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Power for the Powerless:
Girlfriend Abuse by Marginal Male Youth

by

Mark Douglas Totten, M.S.W., B.A. (Hons.)

A Thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

September 1996

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and Research Acceptance of the thesis

**Power for the Powerless:
Girlfriend Abuse by Marginal Male Youth**

submitted by Mark Douglas Totten, B.A. (Hons.), M.S.W.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Florence Kellner, Thesis Supervisor

Robert Stebbins, External Examiner

Chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University
November 15, 1996

Abstract

This dissertation examines how marginal male youth who are abusive make sense of their behaviour, and how this behaviour can be analyzed as a social phenomenon. A multi-method research design was employed. Three key concepts of familial patriarchal ideology, masculine identity, and male peer group/gang involvement were identified in the literature and tested in structured screening interviews with 90 male youth. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were then conducted with 30 abusive, marginal youth selected from the screening sample. All 30 participants experienced severe physical and emotional child abuse by father-figures, and while growing up, witnessed their mother being beaten. Their families were characterized by rigid gender roles. Twenty-nine of these youth demonstrated rigid masculine identities. Their adolescent lives were defined by an extreme pursuit of the traditional male attributes of toughness, competitiveness and dominance in a context of social and economic marginalization. They joined abusive peer groups or gangs which provided them with acceptance and identity. It is argued that the participants' familial patriarchal beliefs provided them with a common lens through which to interpret their traumatic childhood. These youth compensated for and protested against their lack of economic future and sexual fears by abusing gays, racial minorities, and girlfriends. Their masculine identities exaggerated their familial patriarchal beliefs, and their peer group/gang affiliations reinforced their common belief systems and identities. However, their identities were also threatened by these peer group/gang affiliations. These males did not present their behaviour as abusive. They engaged in behaviour that in most contexts would be defined as criminal, yet they justified their actions as moral and righteous. The abuse perpetrated by the participants is suggested to be a microsocial expression of the broader hegemonic gender order. These youth engaged in this behaviour to define themselves vis à vis the broader structure of power and compensated for their failure to achieve the masculine ideals of the hegemonic norm. Theoretical, social policy and practice implications are addressed, and areas for future research are also proposed.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Serge: She's pissed me off and she won't stop. I've grabbed her arm, squeezed her and slapped her. I've punched her after she put me down in front of my friends. My ex-girlfriend used to cry after we had fights. I had to punch her to get her to stop.... I mean, when she nags me for nothing, I'll tell her to 'Shut up bitch', or I'll call her a slut.... Almost every week I'll say to her 'Stop it or I'll hit you'. I punch her in the arm or the leg - not in her face. I'll never punch a girl in the face unless she punches me first. Sometimes she nags and she won't stop. Once I punched this girl in the face and knocked her out. She grabbed my hair at a dance. When she pisses me off, sometimes instead of hitting her, I'll push her or shove her down. I've busted pretty much all of her stuff: lamps, I kicked her radio, smashed her mirror, punched her walls - I've destroyed her things. I know it scares her and I think that's why I keep doing it. She always does what I tell her to do. I don't like punching her in the face because it leaves bruises. Once I punched her in the leg and gave her a big purple mark. Once at a party she wouldn't leave. I grabbed my girlfriend and dragged her outside to give her shit. My friends saw it all and didn't say anything....I don't know what to do. It's like I know what I should be as a man, I mean - strong, lots of money, a good job, and a beautiful wife. But my life isn't like that. I'm not really much of a man without a good job and lots of money. She makes me so angry when she won't do what I want her to do. It's not supposed to be that way. A girl is supposed to get along with a man. She's supposed to respect him and listen to him. But that never happens to me. I feel like a piece of shit around my girlfriends. Sometimes it's them who has to pay for things because they've got the job. It's like they're more important than me and they think they can make the decisions because they've got the money. It's not right. It makes me feel like a wimp or a pussy. That's not the way things are supposed to be. (#10:3-4,8)

Wife assault is a major problem in western, post-industrial societies (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Okun, 1986) and is present in all significant demographic and social groups (Smith, 1990b). Girlfriend abuse is a significant social problem as well. A large body of survey data suggests that male-to-female physical, sexual and psychological assaults in dating relationships are common on Canadian and American university and college campuses (Stets and Straus, 1989; Stets and Henderson, 1991; White and Koss, 1991; Barnes et al., 1991; Elliot et al., 1992).¹ DeKeseredy and Kelly (1993a) have provided the only national representative sample survey incidence

¹ Studies of girlfriend abuse in dating relationships on Canadian university and college campuses are scarce. Instead, Canadian literature focuses primarily on male-to-female physical and psychological assaults on married, cohabiting, and separated/divorced women (Ellis and Wright, 1987; Lupri, 1990; Smith, 1990a, 1990b; Ellis and Stuckless, 1992).

and prevalence data on the physical, sexual and psychological victimization of women in Canadian university and college dating relationships. They found that 45% of female respondents reported being physically abused, 35% reported being sexually abused, and 86% reported being psychologically abused since leaving high school. DeKeseredy and Kelly's findings are consistent with the data generated in comparable American studies, including White and Koss (1991) and those projects reviewed by Sugarman and Hotaling (1989). Bergman (1991), Jaffe et al. (1992) and DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1994) have provided data on the extent of girlfriend abuse in high school and/or elementary school dating relationships, suggesting that girlfriend abuse is likewise a serious problem in these settings.

While statistics on this issue are available, there is an absence of research which provides theoretical analysis and qualitative understanding of this phenomenon. Further, although existing studies show that the prevalence and incidence of violent interpersonal assaults vary inversely with social class and age (those with the least resources are both the most frequent perpetrators and victims², especially the younger people (Messerschmidt, 1986)), there is an absence of girlfriend abuse research amongst those who are less privileged. This dissertation attempts to address these gaps in the existing body of work on girlfriend abuse. In the opening quotation, Serge, a 16 year old street youth, told me about how he physically and emotionally abused his girlfriends. This account, illustrative of the data generated in this project, also highlights how the key concepts of this study may provide insights into abusive behaviour. Serge indicated that his actions were related to his expectations of his girlfriends, his low feelings of self-worth, and hopelessness about his present and future economic situation. His behaviour, like that of the other participants in this thesis, was deliberate and severe. These young men, like Serge, justified the abuse.

Given the high incidence and prevalence rates of girlfriend abuse in North America, this project argues that abusive behaviour is best understood from a sociological perspective. A problem of this magnitude cannot be effectively understood through psychological or biological perspectives (Pagelow, 1981). Gelles and Straus (1988) suggest that at maximum 10 percent of family violence incidents can be explained by mental disorders in the perpetrator. Therefore, non-sociological analyses of male violence against women are ineffective because they

² There is a higher incidence of physical wife assault in lower income groups (Smith, 1986a, 1990; Kennedy and Dutton, 1989; Lupri, 1990).

