Sex Role Identity and Relationship Factors as Correlates of Abusive Behavior in Lesbian Relationships

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SEX ROLE IDENTITY AND RELATIONSHIP FACTORS
AS CORRELATES OF ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR IN LESBIAN RELATIONSHIPS

By

Grace A. Telesco

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy

Fordham University
Graduate School of Social Service
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Acknowledgments

The author wishes to thank Dr. Roslyn Chernesky for her insight, guidance, and support on this dissertation. As chair of my committee, as well as my advisor, she has been a “sensei” to me and has taught me many hidden, yet valuable lessons throughout my doctoral experience. The author also wishes to thank Dr. Daniel Herman and Dr. David Koch, members of my committee, for their wisdom, expertise, suggestions, and support. The author is grateful to Dr. Elaine Congress for her unending patience and assistance in helping me to understand and navigate the doctoral program.

To Dr. George Patterson, Dr. Norma Manatu, and Dr. James O’Keefe I thank you for your words of encouragement, inspiring support, and helpful suggestions. To Sergeant Mark Moodie and Deputy Chief Demosthenes Long, I am grateful to both of you for helping me complete this dissertation.

The author would like to acknowledge Kaicho Tadashi Nakamura of the World Seido Karate Organization for his inspiring lectures and classes that have continued to keep me centered and balanced throughout this doctoral process. Both Kaicho and Dr. Chernesky have taught me the importance of “polishing”.

I am grateful to Carmen Vasquez and the New York City Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center and the lesbian community, for without their willingness to participate in this study this dissertation would not have been possible.

I am appreciative to Mrs. Joan Preston, Sergeant Suzanne Murray, and Sergeant Elizabeth Gesualdo for all their help with data collection.
I dedicate this work to my wife, Kristina, to whom I am forever grateful for her unending love, guidance, and support. To my family, I thank you for making me an "over-achiever" and loving me now for who I am.
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Abstract

The recognition of partner abuse between lesbian intimates has gained attention in the literature only within the last few decades. The current research indicates that physical and psychological abuse is occurring between lesbian partners at about the same rate as their heterosexual counterparts. The theoretical explanations for lesbian partner abuse share similarities with the heterosexual paradigm. However, significant differences in gender make-up and the patriarchal issues of power and control do not fit within the lesbian framework and the unique issues of attachment in lesbian relationships and the issue of homophobia are cause for another perspective.

This study shifts the focus from gender differences to explain abusive behavior, to another paradigm examining both the individual characteristics of the abuser as well as the particular dimensions of the relationship. This research sought to measure whether a lesbian’s sex role identity is associated with her abusive behavior toward an intimate female partner, focusing specifically on whether the dimensions of masculinity and femininity help to explain abusive behavior. Additionally, building on existing research in the field of lesbian partner abuse, this study examined to what extent the relationship factors of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance are related to abusive behavior.

There were four purposes of this study 1) to investigate to what extent partner abuse exists among lesbian intimates; 2) to examine the nature of this abusive behavior; 3) to examine whether there is an association between sex role identity and abusive behavior; and 4) to investigate the extent to which the relationship factors of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance are related to abusive behavior in lesbian relationships.
This study addresses existing gaps in the research on lesbian partner abuse by combining intra-individual, social-psychological, and socio-cultural ideologies by making use of a cross-sectional convenience sample of 105 lesbians who frequent the New York City Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center. Participants, who were self-identified lesbians currently in a relationship for at least six months, completed the Bem Sex Role Inventory Scale (BSRI), the Abusive Behavior Inventory (ABI), and a Relationship Factor Scale containing items that measure dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance in the relationship.

The results show that, when abuse is broadly defined, a sizable minority is classified as exhibiting high rates of physical and psychological abuse at some time during their current relationship, although the abuse is such that it would not cause serious physical injury to the victim. The findings also indicate that sex role identity is neither positively nor negatively correlated with abusive behavior. The findings failed to show an association between dependency and abusive behavior or power imbalance and abusive behavior. As a group, masculinity, femininity, dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance only explain 18% of the variance in overall abuse and 17 % of the variance in psychological abuse. The findings further indicate that jealousy was significantly associated with overall abuse, psychological abuse, and physical abuse. Jealousy was also the strongest predictor of abuse when all other variables were held constant.

The implications of these findings underscore the need for social workers to recognize lesbian partner abuse and its unique factors. Further the findings indicate the importance for the social work profession to enhance delivery of services to battered lesbians, expanded intervention programs for lesbian batterers, and develop preventative
initiatives designed to adequately address the issue of partner abuse in lesbian relationships.

Additionally, since the results of this study suggest that jealousy may be associated to abusive behavior, issues surrounding jealousy can be included in educational programs for lesbians designed to promote healthy and non-abusive relationships.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Over the past few decades, there has been a great amount of research and literature written on the subject of heterosexual partner abuse. There is much known about the incidence, prevalence, and severity of heterosexual partner abuse. Theorists have looked at various correlates and explanations for abusive behavior between heterosexual intimates, focusing their attention on gender difference and looking at battering using a male batterer paradigm. Over the last twenty-five years there has been a deluge of theories and ideologies in the literature explaining why men batter. These theories have emerged from the research and fall into three main categories: intra-individual, social-psychological, and socio-cultural.

Intra-individual theory explores how individual personality characteristics of the batterer may be associated with their abusive behavior toward an intimate partner. Social-psychological theory, centering on social learning ideologies, examines how abusive behavior is learned and explains battering in the context of the batterer’s own exposure to violence in the family of origin. Socio-cultural theory looks at abusive behavior through the lens of the society, de-emphasizing the individual and the family and focusing rather on explanations that have political and cultural implications.

While there is a wealth of research and theoretical models to choose from when investigating heterosexual partner abuse, the lack of research and scarcity of the literature as it relates to lesbian partner abuse is glaring. It is clear that the research of the heterosexual population has been met with few challenges than it has for the hidden and under-recognized lesbian population and as a result of the deficit in the research; practitioners have relied largely on a heterosexual paradigm to understand lesbian partner abuse.
Some of the intra-individual and social-psychological theoretical explanations for abusive behavior among men, looking through a heterosexual lens, have focused on sex-role socialization and the development of male privilege and power that can lead to domination and abusive behavior toward their female partners (Bims, Cascardi, & Meyer, 1994; Dobash & Dobash, 1998). Although the research on heterosexual abuse serves to inform theoretical explanations for lesbian partner abuse, the issues surrounding gender difference are not applicable for lesbian intimates.

This study seeks to address the existing gaps in the research on lesbian partner abuse by looking through a multi-theory lens combining intra-individual, social-psychological, and socio-cultural ideologies. This study shifts the focus from gender differences to explain abusive behavior, to another paradigm examining both the intra-individual characteristics of the abuser as well as the particular social-psychological dimensions of the relationship, while exploring the socio-cultural implications. This research will investigate whether a lesbian’s sex role identity is associated to her abusive behavior toward an intimate female partner, focusing specifically on whether the dimensions of masculinity and femininity help to explain abusive behavior. Additionally, building on existing research in the field of lesbian partner abuse, this study will examine to what extent the relationship factors of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalances in lesbian relationships are related to abusive behavior. The unique cultural dynamics of the lesbian population require that this research also be viewed under a socio-cultural lens. Therefore this study uses a multi-theory approach by using the three theoretical models of intra-individual, social-psychological, and socio-cultural in its investigation.

Domestic violence has had a devastating impact on the lives of women. As the norm in patriarchal societies for centuries, the seeds of wife beating lie in the subordination of women and in their subjugation to male authority and control dating back to before the 2nd century (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). As we enter a new millennium, the data indicate that two million women are battered by their male partners each year in the United States, one half of all female homicide victims are killed by their boyfriends or husbands, and that two million heterosexual married and non-married couples experience partner abuse each year in the
United States (Bachman & Coker, 1995; Kellerman & Mercy, 1992; Straus & Gelles, 1986; Stets & Straus, 1989). Data from the redesigned National Crime Victimization Survey of the early nineties suggest that rates of sexual assault against married heterosexual women in the United States have doubled from five to nine women per 1,000 (Bachman, 1994; Bachman & Saltzman, 1995). The literature of the last twenty-five years suggests that the problem of partner abuse is not an exceptional phenomenon and continues to plague society.

The research on the subject of heterosexual partner abuse has been extensive and the theoretical framework presenting various causal factors has also been substantive. This literature on heterosexual partner abuse has come from a variety of sources. National probability studies, clinical studies of battered women and batterers, the battered women’s movement which shed light on the issue of partner abuse, and reports from police, hospital, and crisis hot-lines have all contributed to the literature in the field of heterosexual partner abuse. Every source of data, from police reports to hospital emergency rooms, from counseling centers to divorce courts, points to an enormous gender disparity in who is initiating the violence, who is more physically harmed, and who is seeking safety from the abuse. The National Family Violence Survey found that assaulted women were more likely than assaulted men to require medical care after severe assaults and significantly more likely to experience psychological injuries related to their abuse (Stets & Straus, 1990).

The majority of this literature focuses on the incidence, prevalence, and causal factors for heterosexual partner abuse. To a large degree the literature ignores the reality of lesbian partner abuse, with very little empirical data to support the existence of the problem. Because lesbians are a hidden population and are already made invisible by heterosexism and homophobia, abuse in their intimate relationships is also made invisible. Historically, the battered women’s movement distanced itself from the reality of lesbian partner abuse for fear that services and funding for heterosexual battered women would be jeopardized (Pharr, 1996).

There are currently no national probability studies to research the incidence, prevalence, and severity of lesbian partner abuse. One explanation for this may be that there is no sampling frame with which to conduct a national probability study. The reality of
homophobia and heterosexism continue to keep lesbians a hidden population within society. Lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual people face oppression in this hetero-patriarchal society, not unlike people of color who face oppression because of racism. Only until recently, have lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual people begun to see images of themselves in the media. In some cases these images reinforce negative stereotypes and myths that also can become reinforced by institutionalized systems of oppression that interact with each other in this society (Pharr, 1988).

Lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual people face verbal and physical assault on the street, face termination from their employment, custody loss of their children, abandonment by their families, and suicide all resulting from their identity (Greene, 1994). Moreover, the institutions that serve to protect people at large have often been the very source of oppression and discrimination for lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual people (Holmes & Hodge, 1997).

Mainstream religious institutions are often at odds with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in the spirit of morality and religiosity, promoting heterosexuality as normative (Holmes & Hodge, 1997). Policies and practices of the courts and the criminal justice system suggest a failure to protect the rights of the lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual communities. Allen & Leventhal (1999) examined domestic violence laws in over fifty states and concluded that in some states lesbian and gay victims of partner abuse were afforded no protection under the law and in most states were more likely to receive less protection when compared to heterosexual victims. Legislation has also been negligent in failing to protect the civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, particularly in the absence of laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation (Greene 1994).

The American Psychiatric Association removed “homosexuality” from the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders in 1973 and the diagnosis of ego dystonic homosexuality was ultimately removed in 1988. However, efforts to change lesbian and gay clients through conversion therapy continue to persist for some (Greene, 1994).
Medical, mental health, domestic violence advocates, and social work professionals often make assumptions that all people are heterosexual (Berkman & Zinberg, 1997; Greene, 1994; Hammond, 1989; Holmes & Hodge, 1997). Lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual people struggle to attain a positive self-identity and often endure lifelong negative self-images, fear, shame, embarrassment, and isolation because of their sexual identity. It is not surprising that lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual youth are three times more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to attempt suicide (Hunter & Schaecher, 1995).

Homophobia magnifies the effects of partner abuse. The lesbian, who is a victim of this abuse, may be reluctant to seek help from the police or service providers fearing a homophobic reaction. Anecdotal evidence from service providers suggests that many lesbians deliberately change pronouns when reporting partner abuse, in order to safeguard themselves from homophobic reactions from law enforcement officials. Others may also hide the reality of abuse from their family because they may not be open about their sexuality. Even the openly lesbian victim may not want family or friends to know about the abuse for fear that her sexuality will be perceived as the justification for the abuse. This internalized homophobia may be one of the many reasons why victims of lesbian partner abuse remain hidden (Elliott, 1996; Lie & Gentlewarrier, 1991; Pharr, 1988; Renzetti, 1992).

In the late eighties, some theorists offered explanations for the lack of data on lesbian partner abuse. Morrow & Hawxhurst (1989) posited that the lesbian community's reluctance to acknowledge that partner abuse is a real problem for them might lie in the notion that lesbian relationships are egalitarian, loving, and not violent. Additionally, the reluctance to acknowledge lesbian partner abuse may stem from the fear that lesbianism will be seen as pathological.

Lesbian survivors may also be reluctant to admit abuse in their relationship, mirroring the same dynamics of self-blame, fear, economic and emotional dependency, and low self-esteem, that are experienced by heterosexual women who are survivors of partner abuse (Hammond, 1986). Further, the data on lesbian partner abuse from official sources is limited. Police, hospital, and crisis hotline reporting may not accurately reflect the incidence and severity of lesbian partner abuse and may be minimized by crisis workers, perhaps due to
their own homophobia. Therefore, same sex partner abuse is often left out of police statistics and is consequently not counted in criminal justice reports (Hart, 1986; Island & Letellier, 1991).

There has been a considerable increase in the research of lesbian partner abuse within the last few decades. Findings for these studies suggest that rates and severity of violence among lesbian partners is comparable to that of heterosexual partners (Brand & Kidd, 1986; Coleman, 1990; Elliot, 1996; Lie & Gentlewarrier, 1991; Lockhart, White, Causby & Isaac, 1994; Renzetti, 1992).

With the increase in the research, there has been a substantial growth in the amount of literature pointing to several explanations for lesbian partner abuse. Some of these explanations include power imbalance, dependency and autonomy, jealousy, substance abuse, and intergenerational violence (Caldwell & Peplau, 1984; Coleman, 1990; Lynch & Reilly, 1986; Peplau, Rook & Padesky, 1978; Peplau, Padesky & Hamilton, 1982; Reilly & Lynch, 1990; Renzetti, 1992).

The existing research is limited, however, for a variety of reasons. The studies investigating lesbian partner abuse have almost exclusively used convenience samples that are comprised of lesbians who are mostly white, middle class, and feminist (Lie & Gentlewarrier, 1991; Lockhart et al., 1994; Schilit, Lie, Bush, Montagne & Reyes, 1991). While some of this research has focused on client populations of survivors, examining abusive behavior through the eyes of the victim. (Lobel, 1986; Renzetti, 1988). Other studies have been conducted with client populations of batterers participating in intervention programs (Farley, 1996). The findings from these studies make generalizations to the general lesbian population difficult and limit inferences. Another issue threatening the generalizability of these studies to the larger lesbian population lies within the methodologies used. Some of these studies have relied on second person- retrospective accounts of the abuse, that is, “through the eyes of the victim”. Other studies have examined abuse through retrospective admissions from self-identified batterers in therapy, again limiting the inferences from the results to the larger population of lesbians (Renzetti & Hamberger, 1996).
The limited number of studies on lesbian partner abuse that utilize self-report methods in a non-clinical setting makes it difficult to obtain an accurate estimate of lesbian partner abuse among the general lesbian population. This study seeks to address this gap in the research about lesbian partner abuse by utilizing a sample of lesbians who are not formally a part of a group identifying themselves as batterers or as victims of abuse and asks the lesbian respondents to self-reflect on their own behavior in their relationship. It was anticipated that this research approach would result in a clearer description of the incidence and severity of abuse among lesbian intimates.

Theoretical Framework

In intimate heterosexual relationships where violence is occurring, the primary aggressors are typically men, and the victims are women. Feminist theorists posit that it is patriarchal domination and the control of women that informs partner abuse, specifically among heterosexual intimates (Bograd, 1988; Dobash & Dobash, 1979, 1998).

Dobash & Dobash (1979, 1998) dominate the literature in this feminist argument and socio-cultural framework, suggesting that societal belief systems sustain partner abuse at the individual level. They suggest the factors that contribute to partner abuse are embedded in patriarchal privilege and male entitlement and further posit that the sense of entitlement that a husband believes he possesses to punish “his” wife, lies in the very position of husbandry, allowing men to be abusive simply because of their rank in the relationship.

Dobash & Dobash (1998) argue that there is a correlation between abusive behavior and men’s assumptions and entitlement. They suggest that it is varying perceptions between wives’ expectations and husbands’ assumptions over domestic work that helps to explain men’s abusive behavior toward their wives. More importantly, they argue that it is men’s sense of entitlement to punish “their” women for real or imagined offenses committed that perpetuate abusive behavior among men and serve as the mechanism to maintain power and control over their victims. Other feminist theorists suggest that men are inclined to be more abusive than women because this abuse is embedded in an accumulated web of physical
strength and male tradition where violence and aggression are valued as masculine traits (Thompson, 1998).

In the Violent Men Study of 1996, the data reported by Dobash & Dobash (1998), suggest that when men recounted their physical abuse against a female intimate partner, it was usually accompanied by anger and rationalization. The evidence of masculine identity associated with the abusive behavior was indicated through statements made by the batterer which suggested a strong belief system that the batterer was forced to “put the victim in her place”, “show her who the boss was,” and “could not let a ‘woman’ get away with anything” (Dobash & Dobash, 1998 p.144).

Thompson (1998) describes masculinity in terms of aggression, power, and a predatory spirit, suggesting that when “masculinity” is threatened, acts of aggression may follow. She also argues that femininity in this society is viewed as weak and subordinate. Thompson adds:

The boy who is called a fag is the target of other boys’ homophobia as well as the victim of his own homophobia. While the overt message is the absolute need to avoid being femininized, the implication is that females—and all that they traditionally represent—are contemptible. The United States Marines have a philosophy, which conveniently combines homophobia and misogyny in the belief that ‘when you want to create a group of male killers, you kill the ‘woman’ in the them’. (p. 561)

The paradigm of patriarchy, which is male created and driven, is one of domination and control where the feminine is viewed as subordinate (Dobash & Dobash, 1998). Regardless of one’s biological gender or sexual orientation, these messages can become internalized and inform behavior, particularly in a patriarchal setting where the feminine is not valued and is seen as inferior. Coleman (1996) posits that we exist within a heterosexist system where the relationship model is comprised of two roles: one being dominant and the other submissive. Therefore, lesbians are not immune to the potential for one partner to dominate the other.
Traditional stereotypes of masculinity and femininity can be limiting, gender based, and viewed in terms of dress, roles, and personality attributes (Bem, 1993). Further, as these traditional stereotypes of masculinity and femininity are limiting, so is the construct of gender. Lesbian partner abuse should not be framed exclusively in terms of gender because of the unique differences in the dynamics of lesbian relationships and the fact that the partners are the same sex. Coleman (1996) also argues that regardless of gender or sex role identity, patriarchal values are internalized and may play a role in abusive behavior. Since biological gender difference between lesbian partners is non-existent, a closer examination of a lesbian’s level of masculinity and femininity may serve to explain the incidence and severity of abuse in their relationships.

Purpose of Study

This study is concerned with factors that influence abuse among lesbian intimate partners. The specific aim of this study is to examine the relationship between sex role identity, specifically the characteristics of masculinity and femininity, and abusive behavior. The emphasis is on the extent to which femininity is related to the likelihood that an individual will abuse her intimate partner. This study will also examine the relationship factors of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance that may help to further explain lesbian partner abuse. This research builds on the existing literature but will address the gap that fails to look at how the characteristics of masculinity and femininity in lesbians may relate to and/or explain abusive behavior. Further, there are two significantly different methodological approaches being taken with this research than has been used in most of the other studies in this area.

Many of the studies investigating lesbian partner abuse have been conducted utilizing samples of either victims or batterers. Lie & Gentlewarrier’s (1991) study of 1,109 lesbians attending a women’s music festival are among the exceptions of sampling from a non-clinical setting. In order to investigate the distribution and correlates of partner abuse among the lesbian population, and because of the hidden nature of this population, it is
necessary to sample from as many settings as possible and not limit the sampling to clinical settings. The data for this study will be collected from lesbians in a social setting and will investigate the incidence of lesbian partner abuse through retrospective self reporting of physical and psychological abusive behavior in a current relationship.

To determine a more accurate description of the incidence, prevalence, severity, and correlates of abuse between lesbian intimates, further empirical research is needed. There continues to be a lack of funding, resources, and services for lesbian victims of abuse, as well as intervention programs for batterers. Education is needed for service providers to more accurately assess abuse among lesbian partners and to provide more adequate and appropriate services to this population. Education and awareness is also necessary for the lesbian community at large, in addressing their reluctance to recognize the issue of partner abuse in their community.

The lack of data combined with the lesbian community’s silence and denial of the issue, make funding opportunities for service provision extremely difficult. Increasing awareness of lesbian partner abuse affirms the need for adequate, appropriate, and uniquely tailored services and programs for lesbians who are either survivors of abuse or batterers. There are few resources for lesbian survivors of partner abuse and even fewer intervention programs for lesbian batterers. Homophobia and heterosexism effect the everyday lives of lesbians, but becomes particularly magnified for lesbians who are involved in abusive relationships.

Since there are so few lesbian batterer intervention programs there is a wide gap in the sentencing options for a convicted lesbian batterer. Lesbian batterers may not be afforded the choice of a court-mandated intervention program because one may not exist and placing her in a men’s group is not an option. This may force prosecutors into sentencing lesbian batterers to incarceration at disproportionate rates.

The existing literature on the correlates of abusive behavior among lesbian intimates draws upon theoretical explanations for heterosexual partner abuse and bears significance in serving to explain abuse between romantic partners. However, the manner in which lesbian partner abuse is examined may require a shift in the paradigm, as the dynamic between
lesbian intimates is unique and different. Additionally, the psycho-educational model utilized in traditional heterosexual batterer intervention programs may not address the specific characteristics associated with lesbian partner abuse and may not adequately apply for the lesbian batterer.

The empirical research on lesbian partner abuse is limited and the existing literature fails to paint a clear and adequate picture for social workers to effectively provide services to victims and treatment for batterers. This study contributes to the existing research by documenting rates of physically and psychologically abusive behavior from a diverse sample of lesbians in a social setting and will examine whether their sex role identity and the relationship factors of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance are associated with their abusive behavior. Documenting and understanding the full scope of the problem can broaden the delivery of service to lesbian survivors of partner abuse and treatment for batterers. Additionally, empirical data can help to effect changes in the law and broaden access to funding, which has traditionally been inaccessible to both lesbian survivors and batterers.

One of social work's core values is social justice and in that principle there is a challenge to pursue social change, particularly on behalf of oppressed individuals and groups. Lesbians are a hidden, disenfranchised, oppressed, and marginalized population and look to the social work profession for culturally competent service. It is therefore an obligation on the part of social workers to contribute to the scant body of research in the area of lesbian partner abuse. This study provides another perspective in the examination of the incidence, severity, and explanatory factors related to lesbian partner abuse and contribute to the much-needed research in this area.

Additionally, this research may have significant implications for practice as it relates to batterer intervention programs by enhancing existing curricula and tailoring its use for lesbian populations. Further the findings from this research may be able to provide more
accurate risk assessment for service providers who work with the lesbian population and the phenomenon of lesbian partner abuse.

The next chapter will present a complete review of the partner abuse literature, including theoretical explanations and empirical evidence. As previously mentioned, a large amount of the literature has focused on heterosexual partner abuse, therefore a concise review of the existing literature on lesbian partner abuse will follow a brief review of the literature on partner abuse between heterosexual intimates.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to present a review of the literature that addresses the theoretical explanations and empirical evidence related to partner abuse. This review will first define partner abuse and the tactics associated with abusive behavior among heterosexual intimates, followed by a discussion of the incidence, prevalence, severity, and theoretical explanations for heterosexual partner abuse.

Because the focus of this study is to investigate lesbian partner abuse, a concise review of the existing literature on partner abuse between lesbian intimates will be presented. Since the vast majority of the literature on partner abuse over the last twenty-five years has focused almost exclusively on heterosexual intimates, the existing literature on lesbian partner abuse is limited. However, the existing research that has been conducted is presented here.

Heterosexual Partner Abuse

Definitions and Terms

The terms domestic violence, partner violence, and spousal abuse are often used interchangeably in the literature. Partner abuse will be the term used in this discussion because the term “partner” is more inclusive of lesbian couples in a way that the term “spouse” is not.
Domestic violence often refers to a large range of violence within a family unit, including child abuse and elder abuse. Partner abuse, on the other hand, encompasses the dynamics of physical and psychological abuse between intimates and includes varying types of relationships. Partner violence, although inclusive of various types of relationships, tends to connote physical abuse only and neglects the portion of emotional and psychological abuse that can be as devastating and damaging as physical acts of violence. Therefore, the term partner abuse will be utilized throughout this discussion and will be meant to include lesbians who demonstrate both physically as well as psychologically abusive behavior toward an intimate female partner.

