assessing the relationships between religiosity, patriarchy, and MFPV, studies suggest that 1) conservative religious affiliation is associated with more traditional patriarchal ideologies among males, and 2) patriarchal beliefs appear to be an important factor associated with attitudes supporting MFPV. Combined, these findings suggest that the relationship between religiosity and MFPV may be explained *through* one's patriarchal beliefs regarding the roles of men and women in relationships. Given that the majority of research in this area has focused on the relationship between patriarchal ideologies and attitudes supporting MFPV, additional research is needed in order to understand the extent to which patriarchal beliefs are associated with actual MFPV behaviors. Further, given research demonstrating the differential influence of separate facets of patriarchal ideologies in relation to MFPV perpetration (i.e., Sugarman & Frankel, 1996), additional research is needed in order to better understand which specific patriarchal beliefs are associated with perpetration of MFPV.

The current study argues that while many previous studies have operationalized patriarchal ideology as beliefs supporting traditional roles and responsibilities of men and women within families (e.g., men as financial providers, women as caretakers), such definitions may not capture beliefs in male authority and female submission articulated by feminist theorists linking patriarchy with MFPV. For instance, men adhering to traditional gender roles within the family unit may perceive themselves as having authority equal to their female partners, as they may make financial decisions while their wives make decisions regarding the raising of children and the activities of the home. While in this scenario men and women have responsibilities within the home that reflect a more traditional structure in which men are providers and women are caretakers, both partners demonstrate authority within their respective domains. Therefore, patriarchal beliefs regarding the roles and responsibilities of males and females in relationships

may not be the mechanism through which conservative religiosity is associated with MFPV. Instead, a more direct assessment of specific patriarchal beliefs regarding male authority and female submission in relationships may help to explain the theoretical association between conservative religiosity and MFPV. Specifically, beliefs that women must fully submit to the authority of their male partners (in all areas of family life) may set the foundation for a power differential that feminist theories propose increases the likelihood of MFPV.

Female Submission

The Doctrine of Female Submission

Given the emphasis on the traditional family unit espoused within many Christian organizations (Bartkowski, 1997, 2001), the majority of theory and research exploring the doctrine of submission has focused on beliefs among Christians (Battaglia, 2001). In a comprehensive review of the available literature surrounding female submission within the Christian faith, Ross (2012) demonstrated that patriarchal beliefs supporting male dominance and female submission are embedded within many Christian texts, often structuring power differentials supporting male dominance as men's "religious duty" within their relationships. A review by Skiff (2009) identified 32 unique passages within the Bible that have been associated with MFPV. For instance, 1 Peter 3:1 states, "Wives in the same way, be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives," while Titus 2:4-5 asserts, "Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to

be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God” (New International Version). The emphasis on these patriarchal views within the Bible and the Christian faith are attributed to the notion that men have been the primary writers, interpreters, and transmitters of religious doctrine (Fiorenza, 1985; Ross, 2012).

While much of the (albeit scant) available literature exploring beliefs regarding female submission within the context of religious scripture has focused on the Christian religion, Fortune and Enger (2005) have also discussed the role of female submission within the Islamic faith, noting scripture within the Qur’an that has been used to justify male dominance over women within Muslim relationships. For example:

Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband’s] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance--[first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand. (Surah 4:34, Sahih International Translation)

Female Submission and MFPV

Given the focus on beliefs supporting the submission of women discussed in many feminist theories of patriarchy and MFPV, it is surprising that so few studies have explored these relationships more specifically within the context of religious teachings. However, the few available studies do suggest that conservative religiosity, beliefs regarding female submission, and MFPV may be related. For instance, Levitt, Swanger, and Butler (2008) conducted interviews with religiously affiliated male perpetrators living in the southern U.S. and noted that the majority of men in this sample discussed their religious beliefs in relation to scripture

identifying men as the authority within their homes. The men in this sample also reported that current social trends toward female equality were inconsistent with biblical teachings regarding the submission of women in marriage. Lee (2004) found a similar pattern when conducting qualitative interviews with Filipino men court-ordered into batterer intervention treatment. Men in this sample discussed the importance of male leadership within the home, using scripture to justify their beliefs regarding male authority and female submission. Combined, information obtained in both of these qualitative studies suggests that scripture in relation to wifely submission played an important role in these participants' views regarding gender role expectations in intimate relationships. However, given that comparison groups were not included in either study, it remains unclear whether non-batterers also identify with similar religious teachings regarding male dominance and female submission in relationships.

Findings from Manetta, Bryant, Cavanaugh, and Gange (2003) also demonstrate the potential influence of religion on beliefs regarding female submission and the perpetration of MFPV. Comparing data collected from women living in a battered women's shelter with non-battered religious parishioners (69.8% of whom were women), they found that 59.1% of battered women believed that church teachings contribute to an atmosphere in support of domestic violence compared with 24.2% of non-battered church parishioners. Non-battered church parishioners were also more likely to believe that women should be submissive to their male partners (41.6%) compared with battered women (27.8%).

While most of the literature exploring beliefs regarding female submission and MFPV have been limited in the extent to which they were able to directly assess the relationship between beliefs regarding female submission and MFPV, one study to date has empirically assessed the association between beliefs regarding female submission and MFPV among

Christian couples. Comparing individuals affiliated with more traditional religious doctrines (i.e., Baptists) with those affiliated with more egalitarian religious doctrines (i.e., United Methodists), Skiff (2009) found that, when compared with United Methodist male parishioners, Baptist men were higher in their beliefs regarding female submission in marriage (e.g., women should submit to their husbands' authority) and in their egalitarian views regarding submission by both partners in marriage (e.g., the belief that men and women should submit to one another in marriage). Rates of MFPV were also higher among Baptist compared with United Methodist parishioners. Although this study did not directly assess the role of beliefs regarding female submission in relation to MFPV, these results do suggest that interpretations of submission may matter in relation to MFPV. As Skiff (2009) is the first to empirically assess both the relationship between religiosity and specific beliefs regarding female submission and the relationship between beliefs regarding female submission and MFPV, further research is needed in order to understand the associations between these three constructs.

Interpretations of Submission

Ross (2012) argues that while there are many areas of Christian religious scripture that emphasize the submission of women to their husbands, there is also significant variability in the “proof-texting” (i.e., selective use) that occurs when interpreting scripture. While traditional religious doctrines have often been linked with patriarchal views regarding the roles of men and women in relationships (e.g., Alexander & Welzel, 2011; Brinkerhoff & Mackie, 1984; Gay et al., 1996), heterogeneity in beliefs regarding the submission of women has also been demonstrated (Bartkowski, 1997, 2001; Sharp, 2014; Smith, 2000). For example, Paul’s letter to

the Ephesians is commonly used in reference to the potential differences in scriptural interpretations of submission, including the following passage:

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle, or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife, loves himself. (Ephesians 5:22-28, New International Version)

Three differing interpretations of submission in marriage have been linked with such biblical scripture (Bartkowski, 1997, 2001; Sharp, 2014; Smith, 2000). The first interpretation focuses exclusively on the importance of wifely submission to a husband's ultimate authority within the family and marital relationship. A second interpretation emphasizes the conditional nature of female submission, articulating a belief in which women should submit to their male partners as long as their male partners meet their biblical responsibility to provide for and protect their families (Smith, 2000). A third interpretation articulates a view of mutual submission in which men and women equally submit to one another (Bartkowski, 1997; Smith, 2000). Further integrating the conditional and mutual interpretations of submission, evangelical Christians have most recently adopted a "complementarian" perspective in which men and women are viewed as equal in value but separate in function within their relationships (Padgett, 2008). This perspective identifies men and women as being of equal importance as they both have responsibilities within the family (i.e., men as providers and women as caretakers). Women are viewed as "executive vice-presidents" as they have some decision-making power regarding the care of the home; however, this view maintains the patriarchal hierarchy in which men are ultimately responsible for leadership within the family while women are ultimately expected to

submit to their husbands' authority (Bartkowski, 2001; Dillow, 1986; Padgett, 2008). Given the various interpretations of submission that have been demonstrated, it may be that particular interpretations of submission are more likely to influence MFPV.

