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Gender and Aggression I: Perceptions of Aggression[1]

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To investigate how gender and ethnicity influence evaluation, perceptions, and stereotyping of aggression, two studies were conducted with 115 college students (56% male; 50% Anglo and 26% Hispanic) and 79 individuals (72% male; 92% Anglo) who worked on a military base. Participants were asked to respond to four scenarios depicting aggressive interactions in which the gender of the protagonists varied, give their perceptions of 25 potentially aggressive incidents, and answer questions concerning stereotypes of gender related to these incidents and personal aggressive behaviors. Consistent with previous research on gender and aggression, both studies found that the aggressor, target, and respondent all affected perceptions of aggression and likelihood of aggressive behaviors. Aggression from a male and aggression directed towards a female were particularly likely to be evaluated negatively. Age and educational level were both negatively related to tolerance for aggression, and Anglo vs. Hispanic ethnicity was also associated with perceptions of aggression.

Although there has been a great deal of research on gender differences in aggressive behavior (see Baron & Richardson, 1994; Bjorkqvist, 1994; Eagly & Steffen, 1986; Frodi, Macaulay, & Thome, 1977; Hyde, 1984; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1980; and Teiger, 1980, for reviews), fewer studies have examined the effects of gender on perceptions and attributions of aggression or on decisions about whether or not to aggress against someone. Much of this work has dealt with sexual aggression. Research on sexual harassment and sexual coercion has documented that men and women frequently differ

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in their perceptions of the seriousness and importance of an incident, as well as in how they perceive the motivations of the individuals involved (Abbey, 1987; Fitzgerald, Swan, & Fischer, 1995; Frazier, Cochran, & Olson, 1995; Garcia, Milano, & Quijano, 1989; Garrett-Gooding & Senter, 1987; Hutchinson, Tess, Gleckman, Hagans, & Reese, 1994; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Marks & Nelson, 1993; McCaul, Veltum, Boyechko, & Crawford, 1990; McCormick, 1994). Not surprisingly, men are generally less likely to construe sexual behaviors directed towards women as aggressive or inappropriate than are women.

In addition to considering sexual aggression, researchers have investigated how gender stereotypes and differences affect the evaluation of aggressive acts and persons in nonsexual contexts. Some of these studies have compared the responses given by male and female subjects. Eagly and Steffen (1986) found that females were more likely than males to believe that aggression would harm the target, expect to experience guilt or anxiety from aggressing, and believe that they would face danger from aggressing. Smith (1984) reported that men were more likely than women to endorse the use of violence in a large number of situations. Finn (1986) found that male college students were more likely than females to approve of the use of force in marriage. Harris and Cook (1994) discovered that female college students considered a battering incident more violent than did males and were more likely to feel that the police should be called. Hosch, Chanez, Bothwell, & Munoz (1991) reported that women were more likely than men to say that they would convict a defendant who failed to protect her child from physical or sexual abuse. Herzberger & Tennen (1985) indicated that females judged identical disciplinary techniques as harsher and less appropriate than males. Howe, Herzberger, and Tennen (1988) reported that female respondents considered acts of emotional and physical abuse as more severe than did men. Moreover, the behavior of a mother was rated as less severe than the same behavior performed by a father. Hillier and Foddy (1993) reported that women blamed an abusive husband more and an abused wife less than did men. In general, these studies could be viewed as suggesting that women view incidents of nonsexual aggression as more serious than do men, just as they do acts of sexual harassment.

Other researchers have considered the evaluation of aggressive acts performed by a male or female. Basu (1991) reported that male figures in the Rosenzweig Picture Frustration Study were perceived as experiencing more defensively inhibited behaviors and less self blame and self-directed aggression than were the female figures. Condry and Ross (1985) found that college students rated a video of rough play between two preschool children as significantly less aggressive when both children were identified as boys than when one or both of them were girls. Lyons and Serbin (1986)

found that some adults showed a tendency to perceive more aggression when shown a picture of boys than when shown a picture of girls performing the same behavior or to rate boys as more aggressive than girls based on drawings of boys and girls.

Some studies examined evaluations of violence within the family. Koski and Mangold (1988) found that females viewed family violence as a more serious problem than did males and that both genders considered violence from a woman as more acceptable than violence from a man. Harris and Cook (1994) discovered that an incident of wife battering was taken more seriously than an identical incident where the victim was male. Greenblat (1983) reported that women are perceived as more responsible than men when one spouse hits another, regardless of whether they are the victim or perpetrator of the incident. She also found that a wife hitting her husband was seen as far less serious than a husband hitting his wife. Herzberger & Tennen (1985) found that discipline directed against a daughter was more likely to be labeled as abuse than the identical discipline directed toward a son, particularly if the father was the disciplinarian. However, in a subsequent study, Howe *et al.* (1988) reported that parental discipline was considered as less abusive if delivered to a daughter rather than to a son. They also found that discipline by a mother was rated as less severe than identical discipline by a father.

Campbell and her colleagues (Campbell & Muncer, 1987; Campbell, Muncer, and Coyle, 1992; Campbell, Muncer, & Gorman, 1993) suggest that women view their aggression as expressive, a way of dealing with feelings when out of control, whereas men's aggression is viewed as instrumental, a means of achieving goals and gaining control. Archer and Parker (1994) obtained data which supported this gender difference in social representations of aggression in boys and girls.

The studies discussed above are consistent in their findings that perception and evaluation of aggression may be different for males and females in ways that relate to gender role stereotypes. However, in order to get a broader picture of such stereotypes it is helpful to look separately at the effects of the gender of the evaluator, the aggressor, and the target (Harris, 1991, 1994, 1995). Pan, Neidig, & O'Leary (1994) reported that the factor structure of the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979) was different depending on the gender of the aggressor and victim. Bjorkqvist (1994, p. 178), in discussing aggression, has explicitly stated that "the sex of the opponent is of critical importance: male-male, female-female, and male-female encounters should be distinguished from each other." One way of studying the effects of gender role stereotypes is to present respondents with stimulus materials differing only in apparent gender of the stimulus

person(s) and then examining differential responses to the two sets of stimuli. The present study is one of several which have used this approach.