Empirical Data

The subject of heterosexual partner abuse has achieved considerable attention over the last twenty-five years. The battered women's movement has contributed to the public's education and awareness about the issue of partner abuse and great strides have been made in terms of prevention, intervention, and research. Today, there is much greater understanding about the incidence, prevalence, and severity of heterosexual partner abuse. The data suggest that two million women are physically abused by their male partners each year, that half of all female homicide victims are killed by their boyfriends or husbands, and that 90% of police reports of partner abuse involve male offenders (Bachman & Coker, 1995; Kellerman & Mercy, 1992).

The compilation of data on heterosexual partner abuse has come from a variety of sources. A large portion of the empirical research on partner abuse has relied heavily on samples of heterosexual women who seek help at battered women shelters (Dobash & Doash, 1979; Walker, 1979). The first National Family Violence Survey was the first major non-clinical study of partner abuse in the United States and found that a physical assault occurred
of all American homes during 1976 (Straus, Gelles & Steinmetz, 1980). The Family Violence Survey helped to establish reliable empirical estimates of the incidence of various forms of family violence as it relates to heterosexual intimate relationships. The survey also reported factors associated with violence in the home, and presented theoretical models of the causes of family violence.

In intimate heterosexual relationships where abuse is occurring, the primary aggressors are typically men, and the victims are women. Every source of data, from police reports to hospital emergency rooms, from counseling centers to divorce courts, points to an enormous gender disparity in who is initiating the violence, who is more physically harmed, and who is seeking safety from the abuse. The National Family Violence Survey found that assaulted women were more likely than assaulted men to require medical care after severe assaults and significantly more likely to experience psychological injuries related to their abuse (Stets & Straus, 1990).

It is important to note that a majority of the empirical research on partner abuse and data from criminal justice sources have focused on acts of physical violence and have not looked at the incidence and severity of psychological and emotional abuse. O’Leary (1999) argues that psychological abuse is a variable deserving critical attention in partner abuse and that it appears to have the same damaging impact as physical violence and takes the same toll on the victim that acts of physical violence do.

Psychological abuse and physical abuse are among the tactics utilized by the batterer in order to maintain power and control over the victim. These tactics will be discussed in this next section.

Tactics

Partner abuse can be specifically defined as a pattern of behavior, which includes both physical, as well as psychological tactics, whereby the batterer seeks to exert control over the victim (Hart, 1986; Hammond, 1989; Pence & Paymar, 1985). Physical abuse
includes slapping, shoving, punching, kicking, stabbing, shooting, and sexual assault. Psychological abuse tactics can take the form of threats, destruction of property, intimidation, isolation, insults, ridicule, criticism, and harassment (Leeder, 1988).

Walker (1979) describes how incidents involving psychological humiliation and verbal harassment can be the worst battering experiences, for the battered women she interviewed, whether or not they have been physically abused. The women described how verbal attacks, criticism, and ridicule impacted upon their self-esteem. Research indicates that psychological abuse often has effects that are as damaging as those of physical aggression, if not greater, and that psychological abuse almost always precedes physical abuse (O’Leary, 1999; Murphy & O’Leary 1989; Folingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause, & Polek, 1990).

As part of the definition of the tactics of abusive behavior, Walker (1979) describes a “cycle of violence” (p.55), which she lists as the tension building stage, the explosive stage, and the honeymoon stage, which she defines as remorseful behavior. The cycle continues after another period of tension begins to build for the abuser. The underlying notion of the cycle theory is that with time, the abuse escalates both in frequency and in severity (Kantor Kaufman & Jasinski, 1998).

A large amount of data on the cycle of abuse comes from clinical sources of battered women in shelter. In one study Douglas (1996) found that the cycle of abuse consisted of unresolved and recurring issues between the partners, which resulted in intensified conflict. As the physical and psychological abuse increased, the relationship, as well as the victim’s mastery and self esteem eroded. In the most serious stage, Douglas points out, is where the physical abuse is “deliberate, dangerous, and premeditated” (p. 528), affording no relief to the victim from the physical and psychological terrorism. Physical and psychological abuse tactics operate in tandem as the abuser isolates the victim from her family and friends in order to maintain power and control over her (Walker, 1979).
In the heterosexual paradigm, violence between husbands and wives is conceptualized as the extension of the domination and control of husbands over their wives. This control is historically and socially constructed and includes the use of physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse (Dobash & Dobash, 1998; Pence & Paymar, 1993). According to Dobash & Dobash (1979), violence in the family should be understood primarily as coercive control. Use of physical violence against women in their position as wives is not the only means by which they are controlled and oppressed, but it is one of the most brutal and explicit expressions of patriarchal domination.

**Theoretical Explanations for Heterosexual Partner Abuse**

Some of the explanations for heterosexual partner abuse have come from the findings of national non-clinical probability studies which have been conducted over the past twenty years, as well as studies with clinical populations of men who are abusive. Three main theories to explain partner abuse have emerged from the studies: intra-individual theory, social-psychological theory, and socio-cultural theory.

**Intra-individual Theory**

Intra-individual theory focuses on how abusive behavior may be explained by individual characteristics. Theories centering on personality factors as correlates for abuse among male batterers have dominated the literature (Hastings & Hamberger, 1988). Some individual characteristics that may explain abusive behavior include; chemical dependency and alcohol abuse, as well as psychological traits such as self-esteem and anti-social personality disorder (Hamberger & Hastings, 1986; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994; Hudson & McIntoch, 1981; Roy, 1977). Theorists posit that biological and neurological risk factors, such as childhood attention deficit disorder or head injuries, may also serve to explain the perpetration of abuse among intimate partners (Elliott, 1988; Warnken, Rosenbaum, Fletcher, Hoge & Ackelman, 1994).
Increasingly, attention is being drawn to variations in the pathology among abusive men (Dutton, 1994; Gondolf, 1988; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994). Some theorists argue that perpetrators of abuse are violent because of tension and anxiety, fear of losing control, and fear of intimacy (Browning & Dutton, 1986). Dutton & Starzomski (1993) suggest that borderline personality disorders may account for intermittent abusive behavior of batterers described by the cycle of violence theory (Walker, 1979).

A number of studies conducted in the 1990's found that men who are abusive are often emotionally dependent, insecure, have low self esteem, possess low empathy, exhibit low impulse control, have poor communication and social skills, have aggressive and hostile personality styles, and possess high scores on measures of disorders such as; borderline, passive-aggressive, anti-social anxiety, and depression (Dutton, 1994; Dutton & Starzomski, 1993; Gondolf, 1988; Hastings & Hamberger, 1988; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994; Murphy, Meyer & O’Leary, 1994).

Social-Psychological Theory

Social-psychological theory focuses on how abusiveness may be explained by learned behavior. This theory centers on social learning theory and suggests that men are abusive through experience and exposure to abuse in their family of origin (O’Leary, 1988; Straus et al., 1980). The literature on social-psychological theory and abusive behavior among intimate partners also suggests explanations that include stress, alcohol use, and marital discord in the family of origin (O’Leary, 1988). Some of these explanations seem to overlap with intra-individual ideologies.

Hotaling & Sugarman (1986) suggest other explanations for abuse such as violence toward children, witnessing parental violence as a child, being of working class background, low income, and low education. The findings from non-clinical studies suggest that intergenerational violence, occupational status, excessive alcohol use, and socio-economic status may be associated with partner violence (Gelles & Cornell, 1990; Kaufman Kantor et al., 1990; Murphy, Meyer & O'Leary, 1994).
1994; Straus et al., 1980; Straus & Gelles, 1990; Sugarman, Aldarondo & Bowey-McCoy, 1996). However, other studies have shown inconsistent findings with regards to the relationship between socio-economic status, education, and partner abuse. (Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986; Straus, 1980). Straus & Gelles (1990) found that unemployment and part-time employment seemed to correlate with an increase in the rate of violence and severity, while other research showed no relationship (Hotaling & Sugarman, 1990). Some evidence suggests households with status incompatibilities are at risk for partner abuse (Smith, 1990), while other research indicates the opposite is true (Yllo & Straus, 1990; Hornung et al., 1981).

**Socio-cultural Theory**

Socio-cultural theory looks at abusive behavior through the lens of the society, de-emphasizing the individual and the family and focusing rather on explanations that have political and cultural implications (Dobash & Dobash, 1998; Kaufman Kantor et al., 1994). Feminist explanations of women’s victimization are related to and also underscore socio-cultural factors.

In the feminist view, the central factors that foster partner abuse include the historically male-dominated patriarchal structure and socialization practices that inform men and women about their gender-specific roles in relationships (Pagelow, 1984; Smith, 1990; Yllo, 1984; Dobash & Dobash, 1998). One of the major constructs in the feminist analysis of partner abuse is how the structure of relationships is determined in a male-dominated patriarchal culture. Power and gender issues are associated with the unit of analysis on the societal level rather than at the individual level. (Bograd, 1988).

Dobash and Dobash (1979; 1998) are among the leaders of the feminist charge in the socio-cultural arena and suggest that heterosexual partner abuse is conceptualized as the extension of the domination and control of husbands over their wives and that this domination and control are historically and socially constructed. They go on to posit that in a
patriarchal context, women are victims of abuse because of their position as wives and it is because of their role that they are controlled and oppressed. This explicit expression of patriarchal domination becomes the explanation for abuse in among heterosexual intimates (Dobash & Dobash, 1979).

Several socio-cultural theorists also argue that the position of women and men as husbands and wives has been historically structured as a hierarchy in which men possess and control women. Theorists also suggest that patriarchal domination through force is supported by a moral order that reinforces the marital hierarchy (Smith, 1990; Pagelow, 1984). Some theorists posit that in order to understand heterosexual partner abuse in modern times it is necessary to recognize that for centuries women have been and continue to be socially acceptable victims (Dobash & Dobash, 1998).

In their work with batterers, Pence & Paymar (1993) describe a social learning model in a socio-cultural context by illustrating how the childhood of a man who is abusive includes childhood abuse, exposure to male role models who have shown hostile attitudes toward women, exposure to women-hating environments, alcoholism, racial and class oppression, and the denial of love and nurturing as a child. However, it is only in a patriarchal setting that he can batter "his" woman as an effect of his individual painful experiences. Sociologists and psychologists argue that to discuss violence and abuse of adults is to miss the point that the preferential victims of violence in the family are women (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Pagelow, 1979, & Wardell et al., 1983).

This has been a brief overview of the heterosexual partner abuse literature, presenting the theoretical explanations and empirical evidence. In the next section, a concise review of the existing literature on lesbian partner abuse will be presented.
Lesbian Partner Abuse

Since the mid eighties there have been a number of studies that have investigated lesbian partner abuse. Before referring to them, a definition of lesbian partner abuse and its tactics will be presented.

Terms and Tactics

Lesbian partner abuse can be defined in the same way as heterosexual partner abuse in terms of the physical and psychological components of abuse such as: slapping, punching, kicking, stabbing, shooting, and sexual assault. The elements of psychological abuse present in lesbian partner abuse are similar to those in heterosexual partner abuse. The lesbian batterer, in order to maintain power and control over the victim, uses insults, threats, intimidation, isolation, ridicule, and criticism. One of the unique tactics seen in lesbian partner abuse is the abuser's threat to disclose the victim's sexual identity to family, employer, or others (Elliott, 1996).

Lesbians experience and continue to endure institutionalized, individualized, and internalized homophobia and heterosexism. The term “heterosexism” is used in the literature as a more accurate description of societal belief systems that value heterosexuality as the norm and perceive it to be superior to that of lesbian and gay sexual orientations (Greene, 1994; Herek, 1986). Homophobia and heterosexism continue to impact the lives of lesbians and manifests itself in the fear of losing employment, fear of losing custody of children, or fear of losing support from family because of their sexual orientation (West, 1998). With no state or federal laws to protect the civil rights of lesbians, discrimination based on sexual orientation continues unchecked, and often turns violent. In a study of 157 lesbians and gay men, 41% reported being the victim of physical assault, verbal harassment, or had their property vandalized because of their sexual orientation (Herek, Gillis, Cogan,
Glunt, 1997). For lesbians, being a woman in a misogynistic society, the fear of physical and verbal assaults from strangers becomes compounded. As their heterosexual female counterparts, lesbians are at risk of both physical and psychological assault in their own homes at the hands of their partners.

For lesbians who are in an abusive relationship, the physical and psychological tactics of control of their abusers magnify the isolation already experienced because of their sexual orientation. Because of institutionalized homophobia and a lack of formal validation for lesbian relationships, lesbian couples may already be isolated from the dominant culture and find socialization solely within the lesbian community (Krestan & Bepko, 1980). The lesbian victim of partner abuse can become further isolated by the lesbian community, her only social support network, because they may be reluctant to acknowledge the existence of lesbian partner abuse for fear that it may reinforce homophobic notions that lesbian relationships are pathological (Elliott, 1996; Hart, 1986). Another reason the lesbian community may tend to deny the existence of lesbian partner abuse is that lesbian relationships claim and foster a utopian notion of egalitarianism (Lynch & Reilly, 1986).

**Empirical Data**

Recognition of partner abuse among lesbians has gained attention in the literature only within the last few decades. The existing empirical data suggest that physical, sexual, and emotional abuse occur in lesbian relationships at about the same rate as heterosexual partner abuse (Brand & Kidd, 1986; Coleman, 1990; Island & Lettelier, 1991; Lie & Gentlewarrier, 1991; Lie, Schilit, Bush, Montagne & Reyes, 1991; Lockart, White, Causby & Issac, 1994; NCAVP, 2000; Renzetti, 1992; Schilit, Lie, Bush, Montagne & Reyes, 1991).

In a non-clinical study conducted with 1,109, mostly white lesbian feminists, attending a women’s music festival, the findings indicated that 47% of the respondents reported psychological and emotional abuse in their current relationship (Lie & Gentlewarrier, 1991). A combination of physical and psychological abuse accounted for
nearly one third of the sample. In Lockart’s (1994) study of 284 predominantly white, middle class lesbians, 90% of the respondents reported that they had been recipients of at least one or more acts of verbal abuse from their partner during the last year. Eleven percent reported at least one act of severe violence, such as being punched, kicked or beaten up.

In a clinical study with lesbians in therapy, Farley (1996) found that 94% of the women admitted to abusing their partners, although the type of abuse was not specified and may have included psychological abuse. Coleman (1990) found that of the 90 lesbian couples surveyed, 46% experienced repeated acts of violence in their relationships. Brand and Kidd (1986) found that 25% of the sample admitted that they had been physically abused by a lesbian partner in their past, a figure comparable to that of their heterosexual counterparts. In another study conducted with 174 mostly white lesbian feminists, Lie and her colleagues (1991) found that almost three fourths of the sample had experienced aggression by a former lesbian partner. In a similar study Schilit and her colleagues (1991) found that of 104 mostly white lesbians, half reported abuse in their relationships.

Renzetti (1992) conducted one of the most cited empirical studies that examined the extent and nature of violence in lesbian relationships. Renzetti found that of the 100 lesbian victims of partner abuse, 54% had experienced more than ten abusive incidents during the relationship and 74% had experienced six or more abusive incidents.

The only comparable survey of same-sex partner abuse to that of the National Violence Survey, examining heterosexual partner abuse, is the Annual Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and Bisexual Domestic Violence Survey, prepared by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP). The NCAVP is a coalition of lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual victim advocacy and documentation programs with approximately twenty-five member organizations located throughout the United States. The NCAVP annually surveys twelve anti-violence programs that document and respond to partner abuse among lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual people and publish the findings in an annual report. Partner abuse is defined as verbal, physical, financial, and sexual abuse occurring in the context of a
romantic partnership. The most current edition of the survey indicates that for the reporting year beginning January 1, 1999 and ending December 31, 1999, there were 3,120 nationally documented cases of partner abuse in the relationships of lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual people, a 23% increase over the 1998 total of 2,534 (NCAVP, 2000). The largest number of cases was reported in major coastal metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles (1,356), San Francisco (741 cases), and New York (510 cases). Of the 3,120 reported cases of partner abuse, 47% of the victims were lesbian. (NCAVP, 2000).

Data specifically from the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project indicates that among the 510 reported cases in 1999, 42% were lesbian victims. The largest age category for victims was in the 30-44 year range and the largest number of victims who reported abuse identified as white and comprised 32% of the total reports received. The second largest category of victims identified as Latino and comprised 26%. Victims who identified as African American comprised 19% (NCAVP, 2000).

The data from the NCAVP report illustrates a gap in the existing research which has under-represented lesbians of color in their studies of lesbian partner abuse. There are unique challenges faced by lesbians of color who are involved in abusive relationships because of the linked oppressions of homophobia and racism. Research of lesbian partner abuse that excludes the lesbian of color perspective ignores the effect of racism in the dynamics of abuse (Kanuha, 1990).

In terms of the extent of injuries reported in the NCAVP Annual Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and Bisexual Domestic Violence Survey, 37% of the victims reported minor to fatal injuries in 1999. For those who indicated injuries, it was reported that two percent required hospitalization, 23% required outpatient care, and 17% needed but did not receive medical attention. According to the data from the NCAVP report, current partners accounted for 47% of the perpetrators of such abuse and ex-partners accounted for 32%. (NCAVP, 2000).
Initially, the gay and lesbian communities were reluctant to recognize the existence of same sex partner abuse and responded with denial and minimization (Elliot, 1996; Island & Lettellier, 1991; Merrill, 1996). Part of the reason for this denial has been that the domestic violence movement, which had focused almost exclusively on the abuse of heterosexual women, has used a feminist, socio-political paradigm, framing partner violence largely in terms of gender (Lettellier, 1994). Another reason the lesbian community may tend to deny the existence of lesbian partner abuse is that lesbian relationships claim egalitarian status (Lynch & Reilly, 1986).

In order to determine an accurate description of the incidence and prevalence of lesbian partner abuse, further empirical research is needed, along with a further examination of the explanations of partner abuse among lesbians. Some of the existing literature on the explanations of abusive behavior among lesbian intimates examines the same risk factors present in heterosexual partner abuse. However, the manner in which lesbian partner abuse is examined requires a unique lens for investigation, as the relationship between lesbians is far different from that of heterosexual intimates.

Theoretical Explanations for Lesbian Partner Abuse

Explanations for lesbian partner abuse do not necessarily fit into the same theoretical paradigm that explains heterosexual partner abuse. Hamberger (1996) posits that although gender issues are important in heterosexual partner abuse, they may be less relevant in lesbian relationships. Some of the literature on lesbian relationships has focused on issues of relationship satisfaction and conflict, sex-roles, role-playing, and power sharing (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Caldwell & Peplau, 1984; Kurdek & Schmit, 1986; Lynch & Reilly, 1986; Mendola, 1980; Peplau, Padesky & Hamilton, 1982; Peplau, Rook & Padesky, 1978; Reilly & Lynch, 1990). Research, largely focusing on white, middle class lesbians, indicates that lesbians who are in a relationship are generally satisfied and strive for

Other research suggests that, although egalitarian relationships among lesbians are the ideal, roles, role identity, role conflict, and power imbalances continue to be challenging for lesbian partners (Maracek, Finn & Cardell, 1982; Oldham, Famill, & Ball, 1982; Rozenzweig & Lebow, 1992). Although lesbians experience a high degree of closeness and satisfaction in their relationships (Peplau et al. 1978), the literature also suggests that power sharing, attachment, autonomy, and egalitarianism are issues which lesbian women grapple with as couples (Lynch & Reilly, 1986; Peplau, Padesky & Hamilton, 1982; Peplau, Rook & Padesky, 1978; Reilly & Lynch, 1990).

As previously mentioned, one theoretical explanation for heterosexual partner abuse has pointed to a hetero-patriarchal paradigm. Some of the literature on lesbian partner abuse suggests that because the heterosexual paradigm assumes that women are victims and abusers are men, lesbian partner abuse is the exception and may not fit the theoretical model. Merrill, (1996) suggests that same-sex partner abuse be understood by combining theories that examine both the individual as well as society. Similarly, among heterosexual intimate partners, the power and control issues may be easier to identify, whereas among lesbian intimates it becomes more complex in determining power roles as they are not assigned according to gender (Hammond, 1989; Renzetti, 1992).

The literature suggests that there are commonalities in the contributing factors to abuse between heterosexual and lesbian partners. Attention has been focused on other predictors of lesbian partner abuse, rather than gender, such as; power and control, autonomy, dependency, jealousy, intergenerational violence, personality disorders, and substance abuse (Coleman, 1990, 1996; Farley, 1996; Gardner, 1989; Margolies & Leeder, 1995; Merrill, 1996; Renzetti, 1992).
Power inequities in lesbian relationships may also serve to explain lesbian partner abuse. Renzetti (1989) posits that a physical, economic, social, or psychological power imbalance in a lesbian relationship may contribute to partner abuse. Additionally, education, age, verbal skills, and physical attractiveness can also form the basis for power inequities.

However, one study of abuse in lesbian couples suggests a more complex power dynamic. While the aggressor may have greater power in terms of more influence over decision-making or more resources compared with the victim, she may also be more dependent on the victim and thus have less power (Renzetti, 1988). Lockart’s (1994) research also supports the idea that a lesbian may resort to abuse if she feels too dependent on her partner. In this view abuse is seen as a mechanism for equalizing power rather than asserting it (Renzetti, 1992).

The imposition of power and control is a major motivating factor for lesbian as well as heterosexual batterers (Hart, 1986). Issues of power and control as they arise in relationships are influenced by social norms that promulgate relationship models based on dominance and submission. Although associated with masculinity and femininity, these norms are also associated with social relationships regardless of gender or ethnicity within patriarchal societies (Levy, 1995).

The social-psychological theory, often used in the explanation of heterosexual partner abuse, focuses on how abusive behavior may be explained through a social learning model. Some of the literature uses this model to help explain lesbian partner abuse. Inter-generational abuse, according to Zemsky (1990) serves as an explanation for lesbian partner abuse and is separated into learning to abuse, having the opportunity to abuse, and choosing to abuse (Gilbert, Poorman, and Simmons, 1990). A person who abuses has first been exposed to abuse from their family of origin and has learned to abuse through observation, operant conditioning, or learning that violence is effective and rewarding (Zemsky, 1990). According to Hart (1996), men are especially prone to abuse because of sex-role socialization. Women in this culture also learn and internalize relationship models that are
based upon inequity (Hart, 1986). Learning to abuse does not necessarily lead individuals to abuse. For that to occur they must also have the opportunity and believe they have a right to do it. The abuser has to make a conscious choice to abuse (Gilbert et al., 1990; Zemsky, 1990).

Apart from a social learning model, attachment theory is often seen in the literature to explain lesbian partner abuse. Balancing the need for attachment or intimacy with one’s partner with the need for independence or autonomy from her is a difficulty virtually all couples confront (Peplau, Cochran, Rook & Padesky, 1978). Some of the literature suggests that balancing independence with the need for attachment is particularly challenging for lesbians (Renzetti, 1992).

Peplau, Padesky & Hamilton (1982) found that the desire for independence was the most frequently cited major causal factor in the breakup of the relationships among their lesbian respondents. In her study of violence in lesbian relationships Coleman (1990) examined the relationship between a partner’s cohesion and abuse. Although she expected to find that violence increased as the level of cohesion rose, the data did not support this. Correlation analysis revealed that the more jealousy was a problem in the relationship, the more frequently certain forms of abuse, especially psychological abuse would occur.

The research suggests that equality of power and role sharing are vital to partner satisfaction and the durability of these relationships (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Caldwell & Peplau, 1984; Kurdek & Schmitt, 1986). However, the extent to which equal power and role sharing can be realistically achieved has been questioned. Caldwell & Peplau (1984) for example found that while 97% of the 77 lesbians they interviewed supported the ideal of equal power in their relationships, 39% said that they or their partner actually had more power relative to the other.

Renzetti (1989) found that batterers, who tended to be overly dependent on their partners and to resist their partners’ attempts to be independent, used violence as a way to inhibit them. She also found that abusive relationships tended to be characterized by an
imbalance in power between partners, with particular status differentials. Coleman (1990) found that dependency and jealousy were significantly associated with partner abuse severity. These findings are supported by Renzetti’s (1992) research, which demonstrated correlations between the abusers levels of dependency, jealousy, substance abuse, and the use of violence.

