SEXUAL ASSAULT DURING AND AFTER SEPARATION/DIVORCE: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Final Report

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The research presented in this report could not have been done without the participation of 43 rural Ohio women who took the time and effort to answer highly sensitive questions about the types of pain and suffering they endured when they wanted to leave, were in the process of leaving, or when they left their marital/cohabiting partners. Their courage, strength, and support will always be remembered. I hope the results of this project will enhance their safety and well-being and contribute to the creation of effective policies aimed at curbing the brutal male behaviors vividly described in this report.

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Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank the College of Arts and Sciences and the Office of the Vice President for Research at Ohio University for financial assistance to craft my proposal and for other types of support necessary to conduct this study.

SUMMARY

Since the 1970s, social scientists have greatly enhanced an empirical and theoretical understanding of various types of woman abuse in ongoing heterosexual relationships. However, although we know that breaking up with a violent man greatly increases a woman's risk of experiencing lethal and non-lethal violence, relatively little empirical and theoretical attention has been paid to the victimization of women who want to leave, are in the process of leaving, or who have left their marital/cohabiting partners. Furthermore, the limited work that has been done on this topic focuses primarily on physical violence, such as beatings and homicide. Abuse, of course, is multidimensional in nature and a few studies show that women are also at high risk of being sexually assaulted during and after separation/divorce. Still, almost all of the research on this problem, regardless of whether it is qualitative or quantitative, was conducted in urban areas. Thus, the main objective of this report is to help fill two major research gaps by presenting the results of a qualitative, exploratory study of separation/divorce sexual assault in rural Ohio.

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This study was specifically designed to provide answers to the following questions:

1. Are survivors of separation/divorce sexual abuse also victims of physical and psychological abuse, or is sexual assault the only type of abuse they experience?
2. Is there evidence indicating that separation/divorce sexual assault is a major problem in rural communities?
3. Is sexual assault more frequent and severe during or after separation/divorce?

4. Is separation/divorce sexual assault multidimensional in nature? For example, do survivors of this abuse, like survivors of sexual assault in ongoing relationships, experience different types of forced sexual activity?
5. Based on survivors' point of view, what are the major characteristics of men who sexually assault their ex-partners?
6. What are the psychological, physical, and economic effects of separation/divorce sexual assault?
7. Based on survivors' perspectives, what types of social support and intervention strategies are most effective?
8. What new directions should be taken to develop and test explanatory models of separation/divorce sexual assault?
9. What are the implications for further qualitative and quantitative research on separation/divorce sexual assault?

In addition to trying to enhance a social scientific understanding of a problem that has garnered limited attention from the media, the scientific community, and the criminal justice system, the research team was equally concerned with generating policy-relevant data that can be used to tailor more effective prevention and social support services for a group of women who continue to suffer in silence. Too often, separation/divorce does not end abuse and thus it is necessary to develop policies and practices that meet the unique needs of women victimized by sexual violence during and after the process of leaving marital/cohabiting relationships.

A broad definition of separation/divorce guides this study. For example, a woman does not need to be legally tied to a man to experience sexual assault during or after

exiting a relationship. Further, many women cannot leave a relationship for a host of reasons but emotionally separate from their partners. Thus, here, I use the term separation/divorce to mean physically, legally, or emotionally exiting a marital/cohabiting relationship. Further, guided by empirical work done by Dr. Mary Koss and her colleagues in the late 1980s, the types of sexual assault described by 43 rural Ohio women was classified as follows:

- *Sexual Contact* includes sex play (fondling, kissing, or petting) arising from menacing verbal pressure, misuse of authority, threats of harm, or actual physical force.
- *Sexual Coercion* includes unwanted sexual intercourse arising from the use of menacing verbal pressure or the misuse of authority.
- *Attempted rape* includes attempted unwanted sexual intercourse arising from the use of or threats of force, or the use of drugs or alcohol.
- *Rape* includes unwanted sexual intercourse arising from the use of or threats of force and other unwanted sex acts (anal or oral intercourse or penetration by objects other than the penis) arising from the use of or threat of force, or the use of drugs or alcohol.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Developed by Walter DeKeseredy, McKenzie Rogness, and Martin Schwartz, the integrated theoretical model that informs this study includes the following variables: societal patriarchy; male proprietariness; exiting; threats to masculinity and patriarchal control; patriarchal male peer support; and separation/divorce sexual assault. Referred to by these sociologists as a feminist/male peer support model, some empirical support for it

is presented in Chapter 4. Still, after carefully analyzing the results and reading more rural sociological and criminological literature, it is evident that further theoretical work needs to take in account factors such as rural social and economic transformations that have occurred since the end of the last century. Thus, in Chapter 5, a new theoretical model is offered, one that addresses this variable, as well as male peer support and rural challenges to masculine identity.

METHODS

As described in this report, researchers encounter many obstacles while conducting rural studies of woman abuse. However, some of these problems were overcome or minimized using a variety of methods. The first step was preparatory research. This involved several meetings, electronic mail exchanges, and in-depth telephone conversations with leading researchers in the field, local shelter staff, sexual assault advocates, police officers, mental health workers, and others with a vested interest in curbing separation/divorce sexual assault and other types of woman abuse. Then, techniques like those used by Dr. Lee Bowker approximately 24 years ago in Milwaukee were used to generate a sample. For example, an advertisement was placed twice in a free newspaper available throughout Athens, County, Ohio. Also, posters about the study were pinned up in public places, such as courthouses and were given to social service providers who came into contact with abused women.

In addition:

- Two local newspapers gave considerable coverage to the project.
- Ohio University sent out a press release to newspapers and other Ohio-based media.

- Three local radio stations and Ohio University's television station carried public service announcements about the study.
- The director of the local shelter and I appeared on a local television news show to discuss this project and broader issues related to it.
- The Ohio Domestic Violence Network and other agencies told interested parties (e.g., rural shelter workers) about the study and helped to recruit participants.
- Local shelter staff, a police department social worker, employees of the county sheriff's department, Planned Parenthood, Women's Center staff at a local two-year college, and employees of the local Sexual Assault Survivor Advocate Program informed possible respondents about the study.
- Ohio University sociologist Judith Grant told women who participated in her addiction study about this research.
- Index-like cards with the information provided in the recruiting poster were routinely placed on top of newspaper boxes inside stores and on sidewalks in Athens, Ohio.

From early March 2003 until early April 2004, two female research assistants carried cellular phones 24 hours a day to receive calls from women interested in participating in the study. Callers were told the purpose of the project and were then asked a series of screening questions to determine their eligibility to be interviewed. The main criteria were being 18 years of age or older and having ever had any type of unwanted sexual experience when they wanted to end, were trying to end, or after they had ended a relationship with a husband or live-in male partner. If they met the selection criteria, the women were invited to a semi-structured face-to-face interview at a time and place of

their choosing, and they were paid $25.00 for their time. They were also given $7.75 for travel expenses and an index card listing the locations and phone numbers of local support services for survivors.

Female research assistants tape-recorded and transcribed all of the interviews. Most of them took about 90 minutes and a total of 43 women participated in this study. Posters placed in public places attracted most of our respondents (n=27). Eight women called after exposure to ads or media stories about the study, and the same number were referred to us by individuals or organizations. Most respondents (n=30) lived in Athens County, Ohio, three lived in Hocking County, Ohio, one lived in Vinton County, Ohio, and nine lived in other rural parts of the state. The mean age of the sample was 35 and the mean income for 2002 was $13,588. Sixty-five percent (n=28) had some type of post-secondary education and close to half of the participants were unemployed. Of the 25 who had been married, all got divorced or legally separated, but only five remarried. Most of the respondents also had children.

FINDINGS

The key findings are categorized under these headings: types and timing of abuse; characteristics of men who sexually assaulted their ex-partners; consequences of separation/divorce sexual assault; and social support.

Types and Timing of Abuse

- Only a few respondents experienced just one of the above forms of separation/divorce sexual assault, and virtually all experienced rape or attempted rape.

- Most (80%) of the women were victimized by two or more variants of other types of abuse, such as physical violence and the destruction of prized possessions.
- Nineteen percent of the respondents stated that their partners abused their children and one woman believes that her ex-partner raped her as a means of killing her unborn child.
- Seventy-four percent (n = 32) of the respondents said that they were sexually assaulted when they expressed a desire to leave their relationships. Forty-nine percent (n = 21) were sexually abused while they were trying to leave or while they were leaving and 33% (n = 14) were victimized after they left.
- Compared to cohabiting women (33%, n = 6), married women (47%, n = 12) were more likely to report being abused while still in the relationship, before expressing a desire to exit, trying to exit, or exiting their relationships. At the next stage, when the women reported that they wanted to leave their abusive relationship, 20 of the 25 married women (80%) stated that they were sexually assaulted, while 12 of the 18 cohabiting women (67%) stated that their assaults occurred at this point in time.

Characteristics of Men who Sexually Assaulted their Ex-Partners

- Sixty-seven percent (n = 29) of the interviewees reported on a variety of ways in which their partners' male peers perpetuated and legitimated separation/divorce sexual assault. Three methods in particular stand out: frequently drinking with male friends, informational support, and attachment to abusive peers.

- Seventy-nine percent of the sample said that their partners strongly believed that men should be in charge and control of domestic household settings.
- Regardless of whether they consumed it in groups, 65% of the sample's estranged partners viewed pornography, and it was reported to be involved in sexually abusive events experienced by 30% of the interviewees.
- More than half (58.14%) of the women said that male offenders had guns and some perpetrators even threatened to use them.
- Over 65% (n = 28) of the women interviewed said that their partners used illegal drugs and that their consumption of these substances contributed to abusive behaviors.

Consequences of Separation/Divorce Sexual Assault

- Women experienced a wide range of negative outcomes, including low self-esteem, fear, nightmares, and a myriad of physical health problems.
- All of the survivors interviewed developed a host of adverse post-assault psychological outcomes, such as depression, sexual aversion, and fear.
- Many respondents mentioned physical scars.
- For many interviewees, exiting a relationship was financially devastating.

Social Support

- Data uncovered by this study strongly suggest that if there are high levels of collective efficacy in the respondents' communities, they do not function to prevent and deter separation/divorce sexual assault. For example, most of the interviewees (84%) stated that women experiencing unwanted sex in their

community is a major problem and 81% reported that rape or sexual assault is also a serious problem.

- That 81% of the respondents stated that they personally know other women who were sexually assaulted provides further evidence that such victimization is a major problem in some rural Ohio communities and that little is being done to prevent it.
- Over half (58%) of the interviewees do not feel safe when they are at home.
- Eighty-four percent of the respondents stated that they could not count on their neighbors to help solve their personal problems.
- Sixty-seven percent of the sample did not get together with their neighbors in a typical week.
- Fifty-eight percent of the women turned to at least one friend for help, but most of their friends did not live near them. Further, 44% sought assistance from the police and 40% received help from a local shelter.
- The interviewees' voices reveal that formal and better intervention by state authorities is more important for them than focusing on collective efficacy at this point in time.
- Only one of the respondents who turned to at least one element of the criminal justice system for help stated that it was the best assistance she received.
- Most interviewees turned to several different sources of social support.
- Most interviews found their friends to be the best source of social support.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER EMPIRICAL, THEORETICAL, AND POLICY WORK

This study shows that exiting or trying to exit a marital/cohabiting relationship increases women's chances of being sexually assaulted, especially if they are connected to patriarchal or abusive men. However, there is still much that we do not know about separation/divorce sexual assault in rural and urban communities. Certainly, much more empirical and theoretical work is needed. Of course, it is also necessary to develop policies and practices that meet the unique needs of women who are terrorized by men who will not let them leave and men who they have left.

New Directions in Empirical Work

Regardless of whether separation/divorce sexual assault studies are conducted in rural or urban settings, data gathered from men are needed to more precisely determine the factors that motivate them to be abusive. Moreover, representative sample surveys of rural and urban populations would help determine the incidence and prevalence of separation/divorce sexual assault. Such rural research is undoubtedly difficult to do, given the methodological obstacles discussed in Chapter 3. Further, there are many other groups of men and women who need to be included in future research, such as those who are immigrants, living in public housing, have physical disabilities, and so on.

This is one of the first studies to apply collective efficacy theory to woman abuse in intimate, heterosexual relationships. Obviously, more research is needed, including studying the perceptions and experiences of rural women who are not abused. Another point to consider is that almost all studies of collective efficacy/social disorganization and crime use quantitative techniques, such analyses of census data. Nevertheless, many rural

social problems are not easy to study using such methods, which is perhaps one of the key reasons why so few researchers focus on woman abuse in rural areas. Further, quantitative methods alone cannot adequately describe the complexities of rural woman abuse and community responses to it. Thus, it is essential to continue using other methods to examine community characteristics that affect separation/divorce sexual assault and other forms of woman abuse. One suggestion is to specifically design a qualitative project that focuses exclusively on the topics of central concern to this report and that uses in-depth interviews and participant observations of community relations.

New Directions in Theoretical Work

Again, results described in Chapter 4 lend some support for the theoretical model presented in Chapter 2. Still, this perspective serves as a starting point for future theorizing and subsequent offerings need to take into account factors discussed previously. The rural masculinity crisis/male peer support model of separation/divorce sexual assault presented in Chapter 5 addresses this concern and hopefully it or other new theories will be tested in subsequent studies of separation/divorce sexual assault in rural communities.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The most common policy recommendations made by the 43 respondents are education, creating awareness, listening to the voices of survivors, criminal justice reforms, and subsidized housing. Based on data derived from these women, my previous empirical work, and a review of the extant literature on woman abuse in rural communities, I suggest that these and the following other policies be implemented as soon as possible and throughout all rural U.S. communities:

- Travel subsidies.
- Job training and education.
- Increased funding for rural service providers.
- The development of and support for small, community-based businesses and small industrial districts.
- Community capacity building.

The policies proposed by 43 rural Ohio women and me are not the only effective solutions to problems experienced by survivors of separation/divorce sexual assault. Rather, they are key elements of much need community-based, collaborative efforts. Policy development must also be highly sensitive to the ways in which broader social forces contribute to the harms identified in this report.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Over the past 35 years there have been hundreds of North American studies of different forms of woman abuse (e.g., physical, sexual and psychological) in marital/cohabiting relationships (Brownridge & Halli, 2001), all showing that male-to-female victimization in these heterosexual unions is a major public health problem (Krishan, Hilbert, & Pase, 2001). What is to be done about this brutal ongoing threat to women's health and safety? Scores of people, including criminal justice officials, shelter workers and other practitioners, contend that the "most important weapon" women have in the battle to end their partners' abuse is to divorce or separate from them (Schwartz, 1988; Walker, Logan, Jordan, & Campbell, 2004). Although large numbers of women in abusive marital/cohabiting relationships continue to live in these "dangerous domains" for reasons beyond their control such as economic dependency (Johnson, 1996; Websdale & Johnson, 2005), most battered women eventually "flee the house of horrors" (Schwartz, 1989; Sev'er, 2002).[1] Still, for many targets of "intimate intrusions" (Stanko, 1985), separation or divorce alone does not solve the problem of woman abuse (Buzawa, Hotaling, Klein, & Byrne, 1999; DeKeseredy, Schwartz, Fagen, & Hall, 2006).

[1] Between 50 and 90 percent of battered women in the U.S. try to leave abusive relationships (Block, 2003; Davis, 1999; DeKeseredy & Joseph, 2003; Horn, 1992).

Many men do not leave their ex-partners alone and their "visits can be deadly" (DeKeseredy & MacLeod, 1997; Campbell et al., 2003). [2] As Polk (2003, p. 134) reminds us, "[T]ime and time again the phrase 'if I can't have you , no one will' echoes through the data on homicide in the context of sexual intimacy." Women who exit or try to leave relationships are also at high risk of experiencing non-lethal violence (e.g., acts that do not result in death).[3] Consider that Fleury, Sullivan and Bybee (2000) found that over one third of the 135 women who participated in their longitudinal study were assaulted by a male ex-partner during a two-year time period. Based on studies reviewed here and elsewhere (e.g., DeKeseredy, Rogness, & Schwartz, 2004), we can confidently conclude, then, that the risks of non-lethal violence and homicide are highest when women seek freedom from abusive men.

Sexual assaults also occur when women are wanting to end, planning to end, are trying to end, are in the process of ending, or have ended a relationship with a marital/cohabiting partner. However, less than a handful of North American studies have focused on these harms and most of the data on them are found in the small amount of feminist literature on what is variously termed marital rape, spousal rape, wife rape or sexual assault in marriage (DeKeseredy et al., 2004). Moreover, almost all of the limited empirical work on separation/divorce sexual assault, regardless of whether it is

[2] See Browne, Williams and Dutton (1999), DeKeseredy et al. (2004), Ellis and DeKeseredy (1997), Hardesty (2002) and Walker et al. (2004) for reviews of the extant social scientific literature on male-to-female homicide during separation/divorce.

[3] A recent literature review reveals that separated women have 30 times the risk for non-lethal violence as married women and the risk for divorced women is nine times higher than that for married women (Brownridge, in press).

qualitative or quantitative, was done in urban areas, such as Boston and San Francisco (e.g., Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985; Kurz, 1995; Russell, 1990). Thus, the main objective of this report is to help fill two major research gaps by presenting the results of an exploratory study of separation/divorce sexual assault in rural Ohio.

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

To date, there are no adequate answers to the following questions of central concern to this study:

1. Are survivors of separation/divorce sexual abuse also victims of physical and psychological abuse, or is sexual assault the only type of abuse they experience?
2. Is there evidence indicating that separation/divorce sexual assault is a major problem in rural communities?
3. Is sexual assault more frequent and severe during or after separation/divorce?
4. Is separation/divorce sexual assault multidimensional in nature? For example, do survivors of this abuse, like survivors of sexual assault in ongoing relationships, experience different types of forced sexual activity, such as “sadistic,” “battering,” or “obsessive” rape (Bergen, 1996; Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985)?
5. Based on survivors’ point of view, what are the major characteristics of men who sexually assault their ex-partners?
6. What are the psychological, physical, and economic effects of separation/divorce sexual assault?
7. Based on survivors’ perspectives, what types of social support and intervention strategies are most effective?

