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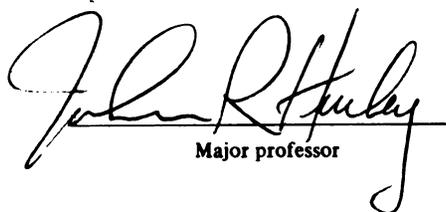
HUSBANDS' SEXISM, SEX ROLE ORIENTATION,  
AND USE OF VIOLENCE DURING MARITAL CONFLICTS

presented by

Amy Susan Kolberg

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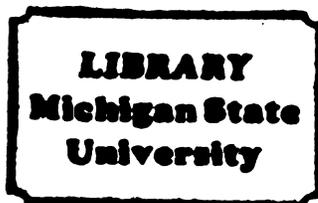


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**HUSBANDS' SEXISM, SEX ROLE ORIENTATION,  
AND USE OF VIOLENCE DURING MARITAL CONFLICTS**

**by**

**Amy Susan Kolberg**

**A THESIS**

**Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
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## ABSTRACT

### HUSBANDS' SEXISM, SEX ROLE ORIENTATION, AND USE OF VIOLENCE DURING MARITAL CONFLICTS

By

Amy Susan Kolberg

Explanatory models based on husbands' or wives' psychopathology are inadequate to account for the prevalence of wife-battering. To explore a sociocultural alternative, 63 female and 36 male undergraduates described their fathers on behaviorally-oriented marital violence scales and measures of sex role orientation and attitudes toward women. Solicited by mail, 86 cooperating fathers described themselves on each measure.

Fathers' and students' reports generally correlated modestly (median  $r = .34$ ), but strongly for marital violence ( $r = .67$ ). Students rated subsets of 13 noncooperating fathers and 5 step-fathers as especially violence-prone. Unlike fathers, students firmly linked fathers' violence with sexism, but negatively with fathers' femininity. Aggressive fathers described themselves as less masculine than nonaggressive fathers. Supporting a sociocultural perspective, the findings suggested that wife beating might be reduced by encouraging in men the empathic, nurturant traits traditionally reserved for women.

TO MY PARENTS,  
WHOSE LOVING DEDICATION TO MY NEEDS  
FREED ME TO PURSUE MY DREAMS

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My sincerest appreciation to John R. Hurley, Ph.D., for his support, wisdom, and guidance along the way.

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## Introduction

The phenomenon of wife battering gained recognition as a pervasive social problem only recently. Gelles (1980), in a comprehensive review of the literature on spouse abuse, noted that scholarly and popular literature regarding battered women was nearly nonexistent in the 1960's. Interest in the broader topic of family violence was sparked by the publication of Kempe's landmark article on "The Battered Child Syndrome" in 1962. For the next decade, family violence research proliferated slowly, until in 1974 Erin Pizzy wrote the first book to draw attention to the plight of the battered woman. Scream Quietly or the Neighbors will Hear was based on her experience at the world's first shelter for abused women, in England. Subsequent spouse abuse research has exposed the overwhelming prevalence of battering in the United States.

The first empirically derived estimate of the incidence of spouse abuse predated popular interest in the topic by nearly a decade. Levinger (1966) reported findings from interviews with 600 divorce applicants in Cleveland, Ohio, which demonstrated that 36.8% of wives listed physical abuse from spouses as a complaint in their divorce action,

while 3.3% of the husbands complained of physical abuse. Another survey of 500 women represented in divorce actions at the Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation found that 57.4% of the wives complained of physical assaults by their husbands (Fields, 1977). Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz (1980) surveyed a representative sample of 2,143 American homes and found that 28% of spouses interviewed reported marital violence at some point in the marriage. Acts of marital violence during the survey year were acknowledged by 16% of spouses. A survey of 385 college undergraduates (Straus, 1974) revealed that 16% of the students were aware of physical violence between their parents during that same year.

Among a sample of 80 families drawn from social work agency and police files and their next door neighbors, spousal assaults were reported to occur from six times a year to daily by 26% of respondents (Gelles, 1974). Fifty-five percent of the families reported one or more instances in which one spouse had kicked, pushed, or in some manner used physical violence against the other. Moreover, Gelles reported that among the neighboring families of the agency cases (predominantly middle-class) and police cases (predominantly lower-class), 37% had had at least one incident of marital violence, while 12% engaged in violence on a regular basis. Because the sample of neighboring families systematically excluded all

families with a public record of family problems, and because of an assumed tendency to withhold information about personal violence, Gelles proposed that his data underestimate the actual occurrence of violence in the population.

Physical abuse is also common within dating relationships. Of 461 college students surveyed, 38% of women students reported abuse by a partner, while 21% acknowledged abusing a partner (Bernard & Bernard, 1983). The form of abuse was identified on a continuum ranging from "throwing things at someone" to "using a lethal weapon." Of the men surveyed, 15% reported abusing a partner, while 19% had been recipients of abuse. The authors propose underreporting by males as the most plausible explanation of the discrepancy between women's reports of abuse from a partner and men's rate of commission of abuse.

Family violence attitude surveys suggest that the high rate at which Americans practice family violence is not incongruent with their attitudes toward it. Stark and McEvoy (1970) surveyed a representative sample of 1,176 adults and found that one-fifth approved of slapping one's spouse on "appropriate" occasions. Dibble and Straus (1980) sampled 2,143 married adults and found that 28% believed that slapping a spouse is necessary, normal, or good. Of the group that advocated spousal violence, 33%

reported using violence against their spouses in the previous year. Altogether, it appears that marital violence is to some degree culturally normative.

### Theories of causality

Victim masochism. Early attempts to explain the phenomenon of wife abuse were predominantly psychodynamic models, and focused on characteristics of the battered wife. Authors who attributed the phenomenon to the psychopathology of the battered woman posited explanations based on Freud's theory of female masochism (Freud, 1946). Representative of this view is Snell, Rosenwald, and Roby's (1964) diagnosis of the battered woman as frigid, hostile, provocative, and "enjoying" the abuse inflicted upon her. The masochism explanation continues to have some popularity, although there is a tendency to couch the diagnosis in less offensive terms. A current proponent of the masochism theory claimed that through her masochistic needs "...the wife almost inevitably plays a part in her own assault" (Shaines, 1977, p. 115). She proposed that women experience physical and emotional tension during the premenstrual phase which may make them excessively demanding and irritating, thereby invoking violent rages in their husbands (Shainess, 1977, 1979).

The critical question in the debate between proponents of the masochism theory and feminists who consider this a misogynistic, victim-blaming stance, has been why women

remain in battering relationships. Rounsaville (1978) interviewed battered women to attempt to answer this question. He defined masochism as an unconscious need or desire to seek suffering, and proposed that this need would manifest itself behaviorally by repetitive self-destructive acts in interpersonal relationships in which it would have been possible to act otherwise. He found that among the women sampled, the partners of 71% had threatened to kill them if they left, and 97% of the women had feared on at least one occasion that their partner would kill them. Contrary to popular belief, these battered women had sought help: Sixty-five percent had called the police, but only 16% of these police contacts resulted in arrest of the partner, and only 10% of the women reported satisfaction with police intervention. All had sought help from psychiatrists or other physicians, and the majority found these professionals unhelpful. Furthermore, the abused women had been alerted to public indifference to their plight: Sixty-eight percent had been abused in public at least once, but only 3% of those women received help from strangers. Because these women had turned to family members, friends, and appropriate community resources and found no one who would intervene effectively in their behalf, Rounsaville concluded that his findings discredit the masochism explanation of wife-battering.

Attorneys Eisenberg and Micklow's (1977) evaluation of the effectiveness of Michigan's legal system in aiding assaulted wives suggested some reasons for battered women's dissatisfaction with police intervention. They quoted the following instructions to police officers for the handling of domestic disturbances, from the International Association of Chiefs of Police training manual:

For the most part these disputes are personal matters requiring no direct police action. However, an inquiry into the facts must be made to satisfy the originating complaint... Once inside the home, the officer's sole purpose is to preserve the peace... attempt to soothe feelings, pacify parties... The officer should never create a police problem when there is only a family problem existing. (Eisenberg & Micklow, 1977, P. 156)

The 1974 Michigan police training manual offered the following recommendations:

- a. Avoid arrest if possible. Appeal to their vanity.
- b. Explain the procedure of obtaining a warrant.
  - 1) Complainant must sign complaint.
  - 2) Must appear in court.
  - 3) Consider loss of time.
  - 4) Cost of court.
- c. State that your only interest is to prevent a breach of the peace.
- d. Explain that attitudes usually change by court time.
- e. Recommend a postponement.
  - 1) Court not in session.
  - 2) No judge available.
- f. Don't be too harsh or critical. ("Wayne County Sheriff Police Training Academy: Domestic Complaints Outline," cited in Eisenberg & Micklow, 1977, p. 156-157)

Other researchers have also found the responses of police and the criminal justice system to domestic violence

complaints highly inadequate and ineffective (Brown, 1984; Ford, 1983). Buzawa (1982) studied police response subsequent to the enactment of domestic violence legislation in Michigan in 1978, under which officers were provided with extensive training in the handling of domestic violence calls, and authorized to make warrantless arrests at the scene. Inexplicably, there was a 35% decrease in police responses to domestic violence calls during the six months following enactment of the legislation as compared to the six months prior to legislation, while arrests in such cases declined by 40% during the same period. It appears that even the growing awareness of police neglect of family violence crimes does not necessarily result in more effective response.

Like police officers, mental health professionals and researchers have devoted an inordinate amount of effort to treating "the battered woman problem," and have virtually ignored the battering male. While this selective inattention to the batterer may be explained by the greater accessibility of the victim, there may also be an underlying assumption that the battered wife is responsible for the occurrence of violence in the marital relationship. Battered wives, like rape victims, are widely believed to have "asked for" the assaults inflicted upon them. Walker (1981) has observed that victim-blaming is common among mental health professionals who treat battered women.

Wives are thought to provoke assaults through nagging, name-calling, or making demands (Faulk, 1977; Gelles, 1974). Professionals are not alone, however, in their willingness to attribute responsibility for wife abuse to the victim. Kalmus (1979) surveyed attitudes of the general public, and found that while 73% of the sample attributed predominant or total responsibility for wife abuse to the husband, 24% attributed half of the responsibility to the wife, while 3% held the victim primarily or totally responsible for the abuse.

The attribution of responsibility for wife abuse to the victim is unpalatable to feminists, who argue that victim-blaming is unique to crimes which are committed by members of a dominant group against an oppressed group. Thus, rape victims, battered women, and sexually abused children are often suspected of inciting their own assaults, while victims of burglary or murder are rarely accused of provoking the crimes against them.

Intrapsychic theories of male violence. Given the virtual absence of research literature on the male batterer, it is necessary to delve into the literature on violent behavior in general to gain a theoretical perspective on the nature of the batterer. The existing literature is largely theoretical rather than empirically based, and can be roughly divided into two categories: (a) explanations based on models of individual psychopathology,

and (b) explanations based on social and cultural factors. Attempts to explain marital violence on the basis of individual psychopathology are extensions of earlier causal theories of child abuse. Researchers had attempted to develop psychogenic models of the abusive parent, and these explanations were extended to wife abuse.

A current proponent of an intrapsychic model of battering is Symonds (1978), who developed his theory out of clinical work with batterers and victims at the Karen Horney Clinic Victimology Program. He proposed that overt power struggles form the basis of violent marriages. Batterers were differentiated in terms of character structure; one type for whom violence is ego-syntonic, and another type who is highly guilt-ridden about his violent tendencies and uses alcohol to facilitate the release of aggression.

Bowlby (1984) extended a theory of child abuse to the problem of spousal violence, viewing both disorders as distortions and exaggerations of normal attachment behavior. Violent husbands were described as "anxiously attached" to their mates, usually as the result of emotionally and physically abusive childhood experiences. He proposed that anger can be an adaptive response to the perception of threat to a significant relationship, given that its aim is the preservation of the relationship. Anxiously attached men, however, are unable to channel

their anger constructively, and instead convert it to coercive attempts to control their partners, including battering.

An earlier researcher, Talcott Parsons (1949), attributed men's aggression toward women to the difficulties which males have in achieving a masculine sexual identity:

The boy has a tendency to form a direct feminine identification, since his mother is the model most readily available and significant to him...he soon discovers that in certain vital respects women are considered inferior to men, that it would hence be shameful for him to grow up to be like a woman. Hence when boys emerge into what Freudians call the 'latency period,' their behavior tends to be marked by a kind of 'compulsive masculinity'...aggression toward women who 'after all are to blame,' is an essential concomitant. (Parsons, 1949, p. 257)

According to this view, the masculine ideal to which young boys are socialized to aspire is such an unnatural state that males may become generally angry and frustrated in response to these sex role expectations.

Hans Toch's (1969) model of the psychopathology of violent men is congruent with Parsons' theory. Toch's extensive interviews with violent men led him to conclude that the majority respond violently when they experience any type of strong, unpleasant emotion because their nonviolent behavioral repertoire is restricted. Deficient in verbal and social skills, their frustration at their inability to express themselves during conflict leads to attempts to obliterate the situation through violence.

Given that males are often socialized to believe that expressions of sadness, uncertainty, or fear are unmasculine, while anger is an acceptably masculine response; it might be expected that feelings of vulnerability would be converted to aggressive behavior.

Alcohol abuse. Alcohol abuse is commonly assumed by mental health professionals and criminal justice workers to be a primary cause of domestic violence. This assumption is challenged, however, by research evidence. Bard and Zacker (1974) collected data from the reports of police teams which had visited 962 families on 1,388 separate occasions to mediate in domestic quarrels. They found that in only 15 of the 1,388 cases did the complainant allege that the other party was both drunk and assaultive. Furthermore, the second party was more likely to have used alcohol in those family disputes which did not involve an assault than in the assaultive disputes. The authors concluded that those studies which have found an association between family violence and alcohol consumption may be reporting a spurious correlation. They suggested that because alcohol is so widely used in this society as an emotional "tranquilizer," it may be more likely to be used by individuals experiencing a family crisis. Other authors have echoed similar concerns that the view of alcohol consumption as a direct cause of domestic violence is weakly founded (Dutton, Fehr, & McEwen, 1983; Gelles,

1974; Martin, 1976; Rounsaville, 1978). They have noted, however, that alcohol is frequently used as an excuse or a trigger for violent behavior. The abuser may become intoxicated in order to carry out his violent intention. Afterward, he feels justified in blaming alcohol for his violent behavior, or in seeking forgiveness on the basis of his intoxicated state.

