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Wife-beating among 'coloureds' in South Africa: Its Impact on the marital relationship

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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology.

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I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work, and that it has not been submitted at another university.

I.A. ADAMS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to assess the impact of wife-beating and marital satisfaction on the marital relationship. Due to research and interest in the area of wife abuse being only a recent phenomenon, the impact of wife-beating on the marital relationship had not previously been researched. The findings of this study would have important implications for the treatment of wife abuse. This study assessed the impact of wife-beating and marital satisfaction on the following dimensions of the marital relationship: communication, sexual satisfaction, disharmony, feelings toward the spouse, commitment to the relationship and the dissolution potential of the relationship. Standardised self-report questionnaires measuring the above dimensions of the marital relationship were administered to three groups of women. These three groups of women comprised of a group of 15 satisfactorily married, non-abused women, a group of 20 unsatisfactorily married, non-abused women and a group of 20 unsatisfactorily married, abused women. Women were selected and assigned to one of the three groups on the basis of scores obtained on the Short Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (Locke & Wallace, 1959) and the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979). The inclusion of the group of unsatisfactorily married, non-abused women was crucial and partially controlled for the effects of marital discord. The data from the above-cited dimensions of the marital relationships were statistically analysed using a multivariate statistic MANOVA, followed by , where appropriate, parametric ANOVAS and Scheffé comparisons or non-parametric Mann Whitney U tests. Battered women were found to differ significantly (at the .05 level of significance) from both comparison groups in their commitment to the relationship, level of disharmony in the relationship and their feelings toward the spouse. The importance of these findings for the theory that battered women are masochistic was discussed. In addition, the implications of these findings for the treatment of abusive couples were discussed and suggestions for future research were made.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Although wife-beating is an age-old tradition and has been in existence for centuries (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Pleck 1979; Yllo, 1983), it has only recently become the focus of concern and empirical research (O'Brien, 1971; Gelles, 1974, 1976; Dobash & Dobash, 1979, Freeman, 1980; Dibble & Straus, 1980; Ferraro & Johnson, 1983). The empirical research on wife-beating has mainly been concerned with establishing reliable estimates of the problem, identifying the various factors associated with wife-beating and developing theoretical models for the causes of wife-beating (Gelles, 1980). While the problem of wife abuse has shifted from "selective inattention" to "high priority social issue" (Straus, 1974: Moore, 1979), when the effects of wife-beating have been researched, attention has been confined to the effects of wife-beating on the victims (Gayford, 1975; Hilberman & Munson, 1977-78; Pfouts, 1978; Rounsaville, 1978) and the children in the battering relationship (Scott, 1974; Gayford, 1975; Hilberman & Munson, 1977-78; Lawrence, 1984). A gap therefore exists in the literature, since the effects of wife-beating on the marital relationship have not previously been researched. Research in the area of marital relations has typically concerned itself with determining the "causes" of marital satisfaction and dissatisfaction and marital stability and instability among happily and unhappily-married couples (Hicks & Platt, 1970; Renne, 1970; Snyder, 1979; Bentler & Newcomb, 1978; Price-Bohnham & Balswick, 1980; Spanier & Lewis, 1980). The marital relationships of that sub-group of unhappily married couples in which men batter their wives, have not been the focus of research in the area of marital relations either.

The purpose of this research is to assess the effect of wife-beating and marital satisfaction on the marital

relationship as measured by the following variables: communication, positive feelings toward the spouse, sexual satisfaction, level of disharmony in the relationship, level of commitment to the relationship, and finally, the dissolution potential of the relationship. Standardised measures of the above variables will be utilised in this study and will reflect women's self-reports of their relationships. The above cited variables have been chosen as indices of the marital relationship because they break down the marital relationship into specific analysable components and measure the functioning of the relationships on a number of important dimensions previously found to be positively correlated with marital satisfaction (Hicks & Platt, 1970; Markman, 1979, 1981; Lewis & Spanier, 1980; Turkewitz & O'Leary, 1981; Beach & Broderick, 1983; O'Leary & Arias, 1983; O'Leary, Fincham & Turkewitz, 1983). The results of this study will therefore provide an index of the functioning of couples in the abovementioned dimensions of the marital relationships and in so doing, will provide a picture of the general tone or quality of these relationships. In this study, two comparison groups will be utilised, that is, unhappily married, abused women's relationships will be compared with a group of happily married, non-abused women and a group of unhappily married, non-abused women. The latter group was introduced in order to partially control for the confounding effects of marital discord (Discussed in chapter 9).

Rationale and Hypotheses for the Present Study

Previous research has established that wife-beating is a serious and widespread problem (Straus, et al, 1980; Lawrence, 1984) which has important emotional, cognitive, physical and social sequelae (Levinger, 1966; Gelles, 1974; Hilberman and Munson, 1977-78; Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981). It has also been established that physical abuse as a strategy for coping with stress or conflict is passed on from generation to generation (Spinetta & Rigler, 1972; Gelles, 1974; Owens & Straus,

1975; Steinmetz, 1977). These constitute important reasons for studying the problem of wife-beating.

However, it seems important for several reasons to specifically assess the impact of wife-beating on the marital relationship. First, previous research has established that battering occurs to a large extent because of a real or perceived lack of resources or the powerlessness of either partner or both partners in the marital relationship (to be discussed below). These lack of resources include for example, men's lack of resources to fulfill their leadership roles, regardless of whether the lack of resources are economic, social, educational or occupational (Goode, 1971; Nichols, 1976; Flynn, 1977; Prescott & Lekto, 1977; Hornung et al, 1981). Women who lack resources and are excessively dependant on their men, either psychologically or economically have been found to be more vulnerable to being beaten by their partners (Straus, 1973; Yllo, 1983). Couples who are socially isolated and lack a support network have also been found to run a high risk of the occurrence of wife-beating (Ball, 1977; Maden & Wrench, 1977; Ostbloom & Crase, 1980). Given that a lack of resources or powerlessness is often associated with wife-beating, it may well be that wife-beating occurs because of a lack of resources within the marital relationship. For example, inadequate communication would represent such a lack. Such findings would have important implications for treatment. Second, it may well be that wife-beating has an impact on only some of the areas of the relationship, while other areas remain unaffected. This too would have important implications for therapy. Third, the tenacity of both partners to the marital relationship has been noted in previous research and has resulted in the theory that battered women remain in the relationship because they have a personality flaw, that is, that they are masochistic (Schultz, 1960; Snell et al, 1964; Faulk, 1974). If the battering couple have a sado-masochistic relationship, the beatings cannot be presumed to have an adverse effect on the marital

relationship. Therefore, the results of the present study, through an assessment of the functioning of the couple in several areas of the relationship, will test the hypothesis that battered women are masochistic.

The specific hypothesis of this study are as follows:

1. Unhappily married, abused women will report a poorer quality of communication in their marital relationships than both control groups.
2. Unhappily married, abused women will express the higher level of sexual dissatisfaction in their relationships compared to both control groups.
3. Unhappily married abused women will report a higher level of disharmony or unresolved differences in their relationships than both control groups.
4. Unhappily married, abused women will report the most negative feelings toward their spouses of all three groups.
5. Unhappily married, abused women will express the lowest level of commitment to their relationships.
6. Unhappily married, abused women will have the greater dissolution potential for their relationships compared to both control groups.

Research in both America and Britain has consistently found that Blacks are especially vulnerable to both marital dissatisfaction / unhappiness and wife-beating due to several socioeconomic and political deprivations which will be discussed below (Renne, 1970; Steinmetz, 1977; Prescott & Lekto, 1977; Moore, 1979; Spanier & Lewis, 1980; Straus, Gelles & Steinmetz, 1980). In the chapters which follow, this study will therefore attempt to establish if the same factors found to be associated with wife-beating in America and Britain are associated with wife-beating in South Africa (S.A.). It will also be argued that the factors found to be associated with wife-beating and marital dissatisfaction in America and

Britain which render the lower socioeconomic statuses, especially Blacks, more vulnerable, are exacerbated by the capitalist economic, social and political structure of South Africa. In addition, it will be argued that the social, economic and political structure of South Africa results in additional sources of stress and frustration which increases the likelihood that wife-beating will occur more frequently amongst Black people in South Africa. Patriarchy and its relevance as a cause of wife-beating among the lower socioeconomic statuses of South Africa, specifically Blacks, will also be examined. In this study it is proposed that these two structural conditions, that is, a capitalist economic, social and political system and the patriarchal social and family system, interact to create all the specific causes of wife abuse reported in the literature (discussed below). Furthermore, the theory of battered women's masochism will be critically reviewed and its implications for this research discussed. In conclusion, a summary of the literature on marital satisfaction will be presented.

Since the focus of this research is wife-beating, the terms family violence, spouse abuse and wife abuse will refer exclusively to wife-beating. Also the term Black will be used to refer to Coloureds, Indians and Africans. Using one classification label for these three groups is justified in a South African context since these groups together comprise the oppressed majority. As such there are commonalities in their material existence in that they are all politically, economically and socially deprived groups. For instance, oppresive legislation such as the Group Areas Act applies equally to all three groups. All three groups also receive inferior education.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE PROBLEM OF WIFE-BEATING

As stated earlier, previous research has indicated that wife abuse is an extensive and serious problem (Straus et al, 1980; Lawrence, 1984). Both the extent of the problem of wife abuse as well as the nature of the problem (that is, the social, physical, emotional and psychological consequences of abuse for both the victims of abuse, as well as the children in abusive relationships) constitute important reasons for studying the problem. Gelles (1979) remarks that women are most likely to be hit, beaten up, physically injured or even killed in their own families than anywhere else or by anyone else. However, to date no reliable statistics on the extent of the problem exists in either America or Britain (Straus et al, 1980). In South Africa a paucity of research on the problem exists even though it is the writer's opinion that its occurence is much higher here than in the abovenamed two countries. The lack of reliable estimates of the problem is attributable to reliance on indirect methods of assessing the extent of the problem as well as the sensitive nature of the problem (Gelles, 1980; Straus et al, 1980).

Reliance on indirect methods in assessing the extent of the problem of wife-beating in South Africa is problematic as marital violence cases are classified by police in other more general categories such as "general assault" and by welfare agencies as "marital problems". Hospital records are not reliable either, as women are reluctant to tell the truth about how they sustained their injuries (Lawrence, 1984). However, Lawrence (1984) reports that at a symposium on battered women held at the University of Pretoria, the fact that marriage is the most violent institution in South Africa today, was high-lighted. It was also stated at this symposium that South Africans are known to be aggressive persons who vent their

aggressions through contact sport, and that child and wife-beating would increase in view of the fact that South Africans live in a frustrating society with a complicated economic and political climate. Furthermore, it was stated at the symposium that according to available statistics, marital violence in South Africa is present in 50% to 60% of marriages and that one out of every four women in such relationships attempt suicide, one out of every three starts drinking, and one out of every ten abuses drugs. Also rape in marriages occurs often.

In a study conducted by Dr Peet Pienaar in 1979 (Lawrence, 1984) he reported that 3 500 women in South Africa were battered annually, and of these 40 to 50 died as a result of the injuries sustained, 1140 were seriously injured and 1520 were emotionally damaged. Lawrence (1984), in her study of wife-beating among "Coloured" people in Mitchells Plain in the Cape, reports that the majority of social workers in that area and outside Mitchells Plain, reported that up to 25% of their caseloads in their present posts were wife-beating cases. Lawrence also reports that the South African Police in Mitchells Plain state that they received 25 reports of wife-beating per month in 1981 and that wife assault accounted for more than 15% of the reported crimes in 1981 and 1982. This made wife assault the highest violent crime reported to the police. Clearly wife-beating is a serious social problem in South Africa, and probably occurs with greater frequency amongst Black people in South Africa due to their social, economic and political deprivations.

Statistics on the extent of the problem in both Britain and the United States have also been variable and problematic. Gelles (1980) suggests that this is due to the absence of laws mandating the reporting of wife abuse and the reliance on indirect measures. Many experts cite the incidence as high as 60% (Gelles, 1974; Walker, 1979), and even the conservative

aggressions through contact sport, and that child and wife-beating would increase in view of the fact that South Africans live in a frustrating society with a complicated economic and political climate. Furthermore, it was stated at the symposium that according to available statistics, marital violence in South Africa is present in 50% to 60% of marriages and that one out of every four women in such relationships attempt suicide, one out of every three starts drinking, and one out of every ten abuses drugs. Also rape in marriages occurs often.

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estimate arrived at from an allegedly representative national sample in the United States, indicates that almost 30% of married women (15 million) experience some physical spouse abuse at some point in their marriages (Straus et al, 1980). Straus et al (1980) further state that sixteen percent reported some kind of physical abuse between spouses during the year of the survey and 3.8% were victims of acts of violence which could be considered "wife-battering". Straus et al (1980) report that this is probably an underestimate of the true level of family violence since the study had methodological difficulties. Research has also clearly demonstrated that men's abuse of women is the predominant form of spouse abuse despite empirical evidence suggesting the reverse pattern (Straus et al, 1980; Frieze, 1979; Walker, 1981).

Research in Britain and America has also found that as a result of injuries sustained, abused women frequently receive physical injuries requiring medical attention or hospitalisation; in some cases permanent physical disabilities such as blindness, result (Hilberman & Munson, 1977-78). On the extreme of the continuum of wife abuse many women are murdered annually. Statistics on homicides in several countries range between 13% and 31% for wives killed by their husbands (Wolfgang, 1958 as cited in Steinmetz, 1978; Truninger, 1971; Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Marital violence is frequently cited as grounds for divorce (Levinger, 1966; Flynn, 1977; O'Brien, 1971), and there appears to be a strong relationship between alcohol and drug abuse and marital violence (Gelles, 1974; Roy, 1977; Eisenberg & Micklow, 1977). Marital violence is correlated with child abuse and child behaviour problems (Hilberman & Munson, 1978; Rounsaville, 1978a). Gayford (1975) reports that 18% of his abused sample of 100 women, report chronic physical illness related to the stress of abuse. Almost 50% of his sample had been diagnosed as clinically depressed and a similar finding is reported by Rounsaville (1978a). Seventy-one percent of Gayford's sample were taking

tranquilizers or antidepressants and 53% had attempted suicide at least once. Hilberman & Munson (1977-78) also report that their entire sample made frequent visits to local physicians for somatic complaints, anxiety, insomnia or suicidal behaviour. Similarly Pfouts (1978) reports a high incidence of anxiety and depression amongst her sample and states that in some cases wives are driven to alcoholism, suicide or even murder.

Not only does wife-beating have serious physical and psychological effects on the victims and the children in battering relationships, but it also exacts a high social cost. It is the writer's opinion that part of the social cost is the effect wife-beating has on the marital relationship. If wife-beating does have an adverse effect on the marital relationship and results in the deterioration in the quality of the marital relationship, not only do all the family members suffer emotionally under the stress and tensions of a bad marriage while it is still intact, but it could lead to the dissolution of the relationship and all the social costs usually involved in a divorce. If wife-beating has such a serious effect on the victims and children, it seems highly improbable that the marital relationship will remain unaffected.

CHAPTER THREE

WIFE-BEATING AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN CAPITALIST ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Gelles (1980), in a review of the literature on family violence, states that the problem of wife abuse has been approached from three theoretical levels of analysis: 1) the intra-individual or the psychopathological model, 2) the social-psychological model, and 3) the socio-cultural model. The social-psychological model assumes that wife abuse can best be understood through a careful examination of the interaction between the individual and his social environment while the socio-cultural model assumes that wife-beating can best be understood though an examination of the interaction between socio-cultural factors and the individual. The body o research which grew out of the use of the social-psychological model in America and Britain (to be discussed in this chapter), has consistently found that people in the lower socioeconomic statuses are more vulnerable to wife abuse due to several social, economic and political deprivations (Prescott & Lekto, 1977; Steinmetz, 1977; Moore, 1979; Straus et al, 1980). It would appear that lower socio-economic status results in fewer resources and a position of powerlessness which exposes lower socio-economic status individuals to more of the stress and frustration producing situations which have been established in previous research to be associated with wife-beating (Gelles, 1980; Struas et al, 1980). Therefore, it is the writer's opinion that wife-beating is related to a capitalist economic, social and political structure which is based on class distinctions.

In S.A. class and race are confounded, so that Black people largely comprise the lower socio-economic status groups. Therefore, wife-beating can be expected to occur more frequently amongst Blacks in S.A.. The confounding of race and class in S.A. is attributable to the institutionalised Apartheid System

and legislation such as the Job Reservations Act and inferior education for Blacks. Furthermore, the socio-cultural factors found to be associated with wife abuse (discussed in chapter 4) appear to have the structural condition of patriarchy underlying the specific factors reported to be associated with wife abuse in this area of research. The psychopathological model, on the other hand, has been concerned with establishing the intra-individual factors associated with wife abuse. This model has been severely criticised for inadvertantly blaming the victims for their own abuse as well as for the patriarchal values which underlie the psycho-analytic ideology the model adopts (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Since the focus of this research is the impact of abuse of the marital relationship results of research using the latter model will be referred to only when it has a direct bearing on relationship issues.

Some South African research supports the contention that wife-beating occurs with greater frequency amongst Blacks. Statistics kept by Marriage and Family Life in Durban from 1983 to 1984, indicate that 12% of White cases mentioned violence in the home as a problem, whilst this was the case for 33% of Coloured cases and 40% of Indian cases (Lawrence, 1984). In 1982 Slabbert (as cited in Lawrence, 1984), in a study of 60 family case histories of all population groups, established that violent incidents occur in one out of every three families in lower socioeconomic-income areas, in one out of every five families in middle-income areas and one out of every seven families in upper-income areas. Not only does the confounding of race and class make it more likely that wife-beating will occur more frequently amongst Black South Africans, but it is also probable that the political, social and economic structure of South Africa produces additional sources of stress and frustration which increases the likelihood of wife abuse amongst Blacks.