Clinical and anecdotal evidence suggests that lesbian abusers frequently use alcohol or drugs, feel powerless, have low self-esteem, and tend to be overly dependent and jealous (Leeder, 1988; Lobel, 1986).

Relationship Factors and Lesbian Partner Abuse

Many lesbians are involved in a steady relationship and establish lifelong partnerships (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Peplau & Cochran, 1990). Peplau & Cochran (1990) posit that most lesbians perceive their relationships as satisfying and that satisfaction is similar to that of their heterosexual counterparts. The literature offers several explanations for why a lesbian relationship turns from satisfying to abusive.

The existing literature focuses on three types of conflicts in lesbian relationships that seem to contribute to partner abuse; dependency verses autonomy, jealousy, and the balance of power between partners (Renzetti, 1988). Balancing the need for intimacy between partners with the need for independence is a challenge for couples, regardless of the partner’s gender. However, Renzetti (1992) posits that this dynamic of balancing intimacy with autonomy is even more pronounced for lesbians.

Dependency

According to Walker (1989), male abusers have been found to be dependent on their female partners. However, additional factors may influence how dependency is experienced in lesbian partnerships because women tend to define themselves in relation to significant others and place a high value on intimacy (West, 1998). Lesbians may develop a greater
attachment to their partners in response to the lack of social validation and support for their relationship because of heterosexism and homophobia (Renzetti, 1992). When two women are romantically involved it may be even more difficult for them to establish a sense of independence and autonomy in their relationship. A sense of intimacy and closeness can also act as a buffer against discrimination. Researchers and therapists attribute this, in part to a lack of institutional and social validation and support of lesbian relationships outside the lesbian community (Holmes & Hodge, 1997). Heterosexism sets up lesbian couples to become insulated by nurturing their relationships as closed systems (Krestan & Bepko, 1980).

Among some lesbian couples, however, high levels of intimacy can make it difficult for each partner to have a sense of independence and a separate identity in their relationship. According to Lindenbaum (1985), if one partner tries to act independently by having separate friends or attempting to achieve autonomy, the other partner views that as rejection. Therefore, having a different opinion or initiating social activities without the partner might be perceived as rejection, which in turn leads to conflict and possibly physical violence (Margolies & Leeder, 1995). Lindenbaum (1985) names this phenomenon among lesbians as “fusion” or “merging” and describes it as a crisis which occurs when one of the women begins to feel lost in her partner and has lost a sense of who she is.

Although Coleman (1990) found no correlation between relationship interdependency and partner violence among lesbian couples, other researchers have discovered that conflicts around dependency and autonomy were related to lesbian battering (Renzetti, 1992). Coleman (1990) defined this phenomenon among lesbian couples as “cohesion” and examined its relationship to abuse, which she found to have no significance. Renzetti (1992) however did find a relationship between dependency and abuse in that the greater the respondent’s desire to be independent and the greater the partner’s dependency, the more likely the batterer was to inflict more types of abuse with greater frequency.
Renzetti (1992) administered a self-report scale to measure dependency and autonomy as related to violence in lesbian relationships to 100 self-identified battered lesbians. An examination of dependency verses autonomy demonstrated that an increased desire to be independent on the part of the respondent combined with a level of dependency for the abuser, resulted in an increase in both type and frequency of the abuse. For example, the abusive partners' pushing and shoving significantly increased as conflict over the respondents' desire to be independent also increased. Similarly, reports of the abusers' dependence as a problem in the relationship correlated highly with increased abuse, such as hitting her, interrupting her sleep, or disrupting her eating habits. This is consistent with the observed rigidity and enmeshment, which makes an increase in autonomy particularly threatening for the abusive partner.

Lockhart (1994) and her colleagues found that when compared with their non-victimized counterparts, respondents who reported severe acts of physical abuse perceived that their partners had a high need for attachment, as measured by such beliefs as "couples need to do everything together" and the use of communication techniques that included mind reading. Severely victimized respondents in this study also reported more conflict around issues of independence and autonomy, such as a partner's emotional and financial dependency, a partner socializing without the respondent, and a respondents' intimate involvement with other people.

Renzetti (1992) assessed dependency and autonomy with such an item as "My partner and I have a separate set of friends". Her results revealed that batterers who were very dependent on their partners, as well as victims who desired more independence, reported a greater frequency of abuse and more types of abuse, such as shoving, pushing, and choking. In addition to dependency issues, Renzetti also examined how issues of power differences in the relationship may be related to abusive behavior.
Power Imbalances

Research indicates that equality of power and role sharing are vital to partner satisfaction (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Calwell & Peplau, 1984; Kurdek & Schmitt, 1986). Straus and his colleagues (1980) assert that violence is least likely to occur in egalitarian households where the power of partners is balanced. Research also indicates that equality of power is particularly important in lesbian relationships and that when compared with gay male couples and heterosexual couples, lesbian couples tend to embrace an egalitarian ideal with equal decision making and division of labor in the home (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Kurdek & Schmitt, 1986).

For heterosexual couples the balance of power is often centered on gender; however, the relationship between the imbalance of power and abuse is less clear among lesbian couples (West. 1998). There has been some empirical research that has examined the relationship between power differences and abusive behavior. In a study conducted with 77 lesbians, currently in a romantic relationship, Caldwell & Peplau (1984) found that 40% reported a power imbalance in their relationship despite strongly endorsing an egalitarian ideal of equal power. Reilly & Lynch (1990) also found that although egalitarianism was the ideal in most of the 70 lesbian couples interviewed, the couples had not been able to achieve it.

Renzetti (1992) looked at decision making, division of labor, resources and status differentials such as; income, social class, perceived intelligence, age, education, and employment status and found a clear imbalance of power between the study participants and their abusers. In terms of decision-making, Renzetti found that the abusers appeared to be more powerful partners in the relationship. There was an unequal division of labor in two thirds of the relationships, with most of the abusers making the decisions about the couple’s weekend activities. Some indicators of power imbalance were strongly associated with severe forms of abuse.
Lockhart (1994) found evidence to support the link between power imbalances and victimization in lesbian relationships. When division of labor between partners was considered to be a form of power, lesbians who assumed primary responsibility for household duties, such as cooking and managing finances, were more likely to be abused. Specifically respondents who sustained severe aggression reported more conflicts around housekeeping and cooking duties, when compared with non-victims and those who sustained mild forms of violence. Renzetti (1992) questions whether divisions in household labor exist before the abuse or if the victim assumes domestic chores in an attempt to appease the abuser.

Coleman (1990) posits that while the dynamics of power and control are clearly associated with abusive behavior, the specific nature of this relationship is unclear. The most common method of measuring family power has been through an analysis of decision-making. In their national study of violence in the family, Straus and colleagues (1980) explored power and decision making as it relates to violence in heterosexual couples and found that wife beating was most common in husband dominant homes and the least amount of violence occurred in democratic households. They suggest that violence may be used as a reaction to feeling less powerful and participating less in the decision-making process, as well as a means of legitimizing or maintaining dominance.

In Renzetti's (1992) examination of the balance of power and abusive behavior in lesbian couples, she found that the abusers were most often the decision makers in the relationship. Most batterers were reported to initiate sexual activities and make decisions about how to spend the weekend. A tendency to defer to their partners' choice regarding the weekends led to a higher number of abusive incidents and increased the likelihood of having guns pointed at them or being pushed down the stairs.
Jealousy

Another contributing factor to partner abuse among lesbians that is also present among heterosexuals is jealousy. Studies of heterosexual partner abuse found that male abusers displayed extreme jealousy and possessiveness toward their female partners and that irrational jealous outbursts usually proceeded acts of physical violence (Folingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause, & Polek, 1990; Walker, 1989).

In the lesbian feminist movement of the eighties, the resistance of monogamy was a fundamental principle that many lesbians strived for. Risman & Schwartz (1988) report that lesbian respondents indicated that they found non-monogamy difficult and that it threatened the security of their relationship. Renzetti (1992) found that 42% of the respondents indicated that conflicting attitudes about monogamy were problematic and an overwhelming 70% reported that jealousy was a problem in their relationship. This may suggest that despite the claim to egalitarian and non-monogamous relationships, jealousy may be associated with abuse among lesbian couples.

Renzetti (1992) reported that the majority of participants in her study described their abusive partners as jealous, extremely possessive, and that the majority of the abusive partners had irrationally accused the respondents of infidelity. Renzetti’s findings also indicated that the more jealousy was a problem in the relationship, the more frequently certain forms of abuse—especially physical abuse—occurred.

Sex Role Identity and Abuse

In the discussion of power imbalances in lesbian relationships, the power difference between men and women in heterosexual couples has been theorized to be of primary importance in the understanding of partner abuse (Walker, 1979). Feminist theorists posit that sex role-socialization is central, not only to gender-based power for men, but also to their abuse of women (Birns, Cascardi & Meyer, 1994). This gender-based explanation for power
differences that may exist in heterosexual couples, may not serve as a fitting explanation for lesbian couples. A further examination into the sex role identity of lesbians, however, may offer an alternative explanation for abuse among lesbian partners.

Sex role identity as an explanation of partner abuse among lesbians is underrepresented in the research. One of the explanations for the gap in the research may be in the operationalization of sex role identity. Sex role identity is sometimes defined through the dimensions of masculinity and femininity (Bem, 1993).

Dimensions of masculinity and femininity can take on unique forms among lesbians and are sometimes played out in relationships through what is called “butch” and “femme” identification or role-playing (Nestle, 1992). According to MacCowan (1992) butch and femme identification are “gender constructions arising from a sexual definition of lesbianism”. Rubin (1981) posits that women’s oppression is equated with the existence of gender and sex roles and that there is a need to expand the construction of gender to more accurately reflect lesbian sexuality.

Some of the literature suggests that butch/femme roles are non-existent in current lesbian relationships (Bell & Weinberg, 1983; Blustein & Schwartz, 1983; Brooks, 1981; Caldwell & Peplau, 1984; Lynch & Reilly, 1986; Renzetti, 1992). On the other hand, a growing body of literature indicates that sex role identity, butch-femme identification, and the notion of “female masculinity” are very much a part of the experience of lesbians and lesbians involved in intimate relationships (Goodloe, 1999; Halberstam, 1998; Nestle, 1987; Newton & Walton, 1984; Pratt, 1995; Soares, 1995).

Sex role identity, although encompassing butch/femme role-playing among some lesbian couples, differs from the dimensions of masculinity and femininity which may be a part of the persona of individual lesbians (Goodloe, 1999; Halberstam, 1998; Nestle, 1987; Newton & Walton, 1984; Pratt, 1995; Soares, 1995). The literature suggests that butch and femme identification differs significantly from butch/femme role-playing. A lesbian woman may possess masculine traits and characteristics, may identify herself as butch, be attracted to
a lesbian woman who possesses feminine characteristics, and be in a relationship that is egalitarian and balanced in power, with each partner maintaining their autonomy (Nestle, 1987; 1992).

Additionally, not all lesbian women identify themselves as either butch or femme, yet may exhibit dominant masculine or feminine traits and characteristics (Halberstam, 1998). Sex role identity theorists argue that because of the restrictions placed on lesbian women resulting from homophobia, rigid heterosexist gender roles, and the feminist discourse, they may be reluctant to come to embrace their butch or femme, masculine or feminine identification (Goodloe, 1999; Nestle, 1987; Pratt, 1995; Soares, 1995).

Kurdek & Schmitt (1986) found that lesbian participants scored higher on measures of masculinity than their heterosexual female counterparts. Blumenstein & Schwartz (1983) offer an explanation that lesbians, specifically feminists, are more non-conventional in their sex roles, and therefore may tend to be more masculine or androgynous.

In a study that examined the dimensions of sex role self-schema among lesbians, gay men, and heterosexual men and women, Kurdek (1987) found that the measures of masculinity and femininity were significantly different for heterosexual women when compared to lesbians. In another study conducted with heterosexual, lesbian, and gay male couples, Cardell, Finn & Maracek (1981) found significant differences between heterosexual and same-sex couples with regard to their sex role identity. The lesbians scored higher on measures of masculinity than their heterosexual counterparts. Oldham, Farnill & Ball (1982) found that when the dimensions of masculinity and femininity of 37 lesbians were compared to 44 heterosexual women, the lesbian group also scored higher on measures of masculinity but no lower in femininity.

Sex role identity, which can be defined by measures of masculinity and femininity and sexual identity, which can be defined as how an individual identifies themselves in terms of romantic attraction toward others, are presumed to be related in this society. Some theorists posit that lesbians do not adhere to prescribed sex roles (Corley & Pollack, 1996).
The constructs of gender and sex role identification are embedded in cultural discourses, social institutions, and individual psyches in virtually all male-dominated societies, therefore making current dimensions of masculinity and femininity, although stereotypic, quite valid in contemporary male-dominated societies (Bem, 1993).

Since sex roles are prescribed behaviors that a hetero-patriarchal society deems appropriate for members of each gender, lesbians who are unconventional in their sexual identity may not prescribe to conventional sex roles (Blumenstein & Schwartz, 1983). Conventional femininity embodies such characteristics as nurturing and caring for others, while conventional masculinity connotes power, strength, and success (Marecek, Finn & Cardell, 1983).

Bem (1974, 1975, 1981, 1993) suggests that sex role identification exists across gender and sexual orientation. Whether one identifies as a heterosexual man, heterosexual woman, lesbian, or gay man, the dimensions of masculinity and femininity are logically independent. These sex role lenses are embedded in the culture as well as within our personalities (Bem, 1993). In most Western societies, the socialization of men and women are often set along the lines of gender, with men generally taking on power-dominant roles, while women are taught to embrace loving, empathetic, and dependent roles (Foss, 1989).

There has been little research on the relationship between sex role identity and abusive behavior. As early as 1974, some researchers described abuse-prone men and battered women with being very traditional in their sex-role orientations (Gelles, 1974; Pagelow, 1981). In a more recent study conducted with college students, examining the relationship between courtship violence among heterosexuals and sex role-identification, the findings indicated that men who participated in abusive interactions had significantly lower measures of femininity than did men without abusive interactions. The men who reported lower feminine characteristics were lacking in such things such as being sensitive to the needs of others, being affectionate, and being understanding (Worth, Matthews & Coleman, 1990).
A probable implication is that at least some of these qualities are associated with the ability to avoid violence or engage in communication patterns that are alternatives to violence in resolving conflicts. In preliminary research conducted by Telesco (1997), with a convenience sample of 30 lesbian victims, respondents were asked to rate their batterers' sex role identity and report on that batterer's abusive behavior toward them. Results showed that low measures of femininity among the respondent's batterer were significantly associated with that batterer's abusive behavior toward the respondent.

This study will examine the relationship between measures of femininity and masculinity in lesbians and their abusive behavior with an intimate partner. Particular emphasis will be placed on the extent to which lower levels of femininity are related to abuse. This study will add to the existing literature regarding the extent to which the relationship factors of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance are associated with abusive behavior among lesbian intimates.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH

Introduction

In this chapter the hypotheses and the study design are presented, followed by a description of the procedures for data collection. The operationalization of the variables and the measures utilized are then presented, followed by a strategy for the data analysis. This study examined the relationship between a lesbian's sex role identity, specifically the dimensions of masculinity and femininity, and her abusive behavior toward an intimate partner. In addition, the study investigated to what extent the relationship factors of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance are related to abusive behavior. Four questions guided the research: 1) To what extent does partner abuse exist among lesbian intimates? 2) What is the nature of this abusive behavior (physical or psychological abuse)? 3) Is there an association between sex role identity and abusive behavior? 4) To what extent are the relationship factors of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance related to abusive behavior in lesbian relationships?

Research Model

As Figure 1 illustrates, low levels of femininity are expected to be associated with high rates of abusive behavior. It is also expected that high levels of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance will each be positively associated with high rates of abusive behavior.
Hypotheses and Variables

Based on the literature, this study will test the hypothesis that among the lesbian population lower levels of femininity will be associated with a higher rate of abusive behavior toward an intimate partner. Further, this study will test the hypotheses that high levels of dependency in the relationship will be positively associated with higher rates of abusive behavior, high levels of power imbalances in the relationship will be positively associated with higher rates of abusive behavior and that high levels of jealousy in the relationship will be positively associated with higher rates of abusive behavior.
Sex Role Identity

H1: Low levels of femininity will be positively associated with high rates of abusive behavior.

Relationship Factors

Dependency

H2: High levels of dependency in the relationship will be positively associated with higher rates of abusive behavior.

Jealousy

H3: High levels of jealousy in the relationship will be positively associated with higher rates of abusive behavior.

Power Imbalance

H4: Power imbalances in the relationship will be positively associated with higher rates of abusive behavior.

Sample and Procedures

To test the hypotheses, the present study makes use of a cross-sectional survey of a convenience sample of 105 lesbians who frequent the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center in New York City. Participants for the study met two criteria: 1) women who identify themselves as lesbians and 2) women who reported being in a relationship with another woman for at least six months at the time of the study.

Each week, approximately 5,000 people visit the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center in New York’s Greenwich Village neighborhood. Founded in 1983, the Community Services Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing social, civic,
cultural, educational, and health-related services to the lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual communities of the New York metropolitan area. The Center provides 27 social service, public policy, educational, and cultural programs to the community and offers low cost meeting space for 300 social, activist, professional, 12-step, and support groups. Social events and activities are available to the community on a daily basis. One of the Center’s primary functions is to provide affordable meeting space for lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual organizations, many of which would otherwise have no place to go. The availability of meeting space at the Center has been a major organizing tool for the community (Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center, 2000; 2001).

This sample setting was chosen because of the large number of lesbians that attend the social groups and events. While a nonrandom convenience sample was used, participants were recruited from social groups that appear to represent a wide variety of interests, class backgrounds, education, race, ethnicity, and religious practices. The objective of these social groups is for lesbians to network, socialize, and participate together in social activities in a safe environment. The groups meet on a weekly or monthly basis and have an average membership size of approximately 15 people. Social activities sometimes include picnics, dances, games, and speak out events where outside speakers address the group on relevant lesbian issues. In attempting to avoid sample bias, political, activist, mental health, and 12 step support groups were not chosen for recruiting participants because of the atypical nature of their objectives and mission. In addition to the social groups that meet at the Center, day and evening social activities are continuous and available. These social activities that are not affiliated with any particular social group include dances, a reading library, a theater desk (discount theater tickets), and a café, where people gather to network and socialize.

This sample consisted of lesbians who volunteered to participate in this study from 10 social groups that regularly meet at the Center. Lesbians, who were not affiliated with any particular group, yet frequented the center for other social activities were also recruited. The latter accounted for one fourth of the sample. Since the existing research in this field has
been limited to samples of white, middle class, feminist lesbians, the researcher was committed to obtaining a diverse sample assuring that lesbians of color were represented.

The Director of Public Policy at the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center forwarded a letter indicating support for the research to the group facilitators of 50 lesbian social groups that met at the Center. The letter informed them that the researcher would contact them for the purpose of soliciting volunteers to participate in a study.

Data Collection

A list of the 50 groups, along with names of group facilitators and contact numbers were given to the researcher. A schedule of the social activities and events for the upcoming months was also made available. Phone calls were made to each of the facilitators to discuss the study and determine the opportunity to solicit volunteers from their membership. Group facilitators consulted their membership and members of each group decided whether to grant the researcher access.

Seventeen group facilitators of 17 groups responded negatively, without consulting their membership, advising that it was the policy of the group to deny access to researchers. There were several reasons given for the refusal, one of which centered on a distrust of researchers perceived to be heterosexist and homophobic. The facilitators expressed that their members were skeptical of researchers who are only interested in lesbians as research subjects and fear on the part of the membership that their sexual orientation would become public information. Lastly, these facilitators claimed that members were unwilling to devote any time for the administration of a questionnaire during their meeting periods.

Despite the Director of Public Policy’s letter of introduction and support for the research, the researcher’s open admittance that she is part of this community, and the assurance of confidentiality and measures taken for anonymity, the facilitators ultimately refused the researcher access to seventeen groups. Some facilitators as spokesperson for their
respective groups requested that the questionnaires be given to the facilitator who would later administer and return to the researcher at a future date. However, this would have compromised the integrity of the research, in addition to creating serious ethical considerations, therefore this method was not accepted.

Another 23 groups were never reached to solicit participation. Two and three phone calls yielded no response. Eleven contact phone numbers were outdated and the Center did not have updated contact information.

Of the fifty original groups, ten groups granted access to the researcher and constituted the sample. They included African Ancestral Lesbians, Brazilian Rainbow Group, The Butch Femme Society, Gay Officers Action League (GOAL), Gay Reunion in our Time (GRIOT), Senior Action in a Gay Environment (SAGE), Sisters in Search of Truth, Alliance, and Harmony (SISTAHS), the Softball group, and Women who Identify as Butch. In addition, Center Orientation was another event that the researcher was able to collect data from. The orientation event provides attendees with a guide to the social activities held at the Center and helps people navigate the many social events and social groups held at the Center. A complete list describing the groups is shown in Table 1 at the end of the chapter.

The 10 participating social groups invited the researcher to attend the last half hour of their meetings to give a brief presentation and to solicit volunteers for the study. Appointments were made with the facilitator a month in advance and a schedule prepared. Because each facilitator would have had a substantial amount of prior contact with the researcher and significant knowledge of the study content, facilitators were not eligible to participate.

The presentation began with a formal introduction, which included the researcher’s affiliation and credentials. A brief explanation of the study’s objectives and the importance of this particular study to the lesbian community were discussed. Participants were advised that the proposal for this study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Local Review Board at Fordham University. The consent forms consisted of information that reinforced to
the voluntary participants that they had a right to refuse to participate without consequences and that if they decided to participate they would be given information about the results upon request. It was also emphasized that they could withdraw at any time during the administration of the questionnaire without penalty and take their data with them. The questionnaire and informed consent are contained in the appendix.

Participants were advised that the consent forms, affixed to the front of the questionnaire, must be completed, signed, detached from the questionnaire, and placed in the box marked “consent forms”, located in the front of the meeting room. As true for any population, the issue of confidentiality and anonymity cannot be overemphasized; however homophobia and heterosexism may create an additional skepticism on the part of lesbian participants, therefore the researcher placed additional emphasis on it during the instructions.

The participants were advised that all questionnaires would be kept strictly confidential and that the data would be stored in a locked cabinet. Further, respondents were assured of their anonymity by advising them that the questionnaires would not be coded in any way to divulge their name or personal information. In the event that participants were interested in receiving the research results, they were advised to put their names and addresses on the rear of the consent forms. The researcher advised the participants that the questionnaire would take approximately 20 minutes to complete and that when they were finished to detach the consent form, which they must sign, and place it in the box marked “consent forms”. Completed questionnaire should be placed in the boxes marked “questionnaires”, both of which would be located in the front of the meeting room.

The sensitivity of the subject matter was a concern in terms of participant reaction to specific questions in the questionnaire. The recalling of possible abusive behaviors that participants may have exhibited in the past toward their partners may have evoked a negative reaction. In order to address this, participants were advised that the researcher would be available for consultation at the conclusion of the meeting to discuss any reactions and provide further referrals if necessary. Additionally, resource booklets were given to all
participants upon completion of the questionnaire. The researcher remained in the rear of the room during the administration of the questionnaire to monitor reactions.

Once the general aim of the research had been introduced, the ethical considerations addressed, and the general instructions given, the researcher handed out the blank questionnaires to all volunteers and then asked participants to place completed questionnaires in the respective boxes. This data collection method insured an adequate response rate and did not present the unique challenges that a mailing has on survey research.

After exhausting the social groups and to meet the criterion of the power analysis, which required a minimum sample of 100 participants, it was necessary to recruit additional participants for the study. The Director of Public Policy offered the researcher complete access to the Center to solicit lesbians who were not affiliated with any particular group yet frequented the center for social events. The questionnaires collected at the Center's social events such as: the café, theater desk, and "outmusic" event (lesbian musicians perform their original music) were distributed in the same manner as the data collection process conducted with the social groups as outlined earlier. The presentation to participants, including directions related to the questionnaire, as well as all ethical considerations, were consistent with the manner in which they were addressed with the social groups. Nearly one fourth of the sample was obtained at the social events (22%).

