

COERCED SEX: WHAT VARIABLES AFFECT PERCEPTIONS OF COERCION
AND ASCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITY

by

Tracy L. Tamborra

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_____	Karen Terry
Date	Chair of Examining Committee
_____	Karen Terry
Date	Executive Officer

Karen Terry

Chitra Raghavan

Natalie Sokoloff
Supervision Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

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Tracy L. Tamborra

Adviser: Professor Karen Terry

This project measured the affect of relationship status and the woman's reputation, within the context of a heterosexual sexual encounter, on perceptions of coercion and ascription of responsibility. This project also measured the effect of the respondent's gender on recognition of coercion, ascription of responsibility and the recognition of criminality. A 2 (reputation of woman; virgin v. promiscuous) x 3 (status of the relationship; stranger v. second date v. dating for one month) between subjects factorial design was utilized.

In all the findings suggest that sex (gender) significantly affects perceptions of coercion and recognition of problematic sex. Women were more likely than men to agree that verbal pressure is equivalent to

coercion and that coercive sexual tactics are problematic. This project also found that the relationship status of the couple significantly affects perceptions of coercion. Respondents in the second date condition and one-month dating condition were more likely to agree that coercion was used when compared with respondents in the stranger condition. Findings also revealed that perceptions of coercion, ascription of responsibility and recognition of problematic sex were significantly correlated with acceptance of rape myths. Respondents who were more supportive of rape myths were less likely to agree that the sex was coerced; more likely to agree that the female was responsible for the coerced sex; and were less likely to agree that the sex was problematic. Finally, this project found a significant relationship between rape myths acceptance and sex (gender); men were more likely than women to accept rape myths.

This project has enhanced the coercion literature; begun the exploration of ascription of responsibility for coerced sex; confirmed gender differences as related to sexual exchanges; and furthered feminist perspective research. Findings from this project support the assertion that laws are reflective of male definitions, as most rape laws do not consider verbal coercion to be a form of force

and therefore using verbal coercion to obtain sex/sex acts is not criminal. Because laws are more reflective of male definitions, changes to rape laws and public perceptions require gendered discussions and responses.

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Introduction

Sexual coercion as a construct has been studied and debated by researchers, scholars and advocates over the last three decades. The definition, frequency of occurrence, gender specific manifestations and the effects, recognition and perceptions of coercion have been examined. This project defines sexual coercion as a form of force in which the perpetrator attempts to verbally wear down or convince the recipient to engage in sexual contact by being manipulative, playing upon gender role socialization and social stereotypes, being persistent and/or applying pressure, in the hopes that the recipient will be affected by guilt, shame, obligation, gender role socialization or being overwhelmed to the point that she complies with the recipient's requests for or initiation of sexual contact. Coercion can occur without verbal pressure; coercion can be implied and occur without an exchange of words. This point is more subtle and will not be covered in this study.

It should be noted that while sexual coercion can occur in any relationship, this project examines perceptions of coercive tactics as perpetrated by a male against a female, as the literature suggests this dyad is the most prevalent and this project's definition of

coercion includes gender role socialization as a contributing factor for both the initiation of coercion and the recipient's reaction to the coercion.

This project measured: (1) the recognition of coercion within heterosexual male on female sexual encounters; (2) to whom the responsibility for a completed sexual encounter, as a result of coercive tactics is ascribed; and (3) if responsibility is ascribed to the male, to what degree the responsibility is recognized. In addition to measuring the recognition of coercion within an exchange, it is imperative to examine to whom responsibility is ascribed when coercive tactics are used during a sexual encounter. It is also critical that research begin to measure whether coercion is viewed as force and therefore equivalent to criminal behavior, and to what degree. Further knowledge regarding ascription of responsibility and the classification of coercion as criminal or not, and to what degree, may impact the evolution of rape laws and actions of victims and potential perpetrators.

Although rape laws have evolved dramatically over the last few decades, failure to include non-physical coercion as a form of force discounts the experience of women whom unwillingly concede to sexual acts. The inclusion of non-physical coercion as a form of force may be necessary given

coercion literature findings. The literature review will examine the differences between rape and coercion; literature which measures the effects of victimization, comparing physical force and non-physical force will also be reviewed. The review will also examine the prevalence rates of coercion experienced by women. The review is intended to demonstrate that coercion is pervasive and has long-term emotional effects on survivors. Therefore, laws and policies that fail to address coercion promote the notion that only physical force is socially unacceptable and simultaneously ignore the resulting harm experienced by the victim. Furthermore, the conceptualization of force as related to sex offenses is problematic for many reasons. First, the emphasis on physical force endorses a limited definition of force. Conceptualizing force to merely include physical violence demonstrates a superficial appreciation of force. Numerous practitioners and researchers on violence experienced by women recognize that merely focusing on physical violence and abuse, devoid of an appreciation of emotional violence and abuse, endorses violence against women (Bancroft, 2002; Crown & Roberts, 2007; Kelly, 1988; Sheffield, 1993; Stark, 2007). The law must expand its conceptualization of force to include verbal coercion and other forms of non-physical force.

Furthermore, discounting the emotional effects that result from coercive tactics neglects the experience of many women and colludes with a male-centered definition of violence. This collusion promotes the second problem pertaining to laws which discount coercion. Emphasis on force, much like emphasis on stranger rape, promotes the notion that all other methods for obtaining unwanted sex are permissible. So long as society equates force with physical violence and discounts the impact of non-physical force perpetrators of coercion can justify their behavior as acceptable because it was not force.

Finally the law and public policy must address coercion, given that the literature on sexual assault finds coercion is more frequently used than physical force. Tjadden and Thoennes (2000) using a definition of rape which only included physical force or threat of force, found over 14% of women experience a completed rape; whereas it is estimated that 33% to 50% of women experience sexual coercion in their lifetime (Cecil & Matson, 2005; DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1993; Koss, Gidycz & Wisniewski, 1987). In addition, Spitzberg (1999) found sexually harassing and coercive behaviors are more prevalent than more physically violent forms of sexual aggression.

Failure to fully appreciate the impact of coercion also negatively impacts victims of coerced sex. If coercion is underappreciated by researchers and the criminal justice system, victims may be deprived of valuable services. Women who experience coerced sex may be reluctant to seek victims' services, such as medical attention and counseling. A lack of public awareness that coerced sex has many of the same negative consequences as forced sex potentially results in more undiagnosed sexually transmitted diseases, more unwanted pregnancies and more women who do not seek counseling services to deal with the trauma they experienced. These negative consequences may be a result of women who do not seek timely services, because of pervasive social perceptions that coercion is not equivalent to rape; therefore they may not feel entitled to services such as crisis counseling and a rape kit, which includes emergency contraception and a sexually transmitted disease screening.

A better appreciation of coercion and to whom responsibility is ascribed is imperative to potential perpetrators and the criminal justice system. The coercion literature suggests men acknowledge their use of coercion, but often downplay or mitigate the effects of coercion and report that women misinterpreted the level of sexual

intimacy they desired (Carr & VanDeussen, 2004). Abbey, Ross, McDuffie and McAuslan, (1996) found rape events more likely than coercion events to involve alcohol consumption by either or both parties, and rape events more than coercion events to involve strangers rather than acquaintances. Collectively these findings should compel policy makers to better address coercion. Policy reform may influence potential perpetrators who were previously unaware that their actions are problematic. Finally, if policy addressed coercion it would deter many offenders given they are acquainted with their victims and therefore more easily identified. The policy implications and the deterrent values of expanding the definition of force to include coercion will be discussed further in chapter six.

The limited amount of sexual coercion literature that exists has grown out of rape research and theory. Therefore, chapter one will review general rape literature findings, and culturally supported beliefs about women who report experiencing unwanted sex, including rape myths and sexism. A review of culturally supported stereotypes that affect perceptions of rape is necessary because the same socially constructed norms that promote rape also promote the use of coercion. Furthermore, this is critical given this project operationalizes, or defines, sexual coercion

as an exchange between a male who is the sexual aggressor and a female who is the submissive recipient of male advances; the exchange between this heterosexual dyad is dependant upon gender role socialization, including rape myths and sexism. Therefore, a review of socio-political forces which promote the sexual domination of women by men is necessary given my definition of coercion and the structure of the study.

Chapter 2 will include a review of the existing sexual coercion literature. Research findings suggest (1) social norms and expectations affect social perceptions of forced and coerced sex; (2) overwhelmingly women who experience rape and sexual aggression from men know their offender; (3) men utilize coercive tactics more often than physical force to obtain sex from women, and they do not appreciate the significance of these coercive tactics; and (4) the relationship between the victim and offender affects victims' perceptions of rape and coercion. However the coercion literature does not address the following; (1) The literature does not acknowledge that numerous independent variables interact and affect perceptions, use and experience with coercion; (2) the literature does not address the difference between perceptions of externally applied coercion by the male and the internalized effect of

the coercion on the female; and finally (3) the literature does not address to whom responsibility for coerced sex is ascribed.

Chapter 3 will explore this project's methodology, including a discussion of the three aforementioned deficiencies in the coercion literature. An examination of this project's hypotheses, operationalization of this project's variables and the data collection strategies employed by this project will be included in this chapter. Chapter 4 will discuss this project's findings. Principle components factor analysis, MANOVA, and ANOVA were run using SPSS to measure the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variables. Overall, findings suggest that extraneous variables affect perceptions of coercion and that woman and men perceive coercion and ascribe responsibility for coerced sex differently. Chapter 5 will review this project's contributions to the existing scholarly literature. This project has enhanced the coercion literature; begun the exploration of ascription of responsibility for coerced sex; confirmed gender differences as related to sexual exchanges and furthered feminist perspective research.

Finally, the last two chapters will discuss policy implications. Chapter 6 will discuss and critique the

current state of rape laws, as well as, suggest changes to existing rape laws; a call to redefine force to include verbal coercion is put forth. Finally chapter 7 will discuss the need for teaching agents, including parents, teachers and other care takers to address the issue of verbal coercion and sexual exchanges in general. This chapter critiques the current state of information sharing regarding sexuality. In addition this chapter suggests socio-educational programs which may change perceptions and attitudes regarding verbally coerced sex.

Chapter 1

Rape: Frequency, victim-offender relationship, reporting and patriarchal constructs

This chapter will review literature pertaining to sexual assault and misconduct as a result of physical force, non-physical force and verbal coercion. Although this project examines verbal coercion a review of the rape literature is imperative. Sections on rape myths and sexism are relevant and must precede a review of the coercion literature; these concepts are at the root of the prevalence and acceptance of verbal coercion in the context of a sexual exchange.

Rape: An overview

According to Tjadden and Thoennes, (2000) over 14% of women experience a completed rape and 2.8% of women experience an attempted rape in their lifetimes, resulting in over 876,000 rapes per year. While the estimate is daunting, one must consider the numbers found by Tjaden and Thoennes' National Violence Against Women Survey as a conservative estimate. Their definition is based upon sex as a result of physical force or threat of force; their definition does not consider rape as a result of non-physical coercive tactics. Sexual assault research finds

sexual coercion is used more often than physical force (Boerenger, 1996; Forbes & Curtis, 2001; and Carr & VanDeusen, 2004, Forbes, Curtis & White, 2004; Koss, et al., 1987).

Research has found non-stranger rape constitutes 75 - 90% of all rapes (Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000; Koss, Dinero, Siebel & Cox, 1988; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Focusing more specifically on women on college campuses, studies have found that women reported that over 90% of male sexual aggressors were boyfriends, friends or acquaintances (Gross, Winslett & Gohm, 2006), and that during a five year college career one-fifth to one-quarter of women could experience a completed or attempted rape (Fisher et al, 2000). Koss, et al. (1988) found stranger rape victims were more likely to identify their experience as rape than were acquaintance rape victims. They also found women who reported being raped by an acquaintance were more than twice as likely to label their experience as "miscommunication" when compared to women who reported being raped by a stranger.

Frazer and Seal (1997) conducted two studies which compared stranger rape victims and acquaintance or date rape victims. They found victims of acquaintance rape are as traumatized as victims of stranger rape. "Specifically,

they report equal (and high) levels of depression, anxiety, hostility, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms, suggesting that acquaintance rape is a real and serious problem and not merely the fabrication of feminist researchers" (Frazer & Seal, 1997, p.54). Ullman (1996) found women assaulted by known offenders versus strangers had more psychological symptoms.

To complicate matters acquaintance rape and other forms of non-stranger rapes are underreported. Koss and Oros (1982) found that only 8% of women who are date raped will report the crime to the police. Campbell-Ruggaard and Van Ryswyk (2001) suggest that rape on college campuses is underreported because it does not fit the socially constructed version of a deranged stranger rape. In addition, they opine rape is not reported because women do not want their independence compromised. If a woman reports rape she may lose her autonomy both on campus and as a result of imposed parental constraints. Underreporting may also be an issue because the victim is confused about what constitutes rape. Gross, et al. (2006) found of their sample of 903 women, only 15.1% who partook in unwanted sex, because their partner was too aroused to stop, viewed their experience as rape.

All of these findings collectively suggest the numbers of actual incidents of forced sex is higher than imagined, victims know their perpetrators, and victims of acquaintance rape are as or more emotionally traumatized.

Patriarchal constructs

Rape Myths

Considering the above data, it is not an exaggeration to say rape in America is pervasive. It is also not an exaggeration to say rape has been conceptualized to benefit a male centered definition, at the expense of discounting the safety of women. Feminist researchers and theorists of the 1970s and 80s gathered baseline data, critiqued socially promoted attitudes about rape, and developed rape measurement instruments for the purpose of illuminating the prevalence of rape. Arguably the most noted instrument developed was Burt's (1980) Rape Myths Acceptance Scale (RMAS). Burt (1980) set out to test the relationship between the acceptance of rape myths and adversarial sexual beliefs, tolerance of interpersonal violence, and gender role stereotyping. Burt's scale measures concepts related to victim blaming, general attitudes toward woman, and attitudes toward woman who claim to be raped. Examples of statements requiring a one to seven Likert scale response

include: "In the majority of rapes, the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation" and "Women who get raped hitchhiking get what they deserve" (p. 223). Findings suggested many Americans' beliefs about rape were "connected to other deeply held and pervasive attitudes such as sex role stereotyping, distrust of the opposite sex and acceptance of interpersonal violence" (Burt, 1980, p 229).

Burt's (1980) article and the RMAS is the basis for much of the early empirical analyses of rape. Her purpose was to find support for feminist theories, including Brownmiller's (1975) assertion which faults patriarchal structures with confining women to second class statehood and Dworkin's (1974) critique of society as accepting a male-centered fantasy of women as wanton and desiring sexual domination. Arguably, second class statehood and the subjugation of women allows for the proliferation of rape, the protected identity of most offenders, the sustenance of guilt and shame experienced by the victim, and the overall denial of the crime. Burt's discussion and findings also highlighted the specious reasoning of researchers such as Amir (1971), who stated that women victims are at least partially responsible for their rapes.

Burt's article and "rape myths" gained the attention of researchers, legal scholars and the general public. The inclusion of Burt's RMAS has been noted in 57 studies, and numerous additional studies have utilized a portion or a revision of the scale (Buhi, 2005). Researchers have found acceptance of rape myths are linked to the acceptance of the use of force and/or coercion (Forbes, Adam-Curtis, Leah & Pakalka, 2006). Research has found men who accept rape myths are more likely to subscribe to specific masculine norms, such as having power over women and being violent (Locke & Mahalik, 2005). Zubbriggen and Yost (2004) considered the relationship between fantasies and the acceptance of rape myths. They found men's fantasies of dominance were associated with greater acceptance of rape myths. Findings have also supported women's problematic acceptance of rape myths. Mason, Riger and Foley (2004) found "women who scored higher on the Rape Myths Acceptance Scale (RMAS) blamed the victim more and were less likely to believe rape had occurred" (p. 1157). In addition, researchers have found rape prevention education can decrease the acceptability of rape myths (Faye & Medway, 2006; O'Donohue, Yeater & Fanetti, 2003) suggesting rape myths result from socially constructed definitions of rape.

Muelenhard, Friedman and Thomas (1985) directly tested one of the items within the RMAS in their examination of "justifiability of date rape under various circumstances" (p. 297). The authors found date rape was regarded as significantly more justified if the couple went to the man's apartment to talk, versus if the couple went to a religious function. The study also found rape was regarded as significantly more justifiable if the man paid all of the date expenses, versus if expenses were split between the couple. These findings support the notion that social norms and expectations may mitigate the acceptability of date rape.

Studies have also examined gender differences in regards to the acceptability of rape myths. Researchers have found women more likely to reject rape myths than men, and men more likely to attribute blame to victims than women (Gilmartic-Zena, 1988; Jimenez & Abreu, 2003). Jimenez and Abreau (2003) also found women are more likely to exhibit higher perceptions of empathy and ascribe more credibility to the rape victim than men. Longsway and Fitzgerald (1995) found support to suggest the measure of hostility toward women has more predictive power among men than women; hostility toward women accounted for twice as much variance for males.

Research has also found gender differences regarding the acceptability of rape myths. Boehner et al. (1993) found women who are less accepting of rape myths have lowered self-esteem when exposed to a rape report; whereas men who have high support for rape myths show an increase in self-esteem as a function of exposure to rape. The study found this affect specific to rape, not violence in general. They opine women who accept rape myths are more likely to feel in control of their safety as opposed to women who refute rape myths and recognize they are at risk. This supports the feminist notion that rape is socially constructed to benefit men and leave women vulnerable.

Research and theory suggest attitudes toward rape are socially reinforced to benefit a male-centered appreciation of sexual encounters. Furthermore, Burt (1991) suggests society needs to believe women frequently lie about being raped. While this author agrees with Burt that overall the general public is inclined to disbelieve rape victims, this assertion should be contextualized. Assumptions about non-credible victims are primarily a manifestation of acquaintance or date rape reports. The general public has come to accept a stranger rape victim as what Estrich (1987) deems "real rape" victims. Estrich described "real rape" victims as women, generally white, who have been

assaulted by strangers, without "provocation" and have physical injuries. She asserts that most other types of rape victims are dismissed and distrusted by the criminal justice system, the general public and even their family and friends. Alternatively "real rape" victims receive more support by the public and criminal justice system unless race or class issues complicate victim credibility¹. It is victims of coercion within the context of acquaintance or date rape who are now seemingly met with social distrust. It is the use of coercion within the context of acquaintance or dating relationships which warrants further inspection.

In addition to Burt, Brownmiller, Dworkin and other women's movement feminists, researchers and theorists have supported the notion that rape myths perpetuate the acceptability of rape and mitigate aggressive male behavior. Longsway and Fitzgerald (1994) discuss rape myths as "attitudes and beliefs that are generally false yet widely and persistently held and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women" (p. 134).

¹ The author recognizes the intersection of race and class with sexism requires an inquiry all to itself. This point is being made but not expanded here. For reading on the intersections of race and class with gender see a collection of essays in Sokoloff, N.J. & Pratt, C. (2005). *Domestic Violence at the Margins*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press. Also for a specific appreciation of the intersection of race, class and gender regarding black women see Patricia Hill Collins (2004) *Black Sexual Politics*. Great Britain: Routledge.

Sexism

While Burt and other noted researchers and scholars examined the issue of gender oppression in regards to sexual exploitation, Glick and Fiske (1996) examine the general issue of sexism. Their scale arguably extends Burt's RMAS by testing broader, more insidious stereotypes which may ultimately result in the acceptance of the sexual exploitation of women. Glick and Fisk differentiate between benevolent and hostile sexism. They explain hostile sexism as an antipathy and prejudice which results in social distance and stereotypes. Whereas the more commonly accepted and pervasive form of sexism, benevolent sexism, is operationalized "as a set of interrelated attitudes toward women that are sexist in terms of viewing women stereotypically and in restricted roles but that are subjectively positive in feeling tone (for the perceiver) and also tend to elicit behaviors typically categorized as prosocial (e.g., helping) or intimacy seeking (e.g., self-disclosure)" (p. 491). They are careful to point out that benevolent sexism is not positive as often the consequences of benevolent sexism are male dominance and female submission.

Sibley and Wilson (2004) found benevolent and hostile sexism maintain and legitimize gender-based social hierarchies. Their New Zealand study utilized vignettes, distributed to only male students. The vignettes either depicted the female as promiscuous or not. Both the positively and negatively framed females declined sex after consuming alcohol. The research findings revealed men expressed increased hostile, but decreased benevolent, sexism toward a female who was depicted as promiscuous. Their findings also revealed males expressed increased benevolent, but decreased hostile, sexism toward a female who was described as not having casual flings. The authors assert their findings provide "additional evidence to support Glick et al.'s (1997) claim that men's expressions of benevolent sexism may be used to idealize and reward women who are categorized into subtypes that conform to male dominated social hierarchies, whereas women who defy traditional gender roles may experience more hostile and negative attitudes" (p. 693).

