VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

WHERE THE WESTERN BOYS FIT: ATTITUDES OF WESTERN MELBOURNE ADOLESCENT MALES TO FAMILY VIOLENCE.

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DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis is a product of my own original research and has not been previously submitted for academic accreditation; it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person where due reference is not made in the text. The research undertaken within this thesis has gained ethics approval from the Department of Education, Employment and Training (ref: SOS001512) and from the Human Research Ethics Committee at Victoria University (ref: HRETM.FOA0018/00).

Melanie Pepping

8-12-00

Dated

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SYNOPSIS

The primary aim of this thesis is to explore the attitudes of Western Melbourne adolescent males towards the issue of family violence. Comparisons were made between their attitudes and attitudes found to exist nationally. This thesis also looks at some mainstream approaches to explaining the attitudes that support male family violence, in particular, the influences of masculinity.

Data was collected through the distribution of surveys to 22 male Year 10 students attending four co-educational secondary colleges in the Western region of Melbourne. The failure of many parents to give their consent for their son's involvement in the research resulted in the unanticipated small number of participants. In light of this development, a second aim was added; an exploration of the possible factors involved in the parents' decision not to consent to their son's involvement.

The results of the survey indicated that overall the boys surveyed exhibited attitudes that were more supportive of domestic violence than those attitudes that were found to exist nationally. A particularly consistent finding in the current study was that men's violence towards women was both tolerated and encouraged more often when it was given as a reaction to the woman's adulterous behaviour.

In discussing the results of the survey, the socio-economically disadvantaged status of the Western suburbs of Melbourne is argued to have some bearing on the finding that pro-violence attitudes were prominent among those surveyed.

This study suggests that particular constructions of masculinity serve to encourage the use of men's violence towards women. Also, it is concluded from this study that further education is needed in a number of key areas. In particular, it is suggested that young men need to be taught and trained in using non-violent approaches for conflict resolution.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary Australia, it is neither rare nor shocking to hear of family violence. However, as little as thirty years or so ago, domestic violence was largely a hidden phenomenon. At this time, men's violence towards their wives/partners was never regarded as being of sufficient severity, or affecting sufficient numbers of women, to warrant any widespread concern (Dobash & Dobash, 1979).

Today, domestic violence has been redefined as a major social problem that has warranted increased intervention from state authorities. Despite this increased attention and intervention however, the problem of domestic violence in this country is still widespread (ABS, 1996), as is the harbouring of negative attitudes that serve to condone and even encourage men's use of violence towards their female partners (OSW, 1995).

Throughout the literature on men's violence against women, the importance of considering the construction of gender, particularly masculinity, when attempting to understand men's violence towards women features prominently. Constructions of masculinity and the socialisation practices of parents, the education system and the media are often argued to contribute to the production of men's violence towards women and the attitudes that maintain it. Furthermore, the consideration of the broader social context in which these violent masculinities are formed is also crucial in understanding how attitudes that are supportive of men's violence against women continue to exist.

The focus of the current research is the attitudes of adolescent males in the Western region of Melbourne towards the issue of family violence. The primary aim is to examine the ways in which these adolescent boys perceive and think about the important social issue of family violence, namely men's violence against their female partners. The social context within which the attitudes of the boys exist and develop will be examined, and possible areas in which further education may be needed in order to improve attitudes towards domestic abuse will be highlighted.

A secondary aim, developed as a result of the difficulties encountered in recruiting participants, is to look at factors that may have contributed to the many parents' refusal to consent to their son participating in the research.

It is acknowledged that terms such as 'domestic violence' and 'family violence' can refer to a number of different types of abuses within the family such as incest, sibling abuse, parent abuse, elder abuse, husband abuse, child abuse and so on. However, for the purposes of this research, the use of both of these terms will be used to refer to the most common type of domestic abuse, namely men's violence towards their wives or female partners.

This thesis includes five chapters which explore attitudes towards domestic violence and the context from which they arise. Chapter one provides an examination of theories used to explain domestic violence and the stereotypes and attitudes that maintain it. In particular this chapter focuses on the literature which examines the connections between masculinities and male violence. The contributions of our

patriarchal society to the construction of male violence and the attitudes that maintain it are also acknowledged within this chapter.

Chapter two provides a review of the findings of previous studies examining attitudes towards domestic violence and outlines the importance of studying attitudes towards domestic violence as a way of reducing it's prevalence.

Chapter three deals with the methodology used in this research. It explains the reasons why I chose to use quantitative methods as opposed to qualitative ones and explains how my decision to conduct a study involving enumeration does not interfere with the feminist aims of the research. The difficulties of recruitment are also outlined in detail in this chapter.

The fourth and fifth chapters include the findings of the current research into the attitudes of Western Melbourne adolescent males towards domestic violence. These findings are then discussed with relevance to previous literature in an attempt to reveal the factors that may have influenced these attitudes. Also, included in chapter six, is a discussion of the possible factors influencing the decision of many parents' to not give consent for their son to participate in the research.

Finally, I offer a conclusion in which the findings of the current research are summarised and recommendations to improve the attitudes of Western Melbourne adolescent males towards men's violence against their female partners are made.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CONSTRUCTION OF VIOLENT MASCULINITIES: THEORIES TO EXPLAIN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE STEREOTYPES THAT MAINTAIN IT

Social constructions of masculinity are often identified as having an important influence on violent behaviour and violent attitudes. Literature on male violence almost always includes a discussion of masculinity and its link to violent behaviour and stereotypical attitudes towards the abuse of women.

Recent contributions to this literature include Anthony McMahon's *Taking Care of Men: Sexual Politics in the Public Mind* in 1999 and R. W. Connell's *The Men and the Boys* in 2000. McMahon's book focuses largely on the ways in which the contemporary society and the families within it serve in the interests of men, thereby increasing men's resistance to pro-equity change. Connell meanwhile, focuses in depth on the ways in which masculinities have been socially constructed.

Masculinity refers to the way men define themselves as being manly (Connell, 1995). Although, numerous competing masculinities exist within our society (Brittan, 1989; Segal, 1990), the masculinity most often linked with men's violence, is the dominant, heterosexual masculinity that has been referred to by Connell (1995) as hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity often describes the ideal masculine man as aggressive, assertive, independent, competitive, insensitive and so on (Brittan, 1989) and is often defined in direct opposition to femininity and

homosexuality (Brittan, 1989; Connell, 1995; Edley & Wetherell, 1995). For example, Edley & Wetherell argue that the dominant form of masculinity is both shaped and maintained by homophobia. They contend that men wishing to embody the hegemonic form of masculinity constantly describe themselves in direct opposition to being gay or feminine.

It is widely accepted that masculinities are socially constructed rather than an inborn characteristic of all men (Lewis, 1983; Miedzan, 1991; Connell, 1995; Biddulph, 1997). Socialisation theories and crisis of masculinity theories are both prime examples of attempts to explain how the dominant hegemonic masculine gender identity is constructed in men in childhood through social means. The motivations and the nature behind some men's violence towards their female partners have often been explained using these theories. Also, these theories attempt to explain how attitudes that support and tolerate this type of abuse are maintained.

Prior to an examination of these theories it is necessary to first consider the social context within which they have developed. This is where feminist theory is particularly useful. Feminist literature is able to provide a deeper insight into the problem of domestic violence through moving beyond individual psychological accounts to examine the social context within which the violence occurs. Through exploring ideologies of male power, feminist literature is able to provide a more complete view of how domestic violence and the stereotypes and attitudes that maintain it continue to be a major social issue.

PATRIARCHAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF MALE VIOLENCE

Feminist theory contends that the reasons behind men's violence towards their female partners is embedded within our inherently patriarchal society which through it's continued subordination of women, encourages men to act in violent ways and teaches them that they must be dominant and superior to women (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Archer, 1994).

Pioneers in domestic violence research, Ruth and Russell Dobash spoke in depth about the connections between patriarchy and domestic violence in their book entitled *Violence against wives: a case against the patriarchy*. They saw patriarchy as a complex system of beliefs based on male superiority. According to Dobash & Dobash, due to the incredibly long history of this belief system, patriarchal values are deeply ingrained within our society and are therefore more difficult to abolish. They believe that it is the unequal power relations that exist between men and women in society at large and within the family that ultimately lay the foundations for male violence against wives to occur:

> The husband's use of physical force against his wife was similarly an expression of the unequal status, authority, and power of marital partners and was widely accepted as appropriate to the husband's superior position. (p. 10).

This consensus that men's abuse of women in the home is fundamentally linked to the sexism that exists within our society and within our families, is pivotal to the feminist position. Bograd, (1988) for example, explains this position as follows:

> Feminist theoreticians have cogently argued that wife abuse is

> closely related to the historical development of the isolated nuclear family in a capitalist society, to division of the public and private/domestic domains, to specialization of 'appropriate' male and female family roles, and to the current position of wives as legally and morally bound to husbands. (p.14-15)

The society that we live in today has evolved from a long history of patriarchal power. Although it may be argued that women now have more opportunities than ever to gain power, the deeply ingrained sexist beliefs and values remain. Patriarchal contributions to the construction of male violence and to the construction of negative attitudes towards women continue to be significant. Furthermore, the capitalist/patriarchal nature of Western society continues to provide the fundamental basis upon which violent masculinities can be constructed.

THE SOCIALISATION THESIS OF MASCULINITY CONSTRUCTION

The socialisation thesis of masculinity construction argues that gender and gender identity is learnt in early childhood through a systematic attempt on the part of parents and other socialising agents to reproduce the existing gender divisions existing within our society (Oakley, 1972; Brittan, 1989). In her book *Sex, Gender and Society*, Ann Oakley strongly supported the notion that masculinity and femininity is learnt via the processes of parenting and through absorbing common cultural stereotypes that exist within our society. With reference to cross-cultural studies on constructions of male and female gender roles she demonstrates the clear association between sex differentials in child rearing practices and male and female personality types. Oakley argues conclusively that the hegemonic masculine gender

identity is constructed socially through the overwhelming influences of social stereotypes and parental models. She states:

> Nothing should be more convincing than the mass of associations that have emerged between an individual's masculinity or femininity and socially determined norms of behaviour, attitude, expectation and role... [This] suggests strongly that gender has no biological origin, that the connections between sex and gender are not really 'natural' at all. (p. 187-188).

According to the socialisation thesis, young boys and girls are taught to behave in sex appropriate ways and are encouraged to conform to sex role norms through observing and imitating parents, teachers, peer groups and the mass media (Edley & Wetherell, 1995). Media influences in particular have often been linked to encouraging male violence. For example, Miedzan (1991) points out the influential impact of particular violent television shows and popular action and slasher films on young boys constructions of masculinity. She argues that violent films often work to reinforce and encourage dangerous masculine ideals such as aggression and violence:

> In slasher films as in the endlessly violent 'adventure' films featuring such actors such as Sylvester Stallone, Chuck Norris, or Arnold Schwarzenegger, the perpetrators of violence are almost invariably men. It is young boys in particular who are being reinforced to commit acts of rape, murder and sadism (p. 247).

Furthermore, Rutherford (1988) suggests that there exist a number of influential children's television programs that work to reinforce the hegemonic masculine attributes of power, control and mastery over others.

Socialisation into the masculine gender role also occurs in schools, in the family and within peer groups (Edley & Wetherell, 1995). In each of these institutions it has been argued that boys are encouraged to conform to the hegemonic masculine ideal which specifies that real men are tough, insensitive, aggressive, unemotional, rational, powerful, independent and so on.

There has been a significant amount of empirical support for the socialisation theory of masculinity construction (Edley & Wetherell, 1995; Miedzian, 1991), however the theory has nonetheless received some criticism particularly for it's apparent simplicity (Brittan, 1989; Connell, 1995).

According to this theory, boys learn the male gender role through a simple process of rewards and punishment; they are rewarded for conformity and punished for non-conformity to gender role ideals. For example, little boys "are encouraged to be competitive, assertive and brave, and ridiculed for being passive quiet and soft" (Edley and Wetherell, 1995, p. 87). Despite the appeal of this theory, some important flaws in its conception are evident. Connell (1995) argues for example that the socialisation theory is unable to explain what motivates the parents and other socialising agents to pressure young boys to conform to stereotypical masculine expectations. The failure of social theorists to explain the origins of this motivation has led some critics to suggest that people must simply choose to encourage conformity (Edley & Wetherell, 1995). This is an important limitation, as the socialisation case cannot be accepted as a social theory of masculinity if it is based on individual choice. Segal (1990) has also pointed out the simplicity of this theory and has convincingly argued that "the complex dynamics of gender identity, at both

the social and the individual level, disappear in sex role theory" (p.69). Socialisation is seen almost as a kind of mechanical process whereby young boys simply absorb and internalize ready-made norms of behaviour without ever encountering conflict (Brittan, 1989). In addition, Brittan maintains that this theory is unable to explain any exceptions to the rule, that is, it cannot account for the development of gay men, transsexuals etc. He describes the socialisation case as incorporating versions of role theory which "come very close to completely encapsulating gender and sexuality in social strait-jackets"(p. 21).

In light of the existing criticism, it is clear that the construction of masculinity cannot be seen as developing through a totally harmonious and consensual process, which is completely free from conflict. In addition, the acquisition of the male sex role cannot be said to occur through such a simple process whereby the complexities of the individual person are ignored. Even so, it is nonetheless impossible to ignore the influences of various socialising agents, especially the media, on the construction of violent and aggressive forms of masculinity. Although the socialisation thesis cannot on its own provide a sufficient explanation of domestic violence and the attitudes that support it, it nonetheless provides useful and necessary insight into the reasons behind male violence and the attitudes that support it.

THE CRISIS OF MASCULINITY THESIS

The use of the crisis of masculinity theory as a way of explaining unhealthy gender identities has become increasingly popular in recent years. Put simply, this theory argues that recently there has developed a crisis of masculinity in Western society

that has come about as a result of a decrease in male power both in the public world of work and in the private domain of the family. Brittan (1989) explains:

> In the past, men supposedly knew who they were; their roles were minutely specified, and they also knew who women were supposed to be. However, all this has changed - they have lost their gender certainty, their sense of place in a world in which women are challenging them at all levels. Their response has been to over-compensate for this loss of power and authority but, the more they do this, the more acute is their feeling of insecurity and anxiety (p. 25).

Underlying this theory is the assumption that the process of acquiring a healthy masculine gender identity is a fragile one. Also, it is assumed that for an individual to develop a healthy gender identity, he/she must identify and form a relationship with the parent or parent figure of the same sex (Biddulph, 1997; Brittan, 1989). For men, the process of acquiring a healthy gender identity is often somewhat thwarted due to the father often being absent from the childrearing process leaving the young boy to have no immediate male role model through which to identify (Brittan, 1989; Miedzian, 1991; Pollack, 1998). The practice of focusing on the absent father to explain problem behaviours in men and boys has become common in popular psychological literature. For example, Steve Biddulph, through his widely accessible writing style, has ensured the popularity of this theory outside of the academic realm. His books on developing healthy gender identities in boys and men are worldwide bestsellers.

Perhaps the most widely known feminist framework used to understand how the absent father contributes to the acquisition of an unhealthy male gender identity, is the psychoanalytical feminist theory of object relations (Chodorow, 1978).

Chodorow argues that there exists a clear 'need' for a boy to be able to identify with a father figure of some sort and when this identification is made impossible due to father's continued absence, the boy inevitably experiences acute gender confusion. As a result of this confusion, it is suggested, his ability to develop a healthy gender identity is thwarted, which in turn may lead the boy to reveal his insecurities through phenomena such as violence, delinquency etc. (Brittan, 1989). Chodorow also maintains that within the theory of object relations, the young boy's need to break free from his identification with his mother is aided by her treatment of him as different from herself Consequently, Chodorow maintains that the simple act of mothering causes men to develop conflicts over masculinity, which in turn leads them to develop a desire for domination over women.