An early experiment which manipulated gender of stimulus person was conducted by Decker (1986), who reported that aggressive humor was judged as funnier if the aggressor was male and the victim female than in any other combination of aggressor and victim genders. Males were more likely than females to consider the humor amusing. In a subsequent study, Smith *et al.* (1989) had university students rate the expression of anger in vignettes with male or female stimulus persons. They found that female and male stimulus persons were rated as equally angry but that male respondents rated the reactions of stimulus persons as more appropriate and less angry than did females. Most recently, Harris (1991, 1994, 1995), in a series of studies, discovered that in a number of situations aggression from males was viewed more negatively and perceived as more serious than aggression from females and that aggression directed towards females was evaluated more negatively than aggression toward male targets. The present paper is an extension of this paradigm, using situations in which the gender of the aggressor and target are varied, along with the gender of the respondent.

The current study examines various aspects of perceptions of aggression as they relate to gender role stereotypes. Evaluations and perceptions of aggressive behavior are important for several reasons. First, people's behavior is directly affected by their perceptions of the situation; cognitive attributions of a situation are a major mediator of aggressive behavior (Baron & Richardson, 1994; Berkowitz, 1993). Second, people who are highly aggressive tend to have different attributional patterns than those who are not (Graham, Hudley, & Williams, 1992; Graham & Hudley, 1994), and reducing attributions of aggressiveness to others has been used successfully as a treatment for aggressive adolescents (Hudley & Graham, 1995). Third, many of the theories attempting to explain gender differences in aggression are based on the idea that aggression is evaluated differently depending on whether it is expressed by a male or a female (Eagly & Steffen, 1986; White & Kowalski, 1994).

Although the primary focus of the present paper was to study some of the ways in which gender roles affect perceptions of aggression, a secondary purpose was to consider the relationships between ethnicity, gender, and evaluations of aggression. Few studies have examined differences between Hispanics and Anglos in perceptions and evaluations of aggression. Graham *et al.* (1992) identified no ethnic or gender differences between African American and Latino middle school students in their attributions of the aggressive behavior of others. Hosch *et al.* (1991) found no significant difference between Anglos and Hispanics in their tendency to find a de-

fendant guilty of physical or sexual abuse. However, there was a tendency for the Mexican Americans to be more punitive in their sentencing than the Anglo subjects. Harris (1995) found that Hispanics, particularly Hispanic males, were more approving of physical punishment and aggressive behaviors, especially in response to affronts. This finding is consistent with the idea of machismo as a value system which encourages males to act aggressively when their honor is threatened (Becerra, 1988; Ingoldsby, 1991; Hines & Fry, 1994).

Based on the literature reviewed above, a number of hypotheses were formulated. The first set of hypotheses dealt with differences between male and female respondents. We predicted that men would view the same behaviors as less aggressive, less harmful, more typical, and more acceptable than women, consistent with the research showing that women consider certain potentially aggressive behaviors as more serious (Abbey, 1987; Eagly & Steffen, 1986; Finn, 1986; Fitzgerald, *et al.*, 1995; Garcia *et al.*, 1989; Garrett-Gooding & Senter, 1987; Harris & Cook, 1994; Herzberger & Tennen, 1985; Howe *et al.*, 1988 Hutchinson, *et al.*, 1994; Koss, *et al.*, 1987; Marks & Nelson, 1993; McCormick, 1994; Smith, 1984).

The next set of hypotheses dealt with the gender of the aggressor and target. We predicted that behaviors would be viewed as less aggressive and harmful if performed by women than by men, consistent with the stereotype of women as being weaker and less able to inflict harm, and that behaviors directed toward a female would be rated as more aggressive than the same behaviors directed towards a male (Harris, 1991, 1994, 1995), consistent with research showing that women are more likely than men to be seriously injured in domestic disputes (Bograd, 1990; Cantos, Neidig, & O'Leary, 1994; Cose, 1994; Holtzworth-Munroe *et al.*, 1995; Mercy and Saltzman, 1989; White & Kowalski, 1994). More specifically, we expected not only that participants would react to the gender of the aggressor and target in hypothetical scenarios but that they would specifically endorse statements that a violent act is worse if it comes from a man and if it is directed towards a woman. We also expected respondents to indicate that, when extremely angry, they would direct more aggressive actions to a man than towards a woman.

Other predictions concerned gender role stereotypes of occupations and activities. We expected respondents to assume that a person who had a traditionally male occupation (such as "soldier") or avocation (such as "hunter") would be male.

The final predictions concerned ethnicity. Consistent with previous research (Harris, 1995), we predicted that Anglos would consider aggressive behaviors to be more aggressive and harmful than would Hispanics.

STUDY 1

Method

Participants

Participants were 115 students (56% male) attending classes at a small college (28%), a vocationally oriented community college (64%) or a university (8%) in a Southwestern state. They ranged in age from 18 to 64, with a mean of 35 (SD = 11.22) and median of 33 years. Approximately half (50%) indicated that they were Anglo American, with 26% checking Hispanic, 10% Native American, 4% Asian American, 4% other ethnicities, and 6% not reporting their ethnicity. Inspection of the 31 zip codes represented showed that the respondents came from all areas of the largest city in the state as well as from a second city and from several rural areas.

Only a minority (21%) of the respondents listed no occupation other than student, with 32% having professional occupations, 12% working in trades, 10% holding sales or clerical positions, and the other 25% holding a variety of positions. Twenty percent of the respondents had a graduate degree, 24% had a bachelor's degree, an additional 40% had taken some college classes, and 15% had only a high school degree or a GED.

Procedure

After permission of the instructor was obtained, questionnaires were distributed by a graduate student to students attending classes. They were informed that the anonymous questionnaire dealt with people's opinions about various behaviors and that they would in no way be penalized if they chose not to respond.

Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of seven pages preceded by a cover letter which indicated that we were studying people's attitudes and explained that participation was completely anonymous and voluntary. It began by requesting demographic information about the respondent: age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, zip code, and educational level.

The first set of dependent variables consisted of responses to four aggressive scenarios. This section of the questionnaire constituted an indirect measure of stereotyping, consisting of descriptions of four scenarios, each

involving an aggressive behavior directed by one person (the aggressor) toward another (the target). The gender of the aggressor and target of each scenario were independently manipulated in a 2 by 2 design, making four versions of each scenario. These four versions of each scenario were randomly ordered, so that approximately 25% of the participants received each alternative.

Scenario A was described as follows, with alternate names in parentheses: "Joan (John) is driving on a freeway and cuts off Patricia (Tom) as she (he) changes lanes. Patricia, having been cut off, begins to honk the car horn, yells, gestures, and then rear ends Joan's car." Scenario B consisted of the following: "Harry (Dorothy) and Karen (Brian) are neighbors. Harry has a drinking problem. Karen's child comes home afraid of Harry's yelling. Karen goes next door and confronts Harry, shoving him into the bushes." Scenario C read as follows: "Lisa (Gary) is doing laps in a swimming pool. Audrey (Frank) dives in and breaks Lisa's concentration. Lisa then swims toward Audrey, grabs her by the hair and holds her under the water." Finally, Scenario D stated: "Sam (Louise), who is a pitcher for the local softball team, throws a fastball that hits Jane (Jack) in the arm. Jane throws the bat down and charges the mound. Without verbal exchange, Jane punches Sam in the face." The pairs of male and female names (e.g., Tom/Patricia) were chosen to be approximately equal in attractiveness and competence, according to data compiled by Kasof (1993).

Each of the four scenarios was followed by a series of four questions, with the name of the aggressor substituted for "Patricia." The questions were: "In your opinion, How acceptable is Patricia's behavior? How aggressive is Patricia's behavior? How harmful is Patricia's behavior? How typical is Patricia's behavior?" Responses were given on 5-point Likert scales ranging from 0 (not at all) to 4 (very).

The second set of dependent variables involved responses to a set of general aggressive incidents employed to measure perceptions of aggression. Respondents read 25 descriptions of aggressive or possibly aggressive incidents used by Benjamin (1985) as a classroom exercise for defining aggression. In the present study, for each incident, the respondent was asked to indicate how acceptable, aggressive, harmful, and typical this behavior is, using five point scales ranging from 0 (not at all) to 4 (very). Two different versions of the incidents were used. In the Male version, items 6 through 15, 20, 21, 23 used terms such as "he," "boy," or "man"; in the Female version, the corresponding terms were "she," "girl," or "woman." The items used in this study are presented in Table I.

A third set of dependent variables dealt more directly with gender stereotypes of personal aggression. Two questions asked for the respon-

Table I. Female Version of Aggressive Incidents[a]

1.	A spider eats a fly.
2.	Two wolves fight for the leadership of the pack.
3.	A soldier shoots an enemy at the front line.
4.	The warden of a prison executes a convicted criminal.
5.	A juvenile gang attacks members of another gang.
6.	Two women fight for a piece of bread.
7.	A woman viciously kicks a cat.
8.	A woman, while cleaning a window, knocks over a flower pot, which, in falling, injures a pedestrian.
9.	A girl kicks a wastebasket.
10.	Mrs. X, a notorious gossip, speaks disparagingly of many people of her acquaintance.
11.	A woman mentally rehearses a murder she is about to commit.
12.	An angry daughter purposely fails to write her mother who is expecting a letter and will be hurt if none arrives.
13.	An enraged girl tries with all her might to inflict injury on her antagonist, a bigger girl, but is not successful in doing so. Her efforts simply amuse the bigger girl.
14.	A woman daydreams of harming her antagonist, but has no hope of doing so.
15.	A senator does not protest the escalation of bombing to which she is morally opposed.
16.	A farmer beheads a chicken and prepared it for supper.
17.	A hunter kills an animal and mounts it as a trophy.
18.	A dog snarls at a mail carrier, but does not bite.
19.	A physician gives a flu shot to a screaming child.
20.	A boxer gives her opponent a bloody nose.
21.	A Girl Scout tries to assist an elderly woman but trips her by accident.
22.	A bank robber is shot in the back while trying to escape.
23.	A tennis player smashes her racket after missing a volley.
24.	A person commits suicide.
25.	A cat kills a mouse, parades around with it, and then discards it.

[a]Incidents are adapted from Benjamin, 1985.

dent's opinions on whether a violent act is worse depending on the gender of the aggressor and victim. The next five items asked respondents "if you were extremely angry at someone," to whom they would be most likely to direct certain aggressive behaviors: a man, a woman, a person of either gender, or "I would never [behave in that way], no matter how angry I might be." The specific aggressive behaviors are listed in Tables II and III.

The final set of dependent variables concerned gender stereotypes of the aggressive incidents. Respondents were asked to "think back to the questions asked in Section IV. Each of the following words was used in that section. By each word, please circle *M* if you thought it referred to a male, *F* if you thought it referred to a female, and ? if you're not sure." The words listed were those used by Benjamin (1985) in the aggressive

Table II. Means and Standard Deviations for Male and Female Participants on Rating Scales for Scenarios

