A STUDY OF THE GENERATIONAL FACTOR IN CHILD ABUSE

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by

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ABSTRACT

Many attempts have been made to determine the causative factors associated with child abuse and a wide variety of explanations has been offered. One of the most persistent viewpoints is known as the Generational Factor - the view that parents who abuse their children were themselves abused in childhood.

A review of child welfare and related literature revealed that, while the Generational Factor viewpoint was widely accepted and was supported by Learning Theory, no studies had been specifically undertaken to test its assumptions. Instead, opinion of the Generational Factor generally originated as a tangential issue emanating from other studies.

This study was undertaken to examine specifically the Generational Factor - to determine with empirical evidence whether or not parents who abuse their children were themselves abused in childhood or were raised in environments where they were subjected to violent physical aggression and violently aggressive language. Hypotheses and a major proposition were developed for specific testing purposes and a study questionnaire was developed and pre-tested.

In co-operation with the Provincial Department of Social Services, a methodology for testing the hypotheses was developed. Individuals who were identified as child abusers were selected and a comparison group of non-abusing individuals was matched with them using randomization procedures. Each selected participant was then

visited by an interviewer and a questionnaire was completed. Completed questionnaires were kept confidential and following recording of the data on computer coding forms, the identifying code sheet was destroyed. A computer program was then devised and the groups were compared using Chi-Square and t-test statistical procedures.

Upon analysis of the data, it was found that the groups differed significantly on a number of variables. For example, the respondents who abuse their children were found to have been hit and bruised more frequently and generally subjected to a more violent and a less loving family environment, as children, than the Comparison respondents. As well, the abusing respondents indicated that their parents were more violent toward each other and experienced less marital satisfaction and less parenting satisfaction than the parents of the Comparison respondents.

On the basis of the evidence, the majority of the hypotheses were validated and the major proposition of the study was accepted - providing empirical evidence to support the Generational Factor.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Preparing the child for life outside the home is a primary function of the family. As Pringle (1975) observes, the family which fulfills this function successfully gives each child a sense of security and belonging; bestowing a feeling of purpose, of direction, of achievement and personal worth. For the child, the family is a buffer and bridge, instilling not only security and love but also as Rawls (1971) notes, the willingness to participate and to strive for social ideals.

Methods and philosophies of child raising undoubtedly change with time. Forms of punishment considered proper and even wholesome in Elizabethan or Victorian days, as Arnold (1962) indicates, would today be considered abusive. Indeed, child raising practices within a society may vary on a continuum dependent on a complexity of conditions. Sears, Eleanor and Levin (1957), for example, have found that lower class families tend to use more violence in disciplining children than middle class families. This discrepancy has further increased, in the view of authors such as Bronfenbrenner (1975), because of the accessibility of child raising theories to middle class families.

It is assumed that the basic familial protective role is firmly entrenched regardless of variation in child raising practices within a society. Therefore, there is shock and horror when it is revealed that a family has discarded its protective role and has become instead an institution which inflicts cruelty and injury upon

its charges. A sense of betrayal is felt by the society, followed by anger and the demand for retribution.

Widespread knowledge and attention to the problem of child abuse in North America did not occur until the mid twentieth century. Wooley, in 1955, brought out the startling fact that the lesions noted on X-Rays were in many cases willfully inflicted. The news reached the press and caused concern among the general public and in social agencies. In 1965, C. H. Kempe coined the term "The Battered Child Syndrome" and presented his view of child abuse at a symposium of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Kempe's presentation and a later publication of "The Battered Child", edited by Kempe and Helfer (1968), mobilized the thinking of physicians and social workers and initiated the present profusion of research in the field.

The "open secret" of child abuse, to quote Bakan's (1971) apt phraseology, is becoming known to the general public and is of special concern to professionals in the social services. The number of child abuse incidents appears to be increasing in many provinces, including Newfoundland and may be an indication of increased public and professional concern, or of the legal necessity of reporting such incidents, or of some as yet undetermined cause.

The most conservative estimates of the number of children abused in North America are disconcerting and, to some, quite appalling. As Ray Helfer (1972) of the United States notes, "to the best of our knowledge at least 250 children are injured in a non-accidental manner for every million population in urban areas. Unless these

families are recognized early and some form of family centered therapy instituted, approximately two to three percent of these children will be killed each year and thirty percent of the younger ones will receive permanent physical injury or brain damage (Helfer, 1972)." The report to The House of Commons on Child Abuse and Neglect (1976) indicates that the incidence of child abuse per million population in the United States may be as high as 350 cases in certain communities. In 1971, for example, the state of New York alone reported 3200 cases.

In Canada, The House of Commons report (1976) discloses that 1085 cases of child abuse were reported during 1973-74. It estimates that the actual number of abused children in Canada may range between 3000 and 5000 cases a year. The report noted that in Ontario during the year 1973 for example, 598 cases of child abuse were reported. In Alberta during 1973, 295 cases were reported as compared with 171 cases in British Columbia during the same year. In Newfoundland, The Department of Social Services Annual Report of 1976-77 indicates that 60 child abuse cases were reported and 39 of these were confirmed. The 1977-78 report indicates that 56 cases of physical abuse were reported, with 10 comfirmations.

Evidence of child abuse has led an increasing number of researchers to examine causative factors associated with such aberrant behaviour. Their approach has varied. Some believe that the cause of child abuse can be ascertained by examining demographic characteristics associated with the behaviour pattern; others believe that causation can be found by studying the personality characteristics of abusing parents.

In examining child abuse registries in the United States, Gil (1971), for example, has observed that physical abuse is not limited to early childhood. Over 75 percent of the victims in his study were over two years of age and nearly half of them were over six years. He noted as well that nearly 30 percent of the abused children lived in female-headed homes and that, compared with the general population, the educational and occupational levels of abusing families were low. This observation contradicts that of Paulson and Blake (1963) however, who found in their study that battered children are not pecular to any single socio-economic group. Kempe (1962) indicated in his study that there is a relationship between child abuse and unstable marriages, while Nurse (1964) has observed that child abuse appears to be a product of parental social isolation in the community. Indeed, a rather extensive and often contradictory list of characteristics of abused children and abusive parents has been compiled by researchers studying demographic patterns.

Researchers who believe that child abuse causation can be found by examining the personality characteristics of the abused child and his family have been conspicuous in the literature. Chesser, as far back as 1952, noted that "positive cruelty ..... is more likely than neglect to arise from seated deficiencies in character (Chesser, 1952)." Since this observation, various studies have concentrated on the personality aspect. Merrill (1962) found that abusing parents displayed distinct personality characteristics such as hostility, compulsiveness, lack of warmth, lack of flexibility, dependency and physical disability.

Cochran (1965) found somewhat similar characteristics and indicated that abusing parents are immature, self-centered and impulse ridden. Nurse (1964) considered that abusing parents often display role reversal and that the abused child may represent symbolically some conflict for the parents. Young (1964) felt that scapegoating is an important characteristic of the abusing parent, while other researchers such as Simpson (1968) considered low intelligence to be a causative personality factor.

Other areas of interest which have stimulated much research are emotional - maternal deprivation in childhood and inadequate child raising viewpoints. Researchers such as Fontana (1968) view abusing parents as emotional cripples because of unfortunate circumstances in their own childhood. Stelle and Pollock (1968) find that child abusers are often deprived of basic mothering, while Melnick and Hurley (1969) observe that the abusing mother in her own upbringing was emotionally deprived.

Researchers have similarly indicated the importance of inadequate parenting in contributing to child abuse. Paulson and Blake (1969), for example, have found that abusing parents lack appropriate knowledge of discipline practices and that they have distorted concepts of the nature and limits of discipline in child raising. Gregg and Elmer (1969) have similar findings and note that abusing parents implement culturally accepted norms for raising children, but with an exaggerated intensity. Such studies, while not proving any specific cause of child abuse, indicate the need for training and support of parents in fulfilling their crucial role.

Another view of causation in child abuse, and a topic which is the specific focus of this research, is the Generational Factor. In essence, this factor is a belief that an abusing parent was an abused child and that abused children will in turn become abusing parents. As will be seen in a subsequent chapter of this research, its proponents are many. One will note in reading the literature concerning the Generational Factor however, that there are no studies which address this subject specifically. Rather, as is indicated subsequently in this thesis, opinion of the Generational Factor has appeared generally as a tangential issue emanating from other studies.

Despite the fact that there are no studies which specifically address the Generational Factor, there is considerable acceptance in various circles of its validity as a cause of child abuse. Research is required in order to investigate this assumption scientifically to determine whether or not the Generational Factor is indeed as significant as its proponents declare.

Purpose of Study

As noted above, this study will examine the viewpoint that abusing parents were themselves abused as children - the so called Generational Factor. The results of the study will hopefully add to the knowledge which is already compiled about child abuse.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not parents who abuse their children were themselves abused in childhood, or were raised in families where violent aggression and violently

aggressive language were experienced as a part of daily life. Should such a relationship be found, its possible explanation may be deduced from the theoretical literature supporting the Generational Factor.

The Generational Factor, even if proven to be valuable as a predictor of child abuse, offers, in itself, no explanation of the sub-processes which lead to abusive behaviour. It does establish, however, a hypothetical cause and effect relationship between the experiencing of abuse in childhood and subsequent expression of similar behaviour when the child becomes a parent. Strong theoretical views do exist which explain the intervening processes between cause and effect and one of these views, Modeling Theory, will be discussed later.

In subsequent sections of this thesis, the literature supporting the Generational Factor will be examined and criticized. The theoretical view which supports the Generational Factor will also be examined and hypotheses developed from this theory. These hypotheses will be expressed operationally and tested through an extensive questionnaire which was administered to a group of abusing parents and a matched group of non-abusing parents. The data, which were put on computer cards and analyzed by appropriate statistical procedures, will then be examined and discussed.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are no child abuse studies which have the Generational Factor as their main focus, but a number of studies note that it is a characteristic of child abusers. Studies of aggression by Social Psychologists are also pertinent to the Generational Factor. The following review of this research will indicate the extent of our knowledge about the topic.

Child Abuse Literature

One of the earliest studies providing information relating to Child Abuse was conducted by Duncan, Frazier, Litin, Johnson and Barron (1958). They investigated six prisoners convicted of first degree murder and found that in four of the cases the subjects were physically abused by their parents throughout childhood and adolescence. A study by Edgar Merrill (1962) indicated a similar familial behaviour pattern. In a set of questionnaires sent to eighteen district offices of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Merrill determined that a large percentage of the families served by these agencies thought hostility and attack to be acceptable forms of behaviour and he presumed that this acceptability stemmed from the family in which the abuser grew up. C. Henry Kempe (1962), in discussing the characteristics of abusing parents, likewise indicated that the attacking parent was subject to similar abuse in childhood. "It would appear", Kempe

noted, "that the most important factor to be found in families where parental assault occurs is to do unto others as you have been done by (Kempe, 1962)." In a similar vein, George Curtis (1963), in a clincial note to the American Journal of Psychiatry, discussed what he called "The probable tendency of children who are abused to become tomorrows murderers and perpetrators of other crimes of violence, if they survive (Curtis, 1963)."

Nurse (1964), in her study of familial patterns of parents who abuse their children, found that a significant percentage of these parents were themselves abused. Leontine Young (1964), found from her study of agency files that fifty-one percent of abusing parents came from homes where they were neglected or abused. However, she did not differentiate between neglect and abuse. As well, Steel and Pollock (1968) in their five-year study of sixty families of battered children indicated that there is a tendency for parents to recreate the child raising patterns that they themselves experienced as children. While only "several" of the parents in their study had been abused, all had experienced a sense of intense and continuous demand from their parents.

Further evidence of the Generational Factor was found by Oliver and Taylor (1971). They studied five generations of children who were ill treated in one family pedigree. Of forty-nine children involved, they found only seven who were not ill used and concluded that such ill usage tends to be transmitted through family pedigree because of the environment in which the parents are raised as children.

A British study by Smith and Hanson (1973) compared child rais-

ing practices of parents of battered babies with a control group. They found that fifty-one percent of index mothers had recollections of physical maltreatment as children compared with eleven percent of the control group. A record survey of the same year by Burland, Andrews and Headsten (1973) indicated similar results. From the records of twenty-eight abused or neglected children, they found that parents who abuse their children usually themselves were abused as children and reared under harsh circumstances with inadequate parenting during the first crucial years of life. Likewise, a study by Green, Gaines and Sangrund (1974), concerning mothers or maternal caretakers of sixty abused children in New York City, found that parents manifested impaired impulse control. They concluded that this was the result of harsh punishment and identification with violent adult models in childhood.

V. J. Fontana (1973), in his book, "Somewhere a Child is Crying", concludes as well that abusing parents were once abused as children. Similar conclusions are offered by Bakan (1971), by James (1975), and by authors such as Blumberg (1974) and Lystad (1975) who make their comments in various learned publications.

While not focusing specifically on the Generational Factor, such studies in their aggregate appear to provide considerable evidence that the abusing parent was once an abused child.

Literature of Social Psychologists Studying Aggression

The theoretical view that children imitate the behaviour of those whom they feel are significant has prompted research which is of

interest to a study of the Generational Factor. Much of this research has been initiated by social psychologists studying aggression, including those whose theoretical views will be discussed later. These psychologists have rather boldly departed from the traditional view that aggression is either the result of frustration, or, as expounded by Lorenz (1966) and Ardrey (1966), is an instinct which demands expression in virtually all higher animals.

One of the earliest studies of this nature was conducted by McCord, McCord and Howard (1963). They noted, in a study of anti-social aggressiveness in males, that aggressive anti-social men had experienced family discord, neglect and severe parental attack and conclude that extreme punitiveness coupled with an aggressive model produces anti-social aggressiveness. Similarly a previous study by Sears, Whiting, Nowless and Sears (1953) found that the degree of aggressiveness of children is related to the degree of punishment received at home.

Other studies, while not referring directly to abuse, do illustrate the influence of modeling upon aggression. Bandura (1972), for example, found that children who had observed a model behaving in an aggressive manner responded to frustration by kicking and other imitative aggressive behaviour. A control group of equally frustrated children who had watched a non-aggressive model displayed considerably less aggression.

Parton and Geshuri (1971) have shown that a model is more likely to be imitated when carrying out aggression with intensity and vigor

than when making the response in a more restrained way. They conclude that responses performed with intensity may engage and hold the viewers attention more strongly than less intense responses.

A study by Hicks (1965) has shown that, once acquired, modeled aggression tends to be persistent. He tested children for imitative aggression both immediately after observation of a model and again six months later. Relative to children who had not seen the model, the ones who had been exposed previously made more imitative responses after the longer lapse of time. Hicks later (1968) demonstrated retention of more than 60 percent of the model's aggressive act two months after observation and 40 percent as long as eight months afterwards. As well, Kniveton (1973) has shown the long range modeling effect by demonstrating imitative aggression in British pre-school children five months after observation of a model.

Drabman and Thomas (1974) have shown that observation of filmed violence may promote a general tolerence for aggression while Berkowitz (1974) feels that aggression which is homicidal in nature may be elicited by observation of violence carried out by others.

These studies, while not referring directly to child abuse, do tend to support one of the theoretical bases of this study to be discussed; namely, that abusive behaviour is the result of imitative modeling. The dynamics of the modeling process and its relevance to a study of the Generational Factor in child abuse will be subsequently discussed in detail.

Study Rationale and Critique of Literature

A cursory examination of the above studies might lead one to believe that the relationship between child abuse and childhood experience had been established. Upon closer examination of the studies however, one becomes aware of a number of major weaknesses which appear to invalidate their findings.

The first major weakness in many of the studies is the result of case selection based on availability and on the judgement of those concerned. In a number of cases, the samples obtained for study have not been chosen randomly but instead have been selected discriminately by the researchers. As Kerlinger (1973) notes, such sampling procedure biases the study and renders invalid the use of statistical analysis. Studies by Merrill (1962), Young (1964), and Burland, et al. (1973), researchers who obtained their information from case records, are particularly fraught with these weaknesses. One is unable to say that the samples chosen were representative of the populations or that the researchers did not exclusively select data which supported their assumptions.

An example of the looseness of the sampling procedure may be seen from the Young (1964) study where, "the cases were selected by the judgements of the responsible supervisors.....those in their best judgement were representative of all the protective cases coming to them and those that were most complete in information recorded (Young, 1964)." As Jayaratne and Thompson (1976) indicate, this type of sampling procedure is laden with inherent biases and is therefore subject to considerable error.

A second major weakness in the above studies results from failure of the researchers to employ comparison groups. The studies by Duncan, et al. (1958), Nurse (1964) and Oliver and Taylor (1971) are glaringly weak in this respect. Without comparison groups, one is unable to say that uncontrolled variables are not accountable for the results obtained or that similar results would not have been obtained in the absence of the independent variable under study.

A third weakness in the studies concerns the lack of matching procedures. In view of the glaring lack of comparison groups, this weakness is less conspicuous but it does cast in doubt the one study which employed a comparison group. In the Smith and Hanson (1973) study, the distribution of the mothers' age, area of origin and consultants referring were the same in both groups. The authors fail to match for demographic characteristics such as family size and socio-economic status-features which Gil (1970) feels are significant and need to be controlled by matching in the absence of random selection. Since the two groups were not similar, one is unable to compare them in respect to particular variables.

The weakness of study design and procedure observed in the research studies relating to the Generational Factor make it difficult for one to accept their findings conclusively. It becomes obvious that additional research of the subject is required, employing strong study design and reliable and valid control procedures.

The studies by social psychologists have employed strong experimental designs with valid controls. While not offering direct evidence

to support the Generational Factor, they do indicate the relevance of models to the behaviour of children. The assumption of the Generational Factor, that the child who is raised in a home with a violent and abusive parent will imitate the behaviour of this parent and will retain and some years later express this learned behaviour in the form of abuse to his own child, is not divorced to any great degree from studies and theory. One is aware from studies such as that of Bandura (1972) that children imitate models who behave aggressively if the model is of sufficient value to the child to gain his attention and subsequently to promote retention of what he has learned. The studies of Hicks (1965) and Drabman and Thomas (1974) demonstrate that violent behaviour which is observed and imitated by children tends to persist for quite some time. When one bears in mind that these studies found considerable retention of violent behaviour from modeling experience of several hours only, one cannot fail to realize the pervasiveness and continuity potential of an experience which continues unabated throughout childhood. The abused child, in essence, is subjected on a continuous basis to a life in which abuse and violence is an everyday occurrence. On the basis of these studies, it appears quite logical to assume that violent behaviour learned at home will continue into adulthood and that the degree of violence expressed subsequently will be proportional to that experienced in childhood. Sears, et al. (1953) support this assumption with their findings that the degree of aggressiveness of children is related to the degree of punishment received at home. Similiarly, the study of McCord, et al. (1963) concludes that extreme punitiveness

coupled with an aggressive model produces anti-social aggressiveness.