Criteria for Inclusion

The only criterion for inclusion in the sample was to be a self-identified lesbian who was currently in a relationship for at least six months. On the questionnaire, participants were asked to self identify their sexual orientation by answering "yes" or "no" to the question "Are you a lesbian". Additionally, respondents were asked to indicate how long they have been romantically involved with their partner by writing in the number of years and months. Individuals who did not identify themselves as lesbians and respondents who indicated that they were currently with a partner less than six months were not included in the sample. The
exclusion process was conducted after all completed questionnaires had been collected.

**Response Rate**

The data collection process spanned approximately 16 weeks from July 2000 to October 2000. The administration and collection of the questionnaires were completely conducted on site so that the term “response rate” applies to the breakdown of distributed, completed, and final inclusions into the sample and does not imply that any questionnaires were returned by mail.

A total of 220 questionnaires were distributed. 153 were distributed at 10 social group meetings and an additional 67 were distributed at three social activities in the same manner. Of the 153 distributed at the social groups, 33 did not fit the criteria and 37 were unusable because of substantial incompleteness. Of the 67 questionnaires distributed during the three social events, four did not fit the criteria, three were unusable because of substantial incompleteness, and 37 individuals requested to take them home and did not return them. Unreturned questionnaires would have been excluded in any case.

The Brazilian Rainbow group did not have any one who fit the criteria; therefore they were not included in the final sample. Nine social groups and three social events were ultimately represented, contributing to the final sample of 105 lesbians.

**Power Analysis**

To detect a medium effect size, with an alpha of .05, the power coefficient is .86. The final sample of 105 participants was therefore sufficient to detect a medium effect size (Borenstein & Cohen, 1988; Cohen, 1992).
Measures

The self-administered multi-item questionnaire contained 125 questions and asked participants to rate themselves on their own level of masculinity and femininity, report on whether they have been abusive toward an intimate partner at any time during their current relationship, and to rate the level of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance present in their current relationship.

Since this study examined the relationship between sex role identity and abusive behavior participants were asked to report on their own perceived level of masculinity and femininity by utilizing a well established and widely used measurement instrument that measures the perception of sex-role identity (Bem, 1978). Participants were also asked to report on their abusive behavior toward a current partner utilizing a well established and widely used measurement instrument which measures the construct of abusive behavior (Shepard & Campbell, 1992).

This study also investigated to what extent dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance are associated with abusive behavior. A series of questions about the participants’ relationship as it relates to issues of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance were asked utilizing a combination of items from Renzetti’s (1992) research and original items designed for this study, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Questions related to respondents’ personal demographics were asked for descriptive purposes only.

Independent Variables: Sex Role Identity & Relationship Factors

Bem Sex Role Inventory

One of the independent variables, sex role identity, was measured at the interval level, utilizing the Bem Sex Role Inventory Scale (Bem, 1974). In Bem’s original research and construction of the BSRI, she suggested that historically and cross-culturally, femininity and masculinity each represent complementary domains of positive traits and behaviors (Bem,
1978, 1981). According to Bem, feminine traits are associated with an expressive concern for the welfare of others and the harmony of the group, while masculine traits are associated with a cognitive focus on getting the job done or the problem solved. Both historically and culturally, femininity and masculinity have each represented positive characteristics.

The BSRI has been widely used to measure dimensions of masculinity and femininity and has good psychometric adequacy. Bem (1978) reported alpha coefficients for the BSRI ranging from .75 to .87 for femininity and .78 to .86 for masculinity. Reliability analysis of the BSRI for this sample showed an alpha coefficient of .73 for masculinity and .77 for femininity, demonstrating adequate internal consistency reliability.

The Bern Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) asks the respondents to indicate on a seven-point scale how well each of 60 different attributes describes themselves. This seven-point scale, with anchors ranging from (1 = never or almost never true) to (7 = always or almost always true), measures the dimensions of respondents' masculinity and femininity. Each respondent received a separate and continuous raw score for each dimension of femininity and masculinity.

Twenty of the attributes reflect a conservatively defined definition of masculinity (for example; I am assertive, I act as a leader, I am independent), 20 items also reflect a conservative definition of femininity in this culture (for example; I am tender, I am eager to soothe hurt feelings, and I am understanding) and 20 items are fillers. Each respondent received a masculine or feminine continuous score ranging from 20 to 140.

Utilizing the BSRI scoring manual, each respondent's individual masculine and feminine score were calculated by totaling raw scores and dividing by the number of items to attain a mean masculine and feminine score for each respondent. Due to copyright restrictions, the BSRI cannot be duplicated and is therefore not contained in the appendix.
Renzetti (1992) examined the relationship factors of dependency, jealousy, balance of power, and their association with abuse in lesbian couples. In examining the relationship between these relationship factors and abuse, Renzetti found that dependency, jealousy, and imbalance of power in the relationship all contributed to predicting abuse. Seven items, derived from Renzetti’s self-report scale, were utilized and 13 original items were added to make up a 20-item scale.

This four-point scale, with anchors ranging from (1 = never) to (4 = very frequently) measures the level of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance present in the respondents’ relationship and gives them a separate and continuous raw score for each dimension. The respondents were asked to rate how frequently each of the 20 behaviors described their current relationship.

A pre-test was conducted to measure reliability and to determine intra-item correlation. The results of the factor analysis revealed that the items for each scale were correlated with each other but in order to strengthen the internal consistency, two jealousy items and one power imbalance item needed to be deleted to attain an alpha of .75. Each of the three dimensions of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance will be discussed separately and the individual items that were deleted will be described. A copy of the scale is contained in the appendix.

Dependency

This interval level variable assessed how the respondents perceive dependency in their relationship and was measured using a four-point scale, with anchors ranging from (1 = never) to (4 = very frequently). Each respondent received a separate and continuous dependency score that was calculated by totaling raw scores. The higher the participants’ score the higher the level of dependency in the relationship.

Eight
specific items assessed dependency. The items included; “I am dependent on my partner”, “My partner is dependent on me”, “I consider my partner responsible for my well being”, “My partner is responsible for my well being”, “If I feel badly, my partner is responsible to cheer me up”, “If my partner feels badly, I am responsible to cheer her up”, “My partner needs to ask me permission to spend time with family or friends”, “I need to ask my partner permission to spend time with family or friends”. The results of the factor analysis from the pre-test did not require the deletion of any dependency items (alpha = .75).

Jealousy

This interval level variable assessed how the respondents perceive their own level of jealousy in the relationship and was measured using a four-point scale, with anchors ranging from (1 = never) to (4 = very frequently). Each respondent received a separate and continuous jealousy score that was calculated by totaling raw scores. The higher the participants’ score the higher the level of jealousy in the relationship.

Four items originally assessed jealousy in the relationship, however a factor analysis indicated the need to delete two of the jealousy items to attain an alpha of .71. The two items that were deleted were “I feel very possessive toward my partner” and “I would leave my partner if she had a sexual relationship with someone else”. The items that remained were “I don’t like it when my partner spends time with her friends” and “I don’t like it when my partner pays attention to other things and not me”.

Power Imbalance

This interval level variable assessed how the respondents perceive their own level of power in the relationship as it pertains to decision making over couple’s free time and finances and was measured using a four-point scale, with anchors ranging from (1 = never) to (4 = very frequently). Each respondent received a separate and continuous power imbalance score that was calculated by totaling raw scores.
The higher the participants’ score the higher the imbalance of power in the relationship.

Four items originally assessed power imbalance in the relationship, however a factor analysis indicated the need to delete one of the items to attain an alpha of .73. The item deleted was “My partner is responsible for all household chores”. The three remaining items included “I decide how we spend our free time”, “I make all of our financial decisions”, and “I have exclusive control over our finances”.

Renzetti (1992) did not report alpha coefficients for her research making comparisons to this sample’s alpha coefficients difficult. However, reliability analysis conducted for this sample shows an alpha coefficient of .75 for the dependency items, .71 for the jealousy items, .73 for the power imbalance items, and as reported earlier, .75 for the total relationship factor scale, indicating adequate internal consistency reliability.

Dependent Variable: Abusive Behavior

The Abusive Behavior Inventory

The dependent variable, “abusive behavior” was measured at the interval level utilizing the Abusive Behavior Inventory (Shepard & Campbell, 1992). The ABI, a likert type scale, with anchors ranging from (1 = never) to (4 = very frequently), has been widely used in a vast amount of research as a self-report inventory to assess abusive behavior and has proven psychometric adequacy. This scale has been used with batterers as well as with victims of abuse. Each respondent received a separate and continuous abusive behavior score that was calculated by totaling raw scores. The higher the participants’ score the higher the rate of abusive behavior demonstrated by the respondent toward a current intimate partner. Overall abusive behavior scores range from 30 to 120. When abuse is specified into physical or psychological abuse, physical abuse scores range from 13 to 52 and psychological abuse scores range from 17 to 68.
The Abusive Behavior Inventory is a 30-item scale developed to measure the frequency of a range of abusive behaviors. Two thirds of the items assess psychological abuse such as; humiliation, criticism, threatening by words or gestures, threats of suicide, and economic abuse tactics. One third of the items assess physical abuse, including sexual abuse. Some of the psychological abuse items include “called my partner names”, “criticized her”, “accused her of paying too much attention to someone or something else”, “slapped, hit, or punched her”.

The ABI was administered to the respondents in this study as a self-rating inventory of their own abusive behavior toward a current intimate partner. The respondents were asked to rate how frequently they had exhibited each of the 30 behaviors at any time during their current relationship. Reliability analysis was conducted on the ABI for this sample and indicated an alpha coefficient of .74 indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency reliability. A copy of the scale is contained in the appendix.

Plan of Analysis

Preliminary Analysis

Several preliminary tests were run to determine internal consistency of measures, including reliability tests. Factor analysis was conducted on both the pre-test data and the sample data for the relationship factor scale to determine the amount of variation between the variables of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance. Reliability testing was conducted on each of the measures to determine alpha coefficients.

Descriptive Statistics

Statistical analysis of the data was performed utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion were reported for sex role identity, abusive behavior, relationship factors and demographic variables.
The mean and standard deviations were reported utilizing frequency distributions. Separate ANOVA's were run to determine differences between group affiliation, race/ethnicity of the respondent, and the respondents' occupation.

**Bi-variate Analysis**

Cross tabulations and chi-square were conducted to test the associations between sex role identity and abusive behavior and the relationship factors and abusive behavior. Cross tabulations were also conducted to test the associations between relationship factors and sex role identity. In order to run these tests of association it was necessary to re-code the variables of masculinity, femininity, abusive behavior, and the relationship factors of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance from continuous to discrete variables. Correlations were conducted to further test the strength and direction of these associations and were run with the original continuous variables.

**Multi-variate Analysis**

Three separate regression models utilizing two-tailed significance with a list-wise deletion of missing data was conducted to determine how much of the variance of abusive behavior was explained by sex role identity and the relationship factors of dependency, jealousy and power imbalance and to test the hypotheses that sex role identification and the relationship factors of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance are predictors of abusive behavior, holding each of the independent variables constant. The first regression model used overall abuse as the dependent variable. The second and third models looked at psychological abuse and then physical abuse. All regressions were run using the continuous variables.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Group</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Open to</th>
<th>Meets</th>
<th>Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African Ancestral Lesbians</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Lesbians of color</td>
<td>weekly</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Butch Femme Society</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Butch/femme identified lesbians</td>
<td>monthly</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center Orientation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Lesbians new to NYC</td>
<td>quarterly</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women who Identify as Butch</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Butch identified lesbians</td>
<td>monthly</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay Officers Action League</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Law enforcement</td>
<td>monthly</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay Reunion in our Time</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Older lesbians of color</td>
<td>monthly</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAGE/ Women's Task Force</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Older lesbians</td>
<td>annually</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SISTAHS</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Lesbians of color</td>
<td>bi-weekly</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Softball Group</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Softball Players</td>
<td>weekly</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Café</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Open to All</td>
<td>daily/nightly</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theater Desk</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Open to All</td>
<td>daily/nightly</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OutMusic</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Open to All</td>
<td>weekly</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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CHAPTER 4

RESULTS: SEX ROLE IDENTITY, RELATIONSHIP FACTORS, AND ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR AMONG LESBIAN PARTNERS

Introduction

The findings of the study are presented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. In this chapter the sample description is presented first, followed by a description of the respondent’s sex role identification, and the descriptive results of the relationship factors of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance. The chapter concludes with the descriptive results of the respondents’ abusive behavior.

Sample Characteristics

Study participants were 105 self-identified lesbians who are either members of one of the nine, originally selected social groups that meet at the New York City Lesbian and Gay Community Center, or who frequent the Center’s social events. The nine social groups that participated are Senior Action in a Gay Environment, Gay Officers Action League, Softball League, SISTAHS, Center Orientation Night, Gay Reunion in our Time, Butch/Femme Society, African Ancestral Lesbians, and Women who Identify as Butch.

As indicated in Table 1, the Women’s Task Force of Senior Action in a Gay Environment (SAGE) and the Gay Officers Action League (GOAL) were the two largest groups represented in the sample. Participants from SAGE made up 17% of the sample and GOAL participants also accounted for 17%. The Women’s Task Force of SAGE plans monthly women’s social events, workshops, dances, and other opportunities for older lesbians to be with one another and find support from their own community (S.A.G.E., 2000).
GOAL was formed in 1982 to address the needs, issues, and concerns of gay and lesbian law enforcement personnel. Members include both active and retired uniformed and civilian personnel employed in criminal justice professions. It is a fraternal organization that provides an arena where members can feel free to discuss their needs and concerns in a comfortable atmosphere, without fear of job related reprisals. GOAL also serves as a bridge between the law enforcement community and the gay and lesbian community at large (GOAL, 2001).

Three separate one-way ANOVA's, utilizing Tukey-B test of significance, were run to determine if any differences existed for abusive behavior between group affiliation, respondents' race/ethnicity, and respondents' occupation. The findings indicated that there were no significant differences between the groups at the .05 level.

Table 2 - Respondent Demographics (N=105)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Age</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education of Respondent</td>
<td></td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Graduate Work or Professional Certificate</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree or Professional Degree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; $10,000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000-35,000</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,001-50,000</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,001-60,000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,001-100,000</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; $100,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 - Partner Demographics (N=105)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Age</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education of Respondent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Graduate Work or Professional Certificate</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree or Professional Degree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; $10,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000-35,000</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,001-50,000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,001-60,000</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,001-100,000</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; $100,000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 2 and Table 3 indicate, African American lesbians accounted for 22% of the sample and 11% of the sample identified themselves as Latino. There were no differences between respondent and partners' race/ethnicity. African American partners accounted for 18% and Latino partners accounted for 11%. When ANOVA's were run for respondents' occupation and race/ethnicity on abusive behavior, the findings indicated no significant difference between the groups, with all groups being similar in their mean scores.
The mean age of the respondents and their partners was 40 years with the respondents’ age ranging from 21 to 66 years. Partners’ age ranged from 20 to 74 years. The average level of income for the respondents in this sample ranged from $35,000 to $50,000. Partners’ income also fell in that range. Two thirds of the respondents indicated that they and their partners had no other financial dependents other than themselves. As indicated in Table 2 and Table 3, 85% say that they and their partners are employed and were involved in similar occupations. Respondents classified their work in terms of a wide range of white-collar occupations. Some of which included law enforcement, law, secretarial, education, social work, sales, journalism, labor, and medicine. Two thirds of the respondents held at least a bachelor’s degree. Over one half of their partners also held a bachelor’s degree.

As Table 4 indicates the average time respondents were in their current relationship was 5 years, although the length ranged from six months to 22 years. Respondents reported being in monogamous relationships, with three percent categorizing their relationship as non-monogamous. When asked how committed their relationship was, a fifth of the respondents described their relationship as not committed. Half of the respondents reported that they reside with their partner. In the eighties the resistance to monogamy and commitment was a strongly held political platform for the lesbian feminist movement, making the findings related to monogamy and commitment in this sample interesting to note.
Table 4 – Relationship Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Months/Years Together (N=105)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>6mos – 22 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monogamous (N=99)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed (N=103)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reside Together (N=104)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *N= 105, **N=99, ***N=103, ****N=104

Sex Role Identity

The findings indicate that this sample reported higher masculine than feminine scores. The respondents in this sample report a higher level of masculinity than femininity as indicated by the sample's mean masculine score of 5.14, compared to the sample's mean feminine score of 5.07. Feminine scores ranged from 3.75 to 6.85, while masculine scores ranged from 3.35 to 9.05. As indicated in Table 5 measures of central tendency indicate a normal distribution of both masculine as well as feminine scores.

Table 5 - Measures of Central Tendency for Sex Role Identity and Relationship Factor Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex Role Identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Factor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Imbalance</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For descriptive purposes, a median split method was utilized to dichotomize the sample into high or low masculine and high or low feminine. This method is consistent with Bem’s (1978) original research. Fifty one percent of the sample was categorized as high masculine, with the remaining 49% classified as low masculine. Forty seven percent were categorized as high feminine, with the remaining 53% classified as low feminine. Continuous masculine and feminine scores were maintained and utilized to run correlation and regression analysis. Results for these tests are discussed in chapter five.

Relationship Factors

Table 5 shows the measures of central tendency for the dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance scores. Measures of central tendency for this sample indicate a normal distribution of scores. Each relationship factor is then presented separately.

Dependency

The mean scores do not provide a clear picture of the level of dependency present in the relationship. For descriptive purposes continuous dependency scores were re-coded into three groups: no dependency, one item of dependency, and more than one item of dependency. Continuous scores were utilized for correlation and regression analysis and those results are presented in chapter five. Table 6 presents the sample percentages for each of the categories of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance. As indicated in Table 6, the results show that five percent of the sample indicates that neither they nor their partner demonstrates dependency in the relationship. Ninety two percent of the sample reports more than one incident of dependency in their relationship.
Table 6 - Sample Percentages for Dependency, Jealousy, and Power Imbalance (N= 105)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship Factor</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td>No Dependency</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Item of Dependency</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 1 Item of Dependency</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>No Jealousy</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Item of Jealousy</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 1 Item of Jealousy</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Imbalance</td>
<td>No Power Imbalance</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Item of Power Imbalance</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 1 Item of Power Imbalance</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 lists each dependency item separately and the percentage of the respondents that indicated how each item best described their relationship. Over half of the respondents occasionally felt responsible to cheer up their partner if she felt badly and occasionally felt that their partner also was responsible to cheer them up if they felt badly. Over half of the respondents felt that their partner was occasionally dependent on them and felt that they were occasionally dependent on their partner. One third of the sample felt frequently –very frequently responsible to cheer up her partner if she felt badly. Fourteen percent felt frequently –very frequently that their partner was responsible to cheer them up if they felt badly. This issue of dependency may be closely related to feelings of attachment that is unique to lesbians. The importance of these results will be discussed in Chapter 6.
Table 7 – Sample Percentages for Individual Dependency Items (N=105)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependency Items</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently/Very Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If my partner feels badly, I am responsible to cheer her</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner is dependent on me</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I feel badly, my partner is responsible to cheer me up</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am dependent on my partner</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m responsible for my partner’s well being</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner is responsible for my well being</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need to ask my partner permission</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My part needs to ask me permission to spend time with family or friends</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When classifications were made on the basis of the top twenty-five percentile, in order to create typologies from their raw scores, 34% of the sample was categorized as having high rates of dependency.

Jealousy

The continuous scores do not provide a clear picture of the level of jealousy present in the relationship. For descriptive purposes continuous jealousy scores were re-coded into three groups: no jealousy, one reported item of jealousy, and more than one reported item of jealousy.
As Table 6 indicates, 50% of the respondents report no jealousy in their relationship. Twenty-eight percent report frequently feeling jealousy. Table 8 lists each jealousy item separately and the percentage of the sample that indicated how much each item best described their relationship. Forty-four percent of the sample occasionally did not like it when their partner paid attention to other things. Only one percent frequently—very frequently did not like it when their partner spent time with family or friends. This finding does not appear to be realistic and seems inconsistent with such high levels of attachment and dependency. Continuous scores were utilized for correlation and regression analysis and those results are presented in chapter five.

Table 8 – Sample Percentages of Individual Jealousy Items (N=105)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jealousy Items</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently/Very Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don’t like it when my partner pays attention to other things and not me</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t like it when my partner spends time with friends or family</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When classifications were made on the basis of the top twenty-five percentile, in order to create typologies from their raw scores, over half of the sample was classified as having high rates of jealousy.

**Power Imbalance**

The continuous scores do not provide a clear picture of the power imbalance present in the relationship. For descriptive purposes continuous power imbalance scores were re-coded into three groups: no power imbalance, one reported item of power imbalance, and more than
one reported item of power imbalance. Continuous scores were utilized for correlation and regression analysis and those results are presented in chapter five. Table 6 indicates, 34% of the respondents admit to more than one incident where they maintain the power in the relationship. As indicated in Table 9, fifty percent of the sample occasionally decides how the couples spend their free time and 19% of the sample occasionally makes all the financial decisions for the couple. Even more telling is the finding that 10% of the sample frequently-very frequently decides how the couple spends their free time and 13% of the sample frequently-very frequently make all of the couple's financial decisions. This finding seems to suggest an inter-relatedness between dependency and power imbalances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power Items</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently/Very Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I decide how we spend all of our free time</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I make all of the financial decisions</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I control all of our finances</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When classifications were made on the basis of the top twenty-five percentile, in order to create typologies from their raw scores, 23% of the sample was categorized as having a high level of power imbalance in their relationship. That is the respondents had more power and control in their relationship as it applied to decision making about the couple's free time and finances.
Abusive Behavior

The results of this study suggest that when abuse was broadly defined, a sizable minority demonstrated high rates of physical and psychological abuse toward her current partner at some time during the relationship. It is important to note that both physical as well as psychological abuse was re-categorized from continuous scores into nominal classifications of high and low abuse for descriptive purposes only and also categorized into three groups: no abuse, one incident of abuse, and more than one incident of abuse. On a continuum of severity, high rates of abuse fall well within the lower range and would not have incurred serious physical injury. In fact, the ranges of raw abuse scores were distributed from 30 (representing never engaged in any abusive act) to 45. This is out of a possible range distribution from 30 to 120. Continuous scores were utilized for correlation and regression analysis and those results are presented in chapter five. Tables 10 to 13 present the sample percentages of overall abuse, psychological abuse, and physical abuse.

Table 10 – Sample Percentages of Overall Abuse (N=88)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Abusive</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Incident of Abuse</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Than 1 Incident of Abuse</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                              | 88 | 100%

Seventy five percent of this racially and ethnically diverse sample of 105 middle class and middle aged lesbians who frequent the New York City Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center admit to demonstrating more than one incident of overall abusive behavior toward their current partner. As Table 10 indicates, eight percent of the sample report never abusing her current partner in any way and 17% admit to exhibiting one abusive act toward their current partner at some time during the relationship. For the total overall abuse and psychological abuse score there was missing data for 17 respondents, therefore the total sample
percentages reflect a sample of 88 respondents who received an overall abuse score and a psychological abuse score. In sum, 15% of the sample failed to complete the psychological abuse items on the Abusive Behavior Inventory, suggesting there may be higher rates of psychological abuse than was actually reported.

Table 11- Sample Percentages of Psychological Abuse Scores and Categories (N=88)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Abusive</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Incident of Abuse</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Than 1 Incident</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>88</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the abuse was specified, 74% of the sample admit to more than one psychologically abusive incident and 26% admit to more than one physically abusive incident. As shown in Table 11, eight percent of the sample reports never being psychologically abusive toward their current partner at any time during the relationship, while 18% of the respondents admit to one psychologically abusive act.

Table 12- Sample Percentages of Physical Abuse Scores and Categories (N=104)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Abusive</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Incident of Abuse</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Than 1 Incident of Abuse</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 indicates that 63% of the sample report that they have never been physically abusive toward their current partner at any time during their relationship. Eleven percent of the sample admits to one physically abusive act.
Twenty six percent admit to more than one physically abusive act toward their partner. For the measure of physical abuse, there was only one respondent who did not complete the physical items on the measurement instrument, leaving a total sample of 104 respondents who received a physical abuse score.

Table 13 - Mean, Median, Mode, and Standard Deviation of Abuse Scores (N=105)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Abuse</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Abuse</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Abuse</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Abuse</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measures of central tendency for this sample indicate a normal distribution of scores. The mode for overall abuse (31) and psychological abuse (18), indicate that most of the sample has exhibited at least one psychologically abusive act toward their current partner at some time during the relationship. The mean scores alone however, do not provide a clear picture of the extent to which respondents demonstrated abusive behavior toward their current partner.

