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## Social evaluations of assertion in others.

Justin Campbell Curry  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

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SOCIAL EVALUATIONS OF ASSERTION IN OTHERS

A Thesis Presented

by

JUSTIN CAMPBELL CURRY

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

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Psychology

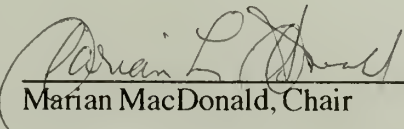
# SOCIAL EVALUATIONS OF ASSERTION IN OTHERS


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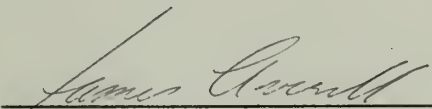
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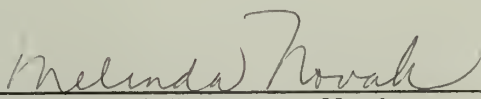
JUSTIN CAMPBELL CURRY

Approved as to style and content by:

  
Marian MacDonald, Chair

  
David Arnold, Member

  
James Averill, Member

  
Melinda Novak, Department Head  
Department of Psychology

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

The literature on the social evaluations of assertiveness, although not particularly large, is a rich and interesting one. As of 1989, only about twenty articles on this subject had been published (Gervasio & Crawford, 1989), and these have reported very different results. Since that time, the literature on social evaluations of assertion has not expanded greatly, perhaps, due to the wide variation in experimental findings.

At the heart of the study of social evaluations of assertion are two fundamental questions. The first asks if different people are evaluated differently when they act assertively. More specifically, are men and women perceived disparately? The second question assumes a positive answer to the first -- why and/or under what circumstances does this differential evaluation occur? The answers to these questions have important implications for the understanding of assertion as a whole as well as the efficacy of and the most appropriate focus for assertiveness training programs.

Before we begin our review of the literature, there are two important issues (one definitional and the other theoretical) that we must broach. First, what do we mean when we say assertion? This is a particularly important issue; if left unanswered it poses a serious threat to the interpretability of research on social evaluations of assertion. Second, if it is the case that male and female models are rated differently, what mechanism or mechanisms might account for this? It is not enough to merely identify a difference; we must also make an effort to fit that observed difference into some theoretical framework or, alternatively, derive a new framework from those differences.

An important source for the consideration of the first of these two issues is the work of Eisler, Miller, and Hersen (1973) who try to characterize and refine our definition of assertive behavior. These authors presented a clinical sample (30 men) with several scenarios in which situations were described and then subjects were asked to show the experimenters how they would respond in such a situation. Although the sample used for this investiga-

tion was a psychiatric one, it seems unlikely that this poses a considerable problem for our acceptance of their results since individuals who were overtly psychotic or who suffered from some form of organic brain disorder were excluded. Subjects were also asked to complete the Wolpe-Lazarus Assertiveness Scale (Wolpe & Lazarus, 1966). Eisler et al. divided their subjects into a high assertiveness (HA) group and a low assertiveness (LA) group on the basis of Assertiveness Scale ratings. The responses of HA subjects to the scenario were compared with those of LA subjects to determine what characteristic behaviors were associated with assertiveness and non-assertiveness. HA subjects were found to display shorter response latencies, louder speech, longer response durations, less compliance, and more requests for a change in another person's behavior. This, then, provides us with, if nothing else, several behavioral components of assertiveness which, as we shall see, will be of great importance in evaluating the research which exists on social perceptions and evaluations of assertive behavior.

While the quasi-definition provided by Eisler et al. (1973) is quite interesting, it is too specific to serve as a useful definition of assertiveness as a concept. For our purposes a much broader and more inclusive definition is warranted. MacDonald (1978) has provided such a definition. She writes that assertion may be defined as "the open expression of preferences (by words or actions) in a manner causing others to take them into account" (p. 890). Any specific behavior which serves this purpose may be termed an assertive act. Thus, with our definitions of assertion and assertive acts in mind, let us now turn our attention to other theoretical concerns.

The second issue (that of what theoretical framework best explains differential evaluations of assertion based on model gender) is less easily addressed. It would appear that Gervasio (1987), building on the work of Grice (1975) who views assertion as a speech-act, has developed a theory that accounts quite well for negative evaluation of assertion in others. She suggests that assertive behavior is evaluated negatively because it violates conversational and social conventions. Grice argues that there are four main postulates of con-

versation: quantity (maximizing the information contained in speech), quality (being truthful and presenting evidence to support one's case), relation (being relevant and avoiding redundancy), and manner (being clear, brief, unambiguous, polite, and orderly). Gervasio points out that techniques taught in assertiveness training programs are inherently opposed to some of these postulates. While assertion training upholds the postulates of quantity (teaching trainees to be informative and clear in their speech) and manner (instruction in how to be brief and coherent when speaking), Gervasio makes the case that "assertive techniques [that prohibit] the giving of reasons violate the quality postulates governing evidence" (p. 115), that the "structural invariance of some techniques violate relational postulates" (p. 115), and that "assertive speech violates the postulates of politeness and propriety because it advocates expressing negative feelings and making direct refusals" (p. 115). Her claim is supported by the findings of Woolfolk and Dever (1979) who report that more polite forms of assertion are evaluated less negatively than more abrupt forms. Gervasio (1987) concludes that assertion will not necessarily be negatively evaluated when it occurs in situations involving "simple, non-recurring requests and refusals, for relatively isolated instances of contact, and for speakers who are unfamiliar with each other or are performing more socially formal roles (e.g. customer-salesperson)" (117). A number of studies have supported this claim, and have found that assertion, *when it occurs with an expression of empathy*, is evaluated more positively than simple assertive acts (Hull & Schroeder, 1979; McCampbell & Ruback, 1985; Rakos & Hrop, 1983). Similarly, a number of studies have shown that expressing negative feelings in an assertive manner is less socially acceptable than assertively proclaiming one's positive feelings (Levin & Gross, 1984; Lewis & Gallois, 1984; St. Lawrence et al., 1985; Schroeder et al., 1983; Wilson & Gallois, 1985). Gervasio, then, posits a seemingly clear and comprehensive theory to account for why assertion is sometimes negatively evaluated. These two theoretical/definitional issues are important in understanding the research that has already been carried out on the social evaluation of assertion as well as the specific research questions with which we are con-



cerned -- are women evaluated more negatively than men when they act assertively, and if so why?

Our review of the literature on social evaluations of assertion begins with the work of Kelly, Kern, Kirkley, Patterson, and Keane (1980). Kelly and his colleagues asked 258 college undergraduate students (83 males and 174 females) to view videotapes which portrayed a male or a female model dealing with four different situations in which another person "behaved unreasonably toward the model" (p. 672). Models responded in either an assertive or unassertive manner, and subjects completed the Interpersonal Evaluation Inventory (Anderson, 1968; Kelly et al., 1980) which consisted of 26 personality items rated on a seven-point Semantic Differential scale. Both female and male subjects rated assertive models differently than unassertive ones. Although assertive models were perceived to be more able and skilled than unassertive models, they were also seen as being less likeable. Furthermore, Kelly et al.'s findings support one of their primary hypotheses that female assertive models received more negative evaluations than did male models despite the fact that both acted in exactly the same fashion. What is also interesting, though, is that unlike previous (and subsequent) research, Kelly et al. observed that male and female subjects made disparate evaluations of female and male models. Female subjects tended to evaluate unassertive models as being "more tactful, thoughtful, and less assertive than did male subjects" (p. 678). Furthermore, females evaluated assertive models as "less desirable to meet at a party or to serve on a committee than did male subjects" (p. 679). Kelly et al. also observed that female subjects rated female models "lower" (p. 680) than other groups on items pertaining to achievement and intelligence. Thus, these researchers reported two important findings. The first of these was that when females and males engage in *exactly the same assertive behavior in exactly the same situations*, women are evaluated more negatively than are men. The second important observation was that female subjects evaluated female models *more negatively* than did male subjects. Kelly et al.'s conclusions are based on the assumption (one which is shared by most, if not all, re-



searchers in this field) that observed disparities in social evaluations of assertive men and women are due to the effects of subjects' stereotypes of appropriate female and male behavior.

Furnham and Singh (1986) tested 95 British adolescents (63 females and 32 males) on their memory of models' behavior. They found that "memory for specific material is a function of attitudes toward it" (p. 484) and that males and subjects with more negative attitudes towards women recalled more negative and fewer positive behaviors enacted by female models. This, then, would seem to support Kelly et al.'s (1980) basic assumption.