It has been consistently argued that the fathers absence during the childrearing process results in the boy having no choice but to construct a masculinity which represents the exact opposite of his mother's femininity (Ryan, 1985; Seidler, 1988, Brittan, 1989). For example, Ryan suggests:

> Masculinity, then, can be viewed as a defensive construction developed over the early years out of a need to emphasise a difference, a separateness from the mother. In the extreme, this is manifested by machismo behaviour with its emphasis on competitiveness, strength, aggressiveness, contempt for women and emotional shallowness, all serving to keep the male secure in his separate identity (p. 26).

The main difference that can be identified between the socialisation theory and the crisis of masculinity theory is that the latter relies heavily on psychological processes. The crisis of masculinity theory argues that the young boys psychological

needs are of paramount importance, and if they are unable to be met due to paternal absence, he is sure to develop a problematic conception of masculinity (Brittan, 1989).

Despite its widespread application, limitations in the use of this theory have nonetheless been identified. Brittan, for example argues that the underlying assumption that a father's participation in childrearing is necessary for a boy's development of a healthy gender identity, may be more likely represent popular opinion rather than actual fact. He cites studies which have in fact found that little or no differences exist between boys with, and boys without fathers, suggesting that perhaps the social context within which the boys develop may represent the crucial factor (Connell, 2000).

Another criticism identified by Brittan is the theory's supposed over emphasis on the psychological. By explaining problematic male behaviours in terms of a newly occurring crisis of masculinity which produces men who are anxious and insecure, it is argued that we are consequently unable to account for the fact that male violence and other problem behaviours has been occurring throughout history:

> So men fight wars, engage in the most ferocious competition, play games, rape and live their lives pornographically because they no longer know how to cope with their desires. To be sure, they did all these things in the past, but this was always in the context of an identity which they supposedly experienced as possessing an enduring reality (p.28).

A final criticism that has been put forward is that the crisis theory claims that the woman's responsibility for childcare is the determining factor in the development of gender identity. By claiming this, it is argued that women are therefore implicated as

the one to blame for their own oppression as they are responsible for reinforcing the masculinity of their sons.

Despite the criticism it has received, this theory still retains a large degree of influence both in academia and in the lay imagination. A large part of its popularity is most likely due to the overwhelming importance given to the influence of fathering in recent times (Biddulph, 1997).

THE LINKS BETWEEN SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED MASCULINITIES AND VIOLENCE.

The notion that masculinities and violence are inextricably linked has been widely supported (Lewis, 1983; Miedzian, 1991; Collier, 1998; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). It is broadly accepted that men have a higher capacity for displaying violent behaviour than do women. This fact has been proven through official crime statistics which continue to show that it is indeed men who are significantly more likely to be the perpetrators of violent crime (Miedzian, 1991; Collier, 1998). Also, as feminists have consistently acknowledged in cases of family violence, men continue to represent the overwhelming majority of perpetrators while women are much more likely to be the victims (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Bograd, 1988; Kurz, 1993). Physical or biological differences between men and women cannot be easily accepted as the sole reason why more men are violent than women. It must be recognised that the key to explaining male violence towards women lies in understanding how the capitalist/patriarchal structure of our society contributes to the construction of violent masculinities.

Finally, it must be concluded that although it may be problematic to speak simultaneously of masculinity and violence, it must nonetheless be accepted that constructions of hegemonic masculinity are indeed intimately linked with male violence and the attitudes that support it. An indication of the links between violence and masculinities can be demonstrated through the acknowledgement that male to male violence is still more common that male to female violence (Collier, 1998). In addition, these links are apparent in the vast amount of literature that is unable to explain violence without including a discussion of masculinity construction.

CHAPTER TWO

ATTITUDES TOWARDS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: HOW FAR HAVE WE COME?

Attitudes towards domestic violence, and to wife abuse in particular, has been an area of increasing interest over recent years. Studies continue to show that there exists a number of Australians, of all ages, who still accept the notion that a man is at times justified in using violence against his wife (OSW, 1995; OWP, 1998; NCP & DETYA, 2000).

WHY STUDY ATTITUDES?

Due to the intensely personal nature of domestic violence, many victims do not speak out about the abuse that they are enduring. Community attitudes which tend to hold the victim as responsible for the abuse rather than the perpetrator, have been identified as a major reason as to why victims remain silent (DVIRC, 1996). It has been argued that obtaining sufficient support from the community is crucial in order that the victim may have enough confidence to disclose the abuse, leave the relationship and seek help. Studying attitudes towards this issue and identifying areas in which improvement is needed is therefore critical in the struggle against the persistence of male violence against women.

The importance of focusing on attitudes when addressing the widespread problem of men's violence against women has been consistently reiterated within the literature.

Many writers and researchers on the topic maintain that the best way to tackle the ongoing problem of men's abuse of women towards their female partners is to work towards the elimination of deeply ingrained attitudes which serve to condone and even encourage the continuation of this type of abuse. For example, Jo Barter (1996) believes strongly in the power that sexist attitudes have in maintaining the acceptability of domestic violence in our society.

Other writers and researchers too, agree that the existence of attitudes that are supportive of violence contribute to the incidence of men's abuse of women (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Koski & Mangold, 1988; Falchikov, 1996; Locke & Richman, 1999). As long ago as 1979, Dobash & Dobash maintained that attitudes supportive of male violence are the result of the public's ignorance towards this issue. They argued convincingly that in order to be able to address the issue of domestic violence effectively, one must understand the complex nature and dynamics of wife abuse as well as the broader social context in which it occurs.

Today, more than 20 years later, the conviction remains that the best way to combat this ongoing problem is to work towards the achievement of widespread social abhorrence of men's abuse towards women within the family (Barter, 1996; Falchikov, 1996; Locke & Richman, 1999; PADV, 2000).

RESEARCH ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In 1987, the Office of the Status of Women (OSW) first commissioned a survey of community attitudes towards domestic violence in Australia. Eight years later, in 1995, a second study was commissioned making it possible to determine whether attitudes had improved over this time. The results of the 1995 study, which involved interviewing 2004 Australians aged 18 years and over, showed that overall community attitudes had in fact improved since 1987. For example:

- there was a much broader community definition of domestic violence in 1995
- In 1995, there was a better community understanding that
  - alcohol is not an excuse
  - domestic violence is a criminal offence
  - wealthy neighborhoods are not immune
  - domestic violence is not a private matter
- provocation was rarely seen as a justification for violence in 1995 (OSW, 1995)

As part of the OSW study, attitudes to various myths and truths about domestic violence were explored. It was found that 80% of respondents disagreed that "domestic violence is a private matter to be handled in the family", with 64% disagreeing a lot (p. 33). Also, 85% disagreed that "domestic violence rarely happens in wealthy neighborhoods", with 68% disagreeing a lot (p. 33). In regards to the role of alcohol in cases of domestic violence, 94% disagreed with the statement that "domestic violence can be excused if alcohol is involved", with 91% disagreeing a lot (p. 33). On a less positive note, the study also revealed that the Australian community remains "judgemental of victims" through their inability to understand

why some women stay in violent relationships (p. 34). To the statement "it's hard to understand why women stay in violent relationships", the majority (77%) agreed, with most (57%) agreeing a lot (p. 34).

The study also asked respondents of situations in which physical force would be justifiable. The response to this question was overwhelmingly positive with only 18% perceiving circumstances in which physical force would be acceptable (p. 37). Furthermore, most of these (15%) did not see provocation as a justifiable condition, instead indicating self defence (10%), to restrain her (3%), or to protect family (2%) as justifiable conditions for the use of physical force (p. 37).

Other research on attitudes, conducted both in Australia and overseas, has been able to provide further insight into how the public perceives the issue of domestic violence. Research examining the attitudes of young people is particularly insightful with regard to the current study. Nancy Falchikov (1996) in her research on adolescent attitudes to situations of marital and non-marital partner abuse, found for example that many young people continue to hold negative attitudes towards women and an associated toleration of domestic violence. She found that boys hold attitudes that are more pro-violence than girls, but while girls' attitudes improve with age, boys' attitudes remained relatively the same.

A familiar finding among research on attitudes towards domestic violence, is that males tend to hold attitudes that are more supportive of men's use of violence towards women compared with females (Koski and Mangold, 1988; Locke and Richman, 1999).

Australian studies on this issue are also able to demonstrate that gender differences exist in attitudes towards domestic violence. For example, it's been found that men, especially older, lower socio-economic scale men (part secondary educated, unemployed, household income less than $20,000), are consistently less well informed of the issues to do with domestic violence (OSW, 1995). These men consistently displayed a lower level of understanding that:

- domestic violence is a criminal offence
- alcohol is not an excuse for domestic violence
- wealthy neighborhoods are not immune to domestic violence
- domestic violence is not a private matter.
  (OSW, 1995)

Men of all ages, but particularly lower socio-economic scale men, also were less likely to understand why some women remain in violent relationships. Interestingly though, the study found that there were no significant gender differences in attitudes to provocation as an excuse for physical force. In fact, more likely to nominate a wife's provocation as a justifiable condition for the use of physical force were socio-economically disadvantaged men *and* women aged over 55 years; and those of non-English speaking backgrounds. This indicates that factors such as ethnicity and education have an effect on attitudes towards men's violence against their female partners.

Research conducted on the attitudes of young people living in the Northern Territory of Australia, also reveal distinct differences in the attitudes of young males compared with young females (OWP, 1998). For example, it was found that more females, at 88% disagreed with the statement that "domestic violence is a private

family matter and that no-one else should interfere", compared with males at 81% (p. 8). In addition, females were significantly more likely than were males to *disagree* with the following statements:

- some men can't help being violent (54% for females and 43% for males)
- some girls ask to be treated badly because they like it (78% for females and 66% for males)
- domestic violence helps keep women in line (95% for females and 85% for males)
- domestic violence can be excused if alcohol is involved (93% for females and 84% for males)
- if a husband or boyfriend asks for sex, his girlfriend or wife should give it to him (94% for females and 76% for males)
- if someone in your family keeps nagging, it's OK to hit them (93% for females and 82% for males)
  (OWP, 1998, p. 8-13)

It is clearly evident from these studies that the problem of negative attitudes towards women and an associated ignorance of issues to do with domestic violence is much more prominent among the male members of Australian society. For this reason, it therefore seems logical that the focus of concern when addressing problematic attitudes towards domestic violence should be on males rather than females.

The studies mentioned above, although useful, have been unable to provide a comprehensive picture of the attitudes of *young* people *throughout* Australia towards the issue of domestic violence. In April of this year, this was rectified with the Australian Federal Government's release of the first results of the most comprehensive national research ever conducted on young people's attitudes to and experiences of domestic violence.

The study, commissioned by National Crime Prevention and the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs involved a survey of 5000 young Australians aged between 12 and 20 years, and in-depth discussions with homeless youths, victims of domestic violence and youths from different ethnic backgrounds. As a result of this study, some shocking truths were discovered. For example, of the girls surveyed who had been in a dating relationship, a massive 36 percent had been a victim of physical abuse in one or more of their previous relationships (NCP & DETYA, 2000, p. 2).

In contrast to this finding however, the study also suggested that overall, young Australians are generally not supportive of domestic violence with 92 percent of the young people surveyed believing that domestic violence was either very or quite serious (p. 1). However it was found that the number of males who agreed with statements that reflected traditional patriarchal gender roles, was still rather high:

- 38% of males agreed with the statement that 'overall there are more things that men are better at than women'
- 37% of males agreed that 'men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household' (p. 1)

Those who held such views were also more likely to hold attitudes that were supportive of violence.

Another finding of the study which warrants concern, is that "one in twenty young people considered forcing the partner to have sex, throwing things like plates at each other and regular slapping or punching to be part of normal conflict rather than domestic violence when given a choice between the two" (p. 1).

Most interestingly, the national research found that attitudes that were supportive of violence persisted most in areas of socio-economic disadvantage (NCP & DETYA, 2000). This finding has particular implications for the current study as the Western region of Melbourne has been traditionally characterised as socio-economically disadvantaged (Grace & Shield, 1998). It could therefore be assumed that attitudes supportive of violence would be considerably more pronounced among male youth from Western Melbourne.

In addition to those from socio-economically disadvantaged areas, the study also found that males, younger age groups and those who were witnesses of domestic violence were most likely to exhibit attitudes that were pro violence. In general, these groups were also found to be more likely to have personal experience of violence (NCP & DETYA, 2000).

In conclusion, a review of the findings of research conducted into community attitudes towards domestic violence indicates that there remains to be a significant minority of people who continue to condone or excuse a man's violence against his female partner. Furthermore, these studies show evidence of the existence of certain "pockets of resistance" towards the feminist movement and towards the abolishment stereotypical and sexist attitudes which maintain men's violence against women (Saltau & Ketchell, 2000). The Western suburbs of Melbourne, with its socio-economically disadvantaged status, may represent one of these 'pockets' in which pro-violence attitudes are more commonly exhibited. The current study, although clearly limited due to its small sample size, can nonetheless provide some insight into whether this is indeed the case.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This research is based on feminist ideologies that recognise the deeply entrenched patriarchal nature of Western societies as a major contributor to the persistence of attitudes that are supportive of men's violence towards women.

I chose to use a quantitative rather than qualitative approach to data collection. Specifically, I chose to collect data through the administration of surveys. The use of surveys was deemed to be the most appropriate way by which the attitudes of adolescent boys in the Western region of Melbourne could be explored and was preferable as it would allow easy comparisons to be made to national surveys exploring attitudes towards domestic violence.

Initial feminist critiques of mainstream research methods often contend the use of statistics in research to be innately 'masculine' in nature and therefore not appropriate to the aims of feminism (Maynard, 1994)

Despite often being a target of feminist criticism, research using surveys and statistics can often be used to benefit the aims of feminism. For example, income statistics that show that women with post-school qualifications only earn between 65 to 72 percent of the wages of their male counterparts, strongly highlight the inequalities that continue to exist in the public domain (ABS, 1986).

In recent years, an increasing number of feminists have recognised the benefits of conducting research using quantitative methods. For example, Mary Maynard (1994) asserts:

> Feminists have overlooked the contribution that research involving enumeration has made to our knowledge and understanding of women's experiences. Further, the *political* potential of such work must not be underestimated. The significance of violence in women's lives, for example, is underlined by studies showing the extent and severity of its incidence. (p. 13).

In the current research, the quantitative approach was particularly advantageous as it allowed the respondents anonymity in disclosing beliefs that may be considered objectionable. Any research on attitudes, but particularly research on attitudes towards issues of a sensitive or contentious nature, calls for the eliciting of very personal and subjective responses from the respondents. For this reason, the use of anonymous surveys was deemed to be the most appropriate method of data collection and the method by which the most accurate results could be obtained.

In addition, the topic under investigation may raise for some students issues that are of a particularly sensitive nature and the possibility that some of the participants may have personal experience with domestic violence and consequently become distressed or upset during interviewing, cannot be overlooked. For these reasons also, the use of surveys was preferred over interviewing, as it is much less intrusive.

RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

The participants of this research were derived from four co-educational state secondary colleges in the Western region of Melbourne. Parental consent needed to be obtained as the participants were under the age of 18. In addition, consent also had to be obtained from both the Victorian Department of Education, Employment and Training, and the Principals and Year Level Coordinators of the participating schools. Approval from Victoria University Ethics Committee was also required

The process of obtaining consent from these various sources proved to be one of the most time-consuming aspects of the research process. Obtaining approval from the Department of Education, Employment and Training involved the completion of a detailed ethical approval form outlining the aims of the project and how it was to be conducted.

Once the project had been approved by the Dept. of Education, Employment and Training, the consequent approval from the Victoria University Ethics Committee was obtained with little difficulty.

With the first obstacles of obtaining consent now successfully cleared, the next step was to seek permission from the Principals and Year Level Coordinators of the schools that were to be involved. Letters were sent out to the Principals of seven secondary colleges in the Western region of Melbourne asking their permission to conduct the research with students at their school (see Appendix 1). These letters were followed up by a phone call to each Principal, up to a week later, to further

discuss the research and determine whether it would be possible to use students at their school as participants in the project. After some initial delays in contacting the various Principals and Year Level Coordinators due to busy schedules, four out of the seven schools contacted agreed to allow their students to take part in the project.

