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INTERPERSONAL PERCEPTION
IN THE MARITAL RELATIONSHIP:
REPRESSION-SENSITIZATION
AND DIMENSIONS OF INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOR

By

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ABSTRACT

Previous studies have shown that the way an individual has learned to cope with anxiety and the way he perceives the people in his world are related, and that they both influence interpersonal behavior. The present study was an attempt to relate these defensive patterns to interpersonal perception and behavior in the marital relationship.

Three tests were given to 30 American married couples living in Beirut: Byrne's Repression-Sensitization Scale (RS Scale); and two copies of the Interpersonal Check List, one for the self concept and one for the description of mate. The RS scale is a measure of anxiety-coping behavior. The Interpersonal Check Lists were employed as a measure of the perceived similarity of self and mate.

The results of the study indicate that a husband and his wife would tend to have similar ways of coping with anxiety. In addition, it was demonstrated that wives with repressive defenses tend to attribute the same amount of dominance to their husbands as they attribute to themselves, while sensitizing wives tend to attribute the same amount of warmth to their husbands as they attribute to themselves. Husbands, on the other hand, demonstrated no such patterns i.e., both repressing and sensitizing husbands varied greatly in their rating of their wives on both dominance and warmth. Thus it appears that a husband's rating of his wife is unrelated to his defensive patterns.

To account for these results the explanation was offered that wives with repressive defenses tend to project their power strivings onto their husbands to avoid the anxiety produced by them; while sensitizing wives tend to project their need for warmth onto their husbands. Role differences were suggested to account for the fact that projection was not also employed by husbands in this same way.

INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal perception differs from other kinds of perception in that it is not only concerned with sensory events and learned cues related to a stimulus object, but also with the ability of the stimulus to act in relation to the individual. Tagiuri (1958) used the term person perception "whenever the perceiver regards the object as having the potential of representation and intentionality" (Ibid., p. X).

This means, according to Fritz Heider, that we see others not as mere objects, but as action centers that can benefit or harm us as we can benefit or harm them. In addition, they are "systems", i.e., they are viewed as having characteristics which direct their action. Tagiuri states, "Indeed, when we speak of person perception or of knowledge of persons, we refer mostly to the observations we make about intentions, attitudes, emotions, ideas, abilities, purposes, traits - events that are, so to speak, inside the person" (Ibid., p. X). Through them we can come to some understanding of another's intentions toward us - by observing the manner in which the person directs himself toward us.

This directionality and intentionality on the part of the perceiver causes alterations in the directionality and intentionality of the perceived, while the perceived has the same effect on the perceiver. In other words, we are not dealing with simple interaction, but with double interaction. This, according to Tagiuri,

is the mutually shared field of interaction.

It is within this interactional field, then, that people create a "relationship", that is, they evaluate one another and establish characteristic ways of responding to one another - all based on their perceptions of the other person and of themselves in relation to that other. Marriage, represents the most clear-cut and permanent example of such a relationship. Thus investigation of interpersonal perception as it applies to the marital relationship has broad implications for the field of psychology since it is in the family environment created by the interaction of the marital partners that an individual's most basic and lasting behavior patterns are formed. These interactions appear to result largely from the perceptions each of the marital partners has of the other, which in turn results from the past experience which has influenced their individual personalities.

Studies on both marriage and interpersonal perception have only recently begun to converge as it has become clearer from the results of each that the dynamics of the marital relationship are closely related to conditions of interpersonal perception. Moreover, the results of recent studies in the area of personality theory appear to have direct bearing on the basic elements responsible for the formation of perceptions of others, both within and without the marriage situation.

A summary of the literature will give a clearer picture of how various personality and marriage studies have contributed to the theory of interpersonal perception.

CHAPTER I

INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOR AND MARRIAGE

Early studies on marriage (Burgess and Cottrell, 1939; Locke and Klausner, 1948) although interesting, were found to have little relevance to the present study. Because these scales focused interest upon areas of agreement and common interests in the healthy marriage, they offered little information on the effects of personality variables on marital adjustment.

The one exception to this among early studies was one by Terman (1939) who attempted to discover the personality characteristics of couples through questions such as, "Do you usually work things out for yourself rather than get someone to show you?" As a result he was able to arrive at the following descriptions: among happily married couples,

"... the women are cooperative, like to do things for dependent or underprivileged. They're religious and moral, are conservative and conventional in their politics. Missionary and ministering attitudes are common in their responses. The men show initiative and responsibility. They work well with their superiors, are equalitarian toward women, and benevolent toward their inferiors and the underprivileged. They too have conservative attitudes on politics, religion, and sex." (29, p.165).

Unhappily married people on the other hand were,

"... characterized by radical attitudes in politics, morals, and religion. The women have deep-seated inferiority feelings to which they react by aggressivity. The men are domineering where they feel superior, but withdraw when they feel inferior or are required to compete with their superiors." (29, p.165),

In the two major studies which used this questionnaire (Kelly, 1941; Locke et al, 1949), however, no attempt was made to show how these behaviors interacted in marriage; that is, how the personalities of husbands and wives affected their feelings about themselves, how it affected their perceptions of their mates, and their mates' perceptions of them. Knowledge of these variables was perhaps the first step to understanding marital adjustment since through them some understanding of an individual's behavior toward his mate can be obtained.

However, it must be said in defense of these early studies that they had of necessity to be limited in this respect since neither the theoretical framework nor the measuring instruments for interrelating these variable was developed until the 1950's. It was then that Tagiuri began to formulate the theory of interpersonal perception put forward in the introduction. Testing propositions based on this theory, in turn, had to await the development of appropriate measuring instruments.

