

EXAMINING COURTSHIP, DATING, AND FORCED SEXUAL INTERCOURSE: A PRELIMINARY MODEL

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ABSTRACT

A survey research project focusing on violence in intimate relationships, perceptions toward courtship and dating, and perceptions of sexual intercourse found that some women tend to choose to label incidents of forced sexual intercourse in which they have been victims as non-rape. These findings are explored and a tentative model to explain this phenomenon is advanced.

INTRODUCTION

Forced sexual intercourse has been consistently defined as a social problem over time. Historically, only forced sexual intercourse directed toward an unwilling victim by a relative stranger was defined as rape and subject to control by the justice system. Societal acceptance, or at least lack of regard, for other forms of forced sexual intercourse has changed dramatically during the latter decades of this century. The definition of unacceptable sexual behavior has been expanded to include types of forced sexual intercourse which, in the past, were held to be of no interest to the justice system. Sexual assault, the emerging concept, is broad, has been accepted widely, and specifies degree of offensiveness. There is some recognition that offensive sexual behavior and forced sexual intercourse can be placed on a continuum based on degree of unacceptability of the offensive behavior. The research reported here suggests that the continuum is broader than generally accepted and may include offensive sexual behaviors which are tolerated by the victims. That is, some offensive sexual behavior occurs in the context of courtship and dating and is accepted to some degree by the victims. A preliminary set of propositions that can be used to frame continuing research in this area has been developed.

Courtship as a set of activities in which couples engage as they seek suitable life mates has taken many forms but has been pervasive through time and present in most societies. Dating, a set of activities in which couples engage for recreation, emerged during the late 1800s and initially evolved from courtship rituals. As freedom for women expanded in the 1900s, dating came to be regarded as a social activity. In dating, the emphasis on finding a mate decreased and the emphasis on recreation increased. Today, recreational dating is an activity in its own right, but dating still can lead to courtship or to

the development of a relatively permanent relationship (Udry, Bauman, Whyte 1990). The lines between recreational dating and courtship dating have always been blurred.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON COURTSHIP AND DATING

It is difficult to examine historical perspectives in courtship and dating without recognizing that the definitions of appropriate behavior, particularly individual freedom, have changed over the years. While men traditionally have had the freedom to pursue their recreational interests away from the protection of the family, women have been restricted to the family home or to carefully chaperoned social events. It was not until the industrial revolution that women began to work outside of the home and not until the 1900s that women began to associate freely in mixed-sex, unchaperoned groups for recreation.

After 1920, the automobile, close dancing, and moving pictures began to dominate the youth culture. Social control of dating and courtship, which had been family supervised and most rigorous in 1900, was replaced by a less rigorous system of social control maintained by the youth culture itself. Dating and petting became ritualized. This ritualization served to protect young women by providing limits, but it entailed a greater degree of risk by promoting participation in sexually stimulating behavior (Rothman 1984).

The movie theater and the automobile promoted petting. The movie theater provided darkness, some degree of privacy, and some degree of safety while the automobile offered complete privacy and less safety. Petting became relatively common behavior and characteristic of dating couples (Angell 1928; Dell, Burfeind 1930). While petting was popular to the point that petting parties became common, sexual intercourse was not (Fass 1977). This attitude began to decline and by the end of the 1930's, while virginity at marriage was still

desired, pre-marital sexual intercourse was tolerated for those women who were discrete and restrictive/selective in their choice of partners. Virginity as a trait for marriage was modified to include virginity at the time of engagement, a recurrence of standards observed at times in the 1700s and 1800s. While dating and petting were relatively unrestricted, the link between sex and love remained secure. The rules imposed by the young on themselves linked sexual intercourse to true love (Rothman 1984).