Table 14 and 15 list each physical and psychological abuse item and the percent of the sample who reported never, occasionally, frequently, or very frequently exhibiting these abusive behaviors toward their current partner within the last year. The items are ranked in the order of those that were most reported by the respondents.
Table 14 – Rank Order of Sample Percentages for Individual Physical Abuse Items (N = 105)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abuse Item</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently/Very Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threw/hit/smashed something</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushed her</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drove recklessly with her in car</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slapped, hit, or punched her</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressured her to have sex</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threw her around</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacked sexual parts of her body</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kicked her</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced her to have sex</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened her with knife/gun</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanked her</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used knife/gun on her</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choked her</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The six most reported physically abusive acts that respondents admitted to either occasionally or frequently/very frequently exhibiting toward their partner were; threw, hit, or smashed something at partner (22%), pushed, grabbed, or shoved partner (21%), drove recklessly when the partner was in the car (15%), slapped, hit or punched partner (8%), pressured partner to have sex (5%), and threw partner around (4%). On a continuum of severity the six most reported physically abusive acts are less serious than those physical acts of using weapons, spanking, or choking that would likely result in serious injury. This finding may suggest that respondents were comfortable admitting less serious physical acts because they may not carry the same stigma as more serious acts of physical violence.
As shown in Table 15 the six most reported psychologically abusive acts that respondents admitted to either occasionally or frequently/very frequently exhibiting toward their partner were: gave partner angry looks or stares (71%), called partner names or criticized her (55%), ended a discussion with partner and made the decision yourself (50%), accused partner of paying too much attention to others (41%), put partner down (36%), and kept partner from doing what she wanted (21%). Table 16 presents a summary of percentages for categories of abusive behavior, dependency, jealousy, power imbalance, and abuse. An in depth discussion of the importance of these findings is presented in Chapter 6.
Table 15 – Rank Order of Sample Percentages for Individual Psychological Abuse Items (N=105)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abuse Item</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently/Very Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gave her angry looks/stares</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Called her names/criticized her</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ended discussion and made the decision yourself</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accused her of paying too much attention to someone/thing</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put her down</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kept her from doing something she wanted to do</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened her with a knife/gun</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Became very upset with her because dinner, housework, or laundry was not ready or done</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checked up on her</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used her children to threaten her</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuse to do housework/childcare</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Said things to scare her</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Said she was a bad parent</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevented her from having money for her own use</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kept her from working</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put her on an allowance</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made her do something humiliating/degrading</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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When classifications were made on the basis of the top twenty-five percentile, in order to create typologies from their raw scores and when abuse was broadly defined, 34% of the sample was classified as demonstrating high rates of overall abuse in their current relationship. When abuse is specified, 34% of the respondents are classified as demonstrating high rates of psychological abuse toward their partner and 37% as demonstrating high rates of physical abuse toward their partner.
Again, it is critical to use caution in the interpretation of these findings, noting that both physical as well as psychological abuse has been broadly defined in this study and on a continuum of severity falls within the lower range. That is the outcome of the physical abuse items in particular would not cause serious physical injury. This dichotomous classification is presented in Table 17 for descriptive purposes and lists a summary of percentages for the reclassification for rates of abuse and levels of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance. Cross tabulations and chi-square tests of association are presented in the next chapter.

Table 17 – Sample Percentages Based on Top 25% for Levels of Abuse, Sex Role Identity, Dependency, Jealousy, and Power Imbalance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Abuse</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Abuse</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Abuse</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Femininity</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Imbalance</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

Despite the finding that a sizable minority has reported high rates of abuse, both physically as well as psychologically, it is important to reiterate that both physical as well as psychological abuse was broadly defined for the purposes of classifying the sample into high and low categories of abuse. On a continuum the sample fell well within the lower range of severity of abuse. It is unclear whether respondents were forthcoming about their abuse and whether the instrument used accurately measured the true level of physical and psychological abuse.
demonstrated by the respondent. Since this non-clinical convenience sample was taken from a social setting and represents a racially and ethnically mixed group of lesbians it may suggest that they are typical of lesbians who frequent the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center for social events. Additionally, the findings indicate that 15% of the respondents failed to accurately complete the Abusive Behavior Inventory portion of the questionnaire suggesting that higher rates of abuse may have been indicated but were not reported.

The following chapter will discuss the results of the hypotheses and describe the factors associated with abusive behavior among the lesbians in this sample. Each of the hypotheses will be summarized and the results presented.
CHAPTER 5

RESULTS: FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR
AMONG LESBIAN PARTNERS

Introduction

In the previous chapter, a description of the sample was presented. In contrast, this chapter will first present the study results as they relate to the correlates of sex role identity, specifically the dimensions of masculinity and femininity and the relationship factors of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance. Secondly, the chapter will discuss how they explain abusive behavior. To test whether a respondent's low level of femininity would be positively associated with abusive behavior, bi-variate analyses, utilizing cross tabulations and correlations were conducted. It is expected that the characteristic of femininity contains dimensions that are concerned with the well being of others and thought to contribute to non-abusive behavior. In contrast, an individual who possess low levels of these characteristics, may be more likely to demonstrate abusive behavior.

Bi-variate analyses were also conducted to determine whether a respondents' level of dependency in the relationship would be positively associated with higher rates of abusive behavior. These tests were also conducted to determine whether jealousy in the relationship would be positively associated with higher rates of abusive behavior, as well as to examine whether power imbalances in the relationship would also be positively associated with higher rates of abusive behavior. These results are expected because each respondents' description of their level of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalances present in the relationship are thought to separately contribute to the respondents' abusive behavior toward their partner. Each variable will be presented separately.
Low/High Masculinity and Low/High Femininity

As previously mentioned in chapter four, in order to run cross tabulations and test the association of sex role identity with abusive behavior, respondent’s continuous scores were re-coded into discreet variables of high or low masculine and high or low feminine. Classifications were made on the basis of a median split. This is consistent with Bem’s (1978) original research that suggests creating typologies from respondents’ raw scores. Fifty one percent of the sample was categorized as high masculine, with the remaining 49% classified as low masculine. Forty seven percent were categorized as high feminine, with the remaining 53% classified as low feminine.

In order to run cross tabulations and test the association of the independent variables with abusive behavior, respondent’s continuous abuse scores were also re-coded and dichotomized into discrete variables of high and low abuse. Classifications were made on the basis of the top twenty five percent in order to create typologies from their raw scores. This dichotomous classification was beneficial for cross tabulations and did not present the problem of empty cells.

Cross tabulations and chi-square tests of association were run for femininity and abusive behavior, however no significance was indicated. Chi-square tests of association were also run for masculinity and abusive behavior, and failed to show a relationship.

To examine the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables of sex role identity and abusive behavior, correlations were computed with continuous scores, utilizing a list-wise deletion of data with a two-tailed test of significance. The correlations are presented in Tables 24 to 26 toward the end of this chapter.
Tables 24 and 25 show that femininity is neither positively nor negatively correlated with overall abuse and psychological abuse. It was expected that low femininity would be positively associated with abusive behavior. This was not supported by the data.

**Dependency and Abusive Behavior**

In order to run cross tabulations and test the association of the independent variables with abusive behavior, respondent’s continuous dependency scores were re-coded and dichotomized into discreet variables of high and low dependency. Classifications were made on the basis of the top twenty five percent in order to create typologies from their raw scores. This dichotomous classification was beneficial for cross tabulations and did not present the problem of empty cells.

As indicated in Tables 18 and 19, chi-square tests of association show that low levels of dependency are significantly associated with low rates of overall abuse and psychological abuse. Fifty one percent of the sample that reported low levels of dependency also reported exhibiting low rates of overall abuse. The same was true for psychological abuse.

**Table 18 - Dependency by Overall Abuse**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Dependency</th>
<th>Low Abuse</th>
<th>High Abuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Dependency</td>
<td>51.1% (45)</td>
<td>18.2% (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Dependency</td>
<td>14.8% (13)</td>
<td>15.9% (14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (n =88), \( x^2 = 5.5, df=1, p < .05 \)
Table 19 - Dependency by Psychological Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Dependency</th>
<th>Low Abuse</th>
<th>High Abuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Dependency</td>
<td>52.3% (46)</td>
<td>17% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Dependency</td>
<td>13.6% (12)</td>
<td>17% (15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (n =88), \( x^2= 8, df=1, p < .01 \)

To examine the strength and direction of the relationship between the variable of dependency and abusive behavior and to determine whether a significant relationship actually existed or if the relationship was spurious, correlations were computed with continuous scores, utilizing a list-wise deletion of data with a two-tailed test of significance. Correlation analysis failed to show a relationship between dependency and overall abuse.

**Jealousy and Abusive Behavior**

In order to run cross tabulations and test the association of the independent variables with abusive behavior, respondent’s continuous jealousy scores were re-coded and dichotomized into discrete variables of high and low jealousy. Classifications were made on the basis of the top twenty five percent in order to create typologies from their raw scores. This dichotomous classification was beneficial for cross tabulations and did not present the problem of empty cells.

As indicated in Tables 20 and 21, chi-square tests of association show that low levels of jealousy are present with low rates of overall abuse and approach significance. Thirty seven percent of the sample that reported low levels of jealousy also reported exhibiting low rates of overall abuse. However, for psychological abuse 39% of the sample that reported low levels of jealousy also reported low rates of psychological abuse and were significantly associated. This suggests that where low levels of jealousy are present, low rates of overall abuse and psychological abuse may also be present.
Table 20 - Jealousy by Overall Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Low Abuse</th>
<th>High Abuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Jealousy</td>
<td>37.5% (33)</td>
<td>12.5% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Jealousy</td>
<td>28.4% (25)</td>
<td>21.6% (19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (n=83), $x^2=3.2, df=1, p=.07$

Table 21 - Jealousy by Psychological Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Low Abuse</th>
<th>High Abuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Jealousy</td>
<td>38.6% (34)</td>
<td>11.4% (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Jealousy</td>
<td>27.3% (24)</td>
<td>22.7% (20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (n=88), $x^2=5, df=1, p<.05$

To examine the strength and direction of the relationship between the variable of jealousy and abusive behavior and to insure that an actual relationship existed and not a spurious one, correlations were computed with continuous scores, utilizing a list-wise deletion of data with a two-tailed test of significance. Correlation analysis shows that jealousy and overall abuse were positively correlated and significant ($r=.37, p<.01, n=88$). As jealousy increased so did reported abusive behavior. In terms of physical abuse, Table 26 shows that jealousy was positively correlated with physical abuse and was significant ($r=.18, p>.05, n=104$). Jealousy and psychological abuse were positively correlated and significant ($r=.36, p<.01, n=88$).

Power Imbalance and Abusive Behavior

In order to run cross tabulations and test the association of the independent variables with abusive behavior, respondent's continuous power imbalance scores were re-coded and dichotomized into discrete variables of high and low power imbalance. Classifications were
made on the basis of the top twenty five percent in order to create typologies from their raw scores. This dichotomous classification was beneficial for cross tabulations and did not present the problem of empty cells.

As indicated in Tables 22 and 23, 57% of the sample that reported low levels of power imbalances in their relationship also reported exhibiting low rates of overall abuse toward their partner. The same was true for physical abuse. Chi square tests of association indicated significant associations between power imbalance and overall abuse and power imbalance and physical abuse. Chi square analysis failed to show a relationship between physical and psychological abuse. This finding is surprising since the dynamics of psychological abuse seem to flourish in a relationship where there is an imbalance in power. It is also surprising because correlation analysis indicates that psychological abuse was highly correlated with physical abuse (.57, p<.01, n=88). The way in which power is defined and measured points toward the abusive individual being more likely to make the decisions about how the couple spends their free time and decisions about finances. This lends itself to more psychologically abusive tactics, than those do that are physical.

Table 22 - Power Imbalance by Overall Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Low Abuse</th>
<th>High Abuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Power Imbalance</td>
<td>56.8% (50)</td>
<td>21.6% (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Power Imbalance</td>
<td>9.1% (8)</td>
<td>12.5% (11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (n=88), $x^2 = 6.1$, $df=1$, $p=.01$

Table 23 - Power Imbalance by Physical Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Low Abuse</th>
<th>High Abuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Power Imbalance</td>
<td>54.4% (48)</td>
<td>22.3% (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Power Imbalance</td>
<td>8.7% (7)</td>
<td>14.6% (13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (n=88), $x^2 = 9$, $df=1$, $p=.003$
Table 24 - Bi-variate Correlations Between Masculinity, Femininity, Dependency, Jealousy, Power Imbalance, and Overall Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Femininity</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Power Imbalance</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Overall Abuse</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<.05 **p<.01

Table 25 - Bi-variate Correlations Between Masculinity, Femininity, Dependency, Jealousy, Power Imbalance, and Psychological Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Femininity</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td>-.02*</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Power Imbalance</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Psychological Abuse</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<.05 **p<.01

To examine the strength and direction of the relationship between the variable of power imbalance and abusive behavior, correlations were computed with continuous scores, utilizing a list-wise deletion of data with a two-tailed test of significance.

Correlation analysis did not show power imbalance and overall abuse to be associated. The same
was true for psychological abuse. Table 26 shows that power imbalance and physical abuse was weakly correlated and significant (.20, p<.05, n=103).

Table 26- Bi-variate Correlations Between Masculinity, Femininity, Dependency, Jealousy, Power Imbalance, and Physical Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Masculinity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Femininity</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Dependency</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Jealousy</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Power Imbalance</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Physical Abuse</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<.05 **p<.01

Although not part of the hypotheses, in order to examine the strength and direction of the relationship of the variables with each other, correlations were computed with continuous scores, utilizing a list-wise deletion of data with a two-tailed test of significance. As previously mentioned psychological abuse was highly correlated with physical abuse (.57, p<.01 n=88).

**Sex Role Identity and Relationship Factors**

Femininity was weakly associated with dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance and masculinity was not. Although associations between femininity and all three relationship factors were weak, significance was indicated for all three (femininity/dependency =.23, p <.05, n=93; femininity/jealousy =.20, p<.05,n= 93; femininity/power =.26 p<.01, n= 92). Masculinity was not correlated with either dependency, jealousy, or power imbalance.
Relationship Factors

The relationship factor of dependency was positively correlated with power imbalance and was significant (dependency/power = .32, p < .01, n = 104). As dependency in the relationship increased so did the power imbalance in the relationship increase. There was no significant association between power imbalance and jealousy.

Sex Role Identity and Relationship Factors as Predictors of Abuse

To examine predictors of abuse, three hierarchical regression models were conducted using continuous scores for all variables. Utilizing two-tailed significance, with a list-wise deletion of missing data, the independent variables of dependency, jealousy, power imbalance, masculinity, and femininity were entered into the first regression model to determine how much of the variance in abuse is explained by these variables.

Tables 27-29 summarize the results of the regression models and are presented in this section. As a group, the variables of dependency, jealousy, power imbalance, masculinity, and femininity significantly explain 18% of the variance in overall abuse (F = 3.13, r² = .18, p<.05). Jealousy was the strongest predictor, when all the other variables were held constant (p<.01, B = 1.20).

Table 27- Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Overall Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>1.20**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Imbalance</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Femininity</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>-.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: F = .3.13, p<.05, r² = .18, p<.05**
The results of the second regression model, entering psychological abuse as the dependent variable indicate that as a group, the variables of dependency, jealousy, power imbalance, masculinity, and femininity significantly explain 17% of the variance in psychological abuse ($F=3.0$, $r^2 = .17$, $p<.05$). Jealousy was the only predictor, when all the other variables were held constant ($p<.01$; $B = .98$).

Table 28- Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Psychological Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.98**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Imbalance</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Femininity</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>-.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $F=3.0$, $p<.05$, $r^2 = .17$, $p<.05**$

A third regression model was conducted entering physical abuse as a dependent variable. Despite the correlation analysis results that show physical and psychological abuse significantly correlated ($r = .57$, $p<.01$), as a group the variables of dependency, jealousy, power imbalance, masculinity, and femininity explain less than 10% of the variance in physical abuse with no significance indicated ($F=1.85$, $p=.11$, $r^2 = .10$). This is despite the significant correlation between physical and psychological abuse ($r = .57$, $p<.01$).
Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis #1: Femininity will be negatively associated with abusive behavior.

It was expected that a respondent’s femininity would be negatively associated with high rates of abusive behavior that she reported exhibiting toward her partner. The results indicated that femininity was neither positively nor negatively correlated with overall abuse and psychological abuse. Femininity and physical abuse, however, were weakly correlated and approached significance. All three regression models, utilizing continuous scores, failed to show that low levels of femininity predicted abusive behavior. Therefore, femininity is not negatively associated with abusive behavior regardless if a lesbian has few or many characteristics typically associated with femininity. The likelihood of her abusing her partner is the same. The data did not support this hypothesis.

Hypothesis #2: Dependency in the relationship will be positively associated with higher rates of abusive behavior.

It was expected that high levels of dependency in the relationship, as reported by the respondent, would be positively associated with high rates of respondent’s abusive behavior that she reported exhibiting toward her partner. While cross tabulations seem to suggest that low levels of dependency are present with low levels of abuse, correlation analysis failed to show a relationship. Conversely, it is unclear why high levels of dependency were not present with high rates of abusive behavior. The data does not support this hypothesis.

Hypothesis #3: Jealousy in the relationship will be positively associated with higher rates of abusive behavior.

It was expected that high levels of jealousy in the relationship, as reported by the respondent, would be positively associated with respondent’s high rates of reported abusive behavior toward her partner.
Cross tabulations and chi-square tests of association show that low levels of jealousy are significantly associated with low rates of psychological abuse (p<.05, x²=5).

Correlation analysis show a positive relationship between jealousy and overall abuse (.37, p<.01). There seems to be evidence that low levels of jealousy are also present with low rates of abuse and conversely that as jealousy increases in the relationship, so does abusive behavior. Multiple regression analysis showed that only 18% of the variance of abuse was explained by the variables, masculinity, femininity, dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance, however, when all other variables were held constant, jealousy was the strongest predictor of abuse (p<.01, B =1.20).

Hypothesis # 4: Power imbalance in the relationship will be positively associated with higher rates of abusive behavior. Support for the hypothesis related to power imbalance were mixed. It was expected that high power imbalance in the relationship, as reported by the respondent, would be positively associated with respondent’s high rates of reported abusive behavior toward her partner. Cross tabulations and chi-square tests of association show that low levels of power imbalance are significantly associated with low rates of overall abuse (p <.01, x²=6.1) and physical abuse (p< .01, x² = 9).

Correlations analysis failed to show a significant association between power imbalance overall abuse. Power imbalance was significantly but weakly correlated with physical abuse (.20, p=.05, n=103).
Summary

There were four hypotheses that framed this study. All but one was supported by the data. This research examined the relationship between a lesbian’s sex role identity, specifically the dimensions of masculinity and femininity, and her abusive behavior toward an intimate partner, and the extent to which the relationship factors of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance are related to abusive behavior.

It was expected that a respondent’s femininity would be negatively associated with high rates of abusive behavior that she reported exhibiting toward her partner. The results indicated that femininity was neither positively nor negatively correlated with overall abuse and psychological abuse. All three regression models, utilizing continuous scores, failed to show that low levels of femininity predicted abusive behavior. Although not part of the hypotheses testing, femininity was associated with dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance and was significant.

Low levels of dependency were present with low levels of overall abuse and psychological abuse and chi square analysis showed a significant relationship. Conclusions cannot be drawn from this finding however because this relationship may have been spurious. Further, correlation analysis failed to show a significant association between dependency and abusive behavior as well as failing to show a significant association between power imbalance and abusive behavior.

Low levels of jealousy were significantly associated with low levels of psychological abuse. Overall abuse was positively correlated with jealousy and was significant. As a group, the variables of dependency, jealousy, power imbalance, masculinity, and femininity significantly explain only 18% of the variance in overall abuse and 17% of the variance in psychological abuse. However, jealousy was the strongest predictor, when all the other variables were held constant.
While 18% of the variance in abuse was significantly explained by the variables studied in this research there is a substantial percentage that is not explained by these variables. Other variables that may explain abusive behavior among lesbians that were not examined in this study may be intergenerational abuse, alcoholism, socio-economic status, or other social-psychological explanations. There is a need for further research that investigates the substantial percentage of variance that is not explained by this study.

In the next chapter, the importance of the results and the implications for social work and social welfare will be discussed. The strengths and limitations of the present study and suggestions for future research will also be addressed.
CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study investigated the following four research questions: 1) To what extent does partner abuse exist among lesbian intimates? 2) What is the nature of this abusive behavior (physical or psychological abuse)? 3) Is there an association between sex role identity and abusive behavior? 4) To what extent are the relationship factors of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance related to abusive behavior in lesbian relationships?

This chapter provides a discussion of the interpretation and importance of the results of the investigation into these research questions and offers implications for both social work and social welfare. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the present study and suggestions for further research.

Interpretation and Importance of Results

The findings indicate that the majority of this diverse sample of lesbians, who frequent the New York City Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center, live together with their partners in a committed and monogamous relationship, with the average length of the relationship being five years.

As mentioned in the review, similar studies investigating abusive behavior among lesbian intimates has primarily been focused on white, middle class, feminist, lesbians and has largely ignored the experience of lesbians of color. This sample differs from other studies in its representation of working and middle class lesbians, as well as lesbians of color which comprised 34% of the total sample.
Sex Role Identity

This study investigated the relationship between sex role identity and abusive behavior. In terms of the sample’s sex role identity, the findings indicate that the sample was more masculine than feminine identified. When compared to Bem’s (1978) original research measuring sex role identification of college undergraduates, this sample had higher measures of masculinity than the heterosexual women in Bem’s sample. This sample’s sex role identity scores were compared to their heterosexual counterparts by utilizing the data from Bem’s (1978) original research. The results show that the lesbian respondents in this sample have both a higher level of masculinity and femininity than their heterosexual male and female counterparts. As indicated in Table 32, the average masculine score of the heterosexual women in Bem’s sample was 4.79 as compared to this sample’s average masculine score of 5.14, which is higher. The average masculine score of the heterosexual men in Bem’s original research was 5.12 as compared to this sample’s average masculine score of 5.14, which is still higher.

The average feminine score of the heterosexual women in Bem’s sample was 5.05 and appears similar to this sample’s average feminine score of 5.07. However, the average feminine score of 4.59 for the heterosexual men in Bem’s study is much lower than this sample’s average feminine score of 5.07.

Table 29 - Comparison of Sample Data Means to Bem’s Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex Role Identity</th>
<th>Bem’s Sample</th>
<th>Sample Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>4.79 (women)</td>
<td>5.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.12 (men)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Femininity</td>
<td>5.05 (women)</td>
<td>5.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.59 (men)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results from this study, suggest that lesbians may tend to score higher on measures of masculinity when compared to heterosexual women. This is consistent with the literature on sex role identity for lesbians and heterosexual women. As indicated in the literature review, Kurdek & Schmitt (1986) found that the lesbians in their sample scored higher on measures of masculinity than their heterosexual counterparts. Similar studies have also found that measures of masculinity and femininity were significantly different for heterosexual women when compared to lesbians (Kurdek, 1987). Blumenstein & Schwartz (1983) offer an explanation that lesbians may be more non-conventional in their sex roles and therefore may tend to be more masculine. Other theorists argue that sex role identity and sexual identity are related and because of their presumed closeness, lesbians may not adhere to imposed sex roles (Corley & Pollack, 1996). Other studies found that when the dimensions of masculinity and femininity of lesbians were compared to heterosexual women, the lesbian group scored higher in measures of masculinity but no lower in femininity (Oldham, Farnill & Ball, 1982). Gardner (1989) also found that when compared to heterosexual women, lesbians scored higher on measures of masculinity but the same on measures of femininity.

Perhaps the dimensions of masculinity, as defined by Bern (1978) and as measured in the instrument used for this study, are personality attributes that lesbians tend to embrace. Despite the gains of the feminist movement and the illusion of a level playing field for women in the workforce, lesbians may more easily adopt the attributes of assertiveness, leadership, and independence than heterosexual women. Some theorists argue that dimensions of masculinity and femininity are so mutually exclusive that to step outside of gender boundaries is not only stepping out of the norm, but can seriously be committing a societal violation (Lundgren, 1998).