Completing qualitative interviews with 22 differentially affiliated religious leaders in Memphis, TN (e.g., Christian, Jewish, Islamic), Levitt and Ware (2006) have demonstrated these various interpretations of female submission across religious groups. Some religious leaders (mostly traditional leaders from Muslim and Evangelical Christian churches) identified with the importance of male authority in relationships, with one Evangelical Christian leader stating, "In the marriage, I don't believe in coleadership...Anything with more than one head is a monster...That is true in the movies, and that is true in marriage" (p. 1181). Other religious leaders identified with a complementarian perspective on female submission. For instance, one leader from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints shared his views on male leadership and female submission:

We believe that the father is the head of the home. That he is there to provide. He is the patriarch, and the husband and wife should work together in decision making, but we find the typical wife would acquiesce to the final say of her husband. (p. 1178)

There were also religious leaders who advocated the importance of equality regarding the roles and responsibilities of men and women in relationships. For instance, one Unitarian church leader stated that "there's a role for leadership, but not for male leadership. All my people, and I'm included, call it extremely sexist and inappropriate" (p. 1174). While differences emerged with regard to the interpretation of female submission in relationships, the majority (91%) of leaders interviewed agreed that beliefs regarding male dominance and female submission in relationships could support an environment increasing the likelihood of MFPV (Levitt & Ware, 2006). Consistent with feminist power and control theories of MFPV (Dobash & Dobash, 1979;

Stark, 2007), the current study focuses specifically on interpretations of female submission that emphasize the full submission of women to their male partners as these beliefs are associated with MFPV.

Belief Discrepancies

Given the various interpretations of submission articulated within religious communities, it is also possible that male and female partners can differ in their beliefs regarding female submission within their intimate relationships. Such discrepancies in beliefs may also be an important factor influencing MFPV. For instance, a situation in which the husband adheres to a more traditional view of wifely submission while the wife believes in a more egalitarian interpretation of submission may lead to conflict as the wife may be viewed by her husband as challenging his authority within the family. Such a discrepancy in which the male believes he is the ultimate authority within the relationship, while his female partner does not, may result in conflict during decision making that increases the likelihood of MFPV. Conversely, a husband and wife may both believe in a complementarian perspective in which the husband is the primary leader within the family while the wife has some secondary leadership responsibilities over family matters. Despite the patriarchal hierarchy inherent in this belief system, the fact that both partners are in agreement regarding their roles and responsibilities within the family may lead to less conflict within the relationship.

Available literature demonstrates the importance of exploring potential differences in beliefs regarding female submission among men and women in relation to MFPV. For instance, Sugarman and Frankel's (1996) meta-analysis indicated that female victims of IPV were more

likely to hold liberal gender role attitudes compared with non-victimized females. Conducting qualitative interviews with Latino men court-ordered into batterer intervention in Kentucky, Alcalde (2011) also found that the majority of men in this group associated their partner-aggressive behaviors with perceptions of their female partners as challenging their leadership within the family. Specifically, the men in this sample noted that as their female partners began acting more like “non-traditional,” American women, they believed that their female partners were less likely to understand the importance of male leadership within the family. This challenge to male authority was difficult for the male partners to understand and accept, thus (from the men’s perspectives) influencing conflict and MFPV within their relationships (Alcalde, 2011). Findings from this qualitative study suggest that while patriarchal beliefs were prominent among male participants, the majority of men perceived that IPV did not occur in their relationships until the patriarchal structure (i.e., male authority) was challenged by their female partners.

Boira and Marcuello (2013) also completed qualitative interviews with men living in Spain who were completing treatment for domestic violence perpetration. One theme that emerged from these interviews was the men’s perspectives on their female partners challenging their authority (e.g., “When she infuriates me most is when...she contradicts me on something”; p.223). These female challenges were recognized by many of the men as fostering hostility toward their female partners that led to conflict and physical violence (Boira & Marcuello, 2013). Van Wagoner (1993) found a similar theme that emerged when completing qualitative interviews with men enrolled in a batterer intervention program in the midwestern U.S. The men in this group described tension within their relationships when they perceived their female

partners as challenging their roles as providers. This tension was discussed as a factor influencing their use of aggressive behaviors toward their female partners (Van Wagoner, 1993).

A study by Macey (1999) also supports this conception. Exploring factors contributing to MFPV among Pakistani Muslim males living in the United Kingdom, Macey (1999) found that women were at an increased risk of MFPV victimization if they were perceived as stepping outside the bounds of traditional female behaviors (e.g., staying out late, attending college). Haj-Yahia (1998) also found that Palestinian men were more likely to justify wife beating in situations in which women were viewed as challenging traditional gender role expectations (e.g., a wife challenging her husband's wishes).

Another qualitative study conducted by Griffith (1997) further links discrepancies in beliefs regarding female submission with relationship conflict. Interviewing women affiliated with Aglow International (a Pentecostal Christian organization), Griffith (1997) found that female leaders within this organization adhered to beliefs regarding the "power of submission" as an important factor in reducing conflict within marriage. Women affiliated with Aglow International were encouraged to accept their submissive roles within their marriages in order to increase their husbands' benevolence toward them (Griffith, 1997).

Combined, these studies suggest that it may not only be men's beliefs regarding female submission that influence MFPV but also the extent to which men and women differ in their interpretation of female submission. Given the limited available literature in this area, further empirical exploration of this relationship is warranted in order to determine whether such belief discrepancies contribute to men's use of violence against their intimate partners. Research in this area may also help to explain some studies that found a protective effect of religiosity on MFPV;

it may be that the likelihood of relationship conflict and MFPV is reduced among couples in which male and female partners share similar beliefs regarding female submission.

Female Submission, Interpersonal Control, and MFPV

Given that feminist scholars have discussed beliefs supporting male dominance and female submission as promoting a framework influencing men's use of interpersonal control (defined as an attempt to control an intimate partner by regulating his or her thoughts, feelings, or actions; Stets, 1991) in relation to MFPV (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Tracy, 2007), there is also a need to explore beliefs regarding female submission as they are associated with men's use of control within their romantic relationships. Specifically, Dobash and Dobash (1979), and more recently Stark (2007), have argued that patriarchal beliefs regarding male power and control are embedded in a set of social relations in which men exercise varying degrees of power and control over their female partners. Women may accept or resist men's attempts to control them; resistance may be met with conflict, thus increasing MFPV (Stark, 2007). In this context, it has been argued that beliefs regarding male dominance and female submission influence the use of interpersonal control and "set the foundation" for men's use of physical aggression, potentially against female partners who challenge male attempts at control (Stark, 2007).

No studies to date have directly explored men's beliefs regarding female submission with their use of interpersonal control; however, a qualitative study exploring men's perceptions of their violence following completion of a court-ordered batterer intervention program in Scotland demonstrated a potential association between men's patriarchal beliefs regarding female submission and their "need" to control their female partners. Morran (2013) noted that all men

(n=11) in the study acknowledged having beliefs regarding violence as masculine, which they believed influenced their perpetration of MFPV. The men also reported adhering to patriarchal attitudes that they perceived as influencing their expectations of women in relationships, including their “need” to control their female partners. Findings from this study suggest that men’s patriarchal beliefs may be associated with their use of controlling behaviors in relationships. Ehrensaft (1996) also found that among married couples, men who were violent toward their female partners were more likely to resist their wives’ attempts at controlling conversations as compared with maritally distressed, non-violent male partners. Stets (1988) further found that aggressive males reported battles over control as influencing MFPV. Combined, these results suggest that patriarchal views and perceptions of female challenges to control may be associated with men’s use of interpersonal control and MFPV. However, given the lack of studies exploring these relationships directly, further research is needed.

Integrating the role of religion, Sharp (2014) explored religious female IPV victims’ accounts of their male partners’ use of the doctrine of submission as a form of religious coercive control. Accounts from qualitative interviews suggest that women perceived their male partners’ use of the doctrine of submission as a way to convince them to follow their male partners’ commands. Sharp (2014) also assessed factors influencing whether female victims challenged their husbands’ interpretations of submission, finding that women who had confidence in their interpretations of scripture and knowledge of scripture were more likely to challenge their male partners’ views on submission. While Sharp (2014) explored men’s use of religion as a way in which to control their female partners, the current study expands upon this line of research by assessing the extent to which interpretive discrepancies regarding the submission of women contribute to men’s use of interpersonal control and partner violence.