Another test of the effects of benevolent and hostile sexism related to this current project is Abrams, Viki, Masser and Boehner's (2003) examination of perceptions of stranger and acquaintance rape. Their sample of 65 English university students was given a vignette in which the

perpetrator was either a complete stranger or an acquaintance (the two met at a party on the night of the rape). Findings reveal more blame was attributed to the acquaintance rape victim than to the stranger rape victim. Findings also revealed a significant positive relationship between benevolent sexism and victim blame, indicating "that the higher an individual's score on the Benevolent Sexism subscale was, the more they blamed the rape victim" (p. 115). Both the Sibley and Wilson (2004) and Abrams et al. (2003) articles support the notion that perceptions and assigned responsibility for rape are related to pervasive sexist attitudes. Further evidence of this is found in a review of the coercion literature.

In addition to feminist theory and empirical research, other sociological and criminological theories lend support for the notion that socialization is related to decision making in sexual encounters. Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976 & Molm, Peterson & Takahashi, 2001), Social Learning Theory (Akers, 1998) and Sykes and Matza's (1957) discussion of neutralization techniques lends support to the notion that cultural and socially imposed attitudes may effect a male's decision to use coercion.

Social exchange theory has evolved to examine "how actors are connected to one another in exchange networks,

how those connections affect access to partners and opportunities for exchange and how power arises out of differential access and opportunities" (Molm et al. 2001). Although most social exchange theorists have not directly studied power differentials resulting from gender inequity they have acknowledged that structural imbalance, the social value of the exchange and obligations can affect the exchange process (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976; Molm, et al., 2001). Within Blau's chapter *Mediating Values in Complex Structures*, he acknowledges that social norms and indirect exchange affect exchange between two individuals or two smaller groups. He asserts that a factor in situating institutions "is that they are rooted in power structures. The cultural values and social arrangements that become institutionalized are those with which the dominant group in society are strongly identified" (p. 276). His reference refers to class stratification, but this assertion can be applied to gender stratification.

Akers' (1998) devotes an chapter of his book on Social Learning Theory to rape and sexual aggression; he also includes the use of coercion within his discussion. He discusses rape as a sexual and violent act in which consent has not been obtained when having intercourse. He adds that acts which do not constitute rape but may still be on

a "continuum away from conforming, consensual, noncoercive sexual intercourse" (Akers, 1998, p. 256) should be examined. Although he does not operationalize his constructs his decision to discuss sexual violence at length is commendable. Very few mainstream criminological theories have rigorously addressed the topic of rape or sexual aggression.

Akers first discusses *differential association*. He asserts that an individual who receives group messages that engaging in sexually coercive behavior is accepted will be more likely to partake in such behavior. Next he discusses *differential reinforcement*. He states that if the rewards outweigh the punishment than the man is more likely to use force in sex. He includes gained approval by peers as a reward. This idea that peers greatly influence a man's proclivity for or against rape is often the focus of rape research and will be examined more closely later in this paper. He also goes on to state that if these rewards are greater than the punishment, then he will be more likely to repeat this behavior. Akers discusses *definitions* in terms of attitudes and beliefs that define rape and other sexual aggression as favorable or not. He asserts attitudes toward rape as either favorable or unfavorable are learned in childhood, through male peer groups or intrafamilial

exposure to such attitudes. He also states definitions may also be learned and supported by social controls and interactions with male peers. Akers surmises many men see coercion as positive and necessary. He also states excuses and justifications neutralize the deviance and support a victim who is asking for rape.

Lastly Akers' discusses *modeling* or *imitation* effects, as applied to general and specific influences on the individual. Akers explains behaviors do not have to be physically present for learning to occur. This explanation includes macro level influences such as pornography, advertising and the media in general. Akers' discusses the macro level influence of media as a critical teaching agent. His discussion includes all forms of media in which men are exposed to repeated acts of sexual aggression, and in which the acts go unpunished or even encouraged.

Exchange Theory and Social Learning Theory support the feminist notion that structural imbalances and macro level influences allow men to have the upper hand in sexual negotiations. However these theories do not completely address the individual justification used by men when exploiting their power. Akers does state that men use excuses and justifications to neutralize their deviance. This assertion is similar to the premise put forth by Sykes

and Matza's (1957) techniques of neutralization. Sykes and Matza (1957) discuss techniques which allow individuals to feel justified in their decision to be deviant; three of the techniques are applicable to this discussion. The first applicable technique is *denial of responsibility*. Denial of responsibility refers to an aggressor who will propose that he is a victim of the situation; for instance, "I did not force her" or "she did not say no." The second relevant technique is *denial of injury*. The aggressor denies that he caused any real harm; for instance "I did not hit or threaten her". The third relevant technique is *denial of the victim*. This refers to an aggressor who believes that the victim deserves the end result. An aggressor who feels entitled to use coercion because the victim was at a party, or wearing provocative clothing, or drinking, or simply not verbally assertive, is an aggressor that denies the victim. Akers' SLT and Sykes and Matza's techniques of neutralization lend a theoretical explanation for how perpetrators of verbal coercion learn to use coercive tactics, and then learn to excuse their behavior.

Chapter 2

Coercion: The illusion of choice

Before reviewing the sexual coercion literature it should be noted that a difference exists between completed coercion, attempted coercion and force. Tactics used by the aggressor can either result in completed coercion; which results in a sexual act as a result of coercive tactics. It is not until the recipient of the coercion ceases to resist that the coercion is completed. Coercive tactics which are utilized but are unsuccessful because the recipient successfully resists is attempted coercion. Finally unsuccessfully applied coercive tactics may lead the aggressor to result in physical force or threats of physical force. If the recipient continues to resist and the aggressor proceeds then this is no longer a case of coercion but rather force.

Spitzberg (1999) reviewed 102 studies and found sexually harassing and coercive behaviors are more prevalent than more physically violent forms of sexual aggression. Godenzi, Schwartz and DeKeseredy (2001) suggest that the learned use of coercion may be so prevalent in sexual relationships that this may be the norm rather than the exception. As a result of the accepted prevalence of coercion, social scientists have discussed

the need to expand the definition of rape. DeKeseredy (2000) argues definitions are extremely important as "policy makers listen to large numbers" (p. 734) and without accounting for coercion policy makers can discount the vast majority of rapes. Kilpatrick (2004) notes rape and other forms of sexual assault are difficult to measure because of "inaccurate stereotypes about rape" (p. 1229). Fisher, Cullen and Daigel (2005) call for the need to expand the definition of rape for the purpose of social science research.

The empirical and theoretical dissection of coercion has resulted in differing, but related definitions. Spitzberg and Rhea (1999) define coercion within the context of sexual interaction as a "continuum of process by which persons are induced into sexual activity against their will" (p. 3). They state that coercive tactics can range from rape at one end of the spectrum to physiological pressure at the other end. Jewkes, Sen and Garcia-Moreno's (2002) definition of coercion as discussed in Kilpatrick (2004) describes coercion as "including physical force, psychological intimidation, blackmail or other threats, or taking advantage of an individual who is unable to give consent because they are drunk, drugged, asleep, or mentally incapable of understanding the situation" (p.

1215). Struckamn-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson & Anderson (2003) define sexually coercive behavior as an "act of using pressure, alcohol or drugs, or force to have sexual contact with someone against his or her will" (p. 76). The Sptizberg and Rhea (1999); Jewkes et al. (2002) and Struckman-Johnson et al. (2003) definitions include force in their description of coercion or coercive tactics. Most definitions of coercion are gender neutral; however, DeGue and DeLillo (2005) offer a gender-specific definition of coercion, with men as perpetrators and women as victims.

In addition to coercive tactics for the purpose of procuring sex, Stark (2007) examines coercion in the context of domestic violence. His definition and discussion is pertinent as it examines the relationship between male dominance in a patriarchal system and coercion. He argues that coercion is more debilitating than violence, because coercion can be downplayed. In addition, he asserts coercion can entrap women in their personal life when the coercer exploits the woman's obligations, fears and gendered socialization.

All of the definitions consider the use of coercion to be as problematic as force. However, unlike forcible rape, most non-physical sexual coercion does not constitute a legally recognized category and definitional

inconsistencies exist within the coercion literature making comparability of coercion research difficult (DeGue and DeLillo, 2005, p. 515).

Other researchers have argued physical force and coercion should be viewed as different tactics. Testa and Dermen (1999) differentiate between coercion (which they suggest involves verbal or emotional pressure) and rape (which typically involves force). They suggest "it may be valuable to view sexual coercion as a distinct form of sexual aggression" (p. 557).

Research has found support for differences between forced and coerced sex. Logan, Cole and Shannon's (2007) evaluate coercive tactics as experienced by women who do and do not experience forced sex, within the context of intimate partner relationships. Logan et al. (2007) interviewed 62 women; 31 women who reported forced sex and 31 women who did not report forced sex. Their findings suggest that both women who do and do not experience forced sex experience coercive and degrading tactics however more women who report forced sex report all forms of verbal coercion, relative to women who do not report forced sex. Abbey, Ross, McDuffie and McAuslan, (1996) found rape events more likely than coercion events to involve alcohol consumption by either or both parties; and rape events more

than coercion events to involve strangers rather than acquaintances. Whether coercion is viewed as a form of force or as a distinctive construct, coercion exists within many sexual relationships.

Coercion can also include using implied power differentials to dominate a partner sexually. Gender, age, race, socioeconomic status and other determinants of social status may allow for coercion to be a factor without any verbal communication or physical force. Dorroch, Bell, Boyer, and Connell (1999) examined 15 -17 year old girls who were pregnant. The girls were asked about the age of the father of their babies. Men who were at least 6 years older than the girls comprised 24% of the fathers. The findings showed that girls whose partners were at least three years older used contraception at one-third the rate of those whose partners were closer in age. These findings suggest older men are engaging in sex with adolescents and girls may feel less empowered to ask older men to use contraception. In addition, Thomas (2005) found that the greater the age difference between partners (males being older) the greater the risk of verbal coercion.

Generally, the coercion literature either examines women's experience as victims of coercion or men's utilization of coercion. A growing number of researchers

suggest a gender neutral measurement application to appreciate all gender interactions, including men as victims and women as perpetrators (Menard, Gordon, Hall, Phung, Erian Ghebrial & Martin, 2003; Russell & Oswald, 2002; Struckman-Johnson et al., 2003). In addition, many studies examine gender-specific samples. Koss, et al. (1987) and Testa and Dermen (1999) used an all-female sample whereas Russell & Oswald (2002) employed an all male sample to study coercion. Studies which examine gender-specific samples make it more difficult to compare men's and women's experiences with coercion.

Findings from gender-mixed samples confirm men use more coercion than women and women are subjected to more coercion than men (Menard et al., 2003; Struckman-Johnson et al. 2003). Menard et al. (2003) utilized items from Anderson's (1998) Sexual Behavior Scale to measure coercion. They found that of their sample of 426 undergraduate students, 3 times as many men (49%) admitted to any form of sexual coercion when compared with women (16%). Struckman-Johnson et al. (2003) measured the responses from 275 men and 381 women from two separate universities. Findings revealed that 78% of women compared with 58% of men reported they were subjected to "post-refusal sexual persistence", a form of verbal coercion (p.

78). Findings also revealed that women utilized gentler or less exploitive tactics, relative to men in the study.

Research suggests women are more likely to experience more extreme forms of coercion, including force (Fiebert & Tucci, 1998). Findings also suggest the victim/offender relationship affects victims' perceptions of rape. Koss et al. (1988) examined identification of rape based upon relationship to aggressor. Koss and colleagues utilized nationally representative sample of 3,187 college females. Of the sample, 15.4% reported experiencing behavior which met the legal definition of rape; force or threat of force was the determining factor for classification as rape victim. Of the 489 rape victims identified, 52 were raped by complete strangers; 416 were raped by acquaintances (122) which included friends, co-workers or neighbors, casual dates (103), steady date including boyfriend or lover (147), or a family member including husband (44). When asked to label their experience as one of four mutually exclusive categories, 21% of stranger rape victims labeled their experience as miscommunication, compared with 51% of acquaintance rape victims. Also, 55% of stranger rape victims labeled their experience as rape, compared with 23% of acquaintance rape victims. Findings suggest

the relationship between victim and offender affects victims' perceptions.

It should be noted Russell and Oswald (2002) found 46% of men in their sample reported being victims of some form of coercion; this number is consistent with Struckman-Johnson's (1994) finding of 43%. The authors suggest men and women may use equal amounts of coercion. However, questions arise given their methodology and reasoning. Thirty percent of the men in their sample reported victimization as a result of their partner being so aroused they felt it was useless to stop; how did they operationalize arousal? The concept of arousal as a mitigating factor for continued unwanted sex has been applied to male perpetrators. The authors should have operationalized arousal when applying this concept to "female perpetrators". Their findings also suggest one of the three most frequently used coercive behaviors reported by the men in their study was becoming so aroused they felt it was useless to stop even though their partner didn't want to have sex. Perhaps the men in this study are mitigating their behavior by transferring their utilization of problematic sexual tactics to their partners. They also report 62% of men who reported using coercion had also been sexually victimized themselves; compared with 13% of

sexually inexperienced men who reported using coercion. The authors hypothesize a relationship between perpetration and victimization exists. However, findings may also suggest men who engage in coercive tactics justify their actions by conceiving of themselves as victims. In general the issue of male victims of coercion should be recognized and studied more closely to account for gender role socialization effects.

Research on women's experience with coercion has utilized the Koss and Oroz (1982) and the later modified Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski (1987) Sexual Experience Survey (SES). Koss (1996) notes the importance of distinguishing between types and degrees of force; she notes that psychological coercion might include situations such as continual nagging and pressuring, threats to end the relationship, false promises, and similar strategies that are not desirable but are not crimes. The SES has been employed in numerous studies (Abbey et al., 2001; Cecil & Matson, 2005; Koss & Oroz, 1982; LaCasse & Mendelson, 2007; Russel & Oswald, 2002; Testa & Dermen, 1999; Thomas, 2005; Wilson, Calhoun & McNair, 2002). The SES is commonly used to identify women's sexually aggressive experiences and to classify them as either rape, attempted rape, verbally

coerced intercourse or sexual contact (Testa, Vanzile-Tamsen, Livingston & Koss, 2004).

Cecil and Matson (2005) surveyed 249 14-19 year-old sexually active, African American females, who attended an adolescent health clinic. Thirty-three percent of females experienced some form of coercion. Thomas (2005) reported 10 % of ethnically diverse young women aged 14-23 experienced some verbal sexual coercion, and 13% experienced rape or attempted rape. Donat & Bondurant (2003) found 12% of their college convenience sample was verbally coerced into intercourse; however they created a mutually exclusive category for individuals who were incapacitated due to alcohol (21% of the sample). Koss et al. (1987) and DeKeseredy and Kelly (1993) found between one-third and one-half of college women in North America experienced some form of sexual coercion.

Shwartz (2000) notes methodological issues, including definitional ambiguity, validity, bias and underreporting, with survey data for measuring violence against women; the SES is without exception. The SES is one of the most widely used coercion and force assessment instruments, and upon conception was very innovative; however the instrument could be improved. Instrument items include "Have you been fondled, kissed or touched sexually when you didn't want to

because you were overwhelmed by someone's continual arguments and pressure?" This statement does not clearly define continual argument or pressure. Construct ambiguity may lead to underreporting. For instance, if a man says to a woman "if you do not have sex with me, I will sleep with another women", this may be coercive but not interpreted as continual arguments or pressure. Items could be more specific to discern between coercive tactics. Specificity would also contextualize the use of coercion and provide insight into relationship by measuring tactics such as threats to find sex outside of the relationship and threats to damage the reputation of the coercion recipient.

The SES and other instruments which measure the use of or experience with coercion is commonly used in combination with other instruments to determine correlations between experience with sexual aggression and other behaviors, outcomes, demographics, etc. Numerous findings, regardless of methodology and samples have found experience with coerced sex to be correlated with negative social and emotional outcomes. LaCasse and Mendelson's (2007) examination of adolescent Canadians in grades 8 to 11, using the SES, revealed female victims of coercion had lower self esteem and more sexist attitudes than other females. Friedrich, Whiteside and Talley (2004) also

examined the relationship between coercive sexual abuse and physical and psychological symptoms. Their community sample consisted of 610 men and women who reported unwanted sexual contact before the age of 17. Their study explored the relationship between coerced sexual contact, age differentials between victim and offender and adverse psychological and physical symptoms. Their findings revealed a significant relationship between coercive sexual abuse and physical and psychological symptoms.

Testa and Dermen's (1999) sample consisted of 198, racially diverse women ages 20 - 35 ($M = 24.4$). Their sample, procured through newspaper advertisements, responded to a self-administered questionnaire and a face-to-face interview. Findings revealed women who experienced coercion reported lower household income and lower educational achievement than women who were not coerced. They also concluded that "women who experienced coercion tended to have lower self-esteem and assertiveness relative to those who had not experienced coercion" (p. 557). Finally, they found women who experienced coercion experienced more severe forms of sexual abuse as children when compared with women who had not experienced coercion.

Additional research has found support for the effect that social influences such as male group (fraternity and

sport teams) membership has on the overall acceptance of coercive tactics to obtain sex (Boerenger, 1994; Boerenger, 1996; Carr & VanDeusen, 2004). Boerenger, Shenan and Akers (1991) examined the relationship between fraternity membership and sexual aggression. They employed self-administered questionnaires to a purposive sample of 262 males from a large southeastern university. The findings revealed that fraternity members were more likely to use non-physical coercion to obtain sex than independent students, and fraternity men were more likely to receive reinforcement from friends to engage in sexual coercion and aggression.

Boerenger (1996) distributed 477 self-report questionnaires to undergraduate males at a large southeastern state to study whether fraternity membership and athletic participation were correlates of coercion. The study differentiated between rape and coercion; rape included behaviors that constituted the legal definition of rape, whereas verbal harassment constituted coercion. A significant relationship emerged between being an athlete and the likelihood of using force. Athletes in this study were more likely to use force to obtain sex than non-athletes. Results also revealed that fraternity members were more likely to use nonphysical verbal coercion than

non-fraternity members. This study did not find any relationship between fraternity membership and the acceptance of using physical force to obtain sex. This finding may suggest that fraternity members and their independent counterparts are no different in their use of or reporting their use of physical force. However findings may also suggest that the fraternity members in the sample appreciated force, but not coercion, to be a problematic tactic.

Studies have also found in some men a relationship between the use of intoxicants and sexually coercive behavior (Abbey, BeShears, Clinton-Sherro & McAuslan, 2004; Boeringer, 1996; Wilson et al., 2002). Boeringer, et al. (1991) found fraternity members in their study were less likely than independents to believe their friends would disprove of getting a woman drunk to have sex with her. In addition, one-quarter of fraternity members, as opposed to one-tenth of non-fraternity members reported their friends approved of using intoxicants to get a woman to have sex. Boeringer (1996) found that fraternity members used more intoxicants to obtain sex relative to independent students.

Wilson et al. (2002) surveyed 186, predominantly white, heterosexual males who attended a large Southern university. Among men who reported using sexually coercive

tactics, 42% (4.3% of the total sample) reported using alcohol as the primary coercion tactic. The findings also revealed that participants reporting a history of sexually coercive behavior reported drinking significantly more per week than their noncoercive peers and that "the relationship between high drinking levels and sexual coercion holds only when the individual also has high alcohol expectancies regarding sexual behavior" (p. 1152). Wilson et al. (2002) note that "it is not alcohol consumption alone but rather its interaction with other cognitive factors that defines its role in sexually coercive interactions" (p. 1154).

The Wilson et al. (2002) conclusion that an interaction with cognitive factors accounts for the use of alcohol in sexually coercive interactions is supported by Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, Clinton and McAuslan (2001). Their research findings revealed that the use of intoxicants make perpetrators more comfortable with their actions. These findings suggest that perhaps it is better to conceptualize alcohol as a tool used when premeditating sexual coercion rather than excuse for the coercion.

In addition to alcohol other cognitive factors affect men's decisions to use coercion Livingston, Buddy, Tesat and VanZile-Tamsen (2004) note that "men's verbal coercion

tactics are largely determined by sexual precedence status, since precedence invokes cultural norms regarding sexual obligation" (p. 294). They conducted qualitative interviews with 114 women; their sample was drawn from 1,014 women participating in the first wave of a larger study regarding alcohol use and sexual behavior (p. 288). They examined the impact of sexual precedence (whether the women had previously engaged in sex with the man) on sexual coercion. Findings revealed that when sexual precedence is established men use negative sexual coercion (e.g. threats to end the relationship) and when no sexual precedence has been established men more often use positive sexual coercion (e.g. sweet talk).

