

MALE-TO-FEMALE PARTNER VIOLENCE DURING
MARITAL SEPARATION: AN EXAMINATION OF
WHITE AND HISPANIC MEN

THESIS

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by

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To my Mom and Dad

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 2004, 10% of adults in the United States were currently divorced or separated from their partners (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). Second only to being widowed, separation is the most distressing event that individuals experience within a relationship (Johnson & Wu, 2002). As a result, they are vulnerable to deconstruct; in other words, with added stressors, individuals are more likely to react irrationally and negatively to adverse stimuli. In addition, because men are less likely to turn to others for social support (Baum, 2003), they are especially vulnerable following separation from their partner. In fact, men are more likely to use alcohol or other substances to cope with the stress surrounding separation (Ramisetty-Mikler & Caetano, 2003). Ineffective coping methods such as these can lead to a violent encounter between partners, further exacerbating an already tenuous relationship.

In fact, separation is one of the primary predictors of female homicide (Johnson & Hotton, 2003), and violence following separation is reported to be more severe than during marriage (Hotton, 2001). However, most research tends to focus on intimate partner violence within ongoing relationships, and views separation as an outcome rather than a source of violence. Contrary to this belief that most intimate partner violence

occurs during marriage, a number of studies have found more violence during separation (e.g., Bachman & Saltzman, 1995; Hotton, 2001; Ramisetty-Mikler & Caetano, 2005; Sorenson & Telles, 1991).

Despite these findings, limited research has been conducted on predictors of separation violence. However, it is assumed that some of the same variables predict both marital and separation violence. For example, certain demographic variables such as age, income, education, and employment status have been found to be associated with marital violence (e.g., Anderson, 1997; Beasley & Stoltenberg, 1992; Cano & Vivian, 2003; Melzer, 2002). Specifically, past research has found that intimate partner violence was negatively associated with a man's age (e.g., Babcock, Green, Webb, & Yerington, 2005; Stets, 1990), education level (e.g., Schuerger & Reigle, 1988; Tschann, Johnston, & Wallerstein, 1989), employment status (e.g., Howell & Pugliesi, 1988; Margolin, John, & Foo, 1988), and income (e.g., Pan, Neidig, & O'Leary, 1994; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989). In particular, these researchers have found that younger men who have fewer years of education, a low income, and who are not employed full-time are more likely to be violent toward their spouses. These men may also be more vulnerable to the distress associated with separation. As a result, they may react violently during separation.

It has also been hypothesized that feelings of depression and anxiety increase when a man is faced with marital separation (e.g., Beasley & Stoltenberg, 1992; Hastings & Hamberger, 1994). In addition, men are more likely to use alcohol to cope with the emotional distress that accompanies separation (e.g., Julian & McKenry, 1993; Thompson & Kingree, 2006). These symptoms of depression, anxiety, and alcohol use, may hinder a man's ability to effectively cope with the separation. As a result, some men

could respond violently toward their ex-partner during separation. In support of this assumption, previous researchers have found that depression, anxiety, and alcohol use are all predictors of intimate partner violence (Schuerger & Reigle, 1988).

Lastly, there is a dearth of research on how Hispanic men deal with marital separation and what predicts intimate partner violence for them. Some researchers have found a link between marital violence and ethnicity; however, most of these results can be ascribed to other demographic variables (Kantor, Jasinski, & Aldarondo, 1994). Specifically, previous researchers have found that once sociodemographic variables are controlled, there is no longer a difference in the rate of intimate partner violence between Hispanic and White couples (Caetano, Schafer, & Cunradi, 2001; Kantor, Jasinski, & Aldarondo, 1994). Thus, it is important to examine if the same variables predict separation violence for different groups.

Theoretical Framework

Crises are defined as obstacles that stand in the way of achieving a long-term life goal. They can be categorized as either situational or developmental. Developmental crises occur during the transition from one developmental stage to another. This is the type of crisis Erikson used to explain human development. In contrast, situational crises are usually accidental or unexpected. Crises in this category could result from losing a loved one, being a victim of a crime, being fired from a job, or, most relevant to this study, separating from one's partner.

In response to these crises, individuals may exhibit uncharacteristic behaviors. Crisis theory is clinically driven, and aims to provide a framework within which to examine an individual's response to these crises (Golan, 1974; Granvold, 2000; Hoff,

2001; Slaikeu, 1984). Specifically, Golan (1974) explains that an individual has coping strategies that are used to maintain equilibrium. When a stressful event occurs that throws off the balance of the individual's homeostasis, the individual attempts to use preexisting coping strategies. If these strategies do not work, the individual becomes more emotionally distressed and struggles to generate new ways of coping.

Furthermore, the individual can perceive the crisis event positively—described as perceiving a challenge—or negatively—perceived as a threat or loss. This perception is then translated into an emotional response. These emotional responses can help an individual cope effectively with the crisis or hinder his ability to effectively cope. If the individual is coping well, he should not be exhibiting adverse psychological symptoms. However, if the individual views the crisis as a threat or a loss, Golan (1974) posits that he may experience anxiety or depression.

After experiencing a crisis, the individual's defense mechanisms are weakened. This phase is short-term (Halpern, 1973; Slaikeu, 1984), and is, by definition, the best opportunity for crisis intervention. Golan (1974) notes that the duration of the crisis state depends on a variety of factors: the nature of the crisis, the individual's perception of the event, coping patterns, emotional response, and resources available to deal with the situation. In fact, a "lack of material resources exacerbates the situation and [therefore crisis intervention must assess] the extent to which efforts are directed toward finding emergency relief (monetary or otherwise) that might facilitate other positive (psychological) coping efforts" (Slaikeu, 1984, p. 23). In order for the individual to resolve the crisis in a positive way, Caplan (1964) suggests that the individual receives intervention within six weeks of the crisis. This will enable the man to learn effective

coping strategies and appropriate outlets for emotional responses. If this intervention does not occur, the man is at risk for continuing negative coping strategies to deal with this and future stressors, such as continued conflict with one's ex-partner.

Following the crisis, the individual reaches a new state of equilibrium that is better than, the same as, or worse than the individual's homeostatic level (Golan, 1974). As a result, coping patterns are reorganized and new coping patterns are developed and cemented for further use. Maladaptive coping behaviors can inhibit future coping abilities, and effective coping patterns can improve crisis resolution in the future. Also, ineffective coping can bring about undesirable consequences, namely psychological symptoms and hostile behaviors.

Marital separation is an appropriate example of a crisis, as it is temporary, acute, and requires resolution (Caplan, 1964). Following separation, each partner is faced with an identity shift, and stressors compounded during this process can increase the likelihood of keeping the separated individual from resolving the crisis. For example, a man may lack the experience and resources necessary to deal with this crisis (age, income, education level, and employment status). As a result, he may develop psychological symptoms, such as anxiety or depression, or may turn to alcohol which may hinder his ability to employ effective coping strategies.

For those who effectively resolve their crisis, there should be no evidence of psychological distress (Mackey, 1968; Turner & Avison, 1992). However, for those who fail to resolve this crisis, it is possible they will regress "to a more dependent, less adequate level of functioning" (Wiseman, 1975, p. 209). As a result, a man who exhibits barriers to effective coping and reports the presence of certain precipitating factors is

more likely to react in an unhealthy manner, such as resorting to physical aggression in reaction to conflict with his ex-partner. Therefore, crisis theory offers a plausible model to explore the conditions surrounding marital separation and subsequent violence.

Specifically, “crisis theory postulates that certain life events, such as...separations of significant others, creates hazards for meeting basic needs and therefore increases the probability of interpersonal disturbances” (Selig, 1976, p. 291).

Problem Statement

Although separated and divorced women report being abused 14 times more often than women still living with their intimate partners (Reihing, 1999), there is still minimal research on separation violence. Furthermore, the majority of research that has been conducted has been limited to White participants, and has used incarcerated individuals, clinical samples, or shelter groups. In addition, only a small number of studies have been conducted from the batterer’s perspective (Davidovich, 1990; Redden-Reitz, 1999; Toews, Catlett, & McKenry, 2003).

Therefore, the goal of this study is to examine predictors of separation violence among White and Hispanic men. Specifically, age, income, education, employment status, and symptoms of alcoholism, depression, and anxiety will be examined as possible predictors of separation violence (Figure 1). According to crisis theory, these precipitating factors and barriers to effective coping may exacerbate the emotional crisis of separation, thus increasing the likelihood that the individual will react negatively towards his partner. In addition, data gathered from both White and Hispanic men will provide information regarding whether the predictors of separation violence are the same for both groups despite possible cultural differences.

Research Questions

Question #1

Do each of the precipitating factors—age, income, education level, and employment status—significantly predict separation violence?