Accordingly one can assume that a parent who has been abused or subjected to a life of violent aggression as a child will have learned that violent aggression is a legitimate manner of venting anger or of responding to stress from a variety of stimuli. A person who responds in such a manner would appear to be eminently more capable of abusing his child than a parent who has not learned to express himself violently. The frequency with which violent aggression is expressed increases the probability that such persons will abuse their children. One can assume that an increase of violent aggression will bring a corresponding increase in broken bones and other consequences of abuse.

In essence this study of the Generational Factor is a logical continuation of studies which have dealt with modeling. Its focus, however, is to demonstrate with empirical evidence that parents who abuse their children are more likely to have been abused in childhood or to have experienced a life of violent aggression and violently aggressive language, than parents who do not abuse their children. The processes by which such behaviour is learned and reproduced will be examined in the following section dealing with the theoretical basis of this study.

From the examination of the literature noted above, one becomes aware of the need for studies which address the Generational Factor directly. As Jayaratne (1977) notes, in discussing child abuse studies in general, there is a proliferation of public opinion on the subject

instead of well designed and well controlled studies. These pitfalls will be avoided in this study through the various controls to be described subsequently.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND HYPOTHESES FORMULATION

It has already been indicated that the purpose of this research is to establish the link between the expression of child abuse by the parent and his previous experience of continuous and pervasive violent aggression as a child - the so - called Generational Factor. It was also recognized that the establishment of this link would not, in itself, explain a cause of child abuse. Rather, it would establish a relationship of cause and effect, with no explanation of intervening subprocesses.

The purpose of theory is to offer a possible explanation of such subprocesses. Upon theory are hypotheses made possible and research facilitated.

The studies discussed in the review of literature above have in general been guided by a particular view known as Learning Theory. This theory offers an explanation of the subprocesses by which the abused child may become in turn an abusing parent; as such, it is important that it be examined as a possible explanation for the findings of this study. Perhaps, most important of all Learning Theory is the instigator on whose behalf this and other research is formulated.

Learning Theory

As noted earlier, there has been within recent years a strong tendency among psychologists in the learning field to concern them-

selves with the intervening processes of learning. They believe that complex mental processes intervene between stimulus and response and must be dealt with if learning is to be understood. Theories of this group of psychologists have become known as Cognitive theories and have received much support from the work of Tolman (1948), on latent learning, and from Kohler (1925), on insightful learning.

Some of the most interesting theoretical developments within this branch of the learning field in recent years have come from work of Bandura and Walters (1963), and Bandura (1971). In their view, significant learning for personality development occurs in the social interactions or social contexts. They are critical of theories of learning based on single organisms rather than on organisms in contact with members of their own species. The fact that Bandura and Walter's theory of social learning applies to situations in which an individual may learn, even though he makes no response indicating such learning, is of particular interest in the field of child abuse.

The purpose of a theory of social learning, Bandura (1971) notes, is to explain how observers can acquire responses that they have not exhibited before as a result of observing a model. Bandura's (1971) Social Learning theory assumes that modeling influences operate principally through their informative function. Observers acquire symbolic representations of modeled events rather than specific stimulus - response information.

In Social Learning theory, modeling phenomena are regulated by what Bandura calls inter-related subprocesses. They are the attentional

processes, the retention processes, motoric reproduction processes and the reinforcement and motivational processes.

Attentional processes are considered one of the main requisites of observational learning and involve the attention, recognition, and differentiation of distinct features of a model's response. As Bandura (1971) notes, simply exposing a person to modeled responses does not guarantee that modeling will occur.

The incentives provided for modeled behaviour learning are of crucial importance in application to child abuse causative factors. The people with whom one is regularly associated, Bandura (1971) notes, determine the type of behaviour he will observe most frequently and learn most thoroughly. As Bandura and Walters (1963) note, models who are rewarding, prestigeful and who have control over resources, are more readily imitated than models who lack these qualities. Bandura (1971) indicates, as well, the importance in this process of a powerful model.

The second essential function of observational learning is the retention of modeled events. A model's behaviour can only be acquired in representational form, Bandura (1971) notes. In order to reproduce this behaviour, it must be retained in some symbolic form as this process is of crucial importance to behaviour models which are acquired early in life but not overtly manifested until the individual matures.

The representational systems by which modeled behaviour is acquired and symbolized involves imaginal and verbal processes. As Bandura (1971) explains, "observers function as active agents who transform, classify and organize modeling stimuli into easily remembered

schemes rather than as quiescent cameras or tape recorders that simply store isomorphic representations of modeled event (Bandura, 1971)."

The third component of modeling is concerned with motoric reproduction processes and involves the use of symbolic representations of modeled patterns to guide overt performances. In delayed modeling, Bandura (1971) notes, behavioural reproduction is guided by symbolic counterparts of absent stimuli.

The final component of social learning theory concerns the reinforcement and motivational processes. Reinforcement variables, Bandura (1971) feels, not only regulate the overt expression of matching behaviour but also affect the learning process itself. It is apparent from Bandura's description of the potency of powerful or resource controlling individuals as models that reinforcement can be effective along both a positive and negative continuum.

The importance of Social Learning theory to an understanding of how individuals react to frustration and stress becomes evident. As Bandura (1971) notes, "the manner in which individuals respond to conditions regarded as frustrative is previously determined by the pattern of behaviour that they have previously learned for coping with such situations (Bandura, 1971)." Furthermore, he adds, "In human learning, response to frustration frequently originates from observation of parental and other models of how to deal with thwarting events.... only when a person has learned aggression as a dominant response to emotional arousal will there be a high probability of his reacting aggressively to frustration. (Bandura, 1971)." As Bandura and Walters

(1963) express, "Learned patterns of response to stress frequently originate from the observation of parental and other models who, during the course of child's development, usually provide him with ample opportunity to observe their stress reactions and to imitate them (Bandura and Walters, 1963)."

Through this, one may readily see the relevance of Learning Theory in offering an explanation of the subprocesses which intervene within the Generational Hypothesis.

Individuals who are regularly associated with a child and who have control over his resources are likely, through the modeling process, to impart to the child in symbolic form a manner of responding to emotional arousal. Where the response of such a parental model is in the form of violent, pervasive aggression, Learning Theory postulates that the children will exhibit similar behaviour, becoming in turn violently aggressive adults with a potential greater than average of becoming abusing parents. Such theory offers an explanation for a broad variety of behaviour patterns and encourages studies which will seek to provide evidence in its support or otherwise. This study is of such nature and the researcher hereby acknowledges Learning Theory to be both the literary instigator of this study, and the conceptual framework within which the result of this study may be explained.

Research Proposition

The theoretical literature and research studies examined above lead to a conclusion and proposition which will serve as the basis of

an empirical examination of the Generational Factor. Accordingly, the following is offered as the major proposition of this study:

> Parents who physically abuse their children are more likely to have been themselves physically abused in childhood, or to have experienced a life of violent aggression and violently aggressive language, than parents who do not abuse their children.

Hypotheses

To facilitate the examination of the above proposition, the following hypotheses are offered:

Hypothesis I — The abusing parent, while in childhood, has experienced violent physical aggression which has been directed toward him (her) by mother, father or both.

Hypothesis II — The abusing parent, while in childhood, has witnessed violent physical aggression on the part of the mother and/or father, which has been directed toward siblings and/or each other.

Hypothesis III — The abusing parent, while in childhood, has had violently aggressive language directed toward him (her) by mother, father or both.

Hypothesis IV — The abusing parent, while in childhood, has heard violently aggressive language

on the part of the mother and/or father which has been directed toward siblings and/or each other.

These hypotheses will be empirically tested by means of a study instrument to be described later. In this fashion, the major proposition of this thesis will be validated or rejected, in part or in whole.

Operational Definition of Concepts

Kerlinger (1973) explains that an operational definition assigns meaning to a variable by specifying the activities necessary to measure it. The study instrument described in a subsequent section of this research and found in Appendix A, will contain questions designed to reveal aspects of the concepts expressed in the above hypotheses. To facilitate this study accordingly, the concepts noted above are hereby expressed operationally:

Abused Child

An abused child is defined operationally as an unmarried individual, male or female, under the age of 16 years who has been identified by the Newfoundland Department of Social Services as being abused - that is, of experiencing non-accidental injury by parents. These injuries include one or more of the following:

> Bruises, welts, abrasions, contusions, lacerations, wounds, cuts, punctures, burns, scalding, bone factures, sprains, dislocations, subdural hematoma, brain damage, internal injuries.

Violent Aggression

Violent Aggression is defined operationally as:

> Shaking, spanking, striking with palm, striking with fists, kicking, biting, scalding, burning, stabbing, poisoning, tying with rope, pinching, hair pulling stomping, striking with an instrument, whipping.

Violently Aggressive Language

Violently Aggressive Language is defined operationally as the verbal expression of intent to:

> Shake, spank, strike with palm, strike with fist, kick, bite, scald, burn, stab, pinch, pull hair, stomp, strike with an instrument, whip.

Emotional Arousal

Emotional Arousal is defined operationally as:

> The stirring up of an individual into an excited mental state during which state the individual expresses violently aggressive language or behaviour as defined operationally above.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

In studies using the well known experimental design, the researcher introduces or varies an independent variable in order to observe its effects upon the dependent variable. Where the independent variable is innocuous and is used with random selection of subjects and random assignment to groups, such procedure is ideal.

In this study, the assumed independent variable was considered to be highly harmful. The experience of abusive or violently aggressive behaviour as such could not be manipulated in the classical experimental sense nor would the researcher have had the time to observe its effects had he felt so inclined.

Instead, this research employed what Kerlinger (1973) describes as an Ex-post Facto design - searching retrospectively to identify abusive or violent childhood experiences which would be found to differ significantly between two groups of individuals. One group consisted of identified child abusers known as the Index group while the other, known as the Comparison or Control group, consisted of identified non-abusers. Both groups were asked a comprehensive battery of questions dealing with their past and present lives and it was anticipated that through this procedure any significantly different experience of abusive or violent behaviour between groups would be identified.

The design of this research thus differs considerably from

the ideal experimental model noted above; a variance imposed by the inherent nature of the subject under study.

Selection of Index Group

To begin the research procedure, the researcher contacted the Department of Social Services and sought permission to examine Departmental files and confidential material dealing with child abuse in the province of Newfoundland. Since the Department is the major agency dealing with child protection in the province, its co-operation was vital. In Appendix B, one may find the permission which the Department of Social Services granted the researcher, along with their generous offer of the assistance of social workers throughout the province. Without such permission and assistance, this study would not have been possible.

To select the Index, or abusing group, the researcher examined the records of the Department of Social Services at Confederation Building, St. John's. There, the Department maintains a Central Registry of all reported cases of physical child abuse within the province, along with general information about each case. From this record the researcher obtained 50 cases - the total of all the confirmed cases of physical child abuse within insular Newfoundland as of March 31, 1980, and dating back to April 1 of 1976 - the earliest date of recorded confirmed cases. A check with local District Offices of the Department revealed an additional 10 cases of confirmed physical abuse giving a total of 60 cases.

These 60 families who had been identified as abusing, at least one of their children were located in 10 different welfare districts of the province; namely, the districts of Channel, Stephenville Crossing, Stephenville, Corner Brook, Deer Lake, Bonne Bay, Springdale, Bay Roberts, Bell Island and St. John's. Although some cases of child abuse were identified within Labrador, none was selected because of the possible cost of travel.

Upon preliminary identification of subjects for the Index group, a check was made with each of the district offices where the families resided. It was determined that in some cases, the identified abuser was no longer with the family and that indeed entire families were no longer within the province. It appeared that 42 cases would be available for study. In each case, the abusing parent was identified and general information about each individual was obtained from office files and Central Registry. This information included age, sex, marital status, number of children and socio-economic status and was required for later matching with a control group.

Because of the small number of available cases, it was not possible or necessary to randomly select a representative sample; the entire population being available for study.

Selection of Control Group

To select a comparison or control group with whom the responses of the Index group could be compared, the computer data sheets containing a record of all Short Term Social Assistance recipients for the

month of February 1980 were obtained from the Department of Social Services. This involved contacting the four Regional Directors within the province; all of whom co-operated most willingly. The data sheets were then used to select individuals who were matched with the individual Index cases according to community of residence, age, sex, marital status, number of children and socio-economic status. This matching was facilitated by the fact that most of the Index cases were of low socio-economic status. As well, a number of normally middle income families had been temporarily in receipt of Social Assistance during February and were available for matching with the few Index cases of middle income socio-economic status. Cases generally numbered between 10 to 15 for every Index case after matching.

Before continuing with the selection procedure, the researcher telephoned each relevant district office of the Department of Social Services to check on the availability of each case and to ensure that no individual was suspected of child abuse. Where any suspicion of abuse was held or when he or she was not available, the individual's name was removed from the list.

Each remaining case was then assigned a number in sequence, proceeding according to community of residence and selection was made using a computer generated table of 4000 random numbers. For every Index case, one and one half Comparison cases were chosen, comprising a total of 63 individuals.

Sampling Instrument

No questionnaire was known to the researcher which adequately examined the area of discipline in childhood, parental interaction, family environment, life and marital satisfaction and spousal interaction. A number of questionnaires concerning family violence did cover certain areas well, yet with some inadequacies for this particular study.

After much experimentation and modification of a number of ideas gleaned from Hudson and Glisson (1976), and Steinmetz (1977), a tentative draft was compiled. It was designed to obtain the information required for a study of the Generational Factor and to examine current attitudes and behaviours concerning child raising and family interaction. In all, 124 variables were included.

Because this instrument was basically new, although comprising basic question blocks from other instruments which had proven valid and reliable, it was necessary to do a pre-test. Five non-abusing males and five non-abusing females were selected from the Corner Brook region and were administered the questionnaire. It became evident that certain modifications were required because of ambiguity, repetition and omission and these modifications were incorporated in the final draft as found in Appendix A.

The study instrument contained nine sections of questions. Demographic information was sought initially, covering variables one to 14. Such questions were asked initially with a view of helping the interviewer establish a rapport with the respondent through generally

non-threatening questions. The information obtained was useful in itself of course and in seeking to confirm the success of the matching procedure.

Section B of the study instrument covered variables 15 to 22. It concerned parental marital satisfaction, parenting satisfaction, and the degree of affection shown to the individual and his siblings by mother and father.

Section C of the study instrument concerned the family environment when the respondent was quite young, and dealt as well with use of alcohol in the family and with the family structure. Variables 23 to 40 comprised this section which was included to ensure that any change in family discipline and atmosphere, as the respondent aged, would be detected.

Section D covered variables 41 to 52, dealing with the behaviour of the respondent's parents in attempting to resolve a family problem. The variables ranged from the calm discussion of issues to the resortment to violent aggression of various degree. It was followed by section D and E which dealt with the respondent's experience of discipline and his recollections of how his siblings were disciplined, including variables 53 to 72.

Section F ended the retrospective series of questions and introduced variables dealing with the resondent's parenting satisfaction, his ability to make friends, his social behaviour and his use of alcohol. Variables 73 to 81 comprised the section.

Section G, variables 82 to 97, concerned the interaction between

the respondent and his spouse in problem solving, the respondent's marriage satisfaction and his life satisfaction. It was followed by section H and I, dealing with the respondent's problem solving techniques with his children, his discipline methods and effects, and with his community residence and parental contact. This completed the study instrument.

Interviewer Selection and Training

Because of the variety of communities in which members of the Index and Comparison groups resided and the problems associated with making contact, establishing a rapport with each respondent and in general finding the interviewing time, it was decided to use the assistance of social workers employed by the Newfoundland Department of Social Services. Twelve social workers were selected, all of whom had had at least five years of experience as social workers, had completed an undergraduate degree in social work or in social science and who possessed, from the researcher's knowledge, a special sensitivity in dealing with people. These individuals were telephoned by the researcher and each agreed to assist with the study.

To each selected social worker in whose district respondents resided, questionnaires were forwarded. Each questionnaire was numbered with an identification code and the name of each respondent was indicated in order to ensure the validity of the master coding system. A note accompanying each questionnaire instructed the interviewer to remove the respondent's name prior to the interview. When each interviewer

had had time to study the questionnaire, he was contacted by the researcher and its content was discussed. Areas where special sensitivity and caution were required were discussed as were specific approaches to all sections of the questionnaire. The intent of this instruction was to ensure that each interviewer approached his task in a uniform and established manner. Interviewers were instructed to telephone the researcher at any time should a problem with the questionnaire or with an interview arise. Very few such contacts were made, however, and subsequent contact revealed that few difficulties were encountered. This was corroborated by the researcher who conducted one third of the Index respondent interviews himself.

Sampling Procedure

Each interviewer contacted the selected respondent and arranged an interview, usually at a confidential site at the respondent's home or at the Social Services office, if the respondent had such preference. A preliminary explanation of the nature of the research was given during the initial contact and was further elaborated during the actual interview. Each respondent was told that the interviewer was employed by the Department of Social Services and that the Department was assisting Memorial University of Newfoundland with a study of family life. It was explained that responses and identity would be kept strictly confidential and that the respondent's name had been obtained from Department records. As well, the importance of the research to future program development was discussed and the respondent's co-operation was sought.

Following the interview, which generally required 20 to 30 minutes, the completed questionnaire was mailed to the researcher in a confidentially marked envelope.

Of the 42 Index cases included in the sample, 31 responded. The remainder refused to participate or were unable to be contacted in time for the interview. Of the 63 cases selected for the Comparison groups, 43 responded. The total number of respondents amounted to 74.

Data Management

As each completed questionnaire was returned, it was examined and the responses transcribed onto a ledger. This duplicated the data as an assurance against loss and facilitated the later transcription to computer General Coding Forms.

When all the data were in the possession of the researcher, a coding plan was devised to further facilitate completion of the computer Coding Forms. This plan indicated the specific columns in which specific variables were to be placed and ensured that correct spacing would be observed.

Using the coding plan, the data were then transcribed onto General Coding Form, CC-27, as required for key-punching. The number of variables necessitated the use of the three Coding Forms for each response, making a total of 222. Absent data were indicated as 0. The completed Coding Forms were then brought to a reliable key-punch operator who did the key punching onto Compro/TNT-5020 cards.