Sex role identification may be more fluid for lesbians than their heterosexual counterparts because they have already taken a step into taboo territory. If it is true that lesbians tend to possess more masculine attributes than their heterosexual counterparts, perhaps it is because they do not conform to traditional roles of heterosexuality and are not concerned that
possessing a higher level of masculinity may be seen as threatening to their male partners.

Another explanation for this sample's higher scores on measures of masculinity may be attributed to an over-representation of "masculine identified" women in the sample. The groups that may have over-represented masculine women are GOAL, the Softball Group, Women who Identify as Butch (WWIAB), and the Butch/Femme Society. GOAL represents a law enforcement group that can be considered non-traditional employment for women and the softball group represents lesbians who are athletic and whose demeanor and interests tend to be more masculine than feminine. Lesbians from the WWIAB group and the Butch/Femme Society identify themselves as "butch" and whose persona, demeanor, and dress represent that which is considered masculine.

Sex Role Identity and Abusive Behavior

This study examined the relationship between sex role identity and abusive behavior and investigated whether low levels of femininity are associated with higher rates of abuse. It was expected that lesbians who possessed less characteristics, typically associated with femininity would be more likely to be abusive toward her partner. The data did not support the hypothesis.

Correlations, utilizing continuous scores, indicated that femininity was neither positively nor negatively correlated with overall abuse, physical abuse, or psychological abuse. Femininity and physical abuse, however were weakly correlated and approached significance (.17, p=.05). All three regression models, utilizing continuous scores, failed to show that low levels of femininity predicted abusive behavior. It is difficult to determine why low levels of femininity were not present with high rates of abuse as predicted. Perhaps respondents perceived themselves as having high levels of both masculine and feminine attributes, when in fact they may really possess lower levels of both masculinity and femininity. There may be a difference between the perception one has of the attributes they possess and the reality of their behavior.

As indicated in the review, Worth, Matthews & Coleman (1990), found that the men in their sample who participated in abusive interactions had significantly lower measures of
femininity than did the men without abusive interactions. According to Leeder (1988) batterers are not able to demonstrate empathy toward their partner, an attribute associated with femininity. In preliminary research conducted with a small convenience sample of lesbians, Telesco (1997) asked respondents to rate their partner's level of masculinity and femininity as well as a current partner's abusive or non-abusive behavior. Results indicated that low measures of femininity were significantly associated with abusive behavior and that low femininity predicted abuse.

In order to draw conclusions from the results of the present study, it is necessary to return to the operational definition of femininity. According to Bem (1974), the dimensions of femininity are associated with an orientation toward the interest in the welfare of others and the harmony of the group. The specific items on the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), measuring the dimensions of femininity are attributes such as tenderness, eagerness to soothe hurt feelings, and understanding. These qualities are by definition benevolent, while the antonyms for the words tender, soothing, and understanding are; harsh, insensitive, and aggravate. It would appear then that an individual who possesses low levels of femininity, as defined by the attributes mentioned, may be more likely to demonstrate abusive behavior.

There has been some criticism of the BSRI, specifically that the measure tends to be associated with recognized gender stereotypes in White, middle class, North America (Morgan & Ayim, 1984). However, Lavallee & Pelletier (1992) found the BSRI to be ecologically adequate and concluded that it was a valid measure of masculine and feminine dimensions. Additionally, Chung (1995) found that the BSRI was equally valid for heterosexual and gay men and that the psychometric data reported in the BSRI manual were essentially replicated. As mentioned earlier, other studies have utilized the BSRI when researching the lesbian population and have found it to be valid (Kurdek & Schmitt, 1986; Oldham, Farnill & Ball, 1982).

Respondents in this sample received separate and continuous scores for each dimension of femininity and masculinity. Therefore, a low measure of femininity is independent of an individual's level of masculinity. The specific items on the Bem Sex Role Inventory that
measure the dimensions of masculinity are attributes such as assertiveness, independence, leadership, and ability to problem solve. The data did not support the hypothesis that low levels of femininity are associated with high rates of abuse. This is surprising and inconsistent with the literature. Studies conducted with heterosexual men who admitted to abusing their partners show that they tend to be emotionally dependent, insecure, and possess low self-esteem (Hastings & Hamberger, 1988; Murphy, Meyer & O’Leary, 1994; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994). Coleman (1996) describes how a batterer may try to compensate for feelings of inferiority and powerlessness by exhibiting abusive behavior.

Perhaps the process of classification of low and high masculinity and femininity, utilizing Bem’s (1988) median split method, does not accurately categorize the high/low dimensions of masculinity and femininity for this sample. Preliminary analysis utilizing the top twenty five percent method of categorization for high/low masculinity and femininity showed that high levels of masculinity are present with high rates of abuse. This is also inconsistent with the literature.

Results from a similar study with heterosexual men and women that investigated sex role identity and abusive behavior, showed that women in the sample who admitted to abusing their male partners had lower masculine and feminine scores than those women who were not abusive. Additionally, the men who were not abusive toward their female partner had both high femininity and masculinity scores, while men who admitted to abuse had low scores (Worth, Matthews & Coleman, 1990). Barnett & Hamberger (1992) found that the heterosexual male batterers in their sample showed a low capacity for problem solving, an attribute associated with masculinity.

Abusive Behavior

This study investigated to what extent partner abuse exists among lesbian intimates. For descriptive purposes continuous abuse scores were re-coded and dichotomized into discreet variables of high and low abuse. Classifications were made on the basis of the top twenty five
percent in order to create typologies from the respondents’ raw scores. It is important to reiterate that abusive behavior has been broadly defined in this study and that on a continuum it falls well within the lower range of severity. That is the psychological and physical abuse items that were most reported were those that are not considered as serious and would not incur serious physical injury. Although a sizable minority were categorized as having high rates of physical and psychological abuse, that abuse specifically was not considered serious.

Thirty four percent of the sample was categorized as exhibiting high rates of overall abuse and psychological abuse toward a current intimate female partner. Thirty seven percent were classified as demonstrating high rates of physical abuse toward their partner at some time during the relationship. This incidence rate seems consistent with the literature.

As indicated in the review, Lie & Gentlewarrier (1991) found that 47% of the respondents in their study reported psychological abuse with a combination of physical and psychological abuse accounting for nearly one third of the sample. In a similar study, 90% of the sample reported that they had been the recipients of at least one or more acts of verbal abuse from their partner (Lockhart, 1994). In a clinical study with lesbians in therapy, Farley (1996) found that 95% of the women admitted to abusing their partners, although the type of abuse was not specified and may have included psychological abuse. In Gardner’s (1989) comparison study investigating the incidence and correlates of partner abuse among heterosexual, lesbian, and gay male couples, the results indicated that lesbian couples had the highest rate of abuse (48%) compared to their heterosexual counterparts (28%). A similar rate was found in Coleman’s (1990) study, with 47% reporting that physical abuse was present in their relationship.

The majority of the abuse reported in the present study is comprised of psychological abuse. The results indicate that 75% of the sample admits to more than one incident of psychological abuse and 26% admit to more than one incident of physical abuse within the last year. The results indicate that the six most reported psychologically abusive acts were gave partner angry looks or stares, called partner names or criticized her, ended a discussion with partner and made the decision yourself, accused partner of paying too much attention to others,
put partner down, and kept partner from doing what she wanted. As indicated in the literature review, psychological abuse often has effects that are as damaging as those of physical abuse, if not greater, and almost always precede physical abuse (O’Leary, 1999, Murphy & O’Leary, 1989; Folingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause, and Polek, 1990).

The results indicate that the six most reported physically abusive acts were; threw, hit, or smashed something at partner, pushed, grabbed, or shoved partner, drove recklessly when the partner was in the car, slapped, hit, or punched partner, pressured partner to have sex, and threw partner around. As indicated in the review, the 1999 NCAVP report on Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and Bisexual Domestic Violence indicates that of the victims who reported minor to fatal injuries to the New York City Anti-Violence Project, two percent required hospitalization, 23% required outpatient care, and 17% needed but did not receive medical attention.

Three quarters of the sample admits to exhibiting more than one incident of psychological abuse toward her partner and almost one third of the sample admits to exhibiting more than one incident of physical abuse. Thirty seven percent of the sample were rated as demonstrating high rates of physical abuse toward their current partner and 34% of the sample were rated as demonstrating high rates of psychological abuse toward their current partner.

Since there is no research to test the hypothesis that psychological abuse predicts physical abuse among lesbian couples, it is difficult to apply the results of this present study indicating that 75% of the sample admits to more than one incident of psychological abuse at some time during their relationship and that 34% of the sample is classified as demonstrating high rates of psychological abuse. The importance of this finding is that psychological abuse tends to precede physical abuse. Murphy & O’Leary (1989) in a longitudinal study of heterosexual couples found that women who were psychologically abused by their dating partners were at higher risk for violence in the early months of their marriage. Other cross-sectional research suggests that severe psychological abuse among heterosexual couples is a predictor of physical abuse (Hamby, 1998).
Later in this chapter areas for future research will be discussed and it is at that time that this issue will be addressed.

Straus (1990) acknowledges that batterers tend to underreport their own abusive behavior. Although the categories of high and low abuse in this present study were defined by utilizing a top twenty five percent classification, the self report nature of the survey research suggests that the abuse reported, both physically and psychologically, may be even higher.

It is difficult to compare the results of this study with other research because there are methodological differences for each study. Some research has focused on the batterer while others have looked at the victim's perspective. The definitions and classifications of abuse, although similar have different methods for classifying.

The ability to generalize the findings of this present study are limited by the location and nature of the sample, however the findings suggest that the incidence of abuse among lesbian intimates is similar to their heterosexual counterparts.

The physically abusive behaviors of pushing, shoving, slapping, throwing objects, and driving recklessly, were among the most reported physically abusive items. The psychologically abusive behavior of ridicule, criticism, threats, and verbal abuse were among the most reported psychologically abusive items. Research on heterosexual dating violence indicates that couples believe that mild forms of physical abuse is acceptable and in some cases is viewed as a symbol of affection (Levy, 1991; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989).

The fact that individuals tend to underreport their own stigmatizing and negative behavior and that 15% of the respondents failed to complete the Abusive Behavior Inventory leads the researcher to infer that higher rates of abuse may have existed for this sample.

Theorists argue that the number of incidents and the severity of abuse escalate over time and that psychological abuse almost always precedes physical abuse (Walker, 1979; O'Leary, 1999). It is important to note that this sample was not taken from a batterers intervention program, a therapy group, or from a group previously classified as "abusive". The sample was taken in a social setting and seems to suggest a typical lesbian who frequents the community.
center for social activities. The results indicate that 75% of the sample is admitting to more than one incident of abusive behavior, although minimally, and to a large degree in the form of psychological abuse. The literature suggests that abuse escalates in incidence and severity over time and that physical abuse is almost always precipitated by psychological abuse. The results of this study may suggest that the minimal level of abusive behavior, both physically as well as psychologically, may increase or worsen over time. Renzetti (1992) found that 77% of the lesbians in the sample had experienced some type of physical abuse within the first six months of the relationship and that 71% reported that the physical abuse increased in the number of acts and in the level of intensity over time.

Dependency

This study also examined to what extent the relationship factor of dependency was related to abusive behavior. For descriptive purposes, continuous dependency scores were recoded and dichotomized into discrete variables of high and low dependency. Classifications were made on the basis of the top twenty-five percent in order to create typologies from the respondents' raw scores. Thirty-four percent of the sample was classified as having high levels of dependency in their relationship. Dependency was defined as both partner dependency on respondent as well as respondents' dependency on partner. In order to draw conclusions from these results it is necessary to return to the operational definition of dependency and the specific items that respondents were asked to report on. Eight specific items assessed this variable. The items included; “I am dependent on my partner”, “My partner is dependent on me”, “I consider my partner responsible for my well being”, “My partner is responsible for my well being”, “If I feel badly, my partner is responsible to cheer me up”, “If my partner feels badly, I am responsible to cheer her up”, “My partner needs to ask me permission to spend time with family or friends”, and “I need to ask my partner permission to spend time with family or friends”.

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The fact that a sizable minority of the sample reported feeling responsible for the other's well being may be linked to issues of attachment, fusion, and merging which seem to be characteristics that exist within lesbian relationships and may be related to dependency. Isolation, resulting from homophobia and heterosexism create a fertile environment for attachment and consequently inform this tendency for lesbians to be dependant on each other for support, validation, sense of identity, legitimacy, and sense of community in a heterosexist and homophobic society (Krestan & Bepko, 1980).

Lesbian couples are challenged with balancing attachment and autonomy and face the risk of dependency. In this study, the results indicated that this dependency was emotional and not financial. Two thirds of the sample reported that neither the respondents nor their partner were financially dependent on the other.

The data suggests that there seems to be some evidence of an association between dependency in the relationship and abusive behavior exhibited toward the partner. The findings indicate that low levels of dependency are present with low rates of overall abuse and psychological abuse. However, correlation analysis failed to support this hypothesis. These mixed findings are consistent with the literature.

In Renzetti's (1992) study the findings indicated that the more the respondents' sought independence, the greater the batterer became dependent and consequently the more abuse inflicted and with greater frequency. For example, the abusive partners' pushing and shoving significantly increased as conflict over the respondents' desire to be independent increased. Similarly, she found that reports of the abusers' dependence as a problem in the relationship correlated highly with increased abuse, such as hitting her, interrupting her sleep, or disrupting her eating habits. This is consistent with the theoretical explanation of enmeshment, which makes an increase in autonomy particularly threatening for the abusive partner.

As indicated in the review, Lockhart (1994) and her colleagues found that when compared with their non-victimized counterparts, respondents who reported severe acts of physical abuse perceived that their partners had a high need for attachment. Severely victimized
respondents in Lockhart’s (1994) study also reported more conflict around issues of independence and autonomy, such as a partner’s emotional and financial dependency, a partner socializing without the respondent, and a respondents’ intimate involvement with other people.

Clinicians report that lesbian batterers tend to possess low self-esteem, are overly dependent, and demonstrate high levels of jealousy (Margolies & Leeder, 1995; Leeder, 1988; Lobel, 1985). Other theorists propose that interconnectedness exists between dependency, power imbalances, personality disorders, and abusive behavior. West (1998) posits that dependency may be related to issues of power and control and power imbalances in the relationship, which may serve to explain abusive behavior in lesbian relationships. According to Coleman (1996) dependency reflects borderline or narcissistic personality disorders that she hypothesizes is correlated to abusive behavior in lesbian batterers.

Jealousy

This study also investigated the extent to which the relationship factor of jealousy was related to abusive behavior. For descriptive purposes continuous jealousy scores were re-coded and dichotomized into discrete variables of high and low jealousy. Classifications were made on the basis of the top twenty five percent in order to create typologies from the respondents’ raw scores. Half of the sample was classified as demonstrating high levels of jealousy in their relationship. Twenty six percent of the respondents reported that they occasionally did not like it when their partner paid attention to other things and not to her. Forty four percent indicated that they occasionally did not like it when their partner spent time with friends or family and five percent frequently to very frequently do not like the partner spending time away from her. Cross tabulations and chi square tests of association showed low levels of jealousy present with low rates of overall abuse and psychological abuse and were significant. These findings are consistent with the literature.

As indicated in the review, Risman & Schwartz (1988) found that non-monogamy was difficult for the respondents in their sample and that it threatened the security of their
relationship. The results of this present study indicate that 97% of the sample classified their relationship as monogamous. The results of Renzetti's (1992) study indicated that 42% of the respondents held conflicting attitudes about monogamy and that it was problematic for their relationship. In that same study, 70% reported that jealousy was a problem in their relationship.

The findings of the present study and the existing research suggest that there is a connection between monogamy in lesbian relationships and problems of jealousy. Renzetti (1992) reported that the majority of participants in her study described their abusive partners as jealous, extremely possessive, and that the majority of the abusive partners had irrationally accused the respondents of infidelity. Renzetti's findings also indicated that the more jealousy was a problem in the relationship, the more frequently physical abuse occurred.

The hypothesis that jealousy is associated with high rates of abuse was supported by the data. The present study indicates that not only was jealousy significantly associated with abusive behavior (.36, p<.01), but it was the strongest predictor of overall abuse (p <.01, B=1.20) and psychological abuse (p<.01, B=.98). This finding is consistent with the literature.

According to Renzetti (1992) jealousy is an outcome of dependency and a significant contributor to abusive behavior among lesbian intimates. As indicated in the review, theorists posit that jealousy can be its own tactic of abuse. Possessiveness, irrational thoughts of partner infidelity, belligerent rages, and badgering accusations often precipitate physical abuse (Follingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause, & Polek, 1990; Walker, 1979). Studies of heterosexual partner abuse found that male abusers displayed extreme jealousy and possessiveness toward their female partners and that irrational jealous outbursts usually proceeded acts of physical violence (Follingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause, & Polek, 1990; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Walker, 1979). Jealousy becomes another tool to isolate the victim and to keep her way from her friends, family, work, school, and community.

For lesbians, issues of attachment verses autonomy and monogamy verses non-monogamy may serve to complicate jealous tendencies by either of the partners. According to Lindenbaum (1985), as one of the partners' tries to maintain autonomy and detach from the other...
Lindenbaum (1985), as one of the partners’ tries to maintain autonomy and detach from the other it can be seen as a threat and may become jealous of the other’s interest in anything outside of the relationship. Further, jealousy among lesbian couples may also be explained by a lack of institutional validation and legitimacy, resulting from institutionalized heterosexism and homophobia. Renzetti (1992) suggests this is because the foundation, security, and durability of the relationship is easily threatened by forces outside of the couple.

Another explanation for why high levels of jealousy may be associated with high rates of abusive behavior among the lesbians in this sample may be a tendency to not only be jealous when a partner pays attention to others but also that others are not paying attention to her. A sort of competitiveness may be at the root of the jealousy. Additionally, lesbians may be more likely to have other lesbians as friends. Unlike their heterosexual counterparts, the potential for romantic attachments may be more likely to exist. That is when heterosexual couples spend time with their separate friends, those friends are more likely to be of the same gender and the potential for romantic intimacy is not present. This may also be at the root of the jealousy.

The hypothesis that jealousy was associated with abusive behavior was supported by the data. An interesting finding related to the third regression model that used physical abuse as a dependent variable, is that the same variables of masculinity, femininity, dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance, used in the third model explained 17% of the variance of psychological abuse yet only explained 10% of the variance in physical abuse. Further, the regression model that used psychological abuse and overall abuse as dependent variables, showed significantly that jealousy was the strongest predictor. In the model utilizing physical abuse, no significance was indicated and none of the variables predicted physical abuse. This is despite the significant correlation between physical and psychological abuse (.5657, p<.01). One explanation for this may be an under-reporting of physical abuse because of its stigmatizing nature and the minimal level of physical abuse reported.
While only 18% of the variance in abuse was significantly explained by the variables studied in this research there is a substantial percentage that is not explained by these variables. Other variables that explain abusive behavior among lesbians may be intergenerational abuse, alcoholism, socio-economic status, or other social-psychological explanations. There is a need for further research that investigates the substantial percentage of variance that is not explained by this study.

Power Imbalance

This study examined to what extent the relationship factor of power imbalance was related to abusive behavior. For descriptive purposes continuous power imbalance scores were re-coded and dichotomized into discrete variables of high and low power imbalance. Classifications were made on the basis of the top twenty five percent in order to create typologies from the respondents’ raw scores. The results of this study indicated that 23% of the sample was classified as demonstrating high levels of power imbalance in their relationship and 34% reported more than one incident of power imbalance within the last year, particularly when it applied to decision-making and finances. Fifty percent of the sample occasionally decides how the couple spends their free time and 18% reported occasionally controlling all the finances. In terms of financial decision-making, 19% of the respondents reported that they occasionally make all the decisions regarding the couples’ finances and 6% report frequently to very frequently having exclusive control over the couples’ financial matters.

Support for the hypotheses related to power imbalance were mixed. Correlation analysis, utilizing continuous scores, showed no association between power imbalance and overall abuse and no association between power imbalance and psychological abuse. However, power imbalance was weakly, but significantly associated with physical abuse. Additionally, results from cross tabulations and chi square tests of association showed that low levels of power imbalance are significantly associated with low rates of overall abuse and physical abuse, suggesting that lesbian couples may be at risk for abusive behavior when high levels of power imbalance are present.
imbalances are present.

The results of the present study are consistent with the literature. As indicated in the review, Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz (1980) assert that violence is least likely to occur in egalitarian households where the power of partners is balanced. The literature also suggests that equality of power is particularly important in lesbian relationships and that lesbian couples tend to embrace an egalitarian ideal (Kurdek & Schmitt, 1986; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983).

Caldwell & Peplau (1984) found that 40% of the lesbians in their study reported a power imbalance in their relationship despite strongly endorsing an egalitarian ideal of equal power. Reilly & Lynch (1990) also found that although egalitarianism was the ideal in most of the 70 lesbian couples interviewed, the couples had not been able to achieve it.

Renzetti (1992) looked at decision-making, division of labor, and other status differentials and found a clear imbalance of power between the study participants and their abusers. In terms of decision-making, Renzetti found that the abusers appeared to be more powerful partners in the relationship. There was an unequal division of labor in two thirds of the relationships, with most of the abusers making the decisions about the couple's weekend activities. Some indicators of power imbalance were strongly associated with severe forms of abuse.

Lockhart (1994) found evidence to support the link between power imbalances and victimization in lesbian relationships. When division of labor between partners was considered to be a form of power, lesbians who assumed primary responsibility for household duties, such as cooking and managing finances, were more likely to be abused. Specifically respondents who sustained severe aggression reported more conflicts around housekeeping and cooking duties, when compared with non-victims and those who sustained mild forms of violence. Renzetti (1992) questions whether divisions in household labor exist before the abuse or if the victims assume domestic chores in an attempt to appease the abuser.
Coleman (1990) posits that while the dynamics of power and control are clearly associated with abusive behavior, the specific nature of this relationship is unclear. The most common method of measuring family power has been through an analysis of decision-making. In their national study of violence in the family, Straus and colleagues (1980) explored power and decision making as related to violence in heterosexual couples and found that abuse was most common in husband dominant homes and the least amount of violence occurred in democratic households. They suggest that violence may be used as a reaction to feeling less powerful and participating less in the decision-making process, as well as a means of legitimizing or maintaining dominance.

In Renzetti’s (1992) examination of the balance of power and abusive behavior in lesbian couples, she found that the abusers were often the decision makers in the relationship. Most batterers were reported to initiate sexual activities and make decisions about how to spend the weekend. A tendency to defer to their partners’ choice regarding the weekends led to a higher number of abusive incidents.

Financial dependency is not supported by the data in the present study, however 13% of the respondents reported that they frequently to very frequently make all the decisions regarding the couples finances and 6% report having exclusive control over the couples financial matters. This finding suggests a risk of economic abuse occurring in the relationship.

When respondents were asked who makes the decision regarding how the couple spends their free time, 10% of the participants indicated that they frequently to very frequently make that decision. This may suggest that the abusive partner, who is maintaining power and control over the victim, is the one to make the important decisions and the victim of the abuse yields to her abuser as a matter of survival and conditioning.

The results of this study may suggest that an egalitarian partnership may be less likely to be abusive than one in which there is an imbalance of power. It is also important to note that correlation analysis showed a significant association between power imbalance and physical abuse. Some of the results of the present study appear inconsistent with prior research that...
found that when compared to their heterosexual counterparts, lesbians tend to have a greater
degree of shared decision-making (Kurdek & Schmitt, 1986; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983).
Renzetti (1992) cautions that when power is defined by decision-making it is important to note
that not all decisions have the same value. This may serve to explain the inconsistency in the
findings.

**Relationship Factors and Sex Role Identity**

An interesting finding not related to any of the hypotheses in this study were associations
found between sex role identity and the relationship factors of dependency, jealousy, and power
imbalance. Results showed that femininity was associated with dependency, jealousy, and power
difference: femininity/dependency (.23, p<.05); femininity/jealousy (.20, p=.05);
femininity/power imbalance (.26, p<.01). Although these associations are weak, they may
suggest that as levels of femininity increase, the levels of dependency, jealousy, and power
imbalance also increase. It is logical that a person who possesses qualities that are concerned
with the well being of others would be likely to “feel responsible for her partner’s well being”.
Therefore explaining why femininity is associated with dependency. However, the explanation
for why femininity is also associated with both jealousy and power imbalance is difficult to
conclude.