8. What directions should be taken to develop and test explanatory models of separation/divorce sexual assault?
9. What are the implications for further qualitative and quantitative research on separation/divorce sexual assault?

Methods described in Chapter 3 were used to answer these questions. Nevertheless, this study is much more than an empirical enterprise. Of course, one of the major goals is to enhance a social scientific understanding of a problem that has garnered limited attention from the media, the scientific community, and the criminal justice system. However, the research team is equally concerned with generating policy-relevant data that can be used to tailor more effective prevention and social support services for a group of women who continue to suffer in silence. Again, too often, separation/divorce does note end abuse and thus it is necessary to develop policies and practices that meet the unique needs of women who are terrorized by sexual violence during and after the process of leaving marital/cohabiting relationships. As Bergen (2006, p. 6) discovered, "there is often a failure on behalf of others including police officers, religious advisors, battered women's shelter advocates, and rape crisis counselors to provide adequate assistance."

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF RURAL

The first problem in any study of rural communities is to attempt to grasp the notion of what "rural" could men. "Like concepts such as 'truth,' 'beauty,' or 'justice,' everyone knows the term rural, but non one can define it precisely" (Weisheit, Falcone, and Wells, 1994, p. 6). Further, as Websdale (1998, p. 40) reminds us, "Ultimately, the definition of rural communities is arbitrary and open to debate." Still, following

DeKeseredy, Donnermeyer, Schwartz, Tunnell, and Hall (in press), I contend that four things are common in most, but not all criminological conceptualizations of places identified as rural. Although these characteristics are true to a certain extent, they must be considered with care as they also can serve to produce stereotypical images that suppress serious discussion of all types of crime and related issues in the rural context. First, rural places have, by definition, smaller populations and lower population densities. Second, people who live in rural areas are more likely to "know each other's business, come into regular contact with each other, and share a larger core of values than is true of people in urban areas" (Websdale, 1995, p. 102). Third, today, rural communities are much less autonomous than before. For example, the standardization of education, communication, transportation, and economic modes of production has removed some of the unique parts of rural culture and narrowed the difference between rural and urban life styles (DeKeseredy et al., in press; Fisher, 1995; Krannich & Luloff, 2002; Ritzer, 2002). Moreover, rural areas are greatly influenced by external, cultural, economic and social forces, depending on their proximity to cities, industries with absentee ownership, tourism, and the development policies in nation-states (Donnermeyer, Barclay, & Jobes, 2006; Hobbs, 1995).

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SEPARATION/DIVORCE[4]

Can only couples that live apart be considered separated/divorced? Many surveys of marital rape such as Finkelhor and Yllo's (1985) and the U.S. National Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS) (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000), as well as surveys of nonsexual types of woman abuse, seem to define separation/divorce this way. This approach is problematic because it neglects assaults after women's decisions and/or

[4] This section includes modified sections of an article published previously (see DeKeseredy et al., 2006).

attempts to leave while they are locked in relationships (Mahoney, 1991; Ptacek, 1999). Many men have a "fanatical determination" to not let their spouses/live-in partners go and will use violence "to keep them in their place" (Russell, 1990). Another point to consider is that many women defy men's patriarchal control by emotionally separating from them (DeKeseredy et al., 2004). *Emotional separation*, a major predictor of a permanent end to a relationship, is defined as a women's denial or restriction of sexual relations and other intimate exchanges (Ellis & DeKeseredy, 1997). Emotionally exiting a relationship can be just as dangerous as physically or legally exiting one because it, too, increases the likelihood of male violence and sexual abuse (DeKeseredy et al., 2006; Kayser, 1993; Kirkwood, 1993; Markman & Notarious, 1994; Russell, 1990). For example, of the 100 sexually abused women who participated in McFarlane and Malecha's (2005) National Institute of Justice (NIJ) sponsored study, 22% reported an emotional separation before the first time they were sexually assaulted.

Separation/divorce is not simply a function of proximity, and a woman does not have to be legally tied to a man to experience sexual or physical assault (Bergen, 1996). For example, Brownridge and Halli's (2001) review of 14 studies: eight done in the U.S., five in Canada, and one in New Zealand, reveals "quite dramatic" differences in violence rates obtained from married persons and cohabitors. In fact, they found that typically, the rate of violence for the latter exceeds that of the former by two times, but the difference can be greater than four times. Cohabiting women are also more likely to experience more severe types of violence than their married counterparts. Further, Canadian national representative sample survey data show that many women are sexually abused by their common-law partners, and male cohabitors are more likely to sexually abuse their

partners than those in casual or serious dating relationships (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998a). As Campbell (1989, p. 336) points out, "a marriage license probably does not change the dynamics of sexual abuse within an ongoing intimate relationship…."

Male cohabitors are at higher risk of being sexually abusive than married men. For example, Finkelhor and Yllo (1985) found that 23% of the cohabiting women in their sample experienced forced sex, compared to 3% of married women. Note, too, 25% of the women who reported forced sex were legally separated/divorced. Thus, based on the above arguments and data presented elsewhere (e.g., DeKeseredy et al., 2004), here, the term separation/divorce is used to mean physically, legally, or emotionally exiting a marital/cohabiting relationship. This project focused on women-initiated separations/divorces because, as Sev'er (1997, p. 567) reminds us, "they are the decisions that challenge male hegemony the most." I also use a broad definition of sexual assault because it, like the physical and psychological abuse of women, takes many shapes and forms.

DEFINITION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT[5]

There are major problems with narrow definitions of sexual assault that have been covered elsewhere (DeKeseredy, 2000). Unlike many, if not most studies of sexual assault, a broad definition is used here that is not restricted to acts of forced penetration. Many women experience a wide range of sexually abusive behaviors, such as assaults when they were drunk or high, or when they were unable to give consent (Bachar & Koss, 2001; Schwartz & Leggett, 1999). Married and cohabiting women also experience

[5] This section includes revised sections of articles published previously (see DeKeseredy et al., 2004, 2006).

other kinds of threats that can result in painful unwanted sex and “blackmail rapes.” Consider what “Mrs. Brown” described to Russell (1990, p. 338). Just because there was no threat or actual use of force does not mean that her experience was not frightening or highly injurious, and she clearly labels what her first husband did as rape:

> The worst raping occasion was in the morning I awoke in labor with my first child. The hospital I was booked into was a thirty-minute drive away, and this being the first time I had undergone childbirth. I had no idea of how close I was to giving birth, or what was to happen to me next. I labored at home for a few hours until perhaps 11:00 a.m., and then said to my ex-husband that I thought we’d better go to the hospital. The pains were acute and I was panicking that I would not be able to bear them. He looked at me, and said, “Oh, all right. But we’d better have a screw first, because it’ll be a week before you’re home again.” I couldn’t believe it, even of him. “Please, W., take me to the hospital,” I begged as another contraction stormed across my body.” “Not until we have a screw,” he insisted. I wept, I cried, I pleaded, but he wouldn’t budge. The pleading went on until midday, by which time I was frantic to get nursing help. He stood adamant with his arms crossed, a smirk on his face, and jiggling the car keys as a bribe. In the end I submitted. It took two minutes, then we dressed and drove to the hospital. The baby was born five hours later.

Most definitions also exclude unwanted sex “out of a sense of obligation” (Bergen, 1996), sexual relations stemming from ex-partners threats of fighting for sole custody of children, and other acts that do not involve the use of threats of force. Unfortunately, excluding the abusive behaviors identified here exacerbates the problem of underreporting and ultimately underestimates the extent of sexual assault (DeKeseredy et

al., 2004). Thus, guided by Koss, Gidycz & Wisniewski's (1987, p. 166) conceptual and empirical work, below is how the research team classified the types of sexual assault described by 43 interviewees:

- *Sexual Contact* includes sex play (fondling, kissing, or petting) arising from menacing verbal pressure, misuse of authority, threats of harm, or actual physical force.
- *Sexual Coercion* includes unwanted sexual intercourse arising from the use of menacing verbal pressure or the misuse of authority.
- *Attempted rape* includes attempted unwanted sexual intercourse arising from the use of or threats of force, or the use of drugs or alcohol.
- *Rape* includes unwanted sexual intercourse arising from the use of or threats of force and other unwanted sex acts (anal or oral intercourse or penetration by objects other than the penis) arising from the use of or threat of force, or the use of drugs or alcohol.

SUMMARY

Only a few social scientific areas on inquiry have moved as far and fast as the study of male-to-female physical, sexual, and psychological abuse in intimate heterosexual relationships. In fact, advances in theoretical and empirical work on this topic have even been faster paced than the major leaps in some of the physical sciences, such as computer science. For example, approximately 30 years ago, a comprehensive bibliography of North American sources on wife beating would fit on one index card (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2002). But now, given the hundreds of journal articles and scores of books that address this and other forms of woman abuse, an interdisciplinary set

of abstracts, such as those included in *Violence & Abuse Abstracts: Current Literature in Interpersonal Violence*, is available and much needed. That the widely read and cited journal *Violence Against Women* is published monthly is another important statement about the extent of scholarly interest and concern about rape, stalking, and other forms of woman abuse.

We now have rich empirical information on the extent, distribution, sources, and outcomes of male-to-female victimization in a variety of relationships and social settings, such as marriage and dating. Further, many competing theories have been constructed and tested.[6] Still, reading the extant literature on woman abuse makes it clear that we need more research on male-to-female sexual assaults during and after separation/divorce, especially those occurring in rural communities. A key objective of this exploratory study, then, was to generate semi-structured interview data about a form of sexual assault that we know little about. Note, too, that the selection of the rural research sites is a direct response to the National Institute of Justice's (2001, p. 6) call for "[m]ore research on community risk factors for sexual assault that vary across ethnic/racial populations and other distinct populations…." Like Ptacek's (1999, p. 39) study of battered women in the courtroom, in addition to providing answers to nine research questions, this project simultaneously helps move the "experiences of the most economically and politically marginalized women to the center of the analysis" and responds to scholarly requests to move beyond the "urban-exclusive orientation of criminology" (Donnermeyer et al., 2006, p. 199).

[6] See Jasinski (2001) for a comprehensive review of the theoretical literature on woman abuse in heterosexual relationships.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK[1]

Why do men sexually assault women who want to leave them, try to leave them, or who have left them? Given the dearth of data on the motivations of men who engage in separation/divorce sexual assault, it is not surprising that until recently no theories were specifically developed to answer this question. Even the marital rape literature is essentially atheoretical because it is restricted to presenting women's opinions about why their partners assaulted them or to constructing typologies based on the information provided by female respondents (DeKeseredy et al., 2004; Mahoney & Williams, 1998). For example, Finkelhor and Yllo (1985) identified three types of rape: battering rape, force-only rape, and obsessive rape. Since these and other typologies of marital rape are reviewed elsewhere (see Bergen, 1996, 2006; Mahoney & Williams, 1998; Russell, 1990), it is beyond the scope of this report to repeat these summaries here.

The above observations should not be construed as an all-out indictment of this limited theoretical work. Certainly, marital rape researchers have identified several important risk factors (e.g., power, control, an adherence to the ideology of familial patriarchy), which is an important step toward constructing and testing theories of separation/divorce sexual assault, as well as other variants of woman abuse (Jasinski, 2001). In fact, some of the determinants mentioned by participants in marital rape studies done by Bergen (1996), Russell (1990), and others (e.g., Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985) are included in the theoretical model that informed this rural Ohio study. Described in Figure 2.1 and developed by DeKeseredy et al. (2004), this model is also guided by the

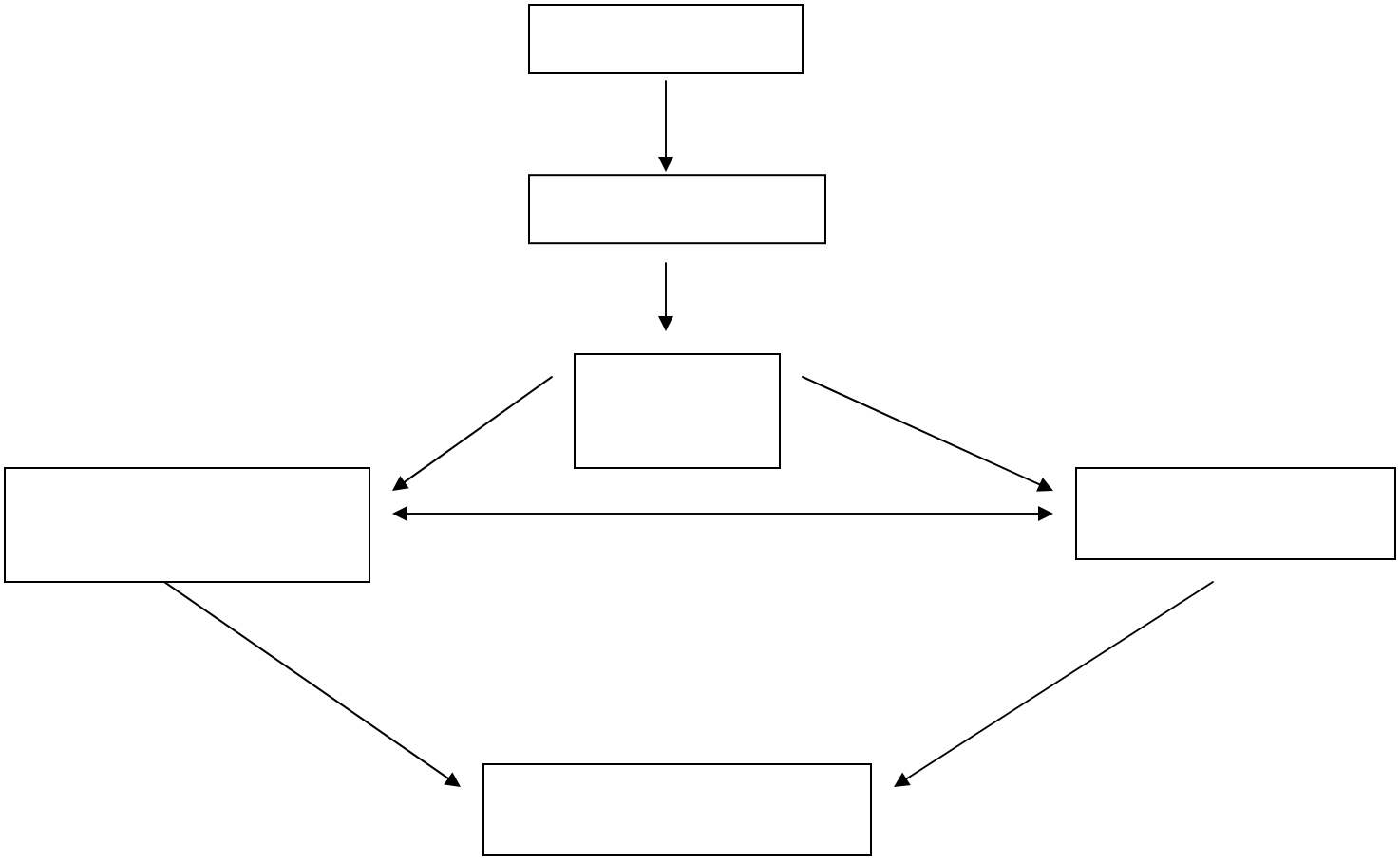
[1] This chapter includes revised sections of an article published previously by DeKeseredy et al. (2004).

theoretical literature on nonsexual forms of violence (e.g., beatings, homicide, etc.) that occur when women want to exit or have left a relationship.

FIGURE 2.1

A FEMINIST/MALE PEER SUPPORT MODEL OF

SEPARATION/DIVORCE SEXUAL ASSAULT



Central to all of this work is the role of patriarchal dominance and control, which is also a central theme in the marital rape literature (Bergen, 2006). For example, Rogness' (2003) integrated theory contends that macro-level factors like societal patriarchy work together with micro-level forces such as patriarchal male peer support to influence men to rape their marital/cohabiting partners. Informed by her perspective and

Jasinski's (2001) call for "acknowledging the existence of multiple risk factors" when doing theoretical work on woman abuse in general, societal patriarchy, "male proprietariness" (Wilson & Daly, 1992), and patriarchal male peer support are major components of the model presented in Figure 2.1.[2] Here, I briefly discuss these and other variables included in it.

Figure 2.1 situates separation/divorce within the larger context of societal patriarchy. North America is characterized by gross gender inequity (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). For example, in 33 U.S. states, under law, a man can be awarded conditional exemptions if he raped his wife (Bergen, 2006). Many more examples of patriarchal practices and discourses could easily be provided. Nevertheless, the key point to consider is that a constant such as societal patriarchy cannot explain a variable such as changes in the frequency and severity of male sexual assaults on women who want to or who have left them (Ellis & DeKeseredy, 1997). In other words, if we live in a patriarchal society that promotes male proprietarieness, why, then, do some men sexually assault during or after the exiting process, whereas most others do not? For instance, data generated by a number of researchers using patriarchal ideology scales of one kind or another indicate that there are variations in male proprietariness (DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1993; Smith, 1990), which is "the tendency [of men] to think of women as sexual and reproductive 'property' they can own and exchange" (Wilson & Daly, 1992, p. 85). Proprietariness refers to "not just the emotional force of [the male's] own feelings of entitlement but to a

[2] This model is also informed by perspectives offered by DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1993, 2002), Ellis and DeKeseredy (1997), and Wilson and Daly (1992).

more pervasive attitude [of ownership and control] toward social relationships [with intimate female partners]" (p. 85).

Many women resist or eventually will resist their spouse/cohabiting partners' proprietarieness in a variety of ways, such as arguing, protesting, and fighting back if they have been abused (Bergen, 1996; Ellis & DeKeseredy, 1997; Sev'er, 2002; Websdale, 1998). There are also women, although the precise number is unknown, who defy men's control by exiting or trying to exit a relationship and this may involve emotional separation, obtaining a separate residence, and/or starting or completing a legal separation/divorce. Regardless of how a woman does it, her attempt to exit or her successful departure from a sexist relationship challenges male proprietariness, but exiting alone, like single factors, cannot account for sexual assault. For example, many abusive patriarchal men have male friends with similar beliefs and values and these peers reinforce the notion that women's exiting is a threat to a man's masculinity (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2002). Further, many members of patriarchal peer groups view wife beating, rape, and other forms of male-to-female victimization as legitimate and effective means of repairing "damaged patriarchal masculinity" (Messerschmidt, 1993; Raphael, 2001). Not only do these men verbally and publicly state that sexual assault and other forms of abuse are legitimate means of maintaining patriarchal authority and control, they also serve as role models because many of them physically, sexually, and psychologically harm their own intimate partners (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2002).