Petting waned in the late thirties, however, it remained a popular activity through the forties and fifties. Petting parties disappeared, but petting moved to beaches, parks, and porches and dating as a recreational activity reached full stature. High school students, both men and women, were expected to "play the field" before settling down to a monogamous relationship and marriage. Recreational dating led to going steady or pinning, which led to engagement and marriage, with the degree of commitment increasing as the couple moved through the various stages. Two competing principles appeared to have been at work: 1) everything is all right if you are in love and 2) women must be seen as respectable, particularly to men who are potential marriage partners. Going steady or pinning permitted the reconciliation of these two conflicting principles (Johnson 1959). During the sixties and seventies, the restrictions on premarital sexual intercourse became more liberal, and the number of men and women reporting pre-marital sexual intercourse increased (Morris 1975; Reiss 1966; Udry et al 1990). These standards, attributions of responsibility, and behaviors continue to influence relationships between men and women even though women's rights and privileges have continued to progress in other dimensions of social interaction (Rothman 1984).

PREVALENCE OF COURTSHIP VIOLENCE

At the same time that attitudes toward sex in intimate non-marital relationships was changing, attitudes toward the use of force in intimate relationships also was changing. As these changes emerged, definitions and justice system orientation toward behaviors labeled as rape and sexual assault changed.

Measuring the incidence of forced sexual intercourse in intimate contexts is difficult for several reasons, most of which are related to

the lack of specificity of definitions of rape and date rape, changes in orientation toward forced sexual intercourse between intimates, and self-definition of sexual assault by victims. Much of the impetus toward change in criminalization of rape is attributed to the women's movement and other special interest groups. Beginning in the early 1970's, the National Organization of Women (NOW) and women identified with the feminist movement began producing forums, writing articles, developing rape education and resource programs, and promoting law suits. By the late 1970s, public awareness of rape issues had increased and people were beginning to accept rape as a serious problem (Bourque 1989; Rose 1977). As a result of changing public attitudes, statutory changes that redefined rape and sexual assault were enacted in many states thus creating different degrees of rape (Parrot, Bechhofer 1991). At the same time, pressure was brought to bear on law enforcement and the courts to change the manner in which charges of sexual assault were processed. Prior to this period, charges of sexual assault involving adults who knew each other were discouraged at each point in the process. Convictions were seldom sought and were rarely sustained at trial (Estrich 1987). Reforms in the law coupled with changes in procedures and the development of new victim support programs redirected the orientation of the justice system in the late 1970s and early 1980s (LaFree 1989).

While violence among dating couples has been studied for some time (Kanin 1957), the term date rape did not emerge until the early 1980s. Date rape has been defined as a forced sexual intercourse that occurs either on a date or between individuals who are acquainted or romantically involved (Jenkins, Dambrot 1987).

Poppen and Segal (1988) conducted a survey of 77 male college students and 100 female college students in which the subjects were asked to indicate whether they had ever used physical or verbal coercive strategies to initiate sexual behavior with a partner, or had ever engaged in sexual behavior in response to a partner's coercive initiatives. The results indicated that men are more likely than women to initiate coerced sexual behavior, and "masculine" persons use coercive strategies more than other sex role orientation types. Shotland and Goodstein (1992) found that prior sexual interaction increased the expectation for future sexual compliance. Forced sexual intercourse

was less likely to be labeled as rape if sexual access had been granted frequently in the past.

Studies have indicated that the majority of rapes occur between acquaintances (Koss, Dinero, Seibel, Cox 1988; Rabkin 1979; Russell 1984). Kanin's (1967) study of male undergraduates indicated that 26 percent of the subjects reported having been sexually aggressive on a date in a way that led to the woman's fighting, crying, or screaming. Russell (1984) found that 88 percent of the rape victims identified in her study of 930 San Francisco residents knew their offender. Furthermore, a national survey indicated that 60 percent of the acquaintance-rape victimizations on college campuses occurred with casual or steady dates (Koss et al 1988).

The introduction of the term sexual assault has led to some confusion in the literature (Gilbert, Koss 1992). Sexual assault is, at best, loosely defined and includes behaviors that are less intrusive than intercourse. The lack of specificity that exists in the literature results in rates of behaviors and attitudes which are not comparable but which are compared in subsequent articles (Muehlenhard, Powch, Phelps, Giusti 1992). When applied to a dating or courtship situation, the terms for sexual assault and their definitions vary widely and include sexual aggression (Amick, Calhoun 1987; Kanin 1957; Muehlenhard, Linton 1987), sexual coercion (Fenstermaker 1988), sexual victimization and rape (Koss et al 1988), courtship violence (Makepeace 1981), and unwanted sexual intercourse (Ward, Chapman, Cohn, White, Williams 1991).

