The Social Construction of Rape Research: Exploring Epistemologies and Evaluating Methods

Edith M. Fisher
Western Michigan University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dissertations

Part of the Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence Commons, and the Gender and Sexuality Commons

Recommended Citation
https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dissertations/1099

This Dissertation-Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate College at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact maira.bundza@wmich.edu.
THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF RAPE RESEARCH: EXPLORING EPISTEMOLOGIES AND EVALUATING METHODS

by

Edith M. Fisher

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Sociology

Advisor: David Hartman, Ph.D

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
June 2004
The most widely known national study of rape found that one in four college-age women has been the victim of rape or attempted rape. Conservative writers have criticized that study for overestimating the possible prevalence of rape in the U.S. My research uses more sensitive instruments and administration techniques, seeking to estimate the prevalence of rape in the lives of women at a large midwestern public university. I address questions about the validity of previous rape research and compare methods of collecting sexual violence information by questionnaire (322 mailed surveys and 300 interviewer-administered surveys). Additional interviews with 62 of the participants using nine sexually explicit vignettes explore the meanings that women place on sexual violence terminology used in rape research. I find a significantly higher prevalence of rape than earlier research indicates, and similar prevalence rates of attempted rape and other forms of sexual violence. There is no significant difference in the prevalence of completed rape when mailed survey findings are compared to personal interviews; however, interviews yield significantly more reports of attempted rape, especially incidents in which the victim is voluntarily intoxicated at the time. When conceptualizing rape abstractly, women exhibit relatively
high degrees of definitional clarity and consensus; however, when asked to assess concrete examples, these levels of clarity and consensus diminish dramatically. I discuss the implications of these findings for policy development, future research, and for our understanding of rape and its impact on our selves, our relationships, and our society.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 622 female students who participated by sharing with me their time, their stories, and their encouragement each deserve a special note of appreciation. My committee (David Hartmann, Paula Brush, Rachel Whaley, and Joetta Carr), the sociology department, the Kercher Center for Social Research, and Western Michigan University all deserve a note of appreciation for their efforts in this research.

There are others who deserve acknowledgement as well, because without their involvement, I would not have made it through this process. Dr. Carol Voytas kept me alive through the asthma, the pneumonia, the depression, and the anxiety. Cheryl Peacock, Susan Standish, Craig Tollini, and Bob Wait were there on a daily basis throughout that insufferably long year of data collection and held my hand when I cried, listened when I needed to talk, made me laugh when I didn’t think I could, and consistently went out of their way to be supportive, encouraging, and kind. Without Craig’s generous assistance with setting up the data files and surviving the analysis process, I would have given up long ago. Other friends too numerous to name played librarian and kept me supplied with wonderful books and rich articles to read, which kept me grounded and calm throughout the process.

My family made great sacrifices that must not go unmentioned. My grandparents, Walt and Lucy Fisher, lost the last few years of their lives with their granddaughter and great granddaughter. They got to share the roughest years of our lives with us but missed sharing our best years with us. My mom, Carol, helped me get a house so my daughter and I could live peacefully with our dogs and cats in our own private space. One patio block at a time, she turned our over-shaded backyard
into a beautiful area where the dogs could play, I could read and watch the birds, and we could host a multitude of fabulous sociology graduate student association parties.

Having a loving and safe home environment made this degree and our growth through it all possible. During the spring and summer months I had to go back home to take care of my mom after her stroke in the middle of all of this, my girlfriend, Cheryl, literally stepped in and took over for me while I was gone. She took care of my daughter, my animals, my house, my bills, and me. She covered my back like no one before her ever had, and I will never forget the depth of her generosity and love.

And maybe most importantly, my teenage daughter, Carol, was gracious enough to at least pretend to be more interested in her high school drama department and forensics team than dating at least until the interviews were all over, and for that, I will forever be grateful. When we left Indiana for graduate school together, Carol a.k.a. “the kid,” was a normal yet amazing 13-year-old adolescent girl, who hated school and loved such things as sports, music, animals, and art. Now that I am about to graduate, she is an exceptional young woman about to turn 20 years old, who is a freshman in college and works with preschool kids. She still loves sports, music, animals, and art, but gratefully she outgrew the love of professional wrestling!

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to three extraordinary men. First, I dedicate this dissertation to my therapist, Al, who literally saved my life about a decade ago. His faith in me, his brilliance as a therapist, and his unyielding generosity as a human being brought me out of the depths of PTSD hell and gave me the courage, the strength, and the faith in myself to survive one more day at a time. He celebrated my last graduation with me, and although cancer has stopped him from celebrating my final graduation with me in person, he has and always will remain a part of me.
Acknowledgments—continued

Second, I dedicate this dissertation to my dear friend, David. We fell in love upon introduction at college only eight short years ago. He was supposed to leave Indiana behind and move here with my daughter and me to start a new life with people who loved and respected him. Unfortunately, cancer had other plans for David as well. He died not quite a year ago, and the world has not seemed quite as bright to me since. I am tempted to wear the Wonder Woman costume underneath my robe at graduation in David’s honor, or at least the boots or a tiara. He would have loved that.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my darling husband, Bob. Falling in love with him was the biggest surprise of graduate school, and by far, the very best part. I have had this dissertation text inside of me for years but couldn’t get it out. I needed the unconditional love of a partner who both understands and respects me to be able to process this work and write it out. It has been excruciatingly painful, exhausting, invigorating, and thrilling, all at once. This research was the most difficult work I have ever been involved in, and because of the healthy environment my husband has created with me, I have grown through it and actually enjoyed myself. I had given up on finding a man like him 20 years ago when I decided they were all equally bad. Ten years ago I decided they existed, but they would never be interested in someone like me. Just as soon as I quit thinking about finding that other person meant just for me and started concentrating on being the best me I could be, there he was, sitting in that very same boat with me. We’ve been enjoying the honeymoon cruise ever since.

Edith M. Fisher
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ........................................................................................................ ii
LIST OF TABLES ............................................................................................................. xiii

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................ 1
   An Innocent Question ............................................................................................... 1
   A Gentle Warning to Readers ............................................................................... 3
   Research Questions ............................................................................................... 7
   Research Objectives ............................................................................................... 9
   Research Benefits ................................................................................................. 9

II. EPISTEMOLOGY ....................................................................................................... 17
   Feminism ................................................................................................................ 17
   Epistemology .......................................................................................................... 19
   Underlying Assumptions ....................................................................................... 30
   Experiences and Expectations .............................................................................. 33

III. RAPE ..................................................................................................................... 38
   Definitions ............................................................................................................... 38
      Conceptual Definitions ..................................................................................... 39
      Consent and Nonconsent .................................................................................. 42
      Prevalence .......................................................................................................... 43
      Victims and Rapists ......................................................................................... 45
      Victim Offender Relationships (VOR) .............................................................. 46
### Table of Contents—continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex/Gender</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarcity of Literature</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incarcerated Males</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation Comparisons</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbians</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Incarcerated Males</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causes</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol and Rape</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactions</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention and Intervention</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative and/or Qualitative Methods</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Survey Research Methods</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underlying Assumptions</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitive Subjects</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement Error</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of Questions</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context of Questions</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents—continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection Method</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Response Bias</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Violence Research Methods</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Definitions</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement Error</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Methodology</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Feminist Sexual Violence Research</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. PREVIOUS RESEARCH</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Rape Research</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Rape Research</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Koss (Ms. Magazine)</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Justice Statistics (NCVS)</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tjaden and Thoennes (NVAW)</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher, Cullen, and Turner (NCWSV)</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Rape Research</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backlash Against Feminist Rape Research</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses of Previous Rape Research</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. RESEARCH DESIGN</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions and Anticipated Outcomes</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents—continued

Population and Samples ................................................................. 157
The Surveys .................................................................................. 159
Data Collection Process ................................................................. 159
Instruments .................................................................................... 162
Questions ....................................................................................... 163
Incident Report ............................................................................. 172
The Interviews .............................................................................. 174
Data Collection Process ................................................................. 174
Instruments .................................................................................... 175
Revisions to the Survey Instrument ............................................... 175
Nine Vignettes .............................................................................. 178
Questions ....................................................................................... 180
The Process in Praxis ....................................................................... 182
Collecting Data and/or Raising Consciousness ................................ 182
Mixing Methods With Orthogonal Paradigms ............................... 185
Emotional Labor and the Midwives .............................................. 191
The Data Analysis .......................................................................... 194
Conceptualizations ....................................................................... 194
Operational Definitions .................................................................. 196
Analyses of the Four Questions ..................................................... 197

VII. FINDINGS—METHODS ............................................................. 200
Demographics of Female Student Population and Samples ............ 204
Table of Contents—continued

Question One—Methods Comparison ................................................... 212

Comparison of Quality Response Indicators ........................................... 212

Comparison of Mail and In Person Samples on Types of Sexually Violent Acts ............................................................ 216

Comparison of Mail and In Person Samples on Individual Screening Questions ............................................................ 217

Comparison of Individual Samples on Types of Sexual Violence ............................................................ 229

Comparison of Individual Samples on Rape and Attempted Rape ............................................................ 239

Question Two—Methods Evaluation .................................................... 247

Comments on the Survey .................................................... 247

Data Collection Method Preferences .................................................... 253

Gender Matching ............................................................ 257

Race Matching ............................................................ 259

Comparison of Koss and Fisher ............................................................ 262

Emotional Labor ............................................................ 266

VIII. FINDINGS—RAPE ............................................................ 272

Question Three—The Meanings of Sexual Violence for Women .... 272

Demographics ............................................................ 272

Incident Reports ............................................................ 274

Vignettes ............................................................ 279

Research Terminology ............................................................ 287

Assumptions About Giving Sexual Permission ................................ 300
Table of Contents—continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question Four—Rape Prevalence</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Violence Prevalence</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear and Expressed Refusal</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Shame</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligatory Sex</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in Meanings, Beliefs, and Actions</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. CONCLUSIONS, QUESTIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and Emotion</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and Power</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison of Data Collection Methods</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Violence (SV) and Violence Against Women (VAW)</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary and Involuntary Incapacitation</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Violence</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Sexual Violence—Rape and Attempted Rape</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Sexual Violence—Sexual Coercion</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internalized Sexual Violence—Sexual Self-Coercion</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional Sexual Violence—Sexual Shame</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensual Sex</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Prevention Strategies</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Prevention Strategies</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Prevention Strategies</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Agenda</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. HSIRB Approval Letters</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Schematic Representation of Data Collection Process</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Cover Letter</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Original Survey</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Original Incident Report</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Voluntary Informed Consent Forms</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Vignette Questions</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Revised Survey</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Revised Incident Report</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Vignette One</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Vignette Two</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Vignette Three</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Vignette Four</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents—continued

N. Vignette Five ................................................................. 418
O. Vignette Six ..................................................................... 420
P. Vignette Seven ................................................................ 422
Q. Vignette Eight ............................................................... 424
R. Vignette Nine ................................................................. 426
S. Interview Questions ....................................................... 428
BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................................. 430
LIST OF TABLES

1. Comparison of Competing Perspectives on Sexual Assault Prevention .... 76
2. Summary of National Rape Research...................................................... 135
3. Population Parameters .................................................................. 205
4. Comparison of Population and Total Sample on Demographics........... 207
5. Comparison of Population and Mail Sample on Demographics .......... 208
6. Comparison of Population and In Person Sample on Demographics ...... 210
7. Comparison of Mail Sample and In Person Sample on Demographics .... 211
8. Comparison of In Person Sample and Interview Sample on Demographics ........................................................................................................ 213
9. Comparison of Quality of Response Indicators for Samples.............. 214
10. Reported Acts of Sexual Violence: Comparison of Total, Mail and In Person Samples (Number of Acts and Rate of Acts Per Woman in the Sample) .................................................................................................................. 217
11. Reported Rapes Committed by Sex Partner ...................................... 219
12. Reported Rapes Committed by Known Persons Other Than Sex Partners ........................................................................................................ 221
13. Reported Rapes Committed by Strangers ......................................... 223
14. Reported Attempted Rapes ............................................................... 225
15. Other Acts of Sexual Violence Reported ........................................... 227
16. Comparison of Samples on Mutually Exclusive Categories (Women)..... 231
17. Comparison of Samples on Eight Categories of Sexual Violence (Women) ........................................................................................................ 233
List of Tables—continued

18. Comparison of Totals on Mutually Exclusive Categories (Koss Method) and Non-Exclusive Categories (Fisher Method) on Eight Categories of Sexual Violence .............................................................   234

19. Comparison of Incident Reports From Mail and In Person Samples on Eight Categories of Sexual Violence ......................................................................................... 237

20. Comparison of Individual Samples on Rape and Attempted Rape ............. 240

21. Comparison of Individual Samples on Victim—Offender Relationship ..... 242

22. Comparison of Samples on Incapacitation and Rape and Attempted Rape .......................................................................................................................... 244

23. Comparison of Individual Samples on Methods Preference Question...... 254

24. Comparison of Research Designs of Koss and Fisher ................................... 262

25. Comparison of Findings From Koss and Fisher ............................................. 263

26. Locations of Incidents Taken From Incident Reports ............................... 274

27. Relationship Terms From Incident Reports .............................................. 275

28. Types of Relationship Terms From Incident Reports ................................ 276

29. Affirmative Responses on Six Yes/No Questions From Incident Reports.......................................................... 277

30. Participants’ Assumptions About Sexual Permission.............................. 300

31. “Other” Assumptions Specified by Participants......................................... 301

32. Percentage of the General Population Participants Believe Have Assumptions Consistent With Their Own .............................................................. 302

33. Comparison of Prevalence Rates From Koss and Fisher ....................... 305

34. Reported Rape or Attempted Rape in Relation to Rape Risk Factors at WMU .................................................................................................................. 307

35. Distribution of the Eight Sexual Violence Categories by Age of Victim From Incident Reports .......................................................... 307

xv
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"I have never been free of the fear of rape" (Griffin, 1971, p. 22).

An Innocent Question

Has anyone ever asked you a question that made your entire life flash before your eyes as you attempted to answer it? It happened to me not quite 15 years ago. I was running an in-home day care eight miles north of my hometown, in a townhouse apartment where I lived with my daughter and second husband. I was under the illusion that because I was working with children outside the city limits of "home," I had left all its ugliness behind me, an illusion that was shattered in an instant by the simple question of an innocent. One of my clients had two children just slightly older than my daughter, who was about six years old at the time. The three children had just returned from school and wanted to watch something on TV. As they surfed the channels looking for their program, they saw one of those public service announcements that offered a toll-free number for victims of rape to contact for help. The younger of the siblings looked up at me with her beautiful brown eyes and asked, "What's rape?"

Instantly, I felt the tears well up in my eyes as the 25 years of my life's history flashed through my mind. How could an innocent child ask such a complicated, difficult, and painful question? How could I answer her question in terms that would make sense to her without destroying the innocence captured in her doe-like eyes? I
reached deep within myself to find the innocent part, the child-like part of me uncorrupted by the world outside, the part of me that I allowed to talk and play freely with my own daughter. I let this part answer for me, “You know how people who like each other kiss and hug and hold hands?” She nodded affirmatively. “Well, they do other stuff too. Rape is when one of those people makes the other one do that stuff when they don’t want to.”

Her eyes widened as she replied, “That’s not very nice!”

Her brother’s nose wrinkled as he added, “Yeah, that’s really mean!”

This time it was I who nodded in agreement and added, “You’re right; it is mean, and sometimes it hurts really bad when people are mean to us, which is why they have those commercials to let people know that there is some place they can go for help when they are hurt like that.” Instantly and completely satisfied with my answer, our discussion was over as all three children settled in happily to watch their show with their innocence still intact and without any more questions. I, on the other hand, was left asking myself a multitude of questions, many of which I still cannot completely answer today.

Just over six years ago, I began my graduate studies in sociology with a course in research methods. During that first semester, something happened that brought these unanswered questions back to me full force along with a host of additional ones begging for answers. I read a column in the school paper written by a woman accusing feminists of using false statistics to scare women into erroneously believing that rape is a widespread phenomenon (Carnell, 1997). I began asking all those old questions again: What is rape? Does penetration have to be involved? What about ejaculation? Can anyone be a victim of rape? Can anyone be a rapist? What’s the difference between child molestation and rape? What’s the difference between rape and sexual...
assault? What is consent? How do you know if someone consents or not? What constitutes force? Does it matter if a weapon is used or not? How much resistance is necessary? What if the people were drunk at the time? Does it matter if only one of them was drunk, and if so, does it matter which one of them was drunk? How can you tell if someone is drunk? What about intent? For example, what if one person honestly thinks what happened was rape but the other person honestly thinks what happened was just sex and not rape? Is it possible to rape someone and not know it?

Along with these many old questions came new ones: What are the statistics on rape? How can a statistic be false? Does she mean the statistics are mistaken or that they are lies? How widespread is rape really? How can we tell the difference between what is actually going on and what the statistics tell us is going on? Why would anyone want people to believe that there is more rape in the world than there really is? Who are these feminists being accused of wrongdoing? Why would a woman publicly accuse feminists of doing this? How can a woman write as if she is not afraid of rape and doesn’t believe that women should be afraid of rape? Aren’t all women afraid of rape? Isn’t that a valid fear?

A Gentle Warning to Readers

As the title suggests, in this project I ask about the research process. I also ask about rape, but more specifically, I ask about the process of conducting rape research. I investigate issues relating to epistemology and to the research methods used to study rape. While this project is about all of these methodological issues, it is

---

important to remember that its goal is ultimately to understand how the uniqueness of rape as a topic influences the research process.

Moreover, I believe that the more genuine and authentic I am with the participants in this study, the more they will trust me enough to tell me their secrets. I further believe that the more genuine and authentic I am with you as a reader of this text, the more we will connect. Unfortunately, connecting over anything having to do with rape is painful. I confess to you now, the impact of this project on me personally has changed my life; I will never be the same.

There is one influence the topic of rape has on the research process that demands our immediate attention; the very nature of this topic can be potentially harmful both to those who participate in the research, and to anyone who attempts to study, read, talk, or even think about it. During our exploration of rape research, we may experience secondary trauma. Secondary trauma refers to those painful reactions we experience when we listen with empathy to other people’s traumatic stories (Campbell, 2002; Grossman, Kruger, & Moore, 1999; Guido, 1999; Schwartz, 1997; Stanko, 1997; Wasco & Campbell, 2002). We may need to find ways to manage and reduce the emotional distress and cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957; Hochschild, 1979, 1983) that can accompany secondary trauma.

Moreover, we may also experience primary trauma as the stories told by others lead us to reflect upon our own histories. Primary trauma refers to painful reactions

---

2 The term “research participants” usually refers only to the people who provide the data and not the researcher or the various audiences to whom the findings are disseminated. For the sake of clarity, I will do the same here; however, I believe that you, as the reader of this text, are involved in this in the same way as am I, as the writer. Clandinin and Connelly (1998) remind us of our connectedness in the social construction of reality, when they remind us there are “conversations through the texts among participants, researchers, and audiences. It is in the research relationships among participants and researcher, and among researchers and audiences, through research texts that we see the possibility for individual and social change” (p. 176). However, all people involved in these research relationships (the researchers, the research participants, and the readers of the text) are at risk for potential harm (as well as potential benefit).
we experience when we are prompted to remember and revisit our own old or current wounds (Campbell, 2002; Johnson, 1998). In order to better equip ourselves to deal with the primary and secondary trauma that may occur as we explore the topic of rape, we may need to develop stronger defensive strategies for stress management. We need support systems and emergency contacts to make our internal and external environments safe and comfortable.³

As we encounter emotionally difficult topic, we need to pay close attention to the stressors in our internal and external social worlds, and when they occur, realize our need for support from people who make us feel happy and secure. We need to know where to go and to whom we can talk if managing our stress by ourselves becomes impossible. We may need to give ourselves permission to seek out others and to use special stress management strategies when exploring this topic because this is not just research; this is rape research. I hope that this research approaches the topic with a non-judgmental, authentic, and emotionally embodied stance.

Shulamit Reinharz (1997) argues we have become obsessed with fear and asks, “can prevention become so overdone, that it becomes deleterious in and of itself?” (p. 482). Immediately, I see how someone could perceive my behavior as codependent—as if I am being over-responsible for others or using the situation as an opportunity to exercise a need for control. I am also reminded of Jack Nicholson in the movie As Good As It Gets compulsively locking the door, ritualistically and repeatedly washing his hands, and carrying his own shrink-wrapped plastic utensils to restaurants, and I think to myself, “sure, I can see her point.”

³ At the very least, make certain you have access to someone with whom you can talk if the need arises. For immediate assistance, contact the closest YWCA in Kalamazoo, MI, that would be the Sexual Assault Program at the YWCA. Its number is (269) 345-3036. Check your local phonebook for additional 24-hour hotline numbers you can call for information, conversation, comfort, or other forms of help.
But then I remember comforting a good friend after her best friend killed herself to escape thinking about rape and living with it. I remember supporting another friend when she was dealing with the drinking problem and the eating disorder that grew out of coping with rape. I remember sitting in a quiet room listening to a battered woman describe the incident that sent her into hiding at the women’s shelter and feeling the tears streaming silently down my face. I remember being afraid to go to sleep at night. I remember the numbness and the disembodied survival skills that kept me alive. I remember these things, and I think to myself, “but rape is one of those exceptional topics. People do deserve fair warning; it can affect you on an intimately personal level without warning, affecting your personal sense of security and trust.”

I approach this topic in a fashion very similar to that of Susan Estrich (1986, 1987) who begins the introductions both her book and her article in The Yale Law Journal with her own story of being raped. She admits:

I talk about it. I do so very consciously. Sometimes, I have been harassed as a result. More often, it leads women I know to tell me that they too are victims, and I try to help them. I cannot imagine anyone writing an article on prosecutorial discretion without disclosing that he or she had been a prosecutor. I cannot imagine myself writing on rape without disclosing how I learned my first lessons or why I care so much. (1986, p. 1089).

“Given the strong emotional reactions that rape generates, it is important to base opinions, services, and public policy on the best empirical research possible. . . . Because America’s rape problem is so large and the mental health impact of rape is so great, the need for more methodologically sound research is equally great” (Kilpatrick, 1993, p. 193). If it’s any comfort to you, I truly believe it’s worth it.
Research Questions

My research will address three basic questions: First, in what ways do different methods of rape research produce different findings? In asking this, I will focus on three specific sub-questions: (a) In what ways does asking more sensitive questions impact the findings of rape research? (b) In what ways does using more participant-centered techniques for questioning participants impact the findings of rape research? (c) How do mailed surveys compare to questionnaires administered by an empathic interviewer when it comes to gathering information about women’s experiences of rape?

Second, in what ways does the unique character of rape call for special methods of doing rape research? This question involves developing an understanding of the ways the topic of rape is different from other research topics. It also involves developing an understanding of how people experience rape and the research process. And finally, how prevalent are rape and sexual violence in the experiences of women at Western Michigan University?

I am asking questions about the impact of a sensitive research topic on the methods best used to investigate it. Different research topics may need to be approached with different methods, and sensitive research topics must be handled more delicately than others (Foddy, 1993; Johnson, Houglan, & Clayton, 1989; Renzetti & Lee, 1993; Sieber, 1998; Tourangeau & Smith, 1996). Rape is very different from other research topics. In fact, Mary Koss (1993) states “rape is perhaps the ultimate sensitive topic” (p. 212). Holly Johnson (1996) identifies an import aspect of this problem: “Researchers must never lose sight of the possibility that with every telephone call, the respondent could be living with an abusive man and that her safety could be jeopardized should he learn of the content of the survey” (p. 52).
I strongly believe that the process of doing rape research is different from the process involved when conducting other types of research. At least, I believe that it should be different. Many writers have dealt with questions of how rape research is different from other research, and in what ways these differences impact the research methods that should be used (Burman, Batchelor, & Brown, 2001; Durant & Carey, 2000; Koss, 1993; Koss, Figueredo, Bell, Tharan, & Tromp, 1996; Koss & Gidycz, 1985; Schwartz, 1997, 2000; Tourangeau & Smith, 1996; Walby & Myhill, 2001).

Accepting that special methods must be used to investigate rape, I am also asking questions about how different research methods impact the findings of rape research. I am not asking if methods impact findings, because it is obvious that what questions you ask, how you ask them, and to whom you ask them, will all impact the answers you get (Koss, 1992, 1996; Lynch, 1996; Phillips, 1971; White & Sorenson, 1992). While I take for granted that methods do impact research findings, questions about how methods impact the findings still remain to be answered (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988; Koss, 1992, 1993, 1996; Muehlenhard, Powch, Phelps, & Giusti, 1992; Renzetti & Lee, 1993; White & Farmer, 1992).

The combined answers to these questions will tell us some of the ways that we can improve the quality of rape research. Better research should in turn influence rape policies and should affect our everyday interactions with each other and with our selves. But “flawed data blunt social concern for rape victims, feed illusions that rape is relatively rare, and fuel the backlash against rape victims” (Koss, 1996, p. 66). Thus, there are practical implications and applications of these research findings for social science, for public policy, and for people.
Research Objectives

As a researcher, my aim is to better understand how to do quality research. By “quality research,” I mean research that provides accurate information with breadth and depth; it has to be valid. By “quality research,” I mean research that maintains and promotes respect for human rights in its design, in its process, and in its application; it has to be ethical. Finally, by “quality research,” I mean research that suggests practical applications in our daily lives and our future research; it has to be useful.

As a researcher, an instructor of college students, a woman, a mother and a stepmother of college-aged daughters, and a member of our global family, I want to reduce the amount of sexual violence and help deal with its impact. I can begin doing this by better understanding the process of doing quality rape research, which requires an understanding of rape, of the research process, and of people’s understanding of rape and the research process (Fontana & Frey, 1998, 2000; Merrick, 1999). My primary research objective is to better develop these understandings, because it is through this knowledge that we develop strategies, which can ultimately lead to a reduction in the amount and impact of rape in all of our lives.

Research Benefits

There are numerous potential benefits of this research for the participants, for the researcher, for social science, for public policy, and for people in general. Because these benefits are all connected (Cantor & Power, 1994; Gilfus, Fineran, Cohan, & Jensen, 1999; Laura X, Elliot, Siobhan, & Rego, 1999; Meyer-Emerick, 2002; Reinharz, 1992), there are potential benefits not just for each individual element but for the process that connects them all as well.
There is a relationship between people and research participants; research participants are generally solicited from the people, from the members of the human family.\(^4\) There is a relationship between research participants and rape research findings; rape research findings are based on the analyses of information that has been collected from those research participants selected from the people. There is a relationship between rape research findings and the social sciences; the social science community is responsible for producing many rape research findings. There is a relationship between rape research findings, the social sciences, and public policies; public policies about rape are based, for the most part, on the rape research findings provided by the social science community\(^5\) (Meyer-Emerick, 2002). There is a relationship between public policies and people in general, because these policies are designed with the specific goal of impacting the interactions between people, which brings us back to the beginning.

As social scientists, our cultural and social assumptions shape our conceptions of rape, the research questions we pursue, and the ways that we conduct research. These assumptions shape the methods we employ, the sampling frames and sampling techniques we choose, and even the wording of the questions we use to gather information from research participants (Cantor & Power, 1994). Each of these in turn affects the prevalence rates we find for rape.

Our findings regarding the prevalence of rape shape our views of the legitimacy of rape as a social problem. This legitimacy in turn affects the policies,

\(^4\) Sociology has begun to direct our attention to the ways in which humans exploit animals, which bears some similarity to the exploitation found in male/female relationships. It is psychology that is best known for its exploitation of non-human research “subjects” in laboratories. Our focus here is solely on human beings and their ethical treatment.

\(^5\) For example, rape research by psychologist Mary Koss (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Warshaw, 1994), has been cited as the “primary reason for the Title IV ‘Safe Campuses for Women’ provision of the Violence Against Women Act of 1993 [sic], which provides twenty million dollars to combat rape on college campuses” (Sommers, 1998, p. 62).
laws, and financial contributions aimed at prevention, intervention and treatment, as well as prosecution of perpetrators. "If only .1% of women are affected, it is easier to blame the problem on a few deviant men rather than on the patriarchal social system, with its unequal distribution of power and resources between women and men" (Muehlenhard et al., 1992, p. 41).

Improving the quality of rape research increases its value. Because each element is connected, increasing the value of any one of its elements will increase the value of each of the other elements. This particular research is aspires to increase the quality, and hence the credibility, of what we know about rape. This should increase the effectiveness of public policies. More effective public policies can improve the quality of people's interactions with themselves and with others as we develop an increased awareness, a deeper understanding, and a more enlightened and consistent stance of intolerance for rape and sexual violence.

This study was designed to benefit its participants without harming them. Its potential benefits for participants include the opportunity to engage in an empowering interaction that stimulates them to think and continue to talk about their personal relationships and their sexual lives. This can improve the quality of their internal and social worlds independent of the research finds. Perhaps most importantly, the act of simply breaking the silence about rape and sexual violence can be an especially healing experience. Telling another person about one's painful experiences can validate these experiences and make them seem less unreal (Miller, 1990). While participating in this study, women can gain access to information about rape and sexual violence, helping agencies, and victim assistance. In addition, participants can learn about and experience the research process and have an opportunity to construct
or reconstruct their conceptualizations, beliefs, and personal policies regarding sex, rape, and sexual violence.

Similarly, the potential benefits for me as a researcher include the opportunity to engage in an empowering interaction that stimulates me to think about and talk about my own experiences with relationships and with sexual violence. This can improve the quality of my own internal and external social worlds. I have the opportunity to deal with my own wounds as I empower others, and to aid in their healing. I have the opportunity, responsibility, and privilege of designing and conducting a quality piece of research that will generate a large data set from which I can learn, write, publish, and make a place for myself in the academic world.

The potential benefits of this research for the social sciences are substantive. Many questions may be developed and explored about a variety of issues related to rape. We can explore issues about the relationships between victims and offenders, about the consequences of the rape for victims, about the victim’s age, alcohol consumption, definitions of situations, disclosure patterns, and degree of self-blame. We can explore questions about the type, number, and locations of incidents, about the sex and number of offenders; and about the offender’s believed alcohol consumption, use of sexual coercion, or use of date rape drugs.

Other potential benefits of this research are methodological, dealing with issues related to the research process. For example, from this data set we may explore questions about gender matching and race matching in interviewing, about people’s preferences of types of data collection methods, about people’s definitions of

---

6 For examples, see Bradburn and Sudman, 1988; Denzin, 1989; Fontana and Frey, 1998; Koss, 1993; Koss and Gidycz, 1985; Renzetti and Lee, 1993; Rubenzahl and Corcoran, 1998.
terminology used in traditional rape survey research, and about the impact of data collection method on findings. We can also investigate how participation in sensitive research affects both researcher and research participants.

These potential benefits apply to a variety of audiences, both in and outside of academe. Within the academic community, this research should be of interest to societies and organizations that focus on theory, on research methods, and on the applications of research. This research should interest those who focus on quantitative methods, qualitative methods, and the blending of both methods. It will be relevant to people who focus on feminist or empowerment research as well. Applied researchers and practitioners should find value in this research also.

Improving the quality of rape research has implications for audiences outside the academic world. Rape and sexual violence can be found at all levels of society (Finlayson, Saltzman, Sheridan, & Taylor, 1999). There are national and federal policies regarding rape (McCall, 1993; Meyer-Emerick, 2002), state, and local policies on rape (Potter, Krider, & McMahon, 2000). We also have institutional (Day, 1995) and individual (Buddie & Miller, 2001) policies regarding rape. All of these policies regulate our internal and external social lives (Caputi, 1992; White & Sorenson, 1992). They include such things as our laws, levels of tolerance, bureaucratic institutional policies and procedures, myths, beliefs, and other elements of the stock of knowledge. Thus, they influence our interactions with our selves and with each other (Holstein & Gubrium, 1998).

---

8 For examples, see Foddy, 1993; Koss and Oros, 1982; Phillips, 1971; Riger, 1999; Schwartz, 2000; Scott and Aneshensel, 1997.
9 For examples, see Bradburn and Sudman, 1979; Czaja and Blair, 1996; Frey and Oishi, 1995; Johnson et al., 1989; Koss, 1993; Koss et al., 1987; Sudman, Bradburn, and Schwarz, 1996; Tourangeau and Smith, 1996.
10 For examples, see Grossman et al., 1999; Schwartz, 1997; Stanko, 1997; Wasco and Campbell, 2002; Wasco, Campbell, and Clark, 2002.
11 For examples, see Lundy and Grossman, 2001; Petretic-Jackson and Jackson, 1990.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Institutional public policies are designed to shape our social realities and worlds. Major institutional influences including the family, the media, the educational system, religion, the economy, government, the medical system, and the criminal justice system all develop and enforce policies that influence our realities of rape by shaping our definitions of rape, our preventions of rape, our responses to rape victims and to rape offenders, our study and knowledge of rape, and even our fear of rape (Madriz, 1997; Martin & Powell, 1995).

As individuals, we have both interpersonal and intrapersonal policies of rape that influence our social worlds. Our intrapersonal policies influence our definitions of situations, our definitions and presentations of self, and the ways in which we conceive of intimacy. Our interpersonal policies shape the expectations and fears we have of other people and social interactions and events. They influence the satisfactions or dysfunctions that we experience in our sexual lives.

The potential benefit of this research for public policies and private practices regarding rape is an increase in value in terms of their validity. These policies, in part, are developed because of research findings. This research explores ways to improve the validity and value of those findings, which will inform our public policies more accurately and with more detail. When we begin generating and enforcing public and private policies based more on accurate and detailed information about rape, and less on prejudice and moral blindness, our policies and practices will become more rational and consistent, which should reduce the chaos in our lives.

Once again, we are back to people, our human family. As we change our focus, our beliefs, and our feelings, our behaviors will change as well. Our internal and external social worlds will change. We can increase our awareness of rape, our understanding of rape, and our intolerance of rape. In doing so, we may be able to
reduce the amount of rape and lessen its impact. We will begin seeing these changes as we increase the quality of rape research, which will increase its credibility with the public. We will generate higher quality research when we begin deconstructing the way that rape research is socially constructed, by exploring its epistemologies and evaluating its methods.

To begin, we need to review some basic issues, such as epistemology and methodology. We will do this by inspecting the methods and findings of previous rape research, reviewing what we know already about rape and its effects. We will treat each of these issues separately, and then integrate them into a research design that addresses what we need to know by asking sensitive questions in participant-centered ways.

This dissertation is my initial effort to accomplish this project. In chapter two, "Epistemology," I briefly explore issues such as standpoint epistemology and situated knowledge as I begin to question what I know about rape and about research and through which methods was that knowledge generated. In the third chapter, "Rape," I explore what we think we know about rape. I examine different definitions of rape and prevalence rates. I briefly discuss victims and perpetrators, causes and consequences, and the law. I discuss the role of alcohol in sexual violence, and society's reactions to it.

In the fourth chapter, "Research Methodology," I turn my attention to the issues involved in designing rape research. I briefly discuss different types of methods with special attention to using traditional survey research methods to investigate sensitive subjects. I discuss sexual violence research methods and feminist methodology. I conclude this chapter with suggestions for future feminist sexual violence research. In the fifth chapter, "Previous Research," I give a very brief
overview of international and local rape research. I present a summary of the main national research studies and discuss the backlash against feminist rape research. I conclude this chapter with a summary of the weaknesses of previous rape research.

In the sixth chapter, “Research Design,” I present a detailed view of my research methods, of the instruments I created, and of the actual data collection process in practice. In the seventh chapter, “Findings—Methods,” I present the major findings on the first two of my research questions on the methods comparison and the methods evaluation. I also discuss the demographics of the population and the samples. In the eighth chapter, “Findings—Rape,” I present the major findings on the last two of my research questions on women’s meanings and rape prevalence. In the final chapter, “Conclusions, Questions, and Recommendations,” I discuss the implications of the findings of this study for our earlier discussions on epistemology, methodology, rape and sexual violence, and also for prevention strategies. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the limitations of this study and a look at my research agenda.
The Social Construction of Rape Research:  
Exploring Epistemologies 
And Evaluating Methods 

CHAPTER TWO 

EPISTEMOLOGY 

"I have never been free of the fear of rape" (Griffin, 1971, p. 22, italics added). 

Feminism 

Claiming feminism\textsuperscript{12} is kind of like claiming that I am drinking soda pop; it doesn't really tell you much. There are many different brand names of soda pop with different flavors, colors, and even textures. There are only a couple of things that all different soda pops have in common, and without further explanation, these are the only things about which you can be certain upon hearing that I am drinking soda pop. For example, you can be sure that it is in liquid form and that it includes some combination of carbonated water and flavored syrup. Further explanation is required to know the type of water used, the degree of carbonation, the specific flavor(s), the coloring, and the proportion of carbonation, water, flavoring, and syrup used. 

Similarly, there are different meanings of the word feminism. In essence, there are multiple feminisms (Russo, 1999; Tong, 1998). If we classify them based on their sociopolitical philosophies, there is liberal feminism, libertarian radical feminism, cultural radical feminism, Marxist feminism, socialist feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, gender feminism, existentialist feminism, postmodern feminism, multicultural feminism, black feminism, ecofeminism, among others; but these labels

\textsuperscript{12}Because feminism speaks to both epistemology and methodology, I will discuss it in both chapters.
change as feminists develop different philosophies (Tong, 1998). There is even anti-feminism (Andrews, 2002) and post-feminism (Gavey & Gow, 2001).

If we classify them based on their applications, there is feminist philosophy (Schott, 2003), feminist pedagogy (Cohee, Daumer, Kemp, Krebs, Lafky, & Runzo, 1998), feminist theory (White, Russo, & Travis, 2001), feminist research (Cook & Fonow, 1986; Crawford & Kimmel, 1999), feminist ethics (Card, 1991; Jaggar, 1990), feminist perspective (White et al., 2001), feminist scholarship (Soble, 1999), feminist ideology (Murphey, 1992), feminist organizations, Ferree & Martin, 1995), feminist epistemology (Harding, 1987, 1991; Merrick, 1999), feminist movement (Mansbridge, 1995; Tong, 2001), feminist thought (Collins, 1990, 2000; Tong, 1998), feminist postmodernism (Heckwood, 1990), feminist psychology (White et al., 2001); feminist empiricism (Danner & Landis, 1990), feminist politics (Soble, 1999), feminist methods (Harding, 1987; Nielson, 1990; Reinharz, 1992) and feminist methodology (DeVault, 1996).

In addition, if we classify them temporally limited to the space of the United States, there is first wave feminism (mid-nineteenth century-1920), second wave feminism (1960s to early 1990s), and third wave feminism (later 1990s-current) (Tong, 2001). First wave feminism concentrated on issues such as women’s suffrage. In essence, first wave feminists fought for women’s right to be more like men. Second wave feminism concentrated on issues such as women’s rights, specifically educational, occupational, and sexual/reproductive rights. In essence, second wave feminists fought for women’s right to be more like women.

Third wave feminism 13 (still under construction) concentrates on issues regarding women’s differences of race, class, national origin, sexuality, religion,

---

13 For example, see Findlen (1995).
ability, and age. Third wave feminism is self-critical and focuses on how gender oppression is connected to other forms of human oppression. In essence, third wave feminists fight for women’s right to define what it means to be a woman; third wave feminists fight for the human right of self-definition and self-efficacy.

There are really only a few things that all different feminisms have in common, and without the aid of further explanation, these are the only things about which you can be certain upon hearing that I am a feminist (Shaw & Lee, 2004). As I see it, these are: (1) Feminism acknowledges that inequality exists based on sex/gender stratification; (2) Feminism acknowledges that women’s lives/voices have been ignored and/or excluded in the past and present; (3) Feminism acknowledges that both the aforementioned inequities are unjust and should be eradicated.

All other details of feminism must be understood contextually. That context is unfolding throughout this text. More details will appear in my writing on methodology and design, but let me say this. I see some underlying assumptions or values behind those three basic tenets of feminism; I see a belief in the value of equality for everyone (even the poor, the immigrants, the ugly, the ignorant, the suffering, and the evil-doers) across the board in all things (even the production and dissemination of knowledge). I see a belief in the value of justice, of seeing that barriers to this egalitarianism are eradicated to ensure the playing field remains level. For me, this is what it’s all about.

Epistemology

Questions of an epistemological nature “deal with who can be a knower, how tests are judged as a criterion of knowledge, what is it possible to know, and so on” (Risman, 1993, p. 16). There may be as many ways to justify what we think we know,
as there are things we think we know. “Although there are other ways to justify what we think we know (for example, divine revelation), the combination of rationalism (which now often takes the form of logic) and empiricism in modern science captures the dominant trends in Western thinking” (Nielsen, 1990, p. 2). Empiricism can be understood as “the process of directly observing, recording, or monitoring the social and natural world” (p. 2). Thus, using logic and the scientific method of objective direct observation remains accepted as the traditional epistemological standpoint of sociology.

“In spite of changing dominant epistemologies, one issue—which we will call ‘objectivism versus relativism’ for now—has characterized the Western discourse on knowledge” (Nielsen, 1990, pp. 2-3). On one side of this seemingly dichotomous issue, the objectivists argue that absolute knowledge is obtainable. “There is some objective (that is, independent of the knower) world that is knowable” (p. 3). The world is full of realities, truths, and facts, about which it is my job as a social scientist to research and write without contaminating them with my subjectivity or personal opinion, feeling, or position in the world. This approach has been labeled as modernism or positivism (Danner & Landis, 1990; White, Bondurant, & Travis, 2000). Patai (2000) offers an example of such thinking, “Scholarship gains little, and perhaps loses much, when it is mired in emotional exhortations and the rhetorical gestures these require” (p. 74).

On the other side, the relativists argue that absolute knowledge is unobtainable and/or non-existent, because “everything we know (including knowledge about the physical world) is contextual” (Nielsen, 1990, p. 3). These relativists suggest that all knowledge is created through the intersection of a human being in his or her contextual environment. Somewhere in the middle, other relativists argue that
absolute knowledge is obtainable, but there are multiple realities involved in examining that knowledge. "Some distinguish between cognitive and moral relativism, arguing that we can be certain about scientifically based knowledge of the natural world but that moral or ethical judgments are relative—that is, dependent on one's values, which are culture-bound" (Nielsen, 1990, p. 3).


> Our consciousness is always the medium through which research occurs; there is no method or technique of doing research other than through the medium of the researcher (p. 157). . . . "Emotional involvement," the presence of emotions, is taboo; and an ideology exists which states that it is possible, not just preferable, to prevent this from happening. But we say that this is mere mythology. Emotions can't be controlled by mere effort of will, nor can adherence to any set of techniques or beliefs act as an emotional prophylactic. (p. 160, original emphasis).

Finally, Jayaratne and Stewart (1991) argue three basic points with one conclusion:

(1) Apparently "objective" science has often been sexist (hence, not "objective") in its purposes and/or its effects. . . . (2) Glorification of "objectivity" has imposed a hierarchical and controlling relationship upon the researcher-researched dyad. . . . (3) Idealization of objectivity has excluded from science significant personal subjectively-based

---

14 Harding (1987) specifically rejects the notion that standpoint epistemology is connected to relativism as it is merely another sexist response to sexist scientism, while standpoint epistemology moves beyond this framework to start from a fresh viewpoint. For a discussion on the meanings and uses of standpoint epistemology, see the Winter 1997 issue of Signs, which is dedicated entirely to this issue.
knowledge and has left that knowledge outside of "science" (Unger, 1983; Wallston, 1981). It may be, then that an important source of the sexist (and racist and classist) bias in traditional "objective" research is the fact that the personal and subjective—which inevitably influences many aspects of the research process—were exempt from analysis (see Hubbard, 1978; Unger, 1983). (p. 98)

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) argue, "All knowledge is constructed, and the knower is an intimate part of the known" (p. 137). As such, our own thoughts, feelings, motivations, perceptions and behaviors as individuals are legitimate sources of information in the quest for knowledge (Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991; Risman, 1993; Stanley & Wise, 1993). Goldberger et al. (1996) summarize their five knowledge perspectives:

1: Silence—a position of not knowing in which the person feels voiceless, powerless, and mindless. 2: Received knowing—a position at which knowledge and authority are construed as outside the self and invested in powerful and knowing others from whom one is expected to learn. 3: Subjective knowing—in which knowing is personal, private, and based on intuition and/or feeling states rather than on thought and articulated ideas that are defended with evidence. 4: Procedural knowing—the position at which techniques and procedures for acquiring, validating, and evaluating knowledge claims are developed and honored. We also described two modes of knowing that we first noticed as we described different procedures for knowing that women adopt: separate knowing, which is characterized by a distanced, skeptical, and impartial stance toward that which one is trying to know (a reasoning against), and connected knowing, which is characterized by a stance of belief and an entering into the place of the other person or the idea that one is trying to know (a reasoning with). . . 5: Constructed knowing—the position at which truth is understood to be contextual; knowledge is recognized as tentative, not absolute; and it is understood that the knower is part of (constructs) the known. In our sample of women, constructed knowers valued multiple approaches to knowing (subjective and objective, connected and separate) and insisted on bringing the self and personal commitment into the center of the knowing process. (pp. 4-5).

Thus, knowledge creation is somewhat of a schizophrenic process in that it requires the willingness and ability to practice both subjectivity and objectivity.
(Belenky et al., 1986; Berger & Luckmann, 1967; DeVault, 1996; Goldberger et al., 1996; Hawkesworth, 1996). Once I have practiced connected knowing and developed an understanding of the subject from its own perspective, I can practice procedural knowing and evaluate that information. Evaluation is where objectivity comes into play. In order to evaluate, I will need to begin to separate and move freely between the incoming information and what I already know, making constant comparisons throughout the process. I need to practice separate knowing, and I need to practice constructed knowing. It is precisely through this understanding and evaluating process that knowledge creation takes place.

It also follows that individuals are interested in understanding and knowing themselves (Markus & Kitayama 1991; Reynolds 1999, 2000). As Susan Griffin reminds us, “Every time I deny myself I commit a kind of suicide . . . if I own my feelings and trace them to their origins, they lead me to a self-knowledge that is liberating and healing” (1981, p. 288).

Feminists have responded to the traditional scientific model of knowledge in three somewhat different ways with feminist empiricism, standpoint epistemology, and feminist postmodernism (Schott, 2003; Swidler & Arditi, 1994; Tong, 1998). In contrast to both feminist empiricism and standpoint epistemology, feminist postmodernism moves beyond relativity into what can only be described as chaotic multiplicity. This approach “allows for the heterogeneity of voices, multiple perspectives, and multiple methods. Postmodern feminists question the nature of reality and objectivity in research. They argue that attention to power relations and the political implications of research are essential” (White et al., 2000, pp. 16-17).

Swidler and Arditi (2000) further suggest, “In essence, postmodernists argue that a

---

new ‘order of things’ has emerged in which the traditional categories that separated kinds of knowledge—or that separated truth from fiction, high from popular culture, and the sacred from the profane—no longer hold” (p. 320).

Toward the extreme edge of relativism, lies standpoint epistemology, which “begins with the idea that less powerful members of society have the potential for a more complete view of social reality than others, precisely because of their disadvantaged position” (Nielsen, 1990, p. 10). It is based on several premises outlined by Nielsen:

The first is that one’s material life (what one does for a living and related facts such as the quality of one’s material surroundings) structures and limits one’s understanding of life. . . . A second premise is that members of more powerful and less powerful groups will potentially have inverted, or opposed understandings of the world. Third, the dominant group’s view will be “partial and perverse” in contrast to the subordinate group’s view, which has the potential to be more complete...A final but important point. . . . is that the less powerful group’s standpoint has to be developed or acquired through education (including, presumably, consciousness-raising). (pp. 10-11)

Hartsock (1983) is credited with locating “the parentage of a feminist standpoint approach in Marxist epistemology and its emphasis on the proletarian standpoint as a privileged one which produces a truer, less distorted picture of social reality than that available to the bourgeoisie” (Danner & Landis, 1990, p. 109).

The concepts of feminist standpoint epistemology and situated knowledge are crucial to research aimed at understanding the impact of sex/gender on people, on their access to resources, and on their lives. These concepts allow us as researchers to bring to light the voices of women, to expose their similarities and differences in their daily struggle to navigate their lives as women of different races, sexualities, classes, religions, ages and abilities (Danner & Landis, 1990). These concepts make it possible to develop a standpoint of women (Smith, 1987) and the feminist standpoint
(Hartsock, 1983). Dorothy Smith (1974) eloquently summarizes the idea of a standpoint of women, which she identifies as more of a method for gaining knowledge than a theoretical understanding of knowledge:

Our means of knowing and speaking of ourselves and our world are written for us by men who occupy a special place in it. . . . In learning to speak our experience and situation, we insist upon the right to begin where we are, to stand as subjects of our sentences, and to hear one another as the authoritative speakers of our experience. (p. 95)

In addition to the extreme of feminist standpoint epistemology, feminist empiricists have taken the middle ground and argue that by examining and exposing the subjectivity of the scientist, it is possible to use “the scientific method toward the feminist goal of achieving greater equality for women. They contend that androcentric biases can be eliminated in traditional scientific methods. Feminist empiricism advocates for nonsexist research as a starting point, while recognizing that all science is value laden” (White et al., 2000, pp. 15-16). Sandra Harding (1996) further suggests:

Starting off thought from outside such dominant conceptual frameworks or discourses can generate more accurate and comprehensive accounts of nature’s regularities and their causes. It can maximize objectivity in ways that thought contained within one dominant framework can not. Such epistemological and scientific resources are not dependent on the particular social activities in which one engages, but on one’s position, and one’s culture’s position, in power relations. The point here is not that every poor or otherwise marginalized person already can or does “see the truth,” but rather that discourses oppositional to the dominant ones can arise as marginalized groups begin to articulate their histories, needs, and desires “for themselves” instead of only in the ways encouraged by their “masters”’ favored conceptual frameworks. . . . Feminist standpoint theories link political struggles by “outsiders” to especially valuable ways of knowing. . . . Such arguments appear in appeals that feminist theory be constructed “from margin to center,” by “outsiders within,” from “borderlands,” in the “lines of fault” that create “bifurcated consciousnesses,” and through “situated knowledge” that is located outside dominant power structures. (pp. 445-446)
Others who self-identify as feminist empiricists argue along lines that seem very parallel to those of standpoint epistemology. For example, Barbara Risman (1993) argues:

By acknowledging that the context of discovery (the researchers' interests and politics) is as important as the research process itself, feminist empiricists are implicitly rejecting the belief in the possibility of the discovery of TRUTH which exists totally outside the context of the knower. Once we acknowledge that our material life structures and sets limits on our understanding, interests and questions, we must take seriously the standpoint of the scientist. (pp. 16-17)

The theorists who put these theoretical frameworks into action bring the voices of the oppressed to the center of discourse in theoretical and political venues. The tension between individual constructs and the reality of the real world is acknowledged, thus espousing the idea that theory and praxis must be integrated for meaning to be discovered, realized and perhaps changed. Sharing of personal experiences is the method and agent that allows this to occur. “Theory adequate to the task of changing the world must be open-ended, non-dogmatic, speaking to and grounded in the circumstances of everyday life” (Lather, 1991, p. 55). Collins (1989) suggests that an Afrocentric feminist perspective has four interrelated characteristics: (1) concrete experience is a criterion of meaning; (2) the use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims; (3) an ethic of caring; and (4) an ethic of personal accountability.

I must admit that I do, however, have some concerns about exposing my epistemological standpoints. For one, it makes it very easy to erroneously assume that homogeneity exists where it does not. No single term, for example, can be used to fully capture all the subtle nuances involved in being “a woman,” because being a woman means different things to different women. Unfortunately, this reality may drive us to further compartmentalize and disconnect ourselves from each other by

16 For example, see black feminists Patricia Hill Collins, bell hooks, Audre Lorde, and Alice Walker.
endlessly increasing the number of terms used in the epistemological labeling process. It seems to follow the logic that if some is good, then more must surely be better.

The underlying assumption behind this practice of increasing the number of categorical labels is the belief that it is only the intersections between categories at which we can truly appreciate and understand one’s gaze (Collins, 1989, 1990, 2000; hooks, 1983, 2000). While I can appreciate the idea that I am a “white bisexual woman with middle class roots and an Anglo-Saxon Protestant upbringing,” I refuse to accept the notion that this label portrays an accurate reflection of my character or who I really am. If it did, then it would be far too easy to dismiss my words just because my labels are known; once my labels are known, my words can be understood without ever even hearing them. This encourages stereotyping, prejudice, and the further silencing of marginalized voices. I think there is enough of this in the world already without adding to it in the name of open discourse.

Maher (1996) further argue:

The proliferation of such standpoint feminisms represented a new set of problems, namely, those generated by the implications of a series of parallel “knowledges” that existed alongside each other without intersecting, or being able to claim knowledge of each other except as regards those experiences held in common. The results have been (and still are) the stalemates of “identity politics,” where members of different dominated and exploited groups, in trying to understand who they are, struggle against the barriers between them and other groups that these same identities create. (p. 156)

Moreover, for these categories to be meaningful, they must remain relatively fixed and stable. It seems more plausible to assume that these categories do indeed shift meanings regularly. These categories vary in the impact they have on a person’s standpoint, depending on the salience of that categorical variable in the person’s life. It seems more plausible to assume not only the meanings of the categories change, but that the degree of impact in the person’s life also changes regularly.
In addition, as Willett (1998) suggests is the case with theorizing multiculturalism, I suggest that the concepts of feminist standpoint epistemology and situated knowledge can be used specifically to sabotage the centering of voices of “the other” by making the discourse too messy. The discourse gets so clouded that those privileged people who are closest to the center get easily frustrated and run to the illusionary safety of the traditional science model in which A + B will always equal C, and women and other representatives of “the other” are not treated as legitimate partners in the production of knowledge. I don’t mean to suggest that this is a flaw of multiculturalism, of standpoint epistemology, or of relativism. I am merely suggesting that multiculturalism and concepts like situated knowledge and standpoint epistemology can get used as an excuse to avoid the issues of “the other” altogether.

Furthermore, insisting that we disclose our epistemological standpoints requires us to know our selves, something I am not convinced we do. Ever since we first began divorcing our selves from our emotions and from our subjective selves in the name of the all-rational scientific model of knowledge, we entered into a dangerous practice of disconnecting our selves. This is not conducive to self-awareness.

Finally, the premise of having an epistemological standpoint and disclosing one’s gaze suggests that these are static characteristics within our selves and lives. This is not the case; we, as human agents, are fluid, and as such, have the capacity to change. My gaze can and does change with my position in the world and my relationships with it, its peoples, and also with myself. As any of these relationships change, so too do I.

In spite of these concerns, once again, as Cynthia Willett (1998) suggests it is with multiculturalism, I contend it is with issues of situated knowledge and
epistemology—"multiculturalism solicits moral deference, not towards those who occupy positions of power but towards those who suffer from the lack of power. . . . It certainly demands that the multicultural movement always remains receptive to new voices and should never be fully theorized" (p. 14). Feminism must remain receptive and fluid; if not, then we will be practicing the static discriminatory elitism from which we tried so desperately to escape. Examining our social world through the lens of situated knowledge encourages this receptivity to and fluidity of new knowledge only insofar as we do not erroneously contend that this new knowledge is "THE TRUTH."

The thing that really bothers me (scares me to death is more like it) about concepts like TRUTH, reality, consciousness, and false consciousness is that I have too many unanswered questions about them. Who gets to say which one is "the truth"? On what authority do they do this? On what criteria do they base their decisions? Here's a good example. Nielson (1990) suggests false consciousness gets replaced with consciousness through education, which includes consciousness-raising. My immediate questions include: By whom? About what? If consciousness comes through education from without, then explain why an outsider would do this? If only Insiders know the Insiders' position, then how is it that someone from without, an Outsider, knows something I don't know about me? It doesn't make sense unless we leave room for divine intervention, and then again, we are right back at square one with who gets to decide which one is right again. It's all too much for me to sort out right now, so I will stick to a simpler but much more challenging policy of accountability. I will do the best I can in all things and be the best I can at all times.

As an accountable researcher, as a responsible writer, and as a reasonable human being, it is important that I disclose my epistemological and ontological
standpoints when I enter into discourse. Ontological knowledge (what I know) can only be adequately addressed when I share my epistemological standpoint (how I know what I know). By doing so, I take responsibility for my self and for my thinking, feeling, and behaving while I allow others the right and responsibility to do the same for themselves. Only in this way can public discourse flow, and only through public discourse can progress begin.

My voice is all I can ever honestly offer to anyone, including myself. If my standpoint has similarities with other voices, then we can talk about those relationships, but in all fairness, the only voice I have as my own is myself. Therefore, it is in my best interests and those of my partners both in discourse and in life to make it my business to know myself and to be true to myself, to be authentic. Only then will I be in an emotionally mature enough position to enter into public discourse. Only through this public discourse can women’s lived experiences take the center stage, allowing the political force of the woman’s voice to develop through the commonalities and differences woven together from women’s situated knowledge and rise up to challenge the truths of androcentric scientific knowledge.

**Underlying Assumptions**

Living in a social world riddled with confusing contradictions and unyielding uncertainties, at a young age I fell in love with the mathematical world because it offered me a reprieve from the seemingly constant chaos of “the real world” with its simple consistent formulas. \(A + B = C\) makes life so clear and uncomplicated, doesn’t it? There are no questions or qualifiers, just one easy policy to follow; if you combine \(A\) with \(B\), then you get \(C\). It’s all very simple really; if you have \(C\), then you have a combination of \(A\) and \(B\). There is just no room for chaos there.
Sometimes, there are additional formulas or policies, like $D + B = C$. All this really means is that it doesn't matter if you have $A$ or $D$, but combining either of them with $B$ will give you $C$. If you have $C$, then you definitely have $B$ combined with either $A$ or $D$. It doesn't matter to what you apply it as long as you consistently follow the policies. I remember believing that I had finally found an easy way to make sense of it all.

When I arrived at graduate school, I remember repeatedly seeing two simple definitional policies in the rape research literature: (a) $A$ (Forced) + $B$ (Sex) = $C$ (Rape), and (b) $D$ (Nonconsensual) + $B$ (Sex) = $C$ (Rape). The consistency of the mathematical world seemed to flow gently into the consistency of the statistical world, and traditional survey research seemed perfectly suited for these wonderful worlds when trying to understand rape (Reinharz, 1992; White & Farmer, 1992). If I ask questions about how much nonconsensual sex and how much forced sex has gone on in people's lives, I will understand how prevalent rape is. It all seemed so simple at the time.

By the time I was doing my thesis on rape research methods, I was realizing in a cold sweat that $A$ (Forced) does not necessarily equal $D$ (Nonconsensual) and that not all parties agree on the definitions of either term or even that both policies are valid (Carpenter, 2001; DeKeseredy, 2000; Kennedy & Gorzalka, 2002; Lira, Koss, & Russo, 1999; Lynch, 1996; Muehlenhard et al., 1992; Reitan, 2001; Tang, Cheung, Chen, & Sun, 2002; Tang, Wong, Cheung, & Lee, 2000; White & Humphrey, 1997). I began asking questions about which formulas are valid and thinking that this could very well mean the demise of my reprieve from chaos. The initial stages of panic ensued.

---

17 For examples of these types of definitions, see Lynch, 1996; Muehlenhard et al., 1992; White and Humphrey, 1997.
During my final years as a graduate student, I learned to actually embrace the chaos and be grateful for the opportunity to ask questions about those formulas and the terms they employ. At one point, I even remember celebrating the freedom from having to put the policies into practice, as my new research agenda became centered on the social construction of the formulas themselves, without the pesky task of actually having to do anything with them in the real world. In fact, taking action became a negative idea rather than just an unnecessary one, as I eagerly accepted the social constructivist notion that my focus should be solely on the process of creating the formula (Schneider, 1985; Spector & Kitsuse, 1977). What a relief it was to feel the panic melt away as I erroneously embraced the idea that I could escape the chaos once again.

Now that my graduate studies are over and I embark on a career in the social sciences, I find myself still struggling with the chaos, the formulas, and the terms they employ. I find myself deconstructing the construction of formulas, asking questions about the creators as well as the creation process. I find myself asking new questions about the appropriateness of applying mathematical formulas to social concepts. I find myself realizing that numbers and conceptual terms used to represent reality do not have perfect correlations with reality, because reality changes with time, with context, with groups, with people, and even within individuals (Altheide & Johnson, 1998; Phillips, 1971).

I find myself accepting that reality is a misleading term because of its singularity. Multiple, socially created realities and formulas operate in people’s lives and influence their interactions with themselves and with each other (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Brownstein, 2000; Goldberger et al., 1996; Guba & Lincoln, 1998, 1994; Harding, 1991; Phillips, 1971). I find myself struggling with the realization that
multiple, and many times conflicting, realities and formulas operate simultaneously in my own internal and external social worlds, regardless of what I may or may not believe about the notions of truth\textsuperscript{18} and reality.

I find myself faced with the knowledge that I will not find serenity trying to avoid the chaos but by finding peace amid it.\textsuperscript{19} I find peace when I am able to detangle my own simultaneous and inconsistent realities and formulas about rape. I find peace when I am able to encourage others to detangle their simultaneous and inconsistent realities and formulas about rape. This being the case, I am intent on exploring the realities of rape that people use to navigate their social worlds, on exploring how those realities compare to the realities of the social sciences and to the realities that shape public policy, and on generating ideas about how to use this information ultimately to improve the quality of our public and private social worlds, by understanding and reducing the amount and impact of rape.

Experiences and Expectations

Of course, I am not blindly going into this research, completely ignorant of my research topic, searching to develop new understandings without a clue whatsoever as to what I might find. Because I have had experiences associated with being a researcher, an instructor, a mother, a woman, and a member of our global human family, I have had experiences with the process of research, and I have had experiences with rape. I am not using my beginner’s mind (McGrane, 1994); my mind is indeed experienced (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998).

\textsuperscript{18} In all fairness, my biggest problem with the idea of absolute truth is wondering who and on what authority decides which truth is the absolute truth.

\textsuperscript{19} "There is no way to peace; peace is the way." A.J. Muste

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
I have experienced participating in research as a primary investigator designing and conducting research, as a research assistant supervising data collection and analysis, as a research assistant collecting data, and as a participant. These experiences inform my expectations. I have experienced being raped, teaching students who have been raped, working with women in substance abuse counseling and in a domestic violence shelter who have been raped, knowing others who have been raped, and knowing (and sometimes even loving) the ones who have done the raping. These experiences inform my expectations.

When I was 19 years old, the police escorted my 9-month-old daughter and me to a shelter for battered women and children, where I remained in hiding from my first abusive husband for the next 30 days. When I was 30 years old, two years before my departure for graduate school, I went back to that same shelter as a direct service employee to work with clients in crisis. The initial contacts with clients in crisis over the phone and at the shelter are absolutely crucial to their success as clients. Because I know from personal experience what it is like to be a client in crisis, I have an obvious advantage as an employee working with clients in crisis. Consequently, I became very active in developing policies and training other employees on procedures for doing initial intakes at the shelter, receiving crisis calls from potential clients, and basic crisis intervention.

All of these trainings have one major theme in common. It is imperative for shelter employees to achieve two simultaneous (and sometimes conflicting) goals when interacting with clients in crisis: to collect pertinent and necessary information and documentation from the client in crisis, and to make that client feel better about her self and her situation at the conclusion of the interaction than when it began.
Shelter clients are clients in crisis, and as such, they are different from other types of clients from other types of places, because of the incredible impact that crisis has on their lives and their selves. Because of my personal experiences, I understand that while not all shelter clients in crisis are the same, we do share certain commonalities. For instance, I know that safety and survival are primary concerns for clients in crisis. I know that we are navigating events in our lives whose effects reach far beyond the presentations of our public selves and mere social desirability issues into our very perceptions of our private selves and our identity construction. I know the experience of having to answer detailed questions about some of the most horrific moments of my lifetime, ones that I would prefer to hide from myself as well as from the outside world, while I am in a state of crisis that involves an incredible amount of shame and guilt, especially since my child is involved. I know just how desperately these clients need to feel valuable to themselves, to their children, and to the outside world. I know how much damage can be done to a client in crisis when employees do not understand the experiences of being a client in crisis (Donnelly & Kenyon, 1996; Harris & Fallot, 2001).

I see similarities in the interactions between clients in crisis and the shelter employees on the one hand, and participants and rape researchers on the other. Crisis intervention work at the shelter reminds me a great deal of rape research that aims to empower the participants in its process, or empowerment rape research (Disch, 2001). In both interactions, one person needs to obtain from the other person accurate, detailed, and thorough information as well as documentation about events of the most personal, private, and secret nature. In both interactions, the one seeking the information is (or at least should be) concerned with the safety, well-being, and even empowerment of the other one.
Additionally, in both interactions, the information being sought pertains to the person’s history with rape and sexual violence. From personal experience as well as from direct observation, I know that even thinking about these events can put a person into a crisis-like state, let alone the act of actually disclosing this information to someone else, especially a stranger with some level of authority who is also taking notes (Campbell, 2000; Ensink, Berlo, & Winkel, 2000; Ullman, 1996).

Clients will, nevertheless, open up and confess their secrets in painstaking detail to themselves and to shelter employees if the environment is conducive to such disclosure (Wasco et al., 2002), because ultimately, it is in their best interests to make such disclosures. In addition to allowing them access to resources for help, the process of disclosure can be extremely therapeutic and healing for clients in crisis (Ensink et al., 2000). These clients need to speak, to be heard, to be understood, to be listened to, to be respected, and to be responded to with sincerity and empathy. To be inductive to disclosure, their surrounding environment needs privacy, soft lighting, closed doors, clear descriptive questions, quiet space, pleasant smells, comfortable seating, laughter, and above all else, tissues and candy. It also needs an employee who approaches clients in crisis with a calm, caring, and compassionate demeanor. It needs an employee who centers and empowers the clients in every interaction with them.

It is my expectation that approaching the data collection process of rape research in a similar fashion will improve the quality of the data in terms of the depth, breadth, and accuracy of the information disclosed (Bachman, 2000; Berger, Searles, Salem, & Pierce, 1986; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Koss, 1993; Koss et al., 1987; Saunders, Kilpatrick, Hanson, Resnick, & Walker, 1999; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1999, 2000a, 2000b). Thus, I expect the proportion of participants who disclose events of rape and sexual violence to be greater than in previous research if this approach is
practiced. In addition, I expect the potential harm to participants and to researchers to be managed more thoroughly and the potential benefits to participants, to researchers, to social science, to public policies, and to people in general to be much greater if this approach is practiced (Campbell, 2000).
"I have never been free of the fear of rape" (Griffin, 1971, p. 22, italics added).

Before I dive into this mini meta-review of rape, let me first say that I have generated an enormous library dedicated to sexual violence, and whenever people ask me if there are one or two books that remain steadfast at the top of my “Must Read” list, I always say the same thing. In addition to the Sourcebook on violence against women by Claire Renzetti (2001), Acquaintance Rape: The Hidden Crime edited by Andrea Parrot and Lauren Bechhofer (1991), and I Never Called It Rape: The Ms. Report on Recognizing, Fighting, and Surviving Date and Acquaintance Rape (2nd ed.) by Robin Warshaw (1994) are definitely MUST READS.

Definitions

What is rape? Ah, yes, and the questions begin again. Does penetration have to be involved? What about ejaculation? What’s the difference between child molestation and rape? What’s the difference between rape and sexual assault? What is consent? How do you know if someone consents or not? What constitutes force? Does it matter if a weapon is used or not? How much resistance is necessary? What if the people were drunk at the time? Does it matter if only one of them was drunk, and if so, does it matter which one of them was drunk? What is the definition of rape?
The definition of sexual violence is different depending on who is defining it, and where and when it is being defined. There are histories of the definition of rape (Brownmiller, 1975; Donat & D’Emilio, 1992). It is a contested concept (Reitan, 2001). Research findings consistently show researchers (DeKeseredy, 2000; Gordon, 2000), and women have different understandings of the same sexually violent experiences. Thus, many times it seems there are as many different definitions of sexual violence as there are people defining it.

The concepts and definitions of sexual violence are different in the criminal justice model and the public health model, which increases this variability in the general public (Potter et al., 2000). Criminal definitions often are different at state, federal, and/or international levels of law, and state laws vary dramatically as well (Rhynard, Krebs, & Glover, 1997; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000a, 2000b).

Conceptual Definitions

The traditional definition of rape includes only penile-vaginal penetration and excludes any and all other types of sexual behavior. This had been the legal definition in the United States across both federal and state lines until reforms began in several states three decades ago (Koss, 1992, 1993, 1996; Koss & Cleveland, 1998; Koss & Cook, 1998; Muehlenhard et al., 1992). Many state laws have been expanded to include anal and oral penetration, cunnilingus and fellatio (Donnelly & Kenyon, 1996; Koss, 1996; Koss & Cleveland, 1998). International laws have just finally

20 Even the definition of sex is ambiguous and contested. Many people engage in oral and even anal intercourse but still consider themselves virgins because they have not engaged in penile-vaginal intercourse (Carpenter, 2001).
21 For examples, see Anderson, 1993; Chasteen, 2001; Drauker, 2000; Riger, 1999; Taylor, Magnusen, and Amundson, 2001; Wood, 2001.
begun to make these changes within the last 5 years (Hickson et al., 1994; Hodge & Canter, 1998). Other definitions are much less conservative. For example, The Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights Newsletter, as cited in Nair (2001) defined rape as “physical invasion of a sexual nature of a person under circumstances that are coercive” (p. 82).

A common definition of rape in the research literature is “nonconsensual sex” (Bechhofer & Parrot, 1991; Van Wie & Gross, 2001). Anderson and Swainson (2001) claim “rape is now defined as the non-consensual penetration of a vagina or anus by a penis in English law and by a penis, a hand or other object in the United States” (p. 110). In 1992, the “New Jersey Supreme Court holds that lack of consent constitutes physical force” (Harvard Law Review 106:969, 1993, p. 969)

Cowan (2000a) uses a definition of rape seen very often in the research literature and the law books. It includes “nonconsensual sexual penetration of an adolescent or adult obtained by physical force, by threat of bodily harm, or when the victim is incapable of giving consent of virtue of mental illness, mental retardation, or intoxication” (p. 807). Schwartz and Leggett (1999) claims:

The law is clear in most jurisdictions that the crime of rape consists of sexual acts without a woman’s consent, and that the act is rape if the woman is incapable of giving consent (unconscious, of low mental capacity, too intoxicated to give consent) . . . We tried to make the connection more clear by asking if the woman had sexual intercourse when she did not want to because she was unable to give her consent or stop the man because of being intoxicated or on drugs. This is an act that is without doubt a felony crime (Schwartz & Pitts, 1995). (pp. 255-256)

When sexual behavior other than penetration is included, terms other than rape, such as sexual assault, are frequently used (Abbey, 2002; White & Humphrey, 1997; White & Sorenson, 1992). Definitions of sexual assault are typically broad enough to include nonconsensual sex between two men or two women, women
coercing men, and other non-penetrative sexual behaviors. Research studies have been done on the incidence and prevalence rates of all of these various behaviors under such umbrella terms as sexual aggression, sexual violence and sexual assault (Koss, 1996; Lynch, 1996; Muehlenhard et al., 1992).

Researchers use terms interchangeably as if they mean exactly the same thing to all people. For example, Thiessen and Young (1994) study sexual coercion, which includes "rape, date rape, acquaintance rape, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and incest" (p. 60). Abbey, Zawacki, and Buck (2001) use the terms sexual assault and rape interchangeably. Malamuth and Dean (1991, p. 229) use the terms rape, forced sex, and coercive sex to refer to sexual aggression. Basile (1999) writes about unwanted sex and calls it "rape by acquiescence" (p. 1036).