Question # 2

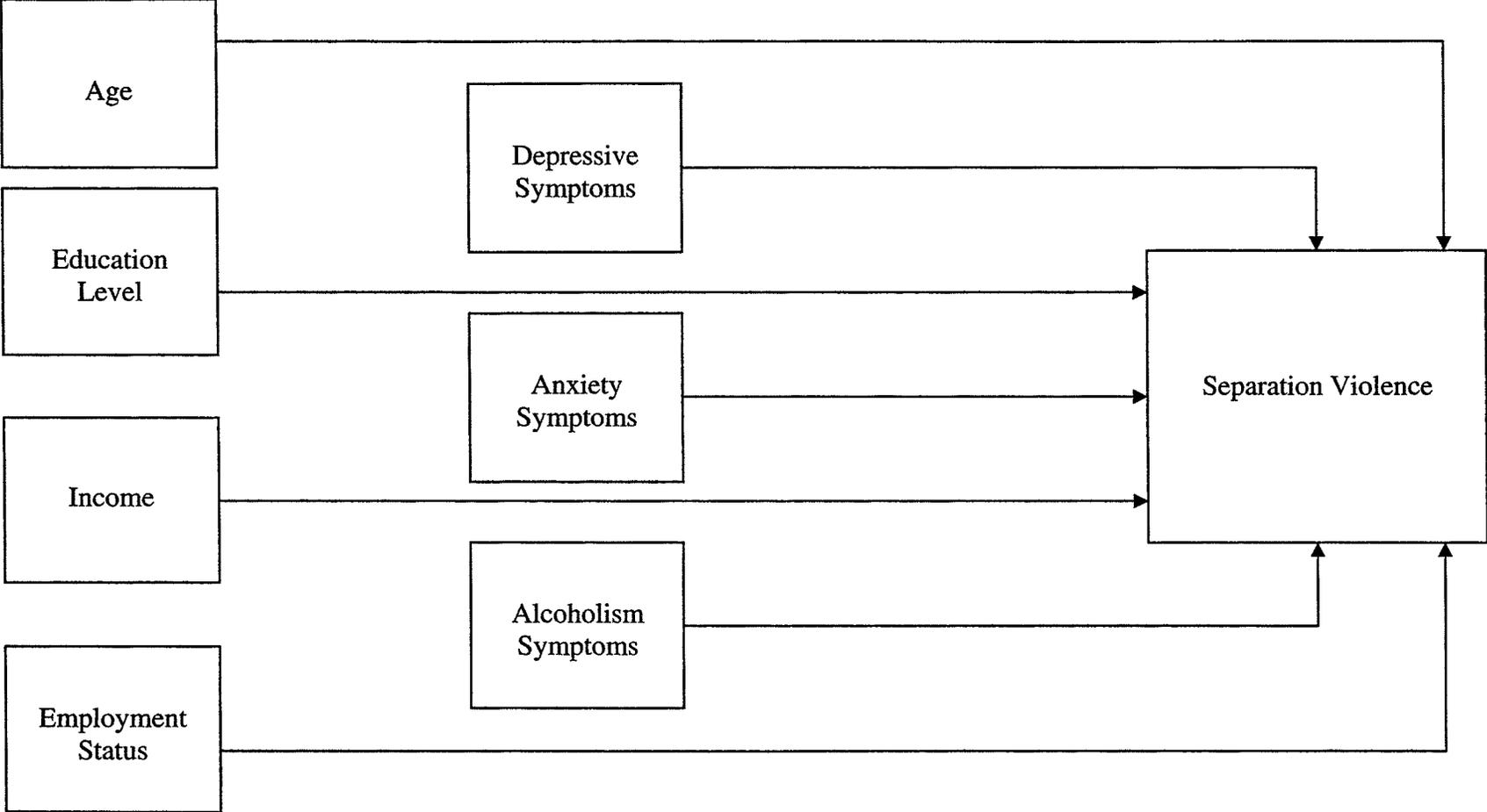
Do each of the barriers to effective coping—symptoms of depression, anxiety, and alcoholism—significantly predict separation violence?

Question #3

Does the model predict separation violence for both White and Hispanic men?

Question #4

Do the same variables predict separation violence for both White and Hispanic men?



Precipitating Factors

Barriers to Effective Coping

Maladaptive Outcome

Figure 1. Predictors of Separation Violence

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter will review the literature pertaining to predictors of separation violence for White and Hispanic men. The review will begin by providing general information about violence that occurs during separation. Crisis theory will then be used to examine what variables predict intimate partner violence during marriage and separation. Lastly, a summary of the limitations of previous research will be provided.

Violence During Separation

Little research has focused on intimate partner violence during separation. In fact, many people believe that once a violent couple separates, the violence will cease. However, separation does not ensure that intimate partner violence will end. In fact, in their sample of 278 women staying at a shelter, Fleury and colleagues (2000) found that 36% of the separated women were assaulted by their ex-partner within two years, and nearly half of those women received injuries from the assault. Similarly, Hotton (2001) found that 22% of men who were in contact with their former spouses within five years of separation reported at least one act of violence against their former spouse, and 24% reported the violence was more serious than any violence that occurred during the marriage. Moreover, Bachman and Saltzman (1995) showed that separated women were

assaulted three times more than married women. In fact, upon examination of a decade's worth of homicide reports in Canada, separation was found to be the most important predictor of homicide, as 31% of female homicides were perpetrated by ex-partners (Johnson & Hotton, 2003). Because an estimated 20% of Americans have been divorced (Kreider, 2005), it is imperative to determine what variables predict intimate partner violence during separation.

Crisis Theory

According to crisis theory, an individual strives to maintain homeostasis even during a crisis situation (Golan, 1974). However, if an individual lacks experience or resources to deal with the crisis (age, income, education level, and employment status), he may have a more difficult time coping. In fact, Slaikeu (1984) noted that lacking material resources may further intensify a crisis situation by increasing the likelihood that the individual has a maladaptive response. Furthermore, when faced with a crisis, an individual may develop psychological symptoms, such as anxiety or depression, or may turn to alcohol which may hinder his ability to employ effective coping strategies. As a result, a man who exhibits barriers to effective coping and reports the presence of certain precipitating factors may be more likely to react in an unhealthy manner, such as resorting to physical aggression in reaction to conflict with his ex-partner.

Precipitating Factors

Because there is limited information concerning violence during separation, it is first necessary to examine predictors of marital violence in general. The biggest predictors of marital violence tend to be demographic rather than cultural variables (Caetano, Schafer, & Cunradi, 2001), and can be viewed as precipitating factors that may

increase the risk of a maladaptive outcome after a crisis (Slaikou, 1984). However, previous researchers have tended to examine demographics as control variables rather than the primary variables of interest. For the purposes of this study, socioeconomic variables are especially important to consider when examining differences between ethnic groups because certain populations tend to report fewer resources than others.

Age

Previous research on the relationship between age and violence has been somewhat inconsistent. On one hand, numerous researchers who have recruited participants from the general population have found that youth is associated with violence (e.g., Babcock, Green, Webb, & Yerington, 2005; Jacobson, Gottman, Gortner, Berns, & Shortt, 1996; Margolin, John, & Foo, 1998). For example, when examining the reported rates of violence among an ethnically diverse sample of 110 publicly recruited married couples, Babcock and colleagues (2005) found that violent couples were significantly younger than nonviolent couples. Similarly, Jacobson and colleagues (1996) found that in a sample of 60 couples who reported experiencing domestic violence, older couples were less likely to be violent compared to younger couples. Likewise, an analysis of 175 husbands revealed that abusiveness was correlated with youth (Margolin, John, & Foo, 1998).

Similar results have been found when examining clinical samples as well (Cano & Vivian, 2003; Conner, Duberstein, & Conwell, 2000). In particular, Cano and Vivian (2003) found men's young age was significantly predictive of violence among a clinical sample of maritally discordant couples seeking marital therapy. Moreover, Conner and colleagues (2000) conducted retrospective analyses on psychological information of

married men who had alcohol-related suicides. They found that younger men tended to have higher rates of domestic violence in their histories compared to older men.

Large, national samples have found similar results as well (e.g., Anderson, 1997; Jasinski, 2001; Melzer, 2002; Stets, 1990). Anderson (1997) found that age was negatively correlated with violence among 2,459 married and cohabiting men. Utilizing a subsample of 1,089 married men, Stets (1990) also found that severely violent men were younger. In a more recent study, Jasinski (2001) reported that youth was significantly associated with violence among 3,584 married or cohabitating couples. Howell and Pugliesi (1988) found similar results using a secondary analysis of 960 men. However, the authors reported that the association between age and violence was much more emphasized among young men—*younger than 40 years*—who were unemployed. For these men, the odds of perpetrating violence were 18.61 compared to 2.95 for older unemployed men. Similarly, Melzer (2002), who examined data from 5,208 married or cohabitating men, found that for each one year increase in age, the rate of violence towards women decreased by 5%.