The Measurement of Interpersonal Behavior. It was somewhat later that Leary (1957) devised the Interpersonal Check List (ICL) in order to measure interpersonal behavior. Based upon an analysis of thousands of clinical cases, he and his associates formulated several hundred terms descriptive of behavior. He was able to bring this number down to a more widedly 128 by eliminating synonyms. For example, 'influence' and 'guide' were both in the original list. The final decision was made in favor of "guide" as the

more widely used term. These words and phrases were then subsumed under sixteen generic themes to help eliminate overlap and repetition. As given in the example above, 'guide' fell into the category of "Managerial".

A factor analysis of the final results indicated that each generic theme could be broken down still further. According to Leary, each of these generic categories,

"... had some reference to a power or affiliation factor. When dominance-submission was taken as the vertical axis and hostility-affection as the horizontal, all of the other generic interpersonal factors could be expressed as combinations of these four modal points.... Further experimentation and review of the raw data led to the conclusion that a circular two-dimensional continuum of sixteen generic variables represented the optimal degree of refinement of interpersonal themes....

It is thus possible to convert the pattern of scores on the sixteen variables (or generic themes) into two numerical indices (one for dominance and one for love) which locate a subject's interpersonal behavior on a diagnostic grid" (16,p.64).

Further analysis of these four nodal points provided information on another important facet of interpersonal functioning. When dominant behavior was exhibited, it provoked submissive reactions on the part of another. Similarly submissive behavior tended to evoke dominant behavior. On the other hand, hostility provoked hostility; and affectionate behavior, affection. It is of interest to note here that behavior along the dominance dimension evokes its opposite or compliment, while behavior along the affection dimension calls forth similar reactions. This behavioral reciprocity reflects the fact that each person creates the social environment in which he lives.

It also conforms to the theory that how a person perceives himself will determine his behavior, and how another perceives that behavior will determine how that other reacts. Thus, the Interpersonal Check List (ICL) provides a simple method of investigating general agreement between self perceptions and perceptions of that self by others. An individual checks those words and phrases that he feels apply to him on one copy. A person intimately associated with the subject can check off a second copy in order to obtain an index of agreement between self perception and perception by others.

Marital Studies Employing the ICL. Because of its simplicity and breadth, Romano (1960) suggested that, since this measure "emphasized the interpersonal aspect of personality and provides a methodology for analysis of personality in interactional terms," (27, p.17) it would be a useful adjunct to marital counseling.

Luckey (1960a, 1960b, 1960c, 1961, 1964), following this suggestion, applied the ICL in a series of studies on married couples. Using Locke's Modified Marital Adjustment Scale as an index of marital satisfaction, she found similarity between self concept and description of mate to be significantly related to marital satisfaction. However, when these findings were evaluated for each sex separately, this similarity was a predictor of marital satisfaction for husbands, but not for wives.

She also found that marital dissatisfaction was highly correlated with self and/or mate descriptions that fell into those generic

groups at the hostile end of the ICL love dimension, while marital satisfaction was highly correlated with self and/or mate descriptions that fell into the generic groups at the affectionate end of the love dimension.

These findings suggest that certain perceptual congruencies, and dimensions on which the perceptions are congruent, are related to the degree of satisfaction the subjects find in marriage. These results also indicate that the sources of the agreement which early studies found to be indicative of happy marriage were due to perceived similarities in the personalities of the two people involved. However, other investigations have indicated that not only is similarity important in the marital relationship, but complementarity as well.

Similarity and Complementarity. In a note on the role of needs in marriage, Levinger (1964) demonstrated that those who would pair people on the basis of needs, must take into account the roles of complementarity and similarity separately. Tharp (1964) in a reply to Levinger, states that "before concerning ourselves with patterning of elements, we had best identify the elements themselves." (30, p.158). Goodman (1963, 1964) attempted to do both by measuring different kinds of needs separately and testing each for similarity and complementarity. Mates were divided according to low and high self accepters (SA) on the Bills Index of Adjustment and Values.

He found that high SA mates rated themselves as similar on dominance and nurturance, while the low SA mates rated themselves as complimentary on these two dimensions, i.e., as opposite to each other. For both high and low SA mates, the highest relationship occurred along the nurturance and succorance dimensions. In conclusion Goodman states: "The nurturant dimension of complementarity is probably more relevant than the dominance-submission dimension in understanding interspousal need structure. The traditional interpretation of complementarity based upon all needs provides a misleading framework for study of mate selection." (11, p.867).

Thus, his findings lend support to those of Luckey who found that high ratings on the affection dimension, apparently a parallel to Goodman's nurturance need, are a determining influence in the marital relationship. In addition, his results not only indicate that feelings of self-acceptance will predict the mate as being similar or complimentary, but also along what specific dimensions or needs this similarity or complementarity will occur.

Unfortunately, little is known about Goodman's measure. However, a study by Hanson (1963) found a .61 correlation between the Index of Adjustment and Values and the Repression Sensitization Scale (RS) (Byrne, 1961). It is this instrument, used alone and in conjunction with the ICL, that has produced a large number of studies relevant to interpersonal perception in marriage.

CHAPTER II

INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOR AND REPRESSION-SENSITIZATION

Altrocchi was one of the first to employ the RS and ICL scales in a single study (1960, 1961, 1963). He based his findings on a sample of student nurses. He concluded from his research that repressors see themselves as more dominant and affectionate than sensitizers. There was also a closer correspondence between how the repressors saw themselves and how they were seen by others, than there was for sensitizers. These results suggest that the sensitizer tends to see himself as lacking in dominance and affection. It is these feelings of inadequacy that are responsible for the vast majority of marital problems that are met in the clinic (See Goller, 1956).

Joy (1963) extended Altrocchi's findings. He found that sensitizers were chosen less often as desirable work partners than either repressors or neutrals. Therefore, those who see themselves as submissive and hostile would be less likely to be chosen as marital partners. Furthermore, once having been chosen, it would be predictable that they would have difficulties adapting to the marital situation.