Some studies have included virtually all nonconsensual sexual behaviors including rape within the definition of sexual assault (Lynch, 1996; Muehlenhard et al., 1992; White & Humphrey, 1997). Morrison, McLeod, Morrison, Anderson, and O'Connor (1997) suggest "coercive sexual behavior refers to the use of physical force, use of weapons, threat of harm, blackmail, unfair use of authority, or use of alcohol or drugs to obtain any [italics added] form of sexual activity" (p. 352). Kellogg, Burge, and Taylor (2000) use a definition of unwanted sexual experience often cited in the literature that includes "any [italics added] kind of sexual touching or action that made you feel uncomfortable, bad, uneasy, or regretful" (p. 59).

Although these terms get combined, they also get differentiated. For example, Muehlenhard and Schrag (1991) write about "types of sexual coercion that would not be legally classified as 'rape'" (p. 115). Sorenson and White (1992) suggest that "sexual violence is a continuum that ranges from verbal pressure for contact to homicide that includes physically forced sexual intercourse. . . . Rape [is] the
acquisition of sexual intercourse without consent of the woman” (p. 4). Clearly, sexual violence can happen between anyone, but only women get raped.

Consent and Nonconsent

All definitions of sexual violence include some reference to the behavior being nonconsensual (Baron, 2001; Donat & White, 2000; Husak & Thomas, III, 2001; Kurth, Spiller, & Travis, 2000). Some definitions are extremely ambiguous and include only the word nonconsensual without specifying it. Others infer nonconsent by the use of force by the perpetrator. More narrow definitions require the use of a weapon, while more broad definitions require only that the perpetrator ignore the victim’s refusals.

These broader definitions include situations when victims do not struggle in an attempt to avoid further injury or even death (Muehlenhard et al., 1992). Some definitions include behaviors when consent is meaningless because the victim is incapacitated and unable to give or refuse consent. Usually, incapacitation is specified as being the result of the victim being under the legal age of consent, mentally ill, asleep, intoxicated or unconscious (Koss & Cook, 1998; Muehlenhard et al., 1992; Warshaw, 1994).

When nonconsent is specified, it is usually in terms of either the victim’s state of mind or the victim’s behavior. When nonconsent is specified in terms of the victim’s state of mind, ambiguous phrases such as “against her will,” “undesired,” or “when you didn’t want to” (Muehlenhard et al., 1992, p. 30) are frequently used. This is problematic because the perpetrator must interpret the victim’s behavior to infer unwillingness, which leaves room for error. Research in this area has shown that males tend to interpret behavior more sexually and consensually than do females.
There are two ways that nonconsent can be specified in terms of the victim’s behavior. The first requires that explicit verbal consent must be given in order for a sexual behavior not to be classified as a rape. In other words, nonconsent is assumed until a verbal consent is given (Antioch College Community, 1995). The problem with this definition is that it is not consistent with reality (Schwartz, 1995). Many consensual sexual encounters are not openly discussed prior to their consummation. As a result, many common consensual sexual acts would be considered rapes simply because no verbal language was used to communicate consent (Muehlenhard et al., 1992).

The other alternative is to assume that any sexual act after the expression of an objection constitutes rape. In other words, consent is assumed until nonconsent is given, and both parties must respect that “no” means “no” rather than an act of “foreplay” or any other kind of “mixed signal.” This definition requires that traditional gender roles be examined and redefined. Muehlenhard et al. (1992) cite a study by Turk and Muehlenhard (1991) that suggests most college students would not support a definition of rape that required verbal consent, but 61% would support a definition that considered sexual activity after a refusal had been given to be considered an act of rape (p. 32).

Prevalence

What are the statistics on rape? How widespread is rape really? How prevalent do people believe it is? Students in a small Southeastern University overwhelmingly agree (over 90%) that other students are the primary offenders of campus crime and that it usually occurs between the hours of 8 pm and 4 am. The fourth most frequently occurring crime on campus according to the students was
sexual assault, which averages only four times monthly, or about once each week (Robinson & Mitchell, 1998).

Many studies have been conducted in an attempt to determine the prevalence of rape in society (Lynch, 1996; Scott & Aneshensel, 1997). Estimates of rape prevalence and incidence rates\(^{23}\) vary from less than 1% to 100% depending on the definitions of rape, the data collection methods, the samples, and the wording of the questions used to collect the data from which those estimates are derived (Bergen, 1993; Gelles, 2000; Jensen & Karpos, 1993; Koss, 1992, 1993, 1996; Muehlenhard et al., 1992; White & Farmer, 1992; White & Sorenson, 1992). Discrepancies in research designs and results further perpetuate the inconsistencies, misunderstandings, and confusion within the general public.

While government studies consistently show extremely and moderately low rates (Jensen & Karpos, 1993; Koss, 1996), “rape and sexual violence are not rare experiences in the lives of young women” (Cowan & Campbell, 1995, p. 145). Kalof (2000) cites a study of college women in which “more than 75 percent . . . had experienced some form of sexual victimization while in college and 28 percent of the victimized women had experienced attempted rape” (p. 47). Indeed, Donat and D’Emilio (1992) suggest that rape is “the most frequently committed violent crime in America today . . . All women are victims of rape even if they are not the direct targets of the attack because rape and the fear of rape are a daily part of every woman’s consciousness” (p. 15).

\(^{23}\) While prevalence rates estimate events that have occurred over one’s entire lifetime, incidence rates estimate events that occurred only within a specific time frame, usually the 12 months (Koss, 1992, 1993).
Victims and Rapists

Can anyone be a victim of rape? We have studies on “the factors that increase the likelihood of victimization” (Harney & Muehlenhard, 1991) and “characteristics of rape victims” (Johnson & Sigler, 1997), so we know who gets raped, right? Can anyone be a rapist? We have studies on “sexually coercive college males” (Rapaport & Posey, 1991) and “characteristics and typologies of rapists,” (Johnson & Sigler, 1997, 2000; Knight, 1999), so we know who rapes, right? Again, it depends on who and when you ask.

In theory, it depends. In practice, however, victims and rapists come from all walks of life. It happens to people of all ages, races, nationalities, religions, ethnicities, social classes, abilities, etc. The tricky and very political part is that not all these people count when we tally up the victims and perpetrators. For example, the Schwendingers (1983) dedicate a chapter of their book on “rape that is officially instituted for torturing and terrorizing conquered populations and political dissenters. Since members of military forces and civil servants, including the police, perpetrate the acts we call institutionalized rapes, these people are not deterred legally” (p. 11).

---

24 For examples of studies focusing on teenagers and rape, see Jackson, Cram, and Seymour, 2000; Lavoie, Robitaille, and Herbert, 2000; Schubot, 2001. For examples focusing on children and older adults, see Acierno, Gray, Best, Resnick, Kilpatrick, Sounders, and Brady, 2001; Hooper, 1995; Kalra, Wood, Desmarais, Verberg, and Senn, 1998. For examples focusing on “college-aged,” 18-24 year olds, look anywhere, because they’re practically everywhere, even here.

25 A recent study examined intimate partner violence of immigrant women (Raj & Silverman, 2002).


27 Unfortunately, the poorer, underprivileged populations are easily assessable, while the wealthier, privileged ones can afford the luxury of privacy. Consequently, the literature usually refers to connections like the ones reflected in the title of a recent dissertation, Domestic Abuse, Sexual Trauma, and Welfare Receipt: Prevalence Effects, and Implications for Poverty Theory (Curcio, 1999).
Victim Offender Relationships (VOR)

The relationship between the victim and the perpetrator is an extremely important factor in any discussion on rape or rape research. Research indicates there are different styles of rape behavior are associated with different VOR (Wilson & Leith, 2001). Marriage is associated with multiple assaults and lower rates of help-seeking behaviors (Brownridge & Halli, 2001; Mahoney, 1999). Histories of marital rape are being delineated (Bennice & Resnick, 2003).

Susan Estrich (1987) explains that an act was originally considered “real rape” by the law and by society only if it involved a male total stranger attacking and having forced vaginal intercourse with a screaming, resisting female. Unfortunately, although some legal and social changes have occurred, real change comes extremely slowly. The traditional definition of rape denies the existence of marital rape (Koss, 1992, 1993, 1996; Muehlenhard et al., 1992; Russell, 1990; Sigler & Haygood, 1987).

Recent reforms in federal law and many state laws now include rape by the legal or common law spouses of the victim (Koss, 1992, 1993, 1996). However, the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which is intended to determine the amount of crime occurring, was using the traditional definition of rape until its recent revision (Koss, 1996).

Koss (1992) warns that “an accumulation of independent data sources suggests that rape incidence may be 6-10 times higher than current NCS [National Crime Survey] estimates and that women are up to 4 times more likely to be raped by someone they know than by a stranger” (p. 73). “There is evidence to suggest that in an acquaintance rape the victim is perceived less favorably and there is more leniency toward the perpetrator than in stranger rape” (Johnson & Jackson, 1988, p. 37).
As the level of intimacy in the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator increases, the likelihood of the victim not to define the act as rape increases, as does the likelihood that the incident will remain hidden and unreported (Koss, 1989; Koss & Cleveland, 1997; Koss et al., 1988; Russell, 1990). For example, in one study cited by Muehlenhard et al. (1992), 55% of the participants agreed with the researcher's definition that rape had occurred when it was a situation involving a total stranger, but less than 28% agreed when the perpetrator was a nonromantic acquaintance, and only approximately 18% agreed when the perpetrator was a romantic acquaintance.

But what do all these labels for seemingly different VOR mean? Do they mean the same things for all people? It can't possibly be. Consider this. Monnier, Resnick, Kilpatrick, Seals, & Holmes (2002) define a stranger as "someone the victim had never seen before or someone they had seen before but did not know well" (p. 589, italics added). That sounds to me like the blending of what some might define as stranger and acquaintance.

**Sex/Gender**

The traditional definition of rape, as well as many of the recently modified definitions, do not include male victims but consider exclusively female victims of male perpetrators (Donnelly & Kenyon, 1996; Hickson et al., 1994; Hodge & Canter, 1998; Koss, 1992, 1993, 1996; Muehlenhard et al., 1992; Palmer, 1988, 1991). In some studies, this is not explicitly stated, but is implicitly the case because only female participants are questioned regarding their experiences as victims of male perpetrators. This kind of definition ignores situations involving two women, two men or women coercing men (Koss, 1992, 1993, 1996; Muehlenhard et al., 1992).
Some states have recently reformed their laws to include male victims of male perpetrators, while others have changed the wording of their definitions to become completely gender-neutral. Federal law also became gender-neutral in 1986 (Hickson et al., 1994; Hodge & Canter, 1998; Koss, 1996; Koss & Cook, 1998). Some have accepted gender-neutral definitions of rape because the authors challenge certain myths, traditional gender stereotypes and heterocentric\(^{28}\) practices (Renzetti, 1998).

Some feminists, however, protest these gender-neutral definitions on the grounds that they underplay the oppression of women (Koss, 1992, 1993, 1996; Muehlenhard et al., 1992). For example, when discussing the logic behind the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES), Koss and Gidycz contend that “the items are worded to portray female victimization and male aggression because nearly 100% of reported rapes reflect this pairing” (1985, p. 422). White and Humphrey (1997) suggest that while data need to be collected on all types of rape, researchers need to concentrate primarily on rape in heterosexual dating relationships.

This variability in the definition of rape becomes very important in the context of examining sexual violence outside the traditional model of men perpetrating against a women, as many times there is no legal definition with which to label a sexually violent act perpetrated against a man or by a woman. For example, in an article examining evolutionary explanations of human rape, Craig Palmer (1991) suggests:

Rape refers to copulations involving either the victim’s resistance to the best of her ability, or the reasonable likelihood that such resistance would result in death or bodily harm to the victim or others whom she

\(^{28}\) Adrienne Rich (1980) writes about compulsory heterosexuality. Virginia Braun (2000) writes about cultural heterosexism by quoting Bohan (1996, p. 39), which “entails the promotion by society in general of heterosexuality as the sole, legitimate expression of sexuality and affection. This includes . . . the tacit communication of this ideal via society’s norms, institutions, laws, cultural forms, and even scientific practices. Cultural . . . heterosexism is so pervasive, so taken for granted, as to escape notice. (p. 133)
commonly protects. The question therefore becomes whether there is evidence of psychological mechanisms in the human male designed to produce this type of behavior. (p. 368, italics added)

In an earlier work, Palmer (1988) states:

Thanks to the feminist movement, no one any longer defends the dangerous claim that rape is a sexually arousing or sought-after experience on the part of the victim. Neither does anyone deny that male sex organs are necessarily involved in the act. The debate is over the motivation of the rapist in using his sex organs in a way that constitutes rape. (p. 514, italics added)

Clearly, Palmer is limiting rape victims to females and rape perpetrators to males, which leaves no room for the possibility of females or males raping other males. Furthermore, he is limiting rape to an act involving male genitals, which of course makes rape between two women impossible by definition.

This extraordinarily narrow conceptualization of rape is very common historically in the literature. For example, in a cross-cultural examination of rape, examining rape in a random sample of 35 world societies, the author criticizes previous researchers for ignoring male victims of rape but yet still uses a model of explanation that “distinguishes clearly between rape and sex by making the absence of female [italics added] choice the fundamental factor in defining rape” (Rozee, 1993, p. 499). Additionally, an article entitled, “Global Health Burden of Rape” promises “the focus of this paper is the health burden of rape, which is addressed from the global perspective and includes discussion of its prevalence and psychological, sociocultural, somatic, and reproductive health consequences” (Koss, Heise & Russo, 1994, p. 509). Although one may be given the false hope that this article really will discuss rape in a global perspective, in the end, it only discusses rape as an effort “on behalf of women’s health and development” (p. 509).
One could easily conclude from these misrepresentations that rape simply is non-existent outside a male raping a female. Unfortunately, just because no language exists with which to discuss rape in “the gay community” or other forms of heterosexual rape, it should not be misinterpreted as an indicator that these types of rape do not in fact occur. Unfortunately, the reality is that other forms of rape do occur: men rape other men, women rape other women, and women rape men. Men raping women is not the only kind of rape. What is even more chilling is the common themes that echo throughout the literature within all rapes.

For example, in one study by Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (1994):

A predominantly heterosexual sample of 204 college men were asked to report incidents of pressured or forced sexual touch or intercourse since age 16. About 34% indicated they had received coercive sexual contact: 24% from women, 4% from men, and 6% from both sexes. . . In 12% of the incidents, sexual contact was forced through physical restraint, physical intimidation, threat of harm, or harm. Contact was initiated by an acquaintance or intimate in 77% of incidents. (p. 93)

It is also important to note that laws tend to discriminate against any kind of rape other than a male jumping out of the bushes and attacking an unknown female. For example, in November 1994, the law in the United Kingdom was updated to include anal penetration, making it possible for males to be the victims of sexual assault for the first time (Hodge & Canter, 1998). Complicating data collection even

---

29 I am uncomfortable with the term “gay community” because it gives the erroneous appearance of homogeneity, as if all non-heterosexual peoples are united into one big happy cohesive ethnic group or family. It is of course just as ludicrous as believing that all heterosexual peoples are united into one big happy cohesive homogeneous ethnic group, and we all know that this is certainly not the case. Members of either “the gay community” or the “heterosexual community” are members by definition based solely on their sexual orientation. This does not take into account other factors such as gender/sex, race/ethnicity, class/socioeconomic status, age, spirituality, religion, ability or any of the other characteristics of our personal lives over which we are frequently separated, compartmentalized, stigmatized and/or disenfranchised.

30 I find it interesting that rape is the preferred term when it is a female victim, but now that male victims are allowed, the term sexual assault is preferred. This gendered language pattern remains consistent throughout the literature historically.
further is the reality that “currently, the homosexual activity of any man below the age of 21 is a criminal offense” (Hickson et al., 1994, p. 282).

Hickson et al. bring up an excellent issue regarding the terminology used in the literature to discuss male sexual assaults. Because rape was historically thought of in terms of being a sexualized act and because two men were involved, original writings on this issue refer to male sexual assault as “homosexual rape” (p. 282). Recently, it has been recognized that this language suggests an unfair assumption about the sexual orientation of the perpetrator that may or may not be accurate. Feminist analyses of rape suggest that rape is a tool “to assert power, release aggression, and control feelings of helplessness” (p. 282), which suggests that heterosexual males as well as homosexual males may use rape as a tool to assert power over other males.

**Scarcity of Literature**

Hickson et al. (1994) suggest the majority of research on male sexual assaults has focused on prisons and other institutions such as the military. The remainder of the research literature has focused on the immediate and long-term effects of male victims of sexual assault. In the introduction to their 1989 article, Waterman, Dawson, and Bologna claim that, “no research has been done on sexual coercion in gay male and lesbian relationships, and few support services exist” (p. 118). In 1984, Goyer and Eddleman contend that while “incarcerated men as victims of homosexual assault have been frequently described, reports on nonincarcerated male victims of same-sex rape have primarily focused on victims of child or early adolescent molestation” (p. 576).
The authors state that very little data has been collected on nonincarcerated men as victims of male sexual assault. They discuss only one such study from 1980 in which a mere five victims were discovered over a 3-year period. Their study published in 1984 is an examination of male victims of sexual assault who presented themselves for treatment at a psychiatric outpatient clinic serving predominantly male personnel on active duty in the US Navy and Marine Corps. Over a 2-year period, a total of only 13 males were studied. While these numbers are very small and do suggest a lack of research in this area, this particular study is very illuminating in the similarities between the known research on women and these men's reactions to and consequences of being sexually victimized.

In 1998, Raquel Kennedy Bergen published the book *Issues in Intimate Violence*, which included sections on child abuse, incest, dating relationships, acquaintance rape, wife abuse, wife rape, elder abuse, and violence in gay/lesbian couples. She writes, “Of all the types of intimate violence addressed in this book, violence in gay/lesbian couples is the subject most overlooked” (p. 114). Claire Renzetti (1997a, 1997b, 1998) suggests that the lack of research in this area is due to two primary reasons. The first is the heterosexism of social scientists and society in general. The second is the commonly shared erroneous belief that violence is confined to heterosexual couples (Bergen, 1998).

**Incarcerated Males**

While an in-depth review of the literature on rape in prison is not necessary, several issues do merit mention because of their familiarity with the findings from mainstream and feminist rape research. For example, Nacci and Kane (1984) found:

Targets of sexual assault and participants in consensual homosexuality have attitudes that are favorable toward homosexuality as an
orientation, affiliate with other prisoners involved in various forms of homosexual behavior, and more importantly, discuss sex often with other inmates. Hence, any public act endorsing homosexuality may contribute to being selected as a target. . . . From this model, it was predicted that inmates’ abstinence from homosexual activity is strengthened by attitudes that do not favor homosexuality, but that do include a commitment to traditional religious beliefs; and that these attitudes and abstinence will be strengthened by the salience of endorsements made by the inmate’s family, prison peers, and prison staff for norms that proscribe involvement in homosexual activity. (pp. 8, 9-10)

Because the focus of intervention is placed on characteristics of the victim rather than on the perpetrator or the contextual environment when examining the causes of rape in prison, the cure is designed to alter those characteristics of the victim. Thus, it would appear that the goal is to instill and perpetuate a very negative attitude toward homosexuality in the inmates and staff, sad but perfect examples of institutional discrimination and homonegativity. Nevertheless, this concentration on the victim rather than the perpetrator is very similar to the rape research that concludes women are responsible for preventing getting themselves raped. A second similarity found in this study is the fact that the prison system is completely uneducated on the use of rape kits to collect evidence for prosecution of rapes in prison (Nacci & Kane, 1984).

Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson, Rucker, Bumby, and Donaldson (1996) found that approximately half of the victims of prison rape did not report the incident for three primary reasons. Victims were afraid of additional harm from the perpetrators. Additionally, victims were afraid of receiving poor treatment by the staff. Finally, victims were ashamed and embarrassed. This self-blame is very evident in some of the comments included from the written statements of victimized

\[31\] Is it not important to consider the implications of this hate crime promoting policy on the future readjustment and reintegration of the prison population back into society? We are still interested in the reintegration into society of these human beings, aren’t we?
prisoners. For example, one victim states, "I was pushed in the back by some-one, [sic] I tried to fight but there was 3 or 4 of them. Some one stuck his dick in my butt and I got out of there and thought about killing myself for allowing something like that to happen to me" (p. 72).

These self-blaming sentiments expressed by male victims are extremely similar to those echoed by female victims of male rape. Additionally, this study reveals that in 18% of the disclosed rape incidents, the perpetrator is a member of the prison staff. The authors suggest that the lack of research in this area may very well be due to the fact that administrators hide the reality of prison rape to protect their staff, or they dismiss it as consensual homosexuality, or are simply prejudiced against convicted criminals and believe they deserve it (Struckman-Johnson et al., 1996). This under-reporting of rape to officials and the stigmatization and further blame and abuse of male victims is also strikingly familiar to research on sexual violence against women.

The reactions of male victims of sexual assault are likewise strikingly similar to those of female victims. Goyer and Eddleman (1984) report that nine of the 13 males they studied reported symptoms of depression, and five of those nine patients with depression reported suicidal ideation, with two of them actually attempting to take their own lives. While I realize these numbers are very small, they still represent the fact that over 38% of the victims suffered consequences from the assault severe enough to drive them to suicidal ideation. Furthermore, symptoms of the male victims include sexual disturbances, problems with peer relations, mood disturbances, and somatic disturbances, such as problems sleeping and eating. It is noteworthy that these are the same types of complaints recorded in the literature on female victims of sexual assault (Koss et al., 1994).
Sexual Orientation Comparisons

What little research there is in this area has been very compartmentalized in that a small handful examines only gay men, and even fewer examine only lesbian women or both at the same time. One study compares the prevalence of sexual assault victimization among 412 university students and concludes “sexual victimization is significantly more common among female than male and among gay and lesbian than heterosexual students” (Duncan, 1990, p. 65). Because this sample was not a random national representative sample of college students, this conclusion is not warranted.

It is appropriate to say, however, that 3.6% of the heterosexual men, 11.8% of the gay/bisexual men, 17.8% of the heterosexual women, and 30.6% of the lesbian/bisexual women reported having ever been forced to have sex against their will. In this particular convenience sample more non-heterosexual people reported sexual victimization than did heterosexual people, and more women reported victimization than did men. Unfortunately, no data was collected with which to identify the sex or sexual orientation of the perpetrator.

McConaghy and Zamir’s (1995) findings from a similar study on second-year medical students are consistent with Duncan’s (1990) with regard to the higher reporting rates of victimization found in gay men but did not find this to be the case with lesbian women. This study did, however, collect data on the sex of the perpetrator and concluded that although same-sex rape is neglected in the literature, it certainly does exist in the real world, as “half the male victims and female aggressors and a quarter of the male aggressors and female victims who reported such coercion [threat or use of force to attempt to or to obtain intercourse] stated it was homosexual” (McConaghy & Zamir, 1995, p. 489).
One additional study deserves mentioning here. Waterman et al. (1989) examine sexual coercion in gay male and lesbian relationships and report that 12% of their sample (n = 34) of gay males and 31% of their sample (n = 36) of lesbians “reported being victims of forced sex by their current or most recent partners” (p. 118). It must be kept in mind, however, that this study does have methodological flaws. For example, participants were recruited to participate in a study on “conflict resolution in gay/lesbian relationships” (p. 119), which could have unfairly biased the sample by attracting those couples with higher levels of conflict.

Nevertheless, there is one very interesting finding that needs to be mentioned. Almost 6% (5.9%) of the men and 8.3% of the women admitted to forcing sex on their partners, which was not statistically significant (p. 120). This suggests, at least within this particular group of people, that lesbian women are just as likely to victimize their partners, as are gay males. Other research focusing on general population supports this conclusion (Fiebert & Osburn, 2001; McFarlane, Willson, Malecha, & Lemmey, 2000).

Lesbians

Living in a patriarchal world where heterosexual males control the major power structures such as ours, it is no surprise to me whatsoever to find the least amount of research literature dedicated to the rape of lesbian women. In fact, while a few scattered pieces on lesbian battering are floating around, no work dedicated solely to the rape of lesbians existed until Lori Girshick published her book Woman-To-Woman Sexual Violence: Does She Call It Rape? (2002b). Again, one cannot assume that this is any indication that it does not exist (Girshick, 2002a, 2002b; Renzetti, 1997a, 1997b, 1998; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000a, 2000b).
Two studies from a decade ago that included lesbian women suggest that lesbians may report higher rates of victimization than do heterosexual women. One study examines the prevalence of workplace sexual assaults of heterosexual and lesbian working women in several New England and Middle Atlantic states (Schneider, 1991). Interestingly, 43% of the overall sample of 372 women reported at least one type of sexual assault during their lifetime. Twenty-seven percent of the total heterosexual sample and 54% of the total lesbian sample were included in this figure. Furthermore, 17% of the overall sample answered yes to the question, "Have you EVER experienced a sexual assault, or attempted sexual assault, or any kind of forced oral or anal sexual activity BY SOMEONE YOU KNEW FROM WORK?" (p. 537).

It is noteworthy that at the time of the data collection, 30% of the women who reported workplace sexual assaults were still employed by the same employer. Lesbians reported workplace victimization at a higher rate than did heterosexuals. "Fourteen percent of the current self-identified heterosexuals and 20 percent of the current self-identified lesbians had experienced a workplace sexual assault sometime during their employment history" (p. 537). While these findings are clearly not generalizeable, they do suggest that lesbians in this particular population at least do report higher rates of victimization than do heterosexual women.

Finally, Arguelles and Rivero (1993) describe the transnational migration of 100 women into the United States, and conclude that many are coming to escape the "impacts and actualities of gender and sexual abuse and heterosexist oppression" (p. 268) in their homelands. Many of the stories are about heterosexual women, but some are about lesbian women. These women have had to endure sexual abuses from the males in their families and environment beyond those endured by heterosexual women, as these men had the additional motivation to rape to change the sexual
orientation of these lesbian women—to "cure" them. Additionally, their stories reflect sexual abuses perpetrated upon them by other women.

Linda Bernhard (2000) analyzed survey data from a convenience sample of 136 lesbian and 79 heterosexual women and found no significant difference between the groups in the prevalence of sexual violence (lesbian 54%, heterosexual 44%). Moreover, there was no difference between the groups in their response actions. "The principal actions for all women in response to violence were avoidance, talking to someone, and doing nothing—passive strategies that have limited value" (p. 68).

**Non-Incarcerated Males**

Several studies have been conducted to examine non-incarcerated male victims of male sexual assault. Hodge and Canter (1998) recently collected data in the United Kingdom on victims and perpetrators of male sexual assault. They conclude, "Male sexual assault by heterosexuals may be slightly more common than sexual assault by homosexual offenders. Fifty-five percent of the offences under study were carried out by heterosexual offenders and 45% by homosexual offenders" (p. 237).

In addition, when the perpetrator is a heterosexual male, the attack is usually more violent and accomplished in gangs. The homosexual victim is more likely to report more serious and more minor injuries than are heterosexual victims. Finally, when the perpetrator is a heterosexual male, the rape is more likely to be a stranger rape and to be reported to the police, whereas when the perpetrator is a homosexual male, the rape is more likely to be an acquaintance rape and less likely to be reported to the police.

Hickson et al. (1994) examine what little literature there is on gay male victims of sexual assault and explain interesting differences between studies in the
United Kingdom and those done in the United States. One study in the UK (Mezey & King, 1989) found that 82% of the sexual assaults found in their sample had been perpetrated by a past or current lover, while only 18% had been stranger rapes. The two studies in the US (Groth & Burgess, 1980; Kaufman, DiVasto, Jackson, Voorhees, & Christy, 1980) found that almost all of the sexual assaults found in their samples had been perpetrated by strangers commonly in gangs, were extremely violent in nature, causing substantial physical trauma to the victims.

The polar differences seen in these samples are very easily explained. The participants in the studies done in the United States were recruited through the police and hospitals, where the participants from the study in the United Kingdom were recruited through advertisements in gay publications. Thus, the sample in the United Kingdom included a much higher concentration of gay males in relationships, while the samples in the United States included much higher concentrations of victims of sexual hate crimes.

Hickson et al. (1994) compiled data over a 6-year period in the United Kingdom. Of the 930 homosexual men in their study, “27.6% said they had been sexually assaulted or had sex against their will at some point in their lives; one third had been forced into sexual activity (usually anal intercourse) by men with whom they had previously had, or were currently having, consensual sexual activity” (p. 281). These results are similar to the other findings from studies done in the United Kingdom. Gay males are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault by their intimate partners and acquaintances. They are also the victims of sexual violence in the form of heterosexual gang rape and hate crimes.

Donnelly and Kenyon collect data from “thirty sexual assault crisis providers in a major Southeastern city” (1996, p. 441) and conclude that there are three types of
sexual assaults in the gay community. There is a great deal of hidden date and acquaintance rape, which is very often hidden for some of the very same reasons female victims of date and acquaintance rape hide their victimization. There is also intimate rape perpetrated by someone in an ongoing gay relationship, which is also less likely to be reported than stranger rape. Finally, there is a huge problem of stranger rape perpetrated by heterosexual men, often in gangs, as a form of homophobic violence against gay men.

Merrill (1998) offers an illuminating review of the scarce literature on domestic violence and battering in gay and bisexual male couples. He suggests that the theoretical discussion of battering in gay couples lends itself well to a discussion on sexual assault in these relationships as well. The similarities between homosexual and heterosexual battering are striking. For example, the literature supports previous findings on the cycle of violence in violent relationships. Gay male victims stay with their partners for all the same reasons battered women stay with their partners, and they suffer some of the exact same ailments collectively referred to in the literature as "battered woman syndrome." Furthermore, 39% of battered gay males admitted that they have been physically forced to have sex against their will by their partners.

Merrill also points out some interesting differences. For example, victimized gay males sometimes stay with their abusive partners because being gay means they are somewhat limited in their choices of available partners. Furthermore, many gay, lesbian, and bisexual people report a higher level of child abuse and other forms of victimization than do heterosexual people, which may make them more tolerant of abuse and victimization in general. Finally, because of the current societal homophobia, there is a distinct lack of social services available to gay and lesbian victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.
Several authors identify and discuss myths about male victims of sexual violence that discourage victims from coming forward. Keeping victimization hidden only further stigmatizes victims and increases the probability of future abuses (Renzetti, 1998). Donnelly and Kenyon (1996) point out that it is commonly believed that men always want sex, and that because they are men, they cannot be raped. Additionally, many male victims of sexual assault are afraid of being stigmatized as gay by society because it is commonly believed that if men can get raped, then only gay men can be victims.

Morrison et al. (1997) suggest that the myth that men are always ready for sex minimizes the trauma experienced by male rape victims similar to the way it minimizes the trauma experienced by female rape victims who are told that they asked for it. Merrill (1998) adds that it is commonly believed that violence in gay male relationships is the result of involvement in sadomasochism. Further, gay male victims of domestic battering are often perceived of as simply being the loser of a fair fight because both participants are males.

Taken collectively, these myths work together to discourage male victims from reporting sexual assaults, a phenomenon not uncommon to female victims of such violence. In addition, research indicates that women are also sexually violent to men, (Fiebert & Osburn, 2001; Kalof, Eby, Matheson, & Kroska, 2001; Pino, 1999) and in these situations, “men fail to report rape when it jeopardizes their masculine self-identity” (Pino & Meier, 1999, p. 979).

One thing is very clear. While there exists a shortage of data collected on rape outside the traditional violence against women (VAW) model (Renzetti, 1997a, 1997b), there does not seem to exist any shortage of rape (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000a,
People of non-heterosexual identities\(^{32}\) are raped by dates, acquaintances, and intimates just as heterosexual people are. They are victims of rape by heterosexual people too. Furthermore, the rates of victimization reported by non-heterosexual people tend to be as high as the rates reported by heterosexual people.

Although there do indeed exist kinds of sexual violence outside of the traditional VAW model that demand our attention as well, the magnitude and scope of the violence perpetrated against women by men warrants its being given special attention. Unlike McFarlane et al. (2000), I do not believe that “the severity and extent of the violence does not differ by gender” (p. 163). Sexual violence is gendered. The violence perpetrated against women by men is not a reflection of the evilness of men or the weakness of women; it is a direct reflection of and a reaction to navigating our patriarchal, white supremacist, and capitalistic world.

Causes

What causes rape? Why does it happen? That is such an important question because knowledge of the cause of something gives you some insights into the cure as well.\(^{33}\) Unfortunately, this medicalized language of causes and cures seems almost appropriate given some of the more recent pieces published on this topic. For example, Debra Niehoff (1999) entitles her book *The Biology of Violence*. Craig Palmer (1988, 1991) has argued in the journals of the trade for over 15 years that rape

\(^{32}\) Because of my unease over the use of the phrase “the gay community,” I am experimenting with replacing it with “people of non-heterosexual identities.” I have reservations. It is still not entirely inclusive of people who might identify as members of the gay community. Furthermore, it’s tedious; it’s doesn’t flow well. On the flip side, it does emphasize its break with heterosexuality, which I believe is necessary. Girshick (2002a) agrees, “The homophobic, biphobic, and heterosexist context of our lives must be confronted in order to address woman-to-woman sexual violence” (p. 1500).

\(^{33}\) Radford and Stanko (1994) offer a perfect example of this cause-cure link when they write, “As feminists we argue that sexual violence is used by men to maintain relations of male dominance and female subordination, which are central to the patriarchal social order. . . . Men’s violence can be confronted only by challenging the patriarchal order and by increasing women’s autonomy” (p. 149).
is not sexually motivated but biological and evolutionary in its origins. He finally published a book a few years ago that presents a physiological model of rape in which men's biological sexual nature is the cause (Thornhill & Palmer, 2000).

The reviews (believe it or not) are mixed. One reviewer of the book calls it “an intellectual masterpiece” (Shackelford, 2001, p. 81). He claims the authors:

Present a courageous, compassionate, and scholarly analysis of rape and male sexual coercion, informed by an evolutionary perspective. There is much to commend and recommend about this book. First, we applaud Thornhill and Palmer for their courage in tackling an area of work that is riddled with ideology, misinformation, and untethered emotional upset. (p. 81)\(^{34}\)

Other reviewers were not so enthusiastic (Koss, 2000). She claims “the authors frame their presentation as a battle of evolution versus the social sciences, likening those who reject a reproductive explanation for rape to right-wing fundamentalists” (pp. 182-183).\(^{35}\)

Policies typically produced out of research from the physiological model are aimed at the abuser’s biology, such as chemical therapy and castration. Policies are also typically aimed at the victim, such as self-defense classes and avoiding certain “risky” behaviors. For example, in the abstract to their book, Thornhill and Palmer (2000) write:

Suggestions for prevention include education focusing on the psychological mechanisms that guide male sexual behavior, stiffer punishments, possibly to include chemical castration, & certain physical &/or social barriers. It is also maintained that women should consider the biological causes of rape when choosing wearing apparel & social activities. (p. xvi)

\(^{34}\) Given his choice to follow ideology with misinformation and untethered emotional upset, I suspect the author really meant mythology. Unless of course his implication is that all the other perspectives are “just theories,” but this book presents “the real facts,” “the truth,” and “what’s real.”

\(^{35}\) No wonder the tone of that particular review sounded angry to me. I don’t take that as a compliment either.
Another theoretical explanation of rape is the psychopathological model. Adherents to this model suggest the cause lies within the characteristics of the rapist; they are pathological or have antisocial personalities (Cowan & Campbell, 1995). Research from the perspective of this model typically examines the etiological factors associated with sexual abuse, searching for universal characteristics to generate a profile of abusers (Freund, 1998; Hartley, 2001; Quinsey, Chaplin, & Varney, 1981). Policies generated from this type of research are most often aimed at the abuser's abnormalities, such as empathy training with the key aspects of “developing cognitive awareness, enhancing emotional responsiveness, self-awareness, and modeling of empathic responses” (Regehr & Glancy, 2001, p. 142).

A third theoretical explanation of rape is the sociocultural model. Adherents to this model suggest, “rape is the expression of a larger cultural phenomenon in which women are seen as subordinate and coercive sexuality is accepted” (Cowan & Campbell, 1995, p. 145). For example, Meyer-Emerick (2002) offers an example of the intimate linkage between sex and violence when she quotes Kelly’s (1987) continuum of heterosexual sex, which proceeds from:

Consensual sex (equally desired by woman and man), to altruistic sex (women do it because they feel sorry for the man or guilty about saying no), to compliant sex (the consequences of not doing it are worse than the consequences of doing it), to rape. (p. 641)

Mandoki and Burkhart (1991) argue:

To understand the victimization of women, especially in acquaintance rape, social-psychological beliefs and attitudes reflective of the culture must be examined for their contributions because it is unlikely and illogical that anomalous psychological processes alone could produce prevalence rates of such magnitude. (p. 177)

For example, Ryan and Kanjorski (1998) examine the enjoyment of sexist humor in relation to rape-supportive attitudes and relationship aggression in college students.
Interestingly, their findings show that women “found the jokes to be less enjoyable, less acceptable, and more offensive than the men, but they were not significantly less likely to tell the jokes” (p. 743).

Research within this model often times focuses on prison rapes showing the “day-to-day victimisation which characterizes institutional life” (O‘Donnell & Edgar, 1998, p. 266). In the end, the argument is usually that violence begets violence; change the violent culture and it will stop breeding more violence. Thus, policies from research within this model are typically aimed at cultural transformations (O’Toole & Schiffman, 1997; Radford & Stanko, 1991; Vogelman, 1990). Buchwald, Fletcher, and Roth (1993) further explain:

**WHAT IS A RAPE CULTURE?** It is a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women as the norm. In a rape culture both men and women assume that sexual violence is a fact of life, inevitable as death or taxes. This violence, however, is neither biologically nor divinely ordained. Much of what we accept as inevitable is in fact the expression of values and attitudes that can change. (Preamble, original emphasis)

Much research from this model links rape to rape-supportive male peer support groups (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002). A great deal of this research focuses on fraternities (Boswell & Spade, 1996; Martin & Hummer, 1995; Sawyer, Schulken. & Pinciaro, 1997), athletes (Benedict, 1998; Keteyian, 1998), or both (Boeringer, 1999). Manderson (2001) contends, “the main challenge is to change the culture of masculinity that underpins male-female relationships in such a way as to facilitate or excuse gender-based violence” (p. 6). DeKeseredy, Schwartz, and Alvi (2000) offer examples of policy implications:
Building on empirical research that suggests that male peer support is the most important factor on whether a male will be abusive, the authors suggest ways in which profeminist men can begin to tilt the balance against male aggression. This can include shaming or working with bullies or those who are abusive, protesting pornography, and involving oneself with education programs and/or support groups. (p. 918)

An enormous amount of research is aimed at rape myths (Burt, 1991). Cowen and Campbell (1995) explain:

People accepting rape myths often tend to blame the female victim, suggesting that she asked to be raped, deserved rape, or wasn’t really raped. Other rape myths focus on the perpetrator in two ways—first, that rapists are crazy or pathological men, and second, that men rape because they cannot control their sexuality. (p. 145)

Gloria Cowan (2000a, pp. 808-809) refers to these as the “victim precipitation,” “male pathology,” and “male sexuality” rape myths. Some studies focus on rape myths in general, while others focus on rape myth acceptance or rape-supportive attitudes.

Research that combines or cutting across these three models is scarce. For example, Schwartz and Rutter (1998) combine models when they suggest, “sexual violence may have its origins in a culture that privileges men. . . . A small subgroup of sex offenders may in fact have a genetic or physiological basis for their pathology” (p. 204). Miscommunication theory cuts across these models (Abbey, 1991; Johnson & Jackson, 1988; Krahe, Scheinberger-Olwig, & Kolpin, 2000).

As Frith and Kitzinger (1997) explain, miscommunication theory:

---

36 If I understood rape from a physiological or psychopathological model, I would also consider the labeling of my perspective as mere mythology tantamount to right-wing fundamentalist behavior too. 37 For examples, see Brinson, 1992; Cowan, 2000b; Buddie and Miller, 2001; Edward and Macleod, 1999; Foubert and Marriott, 1997; Glass, 2002.
39 For examples, see Davies, 1997; Jones, Russell, and Bryant, 1998; Lanier, 2001; Sapp, Farrell, Johnson, and Hitchcock, 1999; Ward, 1995.
Is used to argue that rape and other forms of sexual abuse are often the outcome of "miscommunication" between partners: he misinterprets her verbal and nonverbal communication, falsely believing that she wants sex; she fails to say "no" clearly and effectively. Both biology and socialization are invoked to explain why this form of "miscommunication" is so common. (p. 518)

Apparently, this is one of those cases that I wonder about where one person has sex but the other one got raped. Johnson, Palileo, and Gray (1992) examine a probability sample of students at a Southern university campus and conclude there is "significant evidence of miscommunication between males and females about sexual intentions" (p. 37).

Alcohol and Rape

Alcohol use and sexual violence is intimately linked in the research literature. Antonia Abbey (2002) sums up the situation quite succinctly with the title of her article, "Alcohol-related sexual assault: A common problem among college students." Research suggests that one-third to two-thirds of rapes involve alcohol use (Brecklin & Ullman, 2001). Indeed, Abby et al. (2001) conclude alcohol is involved with 34%-74% of perpetrators and 30%-79% of victims in sexual assault cases. Numerous other studies look into the role of alcohol when the perpetrator uses, when the victim uses, and when they are both using.

There is a substantial body of research examining the role alcohol use plays in the attribution of blame in sexual violence cases (Richardson & Campbell, 1980, 1982; Wall & Schuller, 2000). In addition, studies examine the link specifically

---

40 For examples, see Bernat, Calhoun, and Stolp, 1998; Brecklin and Ullman, 2001; Johnson, 2001; Wilson, McFarlane, and Watson, 2000.
41 For examples, see Corbin, Bernat, Calhoun, McNair, and Seals, 2001; Davies, Combs-Lane, and Jackson, 2002; Livingston and Testa, 2000; Marx, Nichols-Anderson, Messman-Moore, Miranda, and Porter, 2000.
42 For examples, see Abbey, 2002; Abbey et al., 2001; Richardson and Hammock, 1991; Ullman, Karabarsos, and Koss, 1999; White and Chen, 2002.
between sexual assault and bar drinking (Parks & Scheidt, 2000). Parks and Miller (1997) studied women bar drinkers and found that "one third (32.6%) had experienced either attempted or completed rape associated with drinking in a bar" (p. 509).

Reactions

Victims


Nevertheless, research consistently shows the victim's initial reaction after a sexually violent incident is greatly impacted by society's reactions. Research indicates a positive relationship between a victim's reaction, response, and recovery and positive and supportive societal reactions (Campbell, Ahrens, Sefl, Wasco, & Barnes, 2001; Davis, Brickman, & Baker, 1991).

Research indicates that contextual factors influence whether or not a victim acknowledges the incident as rape (Boudrant, 2001). Hamby & Gray-Little (2000) found severity and frequency of assaults, lower partner income, being African American, having a lower relationship commitment, and having ended the relationship all positively associated with labeling abuse as abuse. Karen Weiss (2001) argues women do not call incidents rape because it's inconsistent with their beliefs about their relationships and their partners. She identifies patterns of victim
reactions, including not recognizing rape and normalizing sexual coercion, re-negotiating partner identity and excusing rape behavior, and self-blame, identity switching and justifiable rape.

In addition to defining the event, there is the question of reporting and the question of disclosure. Do I call the police? Do I tell my parents? Do I confide in my church or my best friend or my brother? Who do I tell? Researchers are very interested in what factors impact these decisions.\(^{43}\) Dunham and Senn (2000) studied disclosure patterns at a University in Ontario and found that over one-third of the women who disclosed to relatives or friends omitted information about the incident. Their analysis indicates this may be an unconscious attempt to enhance the chances of receiving positive social support.

The victim’s reactions also impact social responses. For example, Bennett, Goodman, & Dutton (1999) argue that victims who press charges often try to drop them or become non-cooperative with the prosecution because of frustration and confusion with the criminal justice system; fear of, love for, and/or the desire to “help” the perpetrator; racial alliances; and economic reasons. The implications of this victim resistance are disastrous as Bachman (1998) explains:

An unreported incident of rape eliminates the possibility that an offender will be arrested or convicted. This may, in turn, reduce the perceived likelihood that rape and sexual assault, in general, will be punished. If rapists and would-be rapists perceive the likelihood of apprehension from authorities as low, this can only serve to undermine any deterrent value the legal system may have in preventing rape. (p. 9)

\(^{43}\) For an example examining cultural differences, see Dussich, 2001. For an example examining gender and VOR, see Kaukinen, 2002. For an example examining differences in health outcomes based on formal and informal support seeking, see Ullman and Filipas, 2001.
Researchers are interested in people's attitudes and attributions of blame. Calhoun and Townsley (1991) explain, "Questions as to when and why assailants are not found blameworthy and when and why victims are held responsible for rape are of crucial importance in bringing about change" (p. 57). Studies examine the differences between the ways different groups respond to rape. For example, race has been associated with insensitivity to victims (Neville & Pugh, 1997). For example, White and Humphrey (1991) examine young people's attitudes toward acquaintance rape, while Sheldon and Parent (2002) examine clergy's attitudes and attributions of blame toward female rape victims. Other studies examine the relationship between victim blaming and characteristics of the victim (Mull, 2000; White & Kurpius, 2002).

Researchers are also interested in the community's responses to rape victims. As the anti-rape movement is a few decades old, researchers have started comparing and evaluating therapies for victims (Bevacqua, 2000; Burkhard, 1991; Collins & Whalen, 1989), and for victim services, community outreach, and contemporary rape crisis centers (O'Sullivan & Carlton, 2001). Researchers have been criticizing the medical (Campbell, 1998; Parrot, 1991b; Temkin, 1996), legal, and criminal justice systems for mishandling rape cases for quite some time now, but now they are making suggestions for improving these interactions (Bohmer, 1991; Parrot, 1991a).

For examples, see Anderson, Beattie, and Spencer, 2001; Davies, Pollard, and Archer, 2001; Johnson, Mullick, and Mulford, 2002; Almeida, Binder, and Fischer, 2000; Schneider, 1991.

For examples, see Bohmer, 1991; Cretney and Davis, 1997; Hengehold, 2000; Martin and Powell, 1995; Ranyard, Hebenton, and Pease, 1994; Spohn, Beichner, and Davis-Frenzel, 2001.

For examples, see Avakame and Fyfe, 2001; Harris, Holden, and Carlson, 2001; Shoham, 2000; Temkin, 1997, 1999.
Consequences

Recent research indicates not all consequences of sexual violence are negative for the victim (Frazier, Conlon, & Glaser, 2001; Gilfus, 1999). Nevertheless the overwhelming majority of research uses language of victim recovery and coping strategies in exploring outcomes of sexual violence (Arata & Burkhart, 1998; Gidycz & Koss, 1991; Katz, 1991). Research focuses on the psychological outcomes for rape victims. There is a plethora of research on rape victims and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). We examine the degree to which the incident affects women’s interpersonal problems and rates of revictimization (Classen, Field, Koopman, Nevill-Manning, & Spiegel, 2001) and how her parenting was affected (Levendosky, Lynch, & Graham-Bermann, 2000).

Researchers examine the correlation between rape victimization and alcohol and drug use (Clark & Foy, 2000; Harris & Fallot, 2001; Woodhouse, 1992) and even sexually transmitted diseases (Molitor, Ruiz, Klausner, & McFarland, 2000). Researchers examine the impact of rape to women’s sexuality (Berlo & Ensink, 2000; Redfearn & Laner, 2000) and to women’s reproductive health (McMahon, Goodwin, & Stringer, 2000). Research has examined the link between abuse-related traumatization and chronic fatigue (Taylor & Jason, 2002). There is an enormous amount of research focusing on rape and women’s health (Campbell & Soeken, 1999; Koss et al., 1994; Plichta & Falik, 2001).

In addition, recent research focuses on women’s fear of rape (Brockway & Heath, 1998; Day, 1994, 1997, 1999; Madriz, 1997). White and Sorenson (1992)

---

47 For examples, see Sachs-Ericsson and Ciarlo, 2000; Lynch and Graham-Bermann, 2000; Purewal and Ganesh, 2000; Resick, 1993.
48 For examples, see Barker-Collo, Melnyk, and McDonald-Miszczak, 2000; Feeny, Zoellner, and Foa, 2000; Foa, Rothbaum, and Steketee, 1993; Griffin, Resick, and Mechanic, 1997; Jones, Hughes, and Unterstaller, 2001; Layman, Gidycz, and Lynn, 1996; Street and Arias, 2001; Wolfe, Sharkansky, Read, Dawson, Martin, and Ouimette, 1998.
contend that the current definitions of rape used in the legal and social worlds, as well as the research process itself, serve to maintain the current unequal distribution of power and perpetuate the subordination of women through the fear of rape and the silencing of victims after rape occurs. Esther Madriz (1997) argues that the "fear of crime contributes to the social control of women by perpetuating the gender inequalities that maintain patriarchal relations and undermine women's power, rights, and achievements" (p. 2).

Agencies and the media sensationalize particular fear-inducing events, such as the threat of "date rape drugs" (Pope & Shouldice, 2001). This distorts the public's images of the circumstances in which these events occur and their frequency (Moore & Valverde, 2000). Kristen Day argues, "fear and prevention of sexual assault pose major negative consequences for women on U. S. college campuses. Women's ways of coping with consequences often reinforce social control of public space" (p. 83).

Are media representations of rape distorted images of rape? Again, it depends on whom you ask. Bufkin and Eschholz (2000) conducted a content analysis of popular films and concludes that the media perpetuates false images of rape, while Mohahan (2000) conducted a content analysis of Time & Newsweek articles concerning rape and battering published since 1970 and concluded the perpetuation of myths does not occur to the extent to which past researchers have argued.

Whichever way you look at it, one thing is for certain—the media shapes the ways knowledge can be constructed (Hirsch, 1995; Milburn, Mather, & Conrad, 2000; Soothill & Soothill, 1993). Swidler and Arditi (1994) argue it is through the media that "knowledge is preserved, organized, and transmitted" (p. 307). Furthermore, activists are strategizing on ways to use the media's power to shape knowledge on intimate violence. For example, Marissa Ghez (2001) writes about using the media as
a means to change social norms that legitimize abuse. Similarly, Sheila Murphy (1998) offers recommendations on how media portrayals can be used to successfully reduce prejudice.

Recent research has turned its focus toward the differences and similarities between the consequences of rape for women of different social locations. For example, Tsun-Yin Luo (2000) compared the trauma experiences of 35 rape survivors in Taiwan with the rape trauma symptoms documented in Western literature. Similarities include “fear or anxiety, self-blame, depression, loss of self-esteem, and disturbed social relationships” (p. 590). However, certain trauma themes predominantly found in the experiences of Chinese rape victims that “have either never been or have rarely been reported in Western studies” (p. 590). These include, “sexual shame over loss of virginity or chastity (although among very religious Western women, this is a big issue), guilt about derogating family honor, victim ridicule, and rape-induced marriage proposals” (p. 590).

I have to wonder if Dr. Luo has ever been to the United States. I have taught introductory level sociology and women’s studies classes at a large Midwestern residential university for only four years, and I have heard these exact trauma experiences from women struggling with these very issues each and every semester. Maybe Dr. Luo doesn’t realize the extent of the impact of the moral crusade that has swept through this country like the black plague over the last 20 years.

She has never met my mom; that much I know. I disclose the following tiny piece of my life history to my students as a way to enter into an authentic discussion on this very subject. When I was an adolescent, I went to my mom for advice because the older boy with whom I very recently had voluntary sex for the first time in my life was making me do things I didn’t want to do; things that hurt me. She asked me if I
had told him that I didn’t want to do these things and that they hurt me. I said, “I told him, but he insists and then he just does them anyway while I cry.” I was hoping she could tell me how to make him stop, but she didn’t. Instead, she empathized with me because in the eyes of God, I had married this horrible boy, and she knew all too well how it was to be married to a horrible spouse.

Instead of making him stop, she tried to comfort me and tell me to make the best of a bad situation. Apparently, without realizing it, I had married this rapist and was stuck for the rest of my miserable life, although I never would have called him a rapist back then. No, he was just “a selfish lover,” “an insensitive spouse.” My focus was turned away from his behavior and on to my sexual shame and loss of chastity, and on to issues like birth control so there would be no public loss of our illusions of family honor. Apparently, it’s one thing to privately disgrace yourself, but quite another to make it public by getting yourself pregnant.

Inevitably, a student will share her or his story of either being or knowing someone who went through a strikingly similar situation. Often times, many more students jump into the discussion to share their stories as well. You see, the reason I expose my skeletons and secrets is not to gain sympathy or attention for my uniquely traumatic life history, but because I know I am not the only one struggling and suffering with these same skeletons and secrets. I know I am not the only one who struggles with issues of self-blame, resentment, abandonment, rage, abuse, depression, neglect, anxiety, fear, and hopelessness. I know through authentic sharing of these secrets in a safe atmosphere surrounded by love, we can heal our wounds and we can all grow together in the knowledge that there are commonalities in our stories and our wounds that point to structural issues and not individual ones.
Usually, the initial reaction of my students involves a few students asking me a myriad of questions about my relationship with my mom, not the least of which is “How can you not hate her?” Eventually, through our discussion, they begin to see how people from different social locations go to their representatives of “God,” “THE Church,” with the unconditional trust and love of an innocent child. It doesn’t even matter which organized religion, each one has its standard responses to issues on the family and marriage.

Each one has its own set of rules for men and women and children. Each one tells us “THE Truth.” And we listen. And it affects our thinking, our feeling, and our behavior. It affects our goals in life and our sense of purpose. Eventually, they realize that my mom isn’t unique in the unconditional trust she places in the socially constructed and extremely politically charged messages given to her by her Church. Eventually, they begin to ask themselves in whom they place their unconditional love and trust; they learn to attend to what messages are being given to them and to determine the value of those messages for themselves.

Prevention and Intervention

As the feminist anti-rape movement is already over a quarter of a century old (Caputi, 1992), attention has been given to the evaluation of prevention and intervention strategies as well. McCall (1993) argues, “sexual assault prevention suffers because it fully fits neither the traditional crime-prevention model nor the traditional public-health model of prevention programming” (p. 278). The Rape Prevention and Control Act of 1975 eventually placed the National Center for the Prevention and Control of Rape within the Public Health Service’s National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) instead of the Department of Justice. “As sometimes crime-
control and sometime public-health measure, the prevention of sexual assault has lacked focus and effective coordination” (p. 278). McCall offers a summary of comparisons of competing perspectives on sexual assault prevention (p. 288), which is presented in Table 1.

The research literature is riddled with suggestions, like “one of the best ways to prevent rape, and other violent crimes as well, is to put convicted criminals in jail and keep them there” (Bonilla, 1993, p. 22). In addition to the suggestions “to get tough on crime,” more realistic suggestions have been made. These include applying “practical strategies that researchers and advocates can deploy to include abused lesbians in domestic violence theory, praxis, and services” (Giorgio, 2002, p. 1233); examining addiction problems and violent trauma together, and addressing the issues of shame that are involved with both (Harris & Fallot, 2001); increasing “real safety while enhancing women’s freedom and mobility on and near campus” (Day, 1995, p. 261); and “examining cognitive appraisals and coping strategies in research and intervention with sexual assault victims” (Arata & Burkhart, 1998, p. 224). Often

Table 1
Comparison of Competing Perspectives on Sexual Assault Prevention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention</th>
<th>Crime Control Perspective</th>
<th>Public Health Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Treatment and rehabilitation Of convicted offenders</td>
<td>Long-term care for victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Early identification of, and intervention with, offenders</td>
<td>Rape crisis intervention services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Attack on conditions fostering sexual assault</td>
<td>Public education and competency enhancement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
times, however, findings are presented in such a way that outcomes are predicted by victim characteristics, and rape is portrayed as partially controllable or preventable by women.\textsuperscript{49}

Sexual violence is intimately related with domestic violence and violence in general (Jadicola & Shupe, 1998; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983). Sexual violence happens within our relationships. Why doesn’t she just leave? I hear that one all the time. What makes you think leaving will stop the violence? Research shows that at least one-third of women report experiencing further violence after they have left a women’s shelter (Fleury, Sullivan, & Bybee, 2000). I suppose until you have lived through the terror of being stalked by an estranged spouse, being watched constantly, being called at work 20 and 30 times each day until your job is in jeopardy, never feeling safe, you just won’t get it. I suppose until you have been startled awake by the sound of your enraged violent spouse breaking into your apartment through a window and because you were too poor to have a phone to call for help, you had to run out of the backdoor in the dead of the night to escape, you won’t be able to fully appreciate why that question offends me so badly. May you never fully understand.

Furthermore, why is it the woman’s responsibility to prevent a man from violating her? Why is it not his responsibility to not violate others? Isn’t her responsibility also not to violate others? Profeminist men have taken an active role in dealing with woman abuse on Canadian college campuses by advocating for men to take responsibility (DeKeseredy et al., 2000). Andrea Parrot writes about institutional responses to prevent acquaintance rape on college campuses (1991a) and how to intervene when it does happen (1991c). Interestingly, she argues that alcohol abuse

\textsuperscript{49} For examples, see Norris, Nurius, and Graham, 1999; Wittebrood and Nieuwbeerta, 2000.
prevention education must be integrated with sexual violence prevention education to
be effective. Her conclusions on prevention include:

The best way to make the educational and prevention programs successful is to make sure they address the needs of the campus community—and to know exactly what those needs are by conducting research at that institution. . . Because people will change their attitudes, knowledge, and behavior if they can see the relevance of information presented to them, the best way to maximize change is to present local information to program participants. Lecture formats are not effective in changing attitudes about acquaintance rape; programs should be more dynamic and should include vivid interaction to enhance the desired effect of consciousness raising, attitude change, and empathy toward rape victims (Borden, Karr, & Caldwell-Colbert, 1988). Education and prevention programs need to become an integral part of the college curricula (Sandberg, Jackson, & Petretic-Jackson, 1987) but should not be limited to reaching students . . . Ongoing program evaluation will help to improve the programs and will ultimately make the campus a safer place for students, faculty, and staff. (1991a, pp. 366-367)

Parrot (1991c) suggests the first step in intervention is to develop a clear policy and then to make sure everyone is aware of it. Ward, Chapman, Cohn, White, and Williams (1991) suggest, “Different types of policies are required for different types of unwanted experiences” (p. 65). Lonsway and Kothari (2000) evaluated a first-year campus acquaintance rape education program and concluded, “Superior outcomes were observed among students involved in more than one educational program, thus highlighting the need for repeated intervention” (p. 220).

Rozee, Bateman, and Gilmore (1991) recommend a three-tier approach that focuses on societal responsibility (global level), on individual awareness (daily lives level), and on self-protection (victim safety level). Similarly, in their conclusion of “an overview of feminist contributions to the reframing and redefinitions of rape over the last century,” Rozee and Koss (2001) suggest, “refocusing intervention efforts to include rape prevention training for men, rape resistance training for women, and
community-based legal interventions” (p. 295). Rozee et al., (1991) beautifully summarize the situation of acquaintance rape prevention:

Sexual assault has multiple overlapping causes and any effective prevention strategy must provide multiple approaches to the problem. The solutions must relate to the prevention of sexual assault in a way that satisfies both the needs of a society in which sexual assault has become an intolerable endemic problem, and the immediate needs of a woman faced with an assailant or a woman trying to avoid sexual assault. Sole emphasis in rape prevention on what women can do to prevent rape supports the attitude that they are responsible for its occurrence (Gordon & Riger, 1989). To produce social change in the incidence and consequences of acquaintance rape will require the involvement of individual males, families, social and religious groups, and legal, educational, economic, and political institutions. (p. 337)

Law

Rape victims have traditionally been treated unfairly by our legal and criminal justice systems (Calavita, 2001; Gotell, 2001; Pugh, 1983; Rumney, 1999). According to Stetson (1997):

In criminal rape, a man destroyed the chastity of a woman by force. The injured party was not the woman, but those men to whom her chastity had special value—her father and/or her husband or prospective suitors . . . Lord Matthew Hale, the English judge credited with codifying rape law in the seventeenth century, generally viewed rape complaints and the women who made them with suspicion (Geiss, 1978). (p. 308)

[The] staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee conclude that a rape victim has a 2.5 percent chance of seeing the attacker convicted and a 1.9 percent chance of seeing the attacker incarcerated. (p. 313)

There are fifty-one different policy outcomes, products of the interaction between coalitions for reform and the political culture in fifty-one different jurisdictions. Presenting a clear and comprehensive description of US public policy on rape is further stymied by the informal processes of the criminal justice system. The definition, prosecution, and punishment of rape often depends on the informal practices and relationships found among police officials, judges, lawyers, victims, and support groups in local jurisdictions. (p. 307)
However, the Modern Penal Code, drafted by the American Law Institute in the 1960s, was intended to promote uniform change across the states during the general movement to modernize all criminal laws and improve law enforcement. It made very few changes the definition of rape; it was still penile penetration of a woman’s vagina by force and against her will. It retained corroboration requirements, and the code formally made reference to “sexually promiscuous complainants” (p. 310). In addition, it expanded the exemption of spousal prosecution to exclude prosecution of cohabitating couples as well.

During the 1970s, feminist activism led to some real changes in rape policy, inspired by the feminist theory of rape as a political crime against women (Ashcraft, 2000; Brownmiller, 1975; Griffin, 1975; Stetson, 1997). In 1974, “the state of Michigan passed the first comprehensive rape reform statute” (Matoesian, 1995, p. 669). Liberal feminists developed coalitions with lawyers and police officials in nearly every state to establish rape crisis centers for victims reform rape laws.

Since that time, statutory requirements of corroboration have been removed in all jurisdictions; two-thirds of the states changed their definition of rape from the common-law definition; three-fourths of the states use gender-neutral terms for both the victim and the offender, and rape shield statutes to limit the rights of the defense to use the victim’s previous sexual conduct in court proceedings were enacted in nearly every state. However, very few states eliminated all evidence of this kind (Bienen, 1981; Sigler & Haygood, 1988; Stetson, 1997).

The state reforms of the rape law enacted in the 1970s redefined the common-law definition of rape from a crime against morality and the sexual property of men to a crime of violence. Rape became sexual assault, a gender-neutral crime that could happen to anyone. Stetson (1997) explains:
In determining lack of consent, most reforms, following recommendations by the American Law Institute, have directed courts away from looking at the resistance behavior of the victim to determining the amount of force used by the assailant. . . . Some statutes have even eliminated the term consent altogether. Usually, degrees of force used in an assault are associated with graduated penalties—from a few years to life in prison. (p. 312)

Some states have expunged the term rape altogether, in favor of terms such as sexual assault, sexual battery, sexual abuse, criminal sexual conduct, or gross sexual imposition. (p. 311)

The most recent reforms in rape laws have been aimed at removing the spousal exemption; however, many of these reforms are on tenuous ground at best. Although these reforms shifted the focus from the consent of the victim to the behavior of the perpetrator (Bachman, 1998), the campaign for the Violence Against Women Act was successful in redefining rape once again as a crime of violence and coercion against women, which countered the prevailing official definition of rape as a gender-neutral crime.

Schulhofer (1992) offers a concise summation of the situation that still applies today when he writes, “Despite three decades of intense scrutiny and reform, the law of rape still fails adequately to protect the sexual freedom of women” (p. 35). Indeed, Bohmer, Brandt, and Bronson (2002) argue that domestic violence law reform increased the patriarchal authority and involvement of the legal system in women’s lives, and ultimately, this decreases women’s autonomy. Jordon (2001) compared a study from Britain with a study from New Zealand that both dealt with women’s experiences with the police after the 1970s/1980s law reforms to improve that situation. Both evaluations conclude, “little in the way of substantive improvements appears possible within this historically and cross-culturally fraught area” (p. 679).
The Social Construction of Rape Research: 
Exploring Epistemologies 
And Evaluating Methods

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

"I have never been free of the fear of rape" (Griffin, 1971, p. 22, italics added).

Quantitative and/or Qualitative Methods

There is no escaping the power of numbers. They tell us how much of a problem exists and how often the problem arises. We like them; we trust them. However, numbers alone won't give us a detailed enough picture; we need more. We need words, pictures, ideas, and images. We need to understand how people experience the problem to see its impact. Wilson (2000) examined the social construction of sexual harassment and assault of university students. She invited respondents to return after the survey for a follow up interview to discuss their experiences, and argues:

In order to understand how sexual harassment and assault are construed, the complexity of thinking and behaviour [sic] of someone who has experienced harassment needs to be represented. We also need to understand more about how these experiences are perceived, "thought through," "lived out," and how knowledge of what is labeled as harassment or assault has been fabricated through our daily social interaction. (p. 171)

We need both quantitative and qualitative data to gain a fuller picture of the problem (Johnson, 1998). Murphy and O'Leary (1994) argue:

The combined rigor of qualitative methods, designed to uncover subjective perspective and social context in the creation of theories,
and traditional quantitative methods, designed to evaluate the accuracy of claims through the canons of deductive logic, may produce the most thorough understanding of phenomena like spouse abuse. (p. 219)

One method suited for both types of data is content analysis. Berg (1995) contends, "one of the leading debates among users of content analysis is whether analysis should be quantitative or qualitative" (p. 175). He argues for a blend of qualitative and quantitative emphases. In addition to determining "specific frequencies of relevant categories" (p. 175), researchers should be examining "ideological mind sets, themes, topics, symbols, and similar phenomena, while grounding such examinations to the data" (p. 176).

As a social scientist, it seems I need to successfully balance two worlds that appear to be fundamentally opposed to each other, the scientific world and the social world. As a scientist, issues of validity, reliability, and generalizeability within my research design are important to me. Thus, a great deal of my thinking is rooted in a post-positivist tradition (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As a member of the social world, however, issues of justice, voice, power, life, and meaning are more important to me. Thus, a great deal of my thinking is also rooted in a feminist tradition, which is fundamentally opposed to the post-positivist illusion of gathering value-free objective data about the social world (Ewick, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991; Reinharz, 1992; Renzetti, 1997a; Stanley & Wise, 1993; Tong, 1998).

Rather than succumb to this rigid closed-minded "either/or" thinking, I choose to follow a more pragmatic flexible "both/and" model of logic that takes a relativistic stance. In terms of both theory and method, I follow an underlying assumption that all theories and methods have some level of value: which one(s) I use at any given moment depends on the given situation in its context. In doing so, I accept the
humanist sociology perspective that claims "research can be used to achieve social
goods, to right wrongs, and to make things better for the oppressed and repressed.
This does not mean advocacy replaces careful science, of course, but it does mean that
research topics and methods may be chosen for personal and political reasons"
(Schwartz, 1997, p. 71). I practice a feminist sociology that contends, "being a
feminist does not excuse one from being a good and careful researcher, but it certainly
can inform one's research in a great many ways" (p. 72).

Thus, rather than claiming to follow only one theoretical or methodological
perspective, I understand quality research designs to be grounded in what Patton
(1990) (as quoted in Greene, 1998) calls a paradigm of choices:

Rather than believing that one must choose to align with one paradigm
or another, I advocate a paradigm of choices. A paradigm of choices
rejects methodological orthodoxy in favor of methodological
appropriateness as the primary criterion for judging methodological
quality. The issue then becomes . . . whether one has made sensible
methods decisions given the purpose of the inquiry, the questions
being investigated, and the resources available (Patton, 1990, pp. 38-
39). . . . The selection, design, and implementation of . . . methods
should be flexibly based on practical need and situational
responsiveness, rather than on the consonance of a set of methods with
any particular philosophical paradigm. And so, "objectivist" and
"subjectivist" methods can be used together unproblematically. This
practical pragmatic stand is strongly supported by other applied social
inquirers (e.g., Bryman, 1988; Firestone, 1990; Pitman & Maxwell,
1992), as well as by arguments from a position of philosophical
pragmatism (e.g., Howe, 1988). (p. 386-387)

I think the dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative is a forced one and
very problematic. Murphy and O'Leary (1994) agree that "Quantitative research is not
wed to the assumptions of positivism, nor is qualitative research wed to the
assumptions of naturalism" (p. 212). In studying a complex issue such as human
social and sexual relations, surely it is advantageous to stay flexible, to understand the
situation from many positions and perspectives. Tolman and Szalacha (1999) clearly summarize our options:

The debate on the relative value, appropriateness, and possible integration of quantitative and qualitative research paradigms has been a part of research in psychology's landscape for almost two decades (Cook & Reichardt, 1979; Healy & Stewart, 1991; Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991). Quantitative and qualitative approaches are often understood as separate paradigms of research, with radically differing assumptions, requirements, and procedures that are rooted in completely different epistemologies. One position of the philosophical debate contends that the integration of quantitative and qualitative paradigms is impossible, as they represent irreconcilable worldviews (e.g., Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Mishler, 1986). The opposite position, maintained on both philosophic and pragmatic grounds, is that not only can the two paradigms be combined at the hands-on level of research practice, at the sociological level of methodological assumptions, and at the metaphysical level of metatheoretical assumptions, they should be so combined, because these concerns are superseded in importance by political goals about how research findings should be used (Firestone, 1993; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Finally, there are those who maintain that the point is not to accommodate or reconcile distinct paradigms but to recognize each as unique, historically situated forms of insight... Rather than force a dichotomous choice... the goal of researchers should be to understand both quantitative and qualitative paradigms, to learn to speak to them and through them, and to recognize that each are ways of seeing that simultaneously reveal and conceal. (pp. 9-10)

Miller and Crabtree contend, "knowing the probabilities is not enough and is often inappropriate. The stories' uniqueness and context are also essential threads in the fabric. Without them our bodies and lives remain fragmented and power is imposed" (1998, p. 309). Indeed, Clough (1992) warns, "knowledge produced under the guise of objective science is too often used for purposes of social control" (as quoted in Denzin, 1998, p. 336). Thus, Rachael Kennedy Bergen (1993) suggests that in-depth interviews using feminist methodologies are the best method available to investigate the topic of rape, because they deobjectify the participants and force the
researcher to critically examine the ways in which the research might affect the participants, while keeping in mind the ultimate goal of the liberation of all women.

The fluid nature of human relations requires a flexible approach to the study of it. As long as the human race maintains its heterogeneity, we need a variety of tools with which to study its complexity. We need to rely on numbers, words, observations, and our own internal resources, like our thoughts, instincts, intuition, emotions, actions, and reactions.

For example, I can tell you the numbers; rape has been a serious problem for women for centuries but has only been recognized in national and international courts as a serious problem for women in the past 20 years. That's appalling, but it doesn't really sink in just how embedded and socially approved this problem is until Kirkwood and Cecil (2001) quote California State Senator Bob Wilson, addressing a group of women lobbyists in 1979, as saying, “But if you can't rape your wife, who can you rape?” (p. 1234). That sickening feeling in your chest and/or your stomach is knowledge brought to you by qualitative words, not numbers. The numbers may appall us, but his words are truly sickening, “But if you can't rape your wife, who can you rape?”

Traditional Survey Research Methods

Underlying Assumptions

Traditional survey research methods include several underlying assumptions that guide them. For one, traditional survey research methods follow post-positivist notions of neutrality and objective distance in data collection. The traditional interviewer gathers data from subjects from an authoritative position in a hierarchical structure (Reinharz, 1992). Fontana and Frey (1998) warn, “both the interviewers and
the respondents are considered faceless and invisible, and they must be if the paradigmatic assumption of gathering value-free data is to be maintained” (p. 64).

Jennifer Greene writes, “what is important to know, what constitutes an appropriate and legitimate focus for social inquiry, is the phenomenological meaningfulness of lived experience—people’s interpretations and sense makings of their experiences in a given context” (1998, p. 384). Fontana and Frey (1998) suggest an alternative to traditional survey research methods may help uncover hidden issues:

The researcher may reject these outdated techniques and “come down” to the level of the respondent and engage in a “real” conversation with “give and take” and empathic understanding (see Daniels, 1983). This makes the interview more honest, morally sound, and reliable, because it treats the respondent as an equal, allows him or her to express personal feelings, and therefore presents a more “realistic” picture than can be uncovered using traditional interview methods. (pp. 67-68)

Traditional survey research methods also demand that close attention is paid to the amount of total survey error involved in the data set. Paul Lavrakas (1998) contends that coverage error, nonresponse error, and measurement error all need to be included when examining the total survey error. Thomas Mangione (1998), however, warns that “there are four major types of errors that you want to guard against: sample selection bias, nonresponse error, item nonresponse error, and response error” (p. 400).