In addition to the confusion caused by the differences in terms and definitions, the use of differing time frames (life-time vs. fixed time frame) can cause even more confusion. Reported incident rates demonstrate considerable variation in rates which range from 4.2 percent for unwanted sexual intercourse (12 months) (Doyle 1994), 10 percent for forced sexual intercourse (dates in past 12 months), 15 percent for all forced sexual intercourse (during lifetime) (Sigler, Wenstrom 1993) to 78 percent for sexual aggression (lifetime) (Muehlenhard, Linton 1987). Johnson, Palileo, and Gray (1992) compared their data with national rates reported by Koss, Gidycz, and Wisniewski (1987) and argue that prevalence (number of victims) has been relatively stable over the past six years (15% reported incidents for lifetime for college students).

Limited attention has been directed toward the development of theoretical models to address this phenomena. Most studies with a theoretical base attempt to identify factors which make types of assault or adjustment more or less likely to occur. One recent effort (Shotland 1992) develops a basic typology of date rape. Five different types of date rape are characterized, based on time, courtship violence, and degree of development of a relationship. Felson (1992) has developed a model which seeks to explain sexual assaults in terms of motives and goals. He identifies five paths using factors such as social identity, bodily pleasure, personal justice, domination, sexual relations, and harm to target.

The present study sought to examine the dynamics of courtship, dating, and intimate violence. This analysis focuses on forced sexual intercourse, subjects' sexual behavior, and attitudes toward sexual behavior.

METHODOLOGY

A semi-structured questionnaire was administered to a random sample of men and women attending classes at a southern university. Fifty classes were selected from the list of 2,615 classes (including all sections of multiple section courses) offered at the university during the spring semester of 1992. Of these classes, two had not made (no students registered for Biology 111 lab or French 490 readings), Music 501 was dropped by the researchers because it is an independent study course taught by multiple instructors (five subjects), and four instructors denied access to their classes—Chinese 402, Statistics 251, Law 645, and Motion Picture History 112. Data were successfully collected from the remaining 43 classes with three approaches. Data were collected during regular class time from 35 of the classes in the classrooms assigned to the courses. In five of the classes the instructors permitted the researchers to deliver the verbal protocol and to distribute the instruments and campus mail envelopes addressed to the researchers. The researchers chose to collect data from students in the remaining three music classes by mail. These were individual instruction classes in which the students worked in studios at different times during the week. The instructors in these classes delivered the instruments along with campus mail envelopes addressed to the researchers.

All in-class data collection was conducted by a male-female pair of researchers. Male

Table 1: Incidence and Prevalence of Forced Sexual Intercourse

Type of Incident	Prevalence				Incidence	
	Victims		Offenders		Victims	Offenders
	n	%	n	%	n	n
Total ***	82	18.5	33	8.8	275 (d)	230 (e)
Date 1991	16	3.6	6	1.6	54 (a)	32 (b)
Non-date 1991	5	1.1	5	1.3	24 (b)	29 (b)
Date lifetime***	59	13.3	22	5.9	128 (b)	122 (c)
Non-date lifetime	33	7.5	19	5.1	69 (b)	47 (b)
Spouse	1		0			
Gang rape	5	1.1	1	.3		

*** p < .001 Pearson test for chi square prevalence

(a) one subject reported 20 instances

(b) one subject reported 22 instances

(c) one subject reported 20, 22, or 30

(d) one victim reported 20, 29, 37, 66, or 88 instances

(e) one offender reported 22 for each category for a total of 88 incidents

Table 2: Reasons Given by Victims of Forced Sexual Intercourse for Success of Attempt*

Reason	1991	
	n	Percent
He got sexually excited and couldn't control himself.	10	40.0
The victim was biologically aroused and didn't realize that things were getting out of control soon enough.	9	32.1
He was drunk or high.	9	33.3
She was drunk or high.	8	28.6
Trusted the offender and didn't realize she was in trouble soon enough to resist.	9	36.0
Victim wasn't strong enough to resist.	6	23.1
He thought that she didn't really want him to stop.	8	30.8
She was too embarrassed to holler for help.	4	15.4
No one was close enough to help.	3	12.0
She believed that if she didn't submit that she would be badly hurt.	5	19.2
She wants to maintain the relationship.	7	26.9
She sent out the wrong signals.	4	14.8

*Subjects could check as many of the items as applied to their experience. Although 14 subjects from 1989 checked items, percentages are computed with a base of 15 for 1989 because of the small n.