To a large extent, Kelly et al. (1980) set the groundwork for the study of social evaluations of assertion, and although several experiments similar in both purpose and design have been conducted, few have replicated their results. The work of Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, and Vogel (1970) precedes that of Kelly and his colleagues. Nevertheless, it is worth discussing in this context because of its clear conceptual relevance, and these authors report findings which support Kelly et al.'s conclusions. Broverman et al. asked 79 clinicians (33 females and 46 males) to complete the Stereotype Questionnaire (Rosenkrantz et al., 1968) -- a 122 bipolar adjective scale aimed at assessing respondents' ideas regarding sex-roles. These clinicians were to characterize healthy individuals for each of three separate hypothetical cases: an adult male, an adult female, and an adult of unspecified sex. Perhaps not surprisingly, Broverman et al. found that the clinicians' ratings of adult males differed significantly from their ratings of adult females. Of greater importance, though, is their finding that clinicians' judgments about what behavior and characteristics described healthy adults (sex unspecified) were quite similar to their judgments about the nature of behavior and characteristics of healthy adult males but significantly different from their judgments about healthy behavior for adult females. The sex of the clinician was not related to their judgments. For both female and male clinicians, then, healthy adult female behaviors were significantly different than behaviors associated with being a healthy "adult." These results conceptually replicate those of Kelly et al. -- in

both studies, men and women evaluated women less favorably than they did men.

Although it is important to note that Broverman's research did not concern itself directly with assertion, an examination of the items associated with stereotypical male and female behavior sheds light on our own conception of social evaluations of assertion. Typically, the questionnaire items associated with male behavior were those that might also be associated with assertive behavior. For example, healthy adult men were thought to be aggressive, independent, logical, self-confident, and ambitious -- characteristics which could easily be associated with assertive behavior. Healthy adult women, on the other hand, were thought to be gentle, quiet, and able to express tender feelings easily, which would seem to be associated with unassertive behavior. In fact, if we compare the characterizations of healthy adult males reported by Broverman et al. to the quasi-definition of assertion offered by Eisler et al. (1973), we see a striking similarity. Recall that Eisler and his colleagues argued that short response latency, loud speech, long response duration, low levels of compliance, and greater numbers of requests for changes in others' behavior were associated with assertiveness. Broverman et al.'s characteristic of aggression would seem to be related to Eisler et al.'s loud speech and requests for behavior change.

Similarly, Broverman et al.'s characteristics of self-confidence and ambition would appear to share something in common with Eisler et al.'s short response latency, low level of compliance, long response duration, as well as requests for behavior change. Thus, it would appear that Broverman et al.'s findings conceptually support the explanation offered by Kelly et al. to account for the differential evaluations of assertive women and men.

It may be, however, that another explanation would better account for the differential ratings of male and female assertive models. Perhaps subjects' attitudes towards women had a larger effect on their evaluations of female models than did the discrepancy between observed behavior and social roles. There is some evidence to suggest that subjects' attitudes towards women do impact their evaluations of assertive models. Kern, Cavell, & Beck (1985) found that subjects whose attitudes towards women were more conservative

(i.e., traditional) offered relatively negative evaluations of female models who acted assertively while they evaluated male models relatively positively. On the other hand, subjects with more liberal attitudes towards women did not offer such differential ratings. This would seem to suggest, then, that this variable needs to be considered in this and future studies.

Since 1980, few researchers have been able to replicate Kelly et al.'s (1980) results. In fact, the vast majority of studies on the social evaluation of assertion published after their work tends to cast doubt on their results. Gervasio and Crawford (1989) report that an investigation by Solomon et al. conducted in 1983 found no differences in how assertive men and women were evaluated. The authors suggest that the difference in results may lie in the age of the subjects tested and the types of situations presented to them. They point out that most of the studies that have been done have been based solely on the reports of college undergraduate students. Since many of the scenarios generally presented in social evaluations of assertion research revolve around the workplace, Gervasio and Crawford feel that undergraduates may not be familiar enough with such settings for their responses to be generalizable to the population as a whole (Gervasio & Crawford, 1989). This hypothesis (as well as the findings of the 1983 study conducted by Solomon et al.) is supported by Crawford's own work (1988) in which she found a significant main effect for subject's age on subjects' evaluation of assertive behavior. In her study, Crawford presented 84 male and 85 female subjects with typed vignettes of male and female models acting in three different types of assertive situations ("expressing negative feelings, positive self-presentation, and setting limits [for example, limiting the amount of time that one would spend listening to others' complaints]" (p. 552)). Each subject read six vignettes (two examples illustrating each of the three types of assertion situations) describing the behavior of a single model. She found that male subjects consistently rated all models as more flexible than did female subjects. When assessing group differences in ratings of "likability," Crawford found that male models were rated highest by older male subjects



and that female models received their highest ratings from older female subjects. This, then, in conjunction with the report of Gervasio and Crawford (1989), would seem to suggest that Kelly et al.'s finding that women who act assertively are evaluated less positively than are assertive men may not be entirely correct.

Another study which calls Kelly et al.'s (1980) conclusions into question is that of Spence and Helmreich (1972). In their work, researchers asked 343 female and 264 male subjects to evaluate a female model who varied on two bipolar dimensions -- competent-incompetent and masculine interests-feminine interests. Their results are most interesting. Spence and Helmreich found that both female and male subjects significantly preferred competent-masculine models to the three alternatives. This would seem to suggest that competent (arguably a trait related to assertiveness) women are acceptable so long as they resemble men in their interests. If competency is, in fact, a trait related to assertion, then we are faced with the possibility that social evaluations of assertion are not dependent upon the level of assertion alone, but may well be affected by other variables. We have already seen that this would appear to be the case. Recall Gervasio and Crawford's (1989) and Crawford's (1988) work which suggest that subjects' gender and age also play an important role in the social evaluation of assertive models.

The case could logically be made that the studies summarized above (many of which are similar in their design to that of Kelly et al. (1980)) indicate that Kelly et al. were incorrect in their conclusions. Rather than blindly discard their conclusions, however, it would seem prudent to consider another alternative. Perhaps their results were not merely the product of type I error, but were influenced by additional variables which moderated the effects that Kelly et al. regarded as general. Thus, it seems possible that the prevalence of studies which have failed to replicate Kelly et al.'s work is not indicative of interpretive error, but rather suggests that limits to the generalizability of their findings exist.

McNamara, Delamater, Sennhauser, and Milano (1988) suggest just such a challenge to Kelly et al.'s (1980) generalizability -- raters' own levels of assertion. These authors



examined subjects' evaluations of each other in naturalistic settings when they were paired in three experimental groupings according to their levels of assertiveness: high-high, high-low, and low-low. Paired subjects were then observed in situations of social conflict or acquaintanceship. McNamara et al. did indeed observe differences in social evaluations as an effect of assertion, but their findings were of a different nature than those of previous studies. The researchers found that in assertion situations "where highly assertive persons were paired, they viewed their partners as more competent and desirable than paired groups low in assertiveness or groups of mixed high and low assertiveness" (p. 99). This raises an intriguing possibility; perhaps the subjects in Kelly et al.'s study were not simply attending to model gender when they offered less positive ratings to female assertive models as compared to male assertive models. Rather, it is possible that these differential evaluations were elicited because of disparities between the models' levels of assertion and that of the male and female subjects who were rating them. In any event, McNamara et al.'s study forces us to take a more skeptical look at Kelly et al.'s and similar findings, and to consider subjects' own levels of assertion when drawing conclusions about social evaluations of assertive behavior.

This possibility has received some empirical support. Both Kern (1982) and Gormally (1982) obtained data on subjects' evaluations of assertive models and self-reports of subjects' own levels of assertion. The findings of these two studies are consistent with the results presented by McNamara et al. (1988). Gormally found that assertive subjects rated assertive models more positively than non-assertive models. Similarly, Kern found that subjects who identified themselves as relatively unassertive, evaluated models' assertive behavior negatively. Furthermore, Kern's data suggest that assertive subjects actually devalued non-assertive models' behavior.

Perhaps the most fundamental threat to the generalizability of Kelly et al.'s (1980) findings, however, may be the type of assertion situations used in various studies. Different situations call for qualitatively different types of assertion, and it seems quite pos-

sible that these various forms of assertion might be evaluated differentially. For example, raters may find it perfectly acceptable for models to be assertive in the face of rudeness on the part of another, but rate assertive models negatively in situations when the models themselves are being "bossy." Of the studies mentioned above, none employed the same form of assertion as did Kelly et al. and only one (Crawford, 1988) considered assertion type as an independent variable. Although Crawford manipulated assertion type in her experiment, she reports only limited success in constructing truly different forms of assertive situations. Of her three assertive situations, only the first (expressing negative feelings) was judged to be a distinct category of assertion by a panel of two judges. The other two (positive self-presentation and setting limits) were not deemed to be conceptually distinct. Although Crawford found no statistically significant effect for assertion type on raters' evaluation of assertive models, we should not discard type of assertion situation as a possible mediating variable. Crawford's absence of positive findings may reflect only methodological problems in her stimulus design. Assertion type, then, would appear to be a possible candidate for our consideration in the search for mediating variables that may have influenced Kelly et al.'s design, limiting the generalizability (and therefore general replicability) of their conclusions.