Both mention nonresponse error, which is the “biased nature of the responding sample” (p. 400). We can never really measure nonresponse bias because we have no way of knowing if there exists a significant difference between the recorded responses given by those who completed the questionnaire and the responses that would have been recorded by those who did not complete the questionnaire. However, a high response rate, near or above 75%, is the usual safeguard.
Coverage error includes both sample selection bias and other biases created from improper within unit selection (Lavrakas, 1998). "Sample selection bias . . . can be introduced when you draw a sample from a list that is incomplete in a significant way" (Mangione, 1998, p. 400). Lavrakas (1998) suggests that any list missing 20% or more of its contents should be replaced.

Measurement error includes those variances and biases caused by errors associated with the questionnaire itself, and/or the interviewer, and/or the participants (Lavrakas, 1998). These include both item nonresponse error and response error. Item nonresponse error is the "failure of respondents to answer individual questions," (Mangione, 1998, p. 401). This missing data can occur when participants answer outside the given response categories, leave questions blank, and/or do not follow directions carefully. It becomes problematic when 40%-60% of the responses are missing. Response error occurs when participants misunderstand the intended meaning of the questions and give answers based on this misinformed meaning.

Finally, traditional survey research methods demand that close attention is paid to ethics. Liebling and Stanko (2001) explain:

Ethical research is typically defined as that which safeguards the rights and feelings of those who are being researched. Assuring confidentiality, minimizing the impact of recalling and reporting stressful events, and avoiding deception are three components of any ethical expectation for social science researchers. (p. 424)

Sensitive Subjects

A great deal of attention has been paid recently to the study of sensitive subjects, because such study presents additional ethical and methodological concerns that may not be present with the research of other types of topics (Lee & Renzetti, 1993; Sieber, 1998). Lee and Renzetti offer a working definition of sensitive subjects
that includes those topics with potential costs or threats of harm to either the participants or the researcher. Certain areas of research are more prone to sensitivity, such as the private sphere of society, sexual behaviors, and illegal behaviors. Rape can be included in all of these categories, which supports its definition as a sensitive subject. In fact, Koss (1993) states, “rape is perhaps the ultimate sensitive topic” (p. 212).

**Measurement Error**

Methodological concerns include difficulty in gaining access to participants and the construction as well as context of questions (Bergen, 1993; Lee & Renzetti, 1993). Bradburn and Sudman (1979) suggest that the study of sensitive topics involves the asking of threatening questions, which can be defined as questions “to which respondents might respond untruthfully” (p. 2). According to Bradburn and Sudman (1988), response effects can be thought of as the amount of response error in the data. Response error occurs when the participant gives an answer to a question that is different than the accurate answer. DeKeseredy and Schwartz suggest, “Many respondents are reluctant to disclose abusive experiences because of embarrassment, memory error, fear of reprisal, reluctance to recall traumatic memories, and a host of other factors” (2001, p. 31).

It is important to take precautions in all research designs to decrease biases in the data due to response effects (Bradburn & Sudman, 1979; Czaja & Blair, 1996; Fowler, 1998; Sudman & Bradburn, 1974; Sudman et al., 1996; Kammen & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1998). Once questions have been carefully written, it is essential that they be thoroughly pre-tested in an attempt to reduce response effects. While the degree of response effects in the data on sensitive topics due to the untruthfulness of
participants may be greater than that with the study of nonthreatening topics, the more potentially serious problem for respondents is the failure to recall past events successfully (Koss, 1993, 1996). Desai and Saltzman warn, “The difference between intentional and unintentional misrepresentation is often difficult to distinguish, but both increase measurement error” (2001, p. 39). As a result, extra care needs to be taken in the design stages to address these issues.

Construction of Questions

The specific wording and type of questions used to solicit the data are crucial to determining rape prevalence rates (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988; Desai & Saltzman, 2001; Fowler, 1998; Koss, 1993; Sudman et al., 1996). As with all research questions, the specific wording of the questions on sensitive subjects needs to be very clear and unambiguous. After all, “the central tenet of quantitative survey research is that all respondents should understand each question in the same way and can provide answers to each question” (Mangione, 1998, p. 401).

Rape prevalence questions are usually one of two types. They include either multiple indirect behavioral questions that exclude the word rape, or they include a single direct question that includes the word rape (Currie & MacLean, 1997; Koss, 1993). Russell (1990) concludes that women are very hesitant to answer direct questions regarding marital rape. A substantial amount of evidence suggests that women are more likely to answer behavioral questions that do not include the word rape than direct questions including the word rape (Bergen, 1993; Koss, 1992, 1993, 1996; Muehlenhard et al., 1992; Russell, 1990; White & Humphrey, 1997). Mary Koss concludes, “a single item simply cannot cue the respondent to recall the variety of guises under which rape can occur” (1993, p. 209).
Research suggests that using cues to recall an event that are similar to those cues used at the time of encoding the event will increase the rate of recall (Sudman et al., 1996; White & Humphrey, 1997). Thus, if a participant does not use the label “rape” as part of the encoding process when storing a past event in memory, asking a direct question about ever being raped will not act as a retrieval cue; and this event will not likely be recalled. If it has not been recalled, it will not be included in the participant’s answer, which will result in biased data due to response effects. Consequently, government surveys using direct questions have been seriously criticized for gross underreporting prevalence rates (Russell & Howell, 1983).

Context of Questions

Many rape prevalence rates have been obtained from questions included in larger studies in which the primary focus was not specifically rape. The focus of these studies determines the context in which the questions regarding rape occur. For example, questions regarding rape could be found in surveys whose larger focus is crime victimization, women’s health, sexual experiences, or interpersonal relationships, and such.

These contexts have an impact on the participants’ recall abilities, which will influence the data estimates (Sudman et al., 1996). Koss (1993) argues that when questions about rape are included in larger studies, they should be physically separated from all other types of questions with special introductions to emphasize the ways in which the specific questions are different from the other questions to avoid biases in the data due to context effects.

Sudman et al. (1996) suggest that participants could be most vulnerable to context effects during two stages of the answering process. The first involves the
potential for priming effects during the comprehension stage. If a question is ambiguous, information from previous questions may influence the interpretation of the question, resulting in context effects. In addition, the process of answering previous questions renders that information more accessible in memory, which increases the likelihood of its being used in the answering process of subsequent questions. Second, during the editing stage, preceding questions may bring up issues of social desirability and self-presentation, which could result in biased responses to subsequent questions. This is especially true when asking threatening questions (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2001; Desai & Saltzman, 2001).

Data Collection Method

Which data collection method is the best one for collecting information about people’s experiences of rape and sexual violence? Previous research is mixed on this issue. One guideline is that the more sensitive the subject matter, the more privacy matters, this means that we should expect higher rates of disclosure through the mail because more people will feel comfortable writing about it in private without having to say anything out loud or in the presence of another person (Czaja & Blair, 1996).

The opposing guideline is that the more sensitive the subject matter the more crucial personal contact becomes, because trust and report are necessary for disclosure. In addition, the person may need referrals for counseling or just someone to talk to about the incident. Especially in terms of sexual violence, many times the surveyor is the first person to hear about the incident. Telling one’s story out loud in private, to a caring stranger who gives assurances of confidentiality and privacy, is easier than writing it down (Frey & Oishi, 1995).
Because the subject matter is so intensely debated, emotionally packed, and politically charged, there is very little consensus on the meanings of events or words used to describe those events. As a result, many times a participant needs clarification about the meaning of a question or something else within the survey, and in situations of mailed surveys, these participants must make assumptions about the meaning, which may not always be accurate.

This is a serious validity issue. In person, it is possible to talk about the participants' questions; however, through the mail, the only way we have of dealing with this issue, is by including a definition page with this survey, or to explain potentially unclear words and phrases within the survey itself. Many times, this makes the survey too complicated to follow, too repetitive, or can be insulting to people who had no such question. In addition, it increases the size of the survey, which can reduce response rates and will most definitely increase the cost of mailing.

The three most common methods of survey data collection are by mail, telephone, and face-to-face (Czaja & Blair, 1996). The method by which survey questionnaires are administered to participants may affect rape prevalence rates (Czaja & Blair, 1996; Desai & Saltzman, 2001; Sudman et al., 1996; Tourangeau & Smith, 1996); however, the literature is very inconsistent in this area (Koss, 1993). Schwartz (2000) suggests that face-to-face data collection methods are normally the best, but because of the shame and embarrassment associated with violence against women, self-administered mail surveys might be the best. Schwartz (2000) writes:

Farnsworth, Bennett, and West (1996) conducted an interesting experiment in which the same statewide 1992 Texas Crime Poll was conducted by mail and then replicated by a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system. What is most important about this study is that on four of the five major attitude questions, the responses of Texans were different at a statistically significant level. Here, if the researchers had chosen only one method to conduct their
attitude survey, that choice would have completely changed the results.
(p. 822)

Desai and Saltzman (2001) further contend that method affects response rates as well. They suggest interviewer-administered surveys outside the home may elicit higher response rates than mailed surveys, while telephone surveys can produce undesirably low response rates. However, Schwartz (2000) contends telephone surveys are the most popular because they are less expensive than face-to-face methods, allow for rapport building, and generally produce excellent response rates.

Currie and MacLean (1997) claim, “our empirical evidence suggests that face-to-face interviews are more conducive to disclosure by victims of woman abuse” (p. 175). Frey and Oishi (1995) conclude that “sensitive topics . . . are better approached in person” (p. 33), while others suggest that self-administered mail surveys are the preferred method to use with sensitive topics, as they do not require personal contact with an interviewer like telephone and face-to-face surveys do (Czaja & Blair, 1996). Tourangeau and Smith (1996) conclude in their extensive literature review on sensitive questions, “self-administration of sensitive questions increases levels of reporting relative to administration of the same questions by an interviewer” (p. 277). Johnson et al. (1989) contend that participants report unease about discussing sensitive topics over the telephone and that telephone surveys dealing with sensitive issues are prone to higher rates of nonresponse error and response error than are personal interviews.

Sudman and Bradburn (1974) cite 2 studies conducted by Hochstim in 1962 and 1967 that compare the three data collection methods on rates of reporting socially undesirable behaviors. The highest rates were reported on self-administered surveys. Moderate rates were reported using the telephone method, while the lowest rates were received during face-to-face interviews. Durant and Carey (2000) compared self-
administered questionnaires with face-to-face interviews in assessing sexual behavior in young women and found that “reliability did not differ as a function of mode of assessment” (p. 309).

Bradburn and Sudman (1979) compared the three different data collection methods with questions of varying degrees of threat. They expected the smallest error rates with the anonymous mail survey, but the results did not support their expectations. Their results show that self-administered procedures are actually worse with questions about “undesirable acts” (p. 13). They conclude, “no data collection method is superior to all other methods for all types of threatening questions” (p. 12).

Koss (1993) discusses comparisons of data collection methods with actual rape studies, noting two similar studies that took precautions to discourage context effects and used behaviorally specific questions resulted in very different rape rates. The mailed survey resulted in a 21% rate of rape, while the telephone survey resulted in a 14% rate of rape. In the only study to date that directly compares data collection methods within this area, the face-to-face interview resulted in an 11% rate, while the telephone survey resulted in a 6% rate.

Koss (1993) concludes that studies “reveal no clearcut tendencies for prevalence rates to covary by method” (p. 212). Face-to-face interviews have resulted in some of the highest and some of the lowest rape rates, while telephone surveys, however, have consistently resulted in lower rape rates. Koss et al. (1987) conclude, and Tourangeau and Smith (1996) agree, that future research on the effects of data collection methods on rape prevalence rates is still needed.
Non-Response Bias

Koss (1992) states, "any data collection effort that purports to describe rape incidence must include methods to overcome the compelling forces that favor nondisclosure" (p. 61). Czaja and Blair (1996) state, "the expectation is that the more personal the method of data collection, the less likely participants are to report sensitive behaviors" (p. 47); however, it should be noted that "many sensitive behaviors remain unreported even in anonymous mail surveys" (p. 35). Koss (1992, 1993) cites a study conducted by Curtis (1976) in which only 54% of acquaintance rape victims who had reported the assault to the police later admitted to an interviewer that they had been raped.

Walby and Myhill (2001) argue that surveys dedicated to violence against women "have prioritized the development of interviewing practices that facilitate disclosure, such as special training, privacy, and the use of female interviewers" (p. 519). Sooken and Damrosch (1986) contend that bias in the data due to lying and non-response will never be totally removed, even with guarantees of anonymity, especially in studies examining sensitive topics. Currie and MacLean (1997) agree with this assessment. Further research is still needed on self-reports and unwillingness to reveal information to interviewers (Koss & Gidycz, 1985).

Ethics

Ethical concerns are relevant to all researchers studying any topic; however, because of the sensitive nature of rape, additional attention needs to be given to designing research in this area (Desai & Saltzman, 2001; Schwartz, 1997; Sieber, 1998). Campbell and Dienemann (2001) further suggest that victims of violence
against women are members of a vulnerable population, and should therefore be
treated with the additional care given to these special groups of research participants.

Two ethical concerns need to be considered as they have an impact on
methodological choices: the potential costs, threats, or harm to the participants and
the potential costs, threats, or harm to the researcher (Sieber, 1998). Potential costs to
the participant include the emotional pain and trauma of remembering and discussing
rape (Lee & Renzetti, 1993; Stanko, 1997) as well as the potential for future violence
if the perpetrator discovers the disclosure of this private information (Campbell &
Dienemann, 2001; Lee & Renzetti, 1993). Potential threats to the researcher include
the secondary trauma of listening to the rape stories (Lee & Renzetti, 1993; Stanko,
1997), in addition to the primary trauma of revisiting her own painful history
(Campbell, 2002; Miller, 1997; Renzetti, 1997a; Stanko, 1997), as well as the
potential danger of violence if caught by a perpetrator while interviewing a participant
(Lee & Renzetti, 1993).

Sexual Violence Research Methods

Before I begin, I must say that researching sexual violence is another one of
those areas where if (for some atrocious reason) I could only read one or two books,
there would be no question which two they would be. Claire Renzetti (2001) put
together a magnificent sourcebook on violence against women that no doubt will
remain one of my favorites and most often used sources in my library. In addition,
Martin Schwartz (1997) offers a splendid overview of researching sexual violence
against women, which again, is another favorite and often cited source.
Political Definitions

It is frustrating beyond words to enter into a dialogue on a topic of huge social importance like rape with a sincere intention to generate positive social change, only to find yourself chasing your tail at high speed in a never-ending battle over how to define the problem. Trust me; it’s maddening. Sometimes, the process gets so wearisome that I want to give up and walk away before we ever resolve the definitional issues. It feels hopeless, like I already know I won’t have enough internal resources left to survive the rest of the process because just defining the problem has exhausted me.

The problem is that prior to studying rape, we nevertheless must define it, because that definition will set the boundaries that guide our research methods, and subsequently, our findings (Timmerman & Bajema, 1999; Von Hofer, 2000; White & Sorenson, 1992). The definition is the foundation from which all other parts of the research process develop. The focus of the study needs to be clearly delineated with what will be included and what will be excluded clearly established. These criteria need to be clearly and completely articulated. It is the definition of rape that provides these criteria. Dimensions of the definition of rape include the specific behaviors, the criteria for establishing nonconsent, the specific individuals included and whose definition counts.

Narrow definitions limit what is included in the focus of the study, while broad definitions expand what is encompassed. Subsequently, narrower definitions produce smaller prevalence rates, while broader definitions produce larger prevalence rates. The definition should specify the type of coercion, such as verbal, threat and/or use of force; and it should include the type of behaviors, such as any unwanted contact, attempted or completed penetration, etc. In addition, the definition should
specify the type of nonconsent and/or force involved, such as victim incapacitation, physical force, and/or weapon use, (Koss, 1992, 1993, 1996; Muehlenhard et al., 1992).

Such inclusive definitions are preferred as they allow for more consistency across research designs. It becomes problematic, however, when comparisons are made between rates that are not comparable, such as when rape rates are compared with sexual assault rates when the rape rates are also included as a subset of the sexual assault rates (Lynch, 1996). This suggests to me that we should design our questions to obtain a maximum amount of specific detail, which will allow us to collapse the data accordingly to permit more precise comparisons across studies.

Some decisions need to be made regarding the age of the victim. Some studies have set the minimum age of the victim at 10, 12, 14, 16 or 18, while others use no specific age criterion and include victims of all ages (Koss, 1996). Unfortunately, “researchers generally do not say how they chose their age criterion” (Muehlenhard et al., 1992, p. 37). It is important, however, for accurate comparisons across studies to establish an age criterion that will not overlap with other crimes that fall under the label of child molestation (Koss, 1996). White and Humphrey (1997) suggest that data be separated by age at the time of incident in order to separate child molestation from adolescent sexual abuse and also from adult sexual abuse. Russell and Howell (1983) collapsed their data into the following age categories: 0-11, 12-15, 16-19, 20-24, 25-34, 35-49, 50-64, and 65 and over.

Some decisions need to be made regarding the sex of the victim and of the perpetrator. Are we talking about sexual violence (SV) or violence against women (VAW)? It makes an enormous difference both numerically and politically. Numerically, sexual violence is a gender-neutral term, which admits both male and
female victims and perpetrators, while violence against women is a gender-specific term, which admits only male perpetrators of female victims. Johnson and Sigler offer examples of sexual violence research with gender-neutral language with their book, *Forced sexual intercourse in intimate relationships* (1997), and their article, *Forced sexual intercourse among intimates* (2000).

Clare Holzman (1997) in a book review of *Sexual coercion in dating relationships* argues that we need to move beyond merely suggesting the need for more research with non-female, non-heterosexual, non-white, non-middle class, and non-college-aged participants. Parrot and Bechhofer (1991) first mentioned this over a decade ago. It's time to do something about it instead of just talking about it. So, what's the hold up? Why are we still debating this issue?

Politically, sexual violence has become polarized with violence against women in a competition for resources and for survival. The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 was a successful campaign to make domestic violence and sexual violence gendered crimes instead of gender-neutral crimes, suggesting that it is different both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively, there is no question that the overwhelming majority of these crimes are indeed perpetrated by men against women. While there may indeed be evidence to suggest that these crimes are committed between people outside the traditional violence against women model, there is no evidence to suggest that it is a substantial amount when compared to what is happening within the VAW model (Valente, Hart, Zeya, & Malefyt, 2001).

Qualitatively, there is a difference between violence against women and sexual violence. Violence against women includes violent crimes (sexual and nonsexual) perpetrated against women specifically because they are women. These crimes are not randomly distributed across the general population, because women are
targeted for this type of violence. Furthermore, when these crimes are perpetrated between same sex partners, many times there is a gendered nature to the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim that simulates to some degree traditional gender roles found between male perpetrators and their female victims (Valente et al., 2001).

Why does it matter? If domestic violence and sexual violence are indeed gender-neutral crimes, then they deserve no special attention. However, if they are gendered crimes against women, then they are a different type of crime altogether; they are human rights violations. This makes them a global issue and not a merely localized isolated problem. This warrants global attention and the allocation of resources (Donnelly & Kenyon, 1996).

The real problem is that sexual violence and violence against women should never have been pitted against each other as opponents in the first place. Because of the gendered nature of sexual violence, it should be subsumed under the violence against women movement. It should be part of the movement, stressing the insidiousness of traditional gender roles and heterosexism within our everyday culture and structural institutions. We should be fighting on the same side instead of allowing this fabricated and unnecessary division to occur (Valente et al, 2001).

Finally, some decisions need to be made regarding whose definition matters. Whether the researcher or the participants decide whether or not a rape has occurred will greatly affect the prevalence rates. Sometimes it is not explicitly stated whose voice is privileged, but is merely implied by the research design itself. For example, some studies include only participants referred by the criminal justice system, crisis centers or other intervention and treatment agencies. In these cases, it has already
been decided by the victim and the referring agency that a rape has occurred simply by the fact of their inclusion as participants (Koss, 1996).

When solely the participants are allowed to define whether or not what has happened to them constitutes rape, they are offered the opportunity to increase their sense of power and respect for themselves, as they are seen as the authority in their own situations. However, this practice leads to difficulty when attempting to quantify rape because of the inconsistencies between the participants’ and the researcher’s response categories, which tend to be neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive (Muehlenhard et al., 1992).

When the researcher is allowed to define whether or not a behavior constitutes rape, there are also resulting inconsistencies between the researcher’s definition and the participants’ definitions. Although many participants survive situations that meet legal definitions of forcible rape, very few use the word rape to describe what happened to them. Indeed, Pitts and Schwartz (1997) point out that:

In a society widely considered to be rape supportive, the messages that excuse rapists are heard as often and as intensely by women, with the result that women themselves are sometimes unable to affix blame when they voluntarily entered a man’s apartment, when they voluntarily invited him into their apartment, when less physical force was used, or when the woman was drinking. (pp. 65-66)

Measurement Error

Like all studies, we need to attend to issues related to measurement error. Scott and Aneshensel (1997) summarize the situation as it relates to rape:

As in the measurement of any construct, reports of assault are composed of two components: true variation and measurement error. Reliability is true variance relative to total variance (Nunnally, 1967). Precision in estimates is compromised whenever measurement error is large relative to true variance. . . . Measurement error can be subdivided into random and systematic error. Random measurement
error tends to attenuate observed associations, which makes it difficult to identify risk factors for assaults. Attenuation means that only large associations can be detected when measures are unreliable; smaller effects go unnoticed. Systematic measurement error is even more damaging because the direction of bias is unknown. (p. 362)

Johnson and Sigler (2000) compared studies of forced sex among intimates and conclude, “much of the variation in prevalence of forced sexual intercourse can be attributed to variations in investigation methods” (p. 95). They argue the most influential factors are the time period studies (prevalence rates are higher than incidence rates), the definition used (higher rates are found with broader definitions), the sampling technique (higher rates are found with convenience/voluntary samples), and geography. They suggest that standardized definitions and rates need evaluating in relation to methods prior to comparison of findings. In her work on sexual harassment, however, Deborah Lee (2001) suggested sexual harassment “should be understood as only one of many meaningful interpretations for unwanted male sexual conduct: a recognition of a range of terms for unwanted male sexual conduct, rather than just one term, will enable more women to name . . . unwelcome experiences (p. 25).

Regardless of the terms we use, Killworth, McCarty, Bernard, Shelley, and Johnsen (1998) in a study estimating seroprevalence, rape and homelessness in the United States, rightly stated, “We cannot, however, ask people if they have been raped or if they are HIV-positive and expect to get valid answers” (p. 290). The situation calls for a bit more discretion than that. We are studying some extraordinarily sensitive subjects here because sexual violence is so highly correlated with domestic violence and alcohol abuse. These are private matters, family matters, shameful secrets, and sometimes involving life or death situations. Methodology is not the only factor that affects the validity of our data. Jacquelyn Campbell (2000) argues:
It is important to realize that battered women make decisions about to whom and when to disclose what is almost always a shameful (to the self) and stigmatizing (in terms of system response) history. It is not clear if women are more likely to disclose abuse in face-to-face interviews, on paper-and-pencil tests, or by telephone survey. In one of the few studies addressing this issue in a health care setting, McFarlane, Christoffel, Bateman, Miller, and Bullock (1991) found that an ethnically diverse sample of primarily young women in a planned parenthood clinic were more likely to disclose abuse in a face-to-face administration. (p. 713)

Campbell (2000) suggests cultural group affected rates of disclosure in other research. Anglo women are more likely to disclose on a written questionnaire, while African American women are more likely to disclose to the nurse administering the questionnaire. While Puerto Rican women are more likely to disclose in person, there is no significant difference between the disclosure rates of Central American, Cuban, and Mexican American women.

Huygens, Kajura, Seeley, & Barton (1996) used a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods in a study focusing on sexually transmitted diseases. Each participant came for a 30-minute session where quantitative data was collected, and then returned two days later for a conversation that lasted approximately an hour. This study compared disclosure rates between the methods and between data derived when the interviewer and the participant were matched on gender and when they were not. It also compared the meanings participants gave to terminology used in the research and the meanings researchers gave.

Huygens et al. (1996) found equivalent rates of disclosure between the methods. When one rate was higher, it was from the data derived through the conversation, although these differences were never statistically significant. However, they did find the conversation method produced data with superior detail and overall quality. They contend this is due to probing.
They found an interesting difference between the data derived from gender-matched groups and non-matched groups. The female participants disclosed more information about rape related issues in the gender-matched group than in the group when the gender of the interviewer and participant was not matched. Research on male perpetrators of acquaintance rape have found that using male interviewers increases the rates of disclosure (Rubenzahl & Corcoran, 1998). Riessman (1987) concludes that “gender congruence does not help an Anglo interviewer make sense of the working-class, Hispanic woman’s account of her marital separation” (p. 172).

The results of this study show serious discrepancies in meanings. For example, the definitions the participants used and the definitions researchers used for terms like steady partner and casual partner were not consistent or mutually exclusive. More disturbing, one third of the respondents claimed oral sex and anal sex and masturbation were all equal to abstinence. In addition, Huygens et al. (1996) point out that the participants were asked:

How many “sexual contacts” they had had in the last seven days. Results show that the reported numbers for contacts in a week ranged from 1 to 7 contacts. None of them reported more than seven contacts in a week, suggesting that respondents reported the maximum number of days on which they had sexual intercourse regardless of the actual number of sexual acts or partners. (p. 226)

While I will agree there may be some question over the validity of these responses given the discrepancies already mentioned, I also have to admit I do not understand why we cannot assume that these numbers are indeed accurate reflections of the number of sexual acts these participants had in a week. Furthermore, I do not understand why we cannot assume that these numbers are indeed accurate reflections of the number of sexual partners these participants had in a week.

I think Huygens et al. (1996) make unwarranted assumptions. Here is another example:
The following concept shows again how cultural differences or a poor questionnaire design might influence the content of the data collected and lead to misclassification. When asked during semi-structured interview, “have you ever been raped?” most respondents (70%) answered the question referring to indirect experiences or stigmatized groups (e.g. yes, it happens among drunkards, or AIDS victims ...) but did not refer to their personal experience. In fact, 9 female respondents out of 91 (10%) reported they had been raped and among them 8 were raped by their partner (7 specified it was their first partner). It was only possible to analyze this information properly due to the open-ended nature of the questionnaire. In a closed-questionnaire respondents who answered “Yes” would all have been considered as raped victims rather than persons discussing rape as a social problem. (p. 226)

If I didn’t know anything about rape and looked at these responses, I suppose I too would immediately assume these statements were indeed indirect and not reflections of their individual experiences. However, I am aware of the multitude of ways rape survivors can use language to create meanings that are easier to live with than the embodied meanings we’ve survived. Often, students in classroom discussions or in their papers will use the third person to tell their own personal story. For example, a student might say, “My dad was kind of mean. I mean, he would pull your hair, or slap you on the head when he was frustrated, or push you down the stairs on occasion, but I never thought of him as abusive. That’s just how he gets; all Dads do that stuff.”

Why should we assume these participants did not do the same thing?

I agree that it is unusual to achieve a 70% prevalence rate using a single direct screening question that includes the word rape in it. However, these participants were part of six studies conducted by the Medical Research Council and Uganda Virus Research Institute Programme on AIDS in a rural Ugandan community. I admit I do

---

50 Once I’ve gained permission to do so, I try to always take this moment to point out to my students how we use language to protect ourselves. While I understand and truly appreciate that strategy, I see things differently now. I see that he didn’t do these horrible things to any random stranger; he did these things to his daughter. He was being abusive when he did them, and he was wrong. I teach sociology and women’s studies classes. How can I call myself a teacher if I don’t teach them to see the concepts I am trying to teach them when they are right there in their very lives?
not know enough about Ugandan culture to predict whether or not this finding is even suspicious, but at least I acknowledge that cultural differences may be a factor here instead of assuming that the figures are suspect merely because they are different from what we would expect to see in general population surveys in the United States.

Sexual violence research does not always involve survey and/or interview data. Vignette research has become common among sexual violence researchers.\(^{51}\) Alexander and Becker (1978) argue that questionnaires and interviews “elicit unreliable and biased self-reports” (p. 93). They have abandoned these approaches to sexual violence questions and outline three advantages to the vignette method:

First, the respondent is not as likely to consciously bias his [sic] report in the direction of impression-management (social approval of the interviewer) as he [sic] is when being asked directly. . . . Secondly, most people are not particularly insightful about the factors that enter their own judgment-making process. . . . Finally, the systematic variation of characteristics in the vignette allows for a rather precise estimate of the effects of changes in combinations of variables as well as individual variables on corresponding changes in respondent attitude or judgment. (p. 95)

Harris, Rice, Chaplin, and Quinsey (1999) assessed the sexual preferences of rapists phallometrically using four categories of audio-taped vignettes describing neutral interactions, consenting sex, rape, and nonsexual violence. Kirkwood and Cecil (2001) used vignettes to study what constituted rape and what factors contributed to sentencing. Participants judged wife rape the least serious and some even denied it as a crime. Karen Yescavage (1999) used vignettes to compare sexually aggressive and sexually nonaggressive men’s perceptions of acquaintance and date rape. She found the major factors determining whether or not an event was labeled as rape included the onset of the victim’s refusal and the duration of the relationship.

---

\(^{51}\) For examples, see Fischer, 1997; Johnson, 1999; Jones and Aronson, 1973; Livingston and Testa, 2000; Monson, Landhinrichsen-Rohling, and Binderup, 2000; Sotland and Goodstein, 1983.
Men's explanations for these events included themes of token resistance and male entitlement.

Heaven, Connors, and Pretorius (1998) used vignettes to study victim characteristics and attribution of rape blame in Australia and South Africa and found "respondents are more likely to blame women who are considered less respectable and more attractive, who do not resist the attack, who are considered to gain some enjoyment form the attack, or who are unacquainted with their assailants" (p. 131).

O'Donohue, Elliott, Nickerson, and Valentine (1992) used vignettes to study the perceived credibility of children's sexual abuse allegations. Luddy and Thompson (1997) used vignettes to compare attributions of fathers and sons on heterosexual rape. "Men's judgments of whether a woman was raped were independent of generation but not of masculinity ideology" (p. 462).

Ethics

All research involving human subjects should concern itself with issues of privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary informed consent (Sobal, 1984). These are the basic issues; however, sexual violence research poses additional ethical issues that warrant our attention. These include such things as safety, trauma to participants, trauma to researchers, and activism. Schwartz (2000) reminds us, "Research ethics are particularly important when the line between research and advocacy becomes blurred" (p. 826).

Often research is done in a drive-by fashion. When we do this kind of research, we are forgetting that the research process has real effects on the participants that stay with them long after we are done suckling the data out of them. For example, while researching violent behavior in girls in Scotland, Burman et al. (2001) admit,
“One particular incident—a fist fight between two 14 year olds, where one girl was pushed into a glass door and hurt quite badly—arose from our use of vignettes and role-playing activities” (p. 450).\(^{52}\)

When designing a research project it is sometimes easy to forget that we are dealing with people here, not just “data,” and we can make mistakes that will hurt the other people involved. Gayle Pitman (2002) admits as a clinical psychology intern working with non-heterosexual identified people, she made the mistake of leaving a detailed message on a student’s answering machine that revealed the student’s sexual orientation to her roommates. Sometimes these mistakes can have serious repercussions in our participants’ lives, especially when contacting people to question them about sexual violence.

In addition to the risks involved in our making mistakes along the way, just the act of participation itself presents serious hazards for some participants, especially those who are currently involved with their abusers. Also, recalling and disclosing those events can further injure people who have survived these traumatic events. Griffin et al. (2003) conducted one of the few studies that have examined the impact of trauma research participation upon trauma survivors. Contrary to previous research, they found:

Participation was very well tolerated by the vast majority of the trauma survivors. Participants generally found that the assessment experience was not distressing and was, in fact, viewed as an interesting and valuable experience. The findings suggest that trauma survivors are not too fragile to participate in trauma research even in the acute aftermath of a traumatic experience. (p. 221)

Ensink et al. (2000) examined the determinants of postponed disclosure and its impact on persistent problems. They concluded, “our results underline the

---

\(^{52}\) Note to self—do not do violence research in rooms with glass doors.
importance of breaking the silence soon after a sexual crime, in order to prevent
persistent health problems" (p. 96). Indeed, Joseph Guido (1999) adds:

But a betrayal has taken place, and its consequences are real. Although
the effects of sexual assault vary and no individual experiences them
all, young women commonly experience depression and anxiety in its
wake, are prone to self-doubt and blame, can develop difficulties
eating, studying and sleeping, and often use alcohol and drugs to numb
the pain. The lucky ones have strong and supportive families and avail
themselves of the help available through this channel. Those less
fortunate or more seriously affected can become self-destructive, either
literally or symbolically and can be plagued by disabling memories and
reminiscences of the assault. Although nothing can undo the fact of the
assault, healing can take place if the silence and isolation can be
breached. Research suggests that the opportunity to tell the story of
one's assault and to be part of a supportive community are critical to
healing. Although this is in part a task for therapists, it is also the
responsibility of the wider community. (p. 12)

Disch (2001) conducted a follow up debriefing questionnaire designed to
collect data on respondents' experiences of the research process in a study on
survivors of sexual abuse. The participants suggested that while the research process
can be educational and healing, it is also a painful and emotionally upsetting
experience, even when it is healing in the end. It's not one or the other, but most
often, both. Ullman (1996) studied disclosure patterns of sexual assault victims. Her
review of the literature revealed a mixture of research suggesting disclosure is
psychologically and physically beneficial to participants and an equally large body of
research suggesting disclosure is psychologically damaging and traumatic to
participants. The difference appears to be the environment in which the participant
discloses the sexual assault.

Donnelly and Kenyon (1996) interviewed 30 sexual assault crisis providers in
a major Southeastern city about their experiences with and attitudes about male sexual
assault victims. Their findings suggest the criminal justice system ignores the problem
as if it really doesn’t happen to men, and the service providers don’t want to discuss it out of fear it will co-opt desperately needed resources for women victims of male violence.

At the same time, their findings suggest that the environment, the setting, of crisis intervention is absolutely crucial. It needs to be completely free of shame or it will damage clients. I imagine there is a great deal of shame attached to being turned away from the crisis intervention shelter because you are not the right kind of victim. Having walked in those shoes, I cannot honestly say what I would have done had I been turned away almost 20 years ago. I don’t think I would be here writing these words today; that much I can tell you with a good degree of confidence.

How can we call ourselves committed to egalitarian principles of human rights and then deny someone those identical rights? Haven’t we learned any better than this by now? We either want special rights for women or we want equal rights for all human beings. I thought we were working toward the latter goal. I don’t think wanting universal human rights for women is wanting a special right. However, when we deny those same universal human rights to others in an effort to attain those rights for women, then we have crossed the line into something I don’t want to be a part of any longer. This is one of those issues over which feminists, policy makers, practitioners, police officers, judges, and every day people on the street disagree.

In addition to safety issues and protecting participants from potential harm, there is the issue of protecting the researcher from potential harm as well. The researchers, primary investigators, interviewers, and anyone else intimately connected with the data, like the people who enter, clean, and analyze them, all share similar risks in participating in sexual violence research projects. There are potential risks for trauma just from collecting or manipulating these data. A great deal of emotion work

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
is involved in sexual violence research, and the potential for burnout is magnified for those of us working in this area.  

Grossman et al. (1999) remind us that those of us working with sexual violence research data are mere mortals with feelings that sometimes interfere with our work. “Group members did not like all of the participants, and some participants elicited particularly strong positive or negative reactions from different members of the research team. These reactions could not help but influence interpretations of the material from the participant” (p. 124). Emotions are not necessarily a hindrance. “Some experienced rape victim advocates perceived their emotional reactions to be an important part of their work with rape victims” (Wasco & Campbell, 2002, p. 120). When I worked as research assistant in data collection, I also found my emotions invaluable in navigating interviews and surveys.

While our emotions are advantageous in collecting the highest quality data, those very same emotions can be very disadvantageous in maintaining a healthy sense of self (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). This work is exhausting, stressful, painful, enraging, frightening, difficult, anxiety-producing, traumatic, frustrating, demanding, extremely necessary and never-ending. That’s a lot to manage on top of conducting quality research. Wasco et al. (2002) contend “Counselors also reported thinking about positive things, such as identifying clients’ resilience and strength, and discussed channeling their anger, feelings of powerlessness, and other energy into sociopolitical activism as helpful coping strategies” (p. 734). Thus, sometimes, we are able to channel our emotion work into further activism and positive growth, but this requires forethought and planning.

---

53 I contend this also includes you, the reader of the text, which is why I find it ethically necessary to warn readers in the very beginning that these risks exist and need to be managed.
Finally, in addition to attending to safety issues and protecting the participants and the researcher from potential harm, there is the issue of activism. Managing our emotions through further activism is indeed one way to achieve this desired end. Stimulating our participants, peers, students, colleagues, friends, and neighbors to think about an issue of social importance and to get involved in the public discourse is another necessary route to activism.

Another is to present our findings in ways that protect individuals from suffering additional societal blame. Especially in sexual violence research, it is unfortunately very common to see findings presented in such a way that makes the victims responsible for their own victimization and for protecting themselves against future episodes of the same. For example, Livingston and Testa (2000) conclude:

Results revealed that, although women recognized the potential danger of sexual aggression, this recognition frequently was overridden by a desire to facilitate the relationship, and/or a belief that any potential sexual aggression could be successfully managed. . . . Based on these findings, the authors conclude that, while women appear to be able to recognize risk, they may benefit from learning to use strategies for managing potentially risky situations. (p. 729)

Victoria Pitts and Martin Schwartz (1997) further warn:

Counseling women to change their behavior to avoid being raped and blaming them for that behavior ignores the fact that women have the right to walk alone at night, the right to go on dates, the right to go to a bar, and the right to drink alcohol. Women have to restrict their lives not because their behavior is wrong or illegal but because men take advantage of the vulnerability of women. In the short run, activity restriction may be the best advice for women who wish to avoid rape, but blaming survivors for the degrading and violent behavior of men not only legitimizes a society in which women are forced to restrict their lives out of fear of rape but takes away their right to be angry about it. (p. 70)

If women would only learn to use strategies for managing potentially risky situations, they would avoid rape. If women would only stop insisting on
individuality, equality, autonomy, and self-efficacy, and be content in their natural roles as devoted wives, sacred mothers, and virginal sisters, they would avoid rape. If women would only dress conservatively, stay sober, hate their bodies, and deny their sexuality, they would avoid rape. There are those of us who would love to believe these lies. There are those of us who are killing ourselves trying to believe these lies, and there are those of us who are killing each other trying to survive in spite of these lies. Ethical research addresses the lies and refuses to perpetuate them. A discussion of ethical sexual violence research turns my focus to feminist methodology.

Feminist Methodology

Now I’ve really opened a proverbial can of worms, haven’t I? Feminist Methodology. As soon as the letters appeared on my screen I could hear a myriad of voices in my head planted there by various peers, colleagues, mentors, and students:

Methodology?! Is feminism a theory or is it a method?

There is nothing unique about the methods used by feminists, except they are used to address women’s issues.

Should we start calling those same methods “juvenilist methodology” when we use them to explain violence against children?

Oh man! She’s NOT going to talk about FEMINISM again is she?!

On the occasions these various voices were so graciously bestowed upon me, I recall laughing my way through it. Ok, except for those few occasions when I was not at my best, and I got defensive and angry or hurt, but mostly, I laughed it off. Well, it isn’t funny, and I wish I had not laughed. I wish I’d had the courage, strength, and confidence to answer all four of them:

Yes, methodology; feminism speaks to both theory and method in addition to being a social movement, and thank you for asking.
I both agree and disagree with you. I agree the methods per se are not unique, nor are the individual elements of the methodology. However, I disagree on there being nothing unique. I think its distinctiveness is its putting five core elements or principles together into one approach, while allowing multiple variations to develop accordingly.

I hate spending time with you when you act like an asshole. I don’t think I’ll do it anymore.

Sorry Dude, I AM going to talk about feminism again. Let’s start with why you react so negatively with almost a hint of hostility in your voice? Has feminism DONE something to you that you seem to resent it so?

In all fairness, I should admit that when I arrived at graduate school in the fall of 1997, I had a rather sour outlook on feminism. I had been introduced to feminism from the perspective of the fundamentalist religious high school my parents chose for me. Yikes! What was it Pat Robertson said at the 1992 GOP Convention? Ah yes, “Feminism encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians.” That was it, and it makes them mad and mean-spirited, too. In all fairness, I was just a kid stuck in a suburban nightmare who had not yet been given permission to question anything, especially not the almighty word of authority figures like the church, the government, the news media, the education system, my elders, the medical institution, or my parents. The time of my awakening had not yet come.

I struggled with similar, if not identical, thoughts as those insensitive little tidbits from the mountain of crapola I have heard in the last six years as I developed my affinity for feminism. The first time I felt comfortable with feminism was when I read DeVault (1996), “Feminist methodologists do not use or prescribe any single research method; rather, they are united through various efforts to include women’s lives and concerns in accounts of society, to minimize the harms of research, and to
support changes that will improve women's lives” (p. 29). This didn't seem all that radical; it just sounded like good research to me. I liked that.

There is what appears to be an intense and unresolved debate as to what exactly feminist methods are (Maynard & Purvis, 1995). One approach is to use “conventional quantitative methods to answer research questions driven by feminist theory,” while the other approach argues that, “feminist methods are subject centered and therefore necessarily qualitative, disruptive of the tradition of objective experimental and survey methods in the field” (Tolman & Szalacha, 1999, p. 9).

Akman, Toner, Stuckless, Ali, Emmott, and Downie, (2001) assure us, “One can be dedicated to feminist principles and still be committed to established methods” (p. 223).

Eventually, I came across the “four core principles that are endorsed by feminist social scientists of all theoretical orientations” (Akman et al., 2001, p. 213). Finally, I’d found a standardized list. It includes:

1. the recognition of the validity and importance of women’s experiences; 2. the challenge to traditional scientific inquiry; 3. the concern about power imbalances between the researchers and the research participants; and, 4. the insistence on the political nature of research. (p. 213)

In my review of feminist methodology, I found authors who argue for the use of one method over another or for the feminist researcher to be more self-reflective (Crawford & Kimmel, 1999; Russo, 1999; Yllo, 1988) and to pay closer attention to our emotions (Campbell, 2002; Stanko, 1997). While some researchers argue that feminist research uses the same methods as any other research and is feminist in its theory (Stanley & Wise, 1983; Ward, 1995), others argue that feminist research uses different implementations of those methods than other types of research (Harding, 1987). Still others argue that consciousness-raising as a method of investigation is
unique to feminist methodology (MacKinnon, 1983; Reinharz, 1992). Ward (1995) contends “feminist scholars have largely failed to provide concrete guidelines on how to adopt this technique effectively as a viable research strategy” (p. 187).

I agree with Freeman (1995) “empowerment of women is one of the few ideas on which feminists have agreed virtually from the beginning” (p. 408). She further argues “the goal of feminism is to empower women as a group, not just [italics added] individual women.” Because this allows focus on the group and focus on individual women, it is not likely to raise too much dispute. However, she continues with “that requires accountability” (p. 408). While I and many other researchers agree with her call for accountability (Greene, 1998), the debate lies in determining to whom, for what, and how that accountability will be evaluated.

I found others who argue that feminist researchers and policy makers should create survivor-informed collaborations in their research methods and treatment strategies (Gilfus et al., 1999; Giorgio, 2002; Gondolf & White, 2000; Wiesz, Tolman, & Saunders, 2000). Indeed, there is an international psychiatric survivor movement, including Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan as well (Chamberlin, 1995; Church, 2003; Everett, 1994; Finkler, 1997; Lindow, 1994). It originated in the 1970s as a civil rights movement within the mental patients’ liberation movement, arguing that mental patients are “an oppressed group—oppressed by laws and public attitudes, relegated to legalized second-class citizenship” (Chamberlin, 1995, p. 39).

The goal of this movement is to bring people who have been treated as patients by the mental health system (psychiatric survivors) into the boardroom where policies are developed. Because those policies directly affect these people’s daily lives, they have a vested interest in the development of effective and fair policies.
Because these people have direct knowledge about the situations these policies are
developed to address, their involvement in their development can only be beneficial
(Bedillion, 1999; Church, 1991a, 1991b, 1993, 2003; Favreau, 1999; Miller & Miller,
1997; Silverman, Blank, & Taylor, 1997; Trainor, Shepherd, Boydell, Leff, &
Crawford, 1997).

While I felt an attachment to the four core principles outlined by Akman et al.
(2001), it still felt incomplete; something was missing. Cook and Fonow (1986)
suggest five principles of feminist knowledge that I believe fill that void:

1. the necessity of continuously and reflexively attending to the
   significance of gender relations as a basic feature of all social life,
   including the conduct of research;
2. the centrality of consciousness-raising as a specific methodological tool and as a “way of seeing;”
3. the need to challenge the norm of “objectivity” that assumes a
dichotomy between the subject and object of research;
4. the concern for the ethical implications of research; and
5. an emphasis on the transformation of patriarchy and the empowerment of women. (p. 2)

Although I admit it scared me to death at first and I do still look at that list with a hint
of fear, I have become pretty comfortable with this presentation of feminist
methodology. The consciousness-raising part always bothered me, but once I let
myself listen to what that meant, I realized it wasn’t what I was afraid it was. In fact, I
am practicing the majority of these in my work already.

According to Cook and Fonow, the principle of consciousness-raising can be
summarized as follows:

The theme of consciousness-raising is a central tenet of feminist
methodology in a variety of different forms. First, a researcher’s
feminist consciousness can serve as a source of knowledge and insight
into gender asymmetry and how it is managed in social life. Second,
consciousness-raising techniques can be used to elicit data from
respondents while consciousness raising life-course transitions provide
an opportune context in which to examine women’s worlds. Finally,
the process of conscientization combines consciousness-raising and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
social change through encouraging politicization and activism on the part of the research subjects. (p. 8)

One way this can be done is to examine situations that typically produce changes in consciousness, such as divorce, unemployment, widowhood, infertility, rape, physical abuse, and sexual harassment. Studying crisis situations increases the likelihood that the researcher and subject will relate during a more self-conscious “click” moment... The rupture with normalcy serves to demystify the “naturalness” of patriarchal relations and enables the subject to view reality in a different way. (pp. 7-8)

The principle of gender can be summarized as follows:

Acknowledging the importance of gender in social life and social research means a variety of things to feminist sociologists. Specifically, it involves defining women as the focus of analysis, recognizing the central place that men have held in most sociological analysis, and viewing gender as a crucial influence on the network of relations encompassing the research act. (p. 6)

I think the important element they add here is to bring the gendered nature of the research experience into our awareness. While this was an improvement over research designs that ignored gender, a more drastic change involved the questioning of the objectivity of science.

According to Cook and Fonow (1986), the principle of questioning objectivity can be summarized as follows:

Rejection of the rigid dichotomy of subject and object has led sociologists to three paths of investigation. First, they have explored the fallacy that strict separation of researcher and respondent produces more valid, legitimate knowledge. Second, they have examined ways in which the research process obscures yet reinforces the subordination of women participants at every level. Finally, equation of quantification with objectivity has been critiqued by feminist scholars who point out that quantification has its own inherent biases and distortions. (p. 11)

One way in which feminists avoid treating their subjects as mere objects of knowledge is to allow the respondent to “talk back” to the investigator... Answering the questions of interviewees personalizes...
and humanizes the researcher and places the interaction on a more
equal footing. The meaning of the interview to both the interviewer
and the interviewee and the quality of interaction between the two
participants are all salient issues when a feminist interviews women.
(p. 9)

One of the amazing attributes of these principles is not having to second-guess
myself constantly, like Porter (1999, p. 63) asking, “How did the physical and
relational qualities of the researcher affect the type, level, amount, and quality of
disclosure of the participants? Did I contaminate the data?” Approaching
researcher/participant interactions with these principles allows me to stop framing my
interactions as potentially contaminating, and to start framing them as moments of
consciousness-raising and knowledge production.

Grossman et al. (1999) admit that while they adhere to the idea that situating
the researcher within the research process is valuable and necessary to its success,
they struggled with how much self-disclosure is appropriate during the actual research
work. Apparently, believing it is a good idea is the easy part, but actually doing it is
another thing altogether (Stewart & Zucker, 1999).

While the four core principles outlined by Akman et al. (2001) included these
basics, it was never specified what was meant by the political nature of the research.
Cook and Fonow (1986) break it down into ethics and activism. The principles of
ethics and activism can be summarized as follows:

Feminist methodology involves a concern with ethical issues that arise
when feminists participate in the research process. These include the
use of language as a means of subordination, the fairness of
gatekeeping practices, intervention in respondents’ lives, and
withholding needed information from women subjects. Anticipating
the consequences of research for the research subjects and the potential
ethical issues involved are themselves problematic, and more attention
to the development of a feminist ethics is in order. (p. 12)
An assumption of feminist methodology is that knowledge must be elicited and analyzed in a way that can be used by women to alter oppressive and exploitive conditions in their society. This means that research must be designed to provide a vision of the future as well as a structural picture of the present. This goal involves attending to the policy implications of an inquiry, and may involve incorporating the potential target group in the design and execution of a study. Finally, feminist methodology endorses the assumption that the most thorough kind of knowledge and understanding comes through efforts to change social phenomena. (p. 13)

Activism is one of those terms that leaves the door wide open when it comes to operationalizing it. For example, Lundy and Grossman (2001) propose the “implementation of mandatory research tools and practices within mental health agencies and domestic violence shelters and counseling centers” (p. 137), while Michelle Fine (1989) suggests we need to stop studying individual women altogether because it only leads to additional victim blaming. We need to focus on the culture that sustains this violence for activism with real transformative power to occur.

“With the rise of feminist research in the 1970s, came a renewed commitment to social change and a new focus on changing systems rather than individuals. Action-research took on new life as an ‘innovative’ approach” (Mahlstedt, 1999, p. 112). Cook and Fonow (1986) advocate the use of participatory research and action research strategies as well (p. 9). Nelson, Griffin, Ochacka, and Lord (1998) suggest:

Participatory action research blends the traditions of participatory research and action research. . . . Participatory research works on the assumption that oppressed people themselves are fully engaged in the process of investigation. They participate in a process of developing research questions, designing research instruments, collecting information, and reflecting on the data in order to transform their understanding about the nature of the problem under investigation. . . . One important characteristic of action research is to organize the research into different phases, with findings informing action throughout the process. Also, action research identifies and involves key stakeholders at all stages of planning and implementation. (p. 885)
Deborah Mahlstedt (1999) credits Kurt Lewin with introducing the idea of action-research in the 1940s but contends, "Published research focusing on direct intervention in social problems in real-life situations continues to be surprisingly rare. Some of this research now falls under the rubric of applied and/or evaluation research, in contrast to ‘basic’ psychological research, which focuses on the development of theory" (p. 112).

Future Feminist Sexual Violence Research

Nelson et al. (1998) identify certain keys to conducting participant action research, including: authenticity, being on a first-name basis, developing supportive relationships, reciprocity, self disclosure, trust, and writing about personal information in the text. Sieber (1998) argues that VAW researchers must act as “an advocate for those studied to gain their trust and cooperation, and must relate in a personal and caring manner if candor and participation are to be forthcoming” (pp. 154-155).

Difficult decisions need to be made throughout the research design. For example, Murphy and O’Leary (1994) suggest, “Researchers can enhance the credibility of findings through the use of multiple investigators or multiple investigative teams” (p. 214). I agree that this is definitely not a one-person job, but this is a reality often ignored due to budgetary constraints. Many trade-offs are made in the research design due to limited resources. For example, “our study suggests that researchers who are committed to incorporating subjects of different races and classes in their qualitative research designs must be prepared to allow more time and money for subject recruitment and data collection” (Cannon, Higginbotham, & Leung, 1991, p. 238).
Walby and Myhill (2001) contend, “We need more empirical detail about such incidents, about the differing content of labels ‘coerced sex’ and ‘rape’ and how women are using them . . . There are clearly different kinds of sexual assault which require a range of terms to describe them” (p. 516). Schwartz (2000) argues, “We are in need of more research on what women actually perceive when they hear the words we use in our studies” (p. 827). He proposes using vignette research to investigate this issue because previous research indicates vignettes are reliable measures of the meanings people give to survey terminology. Koss (1993) argues:

Method of data collection is less important than the attributes and training of the interviewer, their match with respondents, and the creation of a safe climate for self-disclosure. Investigators must ascertain that respondents are experiencing an effective confidentiality. In addition, investigators should include some multiple-methods comparisons in the design to allow for evaluation of any differential participation and effects by method and for feedback regarding the extent of disclosure fostered by each method. (p. 219)

Walby and Myhill (2001) offer six suggestions to improve the quality of sexual violence surveys:

Even the violence against women surveys can be still further developed in several ways. First, the sampling frame needs to be enhanced so as to include the marginalized population who do not currently occupy permanent domestic residences, especially since this is likely to include disproportionate numbers of women who have fled violent homes to seek sanctuary in a refuge, with friends or relatives, or in a hostel [sic] or homeless accommodation. Second, there needs to be development of a longer and broader standard list for recording more of the different types of sexual attack in recognition of the complexities and variations in experience and definitions, rather than the funneling of respondents through a narrow set of screening questions with which they might not identify. Third, a more systematic and comprehensive way of recording the various impacts of violence, especially that of sexual violence, so as to capture the range of these in meaningful ways. Fourth, a better way of recording series of events over time, so as to capture their escalation and, perhaps, their desistance, and to do so in tandem with other social information so as to begin to provide an evidential basis for understanding desistance.
Fifth, the collection of more disaggregated socio-economic data, such as income, on women and the perpetrator, so that the woman is not hidden in the household, and so that theories as to the role of poverty and social exclusion for both victim and perpetrator can each be addressed. Sixth, it should be asked whether the perpetrator has a criminal history, so as to help assess whether theories of criminal career are relevant in this area. (pp. 519-520)

To remain authentic, future research must be grounded in social constructivism, grounded theory, phenomenology, autoethnography and must remain grounded in action and experience. Lisa Cosgrove (2000) elaborates:

A social constructionist approach criticizes the traditional notion of the self as an ahistorical, asocial entity. Moreover, this approach also maintains that gender is not a natural category of being; gender does not "have" an ontological status. Rather, gender is produced and reproduced intersubjectively. It is in this sense that a social constructionist approach maintains that gender is a social construction, and the focus is on identifying the complex and subtle ways in which gender is produced. (p. 249, original emphasis)

Charmaz (1990) argues for a constructivist revision of grounded theory. This appropriation of grounded theory has both epistemological and methodological relevance for researchers interested in contextualizing women's experiences in social and power relations. Grounded theory attends explicitly to the relationship between objectivity and subjectivity in the research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). By doing so, "it differs from other approaches by avoiding claims to absolute foundations of knowledge, while simultaneously providing a rigorous method and creating theoretical categories from the emerging data" (Cosgrove, 2000, p. 248). Indeed, Sharan Merriam (2002) elaborates:

Researchers in this mode build substantive theory, which is distinguished from grand or formal theory. Substantive theory is localized, dealing with particular real-world situations. . . . A grounded theory consists of categories, properties, and hypotheses that state relationships among categories and properties. Unlike hypotheses in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
experimental studies, grounded theory hypotheses are tentative and suggestive rather than tested. (pp. 7-8)

Lisa Cosgrove (2000) contends Giorgi (1985, p. 10) provides a concise summary of the four essential steps to phenomenologically based research, which include the following:

1) One reads the entire description in order to get a general sense of the whole statement. 2) Once a sense of the whole has been grasped, the researcher goes back to the beginning and reads through the text once more with the specific aim of discriminating "meaning units" from within a psychological perspective and with a focus on the phenomenon being researched. 3) Once "meaning units" have been delineated, the researcher then goes through all of the meaning units and expresses the psychological insight contained in them more directly. This is especially true of the meaning units most revelatory of the phenomenon under consideration. 4) Finally, the researcher synthesizes all of the transformed meaning units into a consistent statement regarding the subject's experience. This is usually referred to as the structure of experience and can be expressed at a number of levels (p. 256).

These are not just theories and ways of explaining the world around us; these are also methods and tools for examining our world. Future feminist researchers will do well to remember this while designing and conducting sexual violence research.
CHAPTER FIVE

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

"I have never been free of the fear of rape" (Griffin, 1971, p. 22, italics added).

International Rape Research

Much of the international research involves comparisons of secondary data from two or three countries. For example, Dobash and Dobash (2001) compare "survey data from Canada, the United States and Britain" (p. 5). Other research emphasizes that rape can be used as a vehicle for social control, and focuses on rape during war, rape as a punishment or as a terrorist policy against women (Cooke & Woollacott, 1993; Iadicola & Shupe, 1998, Kadic, 1995; Lewis, 1999; Smith, 1999; West, 1999). The Schwendingers (1983) include an extremely emotionally challenging chapter of their book *Rape and Inequality* on institutionalized rape. This type of rape is an officially instituted form of torturing and terrorizing conquered populations and political dissenters. The perpetrators of these rapes are members of military forces and civil servants, including the police (p. 11). Lloyd Vogelman (1990) exposes this terrifying face of violence in South Africa.

Several cross-cultural studies do exist. For example, Peggy Sanday (1981) studied 156 world societies, and while this study expanded previous definitions of rape-prone societies to include ceremonial rapes and the rape of enemy women, it still excludes marital rape or "copulation with a sleeping woman" (p. 501). Sanday's
definition of rape-free societies included those societies where rape was a rare event. Consequently, nearly half of the societies in her study qualified as rape-free. Patricia Rozee (1993) studied 35 world societies using a broader definition of rape that included both normative (condoned) and nonnormative (uncondoned) rapes and found “the concept of a rape-free culture was not supported,” as rape was found in each society (p. 499). Nevertheless, the International Crime Survey (ICS) consistently shows low estimates of rape prevalence around the world (Koss, 1996). These international studies need to be examined for their links with national research and local research. Once we begin to clearly see the global network of realities of rape, we will be able to see more clearly how to effectively change the situation.

I feel compelled to admit at this point that the global picture terrifies me. Just the tiny bit I saw putting together this literature review was horrifying. Not only does it remind me of the extreme face of hate that lingers outside the safety of my walls, but it also reminds me how privileged I am to live within those loving walls. As victimized as my life has been, it has also been, and still remains, in a privileged place. I struggle with feelings of guilt and shame over these issues, just as my students do every semester; and it hurts.

While I wholeheartedly believe that it is extremely important to study the intersections of race, class, sexuality, religion, ability, age, and degree of colonization with sex/gender on a global scale, I simultaneously believe that I cannot be the one to do it. Maybe that will change someday, but at this point in time, I know I wouldn’t survive a thorough examination of the global literature on rape. I feel the panic in my chest just writing about it. It is hard enough to face the world each day as I study what is happening in my own back yard. Some days, I barely make it as it is. Pushing
myself any further would only sabotage my ability to focus on my current work. I have limits. I must know and respect them to be any good to anybody.

National Rape Research

In the past, we relied on National Crime Surveys (NCS) and Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) for information on the prevalence of rape, both of which have been consistently criticized for drastically underestimating the prevalence of rape (Jensen & Karpos, 1993; Koss, 1996; Lynch, 1996). Official statistics have now been supplanted by more sensitive national surveys, as we have attempted to construct a more accurate picture of rape. There have been a number of studies conducted on national data samples in addition to the ones I will review here.\textsuperscript{54} While these are worthy pieces of research, I will retain my focus more on those studies whose findings are more involved in public policy making.

In the past two decades, there have been four major national surveys of rape. The first source is the Ms. Magazine Campus Project on Sexual Assault funded by the Center for Antisocial and Violent Behavior of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). This research was conducted by Mary Koss and her associates in 1985 (Koss et al., 1987; Warshaw, 1994). A second source of rape prevalence data is the annual National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) funded by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) (BJS, 1985, 1994).

A third source is the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) funded by National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and conducted by Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes in 1996 (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998, 1999, 2000a, 2000b). The fourth source of national rape

\textsuperscript{54} For example, see Saunders et al. (1999).
research is the National College Women Sexual Victimization Study (NCWSV) funded by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), which was conducted by Bonnie Fisher, Francis Cullen, and Michael Turner in 1997 (Fisher et al., 2000). A summary of these studies is presented in Table 2 following their discussion.

Mary Koss (Ms. Magazine)

The most famous of the four studies is the work led by Mary Koss, who collected her data between November 1984 and March 1985 (Johnson et al., 1992). This project was funded by the Center for Antisocial And Violent Behavior, which is part of the NIMH and titled the Ms. Magazine Campus Project on Sexual Assault. Surveys were administered in classrooms at 32 universities to 6,159 participants, which included 3,187 women and 2,972 men. It should be noted that the men were asked different questions than the women. While women were asked if they had ever been victims of sexual violence, men were asked if they had ever been perpetrators of sexual violence. I am not going to review the male data as it is not applicable to our discussion; however, I believe it is important to consider the implications inherent in designing research to fit this ridiculous and dangerous assumption that only men are rapists and only women are victims.

Every time social scientists conduct research, the questions we ask have an impact on the way the participants and readers of that research understand the world. The structure of our questionnaires has the power to define reality for those people exposed to it. In effect, Koss defined men as either rapists or potential rapists and women as either victims or potential victims. I imagine that idea insulted more than just a few of those 2,972 men and many of the 3,187 women as well. I find it insulting, shaming, and a threat to gender relations in its divisiveness.
The instrument administered is called the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES), which includes 10 questions; however, these were not the only questions involved in the survey. Those 10 SES questions were included within a 71-page survey of over 300 questions, which was titled The National Survey of Inter-Gender Relationships. An example of the 10 SES questions is “Have you had sexual intercourse when you didn’t want to because a man threatened or used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding down, etc) to make you?” The gender-specific nature of the questions makes it very clear that women are not perpetrators but are victims of rape perpetrated only by men.

Koss’ findings showed that 15% of women had experienced an event that qualified as rape and 12% had experienced an event that qualified as attempted rape. Any rape prior to the age of 14 was not counted (Koss et al., 1987). When combined, 27% (one in four) college women experienced a rape or attempted rape in their lifetimes. While this may be the most frequently cited piece of research, it is almost always left unclear if the categories of rape and attempted rape are mutually exclusive or not, which is extremely problematic. Are we to assume no one who was raped ever experienced an attempted rape? Are we to assume those women in the attempted rape category never experienced rape? If these are both accurate assumptions, which I highly doubt, then adding the numbers together to formulate the 25% figure is accurate; however, if these categories overlap and some women experienced both attempted and completed rapes, then adding them together is not entirely accurate.

The original source implies that each woman was classified by her most severe incident. Thus, if a woman had more than one incident, including both attempted rape and rape, then she was classified as a rape victim (Koss et al., 1987).
Therefore, the first assumption is incorrect; some rape victims have also survived an attempted rape.

The second assumption is correct; the women classified as attempted rape victims never experienced rape. Consequently, if 15% of women were classified as rape victims and another 12% were classified as attempted rape victims, a more appropriate interpretation is that when combined, over 25% (1 in 4) college women between the ages of 18-24 have experienced an event that classified as a rape and/or an attempted rape. The point is, when combined in the data analysis, we don’t really know how many women survived only a rape and how many survived both types of incidents. For accurate and fair comparisons between studies, knowing this information definitely matters.

Bureau of Justice Statistics (NCVS)

The Bureau of Justice statistics (BJS) annually conducts the second piece of national rape research, which is the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). This survey is administered every six months for a three-year period. The first and fifth interviews are conducted in person by an interviewer from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. All other interviews are conducted by telephone. Approximately 90,000 participants ages 12 and older from 45,000 households are currently involved in this project.

Originally, the survey included only one screening question about “unwanted sexual activity” among its questions, all of which pertain to victimization by various crimes. Rape is defined as “forced sexual intercourse and includes both psychological coercion as well as physical force. Forced sexual intercourse means vaginal, anal, or
oral penetration by the offender(s). This category also includes incidents where the penetration is from a foreign object such as a bottle” (Bachman, 2000, p. 844).

Bachman reveals the findings of the NCVS project were not reported as percentage rates, but participants disclosed 386,000 sexual assault incidents for 1999. Any rape prior to the age of 18 was not counted. Incidence rates from these studies tend to be very low. For example, in 1992, the BJS reported a rate of 0.5% per annum for sexual assault of women, which is a 500% increase from the 0.1% per annum they were reporting prior to the revision of the NCVS (Walby & Myhill, 2001). At the close of the last millennium, BJS finally revised the NCVS questions to include four behaviorally specific questions, as opposed to the single direct question including the word “rape” that they were using before.

Tjaden and Thoennes (NVAW)

Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes conducted the third national rape research project. Their work was funded by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and was called the National Violence Against Women (NVAW) Survey. They collected their data between November 1995 and May 1996, which was approximately 10 years after the Mary Koss project was completed. The NVAW Survey was administered over the telephone to 16,005 participants from the general population, including 8,000 women and 8,005 men. Once again, women were asked if they had ever been victims of sexual violence, while men were asked if they had ever been perpetrators of sexual violence.

According to Bachman (2000) the NVAW survey used screening questions to identify incidents of violence, including the following:
Has a man or boy ever made you have sex by using force or threatening to harm you or someone close to you? Just so there is no mistake, by sex we mean putting a penis in your vagina. Has anyone, male or female, ever made you have oral sex by using force or threat of force? Just so there is no mistake, by oral sex we mean that a man or boy a put his penis in your mouth or someone, male or female, penetrated your vagina or anus with their mouth. Has anyone ever made you have anal sex by using force or threat of harm? Just so there is no mistake, by anal sex we mean that a man or a boy put his penis in your anus. Has anyone, male or female, ever put fingers or objects in your vagina or anus against your will or by using force or threats? Has anyone, male or female, ever attempted to make you have vaginal, oral, or anal sex against your will but intercourse or penetration did not occur? (p. 845)

As a result of the gendered wording of the screening questions used, women could report sexual violence that occurred between women in addition to the violence they had experienced from men. Once a sexually violent event was identified, an incident report was also completed to gather additional information about that event; however, a description of the event in the participant’s own words was not requested.

The findings of the NVAW Survey showed that 17.6% of women had experienced an event that could be classified as either rape or attempted rape. Any incident prior to the age of 18 was not counted (Bachman, 2000). Because completed and attempted rapes were added together during the data collection process and in the reporting of the findings, there is no way to separate the findings to determine their separate prevalence rates. This makes comparison problematic; however, this combined rate of 17.6% is less than the 27% reported by Mary Koss 10 years earlier.

This discrepancy could be accounted for by the elimination of any rapes or rape attempts that occurred between the ages of 14 and 18 from the NVAW data. In a national study on adult female child rape survivors, Saunders et al. (1999) conducted telephone interviews with 4,009 women. Four screening questions were used to identify any rape prior to the age of 18. The results show 8.5% of women disclosing
an incident of child rape. Although this study includes incidents prior to the age of 14, when added to the 17.6% rate of incidents over the age of 18 in the NVAW study, the rate becomes 26.1%, which is similar to the 27% found by Koss.

Fisher, Cullen, and Turner (NCWSV)

Bonnie Fisher, Francis Colin, and Michael Turner conducted the fourth piece of national research in 1997 between the months of March and May, which was also funded by the National Institute of Justice. This project is titled the National College Women Sexual Victimization (NCWSV) Study. In this study, telephone surveys were administered to a randomly selected, national sample of 4,432 women who were attending a 2- or 4-year college or university during the fall of 1996.

Screening questions and incident reports were identical to those used in the previous study (NVAW); however, there was one additional question included. In this study, within the incident report, the participant was asked for a “verbatim description” of the event, which was later used to clarify the coding of the events. Each question was asked about only recent events that occurred “since school began in fall 1996.” Consequently, this study provided an incidence rate, rather than a prevalence rate.

Additional screening questions were used to estimate the sexual victimization rate prior to the start of the 1996 school year. Thus, it was possible to estimate a prevalence rate; however, no incident reports were collected for additional information or for clarification purposes. The findings of this study showed that 10.26% of the women had experienced a completed rape and 11.08% had experienced

---

55 While prevalence rates estimate events that have occurred over one’s entire lifetime, incidence rates estimate events that occurred only within a specific time frame, usually the 12 months prior to reporting (Koss, 1992, 1993).
attempted rape. Any rape prior to the current academic school year was not counted, as this was an incident rate and not a prevalence rate (Fisher et al., 2000).

Table 2
Summary of National Rape Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE OF RESEARCH</th>
<th>MARY KOSS</th>
<th>BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS (BJS)</th>
<th>TJADEN AND THOENNES</th>
<th>FISHER, CULLEN, AND TURNER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLe O F RESEARCH</td>
<td>Ms. Magazine Campus Project on Sexual Assault</td>
<td>National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)</td>
<td>National Violence Against Women (NVAW) Survey</td>
<td>National College Women Sexual Victimization Study (NCWSV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUNDED BY</td>
<td>Center for Antisocial and Violent Behavior of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH))</td>
<td>Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)</td>
<td>National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)</td>
<td>National Institute of Justice (NIJ))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE OF RATE</td>
<td>Prevalence</td>
<td>Incidence</td>
<td>Prevalence</td>
<td>Prevalence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METHOD</td>
<td>Surveys administered in classrooms</td>
<td>Surveys administered in person's home by an interviewer from the U.S. Bureau of the Census and telephone interviews</td>
<td>Telephone survey</td>
<td>Telephone survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POPULATION</td>
<td>University Students</td>
<td>General Population in Households</td>
<td>General Population</td>
<td>2- or 4-year college or university students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KOSS</td>
<td>NCVS</td>
<td>NVAW</td>
<td>NCWSV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAMPLE</td>
<td>32 universities</td>
<td>Approximately 90,000 participants</td>
<td>16,005 participants (8,000 women and 8,005 men)</td>
<td>4,432 women who were attending a 2- or 4-year college or university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6,159 participants (3,187 women &amp; 2,972 men)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTRUMENT</td>
<td>Sexual Experiences Survey (SES) within “Inter-Gender Relationships Survey”</td>
<td>National Crime Victimization Survey</td>
<td>National Violence Against Women Survey</td>
<td>Modified National Crime Victimization Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTEXT</td>
<td>71-page survey that included over 300 questions on heterosexual gender relations</td>
<td>Crime Victimization Survey</td>
<td>Violence Against Women Survey</td>
<td>Victimization Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCREENING QUESTIONS</td>
<td>10 SES Questions with contingency questions</td>
<td>Originally 1 screening question; 4 revised screening questions</td>
<td>5 Questions with verbatim description of the event in incident reports</td>
<td>Identical 4 screening questions and incident reports as revised NCVS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXAMPLE OF SCREENING QUESTION</td>
<td>Have you had sexual intercourse when you didn’t want to because a man threatened or used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.) to make you?</td>
<td>One screening question about “unwanted sexual activity” amidst all other questions pertaining to one’s victimization by various crimes.</td>
<td>Has a man or boy ever made you have sex by using force or threatening to harm you or someone close to you? Just so there is no mistake, by sex we mean putting a penis in your vagina.</td>
<td>Has anyone, male or female, ever attempted to make you have vaginal, oral, or anal sex against your will but intercourse or penetration did not occur?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINDINGS</td>
<td>15% Rape (25% Rape or Attempted Rape)</td>
<td>386,000 sexual assault incidents reported for 1999</td>
<td>17.6% Rape or Attempted Rape</td>
<td>10.26% Rape Attempted Rape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE BOUNDARIES</td>
<td>Over 14</td>
<td>18 and over</td>
<td>18 and over</td>
<td>18 and over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Local Rape Research

Although national rape research generally holds the spotlight, other kinds of research have been conducted. For example, Kalof (2000) conducted a longitudinal study on sexual coercion and date rape with 54 college women. Studies at specific universities are the most common form of local rape research. Their findings can be drastically different. For example, Finkelson and Oswalt (1995) analyzed 140 mailed surveys at a liberal arts college and found that 5% of students disclosed having experienced date rape. On the other hand, Berger et al. (1986) analyzed 147 mailed questionnaires at “a medium-sized, primarily undergraduate institution” (p. 6) in Wisconsin. Interestingly, they studied sexual assault, because rape reform laws had replaced the offense of rape with a four-degree classification of sex-neutral assault. The results show 37.4% of women disclosing an incident of sexual assault.