The coercion literature also suggests men acknowledge their use of coercion. Wilson et al. (2002) found that 16% of their sample reported in engaging in some form of sexually coercive behavior. Their definition of coercion included behaviors ranging from coerced sex play to forced intercourse, with the highest level of reported coercive behavior being sex play. Although men may acknowledge their use of coercive tactics, many downplay or mitigate the effects of coercion. Carr and VanDeussen (2004) found that few men acknowledge using physical force, but many men acknowledge using verbal coercion. Carr and VanDeussen

(2004) sampled 99 undergraduate men from a large Midwestern University; their sample was predominantly white, entirely heterosexual and an average of twenty-years of age. The respondents completed an anonymous survey. They found that half of the men in their sample reported experiences where the women misinterpreted the level of sexual intimacy they desired. They also found that although few men acknowledged the use of physical force, more recognized their use of coercion to obtain sex. Furthermore, their findings revealed that 16% of men reported being so aroused that they could not stop even though the women did not want them to continue. Research has also examined coercive tactics utilized by males.

Russell and Oswald (2002) also questioned men about their perpetration of coercion. The 173 undergraduate university male respondents were administered two self-report surveys. Results revealed the three most frequently used coercive behaviors reported by men were: saying things they didn't mean to obtain sex, becoming so aroused they felt it was useless to stop even though their partner didn't want to have sex, and obtaining sex through continual arguments (p. 278).

Boeringer (1996) also found that men acknowledge using non-physical force. In his study of college males,

Boeringer found that 55.7% have used coercion on one or more occasions; although only 8.6% report their actions as rape. Boeringer's (1991) findings suggest men are likely to use coercion, but they do not report this behavior as equivalent to rape. This study also found men report using more nonphysical force than physical force. In all, studies have found that the concept of coercion is further complicated because men view physical force and coercion differently from verbal force and non-physical coercion (Boeringer, 1996; Boeringer, 1991; Carr & Van Deussen, 2004; Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000).

A review of the literature revealed women and men perceive coercion, aggression and force differently. Forbes and Adams-Curtis (2001) examine gender differences regarding the reporting of specific sexual acts. The analysis measured the responses from 144 males and 176 females; these respondents were derived from a larger sample, however responses from participants who indicated they were sexually inexperienced were discarded. Fifty-three percent of females reported experiencing some level of sexual coercion, but only 21% of males reported engaging in sexual coercion. Also 22% of women reported experiencing the use of force in sexual activity, whereas less than 1% of men acknowledged the use of force during

sexual activity. In addition to gender perception differences related to coercion and force, experimental designs have found gender differences in perceptions of sexual intent in general. Men perceive women as behaving more sexually and being more interested in a sexual relationship than do women (Abbey, 1982; Shea, 1993).

It is also clear that men are more prone to recognize or accept physical resistance from women, but discount verbal resistance (Carr & Van Deussen, 2004; Fisher et al., 2000; Livingston et al., 2004). In research conducted on the sexual victimization of women on college campuses, Fisher et al. (2000) explored common forms of protective actions used by victims in both completed and attempted rapes. They examined eight categories of resistance which included: used physical force; told the person to stop; pleaded with or begged to stop; screamed or yelled to scare the off the person; removed person's hands; ran or tried to run away; tried to avoid the person; and tried to reason with or negotiate with the person. Six of the eight categories of protective action were utilized more frequently in completed rapes than in attempted rapes. However, using physical force against the person produced an opposite result. A greater percentage of respondents indicated they used physical force in attempted rapes

(69.2%) versus completed rapes (55.4%). One other category showed slight and insignificant differences in the same direction: 10.8 % of respondents in the attempted category tried to run away, as opposed to 10.7% in the completed category. The findings may support the idea that men respond to physical indications of non-consent over verbal indications. Findings also suggest that some men disregard verbal resistance. In 50% of completed rapes, women indicated that they told their attacker to stop, and in 19.6% of completed rapes, the respondent pleaded or begged their attacker to stop.

Livingston et al. (2004) also found that men discount verbal resistance from women. More than half of the women in their study reported they verbally resisted sexual advances and voiced their unwillingness to have sex. Verbal resistance included saying no or "explicitly refusing to have sex" (p. 291).

Although numerous studies have measured perceptions of rape victims and perpetrators (Abrams et al., 2003; Burt, 1980; Jimenez & Abreau, 2003; Muelenhard, Friedman & Thomas, 1985; Sibley & Wilson, 2004), very few studies have examined perceptions of coercion victims and perpetrators. Most of the coercion literature has either directly questioned respondents about their reactions to actual

experienced coercion or applied coercion, or measured the frequency of actual applied or experienced coercion. Measuring perceptions and recognition of coercion in hypothetical situations, may explain the reactions of the media and the general public in regards to victims and perpetrators of sexual coercion. In addition, measuring perceptions of coercion may have real policy implications; jurors' reactions, police response and victims' decisions to come forward may be at least partially explained by measuring perceptions of coercion.

In one of the few studies that analyzed perceptions of sexual coercion, Regan (1997) administered surveys which measured the respondent reactions to scenarios involving sexual intercourse following verbal coercion. The college convenience sample of 80 men and women was given scenarios in which the language used by the male aggressor to obtain sex from a female was manipulated ("I love you...I want to make love to you" versus "I want you...I want to have sex with you"; all other factors were held constant. Findings revealed that when the male expressed love, he was perceived as less responsible for the intercourse and the interaction was perceived as significantly more consensual. Significant results also emerged in regards to participants' gender. Male respondents attributed greater

sexual desire and responsibility for the intercourse to the female in the scenario, compared with female respondents.

Katz, Moore and Tkachuk (2007) also examined perceived victim responsibility using hypothetical scenarios; they explored perceived victim responsibility as a function of rape versus coerced sex. The two-part study measured perceptions of coercion as: (1) a function of the coercive tactic (coercion versus force); and (2) a function of the victim's gender in a heterosexual relationship. A predominantly white, mixed-gender college sample was surveyed. Findings revealed more victim blame was assigned to the victim who was coerced relative to the victim who was forced. The study also examined victim blame as function of victim-offender gender relationship. Participants perceived female-to-male coercion as more controllable, resulting in greater responsibility attributed to a verbally coerced man. These findings suggest assigning blame to either party in a situation involving sexual coercion is dependant upon factors beyond the actual use of coercive tactics; social norms and expectations influence perceptions of coercion.

Summary

Research findings suggest (1) social norms and expectations affect social perceptions of forced and coerced sex; (2) overwhelmingly, women who experience rape and sexual aggression from men know their offender; (3) men utilize coercive tactics more often than physical force to obtain sex from women, and they do not appreciate the significance of these coercive tactics; and (4) the relationship between the victim and offender affects victims' perceptions of rape and coercion.

While coercion research is constantly emerging, the field is currently lacking in three areas. First, the literature does not acknowledge that numerous independent variables interact and affect perceptions, use and experience with coercion. As this research is focused on perceptions of coercion this critique will not discuss the shortcomings of research which examines experience with and use of coercion. Researchers have tested the affect of individual variables on the perceptions of coercion, such as alcohol and relationship status (although the research only considers stranger versus intimate partner as two polarized conditions). Research does not measure the affects of more than one independent variable on respondent's perceptions of coercion. This research will

measure the affects of both relationship status and reputation.

The second gap in the literature that this research aims to address is the difference between perceptions of externally applied coercion by the male and the internalized effect of the coercion on the female. This project will measure whether respondents view coercion as involving an exchange. Coercion is not a unidirectional or one-dimensional construct. For coercion within the context of sexual relations to result in sex the aggressor must be manipulative, play on social stereotypes, be persistent and/or apply pressure. These actions/behaviors must be received by someone who buys into social stereotypes and is impressionable, vulnerable, insecure, etc. An exchange occurs between the aggressor and recipient; the current coercion literature does not examine this exchange. This research will measure respondent's perceptions of both externally applied coercion (by the male) and the internalized effect of coercion (on the woman). Further explanation of externally applied coercion and the internalized effect of coercion will be provided within the methodology section.

The final gap in the literature that this research will address is to whom responsibility for coerced sex is

ascribed. Research examines frequency and amounts of coercion utilized the affect of coercion on the victim, and the acceptance of coercion by respondents. Only one published study (Regan, 1997) was found which measured to whom responsibility is ascribed when coercive tactics result in completed sex. This factor is important because women may not report coerced sex if they feel a sense of responsibility. In addition men may not view their actions as coercive; they perceive the women's behavior, attitudes and actions to be indicative of wanting sex. This research will not only measure perceptions of coercion but also to whom responsibility for coerced sex is ascribed.

While the use of coercive tactics may be used in other dyads this research examines coercive tactics employed by males to gain sex from females. This dyad will be explored because data suggest women are more often affected by coercive sexual tactics than men. In addition, this research aims to find support for the assertion that social norms and gender role socialization create situations in which the uses of coercive sexual tactics by men are promoted.

Chapter 3 Methods

Introduction

This project measured the affect of relationship status and the woman's reputation, within the context of a heterosexual sexual encounter, on perceptions of coercion and ascription of responsibility. A 2 (reputation of woman; virgin v. promiscuous) x 3 (status of the relationship; stranger v. second date v. dating for one month) between subjects factorial design was utilized (see table 3A).

Table 3A
2 x 3 interaction conditions and expected results

		Reputation of the female	
		<i>Virgin</i>	<i>Promiscuous</i>
Relationship status	<i>Stranger</i>	VS DV1: highest DV2: highest DV 3: highest DV 4: highest	PS DV1: low DV2: low DV 3: low DV 4: low
	<i>Second Date</i>	VSD DV1: higher DV2: higher DV 3: higher DV 4: higher	PSD DV1: lower DV2: lower DV 3: lower DV 4: lower
	<i>One-Month Dating</i>	VOM DV1: high DV2: high DV 3: high DV 4: high	POM DV1: lowest DV2: lowest DV 3: lowest DV 4: lowest

DV 1: Perceptions of internalized coercion
 DV 2: Perceptions of applied externalized coercion male
 DV 3: Ascription of responsibility for the completed sexual interaction to the male
 DV 4: Ascription of criminality culpability

This project was developed after a review of literature revealed a deficiency in research which considers the impact of more than one independent variable on perceptions, use and experience with coercion. Also, a dearth of research measuring to whom responsibility for coerced sex is ascribed was found. In addition, the literature fails to consider the difference between perceptions of externally applied coercion by the male and the internalized effect of the coercion on the female. Finally, most of the coercion literature examines respondents' actual experiences as a victim or perpetrator of coercion; this research looks to measure respondents' perceptions of a hypothetical situation.

Beyond the gaps within the literature this project was developed in response to the author's professional observations over years of direct service work with survivors of coerced sexual contact. Most of the survivors were assaulted after being verbally coerced rather than physically forced. However the survivors who were physically forced often experienced more favorable outcomes when compared with women who were coerced. The women who were physically forced to have sex were more likely to utilize support systems and were therefore more likely to receive support from these systems. Women whose experience

met the legal definition of rape were more likely to report their experience to police departments, prosecutors' offices, family, friends and hospitals. The coerced women were less likely to feel justified in their belief that they were victims of a sexual assault, and therefore they were less likely to utilize formal or informal systems. While no known study exists that directly supports this observation, the results from Abbey, Ross, McDuffie and McAuslan (1996), Koss and Oros (1982) and Koss et al. (1988) collectively lend support for this observation. Koss and Oros (1982) found that only 8% of women who are date raped will report the crime to the police. Koss et al. (1988) found 55% of stranger rape victims labeled their experience as rape, compared with 23% of acquaintance rape victims, although both groups reported experiencing the same level of sexual force. Finally, Abbey, Ross, McDuffie and McAuslan (1996) found rape events more than coercion events to involve strangers rather than acquaintances. These findings suggest that coercion is committed more by acquaintances, fewer victims of acquaintance rape label their experience as rape and very few date rape victims report their experience to the police. Therefore it seems reasonable to conclude that victims of coerced sexual contact, most often at the hands of known offenders, would

not report their experience to the formal criminal justice system.

In addition to noticing that the affects of coercion were often more emotionally devastating to women, it was also apparent that various factors affected the women's perception of self. For instance, factors such as their reputation and how well they knew the perpetrator affected the amount of responsibility that the woman placed on themselves. These factors also affected the amount of guilt and shame experienced by the women. The deficiencies in the literature, coupled with personal professional experience, prompted this author to question whether the negative emotions were affected by socially imposed constructs. In other words, did the women feel guilt and shame because they were socialized to believe that various factors, rather than the act itself, affect perceptions of coercion and ascription of responsibility? Furthermore, are the general public's perceptions of coercion and ascription of responsibility more so influenced by extraneous factors rather than the actual exchange?

Hypotheses

Overall, the study sought to examine whether relationship status and the woman's reputation affect perceptions of

coercion and ascription of responsibility. There are nine specific hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The relationship status of the perpetrator and recipient will affect perceptions of externally applied coercion. Specifically, I predicted that respondents would be more likely to perceive that externally applied coercive tactics were utilized when the relationship status of the couple is stranger versus second-date or one-month dating.

After counseling women who were coerced to have sex, it was evident that their perceptions of the event varied depending on whether or not they were acquainted with the perpetrator. Women who did not know the perpetrator perceived the experience differently from women who agreed to date or who knew the perpetrator, suggesting their perceptions may have been socially imposed. In addition, Abrams et al. (2003) examined perceptions of stranger and acquaintance rape. They gave their sample of 65 English university students a vignette in which the perpetrator was either a complete stranger or an acquaintance (the two met at a party on the night of the rape). Findings revealed more blame was attributed to the acquaintance rape victim than to the stranger rape victim. However the research did not measure the relationship between coercion and blame.

Hypothesis 2: The reputation of the woman will affect perceptions of externally applied coercion. Specifically, I predicted that respondents would be more likely to perceive that externally applied coercive tactics were utilized when the woman's reputation is virgin compared to promiscuous. A combination of professional observation and a review of the literature guided the development of this hypothesis. Professional interaction with victims of coerced and forced sex yielded statements such as "I was not that kind of girl" or "just because I slept with his friend did not mean I wanted to sleep with him." In addition, feminist theory argues that society imposes sexually polarizing views of women as sluts or saints; the work of Glick and Fiske (1996) and Estrich (1987) in particular prompted the development of this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship status of the perpetrator and recipient will affect perceptions of internal reactions to coercion. Specifically, I predicted that respondents would be more likely to perceive that the recipient was internally affected by the coercive tactics when the relationship status of the couple is stranger versus second-date or one-month dating. This hypothesis was created for similar reason to that noted under hypothesis one. However, this project attempted to measure if

respondents differentiated between externally applied coercion and internal reactions to coercion. As stated previously, coercion should be seen as a multi-dimensional construct which requires an exchange between actors. This project also measured whether respondents differentiate between the actions of the perpetrator (man) and the reaction of the recipient (women).

Hypothesis 4: The reputation of the woman will affect perceptions of *internal reactions to coercion*.

Specifically, I predicted that respondents would be more likely to perceive that the recipient was internally affected by the coercive tactics when the woman's reputation is virgin compared to promiscuous. This hypothesis was created for a similar reason to that noted under hypothesis two. However this project attempted to measure if respondents differentiated between externally applied coercion and internal reactions to coercion. This project also measured whether respondents differentiated between the actions of the perpetrator (man) and the reaction of the recipient (women).

Hypothesis 5: The relationship status of the perpetrator and recipient will affect *ascription of responsibility*.

Specifically, I predicted that respondents would ascribe more responsibility to the perpetrator in the stranger

condition compared to the perpetrators who are in either the second-date or one-month dating condition. This hypothesis was generated after working with women who experienced coerced sex and presenting trainings on sexual assault. First, the women with whom this author worked often blamed themselves for the coerced sex if the perpetrator was someone they were dating or an acquaintance with whom they flirted. Second, the public (individuals with whom this author came in contact with via trainings and presentations) often blamed women who were romantically involved, even casually, with the perpetrator of coercion.

Limited research exists on ascription of responsibility regarding coerced sexual contact. A recently published study by Katz et al. (2007) examined perceived victim responsibility as a function of rape versus coerced sex. Findings revealed more victim blaming was assigned to the victim who was coerced relative to the victim who was forced. The study also examined victim blame as a function of victim-offender gender relationship. Participants perceived female-to-male coercion as more controllable and thus greater responsibility was attributed to a verbally coerced man. While this study measured attributes of perceived victim blame it was more so a comparison between groups of victims. The current project manipulates

socially imposed victim attributes, to measure ascription of responsibility.

Hypothesis 6: The reputation of the woman will affect perceptions of ascription of responsibility.

Specifically, I predicted that respondents would ascribe more responsibility to the male who uses sexually coercive tactics on a virgin than a male who uses sexually coercive tactics on a promiscuous woman. As with hypothesis 5, this hypothesis was generated based upon research published by Katz et al (2007) which concluded that perceived victim responsibility is a function of the amount of force used by the perpetrator. While this project did not manipulate the independent variable, amount/type of force, it does measure reputation of the woman. The Katz et al. (2007) findings theoretically correlate with this project's assumptions. The concept of victim responsibility as a function of amount of force used by the perpetrator and the *reputation of the woman* evolved from Burt's (1980) analysis of rape myths and Estrich's (1987) discussion of "real rape victims". In addition, researchers have found acceptance of rape myths are linked to the acceptance of the use of force and/or coercion (Forbes, Adam-Curtis, Leah & Pakalka, 2006). The Katz et al (2007) study and this project assume that perceptions of victim responsibility are a

function of social stereotypes which promote that women who are promiscuous, fail to fight off an attack, are not physically forced or who know the perpetrator are more responsible for the resulting rape. Therefore results should theoretically parallel the Katz et al (2007) findings which revealed more victim blame was assigned to the victim who was coerced relative to the victim who was forced.

This prediction is further supported by observations of public reactions to highly publicized rape cases. The public often blames the woman who presses charges against a male, when the woman is not the "perfect" victim (see Burt, 1980; Estrich, 1987; Longway & Fitzgerald, 1984).

Hypothesis 7: The relationship status of the perpetrator and recipient will affect recognition of criminality.

Given the aforementioned Katz et al. (2007) findings and the theoretical assertions advanced by Burt (1980) and Estrich (1987), I predicted that respondents who received the stranger condition would be more likely to strongly agree that the interaction is criminal, when compared with respondents who received either the second-date or one-month dating condition. Like Hypotheses 5 and 6, this considers ascription of responsibility. However this hypothesis developed the level of responsibility further by

questioning whether respondents viewed the coercive tactics as tantamount to a crime and, if so, to what degree.

Hypothesis 8: The reputation of the woman will affect recognition of criminality. Specifically, I predicted that respondents who received the virgin condition would be more likely to strongly agree that the interaction is criminal, when compared with respondents who received the promiscuous condition. Like Hypotheses 5 and 6, this considered ascription of responsibility. However this hypothesis developed the level of responsibility further by questioning whether respondents viewed the coercive tactics as tantamount to a crime and, if so, to what degree. The impact of *reputation of the woman* on *recognition of criminality* evolved from Burt's (1980) analysis of rape myths and Estrich's (1987) discussion of "real rape victims". This project assumed that respondents would be influenced by the woman's reputation; their recognition of criminality would be affected by socially pervasive stereotypes that promiscuous women want sex even if the sex is coerced.

Hypothesis 9: The gender of the respondent will affect recognition of coercion, ascription of responsibility and the recognition of criminality. Specifically, I predicted women would be more likely to agree that (1) external

coercion was applied; (2) internally perceived coercion is present; (3) responsibility should be ascribed with the male perpetrator; (4) and the interaction is criminal when compared with male respondents. This is regardless of the other independent variables, such as reputation of the woman in the scenario. A review of the literature revealed women and men perceive coercion, aggression and force differently (Forbes & Curtis, 2001) and that men perceive women as behaving more sexually and being more interested in a sexual relationship than do women (Abbey, 1982; Shea, 1993). It is also clear that men are more prone to recognize or accept physical resistance from women, but discount verbal resistance (Carr & Van Deussen, 2004; Fisher et al., 2000). It is important, therefore, to understand whether men and women also viewed coercion differently when socially constructed independent variables are manipulated.

This project anticipated that significant interactions would emerge. Respondents who received the condition interaction 1 (RW = virgin; RS = stranger) would be more likely to strongly agree that: (1) external coercion was applied; (2) internally perceived coercion is present; (3) responsibility should be ascribed with the male perpetrator; (4) and the interaction is criminal when

compared with respondents who receive the condition interaction 6 (RW = promiscuous; RS = one-month dating). While it was anticipated that the mean difference would be greatest between the two extreme conditions, it was also predicted that significant differences would emerge between the other conditions.

Dependent variables

Sexual coercion is a multi-dimensional construct. Spitzberg and Rhea (1999) define coercion within the context of sexual interaction as a "continuum of process by which persons are induced into sexual activity against their will" (p. 3). They state that coercive tactics can range from rape at one end of the spectrum to psychological pressure at the other end. Kilpatrick (2004) notes Jewkes, Sen and Garcia-Moreno's (2002) definition of coercion as "including physical force, psychological intimidation, blackmail or other threats, or taking advantage of an individual who is unable to give consent because they are drunk, drugged, asleep, or mentally incapable of understanding the situation" (p. 1215). Struckman-Johnson et al (2003) define sexually coercive behavior as an "act of using pressure, alcohol or drugs, or force to have sexual contact with someone against his or her will" (p.