STRESS

There seems to be general consensus that frustration or stress

one of the major reasons men will beat their partners. Most of these frustrations have little to do with the woman, but are related to general measures of stress (Gil, 1970 as cited in Gelles, 1980; Maden & Wrench, 1977; Straus et al, 1980). The frustrations may relate to work, money, interpersonal relationships outside the home or parenting pressures. If men accept the cultural image of themselves as strong, in control and unemotional, they may be unable to talk about their frustrations with anyone. Stress then leads to a violent eruption with the wife as the target (Moore, 1979). Research also seems to indicate that because of a lack of sufficient legitimate channels (eg work, politics, etc) in which the man can prove his competence, he may beat his wife in order to gain a sense of potency (Renne, 1970; Goode, 1971). It is also probable that a tradition of women's oppression and physical abuse, and their relative powerlessness in society aids in making wives easy targets. Violence is reported to be related to specific stressful situations and conditions as well as more general stressful situations in previous literature (Gelles, 1974; Prescott & Lekto, 1977, Rounsaville, 1978a).

Specific Stressful Situations and Conditions

a) Pregnancy - wives describe the beatings they receive when pregnant as particularly brutal. It is hypothesised that the beatings are related to the financial and emotional stress accompanying pregnancy (Gelles, 1975; Prescott & Lekto, 1977; Steinmetz, 1977). Prescott & Lekto have established that the lower socioeconomic groups tend to have larger families.

b) Research in America and Britain has shown that unemployment or part-time employment of males with its concommitant stress related to financial problems, as well as financial problems even when unemployment is not an issue,(Prescott &

Lekto, 1977) are related to wife-beating (Nichols, 1976; Flynn, 1977; Prescott & Lekto, 1977; Scanzoni, 1979). For men, establishing themselves as economically sucessful is an important criterion for adequate fulfillment of the role of husband and father (Nichols, 1976; Flynn, 1977). The power of the husband has been reported to be perceived as positively related to the amount of resources he accrues through his work (Scanzoni, 1979). In research done on American Blacks, Renne (1970) states that the domestic problems Black couples have can be attributed primarily to economic deprivation. Economic deprivation, he asserts, imposes a strain on a marriage, not only because it is more difficult to live without money, but also because an inadequate income represents for many couples, the husband's failure to perform satisfactorily as a provider. This affects the husband's self-respect and the wife's regard for him adversely. Renne reports that Black men express double the amount of marital dissatisfaction than White men and that this difference is due to socioeconomic status. Furthermore, it appears that for Black women, neither education nor affluence compensates for being Black as they express more marital dissatisfaction than White women at the same income or educational level. Renne suggests that hostility and neglect encountered in a White-dominated society damages family life for women, particulary women raising children, more than for men. Black wives are far more likely to be working to supplement the family income than White women, and Renne states that this allows Black men fewer alternatives for proving their masculine competence; that Black men have been deprived by systematic discrimination and exclusion of the primary means available to White men for expressing masculine competence. Consequently, when men feel threatened in their role as provider and perceive themselves as powerless, they may resort to violence as an alternate means for expressing their authority in the family (Parke & Collmer,

1975; Prescott & Letko, 1977; Flemming, 1979; Straus et al, 1980). The husband's lack of resources as a cause of wife-beating will be discussed again in the chapter on patriarchy, as a lack of resources and the patriarchal ideology are closely bound together.

c) Rounsaville (1978a) and Gelles (1974) report another source of stress in battering relationships which is also widely associated with marital disharmony as well as socio-economic status. Battered women frequently marry under the age of 20, marry after less than one year of courtship, are frequently pregnant before marriage and Rounsaville reports that 28% of the men and women in his sample had had previous marriages.

Apart from general measures of stress which will be discussed below, Lawrence's (1984) findings for violent Coloured couples in the Cape as regards the above specific stressful situations concur with those reported in the research conducted in America and Britain. Her subjects reported socioeconomic problems such as financial problems, and other social problems related to this (eg instability, insecurity, alcoholism, drug abuse etc), caused high stress and frustration among them. Arguments about money (80% of cases) sexual jealousy (73% of cases), and sexual refusal (66% of cases) were reported to most frequently lead to violent episodes. In addition, 31% of her subjects reported that arguments about unemployment led to marital violence, and concurring with Gelles (1974) and Rounsaville's (1978a) findings, 37% of the wives said they married because they had children from the partner or had fallen pregnant with a second or third child.

Lawrence's (1984) findings show that similar specific stressful factors reported in the literature in America and Britain, are associated with wife-beating amongst Coloured

families in the Cape. These stressful factors have nothing to do with the woman, but are more clearly related to socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status in turn is related to the economic structure in South Africa, which is a capitalist one, based on class distinctions. In a capitalist economic system the lower-classes have fewer resources and power due to their economic, social and political deprivation, and therefore are more vulnerable to stress and frustration which increases the likelihood of wife abuse. A lack of resources and power amongst Blacks is in turn exacerbated by institutionalised discriminiation against Blacks, increasing the risk of wife abuse amongst them. The structural conditions in South Africa, such as job reservation and inferior education, result in a large proportion of Blacks occupying unskilled and semi-skilled positions and Blacks generally receiving lower remuneration for work done. Combined with the fact that Blacks tend to have larger families (Institute of Race Relations, 1984), this makes it probable that Black families will experience serious economic problems and stress related to these factors. *However, as stated previously, the capitalist* economic, social and political structure generates additional stresses and frustrations for Blacks and is peculiar to the S.A. context.

Additional Sources of Stress

a) Social Isolation

Another major finding in the wife abuse literature is that social isolation as a result of lack of close interpersonal friendships, isolation from the extended family, being poorly integrated into the community, and the high privacy accorded to the family, all raise the risk of severe violence being directed at family members (Ball, 1977; Maden & Wrench, 1977; Gil, 1970, as cited in Steinmetz,

1977). Violent couples have been viewed as unable to command the resources necessary for adequate responding to inordinate stress (Ostbloom & Crase, 1980), since the resources utilised are not necessarily limited to those they share between them. Other support networks may be turned to for financial or emotional support, but many abusive couples lack such networks (Barnett, Pittman, Ragan, & Salus, 1980). Isolation of the violent couple may be self-induced (Steinmetz, 1978) and isolation of the wife often occurs due to possessive husband's attemps at controlling their wives (Wetzel & Ross, 1983). Lawrence (1984) reports that forced Group Areas Removals had isolated the majority (55%) of the battering couples from extended family and friends, and that there was low community cohesiveness in Mitchells Plain due to people from different social and cultural backgrounds being forced to live together in a common geographic area. Therefore forced Group Areas removals in South Africa, which are politically motivated, and occur on a large scale (Manganyi, 1973) tends to make Blacks more vulnerable to wife abuse by severing ties with potential support networks such as extended family and friends.

b) General Measures of Stress

Commenting on more general measures of stress, the British Association of Social Workers (as cited in Freeman, 1980) summed up the structural factors resulting in frustration, stress and blocked goals shown to be related to the use of violence in the family in the following way:

> "economic conditions, low wages, bad-housing, overcrowding and isolation, unfavourable and frustrating work conditions for the man; lack of job opportunities for adolescents/school leavers, and lack of facilities such as day care (eg nurseries), adequate transport, pleasant environment and play space, and recreational facilities for mothers and children were considered to cause personal desperation that might precipitate violence in the home" (p.139).

Lawrence's (1984) report of the living conditions of people in Mitchells Plain where approximately 150 000 people are housed, is very similar to the living conditions described above. Lawrence reports that Mitchells Plain was created partly due to a growing housing shortage, but also motivated by the government's aim to control people through geographic and racial segregation. In addition, house ownership was seen at governmental level to guard against political unrest. The end result was a dormitory town with 100 000 commuters working mainly in the city 27 kilometres away. The government intends to finally house 250 000 people in this area.

In a study done by the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation (NICRO) in 1982-83 (as cited in Lawrence, 1984) they described Mitchells Plain as follows:

a) There exists a lack of:
   i) adequate facilities and amenities (such as health and educational institutions, day care centres, proper transport and housing, employment opportunities, adequately equipped play-parks, lack of sport and recreational activities)
   ii) police control
   iii) community cohesiveness
b) geographic isolation
c) poor educational opportunities
d) increasing unemployment
e) housing shortages
f) an increasing rate of crime and social pathology.

Additional factors reported by NICRO to have caused further bitterness and frustration among the residents were:

a) that facilities and amenities have by no means been what had originally been promised. Those which have been provided were inadequate to meet the needs of the large population;

b) that residents were forced to live so far away due to the housing shortage and the Group Areas Act;
c) that the residents were not consulted, nor were they part of the decision making process affecting the move to the area;
d) that the residents have to pay the development costs of Mitchells Plain when in fact Mitchells Plain was not their choice, but the state's choice;
e) forced Group Areas Removals have burdened the residents with added financial costs and have disrupted communities.

It is the writer's opinion that the frustrations and stresses that Black people experience due to their living conditions and political factors (inherent in the social, political and economic structure of South Africa) probably create additional sources of stress for Blacks besides the factors commonly found to be associated with the use of violence in the family. The above report on Mitchell's Plain, which is characteristic of most other Black townships, illustrates Black people's social, political and economic deprivations and their resultant powerlessness, which probably makes Black men more vulnerable to abusing their wives.

c) Low Job Satisfaction and Alcohol Use

Research has demonstrated that marital violence is more common when husband and wife report low job satisfaction (Prescott & Lekto, 1977) and where there are alcohol problems (Gelles, 1974; Scott, 1974; Gayford, 1975; Eisenberg & Micklow, 1977; Hilberman & Munson, 1977-78; Ganley & Harris, 1978; Walker, 1979). Alcohol use is frequently associated with wife-beating as well as marital discord (Snell et al, 1964; Gayford, 1975; Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981). Gelles (1974) reports that drinking accompanied violence in 42% of his sample. Hillberman & Munson (1977-78) found this to be the case in 93% of her sample; in Gayford's (1975) sample, drinking accompanied

violence in 52% of cases. While the use of alcohol or drugs is not necessarily thought to "cause" the violence, it does facilitate abuse by allowing the batterer to avoid personal responsiblity for the violence by attributing the cause of his behaviour to being intoxicated (Gelles, 1974; Richardson & Campbell, 1980). Martin (1976) found that drinking served as a trigger for long-standing marital quarrels and Walker (1979) suggests that substance abuse and wife-beating are related in that they are both indicative of the abuser's style of coping with stress.

The Black people of South Africa tend to be more susceptible to greater alcohol use and alcoholism than Whites due to the frustrations they encounter within the socio-political and economic structure of South Africa. Not only has the Group Areas Act of 1950 uprooted and resettled whole communities, resulting in feelings of isolation and weakening supportive interpersonal relationships, but many of the areas relegated to Blacks have become slums in which there is greater tolerance of deviant behaviour (Epstein, 1973; Swinson & Eaves, 1978) and drunkenness is not only tolerated, but heavy drinking patterns are encouraged. Overcrowding due to large families and an acute housing shortage is common, resulting in lack of privacy which Sachs (1962) reports as a factor leading to seeking refuge or entertaining friends in shebeens. In 1968 Williams (as cited in Swinson & Eaves, 1978), in a study of Black American college students, found that there was pervasive heavy drinking amongst Black students which he attributed to subcultural permissiveness and drinking to block out frustrations. In fact, nine out of ten subjects drank for reality-modifying effects and 76% of the drinkers were preoccupied with drinking. There is a lack of appropriate and sufficient recreational facilities in Black Areas in South Africa, leading to boredom and frustration which Rabson (1965) cites as a cause of drinking amongst Coloureds. Due to lack of recreational facilites

Lötter & Schmidt (1975) have found that shebeens serve an important social function and drinking has become a social activity in itself. The nature of shebeens also encourages excessive drinking: they have no fixed opening and closing times, credit is extended to regular customers and alcohol is sold per bottle, half bottle and quarter bottle only (Lötter & Schmidt, 1975; Sachs, 1962).

Epstein (1973) in her study of the Coloured people in Riverlea, found that unrewarding and unchallenging jobs were frequently cited as reasons for drinking. Job dissatisfaction amongst Blacks, which is related to both Job Reservation and inferior education has, according to Fortuin (1973) and Mohare (1981), given birth to a "weekend drinking" tradition amongst Blacks. Under these conditions, they report, alcohol is seldom used moderately.

Another factor related to the high level of alcohol consumption amongst Blacks is the distribution of power and authority in Black families where distinct differences are revealed between lower and higher-class Blacks. Mother-dominated families are found in the lower-classes where the wife's position is strengthened because she both controls domestic affairs and often contributes almost 50% of the family's total income. Under these conditions the indices for manliness come to be judged by aggressiveness and virility, as well as ability to drink heavily (Epstein, 1973; Ripp, 1973).

Blacks in South Africa evidence patterns of greater alcohol consumption than Whites and their drinking is a response to the stress and frustration eminating from the political, economic and social conditions in which they have to live their lives and meet their needs. Greater alcohol consumption has been shown in the literature on wife abuse to facilitate wife-beating because it triggers long standing

marital quarrels, allows the batterer to avoid personal responsibility for the violence, and probably also causes other problems such as absenteeism from work and a large proportion of an already limited income being spent on alcohol.

e) The Cycle of Violence

Although this factor is not a measure of stress it does have relevance here as an important cause in perpetuating the cycle of violent relationships. Research has consistently shown that childhood exposure to violence, either as a victim or as a witness increases the likelihood that the child will grow up to become a child and/or spouse abuser (Kempe, Silverman, Steele, Droogemuller and Silver, 1962; Spinetta & Rigler, 1972; Gelles, 1974; Parke & Collmer, 1975; Owens & Straus, 1975; Flynn, 1975; Byrd, 1979). Childhood exposure to violence is seen as an important antecedent to adult violence by proponents of widely varying theories eg, analytic theory and social learning theory (Rounsaville, 1978a).

Steinmetz (1977) reports even less severe forms of violence are passed on from generation to generation. Straus et al (1980) provide evidence that the greater the frequency of violence, the greater the chance that the victim will grow up to be a violent partner or parent. Violent behaviour is seen as a learned phenomenon where the individual learns norms which approve the use of violence. Individuals also learn that it is an effective method of resolving conflict and children who are beaten learn that the one who loves you has the right and responsibility to beat you (Moore, 1979; Steinmentz, 1977).

Lawrence (1984) in her study of marital violence amongst Coloured couples in the Cape established that in 86% of the cases the children were usually or always present when

violence occurred between parents. It is probable that structural conditions such as overcrowding due to large families, an acute housing shortage and the concommitant lack of privacy in homes (Manganyi, 1973; Lawrence, 1984) make it more likely that children in Black homes are exposed to parental wife abuse. Since it has also been established that wife-beating occurs with greater frequency in Black homes, the likelihood of a perpetuation of the cycle of violence amongst Blacks increases.

In summary, it has been argued that since wife-beating has been found to occur more frequently among lower socioeconomic families, and since race and class are confounded in South Africa, wife-beating can therefore be expected to occur more frequently among African, Coloured and Indian families. Some South African research supports this contention. It has also been shown that a whole range of stress-producing factors, unrelated to the wife, which have been found in previous research to cause wife-beating, operate to cause wife-beating among Coloured families. It has been argued that these stress-producing factors are exacerbated by the structural conditions which pertain to South Africa and that additional stresses emerge from the political, economic and social structure of South Africa to further increase the likelihood that wife-beating will occur more frequently amongst South African Blacks than South African Whites. It has also been suggested that the finding that wife-beating occurs more frequently amongst the lower social-classes can be linked to a capitalist economic structure, where the lower social-classes, which comprise the majority of the population, have fewer resources and consequently less power than the more wealthy, thus being exposed to more stress and frustration.

However, stress and frustration emanating from various sources is not the only factor found to be associated with wife-beating. Research findings which result from the use of the socio-cultural model, reflect the second structural factor which it has been argued in this study, underlies the specific factors cited in the literature i.e., a partriarchal social and family structure with its inherent unequal power relationships between men and women. Some writers even adopt the stance that unequal power relationships between men and women is the sole cause of violence toward women. (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Pleck, 1979).

CHAPTER FOUR

PATRIARCHY AND ITS RELEVANCE AS A CAUSE OF WIFE-BEATING IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa has its own unique authoritarian, patriarchal social and family systems which, in important respects, does not appear to be that different from the patriarchal social and family systems in other Western countries. For instance, Dobash & Dobash (1979) assert that patriarchal social and family systems are characterised by hierarchically-structured organisations and a patriarchal ideology in which men are given positions of supremacy and females positions of subordination. Dobash & Dobash further state that in order to maintain this hierarchical order, it has to be accepted by the majority of society and that it is the patriarchal ideology which serves to reinforce this acceptance. Men and women are socialised into the acceptance of the "rightful" nature of the order and its inequities which allows the order to go mainly unchallenged. Challenges are met with social pressure to conform. In these respects South Africa's patriarchal structures and ideology are similar to those of other Western countries. Given the added factor of an authoritarian culture, it is probable that men and women generally do not question the status quo, although as Straus (1976) states, patriarchal norms are in the process of transition. Patriarchy, although a part of the White mainstream or dominant culture, also impacts on the lives of Black South Africans, although no empiricial research on its effects have been documented to the writer's knowledge.

