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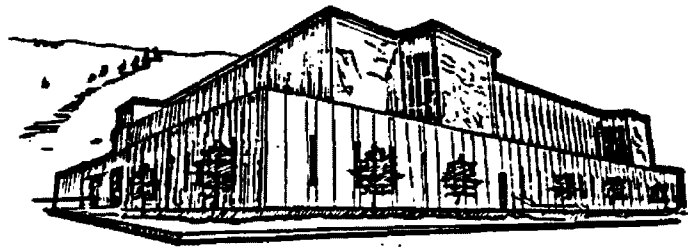
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ECONOMIC STATUS, EDUCATION, AND ATTRIBUTION OF
RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPOUSE ABUSE

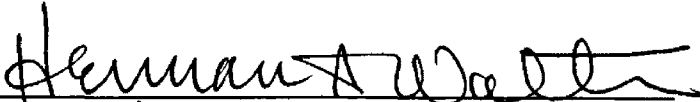
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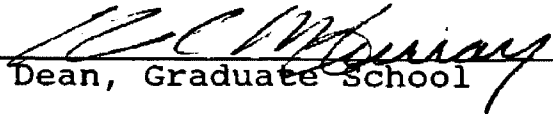
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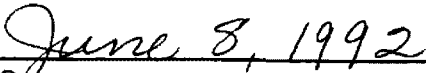
B.S., Southeast Missouri State University, 1980

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts
University of Montana
1992

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ABSTRACT

Van Denburg, Cheryl R., M.A., June, 1992

Psychology

Economic Status, Education and Attributions of
Responsibility for Spouse Abuse

Director: Herman A. Walters, Ph.D. HW

In previous domestic violence research, psychologists have studied attributions of responsibility toward the batterer and victim, only rarely making a distinction between origin and solution responsibility. The present study was an attempt to determine how a woman's education and economic status affects attributions of origin and solution responsibility, gender differences in these attributions, and if an individual's conservative or non-traditional attitudes toward women covaries with these attributes.

This study employed a between groups design, utilizing two groups. Male and female subjects were randomly assigned to one of two groups and were presented with a written vignette depicting a domestic violence incident, which varied in the type of education and employment of the female victim. Subjects then responded to a 7 point likert-type questionnaire asking about origin and solution responsibility of the victim and batterer. Subjects also completed the Attitude Toward Women Scale. The present study failed to show significant interactions for origin and solution responsibility, or any gender differences. When asked about solution responsibility had there been children in the family, there was greater origin solution responsibility assigned when the victim had a limited education and was unemployed than when she was well educated and employed. In addition, it was also found when asked about solution responsibility if the batterer had a limited education and was unemployed that subjects viewed his solution responsibility as greater when the victim also had a limited education and was unemployed. When the victim had an education and was employed, subjects viewed the batterer as having less solution responsibility. There were no gender differences found on any dependent measures in this study. Finally, The Attitude Toward Women Scale was not found to be significantly related to the dependent variables.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables.....	v
Chapter	
1. Introduction	
History.....	1
Abuse Relationships.....	5
Origin and Solution Responsibility....	11
Sex Linked Attributions.....	14
Economic Constraints.....	15
Purpose and Hypotheses.....	16
2. Methods	
Design of Study.....	19
Subjects.....	19
Materials.....	20
Procedure.....	20
3. Results	
Results.....	22
4. Discussion	
General Findings.....	23
Specific Findings.....	26
Conclusions.....	28
References.....	43
Appendices	
A. Experimental Instructions.....	31
B. High Education-Employment Vignette.....	32

C. Limited Education-Unemployment	
Vignette.....	33
D. Origin Solution Responsibility	
Questionnaire.....	34
E. Attitudes Toward Women Scale.....	37
F. Post-Experimental Questionnaire.....	41
G. Demographic Variables.....	42

Tables

Table 1. Design of the study.....	30
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Chapter One

History

Spouse abuse is a phenomenon that has been documented from medieval times to the present (Dutton, 1987). Through the centuries, however, there has been relatively little attention given to this problem. Within the field of psychology, both clinicians and researchers have, within the last fifteen years, begun to recognize the enormity of domestic violence (Straus, Gelles & Steinmetz, 1980). The past relative inattention to domestic violence may have been due to lack of awareness of it occurring, or its magnitude, or active denial of the problem (Erez, 1986).

During the sixties, there was little scholarly or popular literature in the area of domestic violence. (Gelles, 1980). With the seminal work of Kempe et al (1962), family violence toward children became recognized. Along with that recognition came a marked increase in research concerning abused children. The research of family violence (primarily child abuse) in the sixties was characterized by a narrow theoretical and methodological approach to the problem (Gelles, 1980) and primarily used the psychopathological model (Gelles, 1973; Spinetta & Rigler, 1972). The rare reports on wife abuse showed both the batterer and the victim as suffering from personality disorders (Gelles, 1980).

