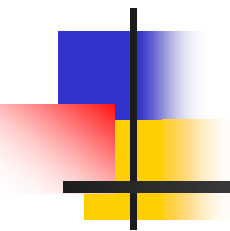


# The Relationship between Hostility toward the Other Sex and Sexual Coercion



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# Abstract

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This study examined the role of hostility toward the other sex (HTOS) in sexual coercion of a relationship partner among a sample of female and male students from universities in 19 nations. Women's scores on the hostility toward *men* scale were slightly higher than men's scores on the hostility toward *women* scale. 14.9% of females and 21.9% of males reported at least one instance of insisting on sexual activity in the past year, .9% of females and 1.0% of males reported using threats, 1.7% of females and 2.9% of males reported using force. Multinomial logistic regressions revealed that, for both women and men, HTOS is related to sexually coercive behaviors but increasingly so for more severe sexual aggression. These results parallel those from research on partner violence that distinguishes between the etiology of common couple violence and intimate terrorism.



# Introduction

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## ■ **What is gender hostility?**

- Researchers typically conceptualize gender hostility as an attitude or personality characteristic (Burt, 1980; Christopher et al., 1993; Straus & Yodanis, 1996)
- Straus and Yodanis (1996), the authors of the measures used in the current study to assess men's hostility toward women (HTW) and women's hostility toward men (HTM), conceptualized gender hostility as an attitudinal variable comprised of negative beliefs (e.g., men are rude) and emotions (e.g., women irritate me a lot)
- In this study, we investigated hostility directed toward the other sex



# Introduction continued

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- **Gender hostility and sexual aggression**
  - Most of the research on gender hostility has focused on men's HTW, particularly as it relates to their sexual and physical aggression against women



# Introduction continued

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## ■ **Men's HTW and sexual aggression**

- Research indicates that HTW is related to men's self-reported sexual aggression against women (e.g., Forbes, 2004; Lisak, 1988; Malamuth, 1986; McCollaum, 1997; Senn, 1990; Smith, 2003)
- There is, however, some research that has failed to find a direct link between men's HTW and their sexual aggression against women (e.g., Calhoun, 1997; Lackie, 1997; Walker, 1993)
- Thus, results from research examining the link between HTOS and sexual aggression among males are inconclusive



# Introduction continued

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- No research has examined the relationship of women's HTM and their sexual coercion of a male partner
- Furthermore, few studies on HTOS have included samples outside the U.S. and Canada

## **HYPOTHESIS**

Hostility toward the other sex (HTOS) will be associated with a significant increase in three forms of sexually coercive behavior (insisting, threatening, forcing) directed toward an other-sex partner.



# Method

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- **International Dating Violence Study (IDVS)**
  - The IDVS is currently being conducted by members of a research consortium located at universities in every major world region except sub-Saharan Africa
  - Consortium members from 38 sites administered the questionnaire to students at their university (typically in social science classes)
  - There is a core questionnaire that each member of the consortium translated and then back-translated (if necessary) to maintain “conceptual equivalence” (Straus, 1969) across the sites
  - A detailed description of the study, including the questionnaire and all other key documents, is available on the website <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~mas2>

# Samples

( $N = 19$  national settings)

National Setting	$N$	National Setting	$N$
Australia	222	Mexico	191
Belgium	416	Netherlands	126
Brazil	330	New Zealand	138
Canada	1,130	Portugal	375
Germany	166	Singapore	206
Great Britain	391	South Korea	219
Hong Kong	147	Sweden	745
India	107	Switzerland	398
Israel	366	United States	2,604
Lithuania	326		$N = 8,603$





# Participants

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- **71.2% female** ( $n = 6,142$ )
- Mean age = **23.36 years** ( $SD = 6.45$ )
- Relationship status
  - **72.8% dating**
  - 15.4% engaged
  - 8.0% married
  - 3.8% cohabiting
- All reported being either currently or previously **in a romantic relationship** lasting at least one month with someone of the other sex



# Measures

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- **Gender Hostility Scales** (Yodanis & Straus, 1996)
  - ***Hostility to Women*** (Males: alpha = .73)
    - Women are rude
    - Women treat men badly
    - Women irritate me a lot
    - I am easily frustrated by women
    - I often feel resentful of women
  - ***Hostility to Men*** (Females: alpha = .72)
    - Men are rude
    - Men treat women badly
    - Men irritate me a lot
    - Men are more dishonest than women
    - Men respect women (R)



# Measures continued

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- **Revised Conflict Tactics Scale** (CTS2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1999)

*Subscales assessing incidences occurring in the past year:*

- **Insisting:**

- I made my partner have sex without a condom
- I insisted on sex when my partner did not want to (but did not use physical force)
- I insisted my partner have oral or anal sex (but did not use physical force)



# Measures continued

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- **Threats:**

- I used threats to make my partner have oral or anal sex
- I used threats to make my partner have sex

- **Force:**

- I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have oral or anal sex
- I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have sex



# Results

Female's HTM	Male's HTW
$M = 1.99$	$M = 1.86$
$SD = .49$	$SD = .51$

- **Women's scores on the HTM scale were slightly higher than men's scores on the HTW scale**
- **This difference could not be statistically tested because the items were different for the two scales**

# Frequency of Sexual Coercion Perpetration

	% Females ( <i>n</i> = 5,526)	% Males ( <i>n</i> = 2,044)	% Exceed*
Insisting	14.9	21.9	47
Threats	.9	1.0	11
Force	1.7	2.9	71

\*Percent by which the rate for males exceeds the rate for females.