Childhood exposure to violence. There is one conclusion about the importance of characteristics of the individual batterer in predicting wife abuse which has strong empirical support. There appears to be a relationship between the amount of violence an individual has been exposed to in childhood and the amount of violence he expresses. Information gathered from battered wives has lead to estimates that 39% to 51% of violent husbands were victims of child abuse (Gayford, 1975; Rounsaville, 1978; Star, 1978). In addition to having been abused themselves, abusive husbands are more likely than nonabusive husbands to report witnessing parental spouse abuse as children (Flynn, 1977; Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981). In a comparison of abusive versus nonabusive unmarried, male college students, Bernard and Bernard (1983) found that 73% of the abusive students had experienced or observed abuse in their families of origin, while only 32% of nonabusive males had had such exposure. There was no difference between type of exposure (experience versus observation) in predicting

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future expression of violence. A striking finding was that 74% of the abusive men used the same form of violence (e.g. punching, throwing) on their partners that they themselves had been exposed to, supporting the view of violence as learned behavior. A study of 188 batterers in treatment for their violent behavior found that 71% had witnessed parental violence, while 49% identified themselves as having been abused children (Fitch & Papantonio, 1983).

Goode (1969) proposed that the male child learns from observing his own parents that males are stronger than females and can have recourse to violence when they are losing in a verbal battle. Even if the boy's parents do not fight physically, he may observe that his mother is frightened when his father is angry. The young girl, on the other hand, learns to defer to male dominance. Thus, sex role socialization is thought to pave the way for violent relationships.

Attitudes toward the appropriateness of the use of physical violence are also related to childhood experiences. Steinmetz and Straus (1974), as well as Gelles (1974), have found a relationship between the harsh physical punishment an individual experienced as a child and approval of the use of violence as a means of control. The enormity of this problem becomes apparent in light of Dibble and Straus' (1980) finding that 81.5% of parents believe that slapping a twelve-year-old child is necessary,

normal, or good; and of that number 72% had actually used violence against their children during the previous year. These figures compare with those of Stark and McEvoy (1970), who found that eight in ten men, and nine in ten women, had spanked a child, while 86% of the public agreed that "what young people need most is strong discipline by their parents."

Subculture of violence theory. The sociological theory of violent behavior most frequently applied to the problem of wife battering has been Wolfgang and Ferracuti's (1967) subculture of violence theory. Their work was notable as an early attempt to identify the broader social context in which violence occurs. According to this view, acts of violence are not deviant behaviors, but responses to values and attitudes of a subculture which defines violence as normative. The subculture of violence explanation associates violence with lower income and ethnic minority status.

The application of this theory to the problem of domestic violence has been denounced by a number of authors. Among them are Stark and McEvoy (1970), who found that blacks do not constitute an especially violent subculture, and that lower income and lower education levels are not associated with higher levels of violence. Their survey of 1,176 adults conducted for the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence

indicated that approval of spousal violence increases with income and education: Sixteen percent of those having an eighth grade education or less, and 25% of the college-educated, approved of slapping one's spouse. Evidence which appears to support the subculture of violence thesis is thought to be the result of differences in reporting among the socioeconomic classes. Because lower class families have fewer resources and less privacy, their altercations are more likely to come to the attention of the police or other public agencies, whereas middle class families are better able to keep their domestic problems private or turn to private services, such as marriage counselors and psychotherapists (Martin, 1976; Stark & McEvoy, 1970).

The subculture of violence theory has also been discounted by Ball-Rokeach (1973) on the basis of her finding of little or no association between proviolent values and attitudes and violent behavior. She attributed this finding to an assumption that unlike values and attitudes, violent behavior is not exclusively intrapersonal, but is instead greatly influenced by interpersonal, situational, and environmental factors.

Sex role socialization. A number of authors have hypothesized that marital violence is a consequence of sex role stereotyping and gender inequality within the family. Proponents of this theory have relied primarily on clinical

observations which have not been empirically validated. Traditional sex role socialization, in which girls are taught to be docile, dependent, and submissive, and boys are taught to be tough, aggressive, and to believe that women enjoy being overpowered, is thought to lend itself well to adult relationships in which males display their dominance through physical aggression, while females assume the role of the victim (Martin, 1976; Peretti & Buchanan, 1978). Walker (1981) proposed that men are socialized to expect that in return for being the primary economic provider and assuming responsibility for the welfare of the family, their reward will be a wife who anticipates their emotional needs and accepts their expressions of frustration. Gondolf (1985) characterized batterers in treatment as males who were "oversocialized" into the masculine sex role, having as a result strong needs for control of self and others, as well as assumptions of male privilege.

The problem is exacerbated by socialization practices which encourage males to express anger and frustration through physical violence. Stark and McEvoy (1970) found that seven in ten Americans believe that it is good for growing boys to have a few fistfights, and one in five men acknowledged that they continued to be physically assaultive as adults.

Goldberg's (1982) intrapsychic model of spousal violence asserts that rage develops in intimate relationships to the extent of each partner's "gender defenses." He proposes that men who adhere to a traditionally masculine sex role are likely to be attracted to women whose outwardly feminine traits are actually defenses against repressed anger, sexuality, needs for power and independence, and other "unfeminine" characteristics. Conversely, traditionally feminine women are attracted to men whose stereotypic masculine traits defend against fear, sexual anxiety, passivity, and other feelings of vulnerability. As the relationship develops, each partner grows to blame the other for their unmet needs and thwarted psychological growth. It is this simmering rage which erupts into violence.

It has been proposed that as sex role expectations become less polarized, and traditional roles receive less support from social institutions, men may resort to violence in an attempt to maintain their superior status within the family (Stahly, 1978; Straus, 1980). There is empirical evidence supporting the hypothesis that husbands resort to violence when the legitimacy of their superior position and privilege are challenged. Gelles (1974) found that marital violence was more prevalent in families in which the husband's educational and occupational status were lower than that of his wife. Another attempt to

correlate the occurrence of violence with division of power within the family was undertaken by Straus (1973).

Division of power was determined by spouses' Likert-scale ratings of six items describing which of them made specific family decisions. Straus found that husbands' violence against their wives showed a curvilinear relationship, with the lowest violence occurring in the equal-power range. He interpreted the finding of high violence against wives who have high power as an attempt by the husband to regain his ascribed status as head of the household.

Dobash and Dobash (1978, 1984) hypothesized that wife beating is associated with the domination, control, and chastisement of women in their position as wives. To test this theory, they analyzed 33,724 police charges processed through courts in Edinburgh and Glasgow, Scotland. The largest percentage of the violent offenses involved unrelated males (39%), while the second most frequent type involved husbands' violence against wives (26%). Overall, 94% of the violence which occurred between family members involved male offenders and female victims. Interviews with the abused wives revealed that husbands were most likely to assault at the point at which they perceived their partners as questioning their authority or challenging the legitimacy of their behavior (67%), or asserting themselves in some way (28%). Other complaints of husbands involved wives' failures to attend to domestic

chores, and sexual jealousy. The researches concluded that wife beating occurs as the result of perceived challenges to the husband's authority.

Sexual jealousy and symbolic affronts to the husband's authority are often mentioned as precipitants of marital violence (Dobash & Dobash, 1978; Gelles, 1974; Martin, 1976; Rounsaville, 1978). Commonly mentioned events include the wife's serving a late meal, failure to iron her husband's shirts, engaging in conversation with another man, or failure to serve her husband the first piece of birthday cake. Incidentally, the birthday cake incident precipitated battering in two of the eighty families studied by Gelles, resulting in a broken wrist for one wife; and has also been mentioned by a second author (Martin, 1976). It might be inferred that the wife's apparent failure to acknowledge her husband's authority in the presence of others is especially enraging to the batterer. Altogether, these findings suggest that batterers harbor expectations of male dominance and privilege.

Traditional patriarchal values, as transmitted through the socialization process, have been implicated indirectly by Russell (1982) as a cause of battering through her research on wife rape. She concluded that wife battering, like wife rape, is largely a consequence of husbands' abuse of the power they have over their wives within the

patriarchal family. Her interviews with victims of wife rape revealed that many husbands who rape their wives subscribe to the view of wives as property, expecting them to obey and abide by a traditional division of chores and responsibilities. Russell proposed that occasional abuses of marital power, as manifested in wife rape and battering, are inevitable consequences of the power disparity in marriage.

The use of violence to enforce women's subservience becomes more common as the intensity of women's relationships with men increases (Dobash & Dobash, 1978). These authors found that female victims of homicide are usually married to their attackers. Gelles (1974) proposed that marriage legitimizes the use of violence, as very few of the couples he sampled had been violent prior to marriage. The increase in rates of violence upon marriage has prompted some authors to refer to the marriage license as a "hitting license" (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980).

Historical origins of wife-battering. An examination of the history of the patriarchal family provides support for the contention that wife-beating is a natural outgrowth of the cultural subjugation of women. Rather than viewing the violent control of women as deviant or pathological, some authors (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 1978) consider it an integral part of the patriarchal institutions of marriage and the family. This view is based on the fact that

marriage laws, from their inception, defined wives as the property of their husbands, and gave husbands the right to rule over and discipline wives. O'Faolain and Martines (1974) reported that the first law of marriage was proclaimed by Romulus, the founder of Rome in 753 B. C. It ordered married women to "conform themselves entirely to the temper of their husbands and the husbands to rule their wives as necessary and inseparable possessions" (1974, p. 34). This legal heritage is believed to remain alive in current cultural norms and attitudes toward marriage, finding expression in domestic violence.

The tradition of the husband's supremacy was well-established by the beginning of Christianity, and was incorporated into the teachings of the Christian religion. The Bible has been used to promote wives' subservience to their husbands:

"...the head of the woman is the man" (I Corinthians, 11:3)  
 (women) "are commanded to be under obedience"  
 (I Corinthians, 14:34)  
 "wives be in subjection to your own husbands"  
 (Peter, 3:1)  
 "thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis, 3:16)  
 "I suffer a woman not to teach or to usurp the authority of man, but to be in silence." (I Timothy, 3:12)

Contemporary patriarchal culture continued to value male supremacy and to write it into the legal system. Eighteenth century British and American laws adhered to the definition of wives as property of their husbands, to be

ruled as their husbands saw fit. Under British Common Law, a married woman lost all of her civil rights and had no separate legal status (Dobash & Dobash, 1978). The right of a husband to discipline and control his wife by force was considered a natural part of his responsibilities, and was guaranteed by the Laws of Chastisement. Blackstone wrote, in 1763: "The husband also, by the old law, might give his wife moderate correction. For, as he is to answer for her misbehaviours, the law thought it reasonable to entrust him with his power of restraining her by domestic chastisement" (Dobash, & Dobash, 1978, p. 429). The law had originally authorized a husband to "chastise his wife with any reasonable instrument," but an act of compassionate reform under British Common Law restricted the weapons a husband could legally use to chastise his wife to "a rod not thicker than his thumb" (Davidson, 1977, p. 18). This law became popularly known as "the rule of thumb."

All of eighteenth century Europe, in addition to Britain and America, had laws which supported the husband's right to chastise his wife. In France, for example, it was considered appropriate for a husband to beat his wife for reasons such as assertion of her independence, wanting to retain control of her property after marriage, adultery, or suspected infidelity. The beatings were supposed to conform, however, to rules of legitimate punishment for

wives and children. They were to be restricted to "blows, thumps, kicks or punches on the back... which did not leave any marks" (Castan, quoted in Dobash & Dobash, 1978, p. 430).

The first United States court case to legalize the husband's right of chastisement occurred in 1824 in the Supreme Court of Mississippi (Davidson, 1977). It was held by the court that the husband should be permitted to chastize his wife moderately "without subjecting himself to vexatious prosecutions for assault and battery, resulting in the discredit and shame of all parties concerned" (Eisenberg & Micklow, 1977, p. 138). The justification given was the same as that provided by Blackstone. Other states followed suit and a North Carolina court ruled in 1864 that the State should not interfere in cases of domestic chastisement unless "permanent injury or excessive violence" was involved (Dobash & Dobash, 1978, p. 430).

The legal sanctioning of wife beating in the United States was short-lived. Within fifty years of its legalization, it was declared illegal in Alabama and Massachusettes (Eisenberg & Micklow, 1977). In 1871 a Massachusettes court declared that:

...a rod which may be drawn through the wedding ring is not now deemed necessary to teach the wife her duty and subjection to the husband... And the privilege, ancient though it be, to beat her with a stick, to pull her hair, choke her, spit in her face or kick her about the floor, or to inflict upon her other like indignities, is

not now acknowledged by our law (Eisenberg & Micklow, 1977, p. 139).

By 1910 all but eleven states permitted divorce on grounds of cruelty, although vestiges of legalized wife beating remain in our legal system. Martin (1976) reported a town ordinance currently on the books in Pennsylvania which prohibits a husband from beating his wife after ten o'clock at night or on Sundays.

Because the United States denied husbands the legal right to beat their wives only one hundred years ago, it is not surprising that norms and attitudes still support the practice. The fact that wife abuse is currently practiced in as many as one-third of American families, as evidenced by the statistics reviewed earlier, contradicts the view of battering as deviant and unusual behavior. There is evidence that male violence toward women is sanctioned not only by those who practice it, but by the general public as well. Pogrebin (1974) cited a study in which a series of public fights were staged and the reactions of passersby recorded. Male bystanders rushed to the aid of other men whether they were being assaulted by women or men, and they also assisted women who were being hit by other women. However, no male bystanders interfered when a man was assaulting a woman. It appears that Americans continue to adhere to the ideology supporting a husband's right to chastise his wife.

Cultural differences in wife-battering.

Anthropological evidence suggests that male aggression toward females is neither universal nor inevitable, but is instead a culture-specific phenomenon. Margaret Mead's (1949) monumental study of three New Guinea societies found three alternatives to patriarchal culture. In the Arapesh society, both men and women displayed personality traits which we would characterize as maternal and feminine. Both sexes were socialized to be cooperative, unaggressive, and responsive to the needs of others. The Mundgumor, on the other hand, had a culture in which both women and men developed ruthless and aggressive personalities.

Nurturant, maternal behaviors were rarely seen in either sex. In the third group, the Tchambuli, sex roles were the reverse of those in our culture. Women were dominant, independent, and managerial, while men were emotionally dependent, less responsible, and regarded as inherently delicate.

There is evidence that battering is related to the social status of women in a given culture. Lester (1980) studied anthropological data from 71 primitive, nonliterate societies, and found that wife beating was significantly more common in societies in which the status of women was rated as inferior. Wife beating was also correlated with other indices of aggression and extreme cruelty. The finding that wife abuse is related to other forms of

societal aggression was duplicated by Masumura (1979), who reviewed ethnographies from 86 primitive societies. He found that societies having a high frequency of wife abuse were more likely to have high scores on measures of personal crime, homicide, feuding, theft, suicide, warfare, and overall societal violence. Masumura postulated two possible explanations: (a) that certain societies are "violence prone," or (b) that sexual jealousy is responsible for a wide variety of personal and societal violence. He found that ethnographies of 45 of the 77 societies in which wife abuse was prevalent specified that sexual jealousy was a precipitating factor, and hypothesized that in addition to resulting in wife abuse, sexual jealousy can lead to suicide, homicide, feuding, or even warfare. An alternative explanation might be that "sexual jealousy" is a manifestation of the view of wives as possessions, and that like the types of aggression studied, this belief is directly related to patriarchal values of male dominance and the use of force as a means of achieving it.

