INTRODUCTION TO THE TRANSACTION EDITION

When Behind Closed Doors: Violence in the American Family (BCD from here on) was published in 1980, it was favorably reviewed in the New York Times and a number of other newspapers and magazines. However, it was not extensively or enthusiastically reviewed in academic journals. Nevertheless, it became a standard reference and was widely cited by academics. That continues to this day. In fact, we were prompted to consider a twenty-fifth anniversary reprinting by receipt of a notice from Questa Media (an organization that provides on-line access to out-of-print books). In 2004, they filled over 33,000 “page views.” Not long after that, the book exhibit at the 2005 meeting of the American Sociological Association provided an opportunity to see if it was cited in textbooks for Introductory Sociology, Criminology, and Family courses. Glancing through these books showed that even though BCD was published twenty-five years ago it is still widely cited.

THE REVIEWS

BCD was intended as a contribution to the field of sociology, and specifically to provide evidence that family violence was more a product of the nature of the American family and society in the 1970s than a consequence of psychological problems. For a book with this objective, perhaps the most important place
to have a favorable review would be in *Contemporary Sociology*, as it is the book review journal published by the American Sociological Association. The review of *BCD* in that journal (Boudouris, 1982) was, at best, lukewarm. The primary theoretical focus of the book—the social causes of family violence—was not mentioned. There were numerous criticisms, as is appropriate in a book review, but not one positive contribution was noted. Boudouris complained that the "interpretations" were *ex post-facto*. Apparently, he did not realize the meaning of "interpretation" (as compared to a result). He then went on to state, "There has been enough discovered about victimization surveys...to question many of the findings of this survey." Boudouris cited the National Crime Survey (now referred to as the National Crime Victimization Survey) as a study that "contradicted" what was in *BCD*, but did not identify any finding that was contradicted. At the time, we checked the findings from that survey and found only two contradictions:

1. The National Crime Survey found a partner violence rate of only two tenths of one percent, whereas *BCD* found 16 per cent, which is 80 times greater. The problems with the National Crime Survey that produced this vast undercount are discussed elsewhere (Straus, 1999), and the need to correct these errors was one of the factors that led to a major revision of the National Crime Survey, in order to achieve a more complete assessment of domestic assaults. In fact, the National Crime Victimization Survey was redesigned in 1989, with its results published in 1993 (see, Bachman and Saltzman, 1995). Criticism of the pre-1993 surveys' capacity to gather information about certain crimes, including sexual assaults and domestic violence, prompted the redesign.

2. The second way in which the National Crime Survey "contradicted" what was reported in *BCD* was in regard to domestic assaults perpetrated by women. The National Crime Survey, like tabulations of crimes known to the police, found that men perpetrated 93 per cent of domestic assaults, whereas *BCD* found that men committed only 50 per cent of domestic assaults. The finding that women physically assaulted their partners at about
the percentage men came as a surprise to us because, like almost everyone else at the time, we believed that domestic violence was almost exclusively a crime committed by men (see, Straus, 1976). The approximately equal rates of assault on partners by men and women was subsequently confirmed by more than a hundred studies showing equal or greater rates (Archer, 2000; Fiebert, 2004; Straus, 2005). However, even the redesigned National Crime Victimization survey finds that men reportedly commit acts of domestic violence at higher rates than do women (Rennison, 2003).

Despite the overwhelming evidence, the findings on intimate partner violence perpetrated by women resulted in twenty-five years of bitter controversy that still has not yet been resolved. The main focus of the debate has shifted somewhat from denying the reportedly equal rates of physical assaults by male and female partners to arguing that when women use violence it is in self-defense, in retaliation for violence initiated by men, or an act of desperation to end male oppression. The empirical evidence, however, reveals just the opposite. It demonstrates the following:

1. There are as many, and possibly more, couples where the female partner is the only one to use physical violence as there are couples where the male partner is the only one to use violence (see, page 37; and, Straus and Ramirez, in press);
2. Women initiate acts of intimate violence as often as men (Straus, 2005);
3. Male and female partner violence is overwhelmingly utilized as a method of coercive control (Fiebert and Gonzales, 1997; Medeiros and Straus, 2006).