76). Koss (1996) discusses the importance of distinguishing between types and degrees of force; she notes that psychological coercion might include situations such as continual nagging and pressuring, threats to end the relationship, false promises, and similar strategies that are not desirable but are not crimes. These definitions all describe coercion as an action or message initiated by a perpetrator without acknowledgement that the perpetrator intends for the recipient of his action or message to comply. Without acknowledgement that the perpetrator intends for the recipient to comply, the premeditated and manipulative nature of coercion is discounted. Definitions which merely list behaviors without context suggest that sexually coercive actions are accidents or misunderstandings. Furthermore without acknowledging the perpetrator's goal is to gain compliance from the recipient, the definition fails to emphasize the existence of the recipient, or victim. A definition which does not reference the presence of the recipient discounts the potential resulting harm to the recipient/victim.

This project conceptualized coercion as an exchange, inclusive of the recipient/victim. The definition must be multidimensional and inclusive of the recipient/victim's internal reaction as intended by the perpetrator. Building

upon the existing definitions of coercion, this project operationalized sexual coercion as a form of force in which the perpetrator attempts to verbally wear down or convince the recipient to engage in sexual contact by being manipulative, playing upon gender role socialization and social stereotypes, being persistent and/or applying pressure, in the hopes that the recipient will be affected by guilt, shame, obligation, gender role socialization or being overwhelmed to the point that she complies with the recipient's requests for or initiation of sexual contact. This author recognizes that coercion can occur without verbal pressure; coercion can be implied and occur without an exchange of words. This point is more subtle and requires a separate paper and analysis; thus, for the purpose of this project, coercion is operationalized as involving verbal communication. It should be stressed that this definition does not assume that force is not used; rather this definition assumes that coercion is a form of force. Chapter 6 will discuss the potential policy implications of this assertion.

This project's definition expands upon the current definitions of coercion in numerous ways. First, this project operationalizes coercion as an exchange; this exchange recognizes the recipient. This definition also

highlights the premeditation utilized by the perpetrator. While the perpetrator may not consider his actions to be illegal, this definition assumes the perpetrator is aware that he is resorting to more than seduction to obtain his goal of sexual contact. Next, this definition includes the concept of playing upon gender role socialization and stereotypes; it is imperative that a definition of coercion include reference to social stereotypes. As suggested by Burt (1980), socially pervasive stereotypes have created a negative climate for rape victims; this reasoning can be applied to coercion victims. In many instances, coercion could not generally occur without the coercive party playing upon gender role socialization and stereotypes. Furthermore, because this definition references gender role socialization and stereotypes, this project applies a gender specific definition. As supported by DeGue and DeLillo (2005) this project utilizes a gender-specific definition of coercion, with men as perpetrators and women as victims. Because this project is operationalizing coercion as a bi-directional construct, involving an exchange between a perpetrator and a recipient, measurement will include analysis of *externally applied coercion* and *internal reactions to coercion*.

Externally applied coercion suggests that the perpetrator utilizes verbal tactics to wear down or convince the recipient to engage in sexual contact by being manipulative, playing upon gender role socialization and social stereotypes, being persistent and/or applying pressure, in the hopes that the recipient will have internal reactions which compel the recipient to comply with the recipient's initiation of sexual contact. Verbal pressures are connected to gender roles, social expectations and/or awareness of the recipients' weaknesses; these three factors will be discussed separately. Coercion involving manipulation occurs when the perpetrator is aware of the recipient's weaknesses. For example, a poor, battered woman pays a lawyer a retainer. The woman is fighting for custody of her children. After paying the retainer the lawyer tells the woman "If you do not sleep with me I will not represent you." In this scenario the lawyer was aware of the woman's weaknesses and used her weakness to coerce her.

Coercion involving gender role socialization is operationalized as applying verbal and emotional pressure which plays upon different messages sent to men and women about their roles in a sexual relationship. An example of such a situation is that a woman is manually stimulating a

man to the point that he has an erection, at which point the woman decides to stop. The man says, "You got me so horny, you can't leave me like this"; or "Why stop now? It is clear you are horny, we might as well finish." This is an example of the man playing upon gender role socialization and making the woman feel obligated to continue. This example and explanation is supported by Russell and Oswald (2002); one of the three most frequently used coercive behaviors reported by the men in their study was becoming so aroused they felt it was useless to stop even though their partner didn't want to have sex. This may suggest that some men feel that once they are sexually stimulated, the woman is obligated to continue. Carr and VanDeussen (2004) also found that 16% of men reported being so aroused that they could not stop even though the women did not want them to continue.

Coercion as a result of social expectations/stereotypes has not been adequately addressed in the coercion literature. However, rape as a result of these factors has been discussed in the literature. Muelenhard, Friedman and Thomas (1985) directly tested one of the items within the RMAS in their examination of "justifiability of date rape under various circumstances" (p. 297). The authors found date rape was regarded as

significantly more justified if the couple went to the man's apartment to talk, versus if the couple went to a religious function. The study also found rape was regarded as significantly more justifiable if the man paid all of the date expenses, versus if expenses were split between the couple. These findings support the notion that social norms and expectations may mitigate the acceptability of date rape. Coercion as a result of social expectations/stereotypes would include a scenario in which the recipient feels obligated to have sex because the aggressor evokes social stereotypes. An example of such a situation is one where a woman in college is drinking and dancing provocatively with a man at a fraternity party. The couple goes back to his room and begins to kiss and touch each other. The woman says "We should get back to the party." The man says "Everyone saw how you were all over me, everyone knows you want me." This is an example of coercion as a result of social expectations.

Internal reaction to coercion refers to how coercion is interpreted and received by the recipient; the recipient will be affected by guilt, shame, obligation, gender role socialization or being overwhelmed to the point that she complies with the recipient's requests for or initiation of sexual contact. The recipient gives in to sex not because

she is sexually aroused but because she feels obligated, ashamed, guilty or embarrassed to refuse the tactics because one or more of the factors (gender role socialization, etc.) may impact her decision. Although researchers have found women more likely to reject rape myths than men, and men more likely to attribute blame to victims than women (Gilmartic-Zena, 1988; Jimenez & Abreu, 2003) women are affected by rape myths and gender role socialization. Boehner et al. (1993) found women who are less accepting of rape myths have lowered self-esteem when exposed to a rape report.

This definition implies that for coercive tactics to result in sexual contact, the tactics must not only be applied but also processed and accepted by the recipient. It should be clear that this assertion *does not* hold the recipient responsible; this assertion rather explains the exchange between aggressor and recipient. The recipient may receive the externally applied tactics and submit to or refuse sex. If the tactics are received and result in submission this would constitute coerced sex. However if the tactics are received and sex is still denied this would result in unsuccessful verbal coercion. Finally if the tactics are received and rejected but sex occurs this would

no longer be verbally coerced sex, but rather physically forced sex.

Ascription of responsibility is operationalized as the person upon whom responsibility for the completed sexual act should be placed. This construct considers the responsibility of both parties for verbally making their feelings or desires known, and for ensuring the desire to have sex was mutual. Ascription of responsibility may either be placed with the male, female, both or neither. In a healthy sexual encounter, devoid of force or coercion, the resulting sex can be attributed to the actions of both participants. In a sexual encounter involving coercion, one may assume that responsibility is placed on the perpetrator; however, this does not seem to be reflected in social attitudes. The impact of the independent variables on this dependent variable will measure whether ascription of responsibility is mitigated by social factors.

Criminality is the final dependent variable. Criminality is operationalized as an action which meets socially recognizable levels of criminal behavior; level of criminality ranges from no crime to rape, with categories in between (e.g., a crime, but not rape).

Independent Variables

Vignettes and an accompanying survey were utilized to measure the hypotheses; the instruments are attached (Appendix A). The vignettes described a situation in which a man and woman come in contact at a social event. Two independent variables were manipulated, while the coercive tactics utilized by the man and the response by the woman were held constant. The *reputation of the woman* (RW) included two conditions; the conditions were virgin or promiscuous. The vignette with the promiscuous condition reads, the female "has a reputation for sleeping around". The vignette with the virgin condition describes the female in the vignette as having a reputation for being a "good girl" and wanting to remain a virgin until she is married.

While the literature has examined the relationship between a woman's reputation and perception of rape, a review of the literature did not yield any research which examined the affect of a woman's reputation on recognition of coercion; therefore this issue should be explored. Measuring the affect of a woman's reputation on recognition of coercion and ascription of responsibility seemed especially pertinent given the amount of attention given to the relationship between a woman's reputation and her experience with rape in the feminist literature. Glick and

Fiske (1996) discuss research which creates polarized versions of women as either saints or sluts. In addition, Estrich (1987) distinguishes between real rape victims who are completely innocent and all others. When testing her theory Burt (1980) found that pervasive social stereotypes, such as "only bad girls get raped" have created a climate which is hostile to rape victims (p. 217); and that over half of her sample supported such statements as "In the majority of rapes the women was promiscuous or had a bad reputation" (p. 229). Given the binary opposition applied to women in nonconsensual sexual encounters, as demonstrated by feminist theory and research, this project utilized two polarized reputation conditions.

Relationship status (RS) was also manipulated and included three conditions; the conditions were just met/stranger, second-date and one-month dating. While the Abrams et al. (2003) study examined perceived differences between acquaintance and stranger rape victims, no study was found which specifically measures perceptions of coerced sex as a function of relationship type. Relationship status refers to level of familiarity between the man and the woman. The first condition is stranger. Stranger refers to the man who before the events leading up to the encounter in question was previously unknown to the

woman. The stranger condition vignette reads as the man and woman "have never met before tonight." The second condition is second date. The second-date condition reads as this is the man and woman's "second date." The second date was chosen as it represents some familiarity between actors; it also assumes the female agreed to a second meeting. This seems to be an important distinction; the second-date signifies the woman's willingness to go out with the man. This willingness may signify to some respondents a level of responsibility on the part of the woman.

The third condition is dating for one month. Dating for one month was chosen to represent a relatively new relationship, which assumes familiarity between the actors. Establishing one month versus on-going is theoretically important. If the relationship was only categorized as a dating relationship, it could be inferred that enough time has elapsed for ongoing patterns of coercive control to have been established.

The two independent variables were manipulated within the vignettes; this manipulation created an interaction. Condition interactions are as follows:

Condition 1: RW - Virgin; RS - Stranger

Condition 2: RW - Virgin; RS - Second-date

Condition 3: RW - Virgin; RS - One-month dating

Condition 4: RW - Promiscuous; RS - Stranger

Condition 5: RW - Promiscuous; RS - Second-date

Condition 6: RW - Promiscuous; RS - One-month dating

Sex (gender) of the respondent will also be run as an independent variable. A review of the literature revealed women and men perceive coercion, aggression and force differently (Forbes & Curtis, 2001) and that men perceive women as behaving more sexually and being more interested in a sexual relationship than do women (Abbey, 1982; Shea, 1993). It is expected that a significant mean difference will result with sex (gender) as an independent variable.

Sample

A total of 389 surveys were collected from three sites. Seventeen surveys were discarded because a significant portion of the surveys were incomplete. The final sample therefore consisted of 372 surveys. The first site was a private, northeast, four-year university (n = 170). The second site was a public, northeast, two-year community college (n = 87). The final site was a south-eastern, private, two-year technical college (n = 115). Because the academic structures varied at each site so did the selection process. Classes at the first site were

randomly chosen from a list of core curriculum courses. All instructors teaching the courses were contacted; classes were selected according to which instructors agreed to participate. A sample at the second site was procured as one instructor allowed the researcher to survey all of the classes she taught. The final sample was procured as the researcher spent a day at the third site and approached each instructor teaching on that day. Any class whose instructor gave this researcher access to the class was sampled. The sites yielded various sample sizes making analysis regarding the effect of the location on results problematic.

The final sample was representative of the institutions from which they were derived. The sample consisted of 140 males and 232 females; the second and third sites had predominantly female populations. The sample consisted of participants aged 18 - 63 ($M = 23.7$, $SD = 8.1$); 73% of the sample was 18 - 23 years of age. Ninety-five percent of the sample reported they identified as straight/heterosexual, while the other 5% reported they identified as either bisexual, gay, lesbian or questioning.

The sample was also ethnically diverse and comparable to the 2000 US Census data (see table 3B): 8.1% of the sample identified as Hispanic/Latino(a); 23% identified as

Black/African-American; 60% identified as White/European-American; 2.7% identified as Asian/Pacific Islander. The remaining 5% identified as South Asian, Native American, Arab or other.

Table 3B
Ethnicity of Sample in comparison with
2000 US Census Data

	African American/ Black	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Hispanic/ Latino	White/ European American	Other
Current research project	23%	2.7%	8.1%	60%	5%
2000 US Census Data	12.3%	3.7%	12.5%	69.1%	5.5%

The sample was economically diverse; the average family household income (estimate of income when they were growing up) was between \$50,000 - 60,000. Forty-three percent of the sample grew up in a home where the average annual income was equal to or less than the \$30,000 - 50,000 category and 27% reported growing in a home where the average annual income was greater than \$70,000.

Procedures

This project was approved by the Institutional Review Boards at both the University from which the research originated and at the first site. The second and third site considered the IRB approval from the University of

project origin as sufficient. Each participant signed an informed consent (see Appendix D). The informed consent explained that participation is voluntary and confidential. The informed consent form discussed the respondents' right to withdraw from the project without any penalty. The informed consent forms were collected and placed in a box, separate from the box in which the surveys were placed. Respondents were told that the last page asks them to fill out demographic information, which will only be used for statistical purposes. Participants were asked to drop completed or incomplete surveys in a box near the exit. Upon completion of the survey each participant was given an exit debriefing form (see appendix E). The exit debriefing form informed participants of the project's goals and listed resources to local sexual assault program. The exit debriefing form also listed the PI's contact information. The PI was present during survey administration. No adverse reactions were noted. Two potential respondents declined to participate.

Data Collection

Data collection instruments included the vignettes with accompanying survey designed for this project, Burt's (1980) Rape Myths Acceptance (RMA) scale, and a demographics questionnaire. This section will discuss each of the data collection instruments separately.

Vignettes (see Appendix A) with an accompanying survey (see Appendix B) were administered to measure perceptions of coercion and ascription of responsibility. Respondents were not exposed to all conditions; respondents received one of six vignettes. Vignettes included a scenario in which a male and a female engage in sex after the male uses verbally coercive techniques; no physical force was used. The verbally coercive techniques are held constant while the independent variables (reputation of the woman and relationship status) are manipulated. The survey consisted of twenty items. Fourteen items consists of statements which require a one to five Likert scale response. The remaining six items elicit a dichotomous response and were added to qualitatively enhance the quantitative responses. Items 1 and 2 were developed to measure the respondents' appreciation of the exchange. Item 1 asked if the male wanted to have sex; and question 2 asked if the female wanted to have sex. Item 1 was also used as a manipulation

check; all respondents answered "definitely" to this item. Item 3 asked if the male should have asked if it was OK for him to have sex with her. This item was added to ascertain the respondents' perceptions about the initiation of sexual contact. Responses from this item will be analyzed separately.

Item 18 asks if the female decides to call this rape, who is more responsible. Responses include: the male, the female, both, and neither it was a misunderstanding. This item was added to get a more definitive appreciation of where ascription of responsibility was placed. The response to this item will be analyzed separately. The final two items were added after a discussion with colleagues yielded the following question: if respondents do not see the exchange as coercion, what do they perceive happened? Item 19 asked "why did Kevin do what he did?" Item 20 asked "Why did Rachel do what she did?" Six choices and an "other" response were listed. Respondents were asked to circle as many of the responses as they saw fit.

In addition to using vignettes with an accompanying survey, Burt's (1980) RMA scale was administered (see Appendix C). The RMA scale measures concepts related to victim blaming, general attitudes toward woman, and

attitudes toward woman who claim to be raped. The 19-item scale consists of statements which require a one to seven Likert scale response with questions such as: "A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies she is willing to have sex"; and "women who get raped hitchhiking get what they deserve" (p. 223). The inclusion of Burt's RMAS has been noted in 57 studies, and numerous additional studies have utilized a portion or a revision of the scale (Buhi, 2005). Burt's (1980) instrument validation analysis found the instrument to be internally consistent; $\alpha = .875$.

The RMA scale was used as it measures socially pervasive stereotypes about women as related to sexual assault. While the instrument does not measure attitudes toward coercive tactics, the scales ability to measure general attitudes toward women who claim to be raped is relevant to this project. Burt (1980) suggests many Americans' beliefs about rape are "connected to other deeply held and pervasive attitudes such as sex role stereotyping, distrust of the opposite sex and acceptance of interpersonal violence" (p. 229). As stated in the introduction, the same socially constructed norms which promote rape also promote the use of coercion. Therefore using a scale which measures attitudes toward rape is

applicable for comparison with results regarding perceptions of coercion. In support of this assertion, researchers have found acceptance of rape myths are linked to the acceptance of the use of force and/or coercion (Forbes, Adam-Curtis, Leah & Pakalka, 2006).

Furthermore, the theoretical premise upon which the RMA scale was developed and many of the scale's items are directly related to this project's hypotheses. Reputation of the woman and relationship status are variables influenced by social norms associated with victim blaming, general attitudes toward women, and attitudes toward women who claim to be raped. One of the items is particularly relevant to this project: "In the majority of rapes, the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation." Analysis was performed to ascertain if a correlational relationship exists between the acceptance of rape myths and this project's dependent variables. The RMA scale was also administered to determine if this project's sample was representative of previous samples which utilized the RMA scale.

The final data collection instrument was a demographics questionnaire (see Appendix F). Questions measured demographic variables including: sex (gender), age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and socioeconomic

status. Only gender was used as an independent variable in this project; the other demographic variables were collected to measure the sample's demographic composition.

Data Analysis

Principal Components Analysis (PCA) factor analysis was performed on twelve items of the 20-item questionnaire. According to Mertler and Vannatta (2005) PCA is a procedure used to measure whether concepts overlap for the purpose of determining if the separate variables are a common concept or element shared between the variables; or more specifically whether shared variance exists between variables (p. 249). They further explain that factor analysis is "a process by which the number of variables is reduced by determining which variables cluster together, and factors are the grouping of variables that are measuring some common entity or construct" (p. 249).

The items were analyzed via a Varimax rotation, as this rotation yielded the model's best fit. Six items were excluded as the scale used to measure item response was different. Analysis regarding some of these items was done separately and will be discussed later in chapter 4. Initially the model revealed four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. However the final factor consisted of only

one item. Analysis was rerun and the model was forced to group the items into three factors; the three factors were labeled *coercion*, *responsibility* and *problematic sex*. The model resulted in the exclusion of two items with factor loading under .4. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) after factors have loaded at .4 or higher, a relationship between items can be established. The two items that were excluded were individually analyzed; findings are discussed later in Chapter 4.

Because this project examined the effect of independent variables on multiple dependent variables, MANOVA was chosen as the test of significance. The reasons for using MANOVA rather than multiple ANOVAs are outlined by Mertler and Vanetta (2005). First, the chances of discovering what actually changes as a result of the differing treatments or characteristics improve. Next, a MANOVA can be more powerful than separate ANOVAs. And finally, using a MANOVA as opposed to several ANOVAs decreases the likelihood of an inflated type 1 error rate.

Robustness was not a concern; Mertler and Vannatta (2005) state a sample size of 20 in the smallest cell should be sufficient to ensure robustness to violations of univariate and multivariate analysis (p. 124). Given the 3 x 2 factorial design will yield six cells, and the sample

is 372, robustness is more than adequately assured. As suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) Box's Test was first run to assess for possible violations of homoscedasticity.

Finally analysis was performed to determine if the sum of the RMA scale was significantly correlated with *coercion, responsibility* and *problematic sex*. In addition, Cronbach's alpha reliability estimate was run on the RMA scale to ensure internal consistency. The RMA scale was also administered to determine if this project's sample was representative of previous samples which utilized the RMA scale. Burt's (1980) instrument validation analysis found the instrument to be internally consistent; $\alpha = .875$. In addition, Buhi (2005) reports reliability coefficients from seven published articles; the reliability estimates were between .745 and .92.

Chapter 4 Results

This chapter will first review results from the vignettes and accompanying survey. Before analyzing the affect of the independent variables on the dependent variables, the dependent variables had to be identified. This project used multiple items to measure the dependant variables; therefore Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was first run to determine the dependant variables. As this project measured the affect of the independent variables on multiple dependent variables, MANOVA was utilized as the test of significance. These results from the MANOVA analysis will also be discussed. Analysis between the RMA scale and this project's dependant variables (coercion, responsibility and problematic sex) will also be reported. Finally, the results from a one-way ANOVA with sum of the RMA scale as the dependant variable and sex (gender) as the independent variable will be reported.

