

CHAPTER 15

Attraction to Sexual Aggression

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Recent social psychological research regarding the causes of sexual aggression has focused on both the values and messages of the culture, on individual differences among men within that culture, and on the interaction between culture and individual differences. Each of these lines of research has considered factors that may be conducive to various expressions of violence and antisocial behavior against women.

This chapter describes some developments within the individual differences approach. Such work has long recognized the inadequacy of relying exclusively on samples of rapists identified by the judicial system (Koss & Leonard, 1984; Weis & Borges, 1973). Not only is it well known that only a small percentage of rapes are reported to the police (Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, 1975; Russell, 1984), but there are various sexually aggressive acts that do not necessarily meet the legal definition of rape or sexual assault. Researchers have, therefore, often studied men from the general population who in confidence report having committed various degrees of sexual aggression, as well as studying incarcerated individuals.

For some time, we have contended that it is important to go beyond studying actual sexual aggressors in nonincarcerated populations and to also study men who have some attraction to sexual aggression but who may or may not admit to having committed such aggression (Malamuth, 1981, 1984). The construct of attraction has been defined as the belief that aggressing sexually is likely to be a sexually arousing experience, both to aggressors and victims, so that the man believes that he might aggress were it not for fear of punishment or other inhibitory factors (Malamuth, 1989a). This definition suggests that sexual aggression may have differing degrees of positive valence to men who have not necessarily actually aggressed. We contend that men from the general population may be described along a dimension that varies in the degree of attraction to such aggression.*

This chapter first examines the relevance of attraction research to theoretical models of sexual aggression. We then summarize recent developments

* The terms *rape*, *forced sex*, and *coercive sex* are used interchangeably here to refer to sexual aggression.

in which a multi-item attraction to sexual aggression (ASA) scale was used. We also discuss the relationship between attraction and actual aggression and review recent work (primarily studies not as yet reviewed elsewhere) that has used measures of attraction to sexual aggression. Finally, several areas that merit additional research are considered.

THEORETICAL MODELS OF THE CAUSES OF SEXUAL AGGRESSION

There exist a wide variety of theoretical models designed to explain sexual aggression, although no model to date has been shown to be very satisfactory. We suggest that the concept of a dimension of attraction to sexual aggression is not antithetical to any of the current theoretical approaches, although it is considerably more embedded in some models than in others. This can be illustrated by discussing three of the leading approaches to the study of sexual aggression—the psychodynamic, sociobiological, and feminist perspectives.

Psychodynamic Theories

Researchers who have applied psychodynamic concepts to sexual aggression have typically emphasized the pathology of aggressors and their distinctiveness from “normal” men. In general, psychodynamic theorists have attributed the motivation to aggress sexually as rooted in intrapsychic conflicts stemming from relationships with parents, particularly with a demanding, dominating, and often rejecting mother (Cohen, Garofalo, Boucher, & Seghorn, 1971; Groth, Burgess, & Holmstrom, 1977). Growing up with such a parent is hypothesized to sometimes create fixation at early stages of development, symbolic power and hostility conflicts, an inability to sublimate sexual and aggressive impulses adequately, and a desire to control and perhaps humiliate women. In some cases, this may result in a need for aggression to attain sexual excitement and hostility toward those who are sexually desired, as well as a fear of sexual inadequacy. The rapist’s motivation may involve displacement of his hostility onto the victim, defensiveness against dependency needs, and/or homosexual wishes. Although most psychodynamic approaches have placed emphasis on the relationship with the mother, a recent study using this approach reported that the conflict in sexually aggressive men may be more related to the father (Lisak & Roth, 1989). It should also be noted that psychodynamic theories emphasize the existence of differing types of rapists with varied developmental histories (Knight, Rosenberg, & Schneider, 1985).

Even though psychodynamic theories have generally been associated with a pathology, or a “sick man” approach to sexual aggression, such models suggest that many men who do not actually rape may experience varying intensities of the emotional and power conflicts and, more generally, the

neuroses reported in rapists. These men may therefore be expected to be attracted, in varying degrees, to sexual aggression. For many men, other means of expressing and/or resolving their psychological conflicts may prevent the occurrence of actual aggression. It appears, then, that the construct of attraction to sexual aggression is not inconsistent with psychodynamic approaches, and to some degree is implicit in them, although it is not as germane to them as to the next two models to be discussed, the sociobiological and the feminist approaches.