In short, patriarchal male peer support contributes to the perception of damaged masculinity and motivates sexually abusive men to "lash out against the women…they can no longer control" (Bourgois, 1995, p. 214). Another point to consider is that if a

patriarchal man's peers see him as a failure with women because his partner wants to leave or has left him, he is likely to be ridiculed because he "can't control his woman." Hence, like many college men who rape women, he is likely to sexually assault her to regain status among his peers. Similar to other men who rape female strangers, acquaintances or dates, the sexual assaults committed by men during or after the process of separation/divorce may have much more to do with their need to sustain their status among their peers than either a need to satisfy their sexual desires or a longing to regain a loving relationship (Godenzi, Schwartz, & DeKeseredy, 2001).

SUMMARY

Figure 2.1 serves as a building block for future theoretical construction. Obviously, as uncovered by this study, there are other factors that contribute to separation/divorce sexual assault, such as male consumption of pornography and alcohol (Russell, 1990, 1998), formal and informal interventions (Ellis & DeKeseredy, 1997), everyday life-events stress (Hardesty, 2002), and rural social and economic transformations briefly described in Chapter 5. Still, of the limited theoretical work done so far, DeKeseredy et al.'s (2004) perspective seems the most promising. It is not a predictive model and it does isolate specific perpetrators; however, some of the data described in Chapter 4 provide empirical support for this integrated theory.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS[1]

Answering the nine research questions listed in Chapter 1 is a daunting task, especially in rural communities characterized by geographic and social isolation (Dutton, Worrell, Terrell, Denaro, & Thompson, 2002; Krishnan, Hilbert, & VanLeeuwen, 2001; Websdale, 2005), inadequate (if any) public transportation (Lewis, 2003), the existence of a powerful "ol' boys network" consisting of patriarchal criminal justice officials and some abusive men, and relatively low telephone subscription rates (Websdale, 1998). In rural sections of Ohio and other states, there is also a "prevailing acceptance of violence against women," as well as community norms prohibiting survivors from publicly talking about their experiences and from seeking social support (Bogal-Allbritten & Daughaday, 1990; DeKeseredy et al., 2006; Hogg & Carrington, 2006; Lewis, 2003; Logan, Stevenson, Evans, & Leukefeld, 2004). For example, one of the 43 women interviewed for this study said:

> I don't sit around and share. I keep it to myself. Um, I, I believe that's part of my mental illness. I believe it takes a lot of it. But, I'm not one to sit around and talk about what's happened.

Poverty is another factor precluding many rural women from coming into contact with those who can help them or will listen to their "atrocity tales" (Goffman, 1961). Unable to afford telephones, cars or to take taxis, they suffer in silence. In numerous cases, being economically disadvantaged is not simply the result of the inability to find

[1] This chapter includes revised sections of articles published previously by DeKeseredy and Joseph (2006), DeKeseredy et al. (2006), and DeKeseredy and Schwartz (in press).

work in a community plagued by joblessness. It is also a function of separation/divorce (Davis, 1999; Logan & Walker, 2004).

An even longer list of obstacles researchers encounter while conducting a rural study of separation/divorce sexual assault and other crimes could easily be provided. However, some of these problems can be overcome or minimized using methods employed in this study. It is to preparatory research that I turn to first.

PREPARATORY RESEARCH

To develop a study that effectively addresses the complexities of separation/divorce in rural Ohio communities, the research team included a "preparatory component of qualitative investigation" (MacLean, 1996). This involved several meetings, electronic mail exchanges, and in-depth telephone conversations with leading researchers in the field,[2] local shelter staff, sexual assault survivor advocates, police officers, mental health workers, and others with a vested interest in curbing the pain and suffering uncovered by this research. Not only did these people strongly support the study, but they also sensitized the research team to key issues not addressed in the extant social scientific literature on separation/divorce sexual assault, such as the influence of broader Ohio state politics. Moreover, they made several major contributions to the development of highly useful screening questions (see Appendix A) and a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix B). Further, they put us into contact with service providers and criminal justice officials throughout Ohio, such as those affiliated with the Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) and the Ohio Coalition Against

[2] Raquel Kennedy Bergen, Mary Koss, Karen Bachar, and Claire Renzetti devoted a substantial amount of time and effort to helping me develop this study.

Sexual Assault (OCASA). Practitioners also referred six of the 43 women who participated in this study. As Schechter (1988, p. 311) points out, activists and practitioners are experts on woman abuse and "can help researchers formulate sophisticated and intellectually rich questions."

Following Schechter (1988) and other feminist scholars, the research team explicitly and publicly acknowledged that service providers are experts on woman abuse. Further, I routinely shared my findings with all of the practitioners who helped craft this study and I served on the Board of Directors of an Athens, Ohio Shelter. I also became an active member of the Athens County Coalition Against Sexual Assault during the data-gathering phase of the project and I am still a member of the Ohio Domestic Violence Network's Board of Directors.

SAMPLE SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT

Data on the relationship between separation/divorce and non-lethal forms of woman abuse (e.g., beatings) have been primarily derived from surveys. Simply identifying through statistical means that separated/divorced women report higher rates of violence than their married/cohabiting counterparts does not reveal whether abuse caused the termination of relationships or if it started during or after breakups (Ellis & DeKeseredy, 1996). Still, it is fair to assume that the relationship between separation/divorce and woman abuse is more than a coincidence (Hardesty, 2002). However, to infer causality, alternative research methods are necessary. This is not to say that survey methods are not valuable means of answering the research questions listed in Chapter 1. The point, rather, is that to develop a richer understanding of these issues it is necessary to listen to

women's voices because it "may be the only way to describe a complex reality for which we have few names" (Mahoney, 1991, p. 41).

Again, researchers face many obstacles in their attempts to do face-to-face interviews with rural women and these same problems present themselves in any attempt to gain access in a telephone or self-report survey (Weisheit, Falcone, & Wells, 1996). Therefore, techniques like those employed by Bowker (1983) in Milwaukee generated the sample. For example, the advertisement presented in Figure 3.1 was placed once a week during two different six-week periods in a free newspaper available throughout Athens County, Ohio. Also, posters about the study were pinned up in public places, such as courthouses, and were given to social service providers who come into contact with abused women.

FIGURE 3.1

NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT

Call for interested women of Athens, Hocking, and Vinton Counties
for participation in an Ohio University research project

Have you ever had unwanted sexual experiences while trying to leave your husband or male live-in partner?

Or, have you ever had unwanted sexual experiences after you left your husband or male live-in partner?

We would greatly appreciate your participation in a confidential interview. Your name will not be given to anyone.

We will pay you $25.00 for your time and transportation costs. Also, we will talk to you at a time and location of your choosing.

If you would like to be interviewed, please call Mae at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or

Carolyn at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

In addition:

- Two local newspapers gave considerable coverage to the project.
- Ohio University sent out a press release to newspapers and other Ohio-based media.
- Three local radio stations and Ohio University's television station carried public service announcements about the study.
- The director of the local shelter and I appeared on a local television news show to discuss this project and broader issues related to it.
- The Ohio Domestic Violence Network and other agencies told interested parties (e.g., rural shelter workers) about the study and helped to recruit participants.
- Local shelter staff, a police department social worker, employees of the county sheriff's department, Planned Parenthood, Women's Center staff at a local two-year college, and employees of the local Sexual Assault Survivor Advocate Program informed possible respondents about the study.
- Ohio University sociologist Judith Grant told women who participated in her addiction study about the research.
- Index-like cards with the information provided in the recruiting poster were routinely placed on top of newspaper boxes inside stores and on sidewalks in Athens, Ohio.

INTERVIEWING PROCEDURES

With the assistance of Judith Grant, I trained the research assistants selected to conduct interviews with great care to ensure that they infuse a sense of "trust, safety, and intimacy" into the interviewing process (Brush, 1990; Russell, 1990; Smith, 1994).

Similar to the approach taken by Russell (1990) in the development of her marital rape survey, the training included "consciousness raising" about sexual assault and the "defining and desensitizing" of sexual words to make the interviewers as comfortable as possible with whatever language respondents might use (Smith, 1994). The local shelter staff and I also sensitized interviewers to the dominant norms and values of the people who reside in rural sections of Ohio.

Below are some concrete examples of the training techniques:[3]

- In-depth briefings on the nature and purpose of the study, the gender sensitive issues involved, and ways of handling potential emergency situations (e.g., respondent experiences traumatic memories).
- Having the interviewers engage in a series of mock interviews under the supervision of Judith Grant and me so that any difficulties could be identified and corrected.
- Discussions of appropriate non-verbal communication (e.g., non-judgmental body language) to be used in the interview situation.

From early March 2003 until early April 2004, two female research assistants carried cellular phones 24 hours a day to receive calls from women interested in participating in the study. Callers were told the purpose of the study and were then asked a series of screening questions to determine their eligibility to be interviewed. The main criteria were being 18 years of age or older and having ever had any type of unwanted sexual

[3] These training techniques are similar to those used by researchers who conducted the first sweep of the Islington Crime Survey (Jones, MacLean, & Young, 1996), a British study that devoted considerable attention to physical and sexual assaults against women.

experience when they wanted to end, were trying to end, or after they had ended a relationship with a husband or live-in male partner. If they met the selection criteria, the women were invited to a semi-structured face-to-face interview at a time and place of their choosing, and they were paid $25.00 for their time. They were also given $7.75 for travel expenses and an index card listing the locations and phone numbers of local support services for survivors. Index or palm cards are much safer than sheets because they minimize the likelihood of abusive ex-partners and others (e.g., ex-partners' male friends) discovering that respondents shared their abusive experiences with others. Moreover, interviewees were invited to contact the research team at a later time if they had questions or concerns. Although the research team was deeply committed to generating rich qualitative data, it was equally, if not more, concerned with ensuring respondents' safety in communities where most residents know each other.

Six interviews were conducted over the phone, five were held off-campus, and the rest were done in an Ohio University office. Most of the participants who came to the campus did not disclose how they got there, but the research team assumed that friends or relatives drove them. Further, all of the participants did not disclose how they had access to telephones. It is reasonable to assume that they felt that revealing such information would jeopardize their safety.

Research assistants tape-recorded and transcribed the interviews. Most of them took about 90 minutes and a total of 43 women participated in this study. Posters placed in public places attracted most of our respondents (n = 27). Eight women called after exposure to ads or media stories about the study, and individuals or organizations referred eight other women to the research team. Most respondents (n = 30) lived in Athens

County, Ohio, three lived in Hocking County, Ohio, one lived in Vinton County, Ohio, and nine lived in other rural parts of the state. The mean age of the sample was 35 and the mean income for 2002 was $13,588. Sixty-five percent (n = 28) had some type of post-secondary education and close to half of the participants were unemployed. Of the 25 who had been married, all got divorced or legally separated, but only five remarried. Most of our respondents also had children.

SUMMARY

Similar to what Bowker (1983) found when he tried to conduct a woman abuse study in Racine, Wisconsin, many rural Ohio women strongly adhere to privacy norms (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, in press) and have little faith that a promise of confidentiality will be guaranteed by survey researchers, especially those who are "outsiders" (e.g., people who are not from the community) (Lewis, 2003). For these and other reasons, alternative means of gathering data on rural separation/divorce sexual assault are necessary. Further, the methods selected for the study are by no means unorthodox. In fact, the sample selection techniques are similar to those used by Bowker (1983) to recruit Milwaukee women who have successfully "beaten wife-beating" and to procedures used by DeKeseredy, Alvi, Schwartz, and Tomaszewski (2003) to recruit people to participate in their Canadian study of poverty and crime in public housing.

Certainly, methodological improvements are needed in future studies and Chapter 5 offers suggestions for further empirical work. I hope the data reported in Chapter 4 will motivate others to pursue these recommendations or use other approaches that may be just as good or better. Much more research needs to be done and the behaviors described in Chapter 4 constitute just the tip of the iceberg.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS[1]

Based on their analysis of data from the first National Family Violence Survey, Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz (1981, p. 32) argued that the "marriage license is a hitting license." Their thesis includes two contentions: (1) marriage is a special institution that places women at high risk of being physically assaulted by their husbands and (2) married women are more likely to be beaten than unmarried women. If we accept Straus et al.'s argument, then the logical solution to wife abuse and other forms of male-to-female victimization is exiting (Ellis & DeKeseredy, 1997). Stated in Chapter 1 and elsewhere (e.g., Logan & Walker, 2004), most women leave violent relationships. Nevertheless, data presented in this chapter support the widely accepted conclusion that, for many women, separation or divorce does not solve woman abuse. In fact, exiting can exacerbate this major social problem. What makes the findings presented in this chapter unique is that they reflect the abusive experiences of women who receive relatively little attention from the research community.

TYPES AND TIMING OF ABUSE

Chapter 1 lists the definitions of the four types of sexual assault used in this study. The number of respondents who ever experienced one or more of these behaviors is presented in Table 4.1. Only a few of the 43 respondents experienced just one of these forms of separation/divorce sexual assault, and virtually all experienced rape or attempted

[1] This chapter includes revised sections of materials published previously by DeKeseredy and Schwartz (in press) and DeKeseredy et al. (2006). All of the names of the women who participated in the study and who are quoted throughout this report have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

rape. As stated previously, “blackmail rapes” are not uncommon. For example, Tina wanted to leave her partner but was afraid of losing her children. Asked why her partner sexually assaulted, she replied:

> Um, to punish me for leaving him. To punish me for getting pregnant, um, to punish me for embarrassing him and um, to control me…. And then something would happen and he would know it was getting close to the end of our relationship once again and he would start it. And the whole time I would be crying, but I couldn’t cry loud enough because if his parents heard us he swore he would take our children away. I know he did this when he thought I was getting ready to leave and he knew that I couldn’t live without my children.

Women who are the victims of intimate violence are rarely victimized only by sexual assault. Rather, they typically suffer from a variety of injurious male behaviors that include physical violence, psychological abuse, economic blackmail or abuse such as denying women money even if they earn wages, harm to animals or possessions to which they have attachments, or stalking behavior. Most (80%) of the women were victimized by two or more of these forms of abuse. The rates at which they reported are presented in Table 4.2, where each different type of abuse is counted once, but a single person can be counted in more than one category.

TABLE 4.1

SEPARATION/DIVORCE SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVALENCE RATES (N = 43)

TYPE OF SEXUAL ASSAULT	N	%
Sexual Contact	19	44
Sexual Coercion	32	74
Attempted Rape	8	18
Rape	35	81

Joan was one woman harmed by various types of abuse during the process of exiting her relationship:

> Well, what happened was that he got drunk and wanted sex from me and I told him no. I said, "Stay away from me. I can't stand you when you're drinking. Get away from me. He started grabbling my butt, and playing with my legs, and trying to grab my boobs. And everything, anything to get what he wanted. And I told him, I kicked him in the leg and I told him, "Get away from me." And then got into a fight over it and the he started throwing stuff at my face and I went to the phone and I said, "I'm gonna call your probation officer." I says, "If you don't leave me alone and you've been drinking, you're acting like an ass. Leave me the hell alone." And he wouldn't. He unplugged the phone. I plugged it in, I plugged it, you know. It was back and forth. He unplugged, I plugged it in. He unplugged it, I plugged it in…. [W]hen he was trying to prevent me from getting the phone,

he stepped on my foot, which fractured the top of my foot. I was on crutches for two weeks.

TABLE 4.2

NONSEXUAL ABUSE PREVALENCE RATES (N = 43)

TYPE OF NONSEXUAL ABUSE	N	%
Physical Violence	36	84
Psychological Abuse	38	88
Economic Abuse	30	70
Abuse of Pets	5	12
Stalking	16	37
Destruction of Prized Possessions	22	51

Table 4.2 shows that most victims of separation/divorce sexual assault are also hurt by other highly injurious acts. Sometimes they are not the only ones injured by ex-partners. For example, 19% of the respondents stated that their partners abused their children and one woman believes that her ex-partner raped her as a means of killing her unborn child. Below is what Trina's ex-husband did to her daughter:

> He came back October of the same year for a so-called emergency visitation, and he was able to take my daughter away from me for eight hours even though the DNA had never been proven. And, when my daughter finally came back, she had severe diaper rash, smelled like cigarettes and alcohol, and had bruises right, right on her thighs and on her wrists.

Some men did not hit their children or force them to have sex, but behaved in other ways that are sexually and psychologically abusive. Below is one example that involved the use of pornography shortly after this man realized that his wife was going to leave him:

> I walked into him masturbating in front of my children to *Penthouse*…. There were naked pictures, well not naked, but pictures of me in a bra and underwear that he had stolen and had developed.

When is the most likely time for separation/divorce sexual assault to occur? As other studies discovered (e.g., Sev'er, 1997), it may be when a woman expresses a desire to leave a relationship. Seventy-four percent (n = 32) were sexually assaulted at that time. Forty-nine percent (n = 21) were sexually abused while they were trying to leave or while they were leaving and 33% (n = 14) were victimized after they left. Obviously, many of these women were victimized at two or more of these times.

It is hard to make hard comparisons from small numbers, there is no question that in this sample, formerly married women reported a higher rate of sexual assault at each stage than did cohabiting women. For example, compared to cohabiting women (33%, n = 6), married women (47%, n = 12) were more likely to report being abused while still in the relationship, before expressing a desire to exit, trying to exit, or exiting their relationships. At the next stage, when the women reported that they wanted to leave their abusive relationship, 20 of the 25 married women (80%) stated that they were sexually assaulted, while 12 of the 18 cohabiting women (67%) said that their assaults occurred at this point in time. These marital status variations data are obviously distinct from those uncovered by Finkelhor and Yllo (1985) and may be the result of married men perceiving greater threats to their sense of entitlement and a stronger adherence to the belief that their wives are their property (Bergen, 1996).