Backlash Against Feminist Rape Research

In 1991, Susan Faludi popularized the term “backlash” to signify the “powerful counterassault on women’s rights” (p. xviii) that began during the Reagan Administration of the 1980s as “an attempt to retract the handful of small hard-won victories that the feminist movement did manage to win for women” (p. xviii). The progress being made prior to this was being attributed primarily “to the growing influence of feminism and the decline of religious authority” (Greenland, 1983).

---

56 Baron and Straus (1989) used the term “backlash” to describe the tendency for rape rates to increase when steps to decrease gender disparity are taken, as predicted by Russell (1975). They suggested this positive relationship was temporary, and that the relationship would turn negative eventually as the backlash weakened. While Austin & Kim (2000) find a positive relationship between gender equity and rape, they suggest it is because women are easier targets when engaging in riskier activities.

57 “In the early 1980s, with the election of President Reagan and the emergence of several significant conservative movements such as the religious right, prolife, and profamily, some of the earlier gender role-related changes began to be challenged” (Botkin, Weeks, & Morris, 2000, p. 941).
Faludi (1991) suggests that backlashes "have always been triggered by the perception—accurate or not—that women are making real strides. These outbreaks are...caused not simply by a bedrock of misogyny but by the specific efforts of contemporary women to improve their status" (p. xix). Indeed, by 1996, bell hooks argued that feminism was being faced with a serious backlash attack. Even the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 came under attack (Rabkin, 1999; Satel, 1999). By the end of the millennium, articles and books were being published and papers were being presented at conferences about the backlash against feminism and feminist violence against women research (DeKeseredy, 1998, 1999; Russell & Bolen, 2000; Schwartz, 1997; Schwartz & Koss, 1998; Stanko, 1997).

It is important to distinguish violence against women research that employs a feminist perspective from other violence against women research. Not all research in this area is subject to backlash attacks. It is primarily research that is identified as feminist or which supports feminist ideology that is attacked. Anti-feminist backlash is primarily an attack on feminism and the application of feminism in the social sciences (Faludi, 1991). Thus, research on violence against women that uses traditionally conservative conceptualizations with more narrow operational definitions of rape, such as the NCVS, are not subject to the same vicious attacks that have been directed at feminist oriented research (DeKeseredy, 1998; Schwartz, 1997; Schwartz & Koss, 1998; Stanko, 1997).

Although one need not look any further than the campaign of the current Bush Administration against women's reproductive rights for an example of antifeminist backlash, we should examine a few examples of the backlash violence against women research. One such example is found in the writing of Wendy McElroy (1998), which

---

58 Rachel Bridges Whaley (2001) analyzed rape trends over two decades and found an increase in rape rates immediately following measures promoting gender equity.
attacks radical feminists for broadening the definition of rape to include sexual coercion. She suggests that this is being done in an attempt to persuade us that all heterosexual sex, even consensual sex, is in effect rape.

While she brings up an exceptionally important issue for rape research (the conceptualizations and operational definitions we choose when we study rape), she does so in such an accusatory, emotionally reactive, and conspiracy-theory way that antagonizes people who don’t share her views. She shuts down any opportunity to really discuss important issues. One easily gets the idea from reading McElroy’s writings that her goal is more to attack the beliefs of radical feminists and to persuade readers that radical feminism represents all feminism. In the process, any discussion of rape research findings is sidetracked and ignored.

Unfortunately, this is frequently the case with these backlash attacks; they are emotionally charged, and their negativity only fuels further emotional reactivity. For example, Neil Gilbert (1994) charges, “The sexual politics of advocacy research on violence against women demonizes men and defines the common experience in heterosexual relations as inherently violent and menacing. This is the message that is being delivered on college campuses, and a frightening atmosphere is the result” (p. 75).

Dwight Murphey (1992) offers another rather disturbing example of rhetoric intended to arouse fear. After first blaming feminists for turning our culture rape-prone with their permissive immorality, he then denies that the US has a rape-prone culture at all:

By promoting permissive behavior, liberals, including feminists, have actually contributed to the destruction of traditional morals. This

---

59 One of the most common themes of the backlash against feminist rape research is “Feminist research exaggerates the prevalence of acquaintance rape” (Sommers, 1998, p. 59). For other examples of this theme, see (Gilbert, 1991, 1994, 1998; Paglia, 1992, 1998; Roiphe, 1996).
morality caused males to abhor rape. It reflected a family-oriented and woman-respecting culture which saw rape as a deeply rooted offense against the ideal of the family, and of the dignity of women. Some conservative males regarded rape as an even more debasing and heinous crime than murder. By opposing this morality, feminists have in effect promoted a cultural environment in which rape is more likely to occur. (p. 21)\(^6\)

Feminists allege that men rape freely, while they attack traditional morality which placed women in a protected category . . . Contemporary permissive culture, to which the feminist ideology has contributed, has created a situation in which former muggers and woman-harassers like Mike Tyson find it easy to rape women who behave in a permissive way. The older pre-feminist morality would have warned that such behavior is dangerous . . . But why did feminists destroy the traditional ethic of male respect for females, as honored wives and mothers, only to create a culture in which many women behave in a way that invites rape? (p. 22, italics added)

The United States is said to be “the most rape-prone” country in the world on the basis of behavior that is disproportionately associated with a very small minority (young, urban, black males) of the United States (and even of the minority) population. Damning the entire society for the derelictions of a small part has to rank among the more demagogic. What are we to think of a type of “social science” that lends itself to this? (pp. 26-27)\(^1\)


Heightened confusion and strained relations between men and women are not the only dysfunctional consequences of advocacy research that inflates the incidence of rape to a level that indicts most men. According to Koss’ data, rape is an act that most educated women do not recognize as such when it has happened to them, and after which almost half of the victims go back for more. To characterize this type

\(^6\) If it was deemed as such a heinous crime, then why did we need a “campaign to make marital and date rape a crime in all 50 U.S. states and other countries” (Laura X et al., 1999)?

\(^1\) When he uses the image of fighter Mike Tyson to generate fear and then connects rape to young black men, Murphy is appealing to his audience’s racial fears to generate hatred of feminists.
of sexual encounter as rape trivializes the trauma and pain suffered by the many women who are true victims of this crime, and may ultimately make it more difficult to convict their assailants. By exaggerating the statistics on rape, advocacy research conveys an interpretation of the problem that advances neither mutual respect between the sexes nor reasonable dialogue about assaultive sexual behavior. (p. 361)

Feminist violence against women research in the late 1980s, especially the study contracted by feminist activist Gloria Steinem for Ms. Magazine conducted by Mary Koss has been cited as the “primary reason for the Title IV ‘Safe Campuses for Women’ provision of the Violence Against Women Act of 1993 [sic], which provides twenty million dollars to combat rape on college campuses” (Sommers, 1994, p. 62).

The impact of the rape research conducted by Mary Koss is undeniable. The American Psychologist (2000) printed the following citation regarding her award for distinguished contributions to research in public policy:

For her outstanding research, writing, and advocacy on violence against women. Through her scholarly research and writing, Mary P. Koss has revolutionized our thinking about the nature, prevalence, and consequences of rape and other forms of violence against women. Her work has had a profound impact on public policies at national, state, and local levels. One of the most powerful effects of this work has been the change in the ways that federal data on violence are gathered and reported. Koss’s [sic] courageous work on date rape exposed the need for policies and programs for prevention and intervention on college campuses. Koss is an excellent example of a psychologist who produces and then uses scholarship to advance the public interest. (p. 1330)

It makes sense then, according to “Faludian logic,” for us to have seen an increase in the number of backlash attacks against rape victims, against feminism in general, and against feminist violence against women research over the past decade, especially the work done by Mary Koss. Indeed, it appears this has been the case; we
have seen a plethora of both attacks and defenses\textsuperscript{62} of Koss' research. Martin
Schwartz (1997) contends:

This is one of those fields in which one person's research dominates all discussion. Virtually every study in this field since the mid-1980s builds on a foundation built by Mary Koss and her associates. Even the backlash authors who trivialize survivors’ experiences seem to forget how many researchers are active; they key their attacks as if Koss were the only person working in this field. (p. 1)

The attacks of Koss’ research fall along three lines (Bonilla, 1993; Gilbert, 1994; Sommers, 1998). First, 73% of the women whose experiences were counted by Koss as rape according to the legal definition did not define the act as rape themselves (Koss et al., 1987; Warshaw, 1994). Thus, the researcher’s definition took precedence over the victim’s definition in calculating prevalence rates. The logic behind the attack is that feminist methodology is used to empower women, and privileging the researcher’s definition over the voice of the participants is wrong because it disempowers women. To truly empower women, it should only count as rape if the participant defines it as rape, because only her definition should matter (Sommers, 1998).

Second, 42% of these women said they had sexual relations with the perpetrator again after an event that was classified as rape by Koss (Koss et al, 1987; Warshaw, 1994). The attack is that these acts could not possibly have been “real” rape (Estrich, 1986, 1987), because no woman would go back to the same man for more (Sommers, 1998). Finally, the wording of a couple of questions in the SES pertaining to intoxication is criticized as being ambiguous. The attack is that these questions broaden the definition of rape to include those instances when a woman drank alcohol

\textsuperscript{62} For examples of defenses, see Davion, 1997; Schwartz, 1997; and the Symposium (1994) edited by Muchlenhard, which is dedicated solely to this issue.
and later regretted the consensual sex in which she engaged while under the influence of that alcohol (Bonilla, 1993; Gilbert, 1994; Sommers, 1998).

These backlash attacks clearly illustrate the pervasiveness of the acceptance of rape myths in our culture, our science, our writing, and our everyday thinking, and the use of these myths to discredit feminist research. These attacks inflame people’s emotions, but fail to identify any legitimate flaws in the research (DeKeseredy, 1998; Frazier & Seales, 1997; Renzetti, Edleson, & Bergen, 2001; Schwartz, 1997). One of the most important findings of Koss’ research is that most women who survive an incident that legally qualifies as rape do not identify themselves as rape victims.

Identifying these “hidden victims” (Koss, 1989) is a major finding of the research. This is not a flaw of its design, as these backlash writers would like us to believe. In another study, although 14% of the participants met the criteria as rape victims, only 6% defined their experiences as rape (Russell, 1990). Many other studies also support the finding that rape victims do not necessarily define their experiences as rape (Bergen, 1993; Donat & D’Emilio, 1992; Koss, 1992, 1993, 1996; Koss & Cleveland, 1997; Muehlenhard et al., 1992; White & Humphrey, 1997).

Pitts and Schwartz (1997) argue convincingly that:

In a society widely considered to be rape supportive, the messages that excuse rapists are heard as often and as intensely by women, with the result that women themselves are sometimes unable to affix blame when they voluntarily entered a man’s apartment, when they voluntarily invited him into their apartment, when less physical force was used, or when the woman was drinking. (pp. 65-66)

Furthermore, many times victims return to or remain with their abusers even when they do accept the label of rape victim for themselves (Koss & Cleveland, 1997). Mahoney, Williams, and West (2001) remind us of the special situation faced by victims of intimate violence:
Despite serious abuse, a woman may have feelings of love for the perpetrator and thus may desire to protect him from harm. Given the high value placed on relationship stability, loyalty, and commitment to working through relationship problems, it is not surprising that many women stay with and stand by an abusive partner, at least for some time, while trying to find a way to salvage the relationship but get rid of the abuse. (p. 147)

I celebrate the naïve innocence of those of us who can still find the idea of remaining with one’s abuser inconceivable, and I grieve for those of us, like myself, who have survived through years of domestic violence and the sexual violence that too often accompanies it. We know what it feels like to be trapped in an abusive relationship, and we know what it feels like to be disempowered to the point of accepting the erroneous belief that we have no choices and deserve what is happening to us. We know what it feels like to suffer in silence. Indeed, Elizabeth Stanko (1997) reminds us:

Despite the contribution of a feminist analysis of sexual violence, few of those who experience abuse today tell anyone. Silence reigns as the typical response of those who are sexually assaulted. Women, children, and men who encounter sexual assault remain steadfastly quiet, despite all the publicity and changes in legal statutes and professional practice over these past 20 years. (p. 76)

Finally, while Koss admits that the wording of the questions pertaining to voluntary intoxication may be ambiguous (Schwartz, 1997), the actual attack points to a deeper issue than poor question design. The underlying issue is that rape should not include consensual sex while under the influence of alcohol. The law in many states does not agree; once a woman becomes legally intoxicated, her consent is meaningless and no longer valid. Consequently, much of the recent research in this area has altered its design to include these acts (Koss & Cook, 1998; Mahoney et al., 2001; Muehlenhard et al., 1992; Warshaw, 1994).
Weaknesses of Previous Rape Research

Backlash attacks aside, there are legitimate weaknesses in the designs of all previous national rape research studies. There are similar weaknesses in research at the international and local level as well. Combined, these weaknesses give us sufficient reason to question the validity of their findings, and to suggest that they may underestimate the prevalence of rape and sexual assault.

Although national research has the advantage of being representative of the country as a whole, it suffers from various weaknesses and disadvantages. For one, it is antiquated. Although Mary Koss (1987) reported the infamous “one in four” statistic over 15 years ago, it is still the most well-known and often cited statistic on rape today. For another, it is funded by government agencies. While being affiliated with the U.S. government may improve the perceived legitimacy of some research projects, this body of research focuses on sexual violence. We must remember that this is the same government that denied the existence of marital rape until very recently (Koss, 1992, 1993, 1996; Muchlenhard et al., 1992; Russell, 1990; Sigler & Haygood, 1987) and continues to under-prosecute sexually violent crimes more than any other (Valente et al., 2001). People, especially victims, are painfully aware of the official response to these crimes and the brutal treatment of those who report them (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2001; Frazier & Seales, 1997; Koss & Cleveland, 1997; Martin & Powell, 1995). We cannot assume that being affiliated with the government improves response rates. Instead, we should be aware of the potential damage that this affiliation may in fact cause.

Furthermore, the data collection methods in previous research include surveys administered over the telephone, in classroom settings, and during personal interviews
by a government agent. Administering sexual violence surveys in classroom settings is inadequate and potentially dangerous for several reasons (Currie & MacLean, 1997). For one, there is no ability to establish rapport or trust with the participants. For another, there is no privacy for participants to fill out a survey on such a sensitive issue with students sitting all around them. In addition, the voluntary nature of consent is debatable when surveys are given in classroom settings. Students, especially undergraduates, may feel obligated to complete the survey to please the professor. This may result in intentional under-reporting to avoid disclosure, to get even for feeling forced to complete the survey, to protect one’s privacy, and/or to hurry up to get to the next class.

In addition, there is a high probability that when a student has an incident to report, an intimate relationship is involved (White & Humphrey, 1997). Students date each other and take classes with their partners and their friends. As a result, a student may be sitting right next to the perpetrator, someone connected to the perpetrator, or someone else from whom the student feels the need to hide the incident. Thus, it is possible to put students in potentially dangerous situations by asking them questions about sexual assault in a classroom setting (Currie & MacLean, 1997).

In addition to classroom settings, surveys are often administered over the telephone, which is not an acceptable method of data collection for a sexual violence survey for several reasons. This is a reality I became painfully familiar with during the original pilot test of my survey instrument (Fisher, 1999). Previous research indicates that people don’t like to talk on the telephone, especially about anything personal (Campbell & Dienemann, 2001; Currie & MacLean, 1997; Desai & Saltzman, 2001; Johnson et al., 1989). The more sensitive the subject is, the less likely people are going to be to talk about it over the telephone. There are insufficient resources
available to build rapport or trust. There are serious questions about privacy and safety. People have no control over who may be listening in on the conversation or if it is being recorded. People have no way of verifying the legitimacy of the surveyor. Because the environment is not controlled, there are many distractions that decrease recall ability and increase anxiety levels.

When surveys are administered in person, a government official, such as a Federal Census Bureau agent, is sent to the person’s home. In addition to magnifying the problems mentioned above with regard to privacy, controlling the environment, and safety (Campbell & Dienemann, 2001), willingness to disclose such personal information to someone connected to the government is involved. Previous research indicates that sexually violent crimes are the most under-reported of all crimes (Hippensteele, 1997; Pitts & Schwartz, 1997). If a victim does not want to or cannot officially report the incident, why would she feel safe disclosing the incident to anyone in an official capacity? She wouldn’t (Currie & MacLean, 1997).

Previous research also has weaknesses in the design of the questions themselves. It uses too few questions, and it asks those questions in the context of other topics not related to sexual assault. Using too few questions will not stimulate recall of all the various ways that sexual violence can occur (Currie & MacLean, 1997; Koss, 1993). In addition, one question in the context of crime and victimization is completely inefficient, because it will not stimulate recall from those of victims who do not define the event as a crime (Desai & Saltzman, 2001). While the question itself may stimulate recall, because the context is that of a crime victimization survey, the participant may be less likely to disclose the event even if it is recalled (Campbell & Dienemann, 2001; Currie & MacLean, 1997; Fortune, 2001).
Previous research is heterocentric and/or sexist (Renzetti, 1998; Stanko, 1997), as same-sex sexual violence is usually ignored and the assumption is made that men are only perpetrators and women are only victims (Donnelly & Kenyon, 1996; Hickson et al., 1994; Hodge & Canter, 1998; Koss, 1992, 1993, 1996; Muehlenhard et al., 1992; Palmer, 1988, 1991). While there is overwhelming evidence that women are primarily victimized by men (Currie & MacLean, 1997; Koss & Gidycz, 1985; Koss et al., 1987; Stanko, 1997; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998, 2000a, 2000b), men victimize each other, women victimize each other, and women victimize men as well (Mahoney et al., 2001). To totally ignore this fact in our research designs is closed minded and potentially harmful to those legitimate victims whose trauma goes further unacknowledged (Campbell & Dienemann, 2001; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2001; Stanko, 1997).

Crucial words such as “force,” “undesired,” “against your will,” “when you didn’t want to” and “coercion” are not defined or explained, and it is left to the participants to do so (Muehlenhard et al., 1992). Comparison between studies is further complicated by inconsistencies in types of events reported (rape, attempted rape, sexual assault, a combination of the above) and in the type of rates reported (incidence and/or prevalence). Finally, insufficient information is given regarding the rules of inclusion in the various categories, making it impossible to determine whether those categories are indeed mutually exclusive or overlapping (Lynch, 1996; Muehlenhard et al., 1992). Bachar and Koss (2001) offer a thorough summary of the situation:

Although the research is continually improving, the level of rape and attempted rape identified depends on the methodological features of the study. Features such as definitional constraints, question context, questions specificity, inclusion/exclusion criteria, and multiple counting form a context in which the numbers must be presented and interpreted (Brookover-Bourque, 1989; Crowell & Burgess, 1996;
Koss, 1993a). Some studies that attempt to assess rape prevalence do not define rape (Brener et al., 1999; Wechsler et al., 1998). However, the majority of recent studies define rape based on legal statues in which forms of penetration other than penile-vaginal are included (Fisher et al., 1998; Koss et al., 1987; Koss, Woodruff et al., 1991; Saunders et al., 1999; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Although these latter studies use definitions that demonstrate considerable consistency, there are still many methodological variations, including the representativeness of the sampling frame, the context of questioning (estimates are frequently assessed in the context of crime, health, or sexuality surveys), the number and type of screening questions used to stimulate recall, the inclusion/exclusion of nonforcible rape, the use for prevalence periods of different age boundaries ranging from 12 (Perkins et al., 1996) to 18 (Wyatt, 1992), and the use of the terms “sexual assault” and “sexual experiences” as alternative to “rape.” These discrepancies may affect how respondents recall and/or classify their experiences and ultimately affect who is counted and who is excluded in studies of rape prevalence (Koss, 1992, 1993a, 1996; Koss et al., 1987). (p. 121)

Indeed, Mahoney et al. (2001) offer a parallel summary of the situation in research on intimate partner violence:

Available research of intimate violence is limited in many respects. Much of the literature has focused exclusively on physical abuse (to the exclusion of sexual and emotional abuse) as well as on discrete acts of abuse within a fixed period of time, limiting what we are able to learn about the array of abuses women experience and how abuse types may change or overlap over the course of a relationship. Variations in definitions and methodology contribute to rather large differences in rates across studies. Clearly, the more types of abuse a study measures (physical, sexual, emotional; threats, attempts, completed acts), the higher the resulting rates. Other important methodological variations include how the sample is selected (e.g., random sample or convenience sample), how the information is gathered and from whom (e.g., face-to-face interviews or phone interviews with women, men or both), how many questions there are and how they are worded, and whether and how privacy and anonymity are guaranteed. It is widely agreed that even well-designed studies will not produce a true estimate of intimate violence due to the problem of underreporting. (p. 149)
Examining these weaknesses is crucial to designing better research. These
design issues, along with those discussed at the end of the previous chapter on
methodology, remained in the foreground of my mind as I designed this study. As the
next chapter will make clear, no research design is flawless and trade-offs are almost
always involved. I'll conclude this chapter with an alphabetical list of these design
issues to which future rape research needs to attend:

- Accuracy of disclosed information
- Antiquated research
- Confidentiality/anonymity issues
- Definitional constraints
- Definitions based on legal statues
- Different age boundaries
- Government funded research
- Heterocentric in design
- Incidence and/or prevalence rates
- Inclusion/exclusion criteria
- Inconsistent language
- Methods of data collection used
- Multiple counting
- No definitions provided
- Number and type of screening questions used
- Participant classification issues
- Question context
• Questions specificity
• Recall issues
• Representativeness of the sampling frame
• Safety of participants
• Underreporting
• Voluntary informed consent to participate
The Social Construction of Rape Research:  
Exploring Epistemologies  
And Evaluating Methods

CHAPTER SIX

RESEARCH DESIGN

"I have *never* been *free* of the *fear* of rape" (Griffin, 1971, p. 22, italics added).

Research Questions and Anticipated Outcomes

My research focuses on three basic questions. First, in what ways do the methods of data collection in rape research impact the findings? This question can be divided into three specific sub-questions: (a) In what ways does asking more sensitive questions impact the findings of rape research? (b) In what ways does using more participant-centered administration techniques impact the findings of rape research? (c) How do the findings of mail surveys compare to the findings from face-to-face interviewers when rape is the topic of study?

Second, in what ways does the unique character of rape impact the method that should be used in rape research? This question requires an understanding of the ways the topic of rape is different from other research topics. A thorough understanding of the unique character of rape as a research topic necessarily involves developing an understanding of *the meanings people attach* to rape and to the research process. My final research question concerns the prevalence of rape. How much rape have the women at Western Michigan University experienced in their lives?
When I started this project, I had five objectives in mind. First, I wanted to address questions about previous rape research by seeing if using more sensitive instruments with more participant-centered administration techniques would increase the disclosure rates. Second, I wanted to compare disclosure patterns using the same instrument through the mail and with an interviewer administered technique in person. Third, I wanted to explore the meanings women place on the specific terms we use in rape research and the meanings women give to their experiences. Fourth, I wanted to estimate the prevalence of rape in the lives of women at WMU. Finally, I wanted to collect more data than I need for this project from which I could generate a continuing program of research.

In connection with these objectives, I also had anticipated what this research would find. I suspected the levels of validity were not as high in previous research as they could be. I suspected that the instruments used have been insufficient to detect all incidents of rape. I also suspected that the questions used in prior research to have been insufficient in number, in verbal precision, and in sensitivity, so that they failed to stimulate accurate recall and adequate trust for complete disclosure to occur. More generally, I suspected that the methods used in collecting crucial data to have been equally insufficient to promote recall and establish trust.

I anticipated that I would find higher rates of disclosure using in person interviews than through mailed surveys. I suspected that people who do not have a story to tell (whose answers would all be no) would not want to waste their time

63 Belknap, Fisher, and Cullen (1999) conclude we need a survey instrument that has sensitive screening questions to increase both the depth and breadth of information we collect and incident reports to examine the discrepancies between questions and descriptions. We need a tool with a broad range of types with a way to verify quantitative information.

64 My interest in women's lives only is in no way meant to imply that I believe sexual violence is limited to women's lives. Rather, I needed to limit my study to only those variables that I could collect and analyze given my limited resources. Introducing male participants into this study would have complicated its design beyond those limits. Maybe next time.
setting an appointment and talking to an interviewer in person; however, they might be willing to take a few minutes to mark all the no boxes on a written survey and drop it in the mailbox in a pre-stamped envelope. Thus, I anticipated a lower prevalence of disclosed rape via mail than in person. Furthermore, people who do have a story to tell (whose answers would include at least one yes) would be more likely to tell their story in person, because having a person to talk with would enable a person to ask questions, make clarifications, and build trust and rapport, thereby leading to higher rates of recall.

I expected the outcome of my study to differ from previous estimates of the prevalence of sexual violence for college female students for several reasons. First, I expected that actual rates of sexual violence would have increased over the past two decades. Our popular culture, generally, glorifies and romanticizes sexual violence, and increasingly desensitizes us to this violence over time. In addition, previous research indicates that levels of sexual violence will increase immediately following steps toward equality for women before it begins to decrease (Whaley, 2001). If we can assume that the passage of the 1994 Violence Against Women Act has been viewed as a step toward equality for women, then we can also assume that rates of sexual violence will have increased since then. As a result, I believe more rape is actually happening now than in the 1980s.

I also anticipated higher rates because the publicity about sexual violence over last 20 years has given more women permission to discuss rape now than before. I anticipated higher rates because of the designs of the questionnaire and interview process. I believe the questions are broad, clear, diverse, and sensitively written enough to increase the recall ability of participants. In addition, I anticipated the rates
in person would be higher because of the rapport, trust, and relationship developed during the interview process; the participants would feel safe disclosing to me.

Moreover, while Mary Koss' work was funded by the government (the same government who has turned a blind eye to sexual violence between intimates all along and continues to allow this violence against women to remain the most frequent, under-reported, and under-prosecuted violent crime), primarily I funded my work, and I am not affiliated with the government. Instead, just like the participants themselves, I am a student at WMU, doing this study at WMU about WMU students. Thus, I am in insider; I am one of them. In sum, I expected the prevalence rates would be significantly higher than those found by Mary Koss in the 1980s because more rape is actually occurring, because more women are talking about their experiences with sexual violence now, and because both the instruments and the data collection methods used now would improve recall ability and willingness to disclose.

I anticipated outcomes about the meanings women give to events and to the terms used to signify those events. I suspected a great deal of inconsistency between women's definitions of words; one woman's force would be another woman's coercion, and one woman's stranger would be another woman's acquaintance.

Furthermore, I anticipated inconsistencies within individual women. The process of surviving after and healing from a traumatic event such as sexual violence requires a great deal of defining and redefining. These definitions may change back-and-forth over time and may even include new elements altogether. As for the meanings that women give to actual events, I had no doubt in my mind whatsoever that inconsistencies would occur, because even my own mind has been plagued with

---

65 One could argue I am operating with double consciousness (Cook & Fonow, 1990). Because I am also an instructor at WMU, one could argue that role puts me in the category of an outsider—an authority figure hired by the University, the establishment, "the man." Be that as it may, I contend that because of my approach to teaching, to research, and to life, I fall closer to the Insider end of the continuum than the Outsider end (Pitman, 2002).
continuous confusion over what to call certain events within my own lifetime. If I don’t call the same event the same thing each and every time I think of it, then why would I expect others to? I wouldn’t, or at least I shouldn’t.

Research Methods

The estimation of prevalence rates requires the manipulation of numerical information. Consequently, the collection of quantitative data is necessary. Surveys are the most commonly used and practical source of this type of data (Desai & Saltzman, 2001; Reinharz, 1992; White & Farmer, 1992). In order to estimate the prevalence of sexual violence at WMU, to compare methods of administering questions, and to compare these with previous research methods and findings, it was necessary to develop a survey and administer it through mail and also during interviews in person. In order to better evaluate my methods and questions, I needed reflexivity; I needed to pay attention to the process and keep a journal (Campbell, 2002; Israel, 2002). See Appendix A for a copy of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) approval letters (00-12-13) for this project.

In order to understand what meanings women at WMU assign to experiences of rape and sexual violence and to the terminology used in this area, I needed to listen to women (Gilfus, 1999; Renzetti, 1997a; Websdale, 2001). The inclusion of open-ended questions in the survey offered a beginning to this process. For example, asking women to give a detailed description of the events and the consequences of that event for their lives, allows us insight into the meanings women assign to sexually violent experiences (Desai & Saltzman, 2001; Hippensteele, 1997). In order to understand what meanings women assign to the terminology used in the survey, additional data collection beyond the survey is necessary. Because these women had already shown
their willingness to come in for a personal interview, I chose to use the group of women who completed the interviewer-administered surveys for the additional data collection.

I invited these women to return for second appointment, during which we would accomplish three tasks. First, we would further pretest the survey itself by completing a revised version of it. Second, we would use sexually explicit vignettes to further investigate the meanings that women assign to specific events. And finally, we would discuss a series of open-ended questions regarding the research process, the definitions of terminology, and women’s experiences with this particular research project.

Population and Samples

Due to the limited resources of time, money, and staff, it was not feasible for me to conduct a national survey. Conducting a university-wide study seemed the most appropriate alternative. Because I wanted to make inferences about a large population with a minimal margin for error, it was necessary to collect data from a relatively large sample. Due to my limited resources, I refrained from including males in this study. Thus, the body of registered female students at WMU seemed the most appropriate population for this study.

The exclusion of male students was a difficult decision to make. This should not be interpreted as a political stand that men are not victims of sexual violence. It should be understood that my decision was based solely on the limited resources available to me for this project. Nevertheless, while both men and women are victims of sexual violence and both men and women are perpetrators of sexual violence, this cannot be understood as a gender-neutral crime. There is overwhelming evidence that
women are primarily the victims of sexual violence perpetrated by men. Consequently, nearly all national research in this area examines the victimization of women. To make comparisons to that body of research, it was necessary to also limit my data collection to the victimization of women.

There were 15,836 female students registered at WMU for the fall semester 2001. Local contact information was available for 15,430 of these women. From this sampling frame, a computer-generated random sample of 4,000 women was selected, which was then randomly split into two smaller samples of 2,000 each. One of these samples received the survey through the mail, while the other was used to complete the survey during in person interviews.

Because previous research indicates that even the act of soliciting participants can potentially put women at risk (Campbell & Dienemann, 2001; Desai & Saltzman, 2001), both of these samples were then randomly split into 20 sets of 100 names each. This allowed me to use only those sets needed to obtain the minimum number of completed surveys, which minimized the number of potential participants I needed to contact. Minimum sample sizes of 288 completed surveys are required to make statistical inferences to the population of WMU female students within a 95% confidence interval (+/-5%). Thus, my target number was 300 participants to complete the survey in person and another 300 participants to complete and return mailed surveys. See Appendix B for a schematic representation of these data collection methods.
The Surveys

Data Collection Process

A total of 1,000 surveys were sent out in the mail with 322 completed surveys returned, which resulted in a 33.0% response rate. This rate was much lower than I had anticipated, given that in my pretest of the survey I enjoyed a response rate of over 55% (Fisher, 1999). There are at least three plausible explanations for this difference. First, the modified version of the survey used in this research is much longer than the survey used in my previous research (Fisher, 1999). This increase in survey length could explain some of the lower response rate for this project.

Second, only 120 surveys were mailed out in 1999, which meant that they were more spread out within the campus community. The concept of diffusion of responsibility would propose a direct relationship between the number of people involved and a person’s willingness to participate. A person will be less willing to participate if others are identified as already participating, making that person’s participation seem less necessary (Darley & Latane, 1968). Having 1,000 surveys mailed out meant that students might have known other students who also received the survey, thereby reducing their sense of responsibility to complete and return their copy of the survey.

Third, these surveys were mailed immediately following the infamous 9-11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and during the subsequent anthrax scare. Response rates may have been lower as a result of the national panic that followed, because people were encouraged to be afraid of their mail (and each other). One

---

66 Some of the surveys were returned unopened due to various delivery problems lowering the number of surveys used to calculate the response rate, which explains why this rate was slightly higher than 32.2%.
survey was returned unopened with "this is a bad time to be sending scary looking envelopes through the Mail" written on the outside of the envelope. These surveys were mailed in official business size envelopes from the Kercher Center for Social Research. I addressed each envelope by hand and stamped them with the word "CONFIDENTIAL" in red ink. Each envelope included a cover letter, a copy of the survey, and a postage paid business reply envelope addressed to the Kercher Center.

A total of 1,300 names were used to complete the 300 in person surveys. I contacted these women by telephone to set up individual appointments for them to come to the Kercher Center for Social Research on campus where I administered the survey to them. In an effort to further protect participants from potential harm, at the beginning of each call, I asked if this was a safe time to talk or if I should call back another time. I made over 1,000 calls during the duration of this project, and only twice did someone tell me they couldn't talk right then. Although it is unclear if these women's safety was in jeopardy or if the timing of my calls was merely inconvenient, asking about safety up front allowed these women some measure of power over the situation. In addition, it established my commitment to their safety and well-being from the very beginning of our interaction, which may have been a factor in their decision whether or not to participate when I called back later. The response rate for this part of the project was 77.2%, which supports Desai and Saltzman's (2001) claim that surveys conducted outside the home in person will elicit higher response rates than those conducted by mail.

I collected each of the 300 surveys in a private room in the Kercher Center for Social Research. The shortest survey lasted just under 10 minutes, while the longest

---

67 See Appendix C for a copy of the cover letter.
68 Campbell and Dienemann (2001) suggest including this type of question at the beginning of all telephone contacts. I found women appreciated this in the pretest of the survey (Fisher, 1999).
lasted just over an hour. The average length was approximately 25 minutes. I administered the survey to the participants and recorded their answers on the survey with a pencil. To promote a casual encounter, I dimmed the lighting in the room and kept a box of tissues on the table along with a bowl full of candy. I gave permission verbally to sample from the candy during each and every survey and also nonverbally by sampling from it myself (Renzetti, 1997a; Stanko, 1997).

At the conclusion of their appointment, I asked each of these 300 participants if they would be willing to return to participate in the final phase of the project (Renzetti, 1997a), during which we would accomplish three tasks. First, we would further pretest the survey itself by completing a revised version of it. Second, we would use sexually explicit vignettes to further investigate the meanings that women assign to specific events. Finally, we would discuss a series of open-ended questions regarding the research process, the definitions of terminology, and women’s experiences with this particular research project. Of the 300 asked, 206 women agreed to return if contacted to complete a much longer semi-structured interview.

Although it is not part of this particular project to compare these interviews based on the person’s experiences with sexual violence, this is a task I would like to do at a future date. Thus, I sorted the contact information for these 206 women into two piles according to their answers to the survey; one pile was for women whose answers were all negative, and the other pile was for women whose answers included at least one affirmative response. These two piles were shuffled into a random order.

---

69 I intended for the candy, primarily a variety of chocolate, to serve as a minor reward and a source of comfort for those women who came in to complete the surveys. Had I video taped these interactions, those tapes would have shown a great deal of mindless, compulsive eating as participants apparently used these treats as a way to bind their anxiety while talking about such a painful subject. During a couple of particularly difficult moments, I found myself doing this as well.

70 The use of vignettes as a way of debriefing and gaining accurate and precise information from participants has been well documented (Alexander & Becker, 1978; Anderson & Swainson, 2001).

71 There were 118 women whose answers were all negative in one pile, and 88 women with at least one affirmative response in the other.
I contacted only as many women needed to complete 60 interviews. Because some participants scheduled appointments they did not keep, I needed to schedule more than 60 appointments. By the end of the school year in April 2002, I conducted a total of 62 additional interviews, including 30 with women who had answered yes to at least one question and an additional 32 with women whose answers were all no.

Instruments

The survey instrument, which is entitled, "Anonymous Sexual Violence Survey" includes three sections: four general demographics questions, 40 sexual violence questions, and 10 closing questions. The 40 sexual violence questions acted as screening questions. An affirmative response to any of those 40 questions prompts the participant to fill out an incident report that includes 15 additional questions. In addition, the first seven of the 10 closing questions address "other types of past sexual experiences" and act as screening questions as well. Thus, an affirmative response to any of these 47 questions prompts the completion of an additional incident report. The final three questions of the survey are not screening questions. Rather, they ask for participants to express their opinions on related issues (sexual politics and research methods).

Due to the length and nature of the survey, it was impractical to print questions on both sides of the paper. It was equally impractical to add pages for multiple incident reports at the conclusion of the survey, especially since many

---

72 See Appendix D for a copy of the original survey.
73 Those participants who completed an interviewer-administered survey in person did not see this title; however, those participants who received the survey through the mail did see it. Because there was no way to track which 322 of the 1,000 mailed surveys were completed and returned, the inclusion of the word "anonymous" in the title is appropriate. To further ensure these participants' anonymity, the phrase, "DO NOT put your name anywhere on this form" is printed in bold letters in the upper right corner of each page.
participants would give negative responses to all the screening questions and not need to use them at all. Consequently, I printed the survey questions on the front sides of five legal size pages and printed an incident report on the backsides of each page.

While the incident report containing 15 questions did fit on a standard size sheet of paper, this left no additional space for participants to answer the last two questions, which are open-ended. The use of legal size paper allowed the survey to be printed on only five pages and to leave a few inches of space at the bottom of the last page for participants to include any comments or additional thoughts. Furthermore, it allowed for the inclusion of five incident reports and gave participants a few inches of space to answer each open-ended question contained within. Participants who needed more than five incident reports were instructed at the bottom of each incident report to photocopy and add any additional as needed.

**Questions**

The first section of the survey includes four general demographics questions. I chose to put the demographics at the very beginning to give me time to establish a little rapport and to ease into the sexual violence questions. The first three are closed-ended questions that ask about current academic status, race/ethnicity, and current marital status, respectively. The fourth demographics question is an open-ended question that asks the participants to identify how old they were on their last birthday. At the time I was designing my research, HSIRB was attempting especially hard to standardize research practices. As part of this effort, they had set rules for asking certain demographics questions. The response categories for the race/ethnicity question were provided by HSIRB. Furthermore, I removed the question of sex altogether, because HSIRB insisted on the inaccurate use of the word “gender”
instead of "sex." Because my population included only female students, I could afford to forego any discussion with HSIRB on the subject by just dropping the question.\footnote{Catharine MacKinnon (1983) knows, "sex is thought the more biological, gender the more social;" however, she admits she uses "sex and gender relatively interchangeably" (p. 635). I admit that I catch myself doing this on occasion as well, but I do make a conscious effort not to. Especially in an area fraught with so much misconception, misunderstanding, and emotional intensity, I think it is imperative to be precise and clear in choosing our words. Nevertheless, being told not to use the word "sex" in the demographics section of a survey on sexual violence because it might potentially disturb someone, seems ridiculous to me.}

The second section of the survey includes the 40 sexual violence questions. The first sentence is in bold and underlined and reads, **Unless instructed otherwise within the survey, ignore the Incident Reports on the backside of the pages.** The next paragraph includes the following instructions with the key terms in bold letters, "Each of the following questions includes the phrase 'had sex.' The meaning of this phrase includes only the following acts: vaginal intercourse; anal intercourse; oral intercourse; or penetration of the vagina or anus by objects other than a penis. Please do not include any other behaviors as sex acts when answering these questions."

I chose to ask behavioral questions rather than directly asking about rape as does almost all contemporary research in this area. Even the governmental surveys, like the NCVS, has abandoned asking direct questions containing the word rape and has begun asking behaviorally specific questions instead. It does no good to ask women if they have been raped if they do not, will not, cannot, or never thought to define incidents as rape. Using this strategy results in an extreme case of underestimation of rape prevalence.

I chose to refer to sex acts for two reasons. First, separating these specific acts out from each of the questions allows the researcher to easily modify the list of acts included in the definition according to the rules established with each separate use of
the survey. I chose the particular definition of sex\textsuperscript{75} that I did based on its frequent use in the literature already (Fisher et al., 2000; Koss et al., 1987; Kupek, 1999, Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998, 2000a, 2000b), and because it makes sense. Second, I was curious if any participants would object to the use of the word sex if she defined these experiences as rape.

Four separate series of questions follow these instructions. Each series includes 10 questions pertaining to 10 different sexual experiences. Each of these four series of questions is separated from the others by an instructional statement, which is typed in bold letters with the key phrases for that series underlined. The first series is set apart from the others with these instructions, \textit{"The first series of questions asks about your past sexual experiences with strangers. Please answer YES or NO to the following questions."} The second series is set apart from the others with these instructions, \textit{"The next series of questions asks about your past sexual experiences with current and past sex partners. Sex partners include anyone with whom you voluntarily have 'had sex.' Please remember the definition of 'had sex' when answering YES or NO to the following questions."}

The third series is set apart from the others with these instructions, \textit{"This next series of questions asks about your past sexual experiences with anyone else you have not yet mentioned. Please remember the definition of 'had sex' when answering YES or NO to the following questions."} The fourth series of sexual violence questions is set apart from the others with these instructions, \textit{"This next series of questions asks about attempted but unsuccessful past sexual experiences. Please remember the definition of 'had sex' when answering YES or NO to the following questions."}

\textsuperscript{75} Because of the ambiguous definitions of sex used in research, it is difficult to define rape and virginity loss as well (Carpenter, 2001).
I separated the questions by different victim offender relationships (VOR) to stimulate recall in participants and to allow for multivariate analyses to include VOR as a variable (Stermac, Bove, & Addison, 2001). I consistently reminded participants to remember the definition of “had sex” given in the survey to promote attention to recall and accuracy in case the participants’ definition of sex was not consistent with the one presented in the survey. I included the instructions between series to help reduce context effects. The bolding and underlining of words helped as a visual cue to those participants self-administering the survey, but they also served as a visual cue as to which words to emphasize in my administration of the survey. I placed the stranger questions first, because I assumed of all the types of events, it would be the least likely to have occurred. This allowed for additional time and space to ease into potentially more threatening questions about sex partners and others we know and probably trust.

Each of these four series asks about the same 10 sexual experiences. Each question within the first three series of questions begins identically, with the exception of the word(s) used to describe the relationship between the participants involved in the experience. These thirty questions begin with the phrase, “Has ______ ever had sex with you...” Each question within the fourth series of questions begins identically with the phrase, “Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you...”

The ending to each of the 40 sexual violence questions identifies at which of the 10 different sexual experiences the question is aimed. These 10 endings include: “by threatening to use force,” “by actually using force,” “by threatening to use a weapon,” “by actually using a weapon,” “by threatening to physically harm someone close to you,” “after making you involuntarily intoxicated, drugged, or in some other...”
way incapable of consenting or refusing,” “after you voluntarily became intoxicated,
drugged, or in some other way incapable of consenting or refusing,” “after you
expressed refusal,” “when you did not want to but were too afraid to express refusal,”
and “when you were asleep.”

I separated the various experiences, the relationship of the victim to the
offender, and the question that distinguished between completed and attempted events
in order to produce more data than I needed. This would allow me to do richer
analyses or to collapse the data later as needed. In addition, future researchers can
easily modify the survey for their own purposes. For example, some states may define
rape to exclude nonconsent by incapacitation experiences, such as when the victim is
voluntarily intoxicated, asleep, or too afraid to express refusal. This change in
definition only requires the removal of a few questions instead of a redesign of the
entire instrument.

I included the question about an assailant threatening to physically harm
someone close to you because I recalled from my work at the shelter that this is a
relatively common method of sexual violence used by partners who batter. Although I
didn’t expect this question to solicit many positive responses from this audience, I
included it because I realized it is possible that the question might stimulate
someone’s recall of an event.

I separated situations in which a person expressed refusal from situations
when the person is too afraid to express refusal. Based on experience, I know that if a
relationship is violent and a man rapes you, he doesn’t just do it once. Rape is not an
event; it’s a way of life. I assumed that other women learn the same lessons that I had
learned, chief among these being that the more you refuse, the madder he gets and the

76 One criticism of Koss’ SES (Koss & Oros, 1982) is it combines threats of force with actual force in
the survey items (Alksnis, Desmarais, Senn, & Hunter, 2000).
worse off you’ll be. So while I may have fought and kicked and scratched and bit and pleaded and demanded and begged the first time or two, I learned not to do it anymore. I learned to limit the degree of violence by closing my eyes, dissociating my mind, and praying it would be over quickly.

As a researcher, I anticipated I would see a pattern in situations with multiple offenses by the same perpetrator in which refusals came only in the initial events and fear of refusals came later. It later occurred to me that this lesson wasn’t just learned with multiple offenses by the same perpetrator but across time with multiple perpetrators. The first time a woman is raped she may fight, but with each subsequent attack regardless of the perpetrator, she may be increasingly likely to just dissociate and suffer silently.

When I originally constructed the survey, I anticipated one event in a person’s history might elicit a positive response to one of these 40 questions, and each of these events would be counted as a rape or attempted rape. However, upon further reflection, I realized this could not be the case with one of the questions. I anticipated that events would include only expressed refusal, such as the typical “I said no and he just did it anyway” but I did not anticipate events with too afraid to express refusal by itself. If the only affirmative response in the entire survey for this event was one of the questions about being too afraid to express refusal, I realized this could not be unquestionably classified as rape.

For example, take the scenario where a young couple is on their first date. No alcohol or drugs are involved. Toward the end the evening, some kissing and petting ensues. The boy sees this as consent to continue and operates under the policy of assume “yes until no,” so he continues and believes he is justified in continuing until he is told to stop. The girl however, has never even thought about the policies of
assuming “yes until no” or assuming “no until yes” and has never been in this situation where she’s been confronted with the possibility of having sex. She’s scared of what is happening between them, of what she is feeling, and what might happen if she refuses.

For example, he might get angry; he might hurt her. He might tell everyone it happened anyway, and she will never see him again. She panics. She goes numb. She goes silent. He penetrates her. She may or may not define what happened as rape; that’s irrelevant from the standpoint of a quantitative survey. What matters is that this event qualifies as an affirmative response to one of the questions about fear of expressing refusal (presumably question 29), and a positive answer to that question alone (someone had sex with her when she didn’t want to but she was too afraid to express refusal) does not necessarily mean a rape has occurred. It means that she didn’t want to do it, but she didn’t refuse because of her fear. Because she answered all the other questions negatively, we must assume the source of her fear was not from threats, force, coercion, pressure, promises, or even her own sense of obligation.

Again, the source of that fear or the justification of that fear is irrelevant. What matters is my inability as a researcher to code this event as rape without further information. It is not unlikely that he acted in good faith, never received negative messages, and continued to proceed until he was told to stop (which he never was). How can we hold someone responsible for rape when they didn’t have any idea it was unwanted? If these events occurred with the only affirmative response being to question 29, then I decided to classify these as something other than rape. I analyzed these separately, hoping that the data in the incident report would shed more light on the source of the girl’s fear.
The third section of the survey includes 10 closing questions, which are divided into three separate parts. Each of these three groups of questions is separated from the others by an instructional statement, which is typed in bold letters with the key phrases for that series underlined. The first series, which includes three questions, is set apart from the others with these instructions, “These next few questions ask about your other types of past sexual experiences with anyone. Please remember the definition of ‘had sex’ when answering YES or NO to the following questions.”

These three questions attempt to determine if a situation involved verbal coercion, attempted verbal coercion, and obligatory sex. The first of these questions begins with the phrase, “Has anyone ever had sex with you...” The next one begins with the phrase, “Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you...” Both of these questions have the same ending, which is, “when you did not want to by overwhelming you with continual pestering and verbal pressure.” The third and final question of this first series asks, “Have you ever had sex with anyone when you did not want to but you felt obligated?”

The second group of closing questions is set apart from the others with these instructions, “These next few questions ask about past sexual experiences with anyone in a position of power or authority over you. Please remember the definition of ‘had sex’ when answering YES or NO to the following questions.” These four questions aim at completed and attempted coercions by threat of punishment and promise of reward. Two of them are aimed at completed experiences, while the other two are aimed at unsuccessful attempts at those same two experiences. Thus, two of these questions begin with the same phrase, “Has anyone ever had sex with you when you did not want to...”
The other two questions begin with the phrase, "Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you when you did not want to..." These four questions end with one of the following two phrases: One set of completed and attempted questions ends in "by promising to somehow reward you or someone close to you?" The other set ends in "by threatening to harm or punish you or someone close to you in a non-physical way?" I presented the authority questions separately because this is a different kind of coercion from mere verbal pressure. It requires a different cue to stimulate recall of the different locations and contexts in which these types of events occur.

The final series of three closing questions is set apart from the previous ones with the statement, "These final few questions ask for your opinions on related issues." This series includes two closed-ended and one open-ended question. First, participants are asked to identify which of the following options best describes their assumptions when it comes to sexual experiences. They are given three options. The first one is "Yes until No... You operate under the assumption that it is acceptable to proceed until someone says no." The second one is "No until Yes... You operate under the assumption that it is not acceptable to proceed until both people say yes." The third one is "Other...Please specify," with space for them to write a response.

The second question asks the participants to identify what percentage of the general population they think also operates under the same assumption as they do. I asked these questions as transitional questions between the sexual violence questions and the final methods question. I expected it to give me additional data for future analyses and to give me further insight into women's meanings.

The final question asks participants to identify which of six listed methods of collecting data would make them more likely to be willing to participate in research
on sensitive subjects, such as sexual violence. The statement, “Please feel free to give additional comments below and to attach additional pages if needed” immediately follows the last question. There are a few inches of blank space available, and “Thank you for your participation!” is printed in bold letters at the bottom of the page. During the interviewer-administered surveys, I read these last two lines to the participants and wrote down any additional comments as they said them to me. I asked the methods question last to tie in with this request for additional comments in hopes it would encourage people to make methods related comments.

Incident Report

The incident report\textsuperscript{77} includes 15 questions. The first question asks the participant to identify which of the survey questions prompted the completion of the incident report. The second questions asks how many times this particular incident has happened during the participant’s lifetime. These two questions are separated from the remaining questions with an instructional statement in bold underlined letters. It says, “Please answer the following questions based ONLY on the most recent incident described in that question.” This separation allows us to examine frequency of experiences and study patterns, but it also encourages accuracy by having the participant verify the question(s) that apply to the incident report.

The next five questions ask the participant to identify her age at the time of the incident, the specific location where it happened, the number and sexes of participants involved, and her relationship to the perpetrator(s). These are typical contextual questions found in the literature. I worded them in gender-neutral terms to allow for

\textsuperscript{77} See Appendix E for the original incident report.
any possible responses. I left the location and VOR questions open-ended to help gain some insight on women's language in this area.

The next six questions include three pairs of similar questions in Yes/No format informing such issues as reporting, disclosure, self-attribution, perceived attribution from others, labeling of events, and stability in language use. The first pair asks if the participant ever officially reported the incident and if she ever told anyone else about it. The next pair asks if the participant believes others hold her responsible in any way for the incident and if she holds herself responsible in any way for it. The final pair of questions in this format asks the participant if she thought of the incident as rape at the time it happened and if she thinks of it as rape today.

The final two questions of the incident report are open-ended. The first one asks the participant to describe what, if any, consequences (health or physical, emotional or psychological, social or sexual, economic or financial) that she has had as a result of this incident. I provided these cues to aid participants in recalling the different and varied effects that might not otherwise be remembered. The final question asks the participant to describe the incident in her own words. This verbal account can be used to investigate women's language and also as a validity check to see if the details of the description are consistent with the questions on the survey to which they apply.

Immediately after these questions, the survey instructs the participant to return to where she left off in the survey. The participant is given several inches of blank space to write after each of these final questions. During the interviewer-administered surveys, I did not read the instructions about returning to the survey. Instead, I made some kind of comment letting the participant know she had done a good job answering the questions. Then I turned the pages back to where we had left off in the
survey, and made a transitional statement, such as, "O.K., so where were we? Ah, here we are; we left off with question number..." As a result, I anticipated there would be substantially less missing data within the surveys collected in person.

The Interviews

Data Collection Process

I conducted each of the 62 interviews in the same private room in the Kercher Center for Social Research that I used to collect the 300 surveys. The shortest interview lasted just over 40 minutes, while the longest lasted just under two hours. The average length was approximately 80 minutes. I used a tape recorder during these interviews to allow me the freedom to give each participant my full attention and to create a more relaxed atmosphere.78

Consistent with the process of collecting the survey data, I dimmed the lighting in the room and kept a box of tissues on the table along with a bowl full of candy to further promote a casual encounter. I gave verbal permission to sample from the candy at the beginning of each and every interview and gave nonverbal permission by sampling from it myself. I frequently noticed the participants and myself compulsively shoveling sugar in our mouths during stressful moments, which considering the terrain, came often.

Upon their arrival, participants filled out a revised79 version of the survey to determine if they experienced any difference between the administration techniques. After completing the revised survey, participants read a one-page vignette that told the story of a heterosexual date rape. When they finished, I asked a series of

78 See Appendix F for copies of the voluntary informed consent forms.
79 The survey was revised in minor ways to accommodate helpful comments made by participants in response to the original instrument.
questions about how they defined the event, the severity of the event, the consequences or punishment they would like to see given, and how they would assign responsibility for the event. I also asked how certain factors, such as age, sex, previous relationship, and degree of intoxication of the participants in the vignette may have influenced their answers to my questions. This same interview and discussion process was repeated until all nine vignettes had been discussed.

Afterwards I asked for their opinions on approximately 25 questions pertaining to sexual politics, to research methods, and to their definitions of specific terminology used in sexual violence research. In conclusion, I asked participants how their thinking about sexual violence or research had changed as result of participating in both phases of this project and gave them the opportunity to offer any additional comments.

Instruments

Revisions to the Survey Instrument

I made only minor revisions to the wording of the survey to improve clarity, based on some of the suggestions offered by participants during the survey data collection process. For example, I used the response categories suggested by HSIRB for the demographics question regarding race/ethnicity for the original survey, which included the category “American Indian.” I changed this category to “Native American” for the revised survey. In addition, the original response categories included “Asian-American” but excluded the category “Asian.” Because of the high

---

80 For a copy of schedule of vignette questions, see Appendix G.
81 For a copy of the revised survey, see Appendix H.
proportion of International students at WMU, I added “Asian” to the revised survey. In addition, I simplified the last demographics question to, “What is your age?”

I also made several minor alterations within the main survey. I clarified the question endings to the first four sexual violence scenarios by changing them to: “by threatening to use force against you,” “by actually using force against you,” “by threatening to harm you with a weapon,” and “by actually using a weapon against you.” To further stimulate recall, I changed the question beginnings to the series of sexual violence questions pertaining to experiences with anyone else not yet mentioned to, “In your lifetime, has anyone else ever had sex with you…”

I also revised the wording of one of the closing questions to, “Have you ever had sex with anyone when you did not want to because you felt obligated to do so?” Finally, I changed the first question of the final series of closing questions to, “Which of the following best describes your policy when it comes to sexual experiences?” I also changed the first two response categories to “Yes until No… You operate under the policy that it is acceptable to make advances just until someone says no” and “No until Yes… You operate under the policy that it is not acceptable to make any advances until permission has been given.”

To improve clarity and further stimulate recall, I also modified parts of the instructions that separate series of questions. For example, I changed the term “strangers” to “total strangers.” Other changes included, “Sex partners include anyone with whom you voluntarily have ‘had sex’ according to the definition provided at the beginning of this survey,” “This next series of questions asks about past sexual experiences with anyone else in your lifetime,” “This next series of questions asks about past unsuccessful attempts of the same sexual experiences in your lifetime,”
and "These next few questions ask about some other types of past sexual experiences with anyone in your lifetime."

I made more drastic revisions to the incident reports, although some of the changes were minor. For example, to improve clarity, I included "Do not complete unless instructed to within the survey" at the top of the page in bold underlined letters, and I revised one of the questions to "Please define your relationship(s) at the time of the incident to the person(s) involved." To stimulate recall, I revised the question at the beginning of the incident report to "Has the incident described in that question happened on more than one occasion in your lifetime?" Also, because of the large number of conditional and mixed answers to the six Yes/No questions, I included the additional response category of "Other, Please specify" to these questions.

While analyzing the 622 previously collected surveys, I found that of all the questions in the incident reports, these six Yes/No questions interested me the most. Most of the questions I wanted to ask participants were about these questions. As a result, I added open-ended contingency questions to each of them. If the responses to the questions about officially reporting the incident and about telling anyone else were "No," I asked "Why not?" If they were "Yes," I asked, "To whom?" If the response to the question about others holding the participant responsible for the incident was "Yes," I asked, "Who and Why do you believe this?" Similarly, if the response to the question about self-responsibility for the incident was "Yes," I also asked, "Why?" If the response to the question about thinking of the incident as rape at the time it happened was "No," I asked, "What language did you use to describe the incident?" If the response to the question about thinking of the incident as rape today was "No," I asked, "What language do you use to describe the incident?"

---

82 For a copy of the revised incident report, see Appendix I.
Excluding the open-ended question requesting a description of the incident was the most drastic change to the incident reports. However, my primary purpose was to pilot test the other changes to the survey and the incident report and to give the participants the opportunity to compare data collection methods. Also, because the interview process was so complicated, I didn’t want to overburden the participants unnecessarily at the very beginning of the interview by asking them to write a detailed description of these incidents. For these same reasons, I also changed the question requesting a description of the consequences to a closed-ended question. It asks participants, “Which of the following best describes the level of impact this incident has had on your life (health or physical, emotional or psychological, social or sexual, economic or financial well-being). The response categories are: “None,” “Slight,” “Moderate,” and “Severe.”

Nine Vignettes

The first\(^{83}\) and second\(^{84}\) vignettes were taken directly from previous research. The first vignette (Quackenbush, 1989, pp. 324-325) is a descriptive one-page story of a heterosexual date rape that takes place in the perpetrator’s apartment. The couple had been dating for two months, although not exclusively, and there is no mention of any previous sexual activity. The story gives an extremely detailed account of a romantic interlude leading up to the removal of the victim’s clothing. The couple is then interrupted by a phone call, after which the victim verbally resists before struggling. The story ends with the line, “he penetrates her and intercourse occurred.”

---

\(^{83}\) For a copy of Vignette One, see Appendix J.
\(^{84}\) For a copy of Vignette Two, see Appendix K.
The third, fifth, seventh, and ninth vignettes\textsuperscript{85} are slight modifications of the first vignette. In the third vignette, everything is identical to the first vignette until the phone call interrupts the couple. In this third vignette, the phone call results in the man having to briefly leave the apartment. In his absence, a stranger enters the apartment. The rest of the story is identical to the first vignette, except the events take place between the victim and the stranger.

In the fifth vignette, everything is identical to the first vignette, except I removed all references to the victim’s verbal resistance and subsequent struggling. Thus, she neither gives nor refuses consent, but instead, remains passive throughout the encounter that follows the telephone call. In the seventh vignette, everything is identical to the first vignette except both the names and gender pronouns are changed to female. This story ends with “her tongue penetrated her and oral intercourse occurred.” In the ninth vignette, everything is once again identical to the first vignette except for the addition of “they recently became intimate for the first time” near the beginning of the story.

The second vignette (Petretic-Jackson & Jackson, 1990, pp. 130-131) is a brief one-paragraph account of a heterosexual acquaintance rape that takes place in the perpetrator’s car after the couple had just met at a bar. The victim is an 18-year old freshman, while the perpetrator is in his 20s. Both are mildly intoxicated. The victim verbally protests before actively resisting, which results in bruising to her thighs, torso, and arms. The account ends with, “penetration occurred but the man had not ejaculated. The two of them talked for a while and then he took her home.”

The fourth, sixth, and eighth vignettes\textsuperscript{86} are slight modifications of the second vignette. In the fourth vignette, everything is identical to the second vignette; except

\textsuperscript{85} For a copy of Vignettes Three, Five, Seven, and Nine, see Appendix L, N, P, and R, respectively.
\textsuperscript{86} For a copy of Vignettes Four, Six, and Eight, see Appendix M, O, and Q, respectively.
the victim is 19-years old, and neither of them had been drinking at the time of the incident. The sixth vignette is identical to the second vignette; except the victim is a 19-year old sophomore, and she is the only one identified as being mildly intoxicated. The eighth vignette is once again identical to the second vignette; except the victim is a 20-year old sophomore, and both of them are identified as being intoxicated.

Questions

After discussing the ninth vignette, I moved directly into the 25 interview questions, starting with two questions about whether or not women and men say “no” when they really mean “yes” during intimate encounters. Because the ninth vignette involved a story of a couple who had previously had sex, these questions acted as a transition moving the participants’ attention away from the specific vignettes and into these more abstract interview questions. In addition, because I successfully used questions about sexual politics as transitional questions within the survey, I hoped being consistent in the interviews would be prudent.

Following these two transitional questions, I asked seven questions about their opinions of the research process. I asked them about their preferences regarding data collection method. I asked them for their thoughts on participant-interviewer matching on sex/gender and race/ethnicity, what issues should be addressed in rape research, and which research populations should be studied. Finally, I asked them about the specific definitions of “rape” and “sex” provided within the survey. These last two questions acted as a transition into the next set of questions, which pertained to the meanings they give to specific terminology used in rape research.

87 For a copy of schedule of interview questions, see Appendix S.
Following these two transitional questions, I asked 14 questions about what specific terms mean to them. I asked them to define the terms and phrases: “force,” “harm or punish in a non-physical way,” “against her will,” “penetration,” “obligated,” “intercourse,” “intoxication,” “initial sexual advances,” “actively resisted,” and “consent.” In addition, I asked them how they could tell if someone is intoxicated. I asked them if they think it is wrong to have sex with someone who is a willing participant but who is also intoxicated and why. I asked them to differentiate between a stranger, an acquaintance, and a friend. I asked them if they would define a situation where someone they recognized by name or face that they just met for the first time in a public place (like a bar setting) rapes them as a stranger rape, an acquaintance rape, or a date rape and why.

Finally, I asked them if these meanings are static and fixed or if they are fluid and changeable, why, and what causes these meanings to change. This last question was a transition into discussing change, which was the last thing I did with each participant. I also asked them how their thinking on the topic of sexual violence had changed as a result of their participation in this project. After this question, I let them know that I had finished asking specific questions and asked them if they had any comments or thoughts they would like to add. When they were finished, I gave them pamphlets with contact information for free help from the local YWCA Sexual Assault Program and from the University Counseling and Testing Services. I explained that while they may not need these materials for themselves, they might know someone else who could benefit from having them.
Collecting Data and/or Raising Consciousness

Because raising consciousness is a major tenet of feminism, it was important for me to develop a position on using the data collection process as a tool for raising consciousness. Cook and Fonow (1986) suggest three ways to accomplish this through the research design. One is to select topics, like sexual violence and violence against women, that stimulate people to rethink their positions. This project certainly qualifies. Another way is to select topics that allow the research process to “become a process of ‘conscientization’” where “the outcome of research is greater awareness leading to social change” (p. 8). I can definitely see the potential for this to happen in this project.

The final way to stimulate consciousness-raising is to use specific techniques of data collection, such as role-playing and focus groups deliberately as a means to raise consciousness during the data collection process. This is where I draw the line. I can see where this may be appropriate for other studies with other research questions, but it is certainly not appropriate for this project. It is unethical to interview women on the premise of wanting to hear their voices and then proceed to invalidate their reality by suggesting that they adhere to a different one (Currie & MacLean, 1997; Huisman, 1997).

Molly Andrews (2002) writes about her struggles with using the concept of false consciousness as a strategy for when a difference between gender consciousnesses becomes apparent in the research setting. I can definitely relate to this. I have serious issues with the whole notion of consciousness and false consciousness. In addition to their illusionary sense of cohesion and stability, I see
their nature as inconsistent with feminist thinking. If there are inconsistencies in the
worldviews of the researcher and the participants and we privilege the researcher’s
definition in the design, collection, analyses, and dissemination of the research and its
findings, then we say this research is elitist and perverse (Nielson, 1990). We say it is
missing the Insider’s position (that of the participants) because it is focusing too much
on the Outsider’s position (that of the researcher) (Pitman, 2002).

If, however, we privilege the researcher’s definition in all stages of the
research AND we take conscious steps to promote the researcher’s worldview, then
we call it consciousness-raising (Harding, 1996). I am not saying the concepts of
consciousness, false consciousness, and consciousness-raising are not legitimate,
worthy terms, deserving of our attention. I am merely pointing out that the use of this
terminology privileges the researcher who is using them. I am uncomfortable with
research that privileges its own perspective.

In addition to understanding the meanings women give to experiences and the
words used to describe them, I wanted to empower the women who participated in
this project (Renzetti, 1997a), and I wanted them to leave the encounter feeling better
about themselves than when they arrived (Huisman, 1997). For the most part, I
accomplished this through making the process of the interview as unthreatening as
possible and being a compassionate and empathetic listener.

I gave them the permission and the private space to be open about their sexual
experiences without the fear of exposure, judgment, or ridicule (Currie & MacLean,
1997; Miller, 1997; Renzetti, 1997a). I let them know that they are not alone; they are
not the only ones who have had these experiences or who blame themselves for them.
I approached these women with the same care a good therapist approaches clients.88

88 It was in these moments that I reverted back to my training as a direct service employee of the
largest YWCA Battered Women’s Shelter in the country and to the lessons I learned as a resident of
because "in many ways, violence research using qualitative methods resembles therapy, in that it involves discussion of intimate, perhaps shameful details of one's life that are usually taboo" (Campbell & Dienemam, 2001, p. 66).

My aim was to hear their voices, so although it was incredibly difficult to do, I refrained from debating any issue with participants whose definitions of events and experiences were completely opposed to my own. On occasion, women would tell me about particularly horrific attacks against them and then hold themselves responsible. These were the moments when my policy on consciousness raising as a researcher came into direct conflict with my own conscience as a human being. I could not justify keeping my mouth shut in the name of research; I could not live with myself had I ended the interview without informing them of their innocence. I remember vividly the first time this happened in an interview; it is a moment I doubt I will ever be able to forget:

The woman had attended a fraternity party instead of studying for an exam. She knew someone must have drugged her beer when she was not looking, because she had a relatively high tolerance for alcohol but passed out after the first drink. She regained consciousness as one man was having sex with her, another man was getting redressed after finishing his turn, and a line of men were impatiently waiting to follow suit; they were "running a train" on her. She proceeded to tell me that she holds herself responsible for the event; it was her own fault.

Without hesitating, I broke protocol and said, "Please forgive me, but do you mind if I ask why? How do you justify blaming yourself?" She explained that she that same shelter ten years prior to my employment there. I also revisited the countless hours of therapy that allowed me to survive my previous lives and begin living in new and self-realizing ways. Edleson and Bible (2001) were right on target when they said, "the interpersonal skills required to negotiate and maintain collaborative relationships are not commonly taught in graduate research programs" (p. 77).

Running a train is a term for gang rape, which had unfortunately entered common usage at large universities, among members of social fraternities.
promised her parents she would not attend those kinds of parties. She should have been home studying for an exam. She should have watched her drink more carefully. She is not yet of legal age to drink and yet she has developed tolerance for alcohol.

I asked for and received permission to give her my personal view of that situation. I told her that many events took place that evening, and she was justified in feeling responsible for some of them. She made the decisions to neglect studying for an exam, to break a promise to her parents, and to drink illegally. For these events, she does bear the responsibility; she made some unwise choices. Someone drugged her drink and several men had sex with her without her consent. For these events, she bears none of the responsibility; that was not her fault.

We cried together and continued to talk for a long time. I put aside my role as a researcher, and became a crisis intervention specialist, an advocate, and a friend. I offered her comfort and provided her with appropriate professional referrals. After she left, I found myself completely drained of energy. I curled up under the table and sobbed for over an hour before I felt safe enough to leave the room.

Mixing Methods With Orthogonal Paradigms

When I originally designed this project, I was trying to keep in mind the guidelines of traditional survey research methods while including the tenets of feminist research methods. I wanted it all; I wanted to mix my methods and peacefully navigate this research project despite the conflicting viewpoints of the paradigms I was mixing. Thus, I intended to use exactly the same process with each and every interview and to present each participant with identical wording of questions, tone of voice, and presentation of self.
I also intended to use feminist methods whenever a participant expressed emotions or asked me a personal question. I intended to acknowledge and empathize with her emotions, to offer comfort and professional referrals when they were obviously needed, and to respect any question by providing an honest forthright answer (Bergen, 1993; Campbell & Dienemann, 2001; Currie & MacLean, 1997; Oakley, 1981; Renzetti, 1997a; Websdale, 2001). I refused to ask these women to share their most private thoughts, feelings, and experiences with me only to give them some insensitive and rehearsed response about being more interested in their information when they ask me to share my feelings, thoughts, knowledge, or experiences with them.90

Once I actually began collecting the data, I relaxed this protocol to some degree because I began to see how rigid and disingenuous repeating a standardized script can really be. With each interview I became increasingly aware of the individuality of each participant, and I allowed myself to bend my protocol to better connect with each participant. While maintaining the basic order of the interview questions, I made exceptions as necessary. I asked the vignette questions in a different order based on the flow of the discussion. I did not read the questions from the page, but shortened and personalized them after the first few vignettes. For example, instead of reading the entire question for the 4th time, I would shorten it to, “How about this one? What happened here?” or “What about the responsibility for this event?” I allowed the participants’ responses to guide process, allowing them to set the tone and depth of discourse.

I found it impossible not to frequently make a transitional comment between questions, such as saying, “ok,” “exactly,” “good,” “no kidding,” “right,” “I gotcha,”

90 For a discussion of the use of these standardized brush-offs, see Oakley (1981).
or "excellent." These comments may or may not have reflected my own thoughts or feelings; however, self-expression was not my intent. These little words or phrases acknowledged to the participant that I understood her responses and that I thought she was doing a good job in her role as a participant.

The real difficulty for me came when a participant would give a response with which I wholeheartedly disagreed. When participants would tell me that an incident was the victim's own fault or that she had never experienced any of these kinds of events herself because she was a Christian, a virgin, and/or doesn't drink alcohol, I bit my tongue, felt the acid burning yet another hole through my stomach lining, and tasted the urge to vomit in the back of my throat. When this happened, I reached deep inside for that part of me who longed to be an actress, smiled sincerely, nodded affirmatively, and said, "ok," "I hear ya', " or even "right." The research must go on.

After the interview was over and I was alone, however, I gave myself permission to feel and to express my hurt and rage. I found myself kicking doors, screaming, crying, ranting, swearing, and seething with rage over rapists, over men in general, and over women who seem to almost eagerly embrace the misogynistic garbage with which they are constantly bombarded from society. When the next participant arrived, however, I reached back inside for that part of me who works crisis intervention situations, and prepared myself to be fully available to this new woman with whom I was about to interact.

The constant second-guessing and the agony that accompanies it are necessary evils of conducting ethical research. If I begin taking my actions for granted, then I stop privileging the participants' voices and start settling for my own instead. That won't do. Under the most benign of circumstances, this is unethical. Under these circumstances where participants' self-identities are involved, this is unethical and
dangerous as well. Because of the level of severity of this issue, I want to be as clear as possible about how I conducted myself during my interactions with these participants. Because of the second-guessing and schizophrenic nature of navigating a research project of this magnitude (especially alone), it may be easy for the reader to get confused. These next few paragraphs are my attempt to clarify this issue.

I invited these women to participate in social research that focused on the collection of information from them about their experiences, thoughts, feelings, and standpoint. I wanted to hear their voice, and I let them know that up front. Because I did not directly obtain their consent for consciousness-raising as part of the protocol approved by HSIRB and because empowerment of the participants is important to me, I took the stance of an “advocate researcher;” I followed their lead.

They held the power to define the flow, tone, pace, depth, and breadth of our interactions together. If they asked me questions, I answered them. If they requested information or my opinion on an issue, I gave it to them. If they wanted to hear my story, I shared it with them. At these times, I put aside my role as a researcher and took on the appropriate role for the interaction that each participant initiated. When I needed information or assistance in clarifying her intentions, I asked for them. When I suspected my responses might be in direct conflict with her standpoint, I asked permission to proceed.