Sociobiological Adaptation

Shields and Shields (1983) described a model of behavioral control that they used to explain how sexually aggressive behavior is related to the reproductive drive in men. For both men and women, sexuality has been shaped by evolutionary forces of natural selection to maximize the arousal patterns and associated behavioral strategies that would be most likely to lead to reproductive success. Because of the differing ways by which men and women can most effectively transmit their genes to offspring (i.e., for men by impregnating as many women as possible and for women by becoming pregnant by men who will "invest" in the rearing of their children), the most "selected for" strategies have been disparate for men and women. Men are more inclined to be easily aroused and to desire intercourse with as many females as possible, with or without their consent, whereas females are more likely to be selective and cautious in sexual relations. According to this theory, sexual aggression is but one of several strategies that men may use to get women to have sexual relations, although in most societies it would not be likely to be the first strategy used, but rather one employed by those men who do not have other means of persuading women to have sex with them.

Although the approach outlined above already conceptualizes sexual aggression as a "normal" male strategy, a recent sociobiological model described by Thornhill and Thornhill (1990) went further in suggesting what could be interpreted as an evolutionary adaptation favoring sexual aggression. They argued that male sexual needs involve a desire to control female sexuality since that would increase the probability of paternity by that male. Men are therefore predisposed, according to this model, to want to dominate and control women sexually. Such a need would theoretically be favored by evolution since men who possess it would be more likely to be the sole beneficiary of a particular female's reproductive ability and to therefore transmit that need genetically to their offspring. The need to dominate and control women sexually might be quite easily translated into an attraction to sexual aggression, wherein control and power over the woman are clearly evident. The idea of a continuum of attraction to sexual aggression among men is therefore fully consistent with earlier sociobiological models (Shields & Shields, 1983) but may be particularly easily embraced by the more recent version suggested by Thornhill and Thornhill (1990). (Also see Ellis, 1989).

The Feminist Approach

Although the sociobiological and feminist approaches differ in many respects, they surprisingly share a rather close affinity with the idea that there is a continuum of attraction to sexual aggression among men generally. However, the feminist model perceives the basis for such attraction in patriarchal culture and the values it encourages, rather than in evolutionary development. According to feminists, this type of culture teaches men that sexual aggression is an acceptable way to demonstrate power, anger, and male "supremacy." They learn that they are ". . . entitled to goods and services, including sex, from women as a class" (Bart & O'Brien, 1985, p. 103) and that women enjoy sexual aggression (Burt, 1980). These messages are embedded within men's socialization processes by sources such as peers, family, and the media. The pervasiveness of misogynistic messages in these socializing institutions led Bart and O'Brien (1985) to assert: "The question we should ask then, is not why men rape, but why don't *all* men rape?" (p. 102). It is apparent that the notion of a dimension of attraction to sexual aggression is fully in keeping with such feminist approaches.*

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTRACTION AND ACTUAL AGGRESSION

Theoretically, it is expected that different information would be derived from assessing attraction to forced sex as compared to measures of self-reported past sexual aggression (Koss & Oros, 1982; Malamuth, 1986). For the purposes of explication, consider crossing these two variables, with each having two levels, a low versus a high score, thereby yielding the following four cells:

1. Some men may not have engaged in any sexual aggression and may have no desire or attraction to do so.
2. Some men may not have committed any sexual aggression, but may have some desire to do so if they could avoid punishment. Such desire may not have been expressed in actual behavior for various reasons. These could include fear of the consequences, the lack of opportunity to aggress, or having certain attributes or emotions (e.g., empathy) that are incompatible with acting out aggressively.
3. Some men have been sexually aggressive in the past but may now report relatively little desire for forcing sex. Some may regret their previous aggression or have changed their attitudes, emotions, or other characteristics. Others may not recognize or admit to themselves that their past behavior constitutes coercive sex or, in certain instances, rape.

* We wish to acknowledge that our motivation to assess attraction to sexual aggression was initially based on feminist literature.

4. Some men who have been sexually aggressive may still have considerable attraction and desire to engage in such behavior.

ASSESSING SEXUAL AGGRESSION

Reported Likelihood of Forced Sex

Most of the research that has attempted to assess attraction to sexual aggression has relied on two items. On these, respondents indicate the likelihood they would engage in forced sex if they could be assured of not being identified or punished. One of these items asks subjects to report their Likelihood to Rape (LR) and the other, their Likelihood of Forcing (LF) sex against a woman's wishes (Briere & Malamuth, 1983; Malamuth, 1981; Malamuth, Haber, & Feshbach, 1980). Although quite highly correlated, these two phrasings generally result in quite different responses, as exemplified in the data described below. This work has shown some similarities between men with attraction to sexual aggression and actual offenders. Other investigators have generally found the same relationships we have described, both with college students and men from the general population (Murphy, Coleman & Haynes, 1986; see Malamuth, 1988a, c, and 1989a for more details).