There is one large and extremely important difference—the rate of physical injury resulting from male partner violence is about three times greater than injuries inflicted by female partners. As stated,

"Even though wives are also violent, they are in a weaker, more vulnerable position in respect to family violence. This applies to both the physical, psychological, and economic aspect of things. That is the reason we gave first priority to aiding wives who are the victims of beatings by their husbands"
Important as is the greater degree of victimization of women, the other side of the coin is also significant, namely that men are the victims of about a third of the injuries and a quarter of the deaths from partner violence (Archer, 2000; Straus, 2005).

*BCD* is like the proverbial cat with nine lives. Given the few and unenthusiastic reviews in scholarly journals, it should have quickly moved to the remainder bins. Although it escaped that fate (*BCD* sold 12,400 copies in clothbound and nearly 24,000 copies in the paperback edition), there were other threats ahead. One was the exponential growth in research on family violence in the decade after *BCD* was published (Straus, 1999), including other national surveys. The flood of new data should have displaced the presumably outdated results in *BCD*. Another potentially fatal threat arose because *BCD* first reported the phenomenon of gender symmetry in partner violence. These findings on violence by women made our research the object of bitter denunciations by feminist scholars (see, Straus and Gelles, 1990, p. 11; Straus, 1992; Straus, 1999).

What then might explain the continuing relevance of this book? Put simply, *BCD* was one of the first books that shed light on a once hidden but significant personal trouble. It laid the foundation for much of the research on family violence that has been carried-out over the last twenty-five years. *BCD* provided groundbreaking, scientific evidence that frames many of the debates that still occur in the field of family violence. Finally, it identified and proposed ways of reducing family violence that are valid today—some of which yet remain to be implemented.

**METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS**

**The Pioneer National Survey of Family Violence**

*BCD* was the first survey of family violence based on a nationally representative sample of families in the United States. Previously, studies of family violence were based on relatively
small or geographically restricted samples or samples that represented special populations, particularly women who had sought assistance from battered women shelters, batterers, or parents reported to Child Protective Services.

These “clinical populations” are very important because shelters, police departments, and child protective services need information about those whom they serve. However, as a basis for prevention efforts, information is needed on a representative sample of the general population because the general population, not clinical populations, is the target for prevention efforts. Primary prevention strategies cannot be based on results from clinical population studies as they are usually systematically different from the general population with the same problem, as has been shown for depression and alcoholism (Room, 1980).

In respect to family violence, the sample of women surveyed in BCD was assaulted by their partner an average of six times in the previous year. That is a high number—about once every two months—but it pales by comparison with the more than once a week found by two studies of women in shelters for battered women (Giles-Sims, 1983; Okun, 1986). Moreover, in the general population, most of the violence among intimates is mutual, whereas among clients of services for battered women it is primarily asymmetrical. A final example is the belief based on clinical samples that once a man starts hitting his partner, it will not stop, and it will escalate to more serious and frequent violence. This fact is likely to be true for women who seek battered women services, as that population consists only of women for whom the violence did not stop. However, in the general population, the typical pattern, over time, is cessation (Feld and Straus, 1989).

Most family violence is enacted within the average relationship, such as the angry husband or wife who slaps or kicks an unfaithful partner, or an exasperated parent who spanks a child after exhausting all other alternatives. Two-thirds of physical abuse cases dealt with by child protective services in the U. S. began as corporal punishment, which then escalated (Straus, 2000). These are not “mentally ill” parents; they are acting out
one of the socially legitimate roles of a violent society. These differences could only be discovered by a general population survey. The differences between extreme and brutal assaults and less severe patterns of violence are extremely important because they indicate a need for utilizing different methods for aiding victims, treating offenders, and different approaches for primary prevention.