A review of the subset of the social evaluation of assertion literature dealing with situational variables would seem to suggest that they can and do have an important effect. Evidence to support the hypothesis that assertion situation affects subjects' evaluations of others comes from the research of Hess, Bridgewater, Bornstein, and Sweeney (1980), in which situational context had a significant impact on the subjects' ratings of models' assertion. In this study, researchers asked 83 male and 82 female subjects to evaluate male, female, and ambiguously gendered models in negative and positive assertion situations. They found that all subjects evaluated actors in negative assertion scenarios as being assertive, aggressive and masculine. Furthermore, subjects rated actors in positive assertion situations as being less assertive, less aggressive, and feminine.

Another study which highlights the role of situational context in social evaluations is that of Levin and Gross (1987). In their experiment, 343 subjects (180 females and 163 males) viewed models acting in three situational contexts (refusal, commendatory, and both refusal and commendatory) in one of the three following manners: assertive, assertive and empathic, and non-assertive. Although they argue that situational effects are unimportant in the social evaluation of assertive behavior, some of their findings would seem to suggest otherwise. For instance, they found that models seen in both commendatory and refusal settings were evaluated as being significantly more competent than models seen only in refusal situations, regardless of their behavior. A similar (but not statistically significant) finding showed that models seen in both types of situation were thought to be more competent than those models seen only in commendatory situations. Thus, even though assertion did not seem to play a role in evaluative differences in Levin and Gross's study, it still remains clear that situational variables do have an impact on a person's ratings of others.

Thus, it seems that both subjects own level of assertion and the situational context within which assertion occurs may play an important role in determining how people evaluate others' assertive acts. This requires that we consider Kelly et al.'s (1980) findings in a new light. Perhaps these researchers observed a much more specific (i.e. bounded) relationship between assertion, gender, and social evaluation than they thought. Perhaps their findings are perfectly valid but *specific* to the situational context of the assertion scenarios which they presented to their subjects. In addition, Kelly et al.'s findings may have been influenced by individual differences (e.g., subjects' level of assertion) within their sample. By investigating this question further, we stand to gain a more refined knowledge of how assertive acts are perceived by others as well as a possible mechanism to explain some of the inequities in women's opportunities for advancement and social standing relative to men.

The present investigation was an attempt to carry out such an investigation, and was designed to assess the effects that situation contextual variables as well as two individual

difference variables had on social evaluations of women's and men's assertive acts. The two types of assertion situations which we have designed may be characterized as request assertion and refusal assertion and were drawn from a previous investigation by MacDonald (1978). While both types of situations have been rated as clearly warranting assertion, each calls for models to engage in topographically different types of assertive acts. The scenarios involving request assertion present situations in which it has been rated as appropriate for the model to *reactively* defend his or her own rights, while refusal assertion scenarios have been rated as appropriately handled by *actively* engaging in behavior conducive to self-advancement. We hypothesized that subjects, regardless of their gender, would evaluate both male and female assertive models positively in request assertion scenarios. Furthermore, we expected that in refusal assertion situations both male and female subjects would evaluate assertive men positively and assertive women negatively, since such assertion (as we have operationalized it) is more self interested and, therefore, less consistent with the traditional feminine nurturing role. Also, we hypothesized that subjects (regardless of gender) with more traditional views of stereotyped female behavior would rate assertive women more negatively. Finally, we hypothesized that subjects who rated themselves as low on a measure of their own assertion would be more likely to evaluate assertive models more negatively than would subjects self-rating as high on assertion.



## CHAPTER 2

### METHOD

#### Subjects

Subjects included 163 men and women enrolled in undergraduate psychology classes who participated to receive extra course credit. Subjects were recruited by research assistants who gave a brief description of the study and solicited volunteers during scheduled class times. Volunteers were contacted by the first author to arrange an appointment and were randomly assigned to a stimulus condition. The sample was comprised of 99 female and 64 male subjects, and ranged in age from 17 to 31 years. Data were gathered on several demographic variables including subjects' year in school, ethnic background, and parents' marital status. Since an examination of these variables revealed no gender differences (see Table 1), they were not included in subsequent analyses.

Table 1. A breakdown of the sample along demographic variables and the results of Chi-Square analysis to test for significant gender differences.

YEAR IN SCHOOL:		ETHNICITY:	
Freshman		Caucasian	
Male .....	13.5%	Male .....	39.2%
Female .....	17.2%	Female .....	51.0%
Sophomore		Asian	
Male .....	14.7%	Male .....	0.7%
Female .....	14.1%	Female .....	2.0%
Junior		Native American	
Male .....	8.0%	Male .....	0.0%
Female .....	16.6%	Female .....	0.7%
Senior		Hispanic	
Male .....	3.7%	Male .....	0.7%
Female .....	11.0%	Female .....	4.6%
Other		Other	
Male .....	0.6%	Male .....	0.7%
Female .....	0.6%	Female .....	0.7%
Chi-Square = 5.96 (not significant)		Chi-Square = 4.21 (not significant)	
PARENTS' MARITAL STATUS:			
Married		Divorced	
Male .....	25.8%	Male .....	11.0%
Female .....	41.7%	Female .....	11.7%
Separated		Never Married	
Male .....	2.5%	Male .....	1.2%
Female .....	3.7%	Female .....	2.5%
Chi-Square = 1.39 (not significant)			

## Measures

Subjects provided demographic information by completing a brief Demographic Data Sheet (DDS), which included questions regarding family constellation, age/gender/ethnicity of subject, year in school, and subject's academic major. The questionnaire also included several items designed to assess behavioral indicators of subjects' attitudes towards women.

Subjects' attitudes towards women were assessed directly using two standardized, self-report measures -- the Simplified Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp, 1973) and the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick and Fiske, 1994). The Simplified Attitudes Toward Women Scale (SAWS), as adapted by Nelson (1988), presents respondents with stereotyped and non-stereotyped statements regarding appropriate gender roles. Subjects rate the degree to which they agree or disagree with each item on a five-point scale. An additional statement relevant to this study's central hypothesis ("It is worse for a woman to be pushy than for a man") was included with the 22 original SAWS items. Nelson has found that the scale has acceptable internal reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.84$ ) and concludes that the SAWS is an "acceptable alternative to the longer and more complex versions of Spence and Helmreich (1972) and Spence et al. (1973)" (p. 296). The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) (Glick and Fiske, 1994) is a 24 item scale similar in both item and response format to the SAWS. The ASI includes two subscales, assessing two types of sexism -- "hostile sexism" (e.g. "Women are too easily offended") and "benevolent sexism" (e.g. "A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man"). The ASI correlates with the SAWS at the 0.7 to 0.8 level (Glick and Fiske, 1994).

Subjects' levels of assertion were assessed using the Assertion Inventory (Gambrill and Richey, 1975). Each of this measure's 40 items presents a description of an assertive response (e.g., "Express an opinion that differs from that of the person you are talking to"). Subjects respond to each item along three dimensions: (1) the amount of discomfort they

would feel in that situation, (2) the likelihood that they would engage in that behavior in that situation, and (3) whether they wished that they were able to handle that situation more assertively than they believe they now would. The Pearson correlation coefficients for reliability are ".87 for discomfort and .81 for response probability" (Gambrill and Richey, 1975, p. 554).

Finally, subjects' evaluations of assertive models were assessed using the Person Perception Questionnaire (Jackson, MacCoun, and Kerr, 1987) which, in its original form, consisted of 44 bipolar adjective items presented with a seven-point semantic differential scale. In an effort to shorten the measure and improve its task relevance and discriminative power, we reviewed 200 Person Perception Questionnaire (PPQ) forms completed by 100 men and 100 women for a pilot study, to identify and discard items on which a plurality (more than 40%) of subjects rated assertive models as "neither one nor the other," indicating that that bipolar adjective pair was not relevant to this rating task. Items identified as irrelevant were discarded only when the item was judged to be irrelevant by both men and women (see Appendix A for a more detailed report on this analysis). A total of 13 items on Jackson et al.'s (1987) PPQ were removed from our scale on the basis of this procedure. To the 31 items remaining we added four items (assertive/non-assertive, aggressive/non-aggressive, submissive/non-submissive, behaves appropriately/behaves inappropriately), and one question ("How much would you like to get to know this person?", rated on a seven point scale anchored by "a very great deal" and "not at all") that pertained directly to the central hypothesis of this experiment. Copies of all measures are included in Appendix B.