Although the majority of researchers have found that youth is a significant predictor of marital violence, a few studies have not reported a significant relationship between intimate partner violence and age (e.g., Harris & Knight-Bohnhoff, 1996; Logan, Walker, Horvath, & Leukefeld, 2003; McMurray, Froyland, Bell, & Curnow, 2000; Vivian & Malone, 1997). For instance, Harris and Knight-Bohnhoff (1996) found that age was positively correlated with verbal aggression, but not related to physical aggression among a sample of college students. In addition, no significant age differences were found when examining a random sample of divorce records that cited instances of

domestic violence and those that did not (Logan et al., 2003). Likewise, Beasley and Stoltenberg (1992) found no significant age difference when comparing 35 nonviolent, publicly recruited men to 49 men from a batterer support group. Perhaps most relevant to this study, McMurray and colleagues (2000) found that age significantly related to separation violence among a sample of men publicly recruited in an Australian community. However, the mean age for this sample was 45 years old, and may have not included younger men who accounted for the observed difference in previous studies.

Education Level

Most researchers have found that education level is closely associated with intimate partner violence (e.g., Beasley & Stoltenberg, 1992; Cano & Vivian, 2003; Tschann, Johnston, & Wallerstein, 1989). In particular, when Beasley and Stoltenberg (1992) compared 49 violent men referred from a batterer support group to 35 nonviolent men, they found that nonviolent men had significantly higher education levels. Similarly, Cano and Vivian (2003) examined a sample of married couples undergoing marital therapy, and found that the men who reported perpetrating intimate partner violence had significantly fewer years of education than nonviolent men. Likewise, Schuerger and Reigle (1988) analyzed information from 246 domestically violent men enrolled in a large treatment program. The majority of the sample had a high school education, indicating men with fewer years of education were more likely to be violent, or these men were more likely to be court-mandated to seek treatment. Perhaps the most relevant study was Tschann and colleagues' (1989) longitudinal study of 144 divorcing men. Men who had a higher socioeconomic status—defined as a higher education level and occupational status—reported experiencing less post-separation conflict with their spouses.

In contrast, Melzer (2002) found a nonlinear relationship between education and violence. That is, men who had either a high school diploma or postgraduate degree had the least amount of reported violence compared to men with a bachelor's degree or less than a high school diploma. This nonlinear relationship may be the reason Anderson (1997) reported that education level is not a good predictor of intimate partner violence. It has not been determined how education level relates to reports of physical violence during separation. In fact, utilizing a subsample of 1,089 married men from a larger, national study, Stets (1990) found no observed educational differences between men who were categorized as severely violent, moderately violent, or nonviolent. However, few researchers have found these results compared to those who did find a strong association between a low education level and high rates of physical violence.

Income

Previous researchers have overwhelmingly found that income is negatively associated with violence (e.g., Beasley & Stoltenberg, 1992; Cano & Vivian, 2003; Pan, Neidig, & O'Leary, 1994; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989). For instance, Beasley and Stoltenberg (1992) found that 35 publicly recruited nonviolent men had significantly higher incomes than the 49 participants recruited from a batterer support group. In a similar vein, Sugarman and Hotaling (1989) found that severely violent husbands reported a significantly lower income than others in their secondary analysis of 608 men from a national study. Cano and Vivian (2003) also found this trend among 258 married couples in marital therapy. That is, severely violent men had significantly lower incomes than moderately violent men who, in turn, had significantly lower incomes than nonviolent men. In addition, Schuerger and Reigle (1988) found that the average income

of the 246 men in their sample of men enrolled in a batterer intervention program was only \$16,000 per year. In the largest study to date, Pan, Neidig, and O'Leary (1994) examined information from 15,023 men in the U.S. Army. Men who were categorized as either mildly or severely violent had significantly lower incomes than nonviolent men.

Despite the overwhelming evidence suggesting men with lower incomes are more likely to engage in intimate partner violence, there are a small number of studies that contradict these findings (Jasinski, 2001; Stets, 1990). For example, when conducting a secondary analysis of 1,089 married men, Stets (1990) found no significant difference in the income levels of severely, moderately, and nonviolent men. In contrast, when examining data from 3,584 married or cohabiting couples, Jasinski (2001) found that a higher income was positively associated with violence.

Employment Status

Few studies have linked violence with employment status, and many of the findings contradict each other (e.g., Beasley & Stoltenberg, 1992; Jasinski, 2001; Margolin, John, & Foo, 1998; Melzer, 2002). For example, Melzer (2002) found that men's unemployment significantly predicted intimate partner violence. In addition, Beasley and Stoltenberg (1992) reported that their sample of 35 nonviolent men were more likely to be employed full-time when compared to the sample of 49 men from a batterer treatment program. Margolin, John, and Foo (1998) also found that being employed less than full-time was highly associated with abusiveness among their sample of 175 publicly recruited husbands. As mentioned, Howell and Pugliesi (1988) found that employment was associated with abuse, but only among men who were below the age of 40.

However, Jasinski (2001) found that being employed increased the risk of violence among a sample of 3,584 married or cohabitating couples, which suggests there could be a curvilinear relationship between employment status and violence. Baum (2003) provides support for this explanation by describing that males are less likely to turn to others for support in difficult times, and, instead, may become workaholics to overcome grief. This method of dealing with stress can be ineffective, leading to a destructive outcome, such as violence. Therefore, it must be determined which state of employment—being unemployed or being stressed by full-time employment—predicts separation violence.

Barriers to Effective Coping

In addition to examining the crisis event, marital separation, and the precipitating factors surrounding the separation, it is also important to examine possible barriers to effective coping. One possible barrier to effective coping is the individual's mental health. Specifically, the individual's mental health should be assessed to determine whether he is exhibiting any signs of depression or anxiety. These signs may indicate that a maladaptive response to separation is imminent. Also, signs of alcohol abuse may indicate that the individual is coping ineffectively with the separation.

Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety

Crisis theory suggests that some men may experience interpersonal disturbances, such as symptoms of depression or anxiety, in response to marital separation. In support of this theory, previous research has found that psychological distress is higher among divorced individuals (Hope, Rodgers, & Power, 1999; Menaghan & Lieberman, 1986). In fact, newly divorced individuals experience depression at a higher rate than the general

public, and the risk of depression increases if they have a lack of resources (Menaghan & Lieberman, 1986; Kincaid & Caldwell, 1991). Furthermore, it has been suggested that depression and anxiety may act as barriers to effective coping (Golan, 1974). Thus, men who experience symptoms of depression and anxiety may have more difficulties coping with the crisis of marital separation, and may react in a violent way.

In support of this assumption, many studies have found a moderate to strong association between intimate partner violence and depression and anxiety (e.g., Beasley & Stoltenberg, 1992; Hastings & Hamberger, 1994; Schuerger & Riegle, 1988; Tschann, Johnston, & Wallerstein, 1989). For example, Hastings and Hamberger (1991, 1994) found that abusive men reported significantly higher scores on measures of depression and anxiety. However, when socioeconomic indicators were controlled, the gap between the groups was narrower (1994). Similarly, Beasley and Stoltenberg (1992) found that batterers had significantly higher scores on depression and anxiety subscales compared to nonviolent men. In addition, from Schuerger and Reigle's (1988) analysis of 246 men in a batterer treatment program, the most severely violent men reported more symptoms of depression and anxiety. Finally, in Tschann and colleagues' (1989) examination of 144 divorcing men from a larger longitudinal study, it was found that those who reported increased levels of post-separation conflict—measured as both verbal and physical aggression—had higher levels of emotional distress, which included symptoms of depression and anxiety.

It is also necessary to consider studies that used the Brief Symptom Inventory (Derogatis, 1993) to measure depression and anxiety because those subscales were employed in the current study. Two such studies in particular show a significant

relationship between violence and symptoms of depression and anxiety (Gavazzi, Julian, & McKenry, 1996; Julian & McKenry, 1993). In one study of 94 men, the researchers found that for every five unit increase in depression, the likelihood of violence increased by a factor of 1.25 (Julian & McKenry, 1993). Similarly, in their study of 152 married or cohabitating couples, Gavazzi and colleagues (1996) found that men who were categorized as violent had significantly higher scores on the depression and anxiety subscales.

Several additional studies examined the relationship between depression and physical violence (Feldbau-Kohn, Heyman, & O'Leary, 1998; Maiuro, Cahn, Vitaliano, Wagner, & Zegree, 1988; Pan, Neidig, & O'Leary, 1994). Specifically, Maiuro and colleagues (1988) assessed the level of depression among 100 abusive patients and 29 matched patients at a medical center. They found that 67% of the domestically violent men had depression compared to only 4% of nonviolent men. Likewise, utilizing a sample of 15,023 men in the U.S. Army, Pan, Neidig, and O'Leary (1994) found that mildly or severely violent men reported significantly more depressive symptomatology than nonviolent men. Interestingly, Feldbau-Kohn and colleagues (1998) recruited 89 couples for their study by advertising access to free relationship therapy. Upon initial analyses, there was no significant difference between violent and nonviolent couples regarding levels of depression. However, there was a significant positive relationship between depressive symptomatology and intimate partner violence, albeit a low one ($r = .21$).

On the other hand, two studies found a negative relationship between depression and violence (Toews, McKenry, & Catlett, 2003; Umberson, Williams, & Anderson,

2002). Umberson and colleagues (2002) reported that their sample of 34 court-referred violent men had lower scores of depression than the 30 nonviolent, publicly recruited men. Similarly, Toews and colleagues (2003) found that men who experienced more symptoms of depression had a decreased likelihood of engaging in physical violence during separation.