Quantitative Results

PCA factor analysis revealed a final model which consisted of three factors and twelve items (see table 4A).

Table 4A
 Rotated Component Matrix
 Final Factor Model of Best Fit
 (Three factors comprised of 12 items)

Item #	Item label	Factor 1 <i>Coercion</i>	Factor 2 <i>Responsibility</i>	Factor 3 <i>Problematic Sex</i>
1	Rachel felt pressured to have sex with Kevin	.795	.218	.172
2	Rachel felt like she was supposed to have sex with Kevin	.762	.018	-.155
3	Kevin made Rachel feel she was supposed to have sex	.746	.132	.059
4	Kevin used verbal pressure	.686	-.109	.231
5	Kevin did not use pressure to get Rachel to have sex	.644	.200	.188
6	Rachel had a choice in the situation	-.064	.730	.241
7	If Rachel did not want to have sex she should have said no	-.032	.701	.096
8	Rachel is more responsible for the sex than Kevin	.274	.588	.014
9	Kevin is more responsible for the sex than Rachel	.190	.533	.128
10	Kevin used verbal pressure but this is not a crime	-.014	.055	.803
11	What Kevin did should be considered rape	.167	.265	.729
12	Rachel felt good Kevin was trying to have sex with her	.150	.136	.588

Bolded items correspond to the factor labeled for that column.

The three factors accounted for 54% of the variance.

Factor one consisted of five items. It was anticipated that

respondents would distinguish between externally applied coercion and internal reaction to coercion. However, items related to both the male's use of coercion and the female's reaction to coercion loaded as one factor (see Table 4A).

The first factor was comprised of five items assessing perceptions of coercion; the items which loaded for factor one are: (1) *Rachel felt pressured to have sex with Kevin*; (2) *Rachel felt like she was supposed to have sex with Kevin*; (3) *Kevin made Rachel feel she was supposed to have sex*; (4) *Kevin used verbal pressure*; and (5) *Kevin did not use pressure to get Rachel to have sex*. Item 5 was reverse coded because it was phrased in a way that assumed Kevin did not use coercion, whereas the other 4 items were worded in a way that assumed that either Kevin used coercion or Rachel felt coerced. It was hypothesized that respondents would view items (1) and (2) as constructs related to *internal reactions to coercion* and therefore separate from items (3), (4) and (5) which were expected to measure *externally applied coercion*; however, these items loaded together as one factor. Reasons why respondents did not differentiate between these constructs are discussed later in this chapter and in chapter 4. It was also expected that an additional item (*Kevin did not use any pressure to get Rachel to have sex with him*) would load with this item.

This item did not load on any factor and was not included in the analysis. This first factor is labeled *Coercion*; the eigenvalue of 3.49 accounted for 29.1% of the variance, $\alpha = .8$.

The second factor was comprised of four items assessing ascription of responsibility; these items are: (1) *Rachel had a choice in the situation*; (2) *if Rachel did not want to have sex she should have said no*; (3) *Rachel is more responsible for the sex than Kevin*; and (4) *Kevin is more responsible for the sex than Rachel*. Item (4) was reverse coded in the scaling because the question assessed Kevin's responsibility and the other three questions assessed Rachel's responsibility. The second factor is labeled *Responsibility*; the eigenvalue of 1.8 accounted for 15.2% of the variance, $\alpha = .56$.

The final factor was comprised of three items which appear to be related to views on problematic sexual encounters; labeled *Problematic Sex*. The items which loaded on this third factor were: (1) *Kevin used verbal pressure but this is not a crime*; (2) *what Kevin did should be considered rape*; and (3) *Rachel felt good Kevin was trying to have sex with her*. Items (1) and (3) were reverse coded in the scaling because the questions were intuitively measuring a construct in the opposite direction

of item (2). It was originally expected that items one and two, and an additional item (*what Kevin did should be considered rape*) would load together as the factor *recognition of criminality*. The model of strongest fit included items (1) and (2) as expected. However, the loading of item (3) on the third factor was unexpected. In addition, *what Kevin did should be a crime but not rape*, did not load on any factor. Because *what Kevin did should be a crime but not rape* is relevant to this project, this item was run as a single item dependant variable. In regards to the items that did load on factor three, the third item seemed theoretically different from the first two items. However all three items seem related to views on problematic sex. Item (1) is related to views on problematic sex because it measures respondents' views on recognition of verbal pressure. Item (2) is also related to problematic sex as it measures respondents' response to the exchange being labeled as rape. Item (3) also relates to problematic sex as this item measures respondents' view on how Rachel felt about Kevin trying to have sex with her. Therefore, the third factor was relabeled problematic sex; the eigenvalue of 1.13 accounted for 9.3% of the variance, $\alpha = .602$. Stevens (1992) states that when the N is greater than 250 a communality of .6 or greater is acceptable.

Before running a MANOVA Box's Test was run (see table 4B). Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) caution that if the test is significant at $p \leq .001$ and group sample sizes are extremely unequal then robustness can not be assumed. Box's Test revealed $F(165, 70031.36) = 1.2$, $p = .041$ and group sample sizes were not extremely unequal, indicating that homogeneity of variance-covariance is fulfilled.

Table 4B
Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices

Box's M	213.470
F	1.200
df1	165
df2	70031.3
	57
Sig.	.041

Respondents did not differentiate between externally applied coercion and internal reactions to coercion; for the purpose of discussing results, hypotheses 1 and 3, and 2 and 4 were combined. The original hypothesis 1 (the relationship status of the perpetrator and recipient will affect perceptions of *externally applied coercion*) and the original hypothesis 3 (the relationship status of the perpetrator and recipient will affect perceptions of *internal reactions to coercion*) have been collapsed into one hypothesis (the relationship status of the perpetrator and recipient will affect *coercion*). In addition, the

original hypothesis 2 (the reputation of the woman will affect perceptions of *externally applied coercion*) and the original hypothesis 4 (the reputation of the woman will affect perceptions of *internal reactions to coercion*) have also been collapsed into one hypothesis (the reputation of the woman will affect perceptions of *coercion*).

Before discussing the MANOVA results it should be noted that item responses were (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) somewhat agree, (4) disagree, and (5) strongly disagree. However means will be reported using the sum for each factor. Factor 1, *coercion*, is comprised of 5 items; therefore the range of means is 5 - 25. Factor 2, *responsibility*, is comprised of 4 items; therefore the range of means is 5 - 20. And finally, factor 3, *problematic sex*, is comprised of 3 items; therefore the range of means is 5 - 15. MANVOA results will be discussed in regards to the corresponding hypotheses discussed below (see Table 4C):

Hypotheses 1 and 3: The relationship status of the perpetrator and recipient will affect perceptions of coercion. MANOVA results revealed significant differences among the relationship status categories on the dependent variable; $F(2,372) = 6.769$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .036$. Respondents in the second date condition ($M = 9.802$) were more likely

to agree that coercion was used when compared with respondents in the stranger condition ($M = 11.353$). Respondents in the one-month dating condition ($M = 9.893$) were also more likely to agree that coercion was used when compared with respondents in the stranger condition. A Tukey HSD poc hoc analysis revealed the mean difference between the stranger condition and both the second date and one-month dating condition was significant; however there was no significant difference between respondents in the second-date and one-month dating condition.

Table 4C
Significant and insignificant results using MANOVA as the test of significance
(Significant results are bolded)

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Relationship status	Coercion	6.77	.001*	0.04
	Responsibility	1.57	.209	0.01
	Problematic sex	1.53	.219	0.01
	What Kevin did should be a crime but not rape	0.43	.650	0.00
	Kevin was trying to seduce Rachel	1.50	.225	0.01
Reputation	Coercion	0.23	.635	0.00
	Responsibility	0.00	.998	0.00
	Problematic sex	0.87	.351	0.00
	What Kevin did should be a crime but not rape	0.00	.954	0.00
	Kevin was trying to seduce Rachel	0.02	.879	0.00
Sex (gender)	Coercion	6.72	.010*	0.02
	Responsibility	0.84	.359	0.00
	Problematic sex	14.14	.000*	0.04
	What Kevin did should be a crime but not rape	1.87	.173	0.01
	Kevin was trying to seduce Rachel	3.49	.063	0.01

Relationship status * Reputation	Coercion	2.01	.136	0.01
	Responsibility	0.41	.664	0.00
	Problematic sex	0.49	.615	0.00
	What Kevin did should be a crime but not rape	0.14	.873	0.00
	Kevin was trying to seduce Rachel	2.74	.066	0.02
Relationship status * Sex	Coercion	2.52	.082	0.01
	Responsibility	0.58	.558	0.00
	Problematic sex	0.24	.787	0.00
	What Kevin did should be a crime but not rape	3.01	.051*	0.02
	Kevin was trying to seduce Rachel	0.68	.505	0.00
Reputation * Sex	Coercion	0.10	.756	0.00
	Responsibility	0.01	.935	0.00
	Problematic sex	1.85	.175	0.01
	What Kevin did should be a crime but not rape	1.21	.272	0.00
	Kevin was trying to seduce Rachel	0.02	.891	0.00
Relationship status * Reputation * Sex	Coercion	0.19	.830	0.00
	Responsibility	0.02	.980	0.00
	Problematic sex	0.02	.980	0.00
	What Kevin did should be a crime but not rape	2.66	.072	0.01
	Kevin was trying to seduce Rachel	2.30	.102	.013

*Computed using alpha = .05

While respondents did not differentiate between externally applied coercion and internal reactions to coercion, as per factor loadings, a discussion following the data collection with one group of the Georgia sample provided useful insight. Responses included:

Female - "She could have tried harder; making excuses is not the same as saying no. She even laid back. We need more information. What was she thinking?"

Female - "But you do not know what she has previously been through or she might have been afraid."

Female - "She did not want it but she did not want to make a problem."

Female - "You never know what someone has gone through before or what they are thinking. We need more information."

These responses suggest that four of the female respondents were considering the internal reaction of the coercion recipient. This will be discussed further in chapter 5.

Hypotheses 2 and 4: The reputation of the woman will affect perceptions of coercion. Reputation of the woman had no significant effect on *coercion*; $F(2,372) = 0.23$, $p = .635$, $\eta^2 = .000$. Although no significant quantitative results were revealed an interesting response was given by a male respondent from the Georgia sample subsequent to a data collection session. Without any leading questions regarding the woman's reputation, a male respondent stated "It should not matter if she is a slut or not, she did not want to be there." This may indicate that respondents were

aware of the manipulated independent variable, *reputation of the woman*. This will be further discussed in chapter 5.

Hypothesis 5: The relationship status of the perpetrator and recipient will affect ascription of responsibility. Ascription of responsibility, *responsibility* as a factor, was not significantly affected by any of the independent variables. However, in addition to the multivariate and univariate analysis conducted, frequencies were run to further appreciate ascription of responsibility. Frequencies from a single-item (*If Rachael calls this rape who is more responsible*) yielded an interesting response. Forty-four percent of respondents saw the man as responsible; 39% of respondents saw both parties as responsible; 12% of the respondents saw the woman as responsible; and 4% of the respondents saw neither as responsible because it was a misunderstanding. These findings suggest that the majority of respondents either saw the man or both participants as responsible if the woman calls the exchange rape. Very few respondents held the woman responsible if she decides to call the exchange rape.

Hypothesis 6: The reputation of the woman will affect perceptions of ascription of responsibility. Ascription of responsibility, *responsibility* as a factor, was not

significantly affected by any of the independent variables. In addition, a cross-tab (*if Rachel calls this rape who is more responsible and woman's reputation*) was run to gain further insight into group differences. Results revealed respondents in the virgin condition compared with respondents in the promiscuous condition responded similarly; 12.6% of respondents in the virgin (reputation of women) condition reported that Rachel is more responsible, compared with 11.1% of respondents in the promiscuous condition. In addition, 42.9% of respondents in the virgin condition reported that Kevin is more responsible, compared with 45.8% of respondents in the promiscuous condition. Forty percent of respondents in the virgin condition reported that they both should be responsible, compared with 38% of respondents in the promiscuous condition. Very few (3.8% for the virgin condition and 4.2% in the promiscuous condition) thought neither should be responsible because it was misunderstanding.

Hypothesis 7: The relationship status of the perpetrator and recipient will affect recognition of criminality. The dependent variable was reconceptualized as views on problematic sex (*problematic sex*). No significant results were revealed. However an interaction

between relationship status and sex of the respondent yielded a significant result. This finding is discussed under Hypothesis 9.

Hypothesis 8: The reputation of the woman will affect perceptions of recognition of criminality. No significant results were revealed. A cross-tab (what Kevin did should be considered rape and woman's reputation) with a correlation was run to gain further insight into group differences. The categories of strongly agreed, agreed and somewhat agreed were collapsed for reporting purposes; 20.4% of respondents in the virgin condition indicated that they at least somewhat agreed that what Kevin did should be considered rape, compared with 23.9% in the promiscuous category. Although the percentage differences are small and the crosstabs results were not significant, this result is theoretically interesting. It was expected that respondents would be more likely to agree that what Kevin did should be considered rape when the women's reputation was virgin. However, the small percentage difference in the opposite direction of what was anticipated may be a result of respondents' frustration with men assuming they can take advantage of a woman who is known to be promiscuous. This will be discussed in detail in chapter 5.

Hypothesis 9: The gender of the respondent will affect recognition of coercion, ascription of responsibility and the recognition of criminality. A significant relationship also emerged between coercion and sex; $F(1,372) = 6.722$, $p = .010$, $\eta^2 = .018$. The findings confirmed the research hypothesis. Women ($M = 9.851$) were more likely to agree that coercion was used when compared with men ($M = 10.848$). No post hoc analysis was conducted because the independent variable was dichotomous. A significant relationship also emerged between problematic sex and sex (gender); $F(1,372) = 14.145$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .038$. Women ($M = 7.856$) were more likely to agree that the sex was problematic when compared with men ($M = 8.865$). No post hoc analysis was conducted as the independent variable was dichotomous.

While the MANOVA analysis revealed women were more likely to agree that the sex was problematic when compared with men, MANOVA results alone do not provide a rich appreciation of respondent perceptions. Specifically responses to the item, *what Kevin did should be considered rape*, are central to the scope of this project and may be the most telling item regarding policy implications. Therefore an ANOVA was run with a single item dependent variable (what Kevin did should be considered rape) and a cross-tab with this item and respondent sex (gender) was

also run. ANOVA results revealed significant differences between men and women on the dependent variable; $F(1, 372) = 5.246$, $p = .023$, $\eta^2 = .014$. Women ($M=3.235$) were more likely to agree that what Kevin did should be considered rape when compared with men ($M=3.550$). A cross-tab was also run on this item; items responses included (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) somewhat agree, (4) disagree, and (5) strongly disagree. The crosstabs revealed that 37.9% of men reported that they at least somewhat agreed that what Kevin did should be considered rape, compared with 48.3% of women who reported that they at least somewhat agreed that what Kevin did should be considered rape. In addition, 44.3% of the total sample reported that they at least somewhat agreed that what Kevin did should be considered rape.

In addition to the individual item results, a significant interaction emerged. As previously stated, the final model resulted in the exclusion of two items with factor loading under .4; these items were included as separate dependent variables in the MANOVA analysis. The interaction between relationship status and sex had a significant effect on a single item dependent variable (*what Kevin did was a crime but not rape*); $F(2, 372) = 3.005$, $p = .05$, $\eta^2 = .016$. Women were more likely to strongly

agree that what Kevin did was a crime but not rape if the relationship status condition was stranger ($M = 3.473$) when compared with men in the same condition ($M = 3.817$). Women were also more likely to strongly agree that what Kevin did was a crime but not rape if the relationship status condition was one-month dating ($M = 3.527$) when compared with men in the same condition ($M = 3.835$). However, men were more likely to strongly agree that what Kevin did was a crime but not rape if the relationship status condition was second-date ($M = 3.450$) when compared with women in the same condition ($M = 3.673$). No post hoc analysis could be performed as one of the independent variables was dichotomous.

An ANOVA was also run with the second single-item dependent variable, *Kevin was trying to seduce Rachel*. No significant relationships emerged for this dependent variable. This item was created to measure respondents' responses to the interaction being labeled as seduction.

This project also utilized Burt's (1980) Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA) scale ($M = 49.4$, $SD = 11.9$, $\alpha = .875$). Buhi (2005) critiques the reporting of reliability estimates by researchers who administered the RMA scale. He reported reliability coefficients from seven published articles; the reliability estimates were between .745 and

.92. Findings from this project ($M = 43$, $SD = 8.14$, $\alpha = .856$) suggest this sample is representative of other samples which utilized the RMA scale.

Items from the RMA scale were reverse coded (variable *rmasum2r* was created) to ensure uniform construct direction measurement. As expected, the RMA scale and the three factors (*coercion*, *responsibility* and *problematic sex*) were negatively correlated. The sum of the RMA scale was significantly correlated with each of the three factors at the .001 level (see table 4D).

The five-item factor, *coercion*, ($M=10.21$, $SD=3.64$) was negatively correlated with the sum of the RMA, such that if respondents scored low on the coercion items, they were likely to score high on the RMA, $r = -.32$, $p < .001$. Respondents who were more supportive of rape myths were less likely to agree that the sex was coerced. The four-item factor, *responsibility*, ($M = 13.61$, $SD = 2.85$) was negatively correlated with the sum of the RMA, such that if respondents scored low on the responsibility items, they were likely to score high on the RMA, $r = -.27$, $p < .001$. Respondents who were more supportive of rape myths were more likely to agree that the female was responsible for the coerced sex. The three-item factor, *problematic sex*, ($M = 8.24$, $SD = 2.52$) was negatively correlated with the sum

of the RMA, such that if respondents scored low on the problematic sex items, they were likely to score high on the RMA, $r = -.27$, $p < .001$. Respondents who were more supportive of rape myths were less likely to agree that the sex was problematic.

Table 4D
Correlation between RMA scale means and factor means

		<i>Coercion</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Problematic Sex</i>	<i>Sum of RMA scale</i>
<i>Coercion</i>	Pearson Correlation	1	.276(**)	.262(**)	–
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	372	372	372	372
<i>Responsibility</i>	Pearson Correlation	.276(**)	1	.381(**)	–
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	372	372	372	372
<i>Problematic Sex</i>	Pearson Correlation	.262(**)	.381(**)	1	–
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	372	372	372	372
<i>Sum of RMA scale</i>	Pearson Correlation	–	–.269(**)	–.246(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	372	372	372	372

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Finally a one-way ANOVA was run with sum of the RMA scale as the dependant variable and sex (gender) as the independent variable. Results revealed a significant relationship; $F(1, 371) = 31.891$, $p = .000$. Men ($M = 74.15$, $SD = 9.98$) were more likely to accept rape myths compared with women ($M = 79.86$, $SD = 9.11$).

Conclusion

In all, the findings suggest that sex (gender) significantly affects perceptions of coercion and recognition of problematic sex. Women were more likely than men to agree that verbal pressure is equivalent to coercion and that coercive sexual tactics are problematic. This project also found that the relationship status of the heterosexual couple, in which a coerced sexual exchange results, significantly affects perceptions of coercion. Respondents in the second date condition and one-month dating condition were more likely to agree that coercion was used when compared with respondents in the stranger condition. Findings also revealed that perceptions of coercion, ascription of responsibility and recognition of problematic sex were significantly correlated with acceptance of rape myths. Respondents who were more supportive of rape myths were less likely to agree that the sex was coerced; more likely to agree that the female was responsible for the coerced sex; and were less likely to agree that the sex was problematic. Finally, this project found a significant relationship between rape myths acceptance and sex (gender); men were more likely than women to accept rape myths.

Chapter 5

Contributions to the Field

This chapter will review this project's contributions to the existing scholarly literature. This project has enhanced the coercion literature; begun the exploration of ascription of responsibility for coerced sex; confirmed gender differences as related to sexual exchanges; and furthered feminist perspective research.

Enhancing the coercion literature

Perpetrators of coercion, victims of coercion, educators, clinicians and the law are in desperate need of an enhanced appreciation of coercion. Beyond expanding and refining the definition, the construct must be further developed so that the individuals and entities affected by sexual coercion can better identify and address the use of sexually coercive tactics. It can be argued that when determining if sexually coercive tactics were employed, only the actions and words of the perpetrator should be considered. However this argument discounts the reactions of the recipient. Another argument is that coercion should be determined after reviewing the actions and words of the perpetrator and then applying the "reasonable person"

standard which according to Hubin and Haely (1999), is often translated into a "reasonable man standard," resulting in gendered definitions and policy implications. It can also be argued that coercion should be viewed contextually and all aspects of the encounter should be considered. While the latter argument is more palatable, it is often difficult to situate context. Regardless of the argument to which one subscribes, it is appreciable that coercion is a complex construct and the determination of sexual coercion in a heterosexual encounter can be equally complex. However, the complexity exists not because of inherent ambiguity, but rather because of the insufficient time and attention given to defining and understanding coercive tactics.