Interpersonal Control and MFPV

While the relationship between female submission beliefs and men's use of interpersonal control has received little attention in the research literature, studies have consistently demonstrated that women experiencing controlling behaviors from their male partners are at a greater risk of physical violence victimization (e.g., Stets, 1988; Tjaden & Theonnes, 2000). For instance, results from the National Violence Against Women Study indicated that women were more likely to experience physical abuse if their partners were also controlling and verbally aggressive (Tjaden & Theonnes, 2000). Tanha, Beck, Figueredo, and Raghavan (2010) also assessed the use of interpersonal control strategies and physical violence perpetration among couples going through divorce mediation. The use of these control strategies was associated with physical violence perpetration for both male and female partners, further suggesting that control over an intimate partner may be a motivating factor that influences subsequent IPV perpetration. Interestingly, findings from this study also demonstrated that while men and women reported equal rates of physical violence perpetration, men reported significantly higher use of interpersonal control strategies against their female partners compared with female perpetration against male partners (Tanha et al., 2010). Barrett, Habibov, and Chernyak (2012) also explored factors contributing to the perpetration of MFPV using a national demographic and health survey that collected data regarding women and their families in Ukraine. It was found that women were more likely to experience physical abuse if their partners engaged in controlling behaviors (e.g., restricting access to friends, monitoring daily activities) and abused alcohol (e.g., frequent intoxication).

Summary

Overall, it appears that conservative religiosity may not independently influence MFPV but may instead establish a framework through which patriarchal beliefs regarding the submission of women contribute to the use of interpersonal control and MFPV. While studies exploring the relationship between conservative religiosity and patriarchal ideologies demonstrate a consistent, positive association between these constructs, studies assessing the link between patriarchal ideologies and MFPV suggest that distinctions matter with regard to the manner in which patriarchy is operationalized. A review of the limited available literature indicates that specific patriarchal beliefs regarding female submission in relationships may be one mechanism through which conservative religiosity influences MFPV. Such beliefs in female submission may also be associated with men's use of controlling behaviors against their intimate partners. While the majority of the research literature has assessed these relationships among individuals of Christian faith, some studies have also demonstrated associations between these constructs with individuals from the Muslim and Jewish faiths. Therefore, beliefs supporting female submission may influence men's use of interpersonal control and partner violence across various religious groups. Available data further suggests that discrepancies among men and women regarding their beliefs in female submission may also play a crucial role in influencing MFPV. More specifically, results from qualitative studies suggest that men may be more likely to perpetrate MFPV if they perceive their female partners as challenging their beliefs regarding female submission to male authority within their romantic relationships.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

Integrating theory with data, a model was developed and tested assessing men's conservative religiosity, men's beliefs regarding female submission, men's use of interpersonal control, and men's perceptions of their female partners' beliefs regarding female submission, as they are associated with MFPV. Given that religious scripture specifically emphasizes female submission to male authority within the marriage relationship, the hypothesized path model (Figure 1) explored these relationships among heterosexual, married couples.

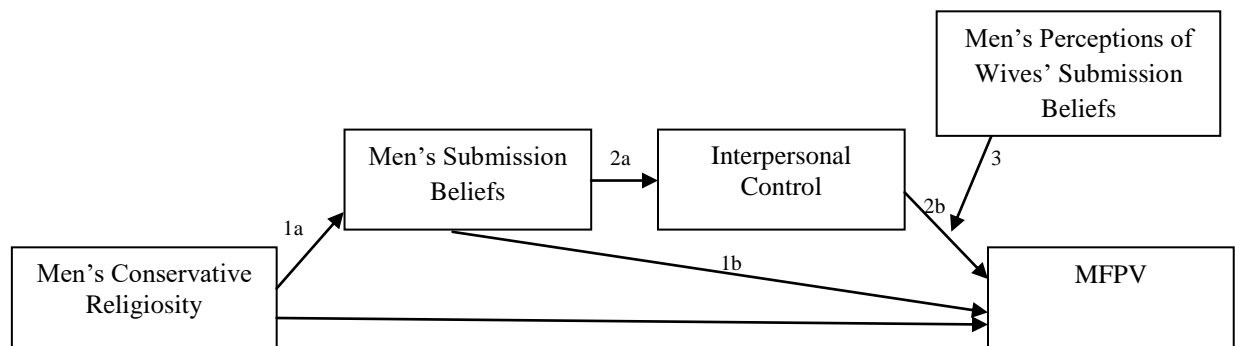


Figure 1. Hypothesized conceptual path model of MFPV.

The identified path model outlines the following hypotheses (for clarity, each hypothesis corresponds with a specific path in Figure 1):

- 1) Men's beliefs regarding female submission will mediate the relationship between men's conservative religiosity and perpetration of MFPV.

- a. Among men, higher conservative religiosity will be significantly associated with beliefs supporting female submission in relationships.
 - b. Among men, beliefs supporting female submission in relationships will be significantly associated with increased perpetration of MFPV.
- 2) Men's use of interpersonal control will mediate the relationship between men's beliefs regarding female submission and MFPV.
- a. Among men, beliefs supporting female submission will be significantly associated with men's increased use of interpersonal control with their female partners.
 - b. Among men, increased use of interpersonal control with their female partners will be significantly associated with their increased perpetration of MFPV.
- 3) The extent to which females differ from their male partners in their beliefs regarding female submission in relationships will moderate this indirect effect. Specifically, males who adhere to beliefs supporting female submission and who engage in the use of interpersonal control strategies will be more likely to perpetrate MFPV if they perceive their female partners as opposing beliefs supporting female submission in relationships.

The following research question was also explored:

- 1) As no studies to date have explored beliefs regarding female submission in relation to men's use of interpersonal control and MFPV, discrepancies between male and

female partners regarding their beliefs in female submission may instead influence men's initial use of interpersonally controlling behaviors. Therefore, the hypothesized model was compared with a model in which female partners' beliefs regarding female submission moderate the relationship between men's submission beliefs and men's use of interpersonal control with their female partners (Figure 2).

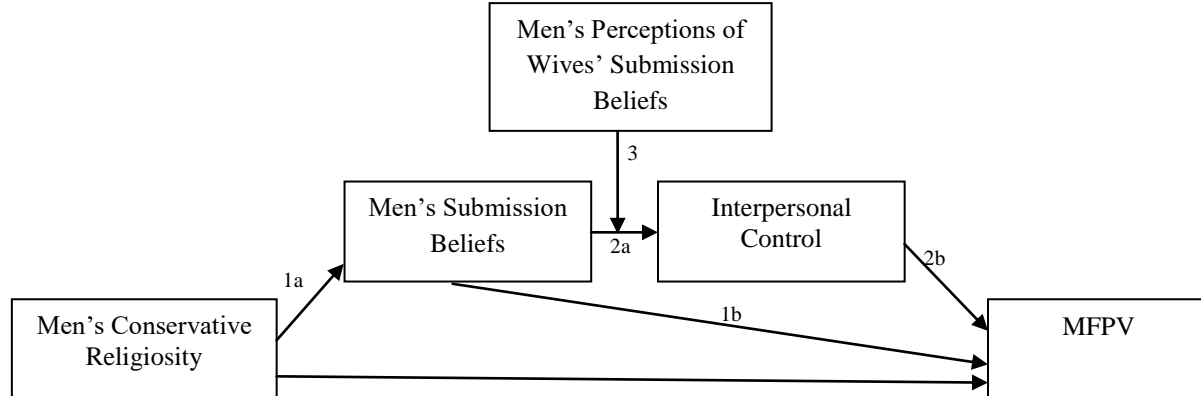


Figure 2. Exploratory conceptual path model of MFPV.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants

The sample consisted of 188 heterosexual, married male participants who were currently living with their spouses. All participants were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) crowdsourcing system. Males ranged in age from 21 to 68 ($M=37.49$, $SD=9.91$) and identified as 86% Caucasian, 5% African American, 5% Asian, and 4% Other (i.e., Indian, Pacific Islander, Multiracial). Religious affiliation was as follows: 27.7% Protestant, 18.1% Catholic, 1.1% Jewish, 41% None, and 12.1% Other (i.e., Christian: Non-Protestant, Mormon, Baptist, agnostic, atheist, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu).¹ Additionally, 68.6% of the sample reported obtaining a bachelor's degree or higher.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) crowdsourcing system, which is an online resource for research participants offered through Amazon.com.