Up to this point in the research, however, one variable, that of sex, had not been investigated. This was a pertinent issue since Altrocchi's studies had been based on a sample of females, while Joy's was based on a sample of males. At the same time, Luckey's findings indicated differences in self concept-description by mate agreement for husbands but not for wives.

Lomont (1966), using both sexes, found that female sensitizers not only saw themselves lower on dominance compared to repressors, but also saw themselves lower on dominance than they were seen by others. This difference did not exist for male sensitizers, nor for either sex at other levels of RS.

These are particularly interesting results in view of a study by Block and Bennet (1955). For a single individual (female), they used a Q-sort method to obtain information about her perceptions of 22 others and their perceptions of her. Factor analysis revealed four clusters that differed in the degree to which her perceptions were similar to others perceptions: 'Family,' 'Professional Colleagues,' 'Close Friends,' and 'Intimates.'

Of these, 'Family' and 'Close Friends' were similar in judging her and themselves to how she judged herself and them. There was a greater disparity between her perceptions and the perceptions of others in the 'Professional Colleagues' group. The greatest difference, however, was found in the cluster classified as 'Intimates,' in particular between herself and her husband from whom she was divorced. Where he rated her as warm and normally assertive and himself as similar, she saw herself as cold, dependent, and inclined to be hypercritical although she saw him as he saw himself.

Since coldness, dependency, et cetera are the characteristics attributed to self by the sensitizer, it seems logical to hypothesize that this individual was an example of the sensitizing female

that Lomont found in his study. Even more important, since this couple was divorced, is the possibility that these discrepancies between self and other percepts are related to, and may define, the underlying dynamics of marital adjustment.

The accuracy of interpersonal perception that seems reflected in Block and Bennet's study was more directly measured in an investigation by Turk (1963). On the assumption that the physician-nurse dyad represents professionally a close parallel to the more personal marital relationship, his results are interesting indeed. These results included, not only a comparison of self concept and description by others, but also comparisons of self concept versus description of other as well. On a measure of task enjoyment, physicians rated themselves and nurses, while nurses rated themselves and physicians. In the repressing nurses group, the nurse's self ratings and ratings of the physicians correlated .69, while in the sensitizing nurses group, this correlation was .30. This seems to indicate that repressors see others as they see themselves, while other factors determine a discrepancy between the way sensitizers perceive themselves and the way they perceive others.

Thus, the personality variables being tapped by the RS seem to play a leading role in interpersonal perception. It seems useful, therefore, to summarize research findings employing the RS as a means of ascertaining what is being measured.

Findings of RS research. In addition to those results reported

above it is now known that:

"... the higher an individual's score on the RS, the more likely he is on other instruments to indicate a discrepancy between his self concept and his self ideal, to describe himself in negative and self-depreciating terms, to report incongruencies among feelings, values, and environmental consequences, and more specifically to say that he enjoys behavior which he believes to be morally wrong and which is likely to have unpleasant consequences. Further, as RS scores increase (toward the sensitization end of the scale), the more likely an individual is to describe his own behavior and feelings as hostile (8, pp.189-190).

Other findings strongly suggest a linear relationship between sensitizing defenses and maladjustment, (with the exception of one study) where extreme repressors were seen to fit into the pattern of chronic overcontrol which included rigidity, conventionality, moralistic views, and (in the criminal sample studied) a greater probability of psychosis (Megargee and Mendelsohn, 1964)" (8, pp.207-208).

Note, however, that all of these studies are related to an individual's self ratings, i.e., how he rates himself on paper and pencil tests. Using other means of measuring, quite different results have been obtained.

A study by Lomont (1963) concluded, "...RS is highly related to self-reported aggression, but not at all with (the Holtzman) ink blot aggression. This finding is in keeping with the clinical hypothesis that repression censors an individual's self report of aggression but that the ink blot measure of aggression largely circumvents censorship."

In addition to these findings, a report by Lazarus and Alfert (1964) indicates that repressors give physiological evidence of anxiety while verbally denying such feelings. Further and based

on review of the concept of repression by Mackinnon and Dukes "the RS has been found relevant in predicting (1) inhibition of perception, (2) inhibition of memory, and (3) inhibition of response" 8, p.186).

It appears, then that the RS, rather than being a measure of any one particular personality variable, actually reflects an individual's defense network, that is, the system of coping mechanisms by which he grapples with anxiety.

CHAPTER III

THE PRESENT STUDY

A. Implications of Research Results. Early studies on marriage were aimed at basic sociological questions of areas of agreement and common interests as a means of predicting marital success or failure. As such, they offered very little to the researcher interested in the basic dynamics that bring about a particular pairing of two people. As was pointed out, this was in large part due to the fact that neither instruments for measuring these dynamics, nor a theoretical framework in which to view them had as yet been developed.

A theoretical approach growing out of perception studies emerged in the 1950's. This approach specified that the behaviors occurring between two people, i.e., how they act with reference to each other, is largely the result of how they perceive one another which, in turn, is determined partly by their feelings about, and percepts themselves.

Within this framework of interpersonal perception, the ICI was developed as a means of gaining insight into as much of the total perceptual environment as was possible, i.e., not just an individual's perceptions of himself, but also others' perceptions of him. These areas seemed at least hypothetically valid in that how an individual perceives himself should indicate his level of self esteem and correspondingly his level of defensiveness. This, in turn, should affect how he behaves toward others, and their resulting perceptions of him.

It remained for Luckey to point out how these variables interacted in the marital relationship. She found that satisfaction in marriage was related: (1) to perceived similarity between the self concept and description by the mate, although there was a sex difference for this relationship; and (2) to how affectionate the self and/or mate was perceived.