In sum, then, in response to the first four research questions listed in Chapter 1, many survivors of separation/divorce sexual assault experienced other forms of abuse

and separation/divorce sexual assault is multidimensional in nature. Moreover, the most likely time for sexual assault to occur is when a woman expresses a desire to exit a relationship. Since the above results were gleaned from a small biased sample, they cannot be generalized to the entire rural Ohio population. Still, these findings strongly suggest that separation/divorce sexual assault is a major social problem in rural parts of this state and these data challenge the notion of rural areas being at low risk for violent crime. Certainly criminologists who accept official statistics as valid have argued that there is less overall crime in rural areas, and that the greatest rural/urban difference is in violent crime. The difference is particularly striking in robbery rates (Weisheit, Falcone, & Wells, 1996).

Most studies depend on official statistics to support theories about the extent of rural crime. Unfortunately, under the best of circumstances official statistics are notoriously poor at gathering information on marital rape and domestic violence (DeKeseredy et al., 2004; Schwartz, 2000). Again, rural communities have characteristics that make it less likely that women will report such crimes, including the acceptance of stereotypical gender roles (Little, 2003), geographic and social isolation, such as from social services (Dutton et al., 2002; Krishnan et al., 2001; Logan, Walker, & Leukefeld, 2001), the absence of public transportation (Lewis, 2003), and a lack of economic opportunities. This lack of support and opportunity may not affect the ability of rural communities to reduce most types of crime, but it would actually act to increase interpersonal violence within the family (Osgood & Chambers, 2000). Websdale (1998) argues similarly that rural areas are characterized by social forces that have overall and generally kept violent crime to levels below those experienced in urban areas. However, his work is based on

the argument that the reason is rural patriarchal relations, including the existence of a powerful "ol' boys network." Websdale suggests that while there is a system of social practices that generally serve to dominate and oppress women, it operates differently in rural areas. "(T)he domination of women by men across cultures is a consistent international trend and if there is one unifying theme, one seemingly universal thread of patriarchy that inhabits most cultures, it is that of male violence" (1998, p. 48).

Thus, Gagne (1992) reported that in her study of Appalachian women that many of them were not only victimized, but were further convinced by their complete lack of support that they (at least temporarily) had no alternative but to put up with oppressive conditions. For example, women know that the local police can be friends with their abuser and may refuse to arrest on the grounds of friendship (Bell, 1989; Coorey, 1990). Others, following in Websdale's (1998) path, argue that it is not these specific actions that combine to make conditions oppressive for these women, but that the very nature of rurality is based on male standards (Hogg & Carrington, 2006), making women generally invisible when decisions are made (Alston, 2003). A variety of studies "have demonstrated how male dominance and supremacy are displayed through symbolic leisure activities as well as more severe manifestations of control (sometimes violent)" (Little & Panelli, 2003, p. 283). Interpersonal violence for these men may be a form of proving both to themselves and others their essential masculinity and heterosexuality, at least as they define it (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2005). Further, there is a greater distrust of government in rural areas, which means that even when crimes such as marital rape occur the victim may be less likely to want the police involved than her urban counterpart (Hogg & Carrington, 2006; Weisheit, Falcone, & Wells, 1994). If rural areas are

characterized by less crime generally, but the crime that is seen is more likely to be against acquaintances and violent, and rural patriarchy serves to encourage and exacerbate men's feelings of control and power over women, then we would expect to find a high degree of physical and sexual assault against intimate partners in rural areas.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MEN WHO SEXUALLY ASSAULTED THEIR EX-PARTNERS

Male Peer Support

Turning now to the fifth research question, one of the key risk factors identified in this study is patriarchal male peer support, which is defined as "attachments to male peers and the resources they provide which encourage and legitimate woman abuse" (DeKeseredy, 1990, p. 130). Except for Websdale's (1998) Kentucky study, no prior empirical attempt has been made to discern the existence, nature, and content of proabuse male social networks in rural U.S. communities. In fact, most male peer support research is quantitative and limited to explaining violence on college campuses (DeKeseredy et al., 2006; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997).[2] Moreover, to the best of my knowledge, no study has thus far concentrated on whether male peer support contributes to sexual assault during or after the termination of any type of intimate relationship. Hence, this

[2] Some researchers have both used qualitative methods and left the college campus to study the relationship between male peer support and various types of woman abuse in urban areas of concentrated disadvantage (Anderson, 1999; Bourgois, 1995; Wilson, 1996). Sinclair (2002) found in a qualitative study that male peer support helped to explain woman abuse behavior among socially displaced youth in an eastern Ontario city. Further, DeKeseredy and Schwartz (2002) offer a male peer support theory of woman abuse in public housing, but did not gather any data specifically on this topic.

study enhances a sociological understanding of the ways in which sexist male peer group dynamics perpetuate and legitimate the sexual abuse of separated/divorced rural women.

It is not surprising that male peer support was a constant theme among respondents, given that it is strongly associated with other types of woman abuse, such as date rape and wife beating (Bowker, 1983; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998a; 2002). For example, 67% (n = 29) of the interviewees reported on a variety of ways in which their partners' male peers perpetuated and legitimated separation/divorce sexual assault. Three methods in particular stand out: frequently drinking with male friends, informational support, and attachment to abusive peers. Informational support refers to the guidance and advice that influences men to sexually, physically, and psychologically abuse their female partners and attachment to abusive peers is defined as having male friends who also abuse women (DeKeseredy, 1988). These factors are identical to those found to be highly significant in predicting which men on college campuses will admit to being sexual predators (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998b; Schwartz, DeKeseredy, Tait, & Alvi, 2001).

The first factor is *frequent drinking with friends*. Such drinking is often associated with the development of a particular kind of masculinity that objectifies women and endorses male behavior that can be physically and sexually violent (Campbell, 2000; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2005). While 77% (n = 33) of the women said that their former partners frequently drank alcohol,[3] 63% (n = 27) said their partners

[3] There is a strong relationship between offenders' alcohol consumption and intimate femicide (Sharps, Campbell, Cambell, Gary, & Webster, 2001, 2003). Intimate femicide is "the killing of females by male

spent large amounts of time with their male friends and most of the time spent together involved drinking alcohol. Further, as is the case with college men who sexually abuse women, "nights out drinking with the boys" were seen by many respondents as contexts that often supported patriarchal conversations about women and how to control them.[4] As Susan reported:

> Um, they're basically like him. They sit around, talk about women and gossip. They're the biggest gossips there ever was. But they sit around and brag how many times they get it and how they keep their women in line and you know just like crap, you know.

The social settings described by Susan and other respondents are also examples of the second factor of *informational support*, although these were not restricted to group drinking events. For example, one respondent's abusive partner spent much time with his cousin, a man who "hated women" and who often called them "fuckin bitches" and "whore sluts." Note, too, that although most of the participants did not explicitly label their partners' peers as patriarchal, most of them are. As Lynn said, "And they just think women are their property and they can lay 'em anytime they want to. That's just their whole attitude about it." Furthermore, 47% (n = 20) of the sample stated that they knew their partners' friends also physically or sexually abused women, which indicates that *attachment to abusive peers* also contributes to separation/divorce assault. In fact, Betty

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partners with whom they have, have had, or want to have, a sexual and/or emotional relationship" (Ellis & DeKeseredy, 1997, p. 592).

[4] See Schwartz and DeKeseredy (1997) and Schwartz et al. (2001) for more detailed information on the relationship between all-male sexist conversations, alcohol consumption, and sexual assault on the college campus.

told us that *all* of her ex-partners' friends hit women or sexually assault them, and several women told us that they directly observed their partners' friends abusing female intimates. Jackie is one such participant: "I watched a friend of his who shoved a friend of mine up against a wall…and try to, you know, have his way with her."

A few perpetrators also enlisted the help of their friends to sexually abuse some of the 43 women. Such male peer support frequently involved forcing women to have sex with friends. This is what happened to Marie:

> Well, him and his friend got me so wasted. They took turns with me and I remembered most of it, but, um, there was also drugs involved. Not as much on my behalf as theirs. I was just drunk. And I did remember most of it and the next morning I woke up feeling so dirty and so degraded and then it ended up getting around that I was the slut…And in my eyes that was rape due to the fact that I was so drunk. And I definitely didn't deserve that. And I was hurting. I was hurting the next day.

This incident is similar to what Sanday (1990) uncovered in her study of fraternity gang rape. In groups, some men do not rely on force to have sex with women, but rather use alcohol or drugs to "work a yes" out of them. In other words, some perpetrators, either alone or in a group, purposely get women so drunk that they cannot resist their advances, which is a form of felony forcible rape in Ohio and most other states. Although the incident described below by Carrie did not involve male peer support, it is another glaring example of using alcohol as a means of "working a yes out":

> I agreed to meet with him to discuss visitation and child support for our daughter and I wanted to go to a public place after everything he had done because it

> wasn't just sexual, it was mental, physical. And I showed up there. I had a couple of friends who were sitting throughout keeping an eye on me. Ordered the drink, got up to use the bathroom, drank my drink and that was pretty much the last thing I remembered until the next morning when I woke up with a killer headache and my daughter crying in her crib…. He was in bed next to me…. I had strangulation marks around my neck. I had marks around my wrists and an open wound on my face and he had obviously had sex.

A few women forced to have group sex were also beaten after going through brutal degradation ceremonies. This is what happened to Janet:

> He ended up bringing someone into the relationship, which I didn't want, but he told me that if I didn't do it he would leave me. And I ended up staying with him. He was more into group sex and, and uh trying to be the big man. He wanted sex in a group thing or with his buddies or made me have sex with a friend of his. See one time he made me have sex with a friend of his for him to watch, and then he got mad and hit me afterwards. I mean he tied me up so I could watch him have sex with a 13-year-old girl. And then he ended up going to prison for it. So, I mean it was nasty.

Lorraine recalled this incident that occurred during the end of her relationship:

> He wanted me to have sex with a few people. Okay, like I was telling you earlier, and I didn't want to…. And, uh, I finally did. And then I got beat for it because I did. I tried not to, but then when we did, I got beat.

Patriarchal Control

Seventy-nine percent of the sample said that their partners strongly believed that men should be in charge and control of domestic household settings. For example, Marie said that her ex-husband "wanted to be in control. He was in control for us, or you know I felt it." Moreover, like Joan's ex-husband, many of the interviewees' partners isolated them to maintain control:

> He didn't allow me to socialize at all. My place was at home with the children and that's where I was most of the time. The only thing I went out for was if they had a parent-teacher conference at school. I went for that. But no, I had no outside contact.

This is how another respondent's partner treated her until she managed to leave him:

> His favorite thing was, "If you are not going to be at work, you're going to be here cooking and cleaning, doing laundry. And if I ever catch you sitting on your ass, I am going to beat the fuck out of you, you know."

Most respondents stated that they were raped during or after separation/divorce because their partners wanted to show them "who was in charge." Tanya was one of many interviewees who had a partner that was determined not to let her go:

> He did it because I was his and he felt he could. And it was his way of letting me know that, ah, first of all, of letting me know that I was his. And secondly, letting me know that um, that I wasn't safe anywhere. And I, when we were together, when he had forced me to go back together with him, ah, he, ah…raped me as another form of, of possession. And I think also as a reminder of what could

> happen. And ultimately, at one point, I believed that he raped me as part of his means of killing my unborn child.

Nickie had similar experiences:

> I was his property that he wanted to own me. And I was his. That's how he looked at it. I was his property and that's all that I felt I was to him, way just a lay, you know. But that's all he wanted me for was to satisfy himself…. He would deprive me. It was more of a mental torture, emotionally, mental torture than physical except in the sex it was physical. "You're mine and I'm gonna have you whether you want it or not. I want you." He was in control. And that's what it's all about with men like that. They have to be in control.

The fact that close to 80% of the men who abused their partners adhered to the ideology of familial and/or societal patriarchy may also partially explain why so many perpetrators had peers who were sexist or abusive. For example, DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1998a) uncovered a strong statistical relationship between Canadian college men's patriarchal attitudes and beliefs and their affiliations with male peers who perpetuate and legitimate physical, sexual, and psychological abuse in dating relationships. More specifically, these researchers found that Canadian college men who report abusing their girlfriends and dating partners are more likely than those who do not report abusive behavior to endorse an ideology of familial patriarchy. They also found that these men are even more likely to be abusive if male peers support their sexist ideology and injurious behaviors.

Below is one major example of how male peers supported an interviewee's husband's "right" to maintain his patriarchal control with abuse. This incident happened shortly after her husband found out that she wanted to leave him:

> I remember my husband making me have sex with him one time when people were in the next room and none of them guys would come in and help me. And they knew he was hitting me, but they figured that he was my husband. If it were a stranger it would have been different.

Did male peers teach interviewees' partners to engage in separation/divorce sexual assault, or did abusive men simply seek the friendship and support of violent peers? These are important empirical questions that can only be answered empirically. Hopefully, future research on separation/divorce sexual assault will be specifically designed to uncover richer data on the complex relationship between patriarchy, male peer support, and the abuse uncovered by this study.

Pornography

A few studies found that the contribution of pornography to woman abuse in dating is related to male peer support (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998a; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1998). For example, some men learn to sexually objectify women through their exposure to pornographic media (Jensen, 1995), and they often learn these lessons in groups, such as pornographic film showings at fraternity houses (Sanday, 1990). Similarly, some rural Ohio survivors of separation/divorce sexual assault said that their partners consumed pornography with their male friends while drinking excessive amounts of alcohol. Agnes is one interviewee who experienced this problem:

> They were drinking and carrying on and they had, um, they had a bunch of porno stuff in the garage and I had walked in and I had started to tear it up. And I was, I was, I thought it was gross. I was mad at it. I was mad at him for being around it. And he just started charging after me and I started running to my car as fast as I could. And he got into the car and he threw me down in the seat and he just kept punching me, punching me.

Regardless of whether they consumed it in groups, 65% of the sample's estranged partners viewed pornography, and it was reported to be involved in sexually abusive events experienced by 30% of the interviewees. But, does pornography cause separation/divorce sexual assault and other forms of woman abuse? Certainly this question cannot be answered from the data generated by this study. Rather, it requires a long-term and expensive longitudinal research design. Certainly, there are some important competing arguments. For example, it may well be that for men who physically and sexually abuse women, pornography is just one more weapon in their arsenal. Thus, a man who knows that his partner would be scared or angry might not try to expose her to the lessons he learned from a pornographic movie, while his abusive friend might try to force his estranged partner to act out such scenes over her objections (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1998). In a somewhat related argument, it might very well be that the same factors that cause a man to abuse women also cause him to purchase pornography. In other words, the abuse came first, followed by an interest in pornography. In these scenarios, eliminating pornography might not have an effect on the amount of woman abuse, since the men are generally abusive anyway. However, this study and those that focused on other groups of women demonstrate that pornography certainly is a

component of the problem of woman abuse (Bergen & Bolgle, 2000; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998a; Harmon & Check, 1989).

Other Major Characteristics of Men who Sexually Assault their Ex-Partners

Male partners' possession of firearms and their illegal drug use were two other common themes identified by respondents. For example, more than half (58.14%) of the women said that male offenders had guns and some perpetrators even threatened to use them.[5] This is what happened to one interviewee when her partner discovered she wanted to leave him:

> And I mean the one night he'd come home and pull a double barrel and cock both barrels and said he was going to kill me. And it was like, wait a minute here, you know, it was two o'clock in the morning. I was sound asleep and I got up at four to go to work. But he'd always keep pressuring me, "If you leave me, I'll find you, I'll kill you. If you leave me, I'll find you, I'll kill you."

Over 65% (n = 28) of the women said that their partners used illegal drugs and their consumption of these substances contributed to abusive behaviors. One interviewee who desperately wanted to leave her partner said:

> He quit drinking for a while and switched addictions and started doing cocaine. He started shooting cocaine with his insulin needles. He's also an insulin dependent diabetic, as well as a chronic alcoholic. He'd come home and force me to have sex with him and it was like sleeping with a brewery. I would sit in the living room afterwards and he'd be passed out. And I'd think about how I could

[5] Gun ownership is strongly related to intimate femicide, especially when intimate partners live apart (Campbell et al., 2003).

get away with killing him. I mean it was getting really bad. I just wanted, you know I couldn't like escape him you know.

Another women said:

Um, there were a lot of times that I had sex with him when I didn't want to, but there's one particular night that I do remember and it was towards the end or our relationships. It was a really bad relationship. We were always fighting. A lot of drugs involved. Ad he was really high and he kept coming at me you know….

And then, of course, he would get together with his friends and do drugs and stuff. His drug of choice was heroin.

For some women, their partners' drug use was a key factor that motivated them to terminate their relationships. As stated by Allison:

He was starting on coke right before we split up because that was the whole drawing point for me was drugs. I was like, "I'll deal with your drinking 'cause you're the kid's dad and I mean I didn't want the kids to not have a dad. His grandma says, "Oh, he'll stop one of these days." Which one?

CONSEQUENCES OF SEPARATION/DIVORCE SEXUAL ASSAULT

Separation/divorce sexual assault, like other forms of woman abuse, seriously affects women and changes them forever. Consistent with other studies,[6] this one found that women experienced a wide range of negative outcomes, including low self-esteem, fear, nightmares, and a myriad of physical health problems. Indeed, the destructive consequences are immeasurable (Barnett et al., 2005). As stated by one interviewee,

[6] See Barnett, Miller-Perrin and Perrin (2005) for in-depth review of studies of the negative outcomes of various types of violence against women.

"Your health suffers. Your energy level is low. I'm miserable. I'm miserable and ashamed." More concrete examples of common negative effects are presented in this section. Still, although the women who participated in this study have experienced harms that few people are capable of imagining, all of them are survivors and should not be regarded as simply passive victims (DeKeseredy & Joseph, 2006; Geotting, 1999; Schwartz, 1989; Sev'er, 2002). These strong and brave rural Ohio women made great strides to recovery and all of them have plans for the future. In fact, one consistent response to a question about long-term goals is becoming actively involved in the struggle to end woman abuse. For example, one survivor said:

> I think that what I want to do is be a presenter in regards to domestic violence and sexual assault. I've worked with victims and just recently worked with perpetrators. I'm taking this summer off. Um, I'm taking an extended vacation and my plan is to get involved with um, educating, not only the community, but also education for the law enforcement, social workers, individuals who are counselors, the judicial system. I would love to be a part of developing policies. I think something that's, ah, advocacy. I would consider it to be like an indirect advocacy. That's my next, that's my plan to move into that direction.