	Scenario A Freeway		Scenario B Neighbor		Scenario C Swimming		Scenario D Softball	
				Study 1				
Acceptable[a]								
All	0.33	(0.80)	0.77	(1.25)	0.30	(0.98)	0.58	(1.10)
Males	0.48	(0.94)	1.05	(1.36)	0.37	(1.02)	0.73	(1.16)
Females	0.11	(0.48)	0.35	(0.90)	0.18	(0.83)	0.28	(0.89)
Aggressive								
All	3.60	(0.94)	3.40	(0.96)	3.69	(0.73)	3.63	(0.73)
Males	3.48	(1.04)	3.31	(1.07)	3.53	(0.93)	3.63	(0.74)
Females	3.91	(0.29)	3.61	(0.65)	3.89	(0.32)	3.76	(0.71)
Harmful								
All	3.61	(0.89)	2.83	(1.21)	3.63	(0.87)	3.33	(0.95)
Males	3.65	(0.80)	2.67	(1.28)	3.53	(1.04)	3.17	(1.08)
Females	3.59	(0.91)	3.04	(1.03)	3.80	(0.59)	3.59	(0.62)
Typical								
All	1.78	(1.05)	1.89	(1.12)	1.30	(1.17)	1.70	(1.08)
Males	1.84	(1.10)	2.20	(1.17)	1.30	(1.19)	1.87	(1.14)
Females	1.63	(0.93)	1.46	(0.84)	1.24	(1.11)	1.46	(0.96)
				Study 2				
Acceptable[a]								
All	0.30	(0.82)	0.79	(1.02)	0.17	(0.07)	0.41	(0.89)
Males	0.40	(0.94)	0.93	(1.10)	0.21	(0.77)	0.54	(1.01)
Females	0.06	(0.24)	0.39	(0.61)	0.06	(0.24)	0.06	(0.24)
Aggressive								
All	3.80	(0.52)	3.14	(0.84)	3.65	(0.66)	3.75	(0.54)
Males	3.75	(0.58)	3.09	(0.85)	3.65	(0.55)	3.72	(0.59)
Females	3.89	(0.32)	3.22	(0.81)	3.78	(0.43)	3.89	(0.32)
Harmful								
All	3.52	(0.93)	2.67	(1.08)	3.25	(1.04)	3.44	(0.84)
Males	3.37	(1.05)	2.51	(1.07)	3.19	(0.99)	3.32	(0.93)
Females	3.87	(0.32)	3.00	(1.00)	3.67	(0.77)	3.78	(0.43)
Typical								
All	1.61	(1.06)	1.59	(0.99)	1.15	(1.08)	1.73	(1.16)
Males	1.53	(1.00)	1.60	(0.94)	1.39	(1.20)	1.68	(1.14)
Females	1.94	(1.21)	1.59	(1.18)	1.39	(1.20)	2.00	(1.33)

[a]0 = "not at all"; 1 = "somewhat"; 2 = "moderately"; 3 ="definitely"; 4 = "very."

incidents that referred to human beings who could be of either gender: soldier, enemy, warden, criminal, gang, pedestrian, senator, farmer, mail carrier, hunter, physician, bank robber, and (suicidal) person.

Other items on the questionnaire are reported in a separate manuscript (Harris & Knight-Bohnhoff, 1996).

Table III. Percentages Selecting Occupational Stereotypes

	Study 1				Study 2			
	M	F	?	χ^{2a}	M	F	?	χ^{2a}
Occupation								
Soldier	90%	0%	10%	104.00***	86%	2%	13%	68.06***
Criminal[b]	74%	3%	24%	76.41***	68%	3%	30%	46.30***
Senator	64%	15%	22%	34.84***	54%	19%	27%	12.79***
Hunter	89%	2%	10%	96.15***	86%	0%	14%	67.00***
Enemy[b]	62%	4%	35%	58.86***	75%	1%	24%	53.07***
Gang	69%	4%	26%	64.20***	72%	0%	28%	54.00***
Farmer	81%	3%	16%	83.38***	87%	0%	13%	65.00***
Physician	40%	16%	44%	11.57***	43%	14%	41%	11.52***
Suicidal person	26%	14%	60%	3.75	28%	5%	66%	11.56***
Warden	81%	2%	18%	86.17***	89%	0%	12%	69.00***
Pedestrian[b]	15%	29%	56%	5.12*	8%	31%	61%	10.80**
Mail Carrier[b]	50%	5%	45%	41.28***	52%	4%	44%	15.92***
Bank Robber[b]	84%	1%	15%	93.04***	85%	3%	13%	60.24***

[a]Chi square tests are goodness of fit tests of the null hypothesis that "M" and "F" are equally likely choices. They have one degree of freedom.
[b]This person is the target of aggression in the example.
*$p < .05$.
**$p < .01$.
***$p < .001$.

Results

Analyses involving ethnicity were conducted comparing Anglo vs. Hispanic respondents.[3] Because the Anglo respondents were significantly older ($M = 39.76$ years, $SD = 10.20$) than the Hispanic respondents ($M = 29.36$ years, $SD = 9.95$), $F(1, 69) = 14.04$, $p < .001$, the Anglos had more education ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.45$) than the Hispanics ($M = 2.36$, $SD = 1.44$), $F(1, 69) = 4.48$, $p < .05$ and the females ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.36$) had significantly more education than the males, ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 1.33$), $F(1, 69) = 8.03$, $p < .01$, analyses of covariance were used where appropriate, with age and education as covariates.

[3]A second set of analyses was conducted for all dependent measures comparing Anglos vs. participants from all other ethnic backgrounds combined. This set of analyses had approximately equal *N*s for both ethnic categories and used almost all the respondents. For the most part, the significant differences between Anglos and Hispanics were identical to the significant differences between Anglos and people of other ethnic backgrounds. Since the combination of other ethnicities formed such a heterogeneous category, only the comparisons of Anglos and Hispanics are reported.

Scenarios

The four measures for each scenario (ratings of "aggressive," "acceptable," "harmful," and "typical") were subjected to a reliability analysis to see whether or not they could be combined into a single scale for each scenario. Because the reliabilities were .51, .59, .33, and .51 for scenarios A through D, respectively, it was felt that the individual items did not make up a single scale and would best be analyzed separately. The mean scores for males and females on each of the four measures for each scenario are presented in Table II. As can be seen from the table, the behavior of the aggressor in the scenarios was rated as "not at all" to "somewhat" acceptable, "definitely" to "very" aggressive, "definitely" to "very" harmful, and "somewhat" to "moderately" typical.

