

Sexual Coercion in Intimate Relationships: A Comparative Analysis of the Effects of Women's Infidelity and Men's Dominance and Control

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Abstract Researchers studying the proximate (or immediate) causes of sexual coercion have proposed that partner rape is motivated by a man's attempt to dominate and control his partner and that this expression of power is the product of men's social roles. Researchers studying the ultimate (or evolutionary) causes, in contrast, have proposed that partner rape may function as an anti-cuckoldry tactic, with its occurrence related to a man's suspicions of his partner's sexual infidelity. In two studies, we collected data relevant to both perspectives to explore how these variables interact with men's sexual coercion in an intimate relationship. Regression analyses from Study 1 (self-reports from 256 men) and Study 2 (partner-reports from 290 women) indicated that men's sexual coercion of their partners was consistently predicted by female infidelity and men's controlling behavior, suggesting that both variables are necessary to explain men's sexual coercion. Discussion addressed limitations of the current research and highlighted the importance of integrating multiple levels of analysis when studying men's sexual coercion of their intimate partners.

Keywords Sexual coercion · Partner rape · Evolutionary psychology · Anti-cuckoldry · Sperm competition

Introduction

Between 10% and 26% of women experience rape in marriage (Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985; Hadi, 2000; Painter & Farrington, 1999; Russell, 1982; Watts, Keough, Ndlovu, & Kwaramba, 1998). Rape also occurs in non-marital intimate relationships. Goetz and Shackelford (2006) secured prevalence estimates of rape in intimate relationships—partner rape—from a sample of young men and from an independent sample of young women in a committed relationship for at least 1 year, but not necessarily married. They found that 7.3% of men admitted to engaging in at least one instance of partner rape by their current partner, and 9.1% of women reported that they had experienced at least one instance of partner rape by their current partner.

Although sexual coercion in intimate relationships sometimes includes men's use of violent physical force, sexual coercion in intimate relationships often includes subtle forms of psychological and emotional manipulation (Basile, 1999; Camilleri, Quinsey, & Tapscott, *in press*; Johnson & Sigler, 2000; Marshall & Holtzworth-Munroe, 2002; Shackelford & Goetz, 2004). Shackelford and Goetz (2004), for example, documented that men were more likely to sexually coerce their partners by hinting about withholding benefits, threatening relationship defection, and manipulating their partners by reminding them of their "obligation" to have sex (e.g., "If you love me, you'll have sex with me") than they were to use physical force to achieve sexual intercourse. By using more subtle forms of sexual coercion (rather than explicit physical force), men may avoid inflicting on their partners some of the costs associated with partner rape, and they may avoid their partners' defection from the relationship that might occur following explicit physical force to achieve sexual intercourse. Because men in intimate relationships may be more

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likely to sexually coerce their partners using relatively subtle tactics, the current research considers these forms of sexual coercion, in addition to partner rape.

Hypothesized Causes of Sexual Coercion in Intimate Relationships

Many researchers have hypothesized that sexual coercion in intimate relationships is motivated by men's attempts to dominate and control their partners (e.g., Basile, 1999; Bergen, 1996; Frieze, 1983; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Gelles, 1977; Meyer, Vivian, & O'Leary, 1998; Watts et al., 1998) and that this expression of power is the product of men's social roles (e.g., Brownmiller, 1975; Johnson, 1995; Yllo & Straus, 1990). Results relevant to this hypothesis are mixed. Shackelford and Goetz (2004), for example, found a significant positive relationship between men's controlling behaviors and their use of sexual coercion in an intimate relationship, thus supporting the domination and control hypothesis. Also, several studies have found that physically abusive men were more likely than non-abusive men to sexually coerce their female partners (Apt & Hurlbert, 1993; DeMaris, 1997; Donnelly, 1993; Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985; Koziol-McLain, Coates, & Lowenstein, 2001; Shackelford & Goetz, 2004), also supporting the domination and control hypothesis. Gage and Hutchinson (2006), however, found that women's risk of sexual coercion by their partners was not related significantly to measures assessing the relative dimensions of power in a relationship, such as who maintains control over decision making and his/her partner's actions. That is, women mated to men who maintained the dominant position in the relationship were not more likely to experience sexual coercion than women mated to men who did not maintain the dominant position in the relationship, thus contradicting the domination and control hypothesis.