As a final prelude to having the students take part in the research, parental consent needed to be obtained. Initially, these consent forms were handed out to the students to take home for their parents to sign, and then return them to school. A copy of the forms used can be found in Appendix 2. Overall, over 160 parental consent forms were distributed to male year 10 students in this way. Despite the numerous time extensions given to students to return forms and the persistent efforts of Coordinators to 'chase them up', a total of only 18 signed consent forms were returned.

It was decided that in order to obtain a better response rate, the consent forms should be mailed directly to the parents with a stamped addressed envelope included so that they can also be returned directly. A letter was sent to the Year Level Co-ordinators asking permission to obtain student addresses to use in this way (see Appendix 3). A copy of the research information and consent form sent to parents' homes can be found in Appendix 4.

Initially it was thought that through reducing the number of hands the consent forms passed through in order to reach the parents, the response rate would ultimately improve. This, however turned out not to be the case, indicating that parent's were in fact *unwilling* to allow their son's to take part. Although close to 100 research

information and consent forms were delivered to parents, only eight consent forms were returned using this method. This brought a final total of 26 students who were to complete the survey and take part in the research. However, four of these 26 students were absent on the day the survey was distributed and completed and were therefore unable to take part in the research, leaving a final total of 22 students.

SURVEY DESIGN

The survey used in this study was based largely on the work of Nancy Falchikov's 1996 study of the attitudes of Scottish adolescent boys and girls towards men's abuse of their wife or partner. Like the current study, Falchikov's study was concerned with determining both the participants' perceptions towards domestic violence issues, as well as their own predicted likelihood of using violence against a future partner. The survey used for the current study contained attitude and predicted intention measures and three domestic violence scenarios. Modifications were made to the survey used by Falchikov to incorporate questions used in the 1995 Australian study entitled *Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women* conducted by the Office of the Status of Women (OSW). A copy of the survey used in the study can be found in Appendix 5.

Attitude and Predicted Intention Measures

The two scales used in the survey were modified versions of the Attitude to Wife Abuse (AWA) scale and the Likelihood of Battering (LOB) scale. The original scales, developed by Briere (1987), were used in the Scottish study conducted by

Nancy Falchikov (1996) which sought to discover the attitudes of both male and female adolescents towards domestic violence. In both scales, participants were presented with a series of statements and were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with them.

Attitude to Wife Abuse Scale

Extensions were made to AWA scale used by Falchikov to include four additional items derived from the 1995 Australian study entitled *Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women* conducted by the OSW. These items were as follows:

- Domestic violence can be excused if alcohol is involved.
- Domestic violence rarely occurs in wealthy neighborhoods.
- Domestic violence is a private matter to be handled within the family.
- It's hard to understand why women stay in violent relationships.

In making this extension, it was possible to explore participants' attitudes towards some common misconceptions about domestic violence that were not previously explored in the study conducted by Falchikov. Also, the extensions to the scale made it possible to make some comparisons between the findings of this study and that of the 1995 study.

Overall, the AWA scale was made up of 11 items to which one of seven responses was allowed. The responses ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

Likelihood of Battering Scale

The Likelihood of Battering scale was developed as an instrument by which the future likelihood of using physical violence against ones wife could be predicted (Falchikov, 1996). Extensions were made to the original LOB scale used in the study by Falchikov to include three additional items derived from the aforementioned study entitled *Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women.* These items were as follows:

- Argues with or refuses to obey you.
- Keeps nagging you.
- Wastes money.

As with the AWA scale, the extensions to this scale made it possible to include comparisons to the earlier 1995 study of *Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women.*

Overall, this scale was made up of a total of 8 items to which participants were invited to answer on a five point scale ranging from "not at all likely" to "very likely". In addition, in order to gain some further insight into the participants' attitudes towards violence against women in particular situations, an open-ended question was included within this section of the survey. To this question, participants were asked to describe the circumstances (if any) of a situation in which a man's violence against his wife would be acceptable.

Domestic Violence Scenarios

Falchikov used domestic violence scenarios in her study to determine whether having participants read them prior to completing the survey would influence the way in which they would consequently answer items in the AWA and LOB scales. In contrast to this method, I've used domestic violence scenarios *in addition* to the previously mentioned scales as an instrument by which the attitudes of participants can be further measured.

Used in the current survey were three domestic violence scenarios depicting different levels and types of violence directed at women. Two examples of physical violence were included, each featuring a different level of abuse occurring under different circumstances. The third domestic violence scenario featured an example of verbal/psychological abuse.

All three scenarios were followed by a series of questions designed to determine the attitudes of participants towards different levels of abuse in differing situations.

DATA ANALYSIS

While it is acknowledged that the use of quantitative methods of data collection and analysis tend not to be the popular domain of typical feminist research, it is also recognised earlier in this chapter, that such research is not necessarily contrary to the aims of feminism. Therefore while the current research does not make use of traditionally feminist methods, it nonetheless serves feminist ends as it is primarily

concerned with the eradication of stereotypical and sexist attitudes which condone the use of violence by men against their female partners. Furthermore, Reinharz (1992) notes that feminism is in fact a perspective, not a method, indicating that any research defining itself as feminist and as serving feminist aims should be considered as feminist research, irrespective of it's chosen method.

Attitude to Wife Abuse Scale

The Attitude to Wife Abuse scale consisted of 11 items to which one of seven responses was allowed. These responses ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". For items 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10, 'strongly agree' was rated as 7 and "strongly disagree" as 1. For items 1, 2, 4, and 6, the scoring was reversed. The maximum score possible on this scale was 77, while the minimum possible was 11. A high score achieved on this scale is indicative of an attitude in which male superiority and violence towards women is supported. Ultimately, the higher the score, the more negative is the attitude towards women.

The score of each participant was calculated and then mean scores for each item were graphed giving an indication of the areas in which the most negative attitudes towards women were held. Also, the number of individual responses for each item was recorded. In this way, it was possible to determine which responses were most commonly given for each particular item.

Finally, comparisons were made between the results of this research and that of the research conducted by the OSW in 1995 entitled *Community Attitudes to Violence*

Against Women. This was achieved through calculating the percentage amounts for how many participants agreed and disagreed with each of the final four items in the scale.

Likelihood of Battering Scale

The Likelihood of Battering scale comprised of eight items to which participants could answer on a scale ranging from "not at all likely" to "very likely". For each item, "very likely" was rated as 5, while "not at all likely" was rated as 1. As with the AWA scale, a high score indicated a greater likelihood of using violence against women, and an endorsement of a man's use of violence against his wife. The maximum score achievable within this scale was 40 while the minimum was 8.

Data for this scale was organised and analysed using the same methods as was used for the AWA scale. In other words, mean scores for each item were graphed and the number of responses for each item was recorded. In addition, percentages were calculated for the final three items so that the results could be easily compared to the 1995 study entitled *Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women.*

Participants who answered "yes" to the question of whether any circumstances existed in which physical violence against one's wife is acceptable were placed into one of two categories. These categories for situations in which violence is acceptable were divided as follows:

- In self defense/restraint

- In reaction to wife's provocation

Domestic Violence Scenarios

Each scenario was followed by eight items, each of which allowed one of five scaled responses to be given. For each scenario, items 3, 7 and 8 were scored from 1 to 5 (left to right). For items 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6, scores descended from 5 to 1 (left to right). The maximum score possible for each scenario was 40 while the minimum was 8. Again, a high score was indicative of an endorsement of violence within that scenario.

The number of responses for each item under each scenario was recorded, making it possible to graph them in order to directly compare how participants' responses differed for each item according to the scenario given. In addition, the overall mean scores of participants for each item under each of the three scenarios were calculated. This made it possible to see at a glance, the differences in participants' level of acceptance of violence depending on the particular scenario within which it occurs.

CHAPTER FOUR

SURVEY RESULTS

This chapter will present the findings of the twenty-two surveys used in the current research. Due to the small sample size, survey findings are not intended to be generalised as being indicative of the entire young male population of the Western suburbs of Melbourne. Rather they will show how this particular group of Western Melbourne boys relate and think about the issues to do with men's violence against women. A discussion of the difficulties encountered when attempting to recruit a larger sample in this research, will follow in Chapter six.

ATTITUDE TO WIFE ABUSE (AWA) SCALE

The overall mean[1] score of participants for the AWA scale in section 1 of the survey was 31.1. Considering that the minimum score possible in this scale was 11 and the maximum achievable was 77, a mean score of 31 therefore does not indicate that overall, the boys surveyed in this study hold attitudes that are extremely pro-violence. Nonetheless, this score is neither indicative of attitudes which totally abhor the use of violence against women, nor is this score an indication that the boys in this survey are completely aware and completely understanding of the issues involved in domestic violence. A number of items within this scale produced scores that were higher than others. Figure 1 shows the overall mean scores of participants to each

[1] 'mean' is the sum of all scores divided by 22 (the number of participants)

item within the AWA scale. Through this information, it is possible to discover the items to which the highest scores were obtained.

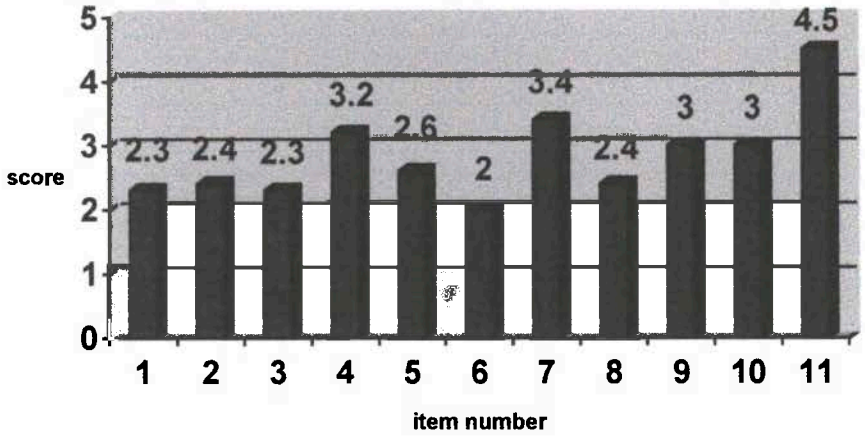

Figure 1: Overall mean scores of participants in section 1 (AWA) scale.

Figure 1 shows that items 11, 7 and 4 produced mean scores that were noticeably higher than the rest. In addition, items 9 and 10 were also higher than most. The highest mean score was for item 11, which stated that "it's hard to understand why women stay in violent relationships". Fourteen of the boys, or 63.6%, agreed to this statement with 3, or 14% agreeing strongly, 5, or 23% agreeing and 6, or 26% agreeing slightly. Figure 2 further outlines the students' responses to this item.

From Figure 2 it is notable that *none* of the boys answered "strongly disagree" to this statement. The high level of agreement with this statement is a clear indication that the boys surveyed remain ignorant about the position of women involved in situations of domestic abuse and therefore are unable to comprehend why they stay.

This finding mirrors that of the OSW study of 1995 which found similar responses existed among the Australian adult community.

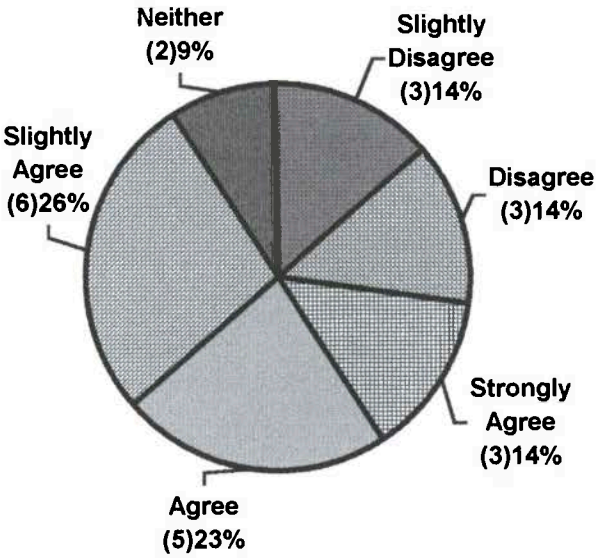

Figure 2: Participants' responses to the statement – "It's hard to understand why women stay in violent relationships".

Item number 7, which was the second highest mean scoring item, stated that "Some women seem to ask for violent treatment from their husbands". Although only one participant indicated that he strongly agreed to this statement, it is nonetheless of concern that a further 5, or 23% slightly agreed and 6, or 26% neither agreed nor disagreed to this statement. The responses to this item can be seen in Figure 3.

The findings shown in Figure 3 are considerably disconcerting when it is noted that less than half of the male students surveyed (10 or 45.5%) disagreed with this statement and only 3 boys indicated that they strongly disagreed. This finding is worse than that of the study conducted in 1998 on the attitudes of youth in the Northern Territory of Australia in which 66% of the young males surveyed disagreed

with the statement that "some girls ask to be treated badly because they like it" (OWP, 1998, p.12).

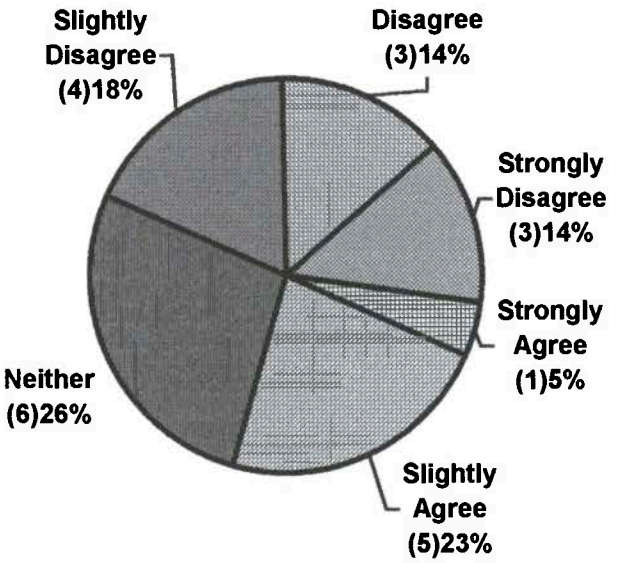

Figure 3: Participants' responses to the statement – "Some women seem to ask for violent treatment from their husbands".

The fourth item in the AWA scale stated "A man should be arrested if he hits his wife". To this, only 1 participant agreed strongly. The responses to this statement were however considerably more positive than those given for the previously mentioned items. Most participants did in fact agree to some extent that a perpetrator of domestic violence deserves to be arrested, however there remained a large minority who either disagreed to some extent, or neither agreed nor disagreed to this statement. All of the participants' responses to this statement can be seen in Figure 4.

The ninth and tenth items within the AWA scale stated "Domestic violence rarely occurs in wealthy neighborhoods" and "Domestic violence is a private matter to be

handled within the family". To each of these, a total of 5 respondents, or 23% to some extent agreed with these statements. The participants' responses to these statements and to the other statements included within the AWA scale are further outlined in Appendix 6.

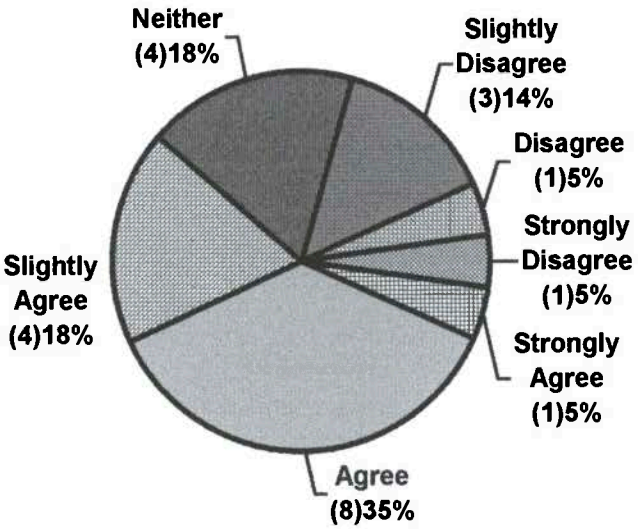

Figure 4: Participants' responses to the statement – "A man should be arrested if he hits his wife".

