

EXPOSURE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, GENDER IDEOLOGY, RAPE MYTHS AND
SEXUALASSAULT PERPETRATION: A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING
ANALYSIS

by

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Exposure to Domestic Violence, Gender Ideology, Rape Myths and Sexual Assault
Perpetration: A Structural Equation Modeling Analysis

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
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Abstract

EXPOSURE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, GENDER IDEOLOGY, RAPE MYTHS AND THE PERPETRATION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT: A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING ANALYSIS

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The prevalence of male perpetrated sexual assault and its antecedents have long remained topics of great interest and discussion among researchers, educators and practitioners.

This study sought to extend and refine existing research on the links between masculinity and sexual assault by exploring their relation to gender ideology and prior exposure to domestic violence in childhood. Specifically this thesis examined the link between exposure to domestic violence in childhood, perpetrated by fathers, gender ideologies, rape myth acceptance and sexual assault among undergraduate men, using previously collected longitudinal data. Based on previous literature, grounded in various theoretical frameworks, I proposed a linear pathway linking these variables. I theorized that young boys exposed to parental violence in the home would internalize traditional gender role beliefs; these stereotypical gender beliefs would then increase their likelihood of developing hypermasculine attitudes characterized by callous sexual attitudes and an

increased probability of accepting rape myths. I proposed that the convergence of these antecedents would lead to a higher risk of sexual assault perpetration. Results from a bivariate correlation analysis and structural equation modeling provided strong support for my linear model. Findings indicated that young men exposed to domestic violence in childhood were more likely to internalize traditional gender role beliefs. Subsequently those young men who internalized traditional gender role beliefs were more likely to adopt a hypermasculine gender ideology. Higher hypermasculine attitudes among respondents led to significant increases in rape supportive beliefs. Consequently high levels of rape supportive attitudes to significant increases in reported sexually assaultive behavior. Findings also revealed that higher alcohol consumption had a positive direct effect on almost every variable in the model, while race and relationship status both had minor to zero effects. The implication of these findings, intervention strategies, limitations and suggestions for future research were also discussed.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In contemporary society sexual assault is regarded as a major social problem with increasing rates of reported cases and an overwhelming percent of unreported cases (Larsen and Long 1988). While specific laws vary across states, sexual assault generally refers to any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient. This includes, but is not limited to, attempted and forced sexual intercourse, sodomy, incest, fondling, and child abuse. In the U.S., the FBI estimates that a woman is raped every six minutes and as many as one in four women will be the victim of rape in her lifetime (Heise 1998). Given this prevalence of sexual violence in American culture, considerable research has been devoted to examining the specific nature of these crimes, including its antecedents, risk factors, and characteristics of the victim and perpetrator (Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994). What increases the likelihood of sexual assault? To what extent does exposure to domestic violence (DV), gender ideology, and rape myth acceptance (RMA) increase one's likelihood of sexual assault? How do these factors interact? The purpose of this study was to extend previous research by examining the link between these concepts.

In this study I maintained that rape had a social basis in which men continually recreated masculine identities and relations. From this perspective, rape must be treated

as a part of the social construction of gender (Boswell and Spade 1996). Men are not born rapists or sexual predators; rape is a learned behavior. Men must learn the scripts, specific techniques, beliefs, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes that are compatible with sexual assault (Scully and Marolla 1985). Men do not rape unless certain attitudes and beliefs are in place that assist in the preparation for and justification of rape (Ryan 2011). With family as the primary mode of socialization, it is imperative to understand how the home environment is influential in shaping children's attitudes and beliefs. Many studies that examine risk factors that contribute to male's sexual perpetration do not include a family measure. This study sought to rectify that oversight by investigating gender ideology, rape supportive attitudes, and sexual assault as originating from the family.

A great deal of past research has incorporated cross sectional designs that have succeeded in producing a wealth of data about the correlates associated with sexual assault. However, these studies in effect, tell us little about how young boys who witness their fathers abuse their mothers may influence outcomes in adulthood. This study departed from that trend by incorporating a longitudinal design that allowed me to better see how exposure to domestic violence, gender ideology, and RMA develop across a young boy's lifetime. This study was designed to empirically test the causal factors that are hypothesized to predispose young boys to commit sexual assault against women by retrospectively examining past experiences as they work to influence attitudes and beliefs in adulthood. Utilizing a longitudinal design was beneficial because it allowed me to retrospectively examine the progression of sexual assault antecedents while exposing connections between social development and mediating variables. I incorporated a path

analysis that allowed me to examine the direct and indirect links between exposure to DV, gender ideology, RMA, and sexual assault. This analysis also allowed me to determine if the resulting data was consistent with the path model I proposed. I hoped to find a causal link between exposure to DV, gender ideology, RMA, and sexual assault that would allow for the funding and implementation of policies and prevention strategies aimed at fighting sexual assault against women.

This research significantly contributes to criminological and sociological research by exposing the underlying experiences, attitudes, and belief systems that contribute to the occurrence of sexual assault through a path analysis. This research will help future researchers by directly identifying the pathways that can be targeted for change. This research study is organized into the following five chapters: Chapter Two: Background and Literature Review, Chapter Three: Research Methods, Chapter 4: Results, and Chapter 5: Discussion. Chapter Two includes a review of previous research that has investigated gender ideology, exposure to DV, and RMA in relation to sexual assault. Chapter Three includes a summary of my dataset, measures and analytic technique. Chapter Four includes a summary of all my major findings with corresponding tables and figures. Finally, Chapter Five concludes with a review of my findings, my analysis of these findings, limitations, future research suggestions and my conclusion.

Chapter Two: Background and Literature Review

The feminist view of violence as an exertion of power maintains that violence is used as a means by which men maintain and enforce a status hierarchy that is to their own advantage and to the disadvantage of women (Chiroro et al. 2004). Brownmiller (1975) viewed rape as an inevitable consequence of a repressive and exploitative patriarchal culture. This production of rape is likely amplified through the societal maintenance of prevalent gender constraints (Hird and Jackson, 2001; Tolman et al. 2003). Gender is a powerful ideological device that produces, reproduces, and legitimates the choices and constraints that men are faced with. For a male to derive membership in the dominant gender group, he must personify the consensual representation of masculinity (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009). Consequently, a set of normative expectations that stipulate appropriate behaviors is reinforced. The ensuing cultural notions of masculinity that emphasize power and dominance, transform the sexual arena into one in which aggression expresses the hypermasculine need for control and sexual prowess (Barron and Strauss 1987).

Graham-Bermann and Brescolli's (2000) research with 221 children revealed a direct association between the level of physical abuse of mothers, children's beliefs regarding the dominance and privilege of men, and the acceptable use of violence in

intimate settings. These researchers deduced that children in families plagued by DV are more likely to internalize stereotypical gendered beliefs (Holt, Buckley, and Whelan 2008). Traditional socialization frequently encourages these opposite behavior roles from men and women. While not all children are socialized to adhere to these traditional gender roles, young boys are often expected to take active, dominant roles in sexual activities. In contrast, women are often expected to take passive or reactive roles in sexual interactions that are only characterized by love, intimacy, and romance (Lottes and Kuriloff 1994).

