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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTICIPANT'S GENDER, SITUATIONAL  
EVENTS AND LIBERAL VERSUS CONSERVATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD  
WOMEN AND DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS OF SPOUSE ABUSE

DISSERTATION

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Recent interest in the area of spouse abuse has resulted in many attempts to define and understand this problem. The present study reviewed the literature addressing spouse abuse, its various definitions and presumed causes. Theories regarding the cause of spouse abuse were presented in two groups: those focussing on society as the perceived cause of abuse and those on either men or women as precipitators of abuse.

The purpose of the study was threefold. The first was to explore the relationship between gender and perception of spouse abuse. The second was to examine whether attitudes toward women varied as a function of perception of spouse abuse. Third, the study explored the relationship between situational variables and perceptions of spouse abuse. Finally, although not an initial purpose of the study, differences in perceptions of spouse abuse were compared among abused and nonabused groups.

To explore the hypotheses of this study, the Attitudes toward Women Scale (ATW), and the Spouse Abuse Profile (SAP)

were used. Also, a new instrument, the Survey of Violent Marital Situations was devised in order to assess the effect of differing situational variables on responses to spouse abuse. These instruments were administered to 60 male and 65 female undergraduates.

A stepwise regression analysis was performed using gender, ATW scores and scores from the situational questionnaire as predictor variables and SAP scores as the criterion variable. No significant relationship was found between perception of spouse abuse, as measured by SAP, and gender or attitudes toward women. Significant relationships were found between how individuals respond to abuse under certain circumstances and their overall attitudes toward spouse abuse.

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WOMEN AND DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS OF SPOUSE ABUSE

Within approximately the last decade, family violence has become a topic of national interest and concern. One form of violence which has been of special concern to professionals has been the area of spouse abuse. The current awareness of potentially excessive family violence, particularly that between spouses is often attributed to the advent of the women's movement.

Despite the increased attention which has been given to spouse abuse in recent years, several problems exist in this area. One apparent problem seems to be that no clear, agreed-upon definition of what constitutes spouse abuse exists. Some theorists have defined spouse abuse as physical injury of another (Parker & Schumacher, 1977). Still other theorists have stated that, in addition to the above, hitting one's spouse may also be considered as abusive (Flynn, 1977). A problem with these definitions is that they do not take other forms of behavior, such as verbal abuse, into consideration. A more clear delineation of what does and does not constitute abusive behavior would be especially valuable for both methodological and applied reasons to social scientists. At

the methodological level, a more precise definition would permit research to be done in this area. At the applied level, it would facilitate the identification and treatment of those who have been abused as well as those who mistreat their spouses. A more exact understanding of what spouse abuse is would also be of value to other professions. For example, a clarification of what constitutes spouse abuse would be of use to members of the legal profession for litigation purposes.

Another major difficulty in the area of spouse abuse is that there is a scarcity of studies which have examined the cause of spouse abuse. Of the literature available, most has attributed the cause of spouse abuse to societal traditions (Dobash & Dobash, 1978; Walker, 1981; Waites, 1978; Straus, 1976, 1978) or to aggressive characteristics which have been socialized into many males. However, both of these explanations seem incomplete. Among other things, a societal explanation of spouse abuse seems inadequate to account for why some individuals abuse their spouse and others do not.

A third weakness in this area is that no theoretical models have been proposed to account for spouse abuse. Such theoretical models would be especially helpful in providing direction to researchers for systematic research examining some causes of this form of behavior.

The following literature review will describe attempts of some previous theorists to account for why spouse abuse occurs as well as some prior conceptions by other theorists

of what constitutes spouse abuse. Next, some common psychological theories will be surveyed and the potential adequacy of these models to account for spouse abuse will be explored. This section will then conclude with a summary of previous findings and theories and a statement of the purpose of this study.

#### Society as the Perceived Cause of Spouse Abuse

One issue in the area of spouse abuse is what causes it. A number of theorists have maintained that society has been the primary cause of spouse abuse. Dobash and Dobash (1978) presented historical and contemporary documents which elucidated the legal, religious and cultural legacies which have supported a marital hierarchy, subordinated women in marriage and legalized violence against them. The authors maintained that these past ideologies and social arrangements persist and are "inextricably intertwined in present legal, religious, political and economic practices" (p. 426).

In another article, Walker (1981) focused on how sex role biases have contributed to the origins of spousal violence, compounded its psychological effects and interfered with effective treatment. Walker viewed the historical and legal condonement of wife beating as resulting from sex role stereotypes. This author maintained that females are socialized to be nurturing, compliant, passive, and dependent on men. In contrast, men are socialized into roles that encourage dependence on and aggression toward women.



Like the previously cited authors, Waites (1978) contended that society has contributed to the development and maintenance of spouse abuse. She discounted the traditional theory of female masochism as the basis of spouse abuse, stating that society has so restricted the external choices of many women that the question of internal motivation approaches irrelevance.

Straus (1976) attributed the occurrence of spousal violence, especially the high frequency of wives as victims, to cultural norms and the sexist organization of society. He contended that in contemporary Euro-American societies, cultural norms implicitly make "the marriage license a hitting license" (p. 55). According to this author, cultural norms legitimizing marital violence are to be found in "the legal system, literary works and everyday discourse, and sociological and psychological experiments and surveys" (p. 54). Such cultural norms and values which permit and sometimes encourage husband-to-wife violence reflect the hierarchical and male dominant type of society of Western culture. Violence is accepted in order to support the existing power structure of the family--if those low on the hierarchy refuse to accept their place and roles. Violence also results from the antagonism between the sexes engendered by sex role differentiation and inequality. The societal restrictions placed on women (i.e., child care responsibility, lack of employment opportunities, negative self-image) serve to maintain violent marital situations. Finally, Straus contended that the male oriented organization

of the criminal justice system makes it difficult for women to secure legal protection from abusing spouses.

In a later article Straus (1978) further delineated the causes of wife beating as follows: the family is the type of social group characterized by a high level of conflict; the U.S. nation is one which is fundamentally committed to the use of violence to maintain the status quo or to achieve desirable changes; the child rearing practices typically employed by American parents train children to be violent, violence is therefore legitimized and built into the most fundamental levels of personality and established as a link with love; the male dominant nature of the family system tends to be maintained by physical force; and finally, the sexual inequalities inherent in our family system, economic system, social services, and criminal justice system leave many women locked into a brutal marriage.

In a similar attempt to account for the etiology of marital violence, Goode (1971) presented a view of the family as a power system which is maintained to some degree by force or its threat. It is this ultimate deterrent of force which enables family roles and structure, laws and traditions to continue without being challenged. The state, community and friends support the use and threat of force within the family. While the implied threat of force may be sufficient to maintain the family system in many cases, Goode described two situations in which actual force may be employed: a family member rejects part of the structure or their role

in it, resulting in the use of force, although not necessarily violence, on the part of the family or other societal institutions; a family member feels cheated in the flow of family transactions, resulting in attempts to hurt the other family member, and often leading to conflict and sometimes violence.

To summarize the views from previous writers thus far, although many authors and investigators have maintained that spouse abuse may be attributed to societal norms, differences exist as to why society has sanctioned and perpetuated abuse of one's spouse. Some theorists have maintained that spouse abuse exists as a means of keeping families intact, maintaining the status quo. Others have proposed that spouse abuse continues because it serves as a means of enhancing the self-esteem of males. Still others have proposed that spouse abuse is often precipitated by misbehavior or masochistic tendencies on the part of the female. At least two problems exist in this field. The first problem with this literature is that few of the theorists have attempted to define exactly what constitutes spouse abuse. Another difficulty with the studies described at this point, is that little agreement exists among theorists as to exactly what causes spouse abuse.