Embedding Within Other Likelihood Items

The early research using reported likelihood of coercive sex either (a) presented men with a scenario depicting forced sex and asked them how likely they were to behave as the depicted man did, if they could avoid negative consequences, or (b) asked about the likelihood they would rape or force sex, without referring to any scenario. In both cases, however, no questions were asked about the likelihood they might engage in other antisocial behaviors (Malamuth et al., 1980; Tieger, 1981). It is possible that a person indicating some likelihood of sexual aggression may be equally likely to indicate likelihood of engaging in any antisocial or "deviant" act. To address this possibility, more recent research has frequently embedded questions about coercive sex within other items asking about a variety of socially acceptable and antisocial behaviors that the person might engage in if he were assured of avoiding negative consequences (e.g., anal sex, armed robbery, and so on).

The pattern of data obtained in such research can be illustrated by the findings reported by Malamuth (1989a, b), who compared frequencies obtained of subjects' reported likelihood to force sex or to rape versus the other reported likelihoods. Earlier work showed the utility of dividing the subjects into those who indicated no likelihood of committing the act versus those indicating any likelihood (Malamuth, 1984). It may be that the strongest difference occurs at the level of those who totally rule out the possibility of engaging in the behavior as compared to those who conceive of some possibility of

participating in it. Consequently, each of the variables was dichotomized to those indicating a 1 (not at all likely) versus those indicating a 2 or above.

Using the percentages of subjects who indicated any likelihood of engaging in the acts, Malamuth (1989a, b) found that between 16% to 20% indicated some likelihood of raping. The percentages that indicated some likelihood of "forcing sex" ranged from 36% to 44%. Tests for statistical significance showed that when the term *forced sex* was used, a significantly larger number of men indicated some likelihood of committing it than other nonnormative behaviors (such as pedophilia, murder, rape, transvestism, homosexuality, and armed robbery). When the term *rape* was used, fewer men indicated any likelihood of such an act than several other behaviors. (The issue of a general tendency to respond in a more deviant way is discussed more fully below.)

The pattern of the intercorrelations among the reported likelihoods indicated that, although some of the variance may be explained by the degree to which a behavior may be considered "deviant" (e.g., a person who indicates some likelihood of committing an extreme act such as murder shows a general tendency to report some likelihood of committing other extreme acts), the magnitude of the correlations also revealed that people generally did not indiscriminately indicate there was some likelihood they would commit any act if assured of avoiding negative consequences. The pattern of the correlations suggested that factors such as whether the act involved violence and/or sex, in addition to its perceived social deviance, may have affected subjects' reported likelihoods. It appears that such self-reports may indeed be indicative of the extent to which respondents consider various acts attractive, if assured of avoiding the negative consequences.

Multi-Item Scale

In recognition of the possibility that there may be components to men's reactions to sexual aggression that are not being adequately tapped with the likelihood to rape or force sex items, Malamuth (1989a, b) recently devised a multi-item attraction to sexual aggression (ASA) scale. We describe this work in considerable detail here in view of its potential importance to future work in this area.

The ASA scale retained the use of the LR and LF items in addition to a variety of other items. The 14 items retained for the ASA scale are presented in Table 15.1, embedded within similar items used to assess attraction to other acts (e.g., oral sex, transvestism, pedophilia, and so on). The items comprising the ASA scale consisted of those referring to "rape" and to "forcing a female to do something sexual she didn't want to." The combined classification using LF and LR (Briere & Malamuth, 1983) has been found to correlate highly (e.g., .69 by Malamuth, 1989a) with the 14-item ASA scale.

As indicated in Table 15.1, two items (one referring to rape and one to forced sex) asked whether the person had ever thought of trying the activities,

and two items asked about the extent to which he found the idea of engaging in these activities sexually arousing. Similarly, two items asked about the respondent's beliefs about the percentage of females who would find the activities sexually arousing (i.e., raping and forcing a male), but a third item was added in this set asking about the subjects' beliefs about the percentage of females who would be sexually aroused by being forced to do something sexual that they did not want to do. In addition, three items inquired about the extent to which the subject himself believed that he would be sexually aroused by engaging in rape, forcing a female to do something sexual she did not want to do, and being forced to do something sexual he did not want to do. Finally, two items inquired about the likelihood that the respondent would engage in the behavior if he ". . . could be assured that no one would know and that you could in no way be punished." These 14 items were first standardized and then added together to create a total ASA score.