Wider norms that shape gender and sexuality are tied to the patriarchal standards that shape men's expectations about sexual interactions (Flood and Pease 2009). Rape supportive attitudes that encourage violence against women are inextricably linked with attitudes about gender and sexuality that condone men's sexual dominance and entitlement. This relationship between attitudes that encourage male domination and sexual assault has been found in college student samples (Johnson, Kuck, and Schander, 1997; Lonsway and Fitzgerald, 1994; Larson and Long 1988) and non-student samples (Costin and Schwartz, 1987; Burt 1980). An early study also linked RMA to the acceptance of interpersonal violence (Burt 1980). However Forbes, Adam-Curtis, and White (2004) found that simply holding rape supportive attitudes in the absence of negative sentiments toward women is not likely to lead to sexual assault. It is through the interaction of these factors that the perfect storm for sexual assault is increased. Although much of the research linking sexual assault perpetration to negative gender ideologies and rape supportive attitudes have been found among middle class, white

college males, this relationship has also been found among black and Hispanic males (Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994). Previous research has indicated that white, black, and Hispanic males all hold very similar attitudes and beliefs concerning sexual assault; these attitudes are not specific or unique to certain racial/ethnic groups (Byers, 1996; Krahe, 2007; Ryan, 2004; Doss and Hopkins, 1998; Santana et al. 2006)

Many young boys who witness the physical abuse of their mothers believe that force and coercion are legitimate methods in which to gain compliance in intimate and sexual relationships with women. Burt (1980) found that men, who hold these adversarial sexual beliefs and traditional sex role attitudes, were more likely to denounce female rape victims. When rape myths structure the understanding of men's experiences, it is possible that they may become a part of a cognitive schema that facilitates sexual aggression. Consequently, these stereotypical attitudes and rape supportive beliefs have then been found to be correlated with sexual assault perpetration (Abbey et al., 2001; Koss & Dinero, 1989; Malamuth et al. 1994). Rape supportive myths are embodied in our social institutions and greatly influence how we view sexual assault. The adoption of these negative views helps create an environment conducive to rape (Ryan 2011). Because men account for the majority of arrests for sexual violence and because many rape myths contain assumptions about masculinity and power, it is necessary to examine masculinity and its relation to sexual violence (Locke and Mahalik 2005).

Predictors of Sexual Assault

Burt (1980) found that beliefs in rape myths were highly correlated with several attitudinal variables, indicating that there is a relationship between the acceptance of rape myths, gender role stereotyping, distrust of women, and acceptance of interpersonal violence. However, few studies have extended this research to create a pathway model that seeks to examine how exposure to DV, gender ideology, and RMA all work to increase the likelihood of sexual violence perpetration. The following section is a brief review on previous research findings concerning the factors believed to share a causal link with sexual assault.

Exposure to Domestic Violence

Recent years have brought an unprecedented interest in the scope and consequences of children's exposure to DV (McIntosh 2003). DV has generally been used to refer to a wide range of behaviors including physical, sexual, or psychological abuse between intimate partners (Osofsky 2003). In this paper I limit the term to only include physical (e.g. slapping, punching, kicking, pushing, etc.) and sexual (any unwanted sexual activity by means of force or coercion) abuse directed towards mothers or maternal figures. Exposure to domestic violence refers to children's awareness or direct observation of physical abuse and unwanted sexual contact between parents,

guardians, or any parental figures. Children's awareness can include seeing or hearing violence directly or indirectly seeing the evidence of abuse (e.g. bruises). Children who witness violence in their homes are particularly vulnerable to detrimental changes in their cognitive, behavioral, social, and emotional functioning. Prior research has also noted that children exposed to DV are also more likely to be abused. This co-occurrence, of witnessing and experiencing abuse, further increases children's risk of adverse outcomes in adulthood (Osofsky 2003). However, the co-occurrence of witnessing and experiencing violence in the home, are beyond the scope of this project.

Current models of aggression and violent behavior build from traditional socialization and social learning theories (Hirschi 1969) and highlight multidimensional antecedents, including environmental influences such as parental socialization (Fantuzzo and Mohr 1999). Social learning theory (Bandura 1977) states that children learn through direct behavioral conditioning and by mirroring the behavior they have observed or seen reinforced (Stith et al. 2000). This theory hypothesizes that young boys who witness their fathers battering their mothers may internalize this violent behavior as a model for future references (Bandura 1986). Because the family is a primary socializing agent, aggression and violence modeled after abusive fathers not only provides scripts for violent behavior, but it teaches and transmits negative messages about intimate relationships (Ehrensaft et al. 2003). This direct observation teaches young boys that violence and coercion are acceptable methods in which to handle conflict in relationships. Young boys not only learn how to negotiate conflicts in relationships but they also learn the proper roles men and women should enact in these relationships. They learn that men

should dominate and control their partners and women should surrender themselves emotionally and physically to their partners (Ehrensaft et al. 2003).

Family systems theorists have detailed the way in which belief systems that are shared among family members work to organize and regulate the behavior of each member. These belief systems act as vehicles through which values are generationally transmitted (Bowen 1978). The intergenerational transmission of violence plays a vital role in the formation of volatile attitudes. These boys may learn specific attitudes which facilitate violence in future intimate interactions (Markowitz 2001). A 20 year study by Ehrensaft et al. (2003) concluded that children, particularly boys, who grow up in families in which fathers abuse their mothers are more likely to imitate these behaviors than children who grow up in nonviolent homes. This exposure affects interpersonal relationships; these boys likely become desensitized to hostile interactions and may have difficulty positively negotiating peer conflicts (Margolin and Gordis 2004). Hattery and Smith (2012) argued that not only do young boys learn how to negatively deal with peer conflicts, but they also learn that women have no value and their self-interests and desires are unimportant in an intimate relationship. Through this intergenerational transmission of violence, young boys learn important lessons about men and women, about gender. Abusive fathers may not intentionally teach their sons about masculinity, but through their actions, their sons learn what it means to be the 'man of the house', how to control their partners, and what behavior to require of their partners. This exposure to domestic violence teaches boys about the appropriate roles for women and the ways in which women may try and manipulate them (Hattery and Smith 2012).

Feminist theory argues that the sexual standards of one's parents are an important determinant of one's initial sexual standards and behaviors (Lottes and Kuriloff 1994). These cultural socialization practices may interact with the modeling of the same sex parent, leading to differential effects for boys and girls growing up in violent homes. Some boys may very well learn the role of aggressive perpetrators from abusive fathers whereas some girls may learn the role of the victim from their mothers (Stith et al. 2000). Gelles and Cavanaugh (2005) stress that while a child's experience of violence in the home is often correlated with later violent behavior; this experience is not the sole determining factor. There is rarely a direct causal pathway leading to a particular outcome (Wolfe et al. 2003). Children are not passive recipients but are active in constructing their social world (Holt et al. 2008).

Gender Ideology: Traditional Gender Roles

Any analysis of violence must recognize the primacy of culturally constructed messages about the proper roles and behaviors of men and women (Heise 1998). Feminist sociocultural models of rape posit that the patriarchal structure of society perpetuates sexual violence against women and that men engage in various behaviors designed to maintain that system. Feminists contend that in order to maintain a hierarchical system, women and men are taught roles or scripts that dictate gendered behaviors (Malamuth et al. 1994).