Research in both Britain and America which has examined the historical and legal precedents of wife abuse, has shown that wife-beating in the patriarchal social and family systems has a long history, was legal until recently, and occurs across cultures (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Walker, 1983). Lesse (1979), examining the relationship between men and women in the context

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of larger social, economic and technologic changes, asserts that the passage from the matriarchal to the patriarchal family systems was economically motivated due to the growth of transmissible property, cattle and products of the soil during the agricultural revolution. This change is seen as being detrimental to the position of women, since they now came to be regarded as the "property" of first the father, then the eldest brother and then the husband. Women's subsequent subjugation ensued as men needed to be sure of the paternity of the children to whom they bequeathed their property. At the same time, men were given the legal right and moral responsiblity of discipline and chastisement of their property. English Common Law, which also forms the bases of American Laws, explicitly permitted wife-beating for correctional purposes, and until recently, American Laws gave a man the right to beat his wife provided he used a stick no wider than his thumb (Martin, 1976; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Pleck, 1979; Walker, 1980). Dobash & Dobash (1979) are of the opinion that most of the ideologies and social arrangements which formed the underpinnings of violence toward women, still exist today and are inextricably interwoven into the present western legal, religious, political and economic practices. Although, to the writer's knowledge, no research is available which traces the historical and legal precedents of wife abuse in South Africa, the concept of women as the property of their husbands who have the legal right and moral obligation of chastisement, does appear to be a part of our western cultural heritage.

The patriarchal social and family systems, with its accompanying partriarchal ideology is thought to cause wife-beating in three ways: First, through early childhood socialisation, men are trained to be dominant and aggressive, which increases the likelihood of men acting out aggressively toward their wives in stressful situations. Concurrently, women are trained to be more dependant and passive, which has been found to increase their tolerance of abuse (Whitehurst, 1971; Lynstad, 1975;

Moore, 1979; Yllo, 1983). Second, patriarchy's prescribed male-dominant and female-submissive roles creates stress based on these traditional roles, as men frequently do not have the superior resources to legitimate their dominant positions (O'Brien, 1971; Gelles, 1974; Straus, 1978; Rounsaville, 1978a; Hornung, McCullogh & Sugimoto, 1981). *Third*, Patriarchy contributes to causing wife-beating since structural conditions, that is, the sexist organisation of society, creates dependancy of women on men and on the institution of marriage. When women are dependant on marriage, wife abuse has been found to occur with greater frequency (Straus, 1973; Yllo, 1983).

The Childhood Socialisation of Men and Women

As stated previously, there is no research or writing based on the childhood socialisation of South African children, specifically Black children, known to this writer. However, it can be assumed that sex-role stereotyping occurs along traditional lines with the basic concepts of patriachal ideology underlying this socialisation, and that it is similar in these basic respects to socialisation patterns found in other Western countries. Traditionally, husbands are regarded as dominant and the head of the household, reponsible for the support of the family, whilst wives are regarded as subordinate, and responsible for housework and children (Martin, 1976). Martin (1976) states that the preparation for the complementary roles of husband and wife, with the concepts of masculinity and feminity underpinning them, occurs by rewarding males for being dominant (strong, independent, aggresive, controlling, unemotional etc), and females for being dependant (submissive, passive, non-controlling, docile etc). The concepts of marculinity and feminity create expectations of how individuals "should" behave and in turn perpetuates the patriachal ideology on which the culture is based (Dobash & Dobash, 1979).

Elbow (1977) states that the more rigid the adherence to sex-role stereotyping, the more likely it is that violence will occur. Empirical research has found that battering couples adhere quite strongly to these traditional values (Walker, 1979, 1983; Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981; Wetzel & Ross, 1983). Ponzetti, Cate & Koval (1982) suggest that traditional socialisation contributes to wife-beating in that it rewards males for their physical aggression, which may in turn reinforce its continued use to the detriment of learning effective verbal skills. Lynstad (1975) suggests that because men are trained to be dominant and aggressive, they are more likely to be sensitive to affronts to their authority, and attempt to preserve such authority and dominance through the use of force. Similarly, Whitehurst (1971) states that because men are socialised without much essential training in relating in ways other than instrumental and agressive, this makes it more likely that they will respond violently in an emotionally-laden situation such as one involving extramarital sex. Furthermore, the literature on wife abuse (using the psychopathological model) indicates that men are more likely to act out aggressively toward females who act in "passive-aggressive" ways (Schultz, 1960; Snell et al, 1964; Walker 1981, 1983). Women's socialisation into passivity and non-aggression appears to increase the likelihood that their hostility would be expressed in a set of behaviours clinicians have labelled passive-aggressive. It is also believed that both men and women's early training leads to the acceptability of men taking charge of a relationship and a women's acceptance of that control, even if it is violent (Moore, 1979).

In addition, Weitzman & Dreen (1982) posit that the relationship rules which govern the marital system and behaviour of individuals are especially rigid in violent couples. This inflexibility is evidenced by sex-role polarisation, narrow coping responses and a high degree of enmeshment so characteristic of these couples. Weitzman & Dreen assert that

battering couples are locked into a complementary system (strong-weak, rational-emotional etc) in which there is little room for negotiation. Any move toward a symmetrical relationship threatens the homeostasis and violence erupts to reestablish the complementarity.

In conclusion, traditional socialisation appears to create the conditions for violence by training men to be aggressive and women to be passive and depriving them both of other necessary skills in order to relate differently to each other or stressful situations.

Frustration Based on Traditional Roles

Frustration or stress based on traditional roles (where the husband does not have the resources to fulfill his traditional role) has been shown to be lead to battering (O'Brien, 1971; Moore, 1979; Hornung et al, 1981). Not only does this failure adversley affect the wife's regard for the husband (Renne, 1970), but it also lowers the self-esteem of the husband, and it is hypothesised that he may sometimes attempt to raise his self-concept by beating his wife (Moore, 1979), thus allowing him some sense of potency. Straus (1978) asserts that male superiority norms are a potent force in producing physical attacks on wives, since these norms are in the process of transition and also because many men lack the resources (such as superior intelligence, income, prestige etc) to validate their dominant positions. They must therefore fall back on the ultimate resource of physical force to maintain their superior positions. This hypothesis is in part supported by the finding that wife abuse occurs more often in the lower socioeconomic status groups where men are generally lacking in resources (Levinger, 1966; Gayford, 1975; Straus et al, 1980).

Commenting on the relationship between powerlessness and the use of physical violence, Goode (1971) argues that the greater

the other resources an individual can command, the less he will use force in an overt manner. He continues his line of argument in this way:

> "the husband in the middle or upper class family commands more force, in spite of his lesser willingness to use his own physical strength, because he possesses far more other social resources. His greater social prestige in the larger society and the family, his larger economic possessions, and his stronger emphasis on the human relations technique of counterdeference, affection and communication give him greater influence generally, so that he does not have to call upon force or its threat that he can in fact muster if he chooses..." (p.628).

Empirical support for the thesis that the greater the man's resources the less the likelihood that he will employ physical force to maintain his dominant position is found in the work of O'Brien (1971), Gelles (1974), Allen & Strauss (as cited in Straus, 1978) and Rounsaville (1978a). Allen & Straus report that for men high in resources, there was no correlation between power and violence. However, among those working-class husbands low in resources, the correlation between male power and violence was .49. Similarly O'Brien (1971) found that the husbands in his violent sub-group showed evidence of underachievement in work roles as well as being deficient in achievement potential relative to their wives. They were, for example educational drop outs or dissatisfied with their jobs. Also Hornung et al (1981) found that status inconsistency of either partner and status incompatibility between partners, increased the risk of spouse abuse.

Early studies on wife-beating using the psycho-pathological model have also pointed to violence occurring where there are deviant family structures, with wives described as dominant, competent and aggressive and men as passive, inadequate and submissive (Schultz, 1960; Snell et al, 1964; Faulk, 1974; Gayford, 1975; Hanks & Rosenbaum, 1977; Weitzman & Dreen, 1982; Cook & Cook, 1984). However, Dobash & Dobash (1979) have criticised the use of the psycho-pathological model in attempting to understand wife abuse since they believe that

psychoanalytic ideology concerning normal or healthy relationships between males and females is very patriarchal. The male, if he is to have a healthy masculine identity, must be dominant and independent and the healthy female on the other hand, is to take on such "feminine" characteristics as dependence, subordination to masculine authority, nurturance, service to others and identification through them. Deviations from the pattern of male dominance is seen as abnormal and the result of a personality disorder.

As stated earlier in this study, the economic, social and political structural conditions in South Africa as well as systematic discrimination against Blacks (for example, job reservations, inferior education, lower wages) increases the likelihood that Black men will not command the resources necessary to fulfill their leadership and instrumental roles. Research on employment of woman outside the home has shown that Black women are more likely to have to work in order to supplement the family income than White women (Renne, 1970), providing indirect support for this contention. Research in South Africa has shown that in lower-class Black families wives contribute as much as 50% of the total family income (Epstein, 1973; Ripp, 1973). In Black families then, stress or frustration based on traditional roles is likely to occur more frequently, increasing the likelihood of wife-beating. Contrary to the predominant patriarchal ideology, Epstein (1973) and Ripp (1973) have also pointed out that lower-class Black families tend to be mother dominated leaving men few avenues to prove their masculinity, aggresiveness being one of the avenues left. One could therefore expect added tension created by the contradiction between a lower-class Black tradition and the predominant ideology. Straus (1973) offers an explanation for the greater frequency of wife abuse in marriages where the husband is lacking in resources. Straus suggests that wife dominant power structures violate the implicit norms of patriarchal societies which require the husband to be head of

the household. Straus hypothesises that when husbands cannot fulfill their leadership roles, two processes set in. First, there is tension and dissatisfaction with the marriage which reduces inhibition for possibly disruptive acts. Second, the husband lacking other resources is more likely to use his superior physical strength in attempts to maintain his power.

The Sexist Organisation of Patriarchal Societies and Wife-Beating

It has been stated that men who are relatively powerless and cannot fulfill their leadership roles are more likely to abuse their women. At the other end of the continuum, women who are relatively powerless and dependant on their marriages, both psychologically and economically, appear to be exploited by their men, and wife-beating is reported to occur more frequently amongst this group of women (Straus, 1973; Yllo, 1983). This has been found to be the case cross-culturally as well (Walker, 1983). Systematic discrimination against women (eg sex-based wage differentials, job discrimination etc) in patriarchal societies facilitates this dependence on men and the institution of marriage to gain status in society (Straus, 1973; Martin, 1976). It can be expected that the added discrimination Black women face due to the colour of their skins and their resultant position as second-class citizens in South Africa makes Black women even more dependant on their men than White women. The structural conditions in South Africa, both sexist and political, social and economic, probably leaves them with much fewer alternatives to their marriages than White women.

While the male-dominant structure of society and the family is still largely in existence, several writers point out that these male superiority norms are in the process of transition. Women's status is in the process of change as they begin to experience greater legal rights, economic opportunities and

physical mobility (Straus, 1978). It has been argued that the changes women are undergoing in status also create strain and frustration for men trying to retain control of their dominant positions and that violence against women may be a response to moves by women to question and reduce the degree of sexual domination. This has led several writers to conclude that, whilst the long-term consequences of a more equalitarian society may be to lessen the frequency of assaults on women, the short-term consequences may be the opposite, as a sizeable number of men will not easily give up the advantages of their traditional sex-stereotyped roles (Whitehurst, 1974; Kolb & Straus, 1974; Straus, 1978). It has been suggested that a more equalitarian society would ameliorate the problem of wife-beating as it would: 1) make it less socially acceptable, 2) make it more likely to come to the attention of the authorities, and 3) provide women with more viable alternatives to a battering relationship.

Yllo (1983) sought to empirically examine the relationship between the societal status of women in different states in America and wife-beating. He qualified his results by stating that in those states where the societal status of women was high, they most certainly were not equalitarian. However, he did find a curvilinear relationship between the two variables. For women whose economic, educational, political and legal status were low, these were the victims of the greatest level of violence from their husbands. Yet at the same time, wives in states where women have achieved the greatest equality also suffer high levels of physical aggression from their husbands. Yllo explains his findings by suggesting that in the case of women with low status, it may be that a greater amount of force is necessary to keep women "in their place" and that women's limited options to marriage make them vulnerable to abuse. On the other hand, the higher status states have undergone the most rapid social change, and these men feel most threatened. While the traditional formulae and norms for the relationship

between husbands and wives have disappeared, new patterns or guidelines have not yet been institutionalised. Another interesting finding in Yllo's study was that violence against wives is not directly paralleled by violence against husbands. Where women's status was relatively low, they were twice as likely as husbands to be victims of severe violence. However, for women with high status, rates of violence by wives directed at husbands is comparable to that directed against them. Yllo suggests that this could be due to the husband's violence being viewed as illegitimate in a context of relative equality, and being reciprocated in kind. Moreover, the decline in sexual inequality in all spheres may be related to a reduction in sex differences in various types of behaviours, including violence.

Importantly, Yllo (as cited above) concludes that unicausal assumptions often underlying the discussion of women's status and violence are unfounded since the magnitude of the impact of increased equality is not that implied by those who have debated the issue. It therefore cannot be the sole cause of wife-beating. He suggests instead that a complicated web of factors combine to cause the phenomenon of wife-beating. In this study it has been argued that stress and frustration emanating from various sources other than the patriarchal family and social systems and its ideology, also operate to increase the likelihood of violence toward women. The need for a multicausal model in understanding the phenomenon of wife-beating has been repeatedly stressed in the literature on wife abuse (Gelles, 1976, 1980; Rounsaville, 1978a; Straus, 1976; Straus et al, 1980).

Based on the writer's review of the literature, the factors associated with wife abuse discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 (selected from the research using the social-psychological and socio-cultural models), reflect the two structural conditions which, in the writer's opinion are the fundamental causes of wife-beating and underly all the specific causes reported in

the literature. One of the structural conditions is the sexist organisation of patriarchal social and family systems. Patriarchal ideology dictates that one sex dominates the other. In addition, women's oppression in a number of areas eg the economic sphere, creates a dependancy on men and marriage. The other structural condition is a capitalist economic, social and political systems in which there is an unequal distribution of power and wealth, resulting in a large proportion of the population being economically, socially and politically deprived. These structures are external to the individual and the individual has limited control over them, but they create the conditions in which individuals live their lives, meet their needs, relate to others and view themselves. It is the author's opinion that these structures powerfully influence the intra-psychic lives of individuals, that is, that psychological status of individuals is shaped by social, economic and political factors. For example, low self-esteem and learned helplessness have been reported in previous research to be associated with wife abuse (Walker, 1979, 1981). Gurin et al (1960) in their empirical study on the relationship between class and self-esteem, report that unskilled workers have the lowest self-esteem compared with any other group of men they assessed. Furthermore, Ball & Wayman (1977-78) report that learned helplessness may develop because of oversocialisation into stereotypical feminine roles.

Of the intra-psychic factors thought to be associated with wife abuse, one of these in particular has relevance for the purposes of this study: the hypothesis that battered women are masochistic (Schultz, 1960; Snell et al, 1964; Faulk, 1974). Positing that battered women are masochistic, blames women for their own victimisation, since battered women are then seen as both needing and provoking the abuse. Rounsaville (1978) defines the term "masochism" in the following way: "it implies an unconcious desire to assuage excessive guilt, reinforce a needed sense of shame or to manipulate others" (p.15). Since

it is an unconscious desire or need, conscious disavowal of receiving pleasure is not sufficient evidence that gratification is not obtained. A fundemental premise of this theory is that women enjoy suffering (Follingstad, 1980). Dobash & Dobash (1979) point out that the theory of women's masochism, which was an important part of Freud's theory of feminine psychology, has a great appeal in patriarchal societies. It is also very popular in the media, and underlies much of the training in the helping professions. Pinto's (1981) study of English speaking South African medical practitioners, revealed that a substantial proportion of his sample endorsed beliefs about wife-beating which had no empirical foundation, and which researchers had labelled myths. One of these was that battered women are masochistic.

CHAPTER FIVE

MASOCHISM AND THE MARITAL RELATIONSHIP

The earliest studies on wife-beating were concerned with the strength of the bonding between battering couples, since women repeatedly returned to abusive husbands only to be beaten again. Psychologists concluded that there must be a flaw in the personality development of these women, and the women were therefore labelled masochistic (Walker, 1980). Rounsaville (1978a) has summarised the evidence in support of the theory of feminine masochism. First, women often choose to remain in an abusive relationship, endure abuse for extended periods of time, and despite continued abuse, only a small minority leave their partners. Second, some women describe actively contributing to their own victimisation. In Rounsaville's sample 68% of the battered wives admitted that they at least sometimes deliberately escalated an argument in which they predicted violence. Third, although 48% of Rounsaville's sample stated that they could usually predict the partner's abuse beforehand, most reported using inadequate means to deal with it or means likely to escalate the violence such as fighting back or trying to calm the partner.

As stated earlier, the results of this study will test the hypothesis that battered women are masochistic, since this contention is crucial to the purposes of this study. The underlying assumption of this study is that wife-beating has a negative impact on the relationship. However, if battered women are involved in sado-masochistic relationships and both enjoy and need the abuse, then wife abuse will not have an adverse effect on the marital relationship. Battered women then would not differ significantly from the control groups on any of the dimensions of the marital relationships assessed in this study.