"...ignore the question of power. They cannot answer the question of why allegedly mentally ill men beat their wives and not their bosses, nor why impulse ridden, out of control husbands contain their rage until they are in the privacy of their homes, at which time they bruise their wives but less frequently kill them". (Bograd, 1988:17)

The purpose of this study is to explore how male youth who are abusive make sense of their behaviour, and how we can understand their behaviour as a social phenomenon. That is, how we, as outside observers, can better understand their world from their viewpoint. Through the exploration of the intentions, meanings and motives associated with this behaviour, we can better comprehend this phenomenon in a social context. In order to address these issues a multi-method research approach³ is taken to identify and develop key concepts that assist in this work. These three concepts are familial patriarchal ideology, masculine identity, and male peer group/gang involvement. They are explored in Chapter Three. These concepts allow for a better understanding of girlfriend abuse in the context of the existing research.

A two-phase research design was used to examine girlfriend abuse. An initial data set was gathered through structured interviews with a purposive, non-representative sample of 90 male youth, aged 13 - 17 years. In-depth, follow-up interviews were later conducted with 30 abusive males drawn from the original sample.

As Ptacek (1988) has likewise done, I will articulate my motivations for undertaking this research, my position as Director of the Youth Services Bureau (YSB) and as a trained social worker. I will be explicit about the impact of values on research. I believe that patriarchal social relations have influenced the dominant methodologies of main-stream studies on family violence. I believe that social science is not neutral; instead, it is situated in patriarchal ideologies and belief systems (Bograd, 1988).

The rationale for this study is political; social change is a goal of my research. Like other feminist researchers, I am open about my commitment to ending woman abuse. Schechter (1982:209) has clearly stated the feminist commitment to end woman abuse:

"Woman abuse is viewed here as a historical expression of male domination manifested within the family and currently reinforced by the institutions, economic arrangements and sexist divisions of labour within

³ Both quantitative and qualitative methods are used.

capitalist society. Only by analyzing this total context of battering will women and men be able to devise a long-range plan to eliminate it."

I have worked as a social worker and manager in the social services field for the past 15 years. Ten years ago, after completing my Masters of Social Work degree at Carleton University, I began working in the area of family violence. As a protection social worker at the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa-Carleton (CAS), I was struck by the fact that most of the children, adolescents and mothers I worked with had been physically, emotionally, and/or sexually abused by adult men. I was also taken aback by what seemed to be a relationship between poverty and abuse: all my cases involved individuals who were on welfare.

Following my work at CAS, I applied for and was successful in gaining employment at the Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa-Carleton (YSB) as a manager, most recently as Director of Ottawa Services. Every year YSB works with over 7,500 high need, high risk, low income youth and their families who are experiencing significant difficulties affecting their physical and emotional development. Services include: drop-in centres for street youth; an emergency shelter for young women; individual, family and group counselling; employment counselling; a young offender's secure facility; two rent-to-income apartment buildings; and street outreach.

Throughout my employment at YSB, I have had the opportunity to counsel perpetrators and survivors of abuse in individual, family and group settings. In particular I developed, managed and evaluated a group counselling program for male youth who are abusive towards female family members and their girlfriends. I authored a manual which presents a therapeutic group program for male youth who are abusive towards females (Totten et al., 1995), and supervised the production of a video on male youth violence against females. Both resources are currently being used regionally and provincially by educators and social service providers. I have also facilitated numerous training sessions on abuse-related issues for social service providers, delivered many public presentations, and done considerable work with the media in an attempt to educate the public on the issue of family violence.

Despite my experience working with abuse perpetrators and survivors, I was

troubled by many unanswered questions related to the meanings, motives and context of abuse perpetration. As suitable respondents were available to me because of my work situation, I was in a good position to pursue these questions.

This study is exploratory. Existing research on girlfriend abuse does not examine any of the central research questions of this study. Simply put, there are no published qualitative studies exploring the role of familial patriarchal ideology, masculine identity and male peer group/gang affiliation in girlfriend abuse by male youth. The multi-method approach of this study addresses some of the shortcomings of existing quantitative studies on this topic which have primarily surveyed samples of university/college and high school students (see Chapter 2). Most of the existing work on girlfriend abuse is survey research (Makepeace, 1986; Koss et al., 1987; Stets and Henderson, 1991; White and Koss, 1991; DeKeseredy and Kelly, 1993). The collection of incidence and prevalence data is the primary goal of this work. In contrast, the qualitative data from the 30 in-depth interviews in this study consists of detailed, as close to verbatim as possible recordings made by me during and immediately following each interview. A systematic search for patterns, explanations and meanings in the narrative text provides the insights into the central research questions of this study.

This study addresses the question of woman abuse almost at its inception. Surveys and longitudinal studies show that girlfriend abuse precedes wife abuse. It is relevant to programs and policy because information concerning motivation, justification and conditions relevant to girlfriend abuse can inform the content of programs designed to alleviate abuse.

The following chapter provides a discussion of the literature and theoretical work related to the general concepts of this study. Chapter 3 examines the research design, ethical considerations and potential sources of bias in the interviews. Screening interview data collection, sample characteristics and interview questions are outlined. The concepts discussed in Chapter 2 are developed and defined. The research questions are described and discussed. Finally, the in-depth interview data

collection, sample characteristics and interview questions are presented.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 address the research questions, including the insights derived from the key concepts. The presentation of the findings is organized around three major themes. Chapter 4 explores acquiring familial patriarchal ideology in early childhood. The impact of the participants' common early childhood experiences of being beaten, emotionally abused, and witnessing the abuse of their mothers by father-figures is explored. As well, the participants' socialization at home into the ideology of familial patriarchy is examined. This socialization plays a key role in how the participants made sense of their abusive upbringing. It also helps us analyze the participants' interpretation of their childhoods. Chapter 5 explores the common experience of the participants of struggling with challenges to their masculine identity. The participants' definition of what constitutes an ideal man, their fears and anxieties about their own masculine identity, and the ways in which they protested and compensated for their perceived masculine deficits are examined. Chapter 6 explores the common experiences of the group/gang affiliations of the participants. The abandonment of natural families, socialization into the group/gang, and the role played by these affiliations in girlfriend abuse are assessed. Each of these findings chapters gives examples of the participants' common experiences. These experiences are analyzed in light of both how the participants made sense of these experiences and how we can understand the participants' behaviour as a social phenomenon. That is, how we, as outside observers, can better comprehend the participants' world from their viewpoint.

Finally, Chapter 7 summarizes the empirical problem, method, research questions and findings. Theoretical, social policy and practice implications are addressed, and areas for future research are also proposed.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This chapter provides a discussion of the wide range of literature and theoretical work related to the general concepts of familial patriarchal ideology, masculine identity and male youth involvement in peer group/gangs. As is noted in Chapter 1, there is very little research on the specific topic of this project. Accordingly, the more general body of knowledge on male violence and male violence against women is reviewed⁴.