#### Differences in the Definition of Spouse Abuse

As mentioned earlier, a second issue in the area of spouse abuse is exactly what is it. While several studies have attributed the cause of spouse abuse to historical trends and

cultural norms, few attempts have been made to define precisely what behaviors constitute spouse abuse. In the process of conducting a National Crime Survey, Gaguin (1978) defined abuse as "assault without theft in which the offender was the victim's spouse or exspouse" (p. 634). Assault included a variety of attacks and threats ranging from assault without a weapon, which could be no more than a verbal threat of attack, to serious assault with a weapon. Rounsaville and Weissman (1978) defined a battered woman as "any married or unmarried woman over the age of 16 who had evidence of physical abuse on at least one occasion at the hands of an intimate male partner" (p. 191). Parker and Schumacher (1977) defined the battered wife syndrome as "a symptom complex of violence in which a woman has, at any time, received deliberate, severe and repeated (more than three times) demonstrable injury from her husband, with the minimal injury of severe bruising" (p. 760).

Flynn (1977) attempted to define spouse abuse and assess the extent to which it is manifested, as well as the circumstances during which it is most likely to occur. Spouse abuse was defined as the act of physical attack by one spouse on another; pushing, slapping, punching, kicking, knifing, shooting or throwing an object with the intent to inflict bodily harm. While he found both men and women to be assailants, he focused on wife abuse as the primary and prevailing problem.

Information for the study came from spouse abuse victims and professionals who work with them. Flynn found that in a county of 200,000 residents, abuse had occurred within ten percent of the families at some time. Nonfatal assaults were usually against women, but homicides were nearly equal for the sexes. Wife abuse usually occurred at home, usually at night or over weekends. Wife beating was found in all socioeconomic and educational levels, all age groups and family sizes. Among assailants, abuse frequently had occurred in their families of origin. Over one-half of assailants had parents who were involved in assaultive situations. Two-fifths had been abused as children. One-third of the wife abusers studied also abused their children. Also, one-third had previous records of criminal assault. There was a strong positive correlation between male children who grew up in homes where parents were assaultive and the fact that the men themselves later assaulted their wives.

Flynn enumerated a number of precipitating factors which had been cited by interviewed victims: mental disturbance, alcohol abuse, or extreme jealousy on the part of the assailant; stress from financial problems; health or employment problems; and conflict over management of children or the marital relationship. One-half of the victims interviewed reported being assaulted during pregnancy. In the cases studied, assaults frequently began as verbal arguments, and often there was excessive use of alcohol.

Snyder and Fruchtman (1981) conducted a study in an attempt to delineate on an empirical basis, distinct patterns of wife abuse, each having a unique etiological profile with implications for treatment. Subjects for the study were women who, after having been abused by their husbands, had sought shelter because of fear for themselves or their children. All subjects resided in the shelter for at least four days. Results of this study yielded five homogeneous subgroups of women abused by their partners. These subtypes were found to differ significantly in the following five ways: (a) frequency and severity of abuse; (b) usual precipitants; (c) typical responses of the woman and her assailant; (d) history of violence in the family of origin; (e) disposition following brief residence at a shelter for battered women.

Another author (Hotaling, 1980) attempted to further explain wife abuse by emphasizing the importance of distinguishing between intentional aggression and accidental mistreatment of one's spouse. According to Hotaling, the intimate and often ambiguous nature of the husband-wife relationship often results in an increased probability that social rule violations will occur. These violations are then attributed intentional and unintentional qualities by the spouse which has been victimized. If the act is perceived as intentional, the probability of violence is increased.

### Models of Behavior

As can be seen from the previously cited studies, various explanations have invoked different causal factors for spouse abuse. However, no systematic theoretical model has been proposed to account for this behavior. As mentioned previously, it would be beneficial to theorists and researchers if a paradigm for viewing spouse abuse were available.

Over the years, psychologists have developed numerous theories of personality in their attempts to both predict and explain diverse forms of behavior. In general, these theories have been classified into three groups (see Cronbach, 1975).

One dominate theoretical position often used to account for various behaviors consists of what are commonly referred to as trait approaches. These theories, labeled personologism by Ekehammer (1974), assume an underlying basic stability and continuity of personality, due to inherited or acquired traits, as well as the existance of trans-situational consistency.

Personologists such as Cattell (1946) and Guilford (1959) have maintained that internal traits are the primary determinants of behavior. Traits are inferred by cross-situation response consistencies.

The psychodynamic theory differs slightly from trait theory in that it allows for variance of behavior across situations. However, it maintains that these diverse

behavioral patterns serve the same enduring generalized underlying dynamic or motivational dispositions (Mischel, 1973). So, while the variables considered differ, both trait and psychodynamic theories maintain that a certain consistency exists within the individual across situations. In reviews of the research, Mischel (1971, 1972) determined that psychodynamic clinicians guided by these underlying dispositions have not been able to predict behavior better than have the person's own direct self report, indices of relevant past behavior, or demographic variables. Thus, the usefulness of this model to account for behavior in general as well as spouse abuse is questionable.

A second major theoretical position, composed mostly of the social psychologists and social learning theorists such as Bandura (1969), Rotter (1954), and Skinner (1953), maintains that situations or the environment are the prime determinants of behavior and that persons will behave consistently across situations only to the extent that the situations are the same or have the same meaning for the person. However, the utility of this approach has also come under criticism because of its seeming inability to account for a wide range of behavior, especially the acquisition of speech (Chomsky, 1959) and some forms of deviant behavior (Hare, 1970).

A third more recent theoretical position is interactionism. It can be regarded as the syntheses of personologism and



situationism and thus implies that neither the person per se nor the situation per se is emphasized, but the interaction of these two factors is regarded as the main source of behavioral variation (e.g., Bowers, 1973; Endler, 1975).

In a review of empirical studies regarding the consistency of behavior assumption of trait or dispositional personality theory, Mischel (1973) concluded that: (a) impressive consistencies often have been found for intellectual features of personality and for behavior patterns such as cognitive styles and problem solving strategies that are strongly correlated with intelligence; (b) consistency is often high when people rate their own traits as in questionnaires and other self reports; (c) response patterns often show little consistency, even in highly similar situations, when noncognitive variables of personality are assessed and when personality variables are assessed with methods other than self report.

Critiques (e.g., Endler, 1975) of a strictly situational emphasis in personality, have focused on the frequent failure of situational research to assess the complexity or "psychology" of situations. More specifically, interactionists have argued that situations do not exist in a vacuum, but have psychological meaning and significance for people. Watchel (1973) has pointed out that people select, create and construct their own environments. When stimuli are ambiguous,

individual differences resulting from past experiences are more discernable.

Several investigators have explored the relative separate quantitative contribution of persons and situations, as well as the variance accounted for by the interaction of the individual and the environment. These studies employ a method which consists of sampling the behavior of individuals across a series of situations and through various response modes. Overall, these studies have indicated that the sampled individual differences, situations, and response modes, when considered separately tend to account for less variance than does their interaction.

Bowers (1973) summarized the results of 11 articles that dealt directly with the situation versus individual controversy. It was found that the combined effects of the person and situation accounted for more variance than either person or situation in most instances.

Argyle and Little (1972) also reviewed the evidence with respect to person perception studies, social behavior studies, and social response questionnaire studies. Based upon their review, these authors concluded that the combined effects of the person by situation interaction accounted for more variance than either situations or persons alone. Thus, Argyle and Little's evaluation of the major theoretical models seems consistent with the conclusions reached by Bowers (1973).