Several writers have attempted to offer alternate explanations to masochism for women's decisions to remain with the abusive partner. Martin (1976) and Moore (1979) suggest that fear is the common denominator in the wive's decision to remain in the battering relationship, as fear immobilises them and rules their actions, decisions and their very lives. Martin suggests that the combination of continuing threats of violence by the partner and the absence of provisions for safety, is universally identified as a deterrent to action. Maccoby & Jacklin (1974) suggest that while fear is an arousal state, the possibility exists that females respond with immobilisation and other "passive" behaviour primarily when they are afraid. Symmonds (1977) in a paper presented to the Association for the Advancement of Psycho-Analysis concluded: "The response of women to violence of the immature, impulsive and exploitive husband is to be profoundly terrorised and traumatised by this violence" (p. 165). Symmonds concludes that women are brainwashed by this terror and he conceptualises this fear as a form of traumatic psychological infantilism or frozen fright, which he also described as the acute psychological response to rape and other violent crimes.

Walker (1977-78) offers the concept of learned helplessness as an explanation for why women become victims and how the process of victimisation further entraps her, resulting in a psychological paralysis which makes it very difficult to leave the relationship. Walker suggests that learned helplessness develops from the process of victimisation where the woman learns that her voluntary responses will not control what happens to her. She comes to believe that nothing she does can make the batterer stop, so a motivational deficit ensues where she ceases all attempts to change or alleviate her present situation. Listlessness and apathy result. Furthermore, learned helplessness has been suggested as a factor contributing to low self-esteem and depression in battered women (Weissman & Klerman, 1977 as cited in Rounsaville, 1978a).

In addition to learned helplessness developing as a reaction to the process of victimisation, it has also been suggested that learned helplessness can develop from other sources (Walker, 1977-78, Ball and Wyman, 1977-78). Since a large proportion of battered women were also exposed to parental spouse abuse and/or were abused by their parents, the women may have learned as a child that the situation is uncontrollable (Ball & Wyman, 1977-78). In other cases, the battered wife is a victim of oversocialisation into a stereotypical feminine role where she has learned to be docile, submissive, humble, non-assertive, dependent and selfless. Her dilemma has its origin in passivity and dependence which define the traditional feminine role. She has been socialised into believing that she is more helpless than men, and she feels incapable of living independently and being responsible for herself. Furthermore, because the battered wife has no sense of control, she has no expectation of success if she were to try to take control. This feeling of helplessness is strengthened by responses of relatives, neighbours, police and social service agencies (Martin, 1976). First, there exists an attitude that the woman probably is getting what she deserves since she probably has provoked the batterer or nagged him beyond a reasonable level of tolerance. Second, there exists a general unwillingness among neighbours and the legal profession to interfere in an ongoing marriage (Ball & Wyman, 1977-78).

Walker (1977-78) states that battered women experiencing learned helplessness, have difficulty in predicting whether or not a response they make will result in more or less violence. In order to gain some limited control, battered women adopt a stereotyped repertoire of behaviour that does have some success in minimising the seriousness of attacks initially, but loses its effectiveness in advanced stages. In the writer's opinion, this may explain why 48% of the women in Rounsaville's (1978a) sample reported that although they could usually predict the partner's abuse beforehand, they used inadequate means to cope

with, or means likely to escalate the violence, such as fighting back. Also Rounsaville (1978a) reported that some women described actively contributing to their own victimisation since 68% of his sample admitted that they at least sometimes deliberately escalated an argument in which they predicted violence. In her empirical study, Walker (1977-78) isolated a definite cycle of violence which appears to have three distinct phases varying in time and intensity both within the same couple and between different couples: i) the tension building phase; ii) the explosion of acute battering incidents; iii) and the calm loving respite. In another study Walker (1979) found empirical support for this cycle in 65% of her sample. It may therefore be that women deliberately escalate arguments because of the knowledge that after the battering incident a period of loving respite follows. Also, they may find it difficult to tolerate the mounting tension before the explosive battering incident. However, fear and learned helplessness are not the only alternate explanations offered for why so many women remain in abusive relationships.

Criticism of the theory of masochism and alternate explanations for why women remain in battering relationships have also centred around the external constraints women face in attempting to extricate themselves from abusive relationships (Truninger, 1971; Field & Field, 1973; Pizzey, 1974; Gelles, 1976; Martin, 1976; Waites, 1978; Walker, 1980). These include pervasive economic, legal, social and additional psychological explanations. Horney (1976), in a critique of Freud's theory of feminine masochism, makes an appeal to empiricism and states that there is not enough evidence to support the hypothesis of female masochism. Also, she very pertinently questions whether anyone truly wishes to suffer, and instead suggests that restrictive social factors, such as certain fixed cultural attitudes regarding the "nature of women" correlate with actual restrictions and positive rewards for masochistic

behaviour. Waites (1978) similarly points to restrictive social factors which constrain women faced with the decision to remain in the abusive relationship or dissolve it. He argues that if choice is externally restricted the question of internal motivation approaches irrelevance as the restriction of choice becomes more extreme. The external constraints documented in the wife abuse literature include:

1) Identity vs Identity Loss. For most women the role of wife is likely to be a cornerstone of identity regardless of their other roles and goals and in some cases marriage would serve as a substitute for identity (Sheehy, 1976; Waites, 1978).

2) Social approval vs Stigmatisation. Singleness, especially for women, is often stigmatised. A woman may evaluate herself or perceive others as evaluating her worth in terms of her ability to get or keep a man and abused women may feel that they are failures if they should choose to leave a marriage. In addition, abused women may share the social tendency to stigmatise the "broken home" as the cause of all kinds of social ills including the maladjustment of children (Truniger, 1971; Gelles, 1976; Waites, 1978; Walker, 1979).

3) Economic Support vs Economic Deprivation and Downward Social Mobility. The economic deprivation of the divorced or separated woman has been well documented in the literature (Truninger, 1971; Martin, 1976; Moore, 1979). Factors contributing to the economic deprivation of the woman who leaves her spouse include those which affect women generally: low pay associated with women's jobs, lack of training, discriminatory hiring practises, etc. The assumption that fathers provide support following marital dissolution is largely unfounded. Studies in America show that only 50% of women are awarded alimony and that only 38% of husbands complied with support payments during the first

year of the court order. During the 10th year, only 13% of fathers made any payments (Truninger, 1971). The abused wife may also be subject to further abuse if she attempts to enforce support (Moore, 1979). The prospect of poverty therefore interacts not only with the fear of social stigmatisation which accrues to poverty, but also to those dependent on others for support (Waites, 1978).

4) Love vs Loss of Attachment. The trauma of losing love is usually cited as a major dimension of marital dissolution (Waites, 1978). Not infrequently, the submissive wife has focussed all her affection on her family, sacrificing ties to other adults. Under such circumstances, the loss of the husband may threaten to isolate the wife from any close interpersonal relationships.

5) Social Agency and Legal Responses to Family Violence. Gelles (1976) suggests that social agencies and legal organisations are unprepared and unable to provide meaningful assistance to victims of abuse.

   a) Researchers in America state that the justice system is ineffective in dealing with wife abuse because of the prevalence of mythology about wife abuse (eg abuse fulfills the masochistic needs of women), the official acceptance of violence between consenting adults and the belief that violence is a private affair (Truninger, 1971; Field & Field, 1973; Gelles, 1976). Field & Field (1973) state that unless the victim dies, the chances that the court system will deal seriously with the offender are slight. Also, women who are abused must suffer grave injury in order to press charges. Although no similar research about the justice system's attitudes regarding wife abuse in South Africa is available, one could speculate that similar conditions prevail. Lawrence (1984) does point out that the legal courses of

action open to battered women in South Africa are equally unsatisfactory. One of the courses of action open to South African women is to file a charge of assault which requires examination by a district attorney; a battered woman may apply to the Supreme Court for an interdict which will order her husband to refrain from hitting her; a peace order from a Magistrate under the Criminal Procedure Act may also be applied for; a lawyer could write a letter of warning; and the women could institute divorce proceedings. Some of the above courses of action are costly although legal aid is available. It is also probable that Black women do not know of the courses of action available to them. Lawrence (1984) reports that social workers in the Coloured area of Mitchells Plain frequently used referral to the police as a last resort because of the negative attitude and lack of cooperation from the police and the fact that women withdraw the charge soon after it was made. In addition, as second-class citizens in South Africa the women probably would not receive much cooperation from the courts. Lawrence (1984) reports that few cases of marital violence reach the courts. Typically sentences are light, normally fines, because the court takes into consideration i) the fact that if the abuser (husband/breadwinner) is imprisoned, the state has to maintain the children; and ii) the large prison population.

b) Social-work agencies are often unable to provide realistic answers for victims of violence because of rather limited knowledge of the causes and patterns of violence. This paucity of knowledge has resulted in few policy or intervention strategies being worked out (Celles, 1976). In South Africa, Lawrence (1984) lists some of the difficulties encountered by social welfare agencies in dealing with the problem of marital violence:

i) inadequate academic training of social workers; ii) welfare agencies are understaffed and have heavy caseloads; iii) no grants are available for battered women and their children if they want to leave; iv) no shelter for battered women; v) no psychologist or psychiatrist freely available to the people; and vi) women face legal disadvantages in child custody proceedings if they should leave their children, even temporarily.

Clearly there are enormous social, legal, psychological and economic constraints women have to face in extricating themselves from battering relationships. Research on women's own explanations for why they remain in the abusive relationship reflect these constraints: 1) economic dependency, 2) presence of young children, 3) fear of being alone, 4) the stigma of divorce, 5) a belief that the husband will reform, and 6) difficulty for women with children to get work (Roy, 1977; Rounsaville, 1978). In an attempt to estimate the relative impact of psychological and economic dependecy on tolerance of abuse, Kalmus & Straus (1982) found that women who are dependant in either way tolerate more abuse than women who are not dependant on marriage. In addition, women who are psychologically dependant tend to tolerate more minor abuse, whilst women who are economically dependant tolerate more severe violence.

From the above discussion of the difficulties women face in extricating themselves from battering relationships, it can be seen that these constraints reflect, at a more basic level, the structural sexist organisation of society and the family as well as the socialisation into a patriarchal ideology. For instance, the process to socialisation in a patriarchal society like South Africa teaches women that the only important roles she has, are that of wife and mother, so that a large part of her identity is based on these roles. Also divorced women are less able to support themselves economically because of the

sexist organisation of society illustrated in discriminatory hiring practises and sex-based wage differentials. It therefore appears that these structural conditions trap women in a marriage, and by creating a restricted choice space, increase the likelihood that battered women will make masochistic choices ie, to remain in the battering relationship rather than facing the overwhelming difficulties of leaving the relationship. It is therefore the author's opinion that rather than perceiving battered women who remain in a battering relationship as having a personality flaw, the prevailing structural conditions increase the likelihood of them making masochistic choices. It is probable that for Black South African women, because of the political, social and economic structure of South Africa, the constraints faced in leaving an abusive situation are much greater. Their economic dependence on marriage can be expected to be that much greater due to for instance, bigger families and lower wages. Conditions such as a lack of day care facilities, housing shortages and unemployment would also be major considerations in battered women's decisions to remain in the battering relationship or leave.

Research in the area of marital relations provides additional support for the arguement offered in the wife abuse literature that external barriers to the dissolution of the marriage and the attractiveness of alternatives to the marriage are important aspects of the dissolution decision (Levinger, 1965, 1970; Nye & McLaughlin, 1976; Lewis & Spanier, 1979; Edwards & Saunders, 1981). Levinger (1965) hypothesises that the strength or weakness of a marriage stems from the interaction between partners attractions for each other (affectional rewards, socioeconomic rewards etc), the strength of barriers to dissolution and the pulling force of alternate relationships. Nye, White & Frideres (as cited in Edwards & Saunders, 1981) largely concur with Levinger's analysis. Marital stability, they suggest, is determined by the amount of

positive affect toward the spouse, constraints against dissolution of the marriage and the perceived unattractiveness of alternatives. Edwards & Saunders (1981) elaborate on alternative attractions to the relationship: availability of another partner, the desirability of singlehood, means of self-support, an emphasis on personal development and growth, liberal sex-role ideology and the sense of time being finite.

Nye & McLaughlin (1976) posit that the husband's role-competence is an important part of the success of a marriage. That if the husband is competent in his role as provider and father, he will provide better reward-cost outcomes in the marriage, and that he will be liked and valued and that this decreases the possibility of marital instability.

In spite of the above cited constraints, some battered women do either seek outside intervention or dissolve the battering relationship (Pfouts, 1978). Empirical research has sought to distinguish those women who leave from those who do not (Owens & Straus, 1975; Gelles, 1976; Rounsaville & Weisman, 1977-78). Several factors have been found to influence the wife's decision:

1) The severity and the frequency of the violence experienced by the woman, has been found by several researchers to influence the wife's decision. Severity has been found to be the best predictor of whether a woman will decide to seek outside intervention or dissolve the marriage (Levinger, 1966; O'Brien, 1971; Gelles, 1976; Rounsaville & Weisman, 1977-78). Interestingly both Miller & Porter (1983) and Frieze (1979) found that the more severe the violence the less women blamed themselves for causing it and the more they blamed the husband, which made it easier to leave the relationship.

2) Women exposed to violence in childhood were less likely to seek outside intervention (Gelles, 1976; Owens & Straus, 1975).

3) Holding a job or being less economically dependent was found by Gelles (1976) to distinguish those women seeking outside intervention.

4) When the eldest child, especially male children, were old enough to become embroiled in the physical violence, women often decided to seek outside intervention (Snell et al, 1964).

5) Rounsaville & Weisman (1977-78) found several other factors which correlated positively with the wife's decision to leave:
   a) the type of abuse
   b) having called the police
   c) fear of being killed
   d) the partner's having hit the children
   e) intervention by others outside of the family, especially medical personnel.

   Both Rounsaville & Weisman and Gelles (1976) found that age, number of children, social class, marital status, psychiatric history and employment status did not appear to affect the decision to leave.

Although masochism has been offered as a theory to account for the tenacity of battering relationships, many recent writers reject this hypothesis in view of the numerous constrainst that battered women face in attempting to dissolve their marriages (Martin, 1976; Walker, 1977-78; Rounsaville, 1978a; Waites, 1978; Moore, 1978). These writers have suggested alternate explanations. For instance, it has been suggested that fear is a deterrant to action and that battered women suffer from learned helplessness which results in depression and a lack of

effort being made to extricate herself from the battering relationship. In this study explanations have also been offered for why women report at times escalating the violence and using inadequate means to cope with violence. Several writers have also pointed out the numerous additional legal, social, psychological and economic constraints women face in extricating themselves from a battering relationship and research in the area of marital relations has been cited which supports this contention. The factors which seem to provide the impetus for battered women to either seek outside intervention or dissolve the relationship, have also been stated. In addition it has also been argued that the structural condition of patriarchy not only functions as a cause of wife-beating, but ironically also functions to keep battered women trapped in an abusive relationship.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH ON MARITAL SATISFACTION

Since the impact of wife abuse on the marital relationship has not been previously researched in the area of marital relations, only a brief summary of the literature will be provided and where similar factors have been found to affect both marital satisfaction and wife-beating, these will be highlighted.

A great deal of research has been done on establishing the determinants of marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction / adjustment / happiness has traditionally been studied as a dependent variable (Hicks & Platt, 1970; Glenn & Weaver, 1978; Snyder, 1979; Spanier & Lewis, 1980). Several variables have been identified as bein related to marital satisfaction. Higher occupational status, income, educational level for the husband (Bloode & Wolfe, 1960; Landis, 1963; Udry, 1966; Bumpass & Sweet, 1972), husband and wife similarities in socioeconomic status, age and religion (Udry, 1966; Bumpass & Sweet, 1972; Glenn & Weaver, 1977), have all been found to be related to marital satisfaction. Furthermore, affectional rewards such as esteem for spouse, sexual enjoyment, companionship as well as age at marriage, have all been delineated as variables positively related with marital happiness (Hicks & Platt, 1970; Bumpass & Sweet, 1972; Glenn & Weaver, 1977). Also, the higher the ratio of children per years of marriage has been found to result in less satisfaction in marriage (Hurley & Palonen, 1967; Ryder, 1973; Russel, 1974). Several studies have focused on changes in satisfaction across the family life cycle (Burr, 1970; Rollins & Feldman, 1970; Harry, 1976). Research has revealed that Black marriages are essentially less happy or satisfying and less stable, largely due to socioeconomic factors (Bloode & Wolfe, 1960; Udry, 1966; Renne, 1970; Barry, 1970; Hicks & Platt, 1970). Research in the area of wife abuse has similarly found wife-beating to be related to socioeconomic factors

(Prescott & Lekto 1977; Steinmetz, 1977; Moore, 1979; Straus et al, 1980,.

Hicks & Platt (1970) emphasise the importance of the husband's instrumental role in determining marital happiness. They state that research in the areas of congruence of role perceptions, compatibility of role expectations and performance, and the wife's employment outside of the home, provides support for the contention that the husband's performance in his instrumental role is an extremely important facet in determining marital happiness. Research in the area of wife abuse has similarly shown that wife-beating is more likely to occur when the husband feels threatened in his role as the provider and when he does not have the resources to legitimate his dominant position (Parke & Collmer, 1975; Prescott & Lekto, 1977; Flemming, 1979; Straus et al, 1980). This has been reported to occur more frequently among lower-class families and Black families (Levinger, 1966; Renne, 1970; Goode, 1971; Cutwright, 1971).