#### Summary and Research Hypotheses

In summary, four lines of theoretical and empirical explanations of wife-battering were reviewed: (a) explanations based on neurotic needs of the abused wife, (b) explanations based on individual psychopathology of the battering husband, (c) the sociological theory of the

subculture of violence, and (d) socio-cultural explanations which view wife abuse as a logical concomitant of patriarchal marriage and traditional sex role socialization. Theories which focused on individual characteristics of the wife were based largely on Freud's theory of female masochism. While research literature on the male batterer is virtually nonexistent, several theories of male aggression toward women were reviewed, as well as hypotheses about the relationship of alcohol abuse and childhood exposure to violence to battering. Wolfgang and Ferracuti's subculture of violence theory was described, and refuting evidence reviewed.

The fourth category of explanations is based on a body of complementary data from several sources. The hypothesis that marital violence is a consequence of traditional sex role socialization and inequality of roles within the marital relationship becomes even more persuasive when examined within a historical context. Additional support for this theory comes from anthropological evidence of cultural differences in the practice of wife abuse. A number of specific research findings which challenge the adequacy of intrapsychic models in favor of a more encompassing, socio-cultural explanation can be summarized as follows:

1. Wife abuse has been widely practiced throughout the last 2500 years of recorded history, but has been defined

as problematic only within the last fifteen years within the United States. Prior to that time wife abuse was legally and socially sanctioned in this country as well as Europe.

2. The prevalence of wife beating in primitive societies has been found to be associated with the inferior social status of women.

3. Anthropologists have found extreme cultural variation among types of sex role socialization. The particular form of socialization practiced in this society, in which males are taught to be dominant and aggressive, and females are expected to be passive and submissive, lends itself well to male-batterer and female-victim roles.

4. Evidence from studies of behavior and attitudes towards violence suggests that an ideology which supports the domestic chastisement of wives is still popular in the United States.

5. The paucity of research on the batterer, in conjunction with the strong interest in the wife's contribution to the battering relationship, reflects uncertainty about the locus of responsibility for the problem. Researchers have been far more likely to ask why the abused wife permits or incites violence than to question the batterer's motivation.

6. The application of Freud's theory of female masochism to the problem of wife abuse is another

indication of reluctance to challenge a husband's right to beat his wife.

7. Statistics on the prevalence of battering, which estimate its occurrence in more than one-fourth of American homes, suggest that wife abuse is far too common to be accounted for on the basis of individual psychopathology alone.

8. Childhood exposure to violence is a good predictor of male-as-batterer and female-as-victim roles in adulthood, which suggests that ways of relating to one's spouse are learned behaviors.

Clearly, there is no single-factor explanation of domestic violence. There is evidence, however, that wife beating is a culture-specific phenomenon, and that particular types of sex role socialization contribute to the practice of wife beating. Although North American culture has begun to view wife abuse as a social problem, vestiges of the ideology of domestic chastisement are still present. As our culture moves in the direction of strongly disfavoring wife abuse, it is to be expected that husbands who continue to practice wife beating will be those who were inculcated with more traditional sex role attitudes than husbands who do not engage in wife beating. The present study tested this hypothesis by assessing the relationship between husbands' sex role orientations and attitudes toward appropriate roles for women, and the use

of violence against their wives. It was predicted that traditional masculine sex role socialization and traditional attitudes toward women would be positively related to husbands' use of violence.

This study focused only on marital violence which was initiated by the husband and directed toward the wife, for the following reasons: To begin with, wives are far more likely than husbands to be the victims of marital violence (Flynn, 1977; Gelles, 1974; Levinger, 1966; Lystad, 1975). In addition, husbands' assaults on wives are likely to cause more severe physical damage than wives' assaults on husbands (Steinmetz, 1977). Wife abuse, therefore, appears to be of greater social consequence than husband abuse.

This should not be interpreted to mean that women are not violent members of the nuclear family, for women contribute significantly to the abuse of children. Gil (1970) reviewed over 12,000 child abuse cases and found that mothers or surrogate mothers were responsible for 48% of the abuse, while fathers or surrogate fathers were responsible for 39% of the abuse. Of 1146 parents interviewed by Gelles (1979), 68% of mothers and 58% of fathers reported at least one act of violence against their children during the survey year. Only Finkelhor (1983) has controlled for the amount of time spent with children, and found that fathers were actually more abusive than mothers.

Nevertheless, it is apparent that American women as well as men are violent within the family.

Aside from quantitative differences which may exist in men's and women's contributions to family violence, there is a clear difference in their choices of objects of the violent behavior. The finding that violent men are likely to abuse their wives as well as children, while violent women are most likely to abuse children, is consistent with the traditional hierarchy of power and status within the family. Violent adults appear to select family members having less power than themselves as targets for abuse. Because women are rarely accorded greater power and status than their husbands, they are likely to view only children as potential objects of their violent impulses. It was hypothesized that abusive men who subscribe to traditional views of appropriate masculine and feminine sex roles would be more likely to include wives in their hierarchy of potential objects of violence than men who do not define sex roles in a traditional manner. When marital violence is viewed in terms of the status hierarchy within the nuclear family, wife beating is consistent with patriarchal family roles, while husband beating is a cultural aberration. Because the phenomenon of husband beating violates the sex role stereotypes which were under consideration in the present study, and because it is

practiced with far less frequency and severity than wife beating, it was not examined.

Husbands' use of physical violence during marital conflicts was measured using Straus' (1979) Conflict Tactic Scales (CTS). This instrument provides information on the frequency of use of three "conflict tactics" during marital arguments: Reasoning, Verbal Aggression, and Violence. Reasoning is viewed as the adaptive response to conflicts which inevitably arise in a marriage. Of the indices which measure maladaptive responses, the Verbal Aggression scale refers to both verbal and symbolic displays of aggression, while the Violence scale measures the use of physical violence. The Violence index can be reduced to a Severe Violence scale by excluding three items which refer to milder forms of violence (throwing something at another person; pushing, shoving, or grabbing; and slapping or spanking). Items which refer to the more severe acts of violence which may be used by the husband against his wife (kicking, biting, punching, hitting with an object, beating up, threatening with a knife or gun, or using a knife or gun), comprise the Wife-beating Index.

The use of both milder and severe forms of physical violence as represented on the Violence scale was expected to be related to traditional masculine sex role attitudes in husbands, as violent acts exemplify the attributes of dominance and the willingness to control by force. The use

of Verbal Aggression, on the other hand, was not expected to be related to masculine sex role attitudes, as verbal aggression is not a primarily masculine prerogative. Because women are socialized to view physical violence against another adult as an unacceptable means of expressing their own aggressive impulses, it is to be expected that they would rely on verbal means. In fact, Straus' (1979) original research using the CTS with 2,143 couples demonstrated that women use Verbal Aggression at rates similar to men. The use of Reasoning was also expected to be unrelated to sex role orientation or attitudes, as reasoning was viewed as a mature, adaptive approach to conflict which supercedes sex role influences. Therefore, only the use of physical violence against wives was expected to be related to masculine sex role orientation and traditional attitudes toward women.

Husbands' sex role orientation was assessed using two measures: the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974), and the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1975). The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) is a self-report measure which yields a categorization of the respondent as Masculine, Feminine, Androgynous, or Undifferentiated in terms of sex role orientation. The scales of the BSRI are discussed in greater depth in the Methods section which follows, but at this point it will be noted that sex role orientation as measured by the BSRI is

a complex, multifactorial construct. Factor analytic studies have identified from two to four factors on the Masculinity dimension (Berzins, Welling, & Wetter, 1978; Feather, 1978; Gruber & Powers, 1982; Pearson, 1980); while one primary factor emerges from the Femininity scale (Feather, 1978; Gruber & Powers, 1982; Pearson, 1980). The consensus among these studies is that the BSRI contains three Masculinity factors (Dominance, Independence, and Incisiveness) and one Femininity factor (Empathy or Concern for Others).

The items of the Masculinity and Femininity scales of the BSRI were chosen on the basis of ratings of desirability for one or the other of the sexes. There is evidence that traditional sex differences are not only considered socially desirable, but are considered to epitomize psychological health for the appropriate sex as well. The items of the BSRI overlap greatly in content with traits identified on a sex role inventory by Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, and Rosenkranz (1972) as "male-valued" and "female-valued." Broverman et al. characterized the masculine traits as reflecting Competency, and the feminine traits as describing Warmth and Expressiveness. They found that mental health professionals, as well as the general public, consider it desirable for women to be empathic and expressive and for men to be competent and efficient.

The fact that sex stereotyped traits are considered to epitomize mental health for the appropriate sex does not necessarily mean that they contribute equally to the quality of intimate relationships. In her work on sex differences in moral development, Gilligan (1982) proposed that differences in culturally valued traits for men and women are responsible for fundamental differences in the way the sexes view intimate relationships. She suggested that socialization practices which promote instrumental traits in men encourage them to abandon the intimate attachments of childhood in favor of individuation. Because intimate relationships are thought to represent to men a regression to a childhood state, they pose a threat to masculine gender identity. The socialization of empathic traits in girls, on the other hand, encourages them to focus on intimate relationships into adulthood, often at the expense of autonomous development. On the basis of Gilligan's theory, it may be hypothesized that the instrumental traits which characterize Masculinity on the BSRI are more conducive to success in the workplace than to successful intimate relationships. Conversely, the traits which facilitate women's roles as caregivers and emotional providers may inhibit their success in the workplace.

Of the BSRI Masculinity factors, Dominance is a trait which may be more likely to contribute to career success than to success in intimate relationships. Male dominance

is at the foundation of the early patriarchal ideology which endorsed the husband's right of domestic chastisement. The fact that Dominance emerges as a primary factor on the BSRI indicates that it is still a highly valued aspect of masculine gender identity. In our technological, mass-production oriented society, many men have little opportunity to affirm their needs for dominance in the workplace, but the belief that "a man's home is his castle" may allow this aspect of masculinity to be played out more easily within the family. Because of its relationship to the ideology of domestic chastisement, the BSRI's Dominance factor was expected to correlate positively with a husband's use of violence against his wife.

The effect of the masculine Independence factor on intimate relationships was more difficult to predict. In the psychological literature, independence is typically juxtaposed with dependence, which is generally considered an undesirable trait in adults. If masculine independence is instead contrasted with the quality of "interdependence" which Gilligan (1982) believes guides the moral development of women, independence may be viewed as a way in which men avoid intimate attachments in order to achieve separation. Gilligan proposed that women perceive their well-being as interdependent with the welfare of others, while men distinguish more sharply between themselves and others.

Independence, in this sense, represents an ability to distance oneself from others.

There is evidence that being in a state of interdependence with others can be threatening to men. Gilligan reviewed the literature on sex differences in TAT responses, and found that men were far more likely than women to use violent images in their TAT stories. Furthermore, different types of stimuli elicited aggression from each sex. Men produced more violent images as persons were depicted closer together in TAT pictures, whereas violence in women's stories increased as people were pictured further apart. In addition, men were most likely to project violence onto situations of personal affiliation, while women were most likely to project violence onto situations involving achievement. Gilligan interpreted the projected aggression as a response to perceived threats, and proposed that men construe intimacy as dangerous. For them, she suggested, intimate relationships carry risks of betrayal or rejection similar to that which was first experienced when the mother severed her son's dependent attachments in order to "make him a man." Women, on the other hand, fear that personal achievements will result in abandonment. In light of these findings, independence in men might be viewed as a defense against the anxiety invoked by close personal attachments,

and would therefore be expected to impair the quality of intimate relationships.

The linkage of independence and marital violence is complicated, however, by the fact that dependence also characterizes some battering husbands (Faulk, 1977; Rounsaville, 1978). These findings are not necessarily contradictory if one considers that independence (as characterized by Gilligan) and dependence are alike in their focus on the individual's own needs, with a disregard for, or inability to consider, the needs of the other. It was hypothesized, therefore, that the masculine trait of Independence as measured by the BSRI may reflect a tendency to defend oneself against the perceived danger of intimate relationships, and that this defensive distancing was likely to increase the possibility that a husband would employ violence against his wife.

The third Masculinity factor, Incisiveness, may also be elucidated on the basis of Gilligan's work. Her research indicated that men approach moral dilemmas with a clarity of thought which is less frequently demonstrated by women. She attributed the ease with which men resolve moral issues to the finding that men's conception of morality tends to be based on an abstract system of rights and rules, in which moral problems are resolved on the basis of a hierarchical ordering of values. Women's means of resolving moral problems is less clear and concise, guided

by a sense of responsibility for the needs of everyone involved. Because men are less likely than women to view human needs as interrelated, they are better able to order needs hierarchically and reach a clear solution to moral dilemmas. If Gilligan's explanation is accurate, then the masculine trait of Incisiveness as measured by the BSRI may reflect this ability to defer to an abstract system of rules and rights as opposed to experiencing a sense of personal responsibility for the needs of others. Of the individual items which make up this factor, "analytical" suggests an adherence to rules and order, while "willing to take a stand" and "defends own beliefs" imply a conviction of self-righteousness. It seemed likely that the combination of (a) a strong tendency toward personal assertiveness, and (b) an ability to distance oneself from others, would be related to a husband's use of violence against his wife. The assertiveness component seemed especially important in light of the previously reported finding that many Americans believe males should express themselves through violent means.

In summary, not only is there theoretical and empirical evidence to support the hypothesis that traditional masculine sex role socialization may be related to wife beating, but a more detailed analysis of the primary factors comprising the BSRI's Masculinity scale suggested that each of the traits represented by these factors was

also theroretically consistent with a psychological portrait of the batterer. It was hypothesized that of the three Masculinity factors, Dominance was most closely related to the ideological origins of wife beating, and would relate most strongly to a husband's use of violence against his wife. Correlations between individual factors and the use of violence, if found, would point to a relationship between wife beating and particular personality characteristics associated with masculinity.

A prediction was also advanced with regard to the primary factor on the Femininity scale, labeled Empathy and Concern for Others. It was predicted that men who have a high level of sensitivity to the feelings and needs of others, whether Androgynous or Feminine in their sex role orientations, would be less likely to use violence against their wives than men who show less of this trait.

The second instrument by which husband's sex role orientation was measured was the short form of Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp's (1975) Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ). The PAQ consists of twenty-four bipolar items which describe sex role characteristics. It is divided into three eight-item scales, labeled Masculinity (M), Femininity (F), and Masculinity-Femininity (M-F).

The authors of the PAQ employed different definitions of masculinity and femininity from those used to construct

the BSRI. On the basis of ratings of the ideal individual of either sex, PAQ items were divided into three scales, M, F, and M-F, rather than two as on the BSRI. Masculine items were those characteristics rated as socially desirable for both sexes, but believed to occur more frequently in males. Feminine items were analogously defined. The M-F scale was composed of items for which mean ratings of the ideal woman and man fell on opposite sides of the midpoint, indicating social desirability for one sex but not for the other. The BSRI, in comparison, identified characteristics which were desirable for one sex only, with no constraints on their desirability for the other. Although Bem describes BSRI items as "all relatively desirable, even for the 'inappropriate' sex" (1974, p. 159), no empirical support is provided for this claim. PAQ items, then, are categorized on the basis of a variable (social desirability) which is not accounted for on the BSRI.