In a study of anxiety, Endler and Hunt (1969) found that interactions were more important than persons or situations. Each of the two way interactions (person by situation, person by mode of response, and situation by mode of response) accounted for more variance than any of the variables considered individually. They concluded that behavior is idiosyncratically organized in each individual. A similar conclusion emerges from Moos' 1968 study of self-reported reactions by staff and patients to various settings.

These empirical results support an interactional view of behavior, in which actual behavior is determined by a continuous and multidirectional interaction between person variables and situation variables. In view of this, Mischel (1973) has stated that in order to move toward a more adequate theoretical approach to personality, the following cognitive social learning variables should be considered in the study of individuals: cognitive and behavioral construction competencies, encoding strategies and personal constructs, behavior-outcome and stimulus-outcome expectancies, subjective stimulus values, and self-regulatory systems and plans.

Given the increasing amount of research which seems to support an interactional approach to many forms of behavior, this model may also be of use in accounting for the antecedents of spouse abuse. This may be an especially appropriate model in the case of spouse abuse, since different authors have attributed cause to both males and females. The

complexity of the marital relationship is such that in many incidents of spouse abuse it is necessary to look at the interaction of these variables in order to understand the cause.

Although the spouse abuse literature is disorganized, it seems that most writers agree that some combination of factors seem to precipitate abusive behavior. One major component of any abusive situation is aggression. In view of this, it seems relevant at this point to review the different theories of aggression and how they pertain to spouse abuse.

#### Theoretical Approaches to Aggression

Although theorists seem to differ on the issue as to exactly what constitutes spouse abuse, one common theme which all conceptions of this behavior seem to share in common is that spouse abuse is a form of aggression, since many of the current hypotheses concerning the nature and origin of marital violence view mistreatment of one's spouse as a form of aggression. However, psychologists of different theoretical persuasions have attempted to explain aggression in different ways.

Freud (1957) proposed that aggression is an innate primary drive representative of the death instinct. He explained life as an eternal conflict between two innate drives: a creative or growth force and a destructive force.

Freud believed that the destructive force would never be completely controlled by reason. Therefore, individuals involved in social situations would inevitably experience constraints and frustrations which would perpetually activate the innate destructive force. While Freud's concept of the "death instinct" was not widely accepted, an understanding of aggression as an individual act resulting from the motives and instincts of the individual has persisted in analytic thought. Freudian theory would predict violence in marriages of persons of incomplete psychosexual development and consequent marginal or unsatisfactory psychological adjustment.

In contrast to the analytic approach, which maintains that aggression is attributable to internal drives, behaviorists maintain that the antecedent conditions for aggressive behaviors tend to be situational variables. Numerous experimental studies have examined the role of reinforcement, modeling, and environmental cues in the expression of aggression.

Many studies have demonstrated the importance of reinforcement in eliciting and suppressing aggressive behaviors (Buss, 1966; Geen, 1968). Brown and Elliot (1965) found a significant decrease in physical and verbal aggression among nursery school students, after their teachers initiated rewards for cooperative behavior while ignoring aggressive behavior. Conversely, providing social reinforcement for

aggressive responses was shown to result in increased incidence of aggression (Parke, Ewall & Slaby, 1972).

In summary, the learning theorists view aggressive behaviors, like all other behaviors, as the result of socialization through either direct or vicarious reinforcement. However, the occurrence of an aggressive act is attributable to an appropriate situational stimuli. Thus, among other things, learning theorists would predict violence in marriages of individuals from families where assaultive behavior was observed and positively reinforced.

However, several problems exist with a strict learning theory approach to accounting for aggression. One obvious problem is that this model has difficulty accounting for varying degrees of aggression. More specifically, although an individual might behave aggressively in similar situations, this theory has difficulty accounting for differences in the extent to which these behaviors are manifested.

As was mentioned previously, due to the inability of existing theories to provide a comprehensive explanation of behavior in general, as well as aggressive behavior, recent theorists have proposed that behavior may best be accounted for as being a function of both situational events and internal characteristics of the organism. Various studies seem to support this contention.

One of the first systematic attempts to examine the contribution of both internal and external contributors to

aggressive behavior was carried out by Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears (1939). While Dollard et al. were influenced by Freudian concepts, they rejected the instinct concept in favor of the theory that aggression is a response elicited by frustrations. Aggression was defined as a sequence of behavior having the objective of injuring the person toward whom it is directed, while frustration was defined as the blocking of an ongoing goal directed activity. The fundamental hypothesis was "that the occurrence of aggression always presupposes the existence of frustration and contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression" (p. 1). The latter part of the statement was later elaborated as follows: "frustration produces instigation to a number of different types of response, one of which is an instigation to some form of aggression" (Miller, Sears, Mowrer, Doob & Dollard, 1941, p. 338).

While Dollard et al. made no assumptions as to whether the frustration-aggression relationship is of innate or learned origin, they explained the expression of the aggressive impulse as being determined by expected rewards and punishment. Subsequent research enumerated several variables which influence the amount of aggression elicited by frustration and the form which that aggression will take. Berkowitz and Geen (1966) found that the amount of aggression elicited by attack was consistently stronger than that elicited by environmental blocking.

In another series of experiments by Bandura and Walters and their associates, the importance of modeling in eliciting aggressive responses was demonstrated. In one study (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961) nursery school children watched a woman play with a set of tinker toys and an inflated doll. In the aggressive condition the adult began by playing quietly with the tinker toys then played aggressively with the doll for the remainder of the observational period. In the control condition, the model played quietly with the tinker toys for the entire period. The children who had observed the aggressive model behaved much more aggressively than those who had not.

As stated previously, interactional psychologists maintain that behavior is a result of both internal and external variables. Consistent with this viewpoint, theorists adhering to this position maintain that aggressive behavior is a function of trait or cognitive processes as well as situational events. There is considerable evidence available to support the contention of this interactionist position.

Perhaps the most systematic series of studies of aggression has been done by Berkowitz. In one study, this author (Berkowitz, 1965) studied the impact of observed aggression (a prize fight film) on previously angered subjects. He found that stronger aggressive responses were evoked in those subjects who associated the instigator of their anger with the observed aggressive scene. Also, angered subjects' inhibitions against aggression varied with the apparent justification for the



observed aggression. In a similar study, Berkowitz and Geen (1967) found that available target persons who were associated with the victim of observed violence received more aggressive actions than possible targets lacking this association. Berkowitz and Alioto (1973) found that previously angered subjects displayed more impulsive aggression after viewing a fight scene which had been introduced as realistic aggression, than did similar subjects who had witnessed the same scene which had been introduced as a fictional situation. They concluded that the interpretation of an event as a realistic rather than a fictional encounter presumably defines an occurrence as an aggressive stimulus, enabling it to elicit aggression-enhancing reactions in the observer.

A number of studies have shown that the relationship between frustration and aggression is markedly influenced by the person's perception of the reason for the frustration (Buss, 1961; Fishman, 1965). When the frustration can be attributed to a reasonable or otherwise acceptable cause it is apt to elicit far less aggression than when it is given arbitrarily. Berkowitz (1962) found that expected unpleasant situations are much less frustrating than expected ones. Previously cited studies (Berkowitz, 1965; Berkowitz & Geen, 1967; Berkowitz & Alioto, 1973) demonstrated that the presence of certain cues from the situation can significantly affect the level of aggression which follows frustration. Other studies have demonstrated that the anticipated results of

aggression determine whether it is expressed directly, indirectly, or displaced to others (Janis, 1945; Berkowitz & Knurek, 1969).