No reliable statistics on the incidence of family violence were recorded in the United States during the 1960's, with occurrence estimates ranging from thousands to tens of thousands. The prevailing attitude at this time was that child abuse and other forms of family violence were rare. However, with the advent of uniform reporting laws in 1968, there was a leap in the number of child abuse cases reported.

During the 1970's both the breadth and depth of awareness of family violence increased. Straus (1974) proposed two cultural and social forces which helped facilitate this change. First, due to the war in southeast Asia, both researchers and the public became more sensitive to violence. Second, the upsurge in the women's movement highlighted the plight of battered women. It was during this time that one of the first books on domestic violence was written by Del Martin (1976) who organized and chaired the National Organization for Women's Task Force on Wife Battering. It was during the 1970's that feminists first began to contend that wife assault was not only a private issue but also a social issue (Loseke & Cahill, 1984).

Gelles (1980) proposed another factor that contributed to the increased interest in domestic violence. Researchers discovered in the 1970's that reliable and valid studies on domestic violence could be conducted. Early studies of

domestic violence were exploratory in nature, and primarily investigated the incidence and prevalence of the problem (Lewis, 1987; Kantor & Straus, 1987). There also began a movement for domestic violence research to look at psychological and sociological correlates of abuse; including socioeconomic status, drug or alcohol use, and personal stress experience.

During the 1980's research on domestic violence continued to grow in scope and improve in quality. The definition of domestic violence became more clearly stated and included anything from pushing and shoving to an assault with a weapon (Bograd, 1986; Walker 1984). Many previously held beliefs about battered women were recognized as myths. Such myths include the psychoanalytically based belief that women are masochistic and stay with men because women like being beaten. This belief has been strongly refuted. Another myth now discarded is that violence fills a deep-seated need, and this need attracts various partners to each other (Walker, 1984; Saunders & Size, 1986).

There has been an increase in the visibility of domestic violence over the last 20 years. It is still often the case, however, that the head of the household (usually a male) takes physical action against his wife. Obtaining accurate statistics on domestic violence is a difficult task. When domestic violence is recorded as a criminal

offense, it has to be ferreted out of a conglomerate of other crimes such as assault, battery, disorderly conduct, disturbing the peace and homicide (Hemmons, 1981). In addition, the definition of domestic violence varies from state to state, and even from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. To further complicate matters, there is a tendency for police departments to record calls as domestic disturbances rather than criminal assaults. The criminal justice agencies may then tend to view domestic violence as non-criminal (Erez, 1986). Therefore, compiling consistent data on domestic violence from a broad sample is still very difficult.

It has been estimated that over half (55%) of the incidences of domestic violence go unreported (Erez, 1986). What is recorded, however, is that every year approximately 1.8 million wives are beaten by their husbands (Bograd, 1986). Reports indicate that violence may occur in 30% (Straus, 1978) to 60% (Gelles, 1974) of all marriages. Gelles & Cornell (1985) state that estimates in a national sample report 30% of all married women in the United States experience physical abuse at some point in their marriage, and 13% or 5 million American wives have been chronically and severely abused by their husbands. Given sample biases and under-reporting, many of these estimates are believed to be quite conservative (Bograd, 1986; Resick & Reese, 1986).

Stark, Flintcraft, and Frazier (1983) discovered that in a large urban hospital, one-third of the women using the emergency room had injuries resulting from an assault by a male intimate (Dutton, 1987). In addition, 19% of all murders committed in the United States are women who were killed by husbands or lovers (Walker, 1984; Hemmons, 1981). It has been estimated in at least 60% of the cases in which a wife kills her husband, she is responding to violence committed against her (Saunders, 1988). Based on national family violence studies which record the incidence rate of domestic violence, there were no statistically significant increases or decreases in the rates of reported domestic violence from 1975 to 1985 (Saunders, 1988).

Abusive Relationships

According to Jackson & Ruston (1982) victims are made, not born. Studies done in the 1980's gave a clearer picture of when, and with whom, domestic violence occurs. A finding of little surprise is that couples who are experiencing violence in their marriage are also in marital distress (Holtzworth-Munroe, 1988; Walker, 1984). Dobash and Dobash (1984) found that two-thirds of domestic violence incidents began after some form of an argument. In addition, the predominant sources of conflict centered on three main issues: "... possessiveness and jealousy, demands concerning domestic labor and service, and money" (pg. 274).

Many women experience abuse from the beginning of their relationship. This abuse may happen first in courtship, and continue throughout the relationship which may last for years (Shields & Hanekke, 1983; Roscoe & Benaske, 1985; Gelles & Cornell, 1985). If a woman does leave, she often will return many times before terminating the relationship.

The greatest amount of domestic violence occurs when the spouses are under the age of thirty, and newer marriages (under five years) are more likely to be violent than marriages over five years (Straus et al., 1980; Roberts, 1987). As previously stated, a considerable amount of physical violence also exists in courtship (Shields & Hanekke, 1983; Gelles & Cornell, 1985). Roscoe & Benaske, (1985) found that 51% of the women in their study had been physically abused while dating the man they married.