As with the BSRI, the dimensions of masculinity and femininity as measured by the PAQ scales were found to be relatively independent of one another. According to the bipolar view of sex roles, masculinity and femininity would be expected to show a strong negative relationship. However, the M and F scales of the PAQ were found to have a low positive correlation, which disconfirms the bipolar explanation in favor of a dualistic concept of masculinity

and femininity. The M-F scale, on which high scores indicate an extreme masculine response, showed a moderately high correlation with the M scale, and a low negative correlation with the F scale, providing some support for the bipolar view. Nevertheless, the authors maintain that the preponderance of data support the conceptualization of masculinity and femininity as independent constructs.

High scores on both the M and M-F scales were expected to be related to a husband's use of violence during marital conflicts. Because the M-F scale appears to measure the more extreme sex role posture (its characteristics are desirable for one sex but not for the other), it was expected to be more strongly related to the use of violence than the M scale, which contains characteristics desirable for both sexes. Violent husbands were expected to adhere to a more rigid, extreme masculine role than nonabusive husbands. Conversely, the use of violence was expected to be negatively correlated with high scores on the F scale. It was predicted that abusive husbands would be less likely than nonabusive husbands to possess the "communal" traits which make up the PAQ's Femininity scale.

A husband's sex role orientation was one of two components of sex role attitudes expected to relate to the use of marital violence. The second aspect of interest was the husband's attitude toward appropriate sex roles for women. It was hypothesized that husbands who had

traditional, restrictive attitudes toward appropriate roles for women would have a relatively narrow definition of appropriate behavior for their wives. In comparison with men who believe that the sexes should share the same rights and responsibilities, these husbands were expected to desire more frequently to limit their wives' behavior. As previously reported, abusive husbands frequently use violence to enforce their wives' subordinate position within the marital relationship (Dobash & Dobash, 1978; Gelles, 1974; Martin, 1976; Rounsaville, 1978). It follows that men who believe that women should occupy a subordinate position in society would be more likely to attempt to enforce their wives' subordination than men who regard women as social equals.

The present study measured husbands' attitudes toward appropriate roles for women using two instruments. The first of these was Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp's (1973) Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS), which measures attitudes toward appropriate sex roles for women on a continuum ranging from Traditional to Feminist views. Traditional responses advocate conservative, restrictive definitions of appropriate goals and behavior for women, while Feminist responses apply more liberal standards; according women the same freedoms, opportunities, and responsibilities as men. Typical items to which an "agree" response is indicative of Traditional attitudes are,

"Swearing and obscenity are more repulsive in the speech of a woman than of a man;" and "Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers." It was hypothesized that traditional, restrictive attitudes toward women's roles are compatible with the ideology of domestic chastisement, as both are based on the belief that women should fulfill prescribed roles. Men holding Traditional attitudes toward women as measured by the AWS were expected to be more likely to use violence against their wives during marital disputes than men holding Feminist attitudes.

The second instrument by which attitudes toward women were measured was Benson and Vincent's (1980) Sexist Attitudes Toward Women Scale (SATWS). This scale was developed as a result of the authors' observation that existing instruments measured only one or a few aspects of sexism, therefore lacking content validity as measures of sexism. In their efforts to develop a more comprehensive scale, they began by defining sexist attitudes toward women as "attitudes which function to place females in a position of relative inferiority to males by limiting women's social, political, economic, and psychological development" (p. 278). On the basis of a review of feminist literature and ideology, they identified six components of sexism: (a) belief in the genetic inferiority of women, (b) belief that men are entitled to greater power, prestige, and

social advantage than women, (c) hostility toward women who do not fulfill traditional roles, (d) antagonism toward the feminist movement, (e) use of derogatory labels and restrictive stereotypes in reference to women, and (f) willingness to view women as sexual objects. The final 40-item version of the SATWS represents each of these six components.

In addition to measuring attitudes concerning the rights and roles of women, which is the focus of the AWS, Benson and Vincent's scale taps a general disparagement of women. Items which refer to objectification of women (e.g., "I see nothing wrong with men whistling at shapely women") and to attributions of sex-linked genetic differences in ability ("On the average, women are as intelligent as men"), measure a belief in the inherent inferiority of women. Just as, historically, the tendency of dominant racial or religious groups to dehumanize oppressed groups served to reduce cognitive dissonance about the victimization of members of that group, disparaging attitudes toward women are likely to facilitate their being viewed as "legitimate" targets of physical (or sexual) abuse. Abuse of women is likely to evoke fewer internal prohibitions if accompanied by the conviction that women are somehow inferior. Therefore, husbands having sexist attitudes toward women as measured by the SATWS were

expected to be more likely to use violence against their wives than nonsexist husbands.

In summary, two consequences of sex role socialization were expected to relate to husbands' use of violence against wives: (a) a traditionally masculine sex role orientation on the part of the husband, as measured by the BSRI and the PAQ, especially when characterized by a high level of dominance and a low level of empathy and concern for others on the BSRI, and (b) traditional attitudes toward appropriate roles for women as measured by the AWS and the SATWS. It was also expected that either variable alone would relate to a husband's use of violence during marital arguments.

The husbands in this sample were accessed through their children, who were all college undergraduate students. As a means of providing data on concurrent validity, students also completed each questionnaire with instructions to describe their fathers' attitudes and behaviors. Thus, questionnaire responses were obtained from both fathers and from their sons or daughters, with the father as referent in each case.

Several hypotheses were advanced with respect to data obtained from the students. It was predicted that children would be less motivated to present a socially desirable image of their fathers than fathers would be to present a desirable image of themselves. Therefore, if violence were

occurring in the parents' marital relationship, it was expected that students would be more likely than their fathers to provide accurate reports of its frequency and severity on the CTS. Because sexism is generally viewed as having a negative social valence, fathers' self-reports were expected to reveal less sexist attitudes than children's descriptions of their fathers. Because personal sex role orientation, as measured by the BSRI and PAQ, was hypothesized to be less susceptible to a social desirability response bias, differences between fathers' and children's responses on these scales were not expected.

Children's data were also expected to provide information about those husbands who refused to respond to the survey. The Conflict Tactics Scale was the instrument most expected to elicit refusal, due to the sensitive nature of items pertaining to the use of physical violence. It was predicted, therefore, that husbands who did not participate in the survey would be reported by their sons and daughters to have used more violence during the preceding year than fathers who cooperated with the project.

To summarize, the following predictions were made with respect to comparisons between students' and fathers' responses:

1. Students were expected to report greater violence by fathers than fathers themselves.

2. Violent husbands, as identified from student responses, were expected to show a lower response rate than nonviolent husbands.

3. Students' and fathers' descriptions of fathers' sex role orientations on the BSRI and PAQ were not expected to differ.

4. Students were expected to report fathers as more sexist on the AWS and SATWS than fathers reported themselves.

The following research hypotheses were advanced regarding marital conflict tactics and husbands' sex role orientation and attitudes toward women:

1. The use of Verbal Aggression and Reasoning, as measured by the Conflict Tactics Scale, were expected to be uncorrelated with measures of sex role orientation and attitudes toward women.

2. The use of Violence, as measured by the CTS, was expected to correlate positively with the Bem Sex Role Inventory's Masculinity scale and its factors: Dominance, Independence, and Incisiveness.

3. Violence was expected to correlate negatively with the BSRI's Femininity scale and its primary factor, Empathy and Concern for Others.

4. Violence was expected to correlate positively with the Personal Attributes Questionnaire's Masculinity and

Masculinity-Femininity scales, and negatively with its Femininity scale.

5. Violence was expected to be positively correlated with traditional attitudes toward women as measured by the Attitudes Toward Women Scale and the Sexist Attitudes Toward Women Scale.

### Method

#### Participants

The sample consisted of 99 college undergraduate students and 99 fathers or father-surrogates of undergraduate students. Students were all freshmen, either attending a small engineering and management institute ( $n=37$ ), or enrolled in an introductory psychology course at a large university ( $n=62$ ). The majority of respondents were members of father-child pairs ( $n=172$ ) in which both student and parent participated in the project. An additional 13 unmatched child responses and 13 unmatched father responses were collected.

As indicated previously, students were asked to respond to questionnaire items with their fathers as referents. Survey instructions and procedures for insuring confidentiality and anonymity were discussed personally with students, as well as included in an explanatory letter (Appendix A) accompanying all surveys. Students were encouraged to contact the experimenter should any questions or concerns arise as a result of participation. Separate

stamped post cards were included so that participants might request a summary of the research objectives and results upon completion of the study. Students who elected to participate were asked to forward a second packet of questionnaires to their fathers in a stamped envelope provided by the experimenter. It was explained that this procedure insured that identities would not be provided or recorded for this study.

Fathers' questionnaire packets contained a similar explanatory letter (Appendix B), including encouragement to call the experimenter with questions or concerns. Fathers were invited to request a summary of research results by means of a separate enclosed post card, thereby insuring that names and addresses would not be linked to survey responses.

### Materials

Conflict Tactic Scales (CTS), Husband Form N. The Conflict Tactic Scales were designed to measure the use of Reasoning, Verbal Aggression, and Violence during marital conflicts. The Reasoning scale measures the use of "rational discussion, argument, and reasoning--an intellectual approach to the dispute." The Verbal Aggression scale measures "the use of verbal and nonverbal acts which symbolically hurt the other, or the use of threats to hurt the other;" and the Violence scale measures "the use of physical force against the other person as a

means of resolving the conflict." Subsumed within the Violence scale is a Wife-beating index comprised of "items for violent acts which carry a risk of serious injury" (Straus, 1979, p. 77).

Form N of the CTS was developed for use in a national interview survey, and differs from the original version in its greater focus on the use of Verbal Aggression and Violence in intrafamilial conflicts. The CTS can be used to measure tactics used in each possible relationship within the nuclear family: husband-to-wife, wife-to-husband, mother-to-child, child-to-father, etc. Because husband-to-wife violence was the focus of the present study, data were obtained only about this relationship.

Despite the sensitive nature of some CTS items, Straus (1979) reported low rates of antagonism and refusal. The CTS had a completion rate of 65 percent when used in the national interview survey ( $N = 2143$ ). Straus proposed that CTS responses are legitimized by its presentation of conflict as an inevitable part of all human relationships, and by the fact that the items gradually decrease in social approval and increase in coerciveness, thereby allowing the respondent to report that more socially acceptable responses had been tried first. He stated that "in the context of a society in which there is widespread approval of violence 'if all else fails,' this serves to legitimize reporting the use of violence" (1979, p. 79). Straus also

believes that resistance to questions about spousal violence is reduced by inquiring first about parent-to-child and child-to-child violence, then finishing with questions about spousal violence. In this way the more sensitive questions are introduced within the context of relationships in which violence is more acceptable, and have become familiar by the time the marital category is reached. Nonetheless, this procedure is not essential. Straus reported a response rate of 72 percent from a sample of parents of university students who were asked only about the use of spousal violence. This return rate was higher than that of the national survey, in which the full range of familial relationships was studied. The present study inquired only about husband-to-wife violence in the interest of maintaining the brevity of the testing packet.

Straus reported high internal consistency reliability across six different familial relationships for the Verbal Aggression and Violence scales of Form N, with low reliability coefficients for the abbreviated Reasoning scale (Straus, 1979). He attributed the Reasoning scale's low reliability to its three-item composition, and suggested that for research in which the measurement of Reasoning is an important focus, the more comprehensive Form A should be used. As Reasoning was not an important variable in the present study, the abbreviated scale was judged to be sufficient.

There is evidence of construct validity of the CTS; Straus reported correlations with several other measures of aggressive behavior. Concurrent validity was measured by comparisons of undergraduate students' responses with the separate responses of their mothers and fathers, and showed high correlations for the Verbal Aggression and Violence scales, and low correlations for the Reasoning scale.

Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS), short form. The AWS measures the extent to which individuals hold traditional versus liberal views of the rights and roles of women in areas such as vocational, educational, and intellectual activities, dating practices, etiquette, sexual behavior, and marital relationships. The 25-item short form has been found to correlate .95 and above with the original 55-item version when used with groups of female and male college students and their parents (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973).

Spence and Helmreich (1978) described extensive research demonstrating differences between various groups in expected directions, thus affirming the construct validity of the AWS. For example, women score higher (are more profeminist) than men; college students score higher than their same-sex parent; undergraduate students in psychology courses score lower than graduate students in psychology but higher than engineering majors.

Additional evidence of the AWS's reliability and validity was provided in an extensive review of the literature by Smith and Bradley (1980). As evidence of its construct validity, they cited findings that the AWS is unifactorial or has at most two factors. In support of criterion validity, they reviewed twelve studies in which the AWS was used to measure change in profeminist attitudes following consciousness-raising procedures. The AWS consistently registered the expected shifts in attitudes, and had the capacity to distinguish between persons who had and had not been exposed to the consciousness-raising experience. Twenty-one other studies were reviewed which provided additional evidence of criterion validity.

Attesting to the AWS's reliability, Smith and Bradley (1980) reviewed studies which found test-retest stability coefficients ranging from .89 to .95. The authors' own research utilized 1002 responses to the 55-item and 25-item versions of the AWS. The results reaffirmed the unidimensionality of the scales by demonstrating only one major factor for each sex. Reliability coefficients were .93 for both sexes on the full scale, and .90 for males and .87 for females on the short form.

The AWS has been criticized on the basis of vulnerability to social desirability effects among college undergraduates (Goldberg, Katz, & Rappeport, 1979). These researchers found that only 4 out of 91 women and 9 out of

48 men scored below 50 on the short form, in the direction of traditional attitudes toward women. They propose that as with attitude scales in general, the intention of the AWS is readily apparent; therefore response bias in a positive direction may be responsible for higher mean scores (highest possible score in the feminist direction = 75; mean score for women = 64; mean score for men = 57). Among a more heterogeneous sample, however, in which 150 subjects ranged in age from 17 to 53, Loo and Logan (1977) found significant range and variability in scores for both sexes (highest possible score on long form = 165; mean score for women = 127, SD = 23; mean score for men = 109, SD = 21). The present sample of fathers of undergraduate students was expected to constitute an age group which would demonstrate a greater range of attitudes than the college undergraduates of the Goldberg et al., study.

Sexist Attitudes Toward Women Scale (SATWS). The Sexist Attitudes Toward Women Scale is the result of its authors' attempt to devise the first comprehensive measure of sexism (Benson & Vincent, 1980). The authors originally identified seven components of sexism which were reduced to the six described previously. Based on data from a sample of 402 non-student adults and 484 college students, the original item pool of 141 was reduced to a 60-item scale by selecting the 10 items having the highest variance from each dimension. Forty items selected for the final scale

showed the highest intercorrelations with other items. The final version includes at least 4 items from each of the six identified dimensions of sexism.

