

## Men's Heterosocial Skill and Attitudes Toward Women as Predictors of Verbal Sexual Coercion and Forceful Rape<sup>1</sup>

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*This study assessed whether men's heterosocial skill and attitudes toward women are related to verbal and physical sexual coercion in a nonincarcerated population. We predicted that heterosocially skilled men would be more likely than unskilled men to have engaged in verbal sexual coercion, whereas unskilled men would be more likely than skilled men to have engaged in physical sexual coercion (i.e., forceful rape). We expected an interaction, with this pattern holding only for men who accepted traditional gender roles or male sexual dominance; men who did not accept these attitudes were expected to be unlikely to have engaged in either verbal or physical coercion. To identify sexually coercive men, we administered questionnaires to 1152 male introductory psychology students. They completed anonymous self-report measures of (a) heterosocial skill, (b) attitudes toward women, and (c) involvement with verbal and physical sexual coercion. Results showed that heterosocially skilled men were more likely than unskilled men to have engaged in verbal sexual coercion, but heterosocial skill was unrelated to forceful rape. Men who accepted traditional gender roles or male sexual dominance were more likely than other men to have engaged in both verbal sexual coercion and forceful rape. There were no interactions. Theoretical issues and treatment implications are discussed.*

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Are heterosocially unskilled men more likely to commit rape than skilled men, perhaps because unskilled men have difficulty interesting women in voluntary sex? Or conversely, are heterosocially skilled men more likely than unskilled men to commit rape, perhaps because they find it easier to persuade women to be alone with them? Furthermore, are heterosocially skilled men more likely than other men to use their skills for verbal sexual coercion, persuading reluctant women to have sex by arguing, lying, or getting them intoxicated?

The answers to these questions have theoretical implications about men's motivation for rape: If socially skilled men find it easier than other men to obtain voluntary sex and are also more likely than other men to rape, this suggests that other factors, such as attitudes toward women and sex, are more important than sexual deprivation in predicting who will rape. The answers to these questions also have implications for treatment programs for rapists. Most such treatment programs include social skills training. Unless other motivating factors for rape are reduced, improving rapists' social skills could give them greater access to women and thus greater opportunity to engage in rape and verbal sexual coercion.

In the present study, we assessed the relationship between men's heterosocial skills, their attitudes toward women and sex, and their involvement in sexual coercion. We investigated both physical sexual coercion—obtaining sex with an unwilling partner by using or threatening to use physical force (i.e., rape)—and verbal sexual coercion—obtaining sex with an unwilling partner by verbal means such as arguing or lying (Bart & O'Brien, 1985; Koss & Oros, 1982). Both forms of sexual coercion are epidemic: A national survey of higher education students revealed that 25% of the women had engaged in unwanted sexual intercourse because they were overwhelmed by a man's continual arguments; 15.4% had been raped (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987).

### *Sexual Coercion and Heterosocial Skill*

Because heterosocially skilled men find it easier to initiate a variety of interactions with women (Twentyman & McFall, 1975), it is likely that they would also find it easier to initiate sex. Even if the woman were initially unwilling, it is likely that a skilled man would find it easier than an unskilled man to persuade her using verbal means. Thus, we predicted that heterosocially skilled men would find it easier than unskilled men to obtain voluntary sex and verbally coerced sex.

Heterosocially unskilled men would have less success using these strategies, and thus may be more likely than skilled men to obtain sex using physi-

cal coercion. It has been reported that rapists are socially inadequate and are often incapable of appropriate heterosocial relations (Clark & Lewis, 1977; Laws & Serber, 1975). Most treatment programs for rapists include heterosocial skills training (Abel, Blanchard, & Becker, 1976; Barlow, Abel, Blanchard, Bristow, & Young, 1977; Becker, Abel, Blanchard, Murphy, & Coleman, 1978; Whitman & Quinsey, 1981). "The premise of such skills training is that rapists may be sexually aroused by women, but unless they can carry out the preliminary conversation, flirting, and other dating skills antecedent to a relationship, they will not have the opportunity to become involved sexually with the female (except by rape)" (Abel et al., 1976, p. 103).