These latter results on affection seem validated by Goodman's findings on a similar dimension or need, nurturance, which he hypothesized as a basis for mate selection since all married couples in his sample showed significance on this variable. However, his prime concern was to investigate complementarity as well as similarity which he found to be highly related to an individual's level of self acceptance on both the dominance and nurturance dimensions.

The RS research of Altrocchi (1961, 1964) and Lomont (1963, 1966) confirmed his findings. The more general studies indicated that sensitizers saw themselves not only as less loving and dominant than they were seen by others, but also as less loving and dominant than repressors saw themselves. However, when sex was added to these variables, Lomont found that it was in fact the female sensitizer who was responsible for the large difference between self concept and description by another person. Such a result adds credence to Luckey's findings that a high correlation between self concept and description by mate was related to the marital satisfaction of husbands but not wives.

In summary then, it would seem that the perceived similarities and complementarities of the marital partners differs for the two sexes, and that these perceptions are determined, at least in part, by the basic defensive patterns reflected in RS scores.

However, these perceptions of the marital partners can be compared for similarity and complementarity in two ways: by comparison (1) of self concept with description by mate, or (2) by self concept with description of mate. Here a more basic element of perceptual accuracy emerges. In getting at the underlying dynamics that go into forming a perception of another individual, it would seem necessary to know something about the defense system of the perceiver. This information can only be intimated in a comparison of self concept with description by another; whereas a comparison of self concept and description of another, especially in conjunction with a well-validated measure of defense, can supply information as to those personality variables that are most important in perception. Thus, ultimately, the basic elements that determine accuracy of interpersonal perception with all its consequences, may be ascertainable.

B. Rationale. On the basis of the foregoing studies, it appears that interpersonal perception in the marital relationship is a function of the amount of dominance and affection attributed to the self and to the mate. More specifically, it would seem that perceptual patterns are directly affected by the agreement between

the amount of dominance and affection an individual perceives in himself and the amount he perceives in his mate. Moreover, all these variables, affecting as they do perception, are related to an individual's own particular defense pattern.

If it is assumed that the way a person feels about himself influences the way he perceives his mate, there are at least two possible ways in which this assumption might be hypothesized to function: via perceived similarity, or via perceived complementarity (Goodman, 1963; Turk, 1963).

First, it appears that there is a better than chance probability that individuals perceive their mates in a manner similar to the way in which they perceive themselves. In terms of the ICL, this means that people may rate their mates as similar to their own self rating on dominance and love. Such a result would argue strongly for a projective defense pattern at work in one's perceptions of his spouse.

Secondly, there is also evidence to indicate that individuals will tend to see their mates in a manner complimentary to the way they see themselves. This is in keeping with the research findings on the ICL (Leary, 1957). Considering both the dominance and acceptance dimensions of this scale as indicators of interpersonal behavior, it was found that dominant behavior tended to provoke submissive behavior and vice-versa; however, there was no such complementarity on the acceptance dimension since affectionate

behavior provokes affection and hostility provokes hostility.

It would seem then that in the intense interpersonal setting of marriage, a person who is dominant would tend to see his mate as submissive and vice-versa; however, a person who was affectionate would not tend to see his mate as hostile, but rather would perceive her also as affectionate.

On the ICL, dominance is measured along a standard score continuum of 100 points with a mean of 50. It is possible, therefore, to derive a complimentary mathematical point equidistant from the mean in the opposite direction from the individual's rating of himself. Confirmation of the personality compliment as predicting an individual's rating of his mate would indicate that feelings of superiority or inferiority in terms of one's own feelings of dominance or strength cause him to see his mate as opposite to himself on this trait.

However, on the basis of Goodman's finding that those high and low on self acceptance were, respectively, similar and complimentary to their mates on dominance and nurturance, it seems logical to hypothesize that the compliment as predictor of rating of mate will hold true only for sensitizers, whereas it will be the repressor's self concept that will be the reference point for his description of his mate.

Perceptions of mate can be evaluated in still another way. Since both Altrocchi (1963, 1964) and Lomont (1966) found such

high correlations between self concept on the ICL and RS scores, there is apparently some overlap in what these two instruments measure. In addition, the vast amount of research presents a possibility for wider evaluation of any results obtained with the RS. If the sex variable is controlled (Luckey, 1960; Lomont, 1966), a measure of an individual's defense predispositions, such as the RS, can be compared with his perceptions of his mate as a means of ascertaining how perceptions are formed.

C. Hypotheses. On the basis of the facts described above, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis I: The self concept (SC) of the repressor on both dominance and love will predict his description of his mate (DM) on both of these dimensions.

Hypothesis II: The personality compliment (PC) of the sensitizer's SC will predict his DM on dominance.

Hypothesis III: There will be a significant interaction when RS and sex are compared with regard to the amount of dominance or love perceived in the mate. That is, whether ICL scores are high or low will be related to and affected by defense patterns and sex.

D. Method.

Subject: To test these hypotheses, 30 mated couples from the American University and American Embassy in Beirut were asked to fill out questionnaire booklets. The couples had been married from eight months to 29 years with an average of eight years.

Tests: The measure of general tendency to repression (RS) was Byrne's (1961) Repression Sensitization Scale. Low scores on this scale indicate strong repressive tendencies. Leary's (1957) ICL was used for both self descriptions and descriptions of mate. Each S. described his self concept on the dominance dimension (SCD) and on the acceptance, or love, dimension (SCL), and his mate on dominance (DMD) and acceptance (DML).

Experimental Design: These measures were combined into a booklet with proper instructions, distributed to couples to be completed in their leisure time, and returned. Ss were advised that complete anonymity was insured by this method. They were also asked not to show their responses to their mate. It was felt that these instructions would allow Ss to be as frank as possible in their responses.