Fewer researchers have focused exclusively on symptoms of anxiety in relation to intimate partner violence (Barnett & Hamberger, 1992; Cogan, Porcerelli, & Dromgoole, 2001); however, the results have been mixed. For example, Barnett and Hamberger (1992) found that the 87 maritally violent men in their study reported more anxiety than the 90 maritally nonviolent men. On the other hand, Cogan and colleagues (2001) noted that in their subsample of 40 college freshmen, symptoms of general anxiety did not differ between groups of men who were violent toward their partner and those who were not. Because symptoms of anxiety are more common among divorced individuals, it is likely that the association between anxiety and separation violence will be more pronounced than that of the general population and among married individuals.

Symptoms of Alcoholism

Alcohol is often utilized as a coping mechanism, and the rate of heavy drinking by separated individuals is disproportionate to that of the general public (Ramisetty-Mikler & Caetano, 2005). Furthermore, it is well documented that heavy alcohol use is related to domestic violence (e.g., Lundeberg, Stith, Penn, & Ward, 2004; Melzer, 2002; O'Leary & Schumacher, 2003; Schuerger & Reigle, 1988). Specifically, Melzer (2002) found that men with alcohol or drug problems were four times more likely to be violent. Moreover, previous researchers have found that domestic violent episodes were more

likely to occur if the male partner had more than five drinks (Caetano, Schafer, & Cunrudi, 2001; Murphy & O'Farrell, 1996). In addition, women were more likely to be injured if their male partners had been drinking alcohol before the encounter (Thompson & Kingree, 2006).

Another study examined the incidence of marital violence following alcohol and substance abuse treatment (Stuart, Ramsey, Moore, Kahler, Farrell, Recupero, & Brown, 2003). Stuart and colleagues found that marital violence decreased following treatment, indicating some link between alcohol use and intimate partner violence. However, Fleury, Sullivan, and Bybee (2000) found that having an alcohol problem did not predict violence. One possibility for these inconsistent findings is the variety of methods used to measure alcohol use. For example, some researchers ask the participant to provide the number of alcoholic beverages consumed over a certain time period, while others ask questions related to alcohol abuse or binge drinking. This amount of variability in measures can change how alcohol is associated with violence.

Another difficulty involved with analyzing the relationship between alcohol abuse and violence is in determining which behavior is the consequence of the other. Many studies, like the ones listed above, assume that alcohol abuse causes violent encounters. Galvani (2004), on the other hand, offers the explanation that these men may be practicing "responsible disinhibition." In other words, alcohol did not necessarily cause the violent behavior, but the men knew they could blame the alcohol if they were intoxicated during the violent encounter. From the perspective of crisis theory, alcohol abuse is a sign of ineffective coping patterns that may signify an increased risk of violent behavior.

Research on Hispanic Men

A majority of the research on intimate partner violence is comprised of White males and sometimes African American men. There is little information regarding how Hispanic men deal with marital separation and what predicts intimate partner violence for them. The few studies that have compared levels of marital violence between Hispanic and White individuals are often limited by the socioeconomic status of those individuals who participate. That is, the Hispanic participants often have a lower income and education level than their White counterparts. This is problematic considering the fact that some researchers have noted that if sociodemographic variables are controlled, there is no longer a difference in the rate of intimate partner violence between Hispanic and White couples (Caetano, Schafer, & Cunradi, 2001; Kantor, Jasinski, & Aldarondo, 1994).

As can be seen in Table 1, the U.S. Hispanic population had a lower education level and income than their White counterparts, and had a higher unemployment rate. This tendency for Hispanic families to have fewer resources than White families may increase the likelihood that they have a higher incidence of intimate partner violence. Therefore, if this study finds that precipitating factors—age, income, education level, and employment status—contribute to the variance in separation violence for both samples, then the likelihood that there is a cultural difference in separation violence will be diminished.

On the other hand, some researchers have suggested that there may be cultural differences that influence the rate of domestic violence between Whites and Hispanics. For example, the cultural construct of machismo is often examined when conducting

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Hispanic and White U.S. Citizens

| | White | Hispanic |
|------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| % of Total Population | 75.1% | 12.5% |
| Education level | | |
| High school graduates | 65.6% | 52.6% |
| Bachelor's degree or higher | 20.5% | 10.5% |
| Unemployment Rate* | 5.9% | 8.9% |
| Median Household Income (per year) | \$44,682 | \$33,676 |

Note. From *U.S. Census, 2000*, U.S. Census Bureau.

*Calculated as the percentage of the civilian labor force.

research on Hispanic samples. Machismo is a concept of masculine identity that is typically used to describe Hispanic men, yet Neff (2001) asserts that it is not unique to only Hispanic men. Neff describes machismo as overmasculinated behavior that stems from inferiority related to nontraditional gender roles and a low socioeconomic status. However, Galanti (2003) notes that there are positive aspects of machismo as well. According to Galanti, these men display valiant behavior; they protect their family, have a strong work ethic, and are good providers. This could provide insight regarding the distress a Hispanic man would feel following separation if he had access to few resources such as employment, income, and educational level. However, if Neff (2001) is correct, this reaction would not only be true for Hispanic men, but men of other ethnicities as well.

Summary

This chapter examined the previous research on separation violence and possible predictors of separation violence utilizing crisis theory as a guiding framework.

According to crisis theory, if the separation is exacerbated by precipitating factors and barriers to effective coping, men will be more likely to become physically violent towards their former partner. Therefore, age, education level, income, employment status, and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and alcoholism were examined as possible predictors of separation violence.

Furthermore, little research has examined predictors of separation violence and the research that has been conducted has consisted of mostly White males. There is limited information regarding how Hispanic men deal with marital separation and what predicts intimate partner violence for them. However, previous researchers have found that the rate of intimate partner violence was similar between Whites and Hispanics (Neff, Holamon, & Schluter, 1995; Sorenson & Telles, 1991). Therefore, it should be determined if the same variables predict separation violence for White and Hispanic men.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

The purpose of this study was to determine how various precipitating factors and barriers to effective coping predicted separation violence among White and Hispanic men. Specifically, age, income, education level, employment status, and symptoms of alcoholism, depression, and anxiety were examined as possible predictors of male-initiated separation violence. Furthermore, I was interested in determining if these variables would predict separation violence for both White and Hispanic men.

Participants

The sample consisted of 113 White men from the Midwest and 72 Hispanic men from the southern part of the United States who were either divorced or in the process of divorcing. As can be seen in Table 1, the groups of men were very similar in some respects, but varied significantly in others. For example, the White sample ranged in age from 21 to 56 with a mean age of 37, and the Hispanic sample ranged in age from 20 to 65 with a mean age of 37. However, the two samples' annual incomes differed significantly. The White men reported an average income between \$30,000 and \$39,999 per year while the Hispanic men reported an average income between \$20,000 and \$29,999. This is particularly interesting in light of the fact that the samples did not

Table 2

Demographic Profile of the Samples

| | White Sample (<i>n</i> = 113) | Hispanic Sample (<i>n</i> = 72) |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Age (years) | 37.49 (<i>SD</i> = 7.20) | 37.13 (<i>SD</i> = 9.07) |
| Education level | | |
| Less than the 9 th grade | 1.8% (<i>n</i> = 2) | 5.6% (<i>n</i> = 4) |
| 9-12 th grade | 5.3% (<i>n</i> = 6) | 11.1% (<i>n</i> = 8) |
| High school diploma | 35.4% (<i>n</i> = 40) | 25.0% (<i>n</i> = 18) |
| Vocational or technical training | 8.0% (<i>n</i> = 9) | 6.9% (<i>n</i> = 5) |
| Some college | 24.8% (<i>n</i> = 28) | 36.1% (<i>n</i> = 26) |
| Bachelor degree or higher | 23.9% (<i>n</i> = 27) | 15.3% (<i>n</i> = 11) |
| Employment Status | | |
| Full-time | 90.3% (<i>n</i> = 102) | 88.9% (<i>n</i> = 64) |
| Part-time | 1.8% (<i>n</i> = 2) | - |
| Unemployed | 4.4% (<i>n</i> = 5) | 2.8% (<i>n</i> = 2) |
| Disabled | 0.9% (<i>n</i> = 1) | 1.4% (<i>n</i> = 1) |
| Retired | - | 2.8% (<i>n</i> = 2) |
| Other | 2.7% (<i>n</i> = 3) | 4.2% (<i>n</i> = 3) |
| *Income | | |
| Under \$10,000/year | 3.5% (<i>n</i> = 4) | 8.3% (<i>n</i> = 6) |
| \$10,000-\$19,999/year | 10.6% (<i>n</i> = 12) | 16.7% (<i>n</i> = 12) |
| \$20,000-\$29,999/year | 22.1% (<i>n</i> = 25) | 31.9% (<i>n</i> = 23) |
| \$30,000-\$39,000/year | 20.4% (<i>n</i> = 23) | 22.2% (<i>n</i> = 16) |
| \$40,000-\$49,999/year | 20.4% (<i>n</i> = 23) | 9.7% (<i>n</i> = 7) |
| \$50,000-\$59,999/year | 7.1% (<i>n</i> = 8) | 5.6% (<i>n</i> = 4) |
| \$60,000-\$69,999/year | 6.2% (<i>n</i> = 7) | 2.8% (<i>n</i> = 2) |
| \$70,000 or more/year | 8.0% (<i>n</i> = 9) | 2.8% (<i>n</i> = 2) |
| Length of Marriage (years) | 10.49 (<i>SD</i> = 6.48) | 10.01 (<i>SD</i> = 7.02) |
| Length of Separation (years) | 1.12 (<i>SD</i> = 0.93) | 1.25 (<i>SD</i> = 1.20) |
| Number of Children | | |
| 0 children | - | 1.4% (<i>n</i> = 1) |
| 1 child | 42.0% (<i>n</i> = 47) | 34.3% (<i>n</i> = 24) |
| 2 children | 40.2% (<i>n</i> = 45) | 37.1% (<i>n</i> = 26) |
| 3+ children | 17.6% (<i>n</i> = 20) | 27.1% (<i>n</i> = 19) |