Psychological Consequences

All of the survivors developed a host of adverse post-assault psychological outcomes, such as depression, sexual aversion, and fear. This is what happened to Rita:

> I could care less if I ever have sex again in my life. I could care less if I ever had another relationship with a man again in my life. Oh, it's scarred me for life. I think it's physically, mentally, well maybe not so much physically, but

> emotionally has scarred me for life. You know, and that's the reason why I don't socialize myself with people. I isolate myself from people because if I don't, I get panic attacks. And the dreams they, they're never gone. They're never gone. I mean, I don't care how much you try to put it out of your head, the dreams always bring it back, always. I've been in a sleep clinic where they would videotape me sleeping, being in and out of bed, crawling into a corner screaming, "Please don't hurt me, don't shoot me, don't whatever.

Interviewees frequently mentioned sexual aversion, and Jane provides an example of this outcome:

> Right now I'd have to say sexually, I'm probably ruined. I don't ever want to have sex again with anyone. I have no desire to have sex with anyone.

An intense mistrust of men in general was another common theme uncovered by this study. Below is one salient example:

> And years ago, years ago when I still only had one child, he told me he knew that I wanted out of the relationship and he said, "If I can't have you, I'm gonna make it so nobody can have you." And I didn't understand what he was talking about. And it was many, many years later that I realized he meant psychologically. He was going to destroy me psychologically so I wouldn't be fit to enter into another relationship. And it's basically true; I have not had any other relationship. I'm afraid to go into a relationship. I don't trust men in general. So basically I live a solitary life, not by choice, but because I'm afraid I'm going to end up in a relationship like that again.

Lori provides another example of such mistrust:

> I have a very low opinion of men in general. So, that might have something to do with those experiences. I'm not really looking for any men. I've written them off. But I don't really associate with that many guys, period!

Many more examples of negative psychological outcomes could easily be provided here. Moreover, often, these effects were experienced in conjunction with physical injuries and the use of alcohol or drugs to dull both physical and psychological pains.

Physical Health Outcomes

As in many ongoing heterosexual marital/cohabiting relationships, some women experience both physical and sexual violence when they want to leave, are trying to leave, or have left their male partners. Referred to by some scholars as "battering rapes" (Bergen, 1996, 2006; Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985), Jackie was the target of such abuse and she sustained severe physical injuries:

> He lowered my self-esteem. Um, I've got a lot of scares and I've still got four broken ribs over here, scars all over my face. I've got a knife stab wound here where he tried to stab me. I've got cuts around my private area, um scars everywhere. Physically, he's, he's put damage on my body. Mentally as well cause I've got to get help to get over this, which I'm working on.

Many respondents mentioned physical scars, which bring back terrifying, vivid memories of events that could have lead to death. For example, Jannie has physical scars all over her body from being thrown through a window.

Lori is another woman with many scars stemming from several brutal battering rapes committed by her estranged male partner:

I have dents in my legs where he used to kick me and some scarring you know in different places.

To cope with these and other physical consequences, some women turned to drugs or alcohol, and Lorraine ended up becoming an alcoholic. She said, “I am a recovering alcoholic. I would get really drunk and pass out.” Other women in the process of leaving knew that sexual assaults were imminent and thus took drugs as a means of preventing their partners from sexually assaulting them. Judy is one of several respondents who did this:

I, um found myself taking my pain pills more often just so I wouldn’t have to be awake when he came home.

For respondents who had partners that were sexually active with other women, there was always the risk of acquiring a sexually transmitted disease (STD). For example, Joan said, “I have a fear of, you know, of like, having some type of disease or something like that.” Indeed, some women are so scared of getting an STD that they frequently go to clinics to get HIV tests. However, it is unclear whether any women actually became infected.

Financial Outcomes

The respondents’ mean income for 2002 was $13,588. Indeed, such a low income makes it extremely difficult for women to leave abusive men or those they no longer love. At the time this study was conducted, abused women and others needing social support from government agencies faced major obstacles, as they still do today. For example, the Athens County Department of Jobs and Family Services’ budget was cut by $9 million in 2001 (Evans, 2002). Also, during the same time period, the Athens, Ohio

shelter received $17,801 less in funding and the crisis hotline located in the same city was "scaled back considerably" due to rising Medicaid costs in Ohio and requirements for local agencies to match Medicaid funding (Claussen, 2003).

Needless to say, exiting relationships can be financially devastating (LaViolette & Barnett, 2000). As Mary told one of my research assistants, "Economically? I'm at the bottom of the food chain now." In addition to enduring physical, psychological, and sexual abuse before and after leaving their partners, many women were economically abused by these men. Recall from reading Table 4.2 that 70% of the women interviewed stated that they experienced this harm. This is what happened to this respondent after she tried to leave her partner:

> He…actually tried to ruin me prior to us splitting up. He forged by signature on a document to the amount of the car loan. He had someone else come in, because he knew the dealer. So, I was put on there as co-owner without my knowledge and he stopped making payments, which really hurt my credit bad. He doesn't help us with money except for the child support that he gets taken out of his check. So, financially I have nothing now. And he stole $13,000 from some bank accounts for my kids' college.

There are other examples of negative financial outcomes, including difficulties finding housing, the inability to get proper nutrition, and being unable to buy children's clothes. However, many financial difficulties were related to inadequate social support services and an absence of collective efficacy in the women's communities.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

When asked about the type of support she received from her community, Mary said:

> A lot of times people don't like stepping in, so we never get company, knowing that you have a violent husband. I didn't have a car. I wasn't allowed to go anywhere. But here is our neighbors out here, seeing this man beat this female off the swing set, beating her with his fist, kicking her with his feet, grabbing her by the hair of her head, smearing her face and what…you're gonna stand up there and aren't gonna call the law? Or you are gonna stand up there and you aren't gonna come down? And they was outside standing and he was just thumping me so hard, so hard. And nobody called the law. Nobody did. Nobody came down to yank him off me. Nobody did anything. But, the worst of all was how my kids seen it all. And, that is what is really sad.

Many people assume that crimes seldom, if ever, occur in rural U.S. communities (Weisheit et al., 1996), and this belief is heavily fueled by the media, lay conversations and even criminological research, which typically focuses on violations of social and legal norms in urban settings (Donnermeyer et al., 2006; Jones, 1995). Indeed, "the characteristics of nostalgic fiction of yesterday are attributed to nonurban communities: they are a retreat from the brutalities of urban living, where people live closer to nature in simpler and (by implication) happier lives (Campbell, 2000, p. 562)." Still, for Mary, nothing can be further from the truth. Her life was a "living hell" when she tried to leave her male partner and she received little, if any, social support. Of course, people who view official statistics as accurate indicators of crime would probably contend that her

experience is unique because similar forms of violent victimization are rarely found in rural police and court data sets (DeKeseredy et al., 2006). Again, under the best of circumstances official statistics are notoriously poor at gathering information on all types of woman abuse, including separation/divorce sexual assault (DeKeseredy et al., 2004; Schwartz, 2000).

Then there are people who, based on a review of the extant literature on informal social control processes in rural communities,[7] contend that Mary's experience is atypical because these areas have higher levels of collective efficacy than do urban ones. In other words, they assert that rural areas are characterized by what Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls (1998, p. 1) refer to as "mutual trust among neighbors combined with a willingness to act on behalf of the common good, specifically to supervise children and maintain public order." This point is well taken, given that many rural citizens, including agents of social control, know each other socially and rural areas are less tolerant of crime than are metropolitan districts (Insurance Research Council, 1993; Donnermeyer et al., 2006; Weisheit et al., 1996; Wilson, 1991). Nevertheless, recent studies found some elements of the antithesis of collective efficacy - social disorganization - in U.S. rural communities, which are associated with arrest rates for juvenile violence (Osgood & Chambers, 2000; 2003).[8] Here, social disorganization is defined as "the inability of a community structure to realize the common values of its residents and maintain effective controls" (Sampson & Groves, 1989, p. 777).

[7] See Donnermeyer et al. (2006) and Weisheit et al. (1996) for a review of this literature.

[8] These elements are residential instability, family disruption, and ethnic heterogeneity.

Collective efficacy in rural areas takes different shapes and forms, and is not necessarily restricted to deterring or preventing crimes such as woman abuse (Barclay, Donnermeyer, & Jobes, 2004). Moreover, what may appear to outsiders as social disorganization is often "simply a different form of social organization if one takes the trouble to look closely" (Venkatesh, 2000; Wacquant, 1997, p. 346). For example, again, 67%, of the women reported on a variety of ways in which their ex-partners' male peers perpetuated and legitimated separation/divorce sexual assault. Similarly, Websdale (1998) uncovered evidence of a powerful "ol' boys network" that serves to dominate and oppress rural Kentucky women. Below is an account of how such an all-male sexist network and other symptoms of what Websdale (1998) refers to as "rural patriarchy" functioned to help stop a respondent from leaving her abusive partner:

> Another time, after I finally got away from him and I was having these problems. I was, I was on drugs real heavy um, and I was trying to get away from him. He was still calling me. This was just in the last nine months. Um, I called Victim Awareness in my town and um, told them that I had been abused by him. Oh, they kept telling me that they was going to do something about it, and they never did. The one other time I went to Victim Awareness, they told me that um, they were going to question the neighbors and stuff. And the neighbors said that um, you know, they said that the neighbors didn't, didn't see or hear anything. So, they I didn't have enough ah proof, so. Basically, nothing was ever done. He's a corrections officer in the town that I lived in, and he's friends with the sheriff and whoever else.

In sum, "social organization may facilitate some types of crime even as it constrains others" (Donnermeyer et al., 2006, p. 203). While they may be able to count on their neighbors to help prevent public crimes (e.g., vandalism), many rural Ohio men can also rely on their male friends and neighbors, including those who are police officers, to support a violent patriarchal status quo, which to them is acting on "behalf of the common good." Consider, too, that in rural sections of Ohio and other states such as Kentucky, there is widespread acceptance of woman abuse and community norms prohibiting victims from publicly talking about their experiences and from seeking social support (DeKeseredy & Joseph, 2006; Krishnan, Hilbert, & Pace, 2001; Lewis, 2003; Navin, Stockum, & Campbell-Ruggaard, 1993).

Perceptions of Collective Efficacy and Safety

Since this study focused on many factors related to separation/divorce sexual assault, all of Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls' (1997) questions about collective efficacy in urban neighborhoods could not be included in the semi-structured interview schedule. Thus, respondents were only asked the following, which are modified versions of items included in Sampson et al.'s (1997) measures of informal social control and social cohesion and trust:

- How often do you get together with your neighbors in a typical week?
- Could you count on your neighbors to help you solve your personal problems?

To acquire more information about perceptions of their communities, respondents were also asked if they personally know other women who have been raped or sexually assaulted, if they thought that unwanted sex, rape and sexual assault are major problems

in their communities, how safe they felt when they are at home, and what type of help they asked for and/or received.

Data uncovered by this study strongly suggest that if there are high levels of collective efficacy in the respondents' communities, they do not function to prevent and deter separation/divorce sexual assault. For example, most interviewees (84%) stated that women experiencing unwanted sex in their community is a major problem and 81% reported that rape or sexual assault is also a serious problem. Consider what Patsy said:

> I've talked to quite a few women…and word gets around in a small community…and uh, you know these women. You know they say, Have you got out yet?" But you find out you know that they've got a lot in common with you and they just open up and start talking with you. One woman, she's in her 80's and she was talking to me and she says, "If you can get out, get out. You're still young enough." She says, "I'm sitting here waiting to die." "I'm too old to get out," and she says she takes abuse everyday.

Joan is another one of many respondents who also perceived sexual assault as "being rampant" in her town:

> It's a big problem. And, a lot of people get by with it. A lot of people! Even these 15 year old kids that are touching these 7 year old kids are getting by with it. Yeah, and everything is getting way out of hand. Nobody is doing nothing but slapping everybody on the hands and its justified. And it's not justified, what you take from that child or woman, or man is not justified because…when you go and take from them that is something you took that will never be given back from nobody. Nobody can refill something that has been taken from you.

Some people might argue that the above and similar perceptions are heavily influenced by the women's own victimization. However, that 81% of the respondents stated that they personally know other women who were sexually assaulted provides further evidence that such victimization is a major problem in some rural Ohio communities and that little is being done to prevent it. Jayne knows more than one woman in her community who has either been raped or sexually assaulted in other ways:

> With the girls I know, all of them have had at least one sexual assault experience, if not rape, and mostly it goes unreported because they feel that they're at fault or it's an isolated situation that this person wouldn't do it otherwise.

Given their own experiences of separation/divorce sexual assault and their knowledge of others who have had similar experiences, it is not surprising, then, that over half (58%) of the interviewees do not feel safe when they are at home, especially since forced sex is strongly related to homicide (Campbell et al., 2003). Sometimes, too, "children can become unfortunate pawns in the violent games" played by male ex-partners (Polk, 1994, p. 143), which is one of the key reasons why many interviewees' children also feel unsafe at home. Agnes' son is one example of a child who has a well-founded fear of being killed due to the abuse he and his mother endured during the process of leaving her husband. She said that;

> My son automatically locks the doors when he gets into the house. He only sleeps with the dog. He has to have the dog in his room at night because that's his warning signal.

Another factor that exacerbates a group of respondents' fear is knowing that the men who abuse them or have done so have strong social ties with male peers who

sexually or physically assault women. Again, 47 percent (n=20) of the sample stated that they knew that their estranged partners' friends engaged in these types of woman abuse and some perpetrators enlisted the help of their friends to sexually assault some of the interviewees.

A growing literature shows that neighbors are more likely to help each other out in urban communities with high levels of collective efficacy (Sampson et al., 1997; Taylor, 2001). However, many rural battered women have neighbors that adhere to and enforce what Browning (2002) refers to as "nonintervention norms." For example, 84% of the respondents stated that they could not count on their neighbors to help solve their personal problems. This is what happened to Grace shortly after her husband found out she wanted to leave him:

> I remember my husband making me have sex with him one time when people were in the next room and none of them guys would come in and help me. And they knew he was hitting me, but they figured that he was my husband. If it were a stranger it would have been different.

Some women said that their neighbors did not help them because these survivors were too embarrassed to reveal their pain and suffering to them or because privacy norms dictated that they "keep their mouths shut," which is also a key barrier to obtaining formal support services in rural communities (Logan, Stevenson, Evans, & Leukefeld, 2004). As June pointed out when asked about her ties with neighbors:

> Back then you never really talked about things like that with other women. So I really don't know. I didn't share. I kept everything a secret. I didn't want anybody to know what was going on. You know you try to keep everything painted pretty

> and you know we lived in a sub-division, where the only thing that separated your house was a driveway. So, uh, you didn't talk a lot about your personal affairs to your neighbors.

Recall that 79% of the sample said that their partners strongly believed that men should be in charge of the household, which partially also explains why 67% of the sample did not get together with their neighbors in a typical week and thus could not count on them for help. "Being in charge" often involved restricting women's day-to-day activities and "cutting them off from the outside world." For example, even if her neighbors were willing to help her, Pat couldn't report her abusive experiences to them because she "was only allowed to be around people at work basically." Jackie's ex-partner behaved in a similar fashion because "he thought that he was all I needed. You know, a measure of love was that I could get all my needs met from him."

Men's fear of facing negative sanctions for their abusive conduct was another factor that contributed to cutting their partners off from contact with neighbors. For example, according to Mandy, "I had black and blue marks on me so you know he didn't want somebody to see that." Then there are a few women who said that their neighbors did not help them because they were experiencing similar problems. June is one person who faced this situation. "A lot" of her neighbors were in relationships characterized by frequent marital rape, wife beating, and other forms of male-to-female victimization. Her male neighbors condoned and engaged in woman abuse, while their partners were involved in an ongoing struggle to maintain their own safety and did not have the time or energy to help others.

In sum, in addition to facing barriers to formal means of social support identified by Logan, Evans, Stevenson and Jordan (2005) and others (Logan et al., 2004), many rural survivors of separation/divorce sexual assault cannot rely on informal processes of social control. This is not to say, however, that the women suffered in total silence. For example, 58% turned to at least one friend for help, but most of their friends did not live near them. Further, 44% sought assistance from the police and 40% received help from a local shelter. A more detailed description of the sample's experiences with these and other social support resources is the subject of the next section of this report.

Social Support Experiences

Data described here provide answers to the seventh research question of central concern to this study, and the interviewees' voices reveal that formal and better intervention by state authorities is more important for them than focusing on collective efficacy at this point in time. Perhaps this is because, as Goeckermann, Hamberger and Barber (1994), Logan et al. (2004), Websdale (1998) and Hogg and Carrington (2006) found, many rural legal officials and other service providers contribute to a form of collective efficacy that protects and/or encourages woman abuse. According to Marlene:

> And then with the criminal justice system start doing something from the beginning. You know, stop this shit. Just because he was a correctional officer with this political stuff, you know, they don't want his name in the newspaper or whatever, you know. I don't know whether that goes from the get go, you know, on how we choose are police officers, you know, and so on and so forth. I mean I know that there's um, you're going to have these kinds of people wherever you go, but this was a whole community you know.

Cultures, whether they are urban or rural, "live through word of mouth and example" (Jacobs, 2005, p. 5). Most respondents perceive their communities' cultures as being patriarchal and view an unknown number of formal service providers as setting "a bad example" for others. Again, in addition to paying selective attention to the voices of survivors, many rural Ohio agents of social control are part of an "ol' boys network" that includes members who degrade and abuse women. For example, based on her brutal experiences, Jolene contends that:

> Cops are number one bad for unwanted sex, for forcing unwanted sex on their mates and violence. They've got to change the whole structure of the protective system with more women on the force. They're all men, how's a man gonna relate to what a woman just went through? It's a good ol' boys network. And it's terrible that our police have come to that. They're not protection.

Who knows more about abuse than those who suffer from it (Sev'er, 2002)? Unfortunately, many lawmakers do not view survivors as leading experts on intimate violence and they often develop policies (e.g., mandatory prosecution) that are not supportive of abused women's interests or needs (Ford, 2003). As Bergen (1996) discovered, police officers, spiritual and religious advisors, battered women's advocates, and a host of other social support resources do not provide sufficient support to victims of marital rape. Data derived from her survey of 1,730 service providers across the U.S. reveal that only 33.5% of the women's agencies included in her sample taught their staff and volunteers about marital rape survivors' legal rights, resources available to them, emotional reactions to sexual abuse and ways of identifying marital rape survivors. If women raped by their live-in partners do not receive proper assistance, it is logical to

assume that survivors of separation/divorce sexual assault are given even less social support.