Researchers (referred to as "requesters") can post surveys through MTurk with specific inclusion

¹ For comparison, results from the 2014 General Social Survey suggest the following demographic distribution among married heterosexual males currently living with their spouses: 50.6% Protestant, 19.4% Catholic, 1.7% Jewish, 19.4% None, 8.1% Other.

and exclusion criteria and individuals (referred to as “workers”) who endorse meeting criteria can anonymously participate in exchange for a small amount of money that is transferred into their Amazon accounts following study completion. Given the anonymous nature of participation through MTurk, it is possible that individuals can lie regarding whether they meet study criteria. Therefore, a two-phase survey was utilized in order to reduce the likelihood that participants were pretending to meet study criteria. An initial demographic screening questionnaire was first made available to all MTurk participants residing in the U.S. in order to identify participants eligible for the main survey. This questionnaire was advertised as a survey exploring the demographics of online crowdsourcing populations so that participants would not know that specific inclusion criteria were being sought for a second survey. Participants who identified on the screening questionnaire that they were male, 18 years of age or older, heterosexual, married, and currently living with their spouse were then given access to the main study survey. Participants were not excluded from participation in the main survey based on their religious affiliation (i.e., non-religious participants and participants of all religious denominational affiliations were allowed access if they met the above inclusion criteria).

The main survey included questionnaires assessing additional demographics, conservative religiosity, men’s beliefs regarding female submission, men’s perceptions of their wives’ beliefs regarding female submission, use of interpersonal control, partner violence perpetration, and partner violence victimization. The order in which individual questionnaires were presented within the main survey was randomized in order to control for order effects; however, the additional demographics survey was always presented last. Randomization was managed through the SurveyMonkey software system. Participants were given up to one hour to complete the main survey and the average completion time was 8.63 minutes. Participants were

debriefed following completion of each of the two surveys. Participants were compensated for their time; \$.10 for completing the screening questionnaire and \$1.00 for completing the main survey.

A total of 2,749 participants completed the demographic screening questionnaire and 347 met criteria for participation in the main survey. Out of the 347 individuals eligible to participate in the main survey, 200 completed the survey (a response rate of 57.6%). Of the 200 who completed main surveys, data from 12 participants was removed given that each of these participants took less than 5 minutes to complete the main survey. Given the length of the main survey, it was considered unlikely that these 12 participants were able to read through and answer each of the survey items in less than 5 minutes. The final sample included data from 188 participants.

Measures

Demographics Questionnaire

Basic demographic information was obtained from a two-part questionnaire including gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, relationship status, education, number of children, religious affiliation, importance of religious faith, frequency of church attendance, and alcohol consumption.

Conservative Religiosity

The Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale (RRFS; Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004) is a 12-item measure of conservative religiosity. Participants respond on a 9-point scale ranging from -4 (*very strongly disagree*) to 4 (*very strongly agree*) to items such as, “To lead the best, most meaningful life, one must belong to the one, fundamentally true religion.” Higher scores indicate beliefs consistent with religious fundamentalism (e.g., scripture as literal truth, one’s religion as “the one” religion). A constant of 5 was added to each response in order to provide a positive total score for each participant, hence the range of possible total scores on the measure was 12 to 108. Demonstrating convergent validity, the RRFS has been found to correlate strongly with measures of right-wing authoritarianism and Christian orthodoxy (Hill & Hood, 1999). The RRFS has also demonstrated excellent internal consistency with alpha reliabilities ranging from .91 to .93 (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004). The initial version of the Religious Fundamentalism Scale previously demonstrated similar internal consistency values with individuals from varying religious backgrounds (i.e., Hindus, Muslims, and Jews), suggesting that the revised version of the scale is also able to capture conservative religious beliefs among individuals of different faiths (Altemeyer, 1996; Hunsberger, Owusu, & Duck, 1999). Internal consistency in the present study was excellent ($\alpha = .97$).

Female Submission

A subscale from the Attitudes Toward Christian Women Scale (ACWS; Postvoit, 1990) was used to assess participant beliefs regarding female submission in relationships. Specifically,

male participants were asked to rate 1) the extent to which they endorsed beliefs regarding female submission in relationships (ACWS-M) and 2) the extent to which they believed that their wives endorsed beliefs regarding female submission in relationships (ACWS-W). Based on a factor analysis of the full ACWS scale, Gengler and Lee (2002) established a female submission subscale including six items that have been shown to best assess beliefs regarding female submission and male headship within relationships (e.g., “Wives are commanded to honor their husbands as the head of the family”). Items are rated on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) scale with higher scores reflecting stronger beliefs in support of the submission of women to their male partners. Scores on each of the six items were summed with a possible total score ranging from 8 to 40.

This six item subscale has demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha=.81$; Gengler & Lee, 2002). Previous research has also shown that this subscale is positively correlated with greater adherence to fundamentalist religious beliefs, providing support for the subscale’s convergent validity (Gengler & Lee, 2002). As the present study assessed beliefs regarding female submission among participants from a variety of religious affiliations (i.e., religious identities other than Christian), items were modified by removing the word “Christian” where relevant. For example, the item, “The wife follows her husband’s leadership to achieve greater Christian unity in their marriage,” was changed to, “The wife follows her husband’s leadership to achieve greater unity in their marriage.” A verification check was also added to the ACWS-W portion of the survey asking each participant to acknowledge understanding that he was being asked to assess his perceptions of his wife’s beliefs regarding female submission. Internal consistency scores for the two versions of the scale ranged from good to excellent; when male participants reported on their own beliefs regarding female submission, the alpha coefficient was

.91 and when reporting on perceptions of their wives' beliefs regarding female submission, the alpha coefficient was .90.

Interpersonal Control

The Interpersonal Control Scale (IPCS; Stets, 1995a, 1995b) was used to assess each participant's use of interpersonal control strategies within his marriage. The IPCS is a 10-item self-report measure with items such as, "I keep my partner from doing things I don't approve of." Items are rated on a 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*) scale and then summed for a total score. Possible total scores range from 10 to 50, with higher scores indicating a greater degree of control over an intimate partner. In previous studies the scale items were found to form a single factor with omega reliabilities ranging from .87 to .89 (Stets, 1995a, 1995b). Stets (1995a) has also found additional support for the construct validity of the scale in comparing interpersonal control ratings with the use of behavioral aggression against an intimate partner. Stets (1995a) found that ratings on the interpersonal control scale correlated significantly with ratings of aggressive behavior ($r = .25, p < .01$); however, this association was not so high as to suggest that interpersonal control and partner aggression are part of the same theoretical construct. Internal consistency in the present study was good ($\alpha = .86$).

Male-to-Female Partner Violence Perpetration

The Revised Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) is a 78-item self-report measure that indexes conflict resolution behaviors in

the context of intimate relationships. It assesses both the use and receipt of physical assault, psychological aggression, sexual coercion, and injury to and against an intimate partner (dating, cohabitating, or married). In this study the 12 items of the Physical Assault subscale (e.g., punching, kicking, biting) and the eight items of the Psychological Aggression subscale (e.g., threatening, insulting, swearing) were used to assess each participant's endorsement of physical and psychological IPV perpetration.

Results from previous data collected with a student population have shown that the CTS2 Physical Assault subscale demonstrates good internal consistency ($\alpha = .86$; Straus et al., 1996) while the Psychological Aggression subscale demonstrates acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .79$; Straus et al., 1996). The Physical Assault and Psychological Aggression subscales have also demonstrated strong test-retest reliability ($r = 0.76$ and 0.69 respectively; Vega & O'Leary, 2007). Demonstrating construct validity, the Psychological Aggression subscale has been shown to correlate positively with the Physical Assault subscale while the Physical Assault subscale has also been shown to correlate positively with reports of injury following physical assault (Straus et al., 1996). Straus (2004) has also demonstrated that higher rates of dominance by an intimate partner are associated with higher rates of physical assault perpetration by that same partner (as measured by the CTS2), providing further evidence of convergent validity.