In evaluating the results, RS scores were rank ordered. Repressors were defined as those scoring in the lower half of the ranking, while sensitizers were defined as those scoring in the upper half.

To test the hypothesis that the repressor perceives his mate as similar to himself on both dominance and love, it was decided to correlate the SCD-DMD and SCL-DML scores using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. A positive correlation, significantly different from zero, would indicate that the respective dominance and love scores on the DM measure increase with

increases in the individual's SC score. This would mean that repressors tend to see their mates as similar to themselves along the dominance and love dimensions. Thus the DM would be predictable from the individual's own SC rather than from the actual personality characteristics of the mate.

The method of testing the second hypothesis, that the personality compliment (PC) of the sensitizer's SC would predict his DM, was provided by the construction of the ICL itself. First, as pointed out earlier, Leary and his associates (1957) found a reciprocal relationship among the behaviors measured by the dominance and love dimensions. That is, when dominant behavior was exhibited, it provoked submissive behavior in the perceiver. Similarly, submissive behavior evoked a dominant reaction. However, loving behavior provoked loving behavior, while hostile behavior evoked hostility. It appears, then, that there can be complementarity along the dominance dimension, but at least the way this particular scale is constructed, not along the love dimension.

Secondly, the standardization of scores along the dominance dimension of the ICL provides a simple method for defining complementarity. These scores range from 1 to 100 with a mean of 50. A mathematical point equidistant from the mean in the opposite direction from the SC defines the PC. This point will itself be complimentary to the SC, i.e., as the SC increases, this point will decrease. A significant negative correlation of the SC versus the

DM then will essentially parallel this point. Such a result, therefore, would reflect complementarity in the SC versus DM comparison. That is to say, as the sensitizer's dominance score decreases, his description of his mate's dominance score will increase. This complementarity would therefore be confirmed by a negative correlation.

In view of the Lomont (1966) article, it was decided that in addition to being broken down by RS, the SC versus DM correlation should also be divided according to sex. This and other studies indicate that there are differences in the way males and females perceive themselves. This required that separate correlations be calculated for each of the following SCD-DMD combinations: repressing husbands, sensitizing husbands, repressing wives, and sensitizing wives. These correlations were then repeated for the SCL-DML dimension.

To test the third hypothesis, that RS and sex will interactionally affect amount of dominance and love attributed to mate, two analyses of variance were employed, one for each dimension. Each analysis consisted of a 2 x 2 table, RS x sex. It was felt that this method would provide data by which the following differences could be evaluated: differences between the amount of dominance and love attributed to mates by sensitizers versus repressors; the same difference between husbands versus wives; and whether these different ways of rating mate varied for husbands and wives at different levels of RS.

Results and Discussion.

Scores were computed for RS, SC, and DM for each of the thirty husbands and thirty wives. Inspection of the data revealed that husbands and wives tended to have similar RS scores. Accordingly, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation was run between the RS scores of husbands and those of wives. The resulting r of .36 was significant at the .05 level.

This correlation indicated that repressors tend to be married to repressing mates and sensitizers tend to be married to sensitizing mates. How this situation develops could be argued in two ways. In the first place, an individual might be attracted to, and choose as a mate, someone who would score in the same range as he himself on the RS. On the other hand, it might be hypothesized that they have become more alike on the dimensions measured by the RS as a function of living together.

In themselves, however, such results are meaningful in terms of what is known about the RS. Therefore, it can be stated with some degree of certainty that married couples will behave in very similar ways. More specifically, they will exhibit similar levels of manifest anxiety, self-esteem, physiological arousal, manifest and covert hostility, openness to social influence, and adjustment. Furthermore, they should show similar tendencies in regard to personality defense, e.g., repressors tend to use denial and avoidance type mechanisms, whereas sensitizers tend to move toward

anxiety in an attempt to control it (Byrne, 1964). On the basis of the obtained correlation it might even be predicted that their responses to humor would be similar. The correlation of .36 carries the statistical implication that approximately $(.36^2)$, or 16% of the variance of individuals' RS scores can be accounted for by the RS scores of their spouses.

In general then, it may be said that in addition to any perceived similarity or complementarity that may exist between spouses, there is the real similarity of their defense mechanisms. This seems to confirm the hypothesis made on the basis of the MacKinnon and Dukes (1962) study, that the relationship of RS and perceptual defense disposes individuals to perceive themselves in similar ways.

Recall the sensitizing female subject of the Block and Bennet study (See p.10). In the light of the present findings, the fact that her marital adjustment was poor, finally ending in divorce, might be attributed to the defensive tendencies of her husband. That is to say, his rating of himself and her as warm and dominant indicates that he had strong repressive tendencies as opposed to her sensitizing trends. This lack of agreement between their respective defensive systems, or means of coping with anxiety, might well make it difficult for them to communicate with each other.

However, as mentioned earlier, RS agreement as shown by the significant correlation between husbands' and wives' RS scores

indicates only the real similarity between them, i.e., the way in which individuals are similar on their self ratings. How they perceive each other, that is, their perceived similarity, was the basis of the first and second hypotheses: both the dominance and love self concepts of the repressor will be significantly related to how he sees his mate, and the compliment of the self concept on the dominance dimension will be significantly related to description of mate for the sensitizer. These were partially confirmed by the findings shown in Tables 1 and 2.

The data of Table 1 indicate that the description of the repressor's mate can be predicted from the repressor's rating of himself only for the wife and only on the dominance dimension. Table 2 indicates that, rather than perceiving the mate as complimentary on dominance as would have been indicated by a negative correlation on that dimension, the sensitizing wife perceive her mate as similar as well, but, at the sensitization end of the RS scale, only on the love dimension.