With the invaluable assistance of the Psychology Department,

Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Memorial University, a computer program was devised using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences program with the University's PBP-11/34 computer at Grenfell College. All variables were first compared individually by groups during the first run, using t-test (III) analysis to seek group variance at the .05 significance level. Variables 17 and 18 concerning parental satisfaction were then run together and compared by group as were variables 19, 20, 21 and 22 concerning parental affection. Similarly, variables 44-51 concerning parental problem solving, variables 55-56 and 65-66 dealing with aggressive language, variables 56-60 concerning how the individual was raised, variables 66-70 dealing with siblings experience, variables 73-74 concerning present parental satisfaction, variables 85-92 concerning present spouse interaction and variables 113-117 concerning present discipline practices were run together as block questions. This procedure was followed to increase the sensitivity of t-test analysis and to reduce the probability of error occurring by chance.

At the second run, crosstabulation of variables according to sex, education and religion was made using Chi-Square analysis to test for significant difference. The print-out sheets were then retrieved and preliminary analysis made, using statistical tables to determine the significance of the variance. Final analysis of the results was then begun.

Human Subject Protection

Immediately following the recording of all responses in the study ledger, the master code sheet was destroyed. This sheet contained the names and addresses of the respondents and identified the code number affixed to each questionnaire. It is now impossible to discover the identity of any respondent from observation of the study data. All individuals assisting in this study had previously taken an oath of secrecy and were reminded by the researcher that responses were to be kept secret. These precautions will ensure that no completed questionnaire can be linked to any particular individual.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

Effectiveness of the Matching Procedure

Before examining the evidence which supports or repudiates the hypotheses and the major proposition of this research, it may be useful to observe the demographic data which were obtained from the first section of the study instrument. These data were gathered mainly for the purpose or corroborating the effectiveness of the matching procedure. The similarity of the Index group and Comparison group may be seen from the following tables and figures:

TABLE 1

Groups By Age

Group	Mean	SD	# of Cases
Index	36.51	12.06	31
Comparison	37.79	11.60	43
$t_{72} = -0.46$, $p>.05$			

No significant difference exists between the groups, as indicated by a t-test probability level which exceeds .05.

A comparison of groups by sex is shown in Table 2:

TABLE 2

Groups By Sex

SEX	INDEX GROUP	COMPARISON GROUP
Male	20	32
Female	11	11
Totals	31	43

Of the eleven females within the Index group, only two were married. Seven of the females were single parents, while the remaining two lived in a common law arrangement.

The marital status of individuals within both groups is shown in Table 3:

TABLE 3

Groups By Marital Status

MARITAL STATUS	INDEX GROUP	COMPARISON GROUP
Married	16	30
Single	1	1
Divorced	2	0
Widowed	0	1
Separated	8	6
Common Law	4	5
Totals	31	43

The groups appear to be relatively similar, with the exception of the married category. However, the large proportion of single parent cases found within the Index group may indicate an increased level of family stress for these individuals, as well as for those in similar situations within the Comparison group. Such an increased stress level could result in child abuse on the part of individuals within the Index group only and this is determined, theoretically, by the learned reaction of those individuals to such stress.

In Figure 1, the similarity of both groups with regard to the number of children may be seen:

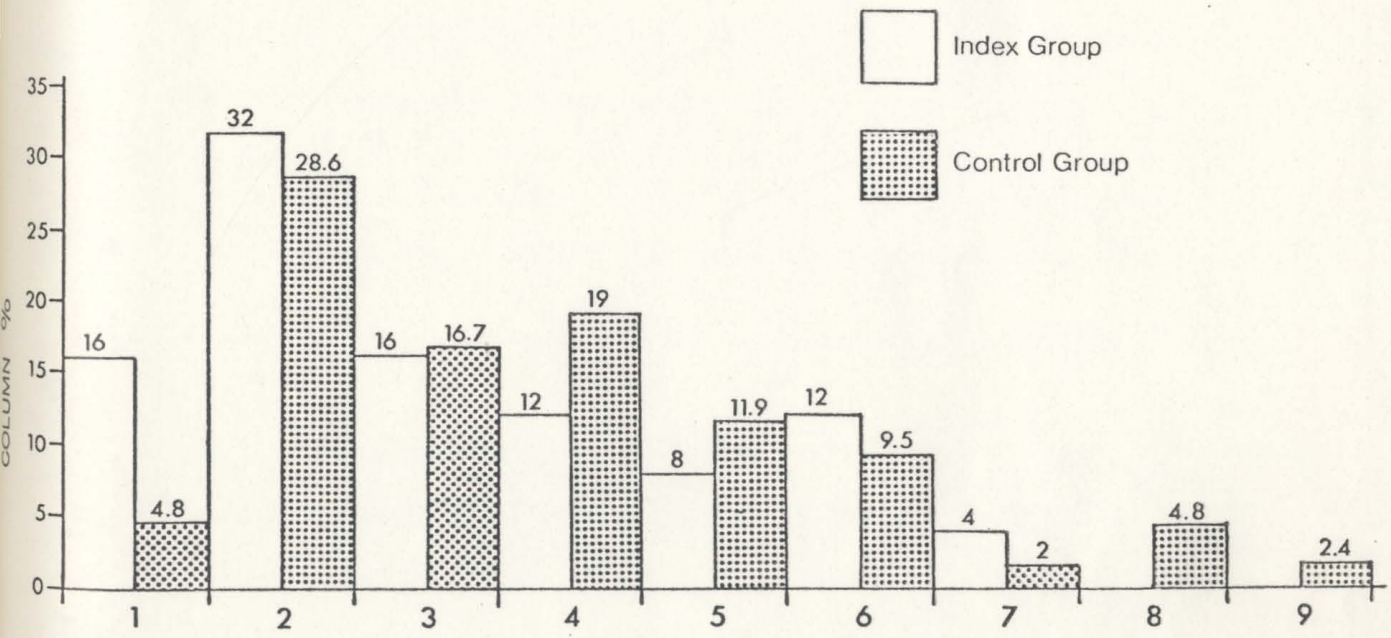

FIGURE 1. Number of children in Index and Control Groups.

FIGURE 1. NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN INDEX AND COMPARISON GROUPS.

As one observes from the histogram, the groups are similar in regard to number of children.

A comparison of groups according to religious denomination is shown in Table 4:

TABLE 4

Groups By Religion

RELIGION	INDEX GROUP	COMPARISON GROUP
United Church	4	4
Roman Catholic	14	25
Anglican	9	7
Salvation Army	4	2
Pentecostal	0	3
Other	0	2
Totals	31	43

No general group difference is apparent. The large representation of Roman Catholicism is indicative only of this denomination's proportion within the province of Newfoundland (Statistics Canada, 1974).

A comparison of groups according to occupation is made in Figure 2:

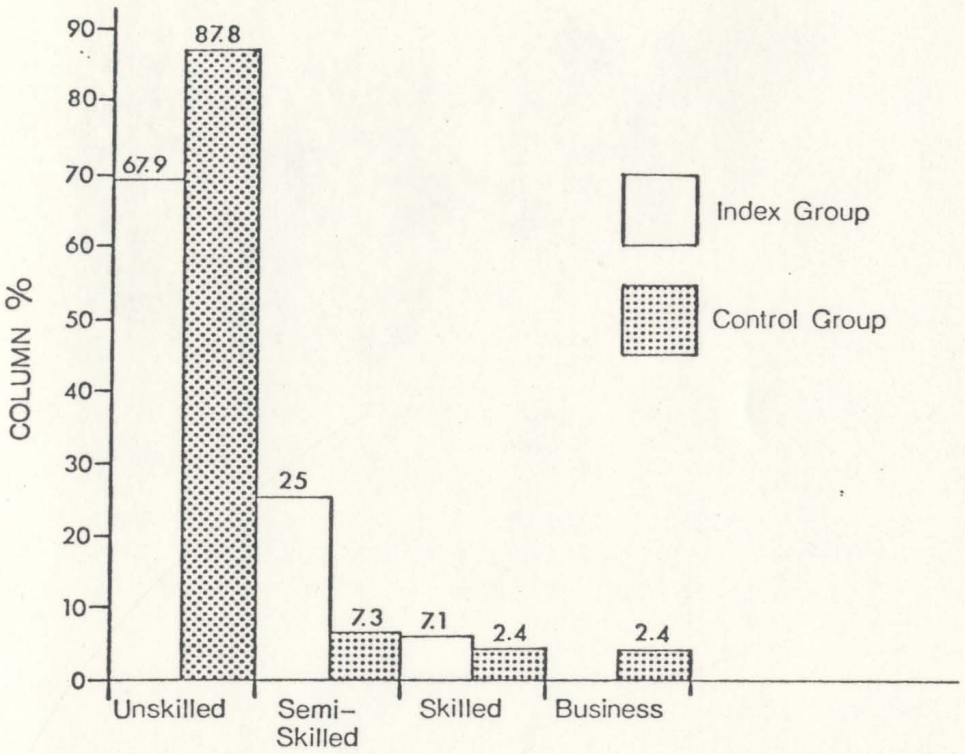

FIGURE 2. GROUPS ACCORDING TO OCCUPATION

The unskilled category contains 67.9 percent of the Index group and 87.8 percent of the Comparison group. None of the Index group was engaged in business.

In Figure 3, the composition of the groups according to the size of the community of birth is shown:

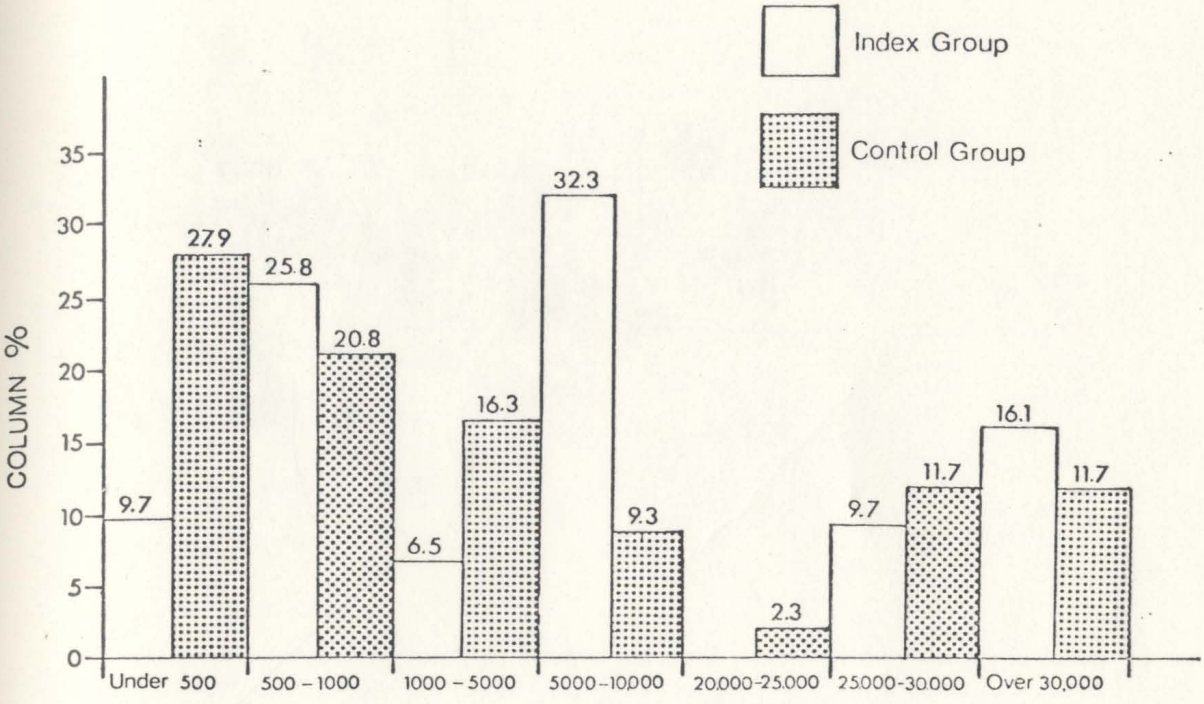

FIGURE 3. SIZE OF COMMUNITY OF BIRTH.

Approximately 41 percent of the Index group were born in communities with a population of 5000 or less, as compared with 64 percent of the Comparison group. The communities with populations exceeding 20,000 were the birthplaces of 25.8 percent of the Index group as compared with 25.7 percent of the Comparison group.

From Table 5 one may observe the educational achievement of individuals within the Index and Comparison groups:

TABLE 5

Groups By Education

EDUCATION	INDEX GROUP	COMPARISON GROUP
Grades 1-8	21	27
Grades 9-11	7	7
High School Graduation	0	4
Some Technical School	2	1
Technical School Graduate	1	0
Some College	0	3
College Graduate	0	1
Totals	31	43

Within the Index group, 67.8 percent achieved less than grade nine education. This compares with 62.8 percent of the Comparison group. Three persons in the Comparison group had attended college while none of the Index group achieved this level.

The above tables and figures corroborate the effectiveness of the matching procedure employed in this study. While both groups are obviously not identical, they do not differ significantly. Consequently, it can be inferred that the differences between groups observed subsequently in this research are the result of a particular independent variable; not the result of spurious variables which could affect the results had the groups been significantly different.

Hypothesis I

To test the study hypotheses, the relevant data will be examined and the accumulated evidence will then be used to accept or reject each hypothesis, in part or in whole. Hypothesis I states:

> The abusing parent, while in childhood, has experienced violent physical aggression which has been directed toward him (her) by mother, father or both.

The group difference, in response to variable 57 of the questionnaire, concerning whether or not respondents from both groups were spanked in childhood, is depicted in Table 6:

TABLE 6

Group Difference In Experience of Being Spanked in Childhood

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.48	1.44	31
Comparison	2.44	1.01	43
$t_{72} = 0.14$, $p > .05$			

As one observes from Table 6, there is little apparent difference between groups in the degree to which respondents were spanked in childhood. The one-tailed t-test corroborates this observation; indicating no significant group difference. No evidence is available here to aid in substantiating Hypothesis I.

Group difference, in response to variable 58 of the study instrument concerning the respondent's recollection of being slapped while in childhood, is depicted in Table 7:

TABLE 7

Group Difference in Respondents' Recollection of Being Slapped in Childhood

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.48	1.48	31
Comparison	2.54	0.99	43

$t_{72} = -0.17$, $p > .05$

The groups do not differ, as the probability level indicates. No evidence is obtained to aid in substantiating Hypothesis I.

In Table 8, the difference between the groups concerning the respondents' recollection of being hit with a belt or stick in childhood, is shown:

TABLE 8

Group Difference in Respondents' Recollection of Being Hit With a Belt or Stick, in Childhood

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.35	1.62	31
Comparison	1.70	0.94	43

$t_{72} - 2.02$, $p < .025$

As the t-test indicates, there is significant difference between the groups. The Index respondents were hit more frequently with a belt or a stick, in childhood, than the Comparison respondents. Evidence is provided to aid in substantiating Hypothesis I.

In Figure 4 and Table 9, the frequency with which respondents received bruises, as the result of discipline in childhood, is indicated:

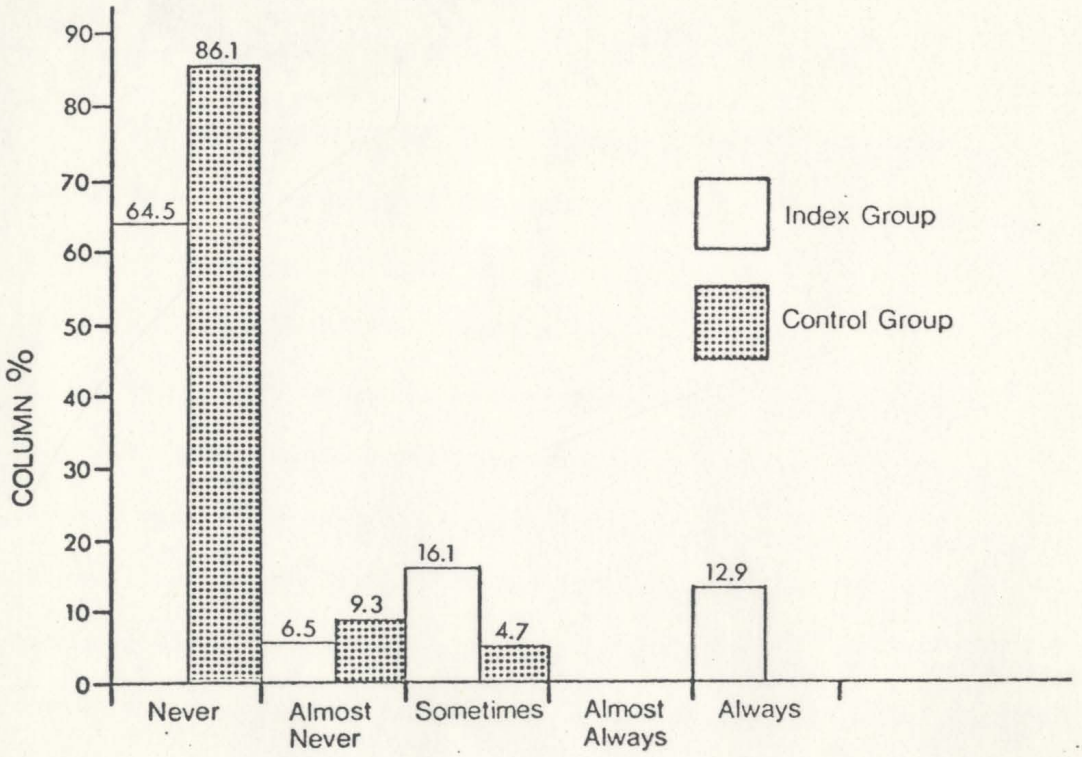

FIGURE 4. FREQUENCY OF BRUISING AS A RESULT OF DISCIPLINE IN CHILDHOOD.

TABLE 9

Group Difference in Frequency of Bruising as Result of Discipline in Childhood

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	1.90	1.42	31
Comparison	1.18	0.50	43
$t_{72} = 2.69, p < .005$			

In the Index group, 12.9 percent indicated that they always were bruised while being disciplined, as compared with 0 percent of the Comparison group. Similarly, 16.1 percent of the Index group indicated that they sometimes received bruises as compared with 4.7 percent of the Comparison group. In the Comparison group, 86.1 percent indicated that they never were bruised as compared with only 64.5 percent of the Index group. The obvious group difference is reflected in the t-test probability of less than .005, as shown in Table 9. The Index group received significantly more bruises in childhood as the result of discipline than the Comparison group. This evidence will aid in substantiating Hypothesis I.

