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Part I

ABSTRACT

A unified concept to explain domestic violence appears to be missing from theory and research. The purpose of this study was to explore how male batterers describe their pattern of violence. Participating subjects were six court-referred Spanish-speaking Mexican-Americans, attending a batterers' treatment program, between the ages of 24 and 37, with a mean age of 30.5. Four of the subjects were married and two were single. Five of the six subjects were in the treatment program after a first offense. Findings from this research study suggest that neither the power and control or powerlessness theories completely account for the experience of Hispanic male batterers. A new model for understanding how domestic violence originates and develops was suggested based on the batterers' description of their violence. Future research needs to explore how batterers perceive the origin and development of domestic violence, which may help to develop new intervention techniques.

Part II

INTRODUCTION

Working with male batterers at a batterers' treatment program, I have been surprised by the complex issues these men bring to group sessions. Their explanations for engaging in domestic violence are often distorted. They often argue that it was their wife's or girlfriend's attitude toward them that precipitated the violence, and argue that they had no choice but to become violent. Denial about the battering incident and anger are two common themes seen in these groups. Minimizing the violence is usually seen with the new group members, and with some of the more seasoned group members.

Power and control issues, according to many people familiar with this topic, are offered as explanations for men battering women. These people argue that men use power and control tactics, such as physical intimidation and the use of aggressive force, in a deliberate effort to oppress women. It appears that, in their minds, the forceful need to exert power and control by males is the main cause of domestic violence. This power and control theory appears to be widely accepted by victims' advocates, members of law enforcement agencies, and batterers' treatment programs.

However, my experience with more than one hundred court-referred male batterers in the last year does not necessarily mirror that point of view. Time after time a recurrent theme keeps coming back in group sessions. These men felt an inability to have a conflict-free relationship with their wives or girlfriends. They talk about a lack of respect by their wives or girlfriends, and their felt inability to do something about it. They appear to want respect, not control. They feel oppressed, too, and often frustrated and shameful by their inability to manage an unmanageable household. It is a sense of powerlessness that keeps coming back, and the power and control point of view held by the majority of victims' advocates does not seem to fit into their dilemma. Domestic violence appears to stem from more than just power and control issues.

My curiosity in wanting to research the powerlessness vs. power and control point of view made me think about doing this research study. While reading literature on domestic violence, I was surprised to find consistent research studies supporting the argument that women appear to be as much prone as perpetrators of domestic violence as men are. This by itself was an interesting finding, and one that directly challenges the gender-based power and control theory. Domestic violence appears to be a far more complicated issue than the power and control point of view tries to explain. Society does not acknowledge women's aggression toward men. However, because men are generally physically stronger than women are, research shows that women are more likely to be injured in domestic violence disputes.

To be honest, I was a little uncomfortable taking a position that might result in criticism by the people who have already set their minds about the way domestic violence must be approached – and there are quite a few of them. Nevertheless, I believed my point of view to be a valid one, taking into consideration my previous work with batterers. After a thorough review of what I was going to do, I decided that research was my priority, and went ahead with my decision.

After having said this, I am still very much aware that many advocates against domestic violence may criticize my research study. If my results show that power and control issues are the main cause for domestic violence, they will probably say, "I told you so." However, if the results of this study show that other causes appear to be the reason why men batter their wives and girlfriends, victims' advocates will

probably question my results. However, this research study will try to break through those barriers, and it will hopefully provide some of the answers needed.

This study has significant relevance to my intervention with batterers. I feel that it is unethical to go with the flow and accept certain guidelines that I consider flawed and sometimes culturally insensitive for batterers. I believe that it is my responsibility to provide a safe environment for victims of domestic violence. If my intervention is not effective, I can talk as much as I want and call myself an expert in the field; however, if due to my flawed way of trying to change the batterers' behavior the victim continues being victimized, then my intervention is of no value at all.

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Part III

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review has been broken down into three categories. The first body of literature will cover the definition of domestic violence, a historical perspective, and four different point of views on the roots of violence. The second body of literature will describe the topic on perpetrators of domestic violence. In this body of literature, research on both male and female perpetrators of domestic violence will be examined. The third body of literature will give a description of batterers' treatment programs, and a description of the men who are attending those programs. The profile of batterers will be explored here.

The whole literature review will then be summarized and analyzed to try to understand its strengths and weaknesses. In addition, an effort will be made to describe what is missing from current research on domestic violence. This will lead to the research question.

As we undertake this literature review exploration, keep in mind that violence appears to be more than a defect of character. As Dunn (1994) agrees, in our attempt to stop violence, we forget that violence is more than a defect, but also a survival mechanism. As Dunn argues, we need to recognize its existence, and acknowledge that everyone, including women, possess it, to different degrees.

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Domestic Violence

Domestic violence can be defined as physical battering, psychological battering, or sexual battering by an adult against another adult in an intimate relationship (Brandl, 1990). According to Brandl, physical battering includes pushing, slapping, and punching. Sexual battering includes forcing sex, and assaulting sexual genitalia or breasts. Psychological battering includes verbal abuse, making threats of violence, and trying to control the other person.

According to Berlinger (1998), domestic violence escalates during three different phases. In the first phase, or the tension-building phase, the abuse starts escalating. This phase may include threats and verbal abuse. In the explosion phase, the batterer may become physically violent. In the calm phase, Berlinger states, the batterer apologizes and promises never to hit her again. Eventually, the process starts again. It is important to mention that Berlinger appears to presume that battering is perpetrated by males only.

A Historical Perspective

In the ancient Hebrew society, a wife was considered property of her husband. Her social status was acquired through her sexual functions, both as mother and as wife. Women were not permitted to speak in public, and they had no power in political decision-making (Mananzan, 1995). During the Middle Ages, Mananzan adds, severe acts of violence against women were perpetrated through the inquisition. Mananzan (1995) states that about two million women were tortured to death between the 12th and the 17th century. Husbands were given the legal right by the church and the state to inflict corporal punishment on their wives. Laws allowed women to be severely beaten in cases of supposedly “bad” conduct.

Moving along the historical context on domestic violence, Amussen (1994) states that in early modern England, men justified violence against their wives by saying that they were obligated to do so, because of their wives’ behavior. Violence was not sanctioned, but it existed and it was accepted. The focus on domestic violence was the violent and unruly wife, not the abusive husband. Wives’ supposed failure to live up to pre-assigned expectations, as an obedient wife was the focus of the debate about domestic violence. Burning at the stake punished the murdering of a husband.

Protecting the concept of the family as understood by European Christian standards was an excuse for defending acts of domestic violence (Ferraro, 1996). According to Ferraro, in the 19th century and early 20th century, demands from feminists and conservatives voiced harsh punishment for drunken, abusive men. Laws aimed at punishing these men were passed in Maryland in 1882, Delaware in 1901, and Oregon in 1905.

Moving forward to the 1970's, victims' advocates strongly criticized the police and criminal courts for being too lenient with batterers. They argued that perpetrators of domestic violence were not prosecuted as harshly as other violent criminals (Davis, 1995). According to Davis, political pressure increased to employ stricter arrest policies. A research project conducted in Minneapolis to measure the effects of arrests in domestic violence incidents gave a boost to the efforts to change police response to domestic violence incidents. According to Erickson and Hart (1998), the first domestic violence restraining law was enacted in Pennsylvania in 1976.

The 1980's witnessed a change in the focus of domestic violence (Ferraro, 1996). According to Ferraro, President Reagan tore down the Office of Domestic Violence and the National Center for Rape. President Reagan cut funding for social programs that challenged a conservative agenda. The focus on domestic violence became seeing it as a crime and punishment for the crime as the main objective. Furthermore, battering was seen as the act of bad men. By 1985, mandatory arrest was adopted by forty-seven police departments.

California and other states implemented new laws on domestic violence. The decision to charge a possible batterer was taken away from the victims and was given to the prosecutors. Police officers were trained to deal with domestic violence calls (O'Dell, 1996). However, according to O'Dell, some officers did not enforce the arresting of batterers.

Moving along the time line and arriving at the nineties, domestic violence remains a serious issue. This decade has seen its share of domestic violence. It appears that laws have not resulted in its decline. A well-publicized and tragic case of domestic violence happened in 1994. O. J. Simpson, a retired professional football player, was charged with murdering his wife Nicole, and another man. He was acquitted of the criminal charges, but many critics questioned the case outcome, arguing that his fame as a public figure helped him get an acquittal of a crime which, according to many, he truly committed. History of domestic violence preceded the murders. Police records and recorded conversations between Nicole Simpson and 911 operators describe a systemic use of violence by O. J. Simpson. The murders made many surprised that domestic violence happens at all socioeconomic levels.

Perhaps this case may serve as an example of what Ferraro (1996) says about domestic violence in this decade. She states that “in the 1990’s, ‘domestic violence’ represents a convoluted, contradictory discourse that incorporates the contested terrains of sex, love, violence, lies and truth” (p. 77).

Points of View on Domestic Violence

Research appears to indicate different views about the roots of violent behavior. Biology, the environment, and power and control issues are the most frequently cited reasons by researchers for people engaging in episodes of violence.

Researchers are searching for a link between aggression and biology (Stevens, 1994). Stevens adds that researchers are looking in several areas, such as in brain injuries, neurotransmitters, steroid endocrinology, and brain-wave abnormalities. According to Gibbs (1995), high levels of testosterone appear to be found in physically aggressive men. Gibbs also stated that low levels of serotonin, a neurotransmitter, is a probable cause for aggression.

Kevles and Kevles (1997), however, disagree with using biology as an explanation for human violence. They stated that describing behaviors in terms of biological variables may be easy to understand and socially agreeable. They, however, stated that research with rats and monkeys cannot tell us much about human nature.

As some researchers believe that violence has a biological explanation, others argue that violence originates due to social circumstances. Other researchers have stated that their research findings indicate that violent individuals have witnessed and experienced abuse as children by their parents (see Barnett, Fagan, & Booker, 1991). Mihalic and Elliott (1997) stated that social learning theory describes violence as a learned behavior. They suggested that exposure to violence during childhood increases the probability of domestic violence during adulthood. They also stated that sex-role theory describes violence as an early and appropriate sex-role socialization, which teaches women to accept male dominance, and teaches men to be the dominant partner.

Furthermore, other researchers believe that power and control issues are at the heart of domestic violence. For example, According to Handwerker (1998), some studies suggest that power inequalities may evoke violence. According to this view, a person who controls the access to resources needed by another person may create power inequalities by taking advantage of people dependent on them for resources. If applied to men in an abusive relationship, they create power inequalities by controlling the resources needed by women.

A less-explored view on domestic violence refers to the view that violence is the result of a sense of powerlessness. According to Halsted (1988), violent men are violent due to a sense of powerlessness, not because of a sense of power. Halsted describes powerlessness as “the felt sense that one cannot change that which he desires to alter, and cannot prevent changing that which seeks to avoid” (p. 67). He further adds, “A ‘real man’ is supposed to get what he wants, when he wants it, particularly with his wife” (pp. 67-8). He argues that this is the reason why male batterers, “experiencing a profound sense of their own powerlessness, find wife abuse a rare arena to meet their masculine power needs” (p. 68).

Halsted (1988) argues that everyone, including the batterer, has a need for a sense of importance. He recommends research that balances the abusive male’s sense of importance by integrating it with his interpersonal power needs. Halsted (1988) argues that, if the research does not make this possible, the abusive man will continue to obtain that sense of significance the only way he knows: through spousal abuse.

Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

In this section, research on perpetrators of domestic violence will be explored. Stevens (1994) argued that men have been treated leniently throughout times in relation to their violence toward women.

According to Fischbach and Herbert (1997), several issues explain why most battering remains hidden from relatives, neighbors, researchers and clinicians. According to them, shame, guilt, social taboos, and fear of recrimination associated with victimization are issues behind the reasons why battering remains undisclosed by victims. Cultural points of view about its significance are another reasons they said causes battering to remain hidden.

Batterers come from a diverse socioeconomic and ethnic background, including doctors, judges, lawyers, and police officers (O’Dell, 1996). As an example of this, Glover (1998) stated that 227 domestic violence complains were filed against the Los Angeles Police Department between 1990 and 1997. Yet, Amber (1997) stated that male batterers share some characteristics. They appear to be excessively jealous, try to isolate the victim from family and friends, and tend to blame others for their shortcomings. Berlinger (1998) stated that batterers suffer from low self-esteem, but cover it with a display of arrogance.

In a study to analyze the profile of male batterers in a batterers' treatment program, several researchers concluded those male batterers had a tendency to feel inadequate and unhappy with themselves (see Hale, Duckworth, Zimostrad, & Nicholas, 1988). In addition, these researchers concluded that male batterers appear to have dependency problems with their wives and in their interpersonal relationships. Adding to this description, in a research study about the "self-perceptions" of men in batterers' treatment programs, several researchers concluded that they tend to be more nervous and impulsive than the general population. They also tend to have a more depressive mood, and tend to be hostile and dominant (see Bersani, Chen, Pendleton, & Denton, 1992).

Other researchers have tried to find what precipitates domestic violence incidents. In their research study, Sirles, Lipchik and Kowalski (1993) concluded that financial problems and alcohol abuse were significant predictors that precipitated episodes of domestic violence.

Substance abuse appears to be a significant variable in domestic violence episodes. In a study of women living in shelters, several researchers noted that more than 40% of them reported having used or abused drugs and alcohol (see Krishnan, S., Hilbert, J. C., VanLeeuwen, D., & Kolia, R., 1997). Perhaps substance abuse makes women more vulnerable to being victims of domestic violence.