Table 3: Perceptions of the Incident for Most Recent Incident of Forced Sexual Intercourse

Perception	Victims		Offenders	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Subject thinks rape*	35	48.3	2	8.7
Other thinks rape	8	11.1	5	20.8
Planned to rape*	6	14.0	1	10.0
Trust before	45	91.8	15	88.2
Trust after	14	25.9	8	44.4
Continue to date	17	32.1	10	55.6
Force not always rape	64	86.5	21	84.0

*p < .05 Pearson's test for chi square

Table 4: Likelihood of Engaging in Sexual Intercourse by Degree of Intensity of Relationship
Likelihood of Engaging in Sexual Intercourse

Relationship Intensity	Would Not		If things were just right		Possible		Probably would		Definitely would	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
On first date****										
Men	172	48.6	104	29.4	70	19.8	5	1.4	3	.8
Women	378	88.5	33	7.5	14	3.2	0	0.0	2	.5
Casual dating****										
Men	67	19.0	92	26.1	141	39.9	49	13.9	4	1.1
Women	296	68.7	59	13.7	60	13.9	13	3.0	3	.7
Steady dating****										
Men	15	4.2	28	7.9	64	18.1	190	53.7	57	16.1
Women	87	20.1	86	19.9	83	19.2	109	25.2	67	15.5
Engaged****										
Men	9	2.4	10	2.8	31	8.8	148	41.8	156	44.1
Women	54	12.5	34	7.9	52	12.0	122	28.2	170	39.4
Living together****										
Men	13	3.7	4	1.1	10	2.8	83	23.4	245	69.0
Women	52	12.1	13	3.0	34	7.9	99	23.1	230	53.7
Married										
Men	1	.3	3	.8	3	.8	14	3.9	336	89.4
Women	1	.2	5	1.1	0	0.0	10	2.3	416	96.3

*** p<.001 for t

****p<.0001 for t

subjects were asked to sit in the front of the room and female subjects were asked to sit in the back of the room in order to reduce stress and anxiety which might have occurred among the women if they had been under the observation of the men while answering the sensitive questions in the instrument. The female researcher gathered data from the female subjects, and the male researcher gathered data from the male subjects. There was one refusal from a female subject and two refusals from male subjects. Ten subjects appeared in more than one class. When the subjects appeared in a second class, they were instructed to return their instruments without completing them. No attempt was made to gather data from students who were absent on the day the instruments were administered. Fifty-one of the one hundred and twelve instruments delivered with campus mail envelopes were returned in usable form. The sample consisted of 442 women and 376 men.

FINDINGS

The sample appeared to be representative of the population. All demographic measures for the sample were within 4 percent of the population figures, with the exception of class

standing. Freshman (13.1% of the sample-21.0% of the population) and sophomores (19.5% of the sample-24.0% of the population) were under-represented in the sample; juniors (32.0% of the sample- 25.0% of the population) and seniors (35.2% of the sample-30.0% of the population) were over-represented. No pattern of significant relationships existed among the demographic variables and the various measures of sexual activity (occasional significant relationships appeared, but the number was less than 5% of the comparisons and no pattern was observed).

While the prevalence of forced sexual intercourse is relatively high, it was less than had been predicted in the popular press (40% to 60%). In this study, 18.5 percent of the women reported that they had been forced to have sex at some point during their lifetime (Table 1). The majority of these incidents had occurred in dating situations both for lifetime victimization (13.3%) and for 1991 (3.6%). Fewer women reported being forced to have sex in a non-date context than in a dating context both for lifetime (7.5%) and for 1991 (1.1%).