These results indicate that perceptions of the mate are greatly affected by the pattern of defenses an individual employs, as indicated by his level of RS, and even more importantly by his sex. With regard to married couples, wives' perception of mate is markedly influenced by their evaluation of themselves, while the insignificant correlations for the husbands demonstrate that their feelings about themselves in general do not affect

Repressors

	Dominance	Love
Husbands	.23	.09
Wives	.23 ⁺	.019

+ significant at the .05 level

TABLE 1 : Self Concept versus Description of Mate Correlations
for Repressing Husbands and Wives.

Sensitizers

	Dominance	Love
Husbands	-.08	.19
Wives	.19	.64 ⁺⁺⁺

+++ significant at the .001 level

TABLE 2 : Self Concept versus Description of Mate
Correlations for Sensitizing Husbands and
Wives.

their perceptions of their wives.

The reasons for this difference between husband and wife perceptions is not clear. It may well be that a man's role as breadwinner in a competitive work situation has served to make him more realistic in his judgements of his environment. Since women generally lack this experience, their judgement may be more subjective. At the same time, the data indicate that wives vary with regard to the dimensions of their subjectivity according to their pattern of defenses. In view of what is known about the RS, it is possible to comment on the reasons low scoring wives judge their mates according to their self ratings on dominance, while high scoring wives judge their mates according to their self ratings on love. It has been repeatedly shown in the literature that repressors tend to be more conservative and traditionalistic in their views. At the same time, they are ambitious, competitive, and enterprising. A repressing woman, therefore, might feel it necessary to express her competitiveness through her husband so as to maintain the traditional role of submissive wife. This would cause her to place more emphasis on the dominance aspect of her husband's personality as opposed to the loving aspect. At the same time, the need to see him as more dominant than herself would necessitate her rating him increasingly higher on the dominance dimension as her own score on this factor increased.

The sensitizer behaves quite differently. He over-reacts to others in that he is suggestible, easily influenced by others' reaction and opinions, and self-defensive. On the basis of this, it becomes clear why such an individual, in this case a wife, would see the affection dimension of personality as the most important in any kind of interpersonal situation. That is to say, by protecting herself in what is perceived to be a loving environment, she satisfies her need for approval-dependency and the fear of the low self-esteem person in expressing dominance and aggression. This might contrast with the husband who might be expected to have been less punished for these latter behaviors, have less of a need to be defensive about them, and therefore, less of a need to have a distorted perception of his mate.

The relationship of these results to previous findings is reflected in Luckey's study (1960a) which has been supported by the results of this experiment. Her finding that there was a sex difference for perceived similarity reflected in a positive correlation between self concept and description by mate, seems also to be true of the relationship between self concept and description of mate. Further, her finding that amount of affection attributed to the mate accounted for marital satisfaction may have been a reflection of the sensitizers' needs according to the present findings. That is to say, the very high correlation between the sensitizer's SC and DM on the love dimension may have accounted

for at least part of the significant correlation she found between amount of affection attributed to self and/or mate and marital satisfaction.

On the basis of the Goodman study, it had been hypothesized that repressors would see their mates as similar, as his high self-accepters had, while sensitizers would see their mates as complimentary, as his low self-accepters had. Why this turned out otherwise, especially considering the .61 correlation between his measure of self acceptance and the RS, may have been a function of the difference between the scales used to measure dominance and love: in the case of the present study, the ICL, while Goodman employed the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule.

The most important relationship between the present study and previous findings lays in how it relates to, and offers possible explanations for, the findings of Lomont (1966). He showed that the perceptions of the sensitizing female were quite different from male sensitizers, or for either males or females at other levels of RS. In the present study, the highest correlation was for the comparison of the sensitizing female's SC and her description of her mate on the love dimension. The most parsimonious hypothesis to account for both these results and those of the Lomont study is that she makes extensive use of the mechanisms of projection in judging others, in this case her mate; and that this accounts for the discrepancy between her own perceptions and the perceptions of others.

One point is important to stress in all of the findings reported in this section. Namely, these results characterize only a restricted range of the population from which they were drawn. That is, the total possible range of RS scores is from 1 to 156. The range of our sample, however, was only 15 to 89. The respective standard deviations are 19 and 11. Therefore, we are dealing with a restricted range, and with a population that is more homogenous than the parent population. A sample which included the extremes of the scale would have allowed for more appropriate comparisons.

In order to analyze the data meaningfully, it was decided to examine the data for trends using only the extreme scores of the RS and those clustering around the mean (\bar{X} of 48.8). Tables 3 and 4 demonstrate the means of the five middle, five most repressing, and five most sensitizing husbands and wives in the sample. These means include the SC, MD, and DM on both the dominance and love dimensions. From these data, some interesting trends emerged.

On the dominance dimension, the mate descriptions of these individuals and their descriptions of their mates do not appear to differ when a comparison is made among the cells of the table. This seems to indicate the possibility of stereotyped MD and DM descriptions. This may well be based upon an idealized conception of the mate.

Table 3 also indicates a curvilinear relationship between SC and RS for wives. While the repressing and sensitizing wives are comparatively low on dominance and lower in both cases than their husbands, the medium range wife is a good deal higher: higher than her husband. Whether this difference between the medium range wife and her husband would be significant in a large sample is questionable since the discrepancy between the two scores is small compared to the discrepancies between the repressing and sensitizing wives and husbands. It appears then that the average wife sees herself as her husband's equal or superior on those variables that characterize dominance, while the repressing and sensitizing wives perceive themselves as weak and submissive.

Table 4 indicates the love scores of these groups. Both the repressing husbands and the repressing wives see themselves, and are described by their mates, as unemotional people. Each, however, perceives the other as more loving than they see themselves. This may indicate the need of the inhibited person for a close relationship with someone who can express the affectional feelings he himself cannot express.