In the present study, participants were asked to rate frequency of perpetration for each specific behavior within the last year of their current relationships on a scale from 1 (*once*) to 6 (*more than 20 times*). Participants were also given the option of choosing 0 (*has never happened*) or 7 (*has occurred but not within the current relationship*). A total variety score was used in which 1 point is given for each physical assault and psychological aggression item reported for perpetration, regardless of the frequency (Regan, Bartholomew, Kwong, Trinke, &

Henderson, 2006). Scores of 0 and 7 were scored as 0. Combining the 12 items from the Physical Assault subscale with eight items from the Psychological Aggression subscale, possible total scores ranged from 0-20. Internal consistency in the present study ranged from good to excellent. Alpha coefficients for the Physical Assault and Psychological Aggression subscales were .97 and .83 respectively. Internal consistency for the combined scale was .94.

Analytic Strategy

SurveyMonkey software was utilized to obtain participant data that was subsequently downloaded into an SPSS file for preliminary analyses. Participants were required to answer all items on both the demographic screener and main survey; therefore, no data sets included missing data points. Total scores for each measure were assessed for normality using 1) descriptive statistics (i.e., skew, kurtosis) and 2) the Shapiro-Wilk's test (Srivastava & Hui, 1987; Steinskog, Tjostheim, & Kvamsto, 2007). Distributions were considered to be non-normal if 1) skew and kurtosis values were below -1.5 or above +1.5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) or if 2) the Shapiro-Wilk's tests were significant (suggesting that the distribution was significantly different from that of a normally distributed scale). Given the nature of the beliefs and behaviors reflected among the study variables, it was expected that each variable may be positively skewed. Specifically, it was expected that endorsement of conservative religious beliefs, beliefs about female submission, the use of interpersonal control, and perpetration of MFPV would be uneven in the general population, reflecting low rates of endorsement for each belief and behavior.

Based on reviews of skew and kurtosis values, the CTS2 combined score was positively skewed and leptokurtic (skew = 3.36, kurtosis = 14.45). All other variables demonstrated acceptable skew and kurtosis values. However, when reviewing the Shapiro-Wilk's significance tests, all variable distributions were considered non-normal (i.e., all tests were significant). Square-root and logarithmic transformations were then made to each variable and normality was reassessed. While the Shapiro-Wilk's significance tests remained significant for each variable following each transformation, the square-root transformation did reduce skew and kurtosis values for the CTS2 scale below the cut-off thresholds (transformed skew = .47, transformed kurtosis = 1.43). Therefore, the only variable that was transformed for all primary analyses was the CTS2 scale, which utilized the square-root transformation.

Total scores for each variable were imported into Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 2012) and all primary analyses assessing model fit were based on the maximum likelihood method for analysis of the variance/covariance matrix. Mean-centered variables were used to assess interactions within each of the two models. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test overall model fit and examine direct, indirect, and total effects among study variables within the hypothesized and exploratory path models (see results in Figures 1b and 2b respectively). Based on recommendations from Bryan, Schmiede, and Broaddus (2007), the Pearson chi-square, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual (SRMR), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) were used to assess overall model fit. Specific cut-off points in assessing overall model fit included non-significant Pearson chi-square, SRMR of .08 or lower, CFI of .95 or higher, and RMSEA of .06 or lower (Bryan et al., 2007). Fit indices were compared between the hypothesized and exploratory models. A sample-size-adjusted Bayesian information criterion (SABIC) was also used to compare the fit of the two models.

Bootstrapping was used to assess the significance of the indirect effects (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Using 10,000 resampling bootstrap draws, the distribution of estimates for the indirect effects and their standard errors were examined. Indirect effect estimates with a 95% confidence interval (CI) that did not include zero were considered significant. The Sobel test (Sobel, 1982) was used as an additional measure to assess the significance of indirect effects.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations are presented in Table 1. All but one of the correlations were significant and in the positive direction; the relationship between men's conservative religiosity and MFPV was positive, but non-significant.¹

Table 1
Descriptives and Bivariate Correlations

Variable	M(SD)	Range	1	2	3	4	5
1.Men's Conservative Religiosity	42.25 (27.99)	12-108	1.00				
2.Men's Submission Beliefs	16.29 (7.05)	8-35	.75**	1.00			
3.Men's Perceptions of Wives' Submission Beliefs	16.07 (6.87)	8-35	.67**	.86**	1.00		
4.Interpersonal Control	18.22 (6.02)	10-36	.26**	.49**	.50**	1.00	
5.MFPV	2.57 (2.97)	0.0-4.47	.06	.23**	.19**	.36**	1.00

Note: ** $p < .01$

¹ Bivariate correlations were also reviewed among study variables when separating values for physical and psychological MFPV. Correlation patterns were consistent with those reported for the combined MFPV variable.

Hypothesized Model

The proposed model included three hypotheses: Hypothesis 1) an indirect effect of conservative religiosity on MFPV, through men's beliefs in female submission; Hypothesis 2) an indirect effect of men's beliefs in female submission on MFPV, through men's use of interpersonal control, and Hypothesis 3) an interaction between men's use of interpersonal control and men's perceptions of their wives' beliefs regarding female submission in predicting MFPV (see Figure 3). Overall, this model had a poor fit to the data as criteria for model fit were not met among any of the four fit indices (see section on Model Comparisons). The squared multiple correlation (R^2 value) for the overall model of MFPV was .13, suggesting that 13% of the variance in MFPV was accounted for by the variables in the proposed model.

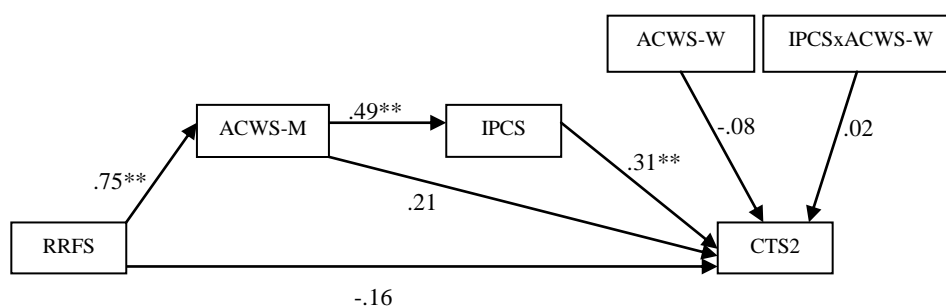


Figure 3. Standardized path coefficients for the hypothesized path model of MFPV. RRFS = Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale, ACWS-M = Attitudes Toward Christian Women Scale-Men's Beliefs, ACWS-W = Attitudes Toward Christian Women Scale –Men's Perceptions of Their Wives' Beliefs, IPCS = Interpersonal Control Scale, CTS2 = Revised Conflict Tactics Scales. ** $p < .001$.

While the hypothesized model demonstrated poor fit to the data, Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen (2008) recommend assessing the fit of individual model components in order to

determine areas of weakness in a given model. Therefore, specific results for each of the three proposed hypotheses are presented in order to aid in model trimming.

Hypothesis 1

The indirect effect of men's conservative religiosity on MFPV through men's beliefs in female submission was not significant, $\beta = .15, p = .17, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.08, .36]$. The total and direct effects of men's conservative religiosity on MFPV were also not significant, $\beta = .11, p = .34$ and $\beta = -.16, p = .13$ respectively. The direct effect of men's conservative religiosity on men's beliefs in female submission was significant, $\beta = .75, p < .001$, while the direct effect of men's beliefs in female submission on MFPV was not significant, $\beta = .21, p = .18$.

