Current Controversies on Defining Nonlethal Violence Against Women in Intimate Heterosexual Relationships: Empirical Implications

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Current Controversies on Defining Nonlethal Violence Against Women in Intimate Heterosexual Relationships

Empirical Implications

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There is considerable disagreement about what harmful behaviors should be included in a definition of nonlethal violence against women in intimate heterosexual relationships. For example, many researchers restrict their focus to physical and/or sexual assaults, whereas others offer formulations that include a much broader range of injurious acts. The main objectives of this article are to describe and evaluate narrow and broad definitions and provide some suggestions for achieving consensus in defining violence against women.

> It is crucial . . . that researchers examine the assumptions and biases underlying the terms they use, as well as the ways in which these terms constrain their results and conclusions. This is particularly crucial in fields that use popular terms likely to be influenced by the unacknowledged biases and political concerns of the dominant group.
>
> —Muehlenhard, Powch, Phelps, and Giusti, (1992, p. 24)

A review of the extant social scientific literature on nonlethal male-to-female assaults[1] in intimate heterosexual relationships, such as marriage/cohabitation and dating, reveals considerable disagreement about what injurious acts should be included in a definition of violence. For example, many North American survey researchers use operational definitions that include both or only one of the following behaviors: physical abuse (e.g.,

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beatings, kicks) or sexual assault (e.g., forced penetration). Psychological, verbal, spiritual, and economic abuse are deleted from their formulations because grouping these types of assault with physically injurious behaviors is seen as muddying "the water so much that it might be impossible to determine what causes abuse" (Gelles & Cornell, 1985, p. 23).

Others oppose broad definitions for different reasons. Consider Fekete (1994, p. 60), who asserts that the Canadian national survey on woman abuse in dating (CNS),[2] a large-scale study that used a broad definition of woman abuse, was ideologically driven and specifically designed to "show that different heterosexual interactions are all variants of the same tree." Similarly, Gilbert (1994) argues that pathbreaking U.S. sexual assault surveys done by Koss, Gidycz, and Wisniewski (1987) and Russell (1982, 1984) are guilty of "definitional stretching," artificially inflating the rates of sexual abuse that do not coincide with "reasonable" women's attitudes and experiences.

Ironically, some feminist critiques of studies like the CNS are similar to those raised by Fekete (1994) and Gilbert (1994). For example, Fox (1993, p. 322) states that "by combining what is debatably abusive with what *everyone* [italics added] agrees to be seriously abusive," the CNS research team trivialized the latter. Although several studies have identified women who view pressure to have sex and verbal aggression as just as or more threatening to their well-being as physically and/or sexually violent acts (Currie, 1998; Duffy & Momirov, 1997; Kirkwood, 1993; Straus & Sweet, 1992; Walker, 1979), Fox (1993) views psychological or emotional victimization as "soft-core abuse." There also are feminists who define psychological assaults as early warning signs of physical and sexual attacks rather than as abusive in and of themselves (e.g., K. D. Kelly, 1994).

On the other hand, a growing number of researchers and government agencies contend that violence against women is multidimensional in nature and that definitions and research should recognize that many women's lives rest on a "continuum of unsafety" (Stanko, 1990) or a "continuum of violent actions," (National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1996). Again, psychological or emotional abuse can be more painful than physical and sexual violence and some women simultaneously experience different types of abuse (Okun, 1986;

Saltzman, Fanslow, McMahon, & Shelley, 1999). For example, Russell (1975, pp. 82-83) describes a terrifying incident in which a man spent an entire day insulting his female partner. Following this abuse, he beat and sodomized her.

The major definitional debates briefly reviewed above are not trivial and they seriously affect how data are gathered, as well as the quality and quantity of social support services for women who experience nonlethal violence in intimate heterosexual relationships. The purpose of this article is twofold: (a) to describe and evaluate narrow and broad definitions, and (b) to provide some suggestions for resolving these definitional debates.

NARROW DEFINITIONS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Many North American crime surveys, especially those done by government agencies, such as the Solicitor General of Canada and Statistics Canada, define sexual and physical violence in narrow legalistic terms (Smith, 1994). For example, the 1982 Canadian Urban Victimization Survey (Research and Statistics Group, 1984) and the third cycle of the General Social Survey (Sacco & Johnson, 1990) uncovered very low incidence rates of wife abuse (less than 1% and 1.5%, respectively).[3] Table 1, however, shows that, except for Statistics Canada's Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS) (1993),[4] large-scale representative sample surveys that used a modified version of Straus's (1979) Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS) elicited much higher rates. For example, Table 1 shows that annually at least 11% of North American women in marital/cohabiting relationships are physically abused by their male partners in a 12-month time period.