**p* < .01

significantly differ on reported education level, age, or employment status. In fact, the majority of both samples reported being employed full-time; only 9.7% ($n = 11$) of the White sample and 11.1% ($n = 8$) of the Hispanic sample reported they were not currently employed full-time. There was no significant difference between the Hispanic and White samples for mean education level, even though only 15.3% ($n = 11$) of the Hispanic men had some sort of postsecondary degree compared to 23.9% ($n = 27$) of the White men.

Procedures

The data from White participants were previously collected in 2000 by Toews and colleagues (2003) in Franklin County and Marion County, Ohio. In 2000, Franklin County had a population of 1,068,978, and 75.5% were White. Regarding socioeconomic status, 85.7% of the population was high school graduates, 31.8% had bachelor's degrees or higher, 4.2% of the civilian labor force was unemployed, and the median household income was \$42,734 per year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). In the same year, Marion County had a population of 66,217 with 92.1% characterized as White. The socioeconomic status was slightly lower with 80.3% of the population completing high school, 11.1% completing college, 4.5% were unemployed, and the median household income was \$38,709 per year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Participants were selected by identifying parents with children under 18 from the divorce records within those counties. Survey materials, including a cover letter (Appendix A), consent form, and questionnaire, were mailed to the participants, and they were financially compensated for their participation. This study was approved by The Ohio State University Behavioral and Social Sciences Research Risk Committee (Appendix B).

The Hispanic men were recruited from a court-mandated divorce education class in Bexar County, Texas, and data were collected primarily in 2005. The most recent information from this county estimates that the population of Bexar County in 2004 was 1,459,296, and 56.9% of the population was Hispanic. Regarding socioeconomic status, 79.9% of the population was high school graduates, 24.8% had bachelor's degrees or higher, 4.5% were unemployed, and the median household income was \$39,694 per year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). Only participants enrolled in classes conducted in English were recruited. Therefore, it was assumed that all participants were able to understand the surveys in the English language. The Hispanic men who enrolled in the divorce education class were notified that they had the opportunity to complete a survey on conflict and coparenting during separation. They had ample time to read and sign the consent form that explained the general purpose of the study (Appendix C). After they received a briefing on the study and signed the consent form, they were given the survey materials to complete. The researcher stayed in the vicinity in order to collect the surveys. Upon completion of the survey, each participant was reimbursed the cost of the divorce education class. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at Texas State University-San Marcos (Appendix D).

Measures

At the beginning of the survey, participants were asked to provide the following demographic information: age, level of education (less than the 9th grade, 9-12th grade, high school diploma, post high school vocational or technical training, 1-2 years of college, 3-4 years of college, college degree, or graduate degree), employment status (recoded as full-time = 1, other = 0), and income (under \$10,000/year to \$90,000 or

more/year). In addition, the following standardized measures were used to examine additional predictors of separation violence. A complete list of all survey items can be found in Appendix E.

Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety

Derogatis' (1993) "Brief Symptom Inventory" is a self-report measure used to collect information about psychological symptoms individuals may be experiencing. Only the depression and anxiety subscales from the "Brief Symptom Inventory" were used for the purposes of this study.

The depression subscale was comprised of six items regarding depressive symptomatology, such as "feelings of worthlessness" and "thoughts of ending your life." The participants had to specify how often they experienced each symptom during marital separation by circling one of the following responses: (0) not at all, (1) a little, (2) moderate, (3) quite a bit, or (4) extremely. A sum was then computed for the subscale, with higher scores indicating that the participant reported more symptoms of depression. Cronbach's coefficient alphas were .92 and .91 for the White and Hispanic samples respectively.

The six-item anxiety subscale was used to measure symptoms commonly experienced by those diagnosed with anxiety disorders, such as "suddenly scared for no reason" or "felt so restless you couldn't sit still." The participants had to specify how often they experienced each symptom during marital separation by circling one of the following responses: (0) not at all, (1) a little, (2) moderate, (3) quite a bit, or (4) extremely. A sum was then computed for the subscale, with higher scores indicating that

individuals experienced more symptoms of anxiety. Cronbach's coefficient alphas were .85 for the White sample and .89 for the Hispanic sample.

Symptoms of Alcoholism

The "Brief Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test" is a ten-item instrument based on the self-report "Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test" developed by Selzer (1971). Pokorny, Miller, and Kaplan (1972) correlated the scores tallied from the ten-item brief questionnaire with scores from the original 25-item questionnaire; the resulting correlation coefficient was .99. Therefore, the brief form of the screening test was used because it is equally effective and more efficient than using the original scale. The brief scale consists of ten yes/no questions related to alcohol use and alcoholism. Responses are weighted depending on the severity of the behavior. For example, two items, such as "do you feel you are a normal drinker," were dichotomously coded as either no (2) or yes (0). Five items were dichotomously coded as either no (0) or yes (2); for example, "Have you ever gotten in trouble at work because of drinking?" Finally, three items, such as "Have you ever attended a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)?" were dichotomously coded as either no (0) or yes (5). All weighted items were then summed to provide the total score for the scale. A higher score indicated that the individual reported more symptomatology related to alcoholism. Cronbach's coefficient alphas were .68 for the White sample and .64 for the Hispanic sample, denoting a low degree of internal consistency.

Separation Violence

A modified version of Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman's (1996) "Revised Conflict Tactics Scale" was used in order to gather self-report information

about violence during separation. The physical assault subscale contained twelve items pertaining to interpersonal partner violence, such as “I used a knife or gun on my ex-wife,” and “I threw something at my ex-wife that could hurt.” The participants were asked to report how frequently they engaged in each behavior during separation on a seven-point scale from (0) this never happened to (6) this happened more than 20 times. Per Straus and colleagues’ (1996) recommendations, the responses were recoded using the midpoints of each item to more accurately reflect the frequency of the behaviors. For example, “this happened 3 to 5 times” was coded as 4, “this happened 6 to 10 times” was coded as 8, “this happened 11 to 20 times” was coded as 15, and “this happened more than 20 times” was coded as 25. Responses for all items of the subscale were then added to provide the total score. A higher score indicated that the individual frequently physically assaulted his wife during separation. Cronbach's coefficient alphas for the scale were .78 for the White sample and .69 for the Hispanic sample. Further analysis revealed that internal consistency could be improved for both samples if the item “I burned or scalded my ex-wife on purpose” was omitted. The adjusted Cronbach alpha scores were .79 for the White sample and .70 for the Hispanic sample.

Data Analysis

According to crisis theory, if an individual possesses certain precipitating factors, and exhibits barriers to effective coping, the individual is more likely to have a maladaptive response to the crisis, such as reacting violently. To determine if one’s precipitating factors and barriers to effective coping predicted separation violence, a hierarchical multiple regression was used (see Figure 1). This was done so the independent variables could be grouped into two clusters, precipitating factors and

barriers to effective coping, and entered hierarchically into the model. In doing so, the degree to which the variables in the precipitating factors cluster (age, education level, income, and employment status) and the barriers to effective coping cluster (symptoms of depression, anxiety, and alcoholism) predicted separation violence was determined. In addition, these models were analyzed separately for the White and Hispanic samples in order to determine if the same variables predicted separation violence for the two groups.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine if the same variables would predict separation violence for both White and Hispanic men. These predictors were age, education level, income, employment status, and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and alcoholism. After examining the means and standard deviations for each of the variables (Table 3), the variables were subjected to a correlational analysis in order to determine the relationship between study variables and to determine if there was a threat of collinearity (Tables 4 and 5). Next, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to test the model presented in Figure 1 (Tables 6 and 7).