In fact, only one of the respondents who turned to at least one element of the criminal justice system for help stated that it was the best assistance she received. In sharp contrast to her experience, another woman who resided in the same rural community said that, “The police department was worthless.” Moreover, in another town, the Justice of the Peace discouraged a respondent form filing a restraining order “on the grounds that ah, it was only a piece of paper.” Most interviewees, however, turned to several different sources of social support, including friends (58.14%) and local shelters (39.53%).

Friends were viewed by the bulk of interviewees as the best source of social support. This is not surprising because other woman abuse studies that used similar methods also found that friends were rated highly (e.g., Bowker, 1983). Family members and shelters ranked second, followed by mental health workers. On the other hand, elements of the criminal justice system (e.g., courts and police) were ranked the worst by 28% (n = 12) of the interviewees, and fewer people perceived the rest of the support they received in the same way.

In response to the question about the worst help they received, 11 women said “no one.” They answered this way because they had next to no contact with anyone who could help them. Thus, they could not make what they defined as valid comparisons. Regardless of the quality of their experiences, however, every respondent needed help to cope with abuse and actively sought social support. Still, not one respondent mentioned

going to the hospital or a general practitioner,[9] which is likely the result of lacking health insurance, other cost barriers, or problems getting appointments with medical personnel (Logan et al., 2004). Consider, too, that some women did not know of any existing services and therefore this survivor's suggestion needs to be taken seriously:

> Getting some information out. I don't know if, ah, I don't know if maybe your public health services, ah, I don't know if they had posters or anything like that, that would advertise their services. Because I know, that you know, quite a few people go to the health department or something like that for medical health. And if they're having problems with the type of situation, maybe a poster or something with information on that particular topic could trigger something inside of that woman, that particular woman. Then maybe she would reach out, you know, talk to somebody.

An equally, if not more important recommendation made by another survivor is to train shelter workers and other practitioners to recognize separation/divorce sexual assault and to deliver services directly matching survivors' needs:

> There's a big difference between domestic violence and sexual abuse. It's just not there. I mean you could call the crisis center, you know, and they're like, they're dumbfounded. You know 'cause they're not used to that kind of crisis call coming in. It just needs to be out there and somebody needs to be trained to take these calls. It's just like at the shelter. They don't understand, you know, they don't live, they're not trained to deal with it.

[9] Similarly, another rural study found that abused women rarely sought medical treatment (Bosch & Schumm, 2004).

SUMMARY

Data presented in this chapter yield several conclusions. First, separation/divorce sexual assault occurs in some rural sections of Ohio as it probably does in other parts of North America. Furthermore, like many survivors of marital rape and other forms of woman abuse, most of the women interviewed experienced multiple forms of victimization, including physical violence. This finding is consistent with previous studies that reveal the prevalence of "battering rapes" among women who are both physically and sexually assaulted by their partners (Bergen, 1996; Bergen & Bukovec, in press; Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985; Russell, 1990). Also, many participants were emotionally pressured to have sex against their will. This is not surprising since 79% of the women stated that men who abused them strongly believed that they "should be in charge." As Bergen and Bukovec (in press) discovered, "Men who believe that they have a right, or entitlement to sex within their intimate partnerships, often rely on emotional pressure or coercion to force their partners to comply."

Data presented here also provide further evidence that the sexual abuse of women is fostered by male peer support. Although the bulk of previous studies of this problem have been done on college campuses, this one provides additional evidence showing that men in a variety of locations are affected by patriarchal group discourses and practices. As Bowker (1983) pointed out, any male peer support for the development of a sexist subculture is not restricted to one specific time, place or sociodemographic group. In a similar manner, Websdale (1998) uncovered evidence of a powerful "ol' boys network" that serves to dominate and oppress rural Kentucky women.

Another conclusion is separation/divorce sexual assault is associated with men's consumption of pornography, possession of firearms, alcohol, and drugs. Moreover, the harms uncovered by this study generated major negative outcomes, and researchers and theorists to rethink the concept of collective efficacy. Again, it can take many shapes and forms, and often what is perceived as the "common good" may actually be behaviors and discourses that threaten the health and well-being of women seeking freedom from patriarchal oppression. Although the respondents perceived an absence of effective informal social control, their own policy recommendations, which will be described in greater detail in Chapter 5, did not address this problem and focused primarily on improving formal support services, better education, and increased public awareness. Joan is one of many respondents who made such recommendations and said:

> Um, I think that awareness, somehow get awareness out there through human services, um, you know, the welfare department, so and so forth. You can get pamphlets out that women don't have to put up with it. You know, um, like I said, the first place for it to start is with awareness, you know, in, in the community like within the welfare office, maybe WIC office, whatever offices that especially young women or women that are, um, not educated you know. And even if you are educated it doesn't make any difference. I was educated. I went to school for human services. I went to school for all that. I mean victim abuse and victim counseling. I mean I went to school to counsel people and it was happening to me. So, even women that are educated it can happen to. But, if you can, you know, if they can be more aware, if the women can be more aware then maybe it would at least take the numbers down.

Most of the women who turned to elements of the criminal justice system for assistance did not hold them in high regard. While perceptions such as theirs are hardly exclusively rural phenomena (Hogg & Carrington, 2006), some of the data presented in this chapter strongly suggest that major improvements to the criminal justice system's response to separation/divorce sexual assault in rural communities need to be made. Further, there also fewer service options available to survivors in rural areas (Baxter, 1992; Hogg & Carrington, 2006), which partially explains why some respondents had no contact with anyone who could help them. Still, of all the social support resources identified by the interviewees, friends were viewed as the best.

What new empirical and theoretical directions need to be taken in further studies of separation/divorce sexual assault? How can services for survivors be improved? Answers to these questions are provided in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Data presented in Chapter 4 and those gathered by a small number of urban marital rape studies show that exiting or trying to exit a marital/cohabiting relationship increases women's chances of being sexually assaulted, especially if they are connected to patriarchal or abusive men. However, there is still much that we do not know about the problem of separation/divorce sexual assault in rural and urban communities. Obviously, much more empirical and theoretical work is needed. Of course, it is also necessary to develop policies and practices that meet the unique needs of women who are terrorized by men who will not let them leave and men who they have left. Hence, the main objective of this chapter is twofold: (1) to provide suggestions for future research and theorizing and (2) to suggest policies based on the needs and voices of rural survivors.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN EMPIRICAL WORK

Regardless of whether separation/divorce sexual assault studies are conducted in rural or urban settings, data gathered from men are needed to more precisely determine what motivates them to be abusive (DeKeseredy et al., 2004). Research on men is required because, as Scully (1990, p. 4) points out, women cannot accurately reveal the reasons why men engage in sexual abuse because "they don't share the reality of sexually violent men. Such insight is acquired through invading and critically examining the social constructions of men who rape." Note, too, that men's abuse of women is male behavior and thus "more fruitful efforts" to explain it should focus on men "Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986). This is not to say, however, that we cannot learn much about the risk factors associated with separation/divorce sexual assault by asking women questions about the

men who harmed them. For example, this study identified key determinants such as male peer support and patriarchal control.

In their study of crime in rural Australia and the societal reactions to it, Hogg and Carrington (2006, p. 179) found that violence against women is strongly associated with a rural hegemonic masculinity that "subordinates others through practices of domination that historically have relied on the exercise of violence." Moreover, they found that the forms of hegemonic masculinity "remain overwhelmingly more circumscribed than in urban areas" (p. 181). Is this the case in rural Ohio and other rural parts of the U.S.? Further, do threats to rural hegemonic masculine identity discovered by Hogg and Carrington in rural Australia contribute to rural separation/divorce sexual assault in the U.S.? Examples of these threats are the growth of rural women's movements, tougher drinking and driving laws, and the crisis in family farming. These are empirical questions that can only be answered empirically and more in-depth research on men would certainly address this concern.

Representative sample surveys of rural and urban populations would help determine the incidence and prevalence of separation/divorce sexual assault. Such rural research is undoubtedly difficult to do, given the methodological obstacles discussed previously. Further, there are many other groups of men and women who need to be included in future research, such as those who are immigrants, living in public housing, have physical disabilities, and so on.

Following Browning (2002), this is one of the first studies to apply collective efficacy theory to woman abuse in intimate, heterosexual relationships. However, this project is distinct from his and others like it (e.g., DeKeseredy et al., 2003) because it

examines the linkage between community characteristics and separation/divorce sexual assault in rural communities. Certainly, more research is needed, including studying the perceptions and experiences of rural women who are not abused. Another point to consider is that almost all studies of collective efficacy/social disorganization and crime use quantitative techniques, such analyses of census data. Still, many rural social problems are not easy to study using such methods, which is perhaps one of the key reasons why so few researchers focus on woman abuse in rural areas (Websdale, 1998). Further, quantitative methods alone cannot adequately describe the complexities of rural woman abuse and community responses to it (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, in press). Thus, it is essential to continue "going beyond census data" to examine community characteristics that affect separation/divorce sexual assault and other forms of woman abuse (Osgood & Chambers, 2000). One suggestion is to specifically design a qualitative project that focuses exclusively on the topics of central concern to this report and that uses in-depth interviews and participant observations of community relations. Websdale's (1998) study is an excellent example of such a project. He rode with police officers, observed woman abuse cases in court, talked to battered women, interviewed agents of social control, and actually lived in Eastern Kentucky. Similarly, Hogg and Carrington's (2006) rural Australian study serves as an excellent model for developing a study of community characteristics related to various forms of woman abuse.[1]

Many more suggestions for future research could be raised here, including the continued use of broad definitions of sexual assault, the use of multiple measures of sexual assault (DeKeseredy, 1995; Mahoney & Williams, 1998; Smith, 1994), and

[1] Note that Hogg and Carrington's study involved the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

studies of abuse that occurs when women try to terminate or have terminated relationships with boyfriends that do not live with them. Still, no matter what research methods or topics are selected, it is equally important to develop and test theories of separation/divorce sexual assault. Certainly, "the purpose of all theory is to understand and explain" (Einstadter & Henry, 1995, p. 12), and in addition to serving as conceptual tools that help us make sense of data, theories are practical. For example, to cure AIDS, researchers must first identify the cause of this deadly disease. In fact, almost every policy developed to prevent or control crimes like those committed against the women who participated in this study is derived from some theory or theories (Akers, 1997; DeKeseredy, Ellis, & Alvi, 2005).

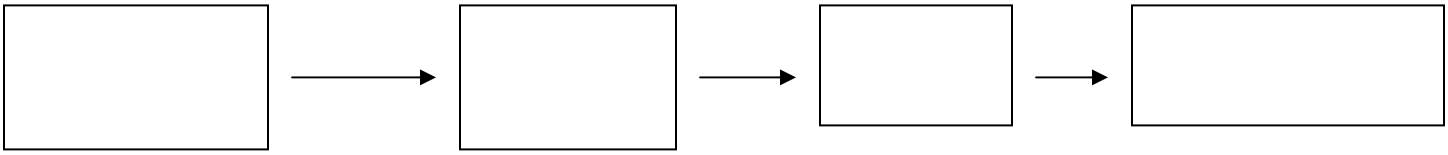
NEW DIRECTIONS IN THEORETICAL WORK

Results described in Chapter 4 lend some support for the theoretical model presented in Chapter 2. This perspective serves as a starting point for future theoretical work and subsequent offerings need to address some "rural realities"[2] that are conspicuously absent from Figure 2.1. For example, most theories of woman abuse developed and evaluated thus far focus primarily on the victimization of women in urban communities. Heavily, informed by data uncovered by this study, theories developed by DeKeseredy and Schwartz (2002) and DeKeseredy et al. (2004), and research done by Hogg and Carrington in six rural Australian communities, in Figure 5.1, my colleagues and I (see DeKeseredy et al., in press) attempt to help fill this gap in the theoretical literature by offering a rural masculinity crisis/male peer support theory of separation/divorce sexual assault, which is briefly described below.

[2] This is the title of a newsletter published by the Rural Sociological Society.

FIGURE 5.1

A RURAL MASCULINITY CRISIS/ MALE PEER MODEL OF SEPARATION/DIVORCE SEXUAL ASSAULT



Rural social and economic transformations and the role of male peer support are major components of Figure 5.2. Following Sernau (2006, p. 69) this model asserts that in rural communities, "male privilege is persistent but precarious." For example, prior to the end of the last century, many rural men obtained an income from either owning family farms or working in extractive industries (e.g., coal mining) (Jensen, 2006; Lobao & Myer, 2001; Sherman, 2005). Further, buttressed by a patriarchal ideology, these men's marriages were typically characterized by a rigid gendered division of labor in which men were the primary "bread winners" and women had "an intense and highly privatized relationship with domestic production," such as childrearing and doing housework (Fassinger & Schwarzweller, 1994; Websdale, 1998; p. 49). This is not to say, however, that such gender relations are non-existent today. In fact, they are still evident in a sizeable number of rural communities. Still, rural men's power has become fragile due to major challenges to their masculine identity spawned by rural social and economic transitions that have occurred over the last 40 or more years (Hogg & Carrington, 2006 Sherman, 2005).

For example, there has been a major decline in the number of family owned farms because many families cannot make a reasonable living from their farms (Jacobs, 2004).

Moreover, many rural communities, such as Nelsonville, Ohio, that had to rely on a small number of industries for employment have been economically devastated by the closing of sawmills, coalmines, and other key sources of income (Jensen, 2006).[3] Note, too, that some sociological studies show that many women seek employment or get jobs when their husbands become unemployed or when their farms become less profitable (Lasley et al., 1995; Lobao & Meyer, 2001). This transition often generates marital instability because many economically displaced males who cannot meet the responsibilities of "being the man of the household" feel deprived of intimate and social support resources that give them self-worth (Harris & Bologh, 1985). Further, a sizeable portion of unemployed rural men who strongly adhere to the ideology of familial patriarchy compensate for their lack of economic power by exerting more control over their wives (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2002; Sherman, 2005), a problem that can influence these women to consider leaving or actually exiting their marriages.

There are numerous other major social and economic transitions that have spawned "the crisis in the rural gender order" (Hogg & Carrington, 2006, p. 181), such as women's rights to own property and inherit wealth, an increase in the number of rural women's associations, and the "delegitimation" of some forms of rural masculinity (e.g., tougher drinking and driving laws). Of course, there are unemployed rural men who have "managed to remake masculinity" in ways that do not involve intense patriarchal domination and control of their wives. For example, Sherman's (2005) study of families

[3] After nearly 70 years of operation, in 2002, the Rocky Shoes and Boots factory closed in Nelsonville Ohio and moved to Puerto Rico. None of its 67 displaced workers were offered replacement jobs (Price, 2002).

harmed by the closure of sawmills in a rural California community reveals that some unemployed men became active fathers and enjoyed spending much time with their children while their wives worked. Other unemployed rural men, however, deal with the aforementioned "masculinity challenges" by spending a great deal of time drinking with men in similar situations, and this is one of the key reasons why their wives leave or try to leave them (Sherman, 2005). Further, as suggested by some data presented in Chapter 4, many rural men have peers who view wife beating, rape and other forms of male-to-female victimization as legitimate and effective means of repairing "damaged patriarchal masculinity" (Messerschmidt, 1993; Raphael, 2001). Similar to many of their unemployed urban counterparts, these men serve as abusive role models in ways described in Chapter 2.

Women terminating relationships because of their partners' substance abuse, violent behavior, or other problems generated in part by unemployment is often perceived by rural men as yet another threat to their masculinity. Like the theory described in Figure 2.1, Figure 5.1 contends that male peers influence some rural men to engage in separation/divorce sexual assault to regain control and to avoid losing status among their friends. Patriarchal domination and control, frequent drinking with friends, and other variants of male peer support are related to the abuse uncovered by this study. Moreover, like explanations of other rural crimes, DeKeseredy et al.'s (in press) model briefly discussed here addresses the fact that rural women's individual abusive experiences are parts "of a larger set of economic and social structural factors…." (Donnermeyer et al., 2006, p. 201).

Regardless of which current or new theory best explains the causes of the pain and suffering described throughout this report, for women like those who participated in this study, the creation of effective policies should be the top priority. And, as Logan et al. (2004, p. 58) correctly point out, "Creative solutions must be developed in order to serve women with victimization histories within the context of the specific communities where these women live."

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Statements about inadequate sources of support provided by my respondents are consistent with those made by women who participated in other rural woman abuse studies (e.g., Logan et al., 2004). Note, too, that while urban women encounter many barriers to service, rural women have fewer resources and those that are available cover very large geographic areas (Bosh & Schumm, 2004; Logan et al., 2004; Purdon, 2003). Rather than repeat these barriers that have been well described elsewhere, the main objective of this section is to provide answers to the seventh research question of major concern to this study: "Based on survivors' perspectives, what types of social support and intervention are the most effective?"

Education

Education is one of the most common suggestions provided by the 43 respondents. As stated by Gladys:

> Education, education, education. Because you know what, I think that the first step in prevention, any type of prevention, is educating both genders, all races, all religions, everything. If you educate and explain to a population that this behavior is unwanted because it hurts another human being. Not because it is wrong or

> morally wrong, but because it is inhumane. And so because of that, well, I think that is a good enough reason for education and say, "Hey, look, this is inhuman behavior. This is unacceptable, period!

Mary said that, "My big push is always education," and others like Jane said similar things:

> Educating men and women about their rights and uh, that sex is not an entitlement in a relationship or in anything. And that, ya know men need to be taught from boys, that, and I mean its contradictory to the whole of society so its really, I mean, how can you say its, ya know your two years old from the time your anywhere your seeing naked women and like the whole imagery like encourages it, excuses any kind of victimization like boys will be boys kind of bullshit. So, I think men need to take responsibility for the fact that there is something really wrong. Just with, trying to control someone just because, I don't know you have low self-esteem or whatever the hell your damn problem is. And women need to know that they don't have to, they need to be taught that they don't have to be submissive. And that's not what they're taught basically. They're taught to do the exact opposite. So, education I think…. Um, well I think that the only way to really, it's just such a huge thing to the whole basis of the capitalist system. I mean your selling sex and so because it sells the best….