The Conflict Tactics Scales

Before the 1975 National Family Violence Survey proved otherwise, few people would have believed it possible to knock on the door of a random sample of households and be able to obtain data on the incidence and extent of violent acts between members of that household. Although one of us had demonstrated that such information can be obtained from the general population by personal interviews through the use of in-depth qualitative interviews (see, Gelles, 1974), this method is unsuitable for a national survey. However, the insights gained from the 1974 study, and from exploratory interviews conducted in 1971, provided the basis for an instrument to measure family violence that is suitable for use in large-scale surveys—The Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS; Straus, 2004; Straus, 2006 in press; Straus and Hamby, 1997; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman, 1996). The CTS made BCD possible. Since then, the CTS, and its second iteration, the CTS2, have become the most widely-used measure in family violence research. More than 400 papers have been published based on data obtained using the CTS and CTS2. Currently, four to five such papers are published every month.

The extensive use of the CTS is all the more remarkable because it has also been the most widely criticized measure in family violence research. The main basis of the criticism is the previously noted fact that use of the CTS in these hundreds of studies has consistently shown that women assault their partners at about the same rate as men. Advocates for battered women, whose knowledge is mainly based on clinical samples, found
this so completely at odds with their experiences that they simply have reject the resultant evidence, and thus the measure and the measurers. The results provided by studies employing the CTS also contradicted the feminist theory that partner violence is almost exclusively committed as a means to dominate women. Consequently, the National Family Violence Surveys results of gender symmetry in rates of partner violence are taken as virtual proof that the CTS is not a valid instrument. Ironically, the CTS has also provided some of the strongest evidence for the feminist theory of partner violence; for example it confirmed the link between male dominance and partner violence (see Chart 23; and, Straus, 1994), but this has not shaken the belief that the CTS is an invalid instrument. Perhaps this is because evidence provided by the CTS shows that when female partners are dominant, there is also an increase in the probability of violence. It is a classic case of ideology triumphing over evidence, even among scientists.

Another irony is that, despite these denunciations, many feminist researchers use the CTS in their own research. To deal with the contradiction of using the CTS, they tend to employ two strategies. One strategy utilized in the recent World Health Organization cross-national study of intimate violence (García-Moreno, Heise, Jansen, Ellsberg, Watts, and World Health Organization, 2005) is to omit questions about female perpetration; or if those questions were asked, not to report the results. The second strategy is to atone for the sin of using a “forbidden” instrument by inserting a paragraph repeating some of the erroneous criticisms. These criticisms are then cited in other articles as though based on empirical evidence. This gives the impression that there is a large body of scientific showing the invalidity of the CTS, where in fact, there is only endless repetition of the same unproven opinions.

Perhaps the most frequently mentioned erroneous limitation of the CTS is the claim that it only measures violence that occurs in the course of rational conflict. It is true that the theoretical basis of the CTS is conflict theory. However, the introductory
explanation to participants specifically includes expressive and malicious violence. It asks respondents to answer about the times when they and their partner "...disagree, get annoyed with the other person, want different things from each other, or just have spats or fights because they are in a bad mood, are tired, or for some other reason." This "limitation" of the CTS have been cited for twenty-five years in perhaps a hundred or more publications. However, none of these publications provide empirical demonstrating that only conflict-related violence is reported. In fact, where there are both CTS data and qualitative data, as in Giles-Sims (1983), it shows that the CTS elicits malicious violence as well as conflict-related violence.

Data from Both Perpetrators and Victims

Still another way in which BCD broke new ground was by obtaining data from perpetrators in the general population, as well as from victims. Previously, the pattern was to base partner violence research on data from either battered women or men convicted of battering. But, as indicated by the above discussion of differences between clinical and general populations, it is critically important to also gather information about perpetrators in the general population. BCD provides data obtained from both male and female perpetrators. About half of the respondents reported in BCD were husbands and half were wives (although none were marital partners). However, just the fact that we were able to obtain data from men and women who had physically assaulted their partners resulted in unique and important, but controversial, findings.

The Risk Factor Index

Still another innovation of BCD was the "Risk Factor Index" in the next to last chapter. This provided empirical data on our theoretical commitment to the principle that family violence could only be explained by taking into account a multitude of casual
factors. The early chapters in *BCD* had followed the standard research approach of examining the effects of these risk factors one-by-one. For the chapter on "Putting the Pieces Together," we created a scale to indicate how many of twenty-five risk factors characterized each couple in the study.

