

PART ONE

Sexual Violence against Women

The classic papers in this section focus on various types of sexual violence commonly experienced by women, including rape in intimate partnerships, childhood sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual slavery. These papers are linked by a common thread; each was groundbreaking in calling attention to a particular form of sexual violence and its effects on women. The importance of these classic papers is how they raised awareness about sexual violence and how each influenced researchers, practitioners, policy makers, and the general public to think about issues that had previously remained veiled in secrecy. This was critical given that, historically, sexual violence was an issue that was largely ignored, and many women did not even have the language to name their experiences of rape, childhood sexual abuse, and harassment. These classic papers helped to establish a framework within the anti-rape movement where women's experiences of sexual violence were not only identified and named, but also where we began to understand the horrible consequences of sexual violence for survivors and all of society.

Importantly, many of these papers are similar in that they provided critical data about the prevalence of sexual violence in the family and within women's intimate relationships. No longer could sexual violence be seen as a crime that only occurs between strangers. Taken together, these classic papers provide powerful testimony to the fact that sexual violence is a serious and pervasive problem for all women in our society—inside of the home, on the street, on college campuses, and in the workplace.

The first two classic papers presented in this section emerged early within the anti-rape movement and were instrumental in raising awareness about the widespread reality of rape and the serious consequences of sexual violence in the lives of women. In 1975, Susan Brownmiller's book, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*, was published and, as Claire Renzetti writes in her reflection, this book became the "manifesto of the anti-rape movement." What was groundbreaking about this book was Brownmiller's documentation of the historical reality of rape in the lives of women and her powerful feminist analysis of rape as a form of control by men over women. The first chapter is excerpted from chapter one of *Against Our Will*, in which Brownmiller argued that rape has played a "critical function" in lives of men and women since prehistoric times. In this chapter, Brownmiller wrote that rape

“is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which *all* men keep *all* women in a state of fear.” While this statement has generated a great deal of debate and controversy, few can deny that the fear of rape is a daily occurrence for many (if not most) women and that far too frequently, what women most fear becomes a reality.

In the second paper, Ann Wolbert Burgess and Lynda Lytle Holmstrom consider the effects of rape on the lives of women and their families. In this classic piece, Burgess and Holmstrom coined the phrase “Rape Trauma Syndrome” to explain the both acute and long-term reorganization process that women undergo after a rape. This paper is a classic in that it explored the serious effects of rape from a “health standpoint,” as Burgess writes in her reflection. Not only were the short-term and long-term emotional and physical effects of rape considered, but so too were women’s coping strategies and how they respond to the traumatic and life-changing event of rape. At an early stage in the anti-rape movement, this paper highlighted the need for a coordinated, comprehensive response to rape survivors to minimize the long-term effects.

The next three works in this section focus not on sexual violence against adult women, but on sexual violence against children. In their classic paper, *Father-Daughter Incest*, Judith Herman and Lisa Hirschman provided a feminist analysis of the deeply hidden problem of incest. Writing at a time when few researchers or practitioners believed that incest was a problem, Herman and Hirschman had the courage to give voice to the stories that they were hearing with alarming regularity among their clients. Importantly, Herman and Hirschman asked the question, “Why does incest between fathers and daughters occur so much more frequently than incest between mothers and sons?” In providing an answer to this question, they pointed to male dominance and argued that incest cannot be understood without a focus on its patriarchal roots. Furthermore, Herman and Hirschman provided a powerful critique of the social attitudes within clinical literature at a time when much of the literature denied the reality of incest, blamed the victims themselves, and minimized the effects of incest on victims. A work that started with “two women talking,” as Herman writes in her “Afterword, 2000: Understanding Incest Twenty Years Later,” has had the far-reaching consequence of changing the way researchers understand incest.

In *Sexually Victimized Children*, David Finkelhor explored the prevalence of the sexual victimization of both male and female children. Like Herman and Hirschman, Finkelhor challenged the assumptions that children are to blame for their own sexual abuse by adults and his work was critical in raising awareness about a much-understudied form of violence. In his excerpted chapter, Finkelhor offered a rich theoretical analysis of the various perspectives of childhood sexual abuse. Importantly, he also took on the much-debated issue of the consequences of childhood sexual victimization. In this classic piece, Finkelhor created the framework for the following generation of researchers to explore critical questions about the causes, consequences, and prevalence of child sexual abuse.