My goal was to be genuine, authentic, self-responsible, non-judgmental, fair, constantly aware, and flexible. I listened to the participants, while listening to my instincts and internal voices as well. My stance on consciousness-raising was that if a participant experienced the “spark,” then I engaged her in that discourse. If she requested additional interaction, I gave it to her. If she was perfectly happy with her consciousness the way it was when she arrived, I left it alone.
My activism isn’t aimed primarily at changing these individual participants’
consciousnesses. I expect some individual consciousness-raising to happen during the
process as a latent function, and that’s wonderful. My activism is primarily aimed at
collecting the most authentic information from these women I can, so I can generate
valid findings with useful implications. Secondarily, my aim is to encourage these
individuals to think about these issues through the act of participating in this research.
If these women begin thinking about these issues more, then they will be more likely
to talk with others about them. Thinking and talking about sexual violence is the first
step to reducing it.

Ethically, I did not approach these women as a therapist. They weren’t
participating in therapy; this is feminist research. I approached these women as an
activist researcher. They knew I am interested in the study of sexual violence for the
purpose of reducing it; I made that explicit. I approached these women as an advocate
for women; I made it explicit that I care about them and their voice. I made it implicit
as well; I followed their lead. To be consistent with these goals, I needed to be
flexible, to ask a lot of questions, and to be as honest and forthright of a human being
as I possibly could. I hope I succeeded. Ethically, to remain accountable to the
participants and to the reader, it is important for me to disclose detailed information
about the process of data collection and to disclose the data as the participants
presented it as well as my interpretations of that data. All I can tell you is that I feel
good about the level of quality I achieved in meeting these goals.

This line is a difficult one to walk, as I tried to make clear in this chapter. I
second-guessed myself a great deal. When participants made misogynistic statements
or used logic built on rape mythology, I had less difficulty remaining non-evaluative
in my interactions than when participants blamed themselves for experiences that fit
the legal definition of rape. Assigning responsibility for an experience involves a causal evaluation, while their illogical and internalized hateful statements are simply normative ideas. Even when a woman uses language other than rape to describe her experiences, this choice of terminology reflects her opinions, thoughts, and consciousness.

These normative ideas are not as potentially harmful to the self as are the causal evaluations of self-blame. Attributing blame to one’s self involves an emotional intensity not seen with normative ideas and judgments. Both types of statements involve thoughts and emotions, but the intensity of the emotion attached to self-blame is a powerful motivator. It can lead to future additional damage. It was in these moments, in which I could see the re-shaming process in action, that I had to remind myself that while I have guidelines regarding consciousness-raising and activism to follow, I also have an obligation to protect these participants from potential harm. Therefore, if I saw signs of this re-traumatization occurring, such as excess sweating, shaking, tearing, trembling, twitching, anxiousness, changes in breathing or constant shifting of positions, I interpreted those moments as nonverbal permission to probe or engage the participant in further discourse on the issue.

Because these cues are nonverbal, my interpretation was necessary. Any time interpretation is involved, mistakes can happen; however, I used love as my guiding force. I trusted the participants to express themselves authentically; I took their words and actions at face value. I trusted their verbal and nonverbal cues, and I trusted my own. I remembered my primary role as a researcher in these interactions. I remembered my goal to empower these individuals as I collected data from them.

---

91 In the state of Michigan, where the data were collected, these experiences fit the legal definition of first or second-degree sexual assault. Law reforms in the 1970s replaced the word rape with a series of sexual assault charges of various degrees (Matoesian, 1995).
remembered that if I am at peace with myself then I have no need to judge anyone else. I remembered and trusted my higher power to guide me through each interaction. Once again, I feel good about the level of quality I achieved in meeting these goals.

**Emotional Labor and the Midwives**

Throughout this entire project I found myself shifting selves to adapt to the situation almost as frequently and effortlessly as changing my facial expressions from moment to moment. I found myself consciously trying to stay “in character” for the interview, while still being authentic. I started second-guessing myself constantly. Am I too close to do this research? Am I too distant? Are they being honest with me because they trust me or are they being compliant because they like me or are they making stuff up because that’s what they think I want to hear? Too often for my own comfort, I found myself asking: Did I contaminate the data by comforting that woman? Did it influence her answers? Did it make her remember other things or did it affect her willingness and ability to disclose further information? Is she ok?

My feelings about the research itself fluctuated. This research isn’t any good. This research is excellent. They are going to hate it. They are going to just love it!

Guba & Lincoln (1994) claim that this “schizophrenia” results from mixing paradigms. They contend that mixing methods is fine, but not when the methods come from fundamentally different paradigms. I see no other way to do this except by using the best parts of whatever paradigm(s) I have available to me with the goal of improving rape research. So, I guess I’ll just continue to deal with the “schizophrenia” and the accompanying bipolar mood swings, take my pills twice a day, gather my selves, grit my teeth, smile, and do the best I can with what I got to work with. I’ll cry when it hurts, and I’ll vent my anger in healthy ways.
I just keep remembering what I tell my students, “Relax. Concentrate on being the best person you can be. Know yourself and be authentic and genuine with yourself and with others. Let the rest go. Treat others as if they are also doing the best they can do, regardless of what that may be. Breathe and relax and take care of yourself; that’s your primary responsibility in life.” While I admit that this actually does help, I still find myself looking over my annual medical expenses wondering if researchers, interviewers, data processors, and others intimately connected with rape research suffer from similar rates of stress-related illnesses, as do therapists and crisis intervention specialists.

It became increasingly difficult for me to aim my emotions at the sexual violence, at the misogyny, and at the patriarchal capitalist system that perpetuates it instead of aiming it at the people involved. By the time I finished collecting the data, I hated everyone, myself included. I needed to put distance between this project and me. It was many months later after a great deal of grieving, therapy, and medication that I was finally able to pick up this project again to begin the data analysis. Recent research indicates that debriefing and professional referrals may be needed for interviewers as well as participants to manage the intense emotions involved in this work (Campbell, 2002; Campbell & Dienemann, 2001).

I anticipated that this project would be painful. I expected the nightmares, the flashbacks, the fits of rage, and the uncontrollable tears. What I didn’t expect was the complete and total exhaustion. Life is full of little surprises. Some of them aren’t so pleasant and require internal resources to deal with them. I didn’t expect the research process to exhaust me to the point that I had very little of myself left over to

---

92 I am sad to admit that I didn’t figure this out until near the end of the data analysis period, but I did discover that having someone safe read to me something simple and benign as I fall asleep dramatically reduces the depth and breadth of the coverage of my life history in my nightmares. I do wish I had thought of that sooner, during the data collection process. Maybe next time.
also deal with teaching, writing, being a mom, being a woman, and grieving the losses of loved ones like my grandparents, my therapist, my uncle, my dearest friend, my two dogs, and what was left of my youth.

Many things were sacrificed. Some losses, like the death of my friend, David, were never fully grieved because doing so would have meant that I wouldn’t finish this project by the deadline. I couldn’t afford to deal with these things when they happened, so I will have to deal with them later on, after the project is over. Other losses I can never recover, like the multitude of moments I lost with my daughter either because I was physically absent or distracted or shut down and just not emotionally available to her. I didn’t expect this project to be too much for just one person to do alone, but it was—way too much.

In fact, I would not have successfully completed the data collection without the love and support of a few very special people, who deserve recognition and my eternal gratitude. It is customary to put these sentiments in footnote; however, the depth of their involvement in the success of this project warrants placement within the main text itself. The graduate research assistant of the Kercher Center during that academic year, Craig Tollini, was an enormous help to me during this project. He tolerated my emotional explosions and listened to me with unyielding patience and a genuine kindness that I have rarely seen in my lifetime. He generously gave his assistance at every phase of this project from its design, the data collection, data entry, and through the analysis.

The secretary of the Kercher Center, Susan Standish, was equally generous with her time and patience. She was the first person with whom the participants had contact upon their arrival, and she did a flawless job of making an excellent first impression and of protecting them from any intrusions into their privacy. She also
listened empathically and helped me to process my thoughts and feelings with sincere interest in the topic.

Finally, while my committee, especially the chair, David Hartmann, was always available to me with open ears, hearts, and minds, there was one additional faculty member in our social psychology department, Dr. Robert Wait, without whom I would not have been able to complete the data collection process. Bob’s office is located within the Kercher Center, which placed him in the very center of the hallway between the front entrance and the room where the interviews took place. Whenever I was overwhelmed, I knew I could go to him for guidance through the intense emotional labor involved in surviving a project of this magnitude.

On several occasions, he sat with me for hours, helping me to process my emotions and to realize the theoretical significance hidden within the interviews. Without his support in navigating the emotion work necessary to weave emotion and rationality together, I would have surely drowned in my emotional distress, and might have abandoned this project altogether. He kept me going when I wanted to quit, and even more importantly, he kept me from losing myself in the process. Before it was all over, his role in my life had changed from being my mentor to also being a very close and dear friend whose love I will always cherish.

The Data Analysis

Conceptualizations

My conceptualization of the events the screening questions are designed to detect includes: completed rapes, attempted rapes, completed coercions, attempted coercions, completed unwanted sex, attempted unwanted sex, obligatory sex, and unwanted obligatory sex. The definition of penetration as used in my
conceptualization of these events includes the following: penile-vaginal, penile-anal, digital-vaginal, digital-anal, object-vaginal, object-anal, someone’s mouth on the victim’s genitals, or the victim’s mouth on someone else’s genitals.

A completed rape is penetration accomplished by any of the following means: use of force, threat of force, use of a weapon, threat of the use of a weapon, threat of physically harming someone close to the victim, the lack of meaningful consent due to voluntary or involuntary intoxication or other such incapacitation (including when the victim is asleep), or after an expressed refusal. An attempted rape is unsuccessful penetration attempted by any of the following means: use of force, threat of force, use of a weapon, threat of the use of a weapon, threat of physically harming someone close to the victim, the lack of meaningful consent due to voluntary or involuntary intoxication or other such incapacitation (including when the victim is asleep), or after an expressed refusal.

A completed coercion is completed penetration accomplished by any of the following means: threat of non-physical harm or punishment to the victim or someone close to the victim, promise of reward to victim or someone close to the victim, or verbal pressure and pestering. An attempted coercion is unsuccessful penetration attempted by any of the following means: threat of non-physical harm or punishment to the victim or someone close to the victim, promise of reward to victim or someone close to the victim, or verbal pressure and pestering.

Completed unwanted sex is unwanted completed penetration accomplished solely by the victim’s fear of expressing refusal. Attempted unwanted sex is unwanted unsuccessful penetration attempted solely because of the victim’s fear of expressing refusal. Obligatory sex is unwanted completed penetration accomplished solely because of the victim’s sense of obligation to do so. Unwanted obligatory sex is
unwanted completed penetration accomplished either because of both the victim’s fear of expressing refusal and the victim’s sense of obligation to do so.

**Operational Definitions**

These conceptualizations are operationally defined as follows. A completed rape is any event that solicits a positive response to one or more of the following questions: 1-8, 10, 11-18, 20, 21-28, or 30. These events may also elicit an additional positive response to one or more of the following questions: 9, 19, 29, 41, 43, 44, or 46. An attempted rape is any event that solicits a positive response to one or more of the following questions: 31-38, or 40. These events may also elicit an additional positive response to one or more of the following questions: 39, 42, 45, or 47.

A completed coercion is any event that solicits a positive response to one or more of the following questions: 41, 44, or 46. These events may also elicit an additional positive response to one or more of the following questions: 9, 19, 29, or 43. An attempted coercion is any event that solicits a positive response to one or more of the following questions: 42, 45, or 47. These events may also elicit an additional positive response to question 39.

Completed unwanted sex is any event that solicits a positive response solely to one of the following questions: 9, 19, or 29. Attempted unwanted sex is any event that solicits a positive response to question 39 only. Obligatory sex is any event that solicits a positive response to question 43 only. Unwanted obligatory sex is any event that solicits a positive response to one or more of the following 9, 19, or 29 in conjunction with a positive response to question 43.
Analyses of the Four Questions

I analyzed the data using SPSS Base 11.0 for Windows software and Microsoft Office Excel and Access software. I compared the two data sets within the methods experiment (Question One—Comparison of Methods) in terms of their demographic representativeness, response rates, patterns of missing data, and prevalence rates. There are inconsistencies in the literature on how to calculate response rates. Frey and Oishi (1995) argue:

Response Rate = Completed interviews/Number in sample eligible. Eligible respondents include completed interviews, refusals, partial completions, those with answering machines or who never answered, and numbers where a language barrier existed. . . . Often, survey research is reported with a response rate based on the ratio of completed interviews to refusals plus completions. This produces the "public relations" rate that makes the surveyor look good but is not an accurate record of response success. (pp. 30-31)

Lavrakas (1998) suggests:

Most survey professionals agree that response rates are best considered as a range rather than a single value. In general, response rates are affected by the survey topic, the length of the questionnaire, the caliber of the organization and interviewing staff conducting the survey, the length of the field period, rules for callbacks and refusal conversions, and other factors. (p. 462)

I followed the suggestion of Lavrakas (1998) that four "quality-of-response indicators" (p. 462) be reported rather than just one response rate. The first indicator is the "sampling pool’s efficiency in reaching eligible people" (p. 462). I calculated this by dividing the number of completions by the total number in the sample. The second indicator is the "proportion of ‘possibly eligible’ persons/households sampled that were interviewed" (p. 462). This is comparable to the response rate as defined by Mangione (1998) and is calculated by dividing the number of completions by the total
number in the sample minus all those coded as pagers, faxes, not eligible, wrong
numbers, disconnected, and business/government.

The third indicator is “the proportion of ‘known eligibles’ interviewed”
(Lavrakas, 1998, pp. 462-463). I calculated this by dividing the number of
completions by the total number of completions, terminations, and refusals in the
sample. The final quality-of-response indicator is the cooperation rate, which is “the
ratio of refusals to completions” (p. 463). Lavrakas contends that using random digit
dialing surveys in the 1990s, his “rates for these four indicators typically are about
55% (efficiency), 60% (all possible eligibles), 65-70% (all known eligibles), and 1:3
(refusals to completions)” (p. 463).

I performed descriptive statistical analyses on each of the individual samples. I
calculated the individual prevalence rates (Question Four—Prevalence of Rape) by
dividing the number of respondents within each sample who responded affirmatively
to any rape question by the total number of respondents within that individual sample.
The estimates from this survey, as from any sample survey, are subject to random
sampling error. The estimated bound at the 95-percent confidence level for a sample
of 600 is 3.7 percentage points if the response distribution is a 30/70 split, whereas
the estimated bound at the 95-percent confidence level for a sample of 300 is 5.2
percentage points. Comparisons of these samples (Question One—Comparison of
Methods) included hypotheses testing (using appropriate t-tests) and the creation of
confidence intervals with 95% alpha levels (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 1999).

I identified weaknesses in the survey design by attending closely to missing
data and other problem areas. I analyzed my journal notes for comments on the
different data collection methods and the process of this project (Question Two—
Evaluation of Methods). I used the chi-square statistic to test for statistically
significant differences between two groups and Tukey's B statistic to test for statistically significant difference between more than two groups. Any estimates based on fewer than five responses were deemed unreliable and were not tested for statistically significant differences between groups using this same test. In such cases, the Fisher's Exact test was substituted.

I used transcripts of the taped interviews and survey responses to weave these women's voices into a picture of how they describe and define rape and sexual assault terminology (Question Three—Women's Meanings). Both quantitative and qualitative data were woven together in as representative a way as possible to present a picture of how rape permeates the lives of the women at WMU (Question Four—Prevalence of Rape).
The Social Construction of Rape Research:
Exploring Epistemologies
And Evaluating Methods

CHAPTER SEVEN

FINDINGS—METHODS

*I have never been free* of the fear of rape. (Griffin, 1971, p. 22, italics added).

Understanding women's experiences of sexual violence, the meanings they attribute to these experiences, and to the language that they use to describe those experiences, requires listening to women. I can tell you what the literature says. Susan Griffin's quote summarizes the literature for you—sexual violence controls women's lives. I can and will show you the numbers—nearly 60% of women at WMU reported having experienced at least one sexually violent event in their lifetimes. But to really "get it"—to really know what the numbers mean, we need to listen to the thoughts that the numbers represent, told in the words of women who have lived them. We need to respect their voices and hear what these women are saying. Their words convey the ways they think and feel about their lives.

I will pair my numeric tables with quotations provided by the women they represent, to let you hear their experiences directly. Quotations are selected from the 62 transcribed interviews and the 622 surveys I collected, and will give substance to the tables. Some quotations will be taken from survey answers and comments, while others are comments or dialogue generated by the interviews.

As you read these women's words, it may be tempting to immediately assume I have emphasized the outliers, those sensationalized, emotionally charged stories that
are often used to distort one's view of an issue. I have attempted to fairly represent the
range of experiences related by the 622 women who shared their voices with me.
Some of the outliers have been included along with the other stories. For example,
there were several women who identified other women as their assailants. While it is
accurate to say this is miniscule in comparison to the number of males identified as
perpetrators, because this study is attempting to examine the wider picture of sexual
violence, it is legitimate to recognize these examples. However, in an attempt to
reflect the content, depth, and range of the stories as they appear in the data set, it
became necessary to include multiple similar stories that reflect the more common
themes.

I will differentiate the 62 interview quotes from the 622 survey quotes by
using the following schema. Quotations from the 62 interviews will be identified with
the letter “I” as in the following example of an interviewee’s response to my request
for her definition of the event described in the ninth vignette. The [---] signifies
inaudible speech.

I: [---] Rape, but she’s ah – so stupid. Why sit there naked? What’s
wrong with you? Don’t sit there naked if you don’t want – ahhhh
[frustrated sound]. [sighs] Um…at this point I start to um…question
these girls. No, I just feel like, if it’s rape, you know even though
they’ve been intimate before, it doesn’t make it right every time. But
it’s just…there’s something you have to understand about males, if
you’re going to be around them – and that is, don’t be naked in front of
them and let them touch on you, and get all around you, if you don’t
want things to go further. Because a lot of them – when you get to that
point, if you say no it doesn’t matter, don’t put yourself in that
situation. You can – like it’s easy to say no means no. It’s so easy to
say that. But when you get – a man is like a loaded weapon. You know
you don’t mess around. You know, it’s like just don’t do that. And I
start to question these females, you know it’s like, I just see males as
dumb animals sometimes and you have to, as a female, you have to be
on top of your game, because they’re bigger and stronger and you can
say no means no, but whatever’s going to happen is going to happen.
It’s going to take its toll on you before you can even…help – you can
even help yourself in anyway. You know, take them to court but the
damage is already done, just because you said no meant no. It’s
nothing to play with, and it’s sad what it takes to learn that, and it’s sad
that guys are like that, but that’s just the way it is and as a female I feel
like the responsibility should be on yourself, but if you don’t want
anything bad to happen to you, take responsibility. You know. That’s
the only way you can avoid it, because you can’t put it on the
moralties of males, because usually they don’t care. And they’re not
going to feel bad about it, so. These females are stupid! Basically!

When I include quotations of interactions from the 62 interviews, I will
similarly identify the interviewee with the letter “I”, and I will identify myself with
my initials “EF” as shown in the following example.

EF: Does the sex of the researcher make a difference?

I: Hell yes.

EF: Would you have been at all willing to do this if I’d been a guy?

I: Probably not. I don’t really discuss my, you know, especially my
past of being sexually abused. I don’t think I’d be very comfortable
discussing that with a guy, ‘cause, you know, at that moment, you
know, men are the enemy.

EF: All right, very cool. So sex is definitely an issue—the sex of the
researcher?

I: Oh yeah—unless he was gay.

EF: Oh, you’re kidding?!

I: No.

EF: Oh that’s wild. I didn’t even think to ask that, but if I had sounded
like a very effeminate man...

I: I have a friend that’s gay and I don’t have problems talking with him
about my past or anything like that ... Well, I don’t know, I mean ... A
gay guy probably wouldn’t be like the enemy to me, if I was talking
about ... it wouldn’t be uncomfortable because there’s no, you know
what I mean, ‘cause, I’m, I wouldn’t want to say like he’s not a guy,
obviously he’s a guy, but ... He’s not a threat.
Quotations from the 622 surveys will be identified using the letter “P” as follows. When series of quotations include multiple interactions and/or participant or interview quotes, I will insert an additional space between quotes as needed, to separate them:

P: All guys try to fuck you when you’re hammered and some just try harder than others--are better at the game--that’s all.

P: A past boyfriend, who currently goes to Western now, took advantage of me while I was drunk at a friend’s party and took my virginity.

I feel compelled to preface this chapter with two additional comments. What you are about to read is emotionally difficult material. I would be lying if I didn’t admit that this and the following chapter have been by far the most difficult chapters for me to write. I experienced more primary and secondary trauma writing these chapters than from all of the preceding six chapters put together. The stories contained within are emotionally devastating and the numbers are equally staggering. Combined, the universality of the control sexual violence has over women’s lives cannot help but become clear. This is the chapter I had in mind when I wrote the warning at the very beginning of this text. I urge you to remember this as you read chapters seven and eight.

It is not uncommon for students to disclose extremely personal information to their professors and mentors in a variety of settings. We read about their lives in their papers and assignments. They sometimes disclose themselves in the classroom or in private meetings in our offices. The stories have some common themes and can produce that feeling of *deja vu*. The stories I hear semester after semester, year after year, all begin to sound alike. Eventually, there develop little typologies that I can use to separate them. For example, there are what I call the “drunk—can’t remember it,”
“drunk—remember but fought it,” and the “drunk—remember but regret it” stories. These I hear on a regular basis. Then there are what I call the “asshole boyfriend,” “asshole girlfriend,” “asshole roommate,” “asshole best friend,” “asshole acquaintance,” and “asshole family” stories that I encounter regularly when I check my email or have available time during my office hours. Of course, above and beyond the generic run-of-the-mill “asshole” types, I have also dealt with the seriously dangerous ones like the “stalker assholes,” “psychotic assholes,” “violent addict assholes,” and “suicidal assholes.”

These typologies and the stories that they represent don’t fade from my memory as easily as I might like them to. Because these voices are from local students, and not from a national sample of women, it might be difficult for you not to see familiar faces or think of names when you read this chapter. I cannot urge you enough to prepare for those thoughts to pop into your mind, but try not to relate the stories to people you might know. By the end of the findings chapters, I hope it will be evident that these stories belong to all women. These are our lives, our histories, our fears, our shameful secrets, our very selves. These stories belong to all of us. The specific quotes I have included may come directly from particular women, but the stories and the lived horror they represent belong to all women.  

Demographics of Female Student Population and Samples

Because one of my goals is to make inferences about a population from sample data, my first consideration will be with the representativeness of my samples.

---

93 In all fairness, they belong to each and every femininely gendered man who ever graced the face of this planet as well. I should point out that it doesn’t matter if the man is femininely gendered in actuality or if someone else merely assumes or suspects that he is. The man’s gender identity and sexual orientation are irrelevant. What matters is whether or not someone else associates this man with femininity. This is clearly a case of guilt by association and guilt by suspicion too.
The population targeted is all female WMU students registered for the fall 2001 semester. A summary of the population parameters is presented in Table 3. All information regarding the demographics of the population of female WMU students reported in the tables comes from the Office of Academic Planning and Institutional Data, which I obtained from the ISIS Student Master Archive Data on February 3, 2003.

Table 3

Population Parameters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEMOGRAPHIC CATEGORY</th>
<th>Population (N = 15,430)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACADEMIC STATUS</strong></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>2,942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>2,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>2,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>3,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>3,402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>15,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RACE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>13,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>15,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MARITAL STATUS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>14,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>15,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>4,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 24</td>
<td>6,786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 29</td>
<td>1,485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>1,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;39</td>
<td>1,144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>15,430</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These data indicate that there were 15,430 female students registered for the Fall 2001 semester at WMU. There were 3,402 (22%) female graduate students, and 11,907 (78%) female undergraduate students. There were 13,360 (87%) female White students and 2,045 (13%) female students in categories not included in White along the continuum of race/ethnicity. There were 561 (4%) female married students and 14,869 (96%) female single students. There were 11,400 (74%) female students under 25 years of age, and 3,962 (26%) female students 25 years of age or older.

Table 4 presents the demographic characters of my total sample of 622 women, comparing it to population characteristics. 322 women completed the questionnaire via mail, and I collected surveys in person from an additional 300 women, for a total of 622 women. The total sample included 100 (16.1%) graduate students, and 512 (93.1%) undergraduate students. Freshmen were overrepresented, while graduate students were underrepresented. There were 523 (84.1%) students who identified themselves as Caucasian, and 96 (15.4%) students who place themselves in categories other than Caucasian. No significant difference was found between the total sample and the population in terms of race/ethnicity.

There were 75 (12.1%) married students and 545 (87.6%) single students in the total sample. Single students were overrepresented, while married students were underrepresented. There were 507 (81.5%) students under 25 years of age, and 113 (18.2%) students 25 years or older. Students under age 20 were overrepresented in the total sample, while students aged 25 to 29 and over 39 were underrepresented.

Table 5 presents a comparison of the mail sample with the total population in terms of demographics. The mail sample was comprised of 283 (87.9%) Caucasian students, and 37 (11.5%) students who identified themselves in racial/ethnic categories.
Table 4
Comparison of Population and Total Sample on Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACADEMIC STATUS</th>
<th>Population N = 15,430</th>
<th>Total Sample n = 622</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>2,942 19.1</td>
<td>163 26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>2,698 17.5</td>
<td>103 16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>2,754 17.8</td>
<td>107 17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>3,513 22.8</td>
<td>144 23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>3,402 22.0</td>
<td>100 16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>121 0.8</td>
<td>5 0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,430 100%</td>
<td>622 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE/ETHNICITY</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>13,360 86.6</td>
<td>523 84.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2,045 13.3</td>
<td>96 15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>25 0.2</td>
<td>3 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,430 100%</td>
<td>622 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARITAL STATUS</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>14,869 96.4</td>
<td>545 87.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>561 3.6</td>
<td>75 12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>2 0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,430 100%</td>
<td>622 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>4,614 29.9</td>
<td>243 39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 24</td>
<td>6,786 44.0</td>
<td>264 42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 29</td>
<td>1,485 9.6</td>
<td>40 6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>1,333 8.6</td>
<td>40 6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;39</td>
<td>1,144 7.4</td>
<td>33 5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>68 0.4</td>
<td>2 0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,430 100%</td>
<td>622 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = difference between population and total sample statistically significant at the p ≤ .05 level
Table 5
Comparison of Population and Mail Sample on Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Mail Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 15,430</td>
<td>n = 322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACADEMIC STATUS</strong></td>
<td>Z-Score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>2,942 19.1</td>
<td>-0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>2,698 17.5</td>
<td>-1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>2,754 17.8</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>3,513 22.8</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>3,402 22.0</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>121 0.8</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,430 100%</td>
<td>322 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RACE/ETHNICITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>13,360 86.6</td>
<td>283 87.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2,045 13.3</td>
<td>37 11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>25 0.2</td>
<td>2 0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,430 100%</td>
<td>322 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MARITAL STATUS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>14,869 96.4</td>
<td>271 84.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>561 3.6</td>
<td>49 15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>2 0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,430 100%</td>
<td>322 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>4,614 29.9</td>
<td>93 28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–24</td>
<td>6,786 44.0</td>
<td>153 47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–29</td>
<td>1,485 9.6</td>
<td>28 8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>1,333 8.6</td>
<td>23 7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;39</td>
<td>1,144 7.4</td>
<td>23 7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>68 0.4</td>
<td>2 0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,430 100%</td>
<td>322 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = difference between population and mail sample statistically significant at the p ≤ .05 level

Other than Caucasian. As with the total sample, no significant difference was found between the mail sample and the population in terms of race/ethnicity.
There were 49 (15.2%) married students and 271 (87.9%) single students in the mail sample. Consistent with the total sample, single students were overrepresented, while married students were underrepresented. There were 246 (76.4%) students under 25 years of age, and 76 (23.6%) students 25 years of age or older. No significant difference was found in terms of age between the mail sample and the population.

A comparison of the in person sample with the total population can be found in Table 6. There were 31 (10.3%) graduate students, and 268 (89.3%) undergraduate students in the in person sample. Freshmen were overrepresented in the in person sample, while graduate students were underrepresented. Where the mail sample was found to be representative of the population, the in person sample and the total sample were not. The in person sample included 240 (80.0%) Caucasian students, and 59 (19.7%) students in non-Caucasian categories. Unlike the mail and total samples, non-white students were overrepresented in the in person sample.

There were 26 (8.7%) married students and 274 (91.3%) single students in the in person sample. Like both the total and the mail samples, single students were overrepresented, while married students were underrepresented in the in person sample. There were 261 (87.0%) students under 25 years of age, and 39 (13.0%) students 25 years of age or older. Consistent with the total sample but unlike the mail sample, students under the age of 20 were overrepresented in the in person sample, while students aged 25 to 29 and over 39 were underrepresented. Unlike the total and mail samples, the in person sample underrepresented students aged 20-24.

Table 7 presents a comparison of the mail sample and the in person sample. The two samples were significantly different from each other on each of the four...
Table 6

Comparison of Population and In Person Sample on Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population N = 15,430</th>
<th>In Person Sample n = 300</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACADEMIC STATUS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>2,942</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>2,698</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>2,754</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>3,513</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>3,402</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,430</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACE/ETHNICITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>13,360</td>
<td>86.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2,045</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,430</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARITAL STATUS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>14,869</td>
<td>96.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,430</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>4,614</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 24</td>
<td>6,786</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 29</td>
<td>1,485</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>1,333</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;39</td>
<td>1,144</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,430</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*= difference between population and in person sample statistically significant at the p ≤ .05 level

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Table 7
Comparison of Mail Sample and In Person Sample on Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACADEMIC STATUS</th>
<th>Mail Sample ( n = 322 )</th>
<th>In Person Sample ( n = 300 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE/ETHNICITY</th>
<th>Mail Sample ( n = 322 )</th>
<th>In Person Sample ( n = 300 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARITAL STATUS</th>
<th>Mail Sample ( n = 322 )</th>
<th>In Person Sample ( n = 300 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>Mail Sample ( n = 322 )</th>
<th>In Person Sample ( n = 300 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 24</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;39</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^*\) = difference between mail and in person sample statistically significant at the \( p \leq 0.05 \) level

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
demographic variables. There were more freshman and fewer graduate students in the in person sample. This sample also contained more non-Caucasian students and fewer Caucasians than the mail sample. There were more single and fewer married students in the in person sample, and the in person sample was younger: It contained more students under the age of 20 and fewer students aged 20 to 29 and over 39. A comparison of the in person sample with the interview sample of 62 women is offered in Table 8. No significant differences in the demographic characteristics of these samples were found.

Question One—Methods Comparison

Comparison of Quality of Response Indicators

Of the 1,000 questionnaires I mailed out, 24 (2.4%) came back with forwarding problems that made them ineligible. Of the remaining 976 (97.6%) possible eligible questionnaires, 322 were returned. This is a possible eligible or response rate of 33.0% (322/976). The efficiency or return rate is 32.2% (322/1,000). Of the remaining 654 (67%) unreturned questionnaires that I mailed out, I only have knowledge of the whereabouts of one of them. It was returned to me unopened on October 29, 2001 (during the postal anthrax scare). Written on the outside was the following statement that said: "This is a very bad time to be sending poorly addressed scary [sic] mail. NO THANKS!"

Table 9 provides a comparison of the mail sample, the in person sample, and the interview sample in terms of quality of response indicators (efficiency, possible eligibles, known eligibles and cooperation rates). Of the 1,300 women I attempted to contact to complete in person surveys, 736 (56.6%) had missing or incorrect
telephone numbers, which made them ineligible. Of the remaining 564 (43.4%) possible eligible

women, 300 of them completed surveys in person. This is a possible eligible response rate of 53.2% (300/564). The efficiency rate is 23.1% (300/1,300). Of the 130 women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACADEMIC STATUS</th>
<th>In Person Sample n = 300</th>
<th>Interview Sample n = 62</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>108 36.0 -0.16 23 37.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>54  18.0 -0.55 13 21.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>45  15.0 -0.54 11 17.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>61  20.3 0.76 10 16.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>31  10.3 0.54  5  8.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1   0.3 0.46  0  0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300 100% 62 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE</th>
<th>In Person Sample n = 300</th>
<th>Interview Sample n = 62</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>240 80.0 -1.61 55 88.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>59  19.7 1.56  7 11.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1   0.3 0.46  0  0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300 100% 62 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARITAL STATUS</th>
<th>In Person Sample n = 300</th>
<th>Interview Sample n = 62</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>274 91.3 -0.15 57 91.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>26  8.7 0.15  5  8.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300 100% 62 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>In Person Sample n = 300</th>
<th>Interview Sample n = 62</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>150 50.0 0.69 28 45.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 24</td>
<td>111 37.0 -0.97 27 43.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 29</td>
<td>12  4.0 0.92  1  1.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>17  5.7 0.26  3  4.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;39</td>
<td>10  3.3 -0.58  3  4.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0   0.0 0.69  0  0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300 100% 62 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8
Comparison of In Person Sample and Interview Sample on Demographics
I attempted to contact to complete interviews, 9 (6.9\%) had incorrect telephone numbers or other problems that made them ineligible. Of the remaining 121 (93.1\%) possible eligible women, 62 completed interviews. This is a possible eligible or response rate of 51.2\% (62/121). The efficiency rate is 47.7\% (62/130). A summary of these quality of response indicators for the samples is presented in Table 9.

Table 9
Comparison of Quality of Response Indicators for Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Mail N = 322</th>
<th>In Person N = 300</th>
<th>Interviews N = 62</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency (55%)</td>
<td>322/1000</td>
<td>300/1300</td>
<td>62/130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible Eligible (60%)</td>
<td>322/976</td>
<td>300/564</td>
<td>62/121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known Eligible (65-70%)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>300/386</td>
<td>62/75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>77.7%</td>
<td>82.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation Rate (1:3)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>86:300</td>
<td>13:62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1:3.5</td>
<td>1:4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage (80%)</td>
<td>976/1000</td>
<td>564/1300</td>
<td>121/130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>97.6%</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>93.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The amount of missing data was very small overall. Although each of the 47 screening questions was skipped by at least one participant, no screening question was skipped by more than five percent of the participants. The question omitted most often was number 44, which asks about having sex with authority figures because of promises. This question was skipped by only 21 participants (3.4\%). Although several people in each sample indicated they didn’t know how to answer this question, either telling me this in an interview or writing a question mark on their mail survey, no
question was ever missed or skipped in the in person sample. Consequently, the mail sample had all 21 (6.5%) of the missing cases on the promises question (number 44).

The second most frequently skipped question was missed by only 12 participants, which is only 1.9% overall. Again, because all 12 were missing from the mail sample, they represent 3.7% of that sample. A total of six questions were each missing 12 cases, including the first five “anyone else” (threatened force, actual force, threatened weapon, actual weapon, and threatened to harm other) questions. The “attempted to overwhelm with continual pressure and constant pestering” question was also missing 12 cases.

Two other sets of questions were frequently skipped. The first five “sex partner” questions were each skipped seven times. Six participants skipped the questions regarding “anyone else-afraid”, “anyone else-asleep”, and “anyone else-attempt, threatened force”. Only five participants skipped the next four “anyone else-attempt” (actual force, attempted weapon, actual weapon, and threaten to harm other) questions.

There is an obvious explanation for these patterns in the missing data in the mail sample. The series of “anyone else” questions that was missed 12 times appears at the end of the third page of the survey immediately following the “sex partner asleep” question. The series of sex partner questions that was missed seven times appears at the end of the second page immediately following the “stranger asleep” question. The series of “anyone else” and “anyone attempted” questions that was missed five and six times appears at the end of the fourth page immediately following the “anyone else after expressed refusal” question.

In each pattern, it is reasonable to assume these participants answered the preceding questions affirmatively, and since they are located at the very end of the
series, they finished the series before going to the incident report on the back page. After completing the incident report, these participants returned to the beginning of the next page instead of returning to the page where they answered affirmatively. As a result, the beginning questions of the following series, which were located at the end of each page of the survey, got skipped.

Comparison of Mail and In Person Samples on Type of Sexually Violent Acts

I have proposed that there is likely to be a difference between survey methods in terms of participants’ willingness to disclose information about sexual violence. I have argued that there are a number of reasons why the administration of a questionnaire by a trained and empathic interviewer would be likely to produce greater disclosure of sensitive information.

Table 10 compares mail and in person administration techniques, looking at the frequency with which five general types of sexually violent acts were reported. The sizes of the mail sample (322) and the in person sample (300) differed. In order to make comparisons, rates of reported acts of sexual violence per woman in the sample were calculated for each type of act. This involved dividing the number of acts by the sample size.

The in person technique of data collection was found to elicit more reports for every category of sexual violence except stranger rape. Rape by a sex partner was one and one half times as likely to be reported to an interviewer as to be revealed on a mail survey (rates of .603 vs. .404). Reports of rape by a known person other than a sex partner were twice as frequent using the interview technique, as were reports of attempted rape. Other sexually violent acts, using any of seven techniques of coercion, were 40% more likely to be reported in person as by mail. Rape by a
stranger was the only type of sexual violence more frequently reported on mail questionnaires than in person, and this difference was not statistically significant. It appears that the in person interviews stimulated participants to recall experiences, or disinhibited their tendencies to withhold information. The sole exception to this was the reporting of stranger rapes. Stranger rapes are extremely memorable, so that mail sample participants were as likely as in person participants to recall these events.

Table 10
Reported Acts of Sexual Violence: Comparison of Total, Mail and In Person Samples
(Number of Acts and Rate of Acts Per Woman in the Sample)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF SEXUALLY VIOLENT ACT</th>
<th>Total Sample n = 622</th>
<th>Mail Sample n = 322</th>
<th>In Person Sample n = 300</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rape by Sex Partner Rate of Acts Per Woman</td>
<td>311 .500</td>
<td>130 .404*</td>
<td>181 .603*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape by Other Known Person Rate of Acts Per Woman</td>
<td>105 .169</td>
<td>33 .102*</td>
<td>72 .240*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape by Stranger Rate of Acts Per Woman</td>
<td>104 .167</td>
<td>57 .177</td>
<td>47 .157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Rape Rate of Acts Per Woman</td>
<td>293 .471</td>
<td>87 .270*</td>
<td>206 .687*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Acts Rate of Acts Per Woman</td>
<td>428 .689</td>
<td>178 .553*</td>
<td>250 .833*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Acts of Sexual Violence Rate of Acts Per Woman</td>
<td>1301 2.092</td>
<td>485 1.506*</td>
<td>756 2.520*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*= difference statistically significant at the p ≤ .05 level

Comparison of Mail and In Person Samples on Individual Screening Questions

The first series of tables offers us an opportunity to see how many individual women answered affirmatively to each of the 47 screening questions. Data are reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
presented relating to rape by a person who has been a sex partner (Table 11), rape by any known person who has not been a sex partner (Table 12), rape by a stranger (Table 13), attempted rape by any person (Table 14), and any other type of sexual violence (Table 15). For each of the four categories related to rape, participants were asked to identify which of ten conditions were present. Five of these were: Threatened force, actual force, threatening to use a weapon, actually using a weapon, or threats of violence to another person.

Participants were also asked if the event occurred when they were involuntarily incapacitated, when they were voluntarily incapacitated, after they had expressed refusal, when they were afraid to refuse, or when they were asleep. Seven screening questions dealt with sexual experiences other than rape, in which the woman had been pressured or pestered, when the other person had attempted to pressure or pester her for sex, when obligations or promises (actual or attempted) were involved, and when there were threats or attempted threats involving non-physical harm.

Table 11 summarizes the affirmative responses for the 10 questions about experiences of rape by a sex partner. Data are presented for the total sample, which is then separated into mail sample and in person sample. The conditions most frequently involved in sex partner rape are voluntary incapacitation, followed by expressed refusal and fear of refusal. Being raped while asleep, and the use of force are also fairly common. When differences are visible, it is most often the in person sample that has higher rates of disclosure. However, individual cells are too small for further statistical analysis on most of the sex partner questions. The only statistically significant difference between samples is that in person interviews are twice as likely to elicit reports of voluntary incapacitation as mailed surveys.
Table 11
Reported Rapes Committed by Sex Partner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH RAPE OCCURRED</th>
<th>Total Sample n = 622</th>
<th>Mail Sample n = 322</th>
<th>In Person Sample n = 300</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screening Question</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11 - Threatened Force</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12 - Forced</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13 - Threatened Weapon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14 - Used Weapon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15 - Threatened to Harm Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16 - Involuntarily Incapacitated</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q17 - Voluntarily Incapacitated</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q18 - After Expressed Refusal</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q19 - Afraid to Refuse</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q20 - Asleep</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P: I just woke up to it happening one time. My boyfriend was abusive. At the time I just thought of it as me being wishy-washy. I still do.

P: It’s consensual. We have a monogamous relationship and get drunk and decide to have sex all the time. It’s not an issue.

P: I knew not to say no or fight anymore—just lie there and take myself to another place so he’ll do it faster without hurting me as much.

P: He was drunk and climbed on me asleep and entered me while asleep. I woke up to scream and refuse but he held me by the hair and arms and finished.

P: We get drunk and fuck. What’s the big deal? I wouldn’t call it an incident. It was just a Thursday night. We like to do it after partying. We’ve been together for 3 years so what’s the problem? No harm, no foul.

P: I fell asleep watching a movie and woke up to his penis in my mouth. He thought he was being sexy. I felt almost raped.

P: On the way to dinner, my boyfriend pulled over into the park to give me a necklace and “make out” on Valentine’s Day. He wanted sex. I said no. We struggled but he pinned me down and ripped off my
panties and did it while I cried and he kept kissing my neck whispering "you know you love it."

P: Many times I'd be awakened by his penetration. Most times I'd pretend not to be awake so he'd finish quickly and leave. I tried fighting him off once and he got very angry because it's his right as my husband to do it whenever he likes.

P: He woke me up riding me. I didn't like it because I didn't say it was ok but he finished anyway because I wasn't really awake enough to push him off. I just lied there in and out of sleep. I was sick and drugged.

P: He kept trying to verbally pressure me into having sex but I was ill and not up to it. I refused repeatedly and he finally just snapped and hit me. I fell down and he jumped on me. I tried to fight him off but he's very strong. After he finished he left to go drink with the boys and I called the police and had him arrested on DV assault charges.

P: I was too drunk. The room was spinning and I was nauseous and said no. He did it anyway. It was the first time, and I was mad. The second time I figured we've been dating over a year so what's the difference.

P: I broke up with my boyfriend that was 6 years older than me. He came over to talk shortly after and I was home alone. He was drunk and forced me to have sex. I had bruising on my chest and abdomen from being held down and bruises on my back from laying on a stairway during. I bled for days and missed two periods afterwards but wasn't pregnant. I didn't tell anyone because our parents were friends and my mom thought I was a virgin. He was my first boyfriend and sexual relationship.

P: I didn't see it coming. My husband went off the wagon and got drunk and wanted sex. I refused and he threatened me with a lamp and eventually hit me with it and knocked me down and forced himself on me while I was still groggy from the hit.

P: My boyfriend and I were sexually active. We went to his best friend's graduation party. I knew we would have sex that night because we usually do but I expected it at home. Someone talked him into giving me something in my drink to "loosen" me up because I was on edge due to grieving over the loss of a pet. My childhood dog died. He did it and I got woozy and he took me to lie down and sleep it off but he got aroused and had sex with me. I couldn't even move.
Table 12 presents information about sexual violence involving known persons who have not been sex partners. A summary of the affirmative responses to the 10 screening questions is provided for each sample. As with sex partner rapes, rapes by other known persons occurred most frequently when the respondent was voluntarily incapacitated. Many of these rapes occurred after the participant had expressed refusal, or when she was afraid to refuse, force or the threat of force were slightly less frequent.

Table 12
Reported Rapes Committed by Known Persons Other Than Sex Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH RAPE OCCURRED</th>
<th>Total Sample n = 622</th>
<th>Mail Sample n = 322</th>
<th>In Person Sample n = 300</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screening Question</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q21 - Threatened Force</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q22 - Forced</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q23 - Threatened Weapon</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q24 - Used Weapon</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25 - Threatened to Harm Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q26 - Involuntarily Incapacitated</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q27 - Voluntarily Incapacitated</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q28 - After Expressed Refusal</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q29 - Afraid to Refuse</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q30 - Asleep</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = difference statistically significant at the p ≤ .05 level

The table cells are generally too small for statistical analysis of differences between samples. An exception to this, however, is the significant difference in disclosure of voluntary incapacitation. As was the case with sex partner rape, in person interviews were twice as likely to find voluntary incapacitation. Overall, the
total for disclosures of all types reveals that about twice as many disclosures occur
when interviews are conducted in person rather than by mail surveys.

P: I cried a lot. It was my best friend at the time and I lost a best friend
over it. I was very young. I ran away from home for a couple of weeks
because it happened in my bedroom, and I can’t go back.

P: The incidents are the earliest memory I have and the ones I need to
get past to get to happier moments in my life. They happened primarily
at home in most every room of the house. My brother was adopted. He
was 3 years older than me. It started when I was 4. He told me that he
loved me and we would get married when we were older. I
experienced oral sex, sodomy, and vaginal intercourse. He would
sneak into my room at night. I didn’t know that it wasn’t right and
when I finally realized I thought I let him.

P: I was so young, I didn’t know it was wrong. It made me who I am;
emotionally unstable, psychologically strong and weak at the same
time, sexually unstable (if I have sex w/men they will stay). I
am getting better about trusting myself to know this isn’t true. I have to
wake up every morning, look myself in the mirror & forgive my
brother. Hating him takes way too much energy & he’s the only
brother I have.

P: Teenage neighbor was the babysitter. I have flashes to the basement,
to forced anal sex and him saying threatening things.

P: I was confused because I was violated while I was sleeping and
woke up while it happened. I did not think the extent to what happened
was that serious but it was wrong and disturbing that a good friend
would take advantage of me in that way.

P: I was taken advantage of because I was drunk and irresponsible. I
came to my apartment and was getting sick for awhile. Then I passed
out on the bathroom floor. This guy who was friends with a friend took
me home and after I passed out he took advantage of me.

Table 13 provides a summary of affirmative responses to the 10 questions
concerned with stranger rape. As was the case for sex partner rape and acquaintance
rape, the most likely condition for stranger rape is when a woman is voluntarily
incapacitated. Stranger rapes frequently occur after a woman has expressed refusal, or
when the woman is afraid to refuse. The use of force or threatened force are also somewhat common. Individual cells in the table are generally too small for statistical analysis of differences between samples. It appears, however, that mail surveys and in person interviews produce fairly equivalent rates of disclosure about stranger rape.

Table 13
Reported Rapes Committed by Strangers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH RAPE OCCURRED</th>
<th>Total Sample n = 622</th>
<th>Mail Sample n = 322</th>
<th>In Person Sample n = 300</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screening Question</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 - Threatened Force</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 - Forced</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 - Threatened Weapon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 - Used Weapon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5 - Threatened to Harm Another</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6 - Involuntarily Incapacitated</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7 - Voluntarily Incapacitated</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8 - After Expressed Refusal</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9 - Afraid to Refuse</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10 - Asleep</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P: A group of people had a party and eventually it moved to my house. After a couple hours everyone was fairly intoxicated, and a man I'd met that night asked if I wanted to go make out. We went into my room and started fooling around on the bed, and he kept trying to take off my shirt. Finally, he became frustrated and with one hand on my shoulders so I couldn't sit up, unbuttoned and removed my shorts. The alcohol had made me slightly incoherent and very nauseous, and the more I tried to fight the sicker I got. We got our arms and legs all tangled up and he inserted his penis and had sex with me for a couple of minutes before becoming uncomfortable. When he stopped to move a leg or something else that was in a poor position I managed to roll off the bed and crawl to the bathroom down the hall. I stayed there until I heard him go back to the living room and then I went back to my room and got dressed.

P: one night stand—got drunk and went home with somebody.
P: They threatened physically with their hands and fists and then they used them.

P: I was with a girlfriend and got locked out of my house. We drove around and wound up hanging with strangers at a hotel. One guy hit on my friend and they paired up. I said no but my ride went along with it so I was stuck. I was sober but he was drunk. I said no 5 times but I got scared he would hurt me so I stopped saying no and just lied there. I gave in to protect myself.

P: I did not realize what I was doing until after it happened. I regret it, and was in the situation because of my own decisions.

P: I have a high tolerance for alcohol but got REALLY drunk and disoriented off of only one cup of beer and I started puking. I was semi-conscious through the entire thing—going in and out.

P: I got drunk and don’t remember anything. Some guy had sex with me while I was hammered. I didn’t know his name or that it even happened until the next day. He took advantage of me.

P: I was at a resort, went to bed, thought I was dreaming a sexual dream, woke up to find one man in the bed, one on top, and one waiting to go next. I jumped out of bed, grabbed my clothes, dressed in the elevator, and walked the streets till morning.

P: You get wasted and they have sex with you after you pass out.

P: I honestly don’t remember—not because of alcohol but because I blocked it.

P: He used a knife and physically held it to me. What a disgusting experience.

Table 14 presents affirmative responses to the questions about attempted rape by anyone: Sex partner, acquaintance or stranger. As was the case with completed rape, the most frequent conditions of attempted rape are voluntary incapacitation and expressed refusal. Force or the threat of force are frequently involved in attempted rape. In addition, affirmative responses are spread relatively evenly across the questions regarding involuntary incapacitation, fear, and being asleep. Individual cells are too small for further statistical analysis for most of these questions. However, in
person interviews are generally better at promoting disclosure of any kind, as evidenced by the significantly higher total number of disclosures coming from the in person technique. The largest differences between mail and in person data collection involve the disclosure of voluntary incapacitation and expressed refusal.

Table 14
Reported Attempted Rapes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDITIONS OF RAPE ATTEMPT</th>
<th>Total Sample n = 622</th>
<th>Mail Sample n = 322</th>
<th>In Person Sample n = 300</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screening Question N Percent N</td>
<td>Mail Percent N</td>
<td>Total Percent N</td>
<td>Mail Percent N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q31 - Threatened Force</td>
<td>21 3.4</td>
<td>4 1.3</td>
<td>17 5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q32 - Forced</td>
<td>26 4.2</td>
<td>10 3.2</td>
<td>16 5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q33 - Threatened Weapon</td>
<td>1 0.2</td>
<td>1 0.3</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q34 - Used Weapon</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q35 - Threatened to Harm Other</td>
<td>2 0.3</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>2 0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q36 - Involuntarily Incapacitated</td>
<td>19 3.1</td>
<td>5 1.6</td>
<td>14 4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q37 - Voluntarily Incapacitated</td>
<td>90 14.5</td>
<td>22 6.9**</td>
<td>68 22.7**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q38 - After Expressed Refusal</td>
<td>86 13.9</td>
<td>29 9.1**</td>
<td>57 19.8**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q39 - Afraid to Refuse</td>
<td>20 3.2</td>
<td>4 1.3</td>
<td>16 5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q40 - Asleep</td>
<td>28 4.5</td>
<td>12 3.8</td>
<td>16 5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>293 47.1</td>
<td>87 27.0*</td>
<td>206 68.7*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*= difference statistically significant at the p ≤ .05 level

**= difference statistically significant at the p ≤ .01 level

P: He pushed me down and took off my pants. I was too drunk to move and I could barely talk. He started having sex with me and I kept saying “stop” and “I want my jeans”. Eventually, he stopped and I left. I don’t even know who he was to this day. I remember that there were a lot of people there, and then we were alone and it was pitch black.

P: We were hanging out with some friends. One of the guys poured alcohol down my throat, kept urging me to drink (I had never drank
before). Next thing I can remember I was screaming and one of the other guys came in and pulled someone off of me; I was almost naked.

P: A friend agreed to give me a ride home from my boyfriend’s game. I knew something was wrong right away. He drove to a secluded area and acted like we were going to have sex. To make matters worse, he was a big guy. I pushed him off, got out of the car and ran.

P: He tried to force me to have sex by hitting and yelling at me. I left and walked home.

P: I was passed out and a guy came in there and attempted to rape me. Luckily my friends realized that I was passed out and got this guy off me. I found out about this incidence after I woke up with my pants undone. No sexual acts actually occurred and my friends (mostly guys) terrorized this guy. Since nothing actually happened I didn’t report it.

P: I never reported it because he only attempted it and didn’t succeed. He was trying to force me to “loosen up” and drink but I refused.

P: I went to buy gas. He came around the counter and locked the door. He backed me into a wall and asked me crude questions about being a virgin and if I’d ever sucked a man’s dick before. He then pushed himself on me and kissed me and tried to grab my pants and I pushed him away. Then he pulled down his pants. I screamed and ran past him and out the door.

P: It was after the bar closed. I was in Canada with my girlfriends when we returned home to our hotel one of my friends was ill. I was waiting outside and the two guys grabbed me and put me in the back seat of their car. They drove away and parked in some open lot. They both repeatedly exposed themselves and tried to force me to have sex with them. I screamed and thrashed around until they finally let me out of the car. I never reported it to the police because I was intoxicated and felt that it would be blamed on me, plus they had not succeeded in forcing me to have sex.

P: I just woke up to it happening one time. My boyfriend was abusive.

P: I was feeling buzzed and this boy from my English class asked me to give him head. I refused. He followed me into the bathroom and tried to rip off my top. He got thrown out and the whole time he was screaming how I wanted to do it and asked for it.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
P: We were in foreplay and he started getting rough and slapped me a couple of times. I asked him to stop and he did but got angry and stormed off. It was the last time I saw him.

A summary of affirmative responses for the seven screening questions regarding other coerced sexual experiences in each sample is presented Table 15. The questions with the highest number of affirmative responses are on the questions regarding pressured/pestered, attempted pressure/pester, and obligatory sex. Once again, the majority of cells in this table are too small to support significance testing. When differences are seen, they generally indicate greater disclosure produced by in person interviews. However, the difference between samples is only statistically significant for the attempted pressure/pester question. The difference between the two samples in terms of total number of affirmative responses is not statistically significant.

Table 15

Other Acts of Sexual Violence Reported

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH OTHER ACTS OCCURRED</th>
<th>Total Sample ( n = 622 )</th>
<th>Mail Sample ( n = 322 )</th>
<th>In Person Sample ( n = 300 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screening Question</td>
<td>( N )</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>( N )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q41 - Pressured or Pestered</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q42 - Attempted Pressure/Pester</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q43 - Obligated</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q44 - Promises</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q45 - Attempted Promises</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q46 - Threatens Non-Physical Harm</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q47 - Attempted Threatens Non-Physical Harm</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = difference statistically significant at the \( p \leq .05 \) level
P: He threatened to lower my grade if I didn’t give him head after I turned him down. He said I wanted it. He threatened to get me expelled if I told. Another student entered so I got out of there.

P: My husband threatened to not give me money for bills and food and medicine if I didn’t give him sex when I was sick with pneumonia. I felt obligated because he was my husband and I had to survive to care for the kids.

P: It was not so much fear as just giving in—rather just do it than sit and listen to him whine and complain. Make me feel—shut him up.

P: High school boys are pigs.

P: I was afraid he would stop seeing me if I didn’t have sex with him.

P: It happens every once in a while. He often wants more than I do and I give in because I feel obligated. I shouldn’t refuse him because he loves me the way I am and I should be grateful.

P: He was just a friend who wanted to “tap the virgin’s ass”. It was continuous pestering.

P: I didn’t feel like I loved my husband and didn’t want to have sex but I felt I had to because we were married. Also I didn’t want him to know how I felt.

P: I’ve lost respect for college guys. They’ll try anything to have sex with you.

P: It was awkward working with him afterwards and I quit a few months later to go to school.

P: I spent years feeling obligated to have sex to please men. Low self esteem 2 bad marriages as well as other relationships. Didn’t go to college until 31. I am much better now though.

P: I lost my job and I’m scared of older men.

P: I had a photofinishing job. The manager and I were working late. First, he offered me a raise and promotion to give him a blow job but I refused and then threatened to fire me for insubordination if I didn’t go down on him right then and there so I let him fire me as I walked out the door.

P: What did I do to make him come on to me?
P: He made me feel like sex was what I owed him. I took this feeling to my other relationships.

P: I was fired. It does bother me that people in the past have made it to be more than as simple as it was. I did nothing to lead anyone on.

P: Took about 15 years to get over the emotional/psychological hurt of allowing myself to be used against my morals and better judgment. I've felt both disappointed in myself for not being strong enough in character to say no as well as anger at the male for unreasonably pressuring me.

P: None. Just weird relationship with him (the neighbor) now, but I could care less.

P: No bad consequences, only good. Now if guys try to pressure me I dump them. I have more nerve and self-esteem and I don't need that from people. I can find someone who will wait as long as I want to.

P: Sometimes I feel like what I want doesn't matter, but for the most part, I have a happy marriage so it's worth it.

Comparison of Individual Samples on Types of Sexual Violence

Exploration of the number of affirmative responses on each individual question has provided us with a point at which to begin the estimation of sexual violence. By itself, this method lacks the precision that is needed for a thorough understanding if sexual violence. This is because each incident may include a mixture of several types of violence. For example, a woman may have experienced (a) an event that included rape, coercion, unwanted sex, and obligation. Or one event could include (b) coercion and obligation, or (c) coercion and unwanted sex. It is necessary to separate those affirmative responses into individual incidents, coding each according to its most severe component. By this standard, these three incidents, which have mixtures of affirmative responses would be coded as (a) rape, (b) coercion, and (c) coercion, respectively.
The next series of tables and quotations provide an opportunity to explore the
eight categories of sexual violence (operational definitions), including rape, attempted
rape, coercion, attempted coercion, unwanted sex, attempted unwanted sex, obligatory
sex, and unwanted obligatory sex, as they are revealed by the data collection methods
we are comparing. Table 16 presents a summary that compares the individual samples
on the eight operationally defined categories of sexual violence, treated as mutually
exclusive categories.

This is the method Mary Koss and her associates used (Koss, et al, 1987;
Warshaw, 1994). It has been the preferred method found throughout the national rape
research literature. Each participant is counted once and only once regardless of the
number of affirmative responses or the number of incident reports she reports. Each
participant is counted within the most severe category for which her affirmative
responses qualify. However, participants counted in the rape category may have also
experienced multiple events of various types, but theses participants are each counted
only once within the rape category and nowhere else. Additional information
regarding lesser forms of sexual victimization other than the one for which a woman
was categorized are usually ignored, whether they occurred within the same incident
or represented additional incidents of sexual victimization.

This method avoids multiple counting of women in estimating prevalence
rates, by creating mutually exclusive categories. However, it ignores a great deal of
information. In this study, a total of 372 participants (59.8%) answered at least one
screening question affirmatively. This means that the number of cases counted is no
more than 372, while the total number of incidents reported or questions answered
affirmatively was much higher. Thus, 191 participants (30.7%) experienced at least
one incident that involved an affirmative response to a rape question. An additional

Table 16
Comparison of Samples on Mutually Exclusive Categories (Women)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mutually Exclusive Category</th>
<th>Mail Sample n = 322</th>
<th>In Person Sample n = 300</th>
<th>Total Sample n = 622</th>
<th>Significance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Yes Q 1-47</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Rape Q 1-8, 10-18, 20-28, or 30</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Rape Q 31-38, or 40 and no Above</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Coercions Q 41, 44, or 46 and no Above</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Coercions Q 42, 45, or 47 and no Above</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Unwanted Sex Q 9, 19, or 29 Only</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Unwanted Sex Q 39 Only</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligatory Sex Q 43 Only</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted Obligatory Sex Q 43 AND Q 9, 19, or 29 Only</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** = difference statistically significant between the mail and in person samples at the p ≤ .01 level

+ = p-value for Fisher’s Exact Test is substituted because at least one cell has an expected count less than 5 in the Pearson Chi-Square test

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
participants (11.7%) experienced at least one incident that involved an affirmative
response to an attempted rape question but did not answer affirmatively to any of the
rape questions. Combined, 263 participants (42.4%) experienced at least one incident
that involved rape and/or attempted rape. Where Mary Koss found that one in four of
her respondents had experienced a rape or an attempted rape, the rate for the present
study is slightly more than two in five (42.4%).

An alternative method for presenting the findings, which preserves most of the
data, does not treat the eight categories of sexual violence as mutually exclusive. This
method allows us to take into consideration how many different types of incidents of
sexual violence each participant has experienced. For example, a participant who
disclosed four incident reports, including 2 rapes, 1 attempted rape, and 1 coercion,
would only be counted once, in the rape category, using the usual method of counting
women. Using the alternative method, which counts incidents, she would be counted
three times: once each in the rape, attempted rape, and coercion categories.
Information about the second rape, however, would be ignored.

When this method is applied, in Table 17, we see that 372 participants
answered at least one screening question affirmatively, and 191 of them experienced
at least one incident that qualified as rape, just as before. The differences can be seen
in the remaining categories that are no longer ignored when a participant has an
additional incident of a more severe nature. Thus, 153 participants experienced at
least one incident that qualified as attempted rape, which is more than double the
number when the previous method was used. Counts in the other five categories are at
least twice as high when different types of incidents are counted.

Table 18 presents totals from the previous two tables, comparing the coding
technique that places women into mutually exclusive categories with the alternative
Table 17
Comparison of Samples on Eight Categories of Sexual Violence (Women)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Violence Category</th>
<th>Mail Sample n = 322</th>
<th>In Person Sample n = 300</th>
<th>Total Sample n = 622</th>
<th>Significance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N  Percent</td>
<td>N  Percent</td>
<td>N  Percent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Yes Q 1-47</td>
<td>165 51.2</td>
<td>207 69.0</td>
<td>372 59.8</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Rape Q 1-8, 10-18, 20-28, or 30</td>
<td>89 27.6</td>
<td>102 34.0</td>
<td>191 30.7</td>
<td>.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Rape Q 31-38, or 40</td>
<td>52 16.1</td>
<td>101 33.7</td>
<td>153 24.6</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Coercions Q 41, 44, or 46</td>
<td>35 10.9</td>
<td>34 11.3</td>
<td>69 11.1</td>
<td>.854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Coercions Q 42, 45, or 47</td>
<td>25 7.8</td>
<td>66 22.0</td>
<td>91 14.6</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Unwanted Sex Q 9, 19, or 29</td>
<td>20 6.2</td>
<td>10 3.3</td>
<td>30 4.8</td>
<td>.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Unwanted Sex Q 39 Only</td>
<td>2 0.6</td>
<td>7 2.3</td>
<td>9 1.4</td>
<td>.096+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligatory Sex Q 43 Only</td>
<td>41 12.7</td>
<td>39 13.0</td>
<td>80 12.9</td>
<td>.921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted Obligatory Sex Q 43 AND Q9, 19, or 29</td>
<td>2 0.6</td>
<td>1 0.3</td>
<td>3 0.5</td>
<td>1.000+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** = difference statistically significant at the p ≤ .01 level

+ = p-value for Fisher’s Exact Test is substituted because at least one cell has an expected count less than 5 in the Pearson Chi-Square test

method that allows a woman to be coded in each of the eight categories of sexual violence that she has experienced. All the comparisons are significantly different, with
Table 18
Comparison of Totals on Mutually Exclusive Categories (Koss Method) and Non-Exclusive Categories (Fisher Method) on Eight Categories of Sexual Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Violence Category</th>
<th>Mutually Exclusive Categories (Koss Method)</th>
<th>Eight Categories of Sexual Violence (Fisher Method)</th>
<th>Statistical Significance of Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Sample n = 622</td>
<td>Total Sample n = 622</td>
<td>Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Yes Q 1-47</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Rape Q 1-8, 10-18, 20-28, or 30</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Rape Q 31-38, or 40</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Coercions Q 41, 44, or 46</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Coercions Q 42, 45, or 47</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Unwanted Sex Q 9, 19, or 29</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Unwanted Sex Q 39 Only</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligatory Sex Q 43 Only</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted Obligatory Sex Q 43 AND Q9, 19, or 29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>372</td>
<td></td>
<td>626</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = difference statistically significant at the p ≤ .05 level

** = difference statistically significant at the p ≤ .01 level

the exception of the first (rape), for which the methods of categorization are identical; and the last (unwanted obligatory sex), which involves very small numbers. While the
mutually exclusive method observes that 372 women have been victimized, the non-mutually exclusive method observes that those 372 women experienced a total of 626 different types of sexual violence. This means that on the average, each of the 372 women had experienced more than two different types of victimization.

The non-mutually exclusive method retains most of the richness of the data, but it doesn’t count multiple acts that fall into the same category. 372 participants answered yes to at least one screening question, but only 365 of them completed at least one incident report. The remaining 7 participants declined. Those 365 participants completed a total of 742 incident reports between them. Most participants completed only one or two, but many completed an additional third or fourth incident report. A good number completed a fifth one as well. Out of the 742 incident reports, only 17 were completed as sixth, seventh, eighth, or ninth incident reports. No participant reported more than nine incidents. Note, however, that an event coded once could have involved ongoing sexual violence that occurred repeatedly.

P: I was molested as a child by a significantly older family member.

P: I refused and he continued to pressure me and touch me until I gave in. Rape? I still don’t know.

P: I had been studying abroad for 6 months and was very homesick and lonely. I met a guy while traveling who was in the same situation and took advantage of the situation (our feelings). I had feelings for him but did not want to have sex with him. I know this sounds naïve but it happened before I knew what was going on. He later felt horrible and apologized and we are friends to this day.

P: Boyfriend wanted to have sex, I said no and he held my arms down and tried to insert his penis but finally stopped after I threatened him.

P: I was a young girl going through depression and this boy that I thought meant so much was all I had. He would call me all the time to watch movies so I’d go to his house. One day he called me and when I got to his house we went in his room and shut the door. He started bugging me constantly about wanting to “go down” on me. He just
kept nagging and I didn’t want to lose him so I let him take off my pants. I didn’t talk to him for 2 years after that day and I cried for 3 weeks.

P: Males being males—rude

P: He tried for 2 years before I give in to him. We’re still together so it’s all good.

P: It’s what girls do to prepare for marriage. We’re supposed to give in eventually. There’s a sense of duty to it after you’ve been together for so long and invested so much into it already.

Table 19 presents a comparison of mail and in person samples in terms of the 742 incident reports coded into eight categories of sexual violence. A total of 297 incident reports were collected through the mail, and I completed an additional 445 with participants in person. While the previous table dealt with the 626 different experiences that the 372 women survived, Table 22 presents all 742 of their experiences. The difference is that 116 incident reports were duplicate experiences for an individual participant. For example, in my earlier example, a participant who survived two rapes, one attempt, and one coercion would have filled out 4 incident reports. The mutually exclusive method counts this woman once. The non-mutually exclusive method counts this woman three times. Table 19, which counts incidents, not individual women, counts all four of her experiences of sexual violence.

Examination of this table makes clear what types of sexual violence tend to be repeated in women’s lives. The 191 participants who experienced an event that counted as rape experienced a total of 290 rapes. Almost all of the duplicated events are rapes or attempted rapes. Only 3 duplicate events are found among all of the other six categories of sexual violence.
Table 19

Comparison of Incident Reports From Mail and In Person Samples on Eight Categories of Sexual Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mutually Exclusive Category</th>
<th>Mail Sample N = 297</th>
<th>In Person Sample N = 445</th>
<th>Total Sample N = 742</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Incident Reports Q 1-47</td>
<td>N 297 Percent 40.0</td>
<td>N 445 Percent 60.0</td>
<td>N 742 Percent 100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Rape Q 1-8, 10-18, 20-28, or 30</td>
<td>114 38.4</td>
<td>176 39.6</td>
<td>290 39.1</td>
<td>0.749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Rape Q 31-38, or 40 and no Above</td>
<td>57 19.2</td>
<td>110 24.7</td>
<td>167 22.5</td>
<td>0.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Coercions Q 41, 44, or 46 and no Above</td>
<td>36 12.1</td>
<td>34 7.6</td>
<td>70 9.4</td>
<td>0.757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Coercions Q 42, 45, or 47 and no Above</td>
<td>25 8.4</td>
<td>68 15.3</td>
<td>93 12.5</td>
<td>0.006**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Unwanted Sex Q 9, 19, or 29 Only</td>
<td>20 6.7</td>
<td>10 2.2</td>
<td>30 4.0</td>
<td>0.023*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Unwanted Sex Q 39 Only</td>
<td>2 0.7</td>
<td>7 1.6</td>
<td>9 1.2</td>
<td>0.04*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligatory Sex Q 43 Only</td>
<td>41 13.8</td>
<td>39 8.8</td>
<td>80 10.8</td>
<td>0.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted Obligatory Sex Q 43 AND Q 9, 19, or 29 Only</td>
<td>2 0.7</td>
<td>1 0.2</td>
<td>3 0.4</td>
<td>0.478</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*= difference statistically significant at the p ≤ .05 level

**= difference statistically significant at the p ≤ .01 level

P: I was left with a man and he raped me in front of my brother and friend. I knew this was wrong.

*Total percentages do not add up to 100.0 because of rounding.
P: Freshman year invited him up to hang out with me and my friends. Went next door to talk and have above the clothes fun. I said no many times--he didn’t stop. My friends couldn’t hear me because of the music.

P: My brother’s older friend and I were both drunk. It just happened. I knew what was going on sort of, but I wouldn’t have done it sober.

P: At a party drinking. Everyone makes passes at everyone when drinking. They try to lead you up the stairs.

P: I was packing for a friend, helping him move. There was some making out. He was big and strong and pinned me and took off lots of clothes. I kicked and screamed and ran out of the building.

P: Every time I get a little tipsy some asshole tries to fuck me at a party. I hate it. It always takes someone intervening to get the pig to lighten up.

P: This boyfriend is still my current boyfriend, and although I did eventually say yes I sometimes feel resentful towards him for making me feel guilty about not having sex with him at the time--so guilty that I eventually gave in. Even when I say no sometimes and he doesn’t directly pressure me anymore abut sex and his lack of it from me. Well, my boyfriend and I are usually in his bedroom snuggling. Then he gets really horny and wants to have sex every so often even after I say no over and over he keeps pressuring me until I finally cave in just to shut him up.

P: Both times, I have consented to foreplay but told him we couldn’t have sex because we didn’t have a condom on hand. He was performing oral sex on me and my eyes were closed and he put it in for a few minutes. I didn’t object, but then I told him we couldn’t because I might get pregnant. He didn’t stop right away; I told him to stop again and he did.

P: After making out, led to heavy petting, he wanted to go all the way and have sex. I would say no and push him away. He would get very angry and slightly violent. This was the same guy who got me pregnant.

P: He was really horny and I told him I didn’t want to, but he kept asking and told me he would find someone else if I didn’t give him a blowjob.
P: We were “fooling around” with my specific rule of NO penetration. When he attempted insertion a third time I put both hands against his chest and shoved him away, got up, got dressed and asked him to leave, which he did.

P: I fell asleep in my friend’s bed after sitting up late talking. When I woke up my friend had taken off my underwear and pulled up my skirt. He was on top of me holding his penis. I woke up and left after pushing him over.

P: My boyfriend I had been with for about a month knew I wasn’t a virgin. He tried to get me to have sex with him and I said no. But then he would bother me and make me feel guilty and self-conscious until I did. His words were horrible; he often made me cry.

P: A friend constantly flirted and fawned on me at the library where I worked, and when we would see each other in common living areas. We often talked in my dorm room. He would never leave and he pestered me constantly until 2 times, when I was very sleepy and worn down. I had sex with him. Finally I became concerned about his behavior—he pursued me even when I was home for summer -- and I broke off all contact.

P: He pressured me into it. He convinced me that it was what I wanted to do. I forgot about it until half way through the questions because I had to think back to your definition of sex. We were in a relationship and I sort of felt obligated because he was my boyfriend.