2.1 Assessing the Impact of Child Abuse and Witnessing Abuse Against Mothers

Being abused by parents and witnessing parental marital abuse are risk factors frequently suggested to contribute to abuse perpetration in dating relationships. Some studies link both child abuse victimization and witnessing parental abuse to dating abuse (Riggs et al., 1980; Marshall and Rose, 1988), whereas other studies link only one of these variables to dating abuse. For example, O'Keefe et al. (1990) found that students who reported witnessing parental aggression had a statistically higher rate of dating violence than those who had not. As well, the relationship between child abuse victimization and dating aggression was not significant. Sigelman et al. (1984) found a relationship only between dating abuse and child abuse victimization, and no relationship for witnessing marital violence. Bernard and Bernard (1983) reported that both witnessing and being abused as a child together were related to dating abuse; however, neither variable when isolated was linked to dating abuse.

Notwithstanding these varied findings, most research on abuse in dating relationships links witnessing and/or being abused as a child to girlfriend abuse

⁴ This project was informed mainly by Marxist and feminist perspectives. I am aware of the vast theoretical and empirical body of work on the self and its development (symbolic interactionist and social psychological perspectives, including Sarbin and Rosenberg (1995), Mead (1934) and Cooley (1922). Including this literature might have increased the scope of this project so as to make it unmanageable.

perpetration, not boyfriend abuse perpetration (De Maris, 1987; Gwartney-Gibbs et al., 1987; Marshall and Rose, 1987, 1988; Breslin et al., 1990; Foo and Margolin, 1995). For example, Foo and Margolin (1995), using a sample of 111 male and 179 female undergraduates who reported on their own aggressive behaviour directed towards dating partners, report that witnessing interparental aggression predicts males' aggressive dating behaviour.

The consequences of being abused as a child by parent(s) can be serious. Victimization by child abuse is reported to be associated with a vast number of psychological and emotional problems by numerous researchers. Children who have been chronically physically abused are more likely than non-abused children to display depressive symptomatology and depressive disorders (Kazdin et al., 1985; Allen and Tarnowski, 1989; Kaufman, 1991). Martin (1976) and others report that abused children have feelings of guilt, shock and fear. They tend to feel insecure and lack confidence because they feel responsible and don't know what to do. Deykin et al. (1985) report that abused children may exhibit more suicidal behaviour than non-abused children. Many abused children are also reported to have problems in a number of other areas, including physical aggression, attachment and behavioural problems (George and Main, 1979; Kinard, 1980; Wolfe and Mosk, 1983; Jaffe et al., 1986; Aber et al., 1989). Abused children are reported to be more likely to be concurrently perpetrating abuse against siblings and parents than non-abused children (Carroll, 1977; Cornell and Gelles, 1981; Straus, 1983; Wind and Silvern, 1992). Alfaro (1978) reports that being abused as a child predicts future delinquency. Palmer (1960) identifies that murderers in his sample have experienced severe physical child abuse. Overall, most of this literature suggests that severity, frequency and duration of child abuse are crucial factors in the extent of social and psychological difficulties these youth experience in their lives.

Rutter (1983) demonstrates that children's risk of developmental problems is elevated with the existence of stressors. Many abused children experience a vast array of stressors in addition to having been physically abused (for example, poverty) [Wolfe, 1987], and these additional stressors are reported to explain, in part, the

variation in functioning between abused and non-abused children (Elmer, 1977; Starr, 1979; Emery, 1989). Researchers who control for the impact of some of these stressors still report differences in functioning between abused and non-abused children (Kaufman and Cicchetti, 1989; Trick et al., 1991).

The consequences of witnessing parental marital violence can be serious as well. Current estimates suggest that 1 in 6 children have witnessed their mother being abused (Jaffe and Reitzel, 1990). Fantuzzo and Lindquist (1989), in a review of 29 papers on witnessing parental violence, report that these children are at risk for a host of externalizing behaviour including elevated levels of aggression at home, school, and in the community. Child witnesses are reported to have high levels of behavioural problems and low levels of social competence (Rosenbaum and O'Leary, 1981; Hershorn and Rosenbaum, 1985; Wolfe et al., 1985, 1986; Holden and Ritchie, 1991; Fantuzzo et al., 1991). These children are also reported to experience higher levels of internalizing behaviour such as anxiety and psycho-social deficits compared to children who have not witnessed marital violence (Forsstrom-Cohen and Rosenbaum, 1985; Jaffe, Wolfe and Wilson, 1990). Child witnesses are reported to display high levels of depressive symptomatology, psychological distress, and other emotional problems (Jaffe et al, 1986a; Christopolous et al., 1987; Wissow et al., 1992; Martinez and Richters, 1993).

Recently, researchers are reporting gender-specific findings regarding the impact of witnessing parental violence. Most of this research suggests that male and female children who witness wife assault cope in distinct ways. Whereas female children tend to be at greater risk for further victimization through abuse in dating and marital relationships, male adolescents are more likely to be violent towards girlfriends, mothers, sisters, and male peers (Hughes, 1988; Jaffe et al., 1990; Mangold and Koski, 1990).

The body of work on the impact of child abuse and witnessing abuse against mothers has important implications for this dissertation. This literature suggests that these childhood experiences may be predictors of adolescent male abuse perpetration and mental health problems.

2.2 Assessing the Impact of Familial Patriarchal Ideology on Marginal Males⁵

The literature is complex on the issue of patriarchy and woman abuse. Feminist and Marxist research and theoretical works on this topic are examined. Socialist-feminist researchers argue that in western, post-industrialized societies, woman abuse is rooted in the interaction of capitalist⁶ economic conditions and patriarchal⁷ social relations (Messerschmidt, 1986; DeKeseredy & Hinch, 1991). This

⁵ This study focuses on marginal male youth. The economic and social backgrounds of these youth are similar. These youth have poor relationships with their families, have been abused by caregivers and have witnessed abuse in their homes. These youth receive little or no financial support from their families. Many live away from home in young offender facilities, group homes, rooming houses/apartments, and shelters. Those who live at home spend little time there; thus parental control is minimal. Almost all come from lower income neighbourhoods and have dropped out or are failing school. Their parents receive social assistance, unemployment insurance, disability pensions, or work in low-paying service sector jobs. Please see pp. 40-41 more detailed discussion on criteria for classification on this issue.