One study (Rule & Percival, 1971) attempted to examine the impact of provocation and sympathy on the relationship between frustration and aggression. Frustration was found to lead to heightened aggressive responses. Provocation relative to no provocation elicited more aggression under nonfrustration conditions but less aggression under frustration conditions. The authors concluded that the interactive nature of the single determinants of aggression suggests that differences in the literature are partially due to variations in the subject's interpretation of his performance, and of the nature of the attack and frustration.

To summarize, a recent approach to accounting for behavior in general, as well as aggressive behavior, is the interactional approach. These theorists would maintain that aggression is due to a combination of both some situational event and internal processes on the part of the aggressor. The interactionist model may be of some utility in accounting for spouse abuse. Various theorists have maintained that the reason females are abused by their partners is because they serve as situational stimuli by constantly performing behaviors which provoke aggressive acts on the part of their spouses. Others maintain that due either to some inherent or learned tendencies, some individuals simply abuse their

spouses. It may be that both explanations are partially correct. That is, spouse abuse may be due to an interaction of abuse eliciting behaviors on the part of one spouse as well as a tendency toward aggression on the part of the partner.

#### Women as Precipitators of Abuse

Several theorists have implied that females who are abused are often the major contributor to being mistreated. The classic Freudian view of the spouse abuse victim is that of a neurotic masochist. The woman unconsciously engages in self-destructive behavior because of a failure to resolve her oedipal complex. The woman attempts to solve her oedipal conflict by rejecting the male's love and instead provoking his aggression.

Gillman (1980) rejected the traditional psychoanalytic view on the basis that most battered women tolerate too much abuse to be accounted for by a simple neurotic behavior syndrome. The author also stated that battered women often do not display neurotic symptoms and defenses. The author then proposed a more contemporary psychoanalytic explanation of the dynamics involved in battering, based on an object relations approach. According to Gillman's explanation, most battered women fit the description of the borderline personality, displaying the concomitant defenses of splitting, denial, and projective identification in which parts of one's

self or object representations are projected onto another. In the abused woman, the splitting enables her to separate the "good self" and "good husband" from the "bad self" and the "bad husband," thus explaining her willingness to stay in the abusive relationship.

While some abused women may fit the criteria of the borderline personality, it seems just as unlikely that all battered women are borderline personalities as it does that they are all masochistic neurotics as has been suggested by some Freudian theorists. Gelles (1976) addressed the question of why abused women remain with their husbands and reached the following conclusions: the less severe and the less frequent the violence, the more a woman will remain with her spouse; the more violence a woman experienced as a child, the more inclined she is to stay; and, wives who do not seek aid are more likely to have not completed high school and to be unemployed.

#### Males as Precipitators of Abuse

Variables pertaining to the offender himself have received considerable attention in the literature. According to Watts and Courtois (1981), most researchers agree that wife batterers do not fit a specific psychiatric profile. Based on their review of the literature, they listed the following characteristics as those most commonly seen in these men. These include being abused as a child, low self-esteem,

traditional and sex-stereotyped values, jealousy and possessiveness in relationships, and severe reactions under pressure.

Results of an empirical study by Rosenbaum and O'Leary (1981) indicated that, compared to nonabusive husbands, abusive husbands were significantly more likely to have witnessed marital abuse as children. Of those who did, 87 percent had themselves been abused as children.

O'Brien (1971) examined how family instability due to status inconsistency contributes to conflict and violence. He defined status inconsistency as a situation in which a person of a superior ascribed status category is deficient in achieved status characteristics. Compared to nonabusive husbands in the process of divorce, 85 percent of abusive husbands, also in the process of divorce, showed a higher percentage in all of the following five categories: job dissatisfaction; failure to finish high school or college; income a source of serious conflict; educational achievement less than wife's; and occupational status lower than that of father-in-law.

In a study examining the adult characteristics of abusive spouses, Rosenbaum and O'Leary (1981) found that abusive husbands differed significantly from nonabusive husbands with marital problems in that they were less assertive with their wives, and were more likely to have been abused as children and to have witnessed spouse abuse in their families.

Similar findings have been reported by other investigators. For example, Elbow (1977) found that many males who abuse their wives view their partners as possessions and dominate them out of fear of being controlled. Shaines (1977) reported that many of the abusive spouses interviewed by her and her colleagues could be categorized as being either passive-aggressive or obsessive-compulsive, or as having sadistic personalities.

Thus, several consistent findings which seem to characterize the background and interpersonal style of wife batterers have been found. Despite these similarities however, it is unclear as to why these individuals tend to behave aggressively toward their spouses rather than, or in addition to other people.

#### Summary and Purpose of this Study

Two major difficulties exist in the area of spouse abuse. One problem is that no specific agreed upon definition of what constitutes spouse abuse exists. A second problem in the area is that no viable explanation of the cause of spouse abuse is available. Some individuals have maintained that females are the primary cause of abuse, while others have maintained that males are the basic cause.

Although no commonly agreed upon definition of spouse abuse exists, most authorities in the field seem to agree that spouse abuse may be viewed as a form of aggression. Several

theories of aggression exist. However, one relatively recent approach to aggression which may also have implications for accounting for spouse abuse, is an interactional model of behavior. This model of behavior maintains that behaviors in general may best be accounted for by the combination of situational variables and internal characteristics of the individual. Since some theorists have maintained that spouse abuse is due to characteristics of the male while other theorists have proposed that spouse abuse is primarily due to characteristics of the female, in a similar view as the interactional model, it may be that spouse abuse is attributable to both behaviors on the part of the male and the female.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between gender of participants, situational variables, attitudes toward women, and perceptions of spouse abuse. Since the literature indicates that males have been socialized into behaving aggressively toward females, one prediction of this study was that a significant relationship would be found between gender and perceptions of spouse abuse. More specifically, it was proposed that males would be more accepting of items characterizing the mistreatment of spouses than would female participants. Also, the literature strongly implies that individuals with more conservative attitudes toward females are more likely to accept the traditional ways males have been socialized. Therefore, it was also predicted that

the more conservative one's attitudes toward females, the higher the level of tolerance of abuse. Finally, the literature seems to indicate that it is more appropriate for males to mistreat their female partners in certain situations. Thus, a third prediction of this study was that the more individuals agreed with spouses' responses to wives' who had behaved inappropriately, according to traditional societal norms, the more accepting they would be of more severe forms of aggressive behavior toward females in general.

#### Method

##### Subjects

A total of 60 males and 65 females enrolled in introductory psychology courses at North Texas State University participated in this study. These subjects had not been identified as being either victims or perpetrators of abuse. In addition, another sample of 40 females who were residing in a shelter for abused females were used in this study. All subjects completed an Informed Consent Form (Appendix E) and a Background Information Questionnaire (Appendix D).

##### Measuring Instruments

The nonabused participants were given all of the following three measures. The abused subjects were given only the Spouse Abuse Profile (SAP).

The Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS)-Short Form is a 25 item instrument that was developed by Spence, Helmreich and Stapp (1973). It is a shortened form of the 55 item AWS (Spence & Helmreich, 1972). The AWS consists of declarative



statements about the rights and roles of women in such areas as vocational, educational and intellectual activities; dating behavior and etiquette; sexual behavior; and marital relationships. Subjects were asked to indicate whether they agreed strongly, agreed mildly, disagreed mildly, or disagreed strongly with these statements. Items were given a score from zero to three, with zero representing the most traditional and three the most contemporary, profeminist response.

Normative data are available for the scale, based on two samples including over 1,000 students at the University of Texas at Austin, obtained during two different semesters in 1971-1972. The stability of distributions over these two semesters is offered as indirect evidence that a reliable phenomenon is being tapped.