The SATWS appears to have high internal consistency reliability. Coefficient alpha computed on the 40 scale items drawn from the original 141 items, was .91 for an initial sample of 886 respondents. A later survey of 80 students and 72 non-student adults yielded coefficient alphas of .93 and .90, respectively.

To rule out the possibility of a socially desirable response bias, 58 adults were given the SATWS and the Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale. No relationship was found ( $r = -.03$ ), indicating that the SATWS is unaffected by this response tendency.

Construct validity was supported by several findings reported by Benson and Vincent which related the SATWS to other behavioral and attitudinal measures of sexism. Compared with persons low in sexism, highly sexist individuals were more likely to (a) make personality attributions on the basis of attractiveness, judging an attractive female more favorably than an unattractive one, (b) give discrepant ratings of the talent and creativity of a male versus a female artist, devaluing the female artist and rating the male artist more highly as sexism increased, and (c) appreciate sexist humor in jokes. Sexism was negatively related to (a) support for the Equal Rights

Amendment, (b) preference for Ms. magazine versus nine other magazines, (c) disregard for traditional sex role expectations as measured by the amount of time the female member of the couple drives the car, and (d) membership in a feminist consciousness-raising group as opposed to a matched group.

Sexism as measured by the SATWS was also found to correlate with other scales measuring similar constructs, including Spence and Helmreich's Attitudes Toward Women Scale ( $r = .63$ ,  $p < .01$ ); the Tavis Women's Liberation Scale ( $r = -.65$ ,  $p < .01$ ); and Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp's Personal Attributes Questionnaire ( $r = .36$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The SATWS was unrelated to constructs from which it was expected to differ. Responses of thirty college students to the SATWS and Mednick's Remote Associates Test showed no relationship ( $r = -.12$ ) of sexism to creativity. The SATWS was also unrelated to social responsibility as measured by Berkowitz and Luterman's Social Responsibility Scale ( $N = 30$ ,  $r = .08$ ).

Thus, although the SATWS is a relatively recent instrument, there is substantial evidence to support its utility as a measure of sexism. The measure was developed with particular attention to content validity, and validation studies have confirmed the scale's high internal consistency reliability and construct validity.

Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI). The BSRI was constructed in response to criticism of the assumptions of unidimensionality and bipolarity which guided the construction of traditional masculinity--femininity measures (Constantinople, 1973). The BSRI was constructed to measure these two concepts as orthogonal dimensions (Bem, 1974). The 60-item sex role inventory is comprised of a Masculinity scale, a Femininity scale, and a Social Desirability scale. Personality characteristics on the Masculinity and Femininity scales were chosen on the basis of sex-typed ratings of the social desirability of each attribute, rather than on the basis of differential endorsement by men and women. In addition to the Masculinity and Femininity categories, the scoring of the BSRI results in an Androgyny category which includes individuals who score high on both the Masculinity (M) and Femininity (F) scales, and an Undifferentiated category of individuals who score low on both. The Social Desirability scale was developed to measure the extent to which an individual responds in a socially desirable manner on items which are neutral with respect to sex. It is currently used only to provide a neutral context for the M and F scales.

The original reliability data on the BSRI were computed from two separate studies designed to provide normative information (Bem, 1974). Internal consistency reliability

estimates from these studies were high: Masculinity scale, .86 and .86; Femininity scale, .80 and .82; Social Desirability scale, .75 and .70; and Androgyny scale, .85 and .86. Test-retest reliabilities over a four-week interval were also high: Masculinity,  $r = .90$ ; Femininity,  $r = .90$ ; Social Desirability,  $r = .89$ ; and Androgyny,  $r = .93$ .

A call to researchers to study existing sex role inventories before devising others (Kelly & Worrell, 1977) led to many studies of the BSRI's validity and reliability. One controversial aspect of the BSRI has been the original method of trait selection (e.g., Myers & Gonda, 1982). Pedhazur and Tetenbaum (1979) objected to trait selection based solely on the use of statistical tests. Responding to their criticism that items were chosen strictly on an empirical rather than theoretical basis, Bem noted that the theory underlying her measure is that sex-typed individuals will conform to culture-specific definitions of femininity and masculinity. The items, therefore, were selected empirically in order to represent existing sex role definitions.

Construct validity of the BSRI was investigated using eight groups of subjects whose androgyny scores were expected to differ (Carlsson & Magnusson, 1980). As expected, male physics students were found to be an androgynous group, while male technology students and two

groups of military offers were traditionally sex-typed. Among females, members of a political women's group with feminist concerns were more androgynous than registered nurses or undergraduate students. Androgynous and undifferentiated individuals were also found to differ in self-esteem, a finding previously reported (Bem, 1977; Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1975).

A number of factor analyses have been conducted on the BSRI. Overall, these studies demonstrated that its scales are multifactorial, and that the masculinity scale is factorially more complex than the femininity scale. Pedhazur and Tetenbaum (1979) found a masculine factor which measured assertiveness, an interpersonal sensitivity factor and a maturity factor which were composed of items from the femininity and neutral scales, and a factor associated with gender of the respondent. Similarly, Gross, Small, and Erdwins (1979) found a femininity dimension, a maturity factor, a masculinity factor, and a fourth factor related to gender of respondent. Two studies conducted with undergraduate students, their parents, and siblings (Feather, 1978), revealed two masculinity factors (dominance and independence), one femininity factor (concern for others), and three factors comprised of items from the social desirability scale (positive affective attitude, inefficiency, and undesirable personal traits). Pearson (1980) found four masculinity factors (dominant,

incisive, insensitive, and independent), one femininity factor (empathic) and four factors which contained both masculine and feminine items. Carlsson (1981) conducted separate analyses for male and female respondents. For women, she found a femininity factor and a masculinity factor. For men, there was a femininity factor and two masculinity factors. Finally, Berzins, Welling, and Wetter (1978) factor analyzed the BSRI and found three factors on the Femininity scale, and four on the Masculinity scale.

Altogether, these factor analytic studies suggest that the femininity and masculinity scales of the BSRI do not measure unidimensional constructs. This fact is frequently viewed in the literature as indicative of a lack of construct validity of the BSRI. In response to this criticism, Bem (1979) maintained that to deliberately attempt to construct unidimensional scales would contradict the theory behind the BSRI; which is that a given culture arbitrarily clusters together heterogeneous groups of attributes and prescribes them as more desirable for one sex than for the other.

To test suggestions which resulted from the factor analytic studies that several items be excluded from the inventory because they failed to load on primary factors, Gruber and Powers (1982) subjected the items of the BSRI to a discriminant function analysis. Like several of the researchers mentioned previously, they found one femininity

factor, two masculinity factors, a sex of respondent factor, and three factors containing neutral items in addition to two Femininity scale items ("cheerful" and "gullible"). One of these three factors was characterized as denoting "positive" affect, while the other two were said to represent "negative" affects. They compared their results with the results of a typical factor analytic study in order to illustrate the complexity of the problem. An author of a factor analytic study had suggested on the basis of the factor analysis that several items be excluded from the inventory because they failed to load on one of four primary factors. In comparison, the discriminant function analysis indicated that each of these items except one, "feminine," contributed significantly to the overall discrimination of sex types. In addition, three of the five items which failed to contribute significantly to the discriminant analysis ("strong personality," "has leadership abilities," and "willing to take a stand") each loaded substantially on one of the masculine factors. Gruber and Powers (1982), therefore, cautioned against eliminating BSRI items on the basis of factor analyses.

The results of four factor analytic studies of the BSRI are summarized in Appendices A and B. Appendix A demonstrates the general agreement among the studies as to the composition of two primary Masculinity factors labeled Dominance and Independence (Berzins, Welling, & Wetter,

1978; Feather, 1978; Gruber & Powers, 1982). Only the Pearson (1980) study had somewhat different results, with fewer items identified as belonging to the Dominance and Independence factors. Interpretation of Pearson's factor analytic results, however, is confounded by the fact that the BSRI was analyzed in conjunction with two other sex role inventories. The following items were identified in two or more of the studies as belonging to the Dominance factor: acts as a leader, aggressive, assertive, dominant, forceful, has leadership abilities, strong personality, soft-spoken (negative loading), and shy (negative loading). Using the same criterion, the consensus was that the following items comprise the Independence factor: independent, individualistic, self-reliant, and self-sufficient. A third Masculinity factor was identified on the basis of the Berzins, et al. and Pearson studies: Labeled Incisiveness or Intellectual Ascendancy, it includes the items analytical, defends own beliefs, and willing to take a stand. Although two of the four studies identified a fourth Masculinity factor, there is no correspondence of items or content. Altogether, 14 of the 20 items of the Masculinity scale were associated with the factors identified.

Three of the four factor analytic studies reviewed identified only one Femininity factor, labeled Empathy or Concern for Others (see Appendix B). Only Berzins et al.

(1978) identified two additional Femininity factors, which they labeled Self-subordination and Introsion. The items in their primary Femininity factor, Nurturant Affiliation, correspond well with the items identified for the single Femininity factor in the other three studies. The consensus, therefore, is that the Femininity scale of the BSRI is composed of one primary factor, herein labeled Empathy and Concern for Others. This factor contains the following items: affectionate, compassionate, eager to soothe hurt feelings, gentle, sensitive to the needs of others, sympathetic, tender, understanding, and warm.

As noted previously, the items of the BSRI were chosen on the basis of their desirability for one sex or the other in American culture. This method of item selection prompted Bem to claim that "masculine and feminine items are all relatively desirable, even for the inappropriate sex" (1974, p. 159). The accuracy of this claim was refuted by several researchers who found that the Masculinity subscale items reflect higher mean social desirability than the Femininity items (Gross, Batlis, Small, & Erdwins, 1979; Pedhazur & Tetenbaum, 1979; Puglisi, 1980). Three traits in particular from the Femininity scale were consistently judged to be relatively low in desirability: shy, gullible, and childlike. It was proposed that rating oneself high on these items demonstrated a neurotic tendency to rate oneself negatively

(Gross, et al., 1979). Puglisi (1980) replaced these three items with three others--charming, graceful, and gracious--chosen from a study by Jenkin and Vroegh in which subjects selected items in terms of their applicability to "the most feminine person imagined." These substitutions elevated the mean social desirability of the Femininity scale from 4.49 (SD = .66) to 5.40 (SD = .60), which was not significantly different from the mean rating on the Masculinity scale of 5.33 (SD = .58). Thus, there appears to be a simple solution to the problem of unequivocal desirability of the items on the Femininity and Masculinity scales. It seems likely, however, that the original BSRI scales accurately reflect the cultural truth that, even when defined in terms of its most desirable attributes, the feminine sex role is less socially desirable than the masculine role. Puglisi's proposed revision fails to address this possibility, and furthermore, has not been endorsed by Bem or others engaged in sex role research. For these reasons, the present study utilized the original BSRI items, while noting that Masculinity scale items are generally assigned a higher social valence than Femininity scale items.

The BSRI has also been criticized by Janet Spence and Robert Helmreich, the authors of the next most widely used measure of sex role orientation, the Personal Attributes Questionnaire. Although the authors of each instrument

periodically debate the relative utility of each instrument (Bem, 1981; Spence & Helmreich, 1981), it remains true that both are heavily used and widely supported within the sex role research literature.

In summary, while the BSRI has been subjected to criticism primarily on the basis of item selection and the factorial complexity of the masculinity and femininity scales, there is also empirical support for the inclusion of each of its items, as well as a theoretical rationale for not attempting to impose unidimensional measures onto the complex constructs of masculinity and femininity. Abundant evidence of the instrument's reliability and validity support its use as a measure of sex role orientation.

Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ). The 55-item full version of the PAQ was derived from a replication of a study by Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman, and Broverman (1968), in which students identified characteristics differentiating men and women. The replication study asked students to rate each of over 130 items as characteristic of themselves as well as either the typical same-sexed adult, college student, or ideal individual (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1975). Items selected for the PAQ were those which most consistently differentiated the sexes regardless of referent. Ideal ratings fell in the same directions as ratings of typical members of the same sex,

but were often closer to the extreme pole, leading the researchers to conclude that PAQ items represent socially desirable attributes.

As previously discussed, the conceptualization of masculinity and femininity in terms of attributes more characteristic of one sex than the other but desirable in both, necessitated the designation of a third PAQ scale (M-F) to encompass items rated desirable for one sex but not for the other. Empirical support for this division was provided from the initial sample of college students to whom the PAQ was administered. Part-whole correlations demonstrated that each item was correlated more highly with the scale to which it had been assigned than to the other two scales. The authors describe Masculinity (M) scale items as referring to instrumental, agentic characteristics, while Femininity (F) scale items refer to expressive, communal attributes. M-F scale items are described as either agentic or suggestive of emotional vulnerability and the need for emotional support. Only two of the items on this scale are also on the BSRI, and these are the M-F scale's two "masculine" traits: dominance and aggressiveness.

Spence and Helmreich (1978) point to this conceptual difference between the Masculinity and Femininity scales of the PAQ and BSRI to account for the moderate correlations found between the respective scales of each instrument.

Data obtained from college students found correlations for the two Masculinity scales of .75 and .73 for males and females, respectively, and .57 and .59 for the two Femininity scales. Another factor suspected of lowering correlations between the two measures is the fact that the PAQ uses bipolar response scales, while the BSRI uses unipolar scales.

The full version of the PAQ was reduced to a 24-item short form based on the magnitude of part-whole correlations between individual items and each of the three scales. The short version correlates highly with the full version of the PAQ. For a sample of college students, correlations of .93, .93, and .91 were obtained for the M, F, and M-F scales, respectively. On the basis of these strong correlations, the authors state that they utilize almost exclusively the short form as opposed to the full version of the PAQ.

Spence and Helmreich examined two exogenous variables thought to pose possible threats to the PAQ's validity. Since PAQ items are by definition socially desirable, the instrument was tested for a social desirability response bias using the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability (SD) scale. Among a sample of college students, correlations between the SD scale and the three PAQ scales ranged from .08 to .36, suggesting at most a weak relationship. Intelligence was another variable considered, as it was

thought that brighter students might be more likely to acquire and present socially desirable characteristics than those of lesser intelligence. The relationship between Scholastic Aptitude Test scores and the three PAQ scales proved to be orthogonal, with correlations ranging from .02 with the M scale to -.12 with the F scale.

Thus, the utility of the PAQ as a measure of sex role orientation has empirical support, although it correlates only moderately with the other sex role measure used in the present study, the BSRI. Structural and conceptual differences between the two instruments need to be considered when they are used concurrently as measures of sex role orientation.

### Procedures

As stated previously, data were collected from 99 students and 99 fathers, for a total  $N$  of 198 respondents. Response rates varied as a function of different incentive conditions. Of the 75 university students who signed up to attend an experimental session entitled "Families' Approaches to Differences of Opinion" specifically to obtain extra course credit, 82.7% ( $n = 62$ ) attended and participated in the survey, while 87.1% ( $n = 54$ ) of their fathers (or father-surrogates) responded in order to provide additional credit. Engineering and management institute students, on the other hand, were offered no incentive and consequently exhibited a low response rate of

37% ( $\underline{n} = 37$ ). The response rate of their fathers cannot be determined as an unknown number of survey packets were forwarded by students, but it appears to have been very high, as more fathers ( $\underline{n} = 45$ ) than students responded from this group.