The correlational analysis revealed that many variables were significantly correlated among the White sample. Age was positively correlated with income ($r = .31, p = .001$) and education level ($r = .25, p = .009$). Income was positively correlated with education level ($r = .51, p = .000$) and employment status ($r = .32, p = .001$), and negatively correlated with symptoms of depression ($r = -.23, p = .019$), and anxiety ($r = -.21, p = .030$). Education level was negatively correlated with symptoms of alcoholism ($r = -.20, p = .032$) and separation violence ($r = -.25, p = .010$). Employment status was negatively correlated with symptoms of depression ($r = -.28, p = .003$), anxiety ($r = -.25,$

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of All Study Variables for White and Hispanic Men

| Variables | White | | Hispanic | |
|------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
| Age | 37.49 | 7.20 | 37.13 | 9.07 |
| Income** | 3.42 | 2.07 | 2.51 | 1.64 |
| Education Level | 3.54 | 1.84 | 3.31 | 1.87 |
| Employment Status | .27 | .94 | .42 | 1.25 |
| Depressive Symptoms*** | 11.59 | 5.95 | 15.15 | 6.83 |
| Anxiety Symptoms*** | 10.46 | 4.76 | 13.16 | 5.73 |
| Alcoholism Symptoms | 1.33 | 2.22 | 1.63 | 1.27 |
| Separation Violence | 1.82 | 5.41 | 1.00 | 3.15 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

$p = .009$), symptoms of alcoholism ($r = -.32$, $p = .001$), and separation violence ($r = -.48$, $p = .000$). Symptoms of alcoholism were positively correlated with depressive symptomatology ($r = .29$, $p = .002$), anxiety ($r = .32$, $p = .001$), and separation violence ($r = .29$, $p = .003$). All of the preceding correlations, with the exception of symptoms of depression and anxiety, were moderate. However, the correlation between symptoms of depression and anxiety was high ($r = .87$, $p = .000$), indicating a possible collinearity threat. Therefore, collinearity diagnostics were conducted in order to determine if multicollinearity was a threat. All tolerance values were close to 1, variance inflation factors (VIF) were below 10, and none of the variance proportions were

Table 4

Correlations for All Study Variables for the White Sample

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. Age | 1.00 | .31** | .25** | .01 | .11 | .04 | .01 | .02 |
| 2. Income | | 1.00 | .51** | .32** | -.23* | -.21* | -.15 | -.10 |
| 3. Education Level | | | 1.00 | .18 | -.02 | .00 | -.20* | -.25* |
| 4. Employment Status | | | | 1.00 | -.28** | -.25** | -.32** | -.48** |
| 5. Depressive Symptoms | | | | | 1.00 | .87** | .29** | .14 |
| 6. Anxiety Symptoms | | | | | | 1.00 | .32** | .15 |
| 7. Alcoholism Symptoms | | | | | | | 1.00 | .29** |
| 8. Separation Violence | | | | | | | | 1.00 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

above .0, which indicated that multicollinearity was not a threat in this analysis (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998).

For the Hispanic sample, fewer associations were present (Table 5). Symptoms of alcoholism were positively correlated with age ($r = .32, p = .008$). Income was positively correlated with education level ($r = .48, p = .000$). Education level was negatively correlated with employment status ($r = -.27, p = .020$). Finally, symptoms of alcoholism were positively correlated with separation violence ($r = .28, p = .038$). Similar to the White sample, symptoms of depression and anxiety were highly correlated ($r = .80, p = .000$), indicating a possible collinearity threat. However, collinearity diagnostics revealed that multicollinearity was not a threat.

Table 5

Correlations for All Study Variables for the Hispanic Sample

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|------------------------|------|------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|------|
| 1. Age | 1.00 | .14 | .06 | -.06 | .10 | .07 | .32** | -.03 |
| 2. Income | | 1.00 | .49** | .22 | .15 | .12 | -.08 | -.15 |
| 3. Education Level | | | 1.00 | -.28* | .18 | .18 | .02 | .01 |
| 4. Employment Status | | | | 1.00 | .05 | .10 | -.22 | .07 |
| 5. Depressive Symptoms | | | | | 1.00 | .80** | .13 | .14 |
| 6. Anxiety Symptoms | | | | | | 1.00 | .15 | -.02 |
| 7. Alcoholism Symptoms | | | | | | | 1.00 | .28* |
| 8. Separation Violence | | | | | | | | 1.00 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

A hierarchical regression was then performed for each sample to test the model in Figure 1. The first block entered was comprised of precipitating factors: age, income, education level, and employment status. The second block entered consisted of the precipitating factors as well as the barriers to effective coping: symptoms of depression, anxiety, and alcoholism.

As seen in Table 6, the White men's precipitating factors contributed to a significant amount of the variance in separation violence ($F = 10.09$, $p = .000$, $R^2 = .30$). Specifically, education level and employment status were the most significant predictors of separation violence. In other words, men who had a low education level and were employed less than full-time were more likely to be violent during separation.

Table 6

 Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Separation Violence for White Men

| Predictor Variables | β | <i>B</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>R</i> ² |
|------------------------------|---------|----------|----------|-----------------------|
| <i>Precipitating Factors</i> | | | | |
| Age | .05 | .03 | | |
| Education Level | -.30** | -.94 | | |
| Income | .20 | .52 | | |
| Employment Status | -.49*** | -9.12 | | |
| Summary of Step 1 | | | 10.09*** | .30 |
| <i>Coping Factors</i> | | | | |
| Age | .06 | .04 | | |
| Education Level | -.28** | -.86 | | |
| Income | .18 | .47 | | |
| Employment Status | -.46*** | -8.60 | | |
| Depressive Symptoms | -.13 | -.12 | | |
| Anxiety Symptoms | .11 | .13 | | |
| Alcoholism Symptoms | .13 | .32 | | |
| Summary of Step 2 | | | 6.08*** | .32 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The second cluster, barriers to effective coping, did not lead to a significant increase in the variance explained. However, this cluster was significantly related to separation violence ($F = 6.08, p = .000, R^2 = .32$). In addition, none of the barriers to effective coping—symptoms of depression, anxiety, and alcoholism—were significant individual predictors of separation violence.

A hierarchical regression was then performed to determine if the same variables predicted separation violence for the Hispanic men. As can be seen in Table 7, cluster one, precipitating factors, did not account for a significant amount of the variance in separation violence ($F = .61, p = .658, R^2 = .05$). However, cluster two approached significance in predicting separation violence for Hispanic men ($F = 1.91, p = .090, R^2 = .22$). As a group, the variables did not significantly predict separation violence, although the three variables added to the second step of the hierarchical regression—symptoms of depression, anxiety, and alcoholism—were independent predictors of violence. Specifically, although the model was not significant, men who reported episodes of separation violence also indicated higher levels of depression and alcoholism and lower levels of anxiety.

Examination of Research Questions

Question #1: Do each of the precipitating factors—age, income, education level, and employment status—significantly predict separation violence?

A hierarchical regression analysis was used to examine this first question. The results for the White sample are shown in Table 6; Table 7 shows the results for the Hispanic sample. Age was not a significant predictor of separation violence for the White or Hispanic men. As can be seen in Table 6, education level was a significant predictor of

Table 7

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Separation Violence for Hispanic Men

| Predictor Variables | β | <i>B</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>R</i> ² |
|------------------------------|---------|----------|----------|-----------------------|
| <i>Precipitating Factors</i> | | | | |
| Age | .05 | .02 | | |
| Education Level | .11 | .20 | | |
| Income | -.22 | -.45 | | |
| Employment Status | .10 | 1.05 | | |
| Summary of Step 1 | | | .61 | .05 |
| <i>Coping Factors</i> | | | | |
| Age | -.06 | -.02 | | |
| Education Level | .00 | .00 | | |
| Income | -.22 | -.44 | | |
| Employment Status | .14 | 1.45 | | |
| Depressive Symptoms | .51* | .25 | | |
| Anxiety Symptoms | -.45* | -.26 | | |
| Alcoholism Symptoms | .30* | .84 | | |
| Summary of Step 2 | | | 1.90 | .22 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

separation violence for the White sample ($\beta = -.30, p = .004$), but not for the Hispanic sample. Income was not a significant predictor of separation violence for the White or Hispanic sample. Employment status was a significant predictor of separation violence among the White sample ($\beta = -.49, p = .000$) (Table 6). However, the same did not hold true for the Hispanic sample.

Question #2: Do each of the barriers to effective coping—symptoms of depression, anxiety, and alcoholism—significantly predict separation violence?

A hierarchical regression analysis revealed that symptoms of depression and anxiety were not significant predictors of separation violence for the White sample. However, symptoms of depression and anxiety were independent predictors of separation violence for the Hispanic sample ($\beta = .51, p = .024, \beta = -.45, p = .041$). In addition, alcoholism symptomatology was not predictive of separation violence for the White sample, but was a significant predictor of separation violence for the Hispanic sample ($\beta = .30, p = .037$).

Question #3: Does the model predict separation violence for both White and Hispanic men?

As demonstrated in Table 6, the model was predictive of separation violence for the White sample. However, the overall model did not significantly predict separation violence for the Hispanic men (Table 7).

Question #4: Do the same variables predict separation violence for both White and Hispanic men?