Statistics by the Bureau of Justice Statistics Factbook (1998) show that more than half of the batterers convicted on charges of domestic violence had been drinking alcohol or using drugs the day of the incident. Brookoff, O'Brien, Cook, Thompson and Williams (1997) also noted that a majority of the male perpetrators of domestic violence reported having used alcohol the day of the assault. In addition, two thirds of them reported having used alcohol and cocaine the day of the assault.

However, police response to domestic violence calls appears to be lax. In a review of 1870 police reports on domestic violence, Bourg and Stock (1994) discovered that only 538 (28.8%) of cases ended in arrest. They stated that police officers had the freedom to decide what cases appeared to be defined as a domestic violence incident. As such, the writers assert police officers may have stated that an incident did not conform to their understanding of domestic violence, which may not accurately represent the incident being investigated. In accord with these statements, the Bureau of Justice Statistics Factbook (1998) shows that police officers seem to arrest only about 20% of batterers.

An interesting issue appears to consistently be found in researching the topic of domestic violence: women from all socioeconomic and age groups appear to engage in acts of domestic violence as often as men do. Historically, this appears to be a recent phenomenon. Bower (1991) argues that "the female capacity for aggression is surprisingly strong" (p. 359). For example, in a study to assess the level of domestic violence in Utah households, Rollins and Oheneba-Sakyi (1990) concluded that severe

spousal violence was more prevalent from wives to husbands than from husbands to wives. In another research study involving 3132 adults from Los Angeles, California, Sorenson and Telles (1991) found that women committed more incidents of domestic violence against their partners than men. Women were more likely to report throwing things or hitting their male partners, and they reported striking first and more than once.

Other research studies have shown similar results. In agreement with this research study, Riggs, O'Leary and Breslin (1990) found in their study that more women than men reported physical aggression against their partner. This physical aggression included kicking, hitting with a fist, and throwing something against their partner, pushing, shoving, and slapping. In a study involving a national representative sample of college students (N=4707), White and Koss (1991) stated that no significant gender differences were found in the number of men and women reporting having inflicted some type of physical violence against their partner. No significant differences were found in relation to socioeconomic status or ethnicity.

However, even when research studies seem to conclude that women are as likely to become violent, they also seem to demonstrate that women are more likely to be injured in domestic violence incidents. For example, In a study of 139 couples in a mandatory domestic violence treatment program in the military, Cantos, Neidig and O'Leary (1993) found that in 84% of the couples both men and women reported engaging in physical aggression during the previous year. However, more women (63%) than men (27%) received injuries.

Researchers have tried to understand how males and females perceive aggression when the perpetrator is either male or female. In a study aimed at understanding how males and females evaluate female and male physical aggression, Arias and Johnson (1989) declared that both male and females evaluated female physical aggression less negatively when the perpetrator was the female. The researchers concluded that women might be receiving the message that their violence toward their partner is acceptable. They further added that trying to decrease male violence toward their partner might not be successful if the belief that women should return violence for violence is not addressed.

Needless to say, domestic violence remains a complicated, systemic issue. By reading journals and listening to the news it would appear that domestic violence is on the rise. However, statistics from the Bureau of Justice Statistics Factbook (1998) do not support the claim that domestic violence is on the rise. According to this research, domestic violence, lethal and non-lethal, has been decreasing for the last twenty years. African-Americans have experienced the sharpest decline in domestic violence murders. Since 1976, African-American males' lethal violence against their wives has decreased by

71%, and 51% against their girlfriends. However, a disturbing finding shown by these statistics is that single Anglo Saxon males have been killing more single Anglo Saxon female girlfriends nowadays than in 1976. Actually, this is the only category that keeps rising.

Copyright

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Males in Batterers' Treatment Programs

In this section, a description of batterers' treatment programs will be given. In addition, a description of batterers attending those programs will be offered.

In a review of batterers' treatment programs standards throughout the U.S., Austin (1997) described the general guidelines followed by most of the programs. These programs are for the most part called psychoeducational programs. According to Austin (1997), coercive control is the preferred term to describe battering by batterers' treatment programs. Power and control issues are included in most of the programs. Patriarchy, or the male dominance in society, is often cited as one of the reasons that causes or perpetuates violence against women.

Abuse is described as the exclusive responsibility of the perpetrator. Victims should never be blamed for the abuse. It is a zero-tolerance approach on blaming the victim. For batterers, work on feelings and shame, and anger management techniques are not included in most of the curriculums.

Austin (1997) contended that a degree or license to be a domestic violence facilitator is not required in about half of the U.S. states. The implied explanation is that a degree or license does not necessarily make group facilitators more effective in dealing with domestic violence intervention work. However, training in domestic violence intervention is considered important, and the suggested training time is a total of 24-80 hours.

Other researchers have also stated that the power-and-control, psychoeducational model of intervention has been implemented as the standard approach for intervention by several states and county governments (see Moore, K. J., Greenfield, W. L., Wilson, M., & Kok, A. C., 1997). According to these researchers, the psychoeducational model attempts to educate the batterer on power and control dynamics and gender egalitarianism as a way to eliminate domestic violence. Yet, they report that the psychoeducational programs have recidivism rates of 50% to 75%. These programs do not appear to be successful.

Many researchers seem to believe that the best theoretical approach to use in domestic violence intervention work is the power and control theory. Researchers seem to prefer this approach. For example, Brandl (1990), under the support of the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services,

recommended a similar approach. Brandl (1990) reviewed different theoretical approaches to domestic violence intervention, and concluded that the most effective was one quite similar to the power and control, psychoeducational model. He did this by analyzing theory and probable implications in dealing with batterers, not by gathering scientific data on the success rate of these programs.

On the other hand, Davis, Smith and Nickles (1998) found no significant cause-and-effect relationship between law enforcement intervention, such as jail sentences and batterers' treatment programs, and the reduction or elimination of domestic violence. Brandl (1990) is in agreement with this assertion. He stated that there is no conclusive evidence that batterers' treatment programs are effective at ending domestic violence. Having said this, a description of the men attending batterers' treatment programs needs to be explored.

Some researchers have tried to understand the characteristics of male batterers who complete a batterers' treatment program from those who do not. In a sample of 175 men in a batterers' treatment program, Grusznski and Carrillo (1988) concluded that those who completed the program had a higher level of education than the ones who did not complete the program. In addition, they found that those who completed the program had a higher level of employment, and reported fewer indirect threats of violence. The researchers concluded that the men who completed the program might have more commitment or motivation to finish what they had already started.

Several researchers (see Faulkner, Cogan, Nolder, & Shooter, 1991) concluded that a negative correlation existed between drug abuse and completion of a batterers' treatment program. It appears that the more they use drugs, the more likely they are to drop out of the program.

In summary, what can be inferred from this section is that most batterers' treatment programs use the power and control, psychoeducational approach in their curriculums to treat men who batter. Another finding is that those programs appear to have recidivism rates of 50%-75%. On the other hand, males who complete the batterers' treatment programs appear to have a higher level of education and employment than the ones who drop out. In addition, substance abuse appears to be lower with the males who complete the program than with the ones who drop out.

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Summary

A short synopsis of what has been covered in this literature review will be added here. In addition, strengths and weaknesses of this literature will be explored.

Historically, although domestic violence against women appears to be a common event, women were burned at the stake for killing of a husband back in early modern England. The European Christian definition of the family influenced the way in which domestic violence was perceived. Men were just “taking care” of their household.

By reviewing the three main views on violence, a unified concept on the roots of violence appears to be missing from theory and research. Some researchers raise valid points when stating that violence has a biological predisposition. After all, research seems to conclude that brain chemistry has a significant effect on behavior. However, defining violence in a mono dimensional way might be misleading. Many researchers have concluded that social circumstances may be what causes violence. They have argued that social factors, such as the witnessing of violence in childhood supposedly predisposes people to become violent later in life.

However, power and control is by far the most commonly named explanation for men battering women. Many researchers have argued that men use power and control tactics in a deliberate effort to oppress women. Victims’ advocates, batterers’ treatment programs, and law enforcement strongly support the power and control point of view. However, this approach appears to suffer from a rigid definition on domestic violence. Everything appears to be seen as a power and control issue. In contrast with this point of view, some researchers have argued that men batter women because of a sense of powerlessness, not because of a sense of power. This point of view directly clashes with the power and control theory, and no middle ground seems to exist currently between the two. These two theories seem to describe domestic violence in terms of “the controlling man” vs. “the weak man.”

In terms of batterers’ treatment programs, the guidelines followed by most them are based on a psychoeducational model. Under this approach, patriarchy and coercive control are described as the main reasons that perpetuate acts of domestic violence against women. Again, this point of view appears to have significant flaws, because it does not allow room for discussion. People supporting this point of

view appear to describe domestic violence as a black and white issue, without a middle ground for revision.

Discourse and research on domestic violence appears to be a misunderstood issue. It is about some people who argue that men try to deliberately oppress women, and of others who question statistics and discourse on domestic violence. A collaborative effort to the understanding and treatment of male batterers is needed. Disagreeing on issues is fine, but as long as a true commitment to research and the application of new intervention techniques are taken.

This exploration on domestic violence literature has ended. It is the hope of this author to have covered the main points of view. Now the focus will shift to this research study. The terrain was prepared to keep the reader focused and interested in this research study. Findings, whether in agreement with current intervention work, or in disagreement, will hopefully provide new tools to approach domestic violence research in a more defined manner.

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Part IV
RESEARCH QUESTION

How do male batterers describe their pattern of domestic violence?

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Part V

METHODOLOGY

Approach and Rationale

I selected a qualitative method for several reasons. In a qualitative study, the researcher becomes another tool of the research process. The researcher deliberately interacts with the subjects being studied. In a qualitative study, the researcher becomes an essential part to the development of the study. The language used in the study evolves from the research findings. Categories or themes emerge from the information provided by the subjects being studied. The qualitative researcher is then concerned with the context of the interaction. The context includes the setting, the subjects being studied, the type of information they provide, and the presence and interaction of the researcher.

Coming back to this research study, this study went beyond just asking yes/no-type questions. This research study was aimed at allowing the male batterer to express freely his opinion through a semi-structured interview. I believe it was necessary to allow the male batterer to describe his point of view freely, because this created a trusting environment, in which the male batterer provided significant information about his view of the issue. This information was then used to develop this research study.

Domestic violence appears to be a complicated, systemic issue, and research appears to confirm it. If indeed this is the case, and if behaviors such as anger and aggression are universal, then this research study may well serve as a bridge to building a systemic understanding for the typical male batterer. If nothing else, a contribution to the study on domestic violence research may be what this study may offer. This may be a small contribution; however, small contributions may add to the past contributions on domestic violence, and they may help change the landscape on domestic violence

research. If we are failing 50%-75% of the times in treating batterers, as research seems to suggest, then, through these small contributions, we may one day effectively treat males who batter, and help their partners who are battered.

Participants

The participating subjects in this study were six Spanish-speaking Mexican-American males, ages 24 to 37 with a mean age of 30.5. Requirements to participate in this study were the following: participating subjects had to be court-referred and currently attending a batterers' treatment program. At the time of the interview, four of the participating subjects were married, and two of them were single.

Subject S1 is 33 years old, and has been in the program for seven months. Subject S1 is married and presently living with his wife. They have two children, a boy age ten, and a girl age seven. This is the first time subject S1 has been attending a batterers' treatment program.

Subject S2 is 37 years old. He is single and presently living with his girlfriend. They have three male children, ages 13, 11, and 6. He has been attending the program for eighth months. This is his first time being court-referred to a batterers' treatment program.

Subject S3 is 28 years old. He is married but he is not living with his wife due to a restraining order issued by the court. They have an 18-month-old daughter and a 4-year-old son. He had just started the batterers' treatment program two weeks before the interview.

Subject S4 is 30 years old. He has been attending the program for ten months. He is married but decided to separate from his wife. They are not living together now. They have two male children, ages six and nine. The children live with their mother. This is the second time subject S4 is in a batterers' treatment program. The first time he was court-referred to a batterers' treatment program was in 1991.

Subject S5 is 31 years old. He is single and has a court-issued restraining order against him. Subject S5 has been attending the program for eleven months. He has two children, a 2½-year-old girl, and an 11-year-old stepson. This is the first time he has been sent to a batterers' treatment program.

Subject S6 is 24 years old. He has been attending the program for eleven months. He is presently married but does not live with his wife. They have no children. His wife left to Mexico a year ago, and

they have not seen each other since then. This is the first time he has been sent to a batterers' treatment program.

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Instruments

The principal investigator wrote the flier. The flier was written in accordance with university guidelines. A copy of the flier can be found in appendix A.

The principal investigator wrote the informed consent form. It was written according to university and federal institutional review board (IRB) committee guidelines. A copy of the informed consent can be found in appendix B.

The principal investigator wrote the interview questions. They were written from the information gathered through the literature review. A copy of the interview questions can be found in appendix C.

The interviews were transcribed by a paid transcriber. A copy of the interview transcripts can be found in appendix D.

An audiocassette was used for taping the interviews. The audiotapes were erased after being transcribed.

Data Collection

The participating subjects were recruited from a court-approved batterers' treatment program in Santa Ana, California. A flier was given to four counselors to ask males attending their group sessions whether they wanted to participate. After the subjects agreed to be interviewed, counselors were asked to allow them to leave the group session for one hour, to which counselors agreed.