With the publication of *The Sexual Abuse of Afro-American and White American Women in Childhood*, Gail Wyatt too influenced the ways in which researchers conceptualized childhood sexual abuse by considering the importance of race. In this classic paper, Wyatt questioned the prevailing assumption that black women were more likely to be sexually victimized, arguing that most research had been conducted with white women. When African American women were included in studies of child abuse, they were primarily

drawn from clinical samples. By using a diverse sample of African American and white women, Wyatt found that rates of sexual abuse were similar for both African American and white women; however, some differences existed, including the age of onset of sexual violence and perpetrator characteristics. While these findings were significant, the true legacy of Wyatt's work is her model of research and the fact that African American women were not treated as a monolithic group. As Carolyn West writes in her commentary, Wyatt's work is significant because "she critically examined racial differences, rather than ignoring or minimizing them."

The next three classic papers were groundbreaking in that each work established a new topical domain in the field of violence against women. In 1979, Catharine MacKinnon published *The Sexual Harassment of Working Women*, and with this important book, she opened up a new terrain of inquiry for those working in the field of violence against women. As Phoebe Morgan so aptly argues in her commentary, this "book accomplishes what subsequent scholars have attempted to do but failed: in everyday language MacKinnon connects sexual violence with male domination, and then locates that nexus squarely in the workplace." In the excerpted work, MacKinnon explored the definition of sexual harassment and its impact on women. While considerable controversy has surrounded the question of what legally constitutes sexual harassment (a question that is still being hashed out in workplaces and universities today), MacKinnon's lasting contribution is that she called attention to this problem and provided ample evidence of the mistreatment of women and the serious effects on their work and lives.

Diana Russell's *Rape in Marriage* was also a book that carved out a new path in the field of violence against women and has had a profound impact on those in the field who study sexual violence in intimate partnerships. As Russell stated in the excerpted chapter in this section, her book was the first to be published in English on the problem of women's violent experiences of rape by their husbands. Writing at a time where forcible sexual intercourse was seen as a marital privilege and not legally rape in many states, Russell's research documented how widespread women's experiences of sexual violence in marriage were. More importantly, in her thorough treatment of the subject and powerful quotes by survivors, Russell legitimized the experiences of millions of women who had been raped by their husbands but lacked the language to call their unwanted sexual experiences with their partners rape.

Diana Russell's study of wife rape and the national study of sexual victimization by Mary Koss and her colleagues, Christine Gidycz and Nadine Wisniewski, were both groundbreaking in that each laid the methodological foundation on which the following generation of researchers would build. Both classics were grounded in strong empirical evidence that revealed the prevalence of women's experiences of sexual violence and the reality that women are not only raped by strangers, but also by men who are their partners, dates, and acquaintances. In *The Scope of Rape*, Koss, Gidycz, and Wisniewski discussed the findings of their national survey of more than 6,000 college students who completed their Sexual Experiences Survey. Their most startling finding, that 27 percent of college women reported experiencing some form of sexual victimization since the age of 14, received widespread media attention and continues to be the source of much debate. Importantly, this classic paper and the research on which it was grounded put the term "date rape" into the American

vocabulary. The legacy of this classic work is that fifteen years after its publication, researchers and practitioners continue to explore the pervasive problem of date rape, and the Sexual Experiences Survey continues to be the most frequently used survey instrument to assess the prevalence of sexual violence.

In the next paper, *Sexual Violence: The Unmentionable Sin*, Marie Fortune explores the response of clergy members to the problem of sexual violence. As a Methodist minister herself, Fortune was in a unique position to challenge clergy members to become a resource for survivors of sexual violence and to challenge beliefs that fail to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. At the time of its publication, this paper served as a call to action for religious leaders to respond to the pervasive problem of sexual violence against women. This call to action is still necessary today, particularly in light of the recent crisis within the Roman Catholic Church. As Fortune writes in her reflection, there is still a need for religious leaders to “take appropriate leadership to change our society’s response to sexual violence.”

The final paper in this section also served as a call to action on both the national and international levels. In 1979, Kathleen Barry published *Female Sexual Slavery*, which provided a feminist analysis of prostitution and the sexual trafficking of women. This work focused on a field of sexual violence that had been largely ignored, even within the anti-rape movement. Rather than looking at prostitutes as deviants (as had been historically done in a variety of disciplines), Barry asked the question, “What are the objective conditions which bring many women into prostitution?” Her response and the descriptions of women’s horrific experiences of sexual slavery led to heightened awareness about this problem and served as the impetus for national and international efforts to end the sexual trafficking of women. As Barry describes in her reflection, efforts to end this serious form of sexual victimization continue today.