Fewer men reported forcing women to have sex (8.8% total) than women reported being forced. Men reported proportionally more forced

sex in a non-date context (5.1% lifetime, 1.3% 1991) than in a date context (5.5% lifetime, 1.6% 1991) when compared with women who reported being forced (Table 1).

Incidence rates were high, with relatively little difference between men and women for reported incidents (women 275, men 230) (Table 1). Most victims report one (61%) or two (22%) incidents in their lifetimes; results are similar for offenders (50% and 19.2%). However, there are more severe offenders than severe victims. One victim accounts for 88 (32%) of the victimizations while three men report more than 20 incidents of the use of force to gain sexual access. Although all three severe offenders reported that their victims used physical force (hitting) to resist them, only one identified himself as a rapist, and all three reported that their victims did not believe that they were being raped. In this sample there was at least one, and probably three, very active predators.

The subjects reported that severe force was not used. The most frequently reported degree of force for both women (54.8%) and men (77.8%) was the man holding the woman down; about 30 percent of the victims reported that no physical force was used. Perhaps as a result, low levels of physical damage were reported by both victims (90%) and offenders (78%); however, both men (53%) and women (72%) reported that relatively high levels of psychological damage occurred.

When asked why they were not successful in resisting the attempt to force them to have sexual intercourse, the most frequently cited causes by victims indicated that the situation had gotten out of control. Biological arousal leading to loss of control is cited by many victims as a cause of their victimization (32% of the women; 40% of the men) and drug and alcohol use (which reduce control) were cited by more than 28 percent of the subjects (Table 2).

This analysis raises the question—is forced sexual intercourse always rape? The contention that forced sexual intercourse is not always rape is supported by the perception of the incidents reported by both the victims and the offenders (Table 3). When asked to characterize their victimization, half of the victims reported that they did not consider the last incident of forced sexual intercourse which they reported to be a case of rape, 88 percent reported that they did not believe that the offender (their date) believed that he was raping

them when he forced them to have sex, and only 14 percent believed that their assailant planned to rape them when he made the date. Almost 80 percent of the offenders chose not to characterize their use of force as rape, about 9 percent reported that their dates believed that they had been raped when forced to have sex, and only one reported that he had planned to rape his date at the time he made the date.

The victims were less likely to trust their assailants after the incident (from 92% to 26%), but about a third of the victims continued to date their assailants. Offenders report less loss of trust (from 88% to 44%) than victims and higher rates of continued dating (55%). More victims believed that their assailants planned to rape them than offenders reported planning to rape (Table 3). Both men (84.0%) and women (86.5%) reported that a man could use force and believe that he was not committing rape. Victims were more likely to make positive statements (48.9%) when describing their assailants than negative statements (17.8%) or negative and mixed statements (26.7%). Men's statements describing their victims tended to be predominately positive (64.3% made only positive statements).

More than 70 percent of the subjects reported that they are currently sexually active, with more men (78.7%) reporting that they are sexually active than women (71.7%; Pearsons for Chi Square $P=0.029$). Men report more partners (mean=2.7) than women (mean= 1.7; p for $t < .001$), engaging more frequently in sex each month (mean= 9.4) than women (mean= 6.6; p for $t < .001$), and knowing their partners a shorter amount of time (mean=10.3 months) than women (mean=14.5 months; p for $t = .003$). Although the difference is significant, both men and women overwhelmingly indicate that sexual intercourse is something they do for mutual pleasure rather than something one partner does for the other.

Men and women differ significantly in perceptions of the point in the relationship at which sexual intercourse is likely to occur for all degrees of intensity of the relationship (Table 4). Men are consistently more likely to anticipate the possibility of sexual interaction earlier in the relationship than women, but the number of both men and women who endorse sexual intercourse at each level tends to increase as intensity increases.