⁶From DeKeseredy and Hinch (1992:4) "Capitalism refers to a political economic system that is based on the exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class which owns and controls the means of production (e.g. factories, companies, financial corporations, etc)". Clement (1990:468) identifies four main classes in capitalist society, each of which is defined in relation to the command of capital (the means of production) and the labour power of others (the source of value).

i) Capitalists/executives are defined as those who employ on a regular basis three or more people or who command the means of production concerning the number of persons employed, the products made, their amount, methods of production, budget or distribution, with binding decision-making authority either themselves or as voting members of a group. These executives must also be located within the top, upper or middle management levels. This means, in addition to claiming actual decision-making, executives also have to be a formal part of the management hierarchy.

ii) The new middle class is composed of employees who either supervise other employees directly in terms of their pace of work, promotion of subordinates, preventing their gaining raises, causing them to be fired or suspended and issuing formal warnings, or who have been delegated lower level managerial policy-making responsibilities which are not binding (as they are for executives). In other words, they must be sanctioning supervisors or have some policy-setting authority.

iii) The old middle class includes the self-employed with two or fewer employees.

iv) The working class have an absence of command over the means of production, labour power of others or their own means of realizing their labour.

⁷ There are various definitions of patriarchy. Messerschmidt (1986), for example, defines patriarchy as a "set of social relations of power in which the male gender appropriates the labour power of women

interaction of capitalist economic conditions and patriarchal social relations is assumed to give rise to two main groups: a group that holds the balance of power, made up of men and the capitalist class (typically white) and a group that is relatively powerless, made up of women and the working class. Messerschmidt (1986: 41-45) states that:

"Within patriarchal capitalism, individuals are affected structurally by their class and gender position in interaction. Social behaviour is socially regulated. Individuals are enmeshed in class and gender structures that organize the way people think about their circumstances and devise solutions to act upon them. Gender and class shape one's possibilities...Males in all social classes are powerful since men have power over women. Their powerful position allows some men to engage in crimes specifically as men to maintain their dominant position. Primarily directed at women and children, crimes such as rape and wife-beating are forms of domination and control of the powerless."

Radical feminist theorists argue that male power and privilege is the fundamental cause of stratified social relations. They suggest that patriarchal social relations constitute the foundation of all social inequalities, and determine class relations (Daly, 1978). Firestone (1974) argues that history is the ongoing struggle of men for power and control over women. Millett (1970), Firestone (1974), and Eisenstein (1979) maintain that men have power because they are men; relations of reproduction determine relations of production. Men collectively dominate women and in general benefit from patriarchal social inequality. Patriarchy is perceived to be autonomous from other systems of social inequality.

Many feminist theoretical and empirical sources identify patriarchy as a fundamental cause of male-to-female violence (Brownmiller, 1976; Dobash and

and controls their sexuality". Walby (1990) defines patriarchy as "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women". The concept of patriarchy implies both a structure, in which men have more power and privilege than women, and an ideology that legitimizes male dominance (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Eisenstein, 1980; Messerschmidt, 1986; Smith, 1990; Walby, 1990). Familial patriarchy can be differentiated from social patriarchy. Social patriarchy refers to societal male domination and control, whereas familial patriarchy refers to male domination and control in domestic settings (Eisenstein, 1980; Smith, 1990). Familial patriarchy is a subsystem of social patriarchy. A number of researchers have argued that familial patriarchy is a more appropriate concept for analysis than social patriarchy in research on woman abuse in intimate, heterosexual settings (Millett, 1969; Martin, 1977; Smith, 1983, 1990). Accordingly this dissertation focuses on the ideological component of familial patriarchy.

Dobash, 1979; Russell, 1984; 1990; Okun, 1986; Smith, 1990). Perceived threats to patriarchal power are believed to be a key motive for woman abuse by adult men. In patriarchal cultures, men are socialized to believe that they are superior to women and therefore have the right to control and dominate female intimates (Messerschmidt, 1986). Positive relationships between both patriarchal social structures and ideologies, and rates of violence against women have been found (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Yllo, 1984; Baron & Straus, 1987; Straus & Gelles, 1990; Smith, 1990a; 1993). In particular, Smith (1990a) demonstrates that husbands who adhere to an ideology of familial patriarchy⁸ are more likely to beat their wives than husbands who do not adhere to such an ideology.

Attitudes supporting violence are linked to dating abuse as well (Deal and Wampler, 1986; Fallingstad et al., 1988; Stets and Pirog-Good, 1987). Attitudes supporting male violence against females are related to familial patriarchal ideology, and likely are an indication of familial patriarchal ideology (Smith, 1990a). Recently, a handful of studies have linked adherence to familial patriarchal beliefs to girlfriend abuse. DeKeseredy and Kelly (1993b), using data from a national representative sample survey of Canadian male undergraduate students, suggest that male university/college students who physically, sexually and psychologically abuse their girlfriends are more likely than non-abusive males to adhere to an ideology of familial patriarchy. Foo and Margolin (1995) report that male undergraduates justify their abusive behaviour against girlfriends based upon their perceived humiliation (jealousy, rejection, ridicule) by girlfriends. Bookwala et al. (1992) suggest that adversarial sexual beliefs, an indication of attitudes supporting violence, predict male's dating violence. These findings are comparable to the studies on adult wife abusers which associate adherence to familial patriarchal beliefs with abuse perpetration.

Finally, two studies examine the relationship between experiencing family violence and attitudes supporting abuse in dating relationships. Ulbrich and Huber

⁸ Smith (1990) defines familial patriarchal ideology as a set of beliefs that legitimize male power and authority over women in marriage or in a marriage-like arrangement.

(1981) put forth that males are more likely to approve of violence against women if they witness their fathers hitting their mothers. Smith and Williams (1992) report that students who were severely abused by parents are more likely to report that "uncontrollable anger" justifies dating abuse than students who had not been abused.

Marxist-feminist theory on woman abuse is typified by the Schwendingers' (1983) Rape and Inequality. Marxist-feminist theory suggests that the structural conditions in the economy are the root cause of male power and control. Capitalism is perceived as the primary oppressive system, within which is situated gender inequality. The Schwendingers present a class analysis of rape and the origins of sexual inequality. Their basic premise is that sexual inequality and the rate of male violence in a given society are the product of primarily class relations and secondarily of gender relations. The Schwendingers argue that throughout history, sexual inequality has been rooted in production for exchange. They suggest that male violence against women originated with commodity production. With a production process based upon exchange value, they argue, men control the production process, thereby generating gender stratification. Although this hypothesis of the Schwendingers is questionable⁹, there are useful elements in their theory.

Representative sample surveys of the general population demonstrate that social class differentially impacts upon adherence to patriarchal attitudes and beliefs, and abuse rates. It is argued that these attitudes and beliefs are an expression of familial patriarchal ideology. Research on wife-beating suggests that low-income males are more likely to adhere to such an ideology, and are more likely to physically assault their wives (Schulman, 1979; Straus et al., 1981; Smith, 1986, 1989, 1990a; Kennedy and Dutton, 1989; Stets & Strauss, 1989; Lupri, 1990) than are middle income adult men. Despite the fact that there is no comparable data, these studies on adults suggest that similar processes may be at work in the youth population.