The interview followed a predetermined sequence. The questions were pre-written and asked on the same sequence to every participant. However, participating subjects were encouraged to answer any way they wanted. This was a critical point in the interview process, because different participants gave different answers to the same questions asked. The final result was a compilation of different opinions, even though the questions asked were the same. This provided additional and unexpected information, which helped in the development of this research study.

The reader may wonder about what happens in a typical group session. To make the reader familiar with group session in a batterers' treatment program, a short description of group dynamics will be described here. This will be done in an effort to familiarize the reader with domestic violence intervention work. By illustrating a typical group session, it may make it easier for the reader to comprehend the scope of this research study.

They sit in a round circle. They have become familiar with the room, the chairs, with one another, and with the group facilitator. They have become familiar with the surroundings. After all, they are usually in group session every week for fifty-two weeks. They have to be there every week. On the fifth absence they get discharged from the program, and face the possibility of spending time in jail, before being sent to the program again.

Their personalities vary, as well as their interaction in group. Some of them are very talkative, and some of them very quiet and withdrawn. Some prefer to be asked as many questions as possible, and some of them try to avoid interacting as much as they can. For fifty-two weeks the group becomes a part of them, and they become a part of the group. They are the perpetrators of domestic violence. Each one has a story to tell. Each one appears to have a need to be heard.

In the following pages, the reader will examine some intimate details of the lives of six court-referred men attending a batterers' treatment program. The narrative of their story will be a window to their way of thinking, feeling, and behaving. The responses provided by them will be presented as research findings.

Data Analysis

This researcher looked for common themes in the transcripts. After reviewing the six transcripts, several themes started to emerge. Communication issues were a consistent theme found in the transcripts. In addition, trust and respect appeared to be two common themes throughout the interviews.

How the male batterer evaluated the source of conflict was another theme noticed by reading the transcripts, as well as how the batterer perceived the victim's behavior. Power and control issues seemed to be present, as well as a felt sense of powerlessness. All of these themes were then arranged in the "results" section, where each one of them was separately analyzed.

Seven themes were explored in this research study: communication, trust, respect, batterer's evaluation of source of conflict, batterer's evaluation of the victim's behavior, power-and-control dynamics, and sense of powerlessness. The first five themes were chosen after reviewing the six interviews. These themes appeared consistently in all six interviews. The last two themes were chosen in an effort to see whether power-and-control dynamics were the main reason why battering occurs, or whether a felt sense of powerlessness by the perpetrator is the main reason why domestic violence occurs.

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Reliability

The methods used to develop this research study were standardized, from the printing of identical flyers to interviewing the subjects at the same site to the assigning of a specific number to each subject. The interview questions were standardized to insure reliability. Reviewing the literature on domestic violence developed them. In addition, each subject was asked the same questions on the same order. This was done in an effort to make this study easy to replicate. Another reason for taking this approach was to develop similar categories or themes emerging from the interview questions.

The themes that emerged from the interviews could be tested in other research studies to confirm their authenticity. Having said this, a qualitative study is unique due to the singular contexts in which subjects and researchers develop the interaction. However, the compilation of common themes may serve as a way to replicate this study in another setting.

However, the small sample population being studied limits this research study. Although standardized techniques were used to insure the reliability of this study, the size of the sample population makes it difficult for this research study to have reliability.

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Validity

The purpose of this study was to answer the question, “How do male batterers describe their pattern of domestic violence?” Each question asked to the subjects validated the main research question. Each question resulted in an answer which directly or indirectly answered the main question. This was accuracy of information, which matched the reality lived by the subjects being studied.

The participating subjects were court-referred to the batterers’ treatment program. This information carried significant validity to the development of this research study. The subjects were convicted batterers who were forced to attend the program. Some of them had spent time in jail, and still carried strong memories about the battering incident. They were at different stages in the batterers’ treatment program, and had different opinions about their present problems.

The themes that emerged from the interviews were carefully categorized to insure their worthiness. Parts of the interviews were then grouped together to compare how they matched with the themes being explored. Therefore, the “results” section has well-defined categories in which themes were properly analyzed and developed.

However, information and themes developed from just six interviews cannot be used to establish a valid pattern or trend. In addition, it is not possible at this point to take the themes back to the subjects to validate the choices made. It would be optimal for subjects to review the findings and themes as they emerged. However, this is not possible due to confidentiality issues and subjects’ availability.

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Part VI

RESULTS

Parts of the interviews will be used to develop this section. In addition, parts of the interviews will be used to describe more than one theme. An effort will be made to pinpoint and extract the main themes from the interviews.

Communication

Communication issues were a common theme in all six interviews. Subjects who identified good communication dynamics in their relationship with their partners appeared to have fewer conflicts than the ones who described consistent poor communication with their partners. Subject S1 seemed to have good communication with his wife. Subject S1 said this about communication:

We have a lot of communication. Whatever I want to do, I ask her whether we need to do it, and whether it may come out all right. And she tells me, “Well, this is going to be fine, this is going to not be fine.” Then we reach a compromise. I mean, if she is right I side with her, if I am right, she sides with me (See appendix D, p. 55).

Subject S3 also seemed to have good communication with his wife. He said, “I love her a lot, and I love my kids a lot, and I want the best for my children for them to succeed” (See appendix D, p.61). He not only seemed to want a good relationship with his wife, but also wanted to be a good role model for his children.

On the other hand, Subject S4 described what appeared to be consistently poor communication with his wife. He said:

We never had good communication. More than anything, there was not enough trust and communication, or at least to communicate with each other about some project that we would

have to do. She was always in denial. I do not know whether it was because of the difference in age. It was a small difference in age, because she was six years older than I was, and she always tried to control me. But I think that we all have a purpose in this country, and a lot of the times, when there is no communication, not a perfect communication, problems exist (See Appendix D, p. 64).

A common theme that emerged from these interviews was what appeared to be the batterers' need to be heard by their partners. This seemed to be a core issue for all of the subjects. When asked the question, "How do you feel when she does not listen to you?" subject S1 said: "Well, I feel bad, but nevertheless I continue talking to her, and then she pays attention to me" (See Appendix D, p. 56).

Subject (S2) echoed the same feelings. He said:

Well, I feel bad, and I tell her, "Are you listening what I am telling you?" And she tells me that she is. When I feel that she is not listening, I tell her, "Are you listening, yes or no?" I want to make sure she is listening to me (See Appendix D, p. 58).

Interestingly, subject S3 also said that he felt bad about not being listened to. He said, "Well, I feel bad sometimes, that is the truth" (See Appendix D, p. 61).

Subject S4 went even more far to say:

That was the problem, that sometimes I wanted to tell her something, and she would avoid me, sometimes because she was taking care of the children, or because she was doing house chores. She would finish late at night, and I would come back home tired, maybe with some problem. I wanted to talk to her about it, but we never had that type of communication. And I would feel frustrated; I would feel as if I was alone, living... Although I had my family, I would feel alone (See Appendix D, p. 66).

Subject (S5) when asked how he felt when his partner did not listen to him said, "Well, sad, and I have to surrender to the situation for her to allow me some time to talk to her afterwards" (See appendix D, p. 69). Subject S6 echoed similar feelings. He said, "When she does not listen to me, I feel bad. I feel stressed. I imagine that she is judging me, that I do not exist, because if she does not listen, it is as if I was all alone there" (See appendix D, p. 72).

Subject S1, S2, and S3 surprisingly said the first four words exactly on the same order. All three said, "Well, I feel bad." Subject S6 said a phrase, and then he said, "I feel bad..."

It appears that all the subjects had a significant need to be heard. It almost seemed that their self-esteem was linked to being heard by their intimate partners.

Trust

Another important theme found in these interviews was the concept of trust in the relationship. Subject S1 talked about trust in the relationship. However, he appeared to be the one distrusting his wife. When asked about the first incident of violence in the relationship, he had this to say about it:

It happened in 88. It happened because of jealousy, jealousy from me to her. And she told me that it was not true. Then I told her that I was going to go out, that I did not want to be with her at that moment. She then told me not to leave, to stay there with her. It was then when it happened... that which happened (See appendix D, p.56).

Subject S3 described jealousy as a trust-related difficulty that existed between his wife and him. However, unlike subject S1, the jealousy was aimed at subject S1. His wife appeared to be jealous due to a supposedly affair subject S3 had with another woman. He said about it: "She, she... I mean, we have always lived in harmony. But sometimes friction arises because of a supposedly affair I had with another woman. Well, I mean, it was her jealousy, and that was the problem we had" (See appendix D, p.61).

Subject S4 had this to say about trust:

Especially when sometimes there is no trust, then it is when the problems begin. Because when I stay out sometimes... Here people usually work too much, sometimes because of overtime or for any other reason, such as a traffic jam or an accident. And you may go home a little late. Sometimes they get upset with you; they do not trust you (See Appendix D, p. 64).

Subject S5 echoed similar feelings. He said: "...Sometimes when I come back home late, and being asked where I had been. And if I say, 'Well, I am coming back from work,' sometimes they don't believe you" (See appendix D, p. 69). He later added: "Well, for example, sometimes I come late for work. Sometimes I come back from work at about eleven, and sometimes, 'Where have you been?' 'Well, I am coming from work,' and sometimes they do not believe you" (See appendix D, p. 70).

Respect

Respect in the relationship was a theme that emerged from these transcripts. It seemed to be an important matter for the subjects. Subject S1 seemed to feel that his partner respected him. He said, "Well, as far as I know, she respects me as a husband, because I see that she loves me, she appreciates me" (See Appendix D, p. 55). Illustrating a similar opinion, subject S2 had this to say about it, "She respects me as a boyfriend" (See appendix D, p.58).

Subjects S3 described what could be interpreted as a sign of respect toward his wife. When asked, “Would you hit her again if she does again the things that made you become violent before?” he replied:

No, Never. I would never hit my wife again. I hope we live together in harmony again, and with my kids, because my kids need me, and she tells me that she needs me a lot, too. They are suffering a lot because of the problem that we have right now. And I pray to God to help me, to help us (See appendix D, p.63).

However, subject S4 did not seem to feel respected by his wife. Subject S4 said:

The problem was that I went on vacation to my country, and being on vacation, she cheated on me with another man. Then when I came back I tried to leave her, but I could not do it because I always made the mistake to lean on my mother. And my mother told me not be one of those men who abandon their children (See Appendix D, p. 64).

In another part of the interview, subject S4 added:

I would tell her to please not to be talking about my intimate life, or not to get involved in gossiping, I mean, with other people. And she would never listen to me. She always wanted to be there, making me look bad, I mean, criticizing and gossiping. And I did not like that (See Appendix D, p. 66).

Subject S4 seemed to have significant issues about how his partner treated him as far as respect was concerned. He added:

She does not respect me. When I have asked her to please respect me, that I am not living with her anymore, the only thing she does is to laugh at me. And she tells me that I am a piece of garbage, a dog, and that for that reason she cannot respect me, that I do not deserve her respect. And I think that as a person who I am, I mean, like any other person, we all have the right to be respected. Even more when I ask her in a good way. I have also made mistakes, but it is not a reason for not being respected (See Appendix D, p. 67).

Subject S6 seemed to mirror some of the feelings explored by subject S4. He said, “She would tell me that I had come from a garbage disposal, and that I was a poor individual” (See Appendix D, p. 71).

Batterer’s evaluation of victim’s behavior

Another significant theme found in the interview transcripts was how the subjects perceived their partner’s behavior. Subject S1 did not appear to see his wife as an aggressive person. When asked, “Do

you consider your wife a violent person? He replied, “Hmmm... No, not violent. Sometimes she gets like in a bad mood. I believe it is because she gets tired at work, and things of that sort, but it does not mean that she is violent” (See Appendix D, p. 56).

Subject S2 and subject S3 blamed the children for their partners’ alleged aggressive behavior. Subject S2 said, “The children make her mad, and she gets in a bad mood. It is then when sometimes I feel stress, because when I speak, it seems like she does not answer to me. It seems that she is upset with the kids. She also talks back to me in an angry way, sometimes” (See Appendix D, p. 58). He added, “When she is angry, she also throws things, and that is violence, too” (See Appendix D, p. 59).

In agreement with other subjects, Subject S3 blamed the children for his girlfriend’s supposed aggressive behavior. He said:

Well, I used to consider her a little violent, but because she was also stressed. Do you see? She was always taking care of my children, and sometimes she would tell me that she could not sleep. And sometimes she would feel frustrated because I would not pay attention to her by not paying attention to my children. I was always irritable because of the problems with my job (See Appendix D, p. 62).

Subject S4 had a different concept of his wife’s supposed aggressive behavior. He said, “She is very impulsive, very histrionic” (See Appendix D, p. 64). He added later:

As I said, I do consider her very violent, because she insults me. Many times she has tried to hit me. She has actually hit me. I have several scars due to what she has done to me. I have a scar in my... intimate part. They put eight stitches. I have a cut in my upper lip due to her hitting me with a frying pan. She broke one of my teeth. I did not want to call the police because, I do not know. Being a man it feels awful calling the police. But I think for the future... I even called one time before this problem happened. I called the police because she had kicked me out of my apartment. I had left all of my personal belongings there, and she kicked me out. The only thing I wanted to do was to see my children. The police came, but the only thing they told me was to get out of there, that if I had a place to go, to leave and forget about the incident. They told me to go to court to get a, how do you call it? A permit to be able to see them (See Appendix D, p. 67).

Subject S5, on the other hand, did not appear to consider his girlfriend a violent person. When asked if he considered his girlfriend a violent person, he replied: “Well no. It could be that, how can I tell you, well, like sometimes a little difficult to talk to, but not violent. I do not think so” (See appendix D, p.70).