Domestic violence investigations have found that abuse occurs with greater frequency in the summer, and it is often more severe. The majority of abuse occurs between 8 p.m. and 2 a.m., most frequently on Friday and Saturday nights. In addition, a domestic violence incident usually happens in the home. It generally occurs in the living room, with the bedroom being the next most frequent area. If abuse is experienced outside the home, it's usual occurrence is in a car. (Erez, 1986; Dobash & Dobash, 1979, 1984; Walker, 1979, 1984). Studies have found that battered women are not

likely to seek medical attention, even though their injuries are severe enough to warrant attention (Walker, 1979, 1984).

Research in the area of spousal abuse has looked at several factors in the abusive relationship including socioeconomic status, social isolation, family background of the batterer and victim, alcohol use, and criminal records of the batterer. Abusive couples can be found in all socioeconomic groups, all races and creeds. Violence in middle and upper-class families does occur, but it tends to be kept a secret. Middle and upper class families may feel strong societal pressures to keep up appearances, to live the American dream. Neighbors may not live in close proximity, and may not readily interfere or call the police. If the authorities are called, upper-class husbands may have success in keeping the police from arresting them. Nevertheless, it appears that the probability of domestic violence occurring in high income, upper-class homes is less likely than the probability of occurrence among lower-class homes (Gelles & Cornell, 1985), and there have been several explanations proposed for this finding.

Studies have shown that domestic violence is directly related to stress in the family. This stress may come from a variety of sources including unemployment or job dissatisfaction of the husband, financial problems, and pregnancy (Gelles, 1980). The lower the total family

income, the greater the probability of violence since economic constraints are very stressful (Dibble & Straus, 1980). Lewis (1987) found that abusive couples tend to have a mean annual income far below nonabusive couples.

Straus et al., (1980) showed that individuals in blue collar positions had a higher incidence of abuse than white collar workers. Blue collar families are sometimes described as the last bastion of patriarchy, and here the male is the provider and rules over the family (Kantor & Straus 1987). Because of lower paying jobs, the blue collar worker may be less able to fulfill the provider role, less able to live up to this expectation, feel frustrated and use violence against his wife (Dibble & Straus, 1980). He may be feeling powerless over circumstances in his life, and find that he feels powerful and regains power by abusing his wife.

In addition to experiencing economic constraints, abusive couples tend to be isolated and rarely interact socially with others (Hemmons, 1981; Resick & Reese, 1986). This social isolation increases the risk of violence directed toward the wife (Gelles, 1980). Social isolation adds another stressor on the relationship and decreases the probability that an abused wife will have a support system which would allow her to escape from the abuse (Walker, 1979, 1984).

Interpersonally, Hofeller (1982) found that violent husbands tend to be overcontrolled and rarely discuss feelings or express emotions other than anger. Battered wives have described their batterers as being unable to talk about problems in the marriage, and solve marital disagreements through violence (Resick & Reese, 1986; Gelles & Cornell, 1985).

Studies have documented that abusive patterns and violence can often be found in the childhood of batterers (Straus, 1979; Roberts 1987). 50-80% of all batterers were raised in families where wife battering was modeled by male authority figures (Roy, 1982; Buda & Butler, 1985; Roberts, 1987; Briere, 1987; Walker, 1984). In addition, the batterer may have been beaten in his childhood. These beatings provide the early socialization and modeling which is later reenacted in violent behavior. In addition, battered women often grow up in homes where there is domestic violence. Approximately 30% of women who are in an abusive relationship have been exposed to violence as children. (Buda & Butler, 1985; Lewis, 1987; Roscoe & Benaske, 1985). Thus, experiencing child abuse or witnessing parental spouse abuse in the family of origin may model both aggressor and victim behavior.

There is general agreement in the empirical literature that drug and alcohol abuse is found among batterers

(Roberts, 1987). Studying the relationship between alcohol and violence dates back to early research on child abuse, where findings show a correlation between alcohol and family violence (Kempe et al., 1962).

Percentages of batterers who are under the influence of alcohol when they abuse their wives range from 48% (Gelles, 1972) to 87% (Appleton, 1980). Most of the research indicates a 60-70% rate of alcohol abuse and a 13-20% rate of drug abuse among batterers (Hemmons, 1981; Roberts, 1987). One limitation of these studies is that they do not report the combination of drug and alcohol use (Roberts, 1987). Inconsistencies and contradictions regarding alcohol use in domestic violence is seen as a reflection of the wide variance in batterers' behavior (Bern, 1985).

Alcohol may contribute to abuse in several ways. By drinking, batterers can absolve themselves of their behavior. In other words, the alcohol is blamed for the abusive behavior, not the batterer (Gelles, 1980). A high degree of conflict and stress is inherent in the American family, especially in lower socioeconomic families. Alcohol may be used as a response to this stress and may either lead to marital discord or be a result of marital discord. (Bern, 1985; Kantor & Straus, 1987; Richardson & Campbell, 1980).