Several recent studies have compared the heterosocial skill of incarcerated rapists, incarcerated nonsex offenders, and nonincarcerated low socioeconomic status (SES) men. Overholser and Beck (1986) assessed men's heterosocial skill during conversations and role-play interactions with a female confederate. The incarcerated rapists were rated as having lower levels of social skill than nonincarcerated low-SES men. The authors did not report whether rapists differed significantly from nonsex offenders. Stermac and Quinsey (1986) assessed men's heterosocial skill using self-report measures and conversations and role plays with a female confederate. Rapists were judged to be less skillful than nonincarcerated low-SES men, but they did not differ significantly from incarcerated nonsex offenders. Segal and Marshall (1985) assessed men's heterosocial skill using a conversation with a female confederate and numerous self-report scales, including the Survey of Heterosexual Interactions (Twentyman & McFall, 1975). They found that, both on behavioral ratings and on the Survey of Heterosexual Interactions, incarcerated men were rated as less skilled than nonincarcerated men; incarcerated sex offenders (rapists and child molesters) did not differ significantly from incarcerated nonsex offenders. When distinguishing between rapists and child molesters, however, Segal and Marshall found that child molesters were significantly less skilled than rapists on several measures, but rapists did not differ from other lower SES males, whether incarcerated or not. Thus, rapists' heterosocial skills have been found to be either equivalent to those of nonincarcerated low-SES men, and lower than nonincarcerated low-SES men but equivalent to incarcerated nonsex offenders. This suggests that skills deficits found in incarcerated rapists might be more related to incarceration than to rape.

Incarcerated rapists probably do not represent a random sample of all rapists with respect to social skill. Low-skilled rapists are probably more likely than high-skilled rapists to be incarcerated. A heterosocially skilled man would find it easier than an unskilled man to get dates and thus could commit date rape rather than stranger rape. Russell (1984) found that 1% of date rapes were reported to the police, compared with 30% of stranger

rapes; similarly, Koss, Dinero, Seibel, and Cox (1988) found that 0.8% of date rapes were reported to the police, compared with 21.2% of stranger rapes. Date rape is less likely than stranger rape to be taken seriously by the police (Russell, 1984). Date rapists are unlikely to go to trial; cases of acquaintance rape are likely to drop out of the court system early, before they reach either the plea bargaining or trial stage (Holmstrom & Burgess, 1978). When an acquaintance rape case does go to trial, defense attorneys often use the relationship between the rapist and victim to imply that the woman consented to intercourse (Estrich, 1987; Holmstrom & Burgess, 1978). During a trial, a jury may find it hard to believe that a sophisticated, socially skilled defendant would resort to rape (Clark & Lewis, 1977).

It is also possible for causality to operate in the other direction: Once a rapist is incarcerated, his heterosocial skill could decline due to lack of practice or due to negative cognitions about women's reluctance to date convicted rapists.

Because it seems likely that low-skilled rapists are more likely than high-skilled rapists to be incarcerated, and because incarceration might decrease a rapist's social skill, it would be useful to study the relationship between heterosocial skill and rape in a nonincarcerated population. This was one purpose of the present study.

### *Sexual Coercion and Attitudes Toward Women*

We did not expect all skilled men to engage in verbal sexual coercion and all unskilled men to engage in rape. Instead, we expected to find these patterns predominantly among men whose attitudes toward women were conducive to sexual coercion—that is, among men who advocated traditional gender roles and male sexual dominance over women. Men who did not hold these attitudes were expected to be unlikely to engage in either verbal or physical coercion, regardless of their heterosocial skills.

According to traditional gender roles, men are dominant and aggressive, and women are submissive and passive (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972); rape coincides nicely with these roles. Clark and Lewis (1977) hypothesized that unequal power relationships must be maintained by threatened or actual violence; consistent with this idea, Sanday (1981) found that rape-free societies are characterized by egalitarian relationships between women and men, whereas rape-prone societies tend to be characterized by male dominance. Traditional gender roles place men in control of more resources than women; it is often expected that a man's financial contribution to a male-female relationship entitles him to sexual access to the woman (Giarrusso, Johnson, Goodchilds, & Zellman, 1979; Kanin, 1967, 1969, 1985; Korman & Leslie, 1982; McCormick & Jesser, 1983; Muehlenhard, 1988a; Muehlenhard, Friedman, & Thomas, 1985; Weis & Borges, 1973). The traditional sexual double standard restricts the

sexual behavior of women (Komarovsky, 1976; Laws & Schwartz, 1977; Schur, 1983); women who violate the double standard and who behave—or whom men perceive to behave—too provocatively are disparaged and viewed to have forfeited their right to refuse sex (Amir, 1971; Burt, 1980; Goodchilds & Zellman, 1984; Kanin, 1967, 1969, 1985). Conversely, the traditional double standard dictates that men should be sexually active and disparages sexually inexperienced men (Gross, 1978; Komarovsky, 1976; Weiss & Borges, 1973; Zilbergeld, 1978); men who accept this double standard must obtain sex to prove their manhood.