In order to assess the effects of the manipulations, the scenarios were analyzed by 2 (gender of subject) by 2 (ethnicity of subject) by 2 (gender of protagonist) by 2 (gender of target) multivariate analyses of covariance, followed by univariate analyses of covariance for the four ratings of how acceptable, aggressive, harmful, and typical they considered the behavior to be. Roy's greatest characteristic root test (Roy & Bose, 1953) was used as the overall test of each main effect or interaction from the multivariate analyses of covariance because of its greater power as a base for specific comparisons (Harris, 1985; 1994).

The multivariate analysis of covariance of Scenario A (the freeway scenario) revealed no statistically significant effects of the covariates or the independent variables. Univariate analyses of covariance indicated that aggression from a female ($M = 0.63$, $SD = .99$) was seen as somewhat more acceptable than aggression from a male ($M = 0.17$, $SD = .59$), $F(1, 56) = 4.52$, $p < .05$. Age was a significant covariate for rated aggressiveness, $F(1, 56) = 4.06$, $p < .05$; inspection of the correlation coefficient revealed that older people considered the behavior to be more aggressive. Aggression directed toward a male ($M = 1.88$, $SD = 1.08$) was considered more typical than aggression toward a female ($M = 1.38$, $SD = 1.03$), $F(1, 56) = 4.71$, $p < .05$, and Hispanics ($M = 2.09$, $SD = .98$) considered the behavior more typical than did Anglos ($M = 1.41$, $SD = .97$), $F(1, 56) = 4.39$, $p < .05$.

A multivariate analysis of covariance for Scenario B (Neighbors) showed a significant effect of the covariates, $\theta(2, .5, 25.5) = .2285$, $p < .05$, and a significant multivariate interaction between the gender of participant and gender of target, exact $F(4, 53) = 2.95$, $p < .05$. Univariate analyses of covariance revealed that education was a significant covariate of acceptability, $F(1, 56) = 9.15$, $p < .01$, with better educated people considering the behavior to be less acceptable. Aggression directed to-

wards a male ($M = 0.74$, $SD = 1.41$) was considered to be more acceptable than aggression directed towards a female target ($M = 0.29$, $SD = 1.34$), $F(1, 56) = 5.91$, $p < .05$. The only significant effect for rated aggressiveness was an interaction between gender of aggressor and gender of target, $F(1, 56) = 4.78$, $p < .05$. Aggression by a male against a male ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.13$) or by a female against a female ($M = 3.38$, $SD = .81$) was considered less aggressive than aggression by a male against a female ($M = 3.85$, $SD = .93$) or by a female against a male ($M = 3.73$, $SD = .96$). Age was a significant covariate for rated harmfulness, $F(1, 56) = 10.68$, $p < .01$, with older people considering the behavior to be more harmful. Aggression from a male ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.15$) was rated as more harmful than aggression from a female ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 1.22$), $F(1, 56) = 4.35$, $p < .05$.

None of the effects from the multivariate analysis of covariance for Scenario C (Swimming) were statistically significant, but univariate analyses of covariance revealed a number of statistically significant effects. Age was a significant covariate for rated aggressiveness, $F(1, 55) = 4.72$, $p < .05$, with older people considering the behavior to be more aggressive. Aggression from a male ($M = 3.91$, $SD = .79$) was rated as more aggressive than aggression from a female ($M = 3.65$, $SD = .67$), $F(1, 55) = 5.40$, $p < .05$. The analysis of covariance for typicality revealed a significant interaction between gender of the aggressor and ethnicity, $F(1, 55) = 8.20$, $p < .01$. Whereas Anglo respondents rated aggression from males ($M = 1.17$, $SD = .33$) and females ($M = 1.15$, $SD = .34$) as equally likely, Hispanics considered such behavior as more typical of females ($M = 2.20$, $SD = .42$) than males ($M = 0.83$, $SD = .41$).

The multivariate analysis of covariance for Scenario D (softball) revealed statistically significant effects of respondent gender, exact $F(4, 53) = 4.41$, $p < .01$, the respondent gender by ethnicity interaction, exact $F(4, 53) = 2.90$, $p < .05$, the target gender by ethnicity interaction, exact $F(4, 53) = 4.53$, $p < .01$, and the three way interaction between aggressor gender, target gender, and ethnicity, exact $F(4, 53) = 3.79$, $p < .05$. Univariate analyses of covariance did not reveal any significant covariates, but there were several significant main effects and interactions. Males rated the behavior as more acceptable than did females, $F(1, 56) = 4.14$, $p < .05$. In addition, there was a significant three-way interaction between gender of the aggressor, gender of the target, and ethnicity, $F(1, 56) = 7.49$, $p < .01$, which seemed to be due to the fact that Anglos rated male to male aggression as least acceptable ($M = .07$, $SD = .27$; the other three means ranged from 0.15 to 0.42), whereas Hispanics rated it as the most acceptable type ($M = 0.83$, $SD = 1.29$; the other three means ranged from 0.00 to 0.57). A significant interaction between gender of aggressor and gender

of target on ratings of aggressiveness appeared to be due to the fact that male to male (M = 3.75, SD = .51) and female to female aggression (M = 3.42, SD = .86) were rated as less aggressive than male to female (M = 3.94, SD = .93) and female to male (M = 3.94, SD = .43) aggression, $F(1, 56) = 4.82$, $p < .05$.