Studies of risk factors for partner violence and child maltreatment usually focus on a small number of correlates. They estimate the "net effect" of each of the risk factors after controlling for their overlap with each other. This is a necessary research strategy because it permits an in-depth examination of those risk factors, such as examining variables that mediate or moderate their effect. But the price of doing that is not being able to see the whole picture. Consistent with our multiple causation theoretical orientation, we wanted to examine the cumulative effect of the many risk factors measured for *BCD* and to estimate the probability of violence when a family had only one of the twenty-five risk factors, when they had two of them, three of them, etc.

If a program to compute logistic regression had been available in the late 1970s when the statistical analyses for *BCD* were done, we could have used it to create a graph showing the cumulative effect the number of risk factors had on the probability of violence accruing in a family. In the absence of such a program, we used simple check lists to achieve the same end. Each family was given a score consisting of the number of risk factors. We then computed the percent who were violent that year for the families in each risk factor score category. The results shown in Chart 26, for severe partner violence, demonstrate that the percent of partners who were severely violent goes from under 1 per cent for partners with none of the risk factors, to over 70 per cent for those who had 14 or more of the risk factors. Moreover, the plot lines are parallel for male and female perpetrators.
SUBSTANTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS

The Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of BCD had been laid out in several previous publications, such as (Gelles and Straus, 1979; Steinmetz and Straus, 1974; Straus, 1973; Straus, 1974; Straus, 1977). A core assumption is that violence in each family role is interrelated with violence in other family roles. Until BCD, research on family violence tended to be focused on either child abuse or spousal abuse. Studies did not seem to exist that gathered data on both, despite the obvious theoretical links. BCD broke new ground by describing the full range of family violence in the U.S., including child, spousal, sibling, and elder abuse. It also provided evidence that, although it may at times be necessary to study each form separately, a more accurate understanding of family violence also requires studying its interrelatedness. BCD showed that this holistic approach to understanding family violence was both possible and fruitful. Unfortunately, except for our 1985 National Family Violence Survey (Gelles and Straus, 1988) no study since BCD has provided similar evidence, even though much still remains to be learned about the types and interrelatedness of family violence.

The Social Causes of Family Violence

A major contribution of BCD was that it provided evidence that demonstrated that the “causes” of family violence lie in the fabric of the American family itself, and on a broader level, throughout society-at-large. Among the many possible explanations for the high rates of family violence are social norms and economic arrangements that create and justify male dominance within the family and in society. The devastating effects of poverty and the violent child-rearing practices experienced by over 90 per cent of American children in the form of spanking by parents are just some of the precursors of violence in families. This is not to say that BCD provided the first empirical description of the social causes of violence. There had been a long
tradition of such research in sociology (see Gil, 1970; Elias, 1978; Loftin and Hill, 1974; Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967). Examining the possible social causes of violence has been at the theoretical core of our research since 1970, as illustrated by numerous articles on the social causes of both ordinary physical punishment of children (Straus, 1971) and child abuse (Gelles, 1973), male dominance, and female intimate partner violence (Straus, 1974; Straus, 1976), and an entire book devoted to partner violence, *The Social Causes of Husband-Wife Violence* (Straus and Hotaling, 1980). However, these studies either were theoretical analyses or used empirical data with important threats to the validity of the data. *BCD* changed that radically. The results in Parts III and IV, and the results from the “Risk Factor Index” in Part V, (which consists almost entirely of social characteristics such as unemployment, early marriage, multiple children, inequality between partners, and the lack of participation in organized religion) are examples of social causes. They show that a few social characteristics can go a long way toward explaining the high rates of violence in American families.