Subject S6 appeared to minimize his wife's supposed aggressive behavior. When asked whether he considered his wife a violent person, he said:

Well, I will not describe her like that, but verbally aggressive, yes. She is indeed. And very rude. In other words very, very rough. She does things in a hurry. If you ask her for something, she throws it at you. But that is the way she is, her way of doing things. She is not too violent" (See Appendix D, p. 74).

Subject S1 did not consider his wife a violent person. Subject S2, on the other hand, considered his wife to be a violent person, but blamed their children for her behavior. Subject S3 also considered his wife to be a violent person, and blamed their children as well.

Subject S4 clearly stated that his wife was a violent person, and gave examples of it. Subject S5, on the other hand, did not consider his wife to be a violent person. Subject S6 seemed to imply that his wife displayed aggressive behaviors. However, he was quick to minimize such behaviors, explaining that was the way his wife was.

It is important to mention that only subject S6 considered himself to be a violent person. The other subjects either did not consider themselves violent (subjects S1, S3, and S5), or considered themselves to be just somehow violent (subjects S2 and S4).

Batterer's awareness of source of conflict

A significant theme that appeared consistently throughout the interviews was a seeming awareness of source of conflict by the batterer. This section overlaps with the other subheadings. This section encompasses sensitive areas for the batterer, including trust and respect. Subject S1 said about it, "Before it was the jealousy that I used to have toward her. But now everything has changed, thank God" (See Appendix D, p. 55). He later added:

It happened because of jealousy, jealousy from me to her. And she told me that it was not true. Then I told her that I was going to go out, that I did not want to be with her at that moment. She then told me not to leave, to stay there with her. I was then when it happened... that which happened (See Appendix D, p. 56).

Subject S2 also seemed to be aware of the source of conflict. He said, "I believe that is the problem. I get angry, I leave, and slam the door and come back late" (See Appendix D, p. 59).

Subject S3 had this to say about the possible source of conflict: "...We have always lived in harmony. But sometimes friction arises because of a supposedly affair I had with another woman. Well,

I mean, it was her jealousy, and that was the problem we had. But I love her a lot” (See Appendix D, p. 61).

Subject S3 also added:

I had been working graveyard for eleven years and the stress... I was feeling too stressed, I could not sleep well, and that was the reason that I would get ill-tempered. And I would feel sometimes that my wife sometimes was talking to me a little rough, and I could not stand it. But thank God everything is changing (See Appendix D, p. 62).

When asked whether he felt stress or pressure in the relationship, subject S4 talked about what appeared to be a source of conflict. He said:

I have felt a lot of pressure when we argue because she tells me that I have to come back to her against my will. She has told me many times that if I don't come back, it means that I am trying to take the children away from her. I have never tried to take the children away from her, because I am aware that the children are better off living with their mom, because moms can sometimes spend a little more time with them” (See Appendix D, p. 65).

He added:

My parents separated at twelve. I mean, I was twelve years old when they were separated. I am the oldest in the family. We are four kids in the family. We stayed with my father, and I noticed that we needed Mom a lot. Unfortunately, she had to leave because of problems between the two of them, and that is the reason why I have tried not to take the children away from her. But sometimes she threatens me by saying that if I try to take them away for her, or if I do not come back with her, she may try to run away. Sometimes she has told me that she is going to kill them, that she wants to kill herself and kill them (See Appendix D, p. 65).

Subject S5 also seemed to be aware of a probable source of conflict. When asked, “At what point do you feel stress or pressure in the relationship- if any?” he replied: “Well, for example, sometimes when I come back home late, and being asked where I had been. And if I say, ‘Well, I am coming back from work,’ sometimes they don't believe you” (See appendix D, p. 69).

Subject S6 described a possible source of conflict. He said: “There were many problems at home due to money issues. And, well, I tried to work a lot to try to solve that problem” (See Appendix D, p.

71). Subject S6 later disclosed what appeared to be another source of conflict. He said:

When I feel stress is when she accuses me of being poor, and tells me that she has money. She puts a lot of pressure on me to make more money, and it is when I feel tension. I tell her, “Look, you met me like this, being poor. I do not know why we have the problems now. I told you

when I met you that I was poor. I was working and supporting myself with my salary. I was not going to be able to give you the expensive things you were getting at home.” And this is when I feel stress, when she rubs it on my face that I am poor (See Appendix D, p. 71).

Subject S6 continued talking later in the interview about a probable source of conflict. When asked, “What kind of things in general makes you angry?” he said:

That sometimes she does not have clean clothes for me, or that sometimes she does not want to cook a meal for me. Because of this, we used to have more conflicts, because she wanted to go shopping. I would come back from work, and I would find nothing to eat. I wanted to go to the restroom, and I would not find clean towels, or anything else. And I would tell her, “Well, what happened? Go out, go out but leave ready the things I need after coming home from work. The only thing I am asking you is to leave me a note about where you are going, about who you went with. Otherwise, when I get home, ‘Where would my wife be?’ Well, who knows? I do not find any note. I do not find anything. This way at least I say, ‘She went to such and such place. I may go there to meet her.’ Or say, ‘Pick me up at such place,’ and I will happily go. But the way you act, I come home, I don’t find you, I look everywhere. I do not find anyone. What am I going to think? Well, who knows who she may be with. Where can she be? However, if you leave a note, ‘I went to such place,’ well, I would feel better knowing where you are” (See Appendix D, p. 73).

Subject S6 talks about source of conflict:

By she getting mad, and trying to make me mad by doing certain things. She leaves the bedroom dirty, which is something that makes me mad. She goes out without telling me where she is going, which is something that really makes me mad. She goes out with her friends, does not leave me a note or something like that, and leaves without cooking something for me to eat, without taking care of the house. And she knows that makes me mad. And when she comes back, she comes back laughing, like saying, “Why not. Don’t women have the power here?” And I tell her, “It is not about women having the power. It is about being understanding, and seeing things as they truly are” (See Appendix D, p. 74).

Subject S1 described jealousy as a probable source of conflict. Subject S2 described his way of approaching an argument between his girlfriend and him as a probable source of conflict. Subject S3 described jealousy as a likely source of conflict. Subject S4 described manipulation and lack of respect by his wife as probable sources of conflict. Subject S6 described money problems and lack of respect as likely sources of conflict.

Power and Control Dynamics

Power and control dynamics seemed to appear in the interviews. It was important to explore this theme, because this was one of the primary areas being explored in this study. However, power and control dynamics were not found in all the interviews.

After reviewing the conversation with subject S1, it is not clear whether definite power and control themes were present. He mentioned something that could be construed as a probable power and control occurrence. When he was asked, “Do you believe your wife does not obey the rules? He said, “Sometimes I think she does not obey them. But it is not that she does not obey them, it is that sometimes people are tired, in a bad mood, and things like that” (See appendix D, p.56).

Subject S2 talked about power and control issues in the relationship. When asked what kind of things made him angry, he disclosed what seemed to be a possible power-and-control theme. He said, “Well, usually when I get mad is when things that are supposed to be ready are not ready. For example, if I go to eat at home during my break, and if the food is not ready, that bothers me” (See appendix D, p. 58). He added, “For example, if I tell her, ‘You know what, I want you to do this thing, so when I come back, it is ready.’ If she does not do it, that makes me angry” (See appendix D, p. 59).

Subject S3 did not appear to describe power and control themes. Subject S4 described what appeared to be a power and control theme. He said: “If we base our assumptions on religion or according to the Bible, the Bible says that men are the heads of the household and that women are to be submissive” (See appendix D, p.66). Subject S5, on the other hand, mentioned some probable power and control occurrences. He said, “Well, for example, violence like that, to tell her something and for her not to obey” (See appendix D, p. 70).

Subject (S6) described what could be construed as a power and control dynamic in the relationship. When asked what kind of things made him angry, he said:

That sometimes she does not have clean clothes for me, or that sometimes she does not want to cook a meal for me. Because of this, we used to have more conflicts, because she wanted to go shopping. I would come back from work, and I would find nothing to eat. I wanted to go to the restroom, and I would not find clean towels, or anything else. And I would tell her, “Well, what happened? Go out, go out but leave ready the things I need after coming home from work. The only thing I am asking you is to leave me a note about where you are going, about who you went with (See appendix D, p. 73).

Subject S6 talked about possible power and control factors in the relationship. When asked the question about what kind of things made him angry, he replied:

She leaves the bedroom dirty, which is something that makes me mad. She goes out without telling me where she is going, which is something that really makes me mad. She goes out with her friends, does not leave me a note or something like that, and leaves without cooking something for me to eat, without taking care of the house. And she knows that makes me mad (See appendix D, p. 74).

It is important to mention that the victims also appeared to display power-and-control behaviors in their interaction with the batterers. Subject S2 described what appeared to be a power and control behavior displayed by his girlfriend. He said:

Well, it was about 10:30pm, and they were in bed, and I wanted to watch a Door's video on TV. And she told me, "Do you know that here is very late? Turn it off." I told her, "You know what? I am not going to turn it off, why should I turn it off if it is not that late. It is just 10:30pm." Then, at that point the argument started. But I never touched her. I, well, she insulted me and I insulted her, too. She called the police, and the police came. They spoke to me, they asked me for my ID and things of that sort. I asked the police whether they had seen any bruises on her, and the police told me, "No." What has happened, then? Well, a police officer was talking to her, and another one was talking to me. And I told the police officer, "I want to see the video and she came out and told me to turn it off and things like that." They were not going to take me or do anything to me, but the police officers asked her, "Do you want us to arrest him?" And she said, "Yes, arrest him." That is the reason why they took me and I got in this problem (See appendix D, p. 59).

Subject S4, on the other hand, had this to say about a probable power and control behavior exhibited by his wife. He said:

She tells me that she loves me, and that she wants to make me stay with her against my will. And she had tried to manipulate me. But to tell you the truth, I have realized that being manipulated because of a kid sometimes does not... You can love, you can love your children, but there is also a limit (See Appendix D, p. 64).

In another example of possible power and control behaviors displayed by the victim, subject S6 talked about his wife's behavior. He was explaining that his wife leaves sometimes without telling him where she goes. Subject S6 then added:

And when she comes back, she comes back laughing, like saying, “Why not. Don’t women have the power here?” And I tell her, “It is not about women having the power. It is about being understanding, and seeing things as they truly are” (See appendix D, p. 74).

What can be inferred from this section is that both the batterer and the victim seem to display power and control dynamics in the relationship.

Sense of Powerlessness

Another significant theme found by reading the transcripts and listening to the subjects was a felt sense of powerlessness. This was the other main theme explored through the literature review.

Subject S4 seemed to convey a sense of powerlessness through this response:

She tells me that she loves me, and that she wants to make me stay with her against my will. And she had tried to manipulate me. But to tell you the truth, I have realized that being manipulated because of a kid sometimes does not... You can love, you can love your children, but there is also a limit (See appendix D, p. 64).

Subject S4 later said:

I have felt a lot of pressure when we argue because she tells me that I have to come back to her against my will. She has told many times me that if I do not come back, it means that I am trying to take the children away from her. I have never tried to take the children away from her, because I am aware that the children are better off living with their mom, because moms can sometimes spend a little more time with them. I, sadly, because of work, can’t but... Also because of an experience I went through when I was a kid. My parents separated at twelve. I mean, I was twelve years old when they were separated. I am the oldest in the family. We are four kids in the family. We stayed with my father, and I noticed that we needed Mom a lot. Unfortunately, she had to leave because of problems between the two of them, and that is the reason why I have tried not to take the children away from her. But sometimes she threatens me by saying that if I try to take them away for her, or if I do not come back with her, she may try to run away. Sometimes she has told me that she is going to kill them, that she wants to kill herself and kill them (See appendix D, p.65).

Subject S4, through a description of how his wife would not listen to him, appeared to be conveying a sense of powerlessness. He said:

That was the problem, that sometimes I wanted to tell her something, and she would avoid me, sometimes because she was taking care of the children, or because she was doing house chores.

She would finish late at night, and I would come back home tired, maybe with some problem. I wanted to talk to her about it, but we never had that type of communication. And I would feel frustrated; I would feel as if I was alone, living... Although I had my family, I would feel alone (See appendix D, p. 66).

Subject S4 then said something that really conveyed a sense of powerlessness. He said:

I have tried to solve the problems as much as I can. But unfortunately, as I have told you, it has been sometimes a fight that I think what I am trying to accomplish is out of my reach. I do not know. Perhaps God can help me to solve this problem (See appendix D, p. 66).

Subject S6, on the other hand, talked about a probable sense of powerlessness. He said:

When I feel stress is when she accuses me of being poor, and tells me that she has money. She puts a lot of pressure on me to make more money, and it is when I feel tension. I tell her, "Look, you met me like this, being poor. I do not know why we have the problems now. I told you when I met you that I was poor. I was working and supporting myself with my salary. I was not going to be able to give you the expensive things you were getting at home." And this is when I feel stress, when she rubs it on my face that I am poor (See appendix D, p.71).

Subject S6 then added:

The only source of support I had was hers, but instead of support, it was only problems. Sometimes she was not in the mood to listen to me, and neither did I. We were clashing all the time. Problems, a small one or a big one, but they were problems (See appendix D, p. 72).

Subject S6 talked about drinking to forget his problems at home. Again, a probable sense of powerlessness seemed to emerge from his discourse. He said, "And then, when I used to come home drunk because we had problems, I used to do it to supposedly minimize the problems. No, it does not work, drinking to minimize the problems. No, it does not solve anything" (See appendix D, p. 72).