If Table 1 demonstrates the importance of using operational definitions of intimate male-to-female violence that extend beyond the limited realm of criminal law, so does a comparison of woman abuse in dating results generated by the CNS with those uncovered by the Canadian VAWS. For example, the VAWS used the following three questions to measure dating violence (Johnson, 1996, pp. 48-49):

TABLE 1
North American Wife Abuse Surveys

	Description of Surveys				*Abuse Rates*			
Survey	*Survey Location and Date*	*Sample Description*	*Interview Mode*	*Measure of Abuse*	*Abuse Past Year (%)*	*Severe Abuse Past Year (%)*	*Abuse Ever (%)*	*Severe Abuse Ever (%)*
Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz (1981)	U.S. National, 1975	2,143 married or cohabiting men and women	Face-to-face	CTS (aggregate)[a]	12.1	3.8	—	—
Schulman (1979)	Kentucky, 1979	1,793 presently or formerly married and cohabiting men and women	Phone	CTS[b]	10.0	4.1	21.0	8.7
Straus and Gelles (1986)	U.S. National, 1985	3,520 presently or formerly married or cohabiting men and women	Phone	CTS (aggregate)	11.3	3.0	—	—
Brinkerhoff and Lupri (1988)	Calgary, 1981	526 men and women	Face-to-face and self-administered questionnaire	CTS (men only)[c]	24.5	10.8	—	—
Kennedy and Dutton (1989)	Alberta, 1987	1,045 men and women	Face-to-face and phone	CTS (aggregate)	11.2	2.3	—	—
Lupri (1990)	Canada National, 1986	1,530 married or cohabiting men and women	Face-to-face and mail questionnaire	CTS (men only)	17.8	10.1	—	—

(continued)

TABLE 1 Continued

Survey	Description of Surveys: Survey Location and Date	Description of Surveys: Sample Description	Description of Surveys: Interview Mode	Description of Surveys: Measure of Abuse	Abuse Rates: Abuse Past Year (%)	Abuse Rates: Severe Abuse Past Year (%)	Abuse Rates: Abuse Ever (%)	Abuse Rates: Severe Abuse Ever (%)
Smith (1986)	Toronto, 1985	315 women ages 18-55	Phone	CTS/open questions and one supplementary question	10.8	—	18.1	7.3
Smith (1987)	Toronto, 1987	604 presently or formerly married or cohabiting women	Phone	CTS and three supplementary questions	14.4[d]	5.1	36.4[e]	11.3
Statistics Canada (1993)	Canada National, 1993	12,300 women 18 years of age and older	Phone	CTS[f]	3.0	—	29.0	—

SOURCE: This table is a modified version of tables developed by Ellis and DeKeseredy (1996) and Smith (1989).
NOTE: CTS = Conflict Tactics Scales. Dashes indicate that data were not obtained or reported.
a. Men-as-aggressors and women-as-victims from different couples.
b. Women-as-victims.
c. Men-as-aggressors.
d. Past year rates based on CTS alone.
e. Abuse ever rates based on CTS (25.0, 7.8) plus supplementary questions.
f. Includes a sexual assault item.

> Has a (male stranger, date or boyfriend, other known man) ever forced you or attempted to force you into any sexual activity by threatening you, holding you down or hurting you in some way?
>
> Now, I'm going to ask you some questions about physical attacks you may have had since the age of 16. By this I mean any use of force such as being hit, slapped, kicked or grabbed to being beaten, knifed or shot. Has a (male stranger, date or boyfriend, other known man) ever physically attacked you?
>
> The next few questions are about face-to-face threats you may have experienced. By threats I mean any time you have been threatened with physical harm, since you were 16. Has a (male stranger, date or boyfriend, other known man) ever threatened to harm you? Did you believe he would do it?

These questions are derived from narrow, legal definitions of physical and sexual violence included in the Canadian Criminal Code. Not surprisingly, the incidence (2%) and prevalence rates (16%) for all women in the sample 18 years and older are considerably lower than those elicited by other North American dating violence surveys that used more broad definitions and superior measures, such as the CNS.[5] It should also be noted that the VAWS figures reported here include both sexual and physical assaults.