One of this project's main goals was to explain the need for an expanded definition of coercion. This project defined sexual coercion as behavior in which the perpetrator attempts to verbally wear down or convince the recipient to engage in sexual contact by being manipulative, playing upon gender role socialization and social stereotypes, being persistent and/or applying pressure, in the hopes that the recipient will be affected by guilt, shame, obligation, gender role socialization or being overwhelmed to the point that she complies with the

recipient's requests for or initiation of sexual contact. This definition implies an exchange occurs between the perpetrator and the recipient, and as such this project conceptualizes coercion a bi-directional construct. This project used vignettes and an accompanying survey to measure respondents' perceptions of both externally applied coercion and internal reactions to coercion. For instance, an item stated, "Kevin used verbal pressure to get Rachel to have sex". An additional item stated, "Rachel felt pressured to have sex". It was hypothesized that respondents would perceive these items to be associated with different dependent variables. However PCA factor analysis revealed that these items were collapsed into one factor, *coercion*; respondents did not differentiate between *externally applied coercion* and *internal reactions to coercion*. *Coercion* was the strongest factor that emerged.

The combined construct may be suggestive of a combination of socialization regarding sexual encounters, and a methodology that did not adequately address this issue. Methodological shortcomings will be discussed in the limitations section. As for socialization regarding sexual encounters, a plausible explanation may be that respondents are socialized to appreciate that sexual encounters result from male initiation and female

compliance. Therefore, *internal reactions to coercion* are viewed as an extension of *externally applied coercion*. In essence, the exchange is not recognized but rather sexual coercion is viewed as unidirectional construct. If this assumption is correct this suggests that women in coercive exchanges are denied the recognition that they can have a response independent of the application of the perpetrator.

Although PCA factor analysis revealed one combined construct, a discussion following the data collection at one group of the Georgia sample is suggestive of recognition of *internal reactions to coercion*. Four of the women from this group made reference to internal reactions to coercion; they discussed possible explanations for Rachel's (the name of the woman in the vignette) reasoning. One of the women stated that she needed more information regarding what "she (Rachel) was thinking". Another woman stated, "But you do not know what she has previously been through or she might have been afraid." This statement suggests that this respondent considered Rachel's previous experience as a potential factor affecting the Rachel's reaction to the coercion. Another female respondent stated, "She (Rachel) did not want it but she did not want to make a problem." Another woman followed her statement with, "You never know what someone has gone through before

or what they are thinking. We need more information.”

These responses suggest that the female respondents were considering the internal reaction of the coercion recipient. Further research is needed regarding this issue.

Although the sample saw *externally applied coercion* and *internal reactions to coercion* as one construct, labeled *coercion*, significant results emerged. Respondents in the second-date and one-month condition were more likely to strongly agree that coercion was used when compared with respondents in the stranger condition. This refutes hypothesis 1; it was expected that respondents who receive the stranger condition would be more likely to strongly agree that the sex was coerced, when compared with respondents who received the second-date or one-month dating condition. It is plausible that respondents may have equated the perpetrator's behavior in the stranger condition with force. The presumption is supported by Koss et al. (1988), in which the identification of rape based upon relationship to aggressor was measured. Koss and colleagues asked respondents to label their experience as one of four mutually exclusive categories; 21% of stranger rape victims labeled their experience as miscommunication, compared with 51% of acquaintance rape victims. Also, 55%

of stranger rape victims labeled their experience as rape, compared with 23% of acquaintance rape victims. Findings suggest the relationship between victim and offender affects how respondents' distinguish force from coercion.

In addition, this project's findings further the limited research on the relationship between victim-offender relationship types and sexual coercion. Studies have examined the actual impact of sexual assault on women over various victim-offender relationship types (Frazer & Seal, 1997; Koss et al., 1988; Ullman, 1996; Ullman, Filipas, Townsend & Strazynski, 2006). In addition, Abrams et al. (2003) examined perceptions of rape over victim-offender various relationship types. However, no known study has examined perceptions of coercion victims and perpetrators over various victim-offender relationship types.

The project also contributes to the coercion literature by examining the impact of more than one independent variable on perceptions of coercion and ascription of responsibility. While this project measured the effect of the woman's reputation and the relationship status on perceptions of coercion, many others factors may contribute to perceptions of coercion (e.g., the clothing worn by the woman, the location of the initial interaction,

the reputation of the man, and the age difference between the two individuals). While coercion research has not focused on these variables, Regan (1997) did measure perceptions of coercion as a function of language used by the perpetrator. Findings suggest respondents were less likely to agree that coercion was utilized when the respondent used more romantic language ("I love you...I want to make love to you" versus "I want you...I want to have sex with you"). The Regan study, coupled with this project's findings suggests perceptions of coercion are influenced by both the actions of the perpetrator and the contextual factors. These implications will be discussed in chapter 6.

This project's definition and measurement of coercion considers the issue of coercion as rooted in an exchange. Research that has utilized vignettes to measure perceptions has measured respondents' reactions to either the perpetrator (Regan, 1997) or the recipient (Katz, 2007). This project measured respondent's perceptions of coercion regarding both the perpetrator's behaviors and the recipient's reactions. Measuring reactions to both victim and perpetrator, as opposed to one or the other, allows for insight into reactions regarding the exchange. Although the respondents did not differentiate between the

externally applied coercion and internal reaction to coercion, research in this area must continue. Situating coercion as a unidirectional construct will perpetuate ambiguity as researchers and practitioners will underestimate the perpetrator's awareness of his actions, the illusion of choice experienced by the recipient, and the culmination of these constructs.

Finally, the insignificant relationship between the woman's reputation and perceptions of coercion may suggest that women's expression of their sexuality is not a factor related to the perceptions of sexual coercion. It is also conceivable that these findings are only applicable to this sample, or that the manipulated variable, as described in the vignette, "Rachel has a reputation for sleeping around" was an obvious variable. Respondents may have been aware that reactions to the woman's reputation were being measured; thus they chose the politically correct response. Although Burt's (1980) RMA scale includes items designed to measure reaction to a woman's reputation, there is a paucity of research which examines the relationship between a woman's reputation and perceptions of sexual exchanges. More analysis is necessary given the media response to the recent high profile Kobe Bryant rape case; immediately following the accuser's decision to press charges, the

media attacked her reputation. Although this is anecdotal information, it raises the question of how much does the women victim's reputation affect perceptions of coercion and ascription of responsibility. Further analysis is needed to make a more definitive assessment.

Exploring ascription of responsibility and determination of criminality

This project also measured ascribed responsibility and criminal culpability. It is the first known study to measure ascription of criminal responsibility in regard to verbally coerced sex. Ascription of responsibility (*responsibility*) was not significantly affected by any of the independent variables. Although findings did not reveal a significant relationship between reputation of the woman and relationship status on *responsibility*, a significant interaction did emerge between relationship status and sex of the respondent on the dependent variable *what Kevin did should be a crime but not rape*. This indicates that more than one factor influences perceptions of coercive tactics and determination of culpability. Furthermore, recognition of coercion and subsequent ascription of responsibility become complicated by factors in addition to the persons, situation and setting; they are also influenced by

variables related to the perceiver. This research revealed that women and men viewed *what Kevin did should be a crime but not rape* differently depending upon the relationship status condition.

In addition to the multivariate and univariate analysis conducted, frequencies were run to further appreciate ascription of responsibility. Frequencies from a single-item (*If Rachael calls this rape who is more responsible*) yielded an interesting response. Forty-four percent of respondents saw the man as responsible; 39% of respondents saw both parties as responsible; 12% of the respondents saw the woman as responsible; and 4% of the respondents saw neither as responsible because it was a misunderstanding. These findings suggest that the majority of respondents either saw the man or both participants as responsible if the woman calls the exchange rape. Very few respondents held the woman responsible if she decides to call the exchange rape.

Analyses also revealed that *problematic sex*, and a single-time dependent variable were significantly affected by gender. Women were more likely to strongly agree that the sex was problematic when compared with men. In addition, the interaction between relationship status and sex had a significant affect on a single item dependent

variable (*what Kevin did was a crime but not rape*). In two of the three conditions women were more likely to strongly agree that what the man did was a crime but not rape if the relationship status condition was stranger when compared with men in the same condition. An interesting finding is that in the condition of second date men were more likely to strongly agree that what the man did was a crime but not rape. The result is unclear, the findings do not make intuitive sense and the dearth of research on ascription of responsibility does not consider this issue. However, it is a variable that should be explored in future research.

Also in an effort to appreciate why the woman's reputation did not significantly affect ascription of responsibility or perceptions of criminality a cross-tab (*what Kevin did should be considered rape and woman's reputation*) with a correlation was run to gain further insight into group differences. The categories of strongly agreed, agreed and somewhat agreed were collapsed for reporting purposes; 20.4% of respondents in the virgin condition indicated that they at least somewhat agreed that what Kevin did should be considered rape, compared with 23.9% in the promiscuous category. Although the percentage difference is small and the crosstabs results were not

significant this result is theoretically interesting. It was expected that respondents would be more likely to agree that what Kevin did should be considered rape when the women's reputation was virgin. This finding may be attributed to the sample or as stated previously, respondent consideration of political correctness. However the small percentage difference in the opposite direction of what was anticipated may be a result of respondents' frustration with men assuming they can take advantage of a woman who is known to be promiscuous. Evidence of this assertion is provided by a comment made by a male from the Georgia sample; he stated "It should not matter if she as slut or not, she did not want to be there." Furthermore, given that this project obtained a majority female, college-based sample, sexual promiscuity of a woman may be not be a predictor of perceptions of coercion or ascription of responsibility.

There is limited research examining ascription of responsibility when either coercion or force is used to obtain sexual contact (Katz et al., 2007; Muelenhard et al., 1985; Regan, 1997). A recently published study by Katz et al. (2007) examined victim blame as function of victim-offender gender relationship. Participants perceived female-to-male coercion as more controllable;

therefore, greater responsibility was attributed to a verbally coerced man. Regan (1997) also measured ascription of responsibility by manipulating language, in a situation that involved continual verbal pressure post-refusal of sexual intercourse. Her findings revealed that when the male expressed love, he was perceived as less responsible for the intercourse and the interaction was perceived as significantly more consensual, relative to when he expressed desire. These findings, coupled with this project's findings, suggest that victim-blaming or perpetrator-excusing attitudes are attributed to socially constructed factors, rather than to the perpetrator's and recipient's actual behaviors.

It may be assumed that the Katz et al. (2007) and Regan (1997) results are attributed to coercion being a complex construct, which is open to interpretation. However, Muelenhard et al. (1985) found that ascribing responsibility for a forced sexual encounter in which extraneous factors are manipulated, can also result in victim-blaming findings. Muelenhard et al. measured the "justifiability of date rape under various circumstances" (p. 297). The authors found date rape was regarded as significantly more justified if the couple went to the man's apartment to talk, versus if the couple went to a

religious function. The study also found rape was regarded as significantly more justifiable if the man paid all of the date expenses, versus if expenses were split between the couple. These findings suggest that victim-blaming and perpetrator-excusing attitudes regarding the use of force to obtain sex can also be influenced by extraneous factors.

Further research which measures ascription of responsibility is imperative as it may result in policy changes. Legislators' decisions to include coercion language in sexual assault statutes, police response and victims' decisions to come forward may be at least partially explained by measuring ascription of responsibility. These policy implications will be discussed in chapter 6.

Confirming gender differences

A significant relationship also emerged between coercion and sex (gender) of the respondent; the findings confirmed the research hypothesis. Women were more likely to strongly agree that coercion was used when compared with men. A significant relationship also emerged between problematic sex and sex (gender) of the respondent; also confirming the research hypothesis. Women were more likely

to strongly agree that the sex was problematic when compared with men.

In addition, the interaction between relationship status and sex had a significant effect on a single item dependent variable (what Kevin did was a crime but not rape). Women were more likely to strongly agree that what Kevin did was a crime but not rape if the relationship status condition was stranger when compared with men in the same condition. Women were also more likely to strongly agree that what Kevin did was a crime but not rape if the relationship status condition was one-month dating when compared with men in the same condition. However, men were more likely to strongly agree that what Kevin did was a crime but not rape if the relationship status condition was second-date when compared with women in the same condition.

Finally, a one-way ANOVA confirmed a significant relationship between rape myths acceptance and sex (gender). Men were more likely to accept rape myths compared with women. This finding supports existing research which has found that men are more accepting of rape myths compared to women (Gilmartic-Zena, 1988; Jimenez & Abreu, 2003; Milhausen, McBride & Jun, 2006).

The findings on gender differences support the existing literature, which suggests men and women view

coercion differently (Boeringer, 1996; Boeringer, 1991; Carr & Van Deussen, 2004; Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000). This is of particular significance given the argument that concepts of force and coercion have been defined by and contextually situated by men (Hubin and Haely, 1999; Estrich, 1987, DeKeseredy, 2000). In addition, Degue and DeLillo (2004) state that coercion has been viewed as less harmful than force, when it may be better to conceptualize sexually coercive and aggressive acts as fundamentally different. The above assertions and this research may contribute to the expansion or reconceptualization of rape laws. It is clear that women were more likely to agree that coercion is equivalent to criminal behavior, and women were more likely to agree that coercion is equivalent to rape. Laws that do not consider women's experience and perceptions continue to perpetuate a system which rewards and promotes sexual violence against women. While the criminal justice system is an offender focused system, victims' needs have been increasingly considered. A female-centered context is central to an examination of rape and coercion policy.

Furthering feminist perspective research

This study advances feminist research and theory in two ways. First, this project's expanded definition of sexual coercion considers: (1) an exchange in which the reactions of the female recipient are central to the definition; (2) the male's use of coercive tactics and the female's reaction to the tactics are based upon socially imposed and implied power differentials, which favor males' perceptions of sexuality, including masculine dominance in a coercive sexual encounter; and (3) the male's use of coercion is not excused, but rather the definition implies that the very presence of verbal persuasion assumes the male is aware that the recipient is unwilling.

This project also furthers feminist theory and research by employing items which measure respondent's perceptions of the male's behavior. Research which measures respondent attitudes and perceptions of female behavior in problematic sexual exchanges is necessary; however, it can situate perceptions of problematic sexual exchanges as a function of the women's responsibility. This project situates findings and discussions related to responsibility using language that addresses males' behavior. For instance, this project reported, "Women were more likely to strongly agree that what Kevin did should be

considered rape when compared with men". This wording fundamentally differs from, "Women were more likely to agree that Rachel experienced rape when compared with men." By presenting the findings in such a way that the male's use of violence is stressed, research can be objective while reinforcing the focus on ascribing responsibility to male perpetrators of violence against women. Language is imperative in situating context. Definitions and policy should be inclusive of women's needs and perspective; however, ascription of responsibility and accountability measures should use language which does not distract from males' use of violence.

Finally, this project furthers feminist perspective research in that gender differences emerged in support of the research hypotheses and in terms of acceptance of rape myths. Women were more likely to perceive the sexual exchange as coercive and agree that coercion is equivalent to criminal behavior. In addition, women were more likely to agree that coercion is equivalent to rape. Therefore policy and social perceptions which fail to consider women's experience and perceptions support the feminist perspective that sexuality and defining problematic sex is viewed through a masculine lens. Furthermore, this project found the dependent variables (perception of coercion,

ascription of responsibility and views on problematic sex) were negatively correlated with acceptance of rape myths. Respondents who were more supportive of rape myths were less likely to agree that the sex was coerced; more likely to agree that the female was responsible for the coerced sex; and less likely to agree that the sex was problematic. In addition, men were more likely to accept rape myths compared with women. These findings suggest the nearly 30 years after Burt developed the Rape Myths Acceptance scale, the perpetuation and subscription to rape myths still exists. Furthermore, rape myths affect perceptions of coercion and ascription of responsibility. Presumably this translates into the real world blaming of coercion victims, less coercion victims coming forward, and more perpetrators of coercion feeling justified in their use of coercive tactics.

Limitations

The methodology may not have adequately distinguished between externally applied and internal reaction to coercion. Items meant to measure these constructs were similar. Respondents may in fact have seen these issues as separate although their reaction to items was similar. For example item 5 stated "Kevin used verbal pressure to get

Rachel to have sex with him"; and item 7 stated "Rachel felt pressured to have sex with Kevin". Item 5 was intended to measure *externally applied coercion*, while item 7 was intended to measure *internal reaction to coercion*. Respondents may have viewed these as separate constructs but equally agreed or disagreed with both, therefore causing one factor to emerge. Furthermore, the wording of these items may not have allowed for respondents to differentiate between *externally applied coercion* and *internal reaction to coercion*. Either the items need to be redesigned or additional items need to be added which directly measure if respondents view the man's use of coercion as conceptually different from the woman's reaction to coercion.

Another limitation was the sample. The two community-colleges yielded predominantly female samples. Although both colleges have greater female enrollments, the final disparity between males and females was not expected. In addition, the overall sample consisted of nearly half of the group resulting from the four-year university. Both of the community colleges yielded smaller samples. This was a result of poor turn-out on the days in which data collection occurred at each community-college.

Finally, this project could have been strengthened by the addition of a formal focus group. Further discussion may generate theoretical assumptions about the findings. A focus group may have led to a better understanding of why the woman's reputation did not matter. A focus group could have also clarified why *What Kevin did was a crime but not rape* did not load with the factor which measured *problematic sex*. A focus group may have also provided insight into why respondents were more likely to view the exchange as coercive when the relationship status conditions were second-date and one-month dating, as opposed to stranger. Finally, a formal focus group may have also better assessed whether respondents appreciate the difference between externally applied coercion and internal reactions to coercion.

Conclusion

Further research is needed to address the above issues. Research must begin to measure women's reaction to coercion as a separate construct, as well as, examine the numerous variables which affect perceptions of coercion. More research on coercion is necessary to guide policy, the evolution of rape laws and the response to victims of coercion.

Chapter 6

Reconceptualizing rape laws

Victim impact statements, victims' advocates, victimless prosecutions and mandatory arrest laws for domestic violence cases, and rape shield laws are all examples of policy changes, at least partially resulting from recognition that laws have not addressed the needs and special interests of victims, and in particular women victims. While many of these policies have resulted in necessary changes, most are ancillary remedies. These ancillary changes may be viewed as first steps toward justice. However, substantive changes require new laws and definitions which reflect a holistic appreciation of force and the impact of coerced sexual exchanges on the recipient. For these substantive changes to be actualized, research and debate which is women-centered must be prioritized.

This chapter will examine how expanding our conception of force to include non-physical coercion will impact rape laws and ultimately victims' decisions and public perceptions of coerced sexual exchanges. It should be noted that because of the current sociopolitical nature of unwanted sex, this chapter's discussion will be gendered. Current rape laws and public perceptions of rape and

coerced sex exist because sexual exchanges have been conceptualized and responded to in a gendered manner; female perceptions are under-valued, while male ideologies are socially promoted. This project's findings revealed gender differences in terms of perceptions of coercion and ascription of criminal culpability. Males were more likely to disagree that verbal coercion should be considered rape. This finding supports the assertion that laws are reflective of male definitions, as most rape laws do not consider verbal coercion to be a form of force and therefore using verbal coercion to obtain sex/sex acts is not criminal. Because laws are more reflective of male definitions, changes to rape laws and public perceptions require gendered discussions and responses; male dominance results in both sexual violence and the creation of laws, while females' social inferiority results in victimization and exclusion from the policy creation. Policy development requires policy makers to acknowledge that sexual violence is perpetrated almost exclusively by men; allowing male-centered ideologies to guide policy development is a conflict of interest. Policy regarding rape and sexual impropriety should, in large part, include feminist-led research and the consideration of women-centered definitions.

It should also be noted that in addition to the results, this project's methodology is relevant to policy development. Utilizing scenarios and accompanying questionnaires to measure perceptions of coercion and ascription of responsibility presumably translates into a real world understating of how verbal coercion may be perceived by potential jurors' reactions to coercion cases, police responses to coercion victims and victims' decisions to report to authorities. Studies utilizing a similar methodology should be developed and tested on police officers, prosecutors, jury pools and the general public.

Can "force" be reconceptualized?

Spence (2003-2004) notes that rape law reform over the past two decades has primarily involved the repeal of the marital rape exemption and inclusion of rape shield laws; reforms have generally failed to address the issue of non-physical coercion. Schulhofer (1998) labels the legal reforms since the anti-rape feminist movements in the early 1970s as "disappointing." In addition, he notes that the law is a reflection of social culture and therefore the law or "legal details" must be examined. He states that the legal details "reinforce certain understandings, delay the recognition of others, and frees predators whose conduct

the courts condemn as despicable - but not illegal”
(Schulhofer, 1998, p.18).