Two of the precipitating factors—education level and employment status—were significant independent predictors of separation violence for the White sample, and

contributed to approximately 30% of the variance in separation violence. On the other hand, the barriers to effective coping—symptoms of depression, anxiety, and alcoholism—accounted for about 17% of the variance in separation violence. Therefore, the same variables do not predict separation violence for White and Hispanic men.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine whether precipitating factors and barriers to effective coping predicted separation violence for both Hispanic and White men. A hierarchical regression analysis revealed that demographic variables significantly predicted separation violence for the White men. Specifically, education level and employment status were significant predictors of violence during separation. However, the model was not significant for the Hispanic sample, even though symptoms of alcoholism, depression, and anxiety were all individual predictors.

Similar to previous research, education level (Beasley & Stoltenberg, 1992; Cano & Vivian, 2003; Tschann, Johnson, & Wallerstein, 1989) and employment status (Beasley & Stoltenberg, 1992; Margolin, John, & Foo, 1998; Melzer, 2002) predicted separation violence for the White sample. That is, White men with fewer years of education and who were not employed full-time were more likely to report violence. Sugarman and Hotaling (1989) offered three possible explanations to account for the strong association between socioeconomic status and intimate partner violence. For one, men with fewer available resources may, in fact, be more likely to resort to physical violence against their ex-partners. Second, it could be possible that men with a lower

socioeconomic status have different values than those with higher levels of income, employment, or education. A third possible explanation could be that men with a higher socioeconomic status are more aware of the social stigma regarding intimate partner violence, thus not reporting it at the same rate as those with fewer resources.

Surprisingly, no other variables predicted separation violence for the White sample. For example, contrary to previous research, age was not a predictor of separation violence (e.g., Anderson, 1997; Cano & Vivian, 2003; Jasinski, 2001; Melzer, 2002; Stets, 1990). One possible explanation for this finding could be related to the overall age range of the men sampled in this study. The aforementioned studies that found a significant relationship between age and intimate partner violence examined violence among married or cohabitating couples instead of divorced or separated couples. Divorce tends to be more common among older couples, 50 to 59 years, who, according to previous research, may not be as violent. Moreover, in this study, the percentage of men under 25 years of age was very small. Without a truly representative sample of this age group, the data could show that there is no significant relationship when, in fact, the lack of young men in the sample could account for the absence of this expected correlation between age and violence.

Income was also not a significant predictor of violence, contradicting results from past research (e.g., Pan, Neidig, & O'Leary, 1994; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989). This could be because of the way income was measured in this study. Specifically, men were asked to provide their current income level which could have significantly differed from their income level during initial separation. According to crisis theory, the presence of precipitating factors during initial separation would increase the likelihood of separation

violence. It may be that men's income changed enough for no discernable effect to be found in the current analysis.

Regarding barriers to effective coping, depression and anxiety were not significant predictors of separation violence for the White sample, even though the vast majority of literature on the topic found a positive relationship between symptomatology of depression and anxiety and intimate partner violence (e.g., Beasley & Stoltenberg, 1992; Hastings & Hamberger, 1994; Schuerger & Riegle, 1988; Tschann, Johnston, & Wallerstein, 1989). One possible explanation could be the variety of instruments used to measure these psychological symptoms. Some of the measures used in previous research were diagnostic tools rather than measures commonly used for research purposes. Although these instruments might be useful for practitioners, they may not be valid in research. In addition, even though the participants were asked to provide answers based on their situation during separation, it is likely they reported their current feelings. Thus, their current feelings may not have been truly representative of their psychological well-being during the initial separation.

Similarly, symptoms of alcoholism did not significantly predict separation violence for the White sample. Although some researchers have used the Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test to explain the variance in intimate partner violence (e.g., Schuerger & Reigle, 1988), similar results were not found for the White sample. However, it is important to emphasize the distinction between how symptoms of alcoholism were measured in this study and how alcohol abuse was measured in other studies. Margolin and colleagues (1998) noted that it was binge drinking, rather than frequent drinking of alcohol that significantly predicted abusive behavior. Therefore, it is

possible that some form of alcohol abuse can predict separation violence and the instrument utilized in this study did not appropriately measure it for the White sample. Interestingly, the Cronbach alpha scores of this measure for both samples were low, and did not reach the accepted minimum of .70. This could signify that this measure was not a valid measure for this construct, and may be why significant results were not found.

In support of crisis theory, education level and employment status significantly predicted violence during separation for White men. More specifically, men with fewer resources during a crisis—separation—were more likely to react negatively, in this case violently. However, this was not the case for Hispanic men. This could be because the Hispanic men who participated were less likely to report separation violence. On the other hand, there truly could be a difference between White and Hispanic men regarding what variables predict violence during separation. Specifically, there could be a cultural difference that accounts for the dissimilar findings.

In support of this assumption, the barriers to effective coping—symptoms of depression, anxiety, and alcoholism—were independent predictors of separation violence for the Hispanic men. Although there has been little, if any, research exploring these variables as predictors of violence among Hispanic men, some of these findings support previous research that had found a positive relationship between symptoms of depression and alcoholism and intimate partner violence among White samples (e.g., Hastings & Hamberger, 1994; Schuenger & Riegle, 1988; Tschann, Johnston, & Wallerstein, 1989). However, there was a negative relationship between symptoms of anxiety and separation violence, contradicting previous findings (e.g., Barnett & Hamberger, 1992; Gavazzi, Julian, & McKenry, 1996). The U.S. Surgeon General has reported that there is a form of

anxiety that is quite common among Hispanic populations although mainstream mental health practitioners remain unaware about specific causes or implications. This condition, known as “ataque de nervios,” tends to be commonly accepted among Hispanic populations even though the symptoms could be perceived as symptoms of general anxiety (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.). This cultural acceptance could account for the reason why violent Hispanic men had fewer symptoms of anxiety despite the fact that the overall sample of Hispanic men had a higher mean anxiety score than the White sample (Table 2).

Table 2 also demonstrates that the Hispanic men in this study had significantly higher rates of depressive symptoms when compared to the White men. This could signify a cultural difference between White and Hispanic men in how they exhibit emotional behavior in response to stressful situations. In particular, culture could have an immense impact on the family and community structure surrounding both samples of men that may influence how they dealt with the crisis of separation.

Limitations

Although this study was unique in examining predictors of separation violence for both White and Hispanic men, the results must be interpreted with caution because of several limitations. First, there was a marked difference in the way the participants from each sample were recruited and how they completed the survey. The White men completed the survey materials through the mail and never spoke to or saw the researchers. On the other hand, the Hispanic men were recruited by the researchers, in person, and completed the surveys in the presence of the researchers. Because the questions on the surveys asked for personal information that is particularly sensitive, the

Hispanic sample may have underreported negative behaviors for reasons of social desirability. In support of this assumption, 80.3% of Hispanic men compared to 67.3% of White men reported no physical violence during separation. Moreover, only 10.0% of the White men and 8.1% of the Hispanic men reported more than three episodes of physical violence during separation. Although there could be significant differences in the rate of violence between the two groups, this finding could also be the result of the Hispanic men underreporting their violent behavior.

Another noteworthy difference relates to how the samples were collected. Specifically, data for the White sample were collected five years prior to the data collection of the Hispanic sample, and the samples were collected from men living in different regions of the United States. Furthermore, the Hispanic sample was recruited for the study following a court-mandated class on coparenting following separation. Each Hispanic participant completed this four hour class immediately prior to completing the survey. Because the class covered topics ranging from effective communication strategies to behaviors to avoid during separation, the men could have answered questions based on how they thought they should behave, rather than on what their actual behaviors were during separation.

Recall is another potential limitation because participants were asked to respond to questions based on past behavior. In fact, one Hispanic man remarked that he had a hard time remembering specifics about separation after completing the survey. This may also be the result of a subconscious mistake. People generally want to believe their previous behaviors were at least justified, and may not own up to socially undesirable behavior.

This study also focused on a limited number of variables that could impact the likelihood of separation violence. Because this construct is complex, there are many extraneous variables that could have impacted the outcome. Crisis theory highlights several other important factors—besides the ones measured in this study—to consider in crisis resolution. For example, the individual's perception of the crisis is important in how he chooses to tackle the stressful situation. Also, the men in this study were not asked whether they had sought out and/or received any treatment related to separation. Because Caplan (1964) posits that social intervention is vastly important in how one perceives a crisis, the existence of support systems would be an important variable to measure in future research. Lastly, this study was correlational in nature, thus no causal interpretation can be made.

Implications for Intervention and Research

Despite these limitations, there are several implications for batterer intervention programs and future research. Specifically, these results indicate that interventions should aim to provide separating men information about available resources in the community. Men who are separating from their partners should be aware of community programs that can help them acquire resources they do not have. This may prevent these men from reacting violently to separation. Furthermore, these findings emphasize that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to batterer intervention. Treatment of these men entails consideration of available resources, but also cultural differences.

Most importantly, batterer intervention programs are a type of secondary and tertiary prevention. Ultimately, researchers and practitioners should aim to provide crisis intervention to separating individuals at the primary prevention point. Individuals should

be targeted and assessed during separation so that they have access to community resources, psychological support, and effective coping strategies. This form of prevention is less costly monetarily and prevents possible harm towards victims (Hoff, 2001; Roberts, 2000).