Each subject appeared to have a central theme in the dialogue. For subject S2, it appears that him coming back home late made his girlfriend argumentative. For subject S3, it appears that stress was the primary theme in the violence. For subject S4, the primary theme appeared to be the supposed manipulation by his wife through his children. For subject S5, a primary theme appeared to be the coming home late and his girlfriend questioning him about it. For subject S6, the primary theme seemed to be the lack of money and his wife's attitude about it.

It is of significant importance to notice that on each primary theme, the victims seemed to know about it, and appeared to know exactly how to evoke angry feelings on the batterers, by forcing the

argument on them. Here concludes the analysis of the interviews. Now the focus will shift to the “discussion” section.

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Part VII

DISCUSSION

This research study found no significant evidence supporting the power and control point of view held by the majority of advocates against domestic violence. The power and control theory did not hold to this qualitative study. However, the powerlessness theory alone was not supported by this research findings, either. There were more and different variables.

Domestic violence appears to originate from a combination of different variables in which consistent poor communication between couples seems to be a significant predictor. However, lack of trust and respect in the relationship seems to contribute to domestic violence, as well.

Power and control dynamics appear to contribute sometimes to domestic violence. However, after a careful analysis of those supposed power and control issues, it is not clear whether it is just a gender-learned behavior, in which males expect certain responses from their female partners, or a valid power-and-control dynamic. For example, it appears that male batterers expect to have a clean house, meals cooked for them, and a partner who tells them their whereabouts. There is not enough information to infer that these variables are due to power and control dynamics, or to gender-learned behaviors and expectations. It may just be a separation of household responsibilities, in which the female partner may expect her male partner to contribute with the financial obligations at home, and the male partner may expect his female partner to take care of the household as reciprocity. For example, subject S6 said during the interview that his wife would put pressure on him to make more money. He then said that he would get angry because his wife would not take proper care of the household responsibilities, such as cooking meals and cleaning the house.

Some batterers appeared to describe a felt sense of powerlessness in the relationship. For example, some of them spoke about feeling alone in the relationship, and not knowing what to do to move out of their present conflict. Another example of powerlessness might be the batterer's description of not being heard by their partners. They were clear as to how they were feeling about it. A sense of powerlessness appeared to be an overall feeling in their description of the situation. However, it is not clear whether it is a true sense of powerlessness, or just frustration.

Therefore, although both power-and-control issues and a felt sense of powerlessness seem to be two variables in domestic violence, they by themselves do not appear to be the only cause of it. Other variables appear to have a significant effect on it.

Again, there was not a single cause that by itself fostered domestic violence. It was a combination of them, in to which both the male and the female intimates seemed to contribute. This research study concluded that, for the most part, the victim is also an active participant in the conflict.

Other research studies have concluded that the victim, when returning aggression for aggression, is only trying to defend herself. However, this study for the most part did not find information supporting that claim.

Most of the subjects stated that they had become less violent due to their attending the batterers' treatment program. This was a significant finding because, after reviewing the literature on the success rate of psychoeducational-based programs, I tended to believe that for the most part those programs were unsuccessful in changing batterers' violent behavior (the batterers' treatment program where I interviewed the six subjects happened to use the power-and-control, psychoeducational model of intervention).

I started this research study with the preconceived idea that such mode of intervention would prove to be a failure. However, the way the six subjects described their present behavior did not match my preconceived expectations. Subject S1 appeared to be a calm, mild-mannered man. His way of interacting was polite, yet assertive. He truly seemed to have benefited by attending that program. Subject S2 seemed to be very outgoing. He had a friendly attitude and a healthy sense of humor.

Subject S3 appeared to be remorseful about the battering incident. However, he had just started attending group sessions two weeks before the interview. Therefore, his behavior could not be attributed to being in that batterers' treatment program. Subject S4, on the other hand, started talking continuously from the moment he arrived to the moment he left the room. Actually, his behavior was somehow annoying. His need to state his point of view appeared to be dysfunctional. His discourse was a one-

sided conversation in which I felt somehow manipulated by his non-stop talking and his overt “poor me” attitude.

Subject S4 stated that he had learned a lot in the batterers’ treatment program, and that he would not hit his wife again if faced with similar circumstances which lead to the battering incident. However, my “gut feelings” were telling me that, if given the opportunity to batter his wife again, he would do it without thinking twice about the consequences, and then would try to hide his responsibility under the “poor me” attitude.

Subject S5, on the other hand, appeared to be genuine with his description of his past and present behavior and feelings. He appeared to have an honest self-reflection about his behavior and his way of trying to change it. Subject S6, unlike subject S5, seemed to have a lot of resentment toward his wife. He stated that he would not hit his wife again. However, as in the case of subject S4, I had the feeling that, if being confronted by his wife again, he would lose his temper and would hit her again. His voice and his non-verbal behavior seemed to convey too much resentment and anger. I do not believe he would be able to stop himself if feeling aggressed by his wife again. Subject S6 and subject S4 do not live with their wives anymore and they do not have girlfriends, either. This may be the reason why they have not had another episode of domestic violence. Overall, it seems that the batterers interviewed were helped by the batterers’ treatment program. They appeared to have stopped their pattern of domestic violence. Perhaps it was just a temporary event, but at least a step on the right direction.

A common model for understanding domestic violence is seeing it in terms of a “cycle of violence” (See Berlinger, 1998). According to this model, the batterer gets angry, explodes, batters, and then feels sorry and promises never to do it again. The implied explanation is that angry feelings go to a ground-zero state as the batterer reaches the “feeling sorry” state. However, after analyzing the data from the six interviews with male batterers, I believe that domestic violence does not necessarily follows such cycle, but rather a different process. Domestic violence seems to be a rather complicated process in which the inclusion of several variables affects its outcome.

After a battering incident, the feeling does not appear to go to ground zero, but rather continues to grow underneath the interaction. A couple engaging in domestic violence appears to carry some type of resentment or frustration toward their partner. An act of domestic violence does not always seem to diminish such feelings.

Even when overt violence is not present, the ill feelings do not appear to diminish. They appear to remain constant, and an act of domestic violence appears to be just the release of extra pressure in that

dysfunctional interaction. However, a lot of ill feelings appear to still remain bottled up in the process, waiting for an opportunity to come out, with obvious results: domestic violence.

I developed a new model with the information learned from the research study. The new model born from this study is based on the batterers' perceived causes of domestic violence. Through this study, I found common themes that formed my model. I discovered that using the batterer's way of perceiving domestic violence, some conditions needed to be present in order for domestic violence to occur. Again, this model was based on the batterer's perceived causes of domestic violence, which means that my model is biased by design. Batterers' reasoning about the causes of domestic violence may be flawed. However, I believe that in order to help batterers, we need to know what their point of view is about the issue.

Approaching the study of domestic violence this way, we may be able to develop new therapeutic interventions, based on the batterers' point of view, but built to help batterers change their way of feeling, thinking, and behaving. After having said this, here I will describe the supposed conditions needed to have an incident of domestic violence:

- 1) **Consistently poor communication between intimates.**
- 2) **Victim awareness of potential for conflict.**
- 3) **Victim's inadvertent or deliberate increase of probability of conflict.**
- 4) **Batterer's response to conflict situation.**
- 5) **Victim aggravation of situation through response.**
- 6) **Perpetrator's sense of being aggressed.**
- 7) **Domestic Violence.**

According to this newly developed model, consistent poor communication between intimates in a heterosexual relationship is a significant predictor of domestic violence. Consistently poor communication appears to cause opportunity for conflict. However, this by itself may not necessarily cause domestic violence.

According to this view, victim's awareness of potential for conflict is the second variable, which may lead to a domestic violence incident. As previously stated in the "results" section, the victims appeared to be aware of the potential for conflict. However, the victim's awareness of a potential for conflict may not by itself cause domestic violence. According to this model, the victim's inadvertent or deliberate increase of probability of conflict becomes a significant predictor for domestic violence. For example, subject S4 described how his wife would make threats of violence, increasing this way the

probability of conflict. On the other hand, subject S2 described what appeared to be a deliberate effort by his girlfriend to escalate the conflict. He stated that she would not let him watch a video on TV.

When these three variables are present (consistently poor communication between intimates, victim awareness of potential for conflict, and victim's inadvertent or deliberate increase of probability of conflict), they appear to lock a potential domestic violence conflict in the eyes of a batterer. However, these three variables by themselves may not cause domestic violence.

The perpetrator's response to conflict situation becomes an essential variable for domestic violence to occur. At this point, the potential perpetrator has the choice to take a time-out, or to retaliate in non-violent ways, such as leaving and not coming back for hours or days, to go out drinking, or to start a verbal argument, without becoming abusive at this point (for example, subject S2 stated that when he gets angry he leaves for hours).

According to this newly developed model, the victim's response, which may aggravate the situation, becomes at this point a significant predictor for domestic violence to occur. The victim has the choice to react in different ways, such as not responding to aggressions and stopping the escalation of the conflict, yelling at the potential perpetrator, blocking the door so the potential perpetrator cannot leave, or becoming physically abusive at this point. For example, subject S1 said after the interview was over that one of the things that makes him angry is to want to leave and for his wife to block his exit. He said that was the reason he hit his wife when he was sent to the batterers' treatment program. It seems that his wife knew about what made him angry, and through her actions appeared to have escalated the violent act.

The way the potential male batterer feels about how the potential victim is behaving toward him becomes the critical point that may lead to a domestic violence incident. If the potential perpetrator feels aggressed, he may choose to react by becoming verbally abusive, without engaging in physical violence. However, if he overreacts, he will most likely commit a violent act of domestic violence.

On the surface, this model appears to be linear, in which one event leads to another. However, emotions are complex, and describing a model in this fashion makes it easier to be understood. If a batterer feels aggressed at any point during the interaction, he may commit an act of domestic violence without going through the phases just described. Looking at domestic violence through this model, it is important to notice that both the victim and the perpetrator appear to be actively involved in the development of a domestic violence incident. Again, while reading this model, keep in mind that it was developed according to how batterers perceive the causes of domestic violence to be. Therefore, this model may not accurately describe the development of a domestic violence episode. However, after

analyzing the six interviews, it appears that the probability of both intimate partners being actively involved in the development of domestic violence is significant.

This newly developed model attempts to change dysfunctional and potentially violent interaction between intimates in a unique way. This is done through an understanding of the male batterer's perspective, and by trying to assess at what stage the male batterer may be in his development of domestic violence dynamics. For example, if he is usually at the "consistently poor communication" stage, proper communication intervention work may need to be explored with him. Perhaps at this stage, angry feelings have not developed to the point of the batterer becoming violent again. However, if the batterer is at the "sense of being aggressed" stage, then a more direct intervention technique needs to be implemented, such as confronting the subject about his potentially violent behavior.

This approach offers the possibility of being very confronting and direct with some batterers, and understanding and emphatic with some others. This appears to be the main weakness with the psychoeducational approach, because intervention work under that model seems to be mainly a "power and control" approach. Under the psychoeducational approach, the understanding of who displays the power and control behaviors sometimes becomes blurred. Sometimes it is not clear whether the power and control behaviors are being displayed by the batterer or by the group facilitator.

In spite of that, the psychoeducational model of intervention seemed to have been effective with the subjects being interviewed. The subjects being interviewed appeared to have decreased their violent behavior while attending the batterers' treatment program. Whether they were truthful about it is a matter of another research study. The subjects stated that they had become less violent as a result of going to the program. Armed with new information learned from this study, it would be inappropriate to suggest that the psychoeducational approach is ineffective or that needs to be discarded. However, the newly developed model needs to be tested in a batterers' treatment program to see whether it offers a better alternative than the power-and-control, psychoeducational model.

Each one of the six supposed conditions that lead to domestic violence need to be tested separately to see whether each one of them contributes to the development of a domestic violence incident. In addition, if after duplicating these research findings the six conditions pass the reliability and validity test, then a new way of intervention for batterers may need to be developed in accord with each of the possible six conditions. For example, if it is true that prior to engaging in an act of domestic violence the batterer feels aggressed, then appropriate interventions need to be developed here. Again, the reader needs to keep on perspective that applying the batterers' perceived understanding of the domestic violence incidents helped in the development of this model. This may not

accurately portray a domestic violence incident. Nevertheless, approaching counseling interventions using the batterer's perspective may help develop effective programs to deal with the batterer, and to help the battered.

Several questions still remained unanswered. For example, it is not clear whether alcohol abuse originates a domestic violence incident, or whether domestic violence originates alcohol abuse. Even one of the subjects mentioned that he would drink to forget the problems at home. Jealousy was another theme that appeared in the interviews. It will be interesting to see whether the batterer has ungrounded suspicious feelings, or whether the potential victim inadvertently or deliberately engages in behavior that could be misunderstood by the potential batterer as disrespectful.

Another question that remained unanswered is why the potential victim seems to physically block the exit of the potential batterer when he wants to leave after an argument. It will be interesting to explore the rationale for such behavior.

As the reader can see, there are still several questions that remained unanswered. Engaging in the exploration of those themes will be an interesting objective to accomplish.

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Part VIII

CONCLUSION

Domestic violence is an even more complex issue that this author previously thought. Poor communication dynamics in the relationship were a significant predictor of domestic violence. However, poor communication between intimates did not appear to be the only cause for domestic violence to occur. Other variables, such as the perpetrator's feelings of being aggressed, were significant predictors of domestic violence. The issues of trust and respect in the relationship contributed to a probable cause to domestic violence, as well.

This research study is based on batterers' descriptions of their pattern of violence, and their way of seeing their violence. Understanding how they feel, think, and behave may give us a framework to work with. Understanding their way of thinking may help us develop more accurate and effective treatment plans.