The statements to which the most respondents agreed to some extent, was that "A wife should move out of the house if her husband hits her" and "A man's violence is grounds for divorce". Eighteen participants, or 82%, agreed to some extent to these statements. The statement to which most respondents disagreed, was "A husband should have the right to discipline his wife when it is necessary", with all but two participants (20 or 91%) disagreeing to some extent with this statement. Finally, the statement to which participants were most unsure, were "Some women seem to ask for violent treatment from their husbands", with 6, or 26% indicating that they neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. Some hesitancy was also evident

for the statement that "A man is never justified in hitting his wife", to which 5 participants, or 23% answered "neither agree nor disagree".

LIKELIHOOD OF BATTERING (LOB) SCALE

The mean overall score gained within this section of the survey was 15.7. The highest score achievable for this scale was 40, while the lowest was 8. Participants were asked to indicate their likelihood of using violence against their future wife if she provoked him in one of eight specific ways. For each item, four degrees of likelihood were possible, while only one answer indicated a zero likelihood. A total score of eight on this scale would therefore indicate a zero likelihood of the use of future violence. A mean score of 15.7, while considerably below the maximum of 40, nonetheless shows that the boys surveyed indicated *some* likelihood of using violence in reaction to their future wife's provocation. In addition, some forms of provocation by the wife elicited higher indications of the use of violence than others did. Figure 5 shows the overall mean scores of participants to each item within the LOB scale.

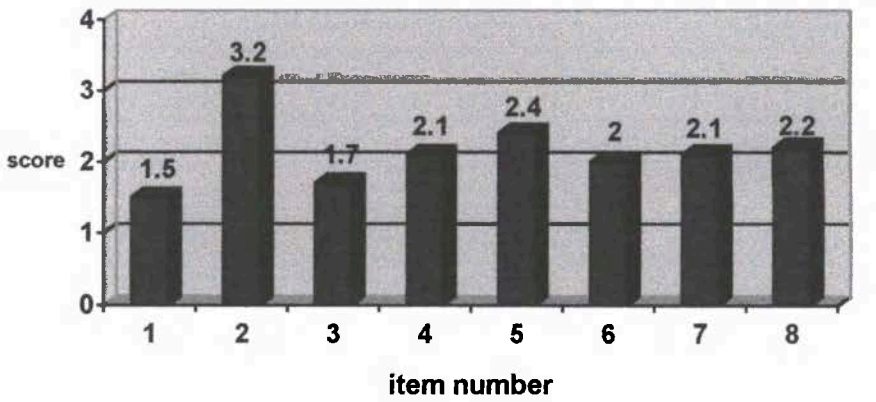

Figure 5: Overall mean scores of participants in section 2 (LOB) scale.

From Figure 2 is it immediately discernible that it was item number two that produced the highest indicated likelihood of violence. This item asked of the likelihood of using violence against a future wife if she "Had sex with another man". The second highest scoring item was number five, which asked of the likelihood if she "Told friends that you were sexually pathetic". It is interesting to note that both of the highest scoring items are sexually oriented and are both examples in which a man's sexual prowess is being undermined or threatened.

To the second item which asked of the likelihood of using violence against a future wife if she "had sex with another man", only 23 percent indicated a zero likelihood of using physical violence. The participants' responses to this item are shown further in Figure 6.

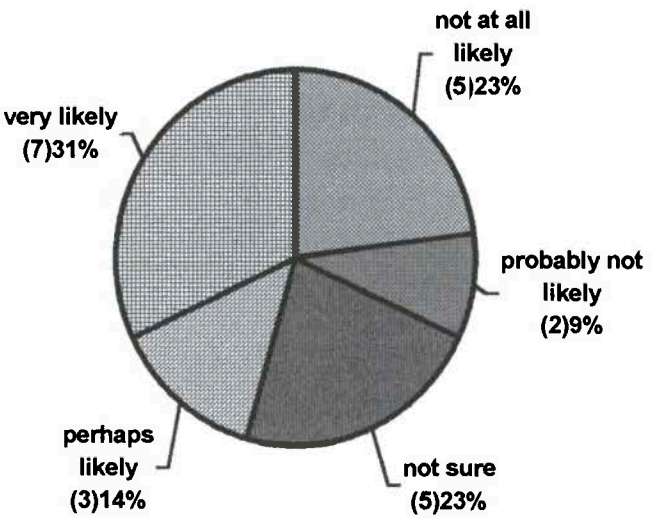

Figure 6: Participants' indicated likelihood of using violence against wife if she "had sex with another man".

Figure 6 shows that the majority of participants indicated that they would be "*very likely*" to hit their wife in an argument if she "had sex with another man".

The second highest scoring item on this scale asked of the likelihood of using violence if she "told friends that you were sexually pathetic". Participants' responses to this item can be seen in Figure 7.

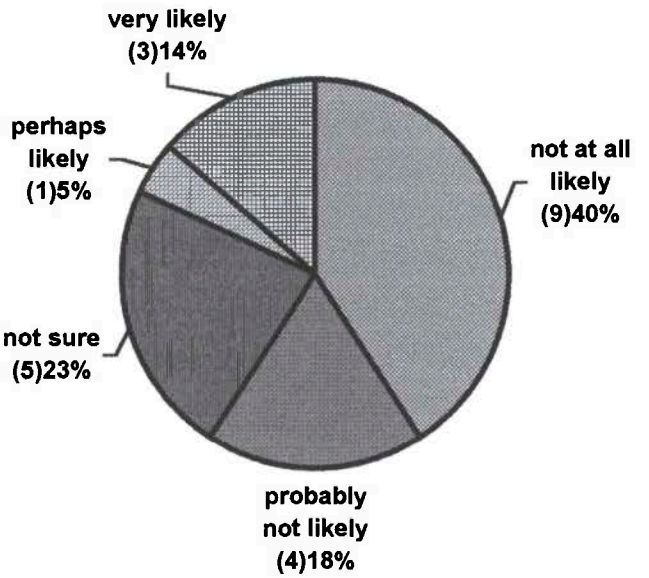

Figure 7: Participants' indicated likelihood of using violence against wife if she "told friends you were sexually pathetic"

Although Figure 7 shows the most common response to be "not at all likely", it nonetheless remains the case that more than half of the respondents indicated *some* likelihood of using violence in this situation.

Further results indicating the participants' responses to these and the rest of the items included within the LOB scale are presented in Appendix 7.

Overall, only five respondents indicated a zero likelihood of using violence against a future wife. Put another way, 77 percent, or 17 respondents expressed some likelihood of using violence against a future wife in at least one of the situations given. This finding indicates that attitudes that are supportive of violence against women are indeed prominent among the Western suburban male youth surveyed in this study. This finding also supports that of previous studies that have found that attitudes that are supportive of men's violence against women are found more often in areas of socio-economic disadvantage.

To the open ended question given within section 2 of the survey which asked if any acceptable circumstances existed for the use of physical force against one's wife, more than half of the respondents were able to identify at least one situation. Fifty-five percent replied "yes" to the question "are there any circumstances in which you think it would be acceptable for a man to use physical force against his wife?". Similar to the findings of the study conducted by the OSW in 1995, the current study found that the most common situation given as to when physical force is considered acceptable was in self-defence or to restrain the wife. Seven of the 12 respondents who agreed that force is sometimes acceptable indicated that self-defence or to restrain the wife was the only situation in which this would be so. It is important to note however, that as it was in the case of the previous study conducted by the OSW, those who indicated self defence and restraint to be the only situation in which force is acceptable, drew a distinction between physical force and physical violence. In other words, they did not view self-defence or restraining wife to be examples of violence. The seven responses given in the current study that identified self-defence or restraint as the only situation acceptable for physical force were:

- *"If my life was in danger and it would only be in self defense and only to subdue her and I would never use excessive force."*
- *"If the wife was mentally ill or something and the husband has to restrain her."*
- *"If the wife places him in a life threatening situation (eg. threatens to stab him with a knife – the knife is very close to him), to which the husband's negotiating with her fails. So in pure self-defense. That is the only acceptable reason in my opinion."*
- *"If she was coming at you with a knife or a gun."*
- *"If she tried to kill me."*
- *"If she was going to hit you with a baseball bat or some kind of hard object."*
- *"If she chases him with a chainsaw."*

The other five participants who agreed that physical force is acceptable in some situations, identified a wife's provocation as grounds for the use of physical violence. As found previously in the current study, a wife's adultery is the most often given circumstance used to justify a husbands use of violence. The responses of the five participants who identified a wife's provocation as being an acceptable justification for the use of violence were as follows:

- *"If she puts you down, if she doesn't cook you dinner and if she cheats on you."*
- *"Had sex with another man."*
- *"If she hits him."*
- *"If she screws another guy or harms the children. Oh yeah, and if she kicks you in the you know where's, that's a cheap dirty shot."*
- *"If she cheats on him and talks behind his back to his friends."*

Only one of the above responses indicated a situation other than a wife's provocation in which force is acceptable. The situation mentioned above of if she "harms the children", is however given in conjunction with other situations which are examples of a wife's provocation.

Overall, the results of section two of the survey suggests the boys surveyed in this study hold attitudes and beliefs that remain to be somewhat acceptable of the use of men's violence towards their female partners.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SCENARIOS

The first scenario depicted a situation in which the husband was angered by his wife's increased independence and resorted to the use of physical violence when arguing with her about her desire to go back to college and again later when she failed to return home in time to serve him dinner. The overall mean score for this scenario was 15.5. The second scenario depicted a situation in which the husband returned home to find his wife in bed with another man, to which the husband responded with the use of extreme violence that concluded with the wife being hospitalised for her injuries. This scenario received an overall mean score of 25.4. The final scenario given was an example of a man's verbal abuse towards his female partner, which took place in the midst of a public barbecue. This scenario resulted in an overall mean score of 16.8.

Given that the maximum achievable score for each scenario was 40, while the minimum was 8, these scores, especially the mean score for the second scenario,

indicate that attitudes supportive of a man's use of violence against his wife continue to exist among some of the participants.

Figure 8 shows the participants' responses to each question on each scenario and is able to show clearly how the second scenario generated a much higher overall score than the other two that were given. Compared with the other two scenarios, participants scored higher on every question within scenario two, with the exception of the final item which asked if the story was true to life. Of all three scenarios, the participants believed that the second one was the most "true to life". This finding is interesting, as the second scenario is also the one that is the most violent.

Scores gained for scenario one and scenario three were similar across all questions, but participants did view the woman as more to blame and as more able to prevent the behaviour in scenario three than scenario one.

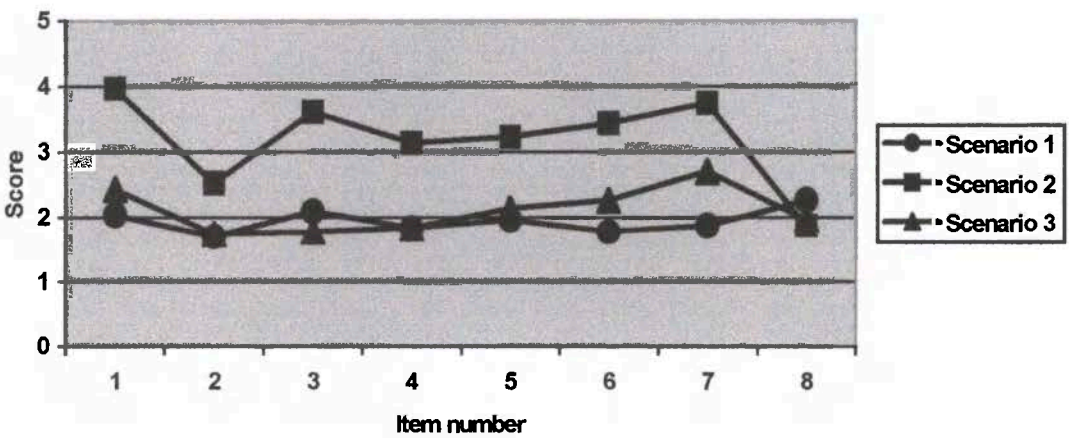

Figure 8: Overall mean scores of participants in section 3 (Domestic Violence Scenarios).

The findings of this section of the survey indicated strongly that the boys surveyed remain much more accepting and understanding of a man's violence against his female partner if that violence is perpetrated as a reaction to the woman's adulterous behaviour. This finding has been supported throughout all three sections of the survey.

The results of section 3 of the survey, which includes the participants' responses to each item in each scenario, are further outlined and compared in Appendix 8.

Overall, all three sections of the survey showed that the attitudes of the adolescent boys who participated in the project were considerably more supportive and tolerant of men's violence against women when compared with findings of previous national surveys conducted on attitudes of Australians towards this issue.

CHAPTER FIVE

EXPLAINING WESTERN MELBOURNE ATTITUDES TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

This chapter looks in more detail at the boys' attitudes towards family violence and also more obliquely, at their parents' attitudes.

DISCUSSION OF SURVEY RESULTS

Overall, the results of the survey suggest that negative attitudes towards women and an associated toleration of domestic violence are present among the participants involved in this research. Compared with the findings of previous Australian studies, the current study suggests that the Western Melbourne boys surveyed hold attitudes that are significantly more supportive of men's violence against women.

A common theme evident in the current study is that a man's violence against his female partner is tolerated, accepted and supported more often if it is given as a response to the woman's unfaithfulness. Also, a woman's verbal attack on the man's sexual ability was used as a common justification for a man's use of violence towards his wife. Within the Likelihood of Battering (LOB) scale, these two circumstances attracted the highest indicated likelihood of the use of future violence. Interestingly, both of these circumstances represent situations in which the man's hegemonic masculinity is being threatened or undermined (Connell, 1995). In other words, his adequacy as a man is in question.

Gerber (1995) has suggested that a man's violence against his female partner is often an attempt by the man to regain the control that he has lost as a result of his sense of masculinity being under threat. She believes that the immense pressure put on men to conform to stereotypical masculine traits of power and control, can sometimes result in the man resorting to the use of violence so that his sense of masculinity is kept unharmed. For instance she asserts:

> The need to present oneself as meeting cultural standards for one's gender identity is very deep seated. Men feel strong pressures to demonstrate that they are masculine, even when this necessitates that they engage in violence towards their wives (p. 152).

The notion that some men use violence against their female partner as a way of maintaining or regaining a sense of power and control has been supported by other theorists. Lynne Segal (1990), for instance, argues that "there are links between the prevalence of violence in our society and men's endeavors to affirm masculinity"(p.269). She asserts:

> In a culture which constructs masculinity around ideas of dominance, social power and control over others, but then denies to some men access to such prerogatives, it is not suprising that subordinated men may be more likely to resort to violence as the only form of power they can assert over others (p.255-256).

Furthermore, Jan Horsfall, (1991) argues that "the male batterer is a product of patriarchal relations and his practices are a sign that these relations are under duress either from outside and/or inside the family" (p.16).

In light of this it could be suggested that the boys in this survey who indicated a likelihood of using violence against a future wife if she "had sex with another man" or if she "told friends you were sexually pathetic" may in fact be reacting to a perceived threat against their masculinity.

Writers such as Horsfall, Segal, and Gerber have recognised that the greatest amount of domestic violence occurs at the lowest levels of income and occupational status. They suggest that men's violence against their female partners often occurs when a man's access to external resources that would enable him power is limited. In other words, a man with a low status occupation, low income level and little education, may turn to violence as the only way he is able to exercise power.

Overall, the findings of the current study found that the attitudes exhibited by the boys involved in the research were largely supportive of men's violence against their female partners. Large proportions of the population in Melbourne's West have little education, and are working in low status occupations with a low income (Grace & Shield, 1998). This fact may have some bearing on the findings of this research (OSW, 1995; DETYA & NCP, 2000). In light of the contentions made by Segal and Gerber, the use of a man's violence against his female partner may be viewed as an acceptable way of maintaining a sense of power that is unable to be obtained through other means.