The difference between the groups in the amount of violence experienced within the family when respondents were growing up is shown in Table 10:

TABLE 10

Group Difference in Experience
of Family Violence

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	3.90	1.14	31
Comparison	4.40	1.03	43
$t_{72} = -1.95, p < .05$			

As is indicated in Table 10, there is significant difference between the groups. The Index respondents experienced more family violence in childhood than Comparison respondents . This evidence will aid in substantiating Hypothesis I.

Group difference in the respondents' experience of a loving family environment when they were growing up is depicted in Table 11:

TABLE 11

Group Difference in The Experience
of a Loving Family Environment

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.35	1.11	31
Comparison	1.72	0.76	43
$t_{72} - 2.74, p < .005$			

The t-test probability level of .005 verifies the group difference. The Index respondents experienced a significantly less loving family environment than the comparison respondents . This evidence will assist in the substantiation of Hypothesis I.

Group difference in the respondents' recollection of how satisfied their parents were with being parents is shown in Table 12:

TABLE 12

Group Difference in Respondents' Recollection of Parents' Satisfaction With Being Parents

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.20	1.45	30
Comparison	1.48	0.78	41
$t_{69} - 2.45, p < .01$			

The obvious variance between the groups is reflected in the t-test probability level of less than .01. The Index respondents' parents were less satisfied with being parents than were the parents of the Comparison group. This evidence supports Hypothesis I.

In Figure 5 and Table 13, the respondents' recollection of growing up in a lonely family environment is depicted:

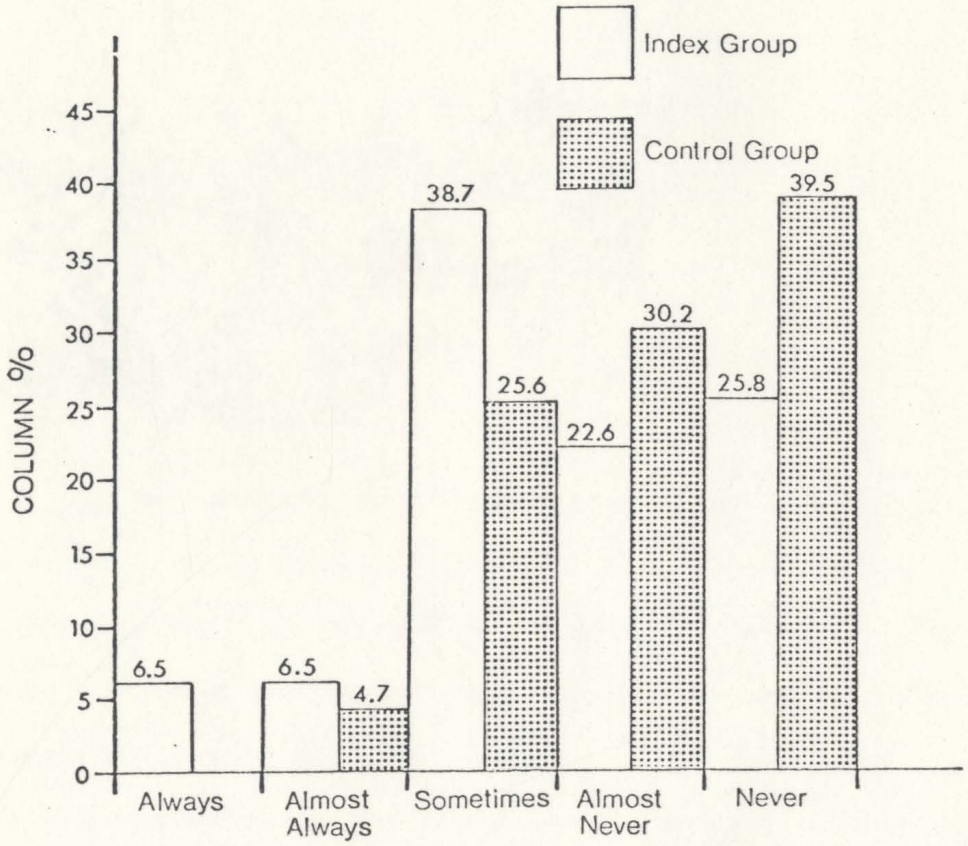

FIGURE 5. DEGREE OF LONELINESS EXPERIENCED BY RESPONDENTS IN CHILDHOOD

TABLE 13

Group Difference in Loneliness Experienced by Respondents in Childhood

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	3.55	1.15	31
Comparison	4.04	0.93	43
$t_{72} = -2.06$, $p < .025$			

As one observes from the histogram in Figure 5, there is an apparent difference between groups. In the Index group, 6.5 percent always were lonely as compared with 0 percent of the Comparison group. The Index group had a larger percentage of individuals who had experienced some childhood loneliness - 51.7 percent as compared with 30.3 percent of the Comparison group. The t-test probability level is less than .025, as depicted in Table 13. The evidence indicates that the Index group experienced more loneliness in childhood than the Comparison group; possibly giving some support to Hypothesis I.

In summary, the accumulation of evidence clearly supports acceptance of Hypothesis I. While there is no significant difference between groups in the amount of slapping and spanking that the respondents received in childhood, there is significant difference among other variables. The Index respondents were hit with a belt or stick, were bruised more frequently, experienced more family violence, had a less loving family environment, had parents who were less satisfied

with being parents and experienced more loneliness in childhood than Comparison respondents . The loneliness experienced by the Index group respondents would appear to result from a sense of isolation in a home where the above factors were not uncommon.

Hypothesis II

To test Hypothesis II, the relevant variables from the study instrument will be examined and significant variance sought. Hypothesis II states:

> The abusing parent, while in childhood, has witnessed violent physical aggression on the part of the mother and/or father, which has been directed toward siblings and or each other.

Group difference in the frequency with which respondents' siblings were hit with a belt or a stick is shown in Table 14:

TABLE 14

Group Difference in the Frequency With Which Siblings Were Hit With Belt or Stick

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.14	1.38	28
Comparison	1.73	0.96	40

$t_{66} = 1.38$, $p > .05$

The statistical test on the data does not indicate any group difference. No evidence in support of Hypothesis II is provided.

Group difference in the frequency with which respondents' siblings were spanked in childhood is depicted in Table 15:

TABLE 15

Group Difference in the Frequency With Which Siblings Were Spanked

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.23	1.33	28
Comparison	2.55	0.93	28
$t_{54} = -0.78$, $p > .05$			

The t-test probability level exceeds .05, indicating no significant group difference. No evidence is offered in support of Hypothesis II.

In Table 16, group difference in the extent to which respondents' siblings were slapped is shown:

TABLE 16

Group Difference in Extent to Which Siblings Were Slapped

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.36	1.31	28
Comparison	2.55	0.96	40
$t_{66} = -0.70$, $p > .05$			

The t-test probability level exceeds .05, indicating no significant group difference. No evidence is obtained to support Hypothesis II.

In Figure 6 and Table 17, the frequency with which respondents' siblings were bruised is depicted:

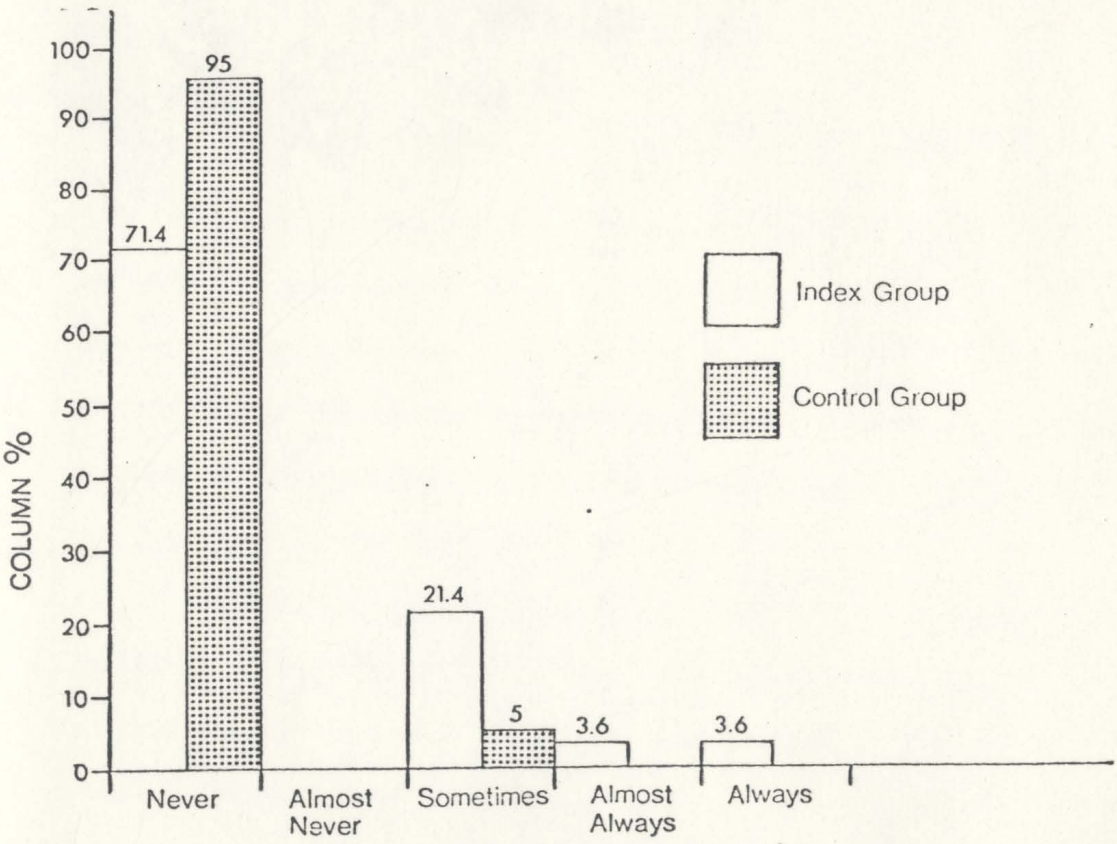

FIGURE 6. FREQUENCY WITH WHICH RESPONDENTS' SIBLINGS WERE BRUISED.

TABLE 17

Group Difference in Frequency With Which Respondents' Siblings Were Bruised

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	1.68	1.16	28
Comparison	1.10	0.44	40
$t_{66} - 2.52, p < .01$			

From the histogram in Figure 6, one can observe that 28.6 percent of Index respondents' siblings received bruises as compared with 5 percent of the Comparison respondents' siblings. The categories at the extreme end of the scale, indicating that bruising occurred always or almost always, contain 7.2 percent of Index responses, as compared with 0 percent of the Comparison responses.

In Table 17, the t-test level is less than .01; indicating that significant group difference exists. The Index respondents' siblings received more bruises than the Comparison respondents' siblings. This evidence supports Hypothesis II.

In Table 18, group difference in the affection shown to respondents' siblings by their mother is shown:

TABLE 18

Group Difference in Affection Shown
by Mother to Siblings

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	1.84	1.38	26
Comparison	1.58	0.78	40

$t_{64} = 0.91$, $p > .05$

The t-test probability level indicates that no significant group difference exists. No support is offered for Hypothesis II.

The affection shown to respondents' siblings by their father is indicated in Figure 7, and Table 19:

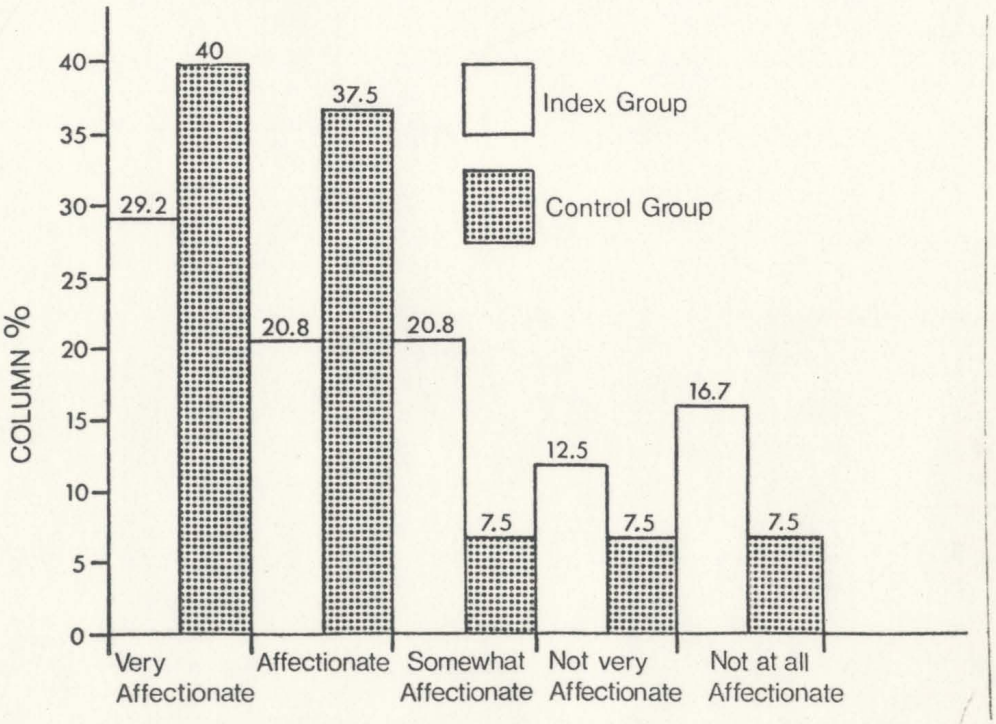

FIGURE 7. AFFECTION SHOWN BY FATHER TO RESPONDENTS' SIBLINGS

TABLE 19

Group Difference in Affection Shown by Father to Respondents' Siblings

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.70	1.47	24
Comparison	2.05	1.22	40

$t_{62} = 1.82$, $p < .05$

One observes from the histogram that less affection was shown to Index respondents' siblings by father, as compared with the Comparison respondents' siblings. In Table 19 the t-test probability level of less than .05 indicates that this group difference is significant. This evidence will support Hypothesis II.

The extent to which respondents' parents threw things during a conflict may be seen in Figure 8, and Table 20:

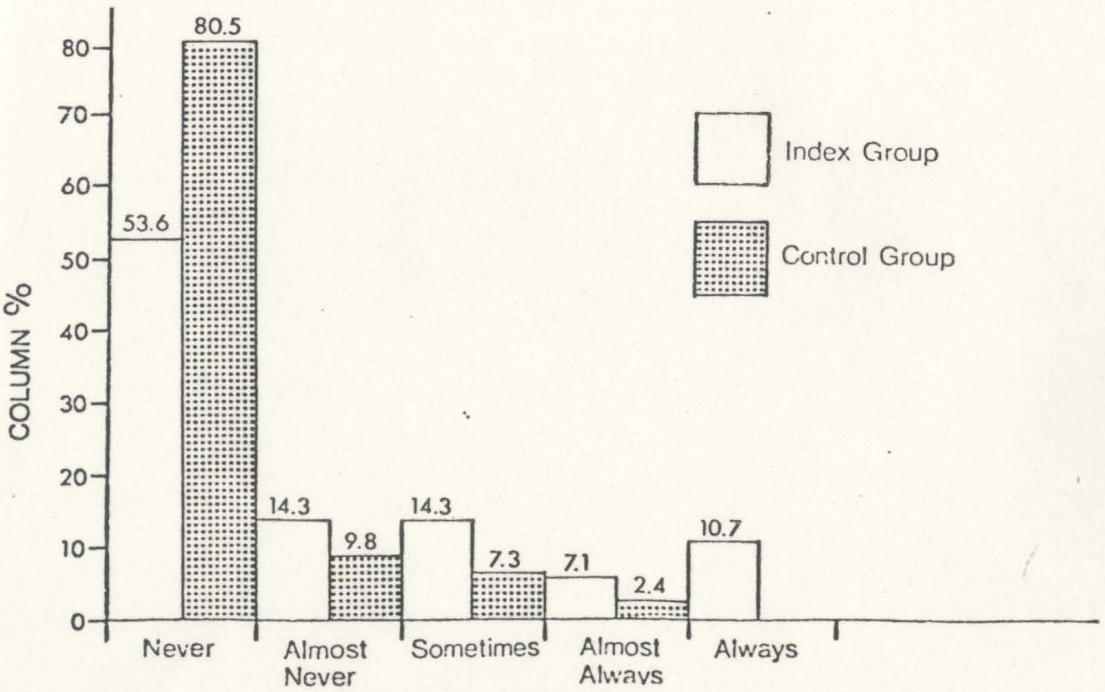

FIGURE 8. EXTENT TO WHICH RESPONDENTS' PARENTS THREW THINGS DURING CONFLICT

TABLE 20

Group Difference in Extent to Which Respondents' Parents Threw Things During Conflict.

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.07	1.41	28
Comparison	1.32	0.72	41
$t_{67} = 2.60$, $p < .001$			

Within the Index group, 32.1 percent threw things at least sometimes during a conflict. This compares with 9.7 percent of the Comparison group. In Table 20, the t-test probability level establishes difference at less than .001. The Index respondents' parents engaged in throwing things when in conflict more frequently than the Comparison group's parents. This finding is in support of Hypothesis II.