The CNS was administered to a national representative sample consisting of 3,142 undergraduate students (1,835 women and 1,307 men) enrolled in 95 university and community college classes across Canada. Physical abuse was measured using a modified rendition of Straus and Gelles's (1986) CTS and sexual abuse was operationalized using a modified version of Koss et al.'s (1987) Sexual Experiences Survey (SES). All of the following incidence (assaults that occurred in the past 12 months) rates and most of the prevalence (assaults that occurred since leaving high school) statistics are higher than those uncovered by the VAWS (DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1993, pp. 148, 152):

- Of the male respondents, 13.7% indicated that they had physically assaulted their dating partners in the year before the survey, whereas 22.3% of the female participants stated that they had been victimized in such a way during the same time period.
- About 35% of the women reported having been physically assaulted, and 17.8% of the men stated that they had used physical abuse since leaving high school.

- Approximately 28% of the female participants stated that they were sexually abused in the past year, whereas 11% of the males reported having victimized a female dating partner in this way during the same time period.
- Of the women, 45.1% stated that they had been sexually abused since leaving high school, and 19.5% of the men reported at least one incident of abuse in the same time period.

In addition to reporting composite rates of male-to-female dating violence, VAWS researcher Holly Johnson (1996) presents separate sexual assault and physical violence prevalence rates (12% and 7%, respectively), figures that are considerably lower than those reported by both the male and female CNS respondents. Clearly, measures informed by more broad definitions of physical and sexual abuse typically elicit higher rates of violence regardless of the sample size and sample composition. For example, the VAWS was administered to a much larger and more representative sample of the Canadian female population at large (12,300 female respondents age 18 years and older), yet this survey elicited much lower estimates of male-to-female physical and sexual abuse in dating than did the CNS.

Low incidence and prevalence rates constitute a major problem for at least three reasons. First, many policy makers tend to only listen to large numbers (Smith, 1994). As Bart, Miller, Moran, and Stanko (1989, p. 433) correctly point out, "The principal questions that organize policy efforts are ultimately quantitative—how many are there, who are they, where are they, how bad are the consequences, how much will it cost?" Unfortunately, if government officials are led by some survey researchers using narrow definitions to believe that violence against women is not a statistically significant issue, they are not likely to devote sufficient resources to prevent and control one of North America's most pressing social problems (Smith, 1994).

Second, narrow definitions tend to create a "hierarchy of abuse based on seriousness" (L. Kelly, 1987). Just because the law does not define an abusive incident as serious does not mean that legal definitions coincide with women's real life feelings and experiences. For example, in Britain, a man cannot be convicted of raping his wife (Smith, 1994) and in 33 American states, a husband is exempt from prosecution in some situations (Bergen, 1996), even though marital rape causes major pain and suffering.[6] Consider

what happened to Lorraine, a woman who was frequently sadistically raped by her husband. In an interview with Bergen (1996, p. 18), she remembered

> just waking up and being tied to the bed by my arms and legs, and the thing that woke me up was him touching me [vaginally] with a feather and me waking up in shock. And he had this thing about taking pictures of it all and trying to open me up [vaginally]. So he would use his fist and other objects and then make me do exercises on the toilet to tighten [my vagina] up again.

Narrow definitions not only trivialize many abused women's subjective experiences, they also restrain them from seeking social support. For example, if a survivor's husband's brutal conduct does not coincide with what researchers, criminal justice officials, politicians, or the general public refer to as abuse or violence, she may be left in a "twilight zone" where she knows that she has been abused but cannot define or categorize it in a way that would help her (Duffy & Momirov, 1997).

Third, narrow definitions exacerbate the problem of underreporting (DeKeseredy, 1995; Smith, 1994). For example, as shown above, if people are asked questions based on narrow, legal criteria, researchers will elicit incidence and prevalence data underestimating the amount of abuse experienced by their respondents. Consequently, the scientific credibility of an entire survey is "put into jeopardy, for one cannot know if those women who disclosed having been abused are representative of all victims in the sample" (Smith, 1994, p. 110).

In sum, then, the research reported here shows that broad definitions of physical and sexual violence against women help researchers generate higher and more accurate estimates of these problems than do narrow, legal formulations. Furthermore, most survey researchers informed by broad definitions use modified versions of the CTS, CTS-2 (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1995), or the SES. These are reliable and valid measures (Koss & Gidycz, 1985; Smith, 1987; Straus, 1990a, 1990b), and they are widely used in both Canada and the United States. Still, although these measures are superior to those used in mainstream crime surveys, many researchers contend that they still do not adequately address the multidimensional nature of violence against women (Currie, 1998; Kurz, 1998). This and other pitfalls,

however, can be minimized or overcome by using techniques suggested in a subsequent section of this article.