Finally, the survey revealed that the majority of the boys couldn't understand why some women stay in violent relationships. This inability or unwillingness to understand the complexities of a woman's situation in cases of domestic abuse, is

common among the Australian public with national surveys also revealing that many people remain ignorant towards this issue (OSW, 1995). Interestingly too, is the fact that although it is the man who is committing the criminal offense, it is nonetheless the abused woman who is expected to leave *her* home (Victory, 1993).

THE DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING A LARGER SAMPLE

As outlined earlier in chapter four, many efforts were made to obtain the consent of parents for their sons to participate in the research. The process was as follows:

1. Over 160 research information and consent forms were given to students to take home for their parents to sign (see Appendix 2).
2. Minimal returns resulted in students being given extra time to return forms.
3. Communications with Year 10 Co-ordinators resulted in an increased effort by them and class teachers to 'chase up' the return of consent forms. Eventually, eighteen signed consent forms were returned.
4. Liaisons with Year 10 Co-ordinators continued in an effort to obtain more consent forms and a request was made to obtain the home addresses of students (see Appendix 3).
5. Close to 100 research information and consent forms were mailed directly to parents with a return envelope (see Appendix 4).
6. In total, 26 signed consent forms were returned, however only 22 students actually took part in the research.

It is clear that the majority of parents were uneasy about their son's involvement in a study on attitudes towards family violence and as a result they did not give their consent for their son to participate. A few parents even went out of their way to explicitly object to their son being involved in the study by either writing or phoning

me or the projects' supervisor to make clear that they did not want their son to be involved in the research. The following discussion will focus on the reasons behind many parents' reluctance to allow their son to be involved in research on family violence.

Previous studies have found that the belief that "domestic violence is a private matter to be handled within the family" is more commonly held among older men from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (OSW, 1995). In addition, those from non-English speaking backgrounds were also found to more commonly exhibit attitudes that supported this notion. Grace and Shield (1998) have noted that the national percentage of people born in non-English speaking countries differs markedly from the percentages in the Western region of Melbourne. Of those born overseas in Australia, 60 percent are from non-English speaking countries, while in Melbourne's West the number of overseas born people from non-English speaking countries jumps to 84 percent (Grace and Shield, 1998). Considering the socio-economically disadvantaged status of the Western suburbs of Melbourne and the fact that this region has a large proportion of people born in non-English speaking countries, it may be assumed that the belief that violence in the family is a private matter is considerably more prevalent in this region than it is elsewhere. The reasons behind many parents' refusal to let their sons be involved in this project may therefore be linked to the ethnicity and socio-economic status of the parents.

Another possible contributor to the reluctance of parents to provide consent is the recognition made earlier in this chapter that domestic violence occurs more often in situations of socio-economic disadvantage (Segal, 1990; Gerber, 1995). Given this

finding, the probability that some of the prospective participants have had some personal experience of domestic violence in their own family is more than likely. It may be also likely then, that some of the parents who refused to give permission for their son to participate in the current research, did so because they did not want their son involved in a study of an issue that was presently occurring within their own home. In her study on the experiences of children who witness domestic violence, Anne Blanchard (1993) noted that "the aura of secrecy surrounding domestic violence still has considerable sway and there is also a mistaken belief that children who have been exposed to violence should not talk about it"(p.33). In summary, the reasons behind the majority of parents' decisions to not allow their sons to participate may be at least partly based on their class and/or their ethnic background.

CONCLUSION

The primary aims of this study was to reveal the attitudes of Western Melbourne adolescent males towards men's abuse of their female partners and to examine how attitudes supportive of violence are maintained through constructions of masculinity and through the social and structural influences of Western societies. A secondary aim of the study was to identify factors that may have contributed to the unwillingness of parents to provide consent for their sons to participate in the project.

Overall, the results of the current study showed that the Western Melbourne adolescent boys surveyed displayed attitudes that are considerably more supportive of violence than those that were found to exist among the national population. However because of the limited amount of participants used in the current study, it would not be feasible to generalise these results as being indicative of the attitudes of the entire Western Melbourne population of young males. Even so, these results may nonetheless be used as an indication of *some* of the attitudes that exist within this particular population.

The results of the current study do indicate that improvements in the attitudes of some young people in the Western region of Melbourne towards domestic violence are needed. In particular, the likelihood of using violence against a future wife points to the need for this to be addressed in addition to the low level of understanding of the plight of women involved in abusive relationships.

The results of this study show that a possible connection may exist between the lower-socio economic status of the Western region of Melbourne and the consequent toleration and acceptance of men's violence against women. This contention is also supported by previous studies that show that pro-violence attitudes are more prominent among those who reside in less affluent areas (OSW, 1995; NCP & DETYA, 2000). In order to effectively address attitudes that are supportive of domestic violence, more attention and intervention needs to be focused on areas of socio-economic disadvantage.

On a broader level, it must be recognised that social constructions of masculinity which encourage men and boys to adhere to a masculine ideal which values aggressiveness, insensitivity and contempt for women, only serve to maintain the existence of pro-violence attitudes and the prevalence of domestic abuse. Furthermore, levels of domestic violence and the attitudes that support it are determined and maintained through the influences of culture, socio-economic status and men's access to masculine power.

What is needed within our society is a realisation of the destructive and potentially violent aspects of these masculine gender ideals. The acceptance of alternative masculinities that encourage men to use non-violent, non-aggressive methods of conflict resolution would result in a drastic reduction in the prevalence of domestic violence and the attitudes that support it. At present, while images of violent and aggressive masculinities abound, the consequent appeal of violence and aggression will not subside.

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APPENDIX 1

Dear Principal,

I am writing to you in order to obtain permission to conduct research in your school using your students as subjects. I am currently undertaking a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Degree at Victoria University and am completing a Thesis entitled 'Where the Western Boys Fit: Attitudes of Western Melbourne Adolescent Males to Family Violence'.

The project aims to discover the attitudes towards family violence of Year 10 males attending secondary colleges in Western Melbourne. Through doing this I hope to provide information that is able to show how Western Melbourne adolescent boys relate and think about the important social issue of family violence in Australia. I hope to achieve this through the distribution and collection of written surveys to 100 Year 10 boys attending secondary colleges in the Western suburbs of Melbourne. I plan to include a minimum of four (4) secondary colleges in the project, one of which I hope will be your school.

Approval has been sought and granted for this project from the Department of Education, Employment and Training. Please refer to the included copy of the Department's letter of Approval.

For your information I have also included with this letter a copy of the survey to be distributed to students as well as a copy of the project information and consent form that I have prepared for parents and students. It is estimated that the survey should not take students longer than 20 minutes to complete.

I will ring you personally regarding this proposal within the next few days whereby we may discuss the project and its' implications in more detail. In the meantime, I hope that you will consider my proposal to use students at your school in this project favorably. I look forward to speaking to you soon.

Sincerely,

Melanie Pepping
Honours Student
Faculty of Arts

APPENDIX 2

Information for Students

Dear Student,

My name is Melanie Pepping and I am currently undertaking a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Degree at Victoria University. I would like to invite you to take part in a study examining adolescent boy's attitudes to family violence. The study will be entitled 'Where the Western Boys Fit: Attitudes of Western Melbourne Adolescent Males to Family Violence' and will be completed as part of my Honours Thesis at Victoria University.

In doing this research I hope to provide information which is able to show how western Melbourne adolescent boys relate and think about the important social issue of family violence.

Your participation would involve you filling out the attached written survey. This should take you no longer than 20 minutes to complete. The survey is completely confidential and you will not be required to record your name anywhere on the survey. All information regarding your identity (e.g. completed parental consent forms) will also be kept confidential in a secure place.

Your participation in this study would be of great benefit to both me and to the aims of the project. Therefore your participation would be very greatly appreciated. There is however no obligation for you to participate and should you decide not to, this will not jeopardise you in any way.

Should you have any questions about your participation or about the project, please pass them on to your teacher who can direct them to me.

I sincerely hope you decide to help by taking the time to fill out the survey. Your participation in this project would be very much appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,

Melanie Pepping
Honours Student
Faculty of Arts

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

I, certify that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the project entitled: 'Where the Western Boys Fit: Attitudes of Western Melbourne Adolescent Males to Family Violence', being conducted at Victoria University of Technology by Melanie Pepping.

I understand that the results of the survey will be used as part of a Victoria University Honours Thesis.

I have been informed that the information provided will be kept confidential.

I further understand that participation in this project is voluntary and there is no obligation for me to participate.

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Information for Parents

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I would like to invite your son to take part in a study examining adolescent boys' attitudes to family violence. The study will be entitled 'Where the Western Boys Fit: Attitudes of Western Melbourne Adolescent Males to Family Violence' and will be completed as part of my Honours Thesis at Victoria University.

In doing this research I hope to provide information which is able to show how Western Melbourne adolescent boys relate and think about the important social issue of family violence.

Your son's participation would involve him filling out a written survey that should take him no longer than 20 minutes to complete. The survey includes a series of statements to which your son will be invited to answer on a scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Some examples of the statements to be used in the survey include:
'Domestic violence rarely occurs in wealthy neighborhoods'
'A man should be arrested if he hits his wife'
'A man is never justified in hitting his wife'

The survey is completely confidential and your son is not required to record his name anywhere on the survey. All information regarding the identity of your son (e.g. completed parental consent forms) will also be kept confidential in a secure place.

Participation is on a purely voluntary basis so if you do not wish your son to be involved, or your son does not wish to be involved, there will be no repercussions. There is no obligation for your son to participate. If you do however decide to provide consent for your son to participate in this project, it would be very much appreciated. In addition to seeking your consent, the full nature of the project will also be explained to your son, so that he too is able to make a fully informed decision on his participation in the project.

As well as benefiting the project, your son's participation may also provide him with educational benefits in that his awareness of issues to do with family violence will be heightened.

Should you wish your son to be a part of this important research, please complete and sign the attached consent form and return it to your son's school as soon as possible. Both your permission and your son's participation in this project will be greatly appreciated.

If you have any further queries about your son's participation or you would like some further information about the project, please feel free to contact me at home on 0000 0000 or on my mobile on 0000 000 000. Alternatively, you may contact the projects' supervisor, Dr. Katie Hughes on 9315 2305.

Yours Sincerely,

Melanie Pepping
Honours Student
Faculty of Arts

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

I, _____(parent/guardian) give my consent for my son _____(son's name) to complete a survey about adolescent male attitudes towards family violence.

I understand that the results of the survey will be used as part of a Victoria University Honours Thesis entitled 'Where the Western Boys Fit: Attitudes of Western Melbourne Adolescent Males to Family Violence'.

I have been informed that the information provided will be kept confidential.

I further understand that participation in this project is voluntary and there is no obligation for my son to participate.

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that my son can withdraw from the project at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise him in any way.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

APPENDIX 3

Dear Year 10 Coordinator,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for your help in gathering data for Melanie Pepping's thesis entitled 'Where the Western Boys Fit'. Your assistance, through facilitating access to your school's community, is invaluable to the project.

As part of the ethics clearance for this project by the Department of Education, Employment and Training and the universities own human research ethics committee, parental consent forms must be both completed and returned. As you may be aware, this has not been easy to do and there have been very few returned. In the light of this, I am writing, also, to ask whether it is possible for Melanie Pepping to mail the parental consent forms directly to parents. In order to do this, she would require the home addresses of some of your students. I can assure you that these addresses would be dealt with in the strictest confidence, and not retained after the consent forms have been sent.

I would be most grateful if you could help in this way. If you have any queries about this, or would like more information, please don't hesitate to contact me. You can phone me on 9365 2305 or 0000 000 000, or email me at Katie.Hughes@vu.edu.au.

Many thanks,

Dr. Katie Hughes
Dept. Communication, Language and Cultural Studies
Faculty of Arts.

APPENDIX 4

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Melanie Pepping and I am currently undertaking a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree at Victoria University. As part of my final year thesis, I am conducting research on the attitudes of young males from Western Melbourne to family violence.

In doing this research I hope to provide information which is able to show how Western Melbourne adolescent boys relate and think about the important social issue of family violence. I am writing to you as I would like to invite your Year 10 son to participate in my research.

Permission to conduct this research has already been granted by both the Department of Education as well as the Principal of your son's school. However as your son is under the age of 18 years, parental permission also needs to be obtained.

Your sons participation would involve him filling out a written survey which should take him no longer than 15 - 20 minutes to complete. The survey, which will be completed within class, will include a series of statements to which your son will be invited to answer on a scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The survey is completely confidential and your son is not required to record his name anywhere on the survey. All information regarding the identity of your son (eg. completed parental consent forms) will be kept confidential in a secure place.

Participation is on a purely voluntary basis so if you do not wish your son to be involved, or your son does not wish to be involved, there will be no repercussions. There is no obligation for your son to participate. If you do however decide to provide consent for your son to participate in this project, it would be greatly appreciated.

Please complete and sign the included parental consent form and post it to me using the envelope provided. For your convenience, I have provided you with a postage paid envelope so there is no need for you to purchase any stamps.

It is important that the completed consent forms are received by me no later than last mail **Monday 16th October** as this is the week in which the surveys will be distributed.

If you have any queries about the project, please don't hesitate to contact me either by phone on 0000 000 000 or via e-mail at: melanie.pepping@students.vu.edu.au. Alternatively, you may contact the project's supervisor, Dr. Katie Hughes by phone on 9365 2305 or 0000 000 000; or via e-mail at: katie.hughes@vu.edu.au.

Thank you very much for your help in allowing this important research to be conducted. Both your consent and your sons participation in this project is very greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Melanie Pepping
Honours Student
Faculty of Arts

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

I, _____(parent/guardian) give my consent for my son _____(son's name) to complete a survey about adolescent male attitudes towards family violence.

I understand that the results of the survey will be used as part of a Victoria University Honours Thesis entitled 'Where the Western Boys Fit: Attitudes of Western Melbourne Adolescent Males to Family Violence'.

I have been informed that the information provided will be kept confidential.

I further understand that participation in this project is voluntary and there is no obligation for my son to participate.

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that my son can withdraw from the project at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise him in any way.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

(please post completed form using the postage paid envelope provided)

APPENDIX 5

SURVEY

SECTION - 1

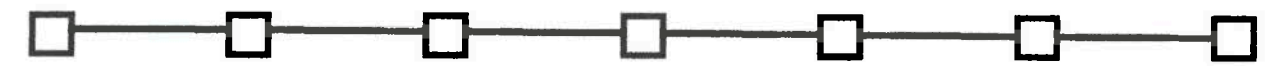
For the following, please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement by placing a tick in the appropriate box after each statement.

(please tick one box per statement)

1. A wife should move out of the house if her husband hits her.

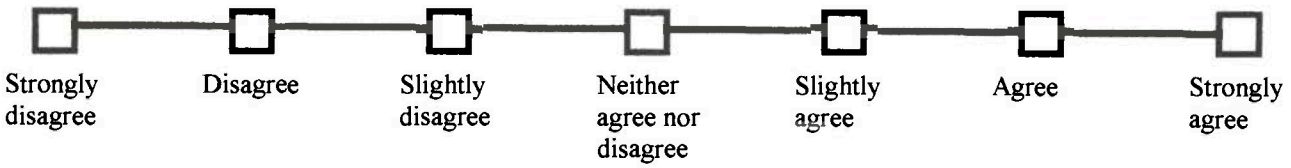
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree

2. A man is never justified in hitting his wife.

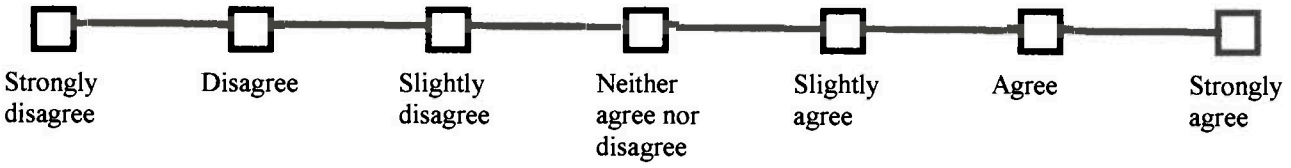


Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree

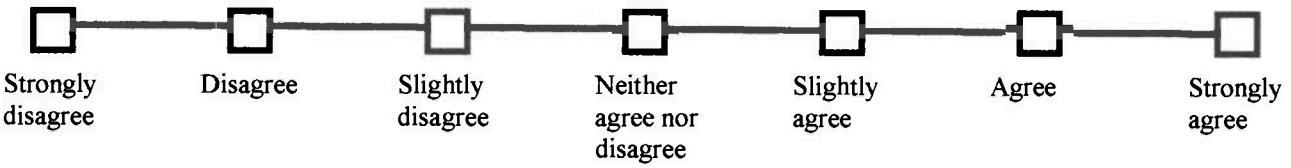
3. A husband should have the right to discipline his wife when it is necessary.