Creating Awareness

Creating awareness is part of an effective education process and like the rural sexual assault advocates interviewed by Lewis (2003), many respondents believed that this would be a very useful solution. According to Louise:

> Um, I guess when I think about unwanted sex during or after divorce or separation, I think that it usually goes hand in hand with domestic violence. I think awareness. I think girls growing up in this community don't get a lot of awareness about domestic violence. It's touched on briefly. They don't realize the warning signs of it and they need to get out. Because it won't get any better. It's not going to change no matter how much you love him, it won't change.
>
> Another women said:
>
> Education, ya. Public awareness, public awareness because it's such a touchy subject. I don't know kind of almost like a taboo. You know it's like, and it's, it's, just, ya, we need to talk about it. Need to talk about it. Get it out there. Let people know that there is help you know because if there is a woman who is experiencing that and they see that I know that I've been drawn. It kind of draws you to it and maybe that will help women step out and get some help.

Listen to the Voices of Survivors

Society must first recognize separation/divorce before effective steps can be taken to alleviate it in rural and other communities. Again, too many women suffer in silence and rarely do members of their communities respond to their cries for help. As one interviewee stated, the typical societal reaction to the abuse uncovered by this study is, "It's like we see, but we don't. It's like three monkeys: don't see, don't hear, don't speak." And, as another respondent pointed out, "People have to be, you know, listen, and um, be sympathetic in relation to what exactly happened…."

Many interviewees emphasized the importance of listening to survivors' voices and developing a sensitivity to women's needs and pain. According to Jane, people need

to “Listen. Listen to what they (the women) have to say. Don’t jump to conclusions and tell them that they’re liars or it will be okay, to get over it.” Jackie made a similar suggestion:

> Listen to the victim. Understand how traumatic that experience may have been. Also what needs to be understood is how that experience is going to affect that person in the future and any children that may be in that home. My 12-year-old for the last three years, well since we have split up, has put the couch in front of the door and that’s where he sleeps every single night. Because he’s only 12 and he’s a big kid, but he’s not that big. He said that way, if he can stop him in any way until I can get to a phone or get out of the house he’ll do it.

Criminal Justice Reforms

Most of the interviewees were dissatisfied with the criminal justice system’s response to their victimization. Even so, suggestions for improvement were made and many women who talked about criminal justice reforms called for more punitive means of dealing with perpetrators. For example, Loreen said, “I think they need to be…more strict on the perpetrator.” Pat wanted stronger stalking laws and said:

> Stalking, stalking is horrible and um, there should be stronger laws about that. My understanding is there isn’t anything they can do about that until after something bad happens and so with domestic violence they have to wait until she gets hit first. So, it seems to me that there should be some protection for women if they feel unsafe or feel threatened and not actually have to come limping in you know. So, if whatever system it comes under, it its law enforcement or whatever, uh, more money needs to be spent on shelters and more money needs to be spent on

prosecuting abusers. It's too bad it's hard to prove verbal and emotional abuse, but think there's got to be a way to do it.

Calls for breaking up the "ol, boys network" that protected offenders were also made by several women such as Nicky:

And then with the criminal justice system start doing something from the beginning. You know, stop this shit. Just because he was a correctional officer with this political stuff, you know, they don't want his name in the newspaper or whatever, you know. I don't know whether that goes from the get go, you know, on how we choose police officers, you know, and so on and so forth. I mean I know that there's um, you're going to have these kinds of people where you go, but this was the whole community you know.

Hiring more female police officers was another common suggestion and some women like Jackie saw it as an effective means of breaking up the "ol, boys network:

Put more women on the force because men have no compassion in these kinds of cases. Cops are number one bad for unwanted sex, for forcing unwanted sex on their mates and they've got to change the whole structure of the protective system with more women on the forces. But when you take a woman on a forces that's predominantly men, then they're gonna start thinking like the men do. They've got to change the training in this country on how police treat the public. They treat the public terribly. I mean I'm not saying in all areas, but in most areas they do not train our policemen to be respectful and polite. They teach them to go in and knock your heard off and break your door down. It's Gestapo tactics. And they really need to change the training for and teach these policemen what women are

> going through how are sexually abused by their husbands or anyone. But they don't know. They're all men. How's a man gonna relate to what a woman went through? The only way a person can related to that is be the same gender and that's why we need more women in that department. I think when they call a policeman in a sexual attack they should, number one, a woman should go out there – not a man. He should be outside the door in case a man comes around that just raped her or the husband or whoever it is. But the woman is the one that should go in and initially interview. Not a male because they have no compassion. Men have no compassion. It's a good ol' boys network. And it's terrible that our police have come to that. They're not protection.

A critical mass of women, such as Peggy, suggested that criminal justice officials should be more empathetic:

> I know that I would always want to see police and courts be a little more supportive, a little more, um, a little more of a secure feeling for women and the victims, that the victims feel safer there, instead of them having to argue a corner on the side.

Mary made a similar statement based on her experience with the Sheriff's Department in her community:

> Well, out here we deal with the Sheriff's Department out side the city limits. It would be nice if the Deputies would stop rolling their eyeballs. You know, it's, uh, I don't think they treat domestic fights with enough seriousness… I would like for the lawyers and the sheriff department to be a little more sympathetic.

Many battered urban women find courtroom advocates to be effective sources of social support (Ptacek, 1999). Unfortunately, such advocates are in short supply in rural areas, and those that work there suffer from a lack of funding and are required to travel long distances to help their clients. Further, rural advocates interviewed by Lewis (2003) stated that there is a need for more people who specialize in sexual assault. Joleen and some other interviewees couldn't agree more for reasons such as those described below:

> Advocacy, Advocacy. I think if some people with expertise, some people with experience with these matters, would sit on the front rows of some of the court cases and watch some this go on and then go to the newspapers you know and have them write up. You know I sat there and watched domestic violence go through umpteen times and nothing happened. What's gonna happen to them? You know talk to the person afterwards and ask them. You know, "Do you have any kids?" You know, "Well, what's gonna happen to your kids?" You know, bring those to it. You know judges don't like that …. That's the only way anything ever gets changed is by people bringing it to attention. Because they can't speak for themselves. It's just like the battered women. Women who are forced to have sex. Those women don't speak for themselves because they can't because they've been beaten down so far that they're afraid to speak for themselves. So who gonna speak for them? The guy that's beatin' on em? I don't think so!"

"Cutting through the red tape" is another common theme that emerged during conversations with interviewees about criminal justice reforms:

> More efficient. I know they have a lot of red tape and they have a lot of paperwork and they have a lot of excuses. Maybe it's not excuses to them, but when it's the person that's the victim, it makes a big difference how they react. If they react slow than a lot more is gonna happen, lot more's gonna affect the person, the victim. If they would react faster with the law, you know if it's a crime, it's a crime when it happens and you know it's not a crime down the road and I know the law's the law and they have to do it a certain way.

Subsidized Housing

Many women do not or cannot leave abusive partners because they lack the financial means to do so (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). Furthermore, a sizeable portion of rural women who manage to flee to shelters only stay there temporarily and return to "the house of horrors" because they cannot afford to rent an apartment or other types of housing (Sev'er, 2002; Tutty, 2006; Websdale & Johnson, 2005). Of course, subsidized housing is available, but very difficult to acquire for reasons described below by Jenny. Her words and those of other survivors sensitize us to the need for an increase in the amount of money provided by state and federal governments to ensure that women have enough money for food, essential living expenses, and safe housing:

> One, um, there you know living, and you have to go back to a shelter situation and a crisis situation back to your normal life. And, usually that means you have to go live with someone, usually the abuser. What's the matter with a little his and her housing? They have all of these subsidized housing developments all over the country. You know, but it's hard to get in as a woman because they want a single woman with children especially. They want income verification. They want

> employment history. They want deposits that women in my situation at least, didn't have. So, there's no place to go so you have to back home to the guy because usually he's taken all your money. Mine, always took mine. He even took my son's savings, we didn't even know. So make it possible for a woman who has literally nothing but the clothes on her back and interest in protecting herself and her children, make it possible for them to have somewhere to go that has a door with a lock, you know that's her's and not his.

Respondents' Other Policy Recommendations

The policy recommendations identified above were those most commonly suggested. However, other relevant suggestions were made and warrant some attention here, including better counseling services, "more safe places to go," and more effective substance abuse programs. Target hardening measures were also mentioned a few times. For example, as stated by Jamie:

> To allow them to be able, to put them through some kind of self-defense class. If not that, give them something to protect themselves. Give them one of those stingers, something they can use, and don't hold them accountable if they get hurt. It is not their fault. They are protecting themselves, what they are supposed to do. Like in my situation, I'm sorry, I hope it's not against the law, but I do sleep with a knife. That's my safety. And that is my right as a human to protect myself.

Similarly, another woman recommended:

> Sleep with a knife. I am sorry. But I mean, because there ain't going to be anybody to get you in time to stop it anyway. Or get you one of the kind of guns that zap the crap out of somebody. Sleep with something, other than mace,

> because it ain't all that good. Sleep with a bat or something, and use it. Why should we be held accountable because we busted some guy who was going to rape us in the kneecap? So he lost his knee, oh well. I would rather see that man lose his knee than me to be raped. And when they do bust them for their whatever they have done to somebody, however they have perpetrated somebody, there is nothing more done to them. Why are they just slapped on the hand? If we would stop them after the first person was raped, all these other women who marring into these men, you know, wouldn't have this problem. Know what I am saying?

It is worth noting that the women's recommendations described here and in the previous section of this report are similar to those by Robyn Edwards (2004) in her study of issues facing Australian women leaving abusive partners. Obviously, the rural women interviewed for this study have much in common with survivors in other advanced nations, including Canada. In the next section, based on data derived from 43 interviews, my previous empirical work, and a review of the extant literature on separation/divorce sexual assault, I suggest other policies in response to Logan et al.'s (2004) call for the development of creative solutions in rural communities.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN REDUCING SEPARATION/DIVORCE SEXUAL ASSAULT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

The most common responses to any type of crime in the U.S. and other countries are symptoms of what Elliott Currie (1985, p. 18) refers to as "the tendency to compartmentalize social problems along bureaucratic lines." For example, most North Americans assume that the criminal justice system is solely responsible for dealing with crimes like separation/divorce sexual assault and other parts of society to deal with the

social, economic, and cultural forces that foster serious violations of legal norms. Consequently, according to Currie:

> The failure to make these necessary connections between causes and consequences stifles the development of intelligent policies to prevent criminal violence, and burdens the criminal justice system with the impossible job picking up the pieces after broader social policies have done their damage (1985, p. 19).

Of course, there is a need to improve the criminal justice system's response to all types of woman abuse in rural communities. For example, as Websdale (1998, p. 194) reminds us:

> More has to be done to confront the problem of local police officers being compromised around the enforcement of domestic violence laws. This involves much more than sensitizing and training police officers to handle domestics better… If rural officers are not receiving training in all aspects of enforcing the law at domestics, then they ought to.

Still, the criminal justice system alone can do little, if anything, to address the broader social forces that motivate men to sexually assault women and that preclude women from safely escaping abusive relationships. What is needed, then, is a "broader vision".[4] This approach involves developing and implementing policies that moves the discussion of crime prevention and control out of the realm of criminal justice and into that of social and economic policy (Walker, 1998).

[4] "A Broader Vision" is the title of Chapter 8 in William Julius Wilson's (1996) widely read and cited book *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*.

The Role of the Public Sector

What can state and federal governments do to improve the plight of rural survivors of separation/divorce sexual assault? Below are three modest proposals: (1) transportation subsidy; (2) job training and education; and (3) increased funding for rural service providers.

Transportation Subsidy

Cars are not luxuries in the three research sites selected for this study and in other rural parts of the U.S. Rather, they are essential for women's safety and to access to childcare, employment, and support services. "Public transportation is not an option" and thus state and federal governments should provide women with money to purchase a car, get insurance, and pay for repairs (Purdon, 2003, p. 49). Note that in Columbus, Ohio, the Columbus Ohio Transportation Authority subsidizes bus fares, and thus an equal amount of money should be allotted for people who need cars in rural Ohio communities. Similarly, more government money should be used to pay the transportation costs of rural advocates who spend much time on the road in their efforts to save lives.

Job Training and Education

As Purdon (2003, p. 49) contends in her report on woman abuse in rural Ontario, Canada, "More supports and more opportunities for retraining or additional education are needed for abused women so they can find the work that will lead to long-term financial security and independence." However, policy makers should not simply assume that getting a job as a result of state-sponsored education and job training programs automatically leads to safety. Some estranged husbands or cohabiting partners engage in "patriarchal terrorism" (Johnson, 1995) to humiliate their ex-partners and to make them

lose their jobs (DeKeseredy et al., 2003; Raphael, 2001; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). Often, violent means of "sabotaging work efforts" influence employers to fire women to avoid problems in the workplace and to protect coworkers. Hence, it is crucial that policies be created that guarantee abused women the ability to collect unemployment insurance if they cannot work due to injuries sustained from their ex-partners violent and psychologically abusive behaviors. Legislation is also required to prohibit employers from firing women who are being stalked or assaulted at work (Brandwein, 1999).

In addition to ensuring that economically disenfranchised rural women get jobs, they should, like all women, get equal pay for equal work. U.S. women's earnings are between 70 and 75 percent of men's. This is blatantly unfair, and if more women had jobs paying living wages, there would be fewer on welfare and in shelters. Further, more women would work if they had access to affordable, quality childcare (DeKeseredy et al., 2003). According to Jensen (2006), "Using TANF flexibility to support home-based child care – more common in rural areas – would help single mothers and dual-worker families."

Job training and education will also prevent many men from engaging in separation/divorce sexual assault and other forms of woman abuse. For example, rural men who lost their farms or jobs in industries such as shoe manufacturing would be much less likely to spend time drinking or doing drugs with their friends if they were given new opportunities to achieve meaningful and adequately remunerative employment. Thus, their relationships would more likely to remain intact and they would be much less likely to engage in the harms described in this report to repair damage to their male identity.

Increased Funding for Rural Service Providers

Obviously, rural battered women face many barriers to service. This problem is due in large part to the fact that rural communities have lower levels of funding than urban areas and rural service providers have to be more efficient with the limited government funds they receive (Lewis, 2003). Note, too, that government funding is typically based on high numbers of officially reported sexual assaults. For example, although the rural official per capita rate of sexual assault is higher than the urban one in Pennsylvania, Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds are allocated on absolute numbers (Ruback & Menard, 2001). Thus, while it is true that most U.S. shelters and rape crisis centers do not provide specific training on marital rape and separation/divorce sexual assault (Bergen, 2005, 2006), this problem is not as simply a function of inadequate training or a lack of knowledge. As Lewis (2003) discovered in her study of sexual assault in rural U.S., rural advocates need more money to hire more advocates and to train them, and they need more money for community outreach. Such increased financial support would improve the quality of services for survivors of separation/divorce sexual assault and ultimately save more lives. As one advocate interviewed by Lewis (2003, p. 15) said, "In some sense it all comes down to money."

Economic Policies[5]

An alarming number of rural U.S. citizens are living "at the razor's edge" (Jensen, 2006). For example, in 2004, 7.3 rural citizens of this country (15.1% the rural population) were living in poverty (Economic Research Service, 2004). There are many reasons for this problem, but one of the most salient is industrial restructuring, which is,

[5] This section includes revised sections of work published previously by DeKeseredy et al. (2003).

as described earlier, related to woman abuse during and after the process of separation/divorce and other variants of male-to-female victimization. What is to be done? Implementing policies suggested previously (e.g., state-sponsored child care) would certainly help; however, the private sector also needs to contribute to ongoing efforts to curb poverty and its devastating consequences. There are many ways in which businesses can achieve this goal and one of them is helping to build a more diverse rural economy. This involves developing and supporting small, community-based businesses and small industrial districts. These initiatives can be created with the help of small business loans, tax incentives, and government-private sector partnerships (Jensen, 2006). Obviously, other strategies are needed to foster economic sustainability. Nevertheless, to nourish a community, and to develop one that is rich in collective efficacy, jobs and effective social programs are absolutely necessary (DeKeseredy et al., 2003). What Currie (1985, p. 263) says about solving the crime problem in urban areas is also directly relevant to rural communities: "In the long run, a commitment to full and decent employment remains the keystone of any successful anticrime policy."

Community Capacity Building[6]

Again, if there are high levels of collective efficacy in the respondents' communities, they do not function to prevent and deter separation/divorce sexual assault. Informed by the principles of Second Generation Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), this approach can be modified to help reduce much pain and suffering in rural areas also plagued by poverty, unemployment, isolation, and a

[6] This section includes modified sections of work published previously by DeKeseredy, Alvi, Renzetti, and Schwartz (2004) and DeKeseredy, Schwartz, and Alvi (2000).

host of other social ills. Second Generation CPTD is directly concerned with generating high levels of collective efficacy through community capacity building (Saville & Cleveland, 1997) and the gender sensitive version offered here involves the use of four main strategies: community culture; connectivity; community threshold; and social cohesion (Brassard, 2003; Cleveland & Saville, 2003; DeKeseredy, Alvi, Renzetti, & Schwartz, 2004). Before any of the suggestions raised in this section can be implemented, rural communities, those who lead them, social service providers, and criminal justice officials must first publicly announce that violence against women is a major problem and that a holistic, integrated community approach is needed to curb it. This requires political will and public education, as well as the "shedding of self-serving professional prejudices that currently separate system groups" (Bowker, 1998, p. 14). This goal is being achieved in a growing number of rural U.S. communities. For example, a rural Pennsylvania advocate interviewed by Lewis (2003) created a Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Task Force that includes representatives from hospitals, law enforcement, the judiciary, and social service agencies. Moreover, throughout rural Ohio, we are witnessing the emergence of similar community-based collaborative efforts, such as the Athens County Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

Community Culture

This approach calls for the creation of a "shared history" in a community through the use of festivals, sporting events, music and art (Cleveland & Seville, 2003). Sometimes referred to as "placemaking" (Adams & Goldbard, 2001), this initiative involves the use of plays, concerts, and paintings that send out powerful messages to rural residents about violence against women. Such cultural work, including designing tee

shirts to memorialize women's victimization, could be done in schools, places of worship, county fairs, community centers and other places with the assistance of a diverse range of community members. This type of cultural work is routinely done in Athens County, Ohio and other rural U.S. communities.