There is empirical evidence that attitudes toward traditional gender roles and male dominance are related to attitudes toward rape. Traditional gender role attitudes (such as attitudes measured by Burt's, 1980, Sex Role Stereotyping Scale) relate to attitudes toward rape. Compared with nontraditional persons, traditional persons are more likely to view rape as justifiable and as the woman's fault, and traditional men report a higher likelihood of raping if they could be sure that no one would know (Burt, 1980; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Feild, 1978; Muehlenhard, 1988a; Muehlenhard et al., 1985; Muehlenhard & MacNaughton, 1988). Some studies have found that traditional men are more likely than nontraditional men to have engaged sexual aggression (Koss, Leonard, Beezley, & Oros, 1985; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987), while another study found no such relationship (Rapaport & Burkhart, 1984).

The acceptance of interpersonal violence, especially violence against women (as measured by Burt's, 1980, Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence Scale) and the belief that male–female relationships are basically adversarial and exploitive (as measured by Burt's, 1980, Adversarial Sexual Beliefs Scale) are related to the acceptance of rape myths, many of which hold that rape is often the woman's fault and is often justifiable (Burt, 1980). These beliefs have been found to be more common among sexually aggressive men than among other men (Malamuth, 1986; Rapaport & Burkhart, 1984).

Callous sexual beliefs are beliefs that “seem to encourage a calloused, exploitive, aggressive posture designed to ensure sexual access to women” (Mosher, 1971, p. 313). Using his Sexual Attitudes Toward Women Scale, Mosher (1971) found that men who held callous sexual beliefs were more likely than other men to have obtained sexual intercourse by using force, by getting a woman intoxicated, and by falsely professing love.

### *The Present Study*

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the heterosocial skill and attitudes of nonincarcerated sexually coercive men. To obtain a sufficiently large sample of nonincarcerated forceful rapists, we had to (a) test a large number of men, and (b) guarantee the anonymity of the men's

responses. These two constraints precluded assessing the men's heterosocial skills by having them engage in conversations or behavioral role plays with female confederates: such techniques would have made testing a large number of men difficult and would have made guaranteeing anonymity impossible. Hence, we chose to assess social skill using the Survey of Heterosexual Interactions (SHI; Twentyman & McFall, 1975). This self-report questionnaire asks men how able they would be to initiate various social interactions with women they do not know well. The SHI has been extensively validated and has been recommended as a selection measure in studies of heterosocial skills (Zellinger, Conger, & Conger, 1983). Attitudes were assessed using the previously discussed attitudinal questionnaires that have been shown to relate to attitudes toward rape. Men's levels of sexual aggression were assessed using a modified version of the Sexual Experiences Survey (Koss & Oros, 1982).

We made the following predictions:

1. High-skilled men would be more likely than low-skilled men to have engaged in sexual intercourse that was voluntary for both persons.
2. Because persuading a reluctant woman to engage in sex would seem to require heterosocial skill, high-skilled men would be more likely than low-skilled men to have engaged in verbal sexual coercion.
3. Because they would find verbal strategies difficult, low-skilled men would be more likely than high-skilled men to have resorted to physical sexual coercion. (However, Segal and Marshall's, 1985, finding that incarcerated rapists were as skilled as nonincarcerated low-SES men cast doubt on this prediction.)
4. Men who accept traditional gender roles or male sexual dominance would be more likely than other men to engage in both verbal and physical sexual coercion.
5. Men's heterosocial skill would interact with their attitudes toward women, in that the second and third predictions would hold only for men with traditional or male-dominant attitudes toward women. Men who did not accept such attitudes would be unlikely to use either verbal or physical sexual coercion, regardless of their level of heterosocial skill.

## METHOD

### *Subjects*

Questionnaires were administered to 1152 male introductory psychology students at a large Southwestern university. They did not know the topic of the study when they volunteered. They received course credit for participating. Their mean age was 20.

### Questionnaires

A modified Sexual Experiences Survey was developed, based on Koss and Oros's (1982) Sexual Experiences Survey. Koss and Oros's original survey presented men with descriptions of 12 sexual experiences and asked them to indicate whether they had had each experience. We modified the survey in several ways: We deleted two items we considered ambiguous (2 and 3). We added the strategy of obtaining sex by getting the women intoxicated, because Mosher (1971) found this to be men's most frequent strategy for obtaining sex with a reluctant partner. Thus, each man in the present study was asked if he had ever engaged in sexual intercourse that was obtained (a) voluntarily for both persons, (b) by his threatening to end the relationship otherwise, (c) because the woman felt pressured by his continual arguments, (d) by his saying things he did not mean, (e) by his getting her intoxicated, (f) by his threatening to use physical force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.) if she did not cooperate, and (g) by his actually using physical force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.).<sup>3</sup>

Koss and Gidycz (1985) reported that for men completing the Sexual Experiences Survey, Cronbach's alpha was .89. To assess test-retest reliability, they administered the Sexual Experiences Survey twice, a week apart; mean item agreement between administrations was 93%.