In Figure 9 and Table 21, the extent to which the respondents' parents threw something at each other is shown:

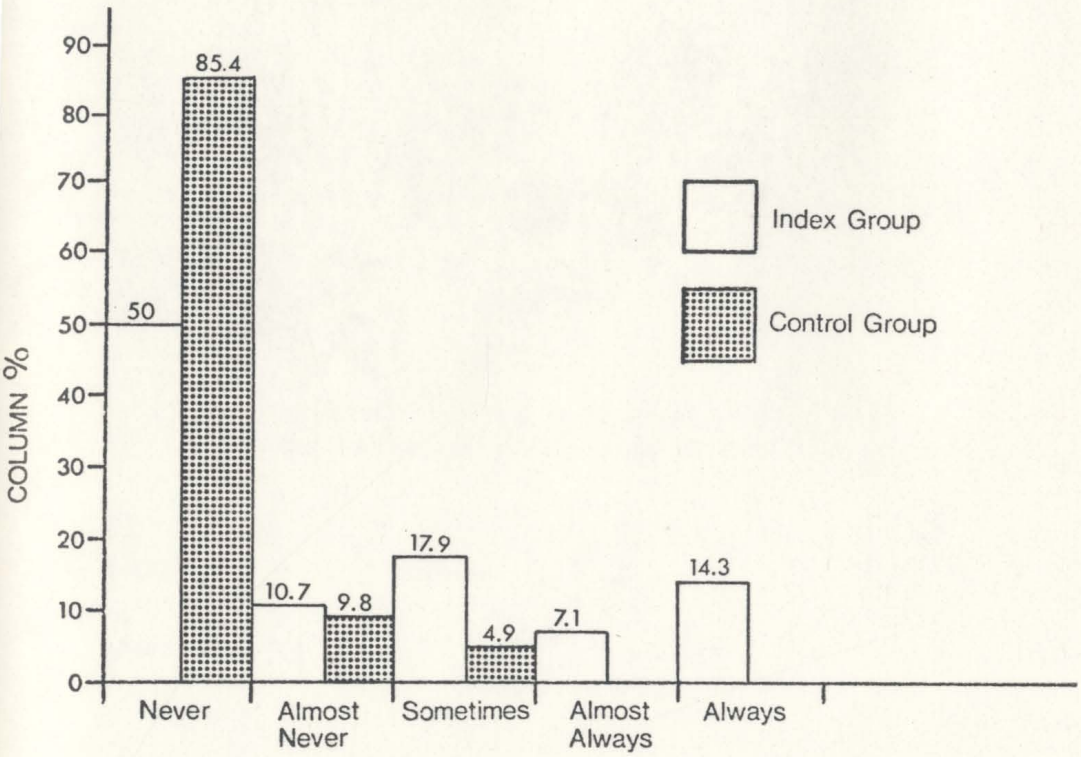

FIGURE 9. EXTENT TO WHICH RESPONDENTS' PARENTS THREW THINGS AT EACH OTHER.

TABLE 21

Group Difference in Extent to Which Respondents' Parents Threw Things at Each Other

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.25	1.50	28
Comparison	1.19	0.51	41

$t_{67} = 3.57$, $p < .005$

The group difference is readily apparent from an examination of Figure 9. This is corroborated by the t-test, in Table 21. The parents of the Index group threw something at each other when in conflict more frequently than the Comparison group's parents. This evidence supports Hypothesis II.

In Table 22, group difference in the extent to which the respondents' parents pushed, grabbed or shoved each other is shown:

TABLE 22

Group Difference in Extent to Which
Parents Pushed, Grabbed or Shoved Each Other

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.03	1.37	28
Comparison	1.46	0.80	41

$t_{67} = 1.98$, $p < .05$

A probability level of less than .05 is found by the t-test. Parents of the Index group engaged in pushing, grabbing or shoving each other more frequently than the parents of the Comparison group. Hypothesis II is supported by this evidence.

In Figure 10 and Table 23 the frequency in which the respondents' parents hit each other with something hard is depicted:

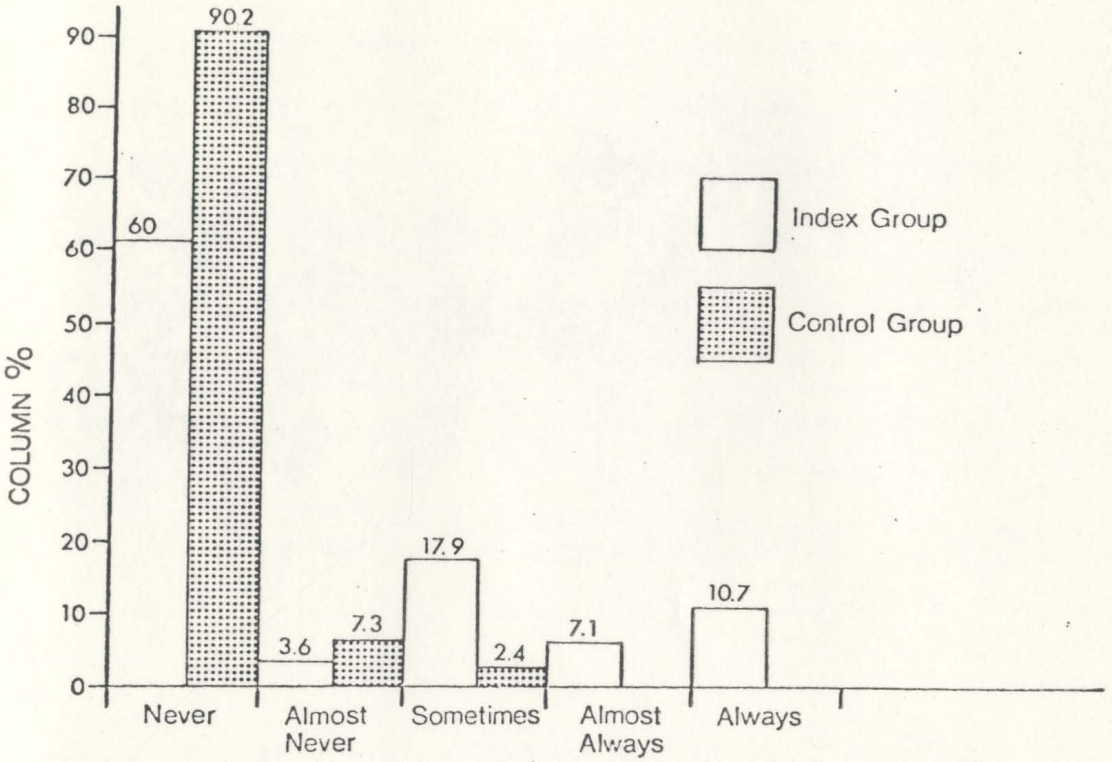

FIGURE 10. FREQUENCY OF RESPONDENTS' PARENTS HITTING EACH OTHER WITH SOMETHING HARD.

TABLE 23

Group Difference of Respondents' Parents Hitting Each Other With Something Hard

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.03	1.45	28
Comparison	1.12	0.40	41

$t_{67} = 3.25, p < .005$

The variance between the groups is quite apparent from Figure 10. In the Index group, 35.7 percent of respondents indicated that their parents hit each other with something hard sometimes or more frequently. This compares with 2.4 percent of the Comparison group. The difference between groups is corroborated by the t-test probability level of less than .005, as shown in Table 23. This evidence, showing that Index respondents' parents hit each other with something hard more frequently than the Comparison respondents' parents, is supportive of Hypothesis II.

In Table 24, group difference in the degree of marital satisfaction which the respondents' parents received, is indicated:

TABLE 24

Group Difference in The Degree of Marital Satisfaction Which Respondents' Parents Received.

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.30	1.37	30
Comparison	1.58	0.89	41
$t_{69} = 2.5, p < .01$			

The t-test probability level of less than .01 confirms the group difference. The parents of the Index group obtained less satisfaction from their marriage than did the parents of the Comparison group. Hypothesis II is supported by this evidence.

The use of alcohol by respondents' father is compared in Figure 11, and Table 25:

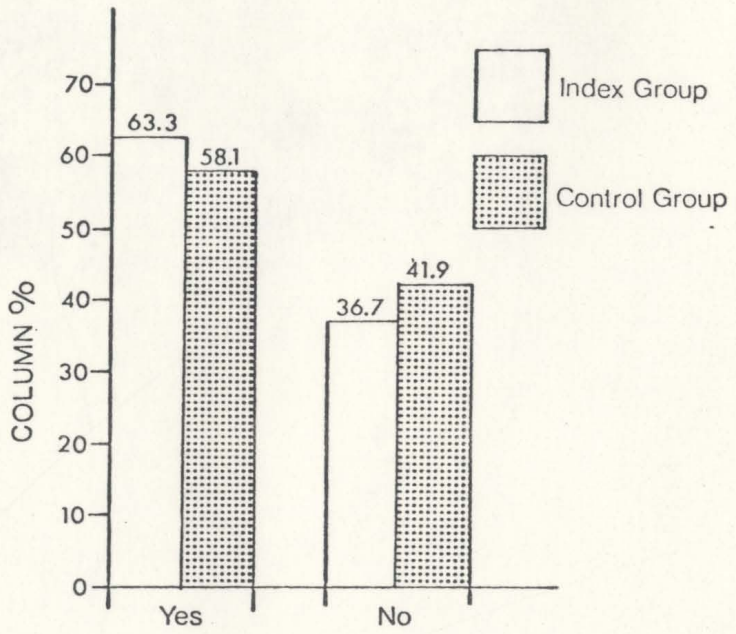

FIGURE 11. USE OF ALCOHOL BY RESPONDENTS' FATHER

TABLE 25

Group Difference in Use of Alcohol by Respondents' Father

	GROUP		
	INDEX	COMPARISON	ROW TOTALS
YES	19(63.3)	25(58.1)	44
NO	11(36.7)	18(41.9)	29
COLUMN TOTALS	30(100)	43(100)	73

$X^2 = 0.19$, 1df; $p > .05$

As is evident from Figure 11 and Table 25, there is no difference between groups. Alcohol was used by an equal proportion, statistically, of the fathers of respondents in both groups.

In Table 26, the group difference in the frequency of alcohol use by the respondents' father, is shown:

TABLE 26

Group Difference in Frequency of Alcohol Use by Respondents' Father

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	3.38	1.45	29
Comparison	3.90	1.15	43
$t_{70} = -1.72$, $p < .05$			

The t-test probability level of less than .05 verifies the variance between the Index and Comparison group. The fathers of the Index respondents used alcohol more frequently than the fathers of the Comparison respondents.

In summary, a number of group differences has been found concerning the manner in which respondents' parents interacted. A greater percentage of the parents of the Index respondents threw things at each other, threw things around the house in general, pushed, grabbed and shoved each other and hit each other with something hard, as compared with parents of the Comparison respondents. Not surprisingly, the parents of the Index respondents experienced less marital satisfaction. The greater amount of physical aggression which Index respondents' parents directed toward each other occurred in a family environment where the father made more frequent use of alcohol and where the amount of affection shown by the father to Index respondents' siblings was less, as compared with the Comparison group.

Although no group difference was found concerning parental physical aggression toward the respondents' siblings, significant difference was detected in the severity of aggression. The siblings of the Index respondents received more bruises than did the Comparison respondents' siblings. On the basis of the evidence, Hypothesis II is considered to be verified in total.

Hypothesis III

Hypothesis III states:

> The abusing parent, while in childhood, has had violently aggressive language directly toward him (her) by mother, father or both

To test this hypothesis, two questions were asked of the respondents; the first question dealt with the frequency which they were yelled at by their parents and the second question concerned the frequency with which they were threatened with physical punishment.

In Table 27, the difference in the respondents' experience of being yelled at is indicated:

TABLE 27

Group Difference in Respondents' Experience of Being Yelled at

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	3.25	1.12	31
Comparison	2.86	1.03	43
$t_{72} = 1.57, p > .05$			

The t-test probability level indicates that no significant difference exists between the groups. No evidence is offered to support Hypothesis III.

Group difference in the degree to which respondents were threatened with physical violence by their parents is shown in Table 28:

TABLE 28

Group Difference in Respondents' Experience of Threats of Physical Punishment From Parents

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.51	1.52	31
Comparison	2.04	1.15	43
$t_{72} = 1.51$, $p > .05$			

Again, no evidence is obtained from the Index respondents to indicate that they were threatened with physical punishment more frequently than were respondents of the Comparison group. The t. Value, while fairly high, fails to make the probability level of .05. When the respondents' experience of being yelled at and their experience of physical punishment threats are combined however, and analysed as if they were one variable, a more sensitive measure of variance is obtained. These results are shown in Table 29:

TABLE 29

Group Difference in Respondents' Experience of Violently Aggressive Language

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	5.77	2.33	31
Comparison	4.90	1.79	43
$t_{72} = 1.81$, $p < .05$			

The variance between groups is thus seen to be quite significant, with a t-test probability level of less than .05. The Index group experienced more violently aggressive language from their parents than did the Comparison group. On the basis of this evidence, Hypothesis III is considered verified.

Hypothesis IV

The final hypothesis of this study, Hypothesis IV, states that:

> The abusing parent, while in childhood, has heard violently aggressive language on the part of the mother and/or father which has been directed toward siblings and/or each other.

To test Hypothesis IV, a number of questions was asked of the respondents. Group difference in the degree to which respondents' siblings were yelled at is indicated in Table 30:

TABLE 30

Group Difference in Degree to Which Siblings Were Yelled At

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	3.00	1.21	28
Comparison	2.85	1.07	40
$t_{66} = 0.54$, $p > .05$			

The t-test probability level of greater than .05 indicates that there is no significant difference between the groups. No evidence is found to support Hypothesis IV.

In Table 31, group difference in the frequency with which the respondents' siblings were threatened with physical punishment is shown:

TABLE 31

Group Difference in Frequency With Which Siblings Were Threatened With Physical Punishment

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.35	1.39	28
Comparison	2.10	1.17	40
$t_{66} = 0.82$, $p > .05$			

The t-test probability level exceeds .05, indicating no significant group difference. Again no evidence is offered to support Hypothesis IV.

In validating Hypothesis III, the responses from the groups to questions dealing with the experience of being yelled at by parents and of being threatened with physical punishment, were combined and analysed as if they were one variable. This has been done again with the questions dealing with the respondents' siblings' experience of being yelled at and of being threatened with physical punishment, and is shown in Table 32:

TABLE 32

Respondents' Recollection of Siblings' Exposure
To Violently Aggressive Language

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	5.35	2.32	28
Comparison	4.95	1.83	40
$t_{66} = 0.80$, $p > .05$			

No obvious variance exists between groups concerning the respondents' siblings' experience of violently aggressive language. The extremely small t. Values found in the analysis of the separate questions and depicted in Tables 30 and 31 forecast this finding. In contrast, the t.Values found from the analysis of similar questions dealing with the respondents' personal experiences, as shown in Tables 27 and 28 are separately quite high. Thus, no evidence is obtained to support Hypothesis IV.

The degree to which the respondents' parents yelled, screamed and insulted each other may be seen in Figure 12, and Table 33:

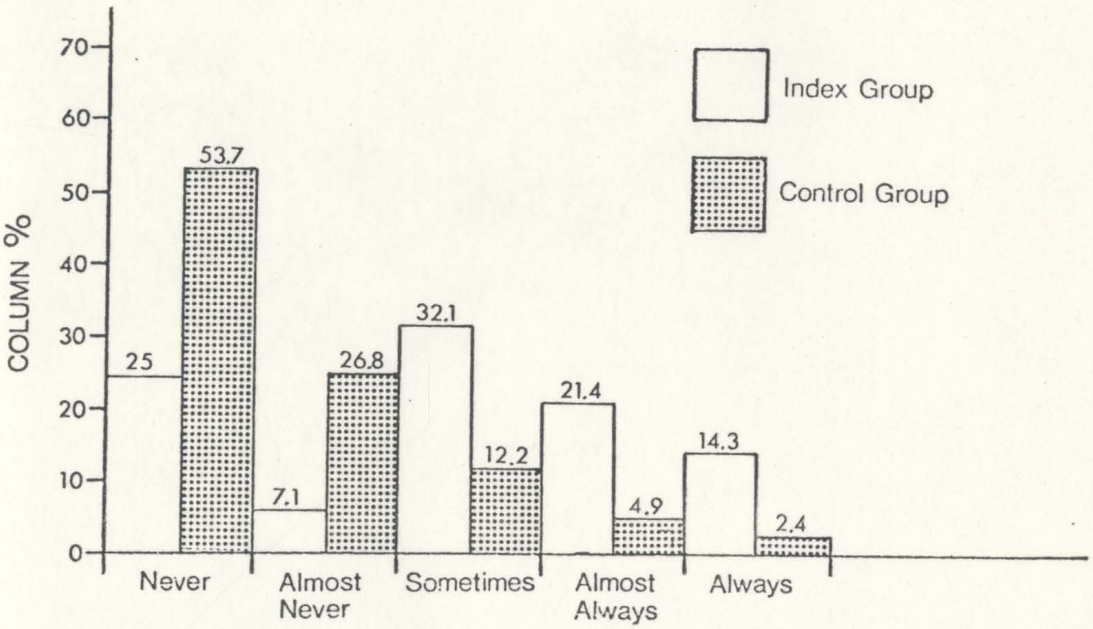

FIGURE 12. DEGREE TO WHICH RESPONDENTS' PARENTS YELLED, SCREAMED AND INSULTED EACH OTHER.

TABLE 33

Group Difference in Degree to Which Respondents' Parents Yelled, Screamed and Insulted Each Other.

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.92	1.38	28
Comparison	1.75	1.01	41

$t_{67} = 4.05$, $p < .0005$

The variance between the groups is quite obvious from the above histogram and is verified by the probability level of the t-test, shown in Table 33. The parents of the Index group yelled, screamed and insulted each other more frequently than did parents of the Comparison group. This evidence is supportive of Hypothesis IV.

Finally, in Figure 13, and Table 34 one may see the degree to which respondents' parents threatened to hit each other:

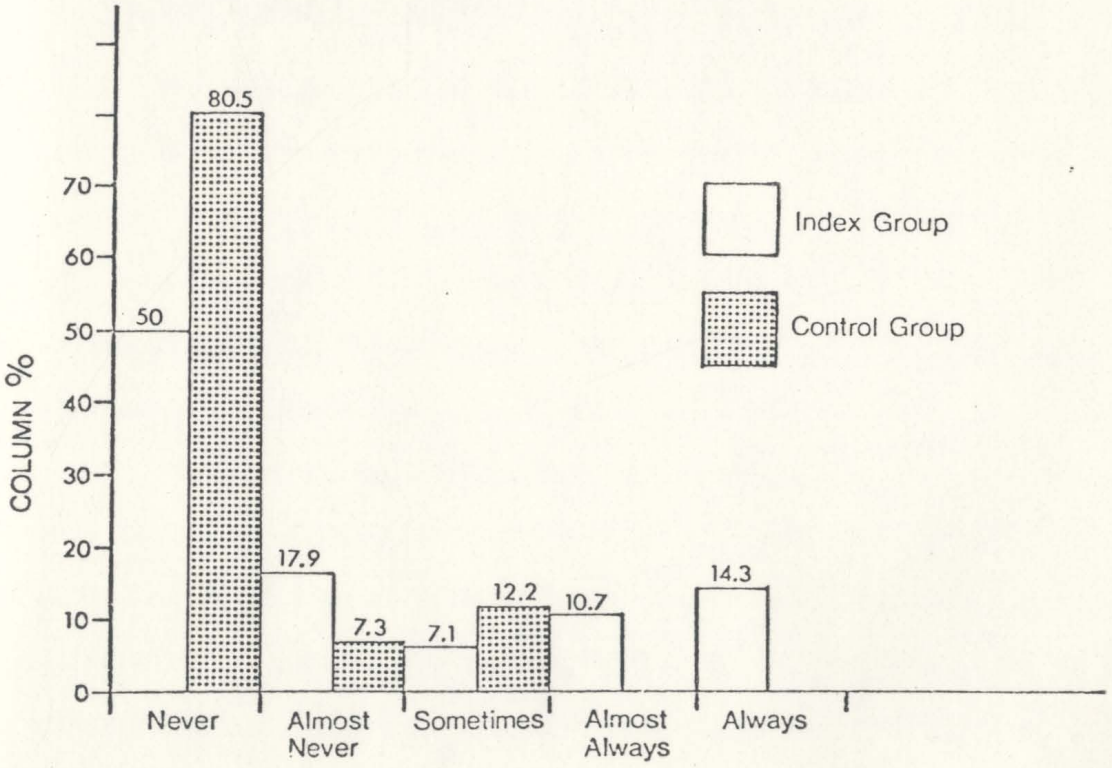

FIGURE 13. DEGREE TO WHICH RESPONDENTS' PARENTS THREATENED TO HIT EACH OTHER

TABLE 34

Group Difference in Degree to Which Respondents' Parents Threatened to Hit Each Other

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.21	1.52	28
Comparison	1.31	0.68	41
$t_{67} = 2.92$, $p < .005$			

The variance between groups is quite apparent from Figure 13, and Table 34. In the Index group, 25 percent indicated that their parents "always", or "almost always", threatened to hit each other. This compares with a Comparison group response of 0 percent. The degree of parental threatening to hit each other was significantly greater in the Index group, as shown by a t.Value of 2.92.