Hypothesis 2

The indirect effect of men's beliefs in female submission on MFPV, through men's use of interpersonal control was significant, $\beta = .15, p < .01, 95\% \text{ CI } [.07, .26]$. The total effect of men's beliefs in female submission on MFPV was also significant, $\beta = .36, p = .02$; however, the direct relationship between men's beliefs in female submission and MFPV was not significant, $\beta = .21, p = .18$. Both the direct effect of men's beliefs in female submission on men's use of interpersonal control and the direct effect of men's use of interpersonal control on MFPV were significant, $\beta = .49, p < .001$ and $\beta = .31, p < .001$, respectively.

Hypothesis 3

Men's perceptions of their wives' beliefs regarding female submission did not impact the strength of the relationship between men's use of interpersonal control and MFPV, $\beta = .02, p = .84$. The direct relationship between men's perceptions of their wives' beliefs regarding female submission and MFPV was also not significant, $\beta = -.08, p = .54$.

Last, while the direct relationship between men's conservative religiosity and MFPV was not significant, $\beta = -.16, p = .14$, it is notable that the beta coefficient was negative while the zero-order correlation between these two variables was positive.

Exploratory Model

The exploratory model proposed the same two indirect effects as the hypothesized model (i.e., an indirect effect of conservative religiosity on MFPV through men's beliefs in female submission and an indirect effect of men's beliefs in female submission on MFPV through men's use of interpersonal control); however, the exploratory model differed regarding the interaction relationship. Instead of an interaction between men's perceptions of their wives' beliefs regarding female submission and men's use of interpersonal control in predicting MFPV, the exploratory model assessed the interaction between men's beliefs regarding female submission and men's perceptions of their wives' beliefs regarding female submission in predicting men's use of interpersonal control (see Figure 4). According to the four model fit indices, the exploratory model also had a poor (albeit improved) fit to the data; all fit values for each of the indices improved but did not meet cut-off criteria (see section on Model Comparisons). The

squared multiple correlation (R^2 value) for the overall model of MFPV was .10, suggesting that 10% of the variance in MFPV was accounted for by the variables in the proposed model.

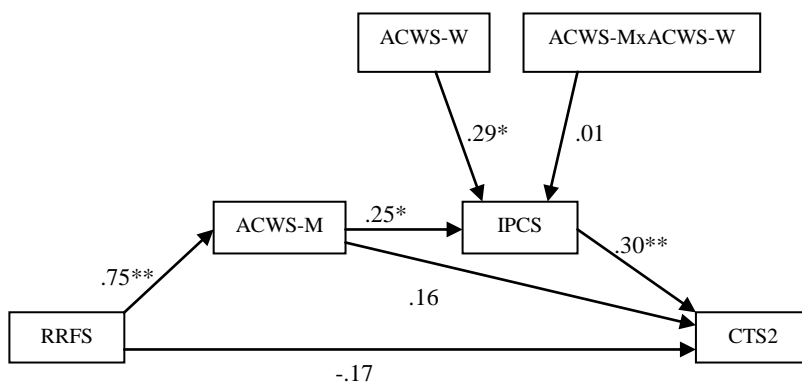


Figure 4. Standardized path coefficients for the exploratory path model of MFPV. RRFS = Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale, ACWS-M = Attitudes Toward Christian Women Scale-Men's Beliefs, ACWS-W = Attitudes Toward Christian Women Scale –Men's Perceptions of Their Wives' Beliefs, IPCS = Interpersonal Control Scale, CTS2 = Revised Conflict Tactics Scales. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.

Similar to results from the hypothesized model, specific results for each of the three exploratory hypotheses are presented in order to aid in model trimming.

Hypothesis 1

The indirect effect of men's conservative religiosity on MFPV through men's beliefs in female submission was not significant, $\beta = .12$, $p = .18$, 95% CI [-.05, .29]. The total effect of men's conservative religiosity on MFPV was not significant, $\beta = .00$, $p = .99$, while the direct effect of men's conservative religiosity on MFPV was almost significant, $\beta = -.17$, $p = .09$. The

direct effect of men's conservative religiosity on men's beliefs in female submission was significant, $\beta = .75, p < .001$; however, the direct effect of men's beliefs in female submission on MFPV was not significant, $\beta = .16, p = .18$.

Hypothesis 2

The indirect effect of men's beliefs in female submission on MFPV through men's use of interpersonal control, $\beta = .08$, was almost significant based on the normal theory test, $p = .06$, and significant based an examination of the 95% CI [.014, .181]. The total effect of men's beliefs in female submission on MFPV was significant, $\beta = .23, p = .04$, while the direct relationship between men's beliefs in female submission and MFPV was not significant, $\beta = .16, p = .17$. The direct effects of both men's beliefs in female submission on men's use of interpersonal control and men's use of interpersonal control on MFPV were significant, $\beta = .25, p = .03$, and $\beta = .30, p < .001$, respectively.

Hypothesis 3

Men's perceptions of their wives' beliefs regarding female submission did not impact the strength of the relationship between men's beliefs about female submission and men's use of interpersonal control, $\beta = .01, p = .91$. The direct relationship between men's perceptions of their wives' beliefs regarding female submission and men's use of interpersonal control was significant, $\beta = .29, p = .01$.

Again, the direct relationship between men's conservative religiosity and MFPV was almost significant in a negative direction, $\beta = -.17$, $p = .08$.

Trimmed Model

Among the hypothesized and exploratory models, the direct paths from men's conservative religiosity to MFPV and men's beliefs about female submission to MFPV were not significant, while the relationships between 1) men's conservative religiosity and men's beliefs about female submission, 2) men's beliefs about female submission and men's use of interpersonal control, and 3) men's use of interpersonal control and MFPV were all significant across the two models. As such, this pattern brings into question theoretical issues regarding whether 1) conservative religiosity is more directly associated with men's use of interpersonal control compared with men's use of partner violence and 2) whether men's conservative religiosity and men's beliefs about female submission *directly* influence MFPV. Instead, these belief variables may be influencing MFPV in a completely indirect manner (i.e., full mediation). Therefore, the trimmed model was readjusted to consider these theoretical considerations.

Further, few male participants endorsed a discrepancy between their own beliefs regarding female submission and their perceptions of their wives' beliefs regarding female submission. In fact, a large portion of male participants (33.5%) reported no discrepancy between their submission beliefs and their perceptions of their wives' submission beliefs, while another 34.5% reported only a 1 or 2 point difference. While such belief discrepancies appear theoretically salient in relation to MFPV, the current data set does not capture enough participants reporting a discrepancy to empirically assess the influence of belief discrepancies on

MFPV. Therefore, the trimmed model also excluded the influence of men's perceptions of their wives' beliefs (see Figure 5).

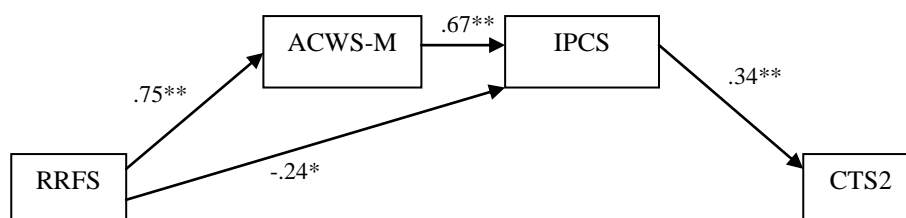


Figure 5. Standardized path coefficients for the trimmed model of MFPV. RRFS = Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale, ACWS-M = Attitudes Toward Christian Women Scale-Men's Beliefs, IPCS = Interpersonal Control Scale, CTS2 = Revised Conflict Tactics Scales. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .001$.

According to all four fit indices this multiple mediation model demonstrated an excellent fit to the data. The squared multiple correlation (R^2 value) for the overall model of MFPV was .11, suggesting that 11% of the variance in MFPV was accounted for by the variables in the proposed model. The indirect effects of men's conservative religiosity on men's use of interpersonal control (through men's beliefs in female submission) and men's beliefs in female submission on MFPV (through men's use of interpersonal control) were both significant, $\beta = .50$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.344, .668], and $\beta = .22$, $p = .001$, 95% CI [.107, .364], respectively. The relationship between men's conservative religiosity and men's beliefs in female submission remained significant, $\beta = .75$, $p < .001$, as did the relationship between men's beliefs in female submission and men's use of interpersonal control, $\beta = .67$, $p < .001$. The relationship between men's use of interpersonal control and MFPV was also significant, $\beta = .34$, $p < .001$. Regarding the first mediation portion of the model, the total and direct effects of men's conservative religiosity on men's use of interpersonal control were significant, $\beta = .26$, $p < .001$, and $\beta = -.24$,

$p < .05$, respectively. While the total effect was in the positive direction (as expected), the direct effect was in the negative direction. As the trimmed model did not include a direct relationship between men's beliefs in female submission on MFPV, total and direct effects were not estimated for this portion of the model.