Each student volunteer received a questionnaire packet containing the Bem Sex Role Inventory, Personal Attributes Questionnaire, Attitudes toward Women Scale, Sexist Attitudes Toward Women Scale, and the Conflict Tactics Scales, in that order. For each instrument, students were instructed to answer with their father (or father-surrogate, if currently living in the home) as referent. The Conflict Tactics Scales were administered with written instructions to indicate on the seven-point scale how often during the students's last year at home the father/step-father had employed each of the tactics described during arguments with the mother/step-mother.

One hundred GMI Engineering and Management Institute students received their survey packets and a request for participation (see Appendix C) through the campus mail, and were asked to return them to the researcher via campus mail. Packets to be forwarded to their fathers were included and stamped, with the request that students privately address and post these materials. Students were given the researcher's Counseling Center office locations and telephone numbers, should any questions or concerns

arise as a result of participation. A residence hall Counseling office made the researcher especially accessible to students with research-related questions, as all students surveyed were living in this facility.

In accordance with Michigan State University subject pool requirements, MSU students consented to attend a group experimental session, with the experimenter present to answer questions. Procedures for insuring confidentiality and anonymity were explained, and students were informed prior to participation in the project that their fathers would receive a similar packet and written request for participation. Upon completion of the surveys, students were given a ten-minute explanation and discussion of the nature and objectives of the study, along with written feedback describing the research and its purposes, and including the researcher's name and telephone number.

Students were next given a second packet of testing materials containing the same instruments they had completed, along with a letter from the researcher to their father explaining the purpose of the study and requesting his participation (see Appendix D). The letter explained that the respondent's anonymity was insured by means of numerical identification of parent/child responses, and that surveys would be destroyed upon completion of the project. Written instructions as provided by the authors of each instrument accompanied the questionnaires, and a

stamped envelope was enclosed for the return of testing materials. Students were asked to address these packets to their fathers or step-fathers, and leave them with the experimenter for posting.

### Scoring

CTS. Each CTS Form N item was scored from 1 to 7 on the basis of the number of times the respondent reports using each particular tactic described within the preceeding 12 months. Its Reasoning scale is composed of 3 items; therefore scores can range from 3 to 21. The 6-item Verbal Aggression scale has a range of possible scores from 6 to 42. The Violence scale has 8 items; scores may range from 8 to 56. The Wife Beating Index, a subscale of the Violence scale, is comprised of 5 items, with possible scores ranging from 5 to 35. Separate scores were calculated for each CTS scale.

AWS. Each of the 25 AWS items has four possible responses on a Likert scale, ranging from "agree strongly" to "disagree strongly." Each item is assigned a score from 1 to 4, with 1 representing the most egalitarian, feminist response, and 4 representing the most traditional response. The highest possible score on the AWS, 100 points, represents the most traditional response, while 25 represents the most strongly feminist response. AWS responses were treated as continuous data for the purpose of statistical analyses.

SATWS. This 40-item instrument utilizes a 7-point Likert response scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, with neither agree nor disagree at the midpoint. Twenty-four items are sexist statements, and 16 are nonsexist statements which are reverse scored. Scores range from 40 to 280, with higher scores indicating more sexist attitudes. For purposes of the statistical analyses, SATWS responses were treated as continuous data.

BSRI. The BSRI asks the respondent to indicate on a 7-point scale how well each of the 60 masculine, feminine, and neutral personality characteristics describes her/himself on a response scale ranging from 1 (Never or almost never true) to 7 (Always or almost always true). Each subject is then assigned a Masculinity score representing their mean self-rating for all endorsed masculine items, and a parallel Femininity score. When the BSRI was originally developed, Bem calculated an androgyny score based on the  $t$  ratio between an individual's endorsement of feminine and masculine attributes, with smaller  $t$ 's indicating androgyny and larger  $t$ 's (significant differences) indicating sex-typing (Bem, 1974). The later finding of behavioral differences between persons who scored high on both the Femininity and Masculinity scales, and those who scored low on both, led to Bem's adoption of the suggestion that the BSRI be scored on the basis of a median split on each dimension (Bem,

1977). This procedure yields four rather than three groups: Masculine (high masculine-low feminine), Feminine (high feminine-low masculine), Androgynous (high masculine-high feminine), and Undifferentiated (low masculine-low feminine). This revised scoring procedure was first proposed by Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1975), who found differences between Androgynous and Undifferentiated subjects in self-esteem: Androgynous and Masculine persons had high self-esteem, while Feminine and Undifferentiated individuals had low self-esteem. Bem (1977) later confirmed these differences, finding the Androgynous group highest and the Undifferentiated group lowest in self-esteem.

The revised scoring procedure has not been free of criticism. Pedhazur and Tetenbaum (1979), who also questioned the use of the original difference score as a definition of Androgyny, viewed the median split method as probably "the crudest and the least useful method of arriving at a typology" (1979, p. 1013). They noted that some individuals with very similar scores will be classified as different types, whereas some with relatively dissimilar scores will be classified as the same type. Furthermore, this scoring method makes classification dependent on the particular sample obtained. Although alternative scoring systems have been devised (e.g. Roe & Prange, 1982), the median split is the scoring method

currently endorsed by Bem and utilized by most researchers. However, to resolve the problem of information loss resulting from categorization, Bem's (1977) suggestion of utilizing the Masculinity and Femininity scores independently as sources of continuous data was adopted in the present study.

PAQ. Each PAQ item is scored from 1 to 5, with a high score on the M and M-F scales indicating an extreme Masculine response, and a high score on the F scale indicating an extreme feminine response (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1975). Scores on the eight individual items of each scale are summed to obtain the total score for the scale. Possible values on each scale range from 8 to 40.

For descriptive purposes, the authors have used the median split method of categorization (Spence & Helmreich, 1978). As with the BSRI, responses are subjected to a four-way classification according to their position above or below the median on both the M and F scales. Labels utilized for these categories (Masculine, Feminine, Androgynous, Undifferentiated) are the same as those employed on the BSRI. Spence and Helmreich provided normative data from which medians for each scale may be drawn, or medians may be computed from the sample surveyed, assuming that it consists of both sexes. The problem of loss of information about individual variability in scores which results from categorization is exacerbated by the

fact that the joint responses of males and females on each PAQ scale have been found to follow a normal distribution. Because many responses tend to be clustered around the median, the authors caution that a shift of even one point on an individual's score could result in categorical reassignment for a substantial number of respondents. For these reasons, scores on each of the three PAQ scales were treated as continuous variables for purposes of statistical analyses in the present study.

### Results

Procedures for scoring and data recording were examined to determine error rate. From the computer printout of all items, survey item numbers 81 through 86 and 161 through 166 were checked against each original response sheet, yielding a total of 2,364 of 35,244 items checked for accuracy. Only 2 errors were present, demonstrating an error rate of 0.09%. As both errors resulted from computer failures to read the scantron sheets on which data were recorded, the raw data printout was examined and corrected for all missing items, thus eliminating all errors of this type.

Demographic data collected from 99 father respondents indicated a mean age of 43.23 years ( $SD = 7.14$  years). Fathers reported an average of 17.79 years in their present marriages ( $SD = 4.64$  years), with years married ranging from under 5 to 20 or more. Nearly all fathers were the

natural parents of student respondents ( $\underline{n} = 92$ ), with few step-fathers or surrogate parents ( $\underline{n} = 7$ ). Fathers tended to be highly educated, with a median achievement of a 4-year college degree. The distribution of education levels among fathers is displayed in Figure 1.

Among young adult child respondents ( $N = 99$ ), 63 were females and 36 were males. Male and female engineering and management institute students responded in approximately equal numbers (20 females, 17 males), whereas more than twice as many female as male university students participated (43 females, 19 males). The GMI sample represented a disproportionately high number of female respondents, as women comprised only about one-fourth of the freshman class at the engineering and management institute. The sex ratio of students in the MSU undergraduate psychology courses is unknown, but there is presumed to be a higher proportion of females.

Student's ratings of natural fathers versus step-fathers on all variables were compared using two-tailed  $t$ -tests, and yielded no significant differences. Self-ratings of natural fathers versus step-fathers yielded significant differences only on the Conflict Tactic Scales among all five instruments. Step-fathers ( $\underline{n} = 7$ ) reported using less Reasoning ( $\underline{t} = -2.24$ ,  $\underline{p} = .028$ ), more Violence ( $\underline{t} = 2.09$ ,  $\underline{p} = .040$ ), and more Wife Beating tactics ( $\underline{t} = 2.23$ ,  $\underline{p} = .023$ ) than natural fathers ( $\underline{n} = 79$ ).

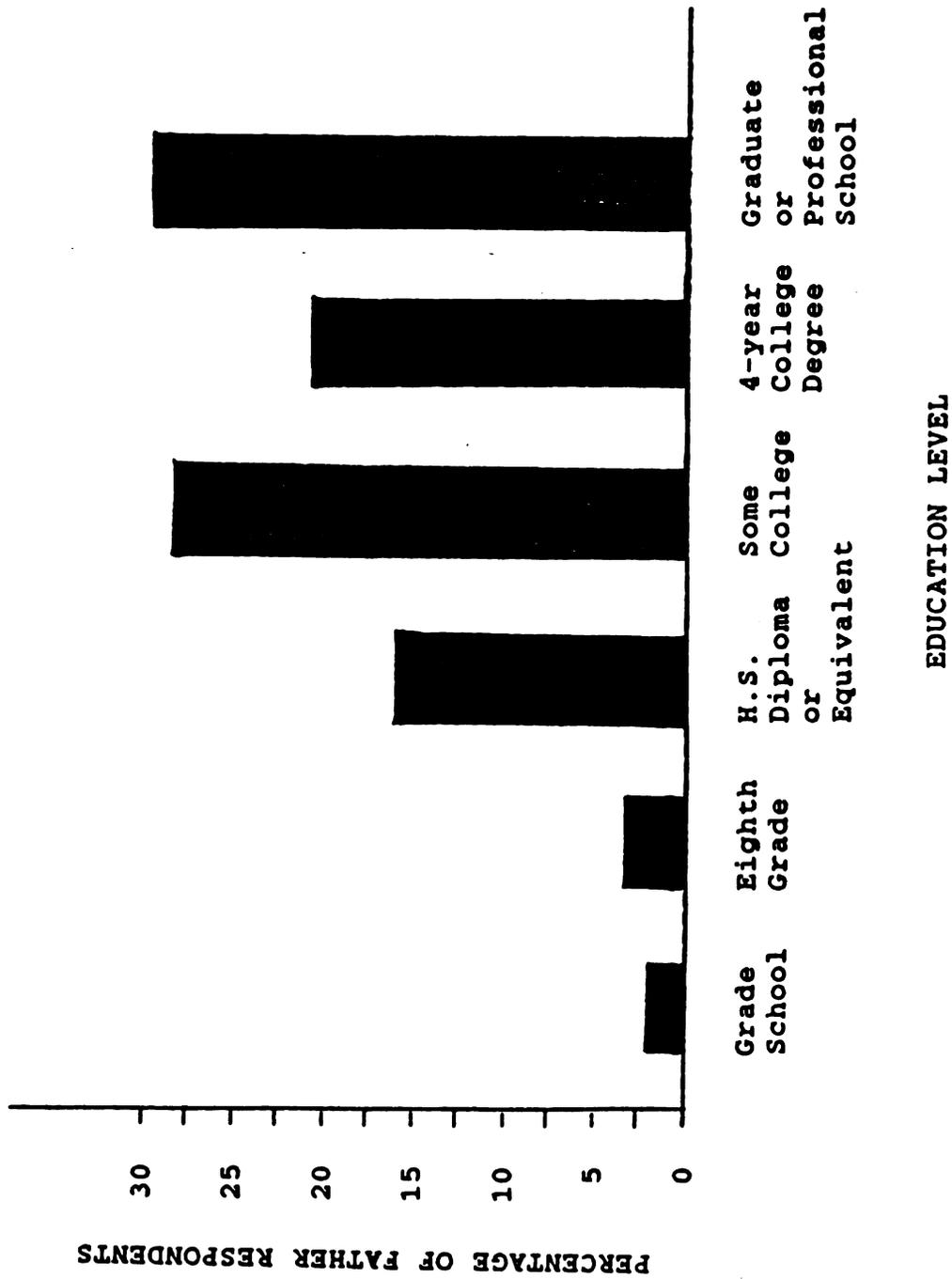


Figure 1. Highest education levels attained by fathers.

Student's ratings of fathers on each variable were also broken down by sex of the child, and two-tailed  $t$ -tests revealed one significant difference: Daughters rated fathers as more Independent on the BSRI than did sons. Because this was the only difference obtained between daughters' and sons' ratings, and because there was no theoretical explanation for it, this finding was held to be a chance difference.

Agreement between the ratings of fathers and children was assessed through Pearson correlations for each variable (see Table 1). Significant correlations obtained on most measures, and were strongest for the CTS aggression subscales. Of all variables, fathers and children reported greatest agreement on the CTS Wife Beating Index ( $r = .67$ ). The absence of agreement on the CTS Reasoning scale had been anticipated due to the employment of its three-item abbreviated version. BSRI Masculinity factors yielded more modest correlations than the overall Masculinity scale itself, perhaps also due to the small number of items comprising each of these factors. The only other scale which elicited no correlation between father and child ratings was the PAQ Masculinity-Femininity scale, which measures traits held to be desirable for either males or females but not both. The dualistic nature of this eight-item scale, with half measuring desirable masculine traits

Table 1

Father-Child Pearson Correlations for 86 Paired Father-Child Cases

Variable	r
BSRI Masculinity	.30**
BSRI Femininity	.44***
BSRI Dominance	.22*
BSRI Independence	.23*
BSRI Incisiveness	.18
BSRI Empathy	.42***
PAQ Masculinity	.34***
PAQ Femininity	.34***
PAQ Masculinity-Femininity	.09
Attitudes toward Women Scale	.40***
Sexist Attitudes toward Women Scale	.35***
CTS Reasoning	.03
CTS Verbal Aggression	.50***
CTS Violence	.38***
CTS Wife Beating Index	.67***

\*p < .05, one-tailed. \*\*p < .01, one-tailed.

\*\*\*p < .001, one-tailed.

and half measuring desirable feminine traits, may have detracted from agreement in the current sample.

Estimates of the incidence of fathers' use of Violence against wives during the previous twelve months were obtained from fathers and their young adult children. Among the 86 matched father-child pairs, children and fathers reported equal violence rates of 13% ( $n = 11$  in each group). However, in only five of the eleven cases did both members of a father-child pair report violence. Commission of severe acts of wife abuse during the previous year, as measured by the Wife Beating Index, was acknowledged by 3 of 86 children and 4 of 86 fathers. Unmatched child cases ( $n = 13$ ) provided data on nonresponding or "uncooperative" fathers. According to these reports, 3 of 13 or 23% of fathers who failed to respond to the survey engaged in acts of Violence, while two of these three fathers committed severe acts of wife beating.