Analysis of the harmfulness ratings indicated that aggression from a male (M = 3.68, SD = .82) was considered more harmful than aggression from a female (M = 3.20, SD = .97), $F(1, 56) = 7.34$, $p < .01$. An interaction between gender of the target and ethnicity, $F(1, 56) = 9.09$, $p < .01$, was due to the fact that Anglos rated aggression towards a female (M = 3.68, SD = .68) as more harmful than aggression towards a male (M = 3.23, SD = .94), whereas Hispanics considered aggression towards a male (M = 3.70, SD = .86) to be more harmful than aggression towards a female (M = 3.25, SD = 1.11). A three-way interaction between gender of the aggressor, gender of the target, and ethnicity, $F(1, 56) = 10.70$, $p < .01$, seemed to reflect the fact that Anglos viewed female to male aggression as the least harmful (M = 2.83, SD = 1.01) and Hispanics viewed female to female aggression as the least harmful (M = 2.86, SD = 1.30; the six other means ranged from 3.57 to 3.80). Two other three-way interactions for rated harmfulness were not easily interpretable: one between respondent gender, aggressor gender and target gender, $F(1, 56) = 5.86$, $p < .05$, and one between respondent gender, aggressor gender, and ethnicity, $F(1, 56) = 5.00$, $p < .05$.

Aggressive Incidents

Scores on the evaluations of how acceptable, aggressive, typical, and harmful each of the 25 potentially aggressive behaviors was seen to be were analyzed by 2 (gender of participant) by 2 (ethnicity) by 2 (gender of the protagonists in the examples) factorial analyses of covariance, with age and education as the covariates. Because of the large number of analyses conducted, only results significant at the .0005 alpha level or beyond will be reported.

Educational level was a significant covariate for three different ratings of the acceptability of a warden executing a convicted criminal, $F(1, 62) = 23.44$, and of the acceptability of shooting an escaping bank robber, $F(1, 61) = 19.13$. More educated people considered both of these actions as less acceptable. Females (M = 3.46, SD = .63) rated disparaging gossip as more harmful than did males (M = 2.63, SD = 1.30), $F(1, 62) = 21.04$. Hispanics (M = 2.62, SD = 1.55) considered it as more acceptable for a hunter to kill an animal and mount it as a trophy than did Anglos (M =

0.98, $SD = 1.47$), $F(1, 62) = 15.87$. This same act was rated as more harmful by Anglos ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.39$) than by Hispanics ($M = 1.29$, $SD = 1.52$), $F(1, 62) = 19.25$.

Gender Stereotypes of Incidents

Table III presents the percentages of people who said that they assumed that the individuals listed in the aggressive incidents were male, female, or not necessarily of one gender. The results of chi square goodness of fit tests of the null hypothesis that participants were equally likely to see each exemplar as male or female are also presented. As can be seen from the table, respondents said that they were much more likely to see a soldier, criminal, senator, hunter, enemy, gang, farmer, physician, warden, mail carrier, and robber as male than as female. They were slightly more likely to see a pedestrian as female.

Gender Stereotypes of Personal Aggression

Table IV presents the percentages of people selecting "a man," "a woman," "sex is irrelevant" or (for the last five questions) "I would never . . ." for the seven items directly measuring stereotypes. The table also presents the results of chi square goodness of fit tests of the null hypothesis that people are equally likely to select "a man" or "a woman." As can be seen from the table, respondents indicated that they thought a violent act was worse when the aggressor was a man and when the victim was a woman. They indicated that, if they were extremely angry, they would be significantly more likely to throw something at, push or shove, slap, and threaten with violence a man as compared with a woman.

STUDY 2

Most of the research on attitudes toward aggression and gender roles (Condry & Ross, 1985; Finn, 1986; Hammock & Richardson, 1992; Harris, 1991, 1994, 1995; Harris & Cook, 1994; Herzberger & Tennen, 1985; Phelps, Meara, Davis, & Patton, 1991; Smith *et al.*, 1989) has been conducted with college students. Although the sample in Study 1 represented a more mature and more vocationally oriented population than the usual college sample, we decided to extend the research to study a group of people who might have different attitudes towards aggression and towards gender roles, due to their socialization into a military environment (Katz,

Table IV. Aggression Stereotypes

	Percentage Selecting				
	A Man	A Woman	Sex is Irrelevant	I Would Never	χ^{2a}
	Study 1				
1) A violent act is worse if the aggressor is:	14%	4%	83%		7.20**
2) A violent act is worse if the victim is:	4%	22%	75%		20.53***
3) Would you be more likely to throw something at:	18%	2%	34%	46%	15.70***
4) Would you be more likely to push or shove:	28%	3%	33%	37%	24.03***
5) Would you be more likely to slap:	17%	4%	32%	46%	9.00**
6) Would you be more likely to curse?	9%	4%	74%	14%	2.57
7) Would you be more likely to threaten with violence	24%	1%	30%	46%	24.14***
	Study 2				
1) A violent act is worse if the aggressor is:	10%	0%	90%		8.00**
2) A violent act is worse if the victim is:	1%	21%	78%		13.24***
3) Would you be more likely to throw something at:	23%	1%	39%	37%	15.21***
4) Would you be more likely to push or shove:	39%	0%	30%	32%	30.00***
5) Would you be more likely to slap:	21%	9%	19%	51%	3.52
6) Would you be more likely to curse?	28%	1%	64%	6%	19.17***
7) Would you be more likely to threaten with violence	29%	1%	27%	42%	20.17***

[a]Chi square tests are goodness of fit tests of the null hypothesis that "a man" and "a woman" are equally likely choices, including only those who chose one or the other. They have one degree of freedom.

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

1990). Study 2 was designed to examine the attitudes of people who are more used to weapons, some of whom have been explicitly trained in the use of aggressiveness and force: members of the military and civilians who work on a military base.

Methods

Participants

Participants were 49 military personnel and 30 civilians working on a military base in the Southwest. The majority (72%) were men, 23% were women and 6% did not indicate their gender. Their ages ranged from 21 to 60 years (M = 35, SD = 8.04). The great majority (92%) of the respondents indicated that they were Anglos, with 4% being Asian American and 1% each African American, Hispanic, and Other. Most of the civilians worked as military contractors (23% of the entire sample), students (5%), or professionals (5%). Thirty percent of the respondents held a graduate degree, an additional 31% had a bachelor's degree, 26% more had some college work, and the remaining 13% had only a high school degree or GED. Inspection of the zip codes showed that 84% of the respondents were local residents living in various regions of the city.