The Survey of Heterosexual Interactions (SHI), used to measure the men's heterosocial skill, presents 20 scenarios in which a male wishes to initiate a conversation, phone call, dance, or date with a female he does not know well (Twentyman & McFall, 1975). These heterosocial interactions were empirically identified to be common for college men and to reflect a cross section of difficulty (Twentyman & McFall, 1975; also see Muehlenhard, 1988b). Respondents indicate on a 7-point scale how able they would be to initiate such an interaction, from *unable in every case* (1) to *able in every case* (7). Responses are summed to yield a total ranging from 20, the least able, to 140, the most able. Twentyman, Boland, and McFall (1981) reported a split-half reliability of .85 and a four-month test-retest reliability of .85.

The SHI has been used frequently as a measure of heterosocial skill (e.g., Firth, Conger, Kuhlenschmidt, & Dorsey, 1986; Glass, Merluzzi, Biever, & Larsen, 1982; Muehlenhard, Miller, & Burdick, 1983; Segal & Marshall, 1985; Twentyman et al., 1981; Twentyman & McFall, 1975; Zellinger et al.,

<sup>3</sup>The questionnaire also contained items from Koss and Oros's (1982) Sexual Experiences Survey involving (a) threatening to use, and actually using, physical force to obtain intercourse, but for some reason intercourse did not occur, and (b) threatening to use, or actually using, physical force to obtain other sexual acts such as anal or oral intercourse. These items are being dropped from the present analysis because there were no parallel items in which the man tried to use verbal coercion, but intercourse did not occur, or in which the man used verbal coercion to obtain anal or oral intercourse.

1983). It seems to assess "the ability and willingness to initiate [interactions with women] combined with social confidence or comfort" (Zellinger et al., 1983, p. 7). The SHI is superior to dating frequency in predicting ratings of men's skill, smoothness, and lack of anxiety during conversations with female confederates (Zellinger et al., 1983). Compared with low-frequency daters with low SHI scores, high-frequency daters with high SHI scores interacted with more women in more situations for more time outside the lab, rated themselves and were rated by observers as less anxious during heterosocial interactions in the lab, and showed less pulse rate change during these interactions (Twentyman & McFall, 1975). Men who scored high on the SHI were more willing than other men to initiate conversations with women they did not know (Twentyman et al., 1981). Because of the high correlations between the SHI and behavioral ratings of heterosocial skill, the SHI has been recommended as a selection measure in studies of heterosocial skill (Zellinger et al., 1983).

The Sex Role Stereotyping Scale, Adversarial Sexual Beliefs Scale, and Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence Scale were developed by Burt (1980). Respondents rate their level of agreement to each item using a 7-point scale. The Sex Role Stereotyping Scale is a 9-item scale measuring attitudes toward women's role in familial, work, and social situations: for example, "A wife should never contradict her husband in public" (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .800$ ). The Adversarial Sexual Beliefs Scale is a 9-item scale measuring "the expectation that sexual relationships are fundamentally exploitative, that each party . . . is manipulative, sly, cheating, opaque to the other's understanding, and not to be trusted" (Burt, 1980, p. 218): for example, "Women are usually sweet until they've caught a man, but then they let their true self show" (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .802$ ). The Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence Scale measures "the notion that force and coercion are legitimate ways to gain compliance and specifically that they are legitimate in intimate and sexual relationships" (Burt, 1980, p. 218; Cronbach's  $\alpha = .586$ ). Five of the six items on this scale refer to violence against women; three of these items refer specifically to sexual violence (e.g., "Being roughed up is sexually stimulating to many women"). All three of these scales have been shown to relate positively to acceptance of rape myths (Burt, 1980).

The Sexist Attitudes Toward Women Scale is a 40-item scale measuring "attitudes which function to place females in a position of relative inferiority to males by limiting women's social, political, economic, and psychological development" (Benson & Vincent, 1980, p. 278): for example, "On the average, women are as intelligent as men," keyed negatively, and "Women should be handled gently by men because they are so delicate." Respondents rate their level of agreement with each item using a 7-point scale. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for three samples ranged from .90 to .93. This scale correlates significantly in the predicted directions with Spence and Helmreich's



(1972) Attitudes Toward Women Scale, with support for the women's liberation movement, with the attribution of humor to sexist jokes, with the desire to subscribe to *Ms.* magazine, and with the proportion of driving the female and male do on a long car trip (Benson & Vincent, 1980). This scale was selected as a measure of traditional gender role attitudes.