Women control sexual access in our society. Therefore, an understanding of perceptions of women's motivation and behaviors

Table 5: Factors Which Women Consider Before Agreeing to Engage in Sexual Intercourse

Reasons Given	Men			Women		
	Ss Endorsing		Degree of Influence	Ss Endorsing		Degree of Influence
	N	%	%	N	%	%
Enjoy sex***	331	88.0	28.2	326	73.7	24.9
Make partner happy	290	77.1	14.7	286	64.7	15.9
In love with partner***	309	82.1	28.1	351	89.4	44.8
Help develop a relationship	197	52.4	10.8	174	39.4	12.7
Keep a relationship from ending***	168	44.6	9.5	55	12.4	9.3
Don't want to appear immoral	91	24.2	9.6	53	12.0	15.1
Attractiveness of date ***	229	60.9	12.2	144	32.5	9.8
Personality of date	181	48.1	9.7	149	33.7	11.3
The situation	201	53.5	10.7	142	32.1	13.3
Other*	17	4.6	22.2	32	16.2	36.3

*p<.05 for t for degree of influence

***p<.001 for t for degree of influence

Table 6: Effect of Anticipated Respect on the Woman's Decision to Participate in Sexual Intercourse

Type of Respect	Men			Women		
	Ss Endorsing		Degree of Influence	Ss Endorsing		Degree of Influence
	N	%	%	N	%	%
Maintain self respect***	301	80.1	52.6	374	85.6	58.2
Maintain man's respect	257	68.4	43.7	331	74.9	39.3
Maintain peers' respect***	207	55.1	41.0	232	52.5	29.8
Other	128	34.0	69.6	124	28.1	64.4

***p<.001 for t

is central to an understanding of dating, courtship, and the use of force in intimate relationships.

Enjoys sex, make partner happy, and in love with partner have been selected most frequently by both men and women as reasons why women agree to engage in sexual intercourse (Table 5). Of these reasons, women believe that love has a greater degree of influence. More men than women believe that enjoys sex has a greater degree of influence. It should be noted that men appear to believe that love and enjoys sex exert about the same amount of influence in a woman's decision to be sexually active.

When the issue of respect is considered, more than 80 percent of both men and women tend to endorse maintaining her self respect. Women believe that this factor is more influential than men (Table 6). Maintaining the man's respect is seen as more important and as having more influence than peers' respect by both men and women. Men see the influence of maintaining peers' respect in determining

participation in sexual intercourse as more important than women.

Women frequently agree to engage in sexual intercourse when they don't want to do so. Both men (52.1%) and women (65.2%) recognize that at times women agree when they would rather not or because they feel threatened (men 16.2%, women 20.4) or coerced (men 15.7%, women 17.9%) (Table 7).

The most common reason for a woman to agree to unwanted sexual intercourse given by both men and women is a desire to make her date or boyfriend happy (Table 8). The second most common reason given by men was the woman's desire to maintain the relationship. For women, the second most frequent reason was things got out of control. Both men and women selected there was no good reason not to engage in sex as the third most frequent reason for a woman to agree to sexual intercourse when she didn't want to. Coercive strategies were the least frequently selected reasons of those available to the subjects. Both men and women appear to believe that

Table 7: Willingness of Women to Engage in Sexual Intercourse

Degree of Willingness	Men			Women		
	Ss Endorsing		Degree of Influence	Ss Endorsing		Degree of Influence
	N	%	%	N	%	%
She wanted to***	313	83.2	88.2	359	81.2	82.6
Didn't want to but agreed***	196	52.1	37.9	288	65.2	42.1
Didn't want to but felt threatened	61	16.2	79.4	90	20.4	75.0
Didn't want to but felt forced	59	15.7	83.0	79	17.9	85.3

***p<.001 for t for degree of influence

Table 8: Reasons Why Women Agree to Have Sexual Intercourse When They Don't Really Want To

Reason Given	Men		Women	
	Ss Endorsing		Ss Endorsing	
	N	%	N	%
Make date/friend happy	125	44.3	161	45.1
Keep man as boyfriend***	67	23.6	44	12.3
Date had shown her a good time****	43	15.2	22	6.1
Date had spent a lot of money**	25	8.9	11	3.1
Things got out of control	40	14.1	67	18.6
She thought something was wrong with her	13	4.6	21	5.8
No good reason not to	48	16.9	61	16.9
Date threatened to leave and not date again	6	2.1	6	1.7
Man wanted her to prove her love	11	3.9	24	6.7
She didn't want to be labeled frigid	7	2.5	16	4.4
Other	37	13.1	46	12.7

**p < .01 for t
 ***p < .001 for t
 ****p < .0001 for t

women do agree to have sex when they don't want to, but this agreement is caused by a willingness to please rather than because of coercion.