In addition to alcohol use, men who batter often have a criminal history. Studies consistently indicate that about

60% of batterers have had charges filed against them concerning their battering, and also have records of a prior felony or misdemeanor offense (Dutton, 1987; Roberts, 1987; Dibble & Straus, 1980). This would tend to support the belief that batterers are, as a group, a violent population (Walker, 1984).

If a man has a strong need for dominance and control, lacks non-abusive ways to realize such control, and is engaged in marital conflict, there is a possibility of spousal abuse. If he watched violence as a means of conflict resolution in his family of origin, the likelihood that he will be assaultive increases. If stressors such as job dissatisfaction and unemployment are present and he has few intimate friends or a support group, the likelihood of violence further increases. If he uses drugs or alcohol, the likelihood of violence increases once again. Finally, if he lives in a culture which has a policy of noninterference in family interactions, the likelihood of domestic violence occurring will increase once again.

Origin and Solution Responsibility

A battered woman is in a unique situation. She is clearly a victim of assault and abuse. However, the perpetrator of the abuse is someone with whom she is intimately involved (Saunders et al., 1987). Given this

unique situation one question researchers have investigated is who is responsible for the abuse occurring.

A review of the domestic violence literature (Loseke & Cahill, 1984; Saunders & Size, 1986) indicates theorists avoid viewing the woman as causing battering, and the husband is usually held responsible for the abuse. In actual abusive situations, there are indications that a woman may initially hold herself responsible for the abuse. As the relationship and the abuse continues, the victim shifts the responsibility of the abuse to the husband (Shields & Hanekke, 1983; Walker, 1979, 1984). Studies have investigated actual abusive situations, and have looked at self-blame vs husband-blame (Walker, 1984). It was found that the majority of victims did not blame themselves for the domestic violence. In addition, the women stated that they did not do anything to provoke the attack, nor did they deserve the domestic violence incident (Walker, 1979, 1984; Shields and Hanneke, 1983; Holtzworth-Munroe, 1988).

In addition to asking victims who is responsible for the abuse, there have been studies where third parties have been asked to identify who is responsible. The overall findings of these studies have found that the husband (the abuser) is viewed as being responsible for the abusive situation (Sugarman & Cohn, 1986; Cohn & Sugarman, 1980). Kalamuss (1979) found that people were more likely to

attribute responsibility to the husband or to both the husband and the wife. Only in very rare cases was the responsibility totally placed on the woman (the victim).

Thus the majority of research in the area of domestic violence has focused on who is responsible for the abuse, the origin component of the problem. There is another component to domestic violence which is finding a solution to the situation. When a woman does not leave a battering relationship or does not attempt to terminate the abuse, she is seen as being somewhat deviant (Sugarman & Cohn, 1986; Loseke & Cathill, 1984). Staying in an abusive relationship is seen as "unreasonable, normatively unexpected, and, therefore, deviant" (Loseke & Cathill, 1984; pg. 298). Although she may not be held as responsible for causing the abuse (origin) she is seen as being deviant if she stays, and seen as being responsible for finding a solution to the problem. Therefore, although abusers are viewed as being responsible for the origin of the abuse, the battered woman may be viewed as being responsible for finding a solution (Sugarman & Cohn, 1986; Loseke & Cathill, 1984).

Up until very recently, research in domestic violence only investigated who was responsible for the problem (Loseke & Cathill, 1984; Kalmuss, 1979; Sugarman & Cohn, 1986; Cohn & Sugarman, 1980). There was no distinction made between origin and solution responsibility. Brickman et. al

(1982) was one of the first to theoretically distinguish between the attributions of origin and solution responsibility. This theoretical stance was later investigated by Cohn & Sugarman (1986). Cohn and Sugarman found after reading a vignette, subjects held the battered woman more responsible for finding a solution to the problem than for the origin of the problem. Husbands, in turn, were held more responsible for the origin of the problem than for the solution to the problem. It would seem, therefore, that the origin and solution responsibility distinction is an important one to make.

Sex Linked Attributions

Another area that has been studied in the domestic violence literature is investigating whether men and women hold different views about battering. People tend to show more empathy toward someone of their same sex (Skiffington et al., 1983; Hansen & O'Leary, 1983). This also seems to be true in situations where people are assigning responsibility to a domestic violence situation. The roles in a wife abuse situation are sex linked, the sex of the individual making an attribution affects the nature of his/her attribution. Studies have shown that although men and women may both assign responsibility for domestic violence to the batterer, women assign more responsibility to the husband than do men (Sugarman & Cohn, 1986, Cohn &

Sugarman, 1980; Hansen & O'Leary, 1983; Skiffington et al., 1983).

Economic Constraints

It would appear that finding a solution to a domestic violence situation may be viewed as the woman's responsibility. One such solution is the woman leaving the relationship. This solution of leaving may be easier said than done. In a study done by Ewing and Aubrey (1987), "a clear majority (63.7%) of all observers appeared to subscribe to the 'myth' that a battered woman can 'simply leave' her batterer" (p 261).