- **Males reported substantially more sexual coercion than women**
- **Examination of the percents by which rates for males exceeds those for females indicates that men report much more sexual coercion than women, particularly that involving force**

## Multinomial Logistic Regressions

	Sexual Coercion Perpetration					
	Insisting		Threats		Force	
	Odds Ratio	<i>SE</i>	Odds Ratio	<i>SE</i>	Odds Ratio	<i>SE</i>
<b>Females</b> ( <i>n</i> = 5,429)						
Age	.99	.01	.98	.02	.98	.02
Social Desirability	.56***	.11	1.49	.39	.56+	.31
Hostility to Men	1.60***	.08	2.91***	.27	2.54***	.21
<b>Males</b> ( <i>n</i> = 2,014)						
Age	1.02	.01	1.03	.04	.97	.03
Social Desirability	.45**	.17	.31	.77	1.23	.43
Hostility to Women	1.25+	.12	2.28+	.46	3.59***	.26
+ <i>p</i> < .10; * <i>p</i> < .05; ** <i>p</i> < .01; *** <i>p</i> < .001.						



# Multinomial Logistic Regression

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- **For females, HTM was more strongly associated with threats and force than insisting**
- **For males, HTW was more strongly associated with force than threats or insisting**
  - Although the odds ratios were not significant for insisting or threats among males, the pattern of results for both women and men suggests that the relationship of HTW to sexual coercion becomes stronger as the level of aggression increases





# Summary and Implications

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- **Females and males reported similar levels of HTOS**
- **This mutual hostility has implications on the individual level**
  - Hostile attitudes toward and beliefs about the other sex undoubtedly affect women's and men's interactions with a range of individuals including strangers, acquaintances, co-workers, family members, as well as intimate partners



# Summary and Implications Continued

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- **Such hostility also has implications on the societal level**
  - For example, in a cross-national study, Glick et al. (2000) found that lower rates of hostile sexism (i.e., negative evaluations of women's competence) were associated with higher levels of gender inequality
  - Thus, addressing women's and men's HTOS is important for increasing our understanding of female-male relationships and helping to guide efforts to prevent and alleviate the individual- and societal-level problems that result from such hostility



# Summary and Implications Continued

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- **Males reported all three forms of sexually coercive behavior (insisting, threats, force) more often than females**
- **These results are consistent with previous research findings that both men and women engage in sexual coercion, but men more than women (Bookwala, 1992; Fiebert, 1998)**



# Summary and Implications Continued

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- **It should not be overlooked, however, that a notable percent of females reported engaging in sexually coercive behaviors**
  - Nearly 15% of the women reported insisting that their partner engage in sexual activity with them
  - Almost 1% of the women reported using threats
  - Close to 2% reported using force
- **Thus, intervention and educational efforts need to be directed at women as well as men**



# Summary and Implications Continued

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- **For females, HTM was more strongly related to the use of threats, followed closely by the use of force, and then insisting**
- **For males, HTW was significantly related to the use of force**
  - The general pattern of results for both women and men suggests that as the level of hostility increases, so does the severity of the sexually coercive behavior, thus supporting our hypothesis



# Summary and Implications Continued

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- **Our results support those from research showing a direct relationship between HTOS and sexual coercion (e.g., Forbes, 2004; Lisak, 1988; Malamuth, 1986; McCollaum, 1997; Senn, 1990; Smith, 2003)**
- **They also parallel those from research on partner violence that distinguishes the etiology of common couple violence and intimate terrorism**



# Summary and Implications Continued

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- Johnson (1995) suggested that *common couple violence* (characterized by less frequent and less severe violence) and *intimate terrorism* (characterized by more frequent and more severe violence) have different etiologies, including motivation to control and inclination to use violence for control
- Our results suggest that HTOS is more strongly related to the aggressive and controlling forms of sexual coercion for both women and men



# Limitations

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- University students are not necessarily representative of a national setting and the samples selected were not chosen to represent all students
- Sample sizes for men were quite small in some national settings
- Definitions of dating varied from site to site
- Use of self-report





# Conclusions

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- It is important to further investigate gender hostility as a causal factor in sexual aggression perpetrated by women and men
- Interventions and educational efforts should focus on women as well as men
- Efforts to reduce men's HTW and women's HTM can have benefits for women and men at both the individual and societal level



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