The line between despicable and illegal should not be blurred; after all, the law should be a reflection of social consensus. However, it still appears that laws regarding rape have discounted the perspectives of women and therefore rape laws are not a reflection of social consensus, but rather of male consensus. It is for this reason that non-physical coercion is still generally not accepted as force within the context of rape laws. Evidence of this assertion is provided by Pistono’s (1988) review of the history of rape. Pistono notes that in many cultures the violent aspects of rape (e.g. beatings and threats with a weapon) were emphasized because the act of having sex with a woman against her will was regarded as such a petty offense, which in and of itself would not result in the application of a severe penalty. This reasoning is reflected in our current appreciation of force and rape. Legal definitions and the social conceptualization of force include the presence of physical harm or threat of physical harm. The unwanted sex/sex acts are a cursory consideration. Schulhofer (1998) notes that “the law seeks, at least in theory, to protect women from serious violence, but until now the law has not been

concerned, even in theory, with protecting a woman's right to make a genuinely free choice whether to participate in a sexual encounter" (p. 114).

If having sex with a woman against her will was considered morally and socially reprehensible then any form of force, including non-physical coercion would be condemned and included in all sexual assault statutes. Spence (2003-2004) asserts that non-physical coercion should be considered force. Spence and Schulhofer call for the expansion of force to include coercion based upon principles which apply to contract law and extortion. Spence asserts that conceptualizing rape laws similar to contract laws would allow for a more expansive and functional law. She states that rape laws measure the threat of force through an objective measure, which is generally the reasonable person standard. She contrasts this with contract law which considers both a subjective and objective measurement of threat; this allows for the victim's perspective to be considered. Spence also notes contract law includes the recognition of undue influence as a measurement of emotional or psychological force. She explains that undue influence is the improper use of power that deprives a person of free will and substitutes another's objectives (Spence, 2003 -2004, p. 84).

Utilizing contract law provisions such as subjective measures and undue influence would uncover a more complex understanding of the incident. Finally Spence argues that definitions of force must include non-physical coercion "in order to accommodate the complexity of human interaction and to inform the law's perception of what constitutes criminal advantage taking" (p. 90).

Schulhofer (1998) discusses a case in which no charges were brought against a high school principal in Montana when he allegedly forced a student to have sex by threatening to prevent her from graduating². He asserts that if the principal had required her to pay money to graduate, he would have been convicted for extortion.

Conceptualizing force to merely include physical violence demonstrates a cursory appreciation of force. Numerous practitioners and researchers on violence experienced by women recognize that merely focusing on physical violence and abuse, devoid of an appreciation of emotional violence and abuse, endorses violence against women (Bancroft, 2002; Crown & Roberts, 2007; Kelly, 1988; Sheffield, 1993; Stark, 2007). The law must expand its conceptualization of force to include verbal coercion and non-physical force.

² State v. Thompson, 792 P.2d1103 (Mont. 1990)

The above references to assertions made by legal theorists and practitioners are now supported by empirical findings. Analysis revealed that 44.3% of the total sample reported that they at least somewhat agreed that what Kevin did should be considered rape. In addition, frequencies from a single-item (*If Rachael calls this rape who is more responsible*) yielded an interesting response. Forty-four percent of respondents saw the male who utilized verbally coercive tactics as responsible; 12% of the respondents saw the woman who was the recipient of the verbally coercive tactics as responsible; 39% of respondents saw both parties as responsible; and 4% of the respondents saw neither as responsible because it was a misunderstanding. These findings suggest that the majority of respondents either saw the man or both participants as responsible if the woman calls the exchange rape. Very few respondents held the woman responsible if she decides to call the exchange rape. This suggests that this sample was ready to ascribe responsibility, in full or in part, to an individual who verbally coerced another person into having sex.

While respondents in this sample may have ascribed responsibility to the perpetrator of sexual coercion, policy makers may not agree that perpetrators of verbal coercion are criminally responsible. I recently discussed

the topic of verbally coerced sex with a State Legislator. He stated that it was not the responsibility of the legislature to regulate all obnoxious behavior and that most people would not agree that verbal coercion should be considered force. While this is only anecdotal information, it is reflective of the reasoning of at least one policy maker. Given that nearly half of the sample equated verbal coercion with rape, further research is needed which examines a general samples' perceptions of criminalizing coercion. It would also be interesting to measure policy makers' perceptions of verbal coercion and ascription of criminality. A study which compared perceptions between a general sample and the sample's elected/appointed law making representatives would be useful in guiding future policy.

Interesting findings also emerged from analysis which examined the role of the respondents' sex (gender). Analysis revealed that 37.9% of men reported that they at least somewhat agreed that what Kevin did should be considered rape, compared with 48.3% of women who reported that they at least somewhat agreed that what Kevin did should be considered rape. In addition, a significant relationship also emerged between problematic sex and sex (gender) of the respondents; women were more likely to

agree that the sex was problematic when compared with men. These findings suggest that a greater percentage of women than men equate verbal coercion with rape. While this study alone can not be the impetus for policy change, it should challenge researchers and legislators to begin to recognize that rape laws have better reflected male perceptions of sexual exchanges.

Finally, the dialogue following one group from the Georgia sample yielded statements such as "We need more information" and "What was she thinking." One respondent also stated, "But you do not know what she has previously been through or she might have been afraid." Overall the group was more concerned about the woman's thoughts and actions than they were with the actions of the man. This issue is extremely important as related to application of the law; the law considers the mens rea of the accused, however the criminal justice system and the public may focus more so on the thought process and actions of the victim. Carmody's (2006) qualitative analysis of Virginia sexual assault advocates revealed that police officers have told victims that they must submit to polygraph in order for their case to proceed; or worse, that unless they submit to a polygraph they could be charged with false reporting. This finding is indicative of system which

scrutinizes the credibility of the eye witness. The discussion noted above also reveals that the general public is equally concerned with the actions of the victim and the perpetrator when the crime of rape is question. More analysis regarding the relationship between perceptions of ascription of responsibility for coerced sex and the accuser's thought process during the coercive exchange is necessary. Specifically, analysis which measures ascription of responsibility and the accuser's thought process/actions from the perspective of police officers, prosecutors and judges is crucial.

This project's findings contribute to debates regarding the expansion of rape laws. Schulhofer (1992) cautions that society and the law are not ready to overhaul rape laws or definitions anymore than currently exists. Thus, in order to slowly appreciate the experiences of coerced victims, he opines we should establish a category of offenses separate from rape, which acknowledge the violation of one's sexual autonomy. Legal theorists have also suggested an expansion of the definition of rape to include coercion. Gauthier (1999) suggests the difference between rape and consensual sex has not been clearly defined, allowing for ambiguity regarding consent to linger in the courtroom and minds of most people. He recommends

replacing the consent provisions because such provisions perpetuate coercive exchanges within a sexually exploitive system. He suggests that the law currently assumes both parties have equal access to sexual autonomy and thus the equitable freedom necessary to reject sex. He concludes by stating the law protects perpetrators and allows the vast majority of rapes, which involve non-physical force, to go unreported and/or not prosecuted.

The law should conceptualize force to include verbal coercion as a reflection of numerous legal principles. First, defining force to include verbal coercion fits with a utilitarian application of law. Sexual assault research finds sexual coercion is used more often than physical force (Boerenger, 1996; Forbes & Curtis, 2001; and Carr & VanDeusen, 2004, Forbes, Curtis & White, 2004; Koss, et al., 1987). In addition, coercion victims are emotionally and psychologically adversely affected by coercion (Freidich, 2004; Testa & Derman, 1999). Therefore, the law which is a reflection of normative social values and utilitarian goals is remiss in its failure to punish perpetrators of verbal coercion, given so many individuals are harmed by coerced sex.

Deterrence

Conceptualizing force to include verbal coercion also promotes a utilitarian justification of punishment. Society is arguably more likely to deter verbally coerced sex than physically forced sex. Abbey, Ross, McDuffie and McAuslan, (1996) found rape events more likely than coercion events to involve alcohol consumption by either or both parties, and rape events more than coercion events to involve strangers rather than acquaintances. Therefore it is more likely that potential perpetrators of coercion who are more likely to be sober and be known to the potential victim would be more likely to be deterred. It is easier to deter a sober person as they are more likely to be able to reason and be deterred by the threat of punishment. In addition it is more likely that a potential offender whose potential victim is known to him would be deterred because the potential offender should fear being identified.

It also makes intuitive sense that the average perpetrator of verbal coercion is more likely to be deterred compared with the average perpetrator of physical force. Imagine the average eighteen-year-old male who wants sex. He may resort to verbal coercion but he does not want to use force. If this person was told the law forbids the use of coercion and he will be arrested,

labeled as a rapist and punished, he may be less likely to use verbal coercion. Compare this scenario to the average eighteen-year-old male who resorts to physical force. He already knows physical force is illegal and it is arguable that he is a different type of male from the male who would use verbal coercion. It makes little sense that the law attempts to deter someone who will most likely not be deterred, but avoids deterring the person who could be deterred. This paper already discussed that coercion occurs more frequently than rape (physical force) and results in significant psychological and emotional trauma. Therefore, it can be inferred that failure to include verbal coercion as a form of force colludes with perpetrators of unwanted sex who use verbal coercion but not force. This is further evidence of a legal system which is not concerned with condemning unwanted sex, but rather fixated on physical force.

Resulting harm

A third policy recommendation is that the law considers and extends its appreciation of resulting harm in the context of coerced sex. Von Hirsch and Jareborg (1991) note measuring the seriousness of a crime is based upon harm and culpability; they define harm as the injury done

or risked by the act. They also note that gauging criminal harm derives from measuring the perceived seriousness of the crime, and given that our legal system is increasingly focused on desert-orientated or proportionalist conceptions of punishments, discussion regarding seriousness should also increase (p. 1).

Finally, they note the dearth of legal doctrines developed on how the gravity of harms can be compared and the lack of substantive law guidance, "because the occurrence of harm is not explicitly made a general condition of criminal liability (p. 3). Assessing resulting harm therefore is contingent upon subjective definitions of harm; this becomes particularly complex as applied to forced sex. As previously discussed, if sanctioning unwanted sex was truly a goal of the law, then the force clause would not be necessary. However, our current conceptualization of resulting harm is based solely upon physical injury or monetary loss.

To further illustrate how resulting harm should be more than a cursory consideration of law in the context of forced sex two scenarios will be presented. Consider a situation in which a woman is walking home and is ambushed by a man who pulls her into his car, drives her to a secluded area, beats and rapes her (scenario 1). Most

would agree that the resulting harm is significant. Now consider that two college students are dating (scenario 2). In the beginning of their relationship the man would tell the woman that women are lining up to sleep with him. In addition, acculturation into college life left the woman feeling that sex was expected of normal college women. After a couple of dates the man initiated sexual contact. The woman attempted to push his hands away when he began to undress her. In addition, she told him twice that he should probably call her tomorrow because she had to study for a test. He undressed himself and told her that "it is no big deal, we have been going out long enough." She finally lay still, while he took off her pants; he did not insert his penis until she was still and quiet.

Arguably the resulting harm from scenario 2 is equivalent to that of scenario 1. While the immediate physical harm experience by the woman in scenario 1 is overwhelming, this victim would most likely have the community support necessary to heal. The victim would identify herself as a blameless victim and therefore seek immediate services. The victim would be accepted by the criminal justice system as a victim. Her family and friends may become aware of the situation and be supportive. Medical intervention would be offered

resulting in the administration of the morning after pill and screening for sexually transmitted diseases. And finally, the general public would call for harsh punishment for her rapist, indicating their condemnation of her experience. In this respect resulting harm may be minimized. Alternatively, the woman in scenario 2 may not receive the same support. Although she experienced unwanted sex, this is most likely not a crime. In addition, she may be less likely to seek medical services; potentially resulting in an unwanted pregnancy and a sexually transmitted disease that goes untreated.

This project found that 44% of respondents at least somewhat agreed that the using verbal coercion to gain sex should be considered rape. This may indicate that nearly half of the sample recognized and considered the resulting harm experienced by the woman. More research is needed to measure perceptions of resulting harm from coerced sex.

Conclusion

In closing, the law's myopic focus on physical force, discounts the resulting harm experienced by coercion victims. Substantive legal changes which recognize that unwanted sex is problematic in and of itself, requires new laws and definitions which reflect a holistic appreciation

of force. As previously noted, Schulhofer (1992) cautions society and the law is not ready to overhaul rape laws or definitions more than currently exist. He posits that in order to slowly appreciate the experiences of coerced victims, we should establish a category of offenses separate from rape, which acknowledge the violation of one's sexual autonomy. Perhaps the law and many members of society are not ready to accept that coercion is a form of force. However, perhaps the law and many members of society are not aware of the prevalence and long-term adverse effects which result from coerced sex. Research must continue to measure the prevalence and adverse effects of coerced sex, so that legislators and the general public recognize the need to condemn coerced sexual exchanges.

Chapter 7 **Rethinking sex education**

This chapter discusses the need for teaching agents, including parents, teachers and other care takers to address the issue of verbal coercion and sexual exchanges in general. In addition, this chapter critiques the current state of information sharing regarding sexuality. Finally, this chapter suggests socio-educational programs which may change perceptions and attitudes regarding verbally coerced sex.

How do parents and other teaching agents promote coerced sex?

Teaching agents, such as parents, teachers and caretakers have introduced children to topics such as sharing, appropriate play, self-control, waiting your turn, using manners, being a good sport, avoiding strangers, the perils of drugs and drunk driving; the list of socially endorsed life-lessons promoted by teaching agents is endless. The teaching agents are physically present to guide young persons in the learning of the aforementioned life lessons. However adults are generally not present when young people engage in sexual activities. In fact,

adults often avoid open conversations about sexuality with young people. It is not just that teaching agents are not present to guide young people, but the teaching agent's lack of presence contradicts the way in which all other human interactions and development has occurred.

Therefore, the learning process is affected and altered. The lack of teaching agents' presence and/or guidance is arguably the reason for coercion and other forms of problematic sexual behavior.

Teaching agents who avoid discussing healthy sexual exchanges may inadvertently promote the internalization that sexuality is, at some level, embarrassing and socially taboo. As a result young persons learn about sexuality from the media, their peers and other such sources.

An estimated 90% of college-aged males and nearly one-third of college-aged females report that they use pornography (Carroll, Padilla-Walker, Nelson, Olson, Barry & Madsen, 2008). It is arguable that young people receive more messages about sexuality from pornographic materials than from their parents or other teaching agents.

Considering that research has found a relationship between pornographic consumption and problematic sexual attitudes (Boeringer, 1994; Carr & VanDeussen, 2004), as well as a link between exposure to pornographic materials and

negative emotional responses to rape victims (Linz, Donnerstein & Penrod, 1988) it is inevitable that coercion and other forms of problematic sexual tactics are prevalent.

Carr and VanDeussen (2004) found that men who used more coercive tactics were more likely to use more pornography. Boeringer (1994) sampled 477 college males; examined the relationship between type of pornography exposure and the likelihood of using force. He divided his sample into four groups, based upon the respondents' exposure to various levels of pornographic materials. The first group was comprised of respondents who reported that they consumed "soft porn", such as reading Playboy magazine. The fourth group reported they watched violent pornography which depicted rape scenes. The remaining two groups reported viewing pornography which met levels between conditions one and four. Findings revealed that that a "significantly greater proportion of high-exposure groups reported likelihood of force and rape, and actual commission of all levels of sexual coercive behaviors" (297). Finally, Bufkin and Escholz (2000) reviewed the 50 most top-grossing films of 1996. This review revealed that rapists were portrayed as monsters who preyed upon mainly children or child like adult females, and the victims

relentlessly resisted by screaming and using physical force. This depiction contributed to myths about rape and discounts the prevalence of coercive tactics. These findings suggest that media influences affect perceptions of problematic sex and responses to rape victims. Without education and discussions about healthy sex to counteract negative media images, our society promotes coercion, force and negative attitudes toward victims of sex crimes.

Because it is socially unacceptable for teaching agents to be in the room when young people engage in sexual activities, it is imperative that teaching agents and educational programs encourage young people to have open conversations about sexuality with their teaching agents and especially potential sexual partners. The topic of coercion should be discussed. Just as parents and other teaching agents would teach the young people in their lives not to cheat or lie, teaching agents should tell young people manipulation and verbal pressure are socially and morally unacceptable, in the context of sexual exchanges. Discussions regarding coerced sex are imperative given that coerced sex has been shown to result in adverse outcomes for the victims. Research has found that victims of coerced sex experience adverse effects. LaCasse and Mendelson's (2007) examination of adolescent Canadians in

grades 8 to 11 revealed female victims of coercion had lower self-esteem and more sexist attitudes than other females. Friedich et al. (2004) also found a significant relationship between coercive sexual abuse and physical and psychological symptoms.

The findings from this dissertation support the assertion that discussions regarding coerced sex are imperative. This project demonstrated that women and men perceive coercion differently. Women were more likely to agree that coercion was used when compared with men; women were more likely to agree that the sex was problematic when compared with men; and more women (48.3%) compared with men (37.9%) reported that they at least somewhat agreed that the verbal coercion employed by the male should be considered rape. These findings suggest that women and men view coercion and the ascription of responsibility for coerced differently. In addition, this project found that respondents who were more supportive of rape myths were less likely to agree that the sex was coerced; more likely to agree that the female was responsible for the coerced sex; and less likely to agree that the sex was problematic. In addition, men were more likely to accept rape myths compared with women. These findings suggest rape myths affect perceptions of coercion and ascription of

responsibility. Therefore, failure to provide education about coerced sex to young people perpetuates gender perception differences and rape myths acceptance. Furthermore, it silences the voices of women who are more likely than men to perceive coerced sex as problematic and even equivalent to rape, and less likely to accept rape myths.

Results from this project also revealed that the relationship status of the couple significantly affected perceptions of coercion. The relationship status independent variable included three conditions: Stranger, second-date and one-month dating. Respondents in the second date and one-month dating condition were more likely to agree that coercion was used when compared with respondents in the stranger condition. While more research is needed to fully explain why the respondents in the second date and one-month dating condition were more likely to agree that coercion was used, what is clear is that extraneous variables affect perceptions of coercion. This suggests that identifying coerced sex is based upon peripheral factors, rather than the exchange; and that perceptions of coerced sex are based upon contextual factors. Without increased education and discussions regarding sexual coercion, coerced sex may be mitigated and

excused resulting in the avoidance of services by coercion victims and the perpetuation of coercive tactics by perpetrators.

Can socio-educational programs reduce coerced sex?

Proactive socio-educational programs are necessary for a variety of reasons. As previously discussed, research has found that adverse emotional effects result from coercion. In addition, this project found that genders perceived coercion differently and that extraneous variables affect perceptions of coercion. Therefore, socio-educational programs developed by collaborating entities, including the local victims' service agency, the school system, survivors and parents should be socially supported.

Programs which seek to reduce the use of coercion should not format their programs as anti-rape programs. Program tenets which promote healthy, consensual sex would better serve young people. As stated in chapter 6, it is less likely that reform, either legal or educational, will deter potential perpetrators of physically violent rape. However, it seems more likely that socio-educational programs could deter coercion by pointing out that manipulation and verbal pressure is socially unacceptable.

If the law also prohibited coercion then programming would include that coercion is also illegal and punishable.

Because this project found perceptions of gender and ascription of criminal responsibility to be affected by gender differences, programming should also have gender-specific components. The components should address verbal coercion from the perspective of both genders. Discussion should include female and male perceptions of coercion and ascription of responsibility in an effort to bridge the communication gap. Therefore, the genders should not be separated. The socio-educational programs should broach sexual communication as an issue requiring input and involvement from both genders. Young females and males in all age categories should become accustomed to open, honest communication about sex in gender-mixed groups. In addition, dialogue between the genders should be encouraged.

Discussions lead by adults comfortable with the topic of sexual exchanges and communication are imperative. As previously stated, teaching agents guide the social development of young people. Therefore, program development should include healthy sex lessons taught by teachers and other school-based professional with whom the students are familiar. Schools which invite outside

agencies, such as the local victims' service provider, to conduct healthy sex or anti-rape education programs send the message that such discussions make adults uncomfortable. This also may lead to an inference that any discussions of sexual exchanges are special topics which can not be discussed by the adults who teach sharing, honesty, manners, and other lessons which are relevant to the topic of sexual exchanges.

While much of the coercion and rape research has been conducted on college-campuses, intervention and educational programming should begin long before young people are college-aged. Programs in middle and high schools should promote age-appropriate discussion about sexuality. Fay and Medway (2006) found that rape education programs also significantly affect the acceptance of rape myths for first-year high school students. Their analysis utilized age-appropriate activities and discussion with mixed-gendered groups; students in the treatment group (exposure to the educational program) endorsed fewer rape myths than the control subjects (no exposure to the educational program) one-week post intervention. These findings reveal that children already subscribe to rape myths by age 14 and that programs can impact attitudes toward rape among adolescents.