### Stimulus Materials

Subjects were presented with an audiotaped set of instructions and four audiotaped scenarios. Audiotapes were chosen over other recording media in order to limit the effects of actor and actress personal characteristics on subject evaluations (Cook and St. Lawrence, 1990). In each audiotaped scenario, a narrator first describes the context within



which the assertive interaction will occur, and then actors and actresses engage one another in the situation described so as to present a male or female assertive model interacting with another male or female assertion recipient. Scenarios were drawn from the College Women's Assertion Sample (Kern and MacDonald, 1980; MacDonald, 1978) and were unambiguous instances of one of the two predominant types of assertion-relevant social contexts -- Request Assertion situations in which the model asks an assertion recipient to terminate an annoying behavior, and Refusal Assertion situations in which the model denies the request of an assertion recipient. Each subject was presented with two instances of each of the two types (i.e. Request vs. Refusal) of situational contexts (see Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptions of audiotaped scenarios by assertion type.

<p><b>Request 1:</b> The model goes to a movie theater and sits down in front of the assertion recipient. Soon after the model's arrival, this person begins kicking the back of the model's chair. The model then turns and asks the person to stop kicking his or her seat.</p>	<p><b>Request 2:</b> The model is taking a test in a crowded room. The assertion recipient is sitting at a nearby desk and begins drumming her/his fingers against the writing surface, making a noise which the model finds both annoying and distracting. The model then asks the person to stop drumming his/her fingers on the desk.</p>
<p><b>Refusal 1:</b> The model (who is presented as doing very well in a particular class) is approached by the assertion recipient who asks to borrow the model's class notes. The model apologizes and explains that they need the notes to study, so no, the other student can not borrow the notes.</p>	<p><b>Refusal 2:</b> The model (who has just purchased an expensive word processor) is approached by the assertion recipient who asks to borrow the models word processor. The model apologizes and explains that because the word processor is so expensive s/he will not let the other student borrow the machine.</p>

The genders of the assertive models and the assertion recipients were systematically varied across the four scenarios heard by each subject, so that all subjects were exposed to all possible combinations of male and female actors, with each combination enacting a different scenario. In engineering the audiotapes, eight actors (four men and four women) were employed. Four of these actors (two women and two men) were detailed to play the roles of the assertive models, while the other four actors were detailed to play the roles of the assertion recipients. Furthermore, each possible model-recipient combination enacted



all four scenarios. A presentation order for the four scenarios was picked at random and then counterbalanced. This yielded two possible orders of scenarios with which subjects could be presented. Thus, by systematically varying the four relevant stimulus tape dichotomous variables (assertive model gender, assertion recipient gender, unique actor/actress-actor/actress combination, and scenario order), 16 distinct tape conditions were constructed. Examination revealed that none of these stimulus tape variables had an effect on subjects' evaluations of assertive models. Therefore, these variables were excluded from subsequent analyses.

### Procedure

Subjects arrived at the lab where they were met by an undergraduate research assistant who gave them a brief study description and obtained their informed consent. Subjects then listened to the uniform audiotaped instructions and practice scenario (see Appendix C). After listening to this scenario, subjects completed a PPQ to demonstrate their comprehension of the procedural instructions. Misunderstandings evidenced during this "dry-run" were corrected by the experimenter before proceeding. Experimenters then played one of the 16 audiotapes presenting the four assertion situations. After each scenario, experimenters paused so that subjects could complete the PPQ rating the assertive model just heard. After subjects had heard all four scenarios and completed their last PPQ, research assistants provided them with the supplementary measures (SAWS, ASI, AI, and DDS) and then left the room. Upon completion of these scales subjects were debriefed and thanked for their participation.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESULTS

Preliminary analyses were conducted to establish the PPQ scale structure. For each PPQ item, a score for each subject was computed by averaging across each of the subject's four completed PPQ questionnaires. A Principle Components Analysis was carried out on these scores to extract a factor structure for the measure. Factors with Eigenvalues less than one were discarded, yielding three factors accounting for 43.4% of the scale scores' variance. The first factor, termed "Politeness," contains ten PPQ items (mean = -4.7697; standard deviation = 5.7561; standard error of measurement = 0.4481). The second factor, "Empathy/Approachability" is marked by nine items (mean = -2.1652; standard deviation = 5.6234; standard error of measurement = 0.4378). The third factor, "Firmness," is marked by five items (mean = 3.5591; standard deviation = 4.1130; standard error of measurement = 0.3202). Specific markers loading primarily on each of the three factors are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. PPQ items associated with each of the three factors extracted from the Principal Components Analysis.

Politeness	Empathy/Approachability	Firmness
1. Non-Aggressive/Aggressive	1. Enjoyable/Unenjoyable	1. Non-Submissive/Submissive
2. Behaves Appropriately/Inappropriately	2. Cooperative/Uncooperative	2. Secure/Insecure
3. Friendly/Hostile	3. Liking/Disliking	3. Active/Passive
4. Calm/Anxious	4. Like Me/Different from Me	4. Constant/Changing
5. Non-Demanding/Demanding	5. Kind/Cruel	5. Predictable/Unpredictable
6. Generous/Selfish	6. Trusting/Untrusting	
7. Accepting/Rejecting	7. Sensitive/Insensitive	
8. Fair/Unfair	8. Gentle/Rough	
9. Relaxed/Tense	9. How much would you like to get to know this person ...	
10. Taking/Giving	A very great deal/Not at all	

After correcting for reversed items so that higher scores always indicated that subjects rated models positively, factor scores were computed by summing unweighted PPQ items loading on each factor. The resulting factor scores were then entered into a series of repeated measures ANOVAs. Cell means for this analysis are presented below.

Table 4. Cell means for Assertion Situation x Model Gender x Subject Gender repeated measures ANOVA.

**POLITENESS FACTOR**

	<b>REFUSAL ASSERTION</b>		<b>REQUEST ASSERTION</b>	
	Male Model	Female Model	Male Model	Female Model
Male Subject	-8.406	-4.016	-7.188	-2.281
Female Subject	-8.141	-4.303	-4.657	-0.071

**EMPATHY/APPROACHABILITY FACTOR**

	<b>REFUSAL ASSERTION</b>		<b>REQUEST ASSERTION</b>	
	Male Model	Female Model	Male Model	Female Model
Male Subject	-7.813	0.469	-6.609	3.484
Female Subject	-5.606	-0.192	-4.081	2.697

**FIRMNESS FACTOR**

	<b>REFUSAL ASSERTION</b>		<b>REQUEST ASSERTION</b>	
	Male Model	Female Model	Male Model	Female Model
Male Subject	4.750	4.094	5.422	4.391
Female Subject	3.172	2.121	3.293	2.667

As expected, analysis revealed a main effect for Assertion Situation across the three factors. For the first factor, "Politeness," subjects rated male and female models in Request Assertion situations less negatively (mean = -3.54925) than male and female models in Refusal assertion situations (mean = -6.2165);  $F(1,161) = 23.31$ ;  $p \leq 0.000$ .

This difference was significant when tested as a paired comparison as well (observed difference = 2.66725;  $HSD = 1.96434$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ).

On the "Empathy/Approachability" factor a similar pattern emerged. Here again, assertive male and female models in Request Assertion situations were evaluated significantly less negatively (mean = -1.12725) than were assertive male and female models in Refusal Assertion situations (mean = -3.128);  $F(1,161) = 16.82$ ;  $p \leq 0.000$ . When this effect was tested as a paired comparison, it was found also to be significant (observed difference = 2.00075;  $HSD = 1.87066$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ).

Finally, on the "Firmness" factor, both male and female models behaving assertively in Request Assertion situations were rated more positively (mean = 3.94325) than assertive male and female models in Refusal Assertion situations (mean = 3.53425);  $F(1,161) = 4.17$ ;  $p \leq 0.043$ . However, this difference failed to reach significance when tested against Tukey's criterion (observed difference = 0.409;  $HSD = 0.54197$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ).

In addition to the main effect for type of Assertion Situation, the repeated measures ANOVAs indicated a significant Model Gender main effect across PPQ factors. On the "Politeness" factor female models were evaluated less negatively (mean = -2.66775) than were male models (mean = -7.098);  $F(1,161) = 41.25$ ;  $p \leq 0.000$ . When tested as a paired comparison, this difference was found to be significant (observed difference = 4.43025;  $HSD = 2.45242$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ).

On the "Empathy/Approachability" factor female models were rated positively (mean = 1.6145) while male models were rated negatively (mean = -5.86975);  $F(1,161) = 106.49$ ;  $p \leq 0.000$ . Again, when this difference was tested as a paired comparison against Tukey's criterion it was found to be significant (observed difference = 7.48425;  $HSD = 2.63257$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ).

On the third factor "Firmness," the difference observed with the first two factors (i.e. female models evaluated relatively positively compared to male models) was reversed. Here, male models were rated more positively (mean = 4.15925) than were female models



(mean = 3.31825);  $F(1,161) = 8.96$ ;  $p \leq 0.003$ . This difference was also found to be significant when tested as a paired comparison (observed difference = 0.841;  $HSD = 0.75999$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ).