Future research should focus on violence during separation because previous studies have shown separation violence is more frequent and injurious than marital violence (e.g., Bachman & Saltzman, 1995; Kurz, 1996). The findings from this study provide some possible explanations for this phenomenon; however, more research is needed. Furthermore, future research should determine whether there truly is a cultural difference between White and Hispanic men based on these variables.

Although the samples used in this study were a limitation, one strength of this study is how these samples were obtained. Many similar studies on intimate partner violence recruited men from batterer intervention programs or incarcerated samples. This limits the scope dramatically, especially if focusing on demographic characteristics. On the other hand, this study drew both samples from county-wide populations of divorced men, so the samples were more representative of the general public. However, these results are not completely generalizable due to the fact that subjects were not randomly selected. Therefore, future research should use a random, more diverse sample. Moreover, because of the inherent limitations of using self-report data on a sensitive topic such as intimate partner violence, qualitative research and research with couples would provide beneficial information on separation violence.

APPENDIX A
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY COVER LETTER
(WHITE SAMPLE)



Department of Human Development
and Family Science

135 Campbell Hall
1787 Neil Avenue
Columbus, OH 43210-1245

Office 614-292-7705
FAX 614-292-4365

Dear Parent:

As shared or co-parenting becomes more common after divorce, there is much interest in how well parents are able to work together in rearing their child(ren). Specifically, family courts, practitioners, and researchers are interested in how divorced parents resolve conflicts with each other and how they generally adjust after divorce. We have been funded by the Ohio Department of Mental Health to study these topics in a sample of parents one to two years after divorce.

The questions contained in the enclosed survey pertain to how you have been feeling since the time of your divorce, your general level of adjustment to the divorce, and how you and your former spouse resolve conflict or differences as you parent your children. Also, we want to know what resources have been helpful to you since the divorce, and what your present needs are. Completion of the questionnaire will take approximately 30-45 minutes. In return for your completion of the questionnaire, we will pay you \$20.

Your participation in our study is completely voluntary. Some of the questions deal with personal issues, such as alcohol use and aggressive behaviors; however, you are free to refuse to answer any questions that you find objectionable, or to withdraw from the study at any time. Please be assured that your responses will be completely confidential; no names will be associated with the responses. The report of the research findings will be in summary form, reflecting the general responses of all the parents in the study. If you wish to go ahead and participate in our study, please sign the attached consent form prior to filling out the questionnaire and also fill out the OSU payment form. If you are interested in the final results of our study, please complete the YELLOW card included in this packet.

Page 2

A second phase of our project involves in-depth interviews with some of the survey respondents. Participation in this part of the study would require 2-3 hours of your time responding to general questions. Again, you are free to refuse to answer any questions that you find objectionable, or to withdraw from the study at any time. These interviews would be audiotaped and later transcribed; the tapes would then be destroyed. Your responses would be kept confidential with no names attached to the transcripts. If you participate in this second phase of our study, we will pay you an additional \$50. If you are interested in participating in this part of the study, please complete the enclosed BLUE card.

We feel that the information that you can provide us is critical in identifying the needs and concerns of divorced parents in our State, and we thank you for your interest in participating in our study. If you need any additional information about the enclosed materials or about the study in general, please contact us at (614)-292-5616.

Sincerely yours,

Patrick C. McKenry
Patrick C. McKenry, PhD
Professor

Beth S. Catlett
Beth S. Catlett, PhD
Adjunct Assistant Professor

APPENDIX B

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY IRB APPROVAL

(WHITE SAMPLE)

APPENDIX C
TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY CONSENT FORM
(HISPANIC SAMPLE)



Texas State University | SAN MARCOS

*Department of
Family & Consumer Sciences*

601 University Drive
San Marcos, Texas 78666-4616
office 512 245 2155
fax 512 245 3829
www.texasstate.edu

We are faculty members at Texas State University-San Marcos, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. We invite you to participate in a study about Hispanic fathers' experiences with parental cooperation and conflict during marital separation. You will be one of approximately 100 participants in the study.

If you decide to participate, we will request that you complete this form and the questionnaire. The questionnaire takes approximately 60 minutes to complete. You may find it stressful to tell us about your experiences as a divorced father; however, you may find it helpful. Your information will be useful to family courts as they develop programs and policies to help divorcing fathers and their children.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential. Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relations with Texas State. If you decide to participate, you may discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

You are making a decision whether or not you will participate in this research. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice after signing this form, should you choose to discontinue participation in this study.

Signature Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

APPENDIX D

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY IRB APPROVAL
(HISPANIC SAMPLE)



Institutional Review Board

**Certification of
Review and Approval
by the
Southwest Texas State University
Institutional Review Board**

**IRB Reference Number
02-0051**

The project titled:

**Conflict and Coparenting During the Divorce Process: An Examination of Hispanic
Fathers**

by Michelle Toews

has been APPROVED, effective 12/6/2001.

The Southwest Texas Institutional Review Board shall conduct continuing review of this research appropriate to the degree of risk and the length of the project period, but not less than once per year.

Charles Garofalo
Chair, Institutional Review Board

Billy C. Covington
Associate Vice President, Office of Sponsored Programs/
Director, Federal Relations

Southwest Texas State University

601 University Drive San Marcos, Texas 78666-4605
512-245-2414

SWT is a member of the Texas State University System

APPENDIX E
INSTRUMENTS

Demographic Information

How old were you on your last birthday? _____

What is your race? _____

How many years of education have you completed?

_____ Less than the 9th grade

_____ 9-12th grade

_____ High school diploma

_____ Post high school vocational or technical training

_____ 1-2 years of college

_____ 3-4 years of college

_____ College degree

_____ Graduate degree (please specify: _____)

Are you currently employed?

_____ Full-time

_____ Part-time

_____ Unemployed

_____ Disabled

_____ Retired

_____ Other (please specify: _____)

What is your current total income?

_____ Under \$10,000/year

_____ \$10,000-\$19,999/year

_____ \$20,000-\$29,999/year

_____ \$30,000-\$39,999/year

_____ \$40,000-\$49,999/year

_____ \$50,000-\$59,999/year

_____ \$60,000-\$69,999/year

_____ \$70,000-\$79,999/year

_____ \$80,000-\$89,999/year

_____ \$90,000 or more/year

Brief Symptom Inventory – Depression and Anxiety Subscales (Derogatis, 1992)

Please circle the response that best described how much you were distressed, bothered, or worried during the time of your separation.

| | Not at All | A Little | Moderate | Quite a Bit | Extremely |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|
| a. Nervousness or shakiness inside? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Thoughts of ending your life? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Suddenly scared for no reason? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. Felt lonely? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. Felt sad? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. Felt no interest in things? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| g. Felt fearful? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| h. Felt hopeless about the future? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| i. Felt tense or stress? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| j. Feelings of terror or panic? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| k. Felt so restless you couldn't sit still? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| l. Feelings of worthlessness? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Brief Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test (Selzer, 1971)

Please answer the following questions about your alcohol use during your separation:

| | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Did you feel you were a normal drinker? | | |
| 2. Did friends or relatives think you were a normal drinker? | | |
| 3. Did you ever attend a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)? | | |
| 4. Did you ever lose friends or girlfriends because of drinking? | | |
| 5. Did you ever get into trouble at work because of drinking? | | |
| 6. Did you ever neglect your obligations, your family, or your work for two or more days in a row because you were drinking? | | |
| 7. Did you ever have delirium tremors (DTs), severe shaking, hear voices or see things that weren't there after heavy drinking? | | |
| 8. Did you ever go to anyone for help about your drinking? | | |
| 9. Were you ever in a hospital because of drinking? | | |
| 10. Were you ever arrested for drunk driving after drinking? | | |

Revised Conflict Tactics Scale – Physical Assault Subscale (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996)

The following list gives a wide variety of behaviors that may arise between spouses when conflict occurs. For each behavior, recall as honestly as you can about how many times you engaged in the behavior **during the time that you were separated**. Use the scale from 0 to 6 to mark how often the behavior occurred.

During the stated time period...

- 0 = This **never** happened
- 1 = This happened **once**
- 2 = This happened **twice**
- 3 = This happened **3 to 5 times**
- 4 = This happened **6 to 10 times**
- 5 = This happened **11 to 20 times**
- 6 = This happened **more than 20 times**

| | Frequency During Separation | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1. I threw something at my ex-wife that could hurt. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 2. I twisted my ex-wife's arm or hair. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 3. I pushed or shoved my ex-wife. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 4. I used a knife or gun on my ex-wife. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 5. I punched or hit my ex-wife with something that could hurt. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 6. I choked my ex-wife. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7. I slammed my ex-wife against a wall. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 8. I beat up my ex-wife. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 9. I grabbed my ex-wife. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10. I slapped my ex-wife. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 11. I burned or scalded my ex-wife on purpose. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 12. I kicked my ex-wife. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

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