Although many researchers (including ourselves) agree that individual men may sexually coerce their partners to maintain dominance and control, proponents of the domination and control hypothesis often argue that men are motivated as a group to exercise "patriarchal power" or "patriarchal terrorism" over women (e.g., Brownmiller, 1975; Johnson, 1995; Yllo & Straus, 1990). We are aware of no empirical evidence suggesting that men are motivated as a group to dominate and control women.

Another hypothesis has been advanced by researchers studying sexual coercion from an evolutionary perspective: sexual coercion in intimate relationships may function as an anti-cuckoldry tactic, with its occurrence related to a man's suspicions of his partner's sexual infidelity (Camilleri, 2004; Lalumière, Harris, Quinsey, & Rice, 2005; Thornhill & Thornhill, 1992; Wilson & Daly, 1992; see also Goetz & Shackelford, 2006). Sexual coercion in response to cues of his partner's sexual infidelity might function to introduce a

male's sperm into his partner's reproductive tract at a time when there is a high risk of cuckoldry (i.e., when his partner has recently been inseminated by a rival male). This sperm competition hypothesis was proposed following recognition that partner rape in non-human species followed female extra-pair copulations (e.g., Barash, 1977; Cheng, Burns, & McKinney, 1983; McKinney, Cheng, & Bruggers, 1984) and that sexual coercion and partner rape in humans often followed accusations of female infidelity (e.g., Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985; Russell, 1982). Direct empirical evidence supporting this hypothesis is accumulating. Camilleri (2004), for example, found that the risk of a partner's infidelity predicted sexual coercion among male participants but not female participants. This is important because men, but not women, are at risk of being cuckolded (i.e., unwittingly investing resources into genetically unrelated offspring). Goetz and Shackelford (2006) documented in two studies that a man's sexual coercion in the context of an intimate relationship was related positively to his partner's infidelities. Moreover, studying men's partner-directed insults, Starratt, Goetz, Shackelford, McKibbin, and Stewart-Williams (*in press*) found in two studies that a reliable predictor of a man's sexual coercion was their accusations of their partner's sexual infidelity. Men who accused their partners of being unfaithful were more likely to sexually coerce them. Most recently, Camilleri and Quinsey (2007) documented in one study that convicted partner rapists, compared to convicted non-sexual partner abusers, experienced more cuckoldry risk events prior to committing their offense; and in a second study involving a non-forensic sample, direct cues to female infidelity predicted men's self-reported propensity for sexual coercion.

Levels of Analysis

The domination and control hypothesis and the sperm competition hypothesis are complementary hypotheses to some extent. Researchers interested in proximate explanations would not be surprised to learn that men sexually coerce their partners upon detection or suspicion of their partners' infidelity. Likewise, researchers interested in ultimate explanations would agree at men who sexually coerce their partners do so in order to dominate and control her, but these researchers would add that this domination and control functions to limit men's partners' sexual autonomy and reduce paternity uncertainty. These two perspectives reflect different levels of analysis. The domination and control hypothesis is a proximate explanation, focusing on the immediate, non-evolutionary causes of a trait, behavior, or mechanism. The sperm competition hypothesis, however, is an ultimate or evolutionary explanation, focusing how such psychology and behavior could have arisen via natural selection. Below, we offer an example of the difference between proximate and ultimate explanations (for a complete discussion of different levels of analysis, see Tinbergen, 1963).

Why do people not have sex with their siblings? After all, this would save energy associated with mate selection and attraction and they would likely have a lot in common. One answer is that people are disgusted by sexual thoughts of their siblings. This is a proximate answer. Another, equally correct, answer is that people do not have sex with their siblings because the survival and reproductive costs associated with deleterious recessive mutations and short-generation pathogens selected for an inbreeding avoidance psychology (e.g., Lieberman, Tooby, & Cosmides, 2007). These answers are complementary, the former focusing on non-evolutionary causes and the latter focusing on evolved function.