This dissertation builds upon the strengths and addresses some of the

⁹ Counts, Brown and Campbell (1992) provide cross-cultural evidence that wife-beating exists in societies without commodity production.

limitations in the existing literature on patriarchy, social class and girlfriend abuse. First, with the exception of DeKeseredy and Kelly (1993a), the concept of patriarchy is not included in any consistent way in any studies on woman abuse in dating relationships. Second, like most existing work on girlfriend abuse, DeKeseredy and Kelly's study is quantitative survey research. The collection of incidence and prevalence data is a primary goal. There simply are not any investigations of intuitions, meanings and motives underlying the behaviour of abusive male youth. Third, the existing body of work on patriarchy and woman abuse in the adult population is based upon the reports of female survivors of male violence, primarily in victimization surveys. The assumption of a universal correlation between patriarchy and woman abuse has only limited empirical support. This "universal risk theory" (Schwartz, 1988) of assault for all women in patriarchal societies downplays important class and race variations. For example, there is a greater incidence of physical wife assault and stronger adherence to an ideology of familial patriarchy in lower income groups (Straus et al., 1981; Smith, 1986; 1990a; Kennedy and Dutton, 1989; Lupri, 1990) compared to middle income groups. Further, radical feminist theory assumes that all men in patriarchal societies have roughly an equal potential to abuse women. This assumption is not supported by current empirical data on the incidence and prevalence of abuse (see above).

Marxist-feminist theory on woman abuse is useful because it highlights the material basis of male violence against women. However, non-economic factors, such as patriarchy, are not fully explored. Radical feminist theory on woman abuse is likewise useful because of its focus on patriarchal social relations. However, existing research on girlfriend abuse focuses mainly on middle-income college/university populations and high school students. There has been no qualitative or quantitative girlfriend abuse research conducted on low-income male youth. It is not known if marginal male youth adhere to an ideology of familial patriarchy. Rubin (1976) and Messerschmidt (1986, 1993) provide some answers to the questions raised here regarding Marxist and feminist theory on woman abuse, and build upon the strengths of these theories.

Rubin (1976) offers a relevant explanation of the differential impact of eroding patriarchal power on individuals in different social classes¹⁰. Rubin argues that working-class males are socialized into a role of dominance, aggression, and power; however, they are unable to wield this power outside of the family. Rubin hypothesizes that working-class males are thus more likely to overtly dominate female partners. Middle-class males, however, have ways to assert power and control outside of the family, through the various rewards and privileges to which they are entitled by virtue of their class position (for example, employment, possessions). Rubin also suggests that middle-class males have resources to purchase relief from the stresses of daily life (for example, daycare, leisure). Along similar lines, Messerschmidt (1986) argues that working-class male youth are most likely to use physical violence, as opposed to economic coercion used by middle-class male youth, to sexually assault women. Klein (1982) and Messerschmidt (1986) argue that physical violence is one of the few resources controlled by working-class male youth. Messerschmidt argues that these youth are socialized to view themselves as superior to women and non-heterosexual men; however, they are denied access to the economic rewards of middle and upper class heterosexual males. Messerschmidt suggests that masculinity is reaffirmed and expressed by exerting power and control over women and gay men in the "hypermasculine" street culture.

The feminist and Marxist bodies of work on woman abuse contain many useful elements for this dissertation. Marxist research highlights the material factors which may be related to abusive behaviour and suggests that low income males may be at greater risk for perpetrating abuse than middle and upper income males. Feminist research suggests that patriarchal social relations are directly related to male violence against women. In particular, this theory maintains that males who adhere to familial patriarchal beliefs are at higher risk for abusing females than are males who do not hold these beliefs. Further, low-income males are believed to be at the greatest risk of adhering to these beliefs and abusing women. The primary implications of the

¹⁰ See footnote 6 in this chapter for definition of social class.

literature reviewed for this dissertation include testing the concept of familial patriarchal ideology with a sample of marginal adolescent males to explore how familial patriarchal beliefs may be acquired and the nature of the possible relationship of these beliefs to abusive behaviour. It is possible that because low-income adolescent males experience the highest rates of unemployment, many may not be able to attain the superior economic position to which they feel entitled (Messerschmidt, 1986: 139). Economic marginalization and patriarchal power may therefore increase the potential for physical and sexual violence against women by some of these youth.

2.3 Assessing the Impact of Masculine Identity on Marginal Males

Coleman (1990), Connell (1993), and Messerschmidt (1993) argue that masculinity is rooted in a particular socio-historical context, and the practice of masculinity is structured by the social relations of class, race, and gender as well as individual and group behaviour. They maintain that dominant and subordinate masculinity types are formed through practices that perpetuate stratified relationships between males, and between males and females. The individual and collective practice of oppressive gender relations occurs within the context of social structures. As such, Coleman (1990) maintains, role/socialization and social constructionist theories of masculinity offer inadequate accounts on the construction and practice of masculinity. Coleman (1990:197) summarizes the limitations of these theories:

"there are but two ways of answering the question: either masculinity is constructed and sustained by hidden but discoverable forces, discourses, ideologies, structures and the like (in which case its contingent and moment-to-moment accomplishment is unconscious, the actor being unaware, and necessarily unaware, of all that he does), or else it is constructed, bricoleur-fashion, by the actor and sustained by conscious monitoring and impression-management."

These researchers hypothesize that maleness is neither determined wholly by social structures, historical practices and cultural scripts, nor by pre-determined genetic/psychological makeup. Instead, masculinity is created and expressed through personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural practices. Accordingly, Connell

(1993) maintains that masculinity as a personal practice can be understood only within the context of societal institutions (such as the State, the workplace/labour market, the family) and history. He remarks that "masculinity is an aspect of institutions, and is produced in institutional life, as much as it is an aspect of personality or produced in interpersonal transactions" (1993:602). Connell delineates the historical evolution of contemporary, hegemonic forms of masculinity in patriarchal-capitalist society. Using cross-cultural data on varied gender practices of men in different social orders, Connell maintains that the concept of masculinity derives meaning only within a specified culture.

Liddle (1989), Coleman (1990), Segal (1990), Connell (1993) and Messerschmidt (1993) suggest that in Euro-American culture, universal norms of masculinity are identifiable, although not absolute. They maintain that the main patterns of contemporary hegemonic masculinity are the subordination of women, the marginalization of gay men, and the connection of masculinity to toughness and competitiveness. Liddle (1989) hypothesizes that hegemonic masculinity in patriarchal-capitalist society contains successful individual and group practices for the subordination of women and non-heterosexual men. According to Liddle, hegemonic forms of masculinity imply that "the reproduction of gender categories is never automatic, and that the maintenance of domination is a multi-levelled phenomenon which involves a dynamic mixture of coercion and consent" (1989:70). The sociology of masculinity literature suggests that this complex range of gendered power relations perpetuates the domination of heterosexual men over women in general, and over all other male gender types.