A new model for understanding how domestic violence originates and develops was introduced by using the batterers' description of their violence. This newly develop model offers the possibility of helping the male batterer change his behavior by understanding his point of view, and by developing appropriate intervention techniques. However, this new model needs to be tested to see whether it stands on reliable grounds.

Here concludes this journey through a taxing yet rewarding research study. The information that this researcher gained from this study went beyond intellectual knowledge. This new information allowed this researcher to learn and understand even more human interaction in a unique way. This researcher started this study with a bold attitude, and ended it with a humble smile. Yes, there is still much to be learned. There is a long road to walk in the counseling profession; however, this researcher is excited about it and ready to face the new challenges.

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Part IX

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Part X

APPENDIX A

Flyer

ATTENTION:

ARE YOU ATTENDING GROUP SESSIONS?

IF YES, CAN YOU HELP ME?

ARE YOU BETWEEN 20 AND 50 YEARS OLD?

**DO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT THE WAY YOU PERCEIVE THE
PROBLEMS BETWEEN YOUR WIFE/GIRLFRIEND AND YOU – IN
YOUR OWN WORDS?**

**I AM CONDUCTING A STUDY ABOUT THE PROBLEMS THAT EXIST
WITHIN COUPLES. YOUR POINT OF VIEW WILL BE WELCOMED.**

IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE, PLEASE CALL ME AT:

JULIO REYNA

DIVERSIFIED COUNSELING SERVICES

SANTA ANA OFFICE: (714)677-1196

CELL PHONE: (714)267-9647

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Part XI

APPENDIX B

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Statement of Informed Consent

Thank you for participating in this study on “How male batterers describe their pattern of domestic violence.” This research is being conducted by Julio-Carlos L. Reyna, a graduate student in the California State University, Fullerton’s Masters of Science in Counseling program, and is being supervised by Kathy O’Byrne, Ph.D. This study is designed to gather information on the probability of relationship conflict within heterosexual couples. The purpose of this study is to understand a possible sense of powerlessness experienced by males involved in domestic violence. This new information may help in future research to provide better services to males in domestic violence diversion programs.

The information you provide will remain strictly confidential. Your participation consists of the completion of an audiotaped interview. The audiotape, transcripts, and a copy of the informed consent form will be stored in a locked filing cabinet to which only the interviewer has access. The audiotape will be transcribed and then promptly erased. The transcripts will be kept for one year and then shredded. Excerpts from the interview may be used in the study. Any identifying information will be altered to protect your identity.

The interview will take approximately forty-five minutes. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to skip any questions, or to withdraw your participation at any time during the study without negative consequences to you or to the outcome of the study. Please answer as many questions as you can, honestly and accurately.

If you have any questions, or experience any stress or discomfort in the future regarding your participation, please feel free to contact Julio-Carlos L. Reyna or Kathy O’Byrne, Ph.D. at (714)278-2874, or the Coordinator of Regulatory Compliance at (714)278-7640. If you wish to know the results of this study, they will be available after January 1, 1999. There will be a time at the end of the interview for any questions you may have regarding this form, and that you agree to participate in this study. Thank you!

Signature

Date

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PART XII

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

Do you believe your wife/girlfriend supports you with the things you want to do?

Do you want to spend the rest of your life with her?

Do you feel sometimes that she does not respect you as a husband/boyfriend- if yes, why?

What do you think should be your rights and responsibilities as a husband/boyfriend?

At what point do you feel stress or pressure in the relationship- if any?

Who do you think should set the rules in the relationship?

How do you feel when she does not listen to you?

Do you believe your wife/girlfriend does not obey the rules?

Are you willing to work things out?

Do you think her friends or relatives made her change her attitude toward you?

What kind of things in general makes you angry?

How would you describe a violent person?

Do you consider yourself a violent person?

Do you consider your wife/girlfriend a violent person?

What kind of things does your wife/girlfriend do to provoke your violence?

When the first incident of violence occurred?

How do you feel when you become violent?

Do you believe you had the right to batter your wife/girlfriend?

Would you hit her again if she does again the things that made you become violent before?

Do you think the only way she understands her mistakes is by hitting her?

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Part XIII

APPENDIX D

Interview Transcripts

Interview with Subject 1

PI: Do you believe your wife supports you with the things you want to do?

S1: In some ways, yes. Everything is... I mean... communication. Me with her... I mean, we have a lot of communication. Whatever I want to do, I ask her whether we need to do it, and whether it may come out all right. And she tells me, "Well, this is going to be fine, this is going to not be fine." Then we reach a compromise. I mean, if she is right I side with her, if I am right, she sides with me.

PI: Do you want to spend the rest of your life with her?

S1: Yes totally, because right now we get along well.

PI: Do you feel sometimes that she does not respect you as a husband - if yes, why?

S1: Well, as far as I know she respects me as a husband, because I see that she loves me, she appreciates me.

PI: What do you think should be your rights and responsibilities as a husband?

S1: Giving her love, affection, for her to feel happy.

PI: At what point do you feel stress or pressure in the relationship- if any?

S1: Before it was the jealousy that I used to have toward her. But now everything has changed, thank God.

PI: Who do you think should set the rules in the relationship?

S1: Both. Both because we have to set the rules together. I mean, we both have to communicate. I need to be able to communicate with her, and she needs to communicate with me, to reach an agreement.

PI: How do you feel when she does not listen to you?

S1: Well, I feel bad, but nevertheless I continue talking to her, and then she pays attention to me. I am... We are happy like this.

PI: Do you believe your wife does not obey the rules?

S1: Sometimes I think she does not obey them. But it is not that she does not obey them, it is that sometimes people are tired, in a bad mood, and things like that. But then people start reasoning about those things, and a compromise is reached.

PI: Are you willing to work things out?

S1: Absolutely yes.

PI: Do you think her friends or relatives made her change her attitude toward you?

S1: No, I would say no, because whatever people want to do, they do it, without other people getting involved.

PI: What kind of things in general makes you angry?

S1: Before it was the jealousy, but right now, well... I do not get mad anymore. I get along very well with my wife, with my children.

PI: How would you describe a violent person?

S1: Well, a violent person can be someone who yells at other people, threatening them, hitting them.

PI: Do you consider yourself a violent person?

S1: Before yes, but not now. Since I was thrown in this program, I have changed a lot.

PI: Do you consider your wife a violent person?

S1: Hmm... No, not violent. Sometimes she gets like in a bad mood. I believe it is because she gets tired at work, and things of that sort, but it does not mean that she is violent.

PI: What kind of things does your wife do to provoke your violence?

S1: Like throwing things, throwing clothes, throwing... I mean, towels and things like that.

PI: When the first incident of violence occurred?

S1: It happened in 88. It happened because of jealousy, jealousy from me to her. And she told me that it was not true. Then I told her that I was going to go out, that I did not want to be with her at that moment. She then told me not to leave, to stay there with her. It was then when it happened... that which happened.

PI: How do you feel when you become violent?

S1: When I become violent I feel like being humiliated at the same time, because a violent person in no good for anything. A violent person is only good to destroy another person.

PI: Do you believe you had the right to batter your wife?

S1: No. Not at all.

PI: Would you hit her again if she does again the things that made you become violent before?

S1: Not now. Right now, if she does the things that she did before, I would talk to her. I have learned a lot her at school, in the class. I would speak to her about how things are supposed to be done, and I would tell her to listen to me, to let me talk, and for her to listen to me. And then she would talk to me and I would listen to her, and then we would reach a compromise.

PI: Do you think the only way she understands her mistakes is by hitting her?

S1: No, it is a lie that they understand by being battered, because people understand better by giving them advice rather than beating them up. By beating up women, they become more aggressive and we also become more aggressive. On the other hand, if I give her advice and she gives me advice, things are a lot more different. It is better for the two of us, and also better for the family.

Interview with Subject 2

PI: Do you believe your girlfriend supports you with the things you want to do?

S2: Yes, I think so, many times. Most of the times.

PI: Do you want to spend the rest of your life with her?

S2: It is possible.

PI: Do you feel sometimes that she does not respect you as a boyfriend- if yes, why?

S2: No, she respects me as a boyfriend.

PI: What do you think should be your rights and responsibilities as a boyfriend?

S2: Well, to respect her as well, not to be disrespectful and not to look for trouble to be able to have a peaceful relationship.

PI: At what point do you feel stress or pressure in the relationship- if any?

S2: Sometimes, because of the children. The children make her mad, and she gets in a bad mood. It is then when sometimes I feel stress, because when I speak, it seems like she does not answer to me. It seems that she is upset with the kids. She also talks back to me in an angry way, sometimes.

PI: Who do you think should set the rules in the relationship?

S2: I think both, both of us. I believe about sharing between the two of us.

PI: How do you feel when she does not listen to you?

S2: Well, I feel bad, and I tell her, "Are you listening what I am telling you?" And she tells me that she is. When I feel that she is not listening, I tell her, "Are you listening, yes or no?" I want to make sure she is listening to me.

PI: Do you believe your girlfriend does not obey the rules?

S2: No, she obeys them.

PI: Are you willing to work things out?

S2: Yes, I am willing. I usually try to make the first step to solve the problems.

PI: Do you think her friends or relatives made her change her attitude toward you?

S2: Not at all.

PI: What kind of things in general makes you angry?

S2: Well, usually when I get mad is when things that are supposed to be ready are not ready. For example, if I go to eat at home during my break, and if the food is not ready, that bothers me.

PI: How would you describe a violent person?

S2: Being a violent person is to insult, to hit, to be aggressive about anything.

PI: Do you consider yourself a violent person?

S2: A little. Sometimes I consider myself violent, because I get mad and, well, I slam the door when I leave because I am angry. I mean, I close it hard, and that is being violent as well. But, about hitting I don't hit. I have never assaulted my girlfriend, because she is my girlfriend and we live together.

PI: Do you consider your girlfriend a violent person?

S2: Yes, indeed. Yes because she also behaves sometimes the same way I do. When she is angry, she also throws things, and that is violence, too.

PI: What kind of things does your girlfriend do to provoke your violence?

S2: Well, sometimes like ignoring, ignoring me, or not doing things that she should do. For example, if I tell her, "You know what, I want you to do this thing, so when I come back, it is ready." If she does not do it, that makes me angry. that's it.

PI: When the first incident of violence occurred?

S2: The first incident of violence for which I am here, or another one? Well, that happened about six months ago, It happened at night. Do I have to talk about what happened? The reason why it happened was because I had been drinking that night and I came back home late. Well, it was about 10:30pm, and they were in bed, and I wanted to watch a Door's video on TV. And she told me, "Do you know that here is very late? Turn it off." I told her, "You know what? I am not going to turn it off, why should I turn it off if it is not that late. It is just 10:30pm." Then, at that point the argument started. But I never touched her. I, well, she insulted me and I insulted her, too. She called the police, and the police came. They spoke to me, they asked me for my ID and things of that sort. I asked the police whether they had seen any bruises on her, and the police told me, "No." What has happened, then? Well, a police officer was talking to her, and another one was talking to me. And I told the police officer, "I want to see the video and she came out and told me to turn it off and things like that." They were not going to take me or do anything to me, but the police officers asked her, "Do you want us to arrest him?" And she said, "Yes, arrest him." That is the reason why they took me and I got in this problem. Do you understand? But I did not touch her. It was only verbal aggression.

PI: How do you feel when you become violent?

S2: Well, I feel angry, the truth, a lot of anger. And sometimes, well, I do stupid things, too, like for example, leaving and coming back late. I know that coming back late is going to make the problem even worst. And well, here we have learned to take time-outs, and I take my timeouts

and I leave, but I believe I take them for too long. I should not take them for 5 hours. Depending at what time the incident occurred. But I believe that is the problem. I get angry, I leave, and slam the door and come back late.

PI: Do you believe you had the right to batter your girlfriend?

S2: No, of course not. No, I do not have any rights to hit her, because I am not her dad. But, anyway, I believe that nobody has the right to hit anyone. No couples have the right to hit their partner. Not at all.

PI: Would you hit her again if she does again the things that made you become violent before?

S2: Well, here I am going to say something. You say, "Would you hit her again?" I have never hit her. O.K., If she would do again the things that make me angry, I would not hit her. I would get mad and, yes, I would tell her things, and I would leave home, and I think I would slam the door again. And I would come back late, when everybody was already in bed to avoid escalating the conflict. But I would not hit her. Not me.

PI: Do you think the only way she understands her mistakes is by hitting her?

S2: No, of course not. Not at all. I have not done it, I say it again. But if I would do it, it would be worst, because that will not be the way to admit one's mistakes or to solve a problem. That would not work. Do you understand? The problem would be worst, and I might end up in jail because of that, if I hit her. I don't believe that is the right solution, hitting her.

Interview with Subject 3

PI: Do you believe your wife supports you with the things you want to do?

S3: Yes. She is willing to support me for the sake of our children, and to live in harmony as a family.

PI: Do you want to spend the rest of your life with her?

S3: Yes, Because I love her a lot, and I love my kids a lot, and I want the best for my children for them to succeed.

PI: Do you feel sometimes that she does not respect you as a husband - if yes, why?

S3: She, she... I mean, we have always lived in harmony. But sometimes friction arises because of a supposedly affair I had with another woman. Well, I mean, it was her jealousy, and that was the problem we had. But I love her a lot. I do not want my children to have a bad example. I want my children to succeed, to have a future.

PI: What do you think should be your rights and responsibilities as a husband?

S3: Well, my rights is about living in harmony with my wife, and to work hard so my children will not be deprived of anything, and to respect my wife.