**Implications for Social Work and Social Welfare**

**Practice and Programs**

The results of this study underscore the need to recognize that abuse occurs among
lesbian couples and that it takes the form of psychological abuse as well as physical abuse. The
results of this study also highlight the commitment needed for the continued and enhanced
delivery of services to battered lesbians, expanded intervention programs for lesbian batterers,
and innovative prevention initiatives designed to adequately address the issue of partner abuse in lesbian relationships. In order to enhance the delivery of services to battered lesbians, providers need to be educated on the issue of battering in lesbian relationships. Staff development and education about the incidence, prevalence, and severity of lesbian partner abuse can improve service delivery. Further, the role that research plays in the education of social workers about the lesbian population and their human service needs is critical. This is particularly timely in response to the Council on Social Work Education accredited social work programs recent requirements to include curriculum on lesbian and gay issues (Martin & Knox, 2000).

As mentioned earlier in the review, medical, mental health, domestic violence advocates, criminal justice workers, and other providers may assume that clients are heterosexual (Berkman & Zinberg, 1997; Greene, 1994; Hammond, 1989; Holmes & Hodge, 1997). In fact most domestic violence programs do not serve lesbian survivors or victims and the criminal justice system does not view lesbian partner abuse in the same manner as heterosexual partner abuse. This can be addressed with cultural competence and anti-homophobia training for providers, police, and prosecutors which can aid in creating agencies that will foster an environment where service providers do not presuppose that they are serving heterosexual women exclusively. As staff become less heterosexist and homophobic in the delivery of service to the lesbian population, more lesbian victims may be encouraged to seek help.

In addition to utilizing the items on the Abusive Behavior Inventory, that include physical as well as psychological indicators, an assessment of lesbian partner abuse should include specific questions that center around the dynamics of the relationship itself. It is also critical to use gender neutral language in your assessment at the onset and then specific questions can be asked regarding gender later one.

Some questions that can be asked include:

- How do you define your relationship?
- Would you describe it as monogamous? If not, how would you describe it?
Would you say that you are committed to your partner? If not, how would you define your level of commitment?

Are you exclusively involved with your partner?

Is your partner a woman or a man?

Do you live with her? If so, do you share a bedroom?

Do you share the finances? How are the finances divided? Who makes the decisions about how you spend your free time as a couple?

Do you consider yourself dependent on her? Emotionally or financially? Both?

Do you have feelings of jealousy? How often? How are they expressed?

Does your partner have feelings of jealousy? How often? How are they expressed?

Since assessment is critical in the intervention of partner abuse, service providers can benefit from training on how to effectively assess battering in lesbian relationships, particularly as it relates to the assessment of psychological abuse. The results of this study suggest the need for increased awareness in this area.

In terms of clinical practice with individuals or couples, the specific issue of jealousy in a relationship and its association to abuse should be explored. For example, the clinician should assess the degree to which the couple is merged with each other. Does either partner have and maintain autonomy from the other? Are high levels of possessiveness and jealousy present? Do jealous and possessive outbursts seem to occur particularly when one partner attempts to act independently or shows a desire to socialize with friends separately?

This study seems to suggest that jealousy is associated with high rates of abusive behavior. Therefore a clinician may explore with the individual or couple how jealousy is manifested and further assist the individual or couple in examining the connection between the manifestations of jealousy and the abusive behavior.

Batterer intervention programs may incorporate into existing psycho-educational curricula the issue of jealousy and how it may be associated with abusive behavior. Facilitators
can elicit from the batterer what do they specifically believe provokes their jealousy? How is their jealousy manifested? Facilitators may be able to help the batterer to identify the jealous manifestation as psychological abuse or physical abuse.

Survivors’ support groups can also incorporate how jealousy may be linked to abuse into their existing curricula. These groups are generally based on a twelve week model, dealing with issues such as; recognizing abuse, dynamics of power and control, safety planning, self-esteem building, and future healthy relationships. Survivors of abuse can be taught to recognize warning signs, particularly jealous outbursts or tirades and see them as precipitators for abuse, thus being able to develop safety plans before the incident becomes dangerous.

In addition to enhancing the delivery of existing services and intervention programs, initiatives designed to prevent partner abuse within the lesbian community are also needed. Educational programs can be targeted at the lesbian community focusing on ways to cultivate healthy and non-abusive relationships and emphasizing the deleterious effects and precipitating nature of psychological abuse. Lesbian individuals and couples can benefit greatly from seminars, workshops, retreats, and symposiums that discuss ways to balance the need for attachment with the tendency toward dependency, maintaining monogamy without high levels of jealousy, and how to appropriately balance power in a relationship.

Since the results of this study suggested a relationship between jealousy and abusive behavior, this issue can be included in curricula for educational programs designed to promote healthy and non-abusive lesbian relationships. The traits of tenderness, understanding, and eagerness to soothe hurt feelings can be among the feminine attributes that are focused on, while the masculine attributes of problem solving and independence can also be emphasized as ways to prevent abusive behavior, dependency and power imbalances.

Education and outreach initiatives to the lesbian population about the existence and dynamics of partner abuse can be done through radio advertisements, subway campaigns, or the handing out of educational pamphlets at the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center, at

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local lesbian restaurants, bars, social, or athletic events.

Social Welfare Policies

Consciousness-raising in the larger community about institutionalized and individual homophobia and heterosexism in research is critical. Nonprobability sampling methods have significant limitations on the generalizability of the findings. Harry (1990) described how the use of such sampling strategies tends to underrepresent those gay men who are not connected to the gay “community”. This has particular importance for this study that used lesbians who were well connected with the community center and underrepresented those lesbians who were not savvy about the existence of the center and its activities. This is a limitation of the research yet the solution falls in the hands of the social work profession and the need for policy to be implemented that changes the way we research this hidden population.

As social workers, we become limited in our assumptions and conclusions about the populations we serve and study because of institutionalized, individualized, and internalized heterosexism and homophobia. Researchers are limited in their use of inferential statistics when researching the lesbian population. These are the limitations of the research and are rooted in heterosexism and homophobia. Therefore action towards change in social welfare policies can only enhance and augment research.

In terms of the delivery of service, policies can be implemented whereby all human service organization literature reflects the needs of the lesbian population and creates a safe environment for victims as well as batterers. Additionally, staff development and recruitment of openly lesbian staff can contribute to the continued effort to maintain a safe and open environment that enhances the delivery of service.

Government funding for lesbian domestic violence programs depends largely on policy and legislation. These domestic violence programs need to include both batterer programs as well as the provision of services to survivors. On-going anti-homophobia training and consciousness-raising seminars for staff, administration, and volunteers need to be written into
agency policy. Social work has a responsibility to lobby for change on behalf of those who are oppressed by developing policies and advocating for legislation that is inclusive of the lesbian population.

**Strengths and Limitations of Present Study**

**Strengths of Study**

This study adds to the existing literature on lesbian partner abuse but makes a significant contribution by collecting data from a diverse group of lesbians in a social setting from New York City, one of the largest lesbian communities in the country. Lesbians of color have largely been ignored in the research on lesbian partner abuse and this study has taken an important step in the commitment to representation.

Another strength of this study is that important data on the incidence and severity of lesbian partner abuse have been collected in a non-clinical setting. This documentation adds to social workers understanding of the full scope of the problem and thereby broadening the delivery of service to lesbian survivors and treatment for lesbian batterers.

Finally, a major strength of this study is that it examined the sex role identity of lesbians, utilizing a valid instrument to measure dimensions of masculinity and femininity and determine to what extent these dimensions are associated with abusive behavior. This research is groundbreaking in that there is no study to date that has investigated this issue with lesbians.

**Sample Limitations**

The sampling procedures for researching the lesbian population is limiting for several reasons. The conceptual definition of what a lesbian is, the ways in which researchers identify lesbians, and the settings in which they are sampled are all complex challenges in the research of this population (Sell & Petrulio, 1996). Institutionalized homophobia and heterosexism, also serves to explain why it is difficult to obtain a random probability sample from a sampling frame.
(Hedblom & Hartman, 1980). Therefore convenience sampling and snowballing strategies are used.

A convenience sample was used for this study greatly restricting the generalizability of the results. The limitations of the sampling method used in this study limit the inferences made from the results and their applicability to the larger lesbian population.

Other limitations of this study include issues of possible selection bias and instrumentation concerns. The issue of selection bias centers on the use of volunteers as research participants. Not all people volunteer to participate in research and there may be a certain type of individual who is attracted to participating in research. This raises concerns about representativeness. The lesbians who did not participate or refused to complete the questionnaire may have been more abusive than those who chose to participate and complete the questionnaire because lesbians who are abusive in their relationships may have been reluctant to participate and admit to stigmatizing behavior.

Secondly, this sample consisted of lesbians either from various social groups that met regularly at the New York City Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center or lesbians who frequented the center for social events, although not affiliated with a specific social group. There may be unique characteristics associated with people who frequent a lesbian and gay center. There may also be certain characteristics associated with people who are aware of the existence of such groups and the existence of a community center. Individuals who regularly attend such meetings may be more likely to know about and have access to services and may be more comfortable with their sexual orientation than those who are not members of such groups, making them a unique population.

Some of the issues related to representativeness was addressed by choosing social groups that represent lesbians with a wide variety of interests, political affiliations, class, education, race, ethnicities, and religious practice. The current research in this field has focused almost exclusively on samples of white, middle class, feminist lesbians and this study was committed to a diverse sample, seeking to address the issue of representativeness.
Another concern of internal validity for this research is in the self-report retrospective nature of the design, which asks respondents to report on their past abusive behavior. While the research suggests that men under-report their abusive behavior, the National Family Violence Survey indicates that women do not and that issues of social desirability are not indicated (Miller, 1996; Straus, 1990). Despite the research, the items on the Abusive Behavior Inventory ask very specific and stigmatizing questions relative to an individual’s abusive behavior and respondents may be reluctant to admit abusiveness, may deny the behavior as abusive, or may fail to recognize it as abuse. This is a consideration of this study and may limit the interpretation of the results. However, prior research indicates that respondents were candid about their abusive behavior when asked to self-report (Petrik, et al., 1994; Shepard, 1992).

Other Limitations

Another limitation lies with the instruments themselves and the broad definition of the categorizing of low and high rates of abuse. The Bem Sex Role Inventory, although a reliable and valid instrument may have reflected more of a respondent’s perception of themselves rather than their actual attributes. The respondents may have wanted to be viewed in a better light and may have tended to rate themselves higher than they actually are in reality. To utilize the Abusive Behavior Inventory or any scaled measure to collect information on a respondent’s own abusive behavior may not have been an effective to collect data. Rather than using a scale, it may have been more effective and accurate to ask respondents to indicate the actual number of times they exhibited certain physical or psychologically abusive acts and to utilize qualitative data from structured interviews. Further, the broad definition of low/high rates of abuse by utilizing the top twenty five percentile may not be an accurate description of the sample. However, given the data collected from a scale that asks respondents to rate themselves on various psychological and physical abuse items from never to very frequently, the top twenty five percent categorization was more well defined and accurate than utilizing abusive verses non-abusive categories or a median split method.
Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should focus on comparisons between heterosexual and lesbian couples on issues of dependency, jealousy, power, and sex role identity and investigate whether differences between the couples exist. The fact that there is little to no research in this area is one reason to do comparison studies. Another reason to compare the groups is to investigate whether the dynamics of lesbian relationships are similar or different to heterosexual couples and to examine if these relationship factors differ on the basis of sexual orientation. More specifically, other future research can examine the incidence, severity, dynamics, and effects of psychological abuse for lesbian and heterosexual couples.

Analysis from the existing 2000 United States Census data that asked people if they lived with an unmarried partner indicates that there is a 245% increase in gay and lesbian households. According to the census data there are 32, 163 households in New York City that are occupied by unmarried partners of the same gender and that New York City lesbian households account for 11,890. This new category of census data creates an opening to explore the possibility of creating a sampling frame from the census and engaging in a study that utilizes a probability random sample.

Batterer intervention programs currently being used throughout the country almost exclusively treat the male batterer who has been court mandated (Finn, 1987; Hamby, 1998). Because of the scarcity of batterer intervention programs for lesbians, sentencing options are limited for the convicted lesbian batterer. However, using material from existing heterosexual models that focus on power and control, anger management, conflict resolution, and communication, intervention curricula specifically designed for lesbians can be developed utilizing information gained from the results of this study.

An experimental study can be conducted with a convenience sample of lesbian batterers who are participants in a batterers intervention program. The control group would receive the typical 12-week psycho-educational model of intervention, while the experimental group would
receive additional topics on the issues of dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance, in addition to the existing curricula that the control group received. An Abusive Behavior Inventory would be administered to both groups six months prior to completion of the program and six months after participants had successfully completed the program to determine if levels of abuse differed for the groups. This cohort could be monitored and administered the measurement instrument at various intervals to determine program effectiveness.

There is no research on the effectiveness of lesbian batterer intervention programs. An experimental study of this nature would build upon the little we know about lesbian batterers and contribute greatly to the scarce amount of literature on programs designed to help lesbians stop abusing their intimate partners.

While only 18% of the variance in abuse was significantly explained by the variables examined in this study there is a substantial percentage that is not explained by these variables. Other variables that explain abusive behavior among lesbians may be intergenerational abuse, alcoholism, socio-economic status, or other social-psychological explanations. There is a need for further research that investigates the substantial percentage of variance that is not explained by this study.

Despite the finding that a sizable minority of this sample was categorized as demonstrating high rates of physical and psychological abuse, it is critical to note that the items that respondents admitted to demonstrating fell well within a lower range of severity. Future researchers should evaluate the variables examined in this study among lesbians who report a higher range of severity on physical and psychological abuse items. In this replication study, quantitative and qualitative methods should be combined, utilizing focus groups, to provide rich data that may not be represented in survey research and weren't reflected in this study.
Summary and Conclusions

The present study used a cross-sectional sample of 105 lesbians from a social setting to investigate to what extent they exhibited abusive behavior toward an intimate female partner and whether the abuse was physical or psychological, or both. This study examined whether an association exists between a lesbians sex role identity, particularly the dimension of femininity, and her abusive behavior. Finally, this study's focus tested the hypotheses that dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance would be positively associated with higher rates of abusive behavior.

The results show that when abuse is broadly defined that a sizable minority is classified as exhibiting high rates of overall abuse and psychological abuse at some time during their current relationship. That abuse however is considered non-serious in nature. Seventy four percent of the sample admits to more than one incident of psychological abuse and 26% percent admit to more than one incident of physical abuse. The six most reported physically abusive acts that respondents admitted to either occasionally or frequently/very frequently exhibiting toward their partner were; threw, hit, or smashed something at partner (22%), pushed, grabbed, or shoved partner (21%), drove recklessly when the partner was in the car (15%), slapped, hit or punched partner (8%), pressured partner to have sex (5%), and threw partner around (4%).

The six most reported psychologically abusive acts that respondents admitted to either occasionally or frequently/very frequently exhibiting toward their partner were; gave partner angry looks or stares (71%), called partner names or criticized her (55%), ended a discussion with partner and made the decision yourself (50%), accused partner of paying too much attention to others (41%), put partner down (36%), and kept partner from doing what she wanted (21%).

The most salient finding of this study was the strong evidence of a relationship between jealousy and high rates of abusive behavior. The present study found that as a group, the variables of masculinity, femininity, dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance only explained
18% of the variance in overall abuse. A substantial percentage of the variance in abuse is not explained by the variables examined in this study. Other variables may explain abusive behavior among lesbians. Future research is critical to exploring these explanations.

The implications of these findings underscore the need for continued and enhanced delivery of services to battered lesbians, expanded intervention programs for lesbian batterers, and innovative prevention initiatives designed to adequately address the issue of partner abuse in lesbian relationships. Further, the results of this study suggests that jealousy may predict both physical as well as psychological abuse, although such abuse seems to be less serious in nature than abuse that would result in serious physical injury. It is unclear from this study the temporal order of jealousy and abuse. The need for future research to examine this question is indicated.

The issue of jealousy can be included in curricula for educational programs designed to promote healthy and non-abusive lesbian relationships and batterer intervention programs may incorporate into existing psycho-educational curricula how incidents of jealousy may contribute to abusive behavior.

Other implications of this study point toward consciousness-raising to the larger community about institutionalized and individual homophobia and heterosexism in research. As researchers we become limited in our assumptions and conclusions about the lesbian population. Drawing inferences from the findings of this study and making generalizations to the larger lesbian population is not possible. These are the limitations of the research and are rooted in heterosexism and homophobia. This study highlights the need for action towards change in social welfare policies that can only enhance and augment future research of the lesbian population, particularly the issue of lesbian partner abuse.
References


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Dear Participant:

You are invited to participate in a voluntary and anonymous research study on lesbian personality characteristics and lesbian relationships. You have been asked to participate in this study because of your attendance at the New York City Lesbian & Gay Community Center. This research is being conducted by Grace A. Telesco, M.A. at Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Ph.D. in Social Welfare. Some of the questions you will be asked to answer will be personal and sensitive. Because of the personal nature of some of the questions, researchers and lesbians in our community have been hesitant to inquire about them. Although you may not directly benefit from participating in this study, if these questions are asked it is likely that women like you will be able to benefit from the knowledge gained by your participation.

The purpose of this study is to explore the personality characteristics of lesbians and examine the relationship factors in lesbian couples who have been together at least six months. Since most relationships are complex this study will be asking questions regarding several different aspects of your self and your relationship, including, commitment, monogamy, and conflict resolution.

If you decide to participate in this study we are asking you to be as honest as you can in answering the questions and you can refuse to answer any or all of the questions being asked. Each packet contains a copy of the questionnaire and a separate informed consent form. The consent form should be signed and returned separately from the questionnaire. This is to ensure anonymity. There are boxes marked “questionnaires” and “consent forms” located outside of the meeting room. Please remember that you are under no obligation to complete this questionnaire and you may decide to discontinue your participation at any point.

Answering this questionnaire may bring up feelings about yourself, your partner, and the relationship. People have a variety of reactions, ranging from positive to negative. If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to discuss your reaction please feel free to see me before you leave and I will be happy to talk with you and offer you referrals for social services or you can contact me directly at (718) 832-4826. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact Dr. Lee Badger of the Fordham University Institutional Review Board at (212) 636-7074.

I hope that with these considerations in mind and with the understanding that your answers will be completely anonymous, you will decide to participate. All of the questionnaire and consent forms will be securely stored. No names will be associated with any of the questionnaires. The expected date of completion of this study is May 2001. If you would like results of this study please include your name and address under your signature on the consent form. Results will also be published in the Center newsletter.

Thank you for your participation.

Grace A. Telesco
APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

You are invited to participate in a research project which is designed to investigate the personality characteristics of lesbians and factors associated with lesbian relationships. In order to participate in this study you must be in a lesbian relationship for at least six months. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire that includes questions pertaining to yourself and your current relationship. The questionnaire includes questions regarding your personality attributes, relationship factors, and some demographic information about you and your partner. The time involved in completing the questionnaire is approximately 20 minutes.

You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Each packet contains a copy of the questionnaire and a separate informed consent form. The consent form should be signed and returned separately from the questionnaire. This is to ensure anonymity. You understand that your identity as a participant in this study will not be revealed and will be kept in strict confidence.

The possibility exists that in the course of participating in this study, some uncomfortable feelings may arise in response to the questionnaire. The researcher, Grace A. Telesco is available after completion of the questionnaire to discuss any reactions you may have and offer you referrals and resources if necessary. You are also invited to contact her directly at (718) 832-4826.

Although you may not benefit directly from this study, the knowledge gained from this research will add to the understanding of lesbians and lesbian relationships and will result in an increase in lesbian affirmative research. A summary of the results will be available to you upon request. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact Dr. Lee Badger of the Fordham University Institutional Review Board at (212) 636-7074.

Your cooperation and willingness to participate are appreciated and greatly valued.

I have read and understand the above statement, and agree to participate in the research project under these conditions.

Signature of Participant ______________________ Date____________________

Signature of Investigator____________________________ Date____________________

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In this next section we are asking you to recall some of your behaviors during your current relationship. Please estimate, as honestly as you can, how often you have exhibited these behaviors at any time during your relationship with your partner. Circle a number from the list below for each item to show your closest estimate of how often you have exhibited these behaviors at any time during your relationship with your partner. We are only interested in your relationship with your current partner.

1 = Never  
2 = Occasionally  
3 = Frequently  
4 = Very Frequently

1. Called her names and/or criticized her.
   1  2  3  4

2. Tried to keep her from doing something she wanted to do (e.g., said she couldn't go out with friends or go to a meeting).
   1  2  3  4

3. Gave her angry stares or looks.
   1  2  3  4
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<tr>
<td>1 = Never</td>
<td>2 = Occasionally</td>
<td>3 = Frequently</td>
<td>4 = Very Frequently</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Prevented her from having money for her own use.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Ended a discussion with her and made the decision yourself.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Threatened to hit or throw something at her.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Pushed, grabbed or shoved her.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Put down her family and friends.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Accused her of paying too much attention to someone or something else.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Put her on an allowance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Used her children to threaten her (e.g., told her that she would lose custody or said you would leave town with the children).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Became very upset with her because dinner, house-work or laundry was not ready when you wanted it or done the way you thought it should be.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Said things to scare her (e.g., told her something “bad” would happen or threatened to commit suicide).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 = Never
2 = Occasionally
3 = Frequently
4 = Very Frequently

14. Slapped, hit or punched her. 1 2 3 4

15. Made her do something humiliating or degrading (e.g., made her beg for forgiveness or ask you permission to use the car or do something). 1 2 3 4

16. Checked up on her (e.g., listened to her phone calls, checked the mileage on her car, or called her repeatedly at work). 1 2 3 4

17. Drove recklessly when she was in the car. 1 2 3 4

18. Pressured her to have sex in a way that she didn’t like or want. 1 2 3 4

19. Refuse to do housework or child care. 1 2 3 4

20. Threatened her with a knife, gun, or other weapon. 1 2 3 4

21. Spanked her against her will. 1 2 3 4
1 = Never  
2 = Occasionally  
3 = Frequently  
4 = Very Frequently

22. Told her that she was a bad parent.  
23. Stopped her or tried to stop her from going to work or school.  
24. Threw, hit, kicked, or smashed something.  
25. Kicked her.  
26. Physically forced her to have sex.  
27. Threw her around.  
28. Physically attacked the sexual parts of her body.  
29. Choked or strangled her.  
30. Used a knife, gun, or other weapon against her.
The next series of questions addresses specific aspects of your relationship. For each statement, circle the corresponding number to the response indicated which best describes your relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 = Never</th>
<th>2 = Occasionally</th>
<th>3 = Frequently</th>
<th>4 = Very Frequently</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) I need to ask my partner’s permission to spend time with family or friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) My partner needs to ask me permission to spend time with family or friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) I am dependent on my partner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) My partner is dependent on me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) I am responsible for my partner’s well being</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) I consider my partner responsible for my well being</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) If my partner feels badly, I am responsible to cheer her up</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) If I feel badly, my partner is responsible to cheer me up</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) My partner and I have a lot in common</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>10) My partner and I have a spiritual practice (ie. pray together regularly)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>11) My partner and I have a satisfying sexual relationship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) I feel my partner and I can confide in each other about anything</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) I feel very possessive toward my partner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) I would leave my partner if she had a sexual relationship with someone else</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 = Never
2 = Occasionally
3 = Frequently
4 = Very Frequently

15) I don’t like it when my partner spends time with her friends 1  2  3  4

16) I don’t like it when my partner pays attention to other things and not me 1  2  3  4

17) My partner is responsible for all household chores 1  2  3  4

18) I decide how we spend our free time 1  2  3  4

19) I make all of our financial decisions 1  2  3  4

20) I have exclusive control over our finances 1  2  3  4
This final segment of the questionnaire will focus on personal background information about you and your relationship. For each of the following questions, either enter your response or circle the response that best describes you or your relationship.