There is also evidence that the quality of the interpersonal relationship between spouses is associated with marital happiness: affective involvement in the marriage has been found to be related to marital satisfaction (Luckey, 1964); satisfaction/dissatisfaction is associated with the personality concept of the spouse (Levinger, 1964; Chilman & Meyer, 1966); open, effective and rewarding communication is associated with marital satisfaction (Cutler & Dyer, 1965; Navran, 1967); marital satisfaction is associated with personality factors such as redeeming or good characteristics of the spouse (Murstein & Glaudin, 1966), emotional stability (Dean 1966, 1968) and adaptability and flexibility (Buerkle, Anderson & Badgley, 1961). Marital stability has not been found to be all that dependent on marital happiness (Cuber & Harroff, 1963). Cuber & Haroff (1963) suggest that although couples are disaffected with each other, they may stay together because of

a lack of alternatives to the marriage. Hicks & Platt (1970) suggest that even if a marriage is lacking in affection or companionship, couples may stay together if instrumental aspects are satisfactorily met in the marriage. In relation to the relative importance of instrumental factors in the marriage, Levinger's (1966) findings indicate that middle-class marriages are more concerned with the psychological and emotional interaction, while lower-class women saw as more salient their financial problems, husband's drinking and physical abuse. This finding leads Hicks & Platt to conclude that only when the instrumental needs of a marriage has been satisfied, do couples concern themselves with the psychological and emotional interaction of the relationship.

Although areas of overlap between the wife-abuse literature and marital-satisfaction literature have been stated above, the area of marital relations research has never previously researched the impact of wife-beating on marital satisfaction.

CHAPTER SEVEN

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects of this study consisted of 56 women selected on the basis of two criterion: first, whether they were happily married or not and second, whether they were beaten by their partners or not. Physical abuse was defined as the act of physical attack by the husband on the wife with the intention of harming the wife (Straus, 1979). Attack could range in severity from throwing an object, pushing, grabbing, biting, slapping, hitting with a fist to using a weapon such as a knife or a gun. Marital satisfaction was assessed through the use of the scores obtained on the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (Locke & Wallace, 1959).

The majority of subjects (45) were recruited from the Offices of Coloured Affairs while the remaining subjects (11) were recruited from a marital enrichment group being run in Eldoradopark. The subjects recruited from Coloured Affairs had gone seeking counselling regarding family-related problems and were self-referred. Coloured Affairs appears to be the best known and used counselling centre amongst the Coloured population, Family Life Centre and Child Welfare often receiving referrals from this source.

Twenty women who were happily married and not beaten by their partners comprised the first control group; 20 women who were unhappily married, but not beaten by their partners, comprised the second control group and 20 women who were unhappily married and also beaten by their partners comprised the experimental group. Selection of the subjects involved a two-stage process. Initially subjects were selected on the basis of their self-reports as to whether they considered

themselves to be happily married or not and self-reports as to whether they experienced battering or not. If subjects reported being beaten, only subjects who were beaten frequently (more than four times a year) and relatively seriously (not merely pushing or grabbing or shoving) were selected. Women who had experienced physical abuse in the past but not the current year, were also excluded. A battery of tests was then administered to 60 selected subjects, which included the Short Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (Locke & Wallace, 1959) and the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979). The latter tests were included so as to provide a double check on women's self-reports on their marital state and the extent of abuse. Four of the women in the happily married group were found to have scores below 100 which is generally viewed as indicative of marital adjustment (Kimmel & Van der Veen, 1974; Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981). Their results were therefore not included in the statistical analysis. This group therefore comprised only 16 women.

The following table are the means and standard deviation scores for the 56 subjects on the Violence subsection of the Conflict Tatics Scale and for the Short Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test:

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviation Scores and the Range for husbands on the Violence subsection of the Conflict Tactics Scale.

GROUP	M	SD	RANGE
Happily Married/Not Beaten	.06	.25	0.0 - 1.00
Unhappily Married/Not Beaten	1.75	2.42	0.0 - 8.00
Unhappily Married/Beaten	27.55	9.73	11.00 - 44.00

Significant differences were revealed between the three groups with the use of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), F (2,53)

= 125.98, $p < .001$. The use of Scheffé comparisons for the three groups showed that the unhappily married, abused group's husbands used significantly more physical violence as a means of dealing with conflict than did the comparison groups' husbands. No significant differences were found between the two control groups husbands' use of physical violence, thus supporting women's self-reports that they were not physically abused. Generally, when women were questioned about the existence of physical abuse in their relationships, they did not exhibit reluctance to admit its existence and spoke openly and easily about it.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviation scores and Ranges for women's scores on the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale.

GROUP	M	SD	RANGE
Happily Married/Not Abused	121.18	13.78	103.00 - 147.00
Unhappily Married/Not Abused	38.10	21.62	6.00 - 86.00
Unhappily Married/Abused	23.90	9.10	7.00 - 38.00

An ANOVA revealed significant differences between the three groups on the Short Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale, $F(2,53) = 189.09$, $<.001$. Scheffé comparisons showed that the happily married group differed significantly from the other two groups. A significant difference between unhappily married women who were not beaten and those who were, was also revealed through the use of the Scheffé comparisons. For the purposes of this study women who were not legally married but were cohabiting, were included in this study.

Numerous difficulties existed which made a random selection of subjects impossible. These difficulties included: files kept by Coloured Affairs containing insufficient information to determine whether a past particular client had experienced

physical abuse in the relationship; the tracing of past clients was difficult as this community is quite mobile; social workers did not have current caseloads in the conventional sense of having clients in ongoing therapy, as counselling often involved a one session contact only. Subjects therefore had to be selected from the new cases which came in daily between the hours of 8:30 and 12:00. Sufficient subjects were eventually recruited over a period of 11 months to comprise the unhappily married, abused group and the unhappily married, non-abused group. Eleven of the women for the happily married group were then recruited from the marital enrichment group. All women in this study participated voluntarily and without pay.

The subjects making the use of the counselling facilities came from the surrounding urban areas in Johannesburg and tended to be from the lower socioeconomic status groups while the subjects in the happily married group, recruited from the marital enrichment program tended to be from the middle socioeconomic status groups. Subjects were both English and Afrikaans speaking with ages ranging between 20 and 50, the mean age being 30.8 years. The mean number of years of education for all the women was between standards six and eight (SD = 1.00 and range = 5.00). The mean number of children was 2.8 (SD = 1.73 and range of 7.00). The mean joint salary was R1049 - (SD = R680 and a range of R3100 -). The mean number of years married was 8.82 (SD = 6.24 and range of 32.00). As stated earlier, (Chapter 6, p.48). a great deal of previous research has established that there is a strong relationship between socio-economic factors and both wife abuse and marital satisfaction. However, since this research focuses on a different aspect, i.e., the impact of these two variables on the marital relationship, it is beyond the scope of this study to reexamine the relationship between socio-economic status, marital satisfaction and wife abuse.

Procedure

Anonymity and confidentiality were routinely ensured to selected subjects as it was thought that this would facilitate participation as well as reduce the number of socially desirable responses. It was explained to subjects that the information gathered by the administration of the questionnaires was only for research purposes and that the social worker would intervene therapeutically to deal with the problems which had brought them to the centre.

Questionnaires were administered to subjects individually and the researcher was always present to either explain questions and instructions to subjects, answer queries, explain difficult concepts and to ensure that the questionnaires were correctly completed. If a subject was Afrikaans speaking, a translated questionnaire was administered instead. Subjects were instructed to answer questions so as to provide the best possible overall picture of their marriage, with as much honesty as possible. The administration of the full questionnaire battery took approximately 45 minutes and refusal to participate was uncommon. On completion of the questionnaires subjects were allowed to ask questions pertaining to the questionnaires just completed.

Measures

All subjects were asked to complete an extensive written questionnaire battery, which included the following eight standardised measures:

Independent Measures

1) The Short Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (Locke & Wallace, 1959)

This 15 item scale, devised by Locke and Wallace from six previous marital adjustment scales to provide a global measure of marital relationship adjustment, has been shown to be both reliable and valid (Locke & Wallace, 1959; O'Leary & Turkewitz, 1978; Roach, Frazier & Bowden, 1981; Spanier & Lewis, 1980). Responses are summed into an index measure according to a weighting procedure proposed by Locke & Wallace (1959). This self-report questionnaire is conceptualised as measuring the respondent's perception or attitude toward the marital relationship rather than the interaction itself (Roach et al, 1981). Furthermore, whilst self-report questionnaires are usually contaminated by the presence of social desirability, Hawkins (1966) showed that social desirability only accounted for a small amount of the total variance in marital adjustment, thereby validating the use of the Locke-Wallace scale.

2) The Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979)

The Conflict Tactic Scale (CTS) is a 19 item self-report measure completed by the wife and consists of a list of actions or techniques which can be used by both the husband and the wife in a conflict situation. The items start with those low in coerciveness (such as discussing the issue calmly with the other) and becomes gradually more coercive and aggressive toward the end of the list (such as slapping or hitting). The response categories ask for the number of times each action occurred during the past year, ranging from "Never" to "More than 20 times". The scale has three subsections measuring: 1) The use of an intellectual approach to the dispute through the use of rational discussion, argument and reasoning such as discussing the issue calmly. 2) The use of verbal and nonverbal acts which symbolically hurt the other or the use of threats to hurt the other and comprises the verbal aggression subsection. Examples of items in this section include

"insulted or swore at the other" and "stomped out of the room or house". 3) The use of physical force against the other person as a means of resolving the conflict, which constitutes the violence scale. Examples of items in this section include "threw something at the other" and "used a knife or a gun". This instrument, however, does not provide information on the extent to which conflicts are resolved. Straus (1979) reports reliability coefficients of .50, .80 and .83 for the husband to wife reasoning, verbal aggression and violence subsections respectively, and .51, .79 and .82 for the wife to husband subsection respectively. In a cross-cultural study conducted by Kumagai and Straus (1983) they established that the CTS has an adequate level of reliability across societies as well as social classes within the same society.

Dependent Measures

The Primary Communication Inventory (Navran, 1976).

This 25 item scale was designed to measure communication in marriage. This too is an interpersonal measure based on perceived interaction. It is sub-divided into two scales of which 18 items deal with verbal communication (for example, "Do you know the feelings of your husband from his facial and bodily gestures?"). The remaining seven items measure non-verbal communication.

Although it has been used in previous research (Cromwell, Olson & Fournier, 1976; Murphy & Mendelson, 1973) and its validity suggested (O'Leary & Turkewitz, 1978), Suchet (1984) reassessed it reliability to determine its applicability to the South African population. Satisfactory Kuder-Richardson 20 reliability coefficients of .83 and .66 (n=250) were found for the verbal and non-verbal scales respectively, thus validating its use in a South African situation.

Feelings Questionnaire (FQ)

This 17 item inventory yields a total score that represents the overall level of positive affect or "love" an individual feels for his or her spouse (O'Leary, Fincham & Turkewitz, 1983). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be .96, indicating a high degree of homogeneity among the items, and the earlier version of the FQ was found to have test-retest reliability of .92 over 3 weeks (O'Leary & Turkewitz, 1978). In brief, the FQ and the refinements thereof have been shown to have internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and concurrent and predictive validity (O'Leary & Arias, 1983; O'Leary, Fincham, & Turkewitz, 1983).

Broderick Commitment Scale (BCS)

Devised by Broderick and O'Leary (1986), the BCS involves rating on a 100 point scale the degree of commitment felt in the relationship. Commitment is defined for the respondents as:

> the degree to which an individual is willing to stand by another even though that may mean putting aside one's own needs and desires for the sake of the other; it can mean a time of accepting the other person in spite of his/her faults or problems which may make one's own life more difficult; it can mean thinking less about the immediate advantages and disadvantages of the relationship and working to make the relationship last in the long run.

The Dean Commitment Scale devised by Dean & Lucas in 1974 (as cited in Beach & Broderick, 1983) was until recently the only published instrument for measuring commitment. However, the instrument did not differentiate clinic from nonclinic groups, probably in part due to 71% of respondents selecting from only two of six possible choices on the measure (Beach & Broderick, 1983). In contrast, the BCS significantly discrimina[illegible]ic from nonclinic groups while correlating .78 ($p < .0$[illegible] Dean's scale. The improved variability in responses [illegible]d for the BCS in addition to the concurrent validity evidenced by

the correlation with Dean's scale argue for its acceptance as a first step in the measurement of avowed commitment. Both Beach & Broderick (1983) and Broderick & O'Leary (1986) have used this measure in previous research. Beach & Broderick (1983) found that the BCS had greater concurrent validity for women (r = .56) than men (r = .16).

The Factor Scale for Assessing Disharmony (Snyder & Regts, 1982).

This Disharmony Scale is a 17 item scale with factor loadings ranging in absolute magnitude from .35 to .60. The item content reflects a general inability to resolve differences, characterised by a misinterpretation of each other's views, a propensity for disagreements to be perceived as or to evolve into personal criticism and the escalation of minor differences into major conflicts.

Snyder & Regts found this test to be internally consistent (Alpha coefficient = .87) and stable across time (test-retest reliability = .83). They also report initial support for the scale's construct validity.

Marital Status Inventory (Weis & Cerreto, 1980).

This 14 item Guttman self-report scale measures the dissolution potential of a marriage. The scale samples the cognitive and behavioural steps taken toward the dissolution of the marriage such as "I have occassionally thought of divorce or wished that we were separated, usually after an argument or other incident" and "I have not consulted a lawyer or legal aid about the matter". Items are answered True or False and keyed according to increasing commitment to divorce. The Marital Status Inventory (MSI) has been found to differentiate between couples seeking help for marital problems and couples seeking help for parent-child problems (Weis & Cerrato, 1980). Weis & Cerrato

also found negative correlations between MSI scores and parent-child couples scores on the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test for both husband (r = -.73, p <.01) and wives (r = .2, p < .01). This was not so for the marital counselling couples, as indicated by their lower correlations between the MSI and the Locke-Wallace (r = -.26 for males and r = -.26 for females) (p < .10). In Crane & Mead's (1980) study they report similar results. Weis & Cerreto found a coefficient of scalability with their sample to be .87. Crane & Mead reported a Spearman-Brown split-half reliability of .86, and both of the above findings argue for the internal consistency of the MSI.

The Sexual Inventory (O'Leary & Arias, 1983)

The Sexual Inventory consists of five items which assess 1) an individual's actual and desired frequency of sexual activity; 2) his/her own satisfaction and perception of the spouse's satisfaction with the current status of the sexual relationship; and 3) the individuals typical response to his/her spouse's sexual advances. Comparison data for these items were gathered by Heiman, Glaude, Roberts and Lopiccolo (as cited in O'Leary & Arias, 1983) from 91 self-reported happily-married couples who reported that they were not experiencing marital or sexual difficulties at the time of assessment.

CHAPTER EIGHT

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Experimental Design

This study utilises two independent variables i.e., wife abuse and marital satisfaction. Normally, the use of two independent variables would generate a two factor design e.g. a 2 X 2 design. However, in this case the fourth cell of the design, that is, happily married, abused women did not exist. While it is conceivable that such a group of women does exist theoretically, in practice they did not. It took this researcher 11 months to gain access to 20 battered women and all of these women tested as unhappily married. Therefore, both because of the time constraint and also because of the difficulty involved in gaining access to battered women, the fourth cell of a 2 X 2 design was not available. Since only three groups existed in practice, a one way analysis of variance was used to compare group difference on the dependent variables. It should be born in mind that to some extent wife abuse and marital satisfaction are confounded, albeit unavoidably, because of the impossibility of generating a full bi-factorial design.

At times, for convenience, happily married, non-abused women will be referred to as Group 1, unhappily married, non-abused women as Group 2, and abused women as Group 3.

Statistical Analysis

Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficients were calculated on all six dependent variables in order to establish if these variables were related. This Pearson correlation matrix is presented in Appendix A. Since the results of this test showed that the dependent measures were in fact related, a non-orthogonal multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) (Herr & Gaebelin, 1978) was used to compare group differences on these variables. Kerlinger & Pedhazur (1973) point out that univariate analyses of behaviour are limited in that they: 1) tend to ignore the multivariate nature of behaviour; and 2) do not take into account the possible significant relationships between dependent variables. Separate univariate analysis would not therefore be able to account for the common variance between the dependent variables, and the data were more suited to multivariate analysis. However, one of the underlying assumptions for the use of the MANOVA is that the data has a normal distribution. This was tested for with the use of Shapiro-Wilk test. The results of this test, presented in Appendix B, produced mixed results, but did not rule out the use of MANOVA. In addition, the use of MANOVA necessitated that a Statistical Analysis System (SAS) program be used to analyse the data (Ray, 1982), instead of the SPSS data program (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, & Brent, 1975) usually used in the social sciences.

There is no unitary generalisation of the normal univariate F statistic in computing MANOVAS. However, alternate formulae exist. Olson (1976), in a comparison of the four most frequently cited alternatives to the univariate F statistic used in previous research, (Wilk's Criterion, Pillai's Trace, Hotelling-Lawley Trace and Roy's maximum Root Criterion) recommends the use of the Pillai-Bartlett approximation for two reasons:

i) it is the most robust approximation;

ii) departures from homogeneity of covariance matrices are not serious, while increase in Type I errors are less severe ie, rejecting the null hypothesis when it is in fact true.

Apart from Olson's (1976) recommendation of the Pillai-Bartlett F statistic, he discourages the use of Roy's Maximum Root statistic, as he reports that it is the most unreliable of the four statistics. Therefore, although the Pillai-Bartlett statistic will be considered the most most important statistic, the Wilk's criterion and Hotelling-Lawley Trace statistics will also be cited.