Each of the 25 items of the AWS-Short Form was chosen based on an item analysis. This analysis was performed on data from 241 female and 286 male introductory psychology students at the University of Texas at Austin, who were tested in the 1971-1972 academic year.

A number of comparisons were made between the scores on the long and short forms. Correlations were obtained between the subjects' scores on the short form and the full scale. The resulting  $r$ 's were .968 for the males and .969 for the females. Correlations were also obtained between total scores on the 25-item form and scores on the individual items. All  $r$  values were significant ( $p < .001$ ) and ranged

from .31 to .73, with the modal value for both sexes being in the .50s. Factor analysis was performed and proved the scale to be essentially unifactorial. A copy of this instrument is available in Appendix A.

The Survey of Violent Marital Situations (SMS) consists of eight items which describe marital situations in which one spouse behaves in a violent manner toward the other. Using a six-point rating scale ranging from "very strongly agree" to "very strongly disagree," participants were asked to rate the extent to which they felt the item was an example of spouse abuse, the extent to which they felt the aggressive spouse's behavior was justified, the extent to which they felt the wife's behavior justified the punishment she received, the extent to which they felt the aggressive spouse should be punished, and the extent to which they felt that the behavior should be reported to legal authorities (see Appendix B).

Items for the SMS were selected from a pool of items which had been drawn from news accounts and the spouse abuse literature. Selection of items was based on the clarity of the items as examples of abusive situations and the appropriateness of the wife's behavior prior to the abuse. Determination of the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the wife's behavior was based on traditional sex roles as portrayed in the popular literature. Four of the items selected portrayed the wife as behaving appropriately and four portrayed the wife as behaving inappropriately.

The Spouse Abuse Profile (SAP), which was developed by Hauser and Terrell (1982), is a 60 item inventory which was designed to assess a wide range of abusive behaviors between spouses. Each item describes a way in which spouses interact. Subjects were asked to rate each item on a scale of one to six, with one being "agree very strongly that this item is an example of spouse abuse" and six being "disagree very strongly that this item is an example of spouse abuse."

Items for the SAQ inventory were selected from a pool of items which had been drawn from spouse abuse literature and extensive interviews. Selection of items was based on their clarity and appropriateness as indicators of spouse abuse and required unanimous approval of a panel of nine raters which consisted of three Ph.D. level psychologists and six doctoral level psychology students.

The inventory was administered to 86 first and second year college students. An item discrimination analysis was conducted to eliminate items frequently endorsed by the majority of students. Next, an index of homogeneity among the items was determined by computing a Pearson Correlation between each item and the total test score and all items correlated significantly with the total test score. After the SAP was developed, the internal consistency was examined by computing Cronbach's coefficient alpha, and a reliability estimate of .85 was obtained. The relative severity of each item as an indicator of abuse was obtained by taking the mean

ranking of each item and then hierarchically arranging the items according to mean rank. Finally, the external validity of the SAP was examined by correlating participants' scores on the SAP with their scores on the Aggression scale and Husband-Wife scale of the Conflict Tactics Scale. Significant correlations were found between the SAP and the Physical Violence subscales of both versions of the Conflict Tactics Scale. A copy of this inventory may be found in Appendix C.

#### Procedure

The nonabused sample were administered the inventories in groups ranging in size from 15 to 20 in the following way. After participants had entered the room and seated themselves, they were given the following instructions.

I am going to pass out some inventories which I would like you to fill out. The instructions for completing these inventories are self-explanatory. Simply read the directions for filling out each inventory and follow those instructions. If any of the instructions are unclear, please raise your hand and I will assist you. If, while filling out the inventories you decide you do not want to continue, simply bring all of your material up to me and then you may leave. You may begin now.

After all participants had completed filling out all of the measures they were given the following feedback.

I would like to briefly explain the inventories you were given and how they pertain to my study.

The first inventory was the Attitudes toward Women Scale. It is used to assess attitudes about women's role in society. The second inventory consisted of a number of descriptions of marital situations which resulted in abusive behavior. Responses to this inventory are used to assess whether or not a person feels marital violence is ever justified and if so, under what conditions. The third inventory was the Spouse Abuse Profile. This inventory is used to assess what behaviors a person considers to be abusive in a marital relationship. Finally, you were asked to answer a number of questions pertaining to your own personal history and current situation. Information from all of these inventories will be used to assess what behaviors are considered to be abusive between spouses, and whether these behaviors are ever considered to be warranted or justified in certain marital situations. I will also look at different personal characteristics and attitudes concerning women's role in society, to assess if and how these factors affect perceptions of spouse abuse.

The abused subjects were administered the SAP on an individual basis as part of the intake procedure at the women's shelter. Collection of this data took place over a period of six months.

## Results

### Biographical and Personality Correlates with Perceptions of Spouse Abuse

As stated previously, the primary purpose of this study was to explore the relative contributions of one's gender, situational events, and attitudes toward women upon one's perceptions of spouse abuse. To examine the relationship between these variables, a stepwise regression analysis was conducted using scores from a situational variables questionnaire and the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS) along with participants' sex as predictor variables. Participants' scores on the Spouse Abuse Profile (SAP) were used as the criterion variable.

The variables of age, sex, attitudes toward women, marital status, income level, race, and religion were not found to be significantly related to SAP scores. However, a significant relationship was found between scores on the situations questionnaire and SAP scores ( $\beta = .23$ ,  $t = 2.71$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

### Situational Correlates with Perceptions of Spouse Abuse

As will be recalled, the Survey of Violent Marital Situations (SMS) questionnaire was developed specifically for this study. The purpose for developing this questionnaire was to examine whether, and if so, to what extent, situational events contributed to perceptions of spouse abuse. Because of the recent development of this measure, the internal reliability of this measure was examined utilizing the inter-item correlations. These results may be found in Table 1. As can be seen,

Table 1  
Inter-item Correlations of the Survey of Violent Marital Situations Questionnaire

Items <sup>1</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1		.76**	.69**	.59**	.14	.14	.22**	.50**
2			.83**	.68**	.18*	.20*	.25**	.47**
3				.69**	.19*	.17*	.25**	.40**
4					-.03	.01	.11	.37**
5						.86**	.70**	.40**
6							.71**	.40**
7								.52**

<sup>1</sup>The first four items along each axis reflect situations in which the wife behaves in what has traditionally been considered to be unacceptable ways for females, while the second four items depict females behaving in ways which are often viewed as appropriate for females.

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; N = 125

the first four items of this inventory, those which portray the wife as behaving inappropriately, tend to correlate highly with each other, also, the second four items, those which portray the wife as behaving appropriately, tend to correlate highly with each other.

The situations questionnaire was composed of several types of items including some depicting women behaving in ways which have traditionally been considered inappropriate. Other items depicted females as behaving in ways typically viewed to be acceptable for females. The reason for developing these different types of items was to control for response sets and acquiescent responding. Finally, scores were obtained by negatively keying those items of women behaving in what has been considered as traditionally inappropriate ways. Given the significant relationship between scores on this inventory and scores on the SAP, which are presumed to assess perceptions of spouse abuse, an interesting question is exactly what types of situational variables were major contributors to the significant relationship with SAP scores. To examine which items were specifically related to SAP scores, Pearson Product Moment correlations were computed between each item of the situations questionnaire and SAP scores. Correlations between each situational item and SAP scores were computed



separately for males and females as well as for the combination of males and females and these results are available in Table 2.