PI: At what point do you feel stress or pressure in the relationship- if any?

S3: Well, right now I do not feel tension. I feel O.K. I do not have problems about anything right now. It is only the problems that I have right now about court matters.

PI: Who do you think should set the rules in the relationship?

S3: Well, we both have the right to set the rules, I mean, to agree about the things that we have to do.

PI: How do you feel when she does not listen to you?

S3: Well, I feel bad sometimes, that is the truth. But sometimes I explain to her what we need to do to get along.

PI: Do you believe your wife does not obey the rules?

S3: Well, I think that she understands them, but sometimes the children... I mean, there are times when she gets frustrated because of the kids. The children keep growing up, and the children need... I mean, there are times when the children do not obey their parents, because they want to go to one place or another, and things of that sort. It is then when their mother gets mad.

PI: Are you willing to work things out?

S3: Yes. Hopefully God will help me solve the problems and give me the strength to solve the problems, because I love my family a lot.

PI: Do you think her friends or relatives made her change her attitude toward you?

S3: Well, sometimes we think it is because of our friends, but whatever we talk, we are going to keep it to ourselves. We are not going to care about what our friends say.

PI: What kind of things in general makes you angry?

S3: Well, as with anything, we sometimes wake up like this, for anything we get mad. But we are going to communicate better to avoid those problems, to avoid problems in the marriage.

PI: How would you describe a violent person?

S3: Well, I would describe a violent person as... Well, they need to change their ways about being violent, so they may have a better life. It is about thinking better to avoid those problems.

PI: Do you consider yourself a violent person?

S3: Well, I used to consider myself a violent person because of the job that I used to have. I had been working graveyard for eleven years and the stress... I was feeling too stressed, I could not sleep well, and that was the reason that I would get ill-tempered. And I would feel sometimes that my wife sometimes was talking to me a little rough, and I could not stand it. But thank God everything is changing.

PI: Do you consider your wife a violent person?

S3: Well, I used to consider her a little violent, but because she was also stressed. Do you see? She was always taking care of my children, and sometimes she would tell me that she could not sleep. And sometimes she would feel frustrated because I would not pay attention to her by not paying attention to my children. I was always irritable because of the problems with my job.

PI: What kind of things does your wife do to provoke your violence?

S3: Well, there are times when my wife... I mean, she does things that... The children, according to her, bother her and then, there are times when... I love my children a lot. I always talk nice to them, and tell them how they should behave. And there are times when she gets mad. There were times when she wanted me to hit them, and I did not like that. I speak with her a lot to avoid hitting the children, and to live in harmony.

PI: When the first incident of violence occurred?

S3: It happened in '88, I believe. It was an alcohol-related problem. I am going to try to avoid those little problems to live in harmony with my family, and to avoid those problems.

PI: How do you feel when you become violent?

S3: Well, when I used to be violent, I would feel violent, and then, when I would see my wife crying, I would regret it and I would feel bad. I hope God... I want to change my life now.

PI: Do you believe you had the right to batter your wife?

S3: Well, nobody, nobody has the right to hit their wife. Sometimes all the marriages have problems, but here in this country we do not have the right to hit either our children or our wife.

We have to speak first, before an accident happens. We both need to talk to each other, and need to understand each other and not fight to be able to live in harmony.

PI: Would you hit her again if she does again the things that made you become violent before?

S3: No, Never. I would never hit my wife again. I hope we live together in harmony again, and with my kids, because my kids need me, and she tells me that she needs me a lot, too. They are suffering a lot because of the problem that we have right now. And I pray to God to help me, to help us.

PI: Do you think the only way she understands her mistakes is by hitting her?

S3: Well, my wife has always told me that supposedly since I was a kid I have had an issue with physical violence. But I tell her that is not the case. I tell her that I blame a lot the job that I used to have, working for eleven years night shifts. I blame my work a lot about my bad humor. I feel sorry about what happened with my wife, and I hope God, I pray a lot to God that it won't happen again, that I will never put a hand on her.

Interview with Subject 4

PI: Do you believe your wife supports you with the things you want to do?

S4: Well, that was the reason for the accusation, because we were always in disagreement. We never had good communication. More than anything, there was not enough trust and communication, or at least to communicate with each other about some project that we would have to do. She was always in denial. I do not know whether it was because of the difference in age. It was a small difference in age, because she was six years older than I was, and she always tried to control me. But I think that we all have a purpose in this country, and a lot of the times, when there is no communication, not a perfect communication, problems exist. Especially when sometimes there is no trust, then it is when the problems begin. Because when I stay out sometimes... Here people usually work too much, sometimes because of overtime or for any other reason, such as a traffic jam or an accident. And you may go home a little late. Sometimes they get upset with you, they do not trust you; Sometimes you may want to buy something, a house, a car. Sometimes they do not agree with you. I think that we did not have enough, I mean, she would never approve my plans.

PI: Do you want to spend the rest of your life with her?

S4: I made the decision to leave a year ago, because of the same thing, because of what I just said. One of the reasons for this decision was our personalities. They were too different. She is very impulsive, very histrionic. And, well, sometimes I also did not know how to control myself. And, thanks to this program, I have been learning how to control my way of behaving, and I have been learning how not to answer back to aggressions. What I have learned is that it is better to keep my mouth shut.

PI: Do you feel sometimes that she does not respect you as a husband - if yes, why?

S4: Like I said, It was eight years ago, I have a nine year old boy, and a 6 year old. In '89 I had a problem similar to the one I am experiencing right now, about... a program like this one, seven years ago. They sent me to treatment. I mean, arrested on domestic violence charges. The problem was that I went on vacation to my country, and being on vacation, she cheated on me with another man. Then when I came back I tried to leave her, but I could not do it because I always made the mistake to lean on my mother. And my mother told me not to be one of those men who abandon their children. Sadly, three years after we had that argument, I hit her for the first time, and she sent me to the first batterer's treatment program. I attended for nine months, and I think that no... She tells me that she loves me, and that she wants to make me stay with her

against my will. And she had tried to manipulate me. But to tell you the truth, I have realized that being manipulated because of a kid sometimes does not... You can love, you can love your children, but there is also a limit. And I believe that if the respect is lost, from either the woman or the man, then there is no purpose for staying together, unless both partners make a significant change. However, sometimes you need to see...

PI: What do you think should be your rights and responsibilities as a husband?

S4: I have tried to understand her, be always a responsible person by providing things needed at home. I have tried to save money, to give my family whatever I am able to give them, to my children. Although I am estranged from her, I have never forgotten my family. Sadly, they gave me that at the office of child support, but we talked about it, and we withdrew it. I think I am the type of person who likes to be responsible, and I work for them. Even though I am separated, I never forget. I try to interact more with them, to help them when they need me, to go out or spend quality time with my children. Sadly, I have not being able to do so with her, because as I have told you, I am separated. But I spend time with my children.

PI: At what point do you feel stress or pressure in the relationship- if any?

S4: I have felt a lot of pressure when we argue because she tells me that I have to come back to her against my will. She has told me many times that if I do not come back, it means that I am trying to take the children away from her. I have never tried to take the children away from her, because I am aware that the children are better off living with their mom, because moms can sometimes spend a little more time with them. I, sadly, because of work, can't but... Also because of an experience I went through when I was a kid. My parents separated at twelve. I mean, I was twelve years old when they were separated. I am the oldest in the family. We are four kids in the family. We stayed with my father, and I noticed that we needed Mom a lot. Unfortunately, she had to leave because of problems between the two of them, and that is the reason why I have tried not to take the children away from her. But sometimes she threatens me by saying that if I try to take them away for her, or if I do not come back with her, she may try to run away. Sometimes she has told me that she is going to kill them, that she wants to kill herself and kill them. To tell you the truth, I spoke to the person in charge of this place about six months ago about this problem, but I do not know why he did not pay attention. He has my phone number and he never called me, we have never talked about this.

PI: Who do you think should set the rules in the relationship?

S4: I think, according to what I have learned in the program, it is a 50-50. The woman has the rights, and men have rights as well. If we base our assumptions on religion or according to the Bible, the Bible says that men are the heads of the household and that women are to be submissive. However, in this country, we forget many times about things of that sort, and we try to be controlling. Nowadays men want to control, and the woman will not let him. She fights and demands her rights. But I think that men and women alike have the same rights.

PI: How do you feel when she does not listen to you?

S4: That was the problem, that sometimes I wanted to tell her something, and she would avoid me, sometimes because she was taking care of the children, or because she was doing house chores. She would finish late at night, and I would come back home tired, maybe with some problem. I wanted to talk to her about it, but we never had that type of communication. And I would feel frustrated, I would feel as if I was alone, living... Although I had my family, I would feel alone.

PI: Do you believe your wife does not obey the rules?

S4: That was often the problem we had, that we never... I would talk to her about something. For example, I would tell her to please not to be talking about my intimate life, or not to get involved in gossiping, I mean, with other people. And she would never listen to me. She always wanted to be there, making me look bad, I mean, criticizing and gossiping. And I did not like that.

PI: Are you willing to work things out?

S4: I have tried to solve the problems as much as I can. But unfortunately, as I have told you, it has been sometimes a fight that I think what I am trying to accomplish is out of my reach. I do not know. Perhaps God can help me to solve this problem.

PI: Do you think her friends or relatives made her change her attitude toward you?

S4: Unfortunately, the friends we had in those times, when we had those conflicts, made me look bad, and made her look bad, as well. And that had a lot to do with our problems. I would tell her to move away from those friends, to try not to listen to them to avoid problems. And it did not happen that way. We always had conflicts due to that, to hearsay.

PI: What kind of things in general makes you angry?

S4: One of the things that makes me angry is punctuality. I mean, I like punctuality. If she tells me that the children will be ready by 7am... That was the problem I had when I was arrested, because I had, I mean, I have to leave to work by 7am. I start at 8am. When I came back that day, the kid was not ready to go to school. The kid had overslept. Then I started arguing, and unfortunately I slapped her, and she called the police. Punctuality is what makes me mad.

PI: How would you describe a violent person?

S4: Well, I have a mirror, because to tell you the truth, I do not consider myself a saint, neither I have a passive personality, because I have not been able to control myself, yet. But I believe a violent person is the one who loses self-control, insults, says bad words without thinking about it, becomes offensive. Sometimes aggression is not reached, because we try to avoid it. But a violent person is that person who does not know how to control himself, and is easily identified through his behavior.

PI: Do you consider yourself a violent person?

S4: Maybe. I mean, perhaps a year ago, two years ago. I have tried to change my violent behavior as much as I can. Sadly, sometimes there are times in life when we cannot think clearly. It seems that we become stubborn, as much as we want to calm down. I think that from a scale of 100%, if I would rate my level of violence, I would say that right now I am about 35% violent from when I started this program.

PI: Do you consider your wife a violent person?

S4: As I said, I do consider her very violent, because she insults me. Many times she has tried to hit me. She has actually hit me. I have several scars due to what she has done to me. I have a scar in my... intimate part. They put eight stitches. I have a cut in my upper lip due to her hitting me with a frying pan. She broke one of my teeth. I did not want to call the police because, I do not know. Being a man it feels awful calling the police. But I think in the future... I even called one time before this problem happened. I called the police because she had kicked me out of my apartment. I had left all of my personal belongings there, and she kicked me out. The only thing I wanted to do was to see my children. The police came, but the only thing they told me was to get out of there, that if I had a place to go, to leave and forget about the incident. They told me to go to court to get a, how do you call it? A permit to be able to see them.

PI: What kind of things does your wife do to provoke your violence?

S4: To insult me, to treat me very mean. She does not respect me. When I have asked her to please respect me, that I am not living with her anymore, the only thing she does is to laugh at me. And she tells me that I am a piece of garbage, a dog, and that for that reason she cannot respect me, that I do not deserve her respect. And I think that as a person who I am, I mean, like any other person, we all have the right to be respected. Even more when I ask her in a good way. I have also made mistakes, but it is not a reason for not being respected.

PI: When the first incident of violence occurred?

S4: That I remember, the first incident of violence occurred when we had a week living together. I remember that I had given a friend a ride to Los Angeles, because he had asked me to please help him. I did not think much about it, because I had been living with her for just a week. What was my surprise that when I came back home, she was enraged, and slapped me on the face. What I did was to leave and go out with some friends, and I came back late at night. About twenty days later, because I had been drinking, I responded in kind. I mean, I got even. I hit her, too. Then the problems started. It was in 1988.

PI: How do you feel when you become violent?

S4: I feel like my breathing becomes agitated. My heart beats faster, and my face becomes red. I become nervous. Those are the symptoms when I become violent.

PI: Do you believe you had the right to batter your wife?

S4: Not at all. I believe that I have understood, thanks to this program, that I have no right to hit her, not even to insult her. But, sadly, as I have told you, sometimes the couple starts arguing. I fell in love, and sometimes I cannot...

PI: Would you hit her again if she does again the things that made you become violent before?

S4: I do not believe so, because I have put myself to the test about four times during the program. What I have done is to breath deeply, and not to answer back, to pretend I do not listen, or to ignore her, to try to have a barrier between the two of us, even when we may be a foot apart from each other. I have tried to overcome it, and to control myself, because it is hard, but it is possible.

PI: Do you think the only way she understands her mistakes is by hitting her?

S4: Well, she is a person who does not like to be told anything, even worst to be battered. I know that it is not right to hit her, but the aggressions that I have done to her do not merit her... I have seen other cases in which they are battered badly, and the only thing they do is to start crying, and they never call the police. In this case I only slapped her once, and pushed her to let me out, and I still begged her not to call the police. But she did. She does not like to be told anything or to be hit.