The Sexual Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Form B) is a 15-item scale measuring calloused attitudes that would ensure sexual access to women (Mosher, 1971): for example, "Promise a woman anything, but give her your cock," and "You don't ASK girls to screw, you TELL them to screw." Respondents rate their agreement with each item on a 5-point scale. This scale was selected as a measure of male sexual dominance.

### *Procedure*

The men met in groups of up to 60. They were seated in alternate seats in alternate rows to assure the anonymity of their responses. The questionnaires were presented in counterbalanced order, except that the Sexual Attitudes Toward Women Scale was always administered last. This was done because we feared that the vulgar language and callous content of the scale might irritate some men and make them unwilling to complete the rest of the scales. In fact, several men reported being offended by it, and more men failed to complete this scale than any of the other scales.

## **RESULTS**

### *Preliminary Analysis*

A principal components factor analysis of the five attitude scales, with a varimax rotation, yielded two factors with eigenvalues greater than one. Three scales loaded greater than .5 onto Factor 1: the Sex Role Stereotyping Scale (loading = .81), the Sexist Attitudes Toward Women Scale (.80), and the Adversarial Sexual Beliefs Scale (.70). The items on these scales state that men and women should conform to traditional gender roles, but they do not specifically state that men should be sexually dominant over women. We named Factor 1 the Traditionality factor.

Two scales loaded greater than .5 onto Factor 2: the Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence Scale (.91) and the Sexual Attitudes Toward Women (Callousness) Scale (.58). Many items on these scales state specifically that men should sexually dominate women, using either verbal or physical coercion. We named Factor 2 the Sexual Dominance factor.

We combined the three questionnaires loading on the Traditionality factor and the two questionnaires loading on the Sexual Dominance factor in order to obtain traditionality scores and sexual dominance scores, respectively. Because the original questionnaires used several different rating scales, we standardized the scores on each questionnaire before combining them. Using these standardized scores, we assigned traditionality scores to each participant by calculating the mean of his scores for the three scales loading on the Traditionality factor. Similarly, we assigned sexual dominance scores to each participant by calculating the mean of his scores for the two scales loading on the Sexual Dominance factor. Finally, we standardized these new traditionality scores and sexual dominance scores.

*Prevalence of Sexual Coercion as a Function of Men's Levels of Heterosocial Skill, Traditionality, and Sexual Dominance*

To test our predictions, we assessed the percentage of men who engaged in coercive behavior as a function of their level of heterosocial skill, traditionality, and sexual dominance. We divided the entire sample into three approximately equal groups on the basis of their SHI scores. The range of SHI scores was 31–89 for the low-skilled group, 90–105 for the moderate-skilled group, and 106–140 for the high-skilled group. Similarly, we divided the sample into thirds on the basis of their traditionality scores, and also on the basis of their sexual dominance scores.

The relationship between these variables and sexual coercion was investigated using a  $3 \times 3 \times 3$  multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Independent variables were heterosocial skill group (high, moderate, low), traditionality group (high, moderate, low), and sexual dominance group (high, moderate, low). Dependent variables were each men's experience with sexual intercourse obtained in five different ways: (a) *Voluntarily* for both persons. (b) By *arguing* to obtain sex, including threatening to end the relationship and arguing with the woman continually. These two strategies were combined because in both cases the woman did not want to have sex but eventually consented. (c) By *lying* to obtain sex. This strategy was distinguished from other verbally coercive strategies because the woman consented under false pretenses. (d) By getting the woman *intoxicated* to obtain sex. Depending on her level of intoxication and her subsequent ability to give or withhold consent, this might be legally classified as rape or sexual assault (Russell, 1984). (e) By using or threatening to use *physical force* to obtain sex with an unwilling woman—that is, by committing rape. These data were coded as dummy variables, equaling 1 if a man had obtained intercourse in this way and 0 if he had not.

The MANOVA showed that men's sexual experiences were related to their levels of heterosocial skill [ $F(10, 2178) = 4.28, p < .0001$ ], attitudes toward traditionality [ $F(10, 2178) = 1.97, p = .0323$ ], and attitudes toward sexual dominance [ $F(10, 2178) = 5.59, p < .0001$ ]. There were no interactions (failing to support Hypothesis 5).

The MANOVA was followed up by five  $3 \times 3 \times 3$  univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs), one for each of the five ways of obtaining intercourse. Post hoc comparisons were done using Duncan's multiple range test. The results of these analyses, and the percentage of men in each group who had obtained sexual intercourse in various ways, are presented in Table I.

In regard to *heterosocial skill*, more high- and moderate-skilled men than low-skilled men had engaged in sexual intercourse that was obtained by mutual consent (supporting Hypothesis 1), and by arguing, lying, and getting the woman intoxicated (supporting Hypothesis 2). Social skill level was unrelated to forceful rape, however (failing to support Hypothesis 3).