Procedure

The questionnaire was handed out to individuals working and taking courses on a military base by a graduate student who was a member of the military and worked on the base. Like the participants in Experiment 1, they were informed that their participation was completely anonymous and voluntary.

Instrument

The instrument was the same seven-page questionnaire used in Study 1.

Results

Because the great majority of the respondents were Anglo Americans, analyses of the data from Study 2 do not include ethnicity as a variable.

Scenarios

As can be seen in Table II, the mean scores on the ratings of the acceptability, aggressiveness, harmfulness and typicality of the behavior in the four scenarios were similar in Study 2 and Study 1. A two (gender of

subject) by two (gender of aggressor) by two (gender of target) multivariate analysis of covariance with age and educational level as the covariates was computed for each of the four scenarios, followed by univariate analyses of covariance.

There were no significant effects of the multivariate analysis of covariance for Scenario A and only two significant univariate effects. Education was a covariate for the ratings of typicality, $F(1, 63) = 4.51, p < .05$, with more educated people considering the behavior as less typical. A significant interaction between gender of the respondent and gender of the target, $F(1, 63) = 4.53, p < .05$ was also found, reflecting the fact that men ($M = 1.77$, $SD = 1.10$) and women ($M = 1.78$, $SD = 1.27$) saw aggression toward a male as equally typical, whereas women ($M = 2.38$, $SD = 1.06$) believed aggression toward females to be more typical than did men ($M = 1.15$, $SD = .81$).

The multivariate analysis of Scenario B, $F(8, 118) = 2.09, p < .05$, revealed a statistically significant effect of the covariates, using Roy's greatest characteristic root criterion, $\theta(2, .5, 29) = .1973, p < .05$, but no significant main effects or interactions. Univariate analyses of covariance indicated that several effects were statistically significant. Age was a significant correlate of ratings of acceptability, $F(1, 62) = 6.20, p < .05$, aggressiveness, $F(1, 62) = 5.61, p < .05$, and harmfulness, $F(1, 62) = 9.10, p < .01$. Older people perceived the aggression to be less acceptable, more aggressive, and more harmful. Aggression directed toward a female ($M = 3.38$, $SD = .80$) was considered more aggressive than aggression aimed at a male ($M = 2.83$, $SD = .82$), $F(1, 62) = 7.19, p < .01$. Another significant covariate of harmfulness was education, $F(1, 62) = 11.27, p < .001$, with better educated people evaluating the confronting and shoving someone into the bushes as less harmful. Aggression directed toward a female ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.04$) was considered more harmful than aggression directed at a male ($M = 2.23$, $SD = 1.00$), $F(1, 62) = 5.95, p < .05$.

No multivariate effects and only two univariate effects were significant for Scenario C. Aggression from a female ($M = 3.86$, $SD = .71$) was rated as more aggressive than aggression from a male ($M = 3.49$, $SD = .60$), $F(1, 62) = 8.68, p < .01$. Educational level was a significant correlate of rated typicality, $F(1, 62) = 9.96, p < .01$, with more educated participants rating the behavior as relatively less typical.

The multivariate analysis of Scenario D indicated that the covariates were significant, $\theta(2, .5, 28.5) = .2745, p < .01$, using Roy's criterion, but no other multivariate effects and only two univariate effects were statistically significant. Males ($M = 0.55$, $SD = 1.01$) felt that the behavior was more acceptable than did females ($M = 0.06$, $SD = .24$), $F(1, 62) = 4.22$,

$p < .05$. The only other significant finding in Scenario D was that educational level was a significant covariate for typicality, $F(1, 62) = 5.98$, $p < .05$. Better educated respondents considered the behavior to be less typical than did less well educated respondents.

Aggressive Incidents

As with Study 1, because of the large number of variables, only those results reaching the .0005 alpha level were considered statistically significant. Two (gender) by two (ethnicity) by two (male or female version of the incidents) analyses of covariance with age and educational level as covariates revealed no significant findings.

Gender Stereotypes of Incidents

In Table III can be seen the percentages of people who said that they assumed that the individuals listed in the aggressive incidents were male, female, or not necessarily of one gender, along with the results of chi square goodness of fit tests of the null hypothesis that participants were equally likely to see each person as male or female. Like the respondents in Study 1, the participants in Study 2 indicated that they were much more likely to see a soldier, criminal, senator, hunter, enemy, gang, farmer, physician, warden, mail carrier, and robber as male than as female and that they were slightly more likely to see a pedestrian as female.

Gender Stereotypes of Personal Aggression

Table III presents the percentages of people selecting each of the alternatives for the seven items directly measuring stereotypes, along with the results of chi square goodness of fit tests of the null hypothesis that people are equally likely to select "a man" or "a woman." The results were very similar to those of Study 1. Respondents rated a violent act as worse when the aggressor was a man and when the victim was a woman. They indicated that, if they were extremely angry, they would be significantly more likely to throw something at, push or shove, curse at, and threaten a man as compared with a woman.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Effects of Gender

The results of the present study support the hypotheses that gender influences evaluations of aggression in a number of ways.

Gender of Participant

Few significant differences were found between male and female participants, although those that appeared were consistent with the hypotheses that females would consider the incidents of aggression to be more serious. Males in Study 1 and Study 2 considered punching a softball player in the face as more acceptable than did females. Females in Study 1 rated disparaging gossip as more harmful than did males.

Gender of Aggressor

The present study provides support for the hypothesis that aggression from a man would be considered worse than aggression from a woman. When directly asked their opinion about whether a violent act is worse if the aggressor is male or female, the great majority of those who indicated that gender of the aggressor made a difference felt that a male aggressor was worse. On the other hand, most respondents stated that aggression is equally unacceptable from either a man or a woman.