In two studies, we collected data relevant to both hypotheses to explore how these variables interact with men's sexual coercion in an intimate relationship. The domination and control hypothesis posits that men's controlling behavior, relationship violence, and personality (particularly, his dominance or "surgency") are important variables to consider, whereas the sperm competition hypothesis holds that women's infidelity is particularly relevant. Regression analyses provide the opportunity to explore these multiple influences on sexual coercion in intimate relationships.

Study 1: Men's Self-Reports of Their Controlling Behavior, Relationship Violence, Personality, and Partners' Infidelity

Method

Participants

A total of 256 men participated in this study. Participants were in a committed, sexual relationship with a woman for at least 1 year. The mean age of the participants was 25.0 years ($SD = 7.2$), the mean age of the partners was 23.8 years ($SD = 6.7$), and the mean relationship length was 46.6 months ($SD = 48.6$).

Measures

Participants completed a survey that included several sections. The first section requested demographic information, including the participant's age, his partner's age, and the length of his current relationship. The second section asked four questions to assess his partner's past infidelities and her likelihood of committing an infidelity in the future: (1) "As far as you know, has your current partner had sexual intercourse with someone other than you since you have been involved in a relationship together?"; (2) "As far as you know, has your current partner fallen in love with someone other than you since you have been involved in a relationship together?"; (3) "How likely do you think it is that your

current partner will in the future have sexual intercourse with someone other than you, while in a relationship with you?"; and (4) "How likely do you think it is that your current partner will in the future fall in love with someone other than you, while in a relationship with you?" Responses were recorded using a 10-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (*Definitely Not/Not at all Likely*) to 9 (*Definitely Yes/Extremely Likely*).

Prior to analyses, we created the composite variable *female infidelity* ($\alpha = .72$) by summing responses to four variables: (1) partner's past sexual infidelity, (2) partner's past emotional infidelity, (3) partner's likelihood of future sexual infidelity, and (4) partner's likelihood of future emotional infidelity. This composite variable showed adequate internal consistency. Seventy-four percent of men reported at least some suspicion of their partners' past or future infidelity.

Sexual Coercion in Intimate Relationships Scale. Men's sexual coercion in the current relationship, was assessed with the Sexual Coercion in Intimate Relationships Scale (SCIRS; Shackelford & Goetz, 2004). The SCIRS asks how often the participant performed 34 sexually coercive acts in the last month. Responses were recorded using a 6-point Likert-type scale with the following values: 0 = *Act did not occur in the past month* to 5 = *Act occurred 11 or more times in the past month*. Items varied in subtlety, ranging from hinting and subtle manipulations to outright physical force. Example items include: "I hinted that I would withhold benefits that my partner depends on if she did not have sex with me," "I told my partner that if she loved me, she would have sex with me," and "I threatened to have sex with another woman if my partner did not have sex with me." Previous research has established the reliability, validity, and utility of the SCIRS as an assessment of sexual coercion in intimate relationships (Goetz & Shackelford, 2006; Shackelford & Goetz, 2004).

We calculated total scale scores for men's sexual coercion by responses to the items of the SCIRS. The alpha reliability for the summed responses to the 34 items of the SCIRS was $\alpha = .95$, demonstrating excellent internal consistency. Thirty-nine percent of men self-reported using at least some sexual coercion in their current relationship.

Controlling Behavior Index. To assess men's controlling behaviors in the context of a relationship, we used the Controlling Behavior Index (CBI; Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, & Lewis, 1996, 1998, 2000). The CBI measures the occurrence of 22 non-physical controlling and coercive behaviors in relationships. Example items are "Check her movements," "Deliberately keep her short of money," and "Restrict her social life." The CBI records how often such controlling behaviors have occurred in the relationship. Responses were recorded using a six-point Likert-type scale anchored by 0 (*Never*) and 5 (*11 or more times*). Research by Dobash et al. and Shackelford and Goetz (2004) has demonstrated the reliability, validity, and utility of the CBI by

demonstrating its use as a predictive measure of serious intimate partner violence and sexual coercion in intimate relationships. We calculated scores for men's controlling behaviors and the alpha reliability for the summed responses to the measure was $\alpha = .85$. Eighty-eight percent of men self-reported using at least some controlling behavior in their current relationship.