Interview with Subject 5

PI: Do you believe your girlfriend supports you with the things you want to do?

S5: Yes. Because lately we have been getting along better.

PI: Do you want to spend the rest of your life with her?

S5: Yes, of course, because everyday we have more communication.

PI: Do you feel sometimes that she does not respect you as a boyfriend- if yes, why?

S5: No, we get along well. And we have lately... Well, because we are more united, we totally agree on different things. We never have disagreements. Not at all.

PI: What do you think should be your rights and responsibilities as a boyfriend?

S5: Well, I believe that it is behaving well, having a good sense of humor, coming here to this school program, which has been helping me a lot. So far, I do not have any disagreements with her. I do not live with her. But occasionally we talk, and we have not had a disagreement for a whole year, since we have been in this situation.

PI: At what point do you feel stress or pressure in the relationship- if any?

S5: Well, for example, sometimes when I come back home late, and being asked where I had been. And if I say, "Well, I am coming back from work," sometimes they don't believe you.

PI: Who do you think should set the rules in the relationship?

S5: I think that both of us, because we both have the right to state our opinion on things we want to do.

PI: How do you feel when she does not listen to you?

S5: Well, sad, and I have to surrender to the situation for her to allow me some time to talk to her afterwards.

PI: Do you believe your girlfriend does not obey the rules?

S2: No, yes. Yes because lately we have been getting along well. Before, I got along with her well, all of the time I was with her.

PI: Are you willing to work things out?

S5: Yes, As soon as possible. And, well, I have to go to court on December 2, and perhaps we might have, how can I tell you, reconciliation. This is what I really want.

PI: Do you think her friends or relatives made her change her attitude toward you?

S5: Well, I think that maybe yes. It could be.

PI: What kind of things in general makes you angry?

S5: Well, for example, sometimes I come home late from work. Sometimes I come back from work at about eleven, and sometimes, “Where have you been?” “Well, I am coming from work,” and sometimes they do not believe you.

PI: How would you describe a violent person?

S5: Well, for example, ill tempered. It could be to want anything, to get upset.

PI: Do you consider yourself a violent person?

S5: I do not think so, I think it is like anything, right? But I am not a violent person, I don’t think so.

PI: Do you consider your girlfriend a violent person?

S5: Well no. It could be that, how can I tell you, well, like sometimes a little difficult to talk to, but not violent. I do not think so.

PI: What kind of things does your girlfriend do to provoke your violence?

S5: Well, for example, violence like that, to tell her something and for her not to obey.

PI: When the first incident of violence occurred?

S5: It was about a year and a half ago when we had a disagreement. But, well, it did not escalate. The day they went home to arrest me was a year ago. It was September 11 when that happened. It was a domestic argument, and since then, well, I got into this problem.

PI: How do you feel when you become violent?

S5: Well, how can I tell you, I get agitated. Even the blood pressure goes up, and perhaps the tone of voice goes up as well. And I, well... strong words, perhaps.

PI: Do you believe you had the right to batter your girlfriend?

S5: I do not think so. Never. Let’s say we are boyfriend and girlfriend. But we are not willing to do, for example, whatever we want to do. Well, no. I don’t think so.

PI: Would you hit her again if she does again the things that made you become violent before?

S5: No, I said it here in class. Several of us come here, like twenty of us. I tell them to get used to it, whether caring about her, or being a puppet, but let us not do it again.

PI: Do you think the only way she understands her mistakes is by hitting her?

S5: No, because problems are taken care of by talking about it, not with physical violence.

Interview with Subject 6

PI: Do you believe your wife supports you with the things you want to do?

S6: Yes, many times she supports me with the things I want to do. I talk to her about the things I am going to do, and she... We reach a compromise between the two of us, and decide whether it is right or wrong. She supports me. Lately she has been supporting me a lot.

PI: Do you want to spend the rest of your life with her?

S6: Look, unfortunately I am not living with her now, because this is the issue: she used to have money, she has money and I am poor. Moreover, I admit it; I behaved inappropriately with her. Both of us were guilty. She would tell me that I had come from a garbage disposal, and that I was a poor individual. There were many problems at home due to money issues. And, well, I tried to work a lot to try to solve that problem. And, no, she was too aggressive with me. The day came when both of us clashed, and I thank her for having sent me to this program, because I have learned a lot here. I have improved a little my way of doing things, and I thank her. At the beginning, I thought this was something bad. But no, I started to realize soon after that it was a good thing, that if she had not done it, I would continue doing the same thing, hitting her, and abusing her.

PI: Do you feel sometimes that she does not respect you as a husband - if yes, why?

S6: If I would feel that she did not respect me as her husband, it means that she would go dancing. She would go to different places. But no, the time I spent with her she respected me as a husband, because she would support me with things I wanted to do. She would always have a clean house, a clean home. She just had like everything else, her attitude. Sometimes she would be angry, and I won't understand her. Or sometimes she would be in a bad mood, and she would throw things around, and it was then when we would clash.

PI: What do you think should be your rights and responsibilities as a husband?

S6: My responsibility as a husband would be to take her out more often, to visit new places, and to enjoy things more. In addition, to get involved at home more often. To try to have a better communication with her, to talk about our problems to understand ourselves better.

PI: At what point do you feel stress or pressure in the relationship- if any?

S6: When I feel stress is when she accuses me of being poor, and tells me that she has money. She puts a lot of pressure on me to make more money, and it is when I feel tension. I tell her, "Look, you met me like this, being poor. I do not know why we have the problems now. I told you when I met you that I was poor. I was working and supporting myself with my salary. I was not

going to be able to give you the expensive things you were getting at home.” And this is when I feel stress, when she rubs it on my face that I am poor.

PI: Who do you think should set the rules in the relationship?

S6: I think that neither one of us. I think that... Pardon, we should try to communicate between the two of us to reach a compromise, because neither one of us have the right to set the rules at home, but rather the two of us together, and to try to communicate with each other “this is right and this is wrong.” If I set the rules at home my way, there would be more problems. However, if she sets the rules at home, we would keep having the same problems. We would try to, in this case, I would try to talk and communicate to her, “This is right, this is wrong,” to continue moving forwards.

PI: How do you feel when she does not listen to you?

S6: When she does not listen to me, I feel bad. I feel stressed. I imagine that she is judging me, that I do not exist, because if she does not listen, it is as if I was all alone there.

PI: Do you believe your wife does not obey the rules?

S6: Many times she does not obey them, because she is right. Because we are male chauvinists, we may think that we are right about all the rules that we set. No, we do not realize at that moment that we set the rules like that. I later realize that she has to be respected in her personal space. Not because I set my rules in the relationship, everything is OK.

PI: Are you willing to work things out?

S6: Yes, since I started attending this program. It is not because I came to this program. Well, first, it is because I came to this program, because I did not have help at home. The only source of support I had was hers, but instead of support, it was only problems. Sometimes she was not in the mood to listen to me, and neither did I. We were clashing all the time. Problems, a small one or a big one, but they were problems. After I came to this program, I realized that I was wrong 80% of the times, and she was wrong 20% of the times, because sometimes the woman is wrong, sometimes she is not mentally well. And then, when I used to come home drunk because we had problems, I used to do it to supposedly minimize the problems. No, it does not work, drinking to minimize the problems. No, it does not solve anything.

PI: Do you think her friends or relatives made her change her attitude toward you?

S6: In my case, her sister helped her a lot to change her attitude toward me, because she... Since we came to this country, I started noticing a change in her attitude. Since she started visiting her sister, I started seeing a change in her attitude little by little. And one of many times she told me

that she wanted to live according to how people live in this country. People started talking to her, and she told me that no, that it was not right how I treated her, that we were living in a promiscuous country, and that women were in charge here. Moreover, I told her, "This relationship is not about you being in charge, or me being in charge. It is about seeing things the way they are." "No, my sister tells me that I am..." "Look, I married you, not your sister. Lets' see things the way they are. Not just because your sister tells you to jump into a hole, you are going to jump. Your sister thinks differently to other people. Do not get carried away by what your sister tells you, or by what your brother tells you, or anyone else. Do what your heart tells you, whatever you think is better, and I respect your opinion. But if your sister helps you out to make a decision, I don't respect you at all."

PI: What kind of things in general makes you angry?

S6: That sometimes she does not have clean clothes for me, or that sometimes she does not want to cook a meal for me. Because of this, we used to have more conflicts, because she wanted to go shopping. I would come back from work, and I would find nothing to eat. I wanted to go to the restroom, and I would not find clean towels, or anything else. And I would tell her, "Well, what happened? Go out, go out but leave ready the things I need after coming home from work. The only thing I am asking you is to leave me a note about where you are going, about who you went with. Otherwise, when I get home, 'Where would my wife be?' Well, who knows. I do not find any note. I do not find anything. This way at least I say, 'She went to such and such place. I may go there to meet her.' Or say, 'Pick me up at such place,' and I will happily go. But the way you act, I come home, I don't find you, I look everywhere. I do not find anyone. What am I going to think? Well, who knows who she may be with. Where can she be? However, if you leave a note, 'I went to such place,' well, I would feel better knowing were you are."

PI: How would you describe a violent person?

S6: A violent person. Well, I describe myself as a person who was very violent with her, because she used to give me a lot of attention. And well, I did not try to stop myself. I would describe a violent person through the facial expressions, the way of staring, or many times in the words used.

PI: Do you consider yourself a violent person?

S6: Yes, because despite everything, I was violent because no human being should be treated the way I treated my wife, because she has feelings the same way I do. I would not like to...

Actually, I did not like to be hit by her. I believe no one likes to be battered. Yes, I am violent because I get upset easily, and I start talking rudely.

PI: Do you consider your wife a violent person?

S6: Well, I will not describe her like that, but verbally aggressive, yes. She is indeed. And very rude. In other words, very, very rough. She does things in a hurry. If you ask her for something, she throws it at you. But that is the way she is, her way of doing things. She is not too violent. I think that no one, that there are not too many people who are excessively violent. If there are, the other people must respect their space. People are easy going.

PI: What kind of things does your wife do to provoke your violence?

S6: By she getting mad, and trying to make me mad by doing certain things. She leaves the bedroom dirty, which is something that makes me mad. She goes out without telling me where she is going, which is something that really makes me mad. She goes out with her friends, does not leave me a note or something like that, and leaves without cooking something for me to eat, without taking care of the house. And she knows that makes me mad. And when she comes back, she comes back laughing, like saying, "Why not. Don't women have the power here?" And I tell her, "It is not about women having the power. It is about being understanding, and seeing things as they truly are."

PI: When the first incident of violence occurred?

S6: Unfortunately, the first incident of violence occurred just after 22 days of being married, because we went in our honeymoon, and I did not have enough money. I was going on vacation for a month, and I ran out of money. It was then when the problems occurred. She started noticing that we did not have enough things. And I told her, "I do not think money is everything in life." No, but she said that she had everything at home, including cars, and we had to come back walking. That was the first incident I had, 22 days after getting married. It happened too soon. It was a verbal argument, without physical aggression. However, after that incident, respect for each other began to fade. About two months later, we started having problems again. We were still living in Mexico, she threw a big piece of wood at me, and it hit the door. I ignored her. But when I came back home, I came back late. I came back at night, and she had left to stay at her parents' home. I did not find her at home. OK, it was no big deal. She stayed there about eight days. I never went there to bring her back home. She came back, and we talked about what she had done, saying it was wrong, and that we would try to solve our problems. We reached a compromise. Eight days later we fought again. She went back to her parents' home. Her mom

and her relatives came to talk to me. They asked why I had married her if I did not love her. And I said, "Look lady, the truth is that she sometimes starts the problems. I try to defend myself. That's all, but I have never kicked her out of the house. She left because of her own choice. But I have not kicked her out of the house, and I am not thinking about doing that, so far. I just try to talk to her. But, well, whatever she says it has to be done her way, and I don't think that is right."

PI: How do you feel when you become violent?

S6: When I became violent, I feel bad. I try to hit people for no reason just to release my anger. That was before. Now, as I have said, this program has helped me a lot. I will not say perfectly, but yes, looking back eight months ago, things were very different. Now, I try to see things differently. I may think that the world is mine, and that is not the case.

PI: Do you believe you had the right to batter your wife?

S6: As I told you a while ago, I think that any human being must be respected in order to be respected. I do not think that me or anyone else has the right to hit his wife, because if that were the case, I would not like to be physically abused.

PI: Would you hit her again if she does again the things that made you become violent before?

S6: I would not let her... I would not let her do it. The only thing I would try to do is to ask her where she was. She would try to understand that she was wrong, that she is wrong. I would let her go. I just would ask for an explanation. However, hitting her, I do not think so, because it does not take you anywhere. It is a waste of time, and a loss of respect toward her, and the source of many issues that do not take us anywhere. If she would leave in a way that would make me mad, I do not think I would get angry now. Would I try to hit her? Not anymore. She would realize later that she was wrong, that she is making an error.

PI: Do you think the only way she understands her mistakes is by hitting her?

S6: Not at all. Her only way of understanding her errors is for me to change, because a man is the main head of the household. And, if we do not change, they are not going to change either. And if they see that we are changing little by little, then they realize that they are the ones making the mistakes, because they see that we are changing. And things then change, and I think that the problems will decrease, because by being an abusive person I think it is worst. They become more aggressive, more violent, and we become more aggressive as well. And if they notice that we are changing, they follow us. Otherwise, they do not change and we do not change. The same problems continue.