Attitudes toward traditionality were not related to mutually consenting sexual intercourse. However, traditional men were more likely than non-traditional men to have obtained sexual intercourse by arguing, lying, getting the woman intoxicated, and raping (supporting Hypothesis 4).

Attitudes toward sexual dominance were also related to sexual experience. High-dominant men were more likely than low-dominant men to have had sexual intercourse obtained by mutual consent, arguing, lying, getting the woman intoxicated, and raping (supporting Hypothesis 4).

### *Sexual Behaviors of Rapists and Other Men*

To clarify further the relationship between heterosocial skill, attitudes, and verbal and physical sexual coercion, we conducted two additional analyses. First, we identified the 17 men in our sample who had engaged in forceful rape—that is, who had “had sexual intercourse with a woman when she didn't want to because you used some degree of physical force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.).” Their mean age was 20 (range = 18–24). With respect to dating status, 2 (11.8%) were not dating at all, 3 (17.6%) were dating one person occasionally, 8 (47.1%) were dating more than one person, 4 (23.5%) were going steady, and none were engaged. Eight (47.1%) of these men reported raping only once, 3 (17.6%) reported 2–5 times, 2 (11.8%) reported 6–20 times, and 4 (23.5%) reported more than 20 times. Nine (52.9%) of these men reported raping within the past year; 8 (47.1%) indicated that they had raped, but not during the past year.

To assess how the sexual behaviors of these rapists compared with the sexual behaviors of other men, we calculated the percentages of rapists and

**Table 1.** Percentages of Men Who Had Obtained Sexual Intercourse in Various Ways, as a Function of Social Skill, Traditionality, and Sexual Dominance Level<sup>a</sup>

	Social skill level <sup>b</sup>			Traditionality <sup>c</sup>			Sexual dominance <sup>d</sup>		
	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
	Mutually consenting	80.2 <sub>a</sub>	77.0 <sub>a</sub>	64.0 <sub>b</sub> <sup>h</sup>	74.3 <sub>a</sub>	73.0 <sub>a</sub>	73.9 <sub>a</sub>	79.9 <sub>a</sub>	75.5 <sub>a</sub>
He argued with her	17.2 <sub>a</sub>	15.6 <sub>a</sub>	10.5 <sub>b</sub> <sup>e</sup>	20.3 <sub>a</sub>	11.3 <sub>b</sub>	11.7 <sub>b</sub> <sup>e</sup>	23.3 <sub>a</sub>	13.3 <sub>b</sub>	6.7 <sub>b</sub> <sup>h</sup>
He lied to her	33.4 <sub>a</sub>	27.9 <sub>a</sub>	20.7 <sub>b</sub> <sup>f</sup>	35.0 <sub>a</sub>	27.0 <sub>b</sub>	20.3 <sub>c</sub> <sup>e</sup>	40.1 <sub>a</sub>	27.7 <sub>b</sub>	14.3 <sub>b</sub> <sup>h</sup>
He got her intoxicated	21.1 <sub>a</sub>	14.2 <sub>b</sub>	7.8 <sub>c</sub> <sup>h</sup>	20.3 <sub>a</sub>	12.7 <sub>b</sub>	10.4 <sub>b</sub> <sup>e</sup>	20.9 <sub>a</sub>	14.4 <sub>b</sub>	8.1 <sub>c</sub> <sup>f</sup>
He used force	2.3 <sub>a</sub>	0.8 <sub>b</sub>	1.3 <sub>c</sub>	3.2 <sub>a</sub>	1.1 <sub>b</sub>	0.3 <sub>b</sub> <sup>e</sup>	3.5 <sub>a</sub>	0.5 <sub>b</sub>	0.5 <sub>b</sub> <sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Means with different subscripts differ significantly at  $p < .05$ .

<sup>b</sup>Based on Survey of Heterosexual Interactions scores. For the three groupings,  $ns = 383$ , 365, and 372, respectively.

<sup>c</sup>Based on the mean of standardized Sex Role Stereotyping, Sexist Attitudes Toward Women, and Adversarial Sexual Belief Scale scores.  $ns = 374$ , 371, and 375, respectively.

<sup>d</sup>Based on the mean of standardized Sexual Attitudes Toward Women (Callousness) and Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence Scale scores.  $ns = 374$ , 375, and 371, respectively.

<sup>e</sup> $p < .05$ .

<sup>f</sup> $p < .01$ .

<sup>g</sup> $p < .001$ .