**Trends**

The findings in *BCD* are both dismal and hopeful. They are dismal in the sense that they provided overwhelming evidence that the family is the location where the typical American child or adult is more likely to be the victim of a physical assault than in any other normal social setting. We believed the findings were also hopeful because the risk factors identified in *BCD* that may lead family to violence are changing in a direction that will lower rates of violence within families in the future, such as a growing proportion of college-educated Americans, later marriages and fewer children, the torrent of information about all aspects of child-rearing in newspapers, magazines, and TV, greater equality between men and women, and less reliance on spanking children. Moreover, cultural norms are changing that reduce the threshold for what is an “acceptable” or “tolerable” level of violence. These and other social changes (Straus and Gelles, 1986)
led us to predict a decrease in all forms of family violence. Research by a number of investigators shows that this prediction has been borne out for all forms of family violence from spanking children, to partner violence, and intimate homicides (Finkelhor, 2005; Rennison 2003; Straus and Gelles, 1986; Straus and Kaufman Kantor, 1995; Straus, Kaufman Kantor, and Moore, 1997). Some of these trends are shown in Charts I.1, I.2, I.3, and I.4.

There is continuing grounds for optimism because these social trends are continuing; for example, the trend toward greater equality between intimate partners and the reduction of hitting teen-agers from about two thirds of to “only” one third. There is still a long way to go in regard to both of these risk factors for family violence as men continue to earn more than women, and as nearly all American parents continue to use physical violence against pre-school children (Straus and Stewart, 1999). Interpersonal violence in society as a whole, and within the family,
Chart I.2

Chart I.3
Partner Violence Reported to the National Crime Victimization Survey
Chart L.4
Trends in Intimate Partner Homicide Victimization, USA, 1976 to 1998, data from Rennison & Welchans, 2000, Appendix Table 2

has been decreasing since the late Middle Ages (Eisner, 2001; Elias, 1978; Straus, 2001b). Bit-by-bit, and with many steps backward as well as forward, the world is becoming more civilized. The reduction in violence in and outside of the family is a key part of that social evolution.

Risk Factors for Partner Violence Confirmed by Numerous Studies

In the twenty-five years since the publication of BCD, there have been hundreds of studies of risk factors for family violence. These studies have confirmed the factors in our “Risk Factor Index.” For example, the chapter on partner violence in the World Health Organization report on Violence and Health
(Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, Lozano, and World Health Organization, 2002), which many regard as the current definitive statement, included the list of risk factors, which follows below. The “+” signs indicate a risk factor reported in BCD and also in the WHO report. “NS” indicates factors we did not study. The only differences from the BCD and the WHO list are five items that we did not study, and items that are in the BCD risk factor list and not in the WHO list.

- Young age
- Heavy drinking
- Depression
- Personality disorders
- Low academic achievement
- Low income
- Witnessing or experiencing violence as a child
- Marital conflict
- Marital instability
- Male dominance in the family
- Economic stress
- Poor family functioning
- Weak community sanctions against domestic violence
- Poverty
- Low social capital
- Traditional gender norms
- Social norms supportive of violence

What Will It Take to End Family Violence?

At several points in BCD we emphasized the evidence demonstrating that a major part of the explanation for violence in the family can be found in the effects of the structure of society and in the family as it was in the 1970s. BCD provided evidence showing that male dominance and power is related to partner violence within a representative sample of ordinary American families. It was also the first of several studies to demonstrate that the more corporal punishment was experienced as a child, the greater the probability of hitting a partner later in life for both men and women (Straus, 2001a; Straus 2006; in press). There has been progress in reducing these violence-generating
aspects of society. Nevertheless, gender inequality still exists, women continue to have less financial power than men in a society where “money talks,” and spanking is still the norm in child-rearing (Straus and Stewart, 1999).

BCD uncovered evidence to suggest that the prevention of the risk factors for family violence that are the focus of much public concern and remedial efforts—violence toward women and physical abuse of children—has to go beyond providing interventions for battered women and abused children, and arresting and educating assaulting partners and abusing parents. Although these are important ameliorative steps, which are discussed in the concluding chapter, they will not solve the basic underlying characteristics of the family and of the society that lead to violence and abuse. These are primarily socially created factors. Therefore, they require steps to create a different society and family system. Five of these steps are the focus of the final pages of BCD:

- Eliminate the norms that legitimize and glorify violence in society and family.
- Reduce the violence-provoking stressors created by society.
- Integrate families into a network of kin and community.
- Change the sexist character of society and the family.
- Break the “Cycle of Violence” in the family (including, ending the practice of spanking children).