DISCUSSION

These findings indicate that forced sexual intercourse occurs frequently enough to warrant continued and increased attention. About 18.5 percent of the women in this study reported that they had been forced to have sex by a stranger or on a date in their lifetime. The reported rates for the year prior to the collection of data were lower, with about 4.7 percent of the women reporting victimizations (3.6% on a date). The numbers of victims and offenders with severe patterns of experience were relatively small. There does appear to be a small number of male predators in this sample, only one of whom identifies himself as a rapist.

About half of the victims (80% of the offenders) did not define their victimization as rape. That is, these women said that they have

been forced to have sex but the use of force in their case was not rape, and 80 percent of the victims and one offender stated that they did not believe that assailant intended to rape them. In about half of these incidents the degree of force used was holding the woman down; in about 30 percent of the cases the force was not physical. Almost half of the women described their assailant in positive terms and an additional 26 percent used both positive and negative characteristics to define their assailant.

The subjects in this study reported a relatively high level of sexual activity. Both men and women reported that sex is an activity engaged in by both men and women for mutual pleasure. Both men and women recognized that, at times, women participate in sexual intercourse when they really don't want to do so, a decision often influenced by a desire to make their partner happy and/or to maintain a relationship which is pleasurable/beneficial for them.

Historically, rape has been a crime which has been condemned, if not effectively prosecuted. Reforms in the past decade have introduced changes in the law that create different levels of sexual assault and that make cases of sexual assault easier to prosecute successfully. Social concern that accompanied reform efforts on intimate violence as well as on forced sexual intercourse has focused attention on the prevalence and nature of forced sexual intercourse. Research accompanying reform movements frequently is not accurately focused, producing results that introduce confusion.

This study sought data that would clarify the nature of forced sexual assault in dating and courtship. While the dynamics of the situation are not clear, sufficient information has been gleaned to suggest that the development of a tentative model which can be used to guide further research is warranted. The model presented here extends beyond the data reported in this article and only addresses behavior which is generally characterized as date or acquaintance rape and does not address stranger rape or blitz/predatory rape. This rudimentary model can be expressed best as a series of propositions some of which are drawn from the data gathered in this study:

1. Participation in sexual intercourse is fairly common.
2. Women occasionally consent to sexual intercourse when they would prefer to abstain.
3. Men know that women occasionally consent to sexual intercourse when they would prefer to abstain.
4. The decision to engage in sexual intercourse is something women control.
5. Sexual intercourse is something men seek to gain from women.
6. Men are expected to actively pursue women's consent to sexual intercourse.
7. Women are expected to resist the efforts of men to gain sexual access until specific individual conditions exist, even though they plan to consent at some point in the relationship.
8. The presence and nature of these conditions is usually not explicit.
9. In the process of developing a relationship, men and women engage in exploratory sexual behavior.
10. Gaining/granting sexual access is an interactive process involving some degree of trial and error.

11. On occasion the trial and error process produces an out-of-control situation that leads to forced sexual intercourse.
12. If both actors anticipate sexual access, the question is one of timing, and they engage in some exploratory sexual behavior leading to an out-of-control situation, neither the man nor the woman will define the incident as rape.
13. If the woman does not anticipate sexual access at that point in the relationship but engages in some exploratory sexual activity leading to an out of control situation, the woman and the man may or may not define the incident as rape.
14. If the woman chooses not to engage in sexual intercourse but engages in some exploratory sexual behavior in the process of seeking a relationship and the situation gets out of control, she will define the incident as rape and the man may or may not define the incident as rape.

The first three propositions address the prevalence of sexual intercourse and the willingness of some women to engage in sexually intimacy when they don't really want to. These three propositions appear to be supported by the data from the present study.