P: I didn’t want to and he did. It was nothing too major. He would be mad if I said no.

Comparison of Individual Samples on Rape and Attempted Rape

The next series of tables presents comparisons of the individual samples specifically on incidents classified as rape or attempted rape. Table 20 presents an overall comparison that makes clear the differences in methods of calculating these statistics. The first set of completed rape and attempted rape statistics in Table 20 refer
Table 20
Comparison of Individual Samples on Rape and Attempted Rape

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mail Sample n = 322</th>
<th>In Person Sample n = 300</th>
<th>Total Sample n = 622</th>
<th>Significance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Yes Q 1-47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>165</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Rape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 1-8, 10-18, 20-28,</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or 30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Rape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 31-38, or 40</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Rape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With No Attempted</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape Q 1-8, 10-18, 20-28,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or 30 yes AND Q 31-38, 40 all no</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Rape</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With No Rape Q 31-38,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or 40 yes AND Q 1-8, 10-18, 20-28,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 all no</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Completed</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape and Attempted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape Q 1-8, 10-18, 20-28,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or 30 yes AND Q 31-38,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or 40 yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Either Completed</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape or Attempted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape Q 1-8, 10-18, 20-28,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30, 31-38, or 40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** = difference statistically significant at the p ≤ .01 level

to the number of women who experienced these events when coding is not mutually exclusive. If combined, it might be tempting to conclude that 55.3% of the participants had experienced an event that was counted as either rape or attempted rape. The problem is that some women will be counted in both categories.
The remainder of Table 20 shows the various ways to calculate these statistics. A total of 110 participants (17.7%) experienced at least one event that counted as a rape but did not experience any event that was counted as an attempted rape. A total of 73 participants (11.7%) experienced at least one event that counted as an attempted rape but did not experience any event that was counted as a rape. A total of 81 participants (13.0%) experienced at least one event that counted as an attempted rape and at least one even that counted as a rape.

Finally, when women are counted using mutually exclusive categories, by adding the events counted only as rape and the events counted only as attempted rape with no other rape experiences, a total of 264 participants (42.4%) have experienced at least one event that counted as either a rape or an attempted rape in their lifetimes. Table 23 clearly shows that there is no significant difference between the amount of rape disclosed in the two samples. It also makes clear that the amount of attempted rape disclosed is so significantly different between samples that it distorts the overall picture when the two types of events are combined.

P: I was the only one intoxicated, but I was the aggressor. I wanted it even before I got intoxicated.

P: I was 100 pounds, 5' 2" and they were 6', 180 pounds. Figure it out.

P: One evening I don't know how many times I had to say no before he gave up.

P: He threatened to hurt my little sister and beat me up, and sent me to the hospital.

P: I'm a lesbian, and my partner and I got drunk and fell asleep. He, the neighbor, started having oral sex with me in my sleep.

Table 21 presents a summary of the distribution of affirmative responses to the rape questions, categorized by the relationship between the victim and the offender (VOR). While more stranger rape questions were answered affirmatively in the mail
sample and more anyone else rape questions were answered affirmatively in the in
person sample, there is no significant difference between samples on these questions.
The in person sample, however, answered affirmatively to significantly more sex
partner rape items than did the mail sample.

Table 21

Comparison of Individual Samples on Victim – Offender Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mail Sample n = 322</th>
<th>In Person Sample n = 300</th>
<th>Total Sample n = 622</th>
<th>Significance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger Rapes Q 1-8, or 10</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Partner Rape Q 11-18, or 20</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Rapes Q 21-28, or 30</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = difference statistically significant at the p ≤ .05 level

While it might be tempting to conclude that 49 participants (7.9%) survived an
event that could be classified as a stranger rape, it should be noted that inconsistencies
occasionally exist between the type of question affirmatively answered and the type of
story described in the incident report. Some participants answered affirmatively to
stranger rape questions but described the perpetrator as her boyfriend or a friend on
the incident report. Thus, a more thorough examination of the entire data set is
necessary before making conclusions.

P: I said no the whole time, and he was 18 and he just kept saying: "it's
ok" "it won't hurt" I struggled, but in the end I was just crying. I didn't
even run away. I just cried and got dressed and left.

P: An American boy wouldn't stop trying to convince me to be with
him until others at the party made him leave me alone.
P: My brother’s friend was over for the weekend. He climbed on me while I was sleeping. I woke up and screamed, and he ran off.

P: Several times at Christmas, my Uncle tried to sneak into my bed, but someone always made noise in the house and scared him away.

P: He’d threaten to kill my dog—my only friend in the world, who understood and loved me for myself, if I didn’t give him a blowjob.

P: Same, only he covered my mouth and told me if I didn’t lie still he’d kill the kids’ new puppy for shitting on the carpet.

P: This is the same person as the last incident report (question 19). I had a flashback from question 18 and told him to stop. He then told me repeatedly that I needed to get over it. Then he had sex with me.

P: My boss offered me a raise for a blowjob. I refused and he kept talking about it for a few days before giving up, but I was never comfortable at work or around him ever again. And now he acts like it was a big joke, and I quit.

P: In marriage, the wife sometimes has to be there for the husband, even when she doesn’t want to, because that is her job. Sometimes because she’s tired or what not—she needs a little convincing, that’s all.

P: What’s to tell? He wants sex when I don’t, and bugs the shit out of me until I give in; and I do because it’s my job. It’s what a wife does. She may not always want or like it, but she does it and it keeps the marriage in tact.

P: I was a virgin and gave it up to this guy after 2 years of dating. I hated it and didn’t want it ever again. He did. One night he asked and I refused. We argued and he pinned me down and did it anyway. I cried during and after. He tried to say it was because I was new to it, and it would get better.

The final table in this series compares the prevalence of rape and attempted rape under conditions of voluntary and involuntary incapacitation. Table 22 presents a summary of this comparison. Of the 191 participants who experienced an event counted as a rape, only 22 (3.5%) of them answered affirmatively to an involuntary incapacitation question, while 133 (21.4%) of them answered affirmatively to a
Table 22
Comparison of Samples on Incapacitation and Rape and Attempted Rape

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mail Sample n = 322</th>
<th>In Person Sample n = 300</th>
<th>Total Sample n = 622</th>
<th>Significance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Rape Q 1-8, 10-18, 20-28, or 30</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Rape Q 31-38, or 40</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involuntary Incapacitation Rape Q 6, 16, or 26</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involuntary Incapacitation Attempted Rape Q 36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Incapacitation Rape Q 7, 17, or 27</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Incapacitation Attempted Rape Q 37</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = difference statistically significant at the p ≤ .05 level

** = difference statistically significant at the p ≤ .01 level

+= p-value for Fisher’s Exact Test is substituted because at least one cell has an expected count less than 5 in the Pearson Chi-Square test

voluntary incapacitation question. 11.5% (22/191) of the participants who experienced an event counted as rape experienced it under conditions of involuntary incapacitation, while 69.6% (133/191) of the participants who experienced an event counted as rape experienced it under conditions of voluntary incapacitation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Of the 153 participants who experienced an event counted as an attempted rape, only 3 of them answered affirmatively to the involuntary incapacitation question, while 90 of them answered affirmatively to the voluntary incapacitation question. Thus, 2.0% (3/153) of the participants who experienced an event counted as attempted rape experienced it under conditions of involuntary incapacitation, while 58.9% (90/153) of the participants who experienced an event counted as attempted rape experienced it under conditions of voluntary incapacitation.

There are no significant differences between the samples on the events involving involuntary incapacitation, but there are significant differences between them on the events involving voluntary incapacitation. Overall, the difference between samples on the events counted as rape is not statistically significant, but the difference between them on the events counted as attempted rape is significant. Table 22 makes it clear that surveys administered in person are more likely than mail surveys to elicit admissions of voluntary intoxication and to produce more recall of attempted rapes.

There were 240 incidents reported that included one of the four voluntary incapacitation questions. Some of these incidents are viewed by participants as instances of consensual sex, and should not be included in the estimation of sexual violence. Some women consented to sex prior to intoxication with the intent of becoming intoxicated before initiation of the sex act. These incidents should be included with those where only the voluntary incapacitation question was answered affirmatively. Of the 240 incidents involving voluntary incapacitation, 139 of them (57.9%) included no other affirmatively answered question. Further analysis of these individual incident reports is necessary before I can estimate the number of those 139 incidents where sex was consensual and did not involve sexual violence in any way.
P: We always go out with a group and leave together. It’s the dorm rule—strict code. Every time you talk to someone when you’re visibly drunk they try their best to take advantage of you.

P: We get drunk and have sex, so?

P: I was hanging out with her white trash boyfriend all trashed. Her boyfriend had sex with me but I was totally trashed.

P: They put something in my drink and tried to get me to leave the bar. Friends rescued me. I didn’t go to hospital because I puked so much I thought I got it out of my system.

P: I went to his college to visit him. We were friends but we were very flirtatious with no prior sexual intercourse. We went to parties and drank. We went to his dorm room (room mate gone). I planned on “making out.” When the time came for sex, I said “no” but I was not forceful or convincing in my refusal. He said I’m just teasing and did it. I was drunk and I laughed thinking it was somehow funny. I was motionless most of the time because I was sleepy. We fell asleep and I never spoke to him again. I just left. I was very upset the following weeks.

P: We’d been dating for a while. He misunderstood. No, he knew my position on sex. He got drunk and said he’d use force if I didn’t, but a third person came in and stopped him.

P: I was drunk, so I was being dumb. I was at a party and everyone was drinking so we were just going to sleep there. The guy whose apartment it was started hitting on me and he was hot but I figured nothing would happen because I’m not exactly his type and he isn’t mine either. Anyway, eventually he had me walking back toward his bedroom and started kissing me in a dark hallway; then he tried to get me to go in his room but I said, “No, I’m drunk. I’m not easy like this.” And he said, “oh, you’re just scared.” I just said I wasn’t scared and tried to leave, but he was holding onto me and he said “come on, just go in (to the room).” I said no and pushed him away and went outside where there were more people. I don’t think he wanted to hear no, because he kept grabbing me the rest of the night until I called a friend to come pick me up because who knows what would have happened had I decided to sleep there that night.

P: A friend staying over at my house. I told him I wasn’t interested and didn’t think to lock my room. I woke up and he was screwing me. We had been drinking with other friends earlier.
P: A friend and I weren't supposed to be out but we went to the movies. He put GHB in my pop in the car and I passed out. Not totally—but everything was blurry for 4 or 5 hours. I knew what was going on but couldn't physically do anything.

P: Same old-same old—you get a few under your belt and everyone wants to have sex with you. After one or many nos they give up or someone makes them leave me alone. It's all just a harmless part of growing up I guess.

Question Two—Methods Evaluation

Comments on the Survey

Participants gave very helpful comments on the survey construction during the interviews, as these interactions show.

EF: ...what then you're saying then is, when I read them to you, they didn't seem as repetitious, but when you do it by yourself you see how repetitious it is?

I: Yeah.

I: [---] put the age range in here? Age at time of incident, this one's for the pestering, that happens all throughout your life. The only thing that was like slightly confusing was the intoxication part. Because, like, different people have different levels of intoxication that they classify—so I just like wrote it out in the back.

I: What if I don’t know?

EF: Put “I don’t know”.

I: There isn’t a section for that.

EF: Put a question mark.

I: Okay. [---] Wouldn’t want your responses to be wrong. [---] I was drunk, I don’t remember. I just remember waking up with that man.
I: [---] the survey when I was filling it out, could have asked if it was a good experience or a bad experience, rather than automatically assuming throughout the whole thing that it was negative. Like the having sex, you know. Someone woke you up having sex with you and do you consider it rape, yes or no, rather than starting off with, was this a good experience or a bad experience, rather than automatically introducing the word rape. Then I’m kind of going back and second-guess myself or maybe I didn’t know that this is rape. I was raped, and I didn’t know that, but I didn’t call it that; that was wrong.

I: Well, when I’m reading it, it’s different than when I was listening to it. Because when you’re looking at the words they can be figured differently. Where all of a sudden my husband entered into it.

EF: Yeah, scary isn’t it.

I: My definition of rape is changing.

EF: I went through a similar experience...

I: I almost feel like this that I answered I should have read the whole thing through, would be more appropriate... can I say, if I answer yes, can I say please refer to?

EF: Yeah, add that number up there. This is consistent with what I’ve been hearing. I just need more clear instructions on how to do incident reports that involved more than one number.

I: Yeah, yeah, I’ve just been kind of lumping them together. [---] I have a feeling that mine probably are not that unusual, unfortunately.

EF: Yep. I think that’s one of the most depressing things of all is that I’m not a freak.

I: I’d feel less guilty if I’d had oral sex if I cheated on someone.

EF: Oh! So if you cheated on your husband, and had oral sex – this is hypothetical of course – if you were going to cheat on your husband and it was oral, it would be less of an affront to your vows, kind of thing?

I: Not for him.

EF: But for you.
I: I mean I would still feel guilty, but I would feel less guilty.

I found participants to be generous with their comments, feedback, encouragement, and support on the surveys as well. They offered me many suggestions to improve the quality of rape research. Here are some examples:

P: You should first ask if the person has ever had sex -- yes or no -- if no, then skip to the questions if someone ever tried but failed.

P: This survey is missing other lesser sexual assault questions.

P: The incident forms should be ignored unless the subject views the incident as rape. Otherwise they are seemingly pointless.

P: On the reports when asked to describe incidents you need more room for response.

P: rape is not equal to had sex

P: None of the questions get to the issues of fathers and stepfathers touching and fondling -- not necessarily sex -- but being made to feel uncomfortable.

P: Make sure the paper (survey) fits in envelope!!

P: Change "Indian" to Native American -- it's an offensive term. And why are all the categories connected to being American anyway? Thank you for the opportunity to share my story. It helps put it behind me. I hope it helps others somehow.

P: Do you ask men these questions? You forgot to ask about whether people are virgins or not. What about women who like men to offer the idea of sex just so the woman can turn him down? You never asked about any consensual sex acts.

P: Culture plays a huge role in how we define rape.

P: I did the best I could. The questions were similar, so it was hard to classify.

P: I'm sorry I couldn't fill out the case report surveys. It was bringing up too much that is better to be left inside.
P: I don’t think an incident report needs to be filed if someone attempted but failed to have sex by persistently asking.

P: I’m still a virgin and proud of that. I never had sex—just oral which is why I had to say yes to those questions because of your definition.

P: Good survey. Easy to fill out. Hope my info. is useful. Please continue research like this.

P: Questions were hard to discern between. Make them appear more interesting and different. They look too similar and they almost put me to bed.

P: Oral sex is NOT sex.

P: The sex thing—Technically, it was oral, and you don’t consider it sex. I’m a virgin and it makes it sound like I’ve had sex.

P: Why is oral and objects included? That’s not real sex.

P: Should ask more questions other than yes/no. Ask questions where one writes out answers, such as: What do you think rape is? How far does one go to be considered rape? Etc.

P: Thank you for letting me get this out.

P: Some of these questions overlap but I tried to answer them as best as I could with your definition of “sex.” I’m sure there might be more incidences that I just cannot think of right now because I thought “sex” was ONLY vaginal intercourse.

P: Too many variables being tested here. Your survey is too long, too vague, poorly worded (becomes monotonous). You need to shorten this and focus on 6 variables that you feel are important. Otherwise, you get superfluous info, and irritate and bore your respondents. Maybe you should briefly reiterate your definition of sex here rather than making the respondent search for it. Too broad an operationalization of “had sex.” It could mean that fingers inside the vagina is “having sex” which is clearly is not. Try varying the type of question you use: lickert, [sic] semantic differential, open-ended questions, and so on. This leaves no room for those of us who were molested as children—children don’t necessarily “not want” to engage in sexual activity, thus, a mixed response error.
Several things stand out to me about the comments participants made. Our experiences of sexual violence are difficult to talk about but it is beneficial to do it, nevertheless. Our experiences of hearing questions and reading questions can produce different understandings, and subsequently, different answers. There are ways to improve the flow and format, the substance, and the structure and process of the survey to make the experience easier and less demanding on participants. It is a very wise idea to separate out the definition of sex because of the variance in people’s beliefs about oral sex. There are a lot of virgins out there performing fellatio on their boyfriends and a lot of young women being forced to perform fellatio who don’t consider it “real rape” because that doesn’t count as “real sex.”

Finally, I think of the difficulty I sometimes have getting my students to understand the concepts of heterosexism and heterocentric privilege whenever I see the following exchange from an interview regarding the definition of sex. Maybe I should read this to them to my classes next semester, so they can see it in action.

EF: What is sex, then?

I: The penis penetrating the vagina. That is my definition of sex. I know they say oral sex, but that’s not – when I’ve had oral sex with somebody, I haven’t had sex, I say, no, I have not had sex with that person. ‘cause oral sex, I mean that’s, that’s all foreplay that leads up to the sex. To me.

EF: What about anal sex?

I: Okay, or the penis penetrating in the anus, (laughing), that is sex to me.

EF: All right, it has to have a penis involved. This much I’m getting.

I: Yes. Yes. To me it does. Or, but like with lesbians, I would say, they have sex as well, but they’re different – in a way they’re a different scenario because their only means of sex besides using a dildo is you know, going orally, but I guess, I don’t – yeah, they have sex you
know, but they’re a different case, they’re off to the side because, you know what I mean, they don’t even have penises (laughing) so....

In addition, participants frequently asked me about the incapacitation questions. Many times, after repeating and/or discussing the question with the participant, she would hesitate and then answer negatively. Other times, the participant would inquire further about the meaning of the question or disclose an incident, as in the following excerpt from an interview.

I: Can I ask a question? When it says, “has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you after you voluntarily became intoxicated, drugged or in some way incapable of consenting, or refusing” does that mean you were so intoxicated or drugged that you couldn’t say no?

EF: Either that, that you couldn’t, that you were at such a state that you were incapable; either you were in and out of consciousness such that you couldn’t say no, you weren’t even able to speak, or that you were so intoxicated that your consent is meaningless.

I: Okay. When you say meaningless, I clicked. When it says, “had sex, as in penetration by other objects”, that includes a finger?

EF: It could, sure.

I: With my experience, ’cause it’s like – can I tell you my experience?

EF: Of course.

I: well, it was – I think I told you about it before. When I was a freshman I had drank too much one night, and I was coming in and out of it, like I was blacking out but I wasn’t, and I guess, I don’t remember doing this, but I guess I called this guy that I met like a week or two before, and we talked on the phone, and I called him, and I guess I was like – I don’t even remember him, I don’t even remember saying come over, but I guess he did come over, and it was like...late in the evening, like early morning, and he came in and he tried...he, he messed around or whatever, and I guess you could say he fingered me, and I don’t really remember like saying yes or no to that because I was drunk you know. And then he took his pants off and I was like no, no, no, no – I was like, I don’t think so. He kept, you know, he’s like, come on, we’ll have sex, come on; I’m like, No, I’m not having sex with you, I don’t know you. I’m a virgin; I’m not having sex with you.
So, like he tried and he -- finally he just like left me alone, he’s like: Whatever, I can give you pleasure and you can’t give me? And I was like, No. I don’t think so. I don’t care. And then that was it, so like for some of these questions, when you say like penetration, like I don’t know what to answer, ‘cause like, I did that but I didn’t do anything else. So, like I’m kind of confused what to put. ‘Cause, for me – like, I don’t consider that at all. But from this, it does.

Data Collection Method Preferences

Participants offered a variety of responses regarding their preferences of data collection method. Table 23 presents the responses to the methods preference question, divided by individual samples. Participants tended to prefer the method of collecting data that they experienced. Fully 78.6% of the mail sample said that they preferred mail administration. Among the in person participants, 29.3% preferred to be interviewed, while 29.0 said that they would prefer to be contacted by telephone, then given a choice of whether to participate in person or by mail. This latter possibility was often discussed in the interview, so it acquired more salience as a result.

In person participants also gave responses that specified multiple methods (26.7%), again probably because of their discussions with me. Participants who came back for a face-to-face interview preferred being given a choice (66.1%), but their second most popular response was by mail (21.0%). It is noteworthy that hardly any participants selected telephone interviews, either with a person or with a computer, as a preferred method. Many participants in both the mail and in person samples commented that interviews by phone seemed too impersonal for a survey on rape and sexual violence.
Table 23
Comparison of Individual Samples on Methods Preference Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred Method</th>
<th>Mail Sample n = 322</th>
<th>In Person Sample n = 300</th>
<th>Total Sample n = 622</th>
<th>Interview Sample n = 62</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mail</td>
<td>253 78.6</td>
<td>25 8.3</td>
<td>278 44.7</td>
<td>13 21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone With Computer</td>
<td>1 0.3</td>
<td>10 3.3</td>
<td>11 1.8</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone With Person</td>
<td>1 0.3</td>
<td>3 1.0</td>
<td>4 0.6</td>
<td>1 1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Person in Home</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>6 2.0</td>
<td>6 1.0</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Person Outside Home</td>
<td>4 1.2</td>
<td>88 29.3</td>
<td>92 14.8</td>
<td>7 11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice—Phone to Either Mail or Set Appointment to Interview</td>
<td>16 5.0</td>
<td>87 29.0</td>
<td>103 16.6</td>
<td>41 66.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Responses</td>
<td>40 12.4</td>
<td>80 26.7</td>
<td>120 19.3</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7 2.2</td>
<td>1 0.3</td>
<td>8 1.3</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total95</td>
<td>322 100.0</td>
<td>300 100.0</td>
<td>622 100.0</td>
<td>62 100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here are some examples of common comments participants made regarding data collection methods:

P: Mail surveys allow it to be on my schedule without really "confronting" it--like with another person. In-person means scheduling and cutting into my time. Mail is best.

P: Never EVER telephone with a computer! Probably never telephone with a person either--I would consider either one of those a very rude invasion of privacy. But--I have learned a lot from my past mistakes and have changed my ways greatly. I would be happy to try and prevent any young girls from experiencing the sexual lifestyle that I have had.

P: It is very important to have these surveys done in person so that you can ask questions while you are doing it instead of just assuming you know and filling in the wrong circle. Also, this way you know that the answers are from one person only without the influence of others. That is important.

---

95 Total percentages do not add up to 100.0 because of rounding.
P: All telephone related surveys are very bothersome to many people. If there are in-person surveys on campus that might also be helpful, or if the surveys are available to take home and mail back to the organization.

P: Either method involving the telephone is horrible because there is no privacy and safety is an issue.

P: Computer survey would work

P: Mail surveys remain anonymous, so no embarrassment. Nobody wants to do this but it’s easier this way and it is the best method. I am kind of offended that I was picked because it makes me feel like someone knows I was a victim, but I know that’s not true. You’re going to get a lot of different responses and hopefully all will give an insight most people won’t tell for fear of humiliation and/or disbelief and/or revenge. The impacts of any form of rape are debilitating and it’s scary the statistics that show how often it still occurs in this day and age. Please be responsible with this info and be respectful. Don’t just write depressing stories but also come up with solutions to this problem in your research.

P: I need to either read it or do it face to face.

P: It’s not comfortable over the phone but to be honest I didn’t know I’d tell you until I looked into your eyes. Mail I might never complete and if I do it’d just be circle and send in without elaboration quickly and not as honest either.

P: GET REAL!! Who is going to talk to a stranger about sex over the phone?!

The questions I asked participants about their preferences of data collection methods during the interviews allowed for further elaboration.

I: I think kind of like what you’re doing now because it takes, it takes people out of their...out of their settings and brings them into somebody else’s, where you know, everything’s impartial and no one really cares – they care about your responses but they’re not like, they don’t – like you don’t know me, you’re not judging me on what I’m saying. It’s just, you’re just, it’s just scientific experimentation, and I think it’s more effective than like a phone survey or like a mail-in, because I think first of all you’re more likely to get more responses, and it’s, I think it’s a lot more raw, what people really think. Because I know a lot of times if I have time to think about something and write
something down, I'll redraft it over and over until it sounds just right, when this is just your getting my first reaction, what I think right now.

I: I said in the methods, that mailing because I would be much more likely to answer questions that looked official in the mail, and coming in, and if I get a phone call saying, would you rather have a mailing. But if somebody called me on the phone, I'd be going “Who the hell are you?”

EF: One of the questions that we’re going to talk about at the end about research is what we should avoid, and I’ve heard that a lot – don’t try to talk about this on the phone, you know, and even worse have a computer call me. That’s a very common thing I’m hearing. But you know, it makes sense, ‘cause if I look at it just as a woman and not as a researcher, there’s no way in hell I would be talking to somebody on the phone – I don’t even talk on the phone to people who do benign research.

I: I don’t either. I don’t even like to talk on the phone.

I: I think one on one. I think you get the most honest information if you do one on one. I think.

I: I think like, surveys [are the worst method] because they're so general. And the questions are so concrete, you can’t really elaborate on, you know, what you think and what your idea – I can say five different things are rape, but the, how severe each one is to me personally, you can’t really tell by me checking a number or letter.

I: The chocolate is a great idea.

I: I didn’t like the suggestion of over the phone just because you can’t always know for sure who you’re talking to…I wouldn’t trust someone as much over the phone.

I: Men should, I think they should be asked what they think about it. I think that would, um, like for them to read these things from a woman’s point of view, and then ask them what they think about it.

I: I think one on one [is the best method], because when you’re writing on a paper it’s easy just to say, I don’t want to go through this next part I’m just going to mark no. I think that that’s what people could do.
EF: Okay, so if you see that when you mark yes you have to fill out extra stuff you can just say no.

I: Yeah, and I think that people are more willing to talk about it than write it down, because it's harder to put it in words in writing.

**Gender Matching**

Participants gave me excellent feedback on the issues of gender and race matching in the interview process. While an in-depth thorough analysis of all the interview data was not necessary for this particular project, a few patterns became quite clear as the interviews progressed. Gender matching was seen as important more often with women who have been victimized. The overall majority of women who participated indicated that the interviews would have been less comfortable if I had not been a woman. Some indicated that their responses would have changed, and others would have refused to participate at all.

I: My willingness, I think I would have been willing anyways, because I can understand what the whole point behind the research is. Probably been a little more uncomfortable, especially if he was like an older gentleman. The big thing of chocolate next to me helps a lot. But, uh. Um...an attractive young guy would have really hurt – (laughs)

I: I wouldn't have came in.

I: Yes, but I'm not sure if I would be as open as I am. You know, yeah.

EF: Okay, so the topic is such that you would want to be involved, you just don't sound like you'd be as comfortable?

I: Yeah, no, I don't think I'd be as open, as honest. I think. I think.

EF: How so? What do you think you'd hold back on? Details, or...

I: No, not details. I'm not sure. It's more the idea that you know he
doesn’t really get it, what I mean. You know, because he’s not a woman.

EF: So would you be more tempted to say no on things, so you didn’t have to talk to him any further, that you’d otherwise have said yes?

I: Yeah.

I: I would have been willing to fill out the form, and probably talk about – probably talk about this but I don’t know if I would’ve been as willing or forthcoming with the information.

EF: Okay. So you’d have been willing to participate, just maybe not as actively, or as in depth?

I: Probably. As long as he wasn’t going to read my results while I was in the room, or talk to me about my results, probably.

EF: Okay, so like the way it was before, where I read you the questions and wrote it down, you wouldn’t have liked that?

I: I wouldn’t have liked that, no. Personally.

I: I might have been willing to participate, but I might not have been as open.

EF: [Do you] think your answers would have changed somewhat?

I: Possibly...Yes.

I: Actually, it’s easier for me to talk to guys, ‘cause I grew up with guys and I don’t have a problem really.

I: I could, but there would be an underlying resentment. ‘Cause I’m still pissed off about it, you know. I’m still pissed off about it and I think that has a lot to do with who I am today. So, in that way I look at it as being sort of a positive thing. You know, really what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger, but I think if I were discussing this with a guy I would have a chip on my shoulder. I’d be looking for an argument.
I'd be waiting for, you know, I might have used stronger terms, I don't know.

I: I'd be willing to do it, but as for you know turning the sheet over and explaining specific instances, I'd be like, well...[laughs]. You know I think I'd be a little more general about things. I think as a female you will get more comfortableness out of another female talking.

I: It might, I mean might still talk to you but I'd probably be uncomfortable or not as comfortable as like, maybe more like short on my answers.

EF: Okay, so you'd still be willing to participate but you probably wouldn't have gone into as much detail, is that what I hear you saying?

I: Yeah, and I would probably, probably be uncomfortable. I mean like if I didn't, like the first interview if I wasn't comfortable there then I definitely wouldn't have come back and like agreed to do this too.

I: It depends. 'Cause there are some males that have no way of – they don’t understand – it’s, they don’t understand, and some males are more sensitive about it than others. Some guys like, I know some guys that are like, yeah I've heard that a lot, you know that happens to a lot of girls, and there's some guys that think that girls just make it up. If it was somebody that was compassionate about it, I wouldn’t have a problem. But the first time he got smart, I'd feel offended first of all, and then after that he wouldn’t get a good – he wouldn’t get good answers from me. You know I'd be sarcastic and he'd definitely – it'd change the way I surveyed.

Race Matching

The majority of people reported that race matching is unnecessary, although several people had different thoughts on that subject. For the most part, the major concern was the language barrier; however, several participants did voice concerns over the possibility of not being understood or empathized with if the researcher was
from a different culture. One Asian participant, quoted below, stated that she would have been less comfortable had I also been Asian.

I: I think, yeah, I think same sex would be more comfortable.

EF: What about race?

I: Um...I don’t think it would matter to me.

EF: If I had a strong dialect that gave you an indication that I was of a different race, that wouldn’t inhibit your involvement at all?

I: I don’t think so. Um...maybe if I had difficulty understanding you the first time we met that would make me less interested in participating. Worried that I wouldn’t understand everything, or get across everything that I was trying to say. But, I wouldn’t think it would really prevent me from coming in [here].

I: I think that you’re going to get – I probably would’ve been really willing to talk to you but I wouldn’t have gone in like such depth about what do I really think about this stuff if you were a man. I wouldn’t. I mean just because I feel like you can relate to me, I can relate to you know, [the women] think about sex and I’d just rather do, definitely with a woman. Not with a man.

EF: So you’d be willing to participate, because the subject matter matters, but you wouldn’t really be as honest and accurate and in-depth as —

I: Exactly.

EF: What about race? If my name or my voice or my dialect had given you a clue that I was of a different culture maybe or a totally different race, would that have changed your ability to really get into this with me?

I: I think so. I just...I think I would’ve been less likely to get into it with you if you were maybe of a different culture, or if you had like a different, like you said, like a different dialect or whatever. I mean if you’re black, that doesn’t matter to me, but just because maybe like, I want someone that maybe I can relate to with more, and I don’t know about other people in other nationalities and I don’t want to, I don’t know how they feel about that kind of thing, and I just feel
comfortable knowing that we all grew up probably in the same beliefs, or similar.

EF: So basically, if I’m understanding, white and black basically it’s American. It doesn’t matter, but a real strong dialect of some sort might, I don’t have the same belief systems, I wouldn’t approve of your answers maybe?

I: Exactly. I’d be kind of scared to give my answers.

EF: I appreciate your honesty.

I: Um, I think it would have had a slight impact but I have dealt with many people from different cultures, so I mean, the dialect is a little difficult sometimes but as long as she was female, I mean, I don’t think I would mind.

I: Well, actually to be honest with you, I thought you were a black woman when you (laughing), I swear! Because you’re name’s Edie and I don’t know very many – I don’t know any white women, I do know a couple of black woman who, I’ve heard that name before. Absolutely, absolutely.

EF: That is wild.

I: So it really didn’t have any affect, I was just like, okay, whatever. I just thought you were nice, so I was like okay. (laughing)

I: I think maybe I be more comfortable to talk with you instead of Asian researcher.

EF: Why, exactly?

I: Maybe, because Asian has more traditional value and we are not used to…talk of these issues…between Asians, but in my impression, [--] Caucasians are more open to talk about this, so, it makes me more comfortable if you are Caucasian instead of Asian (laughs).

EF: I understand that.
Comparison of Koss and Fisher

There are clear and obvious differences between this research project and the study conducted by Mary Koss and her associates. Table 24 presents a summary of those differences. While only 25.7% of the participants in the Koss study reported having experienced an event that was coded as a rape or an attempted rape, 42.2% of the participants in this study reported having experienced an event that was coded as a rape or an attempted rape. For accuracy, I used the same coding schema as Koss did.

Table 24
Comparison of Research Designs of Koss and Fisher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Koss</th>
<th>Fisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publication Date</strong></td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>32 National Universities</td>
<td>One University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample Size</strong></td>
<td>N = 3,187</td>
<td>N = 622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Collection Method</strong></td>
<td>Self-Administered in Classrooms</td>
<td>Interviewer-Administered In Person, and Mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age of Victim</strong></td>
<td>14 Years</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusion Point</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context of Survey</strong></td>
<td>Heterosexual Relationships</td>
<td>Sexual Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survey Instrument</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Inter-Gender Relationships Survey&quot; With 330 Questions</td>
<td>&quot;Sexual Violence Survey&quot; With 50 Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Screening Questions</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Findings Using Mutually Exclusive Categories</strong></td>
<td>27.5% Rape and/or Attempted Rape</td>
<td>42.4% Rape and/or Attempted Rape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One out of Four</td>
<td>Two out of Five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paradigmatic Approach</strong></td>
<td>Traditional Survey Research Methods for Sensitive Subjects</td>
<td>Feminist Sexual Violence Research Methods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It might be tempting to suspect that there are great differences between the findings of our studies, based on the differences between the methods. A further analysis suggests this is not the case.

Table 25 summarizes the differences in findings between our studies. There is very little difference with respect to each of the categories listed, with the exception of completed rape. Where the Koss study found 15.4% rape and 12.1% attempted rape for a combined rate of 27.5%, I found 30.7% completed rape and 11.7% attempted rape for a combined rate of 42.4%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>% Koss</th>
<th>% Fisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator Known to the Victim</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>82.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledged as Rapes Now</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledged as Rapes Then</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officially Reported Rapes</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kept Silent and Told No One</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Sexual Victimization</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coercion Survivors</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape Survivors</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Rape Survivors</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio: One in Four</td>
<td>Two in Five</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While this may seem like a drastic difference between the studies in the reported rates of rape, direct comparison cannot be made because of the differences in how those numbers were calculated. While I did use the same mutually exclusive method of coding to ensure comparability, I did not remove any incidents from the previous findings because the victim was under the age of 14 at the time of the event. While Koss does so for reasons of separating crimes of rape from crimes of child molestation and statutory rape, I see no legitimate reason for such exclusions. I refuse
to suggest to a participant that her experiences are somehow less serious, less important, or less relevant in an examination of rape, simply because of her age at the time of that incident. Having had incidents in my own life prior to the age of 14, and I would be completely offended and outraged if someone discounted my experiences as somehow not "real rape," just because I was a child or an adolescent at the time.

Further complicating matters is the fact that I did not use the age of 14 as a cutoff point for my coding schemes, as was done by Koss. However, I discovered that the more commonly used coding schema for this variable does not use the age of 14 as a cut off point. Rather, it separates incidents by the following five categories: child (0 – 11), adolescent (12 – 15), Teenager (16 – 17), college (18 – 24), and adult (25+). I used this age breakdown in my study to make it comparable to university figures.

For comparison with Koss’ findings, I removed from the data set the 28 incidents of rape and 12 incidents of attempted rape experienced by children and adolescents (ages 0-15 years) prior to calculating the prevalence rates. This removal establishes an age of victim exclusion at 16 years, while the cutoff was at age 14 in the Koss study. This will tend to reduce the rates that I found when compared to Koss. Some of the participants in my study who experienced one of the 40 incidents classified as rape or attempted rape before age 16, also experienced rape or attempted rape later in life. These participants are still represented in the rates that were compared to Koss’ findings. After the adjustment for age, this study found a 30.7% rate of rape and an 11.7% rate of attempted rape. This results in a combined rate of 42.4%, which is still substantially different from Koss’ rates. It is the unadjusted rates that appear in Table 25.

I: I know in my situation, a lot of the reason I didn’t say anything when it happened was because there was no, there was no actual sex that occurred, so it wasn’t like...like, it was... like if I was to say
something at all, it would almost be like I was just looking to cause trouble.

P: It happened after that other incident and I didn’t see it coming, which ‘furiated me. I had less trust and more tensions with guys. I was more angry with myself. I should’ve been able to anticipate it coming.

P: I felt stupid for letting it happen—for trusting him.

P: I believe that because I was drinking that it was somewhat my fault. I’m more careful how much I drink around certain people and I make sure I’m around my friends at all times.

P: Some emotional and psychological difficulties with whether it was rape. I should have been more forceful with my refusal and I should have had better foresight about drinking and then being alone. I told friends it was rape, but then when I think of how I laughed I felt like a liar.

P: I just thought it was my fault. Why couldn’t I have stopped him, gotten away or beaten the crap out of him or something? I think of it as rape because my boyfriend’s opinion mattered. At least one person may hold me responsible because she liked the guy and accused me of doing it voluntarily—of being a slut. I’ve never drank in public again. I had a nervous breakdown. I never told anyone except my current boyfriend who knows the whole story. I am on Zoloft. I still blame myself. I shouldn’t have been drunk. He got kicked off campus eventually.

P: Serious guilt. I wasn’t comfortable with the situation but unsure if rape. I want call it rape now but I feel like I obviously didn’t stop the situation. I could’ve. I get intimidated at signs of aggression—I didn’t want to see the reaction.

I: And that’s why it’s just stunning to me that even after, you know, I’m 37 and I remember really beginning to hear about date rape while I was in college, you know, which would have been maybe around the time of the one incident, but much after the others. What’s interesting is that when I was 16 and was in a car with a guy I had no trouble saying, you are out of line, take me home, you know, and talking about it and saying, what a jerk, what an asshole. But when I was 19 it was a much different thing, and actually the event itself was worse, and I never talked about it because I really felt like I was complicitous in that in some way.
P: It depends on what day it is. It changes all the time.

P: Not really at the time, but possibly now I would consider it attempted rape. It prepared you for future attempts.

P: Yes—maybe....I'm confused. On occasion I feel like I was raped but don't think of it that way. I'm confused about myself and why I did it and let it happen. I won't drink and don't respect him or me.

P: Sometimes I call it rape. I left the dorms to go off campus, which was more expensive. It upset my parents. They were furious and said should've known better than to let him in.

Emotional Labor

Some of the interactions in the interviews reveal my own exhaustion, frustration, isolation, and desperation that accompany doing rape research using such an emotionally connected approach. I tried to reserve my expressions of these emotions for my journal; however, on occasion, I let them slip out in the interviews.

I: I've really enjoyed participating in this data.

EF: Thank you, I really appreciate hearing that. It's been hard for a lot of people, myself especially I think.

I: I was thinking about that earlier, 'cause one of your friends was out there to see you too, and I'm — [it's curious] because I work in the healthcare field, and sometimes I just want to come home and tell all my friends all the stories that I have encountered while working in healthcare, and you really can't. For you that must be really hard, because you've heard so many stories.

EF: It's extraordinarily difficult. It is, and I hear people, you know, like they're friends or roommates or siblings of my students, and I can't, you can't cross those lines. You know, and it's -- I can't talk to anybody really about anything.

I: I think it would be emotionally taxing.

[EF talks more about this, research on this aspect. I mentions that researchers should have support system, too. EF talks about not taking this issue lightly as research topic.]
EF: I have to admit it's been a very long 4 or 5 months doing this. This is my last week of doing this and I am so glad.

I maintained a journal for the duration of the research process. I used it to vent and to work out my own personal and political issues as needed. Once again, I can tell you how much emotion work has been necessary for me to complete this project, but you really need to see it in action to appreciate it. In order to facilitate that understanding, I will disclose some excerpts from my private journal during the data collection process that began in September 2001 and concluded in March 2002.

**September 2001**

I like the way this is turning out. I set few appointments for Mondays, and spend the whole time on the phone setting appointments for the rest of the week. It is awesome, because to set appointments I have to play the role of telemarketer/cheerleader/intellectual. I am the fellow student about to be a Dr. wanting to do my final project on a difficult and critically important issue for women.” I have to put on the smile and speak in the repetitive tones and patterns. It is just a script that on occasion I have to paraphrase just to keep from going insane at the sheer repetition of it all. I find myself playing with the language and the pace and the tone and the intonation of my voice just to entertain myself while I drudge through this donkeywork. I hate to call it that, because it is the first step in building rapport, so it really is valuable, but it feels like donkeywork to me.

Sometimes, it just scares me how ordered and constructed this whole affair really is. I tell each and every person I interview the same joke on the way down the hallway in the Kercher Center...I say, “They hide me all the way down here at the end of the hallway, “ and then I laugh and add, “Can you imagine how lost people would be if I had to try to give them directions to THIS room?” which is followed by yet another staged chuckle that is usually accompanied by the participant’s laughter as well and/or some comment affirming my position. It all feels so fake. Well, it is. I mean, I put myself into it each and every time. It’s not fake in that I treat each and every woman I interview with the same appreciation for coming and sincere desire for her to be

---

96 As per my committee chair’s request, I deleted all profanity beginning with the letter “F” from these journal entries prior to their inclusion in this text. Although it pained me to do so, I even removed the entry in which I developed my “mail surveys are like masturbation while personal interviews are like fucking” analogy.
comfortable and feel safe in saying or not saying whatever they like. That is genuine, but that genuine emotion is caged in some constructed script that is so fake it sickness me. They don’t know that though. It’s the illusion that matters in the end, I guess.

October 2001

Arlie Hochschild writes about the disauthentication of self that results after prolonged disauthentication of emotions as required by some of the roles that we often have to play in life. I am suffering from this today. I feel sick inside when I hear these women tell me their stories. Some of them fall into that fuzzy category for me and some fall into that very clear boundary of rape and yet they don’t call it that and they think they are responsible for it too. I did not ask these women to come in for counseling; I asked them to come in for research. I am trying to collect their stories—their realities and voices, even if it isn’t consistent with mine. What kind of feminist would I be if I took it upon myself to enlighten these individual women about my opinions and the previous research and theoretical discussions on the topics that they are living in the real world? A vulgar one, that’s what kind of feminist I would be. I would be practicing the very thing that I complain about. So, my job requires me to keep my mouth shut, and it is killing me. I feel like crying. So many times I just circle the letter of the response category and move on to the next question without pause when I really just want to jump up and run over to the women and hug her and cry and stroke her hair and tell her that no one including and especially herself should hold her responsible in any way for what happened to her. But I can’t. It isn’t research anymore at that point; it is me imposing my emotional reactions and all their ideological implications on her, which is potentially harmful to her and just plain wrong in the first place. So there you have it. I feel disauthenticated—made unreal. I don’t feel real anymore; now I feel disingenuous. That sucks.

You know that old myth that women say no when they mean yes? Well, I am beginning to really understand that the opposite is more accurate of a statement. They say yes when they mean no. Not only do they have unwanted sex and coerced sex and believe they are responsible for forced sex, they set appointments to talk about sexual violence when they can’t handle it and should have said no in the first place. I had three people set an appointment and blow me off. I called to reset the appointment for a second time and they all gave me legitimate sounding reasons why they blew me off and reset for today. Then, again they blew me off today. When I called to reset a third time, the first one had her room mate tell me that she just couldn’t go
through with the appointment because “it is a touchy issue for her right now.” I assured her that it was perfectly fine for her roommate to not participate and that I appreciated her effort in attempting to do so. I made sure she knew about the contacts for help if she needed it, and thanked her and bailed out. I can’t help but see a correlation between all this saying yes to sex they don’t want and saying yes to discussions they can’t handle.

**November 2001**

I wonder if it possible to feel any more bland than I do today. Everything is drab inside my world today. I woke up feeling relatively decent except for a few twinges of stiffness that seem to come every morning when I work too much, but the kid woke up pissy and so did the lesbian. I got my head bit off twice before I ever made it to the shower. What a pisser. What a total pisser. Ok, it gets even worse from here. Another plane went down and like 300 more people died today. What a horrible thing. It would make me sick if I could feel anything but drab. I can’t even cry but I want to. I feel sad, I think, but other than drab I don’t feel anything else. I didn’t get into my job today. I had to record scores and do basic donkeywork today so I wasn’t very involved in it. Everyone at work seemed off today too. I just didn’t want to see anyone or be involved in anything. I turned in my ideas to the teaching circle but just couldn’t force myself to go to the meetings. I just needed to hide. Nothing seemed worth doing. I know I am not just depressed because I didn’t just want to sleep or eat or vegetate into the television. I just wanted to stay busy and drudge through it.

Lots of hesitations on the voluntary alcohol question today and some on the after expressed refusal and even involuntary intox. It seemed to me at the time that these might be the ones where they see the incident report on the back and don’t want to answer the extra questions so they say no but first they have to think whether or not they should tell “the truth” or not. I sensed tension and anxiety from them at these times too almost as if they felt guilty for answering the way they did. Everyone gave me contact info for the winter except someone who is graduating in December. That’s cool.

**December 2001**

I had a flat tire the other day and a panic attack leaving the house on top of it. I couldn’t function, so my girlfriend dropped me off at work. I asked my best friend for a ride home and he forgot me.
My own best friend doesn’t even understand what happened. He says things to me about being responsible for what happens to oneself in those settings, but I know he doesn’t have the first clue about PTSD or surviving trauma. I am so tired of being strong. It all hurts so damn bad. I feel like my insides have been chewed up with one of those claw things you are supposed to garden with.

No wonder I am exhausted. Maybe I can rest when I am doing my area exam next week. Isn’t THAT funny?

January 2002

I have been having the most twisted feelings during these interviews. When I hear stories that remind me of my own life at the same time I feel both a sense of relief and anguish for the same reason. I feel relief that I am not alone in these experiences in this world. I feel relief also because I am not alone in these experiences in the world. It makes me numb feeling such opposing emotions at the very same time. I’m too tired and sore too think about it or anything. I need to turn on the TV and just melt into stupid humor. Laughing and sex, well ok and sugar, they are the greatest survival tools in the world, aren’t they?

I feel alone in this project. Unfortunately, I haven’t been able to really talk with anyone.

February 2002

Man I’m tired of women. I have the most misogynistic thoughts go through my head sometimes doing this work. It scares me about myself. I think I am just angry with myself and them for internalizing so much bullshit and reifying it every day still. It sucks big time.

It has been far too long since I wrote in this journal; I have needed and wanted to on so many occasions, but have not either had the time or the courage to do it. I don’t know why I hide but I do so very often, don’t I? The data collection is over for phase one and I am glad. I have grown to hate them, all of them. And to love them on other days. What a mess. How can such a simple thing as a survey make me so crazy?

March 2002

At what point do I no longer have control over my senses to be able to consent? At what point does my consent become meaningless? When I am intoxicated to what BAC? If I have ingested how much cocaine? Heroin? Ecstasy? Marijuana? Acid? Vicodin? What if I have been
brainwashed and live under a sense of false consciousness? And who gets to determine which consciousness is not false? It is all too complicated for me. I don't know. Is it ok to get wasted and have sex with someone? Is that the deal? Intoxicated sex is bad? It's some form of sexual violation? Why? When did I decide that it is bad to combine mood/mind altering substances with sex? When did I decide to forget that it can be just about pleasure too? Has all the morality propaganda since September 11th gotten to me? What the hell am I doing? I just don't know anymore.

I really get agitated when I enter surveys. I have enjoyed this project for the most part until this afternoon and it dawned on me that I haven't disliked it really since the last time I entered surveys—too many stories all at once in one day. I entered like 50 of them today and heard horrific stories of brothers and husbands and boyfriends and strangers and the whole nine yards. Date rape drugs and forced sex and unwanted sex, coerced sex drunken sex, child molestation and guilt self blame minimization techniques and flat ass denial. I got so agitated I couldn't stop entering them and I couldn't face getting on the phone to try to cheerfully request people's help in finishing my project.
CHAPTER EIGHT

FINDINGS—RAPE

Even before I began to decide about college, I was afraid of being raped. I still am. I try to park my car during the light times of day and avoid night parking. I carry an umbrella for safety protection and I keep my guard up. I am still very worried about being raped or someone attempting to rape me. I get very nervous and very overcautious. I am careful, and I hope I will always be that way.

(Participant)

Question Three—The Meanings of Sexual Violence for Women

Demographics

Some of the comments participants made on the survey directly relate to demographic issues. For example, as I analyzed the data from the incident reports on the consequences for the victim, I noticed that race/ethnicity was mentioned several times in the context of participants’ prejudice toward and fear of people who ethnically resemble the perpetrator.

P: I was scared to go to school and missed the last week. Lots of physical exams and tests etc because I pretended to be sick. My parents still complain of the medical bills from that year. I couldn’t go to camp in the summer or play softball because I was sick. I have a fear of older men, especially white men.

P: The persons that did the above mentioned incident were Turkish, very dark hair, dark skin so now I really have a prejudice against people (especially men) that look like that. If something that I’m doing voluntarily reminds me of it I get upset and have to stop.

272
P: I call it child molestation. I had a fear of grown ups, especially white men. I lost interest in playing and became a loner. I have a fear of exposure. Maybe they'll think I did do it.

P: I had to move out of the dorms because my parents thought it wasn’t safe. I didn’t feel safe anymore. I am scared of American males and don’t trust them.

Some of the comments participants made reflected their beliefs about marriage. For example:

P: It’s not rape because I was married but I felt violated: wishing I had stood up for myself more.

P: It was my first time and I had always planned to wait until I was married for religious reasons. So I felt extremely guilty and in need of repentance. I also felt I needed to try and have a relationship and even marry with this person because I had sex with him. So I tried but he just wanted someone to have sex with.

P: None, he is my boyfriend and we have been together for over 3 years. I think in a relationship there are times when you don’t really want to have sex but you feel you should please your partner. My boyfriend has done the same for me before.

P: I hated myself for giving in to his pressure but he’s my husband so I had to do it but I hated it (anal sex). It’s painful and dirty. Eventually I’d give in because I didn’t want to get hurt worse.

As for age and academic status, these next quotes the variety of women’s perspectives on the link between age and rape.

I: Yeah, and there’s all the parties and all the hang out things that college age people do. Where like adults don’t really, I don’t know, they don’t get themselves into trouble as much.

I: Yeah, and especially, you know, like freshman that are really naïve. And don’t know any better, I mean look what happened to me, and I think I have a pretty good head on my shoulders, I mean…

I: So no. I think he is just as responsible. I don’t think it makes any difference, even if they’re 90 and have been married for 50 years.

EF: That’s very refreshing to hear, very much so. I appreciate it.
Incident Reports

When given an open-ended opportunity to describe the location where an incident of sexual violence occurred, women used a variety of terms. Table 26 reports the locations specified by women on the incident reports. Over 80% of all incidents of sexual violence occurred inside homes/apartments, college/dorms, and parties. Nearly two out of three incidents happened at home.

Table 26

Locations of Incidents Taken From Incident Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laundromat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concert</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a Date</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot Tub Place</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Computer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific City (i.e. Cancun, Mexico)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Locations</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside (Parking Lots, Parks, beaches, etc)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorm/College</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home/Apartment</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>635</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total percentages do not add up to 100.0 because of rounding.*
Table 27 shows the different terms women used on the incident reports to describe their relationships to perpetrators. Again, many different terms were used to describe similar relationships:

I: Can I say that he was an Asshole? Because that’s the language I use.

Table 27

Relationship Terms From Incident Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship to Perpetrator</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyfriend/Girlfriend</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband/Partner/Spouse</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EX - (BF, GF, HB)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know Through a Third Party</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boss</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher/School Employee</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random Person—Just Met</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classmate</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Persons Involved</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixture of Relationships (i.e. friend/acquaintance)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Worker</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babysitter</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Friend</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Buddy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend’s Relative</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbor</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Night Stand</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Club Member</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relationship terms participants used were collapsed into more general categories, as presented in Table 28. For example, a stranger and a random person...
seem to have nearly identical meanings: Both involve a relative lack of relationship between the parties. Similarly, friends and best friends were combined because they have similar meanings.

Table 28
Types of Relationship Terms From Incident Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recoded Relationship</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority Figure</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Persons</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixture of Relationship</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimate</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>692</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In combining data categories, “acquaintance” includes those identified as acquaintances, people known through a third party, classmates, a friend’s relative, coworkers, neighbors, and country club members. The category of “intimate” includes perpetrators identified as dates, boyfriends, girlfriends, husbands, spouses, partners, exes, one-night stands, and sex buddies. Please note that the term intimate is not intended to imply that all people in these relationships have previously been sexually active with the participant. Rather, it is used to signify a deeper relationship than acquaintance, with the potential for sexual involvement.99

Finally, the category of authority figures includes those identified as bosses, teachers/school employees, and babysitters. These categories offer a way of

---

98 Total percentages do not add up to 100.0 because of rounding.
99 I suppose one could argue that sex buddies and one night stands do not involve bonds at all, let alone deep ones. Nevertheless, because sexual activity is implied, I thought it appropriate to include these in the intimate category.
organizing relationship information that allows us to see more clearly the patterns that emerge as women identify their perpetrators linguistically.

Participants offered important information about their experiences of the aftermath of sexual violence, presented in Table 29. Almost no one officially reports it (2.4%), and some stay silent forever. Many tell trusted friends and family (60.5%) but still believe that others hold them responsible (25.5%) for the violence that was inflicted on them. The amount of self-blame is incredibly high; even when they do use the word rape to describe the event (which is itself a rarity) women still hold themselves partially or even totally responsible (48.1%).

Table 29

Affirmative Responses on Six Yes/No Questions From Incident Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reported the Incident</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Told Others</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe Others Hold Her Responsible</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holds Herself Responsible</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledged as Rape Then</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledged as Rape Now</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P: It was some time before I was even able to admit the incident had occurred. I was ashamed and felt dirty. The only time I can remember was once when the “foreplay” of a voluntary sexual act, about 8 months after the incident, put me in a similar position and the memory made me start crying. My then current partner stopped immediately.

P: I’ve never told anyone.

P: At the time I was too scared of what people would think if I told them I was raped. When my friends found out that I had sex, I told them it was fine. It wasn’t until 2 years later that I told someone that I was really raped, and that person never told anyone.

P: Nothing happened.
P: You feel as though you’re regarded as less of a woman, even though you know one other than you and the other person know of the incident. It becomes emotionally draining after time.

P: I shouldn’t have been alone.

P: I have only been able to share the events with one other person that wasn’t there. I have not been able to be sexual with my boyfriend who I love very much since then. I have a negative view of anyone associated with fraternities.

P: I just thought it was my fault. Why couldn’t I have stopped him, gotten away or beaten the crap out of him or something? I think of it as rape because my boyfriend’s opinion mattered. At least 1 person may hold me responsible because she liked the guy and accused me of doing it voluntarily--of being a slut. I’ve never drank in public again. I had a nervous breakdown. I never told anyone except my current boyfriend who knows the whole story. I am on Zoloft. I still blame myself. I shouldn’t have been drunk. He got kicked off campus eventually.

P: I have one mistake that I made [having sex with a male friend while under the influence]. It made me realize not to get so intoxicated to not realize what was going on. I just am mad at myself for letting it happen.

P: At the time I just thought of it as wrong, now sometimes I think of it as rape. I think about it all the time and the ways it could have been changed. I wasn’t very cautious that night.

P: [I have] recurring nightmares and because of the rapes, I can not have children.

P: He holds me responsible. Increased promiscuous meaningless sex, poor self esteem. It’s all I’m good for. I told my current boyfriend of 2 years. First I revisited it because I was in a relationship and needed to get it out and dealt with it.

P: He does--I should’ve divorced him years ago. We got divorced. The lawyers and the move financially devastated me. I had bruises, cut in the eye from the lamp and sore muscles.

P: I guess I thought it was rape at the time but then I doubted it and then the clinic talked to me. I shouldn’t have drank so much. I got
tested for HIV and pregnancy. Others misunderstood. I feel gross. I wanna puke when I think about it.

P: No, yes, sometimes, I don’t know. It changes all the time. I’m still processing it 10 years later.

EF: Do you think of this incident as rape today?

P: Not until right now.

Vignettes

While most of the data provided by the discussion of vignettes is still to be analyzed, some obvious patterns emerged while conducting the interviews. For the most part there was consistency in what to call the events, but very little consistency regarding who was responsible. Furthermore, there was inconsistency from one vignette to the next for some participants. While the first, third, fifth, seventh, and ninth vignettes are nearly identical to one another; participants frequently changed their minds with each one. A similar pattern, although not so clearly apparent, was seen with the other four vignettes, which are also nearly identical to each other. What follows is a series of excerpts taken from the vignette portion of one single interview. Starting with the first vignette, this interview shows how a participant’s definitions can change from situation to situation.

EF: What do you call what happened there? What word or phrase do you use to describe what happened in that?

I: Mm [pause]. Sex.

EF: Okay. What is it, how do you define that and what is it about that situation that fits that definition for you?

I: Uh, even though she said no, she didn’t object anymore after you know, he started [...] make me all happy and stuff.
EF: Okay, so what I’m hearing you say is she said no at first, but then...


EF: Is there anything—is there a crime happening that situation, in your opinion?

I: I don’t think so because a lot of people say no, no, no and then it keeps going and going and then they don’t object after that. Go into a different state of mind.

EF: What about responsibility? Who’s responsible for that event?

I: Both of them.

EF: Is it shared equally or is one of them more responsible? How does it divide out, do you think?

I: Um, I think they’re both pretty much responsible. It takes two – well, if one had to be more responsible, the guy would probably be.

EF: how much more, do you think?

I: He had the control. He was on the top, and...she’s laying there.

EF: Okay. So out of 100% responsibility, how much would you give to him and how much to her?

I: 75 him.

EF: 75/25? Okay. Look at number 2...What do you call that situation?

I: I would have to say...rape, because she said no and it was all right with him and then she said no again, and he held her down and gave her bruises and she was trying to fight. Even though they talked afterwards, still.

EF: So the fact that she said no and he held her down and there was physical bruising, all of that makes it clear to you that it’s rape. Would you call this a crime? I mean if you were in charge of that whole criminal justice thing, would you call that a crime, a punishable crime?

I: ...yeah.
EF: What would you like to see happen as a punishment?

I: I would – it totally depends on the girl’s outlook, you know.

EF: So you would go to her for guidelines on how to deal with that.

I: Yeah. Like how she felt about the situation.

EF: Okay. What about responsibility? Who owns the responsibility in this one?

I: He does.

EF: All of it?

I: Uh, no. Probably…80% of it.

EF: Okay, 80/20 in this one.

I: Because she left with him, so, I mean she’s got to have a little bit.

EF: Okay, fair enough. Look at number 3…What do you call that situation?

I: I don’t know. Um…it doesn’t say anything about her fighting. Other than just saying no. I would say…[---] enough in there to—I mean it was a stranger so, it’s kind of weird. But, I mean, you’d think that it would say something about her fighting or…’cause like penetration occurred, if you really didn’t want somebody near you then…

EF: How about responsibility? Who do you see being responsible for this one?

I: The man.

EF: Totally, or does she own any of it?

I: Maybe like 5% because, like 10%, I mean she[---] I’m assuming, but still, she had no control of him. Coming in that room and holding—getting on top of her and…

EF: Okay. Look at number 4.

I: Same thing. With this one I would consider it as rape. Same exact—it doesn’t matter whether you’re drinking or not.
EF: So the role of alcohol doesn’t matter?

I: It does, but I mean, not in this specific case because the same thing happened.

EF: What is it about this one that makes it so clear that the alcohol doesn’t even matter?

I: They weren’t drinking and they still went somewhere and she said no, and she got the bruises and she got the...

EF: Okay. So, first she says no and the bruising makes it clear for you?

I: Mm-hm.

EF: What about responsibility in this one?

I: Same as... the [---].

EF: So how much, is it all the guy, or does Linda have some of it?

I: She went with him, so she’s got a little bit.

EF: Look at number 5.

I: It was not sex—I mean rape—in any way. It was total 50/50.

EF: 50/50 responsibility and what do we call this?

I: Sex.

EF: And you sound even more clear about this one than the first one, where you wanted to call it sex too, but you hesitated. In this one, it’s like flat out, this is sex. What is it about the two that makes it even more clear?

I: It was just smooth; there was not any objections. Um... and it just happened.

EF: It was smooth, and it just happened. Okay. How about number 6?

I: Isn’t this the same as the first one?

EF: Very similar except she’s the one it says is mildly intoxicated. It doesn’t say anything about him. So it leads you to maybe assume that
he’s sober. How does that change what you think about this one?

I: He took advantage of her.

EF: Does that make this one worse?

I: Yes.

EF: So, will you punish it differently or...

I: Yes, because when somebody’s intoxicated they always don’t, they don’t always make the right – they can’t always fight back.

EF: So her ability to fight back is diminished, because she’s intoxicated, which makes it.

I: But she still gave the effort.

EF: Which makes it rape?

I: Yes.

EF: What about responsibility in this one?

I: Responsibility I think would... she’s drinking and so that[---]. Same. 75/25.

EF: Okay, look at number 7...what about this one?

I: [pause] I don’t know...I don’t know! I really couldn’t[---] rape.

EF: What do you want to call it? What is it that makes it not rape?

I: She said no, she said no like three times, but after awhile she still let it...

EF: Let it go on. Okay, that’s fair enough. What about responsibility in this one?

I: Responsibility goes mostly to the pushy chick.

EF: The pushy chick, okay. How much does she get?

I: Probably, 75/25. Er, no – probably[---].

EF: Okay. Look at number 8.
I: Um, I would still, I would consider it...rape, because it doesn’t matter the age; she was 20 and she was really intoxicated and she said no, and there’s only so much no you can say. You know if he’s holding her down, bruising her then that’s rape.

EF: Okay, the holding down and bruising makes it rape. What about responsibility in this one?

I: [---]; I don’t know, because she went with him, that’s some responsibility, but if she thinks that [---] should respect the no, then she shouldn’t have any responsibility as far as...well, she was drinking. Um...

EF: There’s a lot to consider on these, isn’t there? It’s not an easy question. What do you think, what’s your gut response in terms of the responsibility on this one?

I: 25/75; 75/25.

EF: Okay, look at the last one. What about this situation?

I: Either that she was, you don’t know enough if she was scared and stuff like that. So you can’t...I: Because she’s saying...I mean...I was thinking of like how much bigger he was than her; [---] he’s a lot bigger. Um...just, how she was saying, “no, Jim, don’t.” And then, “I don’t want to, let me go.” So like...

EF: Okay, so that one gives you the idea that she’s actually afraid.

I: Yeah, she’s like: “Don’t! Stop!” So she said it a whole bunch of times.

EF: So what do you want to call this one?

I: [---] how she feels; like if she said more, you know, that’s the end of it. Um [---] rape, I don’t know.

EF: Okay. It’s a confused line for you; you don’t know which way to call it until you’ve talked to her, is that what I’m hearing you say?

I: Yeah. [---] be like, no, like..

EF: So until you’ve actually talked to her and found out how she feels as a result of this, you don’t know whether to call it sex or rape?
I: Yeah.

While this particular participant called the first vignette sex, nearly everyone else identified it with terminology that involved the word rape. For example, the following are the most common responses I received when I asked what term or phrase would participants use to describe the event that transpired.

I: Definitely rape.

I: Well, technically if she said no, wouldn’t that be rape?

I: Rape.

I: Date rape.

I: I guess technically it would be rape. Because she did say don’t and stop. Um...let’s see, time, she, it didn’t—I mean if it just ended like that, then, because it didn’t seem like she put any...she didn’t speak up enough.

Participants seemed to have the most trouble with vignette seven (lesbian date rape) and nine (intimate date rape), although a few struggled with number five, where all signs of refusal had been removed.

EF: Good enough. Look at number 5. What do you call this situation?

I: It’s like she didn’t say anything, I mean, it’s kind of like you’d have to know her and like see how she felt about whether she considered it rape or not, because if she really didn’t want to do it she may consider it rape, but she might not because she didn’t say anything, you know, and she doesn’t give any indications that she doesn’t want to. It’s really hard then, not to know, unlike he didn’t ask, which is maybe a little part of his problem, but, you know, he could have asked. But, you know, I’ve been told by other people, well, how do you [---] say so, all my friends like, you know, had conversations like that. But I would kind of say it’s really, like generally probably both of their faults, maybe like a little more his, but not by a whole lot, but still more his just ‘cause he physically didn’t ask, you know, like, do you want to. But otherwise you can’t really technically call it rape, without even asking her, but even then it would still be hard if she did say no, so...
EF: So what responsibility do you want to give to her and what to him?

I: Maybe like 55 to him and 50 to her.

EF: What do you call this? If you can't call it rape, what do you want to call it?

I: Maybe not a verbal asking. I don’t know. Or, just like not asking permission.

I: I guess I would just call it sexual intercourse, since she didn’t protest at all...Um, um...well I wouldn’t consider it rape because she did not verbally protest. She didn’t do anything, you know she didn’t perform any actions that would show that he was not interested in continuing with what was going on. It was mutual, from what I can read, it seems that they both wanted to have sex. That’s why I would call it sexual intercourse.

I: No. It doesn’t really, it doesn’t really have a label if she didn’t want to. I’d almost just call it like a misunderstanding or a miscommunication. I mean that’s horrible but, she has to say something and he should be asking but, even if he doesn’t ask, it’s your responsibility to speak up and say no, You know? The girl should have—I mean we do have some responsibility in sex. We do. You know?

EF: So what I hear you say is that it’s sex. You just don’t know whether or not it was consensual?

I: Exactly. I don’t know from the story if she consented or not to it. Like, I mean, she didn’t say no but that doesn’t mean that she was willing to. That’s the problem with that story.

EF: Let’s look at the seventh one. What do you call this one?

I: I don’t know.

EF: what is it that makes it different for you, what is it about this one that makes it harder to label?
I: Well, it's two girls. I don't know that makes it different for me. And this was oral intercourse. I don't know. I just don't see how you could like force someone... I don't know. Like you could kick somebody or something, like for oral intercourse, I don't know how you could force someone, like... you know, to let you do that.

I: I would still consider that to be sexual assault. I personally don't consider oral sex to be sex. So...

EF: Look at number 9. What do you call this situation?

I: Yeah, 'cause I wouldn't consider her so much a victim. I mean, she's... she's still, I mean, I guess she's been victimized but I wouldn't consider her a victim. I mean, it's inappropriate, it's like, abusive tendencies, but... I don't know. I don't know, somehow it just seems different when you're married.

Once or twice a participant remained completely consistent throughout all nine vignettes, which was truly a refreshing change. For example, the next participant, who is responding to the question of how to punish the perpetrator in the second vignette, maintained her zero tolerance policy to the bitter end.

I: [pause] Probably punish it pretty close to the same. I think that anybody who violates a woman with penetration, no means no and if you violate that, I... I don't care, I mean if she, she may have liked him, she may have been intoxicated, she may have wanted to play kissy-face with him, but she wasn't wearing a sign that said, Screw me.

Research Terminology

I asked participants to describe what they think of when they hear certain words in a sexual violence survey. I asked them about such words as consent, against her will, actively resisted, force, intoxication, harmed in a non-physical way, penetration, initial sexual advances, intercourse, and obligation. I also asked participants to differentiate between a stranger, an acquaintance, and a friend.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Participants’ Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Penetration:</td>
<td>I: I don’t like that word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EF: You don’t like that word?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I: No, it just seems very vulgar. [Laughs] I think of penetration as in something coming in contact with something else. And it’s uncomfortable, and like, you know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I: I think that, not anal...but...vaginal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I: Sexual intercourse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I: Penetration, when an outside object goes inside of a body, either, you know, the mouth, or actually in the vagina or anything like that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I: Um...I guess ejaculation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I: The first thing that comes to mind is intercourse. Full intercourse. That does not necessarily mean it goes on for very long, maybe it only is a very brief moment, but that brief moment is certainly enough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intoxication:</td>
<td>I: Um...There’s such that wide range right there. Like I think intoxication for me is anything past three drinks. Like I wouldn’t even touch a motor vehicle after I’ve had one. People think I go to an extreme, but –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I: Maybe being unable to make quality decisions. Being unable to make the smart choice for the situation that you’re in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I: Being drunk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I: Alcohol or drugs or a high level where he certainly wouldn’t drive and he probably wouldn’t even attempt to walk home.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consent: I: Well, consent is a very fuzzy line. To consent is to say, yes, this is okay. Consenting isn’t always saying yes, this is absolutely what I want to do. Having to deal a lot with my friend and his statutory rape case I have questioned the word consent a lot because a 14-year-old girl can say yes but can she really, somebody can still say that’s not what she meant. So, consent is fuzzy. But I would not say that consent is a definite yes. Consent to me is more like I’m not saying no.

I: Um, she expresses verbally that it’s okay or if, like if she makes physical advances to him.

I: Communication. I think communication is key for consent. I think that a lot of people, or a lot of times consent is assumed and that’s, you know, inaccurate.

Force: I: Like someone holding you down, like so you can’t move.

I: Force, where one person resists and the other one is applying pressure.

Obligation: I: You feel like you have to, you owe them something.

I: A chore.

I: You absolutely have to, like there’s no way of getting out of it.

I: It means…you’re in a committed relationship.

I: Oh God, I hate that word. I think that is just, that word has so much baggage. If you are obligated to do something I think it is a negative thing because if you are obligated, then suddenly that means you have to do it and you really don’t want to.

Intercourse: I: It doesn’t necessarily, sex is not the first thing that comes into my mind, but again words are
my thing. Intercourse can be a discussion, a conversation. It can be...any kind of an exchange at all.

I: Intercourse, where the penis penetrates the vagina or the anus.

**Harmed in a Non-Physical Way:**

I: Verbal.

I: In a nonphysical way, yeah, it's like somebody either saying something to someone that I wouldn't want said, or spreading a rumor, or something like that. Something that would affect me.

I: I would picture some kind of honor or benefit being withheld, you know, for example a promotion, for example an A, for example being on the team, being allowed to do something that perhaps, saying to someone you won't be able to do that unless you make me happy right now. Or, conversely, that you're going to have to do something you don't want to do because of this like write a paper, you know, leave the party, you know, there's some kind of, you know what I mean?

**Initial Sexual Advance:**

I: I mean it could mean anything—I've heard everything. From a guy coming up to you in the bar and saying, I'm trying to fuck tonight, to just, you know, a small innuendo. It's like, guys are...guys are nasty. They'll say anything, especially when people start to get drunk. It's just the initial inquiry, you know like it's here if you want it.

I: I picture somebody moving in on somebody else, like kissing the neck, kind of trying to fondle them.
Against Her Will: I: A guy [---] coming on to a girl and her protesting.

I: Um, like somebody holding you down, like you're like kicking and fighting and saying no, and they're just holding you down.

I: Against her will. Basically forced.

Actively Resisted: I: Well, I picture a girl saying no, and pushing like, a man away.

I: Actively resisted...I can see pushing away, physically. Physical movement of pushing away, trying to create distance.

Stranger: I: Um, well I would say a stranger is someone I don't know at all – like, maybe met that night, and an acquaintance would be someone that I...know and have been talking to, and not just like, know and see 'em at other places. And just like talked once in a while, but just like, continued talking like, phone calls, like, not great friends but knew them. Kind of well.

I: Um...a stranger I think is someone that you maybe have seen before but you've never met them. And an acquaintance to me is someone that you've known for a little bit maybe, a few weeks, or even a few days, but you don't know them well enough to call them your friend, but you wouldn't say that they're a stranger either.

I: If I were in a situation like these, I don't think, I think both would affect me the same. Or, you know, even acquaintance might affect me more simply because, in thinking about it now, they would, I think it would be—if it was a stranger I would feel more like it was a random thing, I was kind of in the wrong place at the wrong time, but if it was an acquaintance I would feel totally betrayed, and I don't think that I would be able to gain...other people would be able to gain my trust.
Acquaintance: I: A stranger, no one, is like no one you’ve talked to ever before. You might have seen them but you’ve never talked to them. Like, an acquaintance would be somebody like, you’re my acquaintance because I’ve talked to you before, I don’t know you on a—well, I guess, you kind of know me a little more ‘cause, just because of these questions, but I had to say somebody you just talked about like one subject like, somebody in my class who’s another student, who you just associate during class, just about that class. You don’t really talk to them about you’re life outside the class.