Where a significant MANOVA effect was found, seperate univariate analysis of variance (ANOVAS) were computed for each dependent variable to assess which of the dependent variables might account for the significant multivariate effect (Spector, 1977). Prior to the computation of ANOVAS a Barlett-Box F statistic and Cochran's C statistic were calculated for each dependent variable to assess whether the underlying assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated. Where this assumption was not satisfied, parametric tests of significance would not be appropriate (Rogan & Keselman, 1977) and non-parametric tests would have to be used. For variables where the assumption of homogeneity was satisfied and ANOVAS were computed, these ANOVAS were followed by Scheffé tests, significant at the .05 level, to establish the direction of the significant group differences (Roscoe, 1969). For the variables where the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not satisfied, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test for two samples was calculated (Roscoe, 1969). On the SAS data analysis program, when only two groups are compared, this test functions as both the mathematical equivalent of the Kruskal-Wallis test (a non-parametric alternative to ANOVAS) and simultaneously establishes the direction of the significant differences. (Roscoe, 1969).

In addition, a stepwise discriminate analysis was performed for all six dependent variables in order to ascertain which of these variables distinguished or discriminated most successfully between the three groups of women used in this study (Spector, 1977).

CHAPTER NINE

RESULTS

The hypothesis that there would be a difference between the three groups of women on the following dependent variables was tested by means of a MANOVA: communication, sexual satisfaction, positive feelings toward spouse, disharmony, commitment and dissolution potential of the marriage. A highly significant multivariate difference emerged between abused women and the comparison groups, using the Pillai-Bartlett F approximation : F (12, 96) = 8.200 $p < .001$. The MANOVA also yielded the following statistics for Wilk's Criterion, F (12, 94) = 19.62, $p < .001$ and F (12,92) = 38.84, $p < .001$ for Hotelling - Lawley Trace.

The use of the Bartlett-Box F and Cochrans C tests for the homogeneity of variance for all the dependent measures revealed that the assumption of homogeneity was only satisfied for the variables communication (F = .314, $p < .05$; C statistic = .4076, $p < .05$) and sexual satisfaction (F = .3449, $p < .05$; C statistic = .4963, $p < .05$), but not for the other variables (See Appendix C). Separate ANOVAS were calculated for those variables where the assumption of homogeneity of variance was satisfied, followed by Scheffé comparisons to determine the direction of the significant differences. The results of the ANOVAS are presented in Table 3 and the results of the Scheffé comparisons are presented in Table 4.

Table 3

ANOVA Results for the variables Communication and Sexual Satisfaction.

SOURCE	DF	SS	MS	F	p
A. Variable : Communication					
Between Group	2	15887.95303	7943.9765	45.64	<.001
Within Group	52	9050.8833	174.0554		
Total	54	24938.8363			
B. Variable : Sexual Satisfaction					
Between Group	2	756.98750	378.49375	11.84	<.001
Within Group	52	1694.13750	31.96485		
Total	54	2451.1250			

Table 4

Scheffé comparisons for the variables Communication and Sexual Satisfaction.

GROUP	M	SD
A. Variable : Communication		
Happily Married/Non-abused	92.62	12.36
Unhappily Married/Non-abused	57.30	14.44
Unhappily Married/Abused	49.95	12.25
B. Variable Sexual Satisfaction		
Happily Married/Non-abused	11.68	3.40
Unhappily Married/Non-abused	18.75	5.88
Unhappily Married/Abused	20.55	6.74

From Tables 3 and 4 it can be seen that significant differences were found between the unhappily married, abused women and the control groups for the following variables:

Communication (F (2,52) = 45.64, p <.001)
Sexual Satisfaction (F (2,52) = 11.84, p <.001).

Further analysis through the use of Scheffé tests for all comparisons showed that while happily married, non-abused women's marriages were characterised by good communication, and were significantly different from unhappily married, non-abused and unhappily married, abused women's communication which was poor, the latter two groups did not differ significantly from each other. Their marriages were characterised by similar levels of poor communication. For the variable sexual satisfaction happily married, non-abused women differed significantly from both unhappily married groups and reported a high level of sexual-satisfaction in their marriages. However, both groups of unhappily-married women had similar levels of dissatisfaction with their sexual relationships with their partners and did not differ significantly from each other.

As an alternative to ANOVAS the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test was computed for those variables which did not satisfy the assumption of homogeneity of variance. The Mann-Whitney U tests were computed for two groups at a time (group 1 v 2, group 1 v 3 and group 2 v 3) which makes it mathematically equivalent to the Kruskal-Wallis test. Computed in this manner the Mann-Whitney U test provides not only a chi-square statistic for the overall significance for the difference between the means, but also tests the direction of the significant difference. The results of the Mann-Whitney U tests are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5

Mann-Whitney U tests for two group at a time for the following variables: Commitment, Feelings toward the Spouse, Disharmony and Dissolution Potential.

Variable	Group 1 vs 2			Group 1 vs 3			Group 2 vs 3		
	X	p	X	X	p	X	X	p	X
Commitment	20.44	.001	27.19(1) 11.55(2)	27.15	.001	28.34(1) 10.63(3)	9.50	.01	25.88(2) 15.13(3)
Feelings	22.52	.001	27.81(1) 11.05(2)	25.97	.001	28.50(1) 10.50(3)	5.87	.05	24.97(2) 16.02(3)
Disharmony	25.81	.001	8.63(1) 26.40(2)	28.40	.001	8.50(1) 26.50(3)	7.52	.01	16.10(2) 24.90(3)
Dissolution	22.03	.001	9.47(1) 25.72(2)	26.45	.001	8.56(1) 26.45(3)	1.96	.1616	17.92(2) 23.07(3)

From Table 5 it can be seen that significant differences were found between the groups for the following variables: commitment, positive feelings toward the spouse and disharmony in the relationship. For the variable commitment, happily married, non-abused women were significantly more committed to their relationships ($\underline{X}$=28.34) than both unhappily married groups. However, unhappily married, abused women expressed significantly ($\underline{X}$=15.13) less commitment to their relationships than unhappily married women who did not experience abuse ($\underline{X}$=25.88). For the variable feelings toward the spouse, happily married, non-abused women had the significantly higher level of positive feelings toward the spouse ($\underline{X}$=28.50) compared with the unhappily married groups of women who tended to express more negative feelings towards their spouses. Unhappily married, non-abused women tended to express significantly less negative feelings toward their spouses ($\underline{X}$=24.97) than did unhappily married, abused women ($\underline{X}$=16.02). Analysis of the variable disharmony revealed that happily married, non-abused women experienced significantly less marital disharmony ($\underline{X}$=8.63) than did both groups of unhappily married women. However, the unhappily married, non-abused women experienced significantly less marital disharmony ($\underline{X}$=16.10) than did unhappily married, abused women ($\underline{X}$=24.90). Furthermore, happily married, non-abused women had the significantly lowest level of dissolution potential for their marriages ($\underline{X}$=9.47) compared to the unhappily married groups of women. The unhappily married, non-abused groups of women did not differ significantly ($\underline{X}$=17.92) from unhappily married, abused women ($\underline{X}$=23.07) on dissolution potential of the relationship with the partner.

In order to assess the relative contributions of each dependent variable in distinguishing between the three groups of women, a stepwise discriminant analysis was computed. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Stepwise Discriminant Analysis for the Variables Commitment, Positive Feelings toward the Spouse, Disharmony, Sexual Satisfaction, Communication and Dissolution Potential.

Variable	Partial R^2	p
Disharmony	.88	.001
Commitment	.25	.007
Feeling	.07	.1331

From the above discriminant analysis it can be seen that the variables disharmony, commitment and feelings toward the spouse are the three variable which distinguish between the three groups of women most successfully. The variable disharmony has the greatest contribution to the significant differences between the groups (R^2 = .88). The variable commitment adds little to the discriminant function (R^2=.25) while the variable feelings toward the spouse adds nothing that is not contained in the variable disharmony.

The above statistical analysis of the data has revealed that wife abuse and marital satisfaction has an impact on the following three variables: feelings toward the spouse, disharmony and commitment to the relationship with the spouse. The variables communication, sexual satisfaction and dissolution potential do not distinguish abused women from unhappily married, non-abused women. The variable disharmony discriminates most successfully between the three groups.

CHAPTER TEN

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the impact of wife abuse and marital satisfaction on the marital relationship as measured by communication, positive feelings toward the spouse, sexual satisfaction, disharmony, commitment to the marriage and the dissolution potential of the relationship. The impact of marital satisfaction on the relationship was partially controlled for in this study. No previous research had examined the relationship between wife abuse, marital satisfaction and the marital relationship. The impact of wife-beating and marital satisfaction on the marital relationship will be discussed by examining its impact on each of the six variables separately. Also the limitations of this study will be stated and suggestions for future research will be made. The implications of these findings for marital therapy will also be discussed.

Prior to discussing the findings of this study, some of its limitations will be outlined. Obtaining a random selection of subjects for this study was almost impossible due to several factors which have already been discussed in Chapter 8. These difficulties included files kept at Coloured Affairs containing insufficient information to determine whether a past particular client had experienced physical abuse in the relationship; social workers not having a current caseload in the conventional sense of having clients in ongoing therapy, because counselling often involved a one session contact only; and the tracing of past clients being difficult as the community is quite mobile. As a result, subjects were selected from new cases which came in daily between the hours of 8:30 and 12:00 noon, and sufficient subjects were eventually recruited over a period of 11 months. The non-random selection of subjects therefore placed limitations on the representativeness of the sample and the generalisability of the findings of this research.

Another limitation of the study related to the issue of generalisability of the findings was small sample size. A sample size of 56 may be considered small, therefore limiting the power efficiency of the statistical measures. However, because of the difficulties involved in obtaining subjects for this study, where women who experienced battering in their relationship had to be selected from the new cases, it took approximately 11 months to recruit the 56 women. This made the use of a larger sample very difficult. The problems imposed by a small sample size were offset to some degree through the use of adequate statistical control built into the research design and analysis of the data. In this study, not only was use made of a second comparison group to partially control for the effects of marital discord, but a conservative approach was used in statistical analysis of the data viz, careful testing of the assumptions underlying the use of certain statistical procedures, the use of a multivariate statistic MANOVA and use of ANOVAS only when the underlying assumption of homogeneity of variance was satisfied.

A further limitation of this research was the problem of artificially elevated results derived from common method variance, namely self-report questionnaires. All data were provided by one source (the respondent) at one point in time, in response to a single methodology (the questionnaires). The conclusions drawn from this study should therefore be tempered by these factors.

The Impact of Wife-Beating and Marital Satisfaction on Communication in the Marriage

The hypothesis that women experiencing physical violence and a lower level of marital satisfaction in their relationships would report a significantly poorer quality of communication in their marriages compared with both comparison groups, was not

supported in its entirety by the results of this study. While happily married, non-abused women reported a good quality of marital communication, ($\underline{X}$=91.62, $\underline{SD}$=12.36) unhappily married, non-abused women's communication ($\underline{X}$=57.30, $\underline{SD}$=14.44) and unhappily married, abused women's communication ($\underline{X}$=49.95, $\underline{SD}$=12.25) did not differ significantly from each other. This finding suggests that by virtue of being unhappily married, the communication in both maritally dissatisfied groups was poor, and that the experience of physical violence did not significantly increase the poor quality of communication over and above that which was present due to the effects of marital discord. It would seem therefore, that general dissatisfaction with the marriage was more important in determining the quality of communication than the experience of wife abuse.

Concurring with the results of this study, a strong relationship between faulty communication and marital satisfaction has been noted in previous research (Haley, 1964; Kahn, 1969; Bienvenu, 1970; Murphy & Mendelson, 1973; Banmen & Vogel, 1985). A number of cross-sectional investigations comparing the interaction of distressed and non-distressed couples (Bircher, Weis & Vincent, 1975; Gottman, Markman & Notarius, 1977) have demonstrated that poor communication is a feature of unhappily married couples and that compared to non-distressed couples, distressed couples rated their communication more negatively, used more negative verbal and non-verbal behaviours and reported more problems in their marriage (Bircher & Webb, 1977). Navran (1967) states that happily married couples differ from unhappily married couples in that they : a) talk to each other more, b) convey the feeling that they understand what is being said to them, d) preserve communication channels and keep them open, e) show more sensitivity to each other's feelings, f) personalise their language, and g) make more use of supplementary non-verbal techniques of communication. Markman (1979, 1981) in two longitudinal studies, found that deficits in communication skills precede marital distress.

Furthermore, other research seems to indicate that poor communication in marriage has an almost "ripple-like effect", affecting other areas of functioning in the marital relationship (Levinger & Senn, 1967; Navran, 1967; Snyder, 1979). Levinger & Senn (1967) not only obtained evidence that strongly supported the association between marital satisfaction and full disclosure of feelings, which tended to correlate positively with marital satisfaction, but also found that full disclosure of feelings was positively related to positive feelings toward the other person in the relationship. In addition, Snyder (1979) states that skills in communication provide the means for resolution of differences and increased satisfaction across a broad spectrum of marital interaction. He further suggests that conflicts evolve from a more fundamental, pervasive absence of intimacy, or may themselves function as major obstacles to such intimacy in the absence of effective means for the resolution of even minor differences. Similarly, Navran (1967) comments on the relationship between conflict resolution, problem-solving and communication. These above cited studies suggest that a relationship exists between communication and other dimensions of marital relationship, such as positive feelings toward the spouse and level of unresolved conflicts or disharmony in the marriage.

In summary, it would seem that communication in marriage has a very strong relationship with marital satisfaction. It has been suggested that the unhappily-married groups of women have a poor quality of communication in their relationships by virtue of both these groups being unhappily married. Furthermore, previous research indicates that poor communication or communication skills deficits affect other areas of the marital relationship, such as the ability to resolve conflicts as well as positive feelings toward the spouse. In conclusion, Banmen & Vogel (1985) state that good communication skills are the foundation of successful families working together.

The Impact of Wife-Beating and Marital Satisfaction on Sexual Satisfaction

The hypothesis that unhappily married, physically abused women would differ from both comparison groups on a standardised measure of sexual satisfaction was not supported in its entirety by the results of this study. As expected, unhappily married, abused women had a significantly lower level of sexual saisfaction ($\underline{X}$=20.55, $\underline{SD}$=6.74) in their marriages than happily married, non-abused women ($\underline{X}$=11.68). However, unhappily married, abused women did not differ from unhappily married, non-abused women on the variable sexual satisfaction ($\underline{X}$=18.75, $\underline{SD}$=5.88). Both groups had similar levels of dissatisfaction with their sexual relationships. It would therefore seem that the general level of marital satisfaction was more salient in accounting for the differences between groups than wife abuse and degree of marital satisfaction. This finding concurs with that reported in previous research in the area of marital relations, where sexual satisfaction is reported to be strongly related to overall marital satisfaction and failures in communication with partners (Terman, 1938; Locke, 1951; Burgess & Wallin, 1953; Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin & Gebhard, 1953; Masters & Johnson, 1970; Edwards & Booth, 1976; Geismar, 1984).

Several empirical studies have found that the quality of the marital relationship as manifested in verbal communication, positive feelings toward the spouse and disharmony in the marriage are crucial in determining sexual satisfaction. For instance, Edwards & Booth (1976) who, in studying a probability sample of Toronto families, reported that "the dimensions of the marital relationship are more efficacious in accounting for sexual patterns than are the background variables" (p.80). As regards the relationship between sexual satisfaction and communication, Geismar (1984) reported that

sexual frequency, sexual satisfaction and the importance assigned to sex was positively related to verbal communication. He defined verbal communication as the discussion of feelings. problems and family goals, and concluded that talking things out undoubtedly accounted for the significant link between verbal communication and sexual satisfaction. It also seems probable that couples with good communication skills are better able to tell their partners what they want sexually. Bircher (1979) similarly supports the connection between sexual satisfaction and communication problems.

Apart from the importance of communication in marriage, Clark & Wallin (1965) report on other important dimensions of the marital relationship found to be related to sexual satisfaction. In their longitudinal study focussing on the sexual component in marriage, they report that women who have a mutual love and respect relationship with their partners (positive feelings toward the spouse), tend to be relatively high on sexual responsiveness (measured by frequency of orgasm) and become more responsive with increased experience. On the other hand women whose marriages are persistently negative in quality tend to remain low on responsiveness. Furthermore, both Geismar (1984) and Bell (1974) report that sexual satisfaction is negatively affected by decrements in positive feelings toward the spouse and by high levels of discord or disharmony in the relationship.

The literature on wife abuse suggests that violence toward women is frequently sex related (Gelles, 1974, 1977; Pfouts, 1978). Women frequently report being beaten by their partners as a result of their partners becoming jealous over a suspected incident of infidelity, or being struck when they voice suspicions over extra-marital affairs (Gelles, 1974). Abused wives also frequently report not wanting to have sex with their partners because partners come home drunk or at odd hours.

This sexual refusal is often stated as provoking a beating (Gelles, 1974, 1977; Lawrence, 1984), and forced sexual intercourse is reported to occur often. Furthermore, battering husbands are reported to believe that wives should have sex on demand and if they do not, husbands accuse them of being frigid. This criticism of wives' sexual responsiveness is frequently reported in the literature - husbands often beat their wives for not being affectionate enough (Gelles, 1974; Pfouts, 1978). However, the above-cited incidents of sex-related violence, as well as higher degrees of reported marital dissatisfaction do not appear to have an adverse impact on sexual satisfaction over and above that due to high marital dissatisfaction, specific dimensions of the marital relationship such as communication, positive feelings toward the spouse and level of disharmony being more efficacious.