Hegemonic masculinity can be conceptualized as occupying both an objective and a subjective space. The objective space refers to the culturally dominant, public, masculine form typified by Rambo movies, Power Ranger toys, Arnold Schwarzenegger and the like. The subjective space refers to the private, inner male sense of self. Connell (1993) notes that objectified, public forms of masculinity may regulate subjective, private forms of masculinity. Connell (1993:13), remarking upon the nature of contemporary masculinity, writes "it is culturally exalted and ... its

exaltation stabilizes a structure of dominance and oppression in the gender order as a whole".

Based upon the sociology of masculinity work, there is no single type of masculinity. Instead, it is theorized, there are hegemonic masculinities within the dominant class and race, as well as hegemonic masculinities within subordinated classes and races. For example, Connell (1993) writes about white middle class heterosexual masculinity being centred around knowledge and professional expertise, whereas white working class heterosexual masculinity revolves around interpersonal dominance, and the labour market/workplace. Further, Liddle (1989) notes that in the project of hegemonic masculinity, there is direct participation, conscious complicity, ignorance, and opposition by men. There are open challenges to hegemonic masculinity by feminism and gay liberation in western, industrialized society.

The research and theoretical work on masculine identity is important for this project for a number of reasons. This body of work suggests that many factors impact upon the construction and practice of masculine identity, and that dominant and subordinant identity types may exist at any given point in time. This work points to the importance of testing the concept of masculine identity in a sample of marginal males, because these males may exhibit identifiable patterns of behaviour related to compensating for perceived deficits in masculinity. These perceived deficits may be resultant from blocked access to traditional male entitlements of power and privilege. This literature also suggests that group behaviour may play an important role in expressing and confirming masculinity.

2.4 Assessing the Impact of Male Peer Group/Gang Affiliation on Marginal Males

A large body of diverse research on youth gangs (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Short and Strodtbeck, 1965; Keiser, 1969; Patrick, 1973; Haeres and Schwartz, 1974; Mathews, 1993; Kennedy and Baron, 1993; Caputo, 1994; Gordon, 1994), prisons (Mann, 1967; Sykes, 1971), hockey players (Smith, 1979, 1983) and soccer "hooligans" (Williams et al., 1984) suggests that interpersonal violence may result

from interactions with male peers. Research on woman abuse in marital relationships (Whitehead, 1976; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Bowker, 1983) and in dating relationships (Blanchard, 1959; Kanin, 1967, 1984, 1985; Leslie, 1979; Ageton, 1983; Alder, 1985; Gwartney-Gibbs et al., 1987 DeKeseredy, 1988;) shows how social exchanges with male friends can encourage and legitimate physical, sexual and psychological assaults on women.

Patriarchal peer group practices are central to university/college dating relationships (Kanin, 1967). University/college males who abuse their dates are more likely to espouse a set of values and beliefs supportive of familial patriarchy than males who do not assault their girlfriends. Further, male students who hold familial patriarchal attitudes and beliefs and who are supported by their male peers are most likely to assault their dating partners (DeKeseredy and Kelly, 1993b).

DeKeseredy (1988) argues that woman abuse in dating relationships is related to a number of "support functions" performed by male peers. His male peer support¹¹ model is derived from social support theory, which explains how social integration and interpersonal dynamics impact on people's capabilities in dealing with stressful life events. In a revision of DeKeseredy's (1988) earlier model, DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1993) argue for the inclusion of the variables of alcohol consumption, membership in formal social groups, absence of deterrence, and the ideology of familial and courtship patriarchy into the male peer support model.

This dissertation addresses a number of limitations in the existing body of work on the relationship between the male peer group and girlfriend abuse. To begin, there is not any qualitative work done in this area. Secondly, although the college and university data from these studies indicate that male peer support is a risk marker for woman abuse, there are obvious age and class biases in these data. A number of important questions, therefore, remain unanswered. These questions are the following: Do marginalized male youth belong to groups similar to those found in

¹¹Male peer support refers to the attachments to male peers and the resources that these males provide that encourage and legitimate girlfriend abuse.

college/university samples? How do these youth understand their participation in peer groups/gangs? Do these groups/gangs commit collective acts of physical, sexual and emotional abuse against females? Is masculinity collectively practised and constructed in these groups/gangs? Are these collectivities patriarchal? It is unlikely that patriarchal male peer groups whose members hold attitudes supportive of abusive behaviour are formed only in university/college settings. Instead, they are most likely formed in high school (Kanin, 1967). Although there is no previous research which documents the emergence of patriarchal, pro-abuse peer groups, related research suggests that marginal male youth are more likely to gravitate towards these groups than are middle-income youth. This hypothesis is rooted in Bowker (1983, 1985) and Smith's (1990a) studies which demonstrate that low-income adult males are more likely to adhere to patriarchal attitudes and beliefs and beat their wives than are middle-income adult males. Schwendinger and Schwendinger (1981) likewise demonstrate that economically marginalized male youth are more likely than middle and upper class male youth to belong to peer groups "that subscribe to violent macho ideals" (p. 19). Cohen (1955), Cloward and Ohlin (1960), McRobbie and Garber (1976), Hall and Jefferson (1976), Muncie (1981), and Brake (1980, 1985), also document the patriarchal structure of youth subculture in the context of economic marginalization.

Thirdly, DeKeseredy (1988) and DeKeseredy and Schwartz's (1993) models are limited. Although they are helpful in explaining the dynamics of woman abuse, they are one-dimensional. Youth participate in groups/gangs for a number of reasons, many of which have little to do with male peer support. The literature suggests that same-sex peer groups are important agents of socialization (Brownfield and Thompson, 1991). The transition from family towards developing independence is in part mediated through peer groups. Peer groups present an opportunity for youth moving from adolescence into adulthood to meet a number of needs not being met by family or school. These groups are also a key space for socializing, hanging out, and having fun (Caputo, 1994).

Youth who are social misfits and have social skills deficits may participate in

gangs (Brownfield and Thompson, 1991). In particular, recent immigrants who are struggling with a new culture and likewise developing their independence may form gangs (Joe and Norman, 1980; Pearcy, 1991; Lee, 1992). School and familial problems are also risk markers for gang participation (Mathews, 1993; Gordon, 1994), as well as unmet needs for status and acceptance (Baron, 1989; Brownfield and Thompson, 1991; Mathews, 1993; Gordon, 1994), and material gain (Pearcy, 1991; Mathews, 1993; Copple, 1993). Due to high youth unemployment rates, some youth choose criminal (as opposed to traditional) means of making money. Younger, weaker youth may also participate in gangs for protection (Mathews, 1993; Gordon, 1994) as do youth looking for thrills and excitement (Mathews, 1993; Gordon, 1994).