Graffiti, although offensive to many people, can be constructive and contribute to placemaking. For example, Ohio University in Athens, Ohio maintains a concrete wall where students are allowed to paint pictures and murals and write political messages aimed at promoting social justice. There you will often see statements such as "Stop Rape" and "Let's Take Back the Night." Defined by some young people and scholars as "sign painting," such artwork could be done on walls or abandoned barns deemed fit by members of other rural communities, and it would increase the visibility and legitimacy of young and old artistic members of these communities.[7] Perhaps, too, artists could be paid for their work with cash or in the provision of spray paint because many of them are in desperate need of money (Ferrell, 1993).

Connectivity

Rural residents, like other people, need to connect with members of other communities, as well as groups within their own areas (Cleveland & Saville, 2003). However, abused rural women suffer from higher levels of social and geographic isolation than their urban counterparts. Thus, it is necessary to build easily accessible women's centers in rural communities or very close to them. The creation of these safe

[7] As Ferrell (1993) found in his study of Denver graffiti artists, some local business people, homeowners, and others often hire sign painters, which fosters their "stake in conformity" (Hirschi, 1969), enhances their self-esteem, and contributes to their economic well-being.

places should be done with private and public sector support, and they do not have to focus only on issues related to abuse. For example, with the help of U.S. Department of Labor demonstration grants, similar to Job Readiness Programs offered in Kentucky woman abuse shelters,[8] women's centers could offer educational programs aimed at training unemployed women for jobs contributing to their economic independence. Artistic events and other social activities should also be organized there, as well as the provision of child care, which gives women time to seek jobs or to get a brief reprieve from the pressures of child rearing.

Most men do not beat or rape female intimates and sizeable portions of them are eager to eliminate woman abuse. Moreover, we are increasingly seeing "the presence of alternative masculinities incompatible with violence in rural communities," which offers hope that "large-scale transformations in the rural gender order are possible over time that may in turn lead to reductions in gendered violence" (Hogg & Carrington, 2006, p. 183). Still, regardless of where they live, most anti-sexist men do not socialize with other males who are concerned about enhancing women's safety (DeKeseredy et al., 2000). Thus, formal pro-feminist men's organizations[9] such as the National Organization of Men Against Sexism (NOMAS) should be invited to hold town hall meetings in community centers and other settings where pro-feminist men can get together and

[8] See Websdale and Johnson (2005) for more information on these programs.

[9] Although there are variations in the profeminist men's movement, a general point of agreement is that men must take an active role in stopping woman abuse and other forms of patriarchal control and domination throughout society (DeKeseredy et al., 2000). Furthermore, profeminist men place the responsibility for woman abuse squarely on men. A widely cited assertion is that "since it is men who are the offenders, it should be men – not women – who change their behavior" (Thorne-Finch, 1992, p. 236).

develop individual and collective strategies to reduce woman abuse such as the following:

- Protesting and boycotting strip clubs, bars with live sex shows, and "adult" stores that rent or sell pornography;
- Confronting men who make sexist jokes and who abuse their female partners;
- Supporting and participating in woman abuse awareness programs; and
- Actively listening to women and reading literature on their issues, problems, and concerns (DeKeseredy, Alvi, Renzetti, & Schwartz, 2004; Johnson, 1997; Thorne-Finch, 1992).

What is especially impressive about profeminist men is that they recognize that the most effective means of prevention and intervention are at the social and cultural systems levels. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) functions in a similar way and has many successful outcomes. For example, we know from this study and others that focused on male peer support that one of the most important factors in facilitating woman abuse is a support system built up of proabuse men (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2002; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997). AA replaces prodrinking peers with those who oppose drinking (social system intervention) and replaces prodrinking norms, values, and beliefs with the opposite set of norms, values, and beliefs (cultural system intervention) (Bowker, 1998). Likewise, profeminist masculinism replaces proabuse peers with antisexist peers and patriarchal norms, values, and beliefs with those that are profeminist (DeKeseredy et al., 2000).

Men's groups can also discuss how and where male members can apply for jobs, effective job interview strategies, and ideas for running a small local business. Initiatives

such as these being people together “in common purpose” (Cleveland & Saville, 2003) and connect them with outside groups that can help them acquire financial and other forms of support for peacemaking efforts. Outside groups also help people avoid reinventing the wheel. For example, established women’s groups (e.g., the Ohio Domestic Violence Network located in Columbus, Ohio) and male anti-sexist collectives (A Call to Men based in Pomona, New York) located in other communities can offer people existing sets of best practices that can be tailored to meet their needs and quickly implemented at little or no financial cost.

Community Threshold

Except for violent street crime, many rural citizens share many of the same concerns about crime as do people living in cities (Weisheit et al., 1996). And, some researchers argue that fear of crime may be increased in rural communities by low levels of policing, the absence of streetlights, and other factors such as perceived dangers posed by members of other ethnic groups moving into traditionally all-white areas (Hogg & Carrington, 2006; Lawtey & Deane, 2001). Regardless of what motivates it, fear of crime in public places influences many women to stay indoors, which precludes them from obtaining knowledge about services available to abused women and developing social ties with neighbors who might be willing to confront the men who assault them in their homes or elsewhere.

As in North American public housing estates, vandalism is a powerful determinant of women’s fear of crime in rural areas (Donnermeyer, 2006; Donnermeyer

& Phillips, 1982, 1984).[10] In fact, a key finding of Sampson et al.'s (1997) studies of collective efficacy is that community threshold can be enhanced and violent crimes can be reduced in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage when neighborhoods band together for informal social control and to pool their collective power to extract such resources as garbage collection and housing code enforcement. For example, high-tech security devices not only do not reduce crime in public housing, but also provide one more expensive item to vandalize (James, 1997). However, as is the case in Melbourne, Australia, provisions for tenant empowerment had a major effect on both crime and fear. When a responsive management system is put into place (including tenant management) and combined with tenant decision-making in security measures, sharp reductions in women's fear of public places are possible.

Thus, strategies aimed at reducing women's fear, increasing perceptions of safety in public housing estates, and making women feel comfortable leaving their homes do not require a major criminal justice response. Instead, they may involve tenant empowerment around issues related to garbage, noise, vandalism, and people who drink and do drugs in public places (Alvi et al., 2001). This may also be the case in rural communities. In fact, rural social order is typically maintained through informal processes of social control rather than through formal processes (e.g., policing) (Weisheit et al., 1996). So, some researchers contend that to prevent vandalism, rural residents should get together to maintain and clean structures that have no apparent usefulness. For example, in his short

[10] See Alvi, Schwartz, DeKeseredy, and Maume (2001) and Renzetti and Maier (2002) for data derived from studies of women's fear of crime in public housing.

paper on rural vandalism protection, Holland (2006, p. 2) recommends the following inexpensive measures, which can be taken by men and women alike:

- Keep the grass mowed and the surrounding sidewalks free of weeds and rocks.
- Maintain the integrity of doors and windows and use sturdy locks.
- Soap all the windows. If the structure is an isolated area, neatly cover all windows with plywood or some other protective material.
- Inspect for and remove bird nests and other material that represents a fire hazard.
- Take steps to prevent unauthorized entry through ventilation ports, etc.

Social Cohesion

Second Generation CPTED studies show that teaching positive communication skills and conflict resolution enhances community cohesiveness (Gilligan, 2001; Saville & Clear, 2000). To reduce woman abuse in rural communities, then, schools should build empathy into the curriculum through constant attention the intersections of race, gender, and class, and require students to take on the role or point of view of the "other" (Connell, 1995; DeKeseredy et al., 2000; Messerschmidt, 2000). Further, workshops could be given in local schools, town halls, or elsewhere designed to specifically train people what to do when confronted with male-to-female violence in public places and behind closed doors. Participants should also be taught how to support victims to seek help in appropriate ways and to work to help abusive men become peaceful (Hazler, 1996). For example, prisons across the country are now using violent offenders to train guard dogs, under the theory that providing a dependent animal that gives love and attention will help offenders empathize with others. Rural communities might consider such imaginative ideas.

Summary

Donnermeyer et al.'s (2006, p. 212) assertion that "rural crime can be most effectively…understood through the organizing concept of community" heavily informs the application of the above four modified principles of Second Generation CPTED. Will these strategies help make a difference? Perhaps Jargowsky (1997, p. 213) has the best answer to this question: "The task is difficult and the results of even our best efforts are uncertain, but to continue our current path is to give the wrong answer to Martin Luther King's question: 'Where do we go from here – chaos or community?'" Hopefully, policy makers, researchers, and the general public will choose the latter.

CONCLUSION

This study serves to broaden the focus of separation/divorce sexual assault theory and research. Furthermore, like studies reviewed by rural criminologists Donnermeyer et al. (2006) this project also contributes to the expansion of rural crime research. Above all, the exploratory qualitative data presented in this report support Lewis' (2003, p. 21) assertion that "in many rural communities, there are hidden crimes, unspoken crimes, that are often hushed and sometimes ignored, crimes of sexual violence that require sensitivity and understanding to promote safety and justice." Still, there much more empirical and theoretical work is needed. Moreover, the policies proposed by 43 rural Ohio women and me are not the only effective solutions. Rather, they are key elements of much need community-based, collaborative efforts. Policy development must also be highly sensitive to the ways in which broader social forces contribute to the harms identified in this report. Achieving this goal is a major challenge, given many people's reluctance to foster major social change. However, as Websdale (1998, p. 194)

discovered in his study of woman battering in rural Kentucky, “Any social policy initiatives must use the structure of rural patriarchy, in all its intricate manifestations, as an essential frame of reference.”

The bulk of this report has focused on terrifying examples of what happens to some rural women when they want to leave, try to leave, or have left their marital/cohabiting partners. Their voices tell us much about gender relations, motives, thoughts, and human feelings (Geotting, 1999). Still, while they were brutalized during and after attempts to leave their partners, they were “battered, but not beaten” (MacLeod, 1987). In other words, they are survivors with plans for the future. It is only fitting to end this report with examples of their “triumph against all odds” (Sev’er, 2001). Many women, such as Joanie, plan to pursue a higher level of education. She said that she “would like a Ph.D. in plasma physics.” Similarly, Martie stated, “I’m really trying to concentrate more on, um, uh, finishing my graduate degree.”

Re-establishing relations with children is another key plan for the future that came up in conversations with many women and it is one that is crucial for their own lives and mental health (Cory & McAndless-Davis, 2000; Sev’er, 2002). As Joan said, “Um, I haven’t had much relationship with my children the past few years, so I want to get that back on track.” Samantha plans to “visit with my kids and just try to get back to myself.”

Other interviewees plan to get jobs, continue going to counselors, become advocates, and acquire enough money to purchase their own home. These and other examples of survival are truly moving and warrant much celebration, given that many of the 43 women could have easily been killed and some women still face the threat of

homicide today. As Mary told one of my research assistants in response to a question about her life since escaping an abusive ex-partner:

> I have never been so excited in my life. You know, how many people get a second chance. I nearly died two years ago, several times, and my kids are now home and not many people get a second chance like I do. I really want this to work out….

APPENDIX A

SEPARATION/DIVORCE SEXUAL ASSAULT SCREEN QUESTIONS

SEPARATION/DIVORCE SEXUAL ASSAULT

Date of Interview: ___/___/___
M D Y

Time of Interview: _____

Hello, Mae (or Carolyn) speaking. Thank you for calling. How are you today?

Are you interested in our study?

(

)

As you know, two of my Ohio University colleagues and I are conducting a study of women's unwanted sexual experiences when they wanted to end or have ended relationships with their husbands or live-in male partners. Our research is sponsored by a grant provided by the U.S. Department of Justice and the results will be used to help make women's lives safer.

I just need to ask you a few brief questions to make sure that you are eligible to participate in our study. Any information you give me will be carefully protected and held as confidential. No one will ever be able to identify you because of your answers. Also, you don't have to answer any question you don't want to answer.

Before I ask **YOU** some questions, do you have any questions you want to ask **ME**?

(***BE PREPARED FOR THEM TO ASK YOU, "WHAT DO MEAN BY***

)

1. Is it safe for you to talk now? (

)

2. How old are you? _____ (

)

3. How did you find out about our study? (

)

4. In which county do you live? (

   .)

5. Have you ever been married or lived with a male partner?

   Yes

   No

Many women experience a wide range of unwanted sexual experiences when they want to end or have ended a relationship with their husbands or live-in male partners. Their experiences could have occurred anywhere and at anytime and don't always involve physical force. Also, unwanted sexual experiences could occur while women are awake, asleep, unconscious, drunk, or otherwise incapacitated.

I realize that it may be difficult to discuss your own unwanted sexual experiences, but if I may, I would like to ask you a few sensitive questions. You only have to answer "yes" or "no" to most of these questions and again, all your answers will be completely confidential. (

)

6. At any time in your life, did your husband or a live-in male partner ever ***try*** to make you have unwanted sex when you wanted to leave him or after you left him? ([redacted])

   Yes

   No

7. At any time in your life, did your husband or live-in male partner ever ***make*** you have unwanted sex when you wanted to leave him or after you left him? ([redacted])

   Yes

   No

[redacted]

8. Is your husband or live-in male partner still making or trying to make you have unwanted sex with him because you want to end or have ended the relationship?

   Yes

   No

9. I really appreciate the time you have taken to talk to me. And I'd like to again assure you that everything you said will remain strictly confidential. I realize that the topics covered in our study are sensitive and that many women don't want to talk about their unwanted sexual experiences. But I'm also a bit worried that I haven't asked the right questions.

   Is there anything you would like to tell me that's important that I have not asked? (

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

RESPONDENTS WHO ANSWERED "YES" TO QUESTION 5 OR 6, OR WHO

[redacted]

IF A RESPONDENT ANSWERED NO TO QUESTIONS 5 AND 6 AND DID NOT

APPENDIX B

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

GENERAL BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

[redacted]

1. I realize that I asked you this before, but I would like to make sure that I have the right information. How did you find out about this study?

2. How old are you?

3. In which county do you live?

4. How long have you lived there?

5. Do you live in or near a city or town, or do you live far away from the nearest town or city?

6. Is transportation a problem for you? In other words, can you get to where you want to go whenever you want or need to?

7. Right now, are you employed full- or part-time? ([redacted])

8. About how much money did you live on in 2002?

9. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

10. Have you ever been married or have you ever lived with a male romantic partner? ([redacted])

11. Are you currently married or living with a male romantic partner? ([redacted])

12. Do you have any children?

13. Have you raised or helped raise someone else's child or children?

14. Do you consider yourself as belonging to any particular ethnic or racial group? ( )

15. What country were you born in? ( )

16. Do you have a religious affiliation?

PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

17. How much of a problem do you think there is with **crime** in your community?

18. How safe do you generally feel being alone in public places in your community?

19. How safe do you generally feel when you are at home?

20. Do you feel safer alone at home or when someone else is with you?

21. What about women experiencing **unwanted sex**… do you think this is a big problem in your community, some problem, or almost no problem? ( )

22. Do you think **rape or sexual assault** is a big problem in your community, some problem, or almost no problem? ( )

SOCIAL NETWORK

23. How often do you get together with friends in your community in a typical week?

24. How often do you get together with your neighbors in a typical week?

25. Could you count on your neighbors to help you solve your personal problems?

26. Could you count on friends in your community to help you solve your personal problems?

27. Have you **personally** known **any** women who've been raped or sexually assaulted? ( )

UNWANTED SEXUAL EXPERIENCES

28. At any time in your life, did your husband or live-in male partner ever ***try*** to make you have unwanted sex when you wanted to leave him or after you left him? ( )

29. When did it happen?

30. Why do you think he (or they) did this?

31. In addition to trying to make you have unwanted sex, did this man (or these men) ever hurt you in other ways? ( )

32. At any time in your life, did your husband or live-in male partner ever ***make*** you [redacted]

33. When did it happen?

34. Why do you think he (or they) did this?

35. In addition to making you have unwanted sex, did this man (or men) ever hurt you in other ways? ([redacted])

36. Did the man (or men) who tried and/or made you have unwanted sex when you wanted to leave or after you left him ever look at pornography?

37. Did the man (or men) who tried and/or made you have unwanted sex when you wanted to leave or after you left him ever make you look at pornography?

38. Did he (or did they) spend a lot of time with his male friends? ([redacted])

39. Does he (or did they) have friends who hit women or who sexually assault them?

40. Does he (or do they) feel that men should be in charge at home?
41. Did he (or they) use drugs or alcohol before he (or they) tried and/or made you have unwanted sex with him (or them)?

42. Did he (or they) try to or make ***you*** use drugs or alcohol before he (or they) tried or made you have unwanted sex with him (or them)?

43. Are there other things you would like to tell me about the man (or men) who tried or made you have unwanted sex that you think are important?

CONSEQUENCES OF UNWANTED SEPARATION/DIVORCE SEXUAL ASSAULT

[redacted]

44. How much effect did your unwanted sexual experiences have on your life? ([redacted])

EXPERIENCES WITH SOCIAL SUPPORT PROVIDERS

[redacted]

46. Did you turn to anyone for help? ([redacted])
47. Who gave you the best help and did their support make you safer?
48. Who gave you the worst help? ([redacted])

SURVIVORS' POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

49. What do you think is the most effective way of preventing unwanted sex during and after separation/divorce?

50. How can the criminal justice system be more helpful to survivors of unwanted sex during and after separation/divorce?

51. How can other types of social support, such as shelters, counselors, your friends, etc., be more helpful to survivors of unwanted sex during and after separation/divorce?

52. What would you do if you were in charge of developing policies aimed at preventing unwanted sex during and after separation/divorce in your community?

53. What advice would you give to other women who have had unwanted sexual experiences when they wanted to leave or have left their husbands or male live-in partners?

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

54. What are your plans for the future?

55. What is your biggest concern right now? (

)

CONCLUSION

56. Is there anything else you would like to tell me that's important that I have not asked about?

57. Are there any questions you would like to ask me?

Thank you for your time and effort. I greatly appreciate your help and I hope that

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