Violence Assessment Index. To assess men's non-sexual violence in the context of a relationship, we used the Violence Assessment Index (VAI; Dobash et al., 1998). The VAI measures 26 specific methods of assault, objects used in assaults, and parts of the body to which assaults are directed. Example items are "Slapped her on the face, body, arms, or legs," "Pushed, grabbed, or shoved her," and "Dragged her or pulled her by the hair." The VAI records how often such violence has occurred in the relationship. Responses were recorded using a six-point Likert-type scale anchored by 0 (*Never*) and 5 (*11 or more times*). Research by Dobash et al. (1998, 2000) and Shackelford and Goetz (2004) has demonstrated the reliability, validity, and utility of the VAI by demonstrating its use as a predictive measure of serious intimate partner violence and sexual coercion in intimate relationships. Also, Shackelford, Goetz, Buss, Euler, and Hoier (2005) documented how men's mate retention behaviors predicted their VAI scores. We calculated scores for men's non-sexual violence and the alpha reliability for the summed responses to the VAI was $\alpha = .75$. For all analyses involving the VAI, we excluded responses to the three acts involving sexual coercion: "Demanded sex when partner didn't want it," "Forced partner to have sex or some kind of sexual activity," and "Forced partner to do something against her will," to prevent detection of spurious relationships between sexual coercion and violence. Fifty-three percent of men self-reported using at least some non-sexual violence in their current relationship.

Injury Assessment Index. To assess the consequences of men's non-sexual violence in the context of a relationship, we used the Injury Assessment Index (IAI; Dobash et al., 1998). The IAI measures the physical consequences of violence against partners using 20 items. Example items are "Bruise on her body," "Blackout or unconsciousness," and "Split lip." The IAI records how often such injuries have occurred in the relationship. Responses were recorded using a six-point Likert-type scale anchored by 0 (*Never*) and 5 (*11 or more times*). Research by Dobash et al. (1998, 2000) and Shackelford and Goetz (2004) has demonstrated the reliability, validity, and utility of the IAI by demonstrating its use as a predictive measure of serious intimate partner violence and sexual coercion in intimate relationships. Also, Shackelford et al. (2005) documented how men's mate retention behaviors predicted their partners' IAI scores. We calculated scores for the IAI and the alpha reliability for the summed responses was $\alpha = .43$. This alpha is relatively low

and results regarding the IAI should be interpreted with caution (also, see General Discussion). Twelve percent of men self-reported that their current partners received some injuries due to relationship violence.

Botwin Personality Inventory. The final section included a standard personality inventory. This inventory includes 40 bipolar items designed to assess standings on the five major dimensions of personality (Botwin, Buss, & Shackelford, 1997; example item anchors in parentheses): Surgency (*dominant-submissive*), Agreeableness (*flexible-stubborn*), Conscientiousness (*careless-careful*), Emotional Stability (*secure-insecure*), and Openness to Experience (*uncultured-cultured*). For each item, participants circled a number between 1 and 7 inclusive that described himself "generally." This measure provides reliable and valid assessments of the five major dimensions of personality and, in addition, previous work indicates substantial agreement between ratings about a target person provided by (1) that target person and (2) the target person's long-term romantic partner (see Botwin et al., 1997).

We calculated scores for participants' standings on each of the five major dimensions of personality by summing responses to the eight items comprising each dimension as assessed by our personality measure. Alpha reliabilities for the five personality dimensions were: Surgency, $\alpha = .56$, Agreeableness, $\alpha = .63$; Conscientiousness, $\alpha = .67$, Emotional Stability, $\alpha = .56$; and Openness to Experience, $\alpha = .53$. These alphas were relatively low, and thus, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Procedure

Upon the prospective participant's arrival at the scheduled time and location, the researcher confirmed that the prospective participant was (1) male, (2) at least 18 years of age, and (3) currently involved in a committed, sexual relationship with a woman for at least 1 year. If the criteria were met, the researcher handed the participant a consent form, the survey, and a security envelope. The participant was instructed to read and sign the consent form, complete the survey, place the completed survey in the envelope, and then seal the envelope. The participant was instructed not to seal the consent form inside the envelope to maintain anonymity. Upon completion of the survey, the researcher explained to the participant the purpose of the study, answered any questions, and thanked the participant for his participation.