<sup>h</sup> $p < .0001$ .

nonrapists who had obtained sex in various ways (see Table II). A series of chi-square analyses revealed that although rapists did not differ significantly from other men in how likely they were to have engaged in mutually consenting sex, the rapists were significantly more likely than other men to have been involved in every type of sexual coercion. This suggests that rapists use physical coercion as part of a general pattern of sexual coercion.

### *Heterosocial Skill and Attitudes of Rapists and Other Groups of Men*

In a final analysis, men's responses to the modified Sexual Experiences Survey were used to create five groups, based on the degree of coerciveness they had used to obtain sex: groups of men who had obtained sex (a) voluntarily for both persons, (b) by arguing, (c) by lying, (d) by getting the woman intoxicated, and (e) by using physical force. Seventeen men had used physical force. To create a balanced design, we randomly selected 17 men from each of the other groups for purposes of comparison. For each group, men who had used a more coercive method of obtaining sex were excluded.

Two MANOVAs were conducted to compare the five groups of men. The first MANOVA compared the groups on variables related to heterosocial skill: The dependent variables were Survey of Heterosexual Interactions scores, number of dates in the last four weeks, average number of dates per month during the past year, number of different women dated during the past year, each man's subjective estimate of his amount of social behavior with the "opposite" sex compared with that of other persons his age, and the approximate number of times each man had ever engaged in mutually consenting sexual intercourse. The MANOVA revealed no significant differences among the groups [ $F(24, 245) = 1.09, p = .3553$ ] (see Table III).

**Table II.** Percentages of Rapists and Nonrapists Who Reported Obtaining Sex in Various Ways

Ways of obtaining sexual intercourse	Rapists <sup>a</sup>	Nonrapists <sup>b</sup>
Mutually consenting	88.2	73.4
Arguing	88.2	13.5 <sup>d</sup>
Lying	88.2	26.4 <sup>d</sup>
Getting the woman intoxicated	76.5	13.5 <sup>d</sup>
Any coercion <sup>c</sup>	100.0	33.1 <sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> $n = 17$ .

<sup>b</sup> $n = 1113$ .

<sup>c</sup>This category includes arguing, lying, getting the woman intoxicated, and/or using physical force to obtain sex.

<sup>d</sup> $p < .001$ .

**Table III.** Social Skill and Attitudes of Men Reporting Various Levels of Sexual Coercion<sup>a</sup>

	Mutually consenting	Arguing	Lying	Intoxication	Rape
Social skill <sup>b</sup>	100.7 <sub>a</sub>	97.6 <sub>a</sub>	94.6 <sub>a</sub>	104.5 <sub>a</sub>	101.8 <sub>a</sub>
Traditionality <sup>c</sup>	.01 <sub>a</sub>	-.31 <sub>a</sub>	.23 <sub>ab</sub>	.28 <sub>ab</sub>	.88 <sub>b*</sub>
Sexual dominance <sup>d</sup>	-.48 <sub>a</sub>	.03 <sub>ab</sub>	.49 <sub>bc</sub>	.61 <sub>bc</sub>	.98 <sub>c*</sub>

<sup>a</sup>Means with different subscripts differ significantly at  $p < .05$ .  $n = 17$  for each group.

<sup>b</sup>Based on Survey of Heterosexual Interactions scores. For the entire sample  $M = 97.4$ ,  $SD = 19.5$ . Higher scores indicate greater social skill.

<sup>c</sup>Based on Sex Role Stereotyping, Sexist Attitudes Toward Women, and Adversarial Sexual Beliefs Scale scores. For the entire sample, these combined scores were standardized. Higher scores indicate greater acceptance of traditional sex roles.

<sup>d</sup>Based on Sexual Attitudes Toward Women (Callousness) and Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence Scale scores. For the entire sample, these combined scores were standardized. Higher scores indicate greater acceptance of male sexual dominance.

<sup>e</sup> $p < .05$ .

<sup>f</sup> $p < .0005$ .

The second MANOVA compared the five groups on attitudinal variables: The dependent variables were traditionality scores and sexual dominance scores. The results were significant [ $F(8, 158) = 3.61$ ,  $p = .0007$ ]. Subsequent ANOVAs and Duncan's multiple range tests were conducted. The five groups differed significantly on their traditionality scores [ $F(4, 80) = 2.88$ ,  $p = .0278$ ], and on their sexual dominance scores [ $F(4, 80) = 6.13$ ,  $p = .0002$ ] (see Table III). Compared with men in the mutually consenting sex and argument groups, men in the rape group more strongly advocated traditional gender roles and male sexual dominance.