There is considerable evidence that men raised in families that encourage traditional gender norms are more likely to become violent adults, to rape women acquaintances and to batter their intimate partners than men raised in more egalitarian homes (Malamuth et al., 1991 and 1995; Koss and Dinero, 1989; Riggs and O’Leary 1989). Feminist researchers propose that many young boys are socialized to believe that sexually coercive behaviors are suitable when interacting with unwilling women. This teaching often leads to beliefs in sexual entitlement and superiority over women (Murnen, Wright, and Kalunzy 2002). According to this view, rape is theorized to be an extreme extension of gender roles; it is a logical and psychological extension of a sexually and exploitative sex-scripted culture. The combination of sex-role stereotyping and the psychological availability of violence have helped created a culture in the US that consistently has higher rape rates than any other industrialized country (Burt 1980).

Hypermasculinity

Schrock and Schwalbe (2009) argued that for men to derive benefits from their membership in the dominant group, they must put on a convincing manhood act. These manhood acts require men to master a set of conventional signifying practices through which their identity is continually established and strengthened in interaction. From this perspective, masculinity is only a dramatic effect, a consequence of how other social actors interpret behavior (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009). Consequently, this precarious masculine identity is constantly threatened and must be shielded against any apparent

failings (Malamuth et al. 1994). Masculinity must be actively guarded and protected by a frequent and vigorous rejection of any self-identified feminine qualities. This self-policing those men must engage in often results in an over-compensatory masculinity, a persistent misogyny, and a desire to control and dominate women (Adam-Curtis and Forbes 2004).

Mosher and Sirkin (1984) defined this exaggerated gender ideology as hypermasculinity, a personality trait that predisposes some men to engage in behaviors that continually reassert physical power and dominance in interactions. “Any situation that challenges or threatens masculine identity activates this structure thereby motivating and organizing the personality for participation in hypermasculine behaviors.” (Mosher and Sirkin 1984:152) Hypermasculinity primarily consists of three characteristics: callous sex attitudes, the belief that violence is manly, and the view that danger is exciting. These men assert power and dominance over women by engaging in activities that uphold their macho image and denounce any perceived femininity. Previous literature provides strong support for the hypothesis that hypermasculinity is positively associated with past sexual aggression (Gold et al. 1992) and a significant predictor of sexual coercion (Vaas and Gold 1995). This ideology is also strongly associated with sexual assault in college samples (Lisak, 1991; Lisak and Roth, 1990; Mosher and Anderson 1986). Negative masculinity (Koss and Dinero 1988) and hostile masculinity (Malamuth et al. 1995) are related concepts that have also been associated with sexual aggression in survey research.

Rape Myths

Rape myths have been defined as “prejudicial, stereotyped or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists” (Burt 1980:217). These rape myths are a specific set of attitudes and beliefs that allow men to engage in ‘forbidden behavior’ by rationalizing and justifying the event (Iconis 2008). Rape myths shift the blame for the sexual assault from the rapist to the victim. This insulation protects the perpetrator and shields society from confronting the reality and extent of sexual violence. Rape myths are widely held attitudes and beliefs that are largely false but serve to excuse and justify male aggression towards women (Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994). Common rape myths tend to blame the victim (e.g. “women often invite rape through their provocative attire”), exonerate the perpetrator (e.g. “men cannot control their sexual urges”), and deny or belittle the violence that characterizes rape (e.g. “women make up rape accusations as a means of revenge) (Bohner and Sieber 2006). The belief that only certain types of women are raped functions to obscure and deny the real vulnerability all women face in a sexually violent culture. Rape myths that are deeply embedded in culture create and foster an environment that makes rape one of the most underreported crimes (Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994).

Sexual behavior is best understood as scripted behavior. Sexual scripts are schematic knowledge structures that govern the anticipated sequence of events in a given interaction (Ryan 2004). These culturally determined pattern structures include an

individual's generalized knowledge about sexual interactions, including expectations about the behavior of the partner and normative beliefs about specific events and elements of the interaction. These scripts are embedded in cultural norms about sexuality and reflect shared gendered stereotypes and behavioral expectations. The typical script assigns men the role of initiators and women the role of recipient (Ryan 2004).

Sexual scripts provide motives for sexual behavior that extend beyond inner states; a sexual conquest becomes a cultural validation of masculinity and dominance over women (Gagnon 1990). Scripts that are permeated with rape supportive beliefs and hypermasculine sentiments are more likely to result in sexual assault by adversely outlining men's expectations, preliminary plans, and goals. Sexual scripts serve as the mechanism in which rape supportive beliefs and hypermasculinity converge to increase the likelihood of sexual perpetration (Ryan 2004). Two possible scripts may be operating when men perpetrate sexual assault. Some men enact the rape script in which they wish to dominate, humiliate, and/or punish their partner. However, other men (most likely acquaintance rapists) enact a very different script; either they do not believe they have just committed a rape or they believe the rape was justified (Lisa and Roth 1990). This conception of rape suggests that there may be cues that unconsciously trigger certain scripts. College parties with heavy alcohol consumption, for example, create an atmosphere where those scripts and rape conducive beliefs can easily surface and lead to sexual assault (Ryan 2004).

Collegiate Rape Culture

Rape on college campuses has frequently been cited as an extension of men's domination and aggression over women in broader society (Schwartz and Nogrady 1996). Every society essentially reproduces its culture through social and sexual identities, attitudes, behaviors, and meanings. The sexual culture on college campuses includes the ideology that sexual exploitation is part of normal male sexual expression (Sanday 2007). Rape on college campuses exemplifies the double standard of sexual behavior in U.S. society (Schwartz and Nogrady 1996). A comprehensive grasp of rape on college campuses must be located in the context of a strong peer pressure to engage in sexual activity, the ritualistic abuse of alcohol, the objectification of women, and societal norms that depict sexual intercourse as an act of masculine conquest.

Alcohol Consumption

Researchers have investigated and theorized about the extensive amount of sexual victimization of women on university campuses throughout the U.S. A great deal of this interest has focused on the alarming rates of ritualistic alcohol abuse. Alcohol consumption is a major facilitating factor at social events and intensifies attitudes and orientations of a rape culture. In alcohol-induced social scenes, men control the parties and secure the upper hand of all in attendance (Boswell and Spade 1996). Alcohol

reduces inhibitions, clouds judgment, and impairs an individual's ability to accurately interpret cues (Abbey et al. 1996). Sexual consent is given by female students' attendance at the party and their subsequent alcohol consumption (Sanday 2007). Consequently, alcohol is used by fraternity members as a weapon against sexual reluctance; it is a major tool used to gain sexual mastery over women (Murnen et al. 2002).

Hypotheses

Based on the above literature, the central argument of this research is that specific experiences, attitudes, and belief systems are pivotal in determining the male perpetration of sexual assault. This research incorporates feminist models of social learning to explain the relationship between exposure to violence, gendered roles, and rape myths. I suggest that these three variables will be statistically significant predictors for the likelihood of sexual assault. Specifically young boys, who witness their fathers abuse their mothers and internalize stereotypical beliefs about the social and sexual scripts of men and women, will come to adhere to rape myths. These myths allow men to rationalize and justify the sexual perpetration of women. This value system consequently fosters and sustains a rape prone culture that increases men's likelihood of sexually victimizing women.