On the basis of *a priori* classification confirmed by factor analyses, the other items described in Table 15.1 were used to create five additional scales: (a) *Attraction to Bondage* (12 items) encompassed both the "bondage" and "whipping, spanking" items; (b) *Attraction to Conventional Sex* (18 items) included the items referring to necking, petting, oral sex, and heterosexual intercourse; (c) *Attraction to Homosexuality* (5 items) consisted of the items inquiring about homosexual sex; (d) *Attraction to Unconventional Sex* (11 items) consisted of items concerning anal intercourse and group sex; (e) *Attraction to Deviant Sex* (12 items) encompassed the items referring to pedophilia and transvestism.

Data concerning the validity of the ASA scale were gathered in several similar studies involving male students and nonstudents. In all of these, subjects responded to a variety of questions on a "paper and pencil" questionnaire. The survey consisted of the ASA items and those of the other attraction scales (see Table 15.1). Also included were: Burt's (1980) Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence (AIV), measuring subjects' perceptions of how much violence is acceptable; Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA), indicating the degree to which subjects endorse various rape myths; and Adversarial Sexual Beliefs (ASB), measuring the extent to which subjects believe that the two genders are necessarily at odds in sexual interactions; a Dominance Scale, measuring the motivation to control another person as an incentive for engaging in sexual acts (Nelson, 1979); Check and Malamuth's (1983) Hostility Toward Women Scale (HTW), measuring subjects' antagonism toward women; the Psychoticism Scale from Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire, measuring antisocial traits (Eysenck, 1978); the Sexual Behavior Inventory, assessing subjects' experience in several heterosexual acts (Bentler, 1968); and an assessment of subjects' affective response to media depictions of sexual activities. In addition, the research included a self-report of sexual aggression that requested subjects to indicate how many times they had engaged in sexual encounters in which they had used some form of force or coercion (Koss & Oros, 1982), and the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale, assessing the extent to which

TABLE 15.1. Items Used to Create the Attraction to Sexual Aggression (ASA) Scale and the Other Scales

<i>ASA Scale Items</i>	
1 & 2.	<p>People frequently think about different activities even if they never do them. For each kind of activity listed please indicate whether or not you have ever thought of trying that activity.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Have Never Thought of It Have Thought of It</p> <p>a. Necking (deep kissing) b. Petting c. Oral sex d. Heterosexual intercourse e. Anal intercourse f. Male homosexual acts g. Group sex h. Bondage (e.g., tying up self or sex partner) i. Whipping, spanking j. Rape k. Forcing a female to do something sexual she didn't want to l. Transvestism (wearing clothes of opposite sex) m. Pedophilia (sex with a child)</p>
3 & 4.	<p>Whether or not you had ever thought of it, do you find the idea:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Very Somewhat Somewhat Very Attractive Attractive Unattractive Unattractive</p> <p>[Same behaviors as in item 1 were listed here.]</p>
5 & 6.	<p>What percentage of <i>males</i> do you think would find the following activities sexually arousing? [The same behaviors as in item 1 were listed, followed by 11-point scales, ranging from 0% to 100% in increments of 10%.]</p>
7, 8, & 9.	<p>What percentage of <i>females</i> do you think would find the following activities sexually arousing? [The same behaviors as in item 1 were listed with the addition of the following item: "Forcing a male to do something sexual he didn't want to." Also, subjects were asked about females being forced into sexual acts rather than about forcing other females. The scales that followed these items were the same as for item 5.]</p>
10, 11, & 12.	<p>How sexually arousing do you think <i>you would find</i> the following sexual activities if you engaged in them (even if you have never engaged in them)? [Same behaviors as in item 1 were listed with the addition of the following item: "Being forced to do something sexual you didn't want to." The scales that followed were the same as in item 5.]</p>
13 & 14.	<p>If you could be assured that no one would know and that you could in no way be punished for engaging in the following acts, how likely, if at all, would you be to commit such acts? [Same behaviors were listed as in item 1, but only including "e" (anal intercourse) through "m" (pedophilia). In some of the studies, items referring to murder and armed robbery were also included. Scales that followed ranged from (1) "not at all likely" to (5) "very likely."]</p>

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subjects responded in line with what is considered socially acceptable (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960).