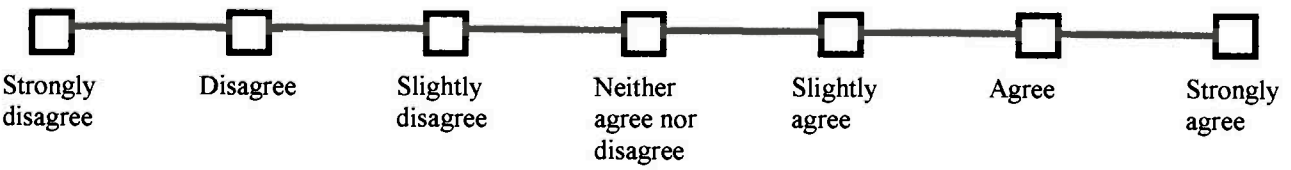
4. A man should be arrested if he hits his wife.



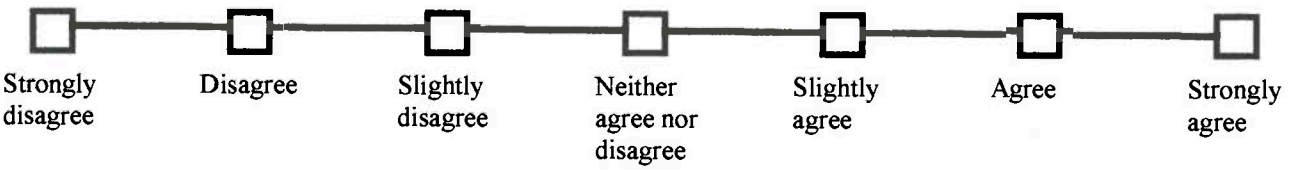
5. A man is entitled to sex with his wife whenever he wants it.



6. A man's violence against his wife is grounds for divorce.

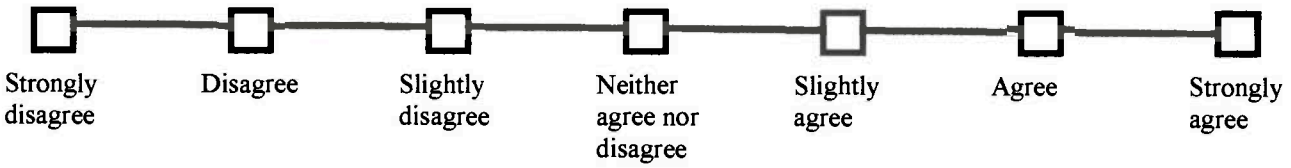


7. Some women seem to ask for violent treatment from their husbands.

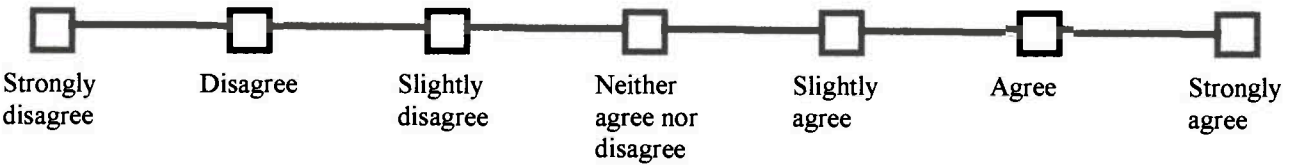


8. Domestic violence can be excused if alcohol is involved.

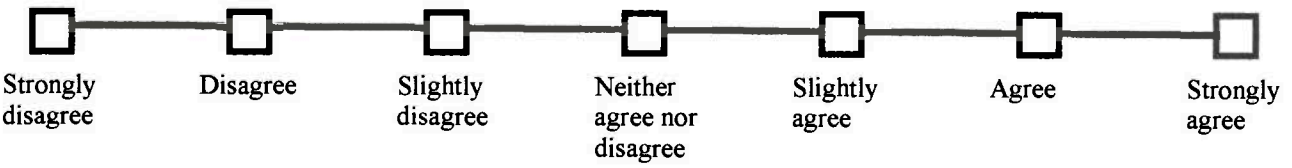
9. Domestic violence rarely occurs in wealthy neighborhoods.



10. Domestic violence is a private matter to be handled within the family.



11. It's hard to understand why women stay in violent relationships.



SECTION – 2

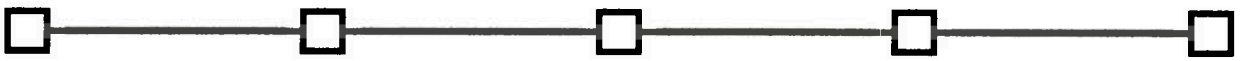
In this section, please indicate the degree to which you believe you would be likely to do the following by placing a tick in the most appropriate box after each statement.

If you were married, how likely (if at all) would you be to hit your wife in an argument if she...

1. Refused to cook and keep the house clean.

Not at all Likely	Probably not likely	Not sure how likely	Perhaps likely	Very likely

2. Had sex with another man.

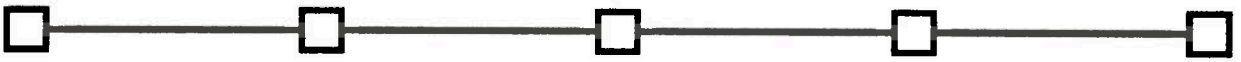


Not at all Likely	Probably not likely	Not sure how likely	Perhaps likely	Very likely

3. Refused to have sex with you.

Not at all Likely	Probably not likely	Not sure how likely	Perhaps likely	Very likely

4. Made fun of you at a party.



Not at all Likely	Probably not likely	Not sure how likely	Perhaps likely	Very likely

5. Told friends that you were sexually pathetic.

Not at all Likely	Probably not likely	Not sure how likely	Perhaps likely	Very likely

6. Argues with or refuses to obey you.

Not at all Likely	Probably not likely	Not sure how likely	Perhaps likely	Very likely

7. Keeps nagging you.

Not at all Likely	Probably not likely	Not sure how likely	Perhaps likely	Very likely

8. Wastes money.

Not at all Likely	Probably not likely	Not sure how likely	Perhaps likely	Very likely

Please think carefully about the following question and write your answer in the space provided.

Q. Are there any circumstances in which you think it would be acceptable for a man to use physical force against his wife?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

If yes, what would the circumstances be?

SECTION – 3

In this section, please read the following scenario's carefully and record your responses on the scales provided. Please tick one box for each row.

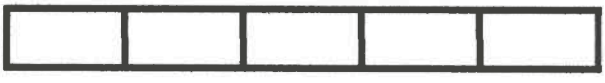
Scenario 1:

Janet had always been interested in cooking, and before she was married had worked in a variety of jobs in catering. Once the children started school she decided to take the opportunity to learn more. She began by going to evening classes while her husband, Mark looked after the children. Janet was very good and the teacher suggested she go to college during the day to get some qualifications. She was very keen but Mark said that he was afraid the children might suffer. They argued about it and he lost his temper and hit her, but later apologised and agreed she should go. Mark came home from work one evening to find that Janet was still not home. She came in five minutes later with the dinner she had cooked from college. He grabbed the pot and threw it at her shouting "I'm not eating that fancy muck!"

I can understand why the man behaved like that.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	I can't understand why the man behaved like that.
The man's behaviour was reasonable.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	The man's behaviour was unreasonable.
I can't sympathise with the man.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	I can sympathise with the man.
I can't sympathise with the woman.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	I can sympathise with the woman.
The man was not to blame.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	The man was to blame.
The woman was to blame.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	The woman was not to blame.
The woman could not have prevented the behaviour.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	The woman could have prevented the behaviour.
The story is true to life.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	The story is not true to life.

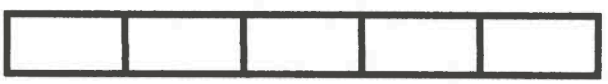
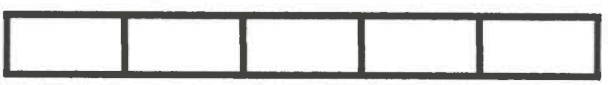
Scenario 2:

Maria had been unhappy in her marriage to John for a long time now. One day she met and fell in love with another man named Michael and they began to have a relationship behind John's back. Michael was the total opposite to John. He was so kind, sensitive and gentle whereas John always seemed so angry and often lost his temper. It was for this reason that Maria decided it best not to tell John about her affair. Although she decided to leave her husband, she was not going to tell him the true reason why as she wished not to make him angry unnecessarily. Before she got up the courage to leave her husband however, John accidentally discovers the relationship one day as he returns from work to find Maria in bed with Michael. John is enraged and attackes both Maria and Michael. Although Michael is able to protect himself, Maria is left hospitalised after the attack with severely broken ribs and a broken jaw.

I can understand why the man behaved like that.		I can't understand why the man behaved like that.
The man's behaviour was reasonable.		The man's behaviour was unreasonable.
I can't sympathise with the man.		I can sympathise with the man.
I can't sympathise with the woman.		I can sympathise with the woman.
The man was not to blame.		The man was to blame.
The woman was to blame.		The woman was not to blame.
The woman could not have prevented the behaviour.		The woman could have prevented the behaviour.
The story is true to life.		The story is not true to life.

Scenario 3:

Susan and her husband, Les are at a football club barbeque. Susan is busy preparing and serving the food with the other women. She looks over towards Les who is standing with a group of men and speaking rather loudly not too far away from Susan and the other women. Les says to the men around him "Look at her will ya, what a fat, ugly cow she has turned into! You guys should see the way she keeps the house, it's a bloody pigsty!! She spends my money like it's water! Hell, just last week she bought herself some new shoes AND a new dress! Greedy bitch!" Susan knew that everyone at the barbeque could hear what Les was saying about her but she carried on serving the food even though she felt very upset.

I can understand why the man behaved like that.		I can't understand why the man behaved like that.
The man's behaviour was reasonable.		The man's behaviour was unreasonable.
I can't sympathise with the man.		I can sympathise with the man.
I can't sympathise with the woman.		I can sympathise with the woman.
The man was not to blame.		The man was to blame.
The woman was to blame.		The woman was not to blame.
The woman could not have prevented the behaviour.		The woman could have prevented the behaviour.
The story is true to life.		The story is not true to life.

Thank you for filling out this survey, your participation is greatly appreciated.

If you or someone you know would like some more information, help or advice on issues to do with family violence please call one of the following numbers:

Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service of Victoria
Ph. 9329 8433 (24hr)
OR
1800 015 188 (freecall)

Domestic Violence & Incest Resource Centre
Ph. 9380 4343

Child Abuse – Child Protection Crisis Line
Ph. 13 12 78

Kids Help Line
1800 551 1800 (freecall)

APPENDIX 6

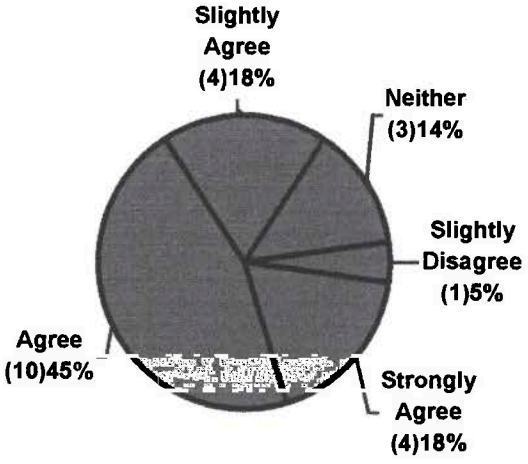
Attitudes to Wife Abuse Scale (Section 1) – Raw Data

Survey No.	Q. 1*	Q. 2*	Q. 3†	Q. 4*	Q. 5†	Q. 6*	Q. 7†	Q. 8†	Q. 9†	Q. 10†	Q. 11†	Total Score
1	4	3	1	4	2	4	1	1	2	2	4	28
2	2	1	2	2	1	1	4	3	3	3	5	27
3	3	6	2	5	2	4	3	4	3	3	3	38
4	2	4	2	4	6	2	3	7	6	2	3	41
5	4	4	2	3	7	2	5	6	6	2	4	45
6	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	6	30
7	2	1	3	2	5	2	5	2	5	2	7	36
8	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	7	3	7	28
9	4	1	3	4	2	2	4	2	5	6	7	40
10	2	1	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	3	28
11	2	1	3	1	2	2	2	1	4	2	6	26
12	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	1	3	3	5	28
13	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	5	20
14	2	4	3	5	2	3	4	3	4	3	5	38
15	3	1	1	2	1	1	5	2	1	2	6	25
16	5	3	7	6	7	4	7	6	2	6	2	55
17	1	1	1	2	2	1	3	1	2	2	6	22
18	1	7	7	7	7	4	5	5	3	7	5	58
19	3	1	1	3	1	2	5	1	2	1	5	25
20	2	1	2	5	1	1	4	1	1	2	2	22
21	1	4	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	5	2	21
22	2	4	2	4	1	2	3	2	3	5	6	34
MEAN	2.3	2.39	2.3	3.17	2.57	2.04	3.35	2.43	3.04	2.96	4.52	**31.09**

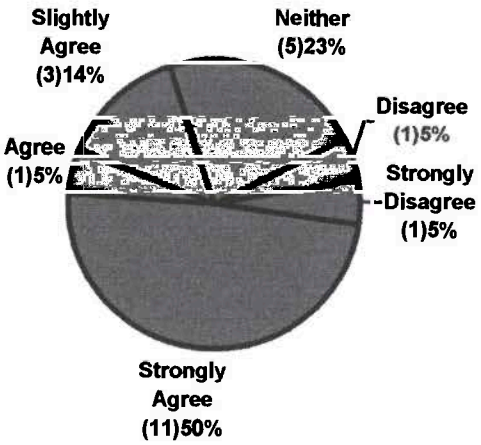
* for these items, scoring ranged from 'strongly agree' as 1 and 'strongly disagree' as 7.
† for these items, scoring ranged from 'strongly agree' as 7 and 'strongly disagree' as 1.

ATTITUDE TO WIFE ABUSE (AWA) SCALE: PARTICIPANT RESPONSES TO EACH ITEM

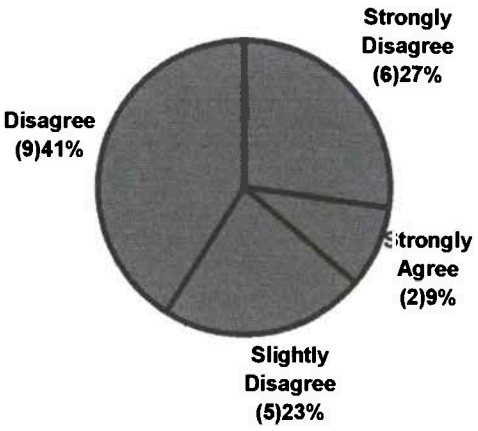
1. A wife should move out of the house if her husband hits her.



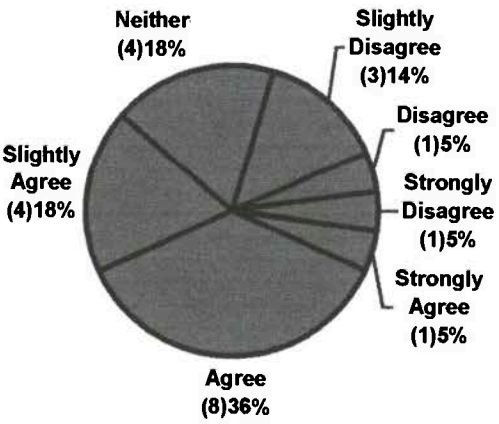
2. A man is never justified in hitting his wife.