The final limitation of the existing literature on this issue lies in the definitional problems in DeKeseredy (1988), DeKeseredy and Schwartz's (1992) and DeKeseredy and Kelly's (1993a) conceptualization of the male peer group. These problems likewise exist in the research on collective youth violence and youth gangs, despite numerous efforts to clarify this issue (Mathews, 1993; Copple, 1993; Gordon, 1994). Mathews (1993) recommends two methods for eliminating this confusion. He recommends conceptualizing youth gangs/groups on a continuum spanning from "groups of friends" to "hard-core criminal gangs". "Groups of friends" are broken down into three subsets: school peers, long-term associations of childhood friends, and neighbourhood friends and associates. "Hard-core criminal gangs" are likewise broken down into three subsets: political/pseudo-political/paramilitary (for example, skinheads), mixed race organized and crime-focused/delinquent, and culturally homogeneous and organized crime-focused/delinquent.

The use of a continuum permits the incorporation of a wide range of youth collectivities for research purposes. Youth groups are placed on the continuum based upon their defining features. Mathews also articulates that the difference between these two main groups should be their participation in criminal activity. The greater the degree of organization for criminal objectives, the closer the group is placed towards the hard-core gang end of the continuum. Groups who participate occasionally in criminal activities are located towards the middle of the continuum,

whereas those groups who do not participate in criminal behaviour are located towards the "group of friends" end of the continuum. Canadian information on collective youth violence and youth gangs suggests that groups falling at various points in the continuum participate in different forms of violence (Caputo, 1994). Violence committed by "groups of friends" include fights to protect group members from competing groups, fights regarding jealousies in dating relationships, and sporadic random acts of violence (for example, swarming). Groups regularly engaged in collective violence are located towards the centre of the continuum and move towards the hard-core gang end of the continuum if the violence is criminally motivated.

The body of work on male peer group/gang affiliation is important for this dissertation. This literature points to the need to explore a possible relationship between peer group/gang dynamics and abusive behaviour in a sample of marginal adolescent males. Mathews has defined the concept of peer group/gang, and this definition should be testable.

As a result of the literature reviewed in this chapter, three central concepts were identified for testing in the screening interviews. These bodies of knowledge suggest that there may be an interactive dynamic between the concepts of familial patriarchal ideology, masculine identity and peer group/gang involvement by marginal males which may lead to abusive behaviour. In addition, witnessing abuse against mothers and being abused as a child may also be related to girlfriend abuse.

Chapter 3

Methods

This chapter examines the research design, ethical considerations, potential sources of bias in the interviews, and my personal motivation and employment position. The screening interview data collection process, sample characteristics and interview questions are outlined. The key concepts, tested in the screening interviews and expanded in the in-depth interviews, are defined. Finally, the in-depth interview data collection process, sample characteristics, and interview questions are discussed.

3.1 Research Design

A multi-phase research design was used to examine the key concepts of familial patriarchal ideology, masculine identity, and male peer group/gang affiliations. An initial data set was gathered through structured interviews (see Appendix A, Screening Interview Questions) with a purposive, non-representative sample of 90 male youth, aged 13-17 years. These participants were selected from the Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa-Carleton (YSB) client list, Britannia Boys and Girls Club members, Byward Market street youth, and youth congregating at Place D'Orléans Mall during February and March 1993 (see pp.27-29 for further discussion on this issue). The research design employed with this screening sample is consistent with previous survey methods in the field (Russell, 1982; Scully, 1990). A number of objectives were achieved in conducting this initial set of 90 interviews: 1) The schedule of interview questions was developed and assessed. The usefulness of the questions was confirmed; 2) Key concepts from the literature were tested with pre-constructed scales; 3) A sample of marginal, abusive male youth for in-depth interviews was produced (see Appendix B, In-Depth Interview Questions); 4) A definition of abuse was developed.

The objectives of the 30 in-depth interviews were to explore and expand upon the key concepts and answer the following research questions which emerged from the screening interviews: How do these males make sense of their participation in their abusive behaviour? What insights can be derived from using the key concepts that

will help analyze the participants' behaviour in a broader social context?

A multi-method approach was used that involved elements of quantitative and qualitative research methods. A quantitative approach was used in the screening interviews to test preconceived concepts. Existing scales were replicated in structured interviews. A qualitative approach was used in the in-depth interviews. Semi-structured questions were used to expand upon the preconceived concepts tested in the screening interviews.

The analytic method used for analyzing the in-depth interview data is based upon the techniques of ethnographic data analysis (see Becker and Geer, 1957; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Denzin, 1970; Filstead, 1970; Deutscher, 1973; Whitehead, 1976; Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979; Gilbert and Mulkay, 1983; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Lyman, 1987; Farr, 1988; Ptacek, 1988; Sanday, 1990; Hammersley, 1992; Silverman, 1993). The in-depth interview data consists of transcripts regarding how these abusive male youth described their behaviour. This large volume of data provides rich accounts describing these young abusers' perspectives on their behaviour. This method gave the participants the opportunity to explore the meaning of their behaviour. The analysis examines how these male youth made sense of their abusive behaviour, and situates their behaviour in a broader social context.

3.2 Ethical Considerations

One of the primary objectives in conducting this project was to increase the safety of abused women. By learning more about how male youth understand their abusive behaviour, it is hoped that a contribution towards the elimination of woman abuse can be made. Notwithstanding this lofty objective, a number of immediate problems were encountered while planning the research. How could the safety of the girlfriends being abused by research participants be enhanced without escalating the participants' abusive behaviour? How would disclosures of life-threatening criminal behaviour of the participants be treated? Could confidentiality and anonymity of the participants be ensured? How could the participants be challenged to accept responsibility for their abusive behaviour without introducing bias into the data? The

way in which these questions were addressed was informed by Ontario's child welfare legislation, YSB policies and procedures, the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) Interim Accountability and Accessibility Requirements for Male Batterer Programs, and the Carleton University Ethics Committee.

To begin, I decided that an ethical way I could heighten the safety of the participants' girlfriends without escalating abusive behaviour was to conduct in-depth interviews only with those youth who agreed to allow me to have phone contact with their current or ex-girlfriends. My objectives in contacting participants' girlfriends were to explain my research and inform them about community resources for abused females. I did not attempt to corroborate the participants' accounts with the girlfriends because I felt that this might have escalated abusive behaviour. In order to ensure that the participants fully understood the implications of this, a statement about contact was included on the interview consent form (see Appendix B). In addition, I decided that an ethical way for me to handle participants' disclosures of abusive behaviour and not contaminate the data was to confront the participants at the end of the interview and identify any abusive behaviour as such.

I was confident that my years of experience working with abusive males provided me with the necessary clinical skills to accomplish this task. Existing literature on adult male abusers verifies the importance of holding men accountable for their abusive behaviour (Toman, 1987; Shepard, 1987; Gondolf, 1987; Saunders, 1988; Ptacek, 1988; Adams, 1988; Eisikovitz and Edleson, 1989). Failure to label this behaviour as abusive and make men accountable can be interpreted by these men as tacit approval for their behaviour (Ptacek, 1988; Adams, 1988; Totten et al., 1995).