Student's descriptions of fathers who cooperated with the survey (matched cases) were compared with those whose fathers withheld responses (unmatched cases). Differences between the means of the two groups were subjected to  $t$ -tests, which are reported in Table 2. Matched and unmatched child respondents differed significantly in their ratings of fathers on only three variables, all pertaining to marital conflict tactics. Nonresponding fathers were

Table 2

Comparisons of Children's Ratings of Responding versus  
Nonresponding Fathers

Variable	Responding Fathers ( $n=86$ )		Nonresponding Fathers ( $n=13$ )		Differences	$t$
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>		
BSRI M	104.65	16.95	104.08	21.22	0.57	0.11
BSRI F	88.22	16.02	91.58	16.40	-3.36	-0.68
BSRI Dom	23.01	8.36	22.92	7.56	0.09	0.04
BSRI Indep	23.66	3.62	22.77	4.59	0.89	0.80
BSRI Incis	17.02	2.95	17.00	3.32	0.02	0.03
BSRI Emp	45.46	12.03	47.77	11.29	-2.31	-0.65
PAQ M	30.99	4.69	31.62	5.64	-0.63	-0.44
PAQ F	30.22	5.38	32.15	5.94	-1.93	-1.19
PAQ M-F	26.06	4.06	25.62	3.84	0.44	0.37
AWS	52.75	11.28	49.91	15.52	2.84	0.75
SATWS	105.62	29.86	100.09	37.68	5.53	0.56
CTS R	10.82	3.40	12.69	3.64	-1.87	-1.83*
CTS VA	13.62	6.83	15.23	10.20	-1.61	-0.74
CTS VL	8.49	2.13	11.77	11.56	-3.28	-2.42**
CTS WBI	5.14	1.00	6.92	6.64	-1.78	-2.38**

\* $p < .05$ .    \*\* $p < .01$ .

described by their children as using more Violence ( $t = -2.42, p < .01$ ), Wife Beating ( $t = -2.38, p = .01$ ), and Reasoning ( $t = -1.83, p < .05$ ) than did responding fathers.

Father and child responses on each variable were compared using  $t$ -tests (See Table 3). Only matched father and child cases ( $n = 86$  in each group) were studied for this and subsequently reported analyses unless otherwise indicated. Fathers and their young adult children differed in their ratings of fathers' sexist attitudes toward women, with children consistently depicting their fathers as more sexist (AWS:  $t = -2.40, p = .01$ ; SATWS:  $t = -3.23, p = .001$ ) than fathers described themselves. Children also reported greater use of Reasoning by their father ( $t = -2.98, p < .01$ ) than fathers self-reported.

On sex role measures, fathers described themselves as significantly more Masculine (BSRI M;  $t = 2.05, p < .05$ ), Feminine (BSRI F;  $t = 2.19, p < .05$ ), and Empathic ( $t = 2.00, p < .05$ ), than children described them. Children rated their fathers as more Masculine on characteristics chosen on the basis of their desirability for males but not for females (PAQ M-F;  $t = -2.49, p < .01$ ) than fathers rated themselves. As will be discussed, these findings are thought to be chance results.

Intercorrelations between all measures were compared for father and child data sets. Correlations were subjected to Fisher's  $z$ -transformations and tested for

Table 3

Comparisons of Fathers' Self-Ratings with Ratings by Children

Variable	Means and Standard Deviations				Differences	
	Fathers		Children		F - C	t
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>		
BSRI Masculinity	108.65	(13.38)	104.72	(15.72)	3.94	2.05*
BSRI Femininity	91.80	(11.74)	88.09	(16.19)	3.72	2.19*
BSRI Dominance	23.27	(6.65)	23.33	(7.87)	-0.06	-0.06
BSRI Independence	23.40	(3.17)	23.62	(3.62)	-0.21	-0.46
BSRI Incisiveness	17.23	(2.54)	17.02	(2.95)	0.21	0.55
BSRI Empathy	47.96	(8.34)	45.46	(12.03)	2.51	2.00*
PAQ Masculinity	31.45	(3.97)	30.99	(4.72)	0.46	0.84
PAQ Femininity	29.88	(4.38)	30.20	(5.41)	-0.32	-0.51
PAQ M-F	24.63	(3.81)	26.06	(4.06)	-1.43	-2.49**
AWS	49.54	(10.94)	52.75	(11.28)	-3.20	-2.40**
SATWS	91.49	(36.01)	105.36	(28.15)	-13.87	-3.23**
CTS Reasoning	9.49	(2.82)	10.89	(3.36)	-1.40	-2.98**
CTS Verbal Agg.	12.80	(5.55)	13.77	(6.91)	-0.95	-1.37
CTS Violence	8.37	(1.17)	8.51	(2.15)	-0.13	-0.60
CTS Wife Beating	5.07	(0.34)	5.14	(0.10)	-0.07	-0.08

a

Paired father-child cases only,  $n = 86$  in each group.\*  $p < .05$ , one-tailed. \*\*  $p < .01$ , one-tailed.\*\*\*  $p < .001$ , one-tailed.

significance against a bivariate normal distribution. The results are displayed in Table 4, and significant differences can be summarized narratively as follows:

1. Students reported a negative relationship between their fathers' Femininity and Verbal Aggression (BSRI F,  $r = -.53$ ; PAQ F,  $r = -.51$ ), while fathers consistently described a significantly weaker relationship between the two variables (BSRI F,  $r = -.20$ ; PAQ F,  $r = -.25$ ).

2. Children viewed Violence toward wives as inversely related to fathers' Femininity (BSRI F,  $r = -.31$ ), whereas fathers reported no relationship ( $r = .04$ ).

3. Children described a modest positive and significantly stronger linkage between Verbal Aggression and fathers' Sexist Attitudes toward Women (AWS,  $r = .35$ ; SATWS,  $r = .44$ ), while fathers reported no relationship (AWS,  $r = .06$ ; SATWS,  $r = .09$ ).

4. Children reported a moderate positive relationship between fathers' sexism and Violence (AWS,  $r = .32$ ; SATWS,  $r = .31$ ), while fathers viewed these measures as unrelated (AWS,  $r = .01$ ; SATWS,  $r = -.01$ ).

5. Children described a modest relationship between Wife Beating and fathers' sexism (SATWS,  $r = .28$ ), whereas fathers reported no relationship ( $r = -.03$ ).

6. Children described a significantly stronger relationship between Violence and Wife Beating ( $r = .95$ ) than did their fathers ( $r = .73$ ).

Table 4

**Intercorrelations within Father and Child Groups, Arranged by Factors** <sup>a, b, c</sup>

THEIR YOUNG ADULT CHILDREN	FATHERS														
	BSRI F Empathy	BSRI F Dominance	BSRI F Independence	BSRI F Incisiveness	PAQ M M	PAQ M-F	AWS	SATWS	CTS R	CTS VA	CTS VL	CTS WBI			
BSRI F	44	92	76	14	2	11	13	-8	-30	-12	-22	-1	-20	4	-20
BSRI Empathy	94	42	77	32	21	22	25	4	-18	-15	-21	-8	-31	-3	-5
PAQ F	83	84	34	14	8	2	15	7	-24	-9	-18	3	-25	-6	-3
BSRI M	29	33	14	30	87	78	68	43		10	-1	3	-30	-15	-6
BSRI Dominance	-2	8	-11	83	22	57	47	58	42	20	12	1	-30	-10	5
BSRI Independence	35	41	31	74	50	23	48	38	38	6	-3	3	-19	-15	-12
BSRI Incisiveness	23	30	12	77	56	49	18	40	17	5	-8	-12	-30	-2	5
PAQ M	22	27	24	77	58	66	54	34	52	13	4	9	-21	-30	-25
PAQ M-F	-9	-4	-11	43	45	21	29	49	2	2	7	7	-10	-12	-13
AWS	-36	-34	-26	-20	-3	-15	-31	-10	-4	40	77	-17	6	1	10
SATWS	-35	-34	-27	-22	-2	-14	-34	-15	-3	86	35	-13	9	-1	-3
CTS R	20	15	19	-8	-25	0	-1	-6	-8	16	-16	3	15	13	-6
CTS VA	-53	-53	-51	-25	1	-29	-34	-36	-15	35	44	-4	50	42	25
CTS VL	-31	-25	-26	3	14	9	-5	-1	-3	32	31	-14	52	38	73
CTS WBI	-28	-23	-24	4	11	12	-2	5	0	30	28	-19	41	95	67

<sup>a</sup> Paired father-child cases only,  $n = 86$  in each group.

<sup>b</sup> All decimals omitted; diagonal holds father-child correlations on each measure.

<sup>c</sup> Value of  $\bar{r} = .18$  for  $p < .05$ , one-tailed.

Thus, fathers and their young adult children showed consistent differences in their descriptions of the relationships between measures of verbal and physical marital aggression and fathers' femininity and sexist attitudes.

Additional evidence suggested that fathers were more likely than their children to view aggression toward wives as incompatible with masculinity. Fathers reported an inverse relationship between Masculinity (PAQ M) and Wife Beating ( $\underline{r} = -.25$ ), whereas children described no such relationship ( $\underline{r} = .05$ ). Furthermore, fathers reported a negative relationship between Verbal Aggression and Dominance ( $\underline{r} = -.30$ ), while children described no relationship between these variables ( $\underline{r} = .01$ ).

Two additional differences between father and child intercorrelations appeared to have been chance results, as they had no additional empirical or conceptual support:

1. Children described a weak relationship between fathers' Femininity (BSRI F) and Masculinity (PAQ M,  $\underline{r} = .22$ ), while fathers reported no relationship ( $\underline{r} = -.08$ ).

2. Children reported an inverse relationship between fathers' Incisiveness and Sexist Attitudes toward Women (AWS,  $\underline{r} = -.31$ ), whereas fathers described no such relationship ( $\underline{r} = .05$ ).

A factor analysis (McQuitty, 1961) revealed the factors illustrated in Figure 2. Father and child data

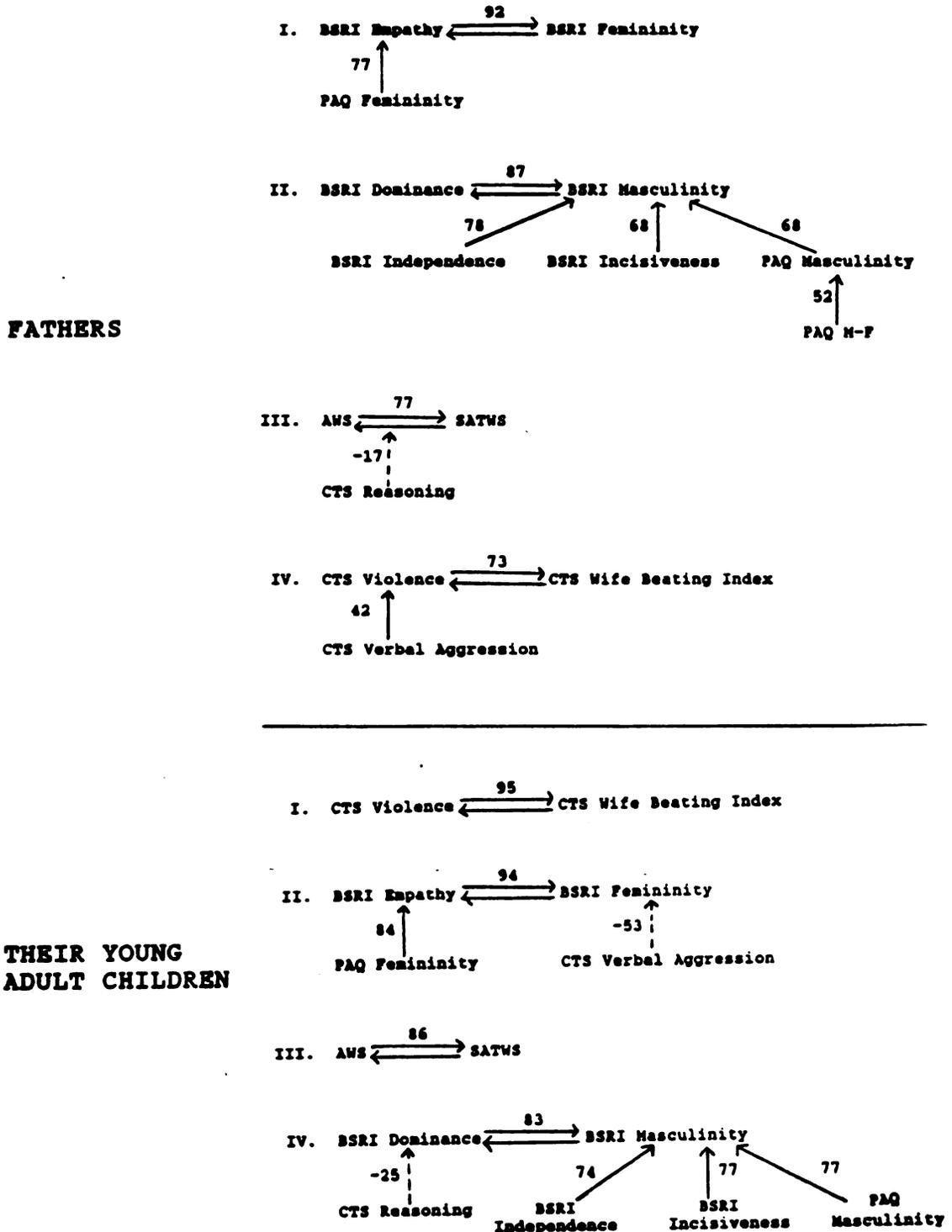


Figure 2. The structure of factors among paired fathers and their adult children, citing relevant correlations (all decimals omitted and all  $n$ 's = 86).

reduced to similar factors, labeled Femininity, Masculinity, Sexism, and Marital Aggression. Only two variables, Reasoning and Verbal Aggression, loaded on different factors within the father and child data sets. The CTS Reasoning scale had very low correlations with all other factors, as expected on the basis of its conceptual difference from any of the other variables of interest. The Verbal Aggression scale loaded as expected on the Marital Aggression factor within the father data, but related most strongly (negative loading) to the Femininity factor among child responses. Overall, the obtained factors closely paralleled the assessment instruments utilized in this study.

#### Discussion

The results of this study illuminated the relationship between husbands' sex role orientation and attitudes, and their use of violence in the marital relationship. Their young adult children provided information which both supported and conflicted with fathers' self-reported behavior and attitudes. Some hypotheses were supported, while other surprising findings emerged. The predicted relationship between fathers' sexism and marital aggression was supported by children's reports, but was absent in fathers' self-descriptions. Similarly, the child data provided support for the expected inverse relationship between femininity and fathers' use of violent tactics,

whereas fathers depicted no such relationship. Fathers' reports suggested a surprising link between masculinity and marital aggression. These findings have implications for future research, which are discussed in terms of the strengths and limitations of the present study.