Several of the more indirect measures also showed effects of aggressor gender. In Study 1, honking and rear ending someone's car was seen as somewhat more acceptable for a female than for a male. Shoving a neighbor into the bushes was perceived to be more harmful if the aggressor was male rather than female. A male holding someone's head under water was seen as more aggressive than a female doing the same thing by the respondents in Study 1 but as less aggressive by those in Study 2. In Study 1, punching a softball player in the face was seen as more harmful if the puncher was male rather than female.

Gender of Target

The results were consistent in implying that aggression directed towards a female is perceived as less desirable than aggression aimed at a male. In both studies, although most respondents indicated that aggression

toward men and women was equally serious, those who differentiated by gender of victim were far more likely to consider violence towards a female as worse. Moreover, respondents were significantly more likely to say that, if they were extremely angry, they would direct their aggressive actions toward men rather than women.

Fewer of the results from the scenarios were statistically significant. In Study 1, aggression on the freeway was seen as more typical when directed at a male and shoving a female neighbor into the bushes was considered less acceptable than shoving a male. In Study 2, shoving a neighbor was rated as more aggressive and more harmful when directed towards a female.

One significant interaction between gender of the respondent and gender of the target was found: In Study 2, although males and female agreed about how typical it was for a man to have someone rear end his car, females found this experience more typical for women than did males. Women may be more sensitive than men to instances in which women are the victims of aggression.

In two instances, gender of the aggressor and target interacted to influence evaluations of aggression. In Study 1, shoving a neighbor of the same gender into the bushes was seen as less aggressive than shoving a neighbor of the opposite gender. Similarly, punching a softball player in the nose was seen as less aggressive if the player was of the same gender as the aggressor. It is possible that people evaluate same gender aggression as more playful and less serious than violence directed toward a person of the other gender.

Gender Role Stereotypes

The results of both studies indicated that gender role stereotypes of occupations and activities are widely held. Even military personnel considered a "soldier" and an "enemy" to be male. For all of the occupations/activities described, with the exceptions of pedestrian, physician, and suicidal person, the majority of respondents visualized a male. Even for the latter two categories, a female was significantly less likely to be visualized than a male. Whether this represents a general tendency to think of males, stereotyping of these particular occupations and activities, or a tendency to see people associated with aggressive events as male cannot be determined from this study.

Ethnic Differences

A number of ethnic differences in perceptions of aggression were found in the present study. Hispanics believed that rear ending a car was more typical than did Anglos. In the swimming scenario, Hispanics consid-

ered it was more typical of a woman than a man to hold someone under water, whereas Anglos thought that men and women were equally likely to do so. In the softball scenario, Hispanics thought that a male punching a male was the most acceptable category of aggression, whereas Anglos thought it was the least acceptable. Hispanics thought that female to female punching was the least harmful type, whereas Anglos thought that female to male aggression was least harmful. Anglos thought that aggression towards a female was more harmful, whereas Hispanics thought that aggression towards a male was more harmful. Hispanics considered hunting as more acceptable and less harmful than did Anglos. It is possible that these findings reflect different cultural experiences with various types of aggressive behaviors, such as hunting. However, they do not form a consistent pattern supporting the hypothesis that Anglos would perceive aggressive behaviors as more serious and less acceptable.

Age and Education

Although age and education were not a major focus of the study, the results are consistent in implying that both age and educational level are negatively related to tolerance for aggression. In Study 1, people who were older considered the behavior in the freeway and swimming scenarios to be more aggressive and the behavior in the neighborhood scenario to be more harmful. In Study 2, older participants rated the aggression in the neighbors scenario as less acceptable, more aggressive, and more harmful.

People with higher levels of education viewed shoving a neighbor into the bushes, executing a convicted criminal, and shooting an escaping bank robber as less acceptable. In Study 2, more educated respondents considered the aggression on the freeway to be less typical, the aggression in the neighbor scenario to be more harmful, the aggression in the swimming scenario to be less typical, and the aggression in the softball scenario to be less typical. These results are consistent with those of Hutchinson, *et al.* (1994), who found that college males perceived more sexual aggression to be present in scenarios which they read than did high school males. Age and educational level were confounded in their study, unlike the present one. It appears that both age and education may cause people to reconsider their perceptions and evaluations of aggressive behavior and to become less accepting of it.

Methodological Issues

In order to decide the extent to which the findings can be generalized, it is necessary to consider the nature of the samples, the measures, and

the consistency of the results. The sample in study 1 included students from three educational institutions, who showed a substantial diversity with respect to age, ethnicity, and occupation. The second sample included people with ties to the military, either as members or as employees, a population that has rarely been studied with respect to their attitudes about aggression. Since the findings from the two studies were quite similar, it seems reasonable to infer that there is some generality to the conclusions.

A second methodological issue is the validity of the measures, which depend on self report and which involve evaluation of hypothetical rather than actual incidents. Since the purpose of the study was to examine attitudes, perceptions, and evaluations, issues of misreporting are less problematic than they would have been if the purpose were to assess actual experiences of aggression. Several aspects of the design should have increased the validity of the responses: having the instrument be anonymous, using a between-subjects manipulation of gender of target and aggressor, and employing pairs of names matched on competence and attractiveness (Kasof, 1993) for the scenarios. Nevertheless, it is clear that the findings were much stronger and more consistent for the questions that asked directly about their own attitudes and behaviors than for the evaluations of the behaviors in the scenarios. Part of the reason for this could have been that the scenarios were deliberately varied to provide a wide range of possible examples of aggressions. Contextual variables such as drinking (Scenario B) or possible playfulness (Scenario C) might have affected the participants' attitudes.

In summary, the results of these studies suggest that gender role stereotypes are related to perceptions of aggression in adults, including adults affiliated with the military as well as college students. Many individuals acknowledge that they evaluate aggressive actions differently depending on the gender of the aggressor and target. People are more likely to direct their aggression towards men than towards women, and they think of males when asked questions about male-stereotyped occupations and activities. The results are less striking but in the same direction when they are asked to evaluate descriptions of aggressive scenarios. Ethnicity, age, and educational level affect these perceptions as well, with older and better educated people showing less approval of aggression.

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