To allow interpretation of these observed Model Gender differences, factor score means were standardized and plotted for the purpose of fair comparison across factors. This comparison highlighted a very interesting result which is illustrated in figure 1.

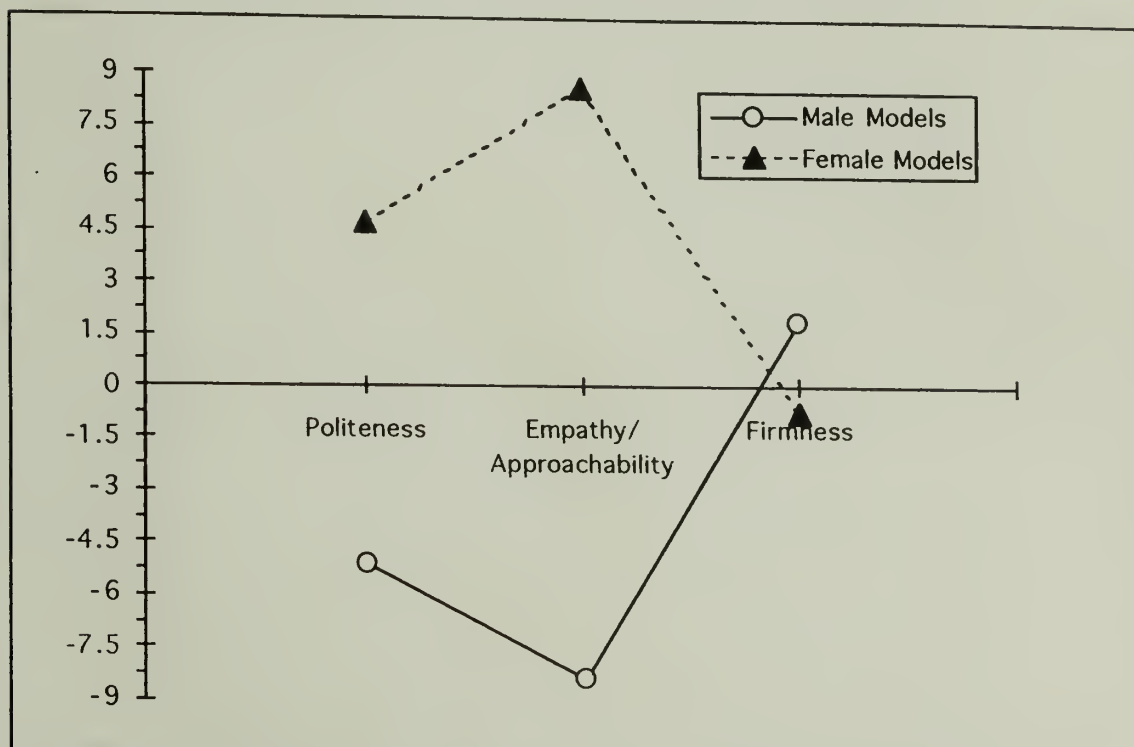


Figure 1. Standardized means of ratings assigned to male and female assertive models across PPQ Factors.

On the "Politeness" factor, the standardized difference between the two means is 9.8867 standard errors of the mean. The difference between group means on the "Empathy/Approachability" factor is 17.095 standard errors of the mean. Finally, the difference between standardized means recorded for male and female assertive models on the "Firmness" factor is 2.6265 standard errors of the mean.

While rarely observed empirically, the significant gender difference observed in this study has been held to exist in the literature quite frequently, and several explanations for the supposed difference have been invoked. Traditionally, these explanations have primar-

ily considered individual difference variables. One such alternative explanation, suggested by Gormally (1982), Kern (1982) and McNamara et al. (1988) was a subject's own level of assertion would mediate his or her evaluations of others' assertive behavior. Another explanation offered to account for the sometimes observed differences between social ratings of male and female assertive models is that subjects' attitudes toward women influence their evaluations of assertive models (e.g. Spence and Helmreich, 1972; Kern et al., 1985).

Both of these explanations were examined empirically in this study. Difference scores for each subject on each of the three PPQ factors were calculated by subtracting the summed evaluations of female models from those of male models. Thus, negative difference scores reflect relatively positive ratings of female subjects. These difference scores and subjects' scores on individual difference measures designed to assess these explanatory variables (i.e. the Assertion Inventory (Gambrill and Richey, 1975), the Simplified Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp, 1973), and the the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick and Fiske, 1995)) were then correlated to look for the relationships between underlying conceptual variables that must exist if there is, in fact, a causal relationship. The resulting correlation matrix is shown in table 5.

Table 5. Correlation Matrix for PPQ factor difference scores and the Assertion Inventory (AI), the Simplified Attitudes Toward Women Scale (SAWS), and the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI). \* =  $p \leq 0.05$

Difference Scores	AI Scale 1	AI Scale 2	AI Scale 3	ASI	SAWS
Factor 1	0.0092	0.0008	-0.1621*	-0.0646	0.0393
Factor 2	-0.0670	-0.0845	-0.1925*	-0.1411	-0.0377
Factor 3	-0.0549	-0.0393	-0.1383	-0.0607	0.0401

Results of this correlational analysis failed to support either of the two individual difference variables as potentially mediating subjects' evaluations of assertive models. Two significant relationships were identified which both suggest that subjects who rated assertive female models more positively than assertive male models on the "Politeness" and

"Empathy/Approachability" factor tended to evaluate their own level of assertion as lower than they would like it to be. It seems likely, however, that these significant intercorrelations are merely statistical artifacts of the large sample size, and in any event, they would not seem to inform our discussion in any meaningful way.

## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION

Initially, we hypothesized that all subjects would evaluate all models relatively positively in Request Assertion situations and that all subjects would evaluate male models more positively than female models in Refusal Assertion situations. While this hypothesis was not supported by the data, a number of interesting findings did appear. Most importantly, we, like Kelly et al. (1980), found significant model gender effects. Unlike Kelly et al. (1980), however, our findings did not support Kelly et al.'s hypothesis that the effect was uniform. Instead, an interaction effect was borne out by the data. This interaction, however, was not the one we had predicted (i.e. between model gender and type of assertion), but rather was between model gender and type of *perception*. More specifically, across types of assertion, female models were perceived more positively than were male models on two of the PPQ factors ("Politeness" and "Empathy/Approachability"), while male models were perceived more positively than female models on the third PPQ factor ("Firmness"). It would appear, then, that different impressions are created when males and females engage in *exactly* the same behavior under *exactly* the same circumstances.

This is an intriguing result in that it implies that subjects perceived the models' levels of assertion differently. As figure 1 shows, subjects evaluated female models as being more polite and more empathetic/approachable but *less firm* than male models. This would suggest, then, that subjects perceived female models to be less assertive than male models despite the fact that there was no difference in their behavior or in the situational context. Furthermore, when female models engage in assertive acts objectively equivalent to those performed by male models, they are perceived (by both men and women) as more likely to back down from their assertive stance.

Although this finding would appear to be unique in the assertion literature, it is consistent with both extant theories and empirical studies. Gervasio (1987), in her analysis of assertion as a speech act, has considered politeness to be an important component in one of



the conversational postulates (i.e. manner) violated by assertive behavior. In a similar vein, Woolfolk & Denver (1979) found that more polite forms of assertion are evaluated more positively than less polite forms. If Gervasio's (1987) theory is correct, then it seems likely that the results reported by Woolfolk & Denver (1979) should be reconsidered.

Woolfolk & Denver (1979) argued that polite assertive acts were evaluated more positively simply because they were polite. In light of Gervasio's (1987) theory, however, it seems more likely that Woolfolk & Denver (1979) observed more positive ratings of polite assertion because those acts *were not perceived to be as assertive as impolite assertion*.

Therefore, it seems a plausible argument to infer that the higher ratings on the "Politeness" PPQ factor assigned to female models is indicative of subjects' perception that female models are not as assertive as male models.

Similarly, a number of researchers have considered social evaluations of empathic assertion and found that the mere presence of an empathic component in assertive acts is sufficient to produce more positive evaluations of those acts as compared to assertive behaviors without an empathic component (Hull & Schroeder, 1979; Kern, 1982; McCampbell & Ruback, 1985; Rakos & Hrop, 1983). While this finding is widely supported in the literature, no adequate explanation has been offered to account for the differential evaluations observed. Again, it would seem plausible that the more positive ratings associated with empathic assertion are observed because the presence of empathy in the behavioral milieu reduces subjects' perception of the amount of assertion present. Thus, subjects' evaluations of female assertive models in the current study as more empathic/approachable than male models likely reflects a quantitatively lower perception of female models' assertion level.