Results

To identify which variables predicted men's sexual coercion against their partners, we conducted a multiple regression using female infidelity, men's CBI scores, men's VAI scores, men's IAI scores, and men's personality standings to predict men's total scale SCIRS scores. The overall model was

Table 1 Multiple regression analyses of men's reports and women's reports (reported in standardized beta weights)

Predictor	Sexual coercion	
	Men's reports (Study 1)	Women's reports (Study 2)
Female infidelity	.23***	.24***
Controlling behavior index	.21**	.18*
Violence assessment index	-.11	.23**
Injury assessment index	.08	.15*
Surgency	.07	-.05
Agreeableness	-.01	.01
Conscientiousness	-.16*	-.06
Emotional stability	.00	.02
Openness to experience	.09	.10

Note. Men's $N = 256$; Women's $N = 290$; Row variables were used to predict column variable. See text for definition and construction of variables
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

significant ($F = 4.31$, $R^2 = .15$, $p < .001$). Investigation of the individual standardized regression coefficients indicated that three of the nine variables uniquely predicted men's total SCIRS scores: female infidelity, CBI scores, and Conscientiousness (see Table 1). These results did not change after controlling for participant age, partner age, and relationship duration (data not shown).

Furthermore, investigation of the individual standardized beta weights revealed that female infidelity had the highest standardized beta weight, $\beta = .23$, $p < .001$. Men's CBI scores had the second highest standardized beta weight, $\beta = .21$, $p < .01$; and men's Conscientiousness had the third highest standardized beta weight, $\beta = -.16$, $p < .05$. This pattern of results did not change after controlling for participant age, partner age, and relationship duration (data not shown).

Discussion

These results suggest that the variables central to both the sperm competition hypothesis and domination and control hypothesis predicted men's sexual coercion in intimate relationships, according to men's self-reports. Again, we remind readers that these results should be interpreted with caution as some of the alpha reliabilities were relatively low (namely, the personality variables).

Study 2: Women's Reports of Their Partners' Controlling Behavior, Relationship Violence, and Personality, and Self-Reports of Infidelity

Men's reports of their partners' past infidelities and likelihood of future infidelities may be biased or otherwise inaccurate. Some men (e.g., those high in sexual jealousy) may overestimate their partners' past infidelities or likelihood of future infidelity. In addition, men's self-reports of their sexual coercion and relationship violence may not provide accurate assessments of these behaviors (e.g., Dobash et al., 1998; Edleson &

Brygger, 1986; Magdol et al., 1997). Men may be reluctant to report their sexual coercion and relationship violence, or may underreport the most severe forms of coercion and violence (e.g., Dobash et al., 1998). Women's reports of their past infidelities and likelihood of future infidelities and women's reports of their partners' sexual coercion and relationship violence may reflect more accurately the incidence of such behaviors. Using an independent sample of women in committed, sexual relationships, Study 2 obtained women's reports of their infidelities and their partners' sexual coercion and relationship violence. These independent reports offered an additional opportunity to investigate which hypothesis (the domination and control hypothesis or the sperm competition hypothesis) better accounts for men's sexual coercion in intimate relationships.

Method

Participants

A total of 290 women participated in this study. Participants were in a committed, sexual relationship with a man for at least 1 year. The mean age of the participants was 22.2 years ($SD = 5.8$), the mean age of the partners was 24.4 years ($SD = 7.0$), and the mean relationship length was 39.2 months ($SD = 38.5$).

Measures

The survey for Study 2 paralleled the one used in Study 1. Participants in Study 2 reported on their past infidelities and likelihood of committing future infidelities, their partners' sexual coercion in the current relationship, their partners' controlling behaviors, violence, any injuries they suffered due to their partners' violence, and their partners' standings on the five major dimensions of personality.