The Impact of Wife-Beating and Marital Satisfaction on Disharmony in the Marriage

The hypothesis that unhappily married, abused women would experience greater levels of disharmony in their relationships with their partners compared with both comparison groups was supported by the results of this study. Happily married, non-abused women ($\underline{X}$=8.63) reported significantly lower levels of marital disharmony than both groups of unhappily married women. However, unhappily married, abused women ($\underline{X}$=24.90) reported significantly higher levels of marital disharmony than did unhappily married, non-abused women ($\underline{X}$=16.10). Since one of the important differences between groups 2 and 3 is the fact that group 3 is abused, this finding indicates that there may be an important relationship between wife abuse and marital disharmony. Furthermore, the stepwise discriminant analysis revealed that this variable discriminated most successfully between the three groups of women ($\underline{R}^2$ = .88).

The finding that unhappily married, abused women reported the highest level of marital disharmony or unresolved conflicts combined with the finding that this variable distinguished most sucessfully between the groups, suggests that there is an important link between mode of conflict resolution and degree of marital disharmony. It appears likely that the use of physical violence as a tactic in dealing with conflict, results in a higher level of unresolved conflict. The analysis of the results of the Conflict Tactics Scale used in this study revealed that the husbands of happily married, non-abused women used significantly greater amounts of rational discussion ($\underline{X}$=1.25, $\underline{SD}$ = 2.01) than did husbands of both unhappily married, non-abused ($\underline{X}$=4.80, $\underline{SD}$ = 1.79) and unhappily married, abused women ($\underline{X}$=6.40, $\underline{SD}$ = 1.78). Combined with the more frequent use of rational discussion as a technique of conflict resolution, husbands of happily married, non-abused women were reported to use significantly lower levels of verbal aggression ($\underline{X}$=3.62, $\underline{SD}$ = 2.89) and physical violence ($\underline{X}$=.062, S)D = .25) than did husbands of unhappily married, non-abused women (verbal agression $\underline{X}$=14.30, $\underline{SD}$ = 6.31 and physical violence $\underline{X}$=1.75, $\underline{SD}$ = 9.42) and unhappily married, abused women (verbal agression $\underline{X}$=23.50, $\underline{SD}$ = 7.99 and physical violence $\underline{X}$=27.55, $\underline{SD}$ = 9.73). The husbands of battered women used significantly less rational discussion, significantly more verbal aggression (swearing, insulting, saying spiteful things, etc) and physical violence compared with both comparison groups. This finding suggests that battering men engage in more destructive modes of conflict resolution which results in higher levels of unresolved differences.

Deutch (1969) in a discussion of the difference between constructive and destructive modes of conflict resolution states that destructive conflicts are typified by the tendency to expand the arena of conflict, to rely on a strategy of power and the tactics of threat, coercion and deception as modes of conflict resolution which lead to the increase of mutual

suspicion and the lack of communication. Constructive conflicts, on the other hand, are characterised by mutual recognition of each other's interests, open and honest communication of information, and a trusting and friendly attitude which allows both partners the flexibility to find creative solutions to the conflicts. The finding that battering husbands use significantly greater amounts of verbal aggression as a tactic to deal with conflict, as well as significantly more physical violence, appears to closely fit Deutch's (1969) description of destructive modes of conflict resolution. These men use their superior physical power and the tactics of threat and coercion in an attempt to deal with conflict.

The finding that battering husbands used a great deal of verbal aggression concurs with the findings of previous research which found that verbal arguments usually precede episodes of physical violence (Walker, 1979; Wetzel & Ross, 1983). The battered women in this study reported using significantly less verbal aggression ($\underline{X}$=9.96, $\underline{SD}$ = 7.70) themselves as a mode of conflict resolution than did unhappily married, non-abused women ($\underline{X}$=12.10, $\underline{SD}$ = 6.34). Previous research has established that battered women are very afraid to retaliate when beaten as they fear that this might make the beatings worse (Gayford, 1975; Gelles, 1976). Although the battered women in this study used quite high levels of verbal aggression in response to conflict compared with happily married women, it may be that they temper its use because they are afraid that it may provoke a beating.

Straus (1974) tested the hypothesis that verbal aggression is a substitute for physical aggression. The opposite results were found: the more the verbal expression of aggression, the more the physical aggression. In addition to the finding that physical aggression and verbal aggression go hand in hand, Straus also established that the use of rational discussion or the "intellectualisation" of marital conflicts was associated

with low amounts of physical violence. The latter finding was reported by Straus to apply most strongly for working-class couples. Similarly, Ort (1950) reports that happily married couples used discussion to resolve conflicts, while unhappily married couples used aggression and avoidance of the issue. These findings concur with the results of the present study, in that happily married husbands appeared to use significantly greater amounts of rational discussion and less verbal and physical aggression than battering husbands, for whom the opposite was true. It should be borne in mind that the ability to rationally discuss conflicts presupposes the presence of good communication skills. As stated previously, both unhappily-married groups of women reported similarly poor levels of communication in their marriages, and a communication deficit may account for the high levels of disharmony in their marriages. In Straus' (1974) investigation of the relationship between verbal aggression and physical aggression he concluded that the rules of civil behaviour seem to be one of the mechanisms by which the arousal level and hence the likelihood of physical violence can be avoided.

The role of the husband in conflict resolution is demonstrated by Barry (1970) to be extremely important. He argues that husbands with stable self-identities engage more easily in trusting behaviour vis-á-vis their wives and that trusting behaviour leads to cooperation rather than destructive conflict. In Deutch's (1969) discussion of constructive conflict he similarly mentions the importance of a trusting attitude which allows both partners the flexibility to find creative solutions to the conflicts. The association between stable male identities and physical violence has been discussed earlier in this study. As stated previously, lower-class men tend to experience less reinforcement for their male identity than middle-class men because of their lack of resources, and that generally lower-class male children have a problem with male identification either because the father is absent or weak, or because he can show little warmth to his son due to

his own insecurity about masculinity (Barry, 1970; Renne, 1970). It is probable that Black men in South Africa have even greater difficulties with stable male identification due to their race and the political, social and economic structure of South Africa, where Blacks are regarded as inferior and systematic discrimination is institutionalised. Apart from the economic, social and political structure affecting lower-class males' self-identity, it should also be remembered that the patriarchal ideology defines masculinity and accords a dominant position to males, although many men lack the resources to legitimate this dominant position.

In a study conducted by Gurin et al (1960) on the relationship between class and negative self-image, they report more negative self-images in unskilled workers than in any other group of men. Unskilled workers cite their own inadequacies as providers and parents in discussing the negative aspects of their marriages. Their wives likewise feel more unhappy in marriage than any other group and tend to blame their husband's inadequacies for their unhappiness. Furthermore, Gurin et al (1960) state that the more stable the man's male identity is, the more he accepts his "feminine" strivings without feeling threatened by them, and the more emotionally supportive and cooperative he can be toward his wife who experiences the greater difficulty adjusting to her role as wife and mother. They conclude that men who feel threatened in their core identity as men, are less able to engage in trusting behaviour which leads to less cooperation and emotional supportiveness and more destructive conflicts. Both Deutch & Kraus (1960) and Epstein, Canavan & Gumpert (1967) report that coercion leads to countercoercion and lack of cooperativeness, making escalating conflict and an unhappy marriage the result. De Vos (1966) asserts that for individuals who have some source of continuing insecurity relative to their status as men vis-á-vis women, any dimunition in deference can result in immediate sensitivity, and the use of coercion or even violence to reaffirm their dominance.

It would therefore appear that stable male identification is an important aspect of conflict resolution since men who have this quality can engage in trusting behaviour which leads to cooperation and emotional supportiveness rather than destructive conflict and perhaps the use of violence to reaffirm dominance. That men resort to their superior strength in a conflict situation is not that surprising given the fact that this is one superior resource that men have compared with women. In addition, given the fact that ours is a culture in which wife-beating and violence as a learned response to stress are not uncommon occurrences, this fact probably increases the likelihood of violence toward women. As stated previously, the patriarchal social and family systems which accord a dominant position to men and a subordinate position to women are seen as important causes of wife-beating (Martin, 1976; Straus, 1976; Straus 1978; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Pleck, 1979). It has also been demonstrated that class is related to stable masculine identity which in turn is related to mode of conflict resolution.

The Impact of Wife-Beating and Marital Satisfaction on Positive Feelings toward the Spouse

The hypothesis that the experience of both abuse and lower levels of marital satisfaction would result in unhappily married, abused women expressing significantly more negative feelings toward their spouses than both comparison groups was supported by the results of this study. Happily married, non-abused women expressed significantly greater amounts of positive feelings ($\underline{X}$=28.50) toward their spouses than did both unhappily married groups of women. Unhappily married, non-abused women expressed significantly more positive feelings ($\underline{X}$=24.97) toward their spouse than did unhappily married, abused women ($\underline{X}$=16.02), indicating a negative relationship between positive feelings toward the spouse and wife abuse and marital satisfaction.

Positive feelings toward the spouse is an extremely important dimension of the marital relationship since, as Medling & McCarrey (1981) point out, the decision to marry and remain with a particular partner, is in part influenced by the extent to which one has positive feelings for the person. Broderick & O'Leary (1986) asserts that positive feelings toward the spouse is judged by women as the most important characteristic of a good marriage. If this is so, it then follows that battered women would express lower levels of commitment to their relationships and greater levels of marital dissatisfaction than both comparison groups. The results of this study confirm these suppositions. Further attesting to the importance of this dimension in the marital relationship, O'Leary & Turkewitz (1978) and Turkewitz & O'Leary (1981) state that positive feelings toward the spouse is a negative predictor of outcome in therapy.

In their interviews with battered women residing in a refuge in Scotland, Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh and Wilson (1977) established that battered women generally used two criteria in selecting an incident of abuse which they singled out as the worst they had experienced in their relationships. First, battered women took into account the extent of the injuries they sustained. Second, the selection was based on social factors which made the episode that much more horrendous. For example, the embarrassment of a public assault or the ruination of a special event such as Christmas. It would therefore appear that when the injuries were particularly severe and painful, and the shame and embarrassment felt at being physically abused were especially acute, battered women viewed this incident as the worst battering incident. This definition of the worst battering incident suggests that the act of physical abuse with the ensuing harm done to the dignity and self-respect of the women and the degradation involved in being battered, are in part responsible for making women feel negatively toward, or diminishing their feelings of love for

their spouse. In Dobash et al's (1977) study one of the women interviewed about the worst assault she experienced in her marriage was asked if the incident had made any difference to the way she felt about her partner. She replied "Well I just felt, if he does this again he's going to kill my love I've got for him, I mean that's one way of really killing it you know" (p.617). It would seem therefore, that being physically abused is destructive for women's self-esteem and sense of dignity and that under these conditions women cannot feel positively about the person who is the source of the humiliation and degradation. Furthermore, Dobash et al state that women's accounts of these confrontations continually illustrate that the woman is viewed as a possession of her husband, secondary to him, and thus subject to even his most unreasonable and humiliating attempts to control her. In this position of subordination accorded her by the patriarchal ideology, a woman is to be controlled and dominated and violence is one of the ways by which this order is achieved and enforced. However, in doing so, women are objectified and stripped of their dignity, self-respect and right to autonomy, and it is the writer's opinion that it is partly this process which is so destructive to feelings women have for their partners.

The Impact of Wife-Beating on Commitment to the Relationship

The hypothesis that unhappily married, abused women would express the significantly lowest level of commitment to their relationships was supported by the results of this study. Happily married, non-abused women expressed the highest level of commitment to their relationships ($\underline{X}$=28.34), while unhappily married, non-abused women expressed a significantly higher level of commitment ($\underline{X}$=25.88) than unhappily-married, abused women ($\underline{X}$=15.13). This finding indicates a relationship between abuse and greater marital dissatisfaction and commitment to the relationship. The stepwise discriminant analysis revealed that this variable was the second most important variable ($\underline{R}^2$=.25, $\underline{p}$ < .007) in discriminating between the three groups.

The scale measuring commitment used in this study defined commitment for the subjects. Part of that definition went as follows "...it can mean a time of accepting the other person in spite of his/her faults or problems which may make one's own life more difficult". Due to the wording of this definition one could speculate that this may have been interpreted as meaning in spite of the abuse which in reality does make their lives more difficult. The significantly lower level of commitment of abused women could therefore indicate battered women's dissatisfaction with the abuse and their desire to change the fact of abuse as part of their lives.

It is also probable that commitment to the relationship is affected by dimensions of the marital relationship other than abuse, such as their significantly greater negative feelings toward their partners and the level of disharmony in their relationships. As Medling & McCarrey (1981) point out, the decision to marry and remain married, is in part influenced by the positive feelings toward the partner. It is probable that even those dimensions of the relationship which have not been found to be related to wife-beating, eg communication and sexual satisfaction, also affect level of commitment to the relationship. Brehm (1956) states that level of commitment to the relationship also influences the way people evaluate the attractiveness of available alternatives. However, the finding that battered women, despite the experience of abuse and greater marital dissatisfaction, had a similar level of dissolution potential for their marriages than unhappily married women who did not experience abuse (discussed in detail below), indicates that a gap exists between level of commitment to the relationship and the dissolution of the relationship. Although women who were physically abused expressed low commitment to their relationships, this does not seem to affect the attractiveness of alternatives. It may be that for the battered women in this study, the lower level of commitment to the relationship is not carried over into action to dissolve

the relationship, because very few, if any, alternatives to the marriage are available. Alternatively, it may be that they are choosing the abusive relationship rather than facing the difficulties involved in dissolving the relationship.

The Impact of Wife-Beating and Marital Satisfaction on the Dissolution Potential of the Relationship

The hypothesis that battered women's marriages would have the higher dissolution potential compared with both comparison groups was not supported entirely by the results of this study. While happily married, non-abused women had a significantly lower dissolution potential ($\underline{X}$=9.47) for their marriages compared with both unhappily married groups, the latter two groups did not differ from each other (unhappily-married, non-abused women $\underline{X}$=17.92; unhappily-married, abused women ($\underline{X}$=23.07). It would therefore appear that the experience of wife abuse and lower levels of marital satisfaction did not have an additional impact on battered women's marital dissolution potential over and above the effects present due to their being unhappily married.

A great deal of previous research has been focused on the tenacity of battering relationships. As stated earlier in this study, research in this area has found that battered women frequently remain in battering relationships and endure extended periods of severe and frequent physical abuse. This fact has resulted in some writers proposing that these women have a personality flaw, that is, that they are masochistic (Gelles, 1976; Martin, 1976; Walker, 1977-78, 1980; Waites, 1978; Rounsaville, 1978a; Pfouts, 1978). The results of this study revealed that battered women, despite the experience of physical abuse and a lower level of marital satisfaction, a significantly lower level of commitment and a significantly greater amount of negative feelings toward their spouse, were no more ready to dissolve their relationships with their partners than the unhappily married women who did not

experience abuse, expressed a significantly higher level of marital satisfaction and commitment to their spouses and more positive feelings toward their spouse. Given the findings that women who experience physical abuse expressed a low level of commitment to their relationships and had a great deal of negative feelings toward their spouse, one would expect battered women to be more motivated to dissolve their relationships with the batterer. However, the findings of this study concur with that of previous research which has established that, despite sufficient justification which should motivate the battered woman to extricate herself from her situation, she frequently tolerates severe and frequent abuse and remains in the battering relationship (Snell et al, 1964; Levinger, 1966; O'Brien, 1971; Gelles, 1976; Rounsaville, 1978a).

Waites (1978) posits that battered women's decisions are a result of a complex interrelationship of factors. As Gelles (1976) states, the assumption that the victim will flee from a battering partner overlooks the complex subjective meaning of intrafamily violence, the nature of commitment and entrapment in the family as a social group and the external constraints which limit the ability of women to seek outside intervention. In addition, it is this writer's opinion that for as long as the prevailing social and family structure and ideology is patriarchal and authoritarian, women will continue to choose battering relationships rather than alternative non-abusive lifestyles. As stated earlier in this study, the numerous external obstacles that are placed in the way of women attempting to extricate themselves from battering relationships are related to the sexist organisation of society. The patriarchal social structure and ideology is often expressed through the responses of various social institutions to the battered woman, as exemplified in for instance, the response of police who seldom make arrests, encourage women not to press charges (Field & Field, 1973) and have an attitude that family altercations are a private matter (Prescott & Lekto, 1977;

Hilberman, 1980). Also, the judicial system seldom deals with wife battery seriously unless the victim has been fatally injured (Field & Field, 1973). It is probable that in South Africa, as in other countries, myths about family violence are prevalent in the judicial system (Gelles, 1976) and women are seen to provoke and deserve the abuse. Lawrence's (1984) report that few cases of marital violence reach the courts and that typically sentences are light has relevance here. Lawrence also reports that social welfare agencies are inadequately equipped to deal with the problem of wife abuse since social workers report having heavy caseloads, being inadequately trained to deal with family violence due to insufficient knowledge of the causes and patterns of wife abuse. In addition, the lack of shelters for battered women in South Africa further compounds the difficulties of professionals dealing with the problem. For instance, the organisation People Opposing Women's Abuse (POWA) states that its shelter for abused women is the only one available to the female population in the Johannesburg and surrounding areas (Personal Communication, 1986). Due to the Group Areas Act, this shelter is far removed from Black women's places of residence and is probably quite inaccessible in an emergency. The patriarchal social system and its ideology is further reflected in women's economic dependence on men and more specifically in sex-based wage discrimination. In spite of women's economically disadvantaged position, they are usually allocated the responsibility of child-rearing. The difficulties encountered by divorced women in gaining and maintaining economic support from ex-spouses has been discussed earlier in this study. In addition to the above obstacles family and friends of the battered women are reported to usually be unsupportive (Martin, 1976; Moore, 1979; Dobash & Dobash, 1979). It has also been argued earlier that for Black women these above practical obstacles are exacerbated because of social, political and economic structures in SA which discriminate against Blacks. For instance, due to housing shortages and overcrowding in Black areas, battered women would

have difficulty finding a place to stay. This increases the likelihood that alternatives to the abusive relationship are viewed negatively.