In Summary, no evidence has been found to indicate any difference between the groups concerning their siblings' experience of being yelled at or threatened with physical punishment. Significant group difference is found however, to indicate that the parents of the Index group yelled, screamed and insulted each other and threatened to hit each other, more frequently than did the parents of the Comparison group. Accordingly, Hypothesis IV is verified in part only. The abusing parent, while in childhood, has more frequently heard violently aggressive language on the part of mother/father which has been directed toward each other, than has the Comparison parent. No evidence has been provided to indicate a group difference in the frequency which violently

aggressive language has been directed toward the respondents' siblings by parents.

Interpersonal Relationships

Other questions, which were not directly concerned with validating or repudiating the hypotheses, were asked of the respondents. These questions dealt with matters such as present disciplinary practices, reaction to social stress, marital satisfaction and other matters which together help complete a portrait of each group. In Figure 14, and Table 35, the respondents' use of a belt or stick in disciplining their children is shown:

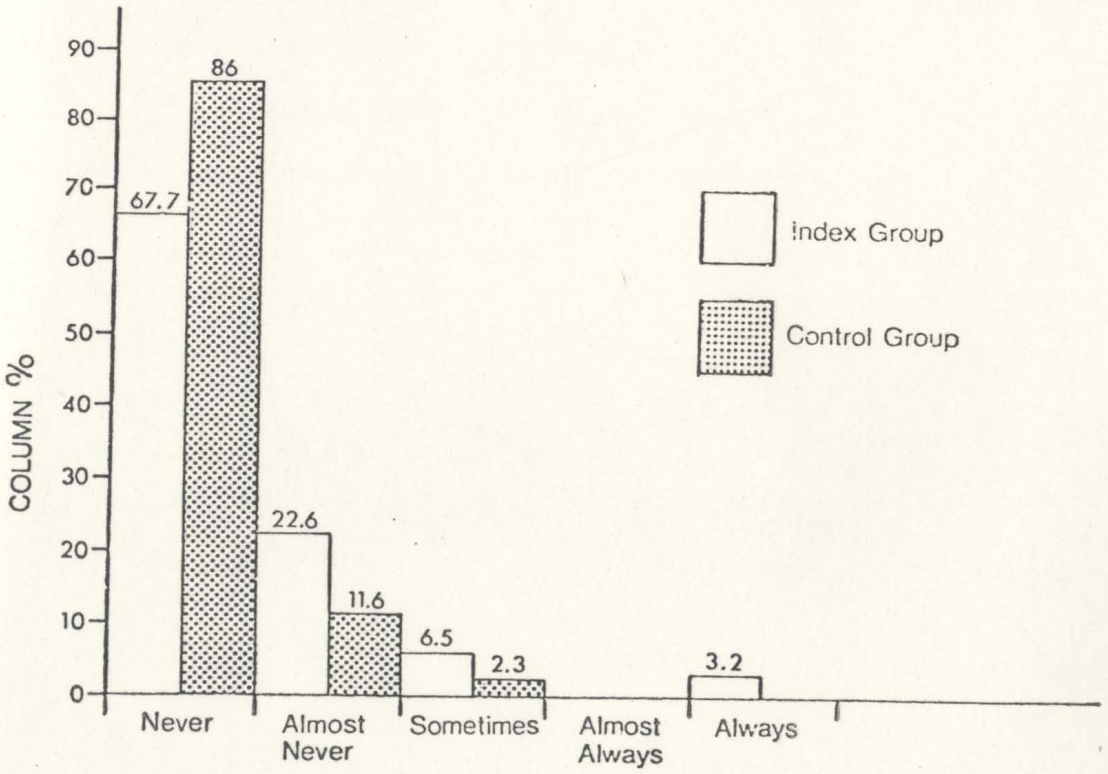

FIGURE 14. RESPONDENTS' USE OF BELT OR STICK IN DISCIPLINING THEIR CHILDREN

TABLE 35

Group Difference in Respondents' Use of Belt or Stick in Disciplining Their Children

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	1.48	0.89	31
Comparison	1.16	0.43	43

$t_{72} = 1.86$, $p < .05$

As may be seen from the histogram in Figure 14, and Table 35, there is a significant difference between groups, as one would expect. The Index group made more frequent use of a belt or stick in disciplining children, than did the Comparison group.

The frequency with which respondents' children received welts or bruises is depicted in Figure 15, and Table 36:

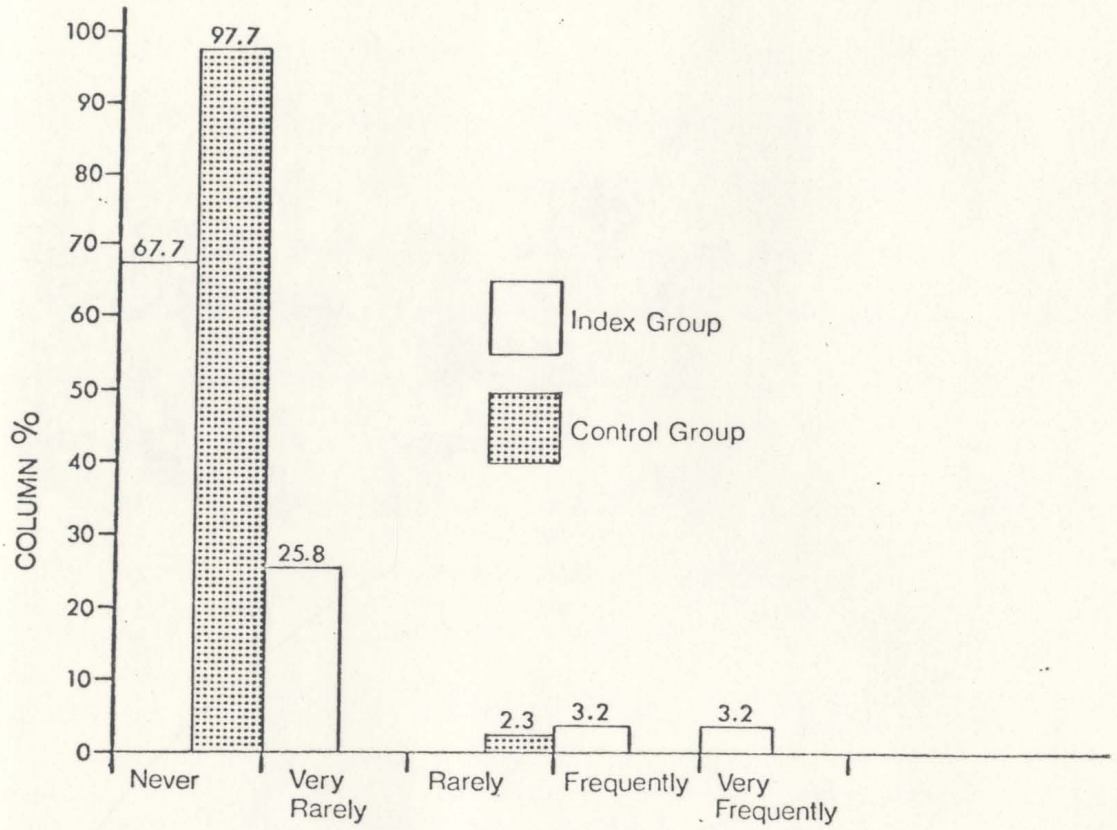

FIGURE 15. FREQUENCY WITH WHICH RESPONDENTS' CHILDREN RECEIVED WELTS OR BRUISES.

TABLE 36

Group Difference in Frequency With Which Respondents' Children Received Welts or Bruises

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	1.48	0.92	31
Comparison	1.04	0.30	43

$t_{72} = 2.53$, $p < .01$

As is to be expected, Figure 15 and Table 36 show there is significant difference between groups in the frequency with which their children were bruised or received welts. One would expect to observe much greater variance considering that the Index group were selected because of their abusive behaviour. However, it was quite evident during the interviews, that Index respondents were reluctant to admit bruising their children - even when they were aware that the interviewer had evidence of such behaviour.

The degree to which respondents yelled at, screamed and insulted their spouses, is illustrated in Figure 16, and Table 37:

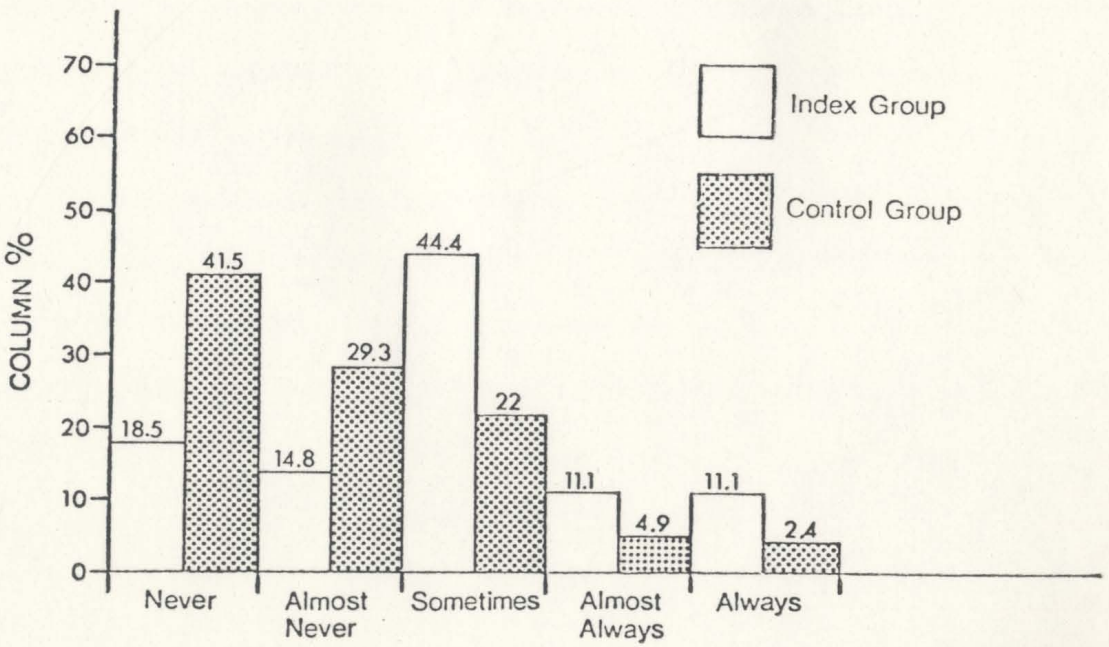

FIGURE 16. DEGREE TO WHICH RESPONDENTS YELLED AT, SCREAMED AT AND INSULTED THEIR SPOUSES.

TABLE 37

Group Difference in Degree to Which Respondents Yelled at, Screamed at and Insulted Their Spouses

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.81	1.21	27
Comparison	1.97	1.03	41
$t_{66} = 3.06$, $p < .005$			

Group difference is quite apparent. In the Index group, 66.6 percent yelled at, insulted and screamed at their spouses at least sometimes, as compared with 29.3 percent of the Comparison group. This difference is corroborated by the t-test probability level of less than .005, as shown in Table 37.

The variables dealing with violence between spouses were combined and analysed as if they were one. Table 38 depicts the frequency with which respondents threatened to hit his or her spouse, threw things, pushed, grabbed or shoved, hit the spouse with the hand or with something hard:

TABLE 38

Spousal Violence

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	12.03	5.93	27
Comparison	10.82	5.12	41
$t_{66} = 0.89$, $p > .05$			

No significant group difference is found concerning spousal violence.

The degree of marital satisfaction achieved by respondents is shown in Figure 17, and Table 39:

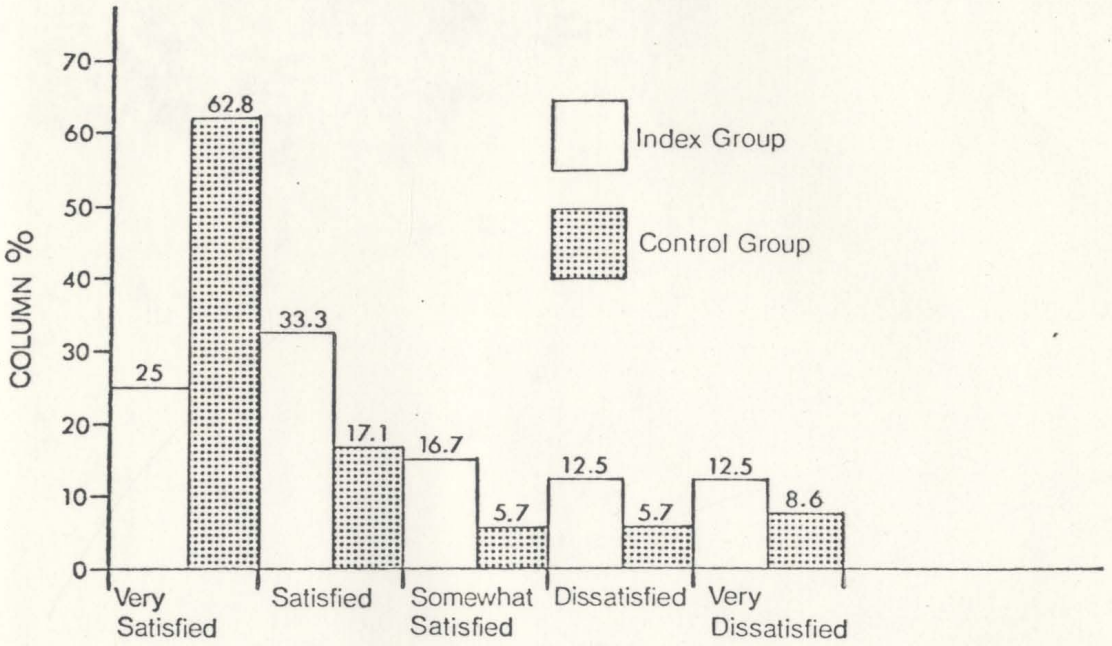

FIGURE 17. DEGREE OF MARITAL SATISFACTION EXPERIENCED BY RESPONDENTS.

TABLE 39

Group Difference in Degree of Marital Satisfaction Experienced by Respondents

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.54	1.35	24
Comparison	1.80	1.30	35

$t_{57} = 2.12$, $p < .025$

The Index respondents experienced significantly less marital satisfaction than did the Comparison respondents, as shown by Table 39.

In Figure 18, and Table 40 the respondents' general life satisfaction is depicted:

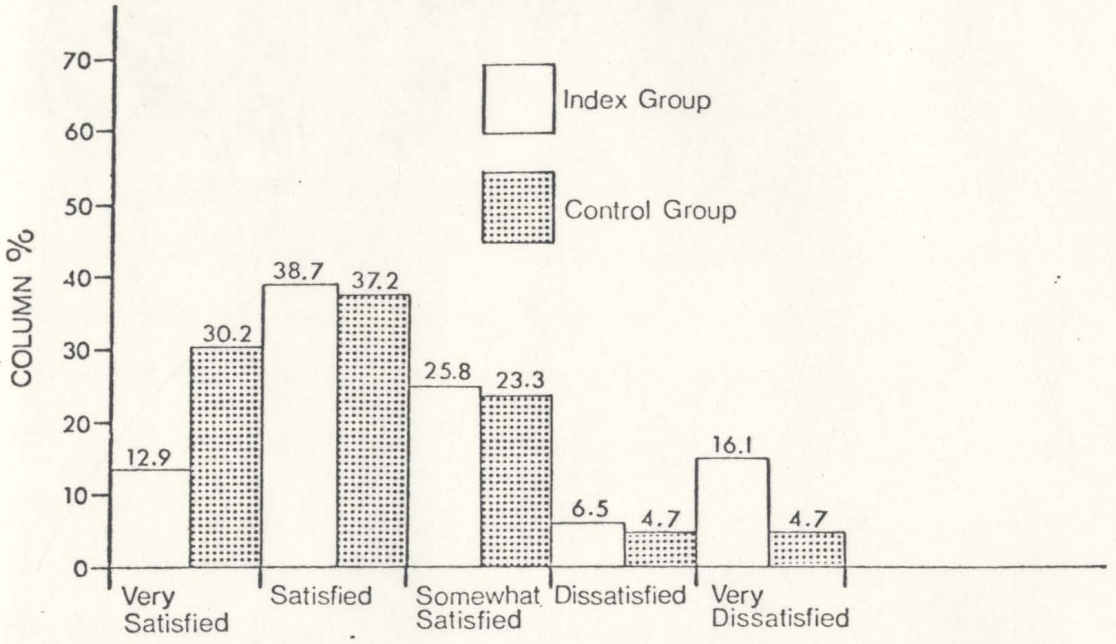

FIGURE 18. RESPONDENTS' DEGREE OF LIFE SATISFACTION

TABLE 40

Group Difference in Respondents' Degree of Life Satisfaction

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.71	1.26	31
Comparison	2.16	1.06	43
$t_{72} = 2.13$, $p < .025$			

The t-test probability level of less than .025 shown in Table 40 corroborates the difference between groups. In the Index group, 22.6 percent were dissatisfied, if not very dissatisfied, with their lives, as compared with 9.4 percent of the Comparison group. The Comparison group respondents experienced greater life satisfaction than did the Index group.