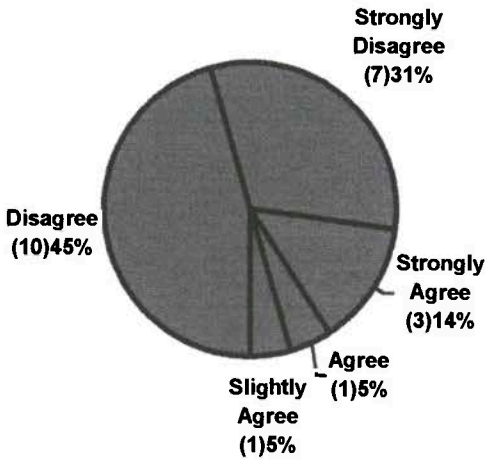
3. A husband should have the right to discipline his wife when it is necessary.



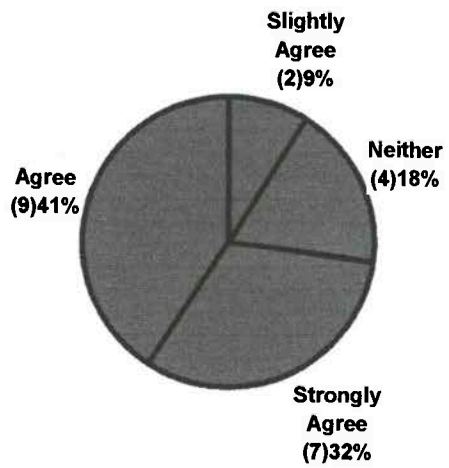
4. A man should be arrested if he hits his wife.



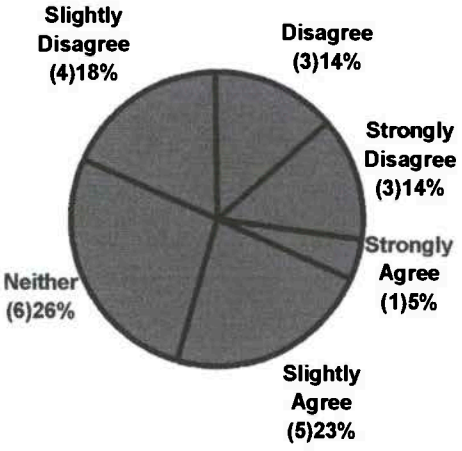
5. A man is entitled to sex with his wife whenever he wants it.



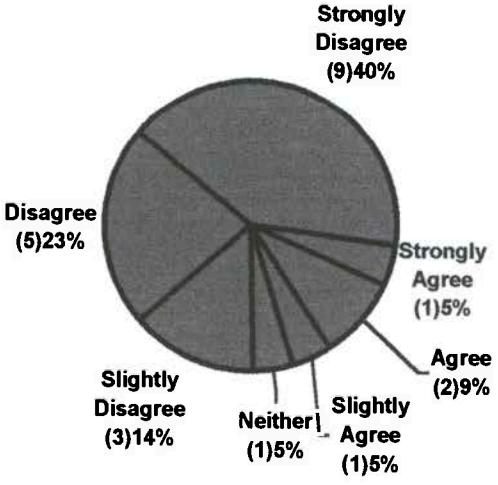
6. A man's violence is grounds for divorce.



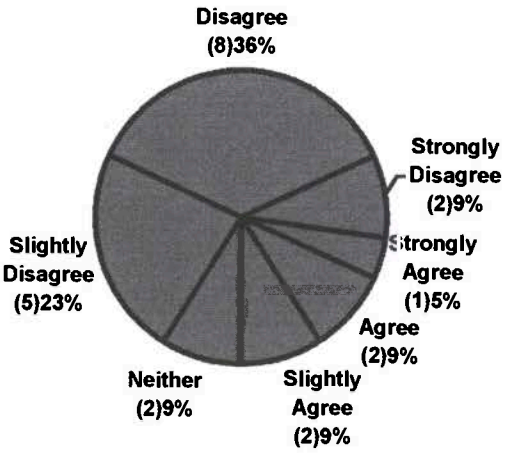
7. Some women seem to ask for violent treatment from their husbands.



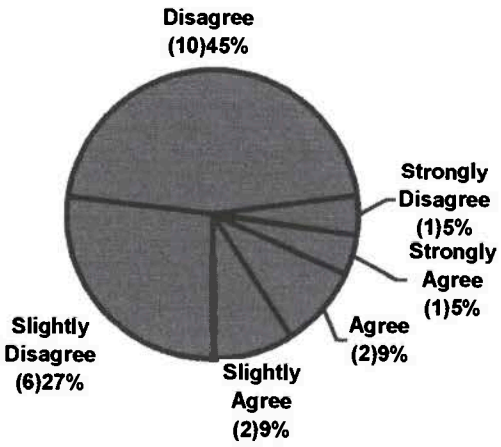
8. Domestic violence can be excused if alcohol is involved.



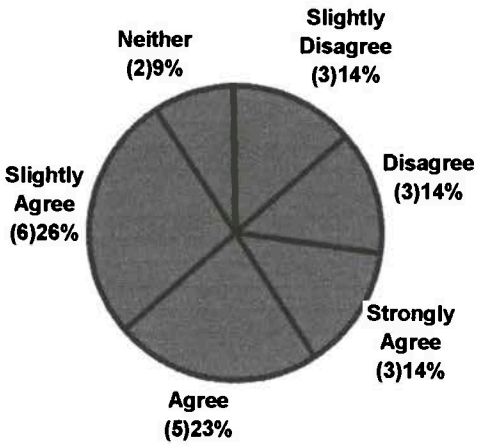
9. Domestic violence rarely occurs in wealthy neighborhoods.



10. Domestic violence is a private matter to be handled within the family.



11. It's hard to understand why some women stay in violent relationships.



please note: percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding

APPENDIX 7

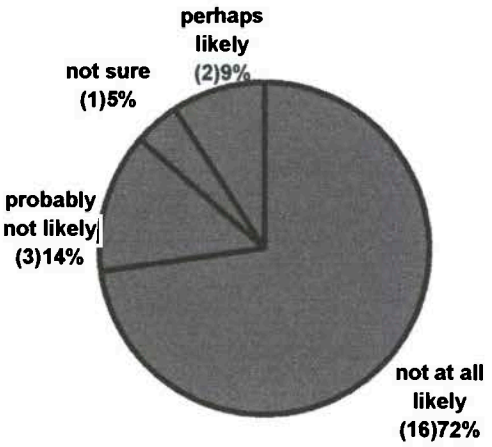
Likelihood of Battering Scale (Section 2) – Raw Data

Survey No.	Q. 1	Q. 2	Q. 3	Q. 4	Q. 5	Q. 6	Q. 7	Q. 8	Total Score
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
2	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	12
3	2	4	2	3	3	2	3	2	21
4	1	5	1	1	4	3	1	4	20
5	3	5	3	5	3	3	3	4	29
6	1	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	18
7	2	5	5	5	5	3	3	4	32
8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
9	1	5	2	1	3	3	2	2	19
10	2	5	2	4	3	2	4	4	26
11	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
12	1	4	1	2	3	1	1	1	14
13	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
14	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	12
15	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
16	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	3	33
17	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
18	4	5	3	4	5	4	3	2	30
19	1	3	1	2	2	1	3	1	14
20	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
21	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
22	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
MEAN	1.48	3.17	1.74	2.13	2.43	2.04	2.09	2.17	**15.7**

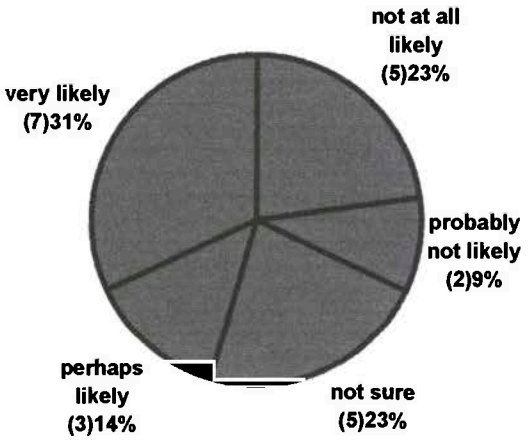
Scores ranged from 'not at all likely' = 1 and 'very likely' = 5

LIKELIHOOD OF BATTERING (LOB) SCALE: PARTICIPANT RESPONSES TO EACH ITEM

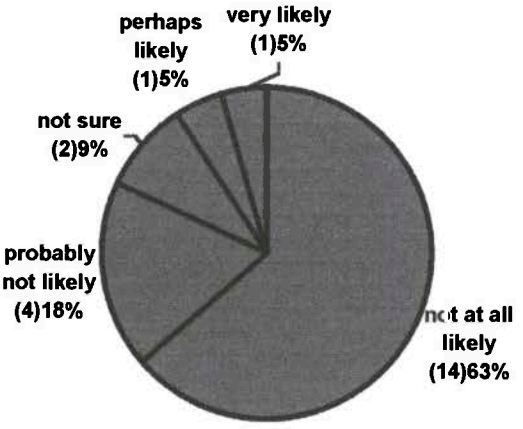
1. Refused to cook and keep the house clean.



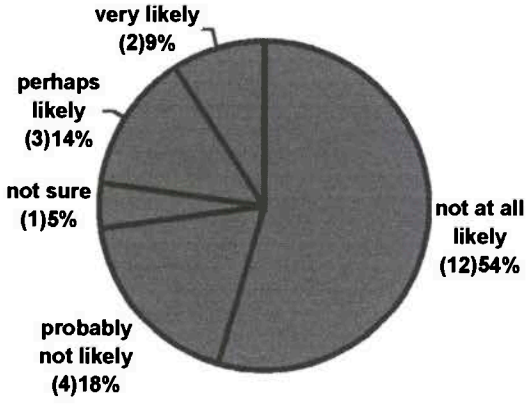
2. Had sex with another man.



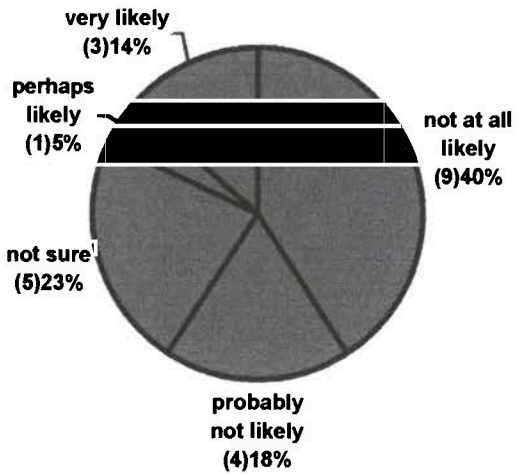
3. Refused to have sex with you.



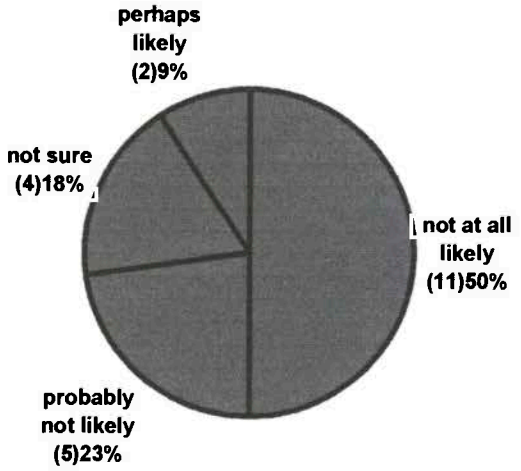
4. Made fun of you at a party.



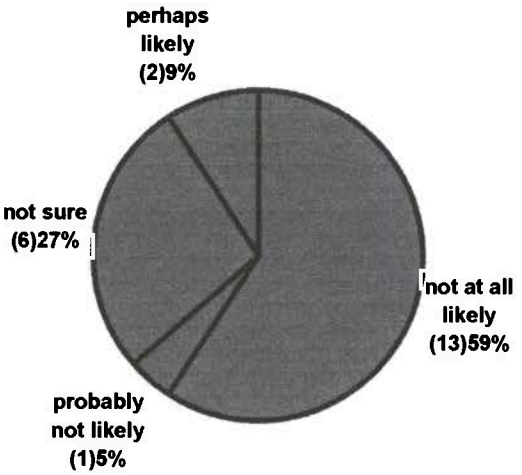
5. Told friends that you were sexually pathetic.



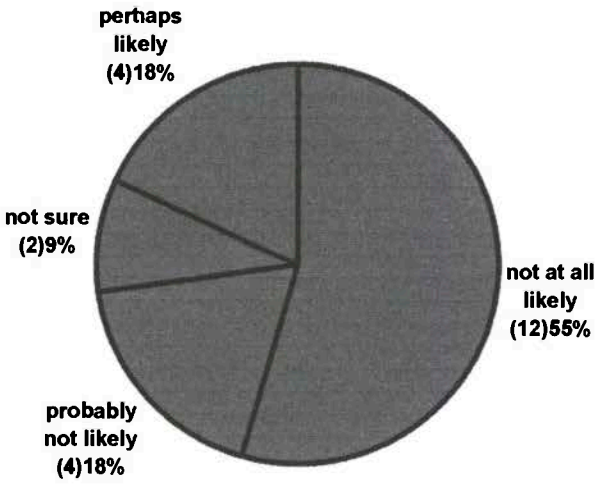
6. Argues with or refuses to obey you.



7. Keeps nagging you.



8. Wastes money.



please note: percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding

APPENDIX 8

Domestic Violence Scenarios (Section 3) – Raw Data

Scenario 1

Survey No.	Item 1*	Item 2*	Item 3†	Item 4*	Item 5*	Item 6*	Item 7†	Item 8†	Total Score
1	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	3	13
2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	9
3	4	3	2	3	4	4	2	2	24
4	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	18
5	3	5	3	2	3	1	1	3	21
6	3	2	3	3	1	2	3	3	20
7	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	3	14
8	1	1	5	3	1	1	1	1	14
9	1	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	19
10	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	18
11	2	1	4	3	3	3	4	3	23
12	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	14
13	4	1	1	2	1	1	3	2	15
14	2	1	3	3	1	1	3	3	17
15	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
16	5	3	5	1	5	2	1	1	23
17	2	1	2	1	2	5	2	3	18
18	5	4	4	4	5	5	1	2	30
19	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	10
20	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
21	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	10
22	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	11
MEAN	2.04	1.7	2.09	1.83	1.96	1.78	1.87	2.26	**15.52**

* for these items, scoring ranged left to right from 5 to 1.
† for these items, scoring ranged left to right from 1 to 5.

Scenario 2

Survey No.	Item 1*	Item 2*	Item 3†	Item 4*	Item 5*	Item 6*	Item 7†	Item 8†	Total Score
1	3	1	4	4	2	4	4	2	22
2	5	1	3	3	5	2	5	1	25
3	4	4	2	5	4	4	2	2	27
4	5	2	5	3	3	4	4	1	27
5	5	3	4	4	3	2	2	3	26
6	4	2	3	3	4	2	5	3	26
7	5	4	4	4	4	4	5	2	32
8	2	1	5	1	5	5	5	1	25
9	4	4	3	2	2	4	5	1	25
10	5	3	5	5	2	2	4	1	27
11	2	1	3	1	3	3	3	2	18
12	4	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	22
13	4	1	4	4	2	2	3	2	22
14	4	1	3	3	4	4	4	3	26
15	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	36
16	4	4	4	3	4	5	5	1	30
17	4	3	2	2	4	3	4	2	24
18	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	36
19	4	2	4	2	2	4	5	3	26
20	4	2	4	2	3	3	5	1	24
21	5	4	5	4	4	4	2	3	31
22	4	4	4	4	1	5	1	4	27
MEAN	3.96	2.52	3.61	3.13	3.22	3.43	3.74	1.87	**25.39**

* for these items, scoring ranged left to right from 5 to 1.
† for these items, scoring ranged left to right from 1 to 5.