In two of the studies, subjects also participated in a separate phase in which they were presented with depictions portraying consenting sex and rape. Their reactions to these portrayals were assessed by self-reported sexual arousal and by penile tumescence. Previous research (Abel, Barlow, Blanchard, & Guild, 1977) had suggested that the degree to which a man is sexually aroused by rape depictions relative to his arousal to consenting sex is an indicator of a "proclivity" to aggress sexually.

The series of predictions and associated data described below (selected from Malamuth, 1989a, b) supported the construct validity of ASA and demonstrated the utility of the concept of attraction to sexual aggression.

Relationship with Characteristics Linked to Aggressors

Men who are higher on attraction to sexual aggression, even if they have never actually aggressed, should be more similar on relevant dimensions to actual sexual aggressors than their counterparts who are lower on attraction to sexual aggression. The differences between men who are highly attracted to sexual aggression but have not aggressed as compared to those who have actually aggressed may be (a) in the extent to which they possess certain characteristics (e.g., those who have aggressed may be very high in hostility toward women, while those attracted to aggression who have not actually aggressed may also be quite high in hostility but not high enough to overcome inhibitions to actually aggress), and (b) those not aggressing may not have had many "opportunities" to aggress due to youth and/or inexperience. As indicated in Table 15.2, generally strong support was found by Malamuth (1989b) for the prediction that higher ASA scores would be associated with a variety of characteristics previously found to be associated with actual aggressors. These included attitudes supportive of violence against women, hostility toward women, antisocial personality characteristics, dominance motives, sexual arousal in response to aggression, perceptions of rape victims, and affective reactions to portrayals of forced sex in the mass media.

Overall, these analyses clearly demonstrated the usefulness of ASA as a measure for discriminating within men who are low in sexual aggression. For all the measures except for sexual experience, the pattern suggests that when low-aggression men score higher on ASA, they are more similar to men who are high in sexual aggression. Interestingly, low-sexual-aggression men who are high on attraction to sexual aggression report what appears to be a rather low level of sex experience (11.63), although statistically this differs significantly only from the high-sexual-aggression men. Based on their scores on the other measures, it appears that these low-sexual-aggression, high-ASA men may have some relatively higher "risk" for committing sexual aggression, but that inhibitory or other factors have prevented them from engaging in much sexual activity, including sexual aggression. However, these men are

TABLE 15.2. Criterion Measures as a Function of Sexual Aggression and Attraction to Sexual Aggression (ASA)

	Low Sexual Aggression			High Sexual	F(3,150)	Trend
	Low ASA	Med ASA	High ASA	Aggression		
	(n=71)	(n=28)	(n=42)	(n=19)		
<i>Criterion Measures:*</i>						
Attitude Composite	-.82 _a	.45 _b	.42 _b	1.62 _b	6.63**	Linear
Hostility	6.78 _a	8.70 _a	9.49 _b	13.36 _c	6.54**	Linear
Psychoticism	1.65 _a	2.30 _a	2.41 _b	3.58 _c	6.73**	Linear
Dominance	15.91 _a	16.26 _a	17.17 _a	20.53 _b	6.00**	Linear
Sex Experience	13.86 _a	14.04 _{ab}	11.63 _a	18.37 _b	3.57 [†]	Quadratic
	(n=42)	(n=14)	(n=27)	(n=12)	F(3,94)	
<i>Sexual Arousal Measures:</i>						
Tumescence index	-32.76 _a	-25.71 _a	-12.78 _a	2.04 _b	2.79 [†]	Linear
Self-report index	-30.95	-31.43	-24.82	-15.83	1.07	—

* Variables not sharing a common subscript differ significantly by the Duncan procedure, which is used to make comparisons among any two groups.

** $p < .0005$

[†] $p < .05$

Note: Attitude Composite = attitudes supporting violence against women computed by combining scores on the Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence, Rape Myth Acceptance, and Adversarial Sexual Beliefs scales; Hostility = Hostility Toward Women scale; Psychoticism = Psychoticism scale; Dominance = Dominance as a motive scale; Sex Experience = Sex Experience scale. Tumescence index = physiological sexual arousal to rape depiction minus arousal to consenting depiction; self-report index = self-reported sexual arousal to rape depiction minus reported arousal to consenting depiction. Reprinted by permission from Malamuth, 1989b.

also significantly lower than high sexual aggressors on most of the criterion measures (i.e., hostility, psychoticism, and dominance). It may be that some "threshold" exists on these dimensions that distinguishes those who actually engage in relatively high levels of sexual aggression.