Group difference in the satisfaction which respondents obtained from raising their children is indicated in Table 41.

TABLE 41

Group Difference in Respondents' Parenting Satisfaction

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	4.56	1.35	30
Comparison	4.06	1.35	43
$t_{71} = 1.54$, $p > .05$			

No significant difference is found between groups. Index respondents achieved as much satisfaction from being parents as Comparison respondents. The probability level of the t-test exceeds .05.

The degree to which respondents had loud verbal disagreements with neighbours or co-workers is depicted in Figure 19, and Table 42:

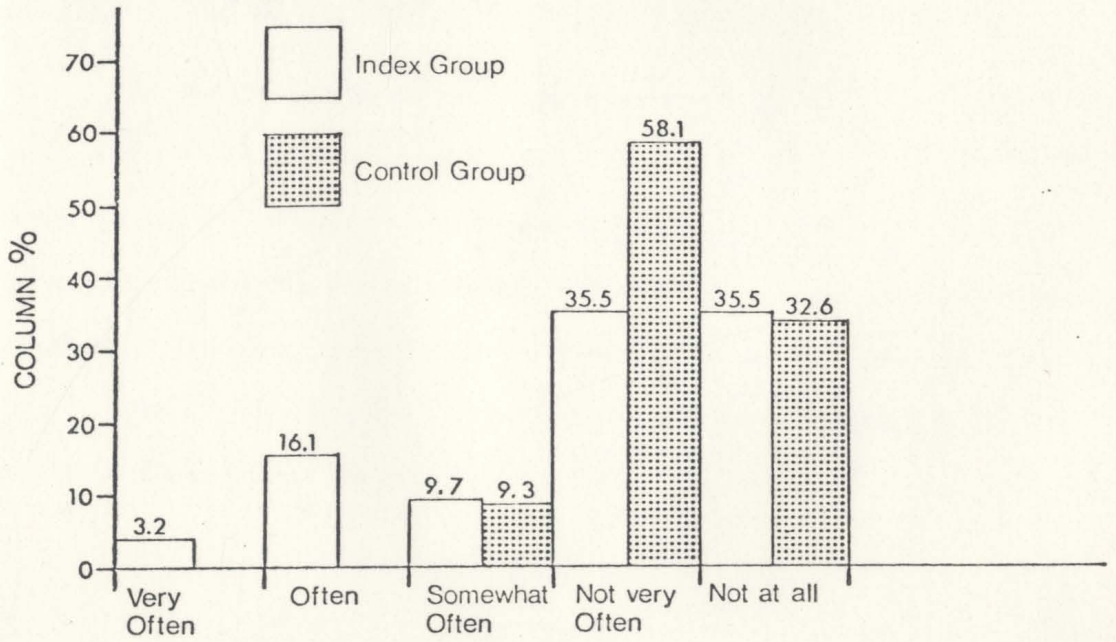

FIGURE 19. FREQUENCY OF LOUD VERBAL DISAGREEMENTS WITH NEIGHBOURS OR CO-WORKERS.

TABLE 42

Group Difference in Frequency of Loud Verbal Disagreements With Neighbours or Co-workers

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	3.83	1.18	31
Comparison	4.23	0.61	43

$t_{72} = =1.69, p < .05$

As the histogram shows, the Index respondents had a greater frequency of disagreements than Comparison respondents. Within the Index group, 29 percent of respondents had disagreements at least "somewhat often", as compared with 9.3 percent of Comparison respondents. The t-test probability level is less than .05, as shown by Table 42.

The degree to which respondents engaged in physical altercations is depicted in Figure 20, and Table 43:

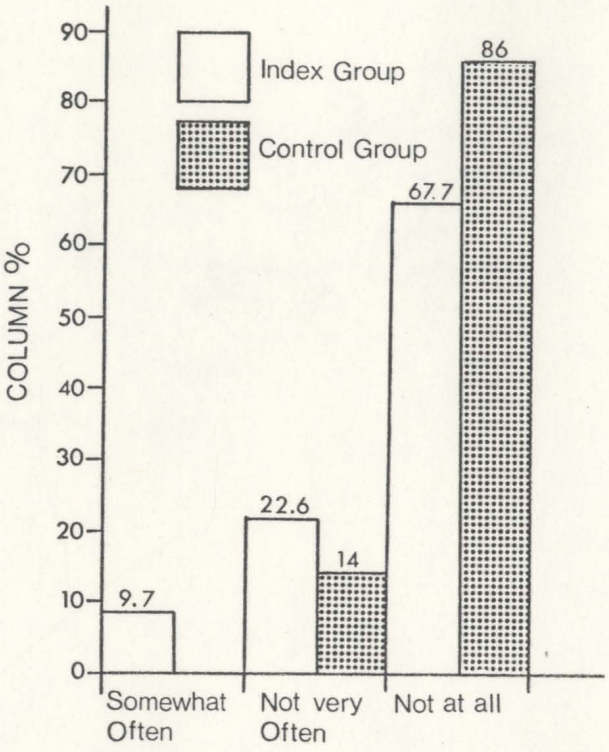

FIGURE 20. FREQUENCY OF PHYSICAL ALTERCATIONS.

TABLE 43

Group Difference in Frequency of Physical Altercations

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	4.58	0.67	31
Comparison	4.86	0.35	43

$t_{72} = -2.12$, $p < .025$

Significant difference between the groups is detected by the t-test, as shown in Table 43. The Index group engaged in physical

altercations more frequently than the Comparison group.

The degree to which respondents described themselves as being moody, is shown in Figure 21, and Table 44:

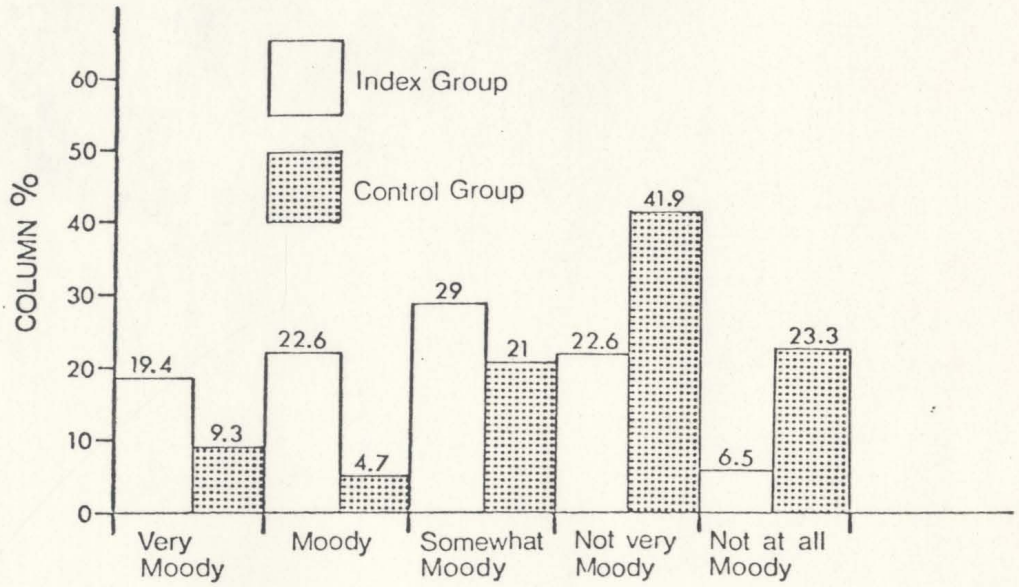

FIGURE 21. DEGREE OF MOODINESS EXPERIENCED BY RESPONDENTS.

TABLE 44

Group Difference in Degree of Moodiness Experienced by Respondents

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.74	1.21	31
Comparison	3.65	1.17	43

$t_{72} = -3.25$, $p < .005$

The t-test in Table 44 indicates that significant differences exist between groups. The Index group had 71 percent of its members, who were at least "somewhat moody", as compared with 35 percent of the Comparison group.

The frequency of church attendance is shown in Figure 22, and Table 45:

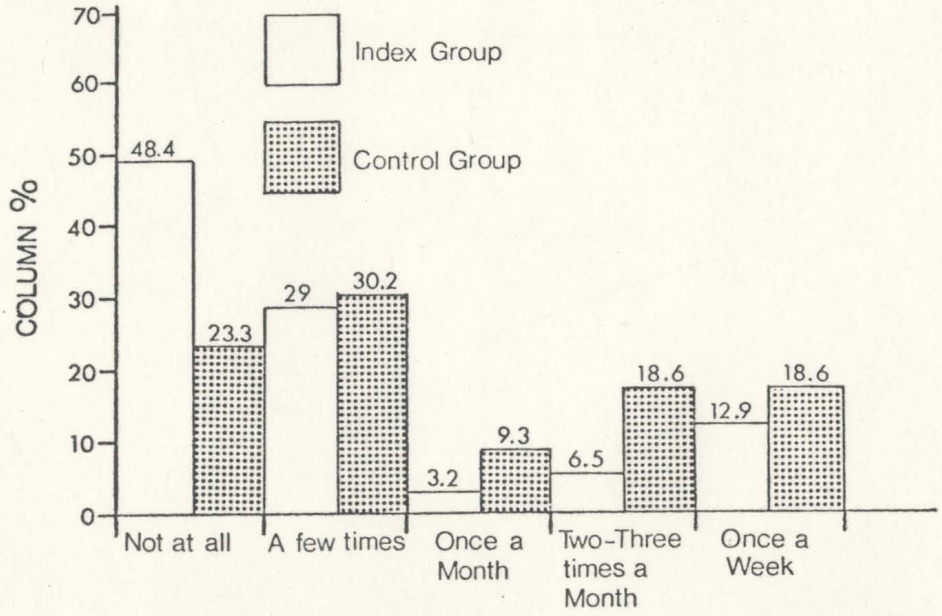

FIGURE 22. FREQUENCY OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE.

TABLE 45

Group Difference in Frequency of
Church Attendance

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	2.06	1.41	31
Comparison	2.79	1.47	43
$t_{72} = -2.13$, $p < .025$			

In Table 45 significant group variance is indicated by the t-test probability level of less than .025. The Index group respondents did not attend church as frequently as the Comparison group respondents.

In Table 46, group difference in the frequency with which the respondents used alcohol is indicated:

TABLE 46

Group Difference in Frequency of
Alcohol Use by Respondents

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	3.87	1.36	31
Comparison	3.95	0.99	43
$t_{72} = =0.30$, $p > .05$			

No significant group difference is evident from the t-test. During the interviews, many of the Index respondents indicated that their use of alcohol had been modified since their abusive behaviour had come to the attention of the Social Services Department. The study instrument was not equipped to record this behaviour change, unfortunately.

The frequency of alcohol use by the respondents' spouse is shown in Figure 23, and Table 47:

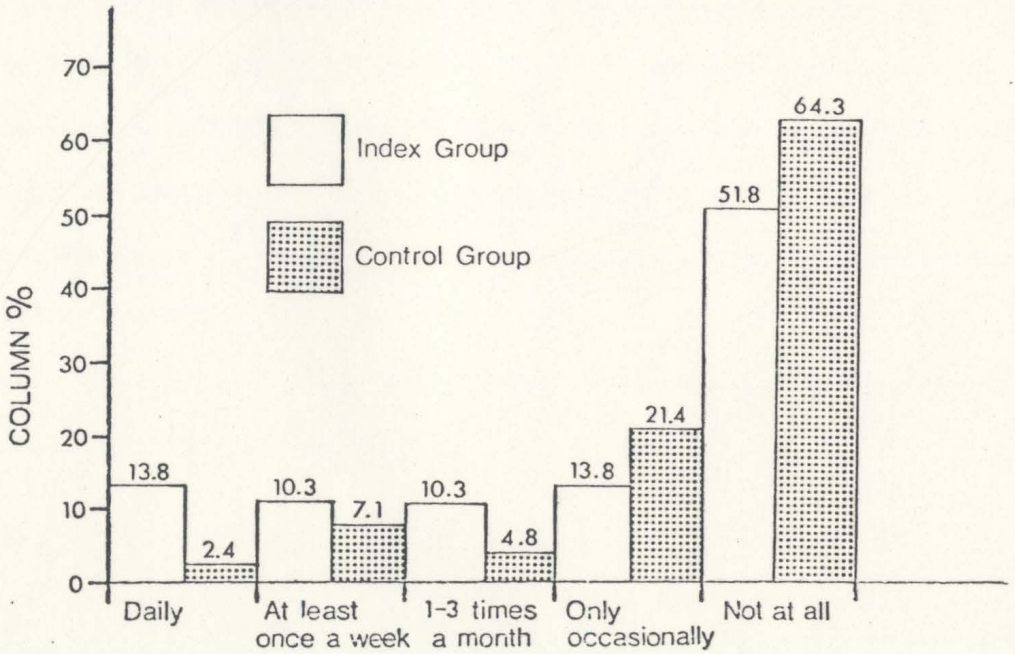

FIGURE 23. FREQUENCY OF SPOUSES USE OF ALCOHOL.

TABLE 47

Group Difference in Frequency of
Spouses' Use of Alcohol

GROUP	MEAN	SD	# OF CASES
Index	3.79	1.52	29
Comparison	4.38	1.03	42
$t_{69} = -1.81, p < .05$			

As is indicated in Figure 23, the spouses of Index respondents made more frequent use of alcohol than the spouses of Comparison respondents. Within the Index group, 24.1 percent of spouses used alcohol at least once a week, as compared with 9.5 percent of Comparison group spouses. This variance is corroborated by the t-test probability level of less than .05, in Table 47.

In Table 48 a crosstabulation of alcohol use by respondents' spouses is shown according to sex and group:

TABLE 48

Crosstabulation of Spouses' Alcohol Use

	INDEX		COMPARISON	
FREQUENCY	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
Daily	1	3	0	1
At least once a week	1	2	0	3
1-3 times a month	1	2	1	1
Only occasionally	3	1	7	2
Not at all	14	1	24	3
Column Totals	20	9	32	10

A greater number of female respondents of the Index group indicated that their spouses used alcohol frequently, as compared with the male respondents. Of the 9 married females within the Index group, 5 of their husbands used alcohol at least once a week, while 3 indicated daily usage. Within the Comparison group 4 female respondents indicated that their spouses used alcohol at least once a week, while only 1 indicated daily usage. Within both groups, males made the most frequent use of alcohol.

In Summary, several significant differences between the groups were found dealing with responses which are not directly related to validation or repudiation of the study's hypotheses. As would be expected, Index respondents made more frequent use of a belt or stick to discipline their children than did the Comparison respondents. As well,

their children quite predictably received bruises more frequently. The Index respondents experienced less life satisfaction and less marital satisfaction than the Comparison respondents. They also yelled at, screamed at, and insulted their spouses more frequently. Index respondents engaged more frequently in loud verbal disagreements with neighgours and co-workers and indicated a greater frequency of physical altercations such as fist fights than did the Comparison respondents. Index respondents attended church less frequently and perceived themselves as being moodier than did Comparison respondents. The spouses of female Index respondents used alcohol more frequently than did the spouses of female Comparison respondents. However, no significant difference in the respondents' use of alcohol was found. As well, no difference was detected in the degree of parenting satisfaction which the groups achieved or in the degree to which the groups engaged in spousal violence.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

General Summary

In order to test the hypotheses and the major proposition of this study, two groups were examined; known as the Index group and the Comparison group. The Index group consisted of identified child abusing parents while the Comparison group consisted of non-abusing parents. The groups were matched as closely as possible to ensure that no extraneous variables would bias the results. Both groups were then asked a number of questions concerning their past and present relationship with their parents, spouses and children.

When the resulting data were analysed, it was found that the matching procedure was effective. The Index group and the Comparison group did not differ statistically with regard to age, sex, marital status, number of children, religion, education, community of birth and socio-economic status. The following hypotheses were then considered.

Hypothesis I, dealing with the abusing parents' experience of violent physical aggression directed toward him or her by the mother, father or by both, was supported by enough evidence to be considered verified. The Index respondents were hit more with a belt or stick, were bruised more frequently, experienced more family violence, had a less loving family environment, had parents who were less satisfied with being parents and experienced more loneliness in childhood than Comparison respondents.

Hypothesis II, dealing with the abusing parents' witnessing of violent physical aggression on the part of the mother and/or father directed toward siblings and/or each other, was also supported by enough evidence to be considered verified. The abusing parents' siblings were more frequently bruised, and had less affectionate fathers than siblings of the Comparison group. The parents of the Index group threw things at each other, and threw things in general, more frequently than parents of the Comparison group. The parents of the Index group pushed, grabbed or shoved each other and hit each other with something hard more frequently than did parents of the Comparison group. As well, the Index group indicated that their parents experienced less marital satisfaction than did the Comparison group. The frequently of alcohol usage by parents of the Index group was also greater than that of the parents of the Comparison group.

Hypothesis III, concerning the abusing parents' experience of violently aggressive language on the part of his or her parents was also considered verified. Although, no significant difference between the groups was found from question 55 or 56 as noted in Appendix A, dealing with the frequency of being yelled at or the frequency of threats from parents, the probability level was very close to .05. When these questions were run together, the computer indicated a statistically significant difference. The abusing parents experienced violently aggressive language more frequently than Comparison respondents.

Hypothesis IV, concerning the abusing parents hearing violently aggressive language which the parents directed toward siblings or toward

each other, was verified only in part. No evidence was provided to indicate that the abusing parents heard violently aggressive language being directed toward siblings more frequently than did the Comparison group. However, considerable evidence was found indicating that the abusing parents' mother and father directed violently aggressive language toward each other more frequently than the parents of Comparison respondents. Parents of the Index respondents yelled, screamed and insulted each other, and threatened each other, more frequently than did parents of the Comparison respondents.

In addition, general information, not related directly to the hypothesis, was obtained. It was found that the abusing parents had less marital satisfaction, less life satisfaction, more frequent loud verbal disagreements and physical altercations with neighbours and co-workers than the Comparison respondents. As well, the abusing parents yelled, screamed and insulted their spouses more frequently, attended church less, and were moodier than Comparison respondents. Spouses of abusing parents made more frequent use of alcohol than did the spouses of the Comparison respondents, and as was known previously, the children of Index parents received bruises more frequently than the children of Comparison parents.