Propositions 4 through 10 address the nature of the interaction between men and women as a relationship becomes more sexually intimate. Responsibility for control of the relationship, expectations for male and female objectives in the process, presence of conditions held by women, awareness of conditions held by women, and the nature of exploratory sexual behavior as a relationship progresses were not measured in this study.

Proposition 11 address the trial and error nature of a developing relationship and the potential for the situation to get out of control in preliminary stages. Victim and offenders report that incidents of forced sexual intercourse result from loss of control for various reasons.

While data are not available to test propositions 12 through 14 directly, data are available to assess two of the three assumptions underlying the model proposed. These propositions assume that forced sexual intercourse is not always perceived as rape by the offender and or the victim; that men and women engage in exploratory sexual behavior less than intercourse as a relationship develops; and that both men and women anticipate that sexual

intercourse will occur at some point as a relationship develops and that there is some difference of opinion as to when this degree of intimacy will occur.

This model suggests that the development of an agreement to engage in sexual intercourse is a negotiated process in which the woman grants sexual access to the man when specific personal conditions (personal standards) are met. It is acceptable for men to actively pursue sexual intercourse, and this pursuit is not channeled by the woman's conditions for agreeing to sexual intercourse as these conditions (woman's expectations) frequently are not clear.

The process of moving forward in a relationship involves exploratory sexual behavior in which the couple approaches but does not necessarily engage in sexual intercourse. If this process gets out of control, forced sexual intercourse may occur because the man is larger and stronger and/or because the woman can not manage to withdraw without permanently damaging a relationship she may want to preserve. When forced sexual intercourse occurs in this context, the woman may accept responsibility for the outcome, and the man may see this as an acceptable/anticipated outcome.

This model is a simplification of a very complex system of interactions which comprise dating and courtship. There is a need for further research, and this rudimentary model can provide a focus for part of this research.

SUMMARY

All forms of forced sexual intercourse have been defined as parts of a social problem which has emerged because changing social values regarding the roles of women and men in society and in intimate settings have created a change in the orientation toward the degree of public interest in women's victimization. As the value system has changed, the social institutions that are responsible for dealing with pathology have had to adapt, frequently while under attack for being insensitive, ineffective, and possibly guilty of misfeasance. The resulting response has been somewhat unfocused, because these agencies have moved to satisfy the critics and complete their assigned tasks.

Before effective responses to all forms of forced sexual intercourse can be developed, this phenomena must be understood. A first step in increasing understanding of the

phenomena is to recognize that some forms of forced sexual intercourse occur between relatively intimate partners and that this form of forced sexual intercourse might be substantially different from other forms of rape. That is, types of forced sexual intercourse must be examined in the social context in which they occur.

A tentative model for one of these sets—the use of force in intimate sexual encounters in the context of courtship is being advanced which can serve as a basis for further research. This model assumes that the process of establishing a relatively permanent or long-term relationship involves progressively more intimate interaction as the relationship matures with sexual intercourse anticipated at some point in the relationship. The point at which sexual intercourse becomes a part of the relationship and the conditions which must be met before this level of commitment to the relationship is accepted is determined by the woman. The likelihood that the woman will define the use of force in sexual intercourse as rape or criminal, the likelihood that the woman will continue the relationship, and the degree of psychological damage which occurs will vary according to the manner in which the woman defines the situation.

The evaluation of the model was based on prior data is incomplete. Support was found in the data for propositions which stated that sexual intercourse is fairly common, women occasionally agree to sexual intimacy when they don't really want to, men believe that women consent to sexual intimacy when they don't want to, at times intimate exchanges get out of control producing forced sexual intercourse, and for the assumptions underlying the final propositions which specify conditions under which victims and offenders will label an incident of forced sexual intercourse as rape. Data were not available to assess the interactional propositions or the specific labeling functions of the final propositions.

Further research is needed so that a complete evaluation of this preliminary model can be made. This model is a beginning point. A great deal of work is needed to develop an effective empirical base in an area which has been characterized by a restricted focus and heated controversy. More elaborate and accurate models will be developed as rudimentary models are developed and an expanded empirical base emerges.

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