Given that female models' higher ratings relative to male models on the "Politeness" and "Empathy/Approachability" factors of the PPQ are most likely indicative of subjects' perceptions of these models as less assertive, the "Firmness" dimension becomes particularly interesting. Here, as we have seen, male models are evaluated as being more firm

than female models. To date, the literature on social evaluations of assertion has not considered a similar construct. It would seem logical, however, to suggest that the "Firmness" factor of the PPQ may be related to subjects' evaluations of a model's likelihood to "stand behind" his or her assertive statement. If this is true, then the more negative ratings given to assertive female models may reflect subjects' beliefs that even when women act assertively they "don't really mean it." As a result, subjects may perceive female models as more likely to back down from their assertive position or fail to act assertively a second time if their initial statement is challenged. This prediction is consistent with Social Role Theory which holds that women are more likely to acquiesce to the social demands of others (perhaps especially men). This, too, suggests that subjects in the present study perceived female models as less assertive than male models who behaved in an identical fashion.

Thus, the pattern of differential ratings across the three factors extracted from the PPQ would appear to indicate that when women act assertively in exactly the same ways and in exactly the same situational contexts as men, they are perceived as being less assertive than their male counterparts. This has several important implications. First, a lower level of assertion exhibited by a man is evaluated as equivalent to a higher level of assertion by a woman. Second, in order for a woman to be perceived as equally assertive as a man, she must engage in objectively more assertive behaviors. Third, had it been possible to hold *perceived* assertiveness constant, we would expect (as predicted by Social Role Theory) that women would have been evaluated more negatively than men on the "Politeness" and "Empathy/Approachability" PPQ factors and equal to (if not greater than) men on the "Firmness" factor. This last point is, of course, an empirical question in need of further study.

Similarly, the perception of women as less assertive than men when assertion content and situation are held constant has several social consequences. Perhaps most importantly, when a woman acts in an assertive manner equivalent to that of a man, we would expect

that she will not be taken as seriously as her male counterpart. Furthermore, in order to effectively advocate for her own needs, a woman will have to act objectively more assertive than will a man. In doing so, she runs the risk of social ostracization as a result of stepping outside of the boundaries of "appropriate" female behavior as defined by the prevalent social norms. In essence, a woman who decides to act assertively to protect her own interests or rights will have to work much harder than will a man faced with equivalent goals and obstacles. One has only to consider the incidence of acquaintance sexual assault to see how this situation might be played out.

Aside from the interaction between model gender and perception type discussed above, it is interesting to point out that when scores were summed across PPQ factors, males were evaluated less positively than females (-8.8085 vs. 2.265). This difference is valenced oppositely that observed by Kelly et al. (1980) but is consistent with the subsequent findings of Schroeder et al. (1983) who report that male assertive models were "consistently devalued by both male and female observers" (534). It should be noted that the finding of negative evaluations of assertion is robust in the literature and that such negative ratings do not reflect the functionality of assertion, only that it is a relatively undesirable trait in everyday interactions. Thus, while assertion may be deemed useful and worthwhile in certain situations, it would appear that when a dispositional attribution of assertiveness is attached to an individual, that individual's social desirability decreases. Given that negative evaluations of assertive behavior are commonplace in the assertion literature, the fact that female models in this study were rated positively across PPQ factors again suggests that they were not perceived as acting assertively.

Results also indicated a main effect for assertion situation, indicating that assertive models in Request Assertion situations were evaluated more positively than were assertive models in Refusal Assertion situations. This difference was found to be significant on both the "Politeness" and the "Gentleness/Approachability" factors and approached significance on the "Firmness" factor. A number of other researchers have considered assertion situa-



tion as an important mediating factor in subjects' evaluations of assertive behavior (Crawford, 1988; Hess et al., 1980; Levin & Gross, 1987; McNamara et al., 1988). Their findings, although limited, are useful in considering possible explanations to account for the observed differences in the present study. The differences observed between subjects' evaluations of assertive models in the two situations are likely due, as Crawford (1988) suggests, to the qualitatively different types of assertion called for in the different situations. In Request Assertion situations, models request that another individual conform to established social norms of behavior; while in Refusal Assertion situations, models act out of motivated self-interest and choose to break the social norm of helping others. It seems logical to assume that the differential evaluations observed reflect subjects' awareness of these qualitative differences and may be an artifact of affective responses to witnessing an established social norm violated. Thus, it is possible that subjects evaluated Refusal Assertion situations more negatively than they did Request Assertion situations because social norms were upheld in the latter but discarded in the former.

Finally, it should be added that analyses failed to support the effects of mediating variables in subjects' evaluations of assertive models. More specifically, we were unable to replicate the work regarding how subjects' attitudes towards women affect their ratings of assertive models (Kern et al., 1985). Nor were we able to replicate the work of Kern (1982) or Gormally (1982) implicating subjects' level of assertion as a mediating variable in evaluations of assertive models.

Above all, the most intriguing result of the present study was that female models who act in exactly the same fashion and in exactly the same situations as male models were not perceived as assertive. While this finding is well supported by both the data and the literature, more work on this subject must be carried out in order to refine interpretations. It should be pointed out that the sample size was only marginally suited for factor analysis on the 35-item PPQs. Therefore, future investigations should employ larger samples. Furthermore, subjects reported that the Assertion Inventory (Gambrill & Richey, 1975)



used in this study was cumbersome and difficult to complete. This poses a serious threat to the reliability of the measure and may account for the fact that we were unable to replicate previous studies which have identified subjects' assertion level as a mediating variable in evaluations of assertive models (Gormally, 1982; Kern, 1982). Similarly, subjects may have found the experimental procedure uncomfortably long (approximately one hour and 15 minutes) and their attention to the paper-and-pencil measures may have been compromised. Because the order of the audiotape presentation/PPQ completion and these additional measures was not counterbalanced, fatigue effects may have influenced subjects ratings on the paper-and-pencil measures. This poses yet another threat to the reliability of the assessment instruments used to measure individual difference variables.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

Although the data did not support our initial hypotheses, an unexpected and important finding did emerge. When women and men engaged in exactly the same sort of assertive behavior in exactly the same situations, men are perceived as assertive while women are not. This discrepancy may reflect a general societal tendency not to take women seriously. Irrespective of what might account for this difference in perception, it has serious ramifications. Most importantly, women may have to work significantly harder than will men in order to effect the same level of change in their environment or to make their preferences known to others. It is not difficult to imagine how this finding could have implications across all forms of social interaction (e.g., home, school, workplace, romance, etc.).

Future investigations should address this issue and the number of questions that it raises. How effective are assertive women perceived to be relative to assertive men? How much more assertion needs to be enacted for women to be seen by others as assertive as men? Furthermore, the absence of significant effects for the individual difference variables examined in this study does not necessarily mean that they do not exist. This too, then, would seem to be an appropriate topic for subsequent empirical consideration.

## APPENDIX A

### ANALYSIS OF PPQ ITEMS

*Percentages of subjects responding "neither one nor the other" to each item. Boxed items were discarded from the final form of the PPQ.*