In this research I propose four hypotheses. (1) Young boys who witness their fathers abuse their mothers during their childhood will be more likely to internalize

traditional gender roles. (2) Men who abide by a strict adherence to traditional gender roles will also likely develop a hypermasculine ideology. (3) Boys who internalize a hypermasculine gender ideology will be more likely to adhere to rape myths. (4) Men who accept rape myths are at an increased risk for sexually assaulting women in adulthood. While this research enumerates several hypotheses related to sexual assault, it is important to acknowledge that the enumeration of these hypotheses may still oversimplify the complex interrelationship of these variables while not accounting for variation between all perpetrators.

The figure below illustrates the hypothesized relationship between exposure to DV, gender ideology, RMA, and sexual assault. Young boys who directly and/or indirectly witness their father abuse their mother are more likely to internalize these displays of violence and aggression as acceptable models of behavior. Normative messages about masculinity, power, and dominance are inextricably entwined into these displays of violence. Path 1 depicts my hypothesis that young boys who witness their father abuse their mother will be likely to internalize traditional gender messages from their fathers. Furthermore, men who internalize these attitudes are also more likely to believe in men's sexual entitlement over women and hold hardened, misogynist sexual attitudes. Young boys not only learn that violence is acceptable in intimate relationships, but they learn that men should dominate and control women, both physically and sexually. This set of values and beliefs, when adopted by men, help create an attitude conducive to rape. Path 2 depicts my hypothesis that those men, who hold traditional gender attitudes, have an increased likelihood of adopting a hypermasculine gender

ideology. Traditional expectations in society that emphasize power and dominion over women often lead to feelings of sexual entitlement. Path 3 depicts my hypothesis that those men who adopt a hypermasculine gender ideology have an increased likelihood to accept rape myths. Rape myths shape men's expectations about sexual interactions while justifying and rationalizing their behavior. These sexual scripts that are permeated with rape myths and hypermasculine views are more likely to result in sexual assault. Path 4 reflects the hypothesized relationship between holding these rape myths and an increased likelihood of sexually assaulting women.

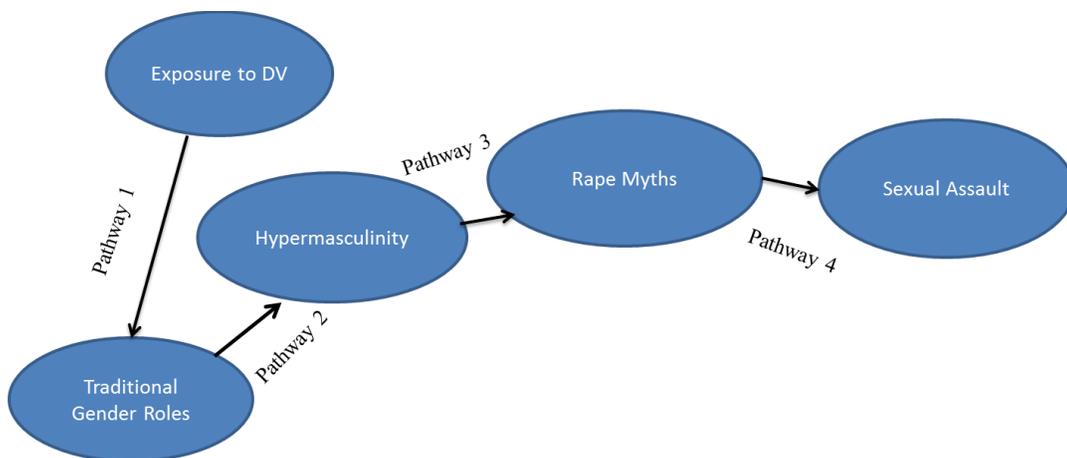


Figure 1: Path Model

Chapter Three: Research Methods

Data and Sample

In this study I assessed the relationship between exposure to DV, gender ideology, rape myth acceptance and sexual assault perpetration. I used a secondary dataset collected by Jacquelyn White and John Humphrey, investigators at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. This survey, funded by the National Institute of Health (NIH), was designed to investigate the developmental antecedents of physical and sexual violence against young women, using a theoretically based multi-causal model that included factors related to the victim, the perpetrator, and the environment. Researchers used a classic longitudinal design; respondents were surveyed first when they were 18 years of age and again each subsequent year until respondents were 22. This five year longitudinal study (1990-1995) focused on the victimization and perpetration among college students demographically representative of undergraduate women and men in state supported universities in the U.S.

In this project I limited my analysis to only male participants and their responses to the Male Survey (Part 2). Of the 851 incoming male students of 1990, 65% completed the first survey. Yearly retention averaged at 71% with 22% of the original sample completing all five phases of the study. To combat missing data I analyzed data

measuring specific variables across two survey waves. In order to create a pathway model sensitive to the passage of time, I analyzed variables in a chronological fashion. Exposure to domestic violence, traditional gender roles and hypermasculinity were analyzed using data collected in the first survey wave from 1990 – 1991. Rape myth acceptance and sexual assault perpetration were analyzed using data collected using the second survey wave from 1991 – 1992. The final sample size of the study was 375 after removing all cases with missing data and restricting my dataset to only contain measures included in my analysis.

Measures

Outcome Variable: Sexual Assault

Sexual assault was measured using one scale that asked respondents to indicate how often each of the following behaviors occurred in the last school year. Questions measuring sexual assault were asked in the second survey wave from 1991 – 1992. I limited the questions to the following five behaviors because they corresponded best with my research question. I then created a Sexual Assault Scale (Cronbach's Alpha = .846). Responses will be summed to yield a respondent's index score. The questions are as follows:

1. Sex play (fondling, kissing, or petting but not intercourse) because of pressure.
2. Sex play because of force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.).
3. Attempted forced intercourse.
4. Intercourse because of pressure.

5. Intercourse because of force.

Predictor Variables

The major predictor variables to be tested are exposure to domestic violence, traditional gender roles, hypermasculinity, and rape myth acceptance.

Exposure to DV as a Child

The first predictor variable was exposure to domestic violence in childhood. This question is measured with the variable; *Hitspous*. This question was asked in the first survey wave from 1990 – 1991. Respondents were asked how often they witnessed their father physically hit their mother, in an average month, by indicating the number of occurrences on a scale ranging from never to more than 20 times.

Traditional Gender Roles

The second major predictor variable was traditional gender roles. This variable was measured with a Traditional Gender Roles Scale (Cronbach's Alpha = .685) composed of four different questions asking respondents to indicate their level of agreement on a scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The variables included in this scale were collected in the first survey wave from 1990 – 1991. Responses were summed to yield a respondent's index score. These questions were selected because they were strongly correlated with a traditional gender ideology, they are as follows:

1. Men are more sure of what they can do.
2. Men should initiate sex.
3. Men are more competitive.
4. Men are more independent.

Hypermasculinity

The third major predictor variable was hypermasculinity. This variable was measured with a Hypermasculinity Scale (Cronbach's Alpha = .786) composed of four different questions asking respondents to indicate their level of agreement on a scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Variables gauging hypermasculinity included in the scale were measured in the first survey wave from 1990 – 1991. Responses were summed to yield a respondent's index score. These questions were selected because they were strongly correlated with hypermasculine attitudes, they are as follows:

1. The man should always be the one to initiate sex with a woman.
2. Raped women asking for it.
3. Man justified in hitting wife.
4. Most charges of "wife beating" are made up by the woman to get back at her husband.