Yet, 'simply leaving' her batterer is not an easy task. Women often experience economic entrapment in their intimate abusive relationships (Gelles & Cornell, 1985; Dobash & Dobash, 1979, 1984; Saunders, 1988). This economic constraint or economic dependence upon her husband may be a primary reason why she stays in an abusive relationship (Hemmons, 1981; Loseke & Cahill, 1984; Kalmuss, 1979; Holtzworth-Monroe, 1988; Shields & Hanekke, 1983; Walker 1979, 1984; Strube & Barbour, 1983). Pagelow (1981) interviewed over 260 women who had been abused and 90% stated they experienced financial hardships. These hardships included no cash, nowhere to go, no resources, and no way for her to support herself.

A woman's economic dependence may be so strong that separation appears more aversive than the continued abuse (Felthous, 1983). Even if a woman leaves her batterer, economic constraints are often one reason given for her not prosecuting her batterer, especially when children are involved (Felthous, 1983; McLeod, 1983).

Purpose and Hypotheses

In summary, domestic violence occurs in 1/3 of all marriages in the United States. The aftermath of this violence can lead to physical injuries or homicide, and psychological distress (Resick & Reese, 1986). This violence is found in all socioeconomic categories, although it appears to occur with greater frequency in lower socioeconomic classes. A primary reason given by many women as to why they stay in an abusive situation is that they are economically dependent upon their abuser.

It is important to investigate the attitudes of the general population towards domestic violence in order to help plan educational and supportive service programs directed at attitudinal and behavioral change (Kalmuss, 1979). The majority of research done in the area of domestic violence has not made a distinction between origin and solution responsibility (Shields & Hanekke, 1983; Sugarman & Cohn, 1986), and this distinction seems to be an important one. Cohn and Sugarman's 1986 study

distinguished between origin and solution responsibility and found that subjects were more likely to assign origin responsibility to the batterer, and solution responsibility to the victim.

The purpose of this study was to further examine the distinction between origin and solution responsibility in domestic violence situations. The current study proposed to assess the relationship between origin and solution responsibility and the economic situation of the woman. Victims of domestic violence have not been viewed to be responsible for the origin of the violence, but may be viewed as being responsible for finding a solution (Sugarman & Cohen, 1986). It was thus hypothesized that observers were more likely to assign solution responsibility than origin responsibility to the victim. It was also hypothesized that batterers would be assigned greater origin responsibility than solution responsibility.

As stated, a woman often stays in an abusive relationship because she is economically dependent upon her husband. It was felt that viewing a woman as economically dependent upon her husband may alter observers' perceptions of solution responsibility. It was hypothesized that a victim who was well educated and employed would be assigned higher solution responsibility than a victim who has little education and is not employed.

A second purpose of this study was to investigate sex differences among the observers' perceptions. It was hypothesized that female subjects would assign greater origin and solution responsibility to the male batterer than would male subjects. It was also hypothesized that male subjects would assign greater origin and solution responsibility to the female victim than would female subjects.

A final purpose of this study was exploratory in nature. It was hypothesized that subjects who held a more traditional view of women would see her as being more responsible for the origin of the abuse than those people who held a more contemporary view of women. In addition, it was hypothesized that those subjects who held a more contemporary view of women would see her as being more responsible for a solution than those subjects who held a more traditional view of women.

Chapter Two

Design:

The design of the present investigation is depicted in Table 1. A between groups design was employed, in which an equal number of male and female subjects were randomly assigned to one of two groups. The two groups differed on the manipulation of the independent variable of victim situation (High Education-Employment vs Limited Education-Unemployment). In analyzing this study a 2 x 2 factorial design was used with each of the dependent measures, using the Attitudes Toward Women Scale as a covariate. The Attitudes Toward Women Scale is a 25-item scale regarding the roles and responsibilities of women in society, ranging from "conservative" to "non-traditional" (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973). This scale is comprised of items with content in the areas of vocational, educational, and intellectual roles of women, freedom and independence, dating, courtship and etiquette, sexual behavior, and marital responsibilities and obligations.

Subjects:

Subjects for this investigation numbered 80; 40 male and 40 female undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Montana. These subjects were in an introductory psychology class and received experimental credit in exchange for participation in the study. Each

person who participated in the study was assigned to one of two experimental conditions; 40 subjects (20 male and 20 female) were assigned to each condition.

Materials:

Each subject was given an introductory paragraph (Appendix A) which briefly explained the experimental task. All subjects were given a vignette describing a domestic violence incident in which a wife was beaten by her husband (Appendix B and C). Half the subjects were given information that the wife was well educated and employed at a bank (High Education-Employed) and half the subjects were given information that the wife had little education and was unemployed (Limited Education-Unemployed). Each subject was also given a response questionnaire (Appendix D), and the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Appendix E). Before leaving, the subjects completed a demographic questionnaire (Appendix F).

Procedure:

Subjects were randomly assigned to one of two groups and read a vignette describing a domestic violence incident. In this vignette the female victim was either employed and well-educated, or unemployed with a limited education (Appendix B and C). Subjects individually read the case material and responded to the questionnaire (Appendix D). The questionnaire was based on a 7 point Lickert-type scale,

in which subjects rated how responsible the wife and the husband were for the origin and the solution of the domestic violence incident.