As in Study 1, we created the composite variable *female infidelity* ($\alpha = .60$) by summing four variables: (1) past sexual infidelity, (2) past emotional infidelity, (3) likelihood of future

sexual infidelity, and (4) likelihood of future emotional infidelity. Sixty-three percent of women self-reported some past infidelity or likelihood of future infidelity.

We then calculated scores for partner's sexual coercion using women's responses to the 34-item SCIRS (Shackelford & Goetz, 2004). The alpha reliability for the summed responses was $\alpha = .97$. We calculated scores for men's controlling behaviors and non-sexual violence using the CBI, VAI, and IAI (Dobash et al., 1996, 1998) using women's partner-reports. Alpha reliabilities for the summed responses to the three measures were $\alpha = .89$, $\alpha = .89$, and $\alpha = .61$, respectively. As in Study 1, analyses involving the VAI excluded responses to the acts "Demanded sex when I didn't want it," "Forced me to have sex or some kind of sexual activity," and "Forced me to do something against my will" to prevent spurious relationships between sexual coercion and violence. Thirty-two percent of women reported at least some sexual coercion by their current partners; 75% of women reported at least some controlling behavior by their current partners; 44% of women reported at least some non-sexual relationship violence; and 16% of women reported sustaining some injuries due to relationship violence in their current relationship.

Next, we calculated scores for partners' personality using responses to the 40-item Botwin Personality Inventory (1997). Alpha reliabilities for the five personality dimensions were: Surgency, $\alpha = .62$; Agreeableness, $\alpha = .77$; Conscientiousness, $\alpha = .69$; Emotional Stability, $\alpha = .55$; and Openness to Experience, $\alpha = .63$.

Procedure

Paralleling Study 1, three criteria were required to qualify for participation. Upon the prospective participant's arrival at the schedule time and location, the researcher confirmed that the prospective participant was (1) female, (2) at least 18 years of age, and (3) currently in a committed, sexual relationship with a man. The same procedure was followed as in Study 1.

Results

As in Study 1, to identify which variables predicted men's sexual coercion against their partners, we conducted a multiple regression using female infidelity, men's CBI scores, men's VAI scores, men's VAI scores, and men's personality standings to predict men's SCIRS scores. The overall model was significant ($F = 13.62$, $R^2 = .33$, $p < .001$). Investigation of the individual standardized regression coefficients indicated that four of the nine variables uniquely predicted women's reports of their partners' total SCIRS scores: female infidelity, women's reports of their partners' CBI scores, women's reports of their partners' VAI scores, and women's reports of their partners' IAI scores (see Table 1).

These results did not change after controlling for participant age, partner age, and relationship duration (data not shown).

Furthermore, investigation of the standardized Beta weights revealed that female infidelity had the highest standardized beta weight, $\beta = .24$, $p < .001$. Women's reports of their partners' VAI scores had the second highest standardized beta weight, $\beta = .23$, $p < .01$; women's reports of their partners' CBI scores had the third highest standardized beta weight, $\beta = .18$, $p < .05$; and women's reports of their partners' IAI scores had the fourth highest standardized beta weight, $\beta = .15$, $p < .05$. Again, results did not change after controlling for participant age, partner age, and relationship duration (data not shown).

Discussion

Paralleling Study 1, these results suggest that the variable central to both hypotheses predicted men's sexual coercion in intimate relationships, according to women's partner-reports. Again, we remind readers that these results should be interpreted with caution as some of the alpha reliabilities were relatively low (namely, the personality variables and IAI score).

General Discussion

Many women endure sexual coercion by their intimate partners (Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985; Goetz & Shackelford, 2006; Hadi, 2000; Painter & Farrington, 1999; Watts et al., 1998). At least two major hypotheses have been advanced to explain this phenomenon. The domination and control hypothesis posits that sexual coercion in intimate relationships is motivated by men's attempts to dominate and control their partner and that this expression of power is the product of men's social roles (e.g., Basile, 1999; Brownmiller, 1975; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Johnson, 1995; Watts et al., 1998). The sperm competition hypothesis proposes that sexual coercion in intimate relationships functions to introduce a male's sperm into his partner's reproductive tract at a time when there is a high risk of cuckoldry, such as when a man suspects his partner has been sexually unfaithful (Camilleri, 2004; Goetz & Shackelford, 2006; Lalumière et al., 2005; Thornhill & Thornhill, 1992; Wilson & Daly, 1992).