BROAD DEFINITIONS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Definitions of violence against women and other social problems constitute a primal social scientific act or decision (Ellis, 1987). As stated previously, many North American survey researchers who study male-to-female violence in intimate relationships have decided to use definitions that include a much broader range of physically and sexually abusive behaviors than those officially designated as criminal. The empirical implications of such a decision are significant and more accurately reflect the terrifying experiences of many women who "suffer in silence" (Pizzey, 1974). Even so, many feminist and profeminist survey researchers contend that we should develop and operationalize even more broader definitions because violence takes many varied forms (Lupri, Grandin, & Brinkerhoff, 1994).

These scholars call for definitions that include physical and sexual violence, as well as psychological, verbal, economic, and spiritual violence. DeKeseredy and MacLeod's (1997) definition of woman abuse in intimate relationships is a recent Canadian example of a formulation that extends beyond physical and sexual assault. According to these researchers,

> Woman abuse is the misuse of power by a husband, intimate partner (whether male or female), ex-husband, or ex-partner against a woman, resulting in a loss of dignity, control, and safety as well as a feeling of powerlessness and entrapment experienced by the woman who is the direct victim of ongoing or repeated physical, psychological, economic, sexual, verbal, and/or spiritual abuse. Woman abuse also includes persistent threats or forcing women to witness violence against their children, other relatives, friends, pets, and/or cherished possessions by their husbands, partners, ex-husbands, or ex-partners. (DeKeseredy & MacLeod, 1997, p. 5)

Following some critics (e.g., Turk, 1975) of broad radical or critical criminological definitions of crime (e.g., formulations that include violations of human rights), many researchers (e.g.,

Gelles & Cornell, 1985), policy analysts, members of the general public, and so on contend that definitions such as the above are problematic because they include everything but the kitchen sink.[7] For these critics, definitions like DeKeseredy and MacLeod's (1997) are so broad that almost every North American woman seems to have been victimized, which is clearly not the case. Furthermore, some critics, such as Fekete (1994), claim that many of the behaviors included in formulations developed by DeKeseredy and MacLeod and other feminist scholars are simply "unwanted interactions" that researchers have added to their "corrupt continuum of abuse."

Of course, including too many behaviors under the rubric of violence may result in a breakdown of social exchanges between people as they label each other's behaviors abusive or violent (Duffy & Momirov, 1997). Moreover, it is much more difficult to study 50 behaviors at once than to study 1 or 2. Nevertheless, qualitative studies show that abused women reject the notion that "sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me." In fact, women who have experienced male violence often say that it is the psychological, verbal, and spiritual abuse that hurts the most and longest (Fitzpatrick & Halliday, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993; Walker, 1979). Some women say that most physical wounds heal, but the damage to their self-respect and ability to relate to others caused by emotional, verbal, and spiritual violence affects every aspect of their lives.

According to a respondent interviewed by DeKeseredy and MacLeod (1997, p. 5),

> I was raped by my uncle when I was 12 and my husband has beat me for years. For my whole life, when I have gone to a doctor, to my priest, or to a friend to have my wounds patched up, or for a shoulder to cry on, they dwell on my bruises, my cuts, my broken bones. My body has some scars . . . that's for sure . . . I don't look like anything like I did 15 years ago, but it's not my body that I really wish could get fixed. The abuse in my life has taken away my trust in people and in life. It's taken away the laughter in my life. I still laugh, but not without bitterness behind the laughter. It's taken away my faith in God, my faith in goodness winning out in the end, and maybe worst of all, it's taken away my trust in myself. I don't trust myself to be able to take care of my kids, to take care of myself, to do anything to make a difference in my own life or anyone else's.

> That's the hurt I would like to fix. I can live with my physical scars. It's these emotional scars that drive me near suicide sometimes.

This woman's experience and feminist qualitative studies done by L. Kelly (1987, 1988) and others (e.g., Nash Chang, 1996) show that it is time to reject narrow, commonsense definitions of violence. This point is especially important when one considers that Fitzpatrick and Halliday's (1992, p. 76) respondents would often tell them that "they would much rather be hit than endure the constant put downs and mind games inflicted on them by their abusive partners."