Subjects also filled out an Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Appendix E). This is a 25-item scale, with each item having four response alternatives. These items investigate attitudes about the vocational, educational, and intellectual roles of women, their freedom and independence, dating, courtship and etiquette, sexual behavior, and marital relationships and obligations (Appendix E).

Subjects were then asked demographic questions (Appendix F), and were asked if they, or someone in their immediate family has ever been involved in a domestic violence incident. When all subjects completed the questions they were debriefed about the purpose of the study. They were then informed that they must not discuss the study with anyone so as not to contaminate the experiment's results. Subjects were then asked to sign a statement agreeing not to discuss the study for eight weeks, and the packets were collected.

Chapter ThreeResults:

The Attitudes Toward Women Scale was not found to be significantly related to the dependent variables and therefore was not a useful covariate in this study. A 2x2 (High Education-Employment vs Limited Education-Unemployment) analysis of variance was used to analyze the dependent measures. No significant interactions for any of the dependent measures were found. There were, however, two main effects found to be significant. There was a significant main effect for Mary's responsibility for the origin of the incident when she had children $F(1,79)=3.39$, $p<.05$. The means when Mary had an education and was employed ($M = 3.3$) and when she had a limited education and was unemployed ($M = 4.2$) differed significantly from one another ($p<.05$). There was also a significant main effect for Mary's education and employment $F(1,79)=7.78$, $p<.01$, with regards to John's solution responsibility. John's responsibility for finding a solution in the case where he was unemployed and had a limited education was greater if Mary had a limited education and was unemployed ($M = 6.62$) than if she had an education and was employed ($M = 5.92$, $p<.01$).

Chapter FourDiscussion:

General Findings:

The primary purpose of this research was to examine the distinction between origin and solution responsibility in domestic violence situations. It was hypothesized that observers would be more likely to assign solution responsibility than origin responsibility to the victim. However, results of the present study demonstrate no significant differences in assigning origin and solution responsibility. The fact that no difference was found between origin and solution responsibility is surprising, given that Sugarman and Cohn (1986) had found such a significant difference.

Several hypotheses are proposed to explain this finding. It may be possible that with the ever-increasing publicity and knowledge regarding domestic violence that general public attitudes are beginning to change. Perhaps people are viewing the plight of a battered woman differently or in a less judgmental light than in the past. Another possibility is that some aspect of the experimental situation prevented subjects from making the predicted attributions. Possibly subjects were not involved in the vignette, and this uninvestment affected the results. The vignette may have been viewed as being unrealistic or the

domestic violence incident seen as being minor and therefore not taken seriously.

The results of this study do not indicate that the economic dependence of the woman changes the perception of solution responsibility. There were no differences found between subjects' perceptions of the woman's plight if she was well educated and employed or had a limited education and was unemployed. In addition there were no differences found between female subjects and male subjects in assigning origin and solution responsibility. Again, a possible hypothesis may be that men's and women's attitudes are beginning to change. In addition, subjects may not have aligned or strongly empathized with either John or Mary, therefore creating no gender differences.

In the past, women have been viewed as unable to financially support themselves. Perhaps this view is changing and people now view women as having more opportunities to be financially independent. If a woman is viewed as having the possibility to be economically independent this may affect how people view her ability to find a solution to domestic violence. It may be that regardless of a woman's education or employment, she is perceived as being able to find a solution to the problem of domestic violence. Possibly the unemployed Mary in the vignette was viewed as having resources available to her.

Although not stated in the vignette, resources such as social service agencies, family or friends may have been considered by the subjects as resources Mary could utilize.

Finally, the Attitudes Toward Women scale was not found to be a useful covariate with attributions of domestic violence. It appears that finding a useful covariate with attitudes toward domestic violence is a complex matter. Possibly there are more facets involved than whether or not people hold a more liberal or conservative attitude toward women. Some of these facets may include how informed people are about violence, in general, and domestic violence, and their personal experience with violence or abuse.

The non-significant results of this study may be due to several factors. As stated, peoples' attitudes toward domestic violence are possibly changing. Domestic violence has received ever increasing attention over the last ten years. Popular television shows depict domestic violence and abusive situations, and newspapers routinely include articles or reports about domestic violence (Walker, 1984). Perhaps with this increased exposure people are not only more informed, but are also changing their attitudes regarding domestic violence. With additional exposure it may be hypothesized that people would become sympathetic to the victim. If, indeed, this is happening, it remains

unclear why John was not held responsible for the origin of the abuse, or for finding a solution to the abuse.

The other end of the spectrum of possibilities would suggest that people are apathetic about domestic violence or that domestic violence is viewed as unimportant. Through the media, people are exposed to violent situations on a regular basis. The impact of violence in general may therefore be lessened. Possibly domestic violence is viewed as normative; a way of life. With the high incidence rates of domestic violence, individuals may continue to believe that domestic violence just happens, or that it's of little consequence. In addition, it may be that people did not feel invested in this domestic violence incident, or somehow viewed it as being unrealistic. Pilot work to investigate subjects' attitudes and reactions to a domestic violence vignette might prove beneficial in future studies.