Relationship of Data to Research Proposition

The evidence obtained in this study and used to validate the hypotheses, verifies that the parents in this study who abuse their children were more frequently physically abused and more frequently

subjected to violently aggressive language in childhood than the parents in the study who do not abuse their children. Because of the procedural controls employed and the use of representative samples, one may assume that similar results would be found if the study were duplicated within a similar milieu.

Accordingly, the major proposition of this study is considered to have been verified - that parents who physically abuse their children are more likely to have been themselves physically abused in childhood or to have experienced a life of violent aggression and violently aggressive language than parents who do not abuse their children.

Acceptance of the majority of the hypotheses and the major study proposition tends to confirm the validity of the Generational Factor. This study has demonstrated with empirical evidence that the abusing parents' relationships with their spouses and children are similar to the relationships which they experienced with their parents. In general, the parents in this study who abuse their children, argue and fight with their spouses frequently and normally live discordant lives, are repeating a pattern of behaviour established by their parents. This study has sought only to establish the link between the actions of the abusing parent and his or her previous experience. It has not sought to explain any of the intervening processes between experience and action. The Learning theorists alluded to earlier in this paper have explained these processes admirably and to them this researcher acknowledges a great debt.

Differences of Results

Hypothesis IV was considered to be verified only in part because of lack of evidence that the Index respondents' siblings were subjected to violently aggressive language more frequently than the Comparison respondents' siblings. It was confirmed that the abusing parents themselves were subjected to violently aggressive language more frequently than the Comparison respondents. One could hypothesize that the abusing parents induced a higher stress level in their relationship with their parents than did their siblings and as a result, received a greater amount of verbal wrath. One also could argue that respondents would remember less about matters concerning their siblings than about matters concerning themselves. This could tend to cause a more neutral response.

Another finding, which was somewhat unexpected, concerned the relationship between the abusing parents and their spouses. While the frequency of shouts, arguments and other indicators of verbal altercations are quite high, there is no indication of physical violence between spouses. One would expect to find such violence because of its prevalence in the abusing respondents' parents' relationships. Based on the researcher's personal knowledge of some of the relationships involved, one might suspect that a completely accurate description of spousal behaviour was not provided by the Index respondents. This is perhaps indicative of the tendency to provide socially accepted responses to questions.

Another surprising result concerned the Index respondents' use of alcohol. The Index respondents' fathers used alcohol more frequently

than the Comparison respondents' fathers, yet no difference in frequency of alcohol use between the respondents was detected. A possible answer to this anomaly was alluded to earlier. During the course of many of the interviews, Index respondents indicated that they had experienced a problem with alcohol but that they had now greatly modified their behaviour. Unfortunately, the study questionnaire was not designed to detect this behavioural change.

General Limitation of The Study

Several limitations of this study are evident. The small size of the Index group and the Comparison group, for example, makes it more difficult to accept the study's result as being applicable to the general population than would have been the case with larger group numbers. As well, one may be critical of the study because of the socio-economic composition of the respondents. The majority of Index and Comparison respondents were of low socio-economic status, whereas a balanced representation would have been desirable.

As well, the matching procedure was less than ideal. The attempt at matching individuals according to a large number of characteristics was extremely difficult. Although the groups do not differ statistically, they are obvious not exactly alike. It was impossible, for example, to match the groups according to years of marriage.

The sampling procedure involved a larger number of interviewers than one could consider ideal. This was necessary because of the varied geographic location of the respondents, but in spite of precautions, may have lent inconsistency to the style of the interviews.

Finally, another limitation concerns the area of Canada in which the research was conducted. The province of Newfoundland is generally rural in nature. Even the majority of its city dwellers have kinship ties and affiliations which make it unlike many parts of North America. To assume that the findings of this study would apply to a more urbanized area would perhaps be unwise. Further research of the Generational Factor in such areas is required.

Applicability of the Findings

The results of this study lend a further research base to the many publications which promulgate acceptance of the Generational Factor and which offer practical advice to social agencies dealing with child abuse. Support of such literature, and the cause of child abuse intervention is the greatest import of the study. Along with a great variety of other studies it has attempted to help explain the phenomenon of child abuse, to enable our society to detect, to ameliorate and eventually to prevent a great social aberration.

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APPENDIX A

Opening Statement

This questionnaire is part of a research project being conducted by Memorial University of Newfoundland, School of Social Work. In this project we are interested in looking at some aspects of family life. In particular we are interested in the interaction between parents and children in problem solving and discipline, the interaction between spouses in problem solving and the interaction between you and your parents while you were growing up.

Please feel free to be frank in answering these questions. Your answers will be combined with those of many other families but any information you give us will be strictly confidential.

A:

First of all I would like to ask some general questions about you and your family.

1. When were you born? _____

2. Where were you born? _____

3. What is your marital status?
   Married - 1, Single - 2, Divorced - 3, Widowed - 4,
   Separated - 5. Common Law - 6.

4. If married, for how long? _____

5. What is your religious denomination?
   United Church - 1, Roman Catholic - 2, Anglican - 3,
   Salvation Army - 4, Pentecostal - 5, Other - 6.

6. During the past year how often did you attend church?
   1. Not at all, 2. A few times, 3. About once a month?
   4. 2-3 times a month, 5. Once per week or more.

7. What is your usual occupation? _____

8. Are you currently employed?
   1. YES _____ 2. NO _____
   If yes go on to Question 13.

9. If NOT employed, are you looking for employment?
   1. YES _____ 2. NO _____

10. If NOT employed, are you unable to participate in employment because of ill health?
    1. YES _____ 2. NO _____

11. If NOT employed, are you unable to participate in employment because of disability?
    1. YES _____ 2. NO _____

12. If NOT employed, are you engaged in any educational or occupational program aimed at employment in the future?
    1. YES _____ 2. NO _____

13. What is the highest grade of school or year of College you finished?

Grade School (grades 1-8)	- 1
Some High School (grades 9-11)	- 2
High School Graduate	- 3
Some Technical School	- 4
Technical School Graduate	- 5
Some College	- 6
College Graduate	- 7

14. Please give the names and ages of the children who are presently living at home.

_____

_____

_____

_____

B:

Now I'd like you to think back to the time when you were a child growing up.

15. Were you raised by both parents? YES _____ NO _____

16. If no, who assumed responsibility for raising you in order of importance?

a. Mother only ___
b. Father only ___
c. Grandparents ___
d. Mother & Stepfather ___
e. Father & Stepmother ___
f. Aunt & Uncle ___
g. Brother & Sister ___
h. Cousin ___
i. Other ___

17. How satisfied do you think your parents were with their marriage?

1. very satisfied, 2. satisfied, 3. somewhat satisfied
4. dissatisfied, 5. very dissatisfied

18. How satisfied do you think your parents were with being parents?

1. very satisfied, 2. satisfied, 3. somewhat satisfied
4. dissatisfied, 5. very dissatisfied.

19. How affectionate was your mother to you?

    1. very affectionate, 2. affectionate,

    3. somewhat affectionate, 4. not very affectionate

    5. not at all affectionate

20. How affectionate was your father to you?

    1. very affectionate, 2. affectionate,

    3. somewhat affectionate, 4. not very affectionate

    5. not at all affectionate

21. How affectionate was your mother to your brothers and sisters?

    1. very affectionate, 2. affectionate,

    3. somewhat affectionate, 4. not very affectionate,

    5. not at all affectionate

22. How affectionate was your father to your brothers and sisters?

    1. very affectionate, 2. affectionate

    3. somewhat affectionate, 4. not very affectionate

    5. not at all affectionate

Please indicate how the following words describe your family environment until you were around 12 years old (circle one number for each question).

	ALWAYS	ALMOST ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	ALMOST NEVER	NEVER
23. Peaceful?	1	2	3	4	5
24. Sad?	1	2	3	4	5
25. Secure?(Emotionally)	1	2	3	4	5
26. Troubled?	1	2	3	4	5
27. Happy?	1	2	3	4	5
28. Violent?	1	2	3	4	5
29. Loving?	1	2	3	4	5
30. Exciting?	1	2	3	4	5
31. Lonely?	1	2	3	4	5
32. Frightening?	1	2	3	4	5
33. Other? Please specify	1	2	3	4	5

34. Were your natural parents divorced?

1. YES _____ 2. NO _____

35. Were they separated but not divorced?

1. YES _____ 2. NO _____

36. Did a parent die when you were a child?

1. YES _____ 2. NO _____

37. Did your father or male guardian use alcoholic beverages?

1. YES _____ 2. NO _____

38. How frequently did he use alcoholic beverages? (If yes)

1. Daily 2. At least once a week 3. 1-3 times a month

4. Only occasionally 5. Not at all

39. Did your mother or female guardian use alcoholic beverages?

1. YES _____ 2. NO _____

40. How frequently did she use alcoholic beverages? (If yes)

1. Daily 2. At least once a week 3. 1-3 times a month

4. Only occasionally 5. Not at all

D:

Here is a list of things which your mother and father might have done when they were trying to solve a problem. Taking all disagreements into account, not just the most serious ones, indicate how frequently they, as a couple, did the following during a conflict.

	NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOME-TIMES	ALMOST ALWAYS	ALWAYS
41. Tried to discuss the issue calmly?	1	2	3	4	5
42. Did discuss the issue calmly?	1	2	3	4	5
43. Argued a little?	1	2	3	4	5
44. Yelled, screamed or insulted each other?	1	2	3	4	5
45. Stamped out of the room?	1	2	3	4	5

	NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOME-TIMES	ALMOST ALWAYS	ALWAYS
46. Threatened to hit the other person?	1	2	3	4	5
47. Threw something but not at the other?	1	2	3	4	5
48. Threw something at the other person?	1	2	3	4	5
49. Pushed, grabbed or shoved the other?	1	2	3	4	5
50. Hit (or tried to hit) the other person but not with anything?	1	2	3	4	5
51. Hit (or tried to hit) the other person with some-thing hard.	1	2	3	4	5
52. Other (Explain)	1	2	3	4	5

E:

Now I would like to ask you some questions about the way you were raised as a child. That is, when you were between the ages of six and fifteen or sixteen how often were you disciplined in the following ways? (Circle ONE number for each statement)

	NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOME-TIMES	ALMOST ALWAYS	ALWAYS
53. I was sent to my room.	1	2	3	4	5
54. I was grounded. (Kept in House)	1	2	3	4	5
55. I was yelled at.	1	2	3	4	5
56. I was threatened with physical punishment?	1	2	3	4	5
57. I was spanked.	1	2	3	4	5
58. I was slapped.	1	2	3	4	5
59. I was hit with a belt or stick.	1	2	3	4	5
60. I was hit so hard I had bruises.	1	2	3	4	5

	NEVER	ONCE	TWICE	THREE TIMES	FOUR TIMES OR MORE
61. I was so severely punished I had to be taken to a doctor.	1	2	3	4	5

62. Other (describe) _____

_____

_____

_____

Could you answer the same questions concerning your sibling (brother or sister). How often were they disciplined by being -

	NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOME-TIMES	ALMOST ALWAYS	ALWAYS
63. Sent to their room.	1	2	3	4	5
64. Grounded.	1	2	3	4	5
65. Yelled at.	1	2	3	4	5
66. Threatened with physical punishment.	1	2	3	4	5
67. Spanked.	1	2	3	4	5
68. Slapped.	1	2	3	4	5
69. Hit with a belt or stick.	1	2	3	4	5
70. Hit so hard they had bruises.	1	2	3	4	5

	NEVER	ONCE	TWICE	THREE TIMES	FOUR TIMES OR MORE
71. They were so severely punished they had to be taken to a doctor.	1	2	3	4	5

72. Other (describe) _____

_____

_____

F:

In this section I would like you to think of yourself, your spouse and the children.

73. How satisfied are you with being a parent?

1. very satisfied 2. satisfied 3. somewhat satisfied

4. dissatisfied 5. very dissatisfied

74. How would you compare your satisfaction as a parent with that of other parents you know?

1. much greater 2. greater 3. same 4. less 5. much less

75. Do you make friends easily?

1. very easily 2. easily 3. somewhat easily

4. not very easily 5. not at all easily

76. Are you a moody person?

1. very moody 2. moody 3. somewhat moody

4. not very moody 5. not at all moody

77. Are you a patient person?

1. very patient 2. patient 3. somewhat patient

4. not very patient 5. not at all patient

78. Have you every had loud verbal disagreements with relatives, neighbours, or co-workers?

1. very often 2. often 3. somewhat often

4. not very often 5. not at all

79. Have your disagreements every lead to a physical altercation, such as a fist fight?

1. very often 2. often 3. somewhat often

4. not very often 5. not at all

80. Do you use alcoholic beverages?

YES _____ NO _____

If yes How freqeuntly do you use alcoholic beverages?

1. daily 2. at least once a week 3. 1-3 times a month

4. only occasionally 5. not at all

81. Does your spouse use alcoholic beverages?

YES _____ NO _____

If yes How frequently does your spouse use alcoholic beverages?

1. daily 2. at least once a week 3. 1-3 times a month

4. only occasionally 5. not at all

G:

Here is a list of things which you and your spouse might do when trying to solve a problem. Taking all disagreements into account, not just the most serious ones, indicate how frequently you, as a couple, do the following during a conflict.

	NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOME-TIMES	ALMOST ALWAYS	ALWAYS
82. Try to discuss the issue calmly?	1	2	3	4	5
83. Do discuss the issue calmly?	1	2	3	4	5
84. Argue a little?	1	2	3	4	5
85. Yell, scream or insult each other?	1	2	3	4	5
86. Stamp out of the room?	1	2	3	4	5
87. Threaten to hit the other person?	1	2	3	4	5
88. Throw something but not at the other?	1	2	3	4	5
89. Throw something at the other person?	1	2	3	4	5
90. Push, grab or shove the other?	1	2	3	4	5
91. Hit (or tried to hit) the other person but not with anything?	1	2	3	4	5
92. Hit (or tried to hit) the other person with something hard?	1	2	3	4	5
93. Other (explain)	_____				

94. Taking all things into consideration, how satisfied would you say you are with your marriage?

If married 1. very satisfied 2. satisfied 3. somewhat satisfied
4. dissatisfied 5. very dissatisfied

95. How would you compare your marriage with those of other people you know?

If married 1. Better than any I know 2. Better than most
3. About average 4. Not as good as most
5. Worse than any I know

96. How satisfied do you feel with your life generally?
1. very satisfied 2. satisfied 3. somewhat satisfied
4. dissatisfied 5. very dissatisfied

97. If you had your life to live over again, would you marry the same person?

If married 1. Yes, definitely 2. Probably 3. Uncertain
4. Probably not 5. No, definitely not

H:

Here is a list of things which you and your children might do when trying to solve a problem. Taking all disagreements into account, not just the most severe ones, indicate how frequently you do the following during a conflict.

		NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOME-TIMES	ALMOST ALWAYS	ALWAYS
98.	Try to discuss the issue calmly?	1	2	3	4	5
99.	Do discuss issue calmly?	1	2	3	4	5
100.	Argue a little?	1	2	3	4	5
101.	Yell, scream or insult each other?	1	2	3	4	5
102.	Stamp out of the room?	1	2	3	4	5
103.	Threaten to hit the other person?	1	2	3	4	5
104.	Throw something but not at the other person?	1	2	3	4	5

	NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOME-TIMES	ALMOST ALWAYS	ALWAYS
105. Throw something at the other person?	1	2	3	4	5
106. Push, grab, shove the other?	1	2	3	4	5
107. Hit the other person with something hard?	1	2	3	4	5

108. Other (explain) _____

109. Every kind of work has certain day to day satisfactions, but some people find some kind of work more satisfying than other. Compared with other kinds of work you could imagine yourself doing, how would you rate the satisfaction of child rearing?

1. much more satisfying 2. somewhat more satisfying

3. equally satisfying 4. somewhat less satisfying

5. much less satisfying

I:

When your child or children misbehave there are many possible ways of disciplining a child. How frequently do you think you do the following.

	NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOME-TIMES	ALMOST ALWAYS	ALWAYS
110. Send child to his/her room	1	2	3	4	5
111. Ground the child?	1	2	3	4	5
112. Yell at child?	1	2	3	4	5
113. Threaten child with physical punishment?	1	2	3	4	5
114. Spank the child?	1	2	3	4	5
115. Slap the child?	1	2	3	4	5
116. Hit child with belt or stick?	1	2	3	4	5

117. Have your children ever been bruised or gotten welts as a result of discipline?

1. Never 2. Very rarely 3. Rarely 4. Frequently

5. Very frequently

118. Have your children ever been seen by a doctor as a result of discipline?

1. Never 2. Once 3. Twice 4. Three times

5. Four times or more

119. How effective do you think physical punishment is in changing a child's behaviour?

1. Never effective 2. Almost never effective

3. Sometimes effective 4. Almost always effective

5. Always effective

120. Looking back on your life since you began your family would you do anything differently?

1. Yes, definitely 2. Probably 3. Uncertain

4. Probably not 5. No, definitely not

121. If yes, definitely what would you have done differently?

---

122. How long have you lived in _____?

1. Less than 1 year 2. 1-5 years 3. More than 5 years - less than 10 years 4. 10-15 years 5. More than 15 years

123. Where do your parents live?

1. In same house 2. Same neighborhood 3. In Newfoundland

4. In Canada 5. Deceased

124. How much contact do you have with your parents?

1. Daily 2. At least weekly 3. 1-3 times per month

4. Only occasionally 5. None at all

This is the end of the questionnaire. Please feel free at this time to make further comments on the topics covered or on any aspects of your family life in general.

Thank you for your co-operation and patience. If you are interested in knowing the results of the study we shall be pleased to place you on the mailing list.

(note to interviewer: If subject wishes to know the results of this study please indicate name and address on separate card or paper.)

APPENDIX B

GOVERNMENT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

ST. JOHN'S

1980 01 14

Mr. George Sheppard
Program Consultant
Corner Brook Regional Office

Dear Mr. Sheppard:

The Deputy Minister has asked me to acknowledge your letter to him of December 27th and to grant you the permission you requested to contact social work staff, and to offer any other help that we can provide.

I want to take this opportunity, personally, to wish you much success in the completion of your thesis which, I understand, is the final requirement of your Masters program. I hope that those selected will cooperate fully in the completion and return of your questionnaires.

Yours sincerely,

Roy Tiller,
Director of Regional Services.

RT/co'l

c.c. Mr. Jerome Quinlan.
c.c. Mr. C. R. Payne.
c.c. Mr. T. L. Wiseman.
c.c. Mr. John Jenniex.
c.c. Mr. George Savoury (Acting Regional Director).

P01