Rape Myth Acceptance

The questions used to measure rape myth acceptance asked respondents if the following situations occurred, how likely they would be to force sex on a woman to if she refused. Variables assessing rape myth acceptance included in the scale were measured in the second survey wave from 1991 – 1992. Responses were summed to yield a respondent's index score. I recoded these variables to create a Rape Myth Acceptance

Scale (Cronbach's Alpha =.903) that only included the following five statements that most closely aligned with common rape myths, they are as follows:

1. You spend a lot of money on her.
2. She's had sex with you before.
3. She is stoned or drunk.
4. She gets you sexually excited.
5. She says she's going to have sex with you then changes her mind.

Control Variables

All other variables included in the model predicting sexual assault were considered control variables. The following three variables were recoded into dummy variables, they are as follows: race of respondent (0=white, 1=nonwhite) and relationship status (single=0, dating someone exclusively=1). The last control variable was a continuous variable, number of drinks typically consumed on a regular basis.

Data Analysis

For the purpose of this research I conducted a structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis to examine direct versus indirect pathways between exposure to domestic violence, traditional gender roles, hypermasculinity, rape myth acceptance and sexual assault. Exposure to domestic violence was the only exogenous variable included; its variance was assumed to be caused by variables outside of the pathway model. Traditional gender roles, hypermasculinity, rape myth acceptance, and sexual

assault are endogenous variables; their variance was assumed to be, in part, explained by other variables in the model. For each path to an endogenous variable, I computed a path coefficient that indicated the effect. A positive coefficient told me that as the predictor variable increased, the dependent variable also increased. A negative coefficient, in turn meant that as the predictor variable decreased, the dependent variable also decreased.

I first conducted a bivariate correlation analysis to determine if there were any potential associations between the variables in the model, including the strength and direction of the association. Correlation coefficients range from 1 to -1 and indicate the strength of the linear relationship. If the correlation coefficient is positive, Y increases as X increases. If the correlation coefficient is negative, Y decreases as X increases. I then used the Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) statistical software package (Version 17) with maximum likelihood estimation. SEM analysis, also known as path analysis, includes many benefits such as flexibility of assumptions, enhanced model visualization, full information maximum likelihood of missing data, and multiple indices to assess relative model fit. A SEM analysis allowed me to test my hypotheses by identifying the links between variables as directly influential or as indirect mediating factors. These results helped determine if the results of my research were consistent with my proposed model. Direct effects measured the extent to which the dependent, or outcome, variable changed when the independent, or predictor, variable changed by one unit. The indirect effect measured the extent to which the outcome variable changed when the predictor variable was held fixed and the mediator variable changed by one unit.

Although SEM offers multiple measures of good fit, it is not necessary to include all indices; therefore only three indices of model fit were assessed to determine model quality. The model Chi-Square, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the root mean square of approximation (RMSEA). The model's Chi-Square statistic is most commonly used; however, the Chi-Square statistic is a very conservative measure of model fit. It provides a test of the proposed model against the general alternative that the variables are simply correlated to an arbitrary extent. While the Chi-Square provides valuable information, it has problems associated with sample size that mitigate its reliance (Bentler and Bonnet 1980). Although different opinions have been expressed about what characterizes a goodness of fit index, it is generally accepted that an ideal fit index has a range between 0 and 1.0 with a 0 value indicating complete lack of fit 1.0 indicating a perfect fit. CFI values range from 0 to 1.0 and measures the model's fit relative to a baseline null model (Bentler and Bonnett 1980). Conversely, for RMSEA, values below .05 would suggest a very good fit and those below .10 would indicate a reasonable fit between model and data. Values larger than .10 would be considered to indicate a mismatch between model and data (Fan, Thompson, and Wang 2009).

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter opens with a short section concerning descriptive summaries on each variable included in the measure. Following variable descriptions, I summarize results from a Bivariate Correlation analysis and present the corresponding tables. This chapter concludes with the major findings from the SEM analysis and the corresponding tables.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Variables in Model

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Exposure to domestic violence	375	4	0	4	.09	.398
Traditional Gender Roles	375	16	0	16	6.75	2.941
Hypermasculinity	375	19	0	19	4.88	3.409
Rape Myths	375	24	0	24	5.53	6.491
Sexual Assault	375	5	0	5	.17	.584
Valid N (listwise)	375					

As shown in Table 1, the mean for exposure to domestic violence was .09; the majority of respondents sampled indicated that they never witnessed their father or stepfather physically hit their mother. The mean for traditional gender roles was 6.75; the respondents tended to report an intermediary acceptance of traditional gender role beliefs. The mean for hypermasculinity was 4.88; the majority of respondents indicated a low to

moderate acceptance of hypermasculine attitudes and beliefs. The mean for rape myth acceptance was 5.53; the majority of respondents either disagreed with all rape myths or indicated a low to moderate acceptance of typical rape myths. Finally, the mean for sexual assault perpetration was .17; the vast majority of respondents indicated that they had never engaged in any sexually assaultive behavior.

Bivariate Correlation

As shown in Table 2, traditional gender roles had a strong positive correlation with hypermasculinity ($r = .435, p \leq .01$); as traditional gender role beliefs increased, there was also a significant increase in hypermasculinity. Traditional gender roles also shared a positive correlation with rape myth acceptance ($r = .173, p \leq .01$); as traditional gender role beliefs increased, rape myth acceptance also increased. However, traditional gender role beliefs were not positively correlated with self-reports of past sexual assault perpetration ($r = .048, p \geq .05$); as traditional gender role beliefs changed, there was no significant fluctuation in past sexual assault perpetration. Between the control variables, traditional gender role beliefs shared a significant correlation with relationship status ($r = -.115, p \leq .05$) and alcohol consumption ($r = .156, p \leq .05$).

Hypermasculinity shared a positive correlation with rape myth acceptance ($r = .155, p \leq .05$); as hypermasculine beliefs increased, there was also an increase in a man's acceptance of rape myths. Hypermasculinity was not significantly correlated with sexual assault perpetration ($r = .051, p \geq .05$); as hypermasculine attitudes increased, there was

no significant change in the likelihood of sexual assault perpetration. Hypermasculinity was also not significantly correlated with race ($r = -.052, p \geq .05$) or relationship status ($r = -.100, p \geq .05$); when race and relationship status varied, there was no significant change in hypermasculine attitudes.

Results in Table 2 also showed that rape myth acceptance was positively correlated with sexual assault perpetration ($r = .248, p \leq .01$); as rape myth acceptance increased, there was also an increase in the likelihood of sexually assaulting women in adulthood. Rape myth acceptance and race also shared significant negative association ($r = -.107, p \leq .05$). Additionally, rape myth acceptance and alcohol consumption also shared a significant positive association ($r = .136, p \leq .05$). However, rape myth acceptance did not share a significant positive or negative correlation with relationship status ($r = -.088, p \geq .05$).

As previously stated, sexual assault perpetration only shared a significant positive correlation with rape myth acceptance ($r = .248, p \leq .01$); as rape myth acceptance increased, the likelihood of sexual assault perpetration also increased. Sexual assault was not significantly correlated with the other three predictor variables in the model. Sexual assault did not share a significant association with exposure to domestic violence ($r = .020, p \geq .05$), as exposure to domestic violence changed, there was no significant change in sexual assault perpetration. Sexual assault also did not share a significant association with traditional gender roles ($r = .043, p \geq .05$); as traditional gender role beliefs increased, there was still not significant change in sexual assault perpetration.