I: You’ve met your acquaintances before. You’ve never met a stranger.

I: Acquaintance is someone you’ve met a few times, you say hello when you pass and you see them in the hallway and on a street. Stranger is someone that you know, its just someone that’s around all the time, you don’t necessarily have seen them a number of times, you’ve never talked to them. Acquaintance is someone you’ve had communications with, communicated with.

Friend: I: I would say trust. I may know, I may have an acquaintance, someone at work that I know a lot of things about them, you know, more than where they work and how many kids they have or whatever. I could know just as much about an acquaintance as I do a friend but whether or not I trust that person probably would be the single most important factor.

I: Well, I think an acquaintance is again someone you only know general things about, and a friend more personal, maybe you would see them or spend more time with them.

I: A friend is someone you have ties to. You guys bond, on a certain level and you guys have...a relationship. You have a relationship. And with acquaintance you really don’t have a relationship, you just know of that person.
During the interviews, I asked two questions that also provide insight into how women define these terms and the events involved. First, I asked them what they would call a situation where someone they had just met in a public place, like a bar, follows them when they leave and rapes them. Their responses, while they all included the word rape, varied in terms of the type of rape and also how certain they seemed to be of their definitions.

EF: If someone you recognize by name or face that you just met for the first time in a public setting like a bar, follows you out to your car and rapes you, what do you call that? Is that a stranger rape, an acquaintance rape or a date rape?

I: It's definitely not date rape. I wouldn't consider myself on a date with that person, so, you said that I would go out and I had recognized his face or name?

EF: You recognize their name or face because you just met them for the first time that night. So you're in the bar and somebody introduces you to Bill; later in the evening, Bill follows you to your car.

I: Yeah, I wouldn't consider that acquaintance rape really, since [pause] maybe if you had spent half the night talking to Bill, you know if he, if I had gotten to know Bill more.

EF: By more than just his name or face.

I: Yeah, yeah.

EF: So if you spent time with Bill during that one setting, and then it happened, it might be acquaintance rape? But just having met someone makes it stranger to you?

I: Mm-hm. Yeah. Even if I had recognized his face from three or four times before. I still didn't know anything about him, besides his face and his name; I would not consider him an acquaintance.

I: It's an acquaintance borderline stranger. 'cause like you still may recognize him but you still don't know him, so. It wouldn't go past acquaintance.
I: An acquaintance rape, probably.

I: Acquaintance rape.

I: Stranger rape.

I: It's not a date rape because you didn't have a really date with them. You know his name but you don't know anything else, so I would say, and you never really talked to him, so it would be stranger rape.

I next asked participants if it is wrong to have sex with someone who is a willing participant, but who is also clearly intoxicated. The responses that women gave included some of the most interesting and disturbing ideas I encountered in my interviewing.

EF: Let me ask you this: Is it wrong to have sex with someone who's a willing participant but they're clearly intoxicated? So if somebody's saying, "Yeah, yeah, I want to have sex with you, I want to have sex with you," but they are clearly just wasted, is it wrong?

I: [laughs] No.

EF: No. You have a look on your face, like But! Is there a But there?

I: Well, I guess it depends on the guy.

EF: How so?

I: Like, well, I personally have been in the situation and I've been so intoxicated that I'm like, yes, I want to have sex, and the guy just says: Are you sure, Are you really sure, you know. So I guess, because I mean I did it and I don't, you know, feel bad for doing it. So, I guess it depends on how - well, no. Can you ask the question again?

EF: Is it wrong to have sex with a willing participant that's hammered?

I: No. No.

I: I wouldn't call that rape, no.

I: I don't think that it's wrong; I think it's both of our mistakes. Like if you know she was drunk and you're obviously taking advantage of her
but she's putting herself in that situation, I mean it's wrong, like the
guy shouldn't do that, but you know, that's the thing with rape, is girls
will get drunk and then regret things they did. That's not fair, you
know. You can't put that on the guy, when, you know...

I: It depends on how well I know them.

EF: Okay, how so?

I: If you were in an ongoing relationship with someone who was
intoxicated, and wanted to have sex. Someone you've been having sex
with and is soberer than you, then I would say that was okay.

I: No. Hm-mm. I mean, I think it's different, but that's like how my
last relationship started out. [Laughs] I mean, I don't think that he did
anything wrong, but the relationship still didn't end up good, but...

EF: But it developed from that initial drunken meeting...

I: Yeah.

EF: Into a relationship?


I: He's taking, I feel like that's taking advantage of. Um, to me sex is
kind of a big deal, so if their...I don't know, I don't even see how you
could (laughs) want that from someone who might not want it from
you the next day, but if she's saying yes, and I wouldn't call it rape. I
wouldn't call it rape. If she is drunk and she is around other people like
that, she, to me, has really put herself in that situation and...if...
if...especially if she's asking for it. You know if she's literally being
the one pushing on the guy, I just, I don't know. I'd have to know the
whole story, but to me, if the girl says yes, and the guy says yes, drunk
or not, it doesn't matter. It seems like a safe situation.

I: Um...I think it would depend on like, like if you're in a relationship,
like you got drunk, but like...like I don't think that like...'cause well,
if you're already having sex in your relationship, I don't think that
would matter, but like a stranger or just an acquaintance, then I don't
think that's appropriate.
I: I would never personally do it, and I know the only time I’ve ever had sex when I was drunk, usually I’ve been dating the person for a while and we’ve talked about it, like we’re going to a party and he’ll even ask me before we go, like if this happens later tonight, is that okay, and I’ll say yes or no, like based on my feelings at that time. Like, and if I say no, then later on if I’m willing, I tried that and he stopped me, saying: Nope, you said no earlier. You’re drunk now. See you in the morning. So. They leave it at that. So I’ve been very fortunate with really nice boyfriends.

I: Yes. All the time unless if it’s, like say you’ve been dating someone for years and you’ve had sex numerous times and they both want to, then I think it’s kind of like, it’s something they always do. But if it’s other than that, no I don’t think it’s right.

I: Yes and no. I mean they are intoxicated, and if you can’t tell and they say yes, I mean yes means yes in my book, I mean if they do say yes, but I mean, if you can tell they’re intoxicated I don’t think that you should continue. I mean, you don’t know if it’s against their will once they’re sober or not.

EF: So what do you call that, if it’s right but it’s not right?

I: Yeah, I just think if you’re not sure, you shouldn’t do it at all. If you have some question in your head, I mean, don’t do it, because it could come back and haunt you.

EF: What about? Would you apply the word rape to that?

I: Um...I don’t think I...well, that’s a good question. I mean, they said yes, I don’t think that you could really call it rape, I mean, even though they are intoxicated and they might not. It’s a really good question; I don’t know if I’d call that rape.... Wrong is a good word.

I: Um... to a degree, definitely. I mean, because a lot of times when people do get intoxicated like really bad, they black out and they don’t even remember what happened. So I guess I would say that that’s definitely, I mean, yeah that definitely could be considered rape. Yeah, because like taking advantage of somebody that doesn’t really have enough focus, so...
I: No, 'cause they said yes. And they said that they would.

I: I would think that would be a bad moral decision.

EF: in your opinion is it a crime?

I: Um...I guess not really. Maybe if the person, you know the next day, said that he or she had been raped. Obviously they were intoxicated and probably not in their best judgment so, maybe.

EF: What if the person having sex with them is also clearly intoxicated?

I: If [---] consider it an unwise decision. Maybe not a crime. If a friend of mine went out and he had sex with a woman who had been intoxicated, but who had wanted to have sex, I wouldn't be very happy with his decision.

EF: but you wouldn’t call it rape?

I: Yeah. If the woman doesn’t feel like she has been raped, then I guess I really don’t see how it could be considered rape.

I: Yeah, I think so.

EF: Would you call it rape?

I: Well, that’s difficult. If you both want it, but yeah... still, you know, the other person is not... the next day he might not even remember, you know, so I’m not sure if it’s rape.

EF: What do you want to call it? It’s wrong, but rape isn’t quite the right word.

I: Taking advantage of someone, it really is.

EF: would it be a crime? Do you think it should be a crime? If both wanted it and the one is just clearly intoxicated.

I: It doesn’t matter who it was the [---]. Maybe it is rape, I don’t know. That’s really difficult, isn’t it?
EF: It is. I think it's the hardest question in this whole thing.

I: Yeah, because it's really taking advantage of someone.

EF: Yeah. So at first you hesitated to call it rape, but yes, it's wrong. And now you're moving closer and closer to rape and there's a phrase, taking advantage of.

I: Yes. Yes. Absolutely!

EF: And I hear that it's somewhere between wrong and rape, it's taking advantage of. Maybe that's the label, but it is something that there should be a reaction to. I'm hearing...

I: Absolutely, even though both wanted it. Because for me, that's really, if you really define rape, you know, having sex, and someone really doesn't want, one of the other person doesn't want that and even makes it clear. But in this case, if one is really intoxicated, I think, yeah, that's really wrong too.

I: I think that the fact that she consented, but she's intoxicated, her judgment is impaired, but the person... that her judgment is also impaired because she's intimated by this person to say no, and I think that is the same, it's a form of abuse, but the fact that she didn't say no, she didn't say--she didn't give a yes or a no, and in this situation, this person gave a yes, but her judgment was impaired.

EF: So the yes doesn't really mean anything?


I: I would call it (pause) I would call it like molestation I think, because...in some way, that this person is convinced that they're... they should have sex with you, but their judgment is impaired, just as a child would be, if you convinced them to have, that the act that your performing on them is okay. And, for some, and even if their judgment is 'paired by the reward that you're offering them. I think that's kind of like tied together. Do you get what I'm saying?
I: Yeah, it is. Yeah, she’s consenting. You know she’s consenting. But, if you wait for somebody to get drunk, or you get them drunk, you know, like yes... then you’re just sick for that. You know, it’s like...there’s nothing rewarding or - it’s just degrading, like it’s just...blah [disgusted noise]. And it’s something she’s going to wake up in the morning like, ew—not really morally right about it, I don’t think.

I: I think that it’s okay if and only if he said it was okay before he was intoxicated.

EF: That’s an interesting answer.

I: Because, that way you know he was thinking without being inhibited by the alcohol and then, if he’s still saying yes while he’s drunk then I think it’s okay.

EF: So if it hasn’t been talked about before the intoxication, the answer is wrong?

I: Right. I don’t think that they should be doing that.

EF: Let me ask you this then: Is it rape?

I: It’s rape if one of the...one of the participant’s says no, and [...] that they don’t want to, otherwise no.

EF: Okay, but if they’re both willing, even if they haven’t talked about it and he’s hammered, and you do him anyway, even though you never talked about it, it’s not rape? It’s wrong, but rape is not the word for it.

I: Yeah. It may be wrong, yeah. But if he says no, then I did him anyways, then it’s rape.

EF: Okay. So rape we hold for the word no, when it’s an expressed no.

I: Yeah.

EF: Okay, but in a situation like this when it’s wrong, but it’s not rape, it’s something else. Should it be punishable? Should it be a crime? Or is it just ethically wrong? Does it just make you an asshole or does it make you a criminal?
Assumptions About Giving Sexual Permission

Women were very open with information on their assumptions regarding their sexual permission policies. Two out of three women reported having a more restrictive “no until yes” policy, while one out of four women reported practicing “yes until no.” Table 30 shows the responses that women gave to questions about implied permission.

Table 30
Participants’ Assumptions About Sexual Permission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumption</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes Until No</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>25.7 One out of four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Until Yes</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>66.1 Two out of three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Specified)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I: [---] I mean, I, [---] terminologies, you know the whole yes until no or no until yes, and I don’t know, I kind of follow the whole yes until no thing because, personally it’s more comfortable for me. I mean I feel like I’m much more in control. That I don’t like—I mean, I guess, I’m more in control with no until yes but I don’t know, personally I don’t like stating exactly what can and can not happen. I’d much rather just let it happen and stop it when I don’t feel comfortable with it anymore.

P: Both, it depends.

P: No until yes within the state of marriage.
Table 31 presents the responses of the sub-sample of participants who reported that their policy was not “yes until no” or “no until yes,” but some “other” answer. Two out of three of these women reported a “no until marriage” policy. This group included a sizable number of international students from Asia. Most women in the “other” category who did not follow “no until marriage” said they followed a flexible policy that would allow them to switch between policies depending on the relationship, the kind of situation, and/or the specific kind of sexual advances involved.

Table 31

“Other” Assumptions Specified by Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumption</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Until Marriage</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixture of Both</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes Until Satisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P: Wait until you’re married—it’s a lot less stressful.

P: No until marriage then yes all the time.

P: After marriage *when husband initiates* it.

P: Kind of a combination of the two—I try something and ask if it was ok then I might ask if it ok to go onto the next step.

P: Depends on situation, who you’re with, past relationship with person, where you are.

P: It depends—random people then B but close friends and boyfriends then A.

P: Partners = A but strangers = B.
P: Depends on the move...kissing then A, but grabbing is B.

P: A mix. Some acts (like sex) then B but other acts like kissing and petting then A.

Participants were asked to estimate what percentages of the general population they believe follow sexual permission assumptions that are consistent with their own. Table 32 presents a tabulation of these estimates, and is based on the responses of 597 women, 297 (of 322) from the mail sample and 300 from the interview sample. The meaning or wording of this question may have been unclear to some of the mail sample; hence the 25 cases (9%) in this sample with missing data. There were no data missing data from the in person sample, because participants in this sample were able to clarify this question’s meaning during their interview.

Table 32

Percentage of the General Population Participants Believe Have Assumptions Consistent With Their Own

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of General Population</th>
<th>Yes Until No (25.8% Total Sample)</th>
<th>No Until Yes (67.0% Total Sample)</th>
<th>Other (Specified) (7.2% Total Sample)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Percent of Total Group</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 50</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 75</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76 - 100</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women who practice a less restrictive “yes until no” policy make up only 25.8 percent of the total sample. However, most believe that a majority of other women

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
follow the same less restrictive policy that they do: 76.3 percent estimate that more
than half of all other women practice "yes until no," Assuming that attitudes in the
population of college women are distributed similarly to my sample, this is an
overestimate of the number of others that agree with them.

Participants who say they follow a more restrictive "no until yes" policy
generally underestimate the degree to which others have policies similar to their own.
When estimating the degree to which others agree with their policy, 58 percent say
that half or less agree, while only 12.25 percent see a clear consensus (over 76 %) in
agreement with "no until yes." However, it was common for women in the "no until
yes" group to give qualifying statements regarding gender. Apparently, these women
believe that a majority of other women follow the same "no until yes" policy, while
men do not, as quotations provided below will show. For women who qualify their
estimates in this way, it is likely that they believe that their policy is held by a
majority of women. Because of differences in the way this question was interpreted, it
is not clear how much agreement these women saw from other women.

Only 7.2 percent of all women specified a personal policy other than "yes until
no" or "no until yes." The most frequently held "other" policy was "no until
marriage." Two groups of women were likely to hold this traditional view:
Conservative Christian women, and international students. Both of these groups see
themselves as minorities. Conservative Christians see themselves in disagreement
with the permissive sexual values of the general culture, while Asian women see
themselves in agreement with fellow Asian students, but different from American
women. A few women in the "other" group said that they followed different policies
depending on the situations they encountered. These women felt that their views were
consistent with those held by the general public.
P: 50% of the men and 75% of the women.

P: Men = 0% but women = 100%.

I: I'm a "yes" until you hear "no." Most people are.

P: Very low male higher for female.

P: I think it depends on gender.

P: I thought most people did it like me but experiences led me to believe otherwise.

P: Lots of people SAY they do B but they lie. In reality it's A all the way.

P: Everyone in China.

P: I think 100% of Japan does "no until marriage" and only about 10% of the USA follows that rule.

Question Four—Rape Prevalence

Sexual Violence Prevalence

Despite what we might want to believe or what conservatives are telling us, the data presented in this chapter suggest that sexual violence is indeed an extremely prevalent issue in women's lives. Table 33 presents a brief synopsis comparing prevalence rates found in the Koss (1987) study, which was conducted in 1985, with rates for this study, which collected data in 2001-2002. Both studies found that a majority of women have experienced at least one incident of sexual violence in their lifetimes: 53.5 percent for Koss and, 59.8 percent for Fisher.

More than ten percent of the participants in each study disclosed having experienced at least one incident that could be counted as attempted rape. A major difference between the two studies concerns completed rape: 15.4 percent of women in the Koss study reported having been raped, while the present study found a rate
twice as high (30.7 percent). Overall, more than one in four participants (>25%) in the 1985 Koss study and more than two in five participants (>40%) in this current study disclosed having experienced at least one incident of either rape or an attempted rape. Clearly, sexual violence is not an issue from the past; it is a current, real, and important issue in women’s lives today.

Table 33
Comparison of Prevalence Rates From Koss and Fisher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>3,187</td>
<td>622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Sexual Victimization</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Rape</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Rape and Attempted Rape:</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio: One in Four</td>
<td>Two in Five</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whenever I go to the health center on campus, I see brightly colored pamphlets lining each corridor that warn women of the dangers of rape. While some do address the issues of acquaintance rape, the most brightly colored ones warn women to be attentive of their drinks at all times to watch out for those dreaded date rape drugs. These fear-inducing pamphlets warn women to be extremely cautious at bars, parties, clubs, restaurants, in public, and even in private if not completely alone.

Table 34 presents a comparison of different risk factors associated with rape, first in terms of the number of women experiencing rape or attempted rape, then
according to the number of incidents reported by all women. Four percent of women report an experience that involved a date rape drug, or some other type of involuntary incapacitation. Rapes by strangers (without involuntary incapacitation) occur about twice as often to women (7.9%) as rapes that involve date rape drugs, and the numbers of incidents reported are nearly twice as high for strangers (8.7%) as for date rape drugs (5.1%)

When the number of women who have been raped under conditions of voluntary incapacitation are compared to those that involve date rape drugs, there is a huge difference: Women are seven times more likely to be raped while voluntarily incapacitated (35.9%) than women who succumb to date rape drugs (4.0%). Similarly, the number of incidents that involved voluntary incapacitation (32.3%) was six times more frequent than events involving date rape drugs.

Even more staggering are the numbers associated with events involving perpetrators known to the victim. While over one quarter of the women reported experiencing an event that counted as a rape or attempted rape by a perpetrator known to her (28.3%), over 90% of all incidents of sexual violence reported involved perpetrators known to the victim. The number of women and the number of incidents related to incidents occurring on campus (9.0% and 9.6%, respectively) were roughly equivalent to those related to incidents occurring at parties, bars, or restaurants (10.1% and 11.3%, respectively). Both occur over twice as often as the number of women and incidents occurring with date rape drugs.

The last table of this chapter, Table 35, presents a distribution of the eight sexual violence categories by age of victim as reported in the incident reports. It shows that two out of three of the incidents for which the age of the victim is known (64%) can be counted as rape or attempted rape. Moreover, over half of the incidents
(57.1%) occur when the victim is between the ages of 18 and 24, and another quarter of the incidents (24.4%) occur when the victim is between the ages of 16 and 17.

Table 34
Reported Rape or Attempted Rape in Relation to Rape Risk Factors at WMU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rape Risk Factor</th>
<th>Prevalence N=365 Women</th>
<th>Incidents N=742 Reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Rape Drugs</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strangers</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Incapacitation</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintances/Friends/Lovers</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorm Rooms</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parties/Bars/Restaurants</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 35
Distribution of the Eight Sexual Violence Categories by Age of Victim From Incident Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident</th>
<th>0 – 11 Child</th>
<th>12 – 15 Adolescent</th>
<th>16 – 17 Teen</th>
<th>18 – 24 College</th>
<th>25 + Adult</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed Rape</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Rape</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Coercion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Coercion</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Unwanted Sex</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Unwanted Sex</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligatory Sex</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Unwanted Obligatory Sex</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent N</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I: I still think, no matter the age, rape is rape.

I: I mean, any...any ages 'cause it happens to all people.
Fear and Expressed Refusal

Although a more thorough analysis of the individual incident reports will be necessary at some point, it became very clear to me as I read through the survey data that fear of expressing refusal is related to failure to express refusal. Sometimes they accompany one another in the same incident when the woman initially refuses, but then stops expressing her refusal out of fear. Other times a sequence of episodes is seen where the women initially refuses her partner, but subsequently stops refusing during later incidents because of fear.

I: Question 38 and 39, like the difference between them was, like express a refusal and not express a refusal. Like, I had both of them, like it was kind of like the same situation, but once I didn’t expect refusal because I was too scared, but once I did but I –

P: I just have to learn to say no.

P: I was too afraid of disappointing him because of my past. I did experience date rape before. I froze because the situation was too similar.

P: He invited me to his dorm room to hang out. We were watching TV. He asked if I wanted a back rub and I said yes. He rubbed my back then began rubbing my breasts and I just froze. I had never had a man I didn’t know just grab me and I was really scared. He turned me over, took off my clothes and had sex with me without ever saying a word. I remember being stiff as a board and had my eyes shut so hard. I didn’t make a noise, didn’t even touch him, just laid there. Then after he asked if it was my 1st time, I said yes then he told me he had to study and I needed to leave.

P: We had sex then fell asleep and I woke up because he started touching me again. At first it was ok, then I just wanted him to stop but I was afraid to tell him no. That was the last time I ever saw him. I broke things off after that.

P: I was too afraid because I was emotionally not ready or not willing and I had fear of losing him.
P: A coworker knew my history and took advantage of me when [I was] weak and crying about a death in the family—my favorite aunt. I cried on his shoulder and he pinned me to the wall with his tongue in my mouth and his hands all over, pulling at my undies when an office mate interrupted and saved me. I froze like a deer in headlights in quicksand—I couldn’t move or breathe. I wanted to scream, kick, bite, punch: But I couldn’t even respond—PTSD.

P: He had been asking for months and I’d been saying absolutely not. When the time came I didn’t say no and he took that as a yes.

P: He was having a bad day and I didn’t want to make him any more mad than he was. I felt obligated because we’d been dating for 3 years and that’s the way things were.

P: My girlfriend wanted sex; I was very tired from long week of work. Girlfriend expected regular sex. If I don’t want to then she immediately expresses suspicions that there’s someone else I’m having sex with or that I have lost interest in her neither of which are true. It’s better for me to just go ahead and have sex even though I’m not really into it at the time so that these other consequences won’t occur as they have in the past.

P: A couple times my ex boyfriend would put in a porno and want to have sex while watching. I didn’t want to but did it anyway.

P: He wants it but I don’t but do it now because if I don’t he’ll just do it anyway like my ex-husband. I feel obligated to do it to protect myself.

P: At first I refused, then was too afraid to do it again because he threatened with physical force on top of me, feeling helpless and disbelief that I was in the situation.

Sexual Shame.

It became clear to me as I went over the survey data that an extraordinary amount of sexual shame is present in the descriptions women give of themselves and their sex lives.

I: Um, well I guess that for me, is I’ve never really been in this kind of situation; I’ve, I’m a virgin, I’ve never had sex, with anybody, so I
don't really know of how [laughs], good of a participant I am for the survey, but I just, I have strong feelings on rape and it's...really no, I don't know if you need to know [laughs]. I've been in a situation and stuff so.

P: The first incident was w/my first sex partner ever—it resulted in a long destructive personal and sex life for me. I feel a chain of feeling the obligation to have sex w/people came as much from that, if not more so, from the psychological effects of people labeling me as easy or slut I felt if people thought that I may as well live up to it. I had nothing to prove & no way of making people believe I wasn't a slut. It all started after the 2nd person I ever slept with. All of a sudden because of this reputation of the guy—everyone thought I was a slut.

P: I just added it to my general attitude about men. All that stuff colors your attitudes for the rest of your life. You can't cancel.

P: Nothing happened. I took care of the problem—haven't dated anyone since.

P: Certain aspects of sexuality with my husband will just turn me off. I am very leery and protective of my own children and more open with them. It took away my innocence and left me timid with nudity.

P: I hated my husband and fear men. I have zero romance or sex. I deal with self-hate and shame and guilt.

P: I am marrying the only one I ever dated or kissed so I'm not much help to your project.

P: It just made me feel dirty.

P: My husband and I were virgins when we married. We don't drink or go to parties. We're safe and protected. You should get more information on background to show how there is less rape with people like me.

P: Only 20% of the world waits until after marriage and then yes when the husband initiates it but 100% of Asians do it that way.

P: I've tried to be responsible regarding my sexual activity and my personal safety. I make healthy choices and don't put myself in a situation where an incident could occur. I believe that when a man or woman respects themselves, they will treat their spirit and body with greater care. Unfortunately, even the best choices can't save one from
the odd chance, but if we can find ways to be safe first, hopefully, we can learn to fight or stay away altogether.

P: I’ve led a pretty sheltered life, never very promiscuous, not a wild and crazy sex life.

P: I’m a virgin. I don’t drink. I had a conservative childhood. I’m not a party girl—normal and boring. Sorry. And sex is intercourse only.

P: It took about 15 years to get over the emotional/psychological hurt of “allowing myself to be used” against my morals and better judgment. I’ll felt both disappointed in myself for not being strong enough in character to say no as well as anger at the male for unreasonably pressuring me.

P: I’m a virgin—boring life—don’t put myself in these situations.

P: Both times the incident happened, I had consumed too much alcohol to consent or refuse. I do not even remember either incident. In the first incident I was at a friend’s house. It was a small gathering where I consumed too much alcohol and blacked out. In the second incident, I had a party at my house and consumed too much alcohol and do not remember consenting to have sex. I feel in both incidents it was my own fault due to the amount of liquor that I consumed.

P: I’m a virgin. I don’t drink and I lead a boring life. I’m not adventurous.

P: Well, I find I have a hard time allowing myself to enjoy sex. It’s like; I feel I can’t let my boyfriend know I’m enjoying it because then he would have some kind of power over me. I’ve never had an orgasm during sex and doubt I ever will. I also can’t stand it when someone’s fingers are close or in my vagina. Emotionally and psychologically it’s been tough—I mean, it was my uncle and I feel like he took advantage of me. Sometimes I still see him, which is very stressful. I have to act normal which is difficult to prove how unimportant he is.

P: I’m a virgin who doesn’t drink. That’s why these are all no.

P: I’m a virgin so these things don’t happen to me, and I don’t drink either. Being boring keeps me out of this loop.

P: I was raised right so I don’t know much of these things.
P: I lived a sheltered life, and was very sure of my moral values. I never put myself in a situation that would get out of control. I have made bad choices, but I have always made the choice to have sex.

P: I'm always with someone not alone or by myself so I never get into these situations. I feel bad for the people who have yeses and disappointed that this is even needed.

P: I know a lot of students aren't virgins and have stories to tell.

P: I have never had sex before and I believe through my faith that it is wrong. I don't understand why people would ever do it unless they knew they were going to spend the rest of their life with that one person.

P: I have never been or put myself into a situation where I was offered to have sex or where the topic ever came up. I believe that there should have been a question at the beginning that asked something similar to that. Then the rest of the survey is inapplicable.

P: I have led a sheltered life. My parents are strict and don't let me date until after college so I can find a good husband. He won't want a "party girl."

P: I'm a virgin. I don't put myself in these types of situations.

P: I am pretty straight and narrow. I have only been with my husband. I'm pretty boring.

P: I'm a virgin--waiting for marriage. I'm a straight A student and a Christian.

P: I have a hard time trusting people and I am worthless. I've cut and burned my body for 12 years in order to deal with what I did.

Obligatory Sex

Over 10% of the total number of disclosed incidents was classified as obligatory sex. Furthermore, nearly 13% of the female students at WMU reported having had at least one experience classified as obligatory sex. Although not rape, I believe that this is a form of sexual violence worth noting. In reviewing the
descriptions women gave on their incident reports, I noticed a great many that began with these three words, "I felt obligated...." What follows are some of the reasons that women gave for feeling obligated:

I felt obligated:

- to do it to protect myself.
- out of a fear of rejection. I put other people's needs before my own because I had to as a child. It was the moral thing to do.
- because he was an adult.
- because of that stereotype that men need sex more than women so I feel bad for him. Besides, I don't want him to have sex with other women.
- because of the fact that I was just turning 16 and we'd been dating quite a while. Everyone's doing it. Boyfriends and girlfriends SHOULD be doing this. I had low self esteem and a fear of abandonment.
- because he was my boyfriend and if I had before then I should again. I really didn't want to but I did.
- because my roommate's in there with someone so I have to go in the other room with him.
- because of their expectations or other things have led to it and then you feel obligated.
- because I felt pestered, so ok, let's do it so you'll stop bothering me.
- because of the money he spent and because I wanted him to like me. (My first boyfriend was older with a car. I liked him and wanted to go out with him. He took me to dinner and bought me flowers and at the end of the night I didn't feel like I really had a choice.)
- because it was my boyfriend at the time. I was not in the mood but he's probably done it for me in the past.
because of money.

because we’d been dating for 3 years and that’s the way things were.

because we were married.

because he was really nice and we had a nice evening.

because I guess my ideal of what I think a wife should be and what her role should be in the marriage and what she should offer her husband.

because he cried and the things he says make me feel like crap.

I: It feels awful because quite honest I don’t think you’re ever obligated to have sex for whatever reason. But I think that now, but when I was you know, married, I thought it was, as you said, just part of being married to an abusive person.

Changes in Meanings, Beliefs, and Actions

The good news is that people can and do change the meanings they attribute to terms and events. They can and do change their beliefs, and even more importantly, they can change their behaviors as well. At the conclusion of each of the 62 interviews, I asked participants if and how their participation in this project had changed them in any way. The discussions that ensued made the incredibly draining research process worth every second of emotional turmoil I endured.

When I started this project, I was terrified of the possibility of putting participants through any serious grief. I now know that during the process, I have actually helped some women to confront and deal with some emotionally devastating issues. Some participants were able to reevaluate their past and current sexual experiences, to forgive themselves, to hold their abusers accountable, and to stand up for themselves and their beliefs. For this, I will be forever grateful. I will close this
chapter with a series of quotations from those discussions, because after writing this chapter, I definitely need to revisit those moments. After reading this chapter, I imagine you could probably use some hope, too.

EF: Okay, I get it. I have one more question for you. How has your thinking on this topic changed, if it has at all, as a result of your participation from the onset of this project?

I: I don’t know. I guess it kind of makes me more aware in the sense of like what might be happening and what might be going on, just ‘cause like, yeah, I’ve heard of it and stuff, but like, obviously if you’re doing a survey on it, it must be bigger than I think it is and just because I’m not surrounded by it all the time, I can definitely see especially like, in college life, how it is. And like, I don’t know. I don’t think the survey has had that much influence on me except for the part that it has made me think more about what I thought about rape and it has made me like bring out my opinion on it, which is good because I’ve never had anyone really talk to me about it or bring out my opinion on it.

EF: Really? This is the first time you’ve really ever talked to anybody about rape, has been with me?

I: Yeah.

EF: I can sense that you feel better having an opportunity to talk about it for the first time.

I: Yeah, I do.

EF: That’s cool; I think that’s cool.

I: I think it is too. I think it’s neat that you can say every time you have an interview with somebody that yes, you walked away probably like at least feeling better because this person also feels better and they’ve learned more, you know.

EF: These things that you’ve given me meanings on, are they pretty much fixed in your mind, or do they change?

I: They’re pretty much fixed.

EF: Does anything change that you can think of?
I: Not unless... no. Well like, maybe if you’re married. And you’re married to the guy.

EF: How so? How does that make it different? What changes?

I: Because, you’ve made the commitment and you’ve, you’re one in context of like when you get married like the preacher and you and him have decided that you’re not just two people anymore, you’re one person, so I don’t know. That’s kind of weird, ‘cause like how about if you don’t want to have sex and like your husband does? I mean, is that considered rape I wonder? But it can’t be because you already said yes by just marrying him, so it can’t be rape. So no, it’s not rape. [laughs]

EF: Okay. So marriage then is a contract of sexual access?

I: Yes.

EF: When you get married, you believe, if I understood what you said, that is a contract that gives your husband access to your body anytime he wants it?

I: ...Well, I don’t know. I believe that once you get married, you guys, you’re supposed to become one and but, I don’t know, no, not really. ‘cause like, if he wants to have sex, I’m just saying that like if he wants to have sex and you guys have sex, but like, I don’t know, it can’t be rape, if you’re married. But like, I don’t think your husband would – I don’t know. That’s a good question.

I: First of all, the definition of sex threw me way off, and I remember talking about that with a number of people, more than just my roommates, and that threw me way off. Because none of us ever even thought of sex as being all those definitions, and so I definitely like mentioned it to more than a few people I think.

I: I think this research project that you’re doing, it almost made me realize something, like, see I had a personal incident just recently with a friend, and it made me, it made me in an uncomfortable situation and I never would have thought anything really of it except, oh, what a jerk, you know, but this kind of made me realize that he was wrong, and it wasn’t what I should’ve done or shouldn’t have done, but he was wrong and I mean it wasn’t an extreme case by any means, but it made me feel uncomfortable, and I told him that. And it ends up, we’re still really good friends and everything. But I mean I told him how it made
me feel uncomfortable. Whereas I never would have...I would have thrown it off - water under the bridge - before, and not thought about it again. Try not to.

I: I know now things that I think I'll talk to my daughters and sons about. I mean you can't just educate your daughters; of course you need to educate your sons. I mean for when I have kids. And I talk with Brad, my fiancé, just about things that we discussed and so, I mean it definitely changed my thought on what rape really is, or what date rape really is or how easily it can slip between the two, or if things aren't said, or if things aren't implied, but it's definitely changed my mind on some ideas that I had before.

I: Um...well, after we did it the first time, it made me think a lot about it. And it, kind of, I was remembering the issue that I'd gone through, and now you -- and it was really kind of bogging me down, and I went, I talked to my boyfriend about it, and, cause it was something that was holding me back in our relationship that I had never thought of before. And I, because I trust him and I'm open with him, I told him about what had happened in that particular incident. And he was really understanding, and helped me get through, and it kind of got rid of it. Got rid of the kind of guilt that I...you know what I mean? It's kind of like I never really knew it was kind of bogging me back, until I really thought about it. And I really thought about the survey that we did and the discussion. And I went and talked with him about it, and it, it was like...leveling. It was kind of getting rid of the bump, getting rid of the speed bump that was kind of, this hump that we got over. I don't feel guilt about it. I don't think about it as like a thing that was bad anymore.

I: I think the way that I think about it does. Like, when I think about situations that I was in before, um, I think that it makes me rethink how I used to think about it. You know if um, I may not have thought it was rape at the time, but it kind of makes me think, you know, maybe it was. Technically. By the definitions that I'm saying, I'm like wait a minute, (laughing), that actually happened to me.

I: [My definition’s] become broader, actually, in the sense that, before I was always just thinking of it more as vaginal or anal penetration. I really never thought too much about oral as being an act of rape, but now I can see how it is.
I: Um, before even this project, like even since I got into college, I've thought about it more. But as soon as I got into this project, I talk about it more with my friends. I ask them about their feelings, and I try to become more aware of it now.

EF: So you found it good for you then?

I: Um, actually I have. Because like I'm even becoming more comfortable talking about my past and what's happened with me, like to people.

EF: That's wonderful. Last thing I want to do before I let you go is give you a chance to say anything at all that you want on the record about any of this.

I: I just, I really think this an awesome project for you to be doing. The more I think about it, the more important it becomes to me for you to do this. Because it's serious, and, I was little when this happened to me so I didn't know what to do about it and now doing this, I know it's okay to talk about it and I don't need people to feel sorry for me because it happened and so I just think it's really, really wonderful and I was really glad to help you with it.

EF: I'm very glad to have your input. It's nice to hear somebody in a process of healing.

I: I would say that I am more aware of what might be rape and what might not be rape. Because I'm thinking about it, I'm [made] to think about it when I do this interview, and I think it worries me more. I mean, it used to be a worrisome thing for me because of my personal experiences, but now it worries me more in terms of social interaction between young people.

EF: By that, it's not that you're more afraid of it for yourself, it's more you're concerned about how widespread it is, is that what I'm hearing?

I: Yeah. I'm more concerned about whether or not kids, young people, are learning to deal with these issues better than my generation did.

I: Well, after surveys like this they change. [Both laugh] But they're pretty well set like for the most part. But that true consent can be something that's physical, too, like I think about it. Like I think about it more when you asked me the questions and I answered them, and
you’re like, okay, so this. And I’m like, oh look, maybe, yeah, so maybe they’re not even stuck in my head. [Laughing] But I thought that they were.

I: No, it’s just something that’s on my mind. I don’t, my friends, I was actually talking about this to my best friend the other day, like our friends don’t talk about their sexual experiences at all. Like my best friend and I don’t talk about it, and I think it’s something that from where we’re from, like the families that we’re from, I think that we just don’t talk about it ever ‘cause there’s some girls – she’s in a sorority and they talk about it all the time, and we don’t ever, ever talk about it, and I think like that this has just made me think a lot more about things.

I: Yeah, actually it has. You know, I haven’t thought about some of those - some of the times when I was in my teens, in a long time. And actually I have thought a lot about it because those were experiences that led me to become the person that I am now, and, have informed the way that I deal with adolescents and young adult women and the advice that I would give them. I would never share those events with adolescents or young adults, but I’ve been working with teenagers and early 20s aged women for a long time and I really think this sort of helps me to sort of crystallize, if you will, the things, the way that I would act, the advice that I would give to women. It almost makes me feel like I could perhaps share that with students in the right situation.

EF: The last thing I want to ask you is how do you think if at all your thinking about sexual violence or your relationship to the topic itself, has it changed at all, as a result of your participating in this whole project?

I: Yeah, absolutely.

EF: How so?

I: I thought about – because that was the first time, when I did your questionnaire the first time, that I thought about my own marriage that it actually - it is rape. It really is. If I say no, and he uses force, physical force to have sex, or even not listening to me say no for whatever reason, no matter whether you’re married or not, a no should be a no, and I never thought about that way.
EF: Really?

I: No.

EF: So when you walked into the survey...

I: I never thought about that as being rape.

I: [---] maybe more aware, I guess. About like, maybe like stuff that I’ve done, it’s made me be like, hey wait a minute, you know that wasn’t really a big deal. You know stuff like that maybe.

I: ‘Cause I never really give much thought to it. You know, I never really...I mean things...like, like what happened to me, I never really knew like a definition for it. You know? And I never really knew what to say, or to call it, or whatever. And I feel...the more I talk about it the more I’m comfortable with it, like that kind of stuff.

EF: Cool. So it’s been a positive experience for you?

I: Yeah.

I: I thought...I thought it was like, well, I don’t know. After reading them my beliefs have changed a little. I’m not sure what consists of rape when alcohol is involved, both partners, if they’re consenting at the time. If they’re not, then I already know what it is. But if they’re both consenting at the time I’m not sure.

I: Oh my gosh, when, when I first got done with this, um, after I first took the survey, I was almost really shaken up because a lot of things that I didn’t (like I said that I haven’t told anybody) like came out in the survey in the questions with you. And I like, I know a couple times I know my boyfriend wanted to have sex and I didn’t want to but I didn’t say anything. Like, I had a lot of problems with him after this, and I was telling him no and I didn’t want to from now on, I really stepped up in doing what I wanted to do. We had some problems but we worked it out, you know, but it really made me aware that I don’t owe anybody anything, and it’s not - if I want to say no, damn it, I’m going to say no from now on, ‘cause that’s just not fair for me to just
feel like obligated or not say something 'cause I’m afraid that I’m going to be seen as a tease or something. And I don’t...I don’t ever, like, do that any more. I totally changed my thinking in that, and there’s no way I’d ever make those mistakes again, and I think that has a lot to do with the survey.

EF: I appreciate your sharing that.

I: That’s a big reason I was like yes, I will totally come back, maybe I can even grow more, you know.

EF: Thank so much for sharing that.

I: Thank you, this has really made a big difference for me.

EF: I can’t tell you how much that means to me, I’m glad to have made a positive difference in somebody’s life. Thank you.
The Social Construction of Rape Research: Exploring Epistemologies And Evaluating Methods

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS, QUESTIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I am afraid of rape. Rape does control and restrict my everyday life, and influences my attitudes, behaviours, choices. It restricts my activities, limits my freedom. I easily recognize it as a phenomenon which is a major problem for all women. I am enraged by the ways present laws and dominant wisdoms define rape, deal with its victims, dispose of rapists... (Postscript, original emphasis included, Pitch, 1985, p. 46).

For too long, researchers, advocates, and policy makers have engaged in separate efforts, and thus, their outcomes have lacked full of efficacy. Only when all three entities work together can these issues be addressed authentically to truly help those who experience this violence. (Wellstone & Wellstone, 2001, Foreword)

I think it would be helpful if Western would provide classes on defense [against] rape and rape education. (Participant)

Introduction

Years ago, when I was beginning my program of graduate studies, I came to realize that there was a need for quality research on rape and sexual violence that went beyond what had previously been done. National studies had uncovered rates of rape that were so high that many people were shocked. Could it be possible that one in four American women had been raped or experienced a rape attempt? A small group of ultraconservative writers denied that this was possible, and attacked the validity of the research. After all, official rates of rape as reported to the police were low, and few women came forward on their own to admit having been raped.
Many people believed the numbers, but only in an abstract way. Perhaps a person has to personally experience an act of domestic terrorism to really realize what the numbers mean and to understand the personal consequences, including shame, fear, and loss of trust that can follow. People seem to have a protective tendency to try to put horrible experiences out of their minds. Shame and trauma lead to silence, so that rape is an underground phenomenon that is seldom discussed. Being private, the experience of rape can seem unreal, even to its victims.

I decided that further research on rape was badly needed, not just to employ improved methods to verify the numbers that previous research had disclosed, but to investigate what the experience of rape and its consequences were like from the standpoint of victims, and to study some of the conditions that make sexual violence likely. I lacked the funds to conduct my study using a national sample of women, but this was not necessarily a disadvantage. I could conduct research on the home ground of my university, doing an intensive study of the experiences of students who are my peers.

Previous research on college students has involved classroom administration of questionnaires, which seems to me a poor environment in which to study sensitive topics. I worked to improve the quality and sensitivity of the questionnaire that I wanted to use, but decided to administer it in two different ways. I would collect some of my data by mail, which was fast and cheap, and some in person, which I suspected might provide more and better information. This would allow me to make a comparison of the two methods. Since I was unsure of exactly what the questions I used and the concepts I investigated meant to respondents, I decided to conduct more intensive follow-up interviews with a small sample of women who had previously answered my questionnaire.
My epistemological and methodological positions described earlier followed naturally from the research questions I wished to ask and from the type of relationship I wanted to establish with the women who answered my questions. It was only as I began to engage in the actual research that I became fully aware of the sort of "truth" that my research was uncovering, and the great amount of emotional labor required of both the participants and myself. I am now more certain than ever that many of the insights and experiences presented in this study could never have been uncovered by traditional survey research techniques.

Epistemology

Knowledge and Emotion

I met with my advisor last week to go over the previous two findings chapters. After two hours of reviewing that material page by page, table by table, discussing the findings and their implications, I saw a side of him that I rarely ever see. Normally, he is a mellow, unemotional guy, but after two hours talking about rape and sexual violence, I suddenly saw the angry parental side of him. The man who once jokingly referred to the emotional labor section of this project as "that emotions crap," had let this material sink in, and it had hit a nerve.

Near the close of our meeting, I suggested we would make better use of our prevention dollars if we stopped printing those colorful pamphlets that warn girls to watch their drinks and to be afraid in public and spent that money on big colorful posters that said, "Don't Date Assholes!" It was then that the protective father in him came out, and he made a suggestion that involved the use of a branding iron. While his words were mixed with laughter, the tone of his voice had a very distinct note of anger.
I think I know how he was feeling at that moment, because I have felt this way countless times myself. At some point in the grieving process, a person's shock and disbelief turn to sorrow, which eventually changes to anger. This stuff makes me mad, too. One of my students told me last semester after I did a 30-minute presentation on my work that I had started out sounding very sad, but seemed really pissed off by the time I'd finished talking. She's very perceptive; I do suffer through the grieving process every time I revisit this research.

While our emotions confirm for us that we are dealing with a social problem of great significance, they also tell us we are beginning to see (or at least feel) a deeper meaning of sexual violence. Our anger and sorrow are signs that we are feeling these women's experiences from their own words. Our anger and sorrow are signs that we are recovering from a position of desensitized uninvolved and are recognizing, in a personal way, what many women have been forced to endure because of the structural inequities in their worlds. The emotions we are feeling or are attempting to suppress tell us volumes about our selves and our society.

Knowledge and Power

Years ago, I set out with the intention of creating a questionnaire that would uncover the hidden truths about rape and sexual violence. It all seemed so simple really; if a woman answered a screening question affirmatively, then she was a rape survivor, even if she believed otherwise. If she answered yes to a stranger rape question and told me a story that revealed her assailant to be a friend, I would code the inconsistency as an error, believing she did not intend to refer to her friend as a stranger. This is standard operating procedure in traditional survey research.
Today, I understand that identifying a single objective truth is not possible. Knowing this has allowed me to create a questionnaire and an interview style that encourages participants to recall more accurate and more complete data, and to feel more comfortable disclosing the data they recall. Today, if a woman answered a rape question affirmatively, then she experienced an event that could be counted as a rape, but this is merely the first step in determining how to classify that event. Furthermore, there are two different classifications that are important: The researcher's (mine), and the participant's (hers). While I analyze the data based on the definitions I set forth at the beginning of the study, I also present data based on the definitions used by the participants themselves. If a woman's story appears to contain inconsistencies, I record the apparent inconsistency, but I do not change the data to fit the definition that I believe more accurately fits this woman's reality. I report what the woman discloses to me because I have no right to alter her voice. She has voluntarily disclosed exactly what she wanted me to hear, so that is what I present to you as a participant in this work.

Methodology

Research Methods

After spending a year collecting data, it took at least another year to recover emotionally from the experience. As I began coding, cleaning, and analyzing data and then writing about it, the stories of the women in my study continued to affect me and bring back memories of my own experiences. I can honestly say that I have no doubt whatsoever of two things. First, the safety of the participants (including the researcher) and the quality of the data (and findings) demand that research on sexual violence be designed and conducted from a feminist perspective. Second, although
this emotionally connected approach to rape research is more appropriate than the traditional, objective (dissociated) approach, the involvement of one's emotions and total self makes the process much more difficult for a researcher.

For the safety of participants, emotionally involved research requires that an interviewer be well trained both in empathic listening skills and crisis intervention techniques. The interviewer must be sensitive to signs of distress (in herself and in others), and know when to stop and when to intervene if problems arise. The safety of the interviewer is also an issue. When research is conducted by a team, regular discussions of emotional reactions to difficult interviews are advisable (Campbell, 2002). Probably no one can judge whether an individual possesses the emotional stability to conduct sensitive research. The best we can do is to make sure that we have caring friends and colleagues who are willing and able to provide us with social support, and make every effort to maintain a calm life outside of our work.

Comparison of Data Collection Methods

One of the objectives of this study was to compare mailed surveys with in person interviews using the same questionnaire. Participants tended to prefer the method with which they had experience. Approximately 95% of the preferences identified by participants included the mail and/or in person interviews outside the home. However, it is noteworthy that more of the participants who completed interviews in person also found submitting questionnaires by mail acceptable than the reverse. Responding by mail seems more acceptable to the majority of participants. Nevertheless, allowing participants to choose how to contribute data may be the best technique of all, as over one-third of the participants who completed interviews in person expressed a firm preference for that method of data collection over any others.
If people are not allowed to choose their method of participation, some of them are likely to refuse to participate at all.

There is no question that using the mail and completing surveys in person are the preferred methods of participants. Using the telephone for scheduling appointments is also a welcomed idea; however, using the phone to complete surveys is unthinkable. Privacy, trust, and compassion are the keys to increasing the amount and depth of the data disclosed, and the telephone interviews are not conducive to any of these key elements. My preferred method would be to allow participants who have been called on the phone to schedule an in person interview or to receive the survey in the mail, whichever they prefer. Similarly, participants who receive the survey in the mail should be given a number to call if they decide that they would prefer to complete the survey in person or if they have problems filling out the questionnaire. People will select the technique that is best for them. Allowing this self-selection process will encourage rapport, empowerment, safety, and trust.

Although using the mail or completing surveys in person are both good methods, they each have their advantages and disadvantages, depending on the objectives of the research. The mail is better at coverage and at providing a representative sample of a population. It is also less expensive, but it is not the best way to encourage disclosure. Huygens et al (1996) suggested that the improved quality and detail of the data attained in person is due to the ability to probe. While I do not doubt that some increase in quality may be due to probing, my findings also suggest that women omit both experiences and details much more easily in the mail than they do in person.

Collecting surveys in person is better for getting at the fine points of a topic and increasing the depth and clarity of information disclosed. It also makes the ability
to do activism and harm prevention easier, but it lacks the advantages of mailed surveys in terms of coverage and representation of the population. In sum, you can get better data from a less representative, more expensive sample by administering a questionnaire in person, or you can get data that has less depth and detail from a better, cheaper sample by mail.

If you need to oversample ethnic minorities, then in person interviews are the more useful method of data collection. Proportionally more ethnic minority women participated in person than did Caucasians, while there was no difference by ethnicity in the mail sample (cf. Campbell, 2000).

There was a significant difference in the rates of disclosure between the in person and mail samples on several individual screening questions. The in person interviews found significantly more participants who answered affirmatively to questions regarding having sex with intimates while voluntarily incapacitated (question 17), thwarting attempts after voluntary incapacitation (question 37), avoiding attempts after expressed refusal (question 38), and rebuffing attempts that use verbal pressure and/or constant pestering (question 42). In each of these cases, more than twice as many women answered affirmatively in person than did through the mail.

After these women are coded according to the information contained in the incident reports, all of these patterns remain with the exception of question 17. For this question, more participants disclose sex with sex partners after voluntary incapacitation, but the difference is not significant when comparing this single question. However, the difference in the overall amount of sex partner rape is significant, as is the overall amount of sex and attempted sex after voluntary incapacitation: In person, more women disclose sex partner rapes, sex and attempted
sex after voluntary intoxication than do through the mail. Furthermore, the difference between methods in the amount of attempted rape and attempted coercion disclosed is still significant.

A slightly different pattern emerges when we compare incident reports instead of women. There is not a significant difference in the amount of rape and attempted rape disclosed, although the in person sample yielded higher rates in both cases. There is a significant difference; however, in the number of attempted coercions and amount of attempted unwanted sex, with the in person sample again yielding the higher rates in both cases. While there is a significant difference in the amount of completed coercions and completed unwanted sex, the numbers are extremely small, as are the numbers related to attempted unwanted sex, making them less reliable or substantial. In contrast to the preceding results, in the cases of both completed coercion and unwanted sex, it is the mail sample that yielded the higher numbers.

Both methods require special attention when researching rape. For example, in the present study, participants were contacted by telephone to set up interviews. Because of the enormous coverage error with samples that require telephone numbers, a change in sampling techniques is necessary. If I were to repeat this research at WMU, I would follow a different design. I would draw a larger original sample, and I would collect more surveys through the mail and in person. I would separate the originally drawn sample based on whether or not a telephone number is available, instead of having the computer randomly assign them into two groups. Based on the coverage error in this study, this would divide into similarly sized groups.

I would divide each group into waves of 100, as I did in this study, to minimize the number of contacts necessary to complete the minimum required number of surveys. I would provide contact information for mail sample participants.
who wish to schedule an in person interview. While scheduling in person appointments, I would also allow participants to receive the survey in the mail if they prefer.

In terms of the surveys collected in person, I would employ a strategy different from the one I used in the present study. I would employ multiple interviewers. To collect 300 completed surveys in person, I would use 2 – 3 different interviewers to participate with me as a team. I would train this group of interviewers extensively prior to the start of the project. To prevent burnout, no single interviewer would complete more than 150 interviews for a single project. To further protect interviewers from harm, more time to detoxify in between interviews is needed. Each interviewer would be responsible for setting her own appointments and completing the surveys with the participants at those appointments. Thus, each interviewer would be trained on the proper procedures for conducting interviews and trained on the proper procedures for setting appointments as well. Moreover, each interviewer would be trained in crisis intervention and stress management strategies.

I would have regular staff meetings with all interviewers and data handlers (people involved in entering, cleaning, recoding, and/or analyzing data) together. These meetings would allow us to compare notes on the process from its beginning to its conclusion. Data handlers and interviewers would maintain community field notebooks through which communication between the people involved in the research could be easily transmitted every time someone begins a shift. To prevent burnout, data handlers should only handle data for 40 minutes per hour. After 40 minutes, the person should spend approximately 10 minutes writing in the field notebook and another 10 minutes stretching and walking away from the research altogether.
In addition, I would have each person maintain a private journal to record thoughts and feelings as they occur throughout the research process. I would schedule regular sessions for these people to all come together to discuss the work and its effects on them and their lives. Emotion management is a critical part of this research. Without it, damage will be done to not only the interviewer but to the participants who are interviewed by that person. This cannot be tolerated. Proactive steps must be taken to prevent emotional crises for individual interviewers or for the team as a whole during the research process. This requires special preparation for the team leader, since her emotions will be contagious.

Surveys

In future research projects with this survey, I will rearrange the order of the questions. I will remove the questions regarding being too afraid to express refusal (unwanted sex questions 9, 19, 29, and 39) from the rape and attempted rape sections. I will ask these questions at the beginning of the screening questions along with the obligatory sex and coercive sex questions (questions 41 through 47).

The act of simply completing a survey of this type impacts participants' lives. Even two years later, women still approach me on occasion to ask if I remember interviewing them or to tell me they got my survey in the mail. Since participation in research affects women's meanings, I must be certain that the questions and their ordering reflect the messages I intend to present.

In addition, I would change the process and the instructions such that each participant should answer all 47 screening questions prior to filling out any incident reports. This will accomplish two goals. First, it will reduce the number of people who answer negatively to questions to avoid filling out the report because the reports
would not be brought up at all until after the questions had all been asked. Second, it would reduce the confusion on how to complete an incident report that involves multiple affirmative responses. Once the questions have all been asked, the participants would be asked to calculate how many different incidents are involved with the affirmative responses she provided.

Questions need to continue to use gender-neutral language. Questions should ask participants about events they have survived and events they have perpetrated as well. Both men and women should be asked both types of questions. In addition, all participants should be asked questions about incidents of witnessing sexual violence as an innocent bystander. This information would be very useful in developing prevention education strategies designed to approach this issue from the bystander intervention perspective. The questions need to be clearly written with better response categories and more room to write open-ended responses. The screening questions need to be presented in a context that is separate from any other topic.

Definitions need to be spelled out up front along with a clear listing of the inclusion/exclusion criteria for answering the questions. Each question should tell the specific acts involved, the VOR, the type of event (attempts, coercions, and completions), and the age of the victim, all separated, along with the definitions by which the questions should be answered. Participants should be asked to supply alternative definitions used in their real lives. Since Huygens et al. (1996) and the findings from this study both suggest that women’s definitions of sex vary greatly, there is a definite need to separate this definition out, make it explicitly clear what definition should be used to answer the questions, and to ask what definition the participant normally uses.
The incident reports need to include more questions regarding the characteristics of the victim and the perpetrator, the specifics of the incident, the participants' definitions of events, its impact to the participants' lives. The instructions need to be improved on how to complete an incident report that involves multiple affirmative responses or multiple incidents of the same kind with the same perpetrator. I should collect contact information from participants interested in reviewing during the writing process, participating in future research, and receiving a copy of the findings. Surveys should include contact information for crisis centers and a number to reach the researcher should they prefer to schedule an in person interview or have questions at any time, and this information should be listed on the survey itself and not just in the participation letter or consent form.

Regular staff meetings should be held with all people involved in the data collection, entry, cleaning, and analysis procedures. These meetings will improve the quality of the data collection and analysis process. They will allow for inter-coder reliability and consistency within the data manipulations. These interactions will also improve the quality of the measures used to protect the participants and the researchers from potential harm. These people should come together regularly during the process to share their stories, and their experiences with the data, as well as their reactions to it. This is not work for anyone to do alone.

Interviews

Interviews must be approached with the style best suited for crisis intervention with a strong focus on privacy, safety, comfort, peace, and warmth. Interviewers must be extremely well trained prior to their first interactions with participants. Because of the intensity of the work involved, no one interviewer should complete more than 150
surveys on the project. Interviewers should work closely with the people handling the data. Again, I would schedule regular staff meetings and have the interviewers maintain a community field notebook as well. Staff meetings and “detox sessions” should be scheduled regularly, so that data handlers and interviewers are meeting alone with their perspective groups as well as meeting together as one large unified team.

The findings of this research suggest that while gender matching will increase the details the participant discloses, race matching is much less important. The character and training of the interviewer is by far the most important qualification. Interviewers must be non-judgmental and compassionate, sensitive and alert. They must have a cheerful and kind disposition with a strong personal commitment to universal human rights. With all that being said, interviewers must also remain flexible and be aware of and follow their intuitions.

For example, during interviews if a participant asked me for my opinion on a question, I did not deflect her question: I answered her as honestly as I could. Other times if the participant was not directly asking for my opinion so much as my approval, I did not answer her directly. Rather, I put the focus back on her where it belonged. I gave her nonverbal cues of approval with laughter, eye contact, and smiling. I nodded my head as she spoke to signal that I understood and appreciated her answers. The following excerpt is an example of this type of interaction.

EF: If someone threatened to harm you or punish you in a nonphysical way, what does that mean to you?

I: Um, either like saying something that, or sharing something with someone else, like…’cause it….I don’t know, harm…like -- I mean is that right?

EF: That’s what I’m asking you! (Both laughing) like what do you think of, what are you hearing when I ask you that question?
Unless an interviewer is flexible and alert enough to alter her behavior and presentation of self for each and every interview based on the needs of that particular participant and can maneuver gracefully within each interview session, she should avoid the in person interview method for rape research altogether.

I struggled with issues surrounding ethics throughout this project. Am I doing enough to protect participants from harm? Am I paying close enough attention to their signals? Did I cross any lines by sharing that story with her? I have an endless list of questions with which I badger myself. On one side, I hear Lofland and Lofland (1995) telling me to jump in and get my feet wet, because the only way to really learn how to do quality qualitative observation and analysis is by doing it. On the other side, I hear Jody Miller (1997) telling me that it is dangerous to jump in and get my feet wet because these are human beings with their own private lives that I am tampering with as I stumble about making mistakes learning how to do the research.

This constant second-guessing nearly kept me from moving forward until I remembered something my mom used to say to me when I was little. Being raised in family with an authoritarian father and surrounded by fundamentalist Christian dogma, I seemed to constantly torture myself, except that then instead of research ethics, it was over "the unforgivable sin." I used to lose sleep worrying about whether or not I had committed this unforgivable act that would prohibit me from entering Heaven when I die. Whenever I was fretting over this sin business, my mom would remind me that as long as I am worried about it, then I haven't committed it. The sin, she would remind me, is not caring about whether or not you commit it, so if I care about it, then that is all I need to do.

When applied to my current situation, this logic says as long as I attend conscientiously to the safety of the participants, I am doing the right thing. In the end,
the Loflands are correct in telling me to keep going, while Miller is equally correct in
telling me to know what I am doing before I do it. As long as I have a solid grasp of
what the research involves and the potential risks to participants, and as long as I
maintain a vigilant watch over the process, then I should keep on going, because that
is the best I can ever do. As long as I maintain humility and a strong sense of concern
for my ability to do quality ethical research, then I should continue doing research. If
at any point along the way I lose my humility or sense of concern over the quality or
ethics of my work, then I should stop doing research altogether. We have too much
poor quality research already and more than enough unethical researchers, without my
joining them.

Rape

Sexual Violence (SV) and Violence Against Women (VAW)

The either/or option of focusing on gender-neutral sexual violence or gender
specific violence against women is an illogical, inappropriate, and potentially
dangerous separation of two intimately related issues. By ignoring everything outside
the VAW model, we abuse victims and set up perpetrators to have an easier time
creating more victims. Further victimizing others to advance our own cause is wrong.
Moreover, including generic sexual violence into the focus along side VAW makes it
clear that all types of sexual violence are violations of human rights. When seen next
to each other, it becomes clear that all "generic" sexual violence has gendered
undertones that place it under the umbrella of VAW, regardless of the sex of the
participants involved in that violence.

The findings of this study support the findings of previous research on victim
offender relationships (VOR): The overwhelming majority of victims are intimately
involved with or at least acquainted with their assailants. Instead of being surprised at these numbers, or worse yet, being aware of the numbers but continuing to focus prevention efforts on stranger rapes, it is time to start looking at and acting upon the bigger picture. Sexual violence happens between all different types of people in all different types of relationships, but the most common type involves male perpetrators and female victims who are at least acquainted, if not intimate. This suggests there should be a very strong alliance between people researching and/or advocating against domestic violence and people researching and/or advocating against sexual violence. It also suggests that early education on relationship skills and dating skills should be a focus for prevention strategies.

Similarly, we need to stop being surprised at the numbers relating to the location of incidents and start acting in congruence with those numbers. Sexual violence happens in all locations, but two out of every three incidents take place in private dwellings. Women are not safe at home. Where are women safe, exactly? Women are not safe at college or at work. Women are not safe on dates or in relationships. Women are not safe at parties and bars. Women are not safe in hotels, public places, or private spaces. Women are not safe anywhere. Women are not safe.

If domestic violence and sexual relations are related, then we need to address it in the classrooms, middle schools, and high schools (Hall, 2000). There should not be debates about informed consent, because the issues would be addressed through informational training sessions about school policies relating to sexual relations of students. These training sessions should be mandatory for all students, as they are an opportunity to clarify the schools' policies, to take a firm position, and to assure that each student understands the policies and the consequences of breaking them.
In addition, these training sessions should address the issue from the perspective of a potential witness to a sexual assault. These sessions are an opportunity to provide students with skills that would allow them to properly respond when they witness violent events. A bystander intervention perspective on rape is a fresh approach that teaches without placing blame or arousing male defenses, which has become much popular in recent years (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004). It is also an opportunity to provide school employees with the same perspective. It is imperative that we first establish clear and consistent policies and enforcement strategies. To do that, we must first stop pretending this isn’t a real issue “for kids” and hiding behind the difficulties of acquiring voluntary informed consent from minors.

Voluntary and Involuntary Incapacitation

Several interesting patterns emerged from the data in this study regarding voluntary and involuntary incapacitation. First, date rape drugs do get used, even between intimates. Men\textsuperscript{100} will try to intoxicate women to unconsciousness in order to rape them. Some of those people know it is rape, others think of it as a successful night playing “the game,” while still others think it is romantic or “normal” sex. Some even think the discussion is moot or ridiculous, because they are vested in the culture of male entitlement, and they can’t think any other way. Gratefully, my findings suggest that while there are cases involving involuntary incapacitation, the numbers

\textsuperscript{100} Once again, males are guilty of this to a much greater extent than are women; however, I do personally know a woman to whom this very thing happened, and the perpetrator was another woman. Although the victim had made it perfectly clear that she was not ready to have sex with the perpetrator, after the sober perpetrator poured more liquor down the already highly inebriated victim’s throat and she woke up naked, covered in hickies, lying next to the naked perpetrator, the victim nevertheless romanticized the rape into the uncontrollable passion of true love.
do not support the widespread emotional panic encouraged by the media and misguided prevention campaigns.

Infinitely more cases involve voluntary intoxication. Apparently, many women like to drink, just as men do. Women learned to smoke cigarettes even more rapidly than men, and women have been catching up to men in the areas of alcohol and drug addiction as well. It should not be too surprising that domestic violence and sexual aggression are behaviors that women are also beginning to engage in. Many people like to get drunk; it feels good. Many people like to have sex; it feels good.

Difficulties arise because neither of these activities is problem-free nor do they come with instruction manuals. Getting drunk can be fun, but puking sucks; you have to experiment to “get it right.” The problem with this is that alcohol is extremely toxic and highly addictive. By the time people have experimented enough to “get it right,” they are dependent; and a whole new set of problems arises, in addition to complicating the pre-existing ones.

Similarly, having sex can be fun, but only when it’s done “right” as defined by the participants involved. You have to experiment to get this right too. The problem with this is that women, unlike men, are not rewarded when they experiment sexually. Women are not even encouraged to think or talk about sex freely with others. Under the best of conditions, miscommunication between women and men happens. Under the current conditions of the sexual double standard, even more miscommunication and misunderstanding should be anticipated. One person’s sex is another person’s violence. One person’s pass is another person’s perpetration. One person’s affection is another person’s assault. Sexual assumptions are involved, and unless we are all encouraged to freely communicate openly with ourselves and others about our sexual
assumptions, beliefs, and desires, we can expect this type of sexual violence to continue to flourish.

Another interesting pattern in the data involves the proportion of attempted events to completed events. Many times the only difference between events being coded as rapes or coercions is the voluntary incapacitation of the victim at the time of the event. When no alcohol is involved, the event is a simple coercion, usually involving question 41. When alcohol is involved, while the rest of the story may be identical, the difference is that in addition to or instead of question 41, the participant also included one of the voluntarily incapacitated questions (numbers 7, 17, and 27) in the incident. Therefore, this event is not coded as coercion, but rather as rape. In both events, the perpetrator is attempting to coerce the victim to engage in sexual activity, but once the victim is voluntarily incapacitated because of intoxication, a different line has been crossed.

It is noteworthy that the proportion of attempted coercions to completed coercions when alcohol is not involved is greater than the proportion of attempted rapes to completed rapes when alcohol is involved. In other words, the ratio of completed rapes involving voluntary intoxication to attempted rapes involving voluntary intoxication is much larger than the ratio of completed coercions to attempted coercions. This suggests that it is easier to escape unwanted sexual advances when sober. When a woman is drunk, she is easier to rape than she is to be coerced when sober. She is also more likely to blame herself.

One possible explanation to this pattern has to do with the very successful anti-drunk driving campaign over the past couple of decades. In an attempt to reduce the rate of drunk driving, the practice of "crashing" or "sleeping it off" has become routine. While these drunken sleepovers have successfully reduced the number of
drunken drivers on the roads, they have also inadvertently increased access to incapacitated women. Unscrupulous men have begun taking advantages of that access. Since I began collecting the data for this project in September 2001, I started asking my students each semester how many of them have ever had sex while intoxicated. Regularly, over half of my students admit that drunken sex is a regular part of the social life of college students. Furthermore, they believe this behavior is normal and "everyone does it."

In regard to the significant difference in rates of disclosure between the samples, yet another pattern emerges. More often than not the description of an incident involving an attempted rape during voluntary incapacitation included one or both of two types of statements: “nothing happened so it was no big deal” and/or “I saved myself.”

P: He tried to attempt sex while I was drunk, however, it was a failed attempt. I did not let it happen.

P: Nothing happened—he didn’t succeed, so I didn’t bother reporting it.

These statements were written on mailed surveys, but over twice as many women spoke similar statements during the interviews in person. A plausible explanation of the significant difference between these groups is that participants in the mail sample intentionally ignore these past experiences most of the time, while the participants who completed the survey in person found it more difficult to dismiss these incidents when I looked them in the eyes and asked them the questions directly. The findings of this study suggest that participants will omit details on mail surveys. They will alter incidents and even omit entire incidents. Although none of these

---

101 I do not address the topic of sexual violence until after midterms, which affords me the time to facilitate the development of a classroom community based on mutual respect, self-responsibility, trust, safety, and love. This is very similar to the need to build rapport during an interview in a research project; you can’t just ask total strangers about their sexual experiences and expect valid responses.
admissions came from participants who actually completed mail surveys, the frequency with which I heard these comments in person gives me reason to suspect that this may have actually happened in the current study. Moreover, it further supports the idea of using a multimethod approach to the data collection process in sexual violence survey research.

Sexual Violence

The categories of rape and attempted rape are merely subsets encompassed within the larger more general area of sexual violence. Moreover, even some acts of "consensual sex" can overlap into sexual violence, depending on whose definition gets applied to the event. The findings of this study suggest to me that sexual violence includes acts of interpersonal violence, acts of intrapersonal violence, and acts that clearly include elements of both. For the sake of clarity and to express the social nature of knowledge construction, I will refer to these three types of sexual violence as interpersonal, internalized, and interactional, respectively.

The data in this study suggest that if a woman has experienced an event that can be classified as sexually violent, it is probable that she has experienced at least two such events in her lifetime. Of the 372 participants in this study who answered affirmatively to at least one screening question, 365 completed at least one incident report. On average, each of those 365 women completed more than 2 incident reports, as a total of 742 incident reports were collected. Although revolting, these numbers should not really be all that shocking. Way back in 1987, Mary Koss and her associates found that over 40% of the women who had experienced an event that fit the legal definition of rape expected it to happen again. Two out of every five victims
expect it to happen again. Sexual violence is not an event in a woman’s life; it is a woman’s life.

**Interpersonal Sexual Violence—Rape and Attempted Rape**

The majority of all acts of sexual violence reported were events that could be counted as rapes and attempted rapes. One possible explanation for this is that because the word rape is in the title of the project and it is the most severe form of sexual violence, it stands to reason that this is the type of story the study is most interested in, so this is the type of story most often told. This doesn’t mean that participants made up stories to fit the purpose of the study, and it doesn’t mean that rape and attempted rape are really the most common kinds of sexual violence either.

After telling one or two rape stories, it is likely that a participant might not feel that the history of coercions matters so much anymore. I am suggesting that the disclosure rates for rapes and attempted rapes more accurately reflect reality than do the disclosure rates for other types of sexual violence. I suggest that these “lesser” types of sexual violence are under-represented with this survey because the language used in the solicitation of participants and in the survey itself specifically focuses attention on rape more than it does all types of sexual violence. The language used should be consistent with the focus of the research. If rape is the focus, then the language is appropriate; however, if the focus is on sexual violence, then the language should be modified to reflect that focus.

Rape happens between people in all different relationships, but mainly to acquaintances, friends, and lovers. Sometimes family members have access to victims, and even less often, total strangers jump out and blitz rape an unsuspecting victim. By far, there are more stories about consensual drunken sex or nonconsensual
drunken rape by strangers than there are stories about sober blitz rapes by strangers. Similarly, seldom are attempted rapes ever attempted blitzes; most often, they are drunken sex/rape attempts.

**Interpersonal Sexual Violence—Sexual Coercion**

Interpersonal sexual violence that does not involve rape is most commonly thought of as sexual coercion. Coercion (questions 41, 44, and 46) and attempted coercion (questions 42, 45, and 47), like rape and attempted rape, involve non-physical force and other abuses of power. They are almost identical to drunken rapes (questions 7, 17, and 27) and drunken attempts (question 37) without the alcohol. Further analysis is needed to determine the differences and similarities between sober attempted rapes and attempted coercions. The same type of analysis is needed on completed sober rapes and completed coercions.

**Internalized Sexual Violence—Sexual Self-Coercion**

Other sexual coercions do not so much involve interpersonal sexual violence, as they do intrapersonal or what I call *internalized* sexual violence. These involve acts of unwanted sex, obligatory sex, and unwanted obligatory sex. Acts of unwanted sex form a bridge between interpersonal and internalized sexual coercions. They involve applying pressure, intimidation, and fear; however, in these cases, they are instances of internal misuses of power directed at one’s self, as opposed to external misuses of power. These abuses are sexual coercions of the self, by the self.

When women fail to say no, they do so out of fear, out of duty, out of obligation, and out of self-coercion—they talk themselves into doing what they don’t want to do. They don’t listen to, respect, or trust their inner voices, their gut, their
instincts, or their inner selves. They have been abused by interpersonal relationships and structural systems so much that they have internalized that abuse, taking it into their very selves. They can’t say no; they don’t know how to say no. They fake it. They push themselves; they talk themselves into it. They guilt themselves. They sexually violate themselves.