Psychological abuse and other nonphysical or nonsexual types of intimate intrusions can be measured using several techniques (Stanko, 1985), such as Tolman's (1989) Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory. Another option is to use psychologically/emotionally abusive and controlling behaviors data elements (variables) developed by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (Saltzman et al., 1999), and questions used in the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998a). Stalking measures, such as those included in the NVAWS, should also be added to surveys of violence against women in intimate heterosexual relationships because stalking generates a substantial amount of psychological pain and suffering and many women are physically assaulted by male intimates who stalk them. For example, the NVAWS found that 81% of their female respondents who were stalked by a current or former husband or cohabiting partner were also physically abused by the same partner. Furthermore, 31% of the women stalked by a current or former male intimate partner were sexually assaulted by the same partner. Stalking is also strongly related to psychologically or emotionally abusive behavior (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998a).

In sum, many nonviolent, highly injurious behaviors are just as worthy of in-depth empirical, theoretical, and political attention as those that cause physical harm. Furthermore, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and psychological abuse are not mutually exclusive. For example, psychological abuse almost always accompanies physical assaults in intimate relationships (Gelles & Straus, 1988; Okun, 1986).

DEFINING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A SEARCH FOR CLARITY AND CONSENSUS

Defining violence against women has been a catalyst for bringing people, including survey researchers, together. Unfortunately, it has also created bitter divisions among social scientists and others involved in the struggle to make intimate heterosexual relationships safer. How do we minimize or overcome these divisions? How can we achieve consensus in defining violence against women? There are no simple answers to these questions and perhaps there will never be a consensus despite strong attempts to meet this objective by researchers such as Saltzman et al. (1999). Like the study of poverty, unemployment, education, and other social problems, violence against women is a highly politicized area of social inquiry; thus, many more new conflicting definitions are likely to be developed in the near future.

Still, a growing number of researchers are recognizing the merits of broad definitions. Consider the NVAWS (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998a, 1998b). This study included measures of stalking, physical violence, sexual assault, and emotionally abusive or controlling behaviors. Two other examples of large-scale surveys specifically designed to address the multifaceted nature of violence against women are the CNS and the Canadian VAWS.

If the above surveys recognize the need for broad definitions, the same can be said about the CDC. For example, the Family and Intimate Violence Prevention Team, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC, held a series of meetings and workshops to create a set of uniform definitions and a set of recommended data elements (RDEs) for surveillance of intimate partner violence. The uniform definitions and RDEs are broad in scope and focus on psychological/emotional abuse, as well as sexual and physical violence.[8] Furthermore, funded by the CDC, using the uniform definitions and RDEs, three state health departments in Massachusetts, Michigan, and Rhode Island are pilot testing methods of conducting statewide surveillance of violence against women.[9] The results of these pilot tests will likely enhance a social scientific understanding of violence against women and, hopefully, influence many states to develop effective surveillance activities.

As pointed out previously, studies that broadly operationalize violence against women provide more accurate estimates of brutal assaults on females that occur behind closed doors (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1981), and they acknowledge the value of feminist interpretations of woman abuse. Rather than being at odds with each other, we are currently witnessing a rapprochement between feminist and mainstream empirical approaches to violence against women research (Smith, 1994).

However, a major problem still remains. Despite the trend toward using broad definitions, we still see variance in incidence and prevalence rates across studies, even when they use similar measures (see Table 1). This problem is due to sampling differences, different data gathering techniques (telephone vs. face-to-face interviews), and other methodological factors. Obviously, definitional consensus does not necessarily translate into scientific consistency. Unfortunately, methodological differences are difficult, if not impossible, to overcome. After all, in a liberal democratic society ostensibly designed to foster intellectual freedom, there is no way of making every survey researcher use the same methods. For example, as Saltzman et al. (1999) point out, no single agency is likely to collect all of the CDC's RDEs. This is not to say, however, that some techniques are not better than others. For example, despite their pitfalls, the CTS and CTS-2 are superior to measures used in crime surveys such as the third cycle of the General Social Survey (Sacco & Johnson, 1990).[10]

Let us suppose that we reach a point where all survey researchers use exactly the same measures and administer them to very similar samples. It is fair to assume that these scholars will generate similar incidence and prevalence rates; nevertheless, they will still have to deal with underreporting. It is well-known, for example, that many respondents are reluctant to disclose abusive experiences because of embarrassment, memory error, fear of reprisal, reluctance to recall traumatic memories, and a host of other factors (Kennedy & Dutton, 1989; National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1996; Smith, 1987, 1994). Accordingly, multiple measures of violence are necessary for reasons briefly described below.