Finally, sexual assault did not share a significant association with hypermasculinity; as hypermasculine attitudes changed, there was no significant change in sexual assault perpetration. Furthermore, sexual assault did not share a significant correlation with race ($r = .003, p \geq .05$) or relationship status ($r = -.050, p \geq .05$). Respondents' racial identity and relationship status had no significant association with their likelihood of sexual assault perpetration. However, sexual assault did share a significant positive association with alcohol consumption ($r = .094, p \leq .05$); as the number of drinks typically consumed increased, there was a significant increase in the likelihood of sexual assault perpetration.

Table 2: Bivariate Correlation Matrix

		Exposure to					Respondent's	Relationship	Alcohol
		domestic	Traditional	Hypermasculini	Rape Myths	Sexual Assault	Race	Status	Consumption
		violence	Gender Roles	ty					
Exposure to domestic violence	Pearson Correlation	1	.135**	.215**	.057	.020	-.044	-.041	.111*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009	.000	.272	.705	.396	.429	.031
	N	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375
Traditional Gender Roles	Pearson Correlation	.135**	1	.435**	.173**	.043	-.057	-.115	.156**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009		.000	.001	.408	.267	.027	.003
	N	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375
Hypermasculinity	Pearson Correlation	.215**	.453**	1	.155**	.054	-.052	-.100*	.169**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.003	.293	.311	.053	.001
	N	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375
Rape Myths	Pearson Correlation	.057	.173**	.155**	1	.248**	-.107*	-.088	.136**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.272	.001	.003		.000	.039	.090	.008
	N	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375
Sexual Assault	Pearson Correlation	.020	.043	.054	.248**	1	.003	-.050	.094
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.705	.408	.293	.000		.140	.318	.004
	N	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375
Respondent's Race	Pearson Correlation	-.044	-.057	-.052	-.107	.003	1	.088	-.091
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.396	.267	.311	.039	.947		.090	.078
	N	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375
Relationship Status	Pearson Correlation	-.041	-.115*	-.100*	-.088	-.050	.088	1	-.121*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.429	.027	.053	.090	.337	.090		.019
	N	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375
Alcohol Consumption	Pearson Correlation	.111*	.156**	.169**	.136**	.094	-.091	-.121*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031	.003	.001	.008	.070	.078	.019	
	N	375	375	375	375	375	375	375	375

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Path Analysis

Table 3 lists the indices used to measure the proposed model's goodness of fit in relation to the empirical data. Because the p-value for my Chi-Square statistic is significant ($p \leq .05$), I must reject my null hypothesis and conclude that there is a possibility that chance created the deviation in my model. The CFI value is .877 which indicates a very good fit to the data. The RMSEA value is .084 which is indicative of a reasonable fit according to this index. These three index values together provide moderate support for a goodness of fit for the proposed model. Figure 2 is an illustration of the proposed model, excluding control variables, with the significant standardized direct effect sizes along the path parameters. Table 4 provides a summary of the significant standardized direct and indirect effects between every variable measured in the model along with the standardized direct effects generated from the control variables.

Table 3: Fit Statistics for Path Model

Chi- Square	25.348
<i>Df</i>	7
Probability Level	.001
CFI	.877
RMSEA	.084

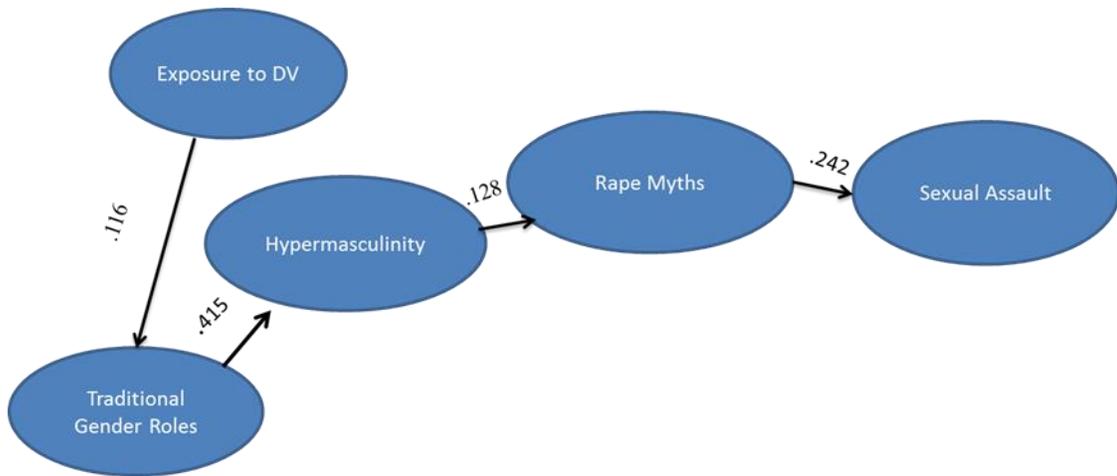


Figure 2: Path Diagram with Significant, Standardized, Direct Effect Sizes

Table 4: Standardized Direct and Indirect Effects

Variables	Exposure to Domestic Violence		Traditional Gender Roles		Hypermasculinity		Rape Myth Acceptance		Race		Alcohol Consumption		Relationship Status	
	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
Exposure to Domestic Violence	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-.032	.000	.105	.000	-.025	.000
Traditional Gender Roles	.116*	.000	---	---	---	---	---	---	-.033	-.004	.129*	.012*	-.092	-.003
Hypermasculinity	.000	.048*	.415**	.000	---	---	---	---	-.016	-.015	.099*	.059*	-.039	-.039
Rape Myth Acceptance	.000	.006*	.000	.053*	.128*	.000	---	---	-.086	-.004	.100*	.020*	-.055	-.010
Sexual Assault	.001	.000	-.010	.013*	.000	.031*	.242**	.000	.037	-.022	.062	.028*	-.025	-.015

* Direct effects significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level. ** Direct effect significant at $p \leq 0.01$ level.

Results in Table 4 show that exposure to domestic violence had a significant direct effect on traditional gender roles ($\beta = .116, p \leq .05$); this means that the significant direct effect of exposure to domestic violence on the internalization of traditional gender role beliefs is unmediated by any other variable. However, exposure to domestic violence did not have a significant direct effect on sexual assault perpetration ($\beta = .001, p \geq .05$); this means that the relationships between exposure to domestic violence and sexual assault is mediated by other factors. Traditional gender roles had a significant direct effect on the adoption of hypermasculine attitudes ($\beta = .415, p \leq .01$). This direct effect was unmediated by any other variable in the model. However, traditional gender role beliefs did not have a significant direct effect on sexual assault perpetration ($\beta = -.010, p \geq .05$). This means that there was not a direct link between traditional gender role beliefs and sexual assault perpetration; instead it is mediated by other factors. Furthermore results showed that hypermasculinity had a significant direct effect on rape myth acceptance ($\beta = .129, p \leq .05$). This direct effect was unmediated by any other variable in the model. Rape myth acceptance had a significant positive effect on sexual assault perpetration ($\beta = .242, p \leq .01$). This direct effect was unmediated by any other variables in the model.