The reliability of fathers' self-reports of violent behavior had been a primary concern in this study. However, student data supported fathers' responses on the CTS, and stronger father-child agreement ( $r = .67$ ) was found on the CTS Wife Beating Index than on any other variable. Additionally, appreciable intersource correlations also obtained on the Violence ( $r = .38$ ) and Verbal Aggression ( $r = .50$ ) scales. Thus, fathers and children provided relatively consistent descriptions of fathers' aggressive behavior toward wives. This agreement may have been partly due to the fact that the CTS solicits reports of observable behavior, in contrast to the more abstract personality characteristics and attitudes measured by the other instruments used in this study.

Female students responded at disproportionately higher rates than male students at the engineering institute sampled. Although the sex ratio of introductory psychology students at Michigan State University is unknown, the obtained ratio of more than twice as many female as male respondents in this sample is also thought to overrepresent females. It is difficult to interpret this finding as the

result of disparate levels of interest in the study's subject matter, as students had minimal information about the topic prior to experimental participation. This seems instead to reflect the general finding that women are more likely than men to volunteer as research subjects. As no significant sex differences were found in students' ratings of their fathers, the overrepresentation of females appears to be inconsequential.

It is likely that the low rates and amounts of violence used by cooperative fathers, as corroborated by their children, provided little motivation for fathers' defensive withholding of information. Violence rates obtained in this sample fell slightly below those found by Straus (cited p. 2) and other researchers using the CTS. As predicted, violent fathers were less likely to participate than nonviolent fathers. Children's descriptions of nonresponding fathers indicated that present fathers' data likely underrepresents the rate of violence in the population sampled, as fathers exhibiting the highest rates of violence declined participation in the survey.

Interestingly, step-fathers reported using significantly more Violence and less Reasoning than natural fathers. While the step-fathers' small n of 5 precludes definitive statements about this finding, it does stimulate several questions. It is likely that step-fathers

experience greater stress in the marital relationship than natural fathers due to issues related to step-children and previous marriages, and may, therefore, be inclined to more frequently resort to violent tactics. Or, violent men may have a history of unsuccessful relationships which makes them more likely than less violent men to end up in a post-nuclear family. These questions point to the need for further research to examine family composition as a potential stressor affecting the use of violence.

On the CTS, adult children differed from their fathers only in their reports of fathers' greater use of Reasoning. Straus (cited p. 51) suggested that subjects' reporting of socially acceptable tactics (i.e., Reasoning) tried first helps them to feel justified in later reporting violence. Perhaps children attempted to minimize cognitive dissonance over reporting their fathers' violent behavior by justifying it as a "last resort." Children of nonresponding fathers described their fathers as using more Reasoning as well as Violence and Verbal Aggression, than responding fathers, thus providing additional support of the "justification" of violent behavior hypothesis.

Children described a nearly perfect relationship ( $r = .95$ ) between Wife Beating and Violence, whereas fathers reported a lesser ( $r = .73$ ) relationship. Thus, children who reported fathers' use of violence were also likely to report severe acts of violence, whereas violent fathers

appear to have stopped short of reporting severely abusive behavior. Children apparently perceived severe wife beating as integral to an overall pattern of marital violence, whereas fathers saw a weaker, nonetheless significant, relationship between more and less severe acts of violence.

Fathers differed from their children in descriptions of the relationship between fathers' marital violence and sexist attitudes toward women. It had been predicted that children would be more cognizant of fathers' sexist attitudes than fathers themselves, and less likely to minimize reports of sexism in order to present a positive image. As expected, children rated their fathers as more sexist on both measures than fathers rated themselves. Children perceived the predicted relationships between sexism and violence and wife beating, as well as between sexism and verbal aggression. Fathers, however, reported none of these relationships. One possible explanation for these differences is that children conceptualized violence as inconsistent with feminist attitudes toward women, and thus were reluctant to ascribe feminist attitudes to their violent fathers when such attitudes actually existed. A more plausible explanation, however, seems to be the one proposed earlier to account for this predicted finding; that fathers strove to present themselves in a socially desirable manner, which, for this highly educated, upper-

middle class sample included a nonsexist stance on issues related to women. Thus, the findings with regard to sexist attitudes and violence are taken here to provide preliminary support of the hypothesis that husbands' sexism is causally related to marital violence. This conclusion is tempered by the fact that this relationship was reported only by children and not by violent fathers themselves. Future research is needed to strengthen this conclusion.

Sex role orientation of fathers was the next variable studied in relation to marital violence. Fathers demonstrated what appears to have been a tendency to respond on one instrument, the BSRI, in more extreme directions than their children. Fathers rated themselves as more masculine, feminine, and empathic than children rated them. These differences may reflect children's caution in assigning extreme values on non-observable characteristics to a second person, whereas fathers felt free to give more definitive self-evaluations. However, children rated fathers as slightly but significantly more Masculine on the PAQ M-F scale than fathers rated themselves. Since there is no readily apparent theoretical explanation for these conflicting findings, they are held to be chance results.

The inverse relationship between femininity and violence was another prediction which held only for students' reports, with fathers reporting no relationship

between the two variables. A similar trend was found for verbal aggression and violence. Both fathers and children viewed verbal aggression as inversely related to femininity, but children reported a significantly stronger relationship. The finding that children again described relationships between marital aggression and sex role characteristics while fathers did not is difficult to interpret. Children generally obtained greater standard deviations than fathers on all measures, suggesting that their perceptions of fathers are perhaps better differentiated than fathers' views of themselves. It may be that children falsely assumed or exaggerated relationships in their efforts to make sense of their fathers' violence. Or, the relationships described by children may reflect their more objective perceptions of fathers' attitudes and behavior, while fathers' self-reports are colored by desires to present themselves in a favorable light. Without additional sources of collateral data, it is difficult to assess the relative accuracy of fathers' and children's reports.

Fathers' self-reports are less ambiguous with respect to the relationship between general Marital Aggression and Masculinity. Father data revealed an unexpected, weak negative correlation between these two factors not found in child data. They also differed significantly from children in portraying Wife Beating as inversely related to

Masculinity, whereas children reported no relationship between the two factors. Finally, fathers described Verbal Aggression as inversely related to Dominance, while children did not. Overall, fathers appeared to perceive Masculinity as inconsistent with Marital Aggression, while children did not. This could be the result of a response tendency, with fathers presenting themselves in a positive manner (e.g., masculine and nonaggressive toward wives), or it could be a valid relationship which was not perceived by children.

If it is true that men perceive Masculinity as inconsistent with aggression toward wives, this in conjunction with previously discussed findings points to an intriguing conceptualization of the function of sex role orientation in marital violence. It is conceivable that a key component in the relationship of sex role orientation to violence is not exaggerated masculinity, but an absence of feminine characteristics. Father and child data taken together suggest that rather than increasing the likelihood of marital aggression, masculinity may be antithetical to it, while the absence of feminine characteristics such as empathy play a causal role in husbands' violent behavior. This formulation can be reversed to account for women's low rates of marital violence. Perhaps women are nonviolent not because they are exempted from socialization practices

that encourage aggression and dominance, but because they are socialized to be sensitive, compassionate, and gentle.

An encouraging implication of this formulation of marital aggression is that masculine sex role orientation appears not to have the hypothesized, potentially negative, effect on intimate relationships. Instead, feminine socialization may have a previously underestimated positive contribution, buffering against the likelihood that husbands will behave violently toward wives. A tentative implication for domestic violence prevention and treatment efforts is that stereotypic masculine attributes need not be discouraged as some authors have suggested. It may instead be more clinically useful to encourage in abusive men the nurturant, empathic traits traditionally reserved for women.

The evidence that sexist attitudes toward women may be causally related to marital aggression suggests that restrictive attitudes toward women's roles may merge with husbands' rigid sex role orientation to set the stage for violence against wives. Bem had predicted that "the androgynous person will come to define a more human standard of psychological health" (1974, p. 162), and the current research supports this contention. Many writers have proposed that both men and women suffer from restrictive sex role stereotypes, and marital violence may be one unfortunate consequence.

The conclusions reported herein must be treated as highly tentative given the methodological limitations of this study. The husband sample proved to be a self-selected group of relatively nonviolent men, certainly at the opposite end of the continuum from a clinical or criminal population of battering husbands. Thus, these findings may not be generalizable to actual batterers. Furthermore, husbands' reports provided little meaningful information about relationships between the variables studied; most conclusions were based on young adult children's descriptions of their fathers. Future research could build upon the present findings by examining a clinical and/or criminal population of battering husbands, and systematically comparing them with a nonviolent control group. While the reliability of husbands' self-reports should continue to be explored through the use of third-party ratings, discrepant data from child and father ratings mitigated any definitive conclusions in the present study. A more effective design would include two objective ratings in addition to fathers' self-ratings, in order to facilitate conclusions based on a correspondence of data from at least two sources. In the case of a clinical sample of battering husbands, children and wives, or therapists and wives, would serve as relevant sources of confirming data.

Despite these limitations, the present study helped to refine research questions regarding the relationship between husband's sex role orientation and attitudes and the use of violence in intimate relationships. Tentative evidence was found of the relevance of broader sociocultural factors to help explain domestic violence in the United States. Wife abuse is undoubtedly the result of a complex interaction of intrapsychic, sociocultural, and ecological factors, and the heretofore neglected area of sex role socialization appears to afford a promising new avenue of inquiry into family violence.

## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A**

## APPENDIX A

Factor Analytic Studies of the Bem Sex Role Inventory: Items  
Composing Masculinity Factors

	Gruber & Powers, 1982	Pearson, 1980	Berzins et al., 1978	Feather, 1978
<u>Masculine items</u>				
Acts as a leader	1		1	1
Aggressive	1		1	1
Ambitious				
Analytical		3		
Assertive	1		1	1
Athletic			4	
Competitive			4	
Defends own beliefs	1	3	3	
Dominant	1		1	1
Forceful	1		1	1
Has leadership abilities	1		1	
Independent	2		2	2
Individualistic			2	2
Makes decisions easily				
Masculine				

## APPENDIX A (cont'd.)

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Self-reliant	2	2	2	2
Self-sufficient	2	2	2	2
Strong personality	1	1	1	
Willing to take a stand				
Willing to take risks				
<u>Feminine items</u>				
Soft-spoken		a 1		a 1
Shy		a 1		a 1
<u>Neutral item</u>				
Conceited		4		

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a

Negative loading on Masculinity factor.

Note. Factor 1 represents Dominance or Social Ascendancy; Factor 2 represents Independence or Autonomy; Factor 3 represents Incisiveness or Intellectual Ascendancy; and Factor 4 represents Insensitivity (Pearson, 1980), and Physical Boldness (Berzins, et al., 1978).

**APPENDIX B**

## APPENDIX B

Factor Analytic Studies of the Bem Sex Role Inventory: Items  
Composing the Femininity Factor Labeled Empathy or Concern for  
Others

	Gruber & Powers, 1982	Pearson, 1980	Berzins et al., 1978	Feather, 1978
<u>Feminine items</u>				
Affectionate	X		X	
Cheerful				
Childlike				
Compassionate	X		X	X
Does not use harsh language				
Eager to soothe hurt feelings	X		X	
Feminine Flatterable				
Gentle	X	X	X	X
Gullible				
Loves children				
Loyal				

## APPENDIX B (cont'd)

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<b>Sensitive to the</b>					
<b>needs of others</b>	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Shy</b>					
<b>Soft-spoken</b>					
<b>Sympathetic</b>	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Tender</b>	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Understanding</b>	X		X	X	
<b>Warm</b>	X	X	X	X	
<b>Yielding</b>					
<b><u>Neutral item</u></b>					
<b>Sincere</b>	X				

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**APPENDIX C**

## APPENDIX C

Request for Student Participation.

4 September 1986

Dear Student:

I am studying family members' approaches to differences of opinion as part of my graduate studies in clinical psychology at Michigan State University. A crucial phase of my work requires collecting information from undergraduate students and their fathers.

You are eligible to participate in this study if you lived in a two-parent home (step-parents included) for one year prior to attending GMI. You will need to volunteer approximately 30 minutes of your time to complete and return the enclosed questionnaires. A second packet is included to be mailed to your father (or step-father, if living in your home). Please address and post this packet yourself, so that neither your father's name nor address will be provided for the study. You will see that the first page of the enclosed testing material is marked with a number in the upper-right corner. This number is the only means by which responses from members of each family surveyed are grouped together. Therefore, your identity will not be known to anyone, including me. All replies will be processed maintaining complete confidentiality, then destroyed.

Brief instructions accompany each questionnaire. The completed forms may be returned to me at GMI in the attached envelope. For the greatest convenience, drop your questionnaire off at the RH Counseling Office at the north end of Unit 31. If for any reason you elect not to participate, please return the uncompleted forms anyway so that I may distribute them to someone else.

I believe that my research problem is both important and interesting. Once the study is completed, I will be pleased to share its purposes and results with you. If you would like to receive a short summary of this research study, please call me at 762-9873 and leave your name and room number (in no way can your identity be connected to your questionnaire response).

Your assistance is crucial to my project's success, and your help is greatly appreciated. If any questions or concerns arise as a result of your participation, I encourage you to call me at the above number, or stop by my offices in 3-100 Campus Center (Monday through Thursday, 3:00 - 6:00 p.m.; Friday 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.) or 3-098 RH (Monday through Thursday from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Amy Koppelberger'.

Amy Koppelberger  
Counseling Graduate Assistant

**APPENDIX D**

## APPENDIX D

Request for Parent Participation.

4 September 1986

Dear Parent:

I am studying family members' approaches to differences of opinion as part of my graduate studies in clinical psychology at Michigan State University. A crucial phase of my work requires collecting information from undergraduate students and their fathers.

Your son or daughter demonstrated an interest in this research project and voluntarily completed five short questionnaires. In order to utilize his or her responses, I need you to volunteer approximately 30 minutes or your time to complete and return the enclosed questionnaires. You will see that the first page of the enclosed testing material is marked with a number in the upper-right corner. This number is the only means by which responses from members of each family surveyed are grouped together. Therefore, your identity will not be known to anyone, including me. The envelope you just received was addressed by your daughter or son so that neither your name nor address were recorded. All replies will be processed maintaining complete confidentiality and subsequently destroyed.

Brief instructions accompany each questionnaire. The completed packet may be returned to me at GMI in the enclosed, stamped envelope. If for any reason you elect not to participate, please return the uncompleted forms anyway so that I may distribute them to someone else.

I believe that my research problem is both important and interesting. Once the study is completed, I will be pleased to share its purposes and results with you. If you would like to receive a short summary of this research study, please return the enclosed, stamped postcard with your name and address, as I lack any other record of your address or identity. I may be contacted at GMI's Counseling Center, (313) 762-9873, if any questions arise as a result of your participation.

Your assistance is crucial to my project's success, and your help is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Amy Koppelberger'.

Amy Koppelberger  
Counseling Graduate Assistant  
3-100 Campus Center  
GMI Engineering and Management Institute  
1700 West Third Avenue  
Flint, MI 48502

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