Although several methodologists promote the use of multiple measures (e.g., Bohrnstedt, 1983; Smith, 1994), most survey researchers who study violence against women in intimate

relationships disregard this important recommendation and only use modified versions of the CTS, CTS-2, or SES. The major problem with only using one measure is that respondents are not given additional opportunities to disclose violent experiences. At the outset, people may not report incidents for the above reasons (e.g., embarrassment). However, if respondents are probed later by an interviewer or asked to complete self-report, supplementary, open- and closed-ended questions, some silent or forgetful participants will reveal having been attacked or abused (Smith, 1994). For example, Smith (1987) found that some reluctant or forgetful female victims ($N = 60$) changed their answers when asked again in different words by a telephone interviewer. Belated responses increased the overall violence prevalence rate by approximately 10% and 21 belated disclosures increased the severe violence prevalence rate.[11] In addition to giving respondents more opportunities to reveal events, supplementary open-ended questions build researcher-respondent rapport (Smith, 1994).

Still, definitional consistency, standard measures, similar samples, and multiple questions will not make much of a difference if respondents cannot understand the survey. Many immigrants and refugees do not read or speak English; thus, it is pointless to ask them to complete a survey unless it is translated into their native language, an approach that is expensive, albeit empirically fruitful, because it results in improved response rates (Smith, 1987). However, administering surveys to ethnic minority booster samples can generate a sufficient number of minorities to allow for complex multivariate analyses of patterns of violence against women (Jones, MacLean, & Young, 1986).

CONCLUSIONS

Definitions of violence against women in intimate relationships are important "because of the power conveyed by 'scientific authority,'" thus a critical examination of these formulations is necessary (Muehlenhard et al., 1992, p. 41). This article shows that there is sharp disagreement over what constitutes violence against women; however, a growing number of survey researchers and some government agencies (e.g., CDC and National

Institute of Justice) are developing broader conceptions. Nevertheless, there is great variation in how these definitions are operationalized, which in turn results in inconsistent incidence and prevalence rates. Perhaps using standard measures and similar samples will minimize this problem. However, these techniques do little, if anything, to address the problem of underreporting. At minimum, multiple measures, translated questionnaires, and ethnic minority booster samples are necessary.

For many women, especially those who are battered, psychologically abused, or sexually assaulted, a key point to consider here is whether researchers' definitions are sensitive to their subjective experiences (Muehlenhard et al., 1992; Smith, 1994). Therefore, surveys that adequately address the complexities of violence against women in a variety of contexts and social settings should include a "preparatory component of qualitative investigation" (MacLean, 1996). This involves in-depth interviews with women and men, researchers, friends, family members, shelter workers, and so on. Such information is rich and sensitizes research teams to the importance of using several supplementary open- and closed-ended questions that reflect women's subjective experiences. Furthermore, as CNS researchers discovered, this preparatory research contributes to the development of broad definitions of woman abuse. Just ask any woman about her experiences with violence and other types of intimate abuse and you will undoubtedly discover that she will call for a definition that includes many harmful nonphysical and nonsexual behaviors (Hall, 1985).

NOTES

1. For the purpose of this article, *nonlethal violence* refers to acts that do not result in death.

2. See DeKeseredy and Kelly (1993), DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1998a), and Pollard (1993) for more in-depth information on the Canadian national survey and the data generated by it.

3. *Incidence* refers here to the percentage of women who stated that they were physically abused by their spouses (or cohabiting partners) and/or the percentage of men who indicated that they were abusive in the past 12 months.

4. See Johnson (1996) for more in-depth information on data uncovered by the Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS).

5. *Incidence* is referred to by VAWS researcher Holly Johnson (1996) as the percentage of women who stated that they experienced violence in dating in the past 12 months, whereas

prevalence refers to the percentage of women who experienced such abuse since the age of 16.

6. In these states, a husband is exempt from prosecution if his partner is vulnerable or cannot consent because she is psychologically impaired, unconscious, or asleep (Russell, 1990).

7. Although there is no widely accepted definition of critical criminology, for the purpose of this article, critical criminology is defined as a perspective that views the major sources of crime as the class, ethnic, and patriarchal relations that control our society (Young, 1988).

8. See Saltzman, Fanslow, McMahon, and Shelley (1999) for more in-depth information on the development of the uniform definitions and the RDEs.

9. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Saltzman et al., 1999, p. 1) refer to surveillance as "the ongoing and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data in the process of describing and monitoring a health event."

10. See DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1998b) for an in-depth critique of the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS) and CTS-2.

11. Smith (1987) defined *prevalence* as the percentage of women who reported ever having been physically abused.

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