Model Comparisons

In addition to a comparison of fit indices (see Table 2), the sample-size-adjusted Bayesian information criterion (SABIC) was also used to compare the three models pairwise. Using recommendations from Raftery (1995), differences in the SABIC of 5 or more points are indicative of model differences with preference given to models generating smaller values. The difference in SABIC values between the hypothesized and exploratory models was 4.82, whereas the difference between the hypothesized and trimmed models was 9.28. Additionally, the difference between the exploratory and trimmed models was 4.46. Therefore, the trimmed model is preferred to the hypothesized model and just below the cut-off criteria for being preferred to the exploratory model.

Table 2
Comparisons of Model Fit

Fit Indices	Hypothesized	Exploratory	Multiple Mediation
Pearson χ^2	176.33(5), $p < .001$	157.14(5), $p < .001$	2.71(2), $p = .26^*$
RMSEA	.43	.40	.04*
SRMR	.13	.09	.02*
CFI	.57	.60	.99*
SABIC	2745.97	2741.15	2736.69

Note: RMSEA=Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; SRMR= Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual; CFI= Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual; SABIC= Sample-Size-Adjusted Bayesian Information Criterion. * Fit criteria supported.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

Religiosity is a complex construct, particularly when striving to understand the extent to which religiously influenced beliefs impact human behavior. As such, it is not surprising that research attempts to elucidate the relationships between conservative religiosity, patriarchal beliefs, and MFPV have demonstrated mixed findings with limited interpretations of the process through which religiosity and patriarchal beliefs may contribute to MFPV. The present study is the first to address this complex relationship in context, moving beyond assessing broad associations between conservative religious identification (e.g., Baptists, Mormons), generalized patriarchal beliefs (e.g., men as providers and women as caretakers), and MFPV. Study results support a model in which conservative religious beliefs *indirectly* influence MFPV through men's beliefs supporting female submission in marriage and men's use of interpersonal control. Specifically, two indirect effects were supported in the present study: one in which conservative religiosity is positively associated with men's use of interpersonal control through men's beliefs supporting female submission in marriage and a second in which men's beliefs supporting female submission in marriage are positively associated with MFPV through men's use of interpersonal control.

While two indirect effects were demonstrated, it is important to also highlight that men's use of interpersonal control was the only variable *directly* associated with MFPV (neither men's conservative religiosity nor men's beliefs in female submission were directly associated with men's use of physical and psychological aggression). Overall, the current findings provide a

clearer picture regarding the process through which conservative religiosity and patriarchy may influence men's use of interpersonal control and aggression against their female partners. First, conservative religious doctrines may influence the likelihood that men adhere to specific patriarchal beliefs regarding female submission in marriage. Second, such beliefs regarding submission may then increase the likelihood that men will attempt to control their wives. Last, influenced by these attempts to control their female partners, men may then be more likely to engage in psychological and physical aggression against their wives.

Religiosity and MFPV

While feminist theories linking conservative religious teachings with MFPV have emphasized the importance of patriarchal messages communicated through religious doctrines in relation to MFPV, the lack of data exploring these specific relationships has perhaps influenced a climate in which the direct association between religiosity and partner violence has instead been a primary focus of research. The current study challenges this practice by supporting feminist theories regarding the role female submission beliefs play in relation to conservative religious beliefs and MFPV. Based on the final trimmed model, a significant direct relationship between conservative religiosity and MFPV was not found. In fact, given that the path coefficient between conservative religiosity and MFPV was negative (despite a positive correlation between these two variables), it seems that the effects of men's beliefs regarding female submission and men's use of interpersonal control may be accounting for much of the variance in predicting MFPV. A similar negative suppression effect was found between conservative religiosity and interpersonal control, as the correlation between these two variables was positive while the

significant path coefficient was negative. Therefore, it seems erroneous to continue focusing more simplistically on the broad association between religiosity, men's use of interpersonal control, and partner violence. The findings from the current study instead suggest that a complex series of beliefs and behaviors may need to be established in order to set the framework for increasing the likelihood of MFPV. Further research in this area should begin to more explicitly explore the dynamics between conservative religiosity and female submission beliefs, especially given that beliefs about female submission appear to be more directly associated with men's use of controlling behaviors and subsequent partner violence against their wives.

Female Submission in Context

The significant relationship found between conservative religiosity and men's submission beliefs may be influenced by the proof-texting that occurs when interpreting religious scriptures. As some conservatively religious men did not endorse beliefs supporting female submission (i.e., while the correlation between these variables of .75 was strong, this was not a one-to-one relationship), it seems that there is some variability in the extent to which conservatively religious males interpret scripture surrounding male and female relationships. Consistent with feminist theory, men who believe that wives should unconditionally submit to their husbands' authority (as opposed to men who believe in a more "complementarian" perspective on submission in marriage) may be more likely to control their wives, as these individuals may believe that it is their God-given right to have a wife who submits in all aspects of marriage.

As the present study only assessed the extent to which men adhered to beliefs supporting female submission and not men's beliefs about their own roles within marriage (e.g., whether

men also believe they have responsibilities to provide for and protect their wives, whether men believe that they should also submit to their wives in matters of the home, etc.), further research is needed to explore the extent to which scriptural proof-texting may contribute to men's use of interpersonal control and partner violence. Additional data collected within specific religious communities may help to clarify the complex process by which proof-texting may contribute to different beliefs among conservatively religious husbands and wives.

Beliefs in female submission appear to be an important factor, not only in relation to conservative religious doctrines but also in the extent to which such patriarchal beliefs may predict marital violence. While many previous studies have assessed the direct associations between patriarchy (in general) and partner violence, present findings again highlight the complexity of the process through which patriarchal beliefs may influence MFPV. Given that men's beliefs in female submission were not directly associated with MFPV and were instead positively associated with men's use of interpersonal control against their female partners, it seems that the use of interpersonal control may be a conditional requirement for increasing the likelihood that men will use psychological and physical aggression against their wives. The use of such interpersonally controlling behaviors (e.g., monitoring phone calls, regulating social activities) may be met with conflict within the relationship as some women may resist certain forms of interpersonal control. Some men may also have unrealistic expectations regarding the extent to which their wives are expected to submit. Perhaps when these expectations are not met husbands may be more likely to engage in psychological and physical aggression. This interpretation is consistent with some feminist models proposing that patriarchal beliefs regarding male power and control contribute to a marital environment in which men attempt to

control their wives, thus setting the stage for later psychological and physical violence (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Stark, 2007).

Belief Discrepancies

In addition to exploring the extent to which men's submission beliefs influence the relationship between conservative religiosity and MFPV, the present study also attempted to contribute to the available literature by incorporating the potential influence of men's perceptions of their wives' beliefs regarding female submission in relation to MFPV. It was expected that men would be more likely to engage in the use of interpersonal control and MFPV if they endorsed a discrepancy between their own beliefs supporting female submission in marriage and their perceptions of their wives' lack of beliefs supporting female submission. In line with data from available qualitative and quantitative studies (e.g., Boira & Marcuello, 2013; Sugarman & Frankel, 1996), it was theorized that such a discrepancy in beliefs may lead to conflict and perhaps violence perpetrated by husbands against their wives when they perceive their wives as challenging their authority in making marital decisions.