These are not the only steps, however, to achieve primary prevention of family violence, but they remain as important today as they were twenty-five years ago.

There is a painful irony that tempers our pride in having identified the social causes that provide the clues to preventing family violence. Although there are important exceptions, such as the home-visitor program developed by David Olds (Eckenrode, Ganzel, Henderson, Smith, Olds, Powers, Cole, Kitzman, and Sidora, 2000) and the “Safe Dates” program for high school students (Foshee, 2004), almost all the current research on fam-
ily violence is focused on the treatment or psychopathology of male perpetrators. In addition, despite a torrent of polemics on partner violence by women, there is almost no empirical research on preventative steps needed to address the fact that half of all family violence is initiated by women (Straus, 2005). Research on treatment is crucial. But it does not deal with prevention. Psychopathology is an important risk factor, but probably applies to, at most, 10 per cent of cases of family violence (see, for example, Cavanaugh and Gelles, 2005; Gelles, 1973; Holtzworth-Munroe, 2000). Although BCD may have led the way in defining the underlying social causes of family violence, except for the research on gender inequality, few social scientists have followed.

Fortunately, as pointed out when we discussed trends in family violence, the process of social evolution is gradually changing the social causes, and families are becoming less violent. The European Union has taken steps to have all member states that have not yet done so, to make corporal punishment illegal (Council of Europe, 2005). The United Nations and the World Health Organization are working worldwide to enhance the status of women. These are important examples of societal changes that will eventually transform the family from being the most violent institution in which individuals participate. We hope the family will eventually become a safe and nurturing environment for all of its members—women, men, and children alike. We firmly believe this process could be accelerated if more of the efforts of social scientists addressed the social causes of family violence.

Richard J. Gelles Murray A. Straus
University of Pennsylvania University of New Hampshire

REFERENCES

Eckenrode, John, Barbara Ganzel, Charles R. Henderson, Eliot Smith, David L.
“Preventing child abuse and neglect with a program of nurse home visitation: The
limiting effects of domestic violence.” *Journal of American Medical Association*
284:1385-1391.

dynamics of European homicide rates in theoretical perspective.” *British Journal of
Criminology* 41:618-638.

Press.

Feld, S. L. and M. A. Straus. 1989. “Escalation And Disestance Of Wife Assault In
Marriage.” *Criminology* 27:141-161.

Fiebert, Martin S. and Denise M. Gonzalez. 1997. “College women who initiate
assaults on their male partners and the reasons offered for such behavior.” *Psychologi-
 cal Reports* 80:583-590.

Fiebert, Martin S. 2004. “References examining assaults by women on their spouses
or male partners: an annotated bibliography.” *Sexuality and Culture* 8:140-177.

Foshee, V.A. 2004. *Safe Dates: An Adolescent Dating Abuse Prevention Curricu-
 lum*. Center City, MN: Halzelden Publishing and Educational Services.

Garcia-Moreno, Claudia, Henrica A.F.M. Jansen, Mary Ellsberg, Lori Haise, Char-
 lotte Watts, and. 2005. *WHO Multi-country Study on Women’s Health and Do-
mestic Violence against Women Initial results on prevalence, health outcomes


and reformulation.” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 43:611-621. Also re-
printed in Suzanne K. Steinmetz and Murray A. Straus (eds.) *Violence in the

Family: Towards a Theoretical Integration.” Pp. 549-581 in *Contemporary Theo-
 ries About the Family: Volume I*, edited by W. R. Burr, F. Rueben Hill, I. Nye, and

and Schuster.

Guilford Press.

Holtzworth-Munroe, A. (2000). A typology of men who are violent toward their
female partners: Making sense of heterogeneity in husband violence. *Current
Direction in Psychological Science*, 9, 140-143.