Among the sensitizers, both husbands and wives perceive themselves as more loving than either the medium or repressing group. However, the husbands see their mates as colder than the mates see themselves, while the wives see their mates as warmer than the mates see themselves. Again, as a function of having to compete in a job, the maladjusted sensitizer may be, or feel

Dominance

		Repressors	Normals	Sensitizers
	SC ⁺	69.2	63.8	58.8
Husbands :	MD	66.8	71.4	66.8
	DM	62.4	69.0	68.0
	SC	54.0	69.2	48.0
Wives :	MD	62.8	65.8	65.6
	DM	64.0	66.6	66.0

+ On these tables, self concept (SC), mate's description (MD), and description of mate (DM) will be referred to by their respective abbreviations.

TABLE 3 : Means of Self Concepts, Mate's Description and Description of Mate on the Dominance Dimension of the Interpersonal Check List across three levels of Repression-Sensitization

		Repressors	Normals	Sensitizers
	SC	39.8	45.0	56.8
Husbands:	MD	34.4	51.8	53.4
	DM	54.0	65.2	38.0
	SC	38.4	35.8	45.6
Wives :	MD	38.6	51.4	55.6
	DM	45.8	47.6	52.2

TABLE 4 : Means of Self Concept, Mate's Description
and Description of Mate on the Love Dimension
of the Interpersonal Check List across
three levels of Repression-Sensitization

himself to be, inadequate, and want more reassurance and warmth from his wife that she can give. The result of this would be to make them both feel that he was the warmer.

The normal wives' self concept on love is the lowest of the six SC's, although they are rated much higher on this dimension by their husbands. It is probable that their feelings about themselves as dominant people are incongruent with self percepts of warmth. The discrepancy between the husbands' DM mean and the wives' SC mean (51.4 versus 36.8) is impressive. It may mean that his view of her is distorted, e.g., the cultural ideal of her as loving has not been challenged by reality. On the other hand, she may appear more loving than she sees herself to be..

The most significant trend in the tables, however, seems to be related to the SC of the husbands. It appeared that as the dominance score decreased across levels of RS, the love score increased. An analysis of variance was run for repressing and sensitizing husbands on the love and dominance dimensions. The means of the cells are given in Table 5. As can be seen, the dominance and love scores appear to converge at the sensitization end of the RS. Table 6 gives a summary of the analysis of variance. The main effect for the dominance-love dimension and the interaction of RS with dominance and love is significant at the .20 level. In view of the size of the groups and the restricted range of the RS in this sample, it appears that these

Husbands' Self Concepts

	Repressors	Normals	Sensitizers
Dominance :	69.2	63.8	58.8
Love :	39.8	45.0	56.8

TABLE 5 : Means of Husbands' Self Concepts on the Dominance and Love Dimensions of the Interpersonal Check List at three levels of Repression-Sensitization.

Husband Self Concept

Source of Variance	df	Mean Square	F
RS	1	275.63	---
Dom-Love	1	708.05	2.28 ⁺
RS x Dom-Love	1	765.63	2.47 ⁺
Within	16	310.80	---
Total	19	10,249.75	---

+ significant at the .20 level

TABLE 6 : Summary of analysis of variance of Husbands' Self Concepts on the Dominance and Love Dimensions of the Interpersonal Check List at different levels of Repression-Sensitization.

results would be statistically reliable if the design allowed for more precision through an increase in sample size. The F ratios indicate that there is reason to believe that for husbands, as self ratings on dominance increase, self ratings on the love dimension decrease. This is parallel to the findings for medium range (normal) wives. Therefore, it is possible that for the husband too, feelings to warmth and affection may be incongruent to his perception of himself as dominant.

Hypothesis 111 stated that the description of mate would be different for husbands and wives at different levels of RS on both the dominance and love dimensions. Tables 7 and 8 give the means, respectively, of the DMD and DML for 20 husbands and 20 wives at different levels of RS.

Table 7 reveals a trend for repressing husbands to see their wives as weaker than sensitizing husbands see their wives (means of 56.6 verses 62.1). Repressing wives, however, see their mates as dominant, whereas sensitizing wives see their mates as less dominant (means of 68.0 versus 62.3). In view of these means, it seemed reasonable to carry out the planned analysis of variance on these data. A summary of this analysis is shown in Table 9. As can be seen, the main effect for RS was not significant. The variance came about due to the differences in mate ratings by husbands as opposed to wives, and by husbands as opposed to wives at different levels of RS. Although the significance level is

Description of Mate on Dominance

	Repressors	Sensitizers
Husbands	56.6	62.1
Wives	68.0	62.3

TABLE 7 : Means of the Description of Mate on Dominance
for Husbands and Wives at two levels of
Repression-Sensitization.

Description of Mate on Love

	Repressors	Sensitizers
Husbands	42.5	40.6
Wives	46.3	44.7

TABLE 8 : Means of Description of Mate on Love for
Husbands and Wives at two levels of
Repression-Sensitization.

Description of Mate on Dominance

Source of Variance	df	Mean Square	F
RS	1	00.10	---
Husband-Wife	1	336.40	1.47 ⁺
RS x Husband-Wife	1	313.60	1.37 ⁺
Within	36	228.87	---

TABLE 9 : Summary of analysis of variance of Description of Mate on Dominance for Husbands and Wives at different levels of Repression-Sensitization.

+ significant at .25 level

low (.25), the means comparisons appear to be substantiated in that at the repression end of the scale, husbands see their mates as submissive, while wives see their mates as strong. At the sensitizing end of the RS, however, the dominance ratings given to mates converge, with the same mean score being assigned whether the mate is a husband or a wife. Specific critical differences among the means were not computed for these data, however, because the significance levels were marginal, and the groups were small.