In terms of indirect effects, or mediated relationships, exposure to domestic violence did have a significant positive indirect effect on hypermasculinity ($\beta = .048, p \leq .05$); the relationship between exposure to domestic violence and hypermasculinity is mediated by traditional gender role beliefs. Exposure to domestic violence also had a significant positive indirect effect on rape myth acceptance ($\beta = .006, p \leq .05$); the

relationship between exposure to domestic violence and rape myth acceptance is mediated by traditional gender roles and hypermasculinity. Additionally, traditional gender role beliefs did have a significant positive indirect effect on rape myth acceptance ($\beta = .053, p \leq .05$). This indirect relationship is mediated by the adoption of hypermasculine attitudes. While traditional gender role beliefs did not have a significant direct effect on sexual assault perpetration, it did have a significant positive indirect effect on sexual assault perpetration ($\beta = .013, p \leq .05$). This indirect relationship between traditional gender role beliefs and sexual assault perpetration is mediated by hypermasculinity and rape myth acceptance. Hypermasculinity also had a significant indirect effect on the perpetration of sexual assault ($\beta = .031, p \leq .05$); this indirect relationship between hypermasculinity and sexual assault perpetration was mediated by rape myth acceptance. Men, who adopted hypermasculine attitudes and accepted rape myths, were more likely to sexually assault a woman than those men without similar beliefs and attitudes.

Furthermore, results from the SEM analysis in Table 4 show that race did not have any significant effect, direct or indirect, on any of the variables in the model. Subsequently I can conclude that a respondent's racial identity was not a significant causal predictor, either directly or indirectly, for exposure to domestic violence, traditional gender roles, hypermasculinity, rape myth acceptance, or sexual assault perpetration. Additionally, much like race, relationship status also did not have any significant effect, direct or indirect, on any variable in the model. Therefore I can conclude that whether a man is single or in a committed relationship, it has no significant

bearing on exposure to domestic violence, traditional gender role beliefs, hypermasculine attitudes, rape myth acceptance, or sexual assault perpetration. On the other hand, alcohol consumption had a significant direct and indirect effect on several of the variables in the model. Results showed that alcohol consumption had a significant direct effect on traditional gender role beliefs ($\beta = .129, p \leq .05$), hypermasculinity ($\beta = .099, p \leq .05$) and rape myth acceptance ($\beta = .100, p \leq .05$). These direct causal effects were unmediated by any intervening variables. Alcohol consumption also had significant indirect effects on traditional gender role beliefs ($\beta = .012, p \leq .05$), hypermasculinity ($\beta = .059, p \leq .05$), and rape myth acceptance ($\beta = .020, p \leq .05$); because alcohol consumption has a significant direct and indirect effect on these three predictor variables, I can conclude that there exists a partial mediation between these variables.

Interestingly, even though alcohol consumption had a direct effect on traditional gender role beliefs, hypermasculinity and rape myth acceptance, it did not have a significant direct effect on sexual assault perpetration ($\beta = .062, p \geq .05$). However, alcohol consumption did have a significant indirect effect on sexual assault perpetration ($\beta = .028, p \leq .05$). These results indicate that higher or lower alcohol consumption is not enough to directly affect sexual assault perpetration. However, alcohol consumption, when mediated by other variables, does significantly affect the likelihood of sexual assault perpetration.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to critically examine the antecedents leading to sexual assault perpetration among young men. I proposed a linear model linking higher rates of exposure to domestic violence in childhood, traditional gender roles, hypermasculinity, and rape myth acceptance to higher rates of sexually assault perpetration. This research study found significant support for all four hypotheses. Significant direct effects were found between the following variables: exposure to domestic violence → traditional gender roles, traditional gender roles → hypermasculinity, hypermasculinity → rape myth acceptance, and rape myth acceptance → sexual assault. Significant support in the predicted direction was found to indicate that young men who witness their father abusing their mother in the home are likely to internalize traditional gender roles. These traditional gender role beliefs also increase the likelihood that these young men will come to adopt a hypermasculine gender ideology. In turn, this hypermasculine gender ideology strongly increases the likelihood for these young men to accept various rape myths. It is this acceptance in rape myths that then increases their likelihood of sexual assault perpetration.

The first hypothesis proposed that young men who witnessed their father abuse their mothers in childhood would be more likely to internalize traditional gender roles.

Findings in this study supported that hypothesis and results showed a significant positive direct effect between exposure to domestic violence and traditional gender roles. This finding corroborates previous research that linked this exposure to domestic violence in the home to the internalization of rigid traditional gender ideologies (Malamuth et al. 1991 and 1995; Koss and Dinero, 1989, Graham-Bermann and Brescilli 2000). Young men, who routinely witnessed their father (or parental male figure) abuse their mother, became casual observers to patriarchal displays of power and violence. Bandura (1977) proposed that children often learn through direct observation and by mirroring the behaviors they witness. These young men are then at an increased risk of internalizing rigid, traditional beliefs concerning the roles of women and men in relation to each other. However, I did not find a significant direct relationship between exposure to domestic violence and sexual assault. This effect between exposure to domestic violence and sexual assault was also not significantly mediated by any other variables in the model, despite the significant indirect effect exposure domestic violence had on both hypermasculinity and rape myth acceptance. Perhaps young boys who witness their father abuse their mother are likely to develop traditionally held beliefs about the sexes which may fester into a more negative, antagonistic view of men and women (Burt 1980). If these young men quickly internalize this more damaging view of men and women's roles as they relate to sex, they will be more likely to accept rape myths. When these damaging belief systems are coupled with rape supportive attitudes, a cognitive schema is created that further facilitates sexual assault (Burt 1980). However, the influence of exposure to domestic violence is not strong enough to affect men's likelihood of sexual

assault perpetration. This finding suggests that contrary to previous theories, the intergenerational transmission of aggression and the psychological availability of violence garnered in the home from witnessing the physical abuse of a mother (Bandura 1986), may not a strong enough predecessor to lead some men to sexually assault women, regardless of the development of a negative belief system. Instead, it is the adoption of rape supportive attitudes that greatly affects a man's likelihood of sexually assaulting women in adulthood.

My second hypothesis proposed that men who internalize traditional gender roles would have an increased likelihood of adopting a hypermasculine gender ideology. Results indicated strong support for traditional gender roles' positive direct effect on hypermasculinity. This result echoed findings from previous research; a skewed gender ideological belief system reinforces differences in the sexes by constraining men to a rigid set of normative expectations (Murnen, Wright and Kalunzy 2002). These normative expectations emphasize power and domination over women that may lead to feelings of sexual entitlement and social superiority (Malamuth et al. 1994). Oftentimes in an effort to showcase one's unyielding masculinity through these traditional avenues, an exaggerated form of masculinity is developed (Malamuth et al 1991; Mosher and Sirkin 1984). This extreme form of masculinity is characterized by extreme showcases of maleness that may lead to an increased predisposition to accept rape myths due to negative sex-role stereotyping. This pattern is supported by my finding that traditional gender roles have a significant positive indirect effect on rape myth acceptance.

My third hypothesis postulated that men who adopt a hypermasculine gender ideology would also have an increased likelihood of accepting rape myths. I found a significant positive direct effect from hypermasculinity to rape myth acceptance, thus providing support for my third hypothesis. This finding corroborated prior research that an adversarial gender belief system, permeated with callous sex attitudes, would lead to an increase in prejudicial beliefs concerning sexual assault (Burt 1980, Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994). These men maintain a hyper-vigilant monitoring of their behavior to denounce any trace of perceived femininity which only increases their rigid standards of masculinity. These men will excuse and justify male aggression and violence toward women as normal displays of masculinity (Iconis 2008). They will often place the blame on the victim or outside factors outside the man's control. Consequently, these men are more likely to sexually assault women. Findings from this study verify that trend; I found a significant positive indirect effect from rape myth acceptance to sexual assault perpetration.