Results from the hypothesized and exploratory models suggest that such belief discrepancies (i.e., moderation effects) were not significantly associated with MFPV; men's perceptions of their wives' submission beliefs did not strengthen the effect of the relationship between men's use of interpersonal control and MFPV (hypothesized model interaction), and men's perceptions of their wives' submission beliefs did not strengthen the effect of the relationship between men's own submission beliefs and their use of interpersonal control (exploratory model interaction). Lack of support for these moderation effects challenges

available theory and data, suggesting that women may not be at increased risk of partner violence when they are seen as challenging their husband's authority within marriage (e.g., Alcalde, 2011; Stark, 2007). However, given that few men in the study reported an actual discrepancy between their own submission beliefs and their wives' submission beliefs (a review of the data suggests that 33.5% of male participants reported no discrepancy while another 34.5% reported a discrepancy of only 1-2 points), these findings may also suggest that few married men perceive their wives as having different beliefs about submission than themselves. Such a low percentage may reflect a perceptual bias on the part of the men completing the present study, as they may view their partners' beliefs as more in line with their own compared with what their wives' beliefs actually are. This potential bias may be the result of cognitive dissonance on the husband's part in order to justify his use of interpersonal control and aggression; specifically, some husbands may believe that their partners are in agreement regarding female submission in marriage in order to reduce negative self-perceptions regarding their behavior (i.e., if one's wife is viewed as agreeing with female submission, the husband's use of control and aggression is justified). If so, then these findings would suggest that, regardless of the actual belief discrepancies potentially present among heterosexual married partners, many men do not seem to perceive such discrepancies in their marriages. Therefore, these men may not be engaging in the use of interpersonal control and MFPV based on such perceptions of a belief discrepancy.

A potential bias in reporting may also help to explain the unexpected positive and direct relationship between men's perceptions of their wives' beliefs about submission and men's use of interpersonal control. While men endorsing submission beliefs were hypothesized to exert greater interpersonal control over wives who did not believe in female submission, results suggest that women were more likely to be controlled when their male partners perceived them

as also supporting female submission in marriage. This type of relationship dynamic may indicate that men who see their wives as supporting female submission feel more justified in being allowed to control their wives. However, given the high positive correlation between men's reported beliefs and their perceptions of their wives' beliefs, men's perceptions of their wives' beliefs may be highly biased by their own submission beliefs, therefore confounding these results. It is also possible that within a marriage a partner's beliefs can change over time and women who are being controlled by their male partners (perhaps initially as a result of challenging their husband's authority) may eventually come to agree with their partners' perspective on female submission.

Clinical Considerations

Based on the current findings, it seems that beliefs about female submission and not simply conservative religiosity may be the mechanism through which religion influences MFPV. If such a pattern is indeed an accurate reflection of the process through which conservative religiosity may indirectly contribute to MFPV, treatment providers, advocates, and religious leaders alike are encouraged to work together in determining how to reduce marital violence among religious couples. As noted by Fortune and Enger (2005), simplistic conclusions regarding the relationship between religiosity and MFPV have led to a climate of mistrust among secular advocates and religious leaders, creating difficulties for potential collaborations regarding effective ways to address partner violence in religious homes. The current results may assist in removing some of the emphasis that has perhaps been unnecessarily focused on conservative religiosity as a *direct* contributor to MFPV.

One area likely worth exploring is the extent to which religious groups interpret doctrines associated with marital relationships. As noted by Sharp (2014), interpretation of religious scripture is variable and improved education regarding the process through which scripture is read and interpreted may assist in promoting interpretations that reduce the likelihood of violence in the home. For instance, individuals who adhere to a strict focus on scripture that endorses wifely submission may benefit from religious teachings in which they are reminded that wifely submission is supported in Christian scripture, but it is also conditional based on a husband's love and care for his wife and family. Therefore, motivated by a desire to follow scripture, individuals identifying with conservative religious beliefs may benefit from exploring doctrine regarding female submission in scriptural context which outlines expectations of support and non-violence for both wives and husbands within a Christian marriage.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Given the cross-sectional nature of the present study, it is important to note that causality cannot be confirmed regarding the extent to which conservative religiosity leads to men's beliefs about female submission and regarding the extent to which beliefs about female submission lead to men's use of interpersonal control and subsequent partner violence. Next steps in this line of research will be to assess the relationships between these study variables in a longitudinal design which will likely require the tracking of participants' specific religious beliefs from adolescence and early adulthood. As the trimmed model was revised based on post hoc theoretical and statistical considerations, it was anticipated that the trimming process would result in strong model fit; therefore, it will be important to replicate findings from the present study with

additional samples. Additionally, consideration should be given to the fact that participants were required to complete all questions, thus individuals who initially may have chosen not to respond to sensitive items (i.e., perpetration of violent behaviors) may have instead chosen not to answer honestly, thus potentially impacting the validity of the data. There is no evidence bearing on this possibility either way.

Another important distinction to note is that the present study assessed men's perceptions of their wives' beliefs about female submission and not female partners' own beliefs about female submission. While men's perceptions of their wives' beliefs may be important when considering their impact on men's behaviors, it will also be important to directly assess the extent to which women endorse agreement with beliefs regarding female submission in marriage and the extent to which such beliefs influence their husbands' use of interpersonal control and partner violence. Collecting data in this manner may also lead to larger discrepancies between men and women regarding their submission beliefs. This may then provide a more variable data set with which to explore the present study's hypothesized interaction between men's and women's beliefs in relation to interpersonal control and partner violence. Given that Sugarman and Frankel (1996) found that women's perceptions of their husbands' beliefs were an important factor in assessing the link between patriarchal beliefs and MFPV, women's perceptions of their husbands' submission beliefs should also be explored as they may indicate important associations between partners' belief discrepancies and aggression in marriage. An additional area for further research includes assessment regarding wives' actual submission behaviors in marriage as they relate to interpersonal control and MFPV, particularly given that some wives may not endorse beliefs supporting submission in marriage but may still engage in such submission behaviors with their husbands.

It is also important to note limitations in generalizability of the present findings. While MTurk samples have been found to be more demographically diverse than college student samples and other internet samples in relation to age and race (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011), MTurk samples appear to be more atypical with regards to educational background and religious affiliation when compared with the 2014 General Social Survey. Given that the majority of participants identified as both Caucasian (86%) and having completed a bachelor's degree or higher (68.6%), caution is required in expanding current findings to the general population of married heterosexual males. Additionally, 41% of the sample did not identify with a particular religious affiliation, which is a higher rate of religious non-affiliation when compared with 19.4% of non-affiliated, heterosexual married males identified through the 2014 General Social Survey. While significant associations were found between conservative religiosity and men's beliefs about female submission and men's beliefs about female submission and their use of interpersonal control and perpetration of violence, rates of conservative religiosity and MFPV were fairly low in the present sample and observed relationships between constructs may not be generalizable to samples demonstrating higher rates of both conservative religiosity and perpetration of partner violence.

Future research might address these sample limitations by including additional men from specific religious backgrounds and men known to have perpetrated physical or psychological violence against their female partners (i.e., comparing differences among men from specific religious faiths in relation to their use of physical and psychological partner violence). It may also be beneficial to build upon the present model through an exploration of broader constructs, such as masculinity, as they influence beliefs about female submission as well as the use of interpersonal control.

In order to further understand the potential impact of religious factors on men's beliefs about female submission (and thus men's use of interpersonal control and partner violence), it may be helpful for future studies to clarify more specific aspects of conservative religiosity that impact one's beliefs about roles in marital relationships. While the present study used a measure of conservative religiosity that reflected participants' views of religious fundamentalism (e.g., religious doctrine as literal truth, belief in a "one true God"), other aspects of religiosity may also be important in their influence on men's beliefs about female submission, such as different religious cultural norms in particular congregations (e.g., the "Bible Belt" versus other geographic locales) and differences in adherence to religious behaviors (e.g., reading of scripture, frequency of prayer).

Conclusions

Attempting to assess and understand the influence of religious beliefs on human behavior can be a challenging task. The present study provides context surrounding the importance of not just men's conservative religiosity or general patriarchal leanings, but specifically the extent to which men believe in the submission of women to their husbands and the impact of such beliefs on men's use of control and aggression in marriage. Given the present findings, it is recommended that future research in this area move away from focusing on broad associations between religiosity and partner violence and begin to focus more specifically on intermediary mechanisms that can be a more direct target for the treatment and prevention of MFPV.

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