For the nonabused females, SAP scores correlated significantly with item #1 ( $p < .01$ ), item #2 ( $p < .01$ ), item #3 ( $p < .01$ ), item #4 ( $p < .01$ ), item #6 ( $p < .05$ ), item #7 ( $p < .01$ ), and item #8 ( $p < .01$ ). For the nonabused males, significant correlations were found between SAP scores and item #2 ( $p < .05$ ), item #5 ( $p < .01$ ), item #6 ( $p < .01$ ), item #7 ( $p < .01$ ), and item #8 ( $p < .01$ ). All of the eight items were found to correlate significantly ( $p < .01$ ) for the combined group of males and females.

The stepwise regression strategy provides a relative estimate of those variables which are most predictive of attitudes toward spouse abuse as reflected by SAP scores. Thus, results of this study suggest that situational events are most predictive of one's perception of spouse abuse. However, it is likely that the other predictor variables not identified by the overall regression strategy may have contained shared variance with other predictor variables included in the regression model. As a consequence, these variables may also be related to SAP scores but because of possible shared variance with items composing the situations questionnaire, these relationships may not have been reflected in the overall regression model. To examine whether, and if

Table 2  
Correlations Between Items Composing the SMS Questionnaire and SAP Scores

Participants' Sex	Situational Items <sup>1</sup>							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Females <sup>2</sup>	.45**	.44**	.41**	.35**	.14	.21*	.24**	.32**
Males <sup>3</sup>	.18	.22*	.13	.07	.31**	.44**	.39**	.35**
Males and Females	.31**	.32**	.26**	.20**	.24**	.35**	.33**	.33**

<sup>1</sup>The first four items depict females behaving in ways consistent with what are commonly considered to be inappropriate ways for this gender group while the remaining items are examples of females behaving in conventional ways.

<sup>2</sup>N = 62 (data for three subjects was discarded due to incomplete protocols)

<sup>3</sup>N = 57 (data for three subjects was discarded due to incomplete protocols)

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

so, to what extent, variables not included in the overall regression model might be related to SAP scores, a correlation matrix was computed and these results may be found in Table 3. As can be seen, none of these demographic variables correlated significantly with perceptions of spouse abuse as reflected by scores on the SAP.

Table 3  
Attitudinal and Demographic Correlates with SAP Scores

Predictor Variables	Females <sup>1</sup>	Males <sup>2</sup>	Males and Females
Age	.06	-.15	-.05
ATW	.10	.15	.11
Marital Status	.07	-.18	-.06
Income	.06	.08	.07
Race	.11	-.16	-.03
Religion	-.01	.00	.00
Sex			-.01

<sup>1</sup>N = 65

<sup>2</sup>N = 60

p < .05

Differences in Perception of Abuse Between Abused and Nonabused Populations

Although not a central purpose of this study, an interesting question was whether individuals who have been abused have similar perceptions of what constitutes mistreatment as nonabused individuals. While it was not possible to collect comparable information from abused subjects as that obtained from the nonabused population, SAP scores on an abused population were available from another study. These scores were obtained and compared with the SAP scores of the nonabused population. The means and standard deviations of SAP scores for abused and nonabused subjects are available in Table 4.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations of SAP Scores  
for Abused and Nonabused Groups

Group	n	Mean	SD
Abused Females	40	144.2	33.32
Nonabused Females	65	157.0	31.06
Nonabused Males	60	157.9	39.79

Since these data were obtained from potentially different populations, prior to examining whether mean differences in SAP scores existed between these groups a Cochran's C test was conducted to examine whether the population variances of these groups were homogenous. A value of .43 ( $p > .10$ ) was found. Therefore, results seem to indicate that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met.

Given that the sample variances were relatively comparable between abused and nonabused samples, a series of t-tests were computed to explore whether means differences existed between groups. Although Table 4 indicates that participants in the nonabused groups expressed a higher mean level of tolerance for mistreatment of one's spouse, no significant differences were found between the SAP scores of either the abused female group and the unabused female group  $t(104) = 1.09, p > .05$ ; or between abused females and nonabused males  $t(99) = 1.07, p > .05$ . Also, mean SAP scores did not differ significantly between nonabused females and nonabused males  $t(124) = 1.07, p > .05$ . Thus, these results would seem to suggest that whether one has been abused or not is not related to perceptions of spouse abuse.

In summary, the results of this study indicate that, in understanding spouse abuse, the situation is more important than demographic characteristics of the individual. These results may have applied implications. One implication is

that treatment strategies of choice might be those which attempt to modify external events or remove the individual from the situation.

#### Discussion

The purpose of this study was threefold. One goal was to explore whether one's gender was related to differences in perceptions of spouse abuse. A second goal was to examine whether differences in perceptions of what constitutes spouse abuse varied as a function of one's attitudes toward females. Finally, the present study explored differences in one's perception of spouse abuse as a function of situational variables. To explore the hypotheses of this study, male and female college students enrolled in introductory classes were given the Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS), the Spouse Abuse Profile (SAP), and an inventory especially developed for this study which depicted individuals behaving in different ways toward their spouses. Next, a stepwise regression analysis was performed using participant's gender, performance on the AWS, and ratings on the situational questionnaire as predictor variables. The SAP scores were used as the criterion variable.

No significant relationship was found between participant's gender and SAP scores. Several theorists (Watts & Cortois, 1981; Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981; O'Brien, 1971; Elbow, 1977;

Shaines, 1977) have proposed that some males, either due to inherent characteristics or the socialization process, have a tendency to abuse their spouses. However, contrary to what these theorists would predict, results of the present study failed to find a significant relationship between gender and attitudes toward spouse abuse. Several reasons are available to account for this failure. One possibility is that the use of college students may account for this lack of gender difference. Had subjects been from a larger, more heterogeneous population in terms of age, marital history, education, and life experience, perhaps a more stereotypical gender difference with regard to attitudes toward spouse abuse would have been found.

A second purpose of this study was to examine whether a relationship exists between attitudes toward women and perceptions of spouse abuse. More specifically, it was predicted that individuals having liberal attitudes toward females would be less tolerant of spouse abuse than individuals with more conservative attitudes toward women. However, contrary to expectations, no significant relationship between this variable and one's tolerance of spouse abuse was found. One possible explanation for this finding is that the AWS may be primarily related to sex differences. In this and a previous study (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973), a highly significant correlation between sex of participant and AWS scores was found.

Finally, this study explored whether differences in one's perception of spouse abuse were related to situational variables.

It was predicted that the more an individual agreed with spouses' responses to wives' behaving inappropriately, according to traditional societal norms, the more accepting they would be of more severe forms of aggressive behavior toward females in general. As expected, significant relationships were found between how individuals responded to abuse under certain circumstances and their overall attitudes toward spouse abuse. Specifically, for those abusive situations in which the wife had behaved inappropriately, a significant correlation was found between a person's unwillingness to define a situation as abusive and his tolerance of abusive behavior toward spouses.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that individuals who are more likely to tolerate abusive behavior toward spouses are less likely to define a situation as abusive. This general finding would seem to have some theoretical implications. As implied in a previous section of this paper, essentially three theoretical perspectives have been provided to account for spouse abuse. On the one hand, some analytically oriented psychologists have proposed that spouse abuse is due to apparently innate aggressive tendencies (Watts & Courtois, 1981). In contrast, others (Goode, 1971; Whitehurst, 1977) have suggested that spouse abuse is primarily attributable to situational events. A third more recent approach (Scott, 1974; Hanks & Rosenbaum, 1977; Coleman, Weinman & Hsi, 1980) has implied that spouse abuse may be a reflection of both situational and intrapersonal characteristics. The failure to find



a significant relationship between scores on the spouse abuse inventory and either participants' gender or the combination of gender and scores on the situational events questionnaire is not in agreement with what would be predicted by either the analytic or interactional model. However, the significant relationships between items composing the situational questionnaire and spouse abuse inventory do seem to be consistent with what would be predicted using a behavioral model.