Krug, Etienne G., Linda L. Dahlberg, James A. Mercy, Anthony B. Zwi, Rafael
Lozano, and World Health Organization. 2002. *World report on violence and

724.


—. 2006, In Press. The primordial violence: Corporal punishment by parents, cognitive development, and crime. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.


Straus, Murray A. and Ignacio Luis Ramirez. In press. “Gender symmetry in prevalence, severity, and chronicity of physical aggression against dating partners by University students in Mexico and USA.” Aggressive Behavior.


# Table of Contents

FOREWORD vii  
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ix  

**Part I. The Issues**  
1. Violence in the Home 3  

**Part II. The Violent Family**  
2. The Marriage License as a Hitting License 31  
3. Spare the Rod? 51  
4. Kids Will Be Kids: Violence Between Brothers and Sisters 76  

**Part III. Social Patterns in Family Violence**  
5. The Social Heredity of Family Violence 97  
6. Who Are the Violent Americans? 123  

**Part IV. Some Immediate Causes**  
7. Marital Conflict and Marital Violence 155  
8. Violent Families: Children, Stress, and Power 174  

**Part V. The Future**  
9. The Social Causes of Family Violence: Putting the Pieces Together 201
Behind Closed Doors
Violence in the American Family

Murray A. Straus, Richard J. Gelles and Suzanne K. Steinmetz

“Because of the pioneering work of these authors, we know that battered children become battering parents, that violent criminals were usually abused as children and that the dimensions of family violence are wider than we ever imagined.”

—The New York Times Book Review

Behind Closed Doors is grounded in the unprecedented national survey of the extent, patterns, and causes of violence in the American family. Based on a study of over 2,000 families, the authors provide landmark insights into this phenomenon of violence and what causes Americans to inflict it on their family members. The authors explore the relationship between spousal abuse and child abuse as well as abuse between siblings, violence by children against their parents, and the causes and effects of verbal abuse. Taken together, their analysis provides a vivid picture of how violence is woven into the fabric of family life and why the hallmark of family life is both love and violence.

ISBN: 1-4128-0591-0 (paper) 2006 $29.95 $23.95
Physical Violence in American Families
Risk Factors and Adaptations to Violence in 8,145 Families
Authors: Murray A. Straus & Richard Gelles

“A substantial and significant contribution...its many strengths include the excellence of the writing, careful attention to detail, the stimulating nature of the commentary, and above all, the quality and comprehensiveness of the research.” —Leslie Moulton Asplund, Violence and Victims

"The stature of the authors and the scope of the work make this an essential volume.” —R.T. Sigler, Choice

Two landmark American studies of violence from the National Family Violence survey form the basis of this book. Both show that while the family may be the central locus of love and support, it is also the locus of risk for those who are being physically assaulted. This is particularly true for women and children, who are statistically more at risk of assault in their own homes than on the streets of any American city. Physical Violence in American Families provides a wealth of information on gender differences and similarities in violence, and on the effects of gender roles and inequality. It is essential for anyone doing empirical research or clinical assessment


ORDER DIRECT • www.transactionpub.com
Offer expires December 1, 2006. Discounts may not apply outside the U.S. See reverse side for order form.

Beating the Devil Out of Them
Corporal Punishment in American Children
with Denise A. Donnelly

"A comprehensive exposé of the corporal punishment controversy by an eminent scholar. Straus provides the long needed scientific evidence linking corporal punishment to subsequent violence and other adult problems. This book gives major new importance and credibility to the uphill effort to end corporal punishment of children.” —Adrienne Ahlgren Haeuser, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Murray A Straus, one of the world’s leading researchers on family violence, discusses the extent to which parents in the United States use corporal punishment (such as spanking and slapping) and its effects on their children based on studies of over 9,000 families. The question of whether corporal punishment is an effective method of discipline is hotly debated. Straus contends that this believed-to-be-"minor" form of physical violence is precursor to much violence that plagues our world.

ISBN: 0-7658-0754-8 (paper) 2001; 317 pages; $24.95 $19.95