## DISCUSSION

This study casts doubt on the hypothesis that rapists are less heterosocially skilled than other men. There were no significant differences in the percentage of rapists in the high-, medium-, and low-skilled groups; these percentages were not even in the predicted direction. Rapists did not differ significantly from any group of nonrapists on any measure of heterosocial skill, dating frequency, or frequency of mutually consenting sex. It could be argued that our sample did not include enough rapist to test this hypothesis adequately—"only" 17 of the 1119 men reported having engaged in forceful rape. This number of rapists was large enough to yield significant results for traditionality and sexual dominance, however. If heterosocial skill is related to rape, this relationship would appear to be quite weak—weaker than the relationship between attitudes and rape.

In contrast to the results involving forceful sexual coercion, the results involving verbal sexual coercion clearly showed that verbally coercive strate-

gies were used by more high-skilled men than low-skilled men. High-skilled men—especially those with traditional and male-dominant attitudes—frequently used their skills to coerce reluctant women to engage in sex.

Because the purpose of this study was to assess the social skill and attitudes of nonincarcerated rapists, we used an anonymous self-report measure to identify rapists. There are potential problems in relying on such a measure. Many men do not believe it when women say no to sex; they believe women often use token resistance to sex in order not to appear promiscuous (Check & Malamuth, 1983; Muehlenhard & Felts, 1987; Shotland & Goodstein, 1983). Such a man might commit rape without realizing he is doing so; thus, he would not be identified as a rapist on a self-report measure. Even if a man is aware that he has committed rape, he might not be willing to admit it. Conversely, a nonrapist could report that he had raped, either because of carelessness or a reluctance to cooperate. Therefore, identifying rapists via an anonymous questionnaire has potential pitfalls—just as identifying rapists via the legal system has potential pitfalls (albeit different pitfalls). It is interesting, then, that both the present study and studies using incarcerated populations (e.g., Segal & Marshall, 1985; Stermac & Quinsey, 1986) found no support for the hypothesis that rapists generally have poorer social skills than other men in the population.

We measured heterosocial skill using the Survey of Heterosexual Interactions. The SHI is one of the best self-report measures of heterosocial skill. It correlates highly with behavioral measures of social skill (Zellinger et al., 1983), and it has been used in numerous studies of social skill. However, it measures only one aspect of social skill: initiating interactions. There are many other dimensions of heterosocial skill: reading women's cues, sending appropriate cues, increasing intimacy in a relationship, initiating sex, engaging in sex, maintaining an ongoing relationship, handling conflicts in a relationship, ending a relationship, and so forth. Studies have found that rapists were deficient in some of these skills. Stermac and Quinsey (1986) found that incarcerated rapists were lower than incarcerated nonrapists and nonincarcerated men on a self-report measure of assertiveness in general situations and heterosexual situations. Lipton, McDonel, and McFall (1987) found that incarcerated rapists were less able than incarcerated nonrapists to read women's cues, especially negative cues, in videotapes simulating first-date interactions.

What are the implications for treating rapists? The present study, along with past studies, casts some doubt on the need to routinely teach rapists how to initiate conversations and flirt with women. Skill in initiating heterosocial interactions was unrelated to rape; furthermore, high-skilled men were more likely than low-skilled men to have obtained sex by arguing, lying, and getting the woman intoxicated. Segal and Marshall (1985) pointed out that even though between-group comparisons revealed that incarcerated rapists

were as skillful as nonincarcerated low-SES men, some of the rapists they studied had severe difficulties interacting with women and could have benefited from social skills training. We need individual assessment to determine the focus of treatment (Segal & Marshall, 1985). This assessment should include an assessment of attitudes toward male sexual dominance and traditional gender roles. Improving a rapist's heterosocial skill without changing his attitudes might simply add verbal sexual coercion to his repertoire of coercive sexual behaviors.

Perhaps it is not surprising that men with high sexual dominance scores were more likely than other men to have engaged in both verbal and physical sexual coercion. It is interesting, however, that even when the ANOVAs controlled for sexual dominance scores, men with high traditionality scores were still more likely than other men to have obtained sexual intercourse by arguing, lying, getting the woman intoxicated, and raping. There appears to be a component of traditional gender role attitudes that is related to verbal coercion and rape, independent of attitudes related directly to male sexual dominance. This has interesting implications regarding the causes of sexual aggression. There has recently been much publicity about the effects of pornography on sexual aggression (U.S. Department of Justice, 1986). Movies portraying sexual violence increase men's acceptance of interpersonal violence (Malamuth & Check, 1981), which the present study found to be related to forceful rape. But the present study also found that traditionality was related to rape, even when sexual dominance was controlled for. Does this mean that materials or institutions that advocate traditional gender roles might increase the incidence of forceful rape by increasing men's traditional gender role attitudes? At the present time, we have only correlational evidence that sexual aggression might be caused by pornography or by institutions promoting traditional gender roles. Clearly, further research is needed on these issues.

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