**Item 1: Hostile/Friendly**

Males: 7%  
Females: 8%  
Total: 7%

**Item 2: Enjoyable/Unenjoyable**

Males: 19%  
Females: 12%  
Total: 16%

**Item 3: Secure/Insecure**

Males: 17%  
Females: 10%  
Total: 14%

**Item 4: Open/Closed**

Males: 23%  
Females: 25%  
Total: 24%

**Item 5: Cooperative/Uncooperative**

Males: 15%  
Females: 18%  
Total: 16%

**Item 6: Liking/Disliking**

Males: 10%  
Females: 9%  
Total: 10%

**Item 7: Shy/Outgoing**

Males: 30%  
Females: 29%  
Total: 29%

**Item 8: Active/Passive**

Males: 23%  
Females: 38%  
Total: 29%

**Item 9: Empathic/Unempathic**

Males: 57%  
Females: 57%  
Total: 57%

**Item 10: Anxious/Calm**

Males: 21%  
Females: 18%  
Total: 20%

**Item 11: Aggressive/Submissive**

Males: 47%  
Females: 48%  
Total: 47%

**Item 12: Confident/Insecure**

Males: 15%  
Females: 11%  
Total: 13%

**Item 13: Dependable/Undependable**

Males: 44%  
Females: 50%  
Total: 47%

**Item 14: Manipulative/Unmanipulative**

Males: 53%  
Females: 56%  
Total: 55%

**Item 15: Constant/Changing**

Males: 45%  
Females: 60%  
Total: 53%

**Item 16: Loyal/Disloyal**

Males: 59%  
Females: 66%  
Total: 63%

**Item 17: Powerful/Powerless**

Males: 43%  
Females: 49%  
Total: 46%

**Item 18: Deep/Superficial**

Males: 55%  
Females: 60%  
Total: 58%

**Item 19: Frustrating/Fulfilling**

Males: 47%  
Females: 48%  
Total: 48%

**Item 20: Demanding/Non-demanding**

Males: 38%  
Females: 39%  
Total: 39%

**Item 21: Secretive/Open**

Males: 34%  
Females: 44%  
Total: 39%

**Item 22: Selfish/Generous**

Males: 53%  
Females: 71%  
Total: 62%

**Item 23: Like me/Different from me**

Males: 23%  
Females: 18%  
Total: 21%

**Item 24: Trustworthy/Untrustworthy**

Males: 38%  
Females: 50%  
Total: 44%

**Item 25: Supportive/Unsupportive**

Males: 43%  
Females: 47%  
Total: 45%

**Item 26: Close/Distant**

Males: 27%  
Females: 31%  
Total: 29%

**Item 27: Kind/Cruel**

Males: 9%  
Females: 15%  
Total: 12%

**Item 28: Rejecting/Accepting**

Males: 22%  
Females: 24%  
Total: 23%

**Item 29: Fair/Unfair**

Males: 31%  
Females: 42%  
Total: 37%

**Item 30: Predictable/Unpredictable**

Males: 32%  
Females: 34%  
Total: 33%

**Item 31: Self-centered/Other-centered**

Males: 51%  
Females: 59%  
Total: 55%

**Item 32: Dependent/Independent**

Males: 28%  
Females: 37%  
Total: 33%

**Item 33: Trusting/Untrusting**

Males: 26%  
Females: 46%  
Total: 36%

**Item 34: Tense/Relaxed**

Males: 16%  
Females: 14%  
Total: 15%

**Item 35: Sensitive/Insensitive**

Males: 39%  
Females: 37%  
Total: 38%

**Item 36: Controlling/Democratic**

Males: 51%  
Females: 54%  
Total: 53%

**Item 37: Disappointing/Satisfying**

Males: 38%  
Females: 41%  
Total: 40%

**Item 38: Gentle/Rough**

Males: 18%  
Females: 16%  
Total: 17%

**Item 39: Talking/Giving**

Males: 42%  
Females: 52%  
Total: 47%

**Item 40: Comfortable/Uncomfortable**

Males: 6%  
Females: 10%  
Total: 8%



**Item 41: Distant/Close**

Males: 31%

Females: 43%

Total: 37%

**Item 42: Intrusive/Nonintrusive**

Males: 52%

Females: 54%

Total: 53%

**Item 43: Socially competent/Socially incompetent**

Males: 13%

Females: 10%

Total: 12%

**Item 44: How much would you like to get to know this person?**

A very great deal/Not at all

Males: 26%

Females: 31%

Total: 29%

## APPENDIX B

### FORMS AND MEASURES

*All forms and measures will be presented in the following order.*

ICF

Subject ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Informed Consent Form

This study is designed to investigate what factors influence how people evaluate other people. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to listen to tape recorded descriptions of social encounters and then evaluate one person in each encounter. You will also be asked to complete two self-report measures and a demographic data questionnaire about yourself.

Your responses to the measures in this study will remain strictly anonymous and confidential. At no time will your name be paired with your data. Public presentations of results from this work will include group data only; your anonymity will be protected and is guaranteed.

There are no anticipated risks or benefits to you from participating in this study. Please remember that at any point in this study, you are free to discontinue your participation in it, without explanation and without penalty of any kind, including without loss of experimental credit.

Please feel invited to ask any questions you have about what is involved in participating in this study. Your signature below will mean that you are volunteering to participate in this experiment as it has been described to you.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Experimenter: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 199\_\_

Address where you can be reached:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

You will be using this sheet to rate: \_\_\_\_\_. Please rate your assessment of \_\_\_\_\_ on each of the following scales, where...

-3 = extremely; -2 = moderately; -1 = slightly; 0 = neither one nor the other;  
1 = slightly; 2 = moderately; 3 = extremely

	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	
Assertive	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Non-Assertive
Aggressive	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Non-Aggressive
Non-Submissive	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Submissive
Behaves Inappropriately	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Behaves Appropriately
Hostile	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Friendly
Enjoyable	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Unenjoyable
Secure	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Insecure
Closed	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Open
Cooperative	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Uncooperative
Liking	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Disliking
Shy	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Outgoing
Active	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Passive
Anxious	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Calm
Insecure	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Confident
Constant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Changing
Demanding	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Non-Demanding
Secretive	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Open
Selfish	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Generous
Like me	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Different from me
Untrustworthy	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Trustworthy
Close	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Distant
Kind	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Cruel
Rejecting	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Accepting
Unfair	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Fair
Predictable	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Unpredictable
Dependent	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Independent
Trusting	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Untrusting
Tense	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Relaxed
Sensitive	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Insensitive
Gentle	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Rough
Taking	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Giving
Comfortable	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Uncomfortable
Distant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Close
Socially Incompetent	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Socially Competent

How much would you like to get to know this person?

A very great deal \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ Not at all

# A1

Subject ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

In the space provided *before* each situation listed below, please indicate the degree of discomfort or anxiety you would experience in each situation. Please use the following scale:

**1 = none; 2 = a little; 3 = a fair amount; 4 = much; 5 = very much**

Then, go over the list a second time and indicate *after* each item the probability or likelihood of your displaying the behavior if actually presented with the situation. Use the following scale:

**1 = always do it; 2 = usually do it; 3 = do it about half the time; 4 = rarely do it; 5 = never do it**

And finally, please indicate the situations you would like to handle *more* assertively by placing a circle around the item number.

Degree of Discomfort	Situation	Response Probability
_____ 1.	Turn down a request to borrow your car	_____
_____ 2.	Compliment a friend	_____
_____ 3.	Ask a favor of someone	_____
_____ 4.	Resist sales pressure	_____
_____ 5.	Apologize when you are at fault	_____
_____ 6.	Turn down a request for a meeting or date	_____
_____ 7.	Admit fear and request consideration	_____
_____ 8.	Tell a person you are intimately involved with when s/he says or does something that bothers you	_____
_____ 9.	Ask for a raise	_____
_____ 10.	Admit ignorance in some area	_____
_____ 11.	Turn down a request to borrow money	_____
_____ 12.	Ask personal questions	_____
_____ 13.	Turn off a talkative friend	_____
_____ 14.	Ask for constructive criticism	_____
_____ 15.	Initiate a conversation with a stranger	_____
_____ 16.	Compliment a person you are romantically involved with or interested in	_____
_____ 17.	Request a meeting of a date with a person	_____
_____ 18.	Your initial request for a meeting is turned down and you ask the person again at a later time	_____
_____ 19.	Admit confusion about a point under discussion and ask for clarification	_____
_____ 20.	Apply for a job	_____
_____ 21.	Ask whether you have offended someone	_____
_____ 22.	Tell someone that you like them	_____
_____ 23.	Request expected service when such is not forthcoming, e.g. in a restaurant	_____
_____ 24.	Discuss openly with the person his/her criticism of your behavior	_____
_____ 25.	Return defective items, e.g. store or restaurant	_____
_____ 26.	Express an opinion that differs from that of the person you are talking to	_____
_____ 27.	Resist sexual overtures when you are not interested	_____
_____ 28.	Tell the person when you feel s/he has done something that is unfair to you	_____
_____ 29.	Accept a date	_____
_____ 30.	Tell someone good news about yourself	_____
_____ 31.	Resist pressure to drink	_____
_____ 32.	Resist a significant person's unfair demand	_____
_____ 33.	Quit a job	_____
_____ 34.	Resist pressure to use drugs	_____
_____ 35.	Discuss openly with the person his/her criticism of your work	_____
_____ 36.	Request the return of borrowed items	_____
_____ 37.	Receive compliments	_____
_____ 38.	Continue to converse with someone who disagrees with you	_____
_____ 39.	Tell a friend or someone with whom you work when s/he says or does something that bothers you	_____
_____ 40.	Ask a person who is annoying you in a public situation to stop	_____



For each item, please circle the number that corresponds to your answer.