Projected Relationship to Future Aggressive Behavior

ASA should relate to the subjects' reports of their behavioral potential and possibly, under some circumstances, to actual aggression. Significant relationships were found between ASA and subjects' reports that they had forced sex in the past and that they might possibly rape or force sex in the future. However, as expected, the correlation between ASA and actual past sexual aggression was significant but not strong (although some studies, e.g., Petty & Dawson, 1989, do report relatively high associations). The correlations between ASA and the possibility that the subject might rape and force sex in the future were strong. In particular, a high correlation measured in this research between ASA and the possibility of forcing sex

seems to indicate that people who are attracted to it believe that they might actually behave aggressively in the future.

Deviancy Motive for Attraction to Aggression

Why do men differ in their ASA scores? Could it be due to a general tendency to be more deviant? Might differences in the desire to be socially appropriate or desirable be crucial? Perhaps men with higher ASA scores are simply more sexually "liberal" than others and may report more attraction to any behavior. That is, they may find a variety of sexual behaviors arousing or interesting even though they do not personally engage in them. These possibilities were assessed by comparisons using ASA and the other attraction scales (measuring "deviant," conventional, and unconventional sex) as well as by using the social desirability scale assessing a subject's desire to appear socially desirable or appropriate.

On the whole, the findings did not support a "deviancy" or a "liberal" explanation. Instead, the data suggested that ASA is primarily measuring an attraction specifically linked to sexual aggression. Further, although responses on ASA were weakly correlated with social desirability, controlling for social desirability tendencies did not significantly change the findings.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ATTRACTION RESEARCH

Over the past few years, there has been considerable research using measures of attraction to sexual aggression. Since some of this literature has been summarized elsewhere (Malamuth, 1981, 1988a, 1989a) we will focus here on examples of recent developments not included in previous reviews. These include research (a) examining the general cognitive, affective, and personality variables discriminating among men with differing levels of attraction to sexual aggression, (b) assessing the influence of various types of exposures designed to increase or decrease such attraction, and (c) extending this type of research to related areas.

Discriminating Variables

Weir and Branscombe (1989) noted that attraction to coercive sex as measured by LR and LF items are often studied in relation to rape-related concepts only. These authors suggested that such attraction may also relate to more general cognitive, affective, and personality tendencies. To examine this possibility, they conducted a discriminant analysis of subjects based on their response to LR and LF items. In support of earlier research (Malamuth, 1981), they concluded that it is clear that certain characteristics previously shown to be associated with rapists are important in the prediction of attraction to sexual aggression. However, they also concluded that

differences in attraction to coercive sex may be further enhanced on the basis of more general cognitive measures, such as Machiavellianism and customary anger expression patterns. Further, their data suggested that the tendency to support exploitation as an appropriate means to deal with others may have an important role in the belief system of men who are sexually aggressive.

In related research, Ceniti and Malamuth (1989) found that the MMPI scales that best discriminated among different levels of attraction to sexual aggression were those assessing suspiciousness, hypersensitivity, and unconventional thinking. Taken together, the findings of both of these studies may prove helpful in the development of more elaborate theoretical models in which general factors are integrated with more specific variables to explain a range of sexually aggressive inclinations and acts (see Malamuth, 1988b for a more detailed discussion of this issue).

Increasing Attraction

There has been some research examining whether exposure to certain types of media messages (e.g., sexual violence) increases the levels of attraction to sexual aggression. Although some studies have reported increases in attraction to coercive sex following exposure to such media (Check & Gulolan, 1989; Donnerstein, 1984), others have not (Malamuth & Ceniti, 1986). There are considerable methodological and other differences in these studies that could account for the discrepant findings. A full discussion of these is beyond the scope of this chapter. At this point, it may be more appropriate to accept the "null" hypothesis rather than conclude that there is sufficient evidence that exposure to sexually violent or similar media increases attraction to sexual aggression.

A recent study by Demare, Briere, and Lips (1988) provided some interesting correlational data on the relationship between certain types of media and attraction to sexual aggression. The authors surveyed the type of pornography male subjects had used in the past, categorizing these materials as nonviolent pornography (consenting sex), violent pornography (e.g., mutilation of women), and sexually violent pornography (coercive sex). They also assessed attraction to sexual aggression and subjects' attitudes. Although all three types of pornography correlated with greater attraction to sexual aggression, only sexually violent pornography made a unique contribution to a discriminant analysis. Attitudes accepting of violence against women also contributed uniquely to the discriminant analysis.