In the present studies, we sought to explore how variables associated with these hypotheses interact to account for men's sexual coercion in an intimate relationship. Results from both studies indicated that men's sexual coercion in intimate relationships was consistently predicted by women's infidelity and men's controlling behavior, suggesting that both risk factors are important predictors.

Results generated in the current research corroborate several key results generated by previous research. The results are

consistent with research suggesting that men's sexual coercion is related to their domination and control of their partner. In both studies, men who used more controlling behaviors, such as restricting their partners' social life and being vigilant about their partners' whereabouts, were more likely to sexual coercion their partners. Results from both studies also supported research suggesting that men's sexual coercion is linked to their partners' infidelities or suspicions of their partners' infidelities. Camilleri and Quinsey (2007) and Goetz and Shackelford (2006), for example, documented that men's sexual coercion in the context of an intimate relationship was related to risk of cuckoldry. Frieze (1983) and Gage and Hutchinson (2006) found that husbands who raped their wives were more sexually jealous than husbands who did not rape their wives. Shields and Hanneke (1983) documented that victims of partner rape were more likely to have reported engaging in extramarital sex than women who were not raped by their in-pair partner. Starratt et al. (in press) found that men who accused their partners of being unfaithful also were more likely to sexually coerce them.

It has often been argued that men's domination and control of their partners functions to maintain a patriarchal society. This hypothesis was first advanced by Millet (1969). Millet argued that rape and violence are products of a patriarchal society. We offer a slight reinterpretation and argue that men's dominance and control of their partners is motivated by individual men's attempt to guard their paternity (see also Wilson & Daly, 1992). This hypothesis is supported by the current data and from research showing that men's controlling behaviors covary with their partners' ovulatory status (Gangestad, Thornhill, & Garver, 2002; Haselton & Gangestad, 2006). These studies have shown that men are more controlling and vigilant of their partners when they are most like to conceive, and thus when men's paternity is under an increased threat.

As women's infidelity was a reliable predictor of men's sexual coercion in both studies, we argue that this finding is consistent with sperm competition theory and that it adds to a rapidly growing literature on human sperm competition (e.g., Baker & Bellis, 1993; Camilleri & Quinsey, 2007; Gallup & Burch, 2004; Gallup et al., 2003; Goetz et al., 2005; Kilgallon & Simmons, 2005; Klusmann, 2006; Pound, 2002; Shackelford, Goetz, McKibbin, & Starratt, 2007; Shackelford et al., 2002; Smith, 1984; for a review, see Shackelford & Goetz, 2007).

The current studies have some limitations. One limitation was the less than optimal alpha reliabilities for some of the composite variables. Although most were acceptable, a few were rather low. The alpha reliability for men's IAI scores (Study 1) was .43. This is potentially due to men's reluctance in reporting the most severe forms of their relationship violence (e.g., Dobash et al., 1998). To minimize this limitation, we collected data from an independent sample of

women, who are known to provide more accurate and reliable assessments of these behaviors (e.g., Dobash et al., 1998; Edleson & Brygger, 1986; Magdol et al., 1997).

Another limitation of the current research exists regarding the design. We present regression analyses that prevent strong statements about causal relationships. We argue that women's infidelities cause men to use sexual coercion and dominance and control as paternity guards. The data are consistent with this interpretation, as is previous research (e.g., Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985), but we cannot rule out an alternative, reverse causal relationship—that men's sexual coercion causes women to become unfaithful. A design that includes repeated assessments of the key variables over time, such as a daily diary study, would allow for the identification of causal relationships.

In conclusion, our results reflect the complex nature of men's sexual coercion in intimate relationships. Researchers studying sexual coercion in intimate relationships might profitably consider variables related to both the domination and control hypothesis and the sperm competition hypothesis to better understand and prevent this behavior. Variables such as women's sexual history, men's perceptions of their partners' fidelity, men's sexual jealousy, as well as men's domination and control should be considered, in addition to the examination of variables related to the researchers' own theoretical perspective.

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