In relation to the complex subjective meaning of intrafamily violence, Ferraro & Johnson (1983) point out that women view the actions of their husbands and lovers through a perceptual screen composed of emotions, expectations, shared experiences and commitments. Therefore battered women rarely experience battering as an unambiguous assault demanding immediate protective action. Ferraro & Johnson state that discordant stimuli, especially threatening stimuli, are perceived with difficulty and often incorrectly. Based on their empirical research, they theorise that battered women use rationalisation techniques to make sense of the experience of battering and that these rationalisation techniques are a defense against seeing the battering relationship clearly and acknowledging the reality of its destructiveness. For example, battered women often rationalise an abusive incident by saying it would not have happened if the partner had not been drunk or not been under stress due to being laid off work. Ferraro & Johnson suggest that the use of these rationalisation techniques further inhibit women's ability to terminate the abusive relationship.

Furthermore, it appears that on an intra-psychic level the experience of abuse evokes a variety of emotions which further inhibits a woman's ability to extricate herself from her situation. For instance, reactions such as shame and guilt at being abused, leads to women blaming themselves for the abuse (Walker, 1979; Miller & Porter, 1983; Wetzel & Ross, 1983). To the extent that women blame themselves for the abuse and absolve the partner from responsibility they are likely to remain in the abusive relationship. Both Miller & Porter's (1983) and Frieze's (1979) findings with regard to self-blame and frequency of abuse have relevance here. In addition,

several writers have pointed out that fear in relation to the batterer is also a factor which inhibits battered women from escaping from the abusive situation (Martin, 1976; Symmonds, 1977; Moore, 1979; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). This fear inhibits women's desire to seek outside intervention such as police protection (Moore, 1979) since they fear retaliatory abuse and they also believe that even the dissolution of the relationship through divorce will not stop the beatings (Walker, 1979). It is also probable that fear operates on other levels as well in keeping women in abusive relationships. Battered women are reported to fear being alone and possibly not being able to survive independently (Rounsaville, 1978a; Walker, 1979). In addition they fear the stigma of divorce (Hilberman, 1980). Due to women's socialisation into the stereotypical female role it is probable that many women do not have some of the necessary skills to survive independently. The fear of being alone is probably compounded by the identity loss involved in the dissolution of a marriage, because as Sheehy (1976) states, for many women marriage is a conerstone of female identity and for some women the traditional path to a substitute for identity. In addition to the above emotions, battered women are reported to be extemely depressed due to the process of victimisation (Walker, 1977-78; Rounsaville, 1978a) and as a result of this depression, have a tendency to maximise difficulties and minimise strengths.

As stated previously, in view of the overwhelming obstacles battered women face in extricating themselves from battering relationships, many recent writers reject the hypothesis that these women are masochistic. Masochism has previously been conceptualised as a personality flaw but research in the area has failed to find conclusive support for this thesis as many women, once they have succeeded in extricating themselves from abusive relationships, do not seek out other abusive partners (Gelles, 1976; Rounsaville, 1978). In addition, for many

women violence is not a life-long pattern since many battered women have not experienced violence in previous relationships (Rounsaville, 1978). However, it is the opinion of this writer that due to structural conditions, that is, both the patriarchal social and family structures and its accompanying ideology as well as the political, social and economic structure of SA, many women will continue to make the masochistic choice to remain in the abusive situation, rather than face the difficulties inherent in leaving. Structural conditions facilitate these masochistic choices, as it were. As stated previously, research has shown that under certain conditions some women do find the impetus to leave the battering relationship, despite the obstacles. For example, when teenage children become embroiled in the violence or when women discover the partner has been abusing the children (Snell et al, 1964; Gelles, 1976). The fact that women in some instances find the impetus to leave when they are required to act on someone else's behalf rather than their own, attests to women's low self-esteem, probably in part fostered by an ideology that teaches them to be selfless and be content with identification through their men (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Furthermore, it could be argued that the results of this study, where battered women were found to have more negative feelings toward their partner and were less committed to their relationships than unhappily married, non abused and happily married, non abused women, provides support for the contention that battered women do not enjoy the suffering of physical abuse.

Suggestions for Future Research

Not only has interest and empirical research in the area of wife abuse been a recent phenomenon in America and Britain, resulting in rather limited knowledge of the causes and patterns of wife-beating, but even less is known about wife-beating in the South African context. First, no reliable

estimates of the national incidence of wife-beating in South Africa are available. It may well be that until such statistics are available, the importance of the problem and the need for empirical research in the area will not be realised. Second, numerous factors have been established as causes of wife abuse in America and Britain. The bulk of these causes (for example, financial problems, unemployment, use of alcohol) have been established as stress and frustration producing situations and indicate the inability of battering men and battering couples to deal with such stress. In addition, the importance of the role of violence as a learned response to stress is indicated. It has been argued that Black people's political, social and economic deprivations make it more likely that they will be exposed to stressful situations which are exacerbated by the political, social and economic structure of South Africa. It has also been argued that this structure creates additional stresses and frustration for Blacks which may well be related to wife-beating. However, this needs to be established empirically. Statistics on the national incidence of wife-beating and cross-cultural studies would establish the role of the political, economic and social structure of South Africa as a cause of wife-beating.

Third, research in America and Britain has established that the patriarchal structure of society and the family is a cause of wife abuse. The role of patriarchy in South Africa as a cause of wife-beating, particularly its relevance as a cause of wife beating amongst Blacks, needs to be researched. Epstein (1973) and Ripp (1973) have highlighted the fact that lower-class Black families are mother dominated that the tension between this tradition and the predominant patriarchal ideology needs to be examined. In addition, race differences in socialisation practises, as well as the role of sexist discrimination in making women dependant on men and marriage would be important areas of future research. Accumulating knowledge about the causes and patterns of wife-beating is

important because as Gelles (1976) states, this paucity of knowledge has resulted in few policy or intervention strategies being worked out for the benefit of those trained professionals who have to deal with the problem in therapeutic situations. Lawrence (1984) cites inadequate training of social workers and other professionals as a major drawback in dealing with wife abuse cases.

Finally, this study, concerned with the impact of wife-beating on the marital relationship, has only reviewed the impact of wife-beating on the relationship from the wife's perspective. Bernard (1972) states that there is a very considerate body of well-authenticated research which shows that there are really two marriages in every union and that they do not always coincide. Bernard states that this difference in the way the relationship is viewed reflects differences in the socialisation of the sexes. Future research examining and comparing both battering husbands' and their victims' reports on the quality of the relationship would probably yield useful findings not only in terms of understanding the impact of wife-beating on the marital relationship, but also in terms of treatment of the couple.

Based on the findings of this study, it has been suggested that communication deficits are crucial in a marital relationship (discussed below) and that improving the quality of communication in therapy would provide the skills for improvement in other dimensions of the relation. This needs to be established empirically. That is, controlled studies in which communication training as a component of a treatment program is manipulated, needs to be conducted in order to establish its value.

In conclusion, research in the area of wife-beating seems to indicate that structural conditions at two levels interact, not only to generate specific causes of wife-beating, but also

function to keep battered women in abusive relationships, since they are embodied in the restrictive social, psychological, legal and economic factors which constrain women's choice space. In the discussion of the impact of wife-beating and marital satisfaction on disharmony in the relationship, the relationship of these two structual conditions and wife-beating was illustrated, i.e. relationship between class and stable male identity, and stable male identity and mode of conflict resolution. Partriarchy's contribution is that it prescribes a male dominant position. The results of this study have shown that both groups of unhappily married women's relationships are characterised by a poor quality of communication, sexual satisfaction and a high level of dissolution potential. However, battering relationships are distinguished from non-abusive relationships in that they are characterised by significiantly more negative feelings toward the spouse, higher levels of disharmony or unresolved conflicts and lower levels of commitment to the relationship. It was therefore concluded that wife-beating exacerbates the negative effects of marital discord and that the general tone of battering relationships is extremely poor.

As stated earlier, the various dimensions of the marital relationship assessed in this study appear to be interrelated. For instance, sexual satisfaction has been found to be related to positve feelings toward spouse and communication in the marriage (Clark & Walin, 1965; Edwards & Booth, 1976; Geismar, 1984). The one variable that appears to be common to and have the most profound effect on the level of functioning in all other areas of the marital relationship assessed in this study is communication. Communication has been found to have a positive relationship with positive feelings toward the spouse (Levinger & Senn, 1976) and with sexual satisfaction (Geismar, 1984). It has been inferred that, since rational discussion has been found to be negatively correlated with the use of violence (Straus, 1974), the ability to discuss conflicts

rationally presupposes good communication skills. This has also been suggested by other writers (Navran, 1967; Snyder, 1979). Although there is no empirical evidence to support this contention, it seems logical to assert that poor communication skills in a relationship also affect the level of commitment to the relationship as well as the dissolution potential of the relationship since communication skills deficits appear to be related to and precede marital discord (Markman, 1979, 1981). It therefore seems reasonable to conclude that men resort to violence as a strategy to deal with conflict because of the couple's lack of communication resources. This in turn suggests that it is imperative to address communication difficulties in the treatment of marital violence (to be discussed below) and that it is probable that through an improvement of communication skills, the general tone of the relationship can be improved. It would therefore seem that marital or family therapy is a necessary component of treatment, and that communication training should be an integral part of any treatment program. It has been suggested that to ameliorate the problem of wife abuse, change needs to take place at the above structural levels.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

IMPLICATIONS FOR TREATMENT

Several institutions have been involved in the treatment of wife abuse. These include legal and police intervention, social welfare and psychotherapeutic efforts. The limitations of legal and police as well as social welfare intervention have already been stated earlier in this study (see Chapter 5). Field & Field (1973) assert that the essential problem with legal and police intervention is that the criminal justice model of arrest, arraignment, release on bail, trial and jail is inappropriate in dealing with cases of intrafamily violence, as these cases involve complex interpersonal and emotional problems. As a result of the inappropriateness of their model, legal and police efforts to cope with the problem reflect this weakness. Field & Field (1973) therefore state that the proper domain of treatment for cases in which there are violent outbreaks between spouses, is with those whose responsibility it is to help understand and ease pathological mental processes and the conflicts peculiar to marriage. However, attempts at psychotherapeutic intervention have also been fraught with difficulties. For instance, when battered women do seek outside intervention, which is reported to occur infrequently (Gelles, 1976), and they are referred for psychotherapeutic help (if for instance they first sought police intervention), they often drop out of therapy for various reasons. For example, because of an overwhelming sense of helplessness they believe that no one is able to help them (Walker, 1979). In addition, husbands who batter their wives typically do not view their behaviour as a problem and frequently only enter therapy if they are coerced to do so by their wives who threaten to leave the relationship or file for a divorce (Rounsaville, 1978b). Psychotherapy cannot be effective for patients who do not recognize firstly, that there is a problem, and secondly, that it is the patient's responsibility to work on the problem.

Psychotherapeutic treatment of cases of marital violence has taken a variety of formats. Typically men and women are seen separately and therapy is usually conducted in an individual or group setting. These two forms of treatment appear to be the most popular thus far (Saunders, 1977). Less frequently couple therapy is attempted, but many therapists working with violent couples reject marital or family therapy as the initial form of service for a variety of reasons. It is believed, for instance, that marital and family therapy intensifies an already overly dependent relationship (Flax, 1977; Walker, 1977-78). Furthermore, family and marital therapists have been criticised for their failure to detect abuse in couples (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). This failure is assumed to be the result of the commitment of the therapist to working exclusively with the couple in the context of equal ownership of all problems in the relationship (Cook & Cook, 1983). Cook & Cook (1983) state that there is a need for marital and family therapists to become aware of the special nature of battering problems and the necessity in most cases to separate the couple for individual or group treatment in the initial phases.

However, while there is general consensus on the need to separate battering couples in the initial phases of treatment, this does not imply the rejection of marital therapy as an important component of treatment. On the contrary, the results of this study indicate the necessity for treatment focussing on relationship issues. The finding that the general tone of battering relationships is very poor (as reflected in level of disharmony, feelings toward spouse and commitment to the relationship) indicates that the most immediate goal of treatment should be the cessation of violent behaviour in order to improve the general tone of the relationship. If this can be achieved to a degree, this would probably make the couple more amenable to therapeutic intervention, since such low levels of commitment and positive feelings toward the spouse are considered a poor prognosis for therapeutic outcome

(O'Leary & Arias, 1983; Beach & Broderick, 1983). Beach & Broderick (1983) assert that commitment level and positive feelings can affect the outcome of therapy through a variety of processes, including increased compliance, general flexibility and greater willingness to make behaviour change agreements.

Attempts to reduce the risk of further abuse are usually dealt with in the initial phases of therapy when the couple are separated. Several therapists recommend an approach using methods of behavioural control on the part of both spouses in order to bring the anger/violence under control (Saunders, 1977; Walker, 1979; Margolin, 1979). This approach is based on the empirical research which has shown that, contrary to the catharisis theory, ventilation of anger or "letting it all hang out" increases the likelihood of violence between spouses (Berkowitz, 1971; Straus, 1974). The strategies recommended to directly inhibit the abusive response include covert sensitisation where mental images of the violent responses or its antecedents are paired with an aversive event (Saunders, 1977). In addition, training for recognising anger build-up is recommended, for example, recognising physical cues. Development of alternatives to battering, such as relaxation, physical exercise, signals to use with the spouse and "time-out" (leaving the scene temporarily) are recommended (Cook & Cook, 1983). Other recommendations include systematic desensitisation to fear, jealousy, criticism and techniques to eliminate or curtail alcohol consumption (Saunders, 1977).

The results of this study further indicate that husbands may resort to physical violence as a means to deal with conflict because of a lack of communication skills and therefore an inability to use rational discussion as a tactic instead. While both groups of unhappily married women were found to have similarly poor levels of communication, it is probable that other factors found to cause wife-beating act in combination with poor communication skills to result in wife abuse. This

indicates the importance of using communication training programs as a facet of treatment with battering couples, and is probably crucial if the battering behaviour is to be stopped permanently. Communication skills can be considered the life-blood of a relationship, since they appear to affect other areas of functioning in the relationship. It is therefore probable that an increase in communication skills would be followed by improvements in functioning in other dimensions of the relationship, for example, sexual satisfaction and positive feelings toward the spouse.

Not only does the need for communication training provide support for the contention that marital therapy is a necessary part of any treatment of the problem of abuse, but previous research indicates that there are other relationship issues which probably maintain the recurrent cycle of violence (Weitzman & Dreen, 1982; Cook & Cook, 1983). For instance, battering spouses are reported to lack differentiation stemming from their difficulty in separating from their families of origin (Hanks & Rosenbaum, 1977; Cook & Cook, 1983). In addition, they are reported to have a spousal relationship characterised by an overadequate wife/underadequate husband complementarity which runs counter to the dominant patriarchal ideology, and Weitzman & Dreen (1982) cite six major control themes around which violence may erupt. It may be, as they state, that the couple struggles for control over the functional rules of the relationship rather than the specific problems in the relationship.

However, it is the writer's opinion that therapeutic or any other kind of intervention, merely "patches-up" the status quo, so to speak. As has been stated earlier, many women who are battered do not seek intervention and when they do they frequently drop-out of therapy. It has also been stated that it is difficult to get batterers into therapy. Therefore the need for primary prevention seems necessary if this problem is

to be curtailed. Since it is the writer's opinion that structural conditions operating on two levels interact to cause wife-beating and underly all specific causes of wife-beating cited in the literature, it seems that primary prevention should be directed at changing these structural conditions. Patriarchy which fosters inequality between the sexes promotes women's dependency on men and marriage and also acts to keep women trapped in abusive relationships. A capitalist economic, social and political structure based on class distinctions results in the powerlessness of the majority of the population (the lower-classes) and serves to create conditions of poverty, deprivation, ignorance, and wife abuse.

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APPENDIX A

Intercorrelational Matrix for Dependent Variables

	Commitment	Feelings	Communication	Sex Sat.	Disharmony
1. Commitment					
2. Feelings	.82				
3. Communication	.67	.85			
4. Sex Satisfaction	.42	.56	.53		
5. Disharmony	-.75	-.86	-.80	-.50	
6. Dissolution Pot.	-.79	-.78	-.61	-.33	.75

n = 56 (p .001 for all above correlations)

APPENDIX B

The Shapiro-Wilk test for Normal Distribution

Variable	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3	
	Test Statistic	p	Test Statistic	p	Test Statistic	p
1. Commitment	.6805	.01	.914908	.083	.621919	.01
2. Disharmony	.913234	.163	.818648	.01	.514502	.01
3. Dissolution Potential	.654837	.01	.958522	.495	.924966	.151
4. Communication	.958492	.608	.87826	.016	.86825	.01
5. Sexual Satisfaction	.870488	.029	.93894	.294	.974501	.81
6. Feelings	.926264	.276	.88691	.027	.95876	.498

APPENDIX C

Bartlett-Box F statistics and Cochran C statistics for homogeneity of Variance on all dependent variables

Variable	F	p	C	p
Commitment	4.139	.016	.6012	.007*
Positive Feelings	11.86	.000	.7159	.000*
Communication	.314	.731	.4076	.608
Disharmony	17.009	.000	.6612	.001*
Dissolution	7.64	.000	.5540	.030*

* rejected at the .05 level of significance.

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