Decreasing Attraction

There have been attempts to both directly and indirectly change attraction to coercive sex. An example of a relatively direct intervention was reported by Stille (1984), who exposed subjects to (a) a documentary film that

portrayed the horrible, long-term consequences of rape for the victim or (b) a control condition. Subjects' attraction to sexual aggression was measured some days later in a context ostensibly unrelated to the earlier exposure. The investigator reported that the documentary was effective in reducing attraction to aggression.

An example of a more indirect intervention was recently reported by Johnson and Russ (1989). They manipulated the salience of consciousness-raising information and analyzed the effect of this information on subjects' reactions to acquaintance and stranger rape scenarios. When information about the "historical and contemporary mistreatment of women in American society" (p. 1186) was made cognitively available to subjects through a speech administered during the experiment, male subjects' assessment of their own likelihood to rape was significantly lower than subjects in the condition that did not receive this salient information. Also, in the manipulation of the type of rape (acquaintance versus stranger), men who read an acquaintance rape vignette reported a higher likelihood to rape than those who read a stranger rape story. The authors suggested that the salience manipulation affected the male subjects' attraction items by activating a cognitive construct about the negative aspects of such aggression. In the acquaintance/stranger rape manipulation, they indicated that the ambiguity in the situation and the less serious perception of acquaintance rape that most people have (i.e., acquaintance rape is not "real" rape) may have affected the subjects' report of their likelihood to behave in the same way as the aggressor in the story. If the often used dependent measure of likelihood to rape can be affected by salience manipulations, the authors suggested that this may be a way to devise effective interventions and educational programs without exposing audiences to actual rape depictions, which may be either arousing or disturbing to the general public.

Extensions to Other Areas

Two researchers extended the work on men's self-reported likelihood of aggressing sexually to develop similar measures of attraction in related areas of inquiry. Pryor (1987) studied likelihood of sexually harassing. He developed 10 hypothetical scenarios portraying a male who could sexually exploit a woman by virtue of his social role (e.g., professor-student, executive-secretary). Male undergraduates were asked to imagine themselves in each of these roles and to consider what they would do if they could avoid any negative consequences to themselves from sexually harassing the woman. Respondents indicated the likelihood that they would choose such behavior on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all likely*) to 5 (*very likely*). Pryor found that men's reported likelihood of exploitative behavior was similar in the 10 situations, enabling the computation of an overall likelihood of sexual harassment (LSH) score for each subject. Pryor obtained data supporting the predictive validity of the LSH reports in an ostensibly unrelated

laboratory task where subjects were asked to teach a woman how to putt in a golf game. It was found that those with higher LSH scores more frequently used the golf task to sexually touch the woman. Interestingly, LSH ratings correlated strongly with subjects' reported likelihood of raping as well as with measures of their beliefs and attitudes regarding violence against women. These data are consistent with the view that diverse violent and nonviolent antisocial acts against women (e.g., rape and sexual harassment) relate to and are possibly caused by similar factors (Malamuth & Briere, 1986).

Using a variation of the likelihood to rape measure, Briere (1987) assessed males' self-reported likelihood to "wife-batter" and related it to measures of attitudes toward women, acceptance of interpersonal violence, and attitudes toward wife abuse. The likelihood to batter (LB) scale questions: If the respondent were married and were in an argument with his wife about a number of specified topics (i.e., she had had sex with another man), how likely would the respondent be to hit his wife? Results indicated that 79% of the men reported at least some likelihood of hitting their wife. The measured attitudes (e.g., attitudes toward women, acceptance of interpersonal violence, and attitudes toward wife abuse) were associated with LB. While the author cautioned that this type of measure cannot be used to predict specific behaviors for any individual, the widespread proclivity to engage in this behavior as measured in a university population is significant.

FUTURE RESEARCH

There is clearly a need for more systematic research on attraction to sexual aggression. We suggest here some potentially fruitful areas—expectancies, cross-cultural comparisons, contributing factors and underlying processes, self-awareness and expressions of attraction in nonviolent acts, and decisions to desist from antisocial behavior.

Outcome Expectancies

Attraction research may benefit from a relatively large body of research on alcohol-related expectancies and motivations for drug use. The term *expectancy* has been used in that literature to refer to the anticipated consequences of alcohol use. Brown, Goldman, Inn, and Anderson (1980) described six independent expectancies about alcohol (e.g., transforming experiences in a positive way, enhancing sexual performance and experience, and so on). This research found that even prior to any direct experience with alcohol, relatively well-developed expectancies exist about its consequences. These expectancies are probably based primarily on indirect experiences mediated by parents, peers, and the media. Expectations of

effects were shown to contribute to alcohol use, over and above pharmacological effects or demographic or background variables.