- 1 = Disagree strongly (DS)  
 2 = Disagree (D)  
 3 = Neutral (N)  
 4 = Agree (A)  
 5 = Agree Strongly (AS)

	DS	D	N	A	AS
1. It sounds worse when a woman swears than when a man does.	1	2	3	4	5
2. There should be more women leaders in important jobs in public life, such as politics.	1	2	3	4	5
3. It is all right for men to tell dirty jokes, but women should not tell them.	1	2	3	4	5
4. It is worse to see a drunken woman than a drunken man.	1	2	3	4	5
5. If a woman goes out to work, her husband should share the housework, such as washing dishes, cleaning and cooking.	1	2	3	4	5
6. It is an insult to a woman to have to promise to "love, honor, and obey" her husband in the marriage ceremony when he only promises to "love and honor" her.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Women should have completely equal opportunities as men in getting jobs and promotions.	1	2	3	4	5
8. A woman should be as free as a man to propose marriage.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Women should worry less about being equal with men and more about becoming good wives and mothers.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Women earning as much as their dates should pay for themselves when going out with them.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Women should not be bosses in important jobs in business and industry.	1	2	3	4	5
12. A woman should be able to go everywhere a man goes, or do everything a man does, such as going into bars alone.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.	1	2	3	4	5
14. It is ridiculous for a woman to drive a train or for a man to sew on shirt buttons.	1	2	3	4	5
15. In general, the father should have more authority than the mother in bringing up children.	1	2	3	4	5
16. The husband should not be favored by law over the wife when property is divided in a divorce.	1	2	3	4	5
17. A woman's place is in the home looking after her family, rather than following a career of her own.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Women are better off having their own jobs and freedom to do as they please, rather than being treated like a "lady" in the old-fashioned way.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Women have less to offer than men in the world of business and industry.	1	2	3	4	5
20. There are many jobs that men can do better than women.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Women should have as much opportunity to do apprenticeships and learn a trade as men.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Girls nowadays should be allowed the same freedom as boys, such as being allowed to stay out late.	1	2	3	4	5
23. It is worse for a woman to be pushy than for a man.	1	2	3	4	5

Below are a series of statements concerning men and women and their relationships in contemporary society. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement using the scale below:

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DDS

Subject ID# \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

GENDER: \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR IN SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

MAJOR: \_\_\_\_\_

ETHNICITY: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT'S OCCUPATION:

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

Father: \_\_\_\_\_

Step-Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

Step-Father: \_\_\_\_\_

SIBLINGS (feel free to use the back of this sheet if necessary):

First Name:

Gender:

Age:

- |          |       |       |
|----------|-------|-------|
| 1) _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2) _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3) _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4) _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 5) _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 6) _____ | _____ | _____ |

MARITAL STATUS OF PARENTS (please circle one):

Married

Divorced

Separated

Never Married

**IF** YOUR PARENTS ARE DIVORCED...

How old were you when the divorce occurred? \_\_\_\_\_

Which parent had primary custody? \_\_\_\_\_

MISCELLANY:

How many Women's Studies courses have you taken? \_\_\_\_\_

How many lectures have you attended that pertained to women's or gender issues? \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any books that you have read over the past year that have stimulated your thinking on women's or gender issues (feel free to use the back of this sheet if necessary):

Title:

Author's last name:

- |          |       |
|----------|-------|
| 1) _____ | _____ |
| 2) _____ | _____ |
| 3) _____ | _____ |
| 4) _____ | _____ |
| 5) _____ | _____ |
| 6) _____ | _____ |

**Debriefing Form**

Thank you very much for participating in this study. The time that you have taken to listen to the tape and complete the questionnaires is very much appreciated, and we would like to take this opportunity to tell you a little bit about what we hope to learn from this experiment. As you probably know, several groups in society (women, for example) are faced with a "glass ceiling." That is to say that they are able to advance so far but, at some point, find that continued advancement is impossible. It is our belief that these glass ceilings could not exist were it not for the (perhaps tacit) cooperation of both the empowered and the disenfranchised.

To test this belief we engineered a total of eight scenarios in which a target individual is called upon to be assertive in one of two ways. First, the target requests that another party discontinue an annoying behavior. Second, the target denies a request for assistance made by a second party on the grounds of personal inconvenience or preexisting rules. The gender of the target individual was varied as was the gender of the second party. We hypothesize that, after being presented with four of these situations, both male and female subjects (you!) would evaluate the target individual in the first scenario positively, regardless of gender. In the second scenario, we expect that both male and female subjects will evaluate male targets positively, **but** female targets negatively. Although we did not speculate on how the gender of the second party would affect your evaluation of the target individual in the two assertion scenarios, we will examine the data during analysis to see if this variable affected your ratings.

We were also aware that variables other than gender might affect your evaluation of the target individuals. Of course, all of these alternative variables could not be tested within the framework of a single study. We therefore selected two additional variables that we felt were particularly likely to affect your ratings. These additional variables were attitude toward women and self ratings of your own assertiveness. These variables were measured by items on the sheet you completed following the presentation of the four scenarios.

This study could have important ramifications in the "real world." By understanding what factors contribute to the maintenance of a "glass ceiling," we should be able to devise means of removing such barriers and seeing that they are not replaced. An appreciation of the reasons why underprivileged groups in society buy into the "glass ceilings" above them could also help us deal with problems of self-esteem, gender/race relations, and poor performance among other things.

To protect the validity of our study, it is very important that the participants in it come to us without having thought too much about gender relations. **It is, therefore, imperative that you NOT discuss the content of your experience in the lab with any of your friends and/or classmates who might also choose to be subjects for this experiment.** Once again, we would like to thank you very much for taking the time to help us in our research. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the results of the study, please inform the research assistant who supervised the experiment with you or contact either Justin Curry (Tobin 603; 545-5953) or Marian MacDonald (Tobin 614; 545-0396).

Thanks again,

Justin C. Curry  
Graduate Research Assistant

Marian L. MacDonald, Ph.D.  
Professor of Clinical Psychology



## APPENDIX C

### TRANSCRIPT OF AUDIOTAPE

#### *Instructions:*

This tape will present several social situations which most college students have either seen or experienced or can easily imagine. Your task in this study involves picturing each situation and picturing someone handling the situation, forming an opinion of that person, and, finally, expressing your opinion of that person by completing a set of rating scales. Let's first go over the set of scales you'll be using to express your opinion. Please open the folder in front of you.

Think of each line on the page as asking you a specific question about the person you're rating. At the ends of each line are two qualities which are the complete opposite of each other, like good/bad, sharp/dull, etc. In between these opposite ends are seven blank spaces. Your task is to make an "X" in the blank which most accurately represents your opinion of where the person you are rating falls with respect to those specific qualities. Don't puzzle over each one. We are looking for your first impression of the person you are rating on each of the specific scales. Just to be sure that you understand these instructions, let's look at an example.

Suppose you are rating a person on a scale that looks like the one that your experimenter is pointing to now. If you think the person is extremely good you would mark the scale like the one your experimenter is pointing to now. If you think the person is moderately good you would mark the scale like the one your experimenter is pointing to now. If you think the person is slightly good you would mark the scale like the one your experimenter is pointing to now. If you think the person is neither good nor bad you would mark the scale like the one your experimenter is pointing to now. If you think the person is slightly bad you would mark the scale like the one your experimenter is pointing to now. If you think the person is moderately bad you would mark the scale like the one your experimenter is pointing to now. If you think the person is extremely bad you would mark the scale like the one your experimenter is pointing to now. You would, of course, make only one rating on each scale to reflect your opinion of the person on that particular scale. Do you have any questions about how to use these scales?

Now let's go over what you will be rating. This tape will present descriptions of several social situations. Each social situation you'll hear involves an encounter between two people. In every case, what you'll first hear is some background information presented by a narrator along with a specific statement made by one of the people in the situation. Please listen carefully to the background information and the statement so that you can get a good sense of what the situation is that is being described. After giving you a moment to visualize the situation, the description of it will be played again. But the second time it is played, there will be something added -- the voice of a second person showing you how the second person handled the situation. You should form an opinion of the second person; the person who handled the situation. As soon as you've decided what you think of them, express your opinion by rating the second person on the set of rating scales in front of you. Try to make your ratings quickly. It's your first impression that we want. Do you have any question about how to complete this task?

Let's try an example just to make sure that the instructions have explained things clearly.

#### *Example:*

Laura goes to her professor's office to talk about her last paper. As the professor invites her in she says, "Laura, I was very pleased with your last paper."

You will be rating Laura in this situation.

Laura goes to her professor's office to talk about her last paper. As the professor invites her in she says, "Laura, I was very pleased with your last paper." Laura replies, "Thank you very much."

*Scenarios:*

[X] has gone to the movies alone to relax. The [girl/guy] in the seat behind [him/her] keeps distracting her by kicking the back of [her/his] chair. [X] says, "Please, stop kicking my seat."

As class ends, [X]'s history professor announces a quiz for next class on last weeks material. A [guy/girl] [s/he] doesn't know comes up to [her/him] and says, "Listen, I really need a good grade on this quiz and I can tell you're doing well in the class. Can I please borrow your notes overnight to copy them?" [X] replies, "I'm going to need them myself to study for the quiz so, no, you can't."

[X] is taking a difficult exam that needs her full concentration. The [guy/girl] next to [him/her] is being real fidgety. A little while ago the [girl/guy] started drumming [his/her] fingers on [her/his] desk as [s/he] works on the exam. [X] says, "Shhh! I'm trying to think."

Last week [X] bought a word processor and decided not to let anyone use it since it cost so much. [His/Her] neighbor [Y] knocks on [her/his] door and says, "I have to write a ten page paper due in two days and my typewriter is such a hassle to use. Can I use your new computer to work on it? I'll be rally careful." [X] replies, "It cost so much that I promised myself not to loan it out so, no, I can't let you use it."

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