On the love dimension, a comparison of the means in Table 8 indicated that there was no difference in the way husbands and wives rated their mates at different levels of RS. In view of these results, it was decided that the planned analysis of variance would be superfluous.

Summary.

On the basis of these results, it appears that interpersonal perception in the marital setting is related to self concept and repression-sensitization. A significant correlation was found between RS score of an individual's mate and his own RS score. This correlation indicates that the level of repression-sensitization of a given individual can be predicted to some degree from the level of repression-sensitization of his mate. A significant correlation was also found between the self concept of repressing wives and the description of their mate on the dominance dimension of the ICL and between the self concept of sensitizing wives and description of their mates on the love dimension.

It was hypothesized that the ability of the self concept to predict the DM in these instances was a function of the defense system of repressors and sensitizers. The repressing wife may have power strivings, but displace them onto her mate since her more conservative views cause her to perceive herself as submissive. The sensitizing wife is defensive and easily threatened and, therefore, needs to see her mate as warm and affectionate. It was pointed out that, due to their role, men are more likely to perceive their mates more realistically.

Some trends were noted in the relationships among self concept, description by mate, and description of mate for husbands and wives at different levels of RS on both the dominance and the love dimensions. The most clear-cut of these involved the self concept of the repressing and sensitizing husbands on both dominance and love. These trends were subjected to an analysis of variance. The results were just below the .10 level of significance and indicated that as the dominance score of husbands' self concepts decreases, the love score increases as the sensitizing end of the RS is approached.

Another analysis of variance was run to test the hypothesis that husbands and wives perceive their mates differently and that this varies as a function of RS.. Only the .25 level of significance was reached, but this appeared to be a function of the size of the groups and the limited range of the RS. More extreme RS scores might have increased the level of significance.

APPENDIX 1.

SCORES OF WIVES ON RS, SELF CONCEPT, AND DESCRIPTION OF MATE

Wife's Code No.	RS Self	RS Mate	SCD	DMD	SCL	DML
28	15	40	49	61	44	36
8	26	38	63	66	26	23
20	31	26	45	65	42	37
2	36	42	61	82	24	70
19	37	37	52	46	56	63
21	39	30	58	63	56	27
29	40	46	54	93	37	65
11	42	36	53	63	32	58
7	42	63	66	89	44	46
24	43	56	51	52	43	38
18	44	54	71	66	40	31
15	45	32	55	65	46	61
16	45	61	73	71	31	18
1	50	38	44	69	33	63
10	52	77	60	69	42	73
12	53	31	88	64	28	32
32	53	59	69	54	38	55
4	53	29	85	77	38	15
22	53	63	37	58	60	57
34	54	55	43	75	55	69
31	55	60	57	46	13	30
33	56	49	59	75	33	8
27	59	45	61	80	46	56
26	60	54	79	43	47	57
9	60	43	42	49	41	35
17	61	34	41	53	17	26
3	63	61	57	75	45	37
30	63	61	45	70	73	63
6	66	89	36	47	39	73
25	81	42	62	85	54	62

Table 2

SCORES OF HUSBANDS ON RS,
SELF CONCEPT, AND DESCRIPTION OF MATE

Husbands's Code No.	RS	SCD	DMD	SCL	DML
20	26	62	63	44	37
4	29	71	64	5	50
21	30	74	71	28	66
12	31	84	49	76	56
15	32	55	65	46	61
17	34	59	33	60	9
11	36	69	54	36	49
19	37	50	41	59	10
8	38	59	60	18	34
1	38	95	66	83	53
28	40	79	68	42	42
25	42	65	80	57	56
2	42	61	82	24	70
9	43	55	51	41	75
27	45	59	64	61	83
29	46	77	68	20	54
33	49	54	23	78	61
26	54	51	56	39	5
18	54	60	58	43	33
34	55	59	48	65	51
24	56	42	37	29	51
32	59	39	61	40	44
31	60	45	31	33	5
3	61	61	76	70	79
30	61	79	76	39	37
16	61	61	68	21	43
22	63	52	47	51	25
7	63	45	73	26	51
10	77	5	89	82	24
6	89	43	63	54	47

Table 3

SCORES FOR WIVES AT THE EXTREMES
AND MIDDLE OF THE RS. CONTINUUM

	Ss	<u>Dominance</u>			<u>Love</u>		
		SC	DM	MD	SC	DM	MD
Repressors	28	49	61	68	44	36	42
	8	63	66	60	26	23	34
	20	45	65	63	42	37	37
	2	61	82	82	24	70	70
	19	52	46	41	56	63	10
Normals	1	44	69	66	33	63	53
	10	60	69	89	42	73	24
	12	88	64	49	28	32	56
	32	69	54	61	38	55	44
	4	85	77	64	38	15	50
Sensitizers	17	41	53	33	17	26	9
	3	57	75	76	45	37	79
	30	45	70	76	73	63	37
	6	36	47	63	39	73	47
	25	62	85	80	54	62	56

Table 4

SCORES FOR HUSBANDS AT THE EXTREMES
AND MIDDLE OF THE RS CONTINUUM

	Sc	<u>Dominance</u>			<u>Love</u>		
		SC	DM	MD	SC	DM	MD
Repressors	20	62	63	65	44	37	37
	4	71	64	77	5	50	15
	21	74	71	63	28	66	27
	12	84	49	64	76	56	32
	15	55	65	65	46	61	61
Normals	28	79	68	61	42	42	36
	25	65	80	85	57	56	62
	2	61	82	82	24	70	70
	9	55	51	49	41	75	35
	27	59	64	80	61	83	56
Sensitizers	16	61	68	71	21	43	18
	22	52	47	58	51	25	57
	7	45	73	89	26	51	46
	10	5	89	69	82	24	73
	6	43	63	47	54	47	73

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