Although a relationship was found between situational events and attitudes toward spouse abuse, caution should be used in attempts to generalize the findings of this study to overt behaviors. Several studies have found that one's attitude does not always correlate highly with one's behavior (c.f. Wicker, 1971; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977, 1980). Thus, although the results of this study may be indicative of participants' attitudes, these findings may not be an accurate reflection of how they would behave in similar situations.

Although not a specific purpose of this study, a group of abused women were studied in order to determine whether abused individuals differ significantly from nonabused individuals in their tolerance for abusive behaviors toward spouses. No significant differences between the groups were found. This finding implies that females who have been abused have similar attitudes toward being mistreated as individuals who have not been abused. An important implication of this finding is that it contradicts the classic Freudian view of the abused wife

as a masochistic neurotic. However, it may also be that no differences were found between these groups because a significant number of the college sample had also been abused. A recent study (Bernard & Bernard, 1983) found that 30 percent of 461 college students interviewed had been involved in abusive relationships.

Unfortunately, since data for the abused sample of females was derived from another larger study, it was not possible to administer the situational questionnaire to the abused group. Further studies, including situational variables pertaining to spouse abuse, are indicated in order to further assess any differences which might exist between abused and nonabused individuals.

In summary, the results of this study indicate that, in understanding spouse abuse, the situation is more important than characteristics of the individual. These results may have applied implications. One implication is that treatment strategies of choice might be those which attempt to modify external events or remove the individual from the situation.

## Appendix A

## Attitudes Toward Women Scale-Short Form

Instructions

The statements listed below describe attitudes toward the role of women in society that different people have. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions. You are asked to express your feelings about each statement by indicating whether you (A) agree strongly, (B) agree mildly, (C) disagree mildly, or (D) disagree strongly. Please indicate your opinion by blackening either A, B, C, or D on the answer sheet for each item.

1. Swearing and obscenity are more repulsive in the speech of a woman than of a man.
2. Women should take increasing responsibility for leadership in solving the intellectual and social problems of the day.
3. Both husband and wife should be allowed the same grounds for divorce.
4. Telling dirty jokes should be mostly a masculine prerogative.
5. Intoxication among women is worse than intoxication among men.
6. Under modern economic conditions with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as washing dishes and doing the laundry.
7. It is insulting to women to have the "obey" clause remain in the marriage service.
8. There should be a strict merit system in job appointment and promotion without regard to sex.
9. A woman should be as free as a man to propose marriage.
10. Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers.
11. Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally the expense when they go out together.
12. Women should assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men.

13. A woman should not expect to go to exactly the same places or to have quite the same freedom of action as a man.
14. Sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.
15. It is ridiculous for a woman to run a locomotive and for a man to darn socks.
16. In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of children.
17. Women should be encouraged not to become sexually intimate with anyone before marriage, even their fiances.
18. The husband should not be favored by law over the wife in the disposal of family property or income.
19. Women should be concerned with their duties of child-bearing and house tending, rather than with desires for professional and business careers.
20. The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men.
21. Economic and social freedom is worth far more to women than acceptance of the ideal of femininity which has been set up by men.
22. On the average, women should be regarded as less capable of contributing to economic production than are men.
23. There are many jobs in which men should be given preference over women in being hired or promoted.
24. Women should be given equal opportunity with men for apprenticeship in the various trades.
25. The modern girl is entitled to the same freedom from regulation and control that is given to the modern boy.

## Appendix B

## Survey of Violent Marital Situations

Instructions

The following are summaries of some articles which appeared in newspapers from around the country during the past year. We would like your opinion about each of these articles. More specifically, what we would like you to do is read each of these summaries. Then on the separate answer sheet labeled B, answer all five of the questions mentioned above for each of the summaries listed. Beginning with answer column A, rate the extent to which you feel the summary is an example of spouse abuse. Next, using answer column B, rate the extent to which you feel the husband's behavior, in that same summary, was justified. Next, using answer column C, rate the extent to which you feel the wife's behavior, in that same summary, justified the treatment received. Next, using answer column D, rate the extent to which you feel the husband, in that same summary, should be punished for the way he treated the wife. Finally, using answer column E, rate the extent to which you feel you would be willing to report the husband's behavior, based on the same summary, as spouse abuse to legal authorities.

Continue this process until you have answered all five of the questions for each of the eight summaries listed. Be sure to rate all summaries. There are no right or wrong answers. We are only interested in your opinions and all answers will remain anonymous, so please feel free to indicate your honest reactions.

1. John, a vice president for a company which makes computers, returned home from work to discover that his wife had not cleaned the house or washed the breakfast dishes, and was still in her nightgown. When John asked why she had not cleaned up, the wife told him she wanted to watch soap operas and did not feel like cleaning up. The wife had not been keeping herself or the house clean for over a year. So this time when John saw his untidy wife and house and after listening to why his wife did not clean up, he became mad and hit his wife in the mouth so hard, he broke three of her teeth and jaw.
2. Mike, a factory worker for an automotive company, has been laid off from his job for over six months and his wife does not work. As a result they were having financial problems and were about to lose their house to the mortgage company. When Mike returned home one day after looking for employment, he discovered that his wife had spent all the money in their joint checking

account on two expensive dresses and a watch for herself. When Mike asked his wife why she had bought those things, she told him she just wanted to get something for herself. Mike became so angry, he hit his wife in the head, breaking her nose and knocking her unconscious.

3. Howard has been married to his wife, whose name is Wanda, for three years. Howard is an accountant and makes almost \$50,000 per year. Wanda is a housewife. While in college Wanda was very popular and was voted homecoming queen. During the three years they have been married, Wanda has told Howard almost daily, that he is not as handsome and does not make as much money as some other men she could have married. Wanda also constantly complains to Howard that he ought to help with the housework more by washing dishes and cooking the meals. Recently, after Wanda compared Howard to other men she had dated, Howard became upset, he hit Wanda with a lamp so hard that two of her teeth were knocked out.

4. Brad and his wife Jane have been married for five years. Brad is a computer programmer for a large company and Jane does not work. Brad was called at work by one of his neighbors and told that a man had been coming to his house almost every day after he left for work and stayed until it was almost time for Brad to come home. Brad did not believe his neighbor. However, one day he became sick while at work and was sent home by his employer. When Brad walked into the house he saw his wife and another man on the couch engaged in sexual intercourse. At that point, Brad became so angry, he picked up a chair and hit his wife with it so hard, he knocked out three teeth and broke her arm in two places.

5. Dale and his wife Cindy have been married for almost four years. Dale is a store manager in a food store. Cindy, who is very attractive, does not work. Instead, she stays home with their two children and takes care of the house. She is always receiving compliments from friends and neighbors about how clean and well-mannered the children are as well as how clean the house is. Cindy almost always gets up and cooks breakfast for Dale before he goes to work and has dinner ready for him when he gets home in the evenings. In addition, she tries to be pleasant and attractive for Dale by the time he gets home to help him relax. However, about twice a month Dale will come home and for no apparent reason, hit Cindy so hard, it will leave discolored marks on her.