Specific Findings:

There were two dependent measures showing significant results. Caution should be taken, however, in interpreting these results as they may be a product of Type I error. The first significant dependent measure was that subjects viewed Mary as being more responsible for the origin of the incident when there were children involved and she was unemployed and had a limited education. Mary was viewed as less responsible for the origin when she had children but

was educated and employed. Perhaps subjects viewed the Mary who was unemployed and had a limited education as possessing some negative characteristics. These characteristics could include lack of motivation and/or limited intellectual abilities to obtain an education or full time work.

Subjects may also have possessed some stereotypical views about women who stay home with their children, i.e. women who stay home with their children are bored, discontented, even possibly angry. If the woman is angry she may express this to her husband, possibly provoking arguments or other domestic disputes. Also people may hypothetically view a woman as being the protector of her children and therefore more responsible for preventing a violent incident. If the woman is a homemaker, people may view her as even more responsible for the protection of her children. Further research is needed to investigate these hypotheses.

When asked about solution responsibility if John had a limited education and was unemployed, subjects viewed his solution responsibility as greater when Mary had a limited education and was unemployed. When Mary had an education and was employed, subjects viewed John as having less solution responsibility. When Mary was unemployed and uneducated and if John was also unemployed and uneducated, subjects gave more solution responsibility to John. This finding may coincide with some of our cultural values. Our culture has

held, and continues to hold the value that men should be employed. This value reinforces the view that if John was employed he may be less likely to be frustrated or angry and therefore less likely to act out violently. Part of finding a solution to the problem would then be finding employment for John. What remains unclear is whether John's having an education or not having an education affects subjects' perceptions.

Conclusions:

Clearly further research is needed in the area of domestic violence. The present study did not find a significant difference in origin or solution responsibility in a given domestic violence incident. Future research needs to more fully investigate the distinction between origin and solution responsibility. This distinction is important and may be more complex than originally thought. Further research is needed to see if, indeed, there is a distinction, and under what circumstances this distinction is made. In addition, it may prove beneficial to investigate types of solutions that subjects may see available to the abuser and the victim. The author also recommends further research that would more fully ascertain how, and to what degree the general public's attitude toward domestic violence is affected by cultural values and/or apathy. Future research may wish to look at what an

individual's attitude is toward violence or abuse in general, in addition to a specific domestic violence incident.

Further investigation is also needed about several distinct factors affecting domestic violence situations: 1) how having children in a domestic violence vignette affects subjects' perceptions 2) the educational and employment status of the male abuser 3) the woman's educational level, employment and earning capacity 4) the ease with which subjects view her ability to leave. Perhaps with further research on domestic violence we will have a greater understanding of how to best impact the general public's perception of domestic violence and the abusive cycle.

Table One

Education

High Education
Employed

Limited Education
Unemployed

Males

--	--

Females

--	--

Appendix A

Thank you for being here today. To begin this study, you are going to read a description describing a domestic violence incident. You will then be asked questions regarding the incident, and will complete an additional scale. Finally, you will be asked some demographic questions.

Appendix B

Mary, age 27 and John, age 29, have been married for almost five years. Mary is a college graduate and is employed full time as a credit consultant at a bank. John is also a college graduate and is employed full time as a manager of a grocery store. On the evening of Saturday, July 19, after a brief argument, John struck Mary in the face three times and pushed her sharply against the kitchen counter. As a result of this incident, Mary suffered a bruised cheek and a cut lip. Mary did not receive any outside medical attention for this injury. Mary has received similar injuries from John during the past five years, and has had bruised ribs and facial contusions. She has never received medical attention for her injuries, and has not reported John to the authorities.

Appendix C

Mary, age 27, and John, age 29, have been married for almost five years. Mary dropped out of high school during her junior year. For several years before she was married she worked for minimum wage at a convenience store. Since she has been married she has occasionally babysat the neighbors' children, although often this was done for free. John is a college graduate and is employed full time as a manager of a grocery store. On the evening of Saturday, July 19, after a brief argument, John struck Mary in the face three times and pushed her sharply against the kitchen counter. As a result of this incident Mary suffered a bruised cheek, and a cut lip. Mary did not receive any outside medical attention for this injury. Mary has received similar injuries from John during the past five years, and has had bruised ribs and facial contusions. She has never received medical attention for her injuries, and has not reported John to the authorities.

Appendix D

Instructions: Please read the following questions and circle the one number which best describes how you feel. Answer all questions.