Other times, women fail to say no out of terror. These times are different from the abusive self-coercions like coercive sex, obligatory sex, and unwanted sex. These times are more an abandonment of one’s self rather than an abuse of it. Many women freeze out of PTSD. They dissociate. They shut down. They are paralyzed. Trust me, if you beat a woman’s body enough, she’ll stop fighting in the future. If you beat a woman’s mind and sense of self enough, she’ll never fight even without the physical beatings. If you beat all women’s minds and bodies in a world that promotes this gender terrorism through all of its major institutions and social arrangements, then women will internalize this globally sanctioned gendered violation of human rights. Women will begin to beat their own minds and bodies for you. Women will begin to beat each other as well.

One night lifetimes ago, a man who supposedly loved me dragged me out of bed by the hair, spitting on me and screaming at me in a drunken fit, as I kicked and scratched and bit at him. He hit me in the head with a pot off the stove, and when I regained consciousness, I was naked and shaking on the kitchen floor with a big throbbing bump on my head, while he lay peacefully passed out in our bed. I never fought back or struggled to escape again. The phrase “until death do us part” took on a whole new meaning for me. I dissociated. I reverted to my childhood survival skills again. I simply disappeared until it was over.
Interactional Sexual Violence—Sexual Shame

There are also times where interpersonal sexual violence and internalized sexual violence merge. In these cases, there is not so much of an abandonment of one’s self as there is a loss of control over it. Violence begets violence, and that violence isn’t always just internalized. Sometimes, women act out against others in sexually violent ways as well. This includes sexually violent women, who appear to be as self involved, unempathetic, and aggressive as their male counterparts. For example, one participant stated she was “usually the aggressor.”

Interactional sexual violence also includes the practice of victim blaming and other sexual shame inducing behaviors, such as calling a sexually expressive woman a “slut,” and other acts of misogyny like homophobia. Interactional sexual violence includes the practice of self-blame by women who have experienced an event that fits the definition of rape. It also includes the practice of reacting to other women’s expressions of sexuality and experiences of sexual violence with shame inducing statements. This is the kind of sexual violence where women call themselves virgins even though they practice oral sex, and self-righteous Christians shame others for being victimized in order to protect their own illusions of safety. After all, everybody knows nothing bad ever happens to good girls. I suppose you could argue that bad things really do happen to good people (Kushner, 1981). Nevertheless, I contend that until women’s rights are respected as the universal human rights that they are, girls will continue to not count as “real” people, so regardless of the content of the book, it doesn’t apply to femininely gendered people, especially women.

I: You know some of my friends walk in a bar talking about “I’m going to have sex with the next guy I see.” You know, and I...I sit there like, you’re dumb. If something happens, I feel bad for you. But, it gets to point where some girls put themselves in a position, like I don’t even feel bad for you. You’re doing it to yourself. You’re being
stupid, I’m warning you and you’re not being smart about it. So, I just feel like to a normal person with regular morals that’s been brought up by a family – I don’t know. I think it’s the way you’re brought up and the values you have are going to change how you see all these words.

I: I’ve heard a lot of bad things lately. Like I know Western doesn’t have a good reputation right now with like the riots and people say like some of the housing [stuff] around here is kind of crappy and then I just heard like girls getting…like I know that last weekend, like the RA’s were talking about how some girls had gotten raped like in my dorm, like on the floor, in like, they don’t say anything about it or they’re not telling girls, “you know you need to be careful, [---]”, don’t say anything about it. Like, well, that just seems dumb to me. I don’t know why they’re doing that. It seems like if you would tell them then they’d try to be a little more cautious, you know what I mean, ‘cause it’s like guys and girls both live in the same dorm, so guys can just take the elevator, go up to the next floor, all they had was one person sitting out there in the hallway, that’s like monitoring people coming in. And, so if like some big guy came in, like what do you think that person’s going to do? Nothing. You know what I mean? [It doesn’t seem right]. I never walk on campus at night by myself but some people do and that’s stupid too, but that’s their own fault.

Also included in interactional sexual violence is the heterosexism and homophobia so deeply engrained in our daily lives. In addition to the obvious difficulties some participants have with defining forced oral sex between women as rape, one participant actually accused the perpetrating woman in that vignette of trying to convert the poor heterosexual female victim by raping her. Even though the vignette is identical to the others except for the change of names and gender pronouns, this participant read a conversion plot into the story.

Our sexual assumptions and the double standard placed on women’s sexuality are central elements in a discussion of interactional sexual violence. For example, the findings about sexual assumptions from this study show that 25% of the women report following a liberal “yes until no” policy, while 66% of them follow a conservative “no until yes” policy. Of the remaining 8%, two thirds of them follow an
ultraconservative “no until marriage” policy, while the other one third follow a more liberal policy that involves a mixture of policies.

The findings of this study suggest there is a relationship between people’s sexual policy and the degree of consensus they believe exists in the general population regarding those policies. The findings on the percentage of the general population the participants believe follow a policy on sexual assumptions consistent with their own show that women who follow a liberal policy strongly believe the majority of the population also follows the same liberal policy. Women who follow a conservative policy believe only other women also follow that conservative policy, and women who follow the ultraconservative policy believe only a tiny minority of the general population follows the same ultraconservative policy.

This translates into approximately 25% of the participants following either a mixed or a “yes until no” policy, assuming almost all others are following that same liberal policy. These women are likely to blame victims, and to be especially non-supportive of victims who practice a “no until yes” policy.

Over half of the women who follow a “no until yes” policy think almost all women follow that same policy, but do not think very many men follow it. These women are likely to be suspicious and afraid of men since they expect the worst from them. These women will be likely to blame victims who follow a liberal “yes until no” policy and to call sexually expressive women sluts.

In addition, about 5% of the women are following an ultraconservative “no until marriage” policy, and they feel all alone in their beliefs. These are likely candidates to blame victims and shame sexual expressiveness. Finally, about 3% of the women are following a policy that involves some mixture of policies, and they believe the majority of the population also follows their flexible policy. These women...
are much more likely to experience an event involving miscommunication because of the variability in policies.

**Consensual Sex**

Consensual sex is the “right” way to do sex; it is what is considered normal. This is not the case with the other stuff, but from the moment you were conceived, your parents were very probably thinking about grandchildren, your prom, your wedding, all the dating rituals and the gender role enforcing that goes along with it. It’s an inescapable part of our lives. Because so much of what can be called violence can also be called sex, we can’t really understand rape or sexual violence if we don’t include questions about our sex lives. There is a continuum from sex to rape where all things are relative.

Intoxicated group sex is perfectly normal to one person, while it represents sexual violence to another. Accepting money for sex is perfectly normal to one person, while it represents sexual violence to another. We are not arguing over morality here. Rather, we are raising questions about methodology. As researchers, we must ask about these events and what they mean to the participants involved. For example, the following two quotes are what participants wrote in the incident descriptions for question 17 (sex partner after voluntary incapacitation) and for question 44 (authority figure promises reward).

P: [There were] 2 guys, 2 girls having sex and switching whenever someone said, “switch.” Everyone [was] drunk and stoned on New Year’s Eve.

P: [I was] offered money for sex. I did it.
Implication for Prevention Strategies

University Prevention Strategies

I think the most obvious place to start is in our own backyard, so to speak. The participant’s comment at the beginning of this chapter says it all: WMU should not be ignoring sexual violence in the lives of its students. WMU needs sexual violence education, prevention, and safety strategies that include policy development and enforcement. We need to employ the lessons learned from the criminal justice system. A “Get Tough on Crime” approach emphasizes only the severity of punishment, and on occasion, the certainty of punishment; however, in order for punishment to act as a deterrent against future crime, that punishment must be certain, severe, and swift. We need to have firm clear policies and enforce them swiftly and consistently.

WMU needs to develop better policies, publicize those policies, educate our students and faculty on those policies, and maintain a zero tolerance of all violations of those sexual violence policies. It doesn’t have to be so complicated. All this boils down to one simple guideline. We need to say what we mean and mean what we say. This proactive and assertive approach has always been and will always remain a benchmark of successful social interactions.

Here is a good example. Voluntary informed consent must be attained prior to incapacitation and maintained (or at least not refuted) during the entire experience for a sexual act involving incapacitation to be considered an act of consensual sex and not an act of sexual violence. In other words, if a person’s voluntary informed consent was not attained prior to incapacitation, then it is a crime to have sex with that person. All persons found guilty of committing crimes of sexual violence will be expelled from this University.
There are numerous other changes the administration could make to effectively address the issue of sexual violence. In addition to general policies and punishments, the University could develop a policy for people who witness incidents of sexual violence. A bystander intervention policy could help the entire community share the sense of responsibility to prevent sexual violence. This approach would reduce the defensiveness of the participants involved and would increase social networking and feelings of community responsibility.

Instead of making women afraid of date rape drugs and dark alleys, this policy focuses the overwhelming majority of its prevention resources toward making men and women aware of the continuum between sex and rape and what the University's policies are regarding sexual violence. Included in these messages, the University could focus its messages on the continuum between love and violence and what the University’s policies are regarding domestic and relationship violence. The University could also focus its messages on the continuum from alcohol and other drug use, through abuse, and into addiction; and what the University's policies are regarding alcohol use and abuse.

The University could put those blue emergency lights where they would actually stand a good chance of reducing the rate of sexual violence—in the dorms, in the sorority houses, in the fraternity houses, in all other student housing on campus, and in the parking lots of every establishment on campus where alcohol is served. Ideally, every single living unit on campus would have a blue light alarm system, where a victim or witness could press a button that would alert the proper authorities to an emergency. These lights would also be placed in co-ed lounges as well.

The University currently provides a free service to its students that is often overlooked by students. If a student is too intoxicated to drive home, there is a phone
number to call to request a free ride home with no questions asked provided by a student volunteer. I confess I just recently learned of the existence of this service from my daughter, who heard about it in a class last semester. I do not even know its official title or its phone number.

This grossly underpublicized service is not only a brilliant strategy for reducing drunk driving, but it is a golden opportunity to reduce sexual violence as well. The University should publicize the findings of this study regarding the very real dangers of rape while voluntarily incapacitated. The University should offer a safer alternative to the “sleepover” with free rides home to incapacitated women. This publicity should avoid any moral judgments regarding alcohol use or abuse and merely offer women a safe way home. The key to this is publicizing the dangers of drunken sleepovers and the safer alternative of getting a free ride home from the student service without any shame inducing propaganda.

The University should develop prevention education programs, sexual violence awareness programs, bystander intervention programs, and see that every Residential Aide on campus (RA) is trained in these and in crisis intervention strategies too. Training in these programs and strategies should also be provided for Peer Educators, and all supervisors of dormitories, fraternities, sororities, student housing, and all coaches and nursing staff. The University could start educating its students, all of its students, on the skills that will make their academic education more successful, such as assertiveness training, self-empowerment, relationship and communication skills based on universal human rights, and a sense of community and compassion.

Are these likely to be popular policies? Are you kidding me? We are talking about telling students we will expel them for their acts of casual drunken sex/rape.
We are talking about telling students we will expel them for abusing their girlfriends, boyfriends, and friends. We are talking about creating a campus community that promotes academic success and personal integrity and intellect. We are talking about creating a campus community that does not promote “partying,” drinking, drugging, raping, or rioting.

We are talking about telling students we will expel them for having sex with someone without first establishing with absolute certainty that voluntary informed consent has been attained. We are talking about holding students responsible for their behavior when they are voluntarily incapacitated by drugs and/or alcohol. We are talking about holding students responsible for their behavior when they are not incapacitated too. We are asking students to do a better job of handling issues related to sex, alcohol, rape, and domestic violence while they are here at WMU than is commonly seen outside of the confines of the University.

No, these are not likely to be popular policies. The people who currently violate these policies without sanction aren’t going to like them; there is no doubt about that. Some of their victims who have internalized the violence in their lives will even fight against this policy. Unfortunately, the people terrified of change who have been terrorized by a culture that terrorizes its own and others more than any other culture in the world aren’t going to like these policies either. We are talking about holding the University, the local business community, and our students responsible for conducting themselves in a manner that is consistent with what is in the best interests of the students and the community. Anytime policies cause embarrassing publicity about the campus community, cost the local businesses money, and force people to find alternative ways to “party,” there will be backlash.
Community Prevention Strategies

Although this research was conducted on the University campus, it has implications that reach outside of that specific community. The messages I received from this work include some scathing reviews of the response to sexual violence by nearly everyone, but in particular, the criminal justice system, the media, the legal system, the public health department, advocates for human rights, the medical field, the church, popular culture, the family, the education system, the general public, the witnesses, the perpetrators, and the victims too. We can all do much better.

The preventions strategies I discussed for the University center around four elements: sex, alcohol, rape, and domestic violence (SARD). These four elements form the base on which each prevention strategy is based. Prevention strategies outside the University should address these issues from that same SARD approach. We already know rape and alcohol are linked. We already know sex and alcohol are linked. We already know domestic violence and alcohol are linked. We already know rape and domestic violence are linked, as are rape and sex. Why don’t we address the links between these issues and get to the problem at the intersections?

In addition, sharing the responsibility among the entire community by approaching these issues with a by-stander intervention strategy is a necessary step if we want to see broad sweeping social changes such as the ones we are talking about. This can be as simple as saying, “Excuse me, sir, please don’t abuse your girlfriend in front of me; it is disturbing me greatly. Thank you.” It can be as simple as saying, “I see nothing funny in using hate speech” the next time someone is making racist, sexist, or homophobic comments in front of you. We’re talking about denormalizing (or recriminalizing if you prefer) sexual violence.
Limitations

I was naïve in looking at participants’ preferences for data collection methods as a dichotomous variable of mail versus in person interview. The world does not fit perfectly into a black and white mold, into the either/or model of reality we so frequently employ; the real world is much messier than that. The real world operates on a model of both/and, on an “it depends” model. Thus, I suspect that certain types of people (i.e. introverts) would prefer to fill out the survey alone in private, whereas other types of people (i.e. extroverts) would prefer direct personal contact.

I suspected it might also depend on the type of story the person has to tell. Women who have survived an attempted rape may feel differently about disclosure than women who have survived a completed rape. Women who have survived certain types of completed rapes may feel differently about disclosure than women who have survived other types of completed rapes. For example, a woman might feel more comfortable disclosing in person an event for which she assumes absolutely no responsibility, such as a stranger rape involving a weapon that occurred in the parking lot at church, than she would an event for which she does assume some if not all of the responsibility, such as an acquaintance rape not involving a weapon that occurred at a party while she was voluntarily intoxicated, wearing her new outfit that made her look “so hot.” As it turns out the data showed just the opposite pattern. Women were more likely to tell me these types of stories in person than through the mail surveys.

In sum, I suspect there may possibly be patterns of higher disclosure rates on surveys collected in person for certain types of events or from certain types of people, and lower disclosure rates for other types of events and people. Little is known about this. Perhaps the best we can do is to offer people a choice about the way they participate in research. I, however, did not think of this prior to the data collection.
process or I would have at least considered collecting data appropriate for examining variables associated with personality. In all fairness, I did not think of this prior to the analysis either or I would have run some numbers to compare methods preferences with incident reports and the like. Alas, maybe next time.

I wish the coverage error for the in person sample wasn’t so high, but I didn’t want to separate the file by phone numbers first for this project, because randomness was a higher priority for the comparison of methods. I wish the World Trade Center hadn’t been terrorized on September 11th, just as I was beginning my data collection. There are obvious and certainly more important reasons for wishing this, but in all fairness, I would have liked to have seen what kind of response rates the mail surveys might have gotten without the ensuing anthrax panic.

I wish I had realized that the unwanted sex questions (9, 19, 29, and 39) were not sufficient reason to classify an event as a rape or attempted rape before I conducted the survey. The current survey question order gives the impression that these questions do indeed represent sufficient reason for that classification, which is unfortunate. I would also like to include better instructions for incident reports and better response categories that take other responses than “yes” or “no” into consideration, like “sometimes,” “most of the time,” “not usually,” or “I don’t know.” Larger samples would be helpful as well to allow for more accurate statistical inferences, as the cells in many of the tables were very small.

Moreover, the data set is missing information because I didn’t think to include certain variables. In the future, I would like to know if the participant is living on or off campus now and the same information regarding victims at the time of the incidents, the participant’s religious preferences, if the participant considers herself “a
virgin," what definition of sex or rape the participant follows, if consent was attained prior to or after intoxication, if both parties were intoxicated and to what degree.

Finally, while in a sense this project does have the advantage of collaboration, I am nevertheless just one single person doing it all, which is a disadvantage on several points. In addition to the emotional overload and stress on me, the data did not have the advantage of inter-interviewer reliability or inter-coder reliability. It is kind of like proofreading your own work; it's not so easy to do when you are so intimately familiar with it. Along similar lines, I wish I had included in my HSIRB protocol the idea to collect contact information from those participants who wished to be involved in reviewing the analysis, but I had enough on my plate getting this project approved in the first place. Because of the intensely personal nature of this topic, I needed to go before the full Review Board for approval.

Research Agenda

As tired as I am right now, it thrills me to say that I have a great deal of work ahead of me with this data set. I have many articles to write, further analyses to conduct, and who knows, maybe even a book to write. More importantly, I have findings to disseminate. The scientific community needs to hear about this work, and so do the general public, and especially the students and administration at WMU. I may not be the one who should be personally pressing this issue with the current administration on this particular campus at this particular juncture in my career, but it is my duty to deliver a copy of this work to the person I believe may have a legitimate chance of pulling it off. This is the first item on my agenda.

I believe the person to take these findings to the Administration at WMU is Linda Lumley, our Coordinator of Gender Health Education and Promotion for the
Office of Health Promotion and Education. Prior to this position, Linda was the
director of Women's Resources and Services at WMU for over 10 years.
Unexpectedly, the administration closed down this office completely over the summer
of 2003 and transferred Linda into this gender-neutral, health-oriented position. Her
office moved to the lower level of the campus health care center between sports
medicine and radiology. In doing so, the University effectively eliminated its rape
prevention education programs.

I recently presented three papers related to this work at the North Central
Sociological meetings in Cleveland. One was about the sexual assumptions questions,
and another was about the link between research on domestic violence and research
on sexual violence. The third one was about how my roles as an activist and as a
sociologist inform one another. Second on my agenda is finalizing those three papers
and submitting them for publication.

I have an enormous list of ideas of topics I want to analyze and/or write about
further from this data set. For example, there seems to be an infinite number of
combinations of variables to explore like VOR, location, victim age, serial
victimization, intoxication, coercion, obligatory sex, demographics, consequences,
reporting and disclosure rates, self blame and perception of blame from others, and
the language used to define the event if not rape. I would like to further analyze
participants' data collection preferences in relation to their demographics and
responses to the survey questions in search of interesting patterns. I want to do a
similar process with the incapacitation questions and the obligatory sex questions. I
want to compare rapes to coercions and attempted rapes to attempted coercions. I
want to do deeper analyses into patterns of serial victimization, frequency of
victimization, and VOR. I want to search for patterns involving serial incidents
specifically involving expressed refusal and fear of expressing refusal (the unwanted sex questions). I want to do a thorough content analysis of the qualitative data from the question on the incident reports regarding consequences to the victim. I want to do a similar analysis on the incident descriptions. I would like to do a thorough content analysis of all the other qualitative data from the surveys and interviews looking for messages of internalized sexual shame.

I would like to experiment with different coding strategies and statistical programs as I analyze the data further. I want to do a more thorough analysis of the process of callbacks and resets from scheduling the in person interviews. I need to do a more thorough analysis of my journal notes. I want to do a thorough analysis of the vignette data and the interview data. I would like to know if there is a relationship between the responses to the vignettes, the responses to the questions in the interview and on the survey about sexual assumptions, and the responses to the question about the morality of having sex with a willing participant who is also *clearly* intoxicated. I also need to compare the two groups of interviews to determine if there is a significant or substantial difference between the data based on the previous victimization of the participant.

I would like to do further survey development and revisions on the questions, especially the ones involving voluntary intoxication. I would like to experiment with the questions and positioning of the questions concerning coercion, unwanted and obligatory sex. I want to further develop my ideas about internalized sexual violence, crisis intervention training guidelines for interviewers, and the protocols for doing this kind of research in the future. I would like to initiate if not help develop a Sex—Alcohol—Rape—Domestic Violence (SARD) prevention and intervention strategy for universities, secondary education institutions, and public health policy.
In addition, I intend to continue debunking myth as a feminist sociologist and an educator both within and outside the classroom (Hall, 2000). Every time I teach a class at WMU with 35 women in it, according to the findings of this study, I can expect that in their lifetimes, approximately 11 of them (30.7%) have experienced an event that could be classified as a rape, while approximately nine of them (24.6%) have experienced an event that could be classified as an attempted rape. I can expect that maybe only one of them (3.5%) officially reported the incident. Approximately 10 of them (48.1%) blame themselves for it, but approximately only 5 of them (25.5%) believe others hold them responsible. Only about three of those 20 women (16.7%) called it rape when it happened, and only about seven of them (34.6%) call it rape now. Overall, in a class of 35 women, I can expect 21 of them (59.8%) to have had at least one experience that can be classified as sexual violence in their lifetimes.

The biggest lie and most insidious myth of all is that there are no healthy relationships—this is as good as it gets. I refuse to give up my personal struggle with this human experiment. It is possible to have healthy selves in healthy relationships, maintaining healthy environments living in peace and harmony with all that is, was, or ever will be, one day, sometimes one moment, at a time.102

In conclusion, I return to my original questions:

What is rape? Does penetration have to be involved? What about ejaculation? Can anyone be a victim of rape? Can anyone be a rapist? What’s the difference between child molestation and rape? What’s the difference between rape and sexual assault? What is consent? How do you know if someone consents or not? What constitutes force? Does it matter if a weapon is used or not? How much resistance is necessary? What if the people were drunk at the time? Does it matter if only one of them was drunk, and if so, does it matter which one of them was drunk? How can you tell if someone is drunk? What about intent? For example, what if one person honestly thinks what happened was rape

102 Just not while you’re writing a dissertation.
but the other person honestly thinks what happened was just sex and not rape? Is it possible to rape someone and not know it?

What are the statistics on rape? How can a statistic be false? Does she mean the statistics are mistaken or that they are lies? How widespread is rape really? How can we tell the difference between what is actually going on and what the statistics tell us is going on? Why would anyone want people to believe that there is more rape in the world than there really is? Who are these feminists being accused of wrongdoing? Why would a woman publicly accuse feminists of doing this? How can a woman write as if she is not afraid of rape and doesn’t believe that women should be afraid of rape? Aren’t all women afraid of rape? Isn’t that a valid fear?

These old questions haunt me, and the new questions torture me endlessly as well. It was with these questions in mind that I began graduate school, and it is with these same questions in mind that I conclude my graduate studies with this dissertation to begin my career as a feminist social scientist. When I started as a graduate student, I suspected that some of these questions might not be answerable. During graduate school, I confirmed this suspicion, and learned an even more valuable lesson; I learned the art of letting go without giving up. I learned to let go of the nagging need to answer the questions without giving up the art of asking the questions themselves. I learned to live peacefully asking questions while knowing that I cannot answer every question I ask.

As I close this research, I must admit that through the course of this research, I believe I have finally found an answer to a question that has troubled me all along. This is the question that pits universal human rights against the relativism of multiculturalism. I confess I was still struggling with this one even at the oral defense to my race/ethnicity area exam. While I hold the notion of universal human rights seems reasonable, I could not bring myself to be the one to destroy the practices of cultures outside my own based on those universal human rights, especially if they are contested beliefs not universally held by all human beings. I was at an impasse.
During the course of this project, I came upon the answer that finally makes sense for me. Bond and Phillips (2001) write:

Many opponents of women's human rights still argue that culture and religion justify harmful practices that violate women's human rights. These arguments of cultural relativism directly contradict the principle of universality. Like any other human rights, women's human rights are universal; culture and tradition, therefore, cannot be used to defend practices that violate women's human rights. (p. 497)

I find no way to deny it. Those cultures whose religious, governmental, and economic practices violate women's human rights should be stopped. Those cultures whose institutions of the family, education, medicine, and the law encourage practices that violate women's human rights must be stopped. Each global nation should be responsible for protecting universal human rights (including women's human rights) within its own borders. But if the United States has taken on the responsibility of protecting other countries from evil-doers and terrorists, who will protect its own citizens from the United States? How can we sensationalize international terrorism yet ignore the more common problem of domestic terror at home?

Call it whatever you like: backlash, denial, grief, misogyny, retaliation, panic, fear, fundamentalism, or assholism, it closes minds like a steel trap. It will make some people believe that some participants must have fabricated some of these stories for fun, to impress someone, to intentionally sabotage the research findings, or for some other reason. Worse yet, some people may even suspect I made up some of them for personal and/or political reasons. Unfortunately, after having read all and met most of Mary Koss, Walter DeKeseredy, Martin Schwartz, Rachel Kennedy Bergen, Claire Renzetti, Elizabeth Stanko, Susan Faludi, Esther Madriz, and Rebecca Campbell, I have learned anticipate at least some of these resistance reactions and unhealthy coping strategies.
I would be lying if I said I hadn’t suffered some serious moments of paranoia and doubt myself. I realized; however, that the part of me who questions the integrity of any these participants is the same part of me who blames me for my own history with sexual violence, also the same part who remains safe with illusions of living in a just world where nothing bad ever happens to good girls. I know better now, but I still have to allow others the right to interpret the situation in whatever way they choose. I do not; however, have to allow their reactions to silence me or denigrate my work. Their beliefs, just as mine, need to be held up and tested in the real world.

Too often we believe others, when we should be listening to ourselves. For example, the comments that follow suggest the participants have internalized false messages about themselves and their human rights.

P: It made me feel like I was a terrible person.

P: I felt obligated because he was my boyfriend and if I had before, then I should again. I really didn’t want to, but I did.

Unfortunately, this can become a pattern. We spend our whole lives devaluing ourselves with obligatory sex, and remaining loyal to people who abuse us. For example, one 23-year-old participant answered affirmatively to question number 43, the obligatory sex question. On the incident report, she stated that the incident took place in her boyfriend’s dorm room on multiple occasions. When prompted to give an estimate of the number of times this incident has occurred, this participant wrote, “Every time since age 15.”

Too often we stop listening to ourselves “for the sake of the relationship” or “because we are in love.” We endure bad relationships with people we know are not trustworthy. One participant stated, “He never did that again but it helped set the tone for an ongoing bad relationship.” The worst-case scenario is when we romanticize sexual violence, as happened with my friend who was raped by another woman while
voluntarily incapacitated. One participant wrote the following description of an incident.

P: We were at a party together, both drinking heavily. He made advances but I did not return them. He was with me on the couch when I passed out. When I woke up he was having sex with me.

When asked about the consequences of the incident, the participant wrote the following, “Attachment to the male, longing for him to want me again.” I think that this warrants repeating: This participant passed out drunk on a couch at a party and woke up to someone having sex with her after she had failed to return his advances earlier that evening. This incident made this participant feel an attachment to this man; she longed for him to want her again.

I started this project asking questions about rape, about methods, about previous rape research, and about epistemology. I found some answers to my questions about methods. I found that rape research requires a multimethod approach with a specially trained staff for maximum validity of the data and safety of all the participants, including the staff. I found that while the mail surveys provide lower quality data from higher quality samples, in person interviews provide higher quality data, but from lower quality samples. I found that while nearly all women prefer to participate in rape research through the mail and/or in person, when given a choice, more participants prefer to submit mailed questionnaires than to complete an in person interview.

I found some answers to questions about rape. I found that sexual violence, alcohol abuse, domestic violence, and consensual sex are all intimately related and inseparable, in that we must study them together if we want to get the most accurate data regarding any of them. I found that women’s meanings change over time with their experiences, such as participating in research projects. I found that sexual
meanings vary between women. I found that sexual shame is extremely prevalent among women, as are interactional sexual violence and internalized sexual violence, such as obligatory sex. I found that sexual violence is so prevalent in women's lives that no story is entirely unique; that any woman with a story about sexual violence will find that she is in the company of others.

Despite all these answers, I still have questions. I have questions about situations where one person operates in good faith under the false assumption that a willing participant is sober, when in fact he or she is not sober. I have questions about when exactly a person is too intoxicated to consent. How are we to gauge this without operating under a strict policy of only accepting consent as legitimate if it is received prior to incapacitation regardless of the other circumstances of the situation? I have questions about how to best word questions on voluntarily incapacitated sex so that I can separate sex with voluntary consent from rapes.

I no longer wonder why I felt so overwhelmingly compelled to take on this enormous project. I now know I did it because only I could. This project needed me just as I needed it to heal my own wounds. I needed it to make sense of my own history with sexual violence, as a woman struggling to survive her own secrets and shame. Instead of wondering why I did it, I am now left wondering how I can best use this research to promote sexual equity and reduce the rate of sexual violence. What can I do next? How can I let this research inform my teaching and my interactions with my daughters and their friends? How and where can I get these findings out to a variety of audiences where they might be able to make a difference?

The time for asking why questions is over. Now is the time for asking how questions. Now is the time for action.
Appendix A

HSIRB Approval Letters
Date: 5 January 2001

To: David Hartmann, Principal Investigator
Edith Fisher, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Michael S. Pritchard, Interim Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number 00-12-13

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled “The Social Construction of Rape Research: Exploring Epistemologies and Experimenting with Methods” has been approved under the full category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: 5 January 2002
Date: January 25, 2002

To: David Hartmann, Principal Investigator
    Edith Fisher, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Mary Lagerwey, Chair

Re: Changes to HSIRB Project Number: 00-12-13

This letter will serve as confirmation that the changes to your research project "The Social Construction of Rape Research: Exploring Epistemologies and Experimenting with Methods" requested in your memo dated January 17, 2002, have been approved by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board.

The conditions and the duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: October 30, 2002
Appendix B

Schematic Representation of Data Collection Process
Data Collection Process

WMU Female Population
N = 15,836

Randomly Assigned

In Person Surveys
N = 2,000
(20 sets of 100)

13 sets used

Completed In Person Surveys
N = 300
(77.2% Response Rate)

Raped
Self-Selected Sampling Frame
N = 88

Not Raped
Self-Selected Sampling Frame
N = 118

Completed Mail Surveys
N = 322
(33.0% Response Rate)

Completed Semi-Structured Interviews
N = 62

Completed Semi-structured Interviews
N = 30
(Raped)

Completed Semi-structured Interviews
N = 32
(Not Raped)
September 10, 2001

Dear Fellow WMU Student:

You are invited by random selection to participate in a research project entitled "The Social Construction of Rape Research" designed to analyze the prevalence of rape among female WMU students and to develop more appropriate methods of researching sexual violence, being conducted by Dr. David Hartmann and Edie Fisher from Western Michigan University, Department of Sociology. This research is being conducted as part of the dissertation requirements for Edie Fisher.

In addition to several demographic questions, this survey has 50 sexual violence related questions. All of them except the last 3 are in a yes/no format and will take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete. Your replies will be completely anonymous, so do not put your name anywhere on the form. You may choose to not answer any question and simply leave it blank. If you choose to not participate in this research, you may either return the blank survey or you may simply discard it. Returning the survey indicates your consent for use of the answers you supply. If you have any questions, you may contact Dr. Hartmann at (616) 387-3594, Edie Fisher at (616) 387-5294, the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (616 387-8293) or the vice president for research (616 387-898).

Should you experience any emotional discomfort as a result of completing the survey, you may contact the YWCA Sexual Assault Program in Kalamazoo at (616 345-3036) or the University Counseling Services at (616 387-1850) for free assistance.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. You should not participate in this project if the corner does not have a stamped date and signature.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Edie Fisher
Appendix D

Original Survey
Anonymous Sexual Violence Survey

I. General Demographics Questions

1. Which of the following best describes your current academic status?
   a. Freshman  
   b. Sophomore  
   c. Junior  
   d. Senior  
   e. Graduate Student  
   f. Other, please specify _________________

2. Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?
   a. African-American  
   b. Alaskan Native  
   c. American Indian  
   d. Asian-American  
   e. Caucasian  
   f. Hispanic  
   g. Multiracial  
   h. Pacific Islander  
   i. Other, please specify __________________

3. Which of the following best describes your current marital status?
   a. Single  
   b. Divorced  
   c. Widowed  
   d. Separated  
   e. A member of an unmarried couple  
   f. Married  
   g. Other, please specify __________________

4. How old were you on your last birthday? ______________________

II. Sexual Violence Questions

Unless instructed otherwise within the survey, ignore the Incident Reports on the backside of the pages.

Each of the following questions includes the phrase “had sex.” The meaning of this phrase includes only the following acts: vaginal intercourse; anal intercourse; oral intercourse; or penetration of the vagina or anus by objects other than a penis. Please do not include any other behaviors as sex acts when answering these questions.
The first series of questions asks about your past sexual experiences with strangers. Please answer YES or NO to the following questions.

1. Has a stranger ever had sex with you by threatening to use force?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report→

2. Has a stranger ever had sex with you by actually using force?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report→

3. Has a stranger ever had sex with you by threatening to use a weapon?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report→

4. Has a stranger ever had sex with you by actually using a weapon?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report→

5. Has a stranger ever had sex with you by threatening to physically harm someone close to you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report→

6. Has a stranger ever had sex with you after making you involuntarily intoxicated, drugged, or in some other way incapable of consenting or refusing?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report→
7. Has a stranger ever had sex with you after you voluntarily became intoxicated, drugged, or in some other way incapable of consenting or refusing?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

8. Has a stranger ever had sex with you after you expressed refusal?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

9. Has a stranger ever had sex with you when you did not want to but were too afraid to express refusal?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

10. Has a stranger ever had sex with you when you were asleep?
    a. No → Go to the next question
    b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

The next series of questions asks about your past sexual experiences with current and past sex partners. Sex partners include anyone with whom you voluntarily have "had sex." Please remember the definition of "had sex" when answering YES or NO to the following questions.

11. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you by threatening to use force?
    a. No → Go to the next question
    b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →
12. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you by actually using force?
   a. No  →  Go to the next question
   b. Yes  →  Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

13. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you by threatening to use a weapon?
   a. No  →  Go to the next question
   b. Yes  →  Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

14. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you by actually using a weapon?
   a. No  →  Go to the next question
   b. Yes  →  Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

15. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you by threatening to physically harm someone close to you?
   a. No  →  Go to the next question
   b. Yes  →  Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

16. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you after making you involuntarily intoxicated, drugged, or in some other way incapable of consenting or refusing?
   a. No  →  Go to the next question
   b. Yes  →  Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

17. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you after you voluntarily became intoxicated, drugged, or in some other way incapable of consenting or refusing?
   a. No  →  Go to the next question
   b. Yes  →  Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →
18. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you after you expressed refusal?
   a. No  →  Go to the next question
   b. Yes  →  Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

19. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you when you did not want to but were too afraid to express refusal?
   a. No  →  Go to the next question
   b. Yes  →  Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

20. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you when you were asleep?
   a. No  →  Go to the next question
   b. Yes  →  Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

This next series of questions asks about your past sexual experiences with anyone else you have not yet mentioned. Please remember the definition of “had sex” when answering YES or NO to the following questions.

21. Has anyone else you have not yet mentioned ever had sex with you by threatening to use force?
   a. No  →  Go to the next question
   b. Yes  →  Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

22. Has anyone else you have not yet mentioned ever had sex with you by actually using force?
   a. No  →  Go to the next question
   b. Yes  →  Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →
23. Has anyone else you have not yet mentioned ever had sex with you by threatening to use a weapon?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

24. Has anyone else you have not yet mentioned ever had sex with you by actually using a weapon?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

25. Has anyone else you have not yet mentioned ever had sex with you by threatening to physically harm someone close to you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

26. Has anyone else you have not yet mentioned ever had sex with you after making you involuntarily intoxicated, drugged, or in some other way incapable of consenting or refusing?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

27. Has anyone else you have not yet mentioned ever had sex with you after you voluntarily became intoxicated, drugged, or in some other way incapable of consenting or refusing?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

380
28. Has anyone else you have not yet mentioned ever had sex with you after you expressed refusal?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

29. Has anyone else you have not yet mentioned ever had sex with you when you did not want to but were too afraid to express refusal?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

30. Has anyone else you have not yet mentioned ever had sex with you when you were asleep?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

This next series of questions asks about attempted but unsuccessful past sexual experiences. Please remember the definition of “had sex” when answering YES or NO to the following questions.

31. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you by threatening to use force?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

32. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you by actually using force?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →
33. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you by threatening to use a weapon?
   a. No  \(\rightarrow\) Go to the next question
   b. Yes  \(\rightarrow\) Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

34. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you by actually using a weapon?
   a. No  \(\rightarrow\) Go to the next question
   b. Yes  \(\rightarrow\) Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

35. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you by threatening to physically harm you or someone close to you?
   a. No  \(\rightarrow\) Go to the next question
   b. Yes  \(\rightarrow\) Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

36. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you after making you involuntarily intoxicated, drugged, or in some other way incapable of consenting or refusing?
   a. No  \(\rightarrow\) Go to the next question
   b. Yes  \(\rightarrow\) Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

37. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you after you voluntarily became intoxicated, drugged, or in some other way incapable of consenting or refusing?
   a. No  \(\rightarrow\) Go to the next question
   b. Yes  \(\rightarrow\) Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report
38. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you after you expressed refusal?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

39. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you when you did not want to but were too afraid to express refusal?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

40. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you when you were asleep?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

III. Closing Questions

These next few questions ask about your other types of past sexual experiences with anyone. Please remember the definition of “had sex” when answering YES or NO to the following questions.

41. Has anyone ever had sex with you when you did not want to by overwhelming you with continual pestering and verbal pressure?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →
42. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you when you did not want to by overwhelming you with continual pestering and verbal pressure?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

43. Have you ever had sex with anyone when you did not want to but you felt obligated?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

These next few questions ask about past sexual experiences with anyone in a position of power or authority over you. Please remember the definition of “had sex” when answering YES or NO to the following questions.

44. Has anyone ever had sex with you when you did not want to by promising to somehow reward you or someone close to you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

45. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you when you did not want to by promising to somehow reward you or someone close to you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

46. Has anyone ever had sex with you when you did not want to by threatening to harm or punish you or someone close to you in a non-physical way?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

384
47. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you when you did not want to by threatening to harm or punish you or someone close to you in a non-physical way?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

These final few questions ask for your opinions on related issues.

48. Which of the following best describes your assumptions when it comes to sexual experiences?
   a. Yes until No... You operate under the assumption that it is acceptable to proceed until someone says no.
   b. No until Yes... You operate under the assumption that it is not acceptable to proceed until both people say yes.
   c. Other... Please specify _____________________________________________________

49. What percentage of the general population do you think also operates under the same assumption as you? _____________%

50. Finally, which of the following methods of collecting data would make you more likely to be willing to participate in research on sensitive subjects, such as sexual violence?
   a. Mail Surveys
   b. Telephone Surveys with a computer asking the questions
   c. Telephone Surveys with a person asking the questions
   d. In-person Surveys with a person coming to your home to ask you the questions
   e. In-person Surveys with you coming to meet a person who asks the questions
   f. Initial telephone contact to offer you the choice of participating by mail or an in-person survey

Please feel free to give additional comments below and to attach additional pages if needed.
Thank you for your participation!
Appendix E

Original Incident Report
Incident Report

Do not complete unless instructed to within the survey

1. To which question did you answer Yes? ______

2. Has the incident described in that question happened on more than one occasion?
   a. No
   b. Yes → How many times has this happened? ______

Please answer the following questions based ONLY on the most recent incident described in that question.

3. What was your age at the time of the incident? __________

4. What specific location did this incident happen? __________________

5. Was there more than one other person involved in the sex acts in this incident?
   a. No
   b. Yes → How many? ________

6. Please define your relationship(s) to the person(s) involved? ________________

7. What is the sex of the person(s) involved?  a. Female(s)  b. Male(s)  c. Both

8. Did you ever officially report the incident?  a. No  b. Yes

9. Did you ever tell anyone about the incident unofficially?  a. No  b. Yes

10. Do you believe others hold you responsible in any way for this incident?
    a. No  b. Yes

11. Do you personally hold yourself responsible in any way for this incident?
    a. No  b. Yes

12. At the time of the incident, did you think of it as rape?  a. No  b. Yes

13. Today, do you think of this incident as rape?  a. No  b. Yes

14. Please describe what, if any, consequences (health or physical, emotional or psychological, social or sexual, economic or financial) that you have had as a result of this incident.

15. Please describe the incident in your own words, and then return to where you were in the survey.

   Please photocopy and attach additional pages as needed

387
Appendix F

Voluntary Informed Consent Forms
The Social Construction of Rape Research: Exploring Epistemologies and Experimenting with Methods

Principal Investigator: Dr. David Hartmann
Student Investigator: Edie Fisher

I have been invited by random selection to participate in a research project entitled "The Social Construction of Rape Research: Exploring Epistemologies and Experimenting with Methods." The purpose of this phase of the research is to develop more participant-centered methods of researching sexual violence.

My agreement to participate in this project indicates that I will be asked to attend one private interview with Edie Fisher. This interview contains two parts. The first is a sexual violence questionnaire with several demographic questions, 48 sexual violence related yes/no questions with several additional multiple choice questions. The second part is a semi-structured interview based on the survey and several vignettes. The 48 explicit survey questions relate directly to my past sexual experiences and are designed to estimate how common these sexual experiences are among female students at Western Michigan University. The vignettes include sexually explicit scenarios about which I will be asked a series of questions to determine my interpretations of the events described in these vignettes and their meanings to me. The entire interview will last about 30 to 45 minutes and will be recorded on audiotape. I will be asked to meet Edie Fisher for this session in a private room designated by the Kercher Center for Social Research.

As in all research, there may be unforeseen risks to the participant. If an accidental injury occurs, appropriate emergency medical measures will be taken; however, no compensation or treatment will be made available to me except as is provided by the Kercher Center for Social Research.

One way in which I may benefit from this activity is having the opportunity to share some of my thoughts and feelings about sexual violence and the research process of collecting information about sexual violence. This information may be used to help improve the research process to better account for the needs and wishes of women being asked to participate in social research on sexual violence.

All of the information collected from me or about me is confidential. That means that my name will not appear on any papers on which this information is recorded. The papers will be assigned a random code number, and no master list with the names of the participants and the corresponding code numbers will be generated. Once the data are collected and analyzed, the audiotapes will be destroyed. All other papers will be retained for at least three years in a locked file cabinet in the Kercher Center for Social Research.
I may choose to not answer any question, and I may refuse to participate or quit at any time during the study without prejudice or penalty. If I have any questions or concerns about this study, I may contact Dr. David Hartmann at 616-387-3594, or the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 616-387-8293, or the Vice President for Research at 616-387-8298 with any concerns that I have. My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Subjects should not sign this document if the corner does not show a stamped date and signature.

__________________________    _______________________
Signature                      Date
You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “The Social Construction of Rape Research” designed to analyze the prevalence of rape among female WMU students and to develop more appropriate methods of researching sexual violence. The research is being conducted by Dr. David Hartmann and Edie Fisher from Western Michigan University Department of Sociology and is part of the dissertation requirements for Edie Fisher.

In addition to several demographic questions, I will be asking you 50 questions related to sexual violence. All of them except the last 3 are yes/no questions. It will take us approximately 10-20 minutes to go through these questions. All of the information you give me will be kept confidential. That means that your name will not appear on any papers on which this information is recorded. You may choose to not answer any question and simply say you choose not to answer. You may choose not to participate or you may quit at any time during this session without any repercussions. However, answering the questions indicates your consent for use of the answers you supply. If, after this session, you have any questions, you may contact Dr. Hartmann (616 387-3594), Edie Fisher (616 387-5294), the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (616 387-8293), or the vice president for research (616 387-8298).

Should you experience any emotional discomfort as a result of answering or being asked these questions, you may contact the YWCA Sexual Assault Program in Kalamazoo (616 345-3036) or the University Counseling Services (616 387-1850) for free assistance.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. You should not participate in this project if the corner does not have a stamped date and signature.
Appendix G

Vignette Questions
Vignette Questions

1. What term or phrase would you use to describe the event that transpired between the individuals in this vignette?

2. Can you give me an idea of how you define that term or phrase?

3. What is it about the interaction that fits this terminology you have chosen?

4. Who is responsible for the event that took place in the vignette? If the responsibility is shared, then how is it divided? Why?

5. What role did mood-altering substances play in this situation? How did this impact your answer to question one? Why?

6. What role did the relationship between the parties involved play in this situation? How did this impact your answer to question one? Why?

7. Has a crime been committed? If so, which one, by whom, and what punishment, if any, should be given?
Appendix H
Revised Survey
Anonymous Sexual Violence Survey

I. General Demographics Questions

1. Which of the following best describes your current academic status?
   a. Freshman  
   b. Sophomore  
   c. Junior  
   d. Senior  
   e. Graduate Student  
   f. Other, please specify

2. Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?
   a. African-American  
   b. Alaskan Native  
   c. Asian  
   d. Asian-American  
   e. Caucasian  
   f. Hispanic  
   g. Multiracial  
   h. Native American  
   i. Pacific Islander  
   j. Other, please specify

3. Which of the following best describes your current marital status?
   a. Single  
   b. Divorced  
   c. Widowed  
   d. Separated  
   e. A member of an unmarried couple  
   f. Married  
   g. Other, please specify

4. What is your age?

II. Sexual Violence Questions

Unless instructed otherwise within the survey, ignore the Incident Reports on the backside of the pages.
Each of the following questions includes the phrase "had sex." The meaning of this phrase includes only the following acts: vaginal intercourse; anal intercourse; oral intercourse; or penetration of the vagina or anus by objects other than a penis. Please do not include any other behaviors as sex acts when answering these questions.

This survey includes a series of repeating questions about past sexual experiences with different groups of people. The first series of questions asks about past sexual experiences with total strangers. Please answer YES or NO to the following questions.

1. Has a stranger ever had sex with you by threatening to use force against you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

2. Has a stranger ever had sex with you by actually using force against you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

3. Has a stranger ever had sex with you by threatening to harm you with a weapon?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

4. Has a stranger ever had sex with you by actually using a weapon against you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

5. Has a stranger ever had sex with you by threatening to physically harm someone close to you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
6. Has a stranger ever had sex with you after making you involuntarily drugged, intoxicated, or in some other way incapable of consenting or refusing?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

7. Has a stranger ever had sex with you after you voluntarily became intoxicated, drugged, or in some other way incapable of consenting or refusing?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

8. Has a stranger ever had sex with you after you expressed refusal?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

9. Has a stranger ever had sex with you when you did not want to but you were too afraid to express refusal?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

10. Has a stranger ever had sex with you when you were asleep?
    a. No → Go to the next question
    b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report

The next series of questions asks about past sexual experiences with current and past sex partners. Sex partners include anyone with whom you voluntarily have “had sex” according to the definition provided at the beginning of this survey. Please remember the definition of “had sex” when answering YES or NO to the following questions.
11. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you by threatening to use force against you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

12. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you by actually using force against you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

13. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you by threatening to harm you with a weapon?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

14. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you by actually using a weapon against you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

15. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you by threatening to physically harm someone close to you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

16. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you after making you involuntarily drugged, intoxicated, or in some other way incapable of consenting or refusing?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →
17. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you after you voluntarily became intoxicated, drugged, or in some other way incapable of consenting or refusing?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

18. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you after you expressed refusal?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

19. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you when you did not want to but you were too afraid to express refusal?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

20. Has a sex partner ever had sex with you when you were asleep?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

This next series of questions asks about past sexual experiences with anyone else in your lifetime. Please remember the definition of "had sex" when answering YES or NO to the following questions.

21. In your lifetime, has anyone else ever had sex with you by threatening to use force against you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →
22. In your lifetime, has anyone else ever had sex with you by actually using force against you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

23. In your lifetime, has anyone else ever had sex with you by threatening to harm you with a weapon?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

24. In your lifetime, has anyone else ever had sex with you by actually using a weapon against you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

25. In your lifetime, has anyone else ever had sex with you by threatening to physically harm someone close to you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

26. In your lifetime, has anyone else ever had sex with you after making you involuntarily drugged, intoxicated, or in some other way incapable of consenting or refusing?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →
27. In your lifetime, has anyone else ever had sex with you after you voluntarily became intoxicated, drugged, or in some other way incapable of consenting or refusing?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

28. In your lifetime, has anyone else ever had sex with you after you expressed refusal?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

29. In your lifetime, has anyone else ever had sex with you when you did not want to but you were too afraid to express refusal?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

30. In your lifetime, has anyone else ever had sex with you when you were asleep?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

This next series of questions asks about past unsuccessful attempts of the same sexual experiences in your lifetime. Please remember the definition of “had sex” when answering YES or NO to the following questions.

31. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you by threatening to use force against you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →
32. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you by actually using force against you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

33. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you by threatening to harm you with a weapon?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

34. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you by actually using a weapon against you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

35. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you by threatening to physically harm someone close to you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

36. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you after making you involuntarily drugged, intoxicated, or in some other way incapable of consenting or refusing?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →
37. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you after you voluntarily became intoxicated, drugged, or in some other way incapable of consenting or refusing?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

38. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you after you expressed refusal?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

39. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you when you did not want to but you were too afraid to express refusal?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

40. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you when you were asleep?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

III. Closing Questions

These next few questions ask about some other types of past sexual experiences with anyone in your lifetime. Please remember the definition of “had sex” when answering YES or NO to the following questions.
41. Has anyone ever had sex with you when you did not want to by overwhelming you with continual pestering or verbal pressure?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

42. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you when you did not want to by trying to overwhelm you with continual pestering or verbal pressure?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

43. Have you ever had sex with anyone when you did not want to because you felt obligated to do so?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

These next few questions ask about past sexual experiences with anyone in a position of power or authority over you. Please remember the definition of “had sex” when answering YES or NO to the following questions.

44. Has anyone ever had sex with you when you did not want to by promising to somehow reward you or someone close to you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →
45. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you when you did not want to by promising to somehow reward you or someone close to you?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

46. Has anyone ever had sex with you when you did not want to by threatening to harm or punish you or someone close to you in a non-physical way?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

47. Has anyone ever attempted but failed to have sex with you when you did not want to by threatening to harm or punish you or someone close to you in a non-physical way?
   a. No → Go to the next question
   b. Yes → Turn to the backside of the survey pages and please complete an incident report →

These final few questions ask for your opinions on some related issues.

48. Which of the following best describes your policy when it comes to sexual experiences?
   a. Yes until No... You operate under the policy that it is acceptable to make advances just until someone says no.
   b. No until Yes... You operate under the policy that it is not acceptable to make any advances until permission has been given.
   c. Some Other... Please specify

49. In your opinion, what percentage of the general population do you think also operates under the same policy as you? _______%
50. Finally, which of the following methods would make you more willing to participate in research on sensitive subjects like sexual violence?
   a. Mail Surveys
   b. Telephone Surveys with a computer asking you the questions
   c. Telephone Surveys with an interviewer asking you the questions
   d. In-person Surveys with an interviewer coming to your home to ask you the questions
   e. In-person Surveys with you coming to meet an interviewer who asks you the questions
   f. Initial telephone contact to offer you the choice of participating by mail or an in-person survey

Please feel free to give additional comments below and to attach additional pages if needed

Thank you for your participation!
Appendix I

Revised Incident Report
Incident Report  Do not complete unless instructed to within the survey

1. To which question did you answer Yes? _____

2. Has the incident described in that question happened on more than one occasion?
   a. No → Continue with the next question
   b. Yes → How many times has this happened? _____ → Continue with the
      next question

Please answer the following questions based ONLY on the MOST RECENT incident described in that question.

3. What was your age at the time of the incident? ________________

4. At what specific location did this incident happen? __________________________

5. Was there more than one other person involved in the sex acts in this incident?
   a. No
   b. Yes → How many? _____

6. Please define your relationship(s) at the time of the incident to the person(s) involved? __

7. What is the sex of the person(s) involved? a. Female(s) b. Male(s) c. Both

8. Did you ever officially report the incident?
   a. No → Why not? __________________________________________
   b. Yes → To Whom? __________________________________________

9. Did you ever tell anyone about the incident unofficially?
   a. No → Why not? __________________________________________
   b. Yes → Whom? __________________________________________
10. Do you believe others hold you responsible in any way for this incident?
   a. No
   b. Yes → Who and Why do you believe this? ________________________________
   c. Other, Please specify ________________________________________________

11. Do you personally hold yourself responsible in any way for this incident?
   a. No
   b. Yes → Why? _________________________________________________________
   c. Other, Please specify ________________________________________________

12. At the time of the incident, did you think of it as rape?
   a. No → What language did you use to describe the incident? _________________
   b. Yes
   c. Other, Please specify ________________________________________________

13. Today, do you think of this incident as rape?
   a. No → What language do you use to describe the incident? _________________
   b. Yes
   c. Other, Please specify ________________________________________________

14. Which of the following best describes the level of impact this incident has had on your life (health or physical, emotional or psychological, social or sexual, economic or financial well-being).
   a. None
   b. Slight
   c. Moderate
   d. Severe

Please return to where you were in the survey.
Appendix J

Vignette One
Vignette Number One

Lee walked into the lobby of the Creighton Hills Apartments and picked up the phone. He buzzed Diane’s apartment. When she answered, he told her he was waiting for her downstairs to take her to the movie. While waiting, he checked himself in the mirror. His 5-foot-10-inch, 160-pound frame fit well into the madras sport jacket and jeans he had donned for the occasion. Diane walked down the steps and over to Lee. Lee smiled and said that he really liked the green jersey dress she had bought last week. She was only 5-foot-2-inches, 100 pounds, small in relation to Lee.

As they walked to the car, Diane said she’d wanted to see the movie for a long time. As they drove to the theater they talked about their mutual friends and the party last weekend. Diane and Lee had met two months earlier and had seen each other a couple of times at first, and then every weekend for the past month. They each continue to date others on occasion.

After parking the car, the couple waited in line, making small talk until the ticket window opened. Lee bought the tickets and they went inside. They were spellbound by the movie; neither talked until the film was over. After the movie, Lee suggested that they go back to his apartment where they could listen to music, drink some wine, and talk. Diane said “okay.”

Lee’s apartment opened onto a landscaped courtyard surrounded by many similar apartments. Lee and Diane walked slowly through the courtyard, enjoying the night air, glancing toward each other from time to time.

When they got to his apartment, Lee put on some music and poured some wine for both of them. They sat on the couch for a while, listening to music and talking. As they were talking, their eyes would meet and then both would quickly look away. The fourth time their eyes made contact, Diane and Lee held their gaze and smiled. Lee moved closer to Diane, put his arm around her and gently stroked her shoulder. He kissed her softly.

Lee put both arms around Diane and held her close to him. He kissed her again, longer this time, and then opened his mouth slightly so that his tongue touched hers. He continued to kiss her like this for a while.

Lee slid his hand inside Diane’s dress and began to fondle her breast; with the other hand he started unbuttoning Diane’s dress and he slipped it off her shoulders. Kissing her so that their mouths were in continuous contact, he stroked her breasts rhythmically and then rubbed the inside of her thighs. Lee kissed Diane’s breasts and stomach and touched her genital area. Then he slid her dress completely off and removed her underwear. They kissed each other passionately.

The phone rang. Lee answered. Just a wrong number; Lee hung up and returned, sitting next to Diane. With Diane totally naked, Lee leaned against her and pushed her back onto the couch until he was on top of her. Diane said, “No, Lee, don’t.” Ignoring this, Lee responded, “It’s okay,” and quickly unzipped his pants and slid them down. Diane struggled and said, “I don’t want to, let me go!” “Relax Diane, don’t worry,” Lee answered.

Diane protested once more, “Don’t! Stop!” Lee held Diane and said, “Don’t worry, I’ll take care of everything.” He stroked her breasts, “Relax, just take it easy,” he said. Lee continued to kiss and fondle Diane. Soon, he penetrated her and intercourse occurred.
Appendix K

Vignette Two
Vignette Number Two

Laura, an 18-year-old college freshman was with friends and met the man (in his twenties) for the first time on the evening it happened. Both were mildly intoxicated when he suggested that the two of them drive to another bar in a different part of town. She found the man attractive and did not protest when he parked the car in a dark alley or when he made initial sexual advances. He tried for several seconds to have intercourse with her, but stopped when she protested verbally. They then talked a while and he again tried to have intercourse with her. At this point she actively resisted and he held her down, bruising her thighs, torso, and arms in the process. Penetration occurred but the man had not ejaculated. The two of them talked for a while and then he took her home.
Appendix L

Vignette Three
Vignette Number Three

Tom walked into the lobby of the Creighton Hills Apartments and picked up the phone. He buzzed Brenda’s apartment. When she answered, he told her he was waiting for her downstairs to take her to the movie. While waiting, he checked himself in the mirror. His 5-foot-10-inch, 160-pound frame fit well into the madras sport jacket and jeans he had donned for the occasion. Brenda walked down the steps and over to Tom. Tom smiled and said that he really liked the green jersey dress she had bought last week. She was only 5-foot-2-inches, 100 pounds, small in relation to Tom.

As they walked to the car, Brenda said she’d wanted to see the movie for a long time. As they drove to the theater they talked about their mutual friends and the party last weekend. Brenda and Tom had met two months earlier and had seen each other a couple of times at first, and then every weekend for the past month. They each continue to date others on occasion.

After parking the car, the couple waited in line, making small talk until the ticket window opened. Tom bought the tickets and they went inside. They were spellbound by the movie; neither talked until the film was over. After the movie, Tom suggested that they go back to his apartment where they could listen to music, drink some wine, and talk. Brenda said “okay.”

Tom’s apartment opened onto a landscaped courtyard surrounded by many similar apartments. Tom and Brenda walked slowly through the courtyard, enjoying the night air, glancing toward each other from time to time.

When they got to his apartment, Tom put on some music and poured some wine for both of them. They sat on the couch for a while, listening to music and talking. As they were talking, their eyes would meet and then both would quickly look away. The fourth time their eyes made contact, Brenda and Tom held their gaze and smiled. Tom moved closer to Brenda, put his arm around her and gently stroked her shoulder. He kissed her softly.

Tom put both arms around Brenda and held her close to him. He kissed her again, longer this time, and then opened his mouth slightly so that his tongue touched hers. He continued to kiss her like this for a while.

Tom slid his hand inside Brenda’s dress and began to fondle her breast; with the other hand he started unbuttoning the dress. Soon, Tom managed to finish unbuttoning Brenda’s dress and he slipped it off her shoulders. Kissing her so that their mouths were in continuous contact, he stroked her breasts rhythmically and then rubbed the inside of her thighs. Tom kissed Brenda’s breasts and stomach and touched her genital area. Then he slid her dress completely off and removed her underwear. They kissed each other passionately.

The phone rang. Tom answered. He had to leave the apartment, telling Brenda, “Wait right here, I’ll be back in ten minutes.” Tom rushed out of the apartment, leaving the door ajar as he left.

A moment later, before Brenda had time to clothe herself, a man peered through the open door. He must have been walking in the courtyard. The man came toward Brenda. With Brenda totally naked, the man leaned against her and pushed her back onto the couch until he was on top of her. Brenda said, “No, don’t.” Ignoring this, the man responded, “It’s okay,” and quickly unzipped his pants and slid them down. Brenda struggled and said, “I don’t want to, let me go!” “Relax, don’t worry,” the man answered.

Brenda protested once more, “Don’t! Stop!” The man held Brenda and said, “Don’t worry, I’ll take care of everything.” He stroked her breasts, “Relax, just take it easy,” he said. The man continued to kiss and fondle Brenda. Soon, he penetrated her and intercourse occurred.
Appendix M

Vignette Four
Vignette Number Four

Linda, a 19-year-old college freshman was with friends and met the man (in his twenties) for the first time on the evening it happened. Neither had begun drinking yet when he suggested that the two of them drive to another bar in a different part of town. She found the man attractive and did not protest when he parked the car in a dark alley or when he made initial sexual advances. He tried for several seconds to have intercourse with her, but stopped when she protested verbally. They then talked a while and he again tried to have intercourse with her. At this point she actively resisted and he held her down, bruising her thighs, torso, and arms in the process. Penetration occurred but the man had not ejaculated. The two of them talked for a while and then he took her home.
Appendix N
Vignette Five
Vignette Number Five

Mike walked into the lobby of the Creighton Hills Apartments and picked up the phone. He buzzed Sarah's apartment. When she answered, he told her he was waiting for her downstairs to take her to the movie. While waiting, he checked himself in the mirror. His 5-foot-10-inch, 160-pound frame fit well into the madras sport jacket and jeans he had donned for the occasion. Sarah walked down the steps and over to Mike. Mike smiled and said that he really liked the green jersey dress she had bought last week. She was only 5-foot-2-inches, 100 pounds, small in relation to Mike.

As they walked to the car, Sarah said she'd wanted to see the movie for a long time. As they drove to the theater they talked about their mutual friends and the party last weekend. Sarah and Mike had met two months earlier and had seen each other a couple of times at first, and then every weekend for the past month. They each continue to date others on occasion.

After parking the car, the couple waited in line, making small talk until the ticket window opened. Mike bought the tickets and they went inside. They were spellbound by the movie; neither talked until the film was over. After the movie, Mike suggested that they go back to his apartment where they could listen to music, drink some wine, and talk. Sarah said "okay."

Mike's apartment opened onto a landscaped courtyard surrounded by many similar apartments. Mike and Sarah walked slowly through the courtyard, enjoying the night air, glancing toward each other from time to time.

When they got to his apartment, Mike put on some music and poured some wine for both of them. They sat on the couch for a while, listening to music and talking. As they were talking, their eyes would meet and then both would quickly look away. The fourth time their eyes made contact, Sarah and Mike held their gaze and smiled. Mike moved closer to Sarah, put his arm around her and gently stroked her shoulder. He kissed her softly.

Mike slid his hand inside Sarah's dress and began to fondle her breast; with the other hand he started unbuttoning the dress. Soon, Mike managed to finish unbuttoning Sarah's dress and he slipped it off her shoulders. Kissing her so that their mouths were in continuous contact, he stroked her breasts rhythmically and then rubbed the inside of her thighs. Mike kissed Sarah's breasts and stomach and touched her genital area. Then he slid her dress completely off and removed her underwear. They kissed each other passionately.

The phone rang. Mike answered. Just a wrong number; Mike hung up and returned, sitting next to Sarah. With Sarah totally naked, Mike leaned against her and pushed her back onto the couch until he was on top of her. Mike quickly unzipped his pants and slid them down.

Mike held Sarah and said, "Don't worry, I'll take care of everything." He stroked her breasts, "Relax, just take it easy," he said. Mike continued to kiss and fondle Sarah. Soon, he penetrated her and intercourse occurred.
Appendix O

Vignette Six
Vignette Number Six

Jenny, a 19-year-old college sophomore was with friends and met the man (in his twenties) for the first time on the evening it happened. She was mildly intoxicated when he suggested that the two of them drive to another bar in a different part of town. She found the man attractive and did not protest when he parked the car in a dark alley or when he made initial sexual advances. He tried for several seconds to have intercourse with her, but stopped when she protested verbally. They then talked a while and he again tried to have intercourse with her. At this point she actively resisted and he held her down, bruising her thighs, torso, and arms in the process. Penetration occurred but the man had not ejaculated. The two of them talked for a while and then he took her home.
Vignette Number Seven

Lisa walked into the lobby of the Creighton Hills Apartments and picked up the phone. She buzzed Debra’s apartment. When she answered, she told her she was waiting for her downstairs to take her to the movie. While waiting, she checked herself in the mirror. Her 5-foot-10-inch, 160-pound frame fit well into the madras sport jacket and jeans she had donned for the occasion. Debra walked down the steps and over to Lisa. Lisa smiled and said that she really liked the green jersey dress she had bought last week. She was only 5-foot-2-inches, 100 pounds, small in relation to Lisa.

As they walked to the car, Debra said she’d wanted to see the movie for a long time. As they drove to the theater they talked about their mutual friends and the party last weekend. Debra and Lisa had met two months earlier and had seen each other a couple of times at first, and then every weekend for the past month. They each continue to date others on occasion.

After parking the car, the couple waited in line, making small talk until the ticket window opened. Lisa bought the tickets and they went inside. They were spellbound by the movie; neither talked until the film was over. After the movie, Lisa suggested that they go back to her apartment where they could listen to music, drink some wine, and talk. Debra said “okay.”

Lisa’s apartment opened onto a landscaped courtyard surrounded by many similar apartments. Lisa and Debra walked slowly through the courtyard, enjoying the night air, glancing toward each other from time to time.

When they got to her apartment, Lisa put on some music and poured some wine for both of them. They sat on the couch for a while, listening to music and talking. As they were talking, their eyes would meet and then both would quickly look away. The fourth time their eyes made contact, Debra and Lisa held their gaze and smiled. Lisa moved closer to Debra, put her arm around her and gently stroked her shoulder. She kissed her softly.

Lisa put both arms around Debra and held her close to her. She kissed her again, longer this time, and then opened her mouth slightly so that her tongue touched hers. She continued to kiss her like this for a while.

Lisa slid her hand inside Debra’s dress and began to fondle her breast; with the other hand she started unbuttoning the dress. Soon, Lisa managed to finish unbuttoning Debra’s dress and she slipped it off her shoulders. Kissing her so that their mouths were in continuous contact, she stroked her breasts rhythmically and then rubbed the inside of her thighs. Lisa kissed Debra’s breasts and stomach and touched her genital area. Then she slid her dress completely off and removed her underwear. They kissed each other passionately.

The phone rang. Lisa answered. Just a wrong number; Lisa hung up and returned, sitting next to Debra. With Debra totally naked, Lisa leaned against her and pushed her back onto the couch until she was on top of her. Debra said, “No, Lisa, don’t.” Ignoring this, Lisa responded, “It’s okay.” Debra struggled and said, “I don’t want to, let me go!” “Relax Debra, don’t worry,” Lisa answered.

Debra protested once more, “Don’t! Stop!” Lisa held Debra and said, “Don’t worry, I’ll take care of everything.” She stroked her breasts, “Relax, just take it easy,” she said. Lisa continued to kiss and fondle Debra. Soon, her tongue penetrated her and oral intercourse occurred.

423

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Appendix Q

Vignette Eight

424
Vignette Number Eight

Julie, a 20-year-old college sophomore was with friends and met the man (in his twenties) for the first time on the evening it happened. Both were intoxicated when he suggested that the two of them drive to another bar in a different part of town. She found the man attractive and did not protest when he parked the car in a dark alley or when he made initial sexual advances. He tried for several seconds to have intercourse with her, but stopped when she protested verbally. They then talked a while and he again tried to have intercourse with her. At this point she actively resisted and he held her down, bruising her thighs, torso, and arms in the process. Penetration occurred but the man had not ejaculated. The two of them talked for a while and then he took her home.
Appendix R

Vignette Nine
Vignette Number Nine

Jim walked into the lobby of the Creighton Hills Apartments and picked up the phone. He buzzed Susan's apartment. When she answered, he told her he was waiting for her downstairs to take her to the movie. While waiting, he checked himself in the mirror. His 5-foot-10-inch, 160-pound frame fit well into the madras sport jacket and jeans he had donned for the occasion. Susan walked down the steps and over to Jim. Jim smiled and said that he really liked the green jersey dress she had bought last week. She was only 5-foot-2-inches, 100 pounds, small in relation to Jim.

As they walked to the car, Susan said she'd wanted to see the movie for a long time. As they drove to the theater they talked about their mutual friends and the party last weekend. Susan and Jim had met two months earlier and had seen each other a couple of times at first, and then every weekend for the past month. Although they recently became intimate for the first time, they each continue to date others on occasion.

After parking the car, the couple waited in line, making small talk until the ticket window opened. Jim bought the tickets and they went inside. They were spellbound by the movie; neither talked until the film was over. After the movie, Jim suggested that they go back to his apartment where they could listen to music, drink some wine, and talk. Susan said "okay."

Jim's apartment opened onto a landscaped courtyard surrounded by many similar apartments. Jim and Susan walked slowly through the courtyard, enjoying the night air, glancing toward each other from time to time.

When they got to his apartment, Jim put on some music and poured some wine for both of them. They sat on the couch for a while, listening to music and talking. As they were talking, their eyes would meet and then both would quickly look away. The fourth time their eyes made contact, Susan and Jim held their gaze and smiled. Jim moved closer to Susan, put his arm around her and gently stroked her shoulder. He kissed her softly.

Jim slid his hand inside Susan's dress and began to fondle her breasts; with the other hand he started unbuttoning the dress. Soon, Jim managed to finish unbuttoning Susan's dress and he slipped it off her shoulders. Kissing her so that their mouths were in continuous contact, he stroked her breasts rhythmically and then rubbed the inside of her thighs. Jim kissed Susan's breasts and stomach and touched her genital area. Then he slid her dress completely off and removed her underwear. They kissed each other passionately.

The phone rang. Jim answered. Just a wrong number; Jim hung up and returned, sitting next to Susan. With Susan totally naked, Jim leaned against her and pushed her back onto the couch until he was on top of her. Susan said, "No, Jim, don't." Ignoring this, Jim responded, "It's okay," and quickly unzipped his pants and slid them down. Susan struggled and said, "I don't want to, let me go!" "Relax Susan, don't worry," Jim answered.

Susan protested once more, "Don't! Stop!" Jim held Susan and said, "Don't worry, I'll take care of everything." He stroked her breasts, "Relax, just take it easy," he said. Jim continued to kiss and fondle Susan. Soon, he penetrated her and intercourse occurred.
Appendix S

Interview Questions
Semi-structured Interview Questions

I. Transition Questions
   1. Do women ever say no when they mean yes?
   2. Do men ever say no when they mean yes?

II. Research Process Questions
   3. What method of data collection would make you the most willing to participate in future rape research (mail, telephone, personal interviews)? Why?
   4. What method of data collection would make you the least willing to participate in future rape research (mail, telephone, personal interviews)? Why?
   5. Does the sex/gender of the person requesting your participation impact on your decision to participate?
   6. Does the race/ethnicity of the person requesting your participation impact on your decision to participate?
   7. What type of data should rape researchers be collecting? Specifically, what issues are of concern to you?
   8. From whom should researchers concentrate their data collection efforts? Specifically, with whom should we be talking?
   9. What specific kinds of sex acts do you think should be included in the definition of rape? What about each of the acts included in the survey – are they appropriate to include? Why? Do you think there is anything missing from the definition of sex given in the survey?

III. Definition Questions
   10. What do you think is the difference in meaning between a stranger and an acquaintance?
   11. What do you think force means?
   12. What do you think harm or punish in a non-physical way means?
   13. What do you think is the difference in meaning between an acquaintance and a friend?
   14. What do you think against her will means?
   15. What do you think penetration means?
   16. If someone you recognized by name or face that you just met for the first time in a public place like a bar setting rapes you would you define that situation as a stranger rape, an acquaintance rape, or a date rape? Why?
   17. What do you think obligated as it was used in the survey means?
   18. What do you think intercourse means?
   19. What do you think intoxication means? How do you know if someone is intoxicated? Do you think it is wrong to have sex with someone who is a willing participant but is also intoxicated? Why?
   20. What do you think initial sexual advances means?
   21. What do you think actively resisted means?
   22. What do you think consent means?
   23. Are these meanings static and fixed or are they fluid and changeable? Why? What causes these meanings to change?
   24. How has your thinking on the topic of sexual violence changed as a result of your participation in the first part of this project last semester?
   25. Do you have any comments or anything you would like to add?
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Danner, M., & Landis, J. (1990). Carpe diem (Seize the day!): An opportunity for feminist connections. In B. D. MacLean & D. Milovanovic (Eds.), *Racism*,
empiricism, and criminal justice (pp. 105-112). Vancouver, Canada: The Collective Press.


439

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


448


449

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


Lee, D. (2001). “He didn’t sexually harass me, as in harassed for sex...he was just horrible” Women’s definitions of unwanted male sexual conduct at work. *Women’s Studies International Forum, 24*(1), 25-38.


454


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


460

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


Jerin, (Eds.), Current Issues in Victimology Research (pp. 31-44). Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.


464

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


465


of religion, colonization, and sexual violence (pp. 31-52). Binghamton, NY: Haworth Pastoral Press.


467


468


470