6. Bobby and his wife Angie have been married for slightly over three years. They have no children. Angie is a realtor and Bobby has been unemployed for almost two years. In addition to working six days each week, Angie gets up early enough to cook breakfast for Bobby and tries to get home early enough to clean the house and cook dinner. About once each week however, Bobby will hit Angie so hard that Angie will have large bruises. Bobby claims that some of the reasons why he hits her are because once she forgot to put the ketchup on the table and on another occasion he hit her because she forgot to take out the garbage.

7. Arnold and Pat have been married for almost three years. Arnold is employed as manager of a large grocery store and Pat does not work. Almost six months ago the couple had their first baby. Pat does an excellent job of caring for the child. She has been complimented by neighbors about how clean she keeps the infant and her child's doctor has told her that she is doing an excellent job of caring for the infant. Sometimes the baby wakes up at night and begins to cry because his diaper is wet or he is hungry. When this happens, Arnold will turn over and punch Pat and tell her to stop the infant from crying. Arnold's punches are so hard they usually leave black and blue marks on Pat. The last time Arnold punched Pat he hit her in the face and caused her nose and mouth to bleed.

8. Alexander and Susan have been married almost seven years. Alexander is a physician and his wife does not work. Susan stays home and cares for the couple's two children and the house. About twice a month, Alexander will go to work and forget to leave Susan some money so that she can pay the bills and buy food. Those days when Alexander has forgotten to leave money, Susan doesn't cook dinner for him. When Alexander comes home and finds there is no dinner he usually becomes outraged. Although Susan tells Alexander that the reason there is no dinner is because he did not leave any money, Alexander feels that it is her responsibility to remind him and will grab her by the hair and yank so hard that a handful of Susan's hair will come out.

## Appendix C

## Spouse Abuse Profile Inventory

Instructions

The following pages describe some ways spouses (i.e., husbands and wives) often treat each other. What we would like you to do is first read each of these statements. After you have done that, we would like you to identify the statement which you consider to be the most inappropriate way a spouse could treat his or her partner. Then, using the answer sheet labeled C place a "1" in the blank space next to this item. Next, identify the item you think is the second worst way a spouse could treat his or her partner and place a "2" in the blank space next to this item. Continue rating the items in this way until you have ranked all of the statements. Thus, since there are 60 items, when you are done you will have ranked all of the items from 1 to 60.

After you have ranked all the items, we would like you to take the answer sheet labeled D and using the scale described below, rate each item on the extent to which you think that item is or is not an example of spouse abuse.

1. agree very strongly that this item is an example of spouse abuse.
2. agree strongly that this item is an example of spouse abuse.
3. agree that this item is an example of spouse abuse.
4. disagree that this item is an example of spouse abuse.
5. disagree strongly that this item is an example of spouse abuse
6. disagree very strongly that this item is an example of spouse abuse

Be sure to rate all items. Also, there are no right or wrong answers. We are simply interested in your opinion, and all answers will remain anonymous. So, feel free to indicate your true opinion. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me.



1. Criticizing one's spouse in public
2. Leave a spouse at home alone for less than one day
3. Spanking one's spouse
4. Biting one's spouse
5. Having sexual intercourse with one's spouse without his or her consent
6. Pressuring one's spouse to work long hours when there is no apparent need.
7. Breaking a spouse's bone
8. Refusing to kiss or hug one's spouse periodically
9. Requiring the spouse to perform dangerous tasks
10. Threatening to hit one's spouse
11. Shouting at one's spouse
12. Permitting others to make derogatory statements about one's spouse and not objecting to them doing it
13. Shooting one's spouse
14. Preventing a spouse from having any time to relax
15. One spouse hitting the other with his or her fist
16. Lightly slapping one's spouse
17. Teasing one's spouse about his or her in-laws
18. Hitting one's spouse hard enough to leave a bruise or welt
19. Refusing to speak to one's spouse for less than one day
20. Shouting obscenities at one's spouse
21. Not showing appreciation for attempts on the part of the spouse to make the other spouse happy
22. Slapping one's spouse
23. Threatening to have sexual intercourse with one's spouse without their consent
24. Refusing to allow one's spouse to leave the home

25. Scratching one's spouse
26. Leaving a spouse alone at home for over a week because of work or other duties
27. Choking one's spouse
28. Calling one's spouse derogatory names in private
29. Throwing things such as dishes, glasses and ash trays at one's spouse
30. Kicking one's spouse
31. Refusing to buy one's spouse food or clothing when these items are needed
32. Preventing a spouse from pursuing an education
33. Pulling out one's spouse's hair
34. Preventing one's spouse from obtaining medical or dental treatment when needed
35. Intentionally destroying a spouse's valuable personal property
36. Not taking, or going out with one's spouse to dinner, movies, dancing or some other similar activity occasionally
37. Forcing one's spouse to perform degrading or unwanted sexual acts
38. Spitting on one's spouse
39. Ignoring one's spouse
40. Throwing one's spouse down some stairs
41. Pressuring one's spouse to perform degrading tasks such as prostitution or begging for money from others
42. Refusing to talk to one's spouse about things which are worrying them
43. Shaking one's spouse vigorously
44. Not praising one's spouse for his or her accomplishments
45. Cutting one's spouse with a knife

46. Not paying attention to a spouse's advice or opinion
47. Hitting one's spouse with a lamp or some other solid object
48. Calling one's spouse derogatory names in the presence of other people such as friends, children, and relatives
49. Refusing to speak to one's spouse for more than one day
50. Pinching one's spouse severely
51. One spouse refusing to tell the other where he or she is going and/or when he or she will be back
52. Withholding spending money from one's spouse
53. Physically throwing one's spouse out of the house
54. Taking the spouse's money and spending it in a carefree fashion
55. Refusing to attend social functions with one's spouse
56. Requiring one's spouse to perform dangerous tasks
57. Preventing a spouse from engaging in employment outside of the home when the spouse desires to do so
58. Teasing one's spouse
59. Refusing to allow one's spouse to attend church
60. Forcing one's spouse to work for long hours when it is not necessary

## Appendix D

## Background Information Questionnaire

SS# \_\_\_\_\_

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: male \_\_\_\_\_ female \_\_\_\_\_
2. Marital Status: single \_\_\_\_\_ separated \_\_\_\_\_  
 married \_\_\_\_\_ divorced \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of Children: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Classification: Freshman \_\_\_\_\_ Junior \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sophomore \_\_\_\_\_ Senior \_\_\_\_\_
- Race: black \_\_\_\_\_ Mexican-American \_\_\_\_\_  
 white \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
5. College Major \_\_\_\_\_
6. Occupational plans upon graduation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
7. Father's occupation: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Mother's occupation: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Father's educational level: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Mother's educational level: \_\_\_\_\_
11. What would you estimate the population of your home town  
 to be?  
 under fifty thousand \_\_\_\_\_ over fifty thousand \_\_\_\_\_  
 over one hundred thousand \_\_\_\_\_
12. What would you estimate your parents' total income to be?  
 under \$30,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$30,000 to \$50,000 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$50,000 to \$100,000 \_\_\_\_\_ over \$100,000 \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix E  
Informed Consent

You will be asked to complete four questionnaires which include biographical information and descriptive statements about the behavior of women and the behavior of married people toward their spouses. We will use this information to gain more understanding of what behaviors between spouses are considered appropriate.

There will be no physical or psychological risks in answering the questions, and your responses will remain completely anonymous. You are free to quit at any time you want without any penalty whatsoever. If you have any questions regarding any part of this procedure, feel free to ask.

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I have received a clear explanation and understand the nature of this procedure, and I have received an explanation of the benefits of this study. I understand that this study is investigational and that I may withdraw my consent at any time. With my understanding of this, having received this information and satisfactory answers to the questions I have asked, I voluntarily consent to the procedure designated above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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