1. To what extent do you think that John is responsible for the origin of this incident?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not responsible		Moderately responsible			Very responsible	

2. To what extent do you think that Mary is responsible for the origin of this incident?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not responsible		Moderately responsible			Very responsible	

3. To what extent do you think that John is responsible for finding a solution to this incident?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not responsible		Moderately responsible			Very responsible	

4. To what extent do you think that Mary is responsible for finding a solution to this incident?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not responsible		Moderately responsible			Very responsible	

5. To what extent would John be responsible for the origin of this incident if he had an alcohol or drug problem?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not responsible		Moderately responsible			Very responsible	

6. To what extent would John be responsible for finding a solution to this incident if he had an alcohol or drug problem?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Not responsible Moderately responsible Very responsible

7. To what extent would Mary be responsible for the origin of this incident if John had an alcohol or drug problem?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Not responsible Moderately responsible Very responsible

8. To what extent would Mary be responsible for finding a solution to this incident if John had an alcohol or drug problem?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Not responsible Moderately responsible Very responsible

9. To what extent would John be responsible for the origin of this incident if they had children?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Not responsible Moderately responsible Very responsible

10. To what extent would John be responsible for finding a solution to this incident if they had children?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Not responsible Moderately responsible Very responsible

11. To what extent would Mary be responsible for the origin of this incident if they had children?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Not responsible Moderately responsible Very responsible

12. To what extent would Mary be responsible for finding a solution to this incident if they had children?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not responsible	Moderately responsible			Very responsible		

13. To what extent would John be responsible for the origin of this incident if he was unemployed and had little education?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not responsible	Moderately responsible			Very responsible		

14. To what extent would John be responsible for finding a solution to this incident if he was unemployed and had little education?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not responsible	Moderately responsible			Very responsible		

Appendix E

The statements listed below describe attitudes toward the role of women in society which different people have. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions. You are asked to express your feelings about each statement by indicating whether you (A) Agree strongly, (B) Agree mildly, (C) Disagree mildly, or (D) Disagree strongly. Please indicate your opinion by circling either A, B, C, or D. Please respond to every item.

1. Swearing and obscenity are more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man.
 - A. Agree Strongly
 - B. Agree Mildly
 - C. Disagree Mildly
 - D. Disagree Strongly

2. Women should take increasing responsibility for leadership in solving the intellectual and social problems of the day.
 - A. Agree Strongly
 - B. Agree Mildly
 - C. Disagree Mildly
 - D. Disagree Strongly

3. Both husband and wife should be allowed the same grounds for divorce.
 - A. Agree Strongly
 - B. Agree Mildly
 - C. Disagree Mildly
 - D. Disagree Strongly

4. Telling dirty jokes should be mostly a masculine prerogative.
 - A. Agree Strongly
 - B. Agree Mildly
 - C. Disagree Mildly
 - D. Disagree Strongly

5. Intoxication among women is worse than intoxication among men.
 - A. Agree Strongly
 - B. Agree Mildly
 - C. Disagree Mildly
 - D. Disagree Strongly

6. Under modern economic conditions with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as washing dishes and doing the laundry.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

7. It is insulting to women to have the "obey" clause remain in the marriage service.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

8. There should be a strict merit system in job appointment and promotion without regard to sex.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

9. A woman should be as free as a man to propose marriage.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

10. Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

11. Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally the expense when they go out together.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

12. Women should assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

13. A woman should not expect to go to exactly the same places or to have quite the same freedom of action as a man.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

14. Sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

15. It is ridiculous for a woman to run a locomotive and for a man to darn socks.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

16. In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of children.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

17. Women should be encouraged not to become sexually intimate with anyone before marriage, even their fiancés.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

18. The husband should not be favored by law over the wife in the disposal of family property or income.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

19. Women should be concerned with their duties of childbearing and house tending, rather than with desires for professional and business careers.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

20. The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

21. Economic and social freedom is worth far more to women than acceptance of the ideal of femininity which has been set up by men.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

22. On the average, women should be regarded as less capable of contributing to economic production than are men.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

23. There are many jobs in which men should be given preference over women being hired or promoted.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

24. Women should be given equal opportunity with men for apprenticeship in the various trades.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

25. The modern girl is entitled to the same freedom from regulation and control that is given to the modern boy.

- A. Agree Strongly
- B. Agree Mildly
- C. Disagree Mildly
- D. Disagree Strongly

Appendix F

Please provide the information asked for below. Everything will be held strictly confidential.

Age _____

Sex M F (Circle one)

Year in college 1 2 3 4 Grad (Circle one)

Major

Marital Status (Check the one that currently applies to you)

- Single
 Divorced
 Cohabiting
 Married

Have you, or has anyone in your immediate family, been the victim or perpetrator of domestic violence (Including hitting, slapping, shoving, biting or kicking)? Yes No
(Circle one)

If yes, what was the nature of the incident(s):

I, (do, do not) promise not to discuss the nature of this research with anyone for a period of two months. (Circle one).

Appendix G

Demographic Variables

	<u>n</u>
High Education/Employed	40
Limited Education/Unemployed	40
Gender	
Male	40
Female	40
Year in College	
Freshman	41
Sophomore	25
Junior	6
Senior	6
Graduate	2
Marital Status	
Single	59
Divorced	8
Cohabiting	2
Married	11
Victim or Perpetrator of Domestic Violence	38
Age	
Mean	23
Median	20
Standard Deviation	8

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