1. Are you a lesbian?
   A. yes
   B. no

2. How old are you (in years)? ________
2a. How old is your partner (in years)? ________

3. What is your racial/ethnic identification?

4. What is the racial/ethnic identification of your partner?

5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   A. elementary school
   B. some high school
   C. high school diploma
   D. some college
   E. a bachelors degree
   F. some graduate or professional school
   G. a graduate or professional degree

6. What is the highest level of education your partner has completed?
   A. elementary school
   B. some high school
   C. high school diploma
   D. some college
   E. a bachelors degree
   F. some graduate or professional school
   G. a graduate or professional degree
7. Are you currently employed?
   A. yes
   B. no

7a. If you are currently employed, what is your occupation?_____________________

8. Is your partner currently employed?
   A. yes
   B. no

8a. If your partner is currently employed, what is her occupation?_____________________

9. Approximately what is your current annual income?
   A. less than $10,000
   B. $10,000 - $15,000
   C. $15,001 - $25,000
   D. $25,001 - $35,000
   E. $35,001 - $50,000
   F. $50,001 - $60,000
   G. $60,001 - $70,000
   H. $70,001 - $80,000
   I. $80,001 - $90,000
   J. $90,001 - $100,000
   K. over $100,000

10. Approximately what is your partner’s current annual income?
    A. less than $10,000
    B. $10,000 - $15,000
    C. $15,001 - $25,000
    D. $25,001 - $35,000
    E. $35,001 - $50,000
    F. $50,001 - $60,000
    G. $60,001 - $70,000
    H. $70,001 - $80,000
    I. $80,001 - $90,000
    J. $90,001 - $100,000
    K. over $100,000
10a. How many dependents are you responsible for? ________

10b. How many dependents is your partner responsible for? ________

10c. How many dependents are you responsible for together as a couple? ________

11. How would you describe your relationship?
   A. a committed relationship
   B. not in a committed relationship
   C. other (Please describe) ________________

11a. Do you share a residence with your partner?
   A. yes
   B. no
   C. Other (Please describe) ________________

12. Would you consider your relationship to be monogamous?
   A. yes, for both of us
   B. yes, for me only
   C. Yes, for my partner only
   D. No, it is non-monogamous for both of us
   E. Other (Please describe) ________________

13. How long have you and your partner been together (not necessarily living together)?
    ______ years _______ months

This concludes the questionnaire. We appreciate the time and energy you have given for this research. We understand that writing about your behavior in your current relationship may have been difficult. If you have any questions about the survey or would like to speak with someone about anything this questionnaire may have brought up for you, please feel free to speak to the researcher who is collecting the completed surveys at the entrance of the meeting room.
DOES YOUR PARTNER*

• Hit, punch, slap, kick, shove or bite you?
• Threaten to hurt you and/or your children?
• Threaten to hurt friends or family members?
• Have sudden outbursts of anger or rage?
• Behave in an overprotective manner?
• Become jealous without reason?
• Prevent you from seeing family or friends?
• Prevent you from going where you want, when you want, without repercussions?
• Prevent you from working or attending school?
• Destroy personal property or sentimental items?
• Deny you access to family assets such as bank accounts, credit cards or car?
• Control all finances and force you to account for what you spend?
• Force you to have sex against your will?
• Force you to engage in sexual acts you don't want?
• Insult you or call you derogatory racial or sexual names?
• Use intimidation or manipulation to control you or your children?
• Humiliate you in front of others?
• Turn minor incidents into major arguments?
• Abuse or threaten to abuse pets?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may be a victim of domestic violence. You are not to blame and you are not alone - millions of women are abused by their partners every year. Not all acts of domestic violence are violations of the law. In any case, you need not face domestic violence alone. You deserve help, and help is available.

1 800 942 6908; English
1 800 942 6908; Spanish
TOLL FREE 24 HOURS

*partner refers to person in intimate relationships, i.e., husband, lover, heterosexual gay or lesbian.

WE CARE

Developed by Battereds Women's Task Force of the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, funded in part by the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR AMONG LESBIAN COUPLES

- The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs documented 2,574 reported cases of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender domestic violence during 1998.
- Research suggests that abuse among same-sex couples occurs at about the same rate as heterosexual battering.
- Coleman (1990) found that of the 90 lesbian couples surveyed, 46% experienced repeated acts of violence in their relationships.
- Lockart (1994) found that 94% of lesbians surveyed admitted to abusing their partners, although the type of abuse was not specified and may have included psychological abuse.
- Lie (1991) found that 73% of the 169 lesbians surveyed reported experiencing some form of abuse in a lesbian relationship.
- The 1998 gender breakdown of cases in which gender identity of the survivor was known was 48% female.
- 50% of clients reported that their lovers were the perpetrators of domestic violence. Ex-lover accounted for 31%. This number is consistent with the understanding that violence does not end with the termination of an abusive relationship.
- In most cases abuse escalates when the victim attempts to leave, often in the form of harassment, stalking as well as assaults.
- Data indicates that 37% of the Anti-Violence Project’s domestic violence victims reported physical injuries, ranging from minor to serious. Injuries sustained ranged from contusions, cuts, scratches, concussion, bites, to broken bones, and ruptured or lost organs.
- Research indicates that psychological and emotional abuse often has effects that are as damaging as those of physical aggression if not greater.
PHYSICAL ABUSE

HETEROSEXIST CONTROL
Threatening to reveal lesbian or gay identity to family, neighbors, employers, ex-spouses or city, state or federal authorities. "Outing" someone.

ISOLATION: RESTRICTING FREEDOM
Controlling personal social contacts, access to information & participation in groups or organizations. Limiting the who, what, where & when of daily life. Locking in room.

PSYCHOLOGICAL & EMOTIONAL ABUSE
Criticizing constantly. Using verbal abuse, insults and ridicule. Undermining self-esteem. Trying to humiliate or degrade in private or in public. Manipulating with lies and false promises.

INTIMIDATION
Creating fear by using looks, actions, gestures and destroying personal items, mementos or photos. Breaking windows or furniture. Throwing or smashing objects. Trashing clothes, hurting or killing pets.

Threats
Making physical, emotional, economic or sexual threats. Threatening to harm family or friends. Threatening to make a report to city, state or federal authorities that would jeopardize custody, economic situation, immigration or legal status. Threatening suicide.

ENTITLEMENT
Treating partner as inferior; using differences against partner; race, education, wealth, politics, class privilege or lack of, physical ability, and anti-semitism. Demanding that needs always come first. Interfering with partner's job, personal needs and family obligations.

Using Children
Threatening to take children away or have them removed. Using children to relay messages. Threatening to harm children.

ECONOMIC ABUSE
Controlling economic resources & how they are used. Stealing money, credit cards or checks. Running up debt. Fostering total economic dependency.

Sexual Abuse
Forcing sex. Forcing specific sex acts or sex with others. Physical assaults to "sexual" body areas. Refusing to practice safer sex.

Power & Control in Gay and Lesbian Relationships

© New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project

Adapted from E. Peere, "In Our Own Interest (1987)
RESOURCES

New York City Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project
240 West 35th Street, Suite 200
New York, New York, 10001-2506
212-714-1184

New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence
24 Hour Domestic Violence Hotlines
1-800-942-6906 English
1-800-942-6908 Spanish

New York City 24 Hour hotline
1-800-621-HOPE
Are you afraid of your partner?
Does your partner try to control what you do and who you see?
Has your partner ever threatened to harm you or your family?
Has your partner ever hit you or thrown things at you?
Have you ever been forced to have sex, or unprotected sex?
Does your partner threaten to "out" you or have you deported?
If you answered "YES," even once, your partner may be abusive.

TAKE ACTION
Talk with somebody you trust - a friend, relative, someone from work, your house of worship, or a health care practitioner. Remember everyone deserves to be treated with respect. Don't let your partner control or mistreat you. Help is available.

At some time you may find yourself in trouble, so be prepared and put together an "emergency kit" of things you would really need if you had to leave suddenly:

SAMPLE EMERGENCY KIT:
✓ Money - store some cash in a secret place where you can easily get to it; be sure to include some coins for phone calls.
✓ Keys - an extra set of keys should be kept in a safe place (at a friend's or neighbor's) in case you need to leave quickly.
✓ Important papers for you and your children - birth certificates, passports, health insurance documents, photo ID/driver's license, immunization records, checkbook, medication, food stamps, social security cards, etc... or copies of them should be kept in a safe place.
✓ Basic Items - keep a small bag with your medicine, copies of your legal papers, an extra pair of glasses, and a set of clothes.

There's No Excuse for Abuse

National Domestic Violence Hotline:
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

Local Resources
Violence and the Family Violence Prevention Fund grants the Family Violence

This publication was funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Please call 1-888-AFF 4 ATE for health care providers.

The Family Violence Prevention Fund grants the Family Violence

Thanking you. Can't display.

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# BASIC DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESOURCES, 1999

## HOTLINES

**MY SISTERS' PLACE** | (800) 298-SAFE  
**NORTHERN WESTCHESTER SHELTER** | (914) 238-2800  
**FAMILY ABUSE SERVICES of the Mental Health Assn.** | (914) 347-4558  
**STAND TOGETHER** | (888) 997-1010  
**PUTNAM / NO. WESTCH. WOMEN’S RES. CTR.** | (914) 628-2166  
**NEW YORK STATE COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:**  
- **English** | (800) 942-6906  
- **Spanish** | (800) 942-6908  
**RAPE CRISIS HELPLINE,** **Victims Assistance Services** | (914) 345-9111  
**PUTNAM / NO. WESTCHESTER WOMEN’S RES. CTR.** | (914) 628-2166  
**NEW YORK STATE COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:**  
- **English** | (800) 942-6906  
- **Spanish** | (800) 942-6908  
**CONNECTICUT COALITION AGAINST D.V.** | (860) 524-5890

## SHELTERS

**MY SISTERS' PLACE** | (800) 298-SAFE  
**NORTHERN WESTCHESTER SHELTER** | (914) 238-2800  
**PUTNAM / NORTHERN WESTCHESTER WOMEN’S RESOURCE CENTER** | (914) 628-2166  
**ROCKLAND FAMILY SHELTER** | (914) 634-3344  
**NEW YORK STATE COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:**  
- **English** | (800) 942-6906  
- **Spanish** | (800) 942-6908  
**CONNECTICUT COALITION AGAINST D.V.** | (860) 524-5890

## FAMILY COURT

**MY SISTERS’ PLACE LEGAL CENTER** | (914) 683-1333  
**NORTHERN WESTCHESTER SHELTER** | (914) 238-2800  
**PACE WOMEN’S JUSTICE CENTER** | (914) 422-4424  
**WESTCHESTER PUTNAM LEGAL SERVICES** | (914) 949-1305  
**WHITE PLAINS FAMILY COURT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEGAL CENTER** | (914) 285-7400  
**WESTCHESTER COUNTY PROBATION DEPT.** | (914) 285-3529  

### Support and advocacy
- **FAMILY ABUSE SERVICES,** **MHA White Plains** | (914) 285-4020  
- **ST. JOSEPH’S MEDICAL CENTER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM,** **Yonkers** | (914) 966-6339

### Criminal Court

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & CHILD ABUSE BUREAU,**  
**WESTCHESTER COUNTY D.A.’S OFFICE** | (914) 285-3000  
**VICTIMS ASSISTANCE SERVICES:**  
- **White Plains** | (914) 285-3347  
- **Yonkers** | (914) 965-0217  
- **Mt. Vernon** | (914) 665-2539

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*NOTE! Family Court serves ONLY persons related by blood or marriage or who have a child in common.*

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The following is a bibliography of organizations, articles, books, and other materials for more information on LGTB domestic violence:

Organizations addressing violence and the LGTB community:

**National:**

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline** (1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or TTY: 1-800-787-3224): Hotline advocates are able to respond to LGTB patients over the phone.

By State, from the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) Annual Report. Organizations serving exclusively LGTB clients are in italics:

**Arkansas:**

- **Women's Project**
  2224 Main Street
  Little Rock, AR 72206
  501-372-5113

**California:**

- **Alternatives to Violence**
  3703 Long Beach Blvd, Suite E10
  Long Beach, CA 90807
  562-493-1161

- **Asian Women's Shelter**
  3543 18th Street, #19
  San Francisco, CA 94110
  415-751-7110

- **Assistance League of Southern California**
  1360 N. St. Andrew’s Place
  Hollywood, CA 90028
  213-469-5893

- **Avec Anti-Violence Project of the Central Coast**
  POB 241
  Santa Barbara, CA 93102
  805-569-0561

- **Beverly Hills Counseling Int**
  204 S. Beverly Drive, #116
  Beverly Hills, CA 90212
  310-271-3784

- **Community United Against Violence**
  973 Market Street, #500
  San Francisco, CA 94103
  415-777-5500

- **Family Violence Project**
  San Francisco District Attorney’s Office
  850 Bryant Street, Room 320
  San Francisco, CA 94102
  415-553-9044

- **Lesbian and Gay Men’s Community Center**
  Anti-Violence Project
  3916 Normal Street
  San Diego, CA 92103
  619-692-2077, ext. 805

- **Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center**
  S.T.O.P. Domestic Violence Program
  1625 N. Shrade Blvd., Suite 40
  Los Angeles, CA 90028-6213
  213-993-7640

- **Options Counseling**
  3703 Long Beach Blvd, Suite E12
  Long Beach, CA 90807
  562-989-0809

- **Project Pride**
  6221 Wilshire Blvd, #408
  Los Angeles, CA 90048
  213-965-0034

- **San Francisco Network for Battered Lesbians and Bisexual Women**
  3543 18th Street, #28
  San Francisco, CA 94110
  415-281-0276

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W.O.M.A.N., Inc.
333 Valencia Street, Suite 251
San Francisco, CA 94103
415-864-4777

YWCA Woman's Services Center
Domestic Violence Project
1007 S. Central, Suite 208
Glendale, CA 91204
818-242-4155

Gay Men and Lesbians Opposing Violence
151J K Street, NW, Suite 821
Washington, DC 20005
202-737-4568

Equity Colorado
Anti-Violence Project
POB 300476
Denver, CO 80203
303-839-5540, ext. 2

Gay and Lesbian Community Services of Central Florida
714 E. Colonial Drive
Orlando, FL 32803
407-425-4527

Horizons Community Services
Anti-Violence Project
961 W. Montana
Chicago, IL 60614
773-472-6469

Beth Israel-Deaconess Medical Center
Safe Transitions
330 Brookline Ave, Rose 200
Boston, MA 02215
617-667-8141

Fenway Community Health Center
Violence Recovery Program
7 Haviland Street
Boston, MA 02115

The Network for Battered Lesbian and Bisexual Women
POB 6011
Boston, MA 02114
617-693-0877

Triangle Foundation
19641 West Seven Mile Road
Detroit, MI 48219
313-537-3323

OutFront Minnesota
Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council
310 East 38th Street, Suite 204
Minneapolis, MN 55409
612-822-0127

St. Louis Lesbian and Gay Anti-Violence Project
University of Missouri, Psychology Department
St. Louis, MO 63121
314-516-5467

New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project
240 West 35th Street, Suite 200
New York, NY 10001-2506
212-714-1184

Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization
POB 82068
Columbus, OH 43202
614-262-9222

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Lesbian/Gay Community Service Center of Greater Cleveland
POB 6177
Cleveland, OH 44101
216-522-1999

Rhode Island:

Rhode Island Alliance for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights
POB 3758, Weybosset Station
Providence, RI 02903
401-331-0227

Texas:

Lambda Services
POB 31321
El Paso, TX 79931
915-562-4297
800-616-HATE
avp@lambda.org

Montrose Counseling Center
V.O.C.A. Grant Program
701 Richmond Avenue
Houston, TX 77006
713-529-0037

Virginia:

Virginians for Justice
POB 342, Capitol Station
Richmond, VA 23202
804-643-4816

Articles on LGTB domestic violence:


Books on LGTB domestic violence:
Other materials on LGTB domestic violence:

Videos:

- Domestic Violence and Lesbian Relationship. A three part series of Eyewitness produced by Dyke TV. Survivors and counselors discuss types of abuse which stem from power and control, effects of abuse, and specific considerations for lesbian survivors. 30 mins. Dyke TV: (212) 343-9335.

- My Girlfriend Did It. A documentary which includes interviews with women battered by their female partners and counselor/advocates interspersed with dramatic depictions of various forms of abuse. Discusses the unique considerations for lesbian/bisexual survivors within a societal context of homophobia. Casa de Esperanza: (612) 641-7515.

Victim Brochures:


- Is Your Girlfriend Abusive? You Are Not Alone (also in Spanish). Brochure from Network for Battered Immigrant Women.

Provider / Advocate Materials:

- Giving the Best Care Possible: Unlearning Homophobia in the Health and Social Service Setting. Training Curriculum Developed by: Office of Gay and Lesbian Health Concerns (212-788-4310) and Community Health Project (212-675-3559).

- Lesbian and Gay Domestic Violence: A Resource. Tucson United Against Domestic Violence


Abstract

The present study makes use of a cross-sectional sample of 105 lesbians from a non-clinical setting to investigate to what extent they exhibited abusive behavior toward an intimate female partner and whether the abuse was physical, psychological, or both. This study examined whether an association exists between a lesbian’s sex role identity, particularly the dimension of femininity, and her abusive behavior. Finally, this study’s focus tested the hypotheses that dependency, jealousy, and power imbalance in the relationship would be positively associated with reported incidences of abusive behavior.

The results show that when abuse is broadly defined that a sizable minority report high incidences of overall abuse and psychological abuse at some time during their current relationship. The most salient finding of this study was the strong evidence of a relationship between jealousy and abusive behavior.

The implications of these findings underscore the need for continued and enhanced delivery of services to battered lesbians, expanded intervention programs for lesbian batterers, and innovative prevention initiatives designed to adequately address the issue of partner abuse in lesbian relationships. Further, the results of this study suggest that jealousy may predict both physical as well as psychological abuse, although such abuse seems to be less serious in nature than abuse that would result in serious physical injury. It is unclear from this study the temporal order of jealousy and abuse. The need for future research to examine this question is indicated.

Other implications of this study point toward the need for consciousness-raising to the larger community about institutionalized and individual homophobia and heterosexism in research. As researchers we become limited in our assumptions and conclusions about the lesbian population. Drawing inferences from the findings of this study and making generalizations to the larger lesbian population is not possible. These
are the limitations of the research and are rooted in heterosexism and homophobia. This study highlights the need for action towards change in social welfare policies that can only enhance and augment future research of the lesbian population, particularly the issue of lesbian partner abuse.
CURRICULUM VITAE

GRACE A. TELESKO, Ph.D.
289 Prospect Park West • Brooklyn, New York 11215 • (718) 832-4826

EXPERIENCE

NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Lieutenant, May, 2001 to Present

Responsible for the development and oversight of a premier research initiative to examine levels of community satisfaction relating to the delivery of police service.

Responsible for; the development of community relations indicators to longitudinally measure police-community relations, data collection and analysis, including the analysis of a neighborhood satisfaction survey, and various analysis strategies to identify police-community problematic trends in each precinct and develop programs/policies to address such problem areas.

Develop, design, implement, and evaluate innovative and novel programs, policies, and initiatives to enhance police/community relations, based on data analysis.

Conduct ongoing literature reviews on national and international police-community issues.

NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT
POLICE ACADEMY
BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT


Responsible for the development of the Behavioral Science Curriculum taught to all entry level police recruits, consisting of four tracks of learning; Effective Communication and Cultural Competence, Ethics and Mental Health, Crisis Intervention, and Service Role.
EXPERIENCE

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Subject Areas include;
- Racism, Sexism, Homophobia, and Critical Consciousness
- Cultural Competence Series including the Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Transgender communities
- Authority, Ethics, Stress, Suicide Awareness, Alcoholism and Addiction
- Police Response to Mental Illness and Homeless Populations
- Crisis Intervention, Victimology, Domestic Violence and Child Abuse
- Police Service to the Aging and Older Adult Populations, Differently abled, and other special needs populations
- Interactive Language Workshop for Police Officers in Spanish, Creole, Mandarin, Russian, and American Sign Language

Responsible for the development and implementation of all aspects of training in the Behavioral Sciences, including methodology, curriculum writing, evaluation and research. Responsible for bringing a social service perspective to a police recruit curriculum with an emphasis on cultural competence. Methods include; lecture, discussion, workshops, film, and theater techniques such as; facilitated socio-drama, structured improvisation, simulation, and reflective team exercises.

NEW YORK CITY GAY & LESBIAN ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT

Intern, 1996 to 1997
- Conducted case management audits and made recommendations for efficiency.
- Coordinated the agency's Domestic Violence Conference
- Co-Facilitated an eight week second-level survivor's support group
- Offered police expertise and assistance to advocates
- Reviewed police curriculum for agency in areas of domestic violence
- Reviewed curriculum for batterers group curriculum and made recommendations

NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT

RECRUITMENT SECTION

Lieutenant/Commanding Officer, August, 1996 To May, 1998

Responsible for the management of staff, implementation of recruitment strategies & policies specifically targeting women candidates and people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, and those from diverse racial and ethnic populations, coordination and development of recruitment advertising campaigns through the solicitation of funds from major donors. Responsible for two major recruitment campaigns, successfully recruiting over 50,000 interested applicants from diverse populations.
EXPERIENCE

JOHN JAY COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
SPEECH & THEATER DEPARTMENT
SPECIAL PROGRAMS DEPARTMENT

Adjunct Professor, 1991 To Present

Course: Crisis Intervention Utilizing Drama Techniques
Designed course for undergraduate seniors as a requirement for the Conflict Resolution Certificate Program. Course addresses dynamics of crisis, victim behavior and effective psychological first aid techniques for crisis intervention professionals and service providers. Curriculum includes issues of domestic violence, sexual assault & incest. Socio-drama, forum theater, structured improvisations, and reflective team exercises are utilized as a training tool.

Course: Drama in Production
Director of the Interactive Socio-Drama Ensemble. Some of the issues addressed are those that impact the lives of students each day. Issues such as, domestic violence, suicide, sexual assault, racism, and oppression.

Course: Introduction to Public Speaking
Train students in public speaking techniques, critical thinking skills, delivery & methods of persuasion.

Course: Non-Violent Crisis Intervention
Train law enforcement officers in techniques of non-violent techniques for the handling of disruptive, out of control and assaultive persons.

NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF TRAINING/OFFICE OF WOMEN'S PROGRAMS & POLICIES

Sergeant/Commanding Officer, 1993 To 1996

Responsible for the coordination and development of four Women in Policing Conferences, facilitated the creation of an action plan on women's concerns, responsible for the inventory and analysis of historical and statistical data relating to female officers.
EXPERIENCE

NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT
POLICE ACADEMY/ SOCIAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Sergeant/Instructor/ Curriculum Coordinator/ Seminar Coordinator
1985 To 1993

Conducted and created training in the Social Science curriculum for recruit officers. Curriculum included issues of crisis intervention, victimology, domestic violence, sexual assault, pedophilia, interacting with the elderly as crime victims, handling emotionally disturbed persons, cultural diversity and anti-racism training.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS / ACCOMPLISHMENTS

American Orthopsychiatric Association Annual Meeting and Symposium on Race-Related Police Violence: Mental Health Approaches to Prevention and Intervention: Panelist.


Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service: Guest Lecturer on Crisis Intervention Utilizing Theater Techniques.

St. Peter’s University Hospital University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey: Presented Seminar for Social Work Staff on Crisis Intervention and Theater Techniques.

Catherine McCauley High School Mental Health Fair: Keynote Presentation - Interactive Socio-Drama on Issues of Oppression


New York City Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project Domestic Violence Conference: Panelist-Presented on Issues of Same-Sex Domestic Violence

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Conference
Workshop Facilitator/ Presented on Issues of Same-Sex Domestic Violence

Ithaca Battered Women’s Program/ Conference on Domestic Violence
Presenter: Issues of Same-Sex Domestic Violence and Police Response
PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS / ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Development and Direction of the Training Film "Final Warning"
A look at domestic violence when it is perpetrated by the police

Fordham University School of Law
Participated in Role-Playing Law Clinic on issues of Domestic Violence

Developed a "Socio-drama" for New York Police Department Counseling Unit on issues of Alcoholism

Coordinated and Supervised an Interactive Theater Internship with John Jay College students in issues of Domestic Violence and Crisis Intervention.

EDUCATION

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Social Service
Specialization in the Field of Mental Health

JOHN JAY COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
Master of Arts, Criminal Justice 1991
Bachelor of Science, Police Science 1988

AWARDS

• New York Finest Foundation Doctoral Scholarship
• John Jay College of Criminal Justice Master of Arts Scholarship
• Community Service Award Gay Officer's Action League
• Department of Justice Crime Victim's Service Award
AFFILIATIONS

• National Association of Social Workers
• Appointed Interim Board Member of the New York City Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers
• Bertha Reynolds Society
• Amnesty International
• American Association of University Professors
• World Seido Karate Organization
• Center for Anti-Violence Education
• New York Police Department Gay Officer’s Action League
• WBAI Radio