The connection with the present line of research is that the concept of attraction as defined and operationalized by Malamuth (1989a) included both an "expectancy" component (that aggressing is likely to be sexually arousing to aggressors and to victims), and a "lure" component (the respondent believes that he might aggress were it not for fear of punishment or other inhibitory factors). The sources of information about outcome expectancies concerning sexual aggression may also be indirect experiences provided, in particular, by mainstream and pornographic media and by peers. A question that arises in comparing the present research to that of alcohol expectancy and drug motivations concerns the relatively weaker relationship found here with actual behavior. Since alcohol consumption is clearly a far more frequently occurring behavior than sexual aggression, it provides more opportunity for a strong relationship to be found between attraction and behavior because of the much greater range of the distribution of behavior for alcohol drinking. In the area of sexual aggression, fear of punishment and other inhibitory factors may be more likely to exert a strong influence on behavior than in the alcohol area.

Cross-Cultural Comparisons

It would be of considerable interest to assess the level of attraction to coercive sex in differing nations and to examine the extent to which any systematic differences correlate with differences in actual violence against women in those societies. This type of research may help clarify the causes of such attraction. For example, the sociobiological and the feminist theories described earlier make contrasting predictions regarding the cross-cultural consistency of such attraction across societies, since the former emphasizes evolutionary causes while the latter emphasizes cultural factors.

Contributing Factors

Research is also needed on the factors contributing to the development of attraction to sexual aggression and the processes underlying it, including cognitive and affective factors. One potential approach was suggested by the recent work of Pryor and Stoller (1989). These investigators explored the cognitive processes underlying likelihood to sexually harass ratings and hypothesized that social dominance and male sexuality form a schematic construct in the minds of high LSH men (i.e., these men view an inherent connection between dominance and sexuality). To test this notion, the researchers first selected words that were connected with either sexuality or dominance, but not both. Then they presented subjects with a series of word pairs. Different combinations of paired words were used, using *sexual*, *dominance*, and other words. They found that high-LSH men overestimated the co-occurrence

of sexuality and dominance words, supporting the hypothesis that they have a sexuality/dominance schema.

Self-Awareness

Future research should investigate subjects' reactions to the awareness that they are attracted to sexual aggression. Many subjects are quite aware of such attraction of arousal to thoughts of such aggression (Malamuth, Check, & Briere, 1986). The consequences of such awareness may be very diverse. One person may be quite upset by such realization and become more inhibited in varied sexual encounters for fear of the "hidden forces" that he believes lurk within him. Another individual may actually seek out situations where there may be opportunities to aggress in order to find out whether the actual behavior would be as arousing as the fantasy.

Attraction, Behavior, and Desistance

Although attraction to sexual aggression may be manifested for some men in actual physical aggression, it is possible that for others such attraction and/or the factors causing this attraction will be expressed in nonviolent behaviors only, such as unjustifiably blaming the victim in a rape trial, supporting another man's aggression in a "locker room" conversation, or sexually harassing and discriminating against women (Malamuth & Briere, 1986). Of course, some men who report attraction to sexual aggression may, due to internal prohibitions or morals, not show any behavioral expressions. It may be particularly useful to study men with similar levels of attraction but with different behavioral expressions, to assist in the prevention of sexual aggression and other antisocial acts. Determining the differences among such groups of men may be beneficial in changing the behavior of aggressors and in guiding interventions designed to prevent the development of such aggression. Such work may benefit from research in other areas on the cessation of undesirable behaviors. For example, Paternoster (1989) analyzed the effect of affective ties, material considerations, informal and formal sanctions, and moral considerations on the decision to desist from offending by juvenile delinquents. Similarly, Fagan (1989) examined desistance from violence by wife batterers and concluded that common processes can be identified in the cessation of disparate behaviors by diverse populations in various settings. While such work analyzes the reasons that people who have already aggressed or committed another antisocial act desist from repeating it, the present suggestion is to study those who have not yet committed such acts, despite their attraction to such behaviors.

Finally, it is important to investigate under what conditions, if any, attraction to aggression is a precursor to actual violent behavior. A great deal of caution must be exercised to avoid labeling certain individuals in a manner that could affect others' reactions to them, as well as their reactions.

to themselves. With such caution in mind, we are currently conducting longitudinal research that will determine whether ASA scores predict later behaviors.

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