My fourth hypothesis stated that men who accept rape myths will have an increased likelihood of sexual assault perpetration. Results from this study indicated that rape myth acceptance has a significant positive direct effect on sexual assault perpetration. Sex scripts filled with hypermasculine sentiments and rape myths are more likely to result in sexual assault by adversely outlining men's expectations for a sexual encounter. Rape is not a random occurrence; beliefs, attitudes predispositions for sexual assault perpetration are interwoven in the social construction of gender (Boswell and Spade 1996). Throughout their lifespan many men will learn the scripts, attitudes and

justifications that are compatible with sexual assault (Scully and Marolla 1985). Results for these four hypotheses suggest that simply changing how men view rape, rape victims and rapists is not enough to combat sexual assault. Rape supportive beliefs are too closely interwoven with other pervasive hypermasculine attitudes. As previously stated, exposure to domestic violence in childhood and traditionally held gender ideologies did not have a significant direct impact on sexual assault. This result further grounds the perpetration of sexual assault in an adversarial gender belief system. It is not enough for men to be exposed to domestic violence in childhood or to hold traditional beliefs governing the roles of men and women; instead, it is the adherence to an ideology characterized by callous sexual attitudes and an exaggerated masculine identity that increases men's acceptance of rape myths and their likelihood of sexually assaulting women.

Of the three control variables I included in my model, alcohol consumption had a positive effect on traditional gender roles, hypermasculinity, rape myth acceptance, and sexual assault. Alcohol consumption did not have a significant effect, direct or indirect, on exposure to domestic violence. From these results I can conclude that as alcohol consumption increases, rigid attitudes and orientations that directly or indirectly condone sexual assault intensify. Men, who reported a higher number of drinks typically consumed, were more likely to have rigid gender ideologies that stipulated appropriate behavior for men and women. While higher alcohol consumption positively affected gender ideology and rape myth acceptance, it did not have a significant direct effect on sexual assault. Consequently it may not be enough for a man to drink copious amounts

of alcohol to sexually assault a woman; instead, he must also have negative beliefs concerning men, women, and rape.

Additionally, in my research I did not find any significant effects between race and any of my main variables. This non-finding corroborates previous research that also did not find any significant differences between race and sexual assault perpetration and its antecedent (Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994; Lottes and Kuriloff 1994). I also did not find any significant effects between relationship status and any of my main variables. However, this sample was limited to college aged men at the exclusion of men in the broader community and was relatively small. It may be entirely possible that if the sampled population had been larger and more representative, significant differences between cultural groups would have emerged. The same holds true for relationship status. If the sampled population had been more inclusive perhaps a significant relationship would have been found between relationship status and one or more of the predictor variables.

Limitations

The most notable limitation of this study was the high number of non-response over the course of the five year study. This small final sample can likely be credited to attrition that occurs across a longitudinal study. However, it can also likely be attributed to the sensitive nature of the measures; consequently, respondents may have purposefully chosen to skip certain questions. This non-response primarily centered on particularly

sensitive questions, with rape myth questions suffering the most. This intentional skipping of questions may be due to an unwillingness to answer these questions due to social desirability bias. Respondents may have very well been afraid of incriminating themselves in the eyes of the researchers if they indicated any agreement with these particular questions. This unwillingness to answer questions truthfully would greatly disrupt the statistical power of my findings. While the number of respondents who did complete each survey in its entirety was sufficient for this small scale study, a larger sample may have painted a more vivid portrait of the precursors to sexual perpetration among young men.

An additional limitation of this study concerns the scale created to measure past sexual assault perpetration. In the future, researchers should work to develop a more comprehensive scale that assigns each behavior different weights based on the severity and frequency of the assaultive behavior. Issues concerning severity and frequency compromise the reliability of the measure and thus the statistical power of the tests. Separate scales measuring less severe assaultive behaviors and more severe acts may also be beneficial in combating non-response and any unwillingness in prompting participants to respond.

Implications

One implication of this study indicates that increased efforts in the future should be made to identify children who are in homes plagued by parental abuse, whether it is

through exposure or direct abuse. Increased efforts should also be made to educate teachers, school administrators, and any other adults who work in close proximity to young children, to recognize the warning signs of abuse. Removing young boys from abusive home environments may help stifle the development of negative gender stereotypes. Intervention strategies must work to target negative sex-role stereotyping and belief systems in young boys before they can begin to develop false perceptions about rape, sexual interactions and the role of women. The adoption of negative ideologies concerning men, women, and sex creates a dangerous time-order effect that increases men's likelihood of sexual assault perpetration. Increased education and awareness of what constitutes a healthy, consensual sexual interaction may help fight views of exploitative sex often depicted in widespread media and pornography. In a culture plagued by pervasive dominant-submissive, sex stereotyped beliefs, rape becomes a logical extension. Men are taught to constantly shield against femininity and any suggestions of sensitivity; this constant safeguarding creates and supports a hypermasculine ideology that is incongruent with safe, healthy, sexual relationships. We must work to combat these cultural prisms if we ever hope to have lasting change.

Continued research efforts should also focus on further clarifying the specific mechanism through which alcohol consumption intervenes in the perpetration of sexual assault and the roles both men and women play in that connection. The precise role of alcohol consumption before, during, and after sexual assault will be valuable for increasing awareness and implementing effective, long-term preventive measures. The indirect effect found between alcohol consumption and sexual assault also emphasizes

the need for increased alcohol awareness, particularly on college campuses. Heavy ritualistic alcohol abuse on college campuses is all too common especially in locations riddled with hypermasculine displays of masochism, such as fraternity houses and sporting events. Preventive programs should focus on raising students' mindfulness of the potential hazards associated with dangerous levels of intoxication. These efforts should also work to crack down on rampant underage drinking while partnering with organizations to raise awareness on campus about safe drinking tips.

In the future, research should continue to better expose the causality that exists between theorized predictors of male perpetrated sexual assault. These initial path results are promising as they provide modest support for a likely precursor pathway that cumulates in sexual assault, however, more consistent research is still needed. Specifically, more consistent research is needed to further clarify the effects of exposure to domestic violence on young boys, the development of adversarial gender ideologies and their maintenance over the life course in order to more effectively fight sexual assault.

Conclusion

In sum, the findings of this study expand the understanding between some of the precursors to male sexual perpetration by further examining a pathway model linking exposure to father perpetrated domestic violence, traditional gender roles, hypermasculinity, rape myth acceptance, and sexual assault. This study's analyses found

strongest support for the formation of negative attitudes as a significant contributor to male sexual assault perpetration. Respondents who had negative, stereotypical beliefs about men and woman who also accepted rape myths were more likely to report past sexual assault perpetration. While exposure to domestic violence did have a positive direct effect on traditional gender ideology, future research efforts should more closely examine how it might be more closely related to the other predictor variables in the model and sexual assault perpetration. What can be concluded from this study above all else, however, is that the goal of reducing sexual assault is tantamount to revamping a significant portion of our society's belief system. In order for these changes to take effect we must develop a comprehensive understanding of sexual violence and all its significant contributing factors to make social changes more effective.

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Biography

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