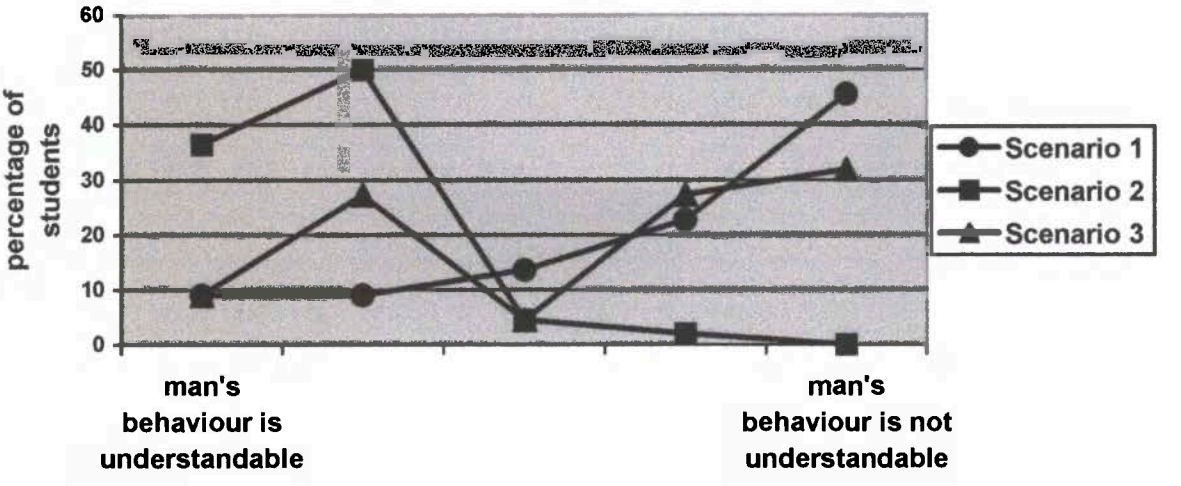
Scenario 3

Survey No.	Item 1*	Item 2*	Item 3†	Item 4*	Item 5*	Item 6*	Item 7†	Item 8†	Total Score
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	11
2	2	1	1	5	4	2	4	3	22
3	4	2	2	2	2	4	3	2	21
4	3	2	2	2	1	4	3	2	19
5	2	5	1	3	5	1	1	1	19
6	2	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	12
7	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	9
8	5	1	1	1	1	5	5	2	21
9	4	2	4	2	3	3	3	1	22
10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
11	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	12
12	2	1	1	1	1	2	3	3	14
13	4	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	14
14	4	1	3	3	4	4	4	3	26
15	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	36
16	4	4	4	2	3	2	2	1	22
17	2	2	2	1	3	3	2	2	17
18	4	4	3	3	4	4	5	1	28
19	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	10
20	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	3	14
21	1	1	3	2	3	3	3	3	19
22	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	11
MEAN	2.43	1.74	1.78	1.83	2.13	2.26	2.7	1.96	**16.83**

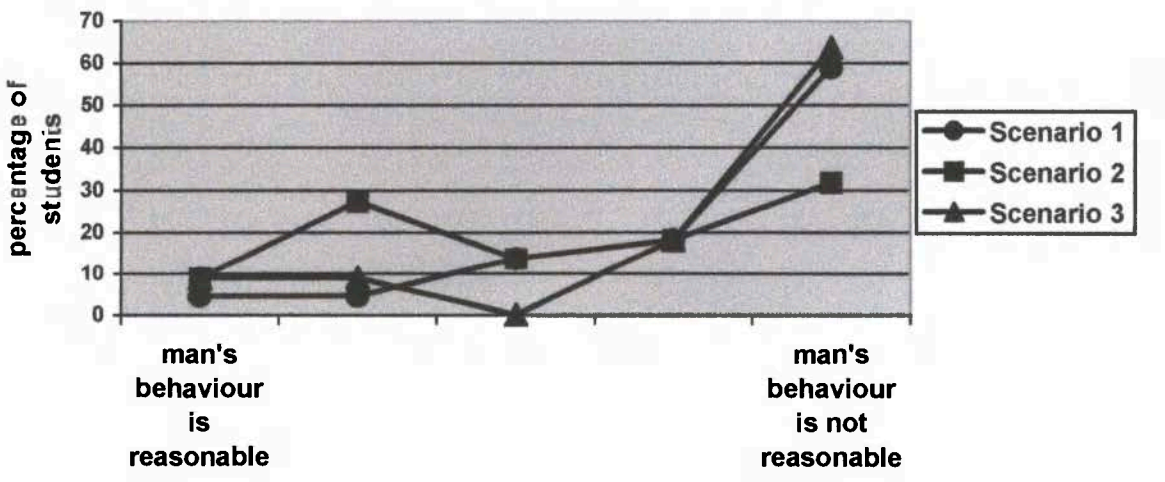
* for these items, scoring ranged left to right from 5 to 1.
† for these items, scoring ranged left to right from 1 to 5.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SCENARIOS: PARTICIPANT RESPONSES TO EACH ITEM IN EACH SCENARIO

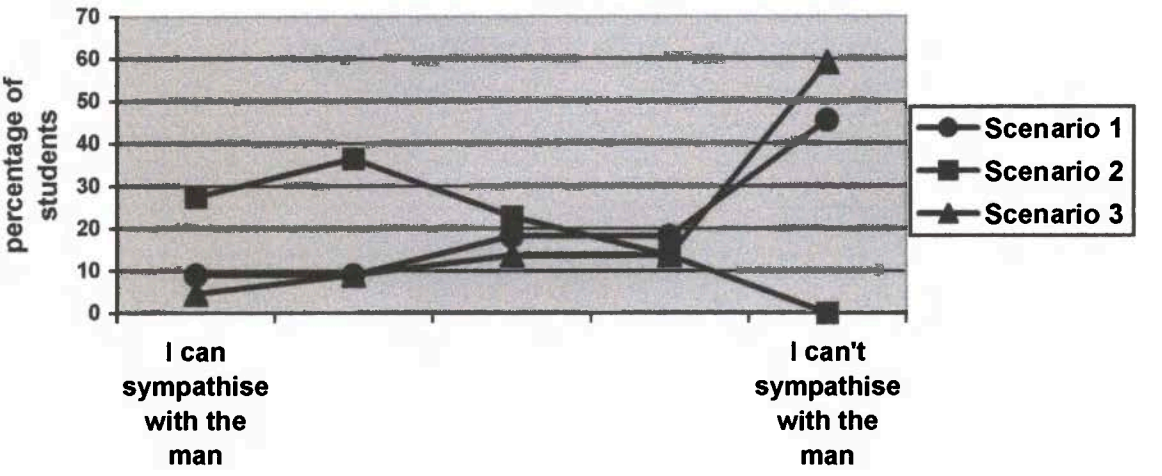
Participants Responses to item 1



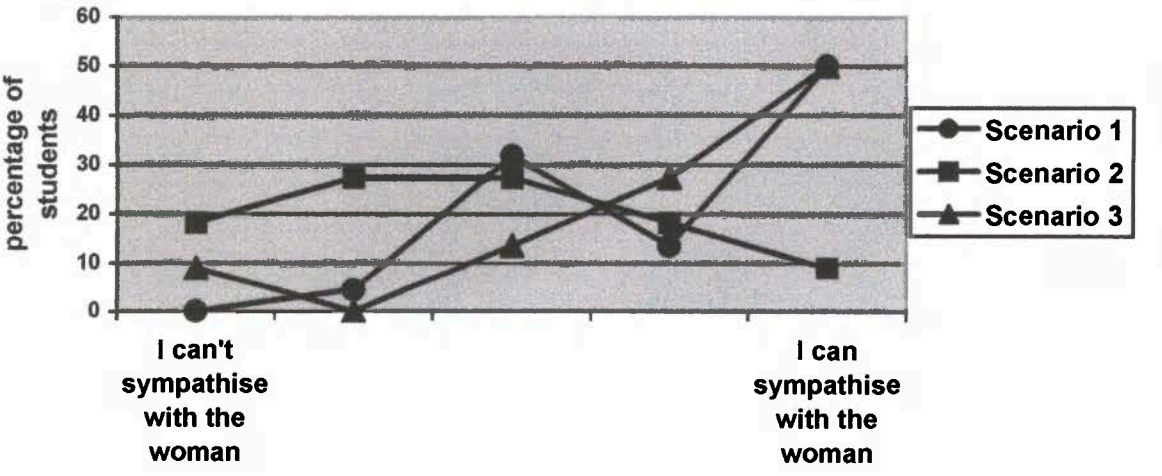
Participants Responses to item 2



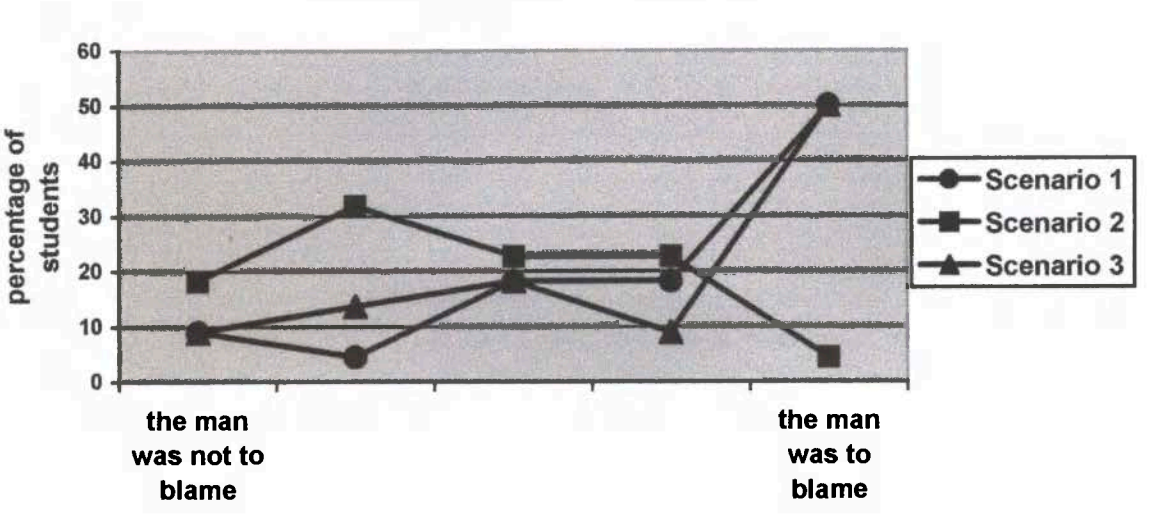
Participants Responses to item 3



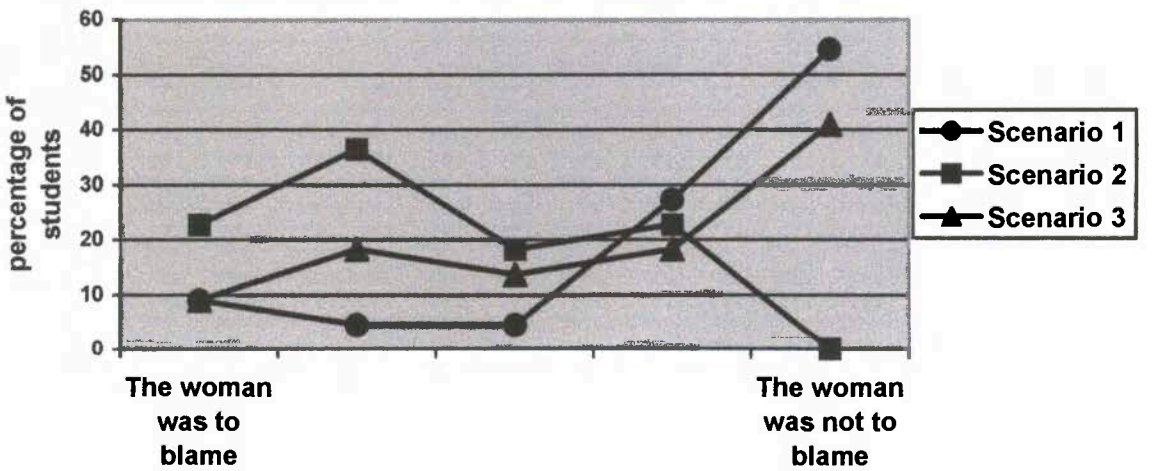
Participants Responses to item 4



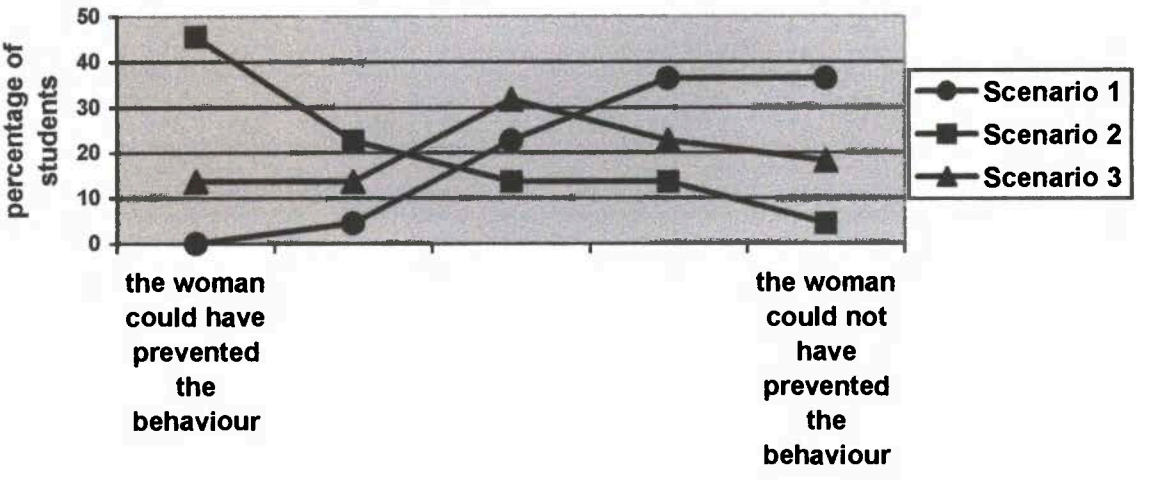
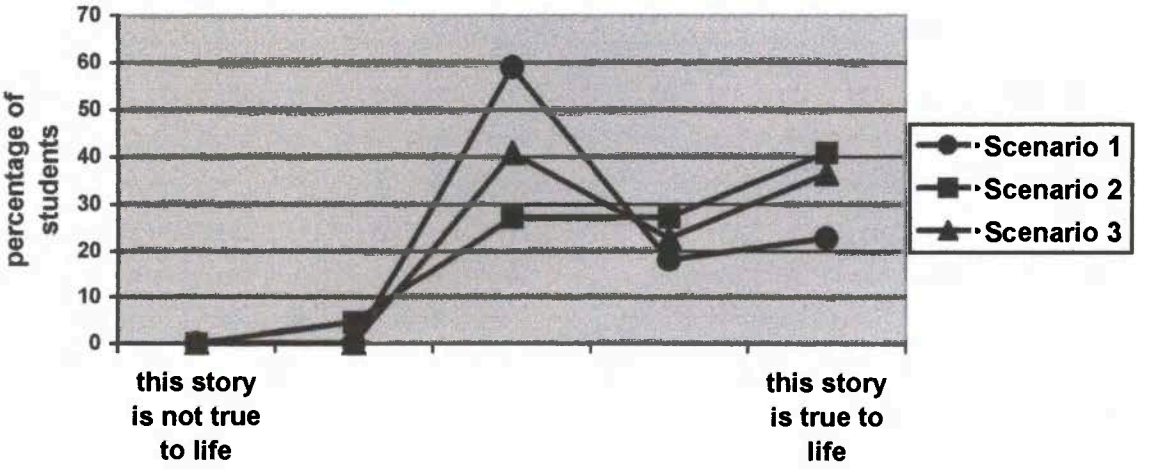
Participants Responses to item 5



Participants Responses to item 6



Participants Responses to item 7



Participants Responses to item 8