Because much of the coercion research has been conducted on college campuses and because Koss et al. (1987) and DeKeseredy and Kelly (1993) found between one-third and one-half of college women in North America experienced some form of sexual coercion, special programs should be developed to address coercion on college campuses. Socio-educational programs on college-campuses are proactive and have been found to significantly affect rape attitudes, rape knowledge, behavioral intent and incidence of sexual assault (Anderson & Whiston, 2005). In addition, Isaacs and Fisher (2008) assessed the effect of a computer-based educational intervention on negative effects of Internet pornography. Their analysis revealed that exposure to the educational intervention decreased attraction to sexual aggression.

Anderson and Whiston's (2005) meta-analysis of sexual assault education programs on college campuses also found that sexual assault education programs on college campuses are more effective when they are longer, presented by professionals and include content addressing risk education, gender-role socialization and information about the myths and facts regarding sexual assault (p. 385). This finding is relevant to this project's definition of verbal coercion. This dissertation defines sexual coercion as a

form of force in which the perpetrator attempts to verbally wear down or convince the recipient to engage in sexual contact by being manipulative, playing upon gender role socialization and social stereotypes, being persistent and/or applying pressure, in the hopes that the recipient will be affected by guilt, shame, obligation, gender role socialization or being overwhelmed to the point that she complies with the recipient's requests for or initiation of sexual contact. Given that this project found that the genders perceive coercion and ascribe responsibility for coerced sex differently, it is evident that efforts to reduce verbally coerced sex must include education about gender-role socialization.

Educational programming regarding coercion also directly benefits potential victims. While no known studies have examined the relationship between victims of verbal coercion and their decision to seek rape crisis services, presumably victims of verbal coercion are less likely to seek immediate services. This may result in more unwanted pregnancies, more undiagnosed sexually transmitted diseases and more long-term trauma as a result of postponed intervention. Educational programs which promote the message that unwanted sex resulting from any form of force will be prioritized, may lead to more victims of coercion

seeking immediate services. Educational programming regarding coercion is proactive; however, such programming also includes a reactive benefit. Information provided during these programs may benefit victims who have initially avoided services.

Conclusion

Often young people come to learn about sexuality without guidance from teaching agents. This learning process contradicts the way in which human beings learn most all other social and developmental processes. In addition, media influences such as pornography, are widely available to young people. Without guidance about healthy sexual behaviors, young people may rely upon gender role socialization messages regarding sexual exchanges; men initiate sexual contact and women comply. In addition, existing research and this project have found that the genders perceive coercion, rape and sexual exchanges differently. As a result of gender perception differences and socially endorsed gender roles, coerced sex is inevitable. While this assertion may seem overly critical, it can also be viewed as optimistic. Accepting that coerced sex is a learned behavior implies that it can be unlearned.

Socio-educational programs have been shown to impact views on coerced sex and other problematic sexual encounters. While programs should continue to be developed, it may be best to frame such programs as "how to have healthy sex." Giving young people tools which enhance their ability to experience a positive sexual exchange may reduce problematic sexual exchanges. In addition, open dialogues with mixed-gendered audiences will promote dialogue between the genders and reduce the inhibition and secrecy shrouding sexuality.

Appendix A

Vignettes

1A. Virgin in stranger scenario (VS)

Rachel and Kevin are at a party at Rachel's friend's house. Kevin and Rachel have never met before tonight. Rachel has a reputation for being a "good girl" and wanting to remain a virgin until she is married. Rachel and Kevin are introduced and they begin to talk and dance. Rachel is flirting and dancing with Kevin. After about a half an hour Rachel says, "Sorry I can not spend more time you, but I have just been given a school assignment which is due tomorrow". Rachel gives Kevin her number, says good-night and asks Kevin to call her tomorrow. Rachel goes upstairs to her friend's bedroom to work on the assignment. Kevin follows Rachel. Kevin knocks on the door and Rachel opens the door. Kevin says he did not get a good-night kiss. Kevin steps forward and kisses Rachel. Rachel kisses Kevin back. As they kiss for about 30 seconds, Kevin closes the door behind him. Rachel stops kissing Kevin and says, "I really have to get my work done, let's talk tomorrow". Kevin says "OK, but just one more kiss". As he is saying this Kevin takes Rachel by the hand and sits on the bed. Rachel kisses Kevin for a few seconds and then says, "OK I should really get some work done now". Kevin then leans Rachel back and continues to kiss Rachel. Kevin then begins to pull up Rachel's skirt. Rachel says that they should take a break. Kevin says "come on, you know you want me as much as I want you. Everyone knows you want me, the whole party saw you all over me." Kevin begins kissing Rachel again. Rachel says nothing and continues to lie on the bed. Kevin then takes his pants down and has sex with Rachel.

1B. Virgin in second date scenario (VSD)

Rachel and Kevin are at a party at Rachel's friend's house. This is Kevin and Rachel's second date. Rachel has a reputation for being a "good girl" and wanting to remain a virgin until she is married. Rachel is flirting and dancing with Kevin. After about a half an hour Rachel says, "Sorry I can not spend more time you, but I have just been given a school assignment which is due tomorrow". Rachel says good-night and asks Kevin to call her tomorrow. Rachel goes upstairs to her friend's bedroom to work on the assignment. Kevin follows Rachel. Kevin knocks on the

door and Rachel opens the door. Kevin says he did not get a good-night kiss. Kevin steps forward and kisses Rachel. Rachel kisses Kevin back. As they kiss for about 30 seconds, Kevin closes the door behind him. Rachel stops kissing Kevin and says, "I really have to get my work done, let's talk tomorrow". Kevin says "OK, but just one more kiss". As he is saying this Kevin takes Rachel by the hand and sits on the bed. Rachel kisses Kevin for a few seconds and then says, "OK I should really get some work done now". Kevin then leans Rachel back and continues to kiss Rachel. Kevin then begins to pull up Rachel's skirt. Rachel says that they should take a break. Kevin says "come on, you know you want me as much as I want you. Everyone knows you want me, the whole party saw you all over me." Kevin begins kissing Rachel again. Rachel says nothing and continues to lie on the bed. Kevin then takes his pants down and has sex with Rachel.

1C. Virgin in one month dating scenario (VOM)

Rachel and Kevin are at a party at Rachel's friend's house. Kevin and Rachel have been dating for one month. Rachel has a reputation for being a "good girl" and wanting to remain a virgin until she is married. Rachel and Kevin begin to talk and dance. Rachel is flirting and dancing with Kevin. After about a half an hour Rachel says, "Sorry I can not spend more time you, but I have just been given a school assignment which is due tomorrow". Rachel says good-night and asks Kevin to call her tomorrow. Rachel goes upstairs to her friend's bedroom to work on the assignment. Kevin follows Rachel. Kevin knocks on the door and Rachel opens the door. Kevin says he did not get a good-night kiss. Kevin steps forward and kisses Rachel. Rachel kisses Kevin back. As they kiss for about 30 seconds, Kevin closes the door behind him. Rachel stops kissing Kevin and says, "I really have to get my work done, let's talk tomorrow". Kevin says "OK, but just one more kiss". As he is saying this Kevin takes Rachel by the hand and sits on the bed. Rachel kisses Kevin for a few seconds and then says, "OK I should really get some work done now". Kevin then leans Rachel back and continues to kiss Rachel. Kevin then begins to pull up Rachel's skirt. Rachel says that they should take a break. Kevin says "come on, you know you want me as much as I want you. Everyone knows you want me, the whole party saw you all over me." Kevin begins kissing Rachel again. Rachel says nothing and continues to

lie on the bed. Kevin then takes his pants down and has sex with Rachel.

2A. Promiscuous in stranger scenario (PS)

Rachel and Kevin are at a party at Rachel's friend's house. Kevin and Rachel have never met before tonight. Rachel has a reputation for sleeping around. Rachel and Kevin are introduced and they begin to talk and dance. Rachel is flirting and dancing with Kevin. After about a half an hour Rachel says, "Sorry I can not spend more time you, but I have just been given a school assignment which is due tomorrow". Rachel gives Kevin her number, says good-night and asks Kevin to call her tomorrow. Rachel goes upstairs to her friend's bedroom to work on the assignment. Kevin follows Rachel. Kevin knocks on the door and Rachel opens the door. Kevin says he did not get a good-night kiss. Kevin steps forward and kisses Rachel. Rachel kisses Kevin back. As they kiss for about 30 seconds, Kevin closes the door behind him. Rachel stops kissing Kevin and says, "I really have to get my work done, let's talk tomorrow". Kevin says "OK, but just one more kiss". As he is saying this Kevin takes Rachel by the hand and sits on the bed. Rachel kisses Kevin for a few seconds and then says, "OK I should really get some work done now". Kevin then leans Rachel back and continues to kiss Rachel. Kevin then begins to pull up Rachel's skirt. Rachel says that they should take a break. Kevin says "come on, you know you want me as much as I want you. Everyone knows you want me, the whole party saw you all over me." Kevin begins kissing Rachel again. Rachel says nothing and continues to lie on the bed. Kevin then takes his pants down and has sex with Rachel.

2B. Promiscuous in second date scenario (PSD)

Rachel and Kevin are at a party at Rachel's friend's house. This is Kevin and Rachel's second date. Rachel has a reputation for sleeping around. Rachel is flirting and dancing with Kevin. After about a half an hour Rachel says, "Sorry I can not spend more time you, but I have just been given a school assignment which is due tomorrow". Rachel says good-night and asks Kevin to call her tomorrow. Rachel goes upstairs to her friend's bedroom to work on the assignment. Kevin follows Rachel. Kevin knocks on the door and Rachel opens the door. Kevin says he did not get

a good-night kiss. Kevin steps forward and kisses Rachel. Rachel kisses Kevin back. As they kiss for about 30 seconds, Kevin closes the door behind him. Rachel stops kissing Kevin and says, "I really have to get my work done, let's talk tomorrow". Kevin says "OK, but just one more kiss". As he is saying this Kevin takes Rachel by the hand and sits on the bed. Rachel kisses Kevin for a few seconds and then says, "OK I should really get some work done now". Kevin then leans Rachel back and continues to kiss Rachel. Kevin then begins to pull up Rachel's skirt. Rachel says that they should take a break. Kevin says "come on, you know you want me as much as I want you. Everyone knows you want me, the whole party saw you all over me." Kevin begins kissing Rachel again. Rachel says nothing and continues to lie on the bed. Kevin then takes his pants down and has sex with Rachel.

2C. Promiscuous in one month dating scenario (POM)

Rachel and Kevin are at a party at Rachel's friend's house. Kevin and Rachel have been dating for one month. Rachel has a reputation for sleeping around. Rachel and Kevin begin to talk and dance. Rachel is flirting and dancing with Kevin. After about a half an hour Rachel says, "Sorry I can not spend more time you, but I have just been given a school assignment which is due tomorrow". Rachel says good-night and asks Kevin to call her tomorrow. Rachel goes upstairs to her friend's bedroom to work on the assignment. Kevin follows Rachel. Kevin knocks on the door and Rachel opens the door. Kevin says he did not get a good-night kiss. Kevin steps forward and kisses Rachel. Rachel kisses Kevin back. As they kiss for about 30 seconds, Kevin closes the door behind him. Rachel stops kissing Kevin and says, "I really have to get my work done, let's talk tomorrow". Kevin says "OK, but just one more kiss". As he is saying this Kevin takes Rachel by the hand and sits on the bed. Rachel kisses Kevin for a few seconds and then says, "OK I should really get some work done now". Kevin then leans Rachel back and continues to kiss Rachel. Kevin then begins to pull up Rachel's skirt. Rachel says that they should take a break. Kevin says "come on, you know you want me as much as I want you. Everyone knows you want me, the whole party saw you all over me." Kevin begins kissing Rachel again. Rachel says nothing and continues to

lie on the bed. Kevin then takes his pants down and has sex with Rachel.

Appendix B**Accompanying Survey**

Please read the statements, which are in bold letters. Then circle the response that best fits with what you are thinking/feeling.

1. Kevin wanted to have sex with Rachel

- A. Definitely
- B. Wasn't as excited as Rachel but wanted sex
- C. Not sure
- D. Was uncomfortable but willing
- E. Definitely not

2. Rachel wanted to have sex with Kevin

- A. Definitely
- B. Wasn't as excited as Kevin but wanted sex
- C. Not sure
- D. Was uncomfortable but willing
- E. Definitely not

3. Kevin should have asked Rachel if it was OK for him to have sex**with her**

- A. Definitely
- B. That would have been nice, but not necessary
- C. Not necessary because she did not say no
- D. Rachel is responsible for not saying no

4. Kevin made Rachel feel that she was supposed to have sex with him

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	agree	somewhat agree	disagree	strongly disagree

5. Kevin used verbal pressure to get Rachel to have sex

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	agree	somewhat agree	disagree	strongly disagree

6. Kevin was trying to seduce Rachel

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	agree	somewhat agree	disagree	strongly disagree

7. Rachel felt pressured to have sex with Kevin

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly agree	agree	somewhat agree	disagree	strongly disagree

8. Rachel felt like she was supposed to have sex with Kevin

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree strongly disagree

9. Rachel felt good that Kevin was trying hard to be with her

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree strongly disagree

10. If Rachel did not want to have sex she should have said no

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree strongly disagree

11. Rachel is more responsible for the sex than Kevin is

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree strongly disagree

12. Rachel had a choice in the situation

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree strongly disagree

13. Kevin is more responsible for the sex than Kevin is

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree strongly disagree

14. Kevin did not use any pressure to get Rachel to have sex with him

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree strongly disagree

15. Kevin used verbal pressure but this is not a crime

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree strongly disagree

16. What Kevin did should be considered a crime but not rape

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree strongly disagree

17. What Kevin did should be considered rape

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly agree agree somewhat agree disagree strongly disagree

18. If Rachel decides to call this rape, who is more responsible

- A. Rachel
- B. Kevin
- C. both Kevin and Rachel
- D. neither, it was a misunderstanding

19. Why did Kevin do what he did?

(You may circle **more than one** answer)

He was horny

He knew Rachel really wanted him

He was insensitive

He was not thinking about Rachel's feelings

He was trying to turn Rachel on

He was angry with Rachel

Other:

20. Why did Rachel do what she did?

(You may circle **more than one** answer)

She wanted to make Kevin try hard to get sex

She was playing a game with Kevin

She did not want to have sex

She is a tease

She was embarrassed

She was afraid

Other:

Appendix C**Rape Myths Acceptance Scale**

Please read the following statements and then circle the response that best fits with what you are thinking/feeling.

1. A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Agree Strongly

2. Any female can get raped.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Agree Strongly

3. One reason that women falsely report a rape is that they frequently have a need to call attention to themselves.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Agree Strongly

4. Any healthy women can successfully resist a rapist if she really wants to.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Agree Strongly

5. When woman go around braless or wearing short skirts and tight tops, they are just asking for trouble.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Agree Strongly

6. In the majority of rapes, the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Agree Strongly

7. If a girl engages in necking or petting and she lets things get out of hand, it is her own fault if her partner forces sex on her.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Agree Strongly

8. Women who get raped while hitchhiking get what they deserve.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Agree Strongly

9. A woman who is stuck-up and thinks she is too good to talk to guys on the street deserves to be taught a lesson.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Agree Strongly

10. Many women have an unconscious wish to be raped, and may then unconsciously set up a situation in which they are likely to be attacked.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Agree Strongly

11. If a woman gets drunk at a party and has intercourse with a man she's just met there, she should be considered fair game to other males at the party who want to have sex with her too, whether she wants to or not.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Agree Strongly

12. What percentage of women who report a rape would you say are lying because they are angry and want to get back at the man they accuse?

Almost all About $\frac{3}{4}$ About $\frac{1}{2}$ About $\frac{1}{4}$ Almost None

13. What percentage of reported rapes would you guess were merely invented by women who discovered they were pregnant and wanted to protect their own reputation?

Almost all About $\frac{3}{4}$ About $\frac{1}{2}$ About $\frac{1}{4}$ Almost None

14. A person comes to you and claims they were raped. How likely would you be to believe their statement if the person were:

Your best friend?

Almost all About $\frac{3}{4}$ About $\frac{1}{2}$ About $\frac{1}{4}$ Almost None

An Indian woman?

Almost all About $\frac{3}{4}$ About $\frac{1}{2}$ About $\frac{1}{4}$ Almost None

A neighborhood woman?

Almost all About $\frac{3}{4}$ About $\frac{1}{2}$ About $\frac{1}{4}$ Almost None

A young boy?

Almost all About $\frac{3}{4}$ About $\frac{1}{2}$ About $\frac{1}{4}$ Almost None

A black woman?

Almost all About $\frac{3}{4}$ About $\frac{1}{2}$ About $\frac{1}{4}$ Almost None

A white woman?

Almost all About $\frac{3}{4}$ About $\frac{1}{2}$ About $\frac{1}{4}$ Almost None

*Appendix D***Ideas and Beliefs about Sexual Activities Informed Consent**

If you are at least 18 years of age, we invite you to participate in this study. As a participant in the study, you will be asked about your beliefs about various forms of sexual activity. The questions seek to gain a deeper appreciation of what people think about the behaviors that lead up to people having sex. The total time it should require you to complete this survey is about 20 minutes. You will be one of approximately 600 participants in this study.

As in all studies, you have the absolute right to refuse to answer any question. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may end your participation and/or withdraw your data from the study at any time up to the point data has been compiled or analyzed or made anonymous, without penalty or loss of benefits. All responses you give will be **completely anonymous** and confidential, to be seen by only you and the researchers. Do not write your name on the survey. The research records will be kept in a locked office.

If you choose to participate you will have the opportunity to learn more about this research. You will be provided with contact information in case you have questions later about the goals of the research or about the research procedures. There are no physical, psychological, financial, or academic risks associated with participation in this study. However this survey asks about your beliefs and experiences with various forms of sexual activity. You should know that thinking about sexual activities may result in embarrassment, anger, shame or other feelings that may result in you needing to speak with someone about your feelings. Both your college and local community resources have support services, if you need to discuss your experiences or feelings. Upon completion of the survey you will receive a form which lists available community resources.

Your signature below means that you have read this consent form, that you fully understand the nature and consequences of participation and that you have had all questions

regarding participation in this study answered satisfactorily. If you have further questions about this research please feel free to contact the Principle Investigator, Professor Tracy Tamborra at 203-479-4591.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant please feel free to contact the John Jay Institutional Review Board Office at jj-irb@jjay.cuny.edu, or (212) 237-8961.

Thank you.

Participant's Printed Name

Signature

Date

Appendix E**Sample Debriefing Form**

(This form was designed specifically for each college/university)

Thank you for participating in this research project!

Purpose of the project:

This project was designed to measure perceptions of coercion within the context of heterosexual sexual interactions. The researcher is trying to measure peoples' perceptions of sexual coercion. If you have further questions about this research please feel free to contact the Principle Investigator, Professor Tracy Tamborra at 203-479-4591.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant please feel free to contact the John Jay Institutional Review Board Office at jj-irb@jjay.cuny.edu, or (212) 237-8961.

If completing the survey made you think about a situation in which you were coerced to have sex, please consider contacting one of the following **resources:**

The University of New Haven's Counseling Center is located in the basement of Sheffield Hall on the University's campus. You may reach a member of the Counseling Center Team by calling (203) 931-6006.

Rape Crisis Center of Milford, Inc.
70 West River Street, Milford CT
(203) 878-1212 or toll free at 888-999-5545
<http://www.rapecrisisctr.org>

Appendix F**Demographic Information**

The following questions are about you and your life. There is no right or wrong answer and everything you say will be kept confidential.

1. How old are you? _____
2. What is your sex? Male Female
3. What is your sexual orientation?
 - Straight/Heterosexual Bisexual Gay
 - Lesbian Questioning
4. Which racial/ethnic group best describes you?
 - Hispanic/Latino/Latina
 - Black/African-American/African/Afro-Caribbean
 - White/European American/European or Caucasian
 - Asian/Pacific Islander
 - South Asian (Indian, Pakistani, etc)
 - Native American/Alaskan Native
 - Arab/Arab-American
 - Other _____

4a. If marked Other please describe_____
5. Do you consider yourself to be of Caribbean background/descent?
 - Yes No
6. Do you consider yourself to be Latino/a?
 - Yes No

6b. If Latino/a, please describe ethnicity: (e.g., Dominican, Mexican-American)

7. Your education: (What year in school are you)
 - Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior
8. Were you born in the U.S.? Yes No
 - 8a. If **NO**, where were you born?
 - Puerto Rico Virgin Islands Guam
 - Other: _____ (Please specify the country.)

15. What was your family's household income when you were growing up? (Make your best estimate)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 10,000 per year | <input type="checkbox"/> 50,001 - 60,000 per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10,001 - 20,000 per year | <input type="checkbox"/> 60,001 - 70,000 per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20,001 - 30,000 per year | <input type="checkbox"/> 70,001 and above per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30,001 - 50,000 per year | |

16. Have you had trouble-making ends meet (pay bills, rent, school fees) in the last 12 months?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Some of the time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Most of the time | <input type="checkbox"/> All of the time |

17. Do you receive financial aid to attend college?

- Yes No

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