YSB policy and procedures were relied upon for dealing with any disclosure by participants of perpetration of life threatening criminal activity. I decided that a way for me to ensure the safety of girlfriends from the threats and actual acts of life-threatening harm (for example death threats, physical and sexual assaults involving knives or guns, serious injuries resulting from physical and sexual assaults) was to inform participants of my obligation to report any such acts or threats immediately to the police, probation officer, or Children's Aid Society (C.A.S.) worker. YSB has a

specific policy on this issue called the "Client Disclosures of the Perpetration of Life-Threatening Criminal Activity". I realized that the risk I took in being direct with the participants about this issue was that it might inhibit participants from talking about abuse perpetration or from participating in the study altogether. Of the 30 in-depth interview participants, 8 told me about incidents which I classified as disclosures of perpetration of life-threatening physical and sexual assaults. In these 8 cases, I contacted either the police, C.A.S., probation, school, or shelter staff to follow up this disclosure.

There were two other issues which precluded me from ensuring the complete anonymity and confidentiality of participants. These issues included disclosures of child abuse/neglect and suicidal behaviour. Ontario's child welfare legislation, the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) (1984), stipulates that any professional having suspicion of child abuse or neglect of a young person under the age of 16 years must report these suspicions forthwith to the local C.A.S. Fortunately, I had worked for the Ottawa-Carleton C.A.S. in the mid-1980's as a child protection social worker. I was therefore comfortable in assessing child abuse and neglect cases and had a thorough working knowledge of this piece of legislation. Again, I included my legal reporting obligations regarding suspicions of child abuse and neglect on the interview consent form. Given the fact that all of the in-depth interview participants reported having been beaten by father-figures, and many were under the age of 16 years, I had to report a significant number of these cases to C.A.S. In most of these cases, the participants told me that C.A.S. was already involved with their families. This was subsequently verified by C.A.S. upon my reporting of the abuse allegations.

Finally, given my years working with troubled young people, I am knowledgeable about suicide and competent in assessing suicidal behaviours. Prior to the start of the interviews, I assumed that some participants would already have at some point in their lives attempted suicide and/or currently be engaging in suicidal behaviours. Although I did not include any specific questions in the interviews regarding suicide, I decided to also address the limitations of confidentiality concerning this issue with participants directly. I informed all participants that in the

best interests of their own safety, I could not keep confidential the name of any participant I assessed to be at high risk of attempting suicide. I was clear with the participants that should this situation occur, I would take immediate action to secure the appropriate intervention. I advised them that this might include calling an ambulance or advising parents.

3.3 Bias in In-Depth Interviews

Although quantitative survey research is not immune to bias (see Becker, 1970), the in-depth interview methodology is susceptible to specific problems regarding interpretation and evaluation (Ptacek, 1988). The primary benefit of my in-depth interviews was my ability to develop trust and investigate the participants' feelings, motives, justifications and understanding through conversation. I realize that because I alone assumed the duties of observer, recorder, theorist, interpreter and counsellor, certain limitations are placed upon my study. Reinharz (1979:10-11), in addressing this issue, recommends that:

"since research is a personal activity, research reports should contain a vivid description of the experience of the researching. In these reports the value positions of the researcher should be faced squarely and addressed fully."

Accordingly, as Ptacek (1988) demonstrates, I clearly articulate my motivations for undertaking this research, and my position as a Director of YSB and as a social worker (see Chapter 1, pp. 3-5). My personal motivation and position contribute to the fact that this is not detached, objective research.

3.4 The Screening Interviews

An initial data set was gathered through structured interviews (see Appendix A, Screening Interview Questions) with a purposive, non-representative sample of 90 male youth, ages 13-17 years, selected from the YSB client list (30 out of 160), Britannia Boys and Girls Club members (15 out of 100), Byward Market street youth (25 out of 100), and youth congregating at Place d'Orleans Mall (20 out of 85) during February

and March 1993. Two pieces of legislation informed the decision to include 13 - 17 year old youth in the sample: the federal Young Offender's Act (Y.O.A.) and the provincial Child and Family Services Act (C.F.S.A.). The Y.O.A. establishes the age of criminal responsibility at 12 years, and stipulates that young criminals 12 - 17 years of age receive both rehabilitation and punishment separately from adult offenders. The C.F.S.A. is Ontario's child welfare legislation, and permits youth 12 years of age and older to receive confidential counselling without knowledge of their parent(s). Under the C.F.S.A., youth 12 years of age and older could participate in this project and request any or all information to be kept confidential from their parent(s). Unfortunately, I was not able to recruit any 12 year olds who met the criteria for this study.

Research participants who were not YSB clients were pre-selected at least 24 hours prior to each interview. I tried to minimize systematic bias by collecting as many names as possible prior to pre-selection. I accomplished this by frequenting key areas in the Byward Market (Rideau Centre, Salvation Army Shelter, Murray St. Youth Drop-in) and Place d'Orléans Shopping Mall (second floor Food Court, arcade, youth drop-in) and the Britannia Boys and Girls Club, in order to introduce myself and the study to potential research participants. During this pre-selection stage of the research, I introduced myself as a YSB worker and a Ph.D. candidate researching problems in teenage dating relationships. The topic of girlfriend abuse was not raised at this time. I explained to the groups that each participant would be paid \$10 for an interview, but that I had to randomize participant selection. I also described the limits of confidentiality as articulated on the participation consent form (see Appendix A). Following this, the names, phone numbers and/or addresses of each youth who wished to participate were recorded, and then at maximum one-quarter of these youth (every fourth name, starting from the middle of the page) were selected. A total of 60 participants were selected in this manner. These names were collected during a five day period in February 1993.

The process for selecting participants from YSB casework, residential, and employment services clients was much easier. Using the YSB weekly client list of

February 5, 1993, 30 male clients were randomly selected from a total of 160 clients. Clients were then telephoned to explain the study and set up an interview time if they agreed to participate. Each interview took approximately 1½ hours to complete, and each participant was paid \$10 following the interview. The interviews took place at three main locations: Britannia Boys and Girls Club, Salvation Army Youth Shelter, and YSB program sites (drop-ins, residences, employment office, young offender's unit). Audio taping was not used for data recording given the sensitive nature of the research topic and well documented reluctance of adult men to discuss their abusive behaviour (Adams, 1988; Ptacek, 1988; Scully, 1990).

Following each interview, participants were informed of the primary goals of the study. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions about girlfriend abuse. Participants were again guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. Fifteen participants accepted referral information on substance abuse, individual or group counselling regarding their abusive behaviour, and employment counselling. No participant voiced concerns to me regarding the methodology or the research topic.

A number of participants disclosed severe physical and/or sexual abuse committed against girlfriends. In 5 of these cases, it was apparent to me that these girlfriends were at significant risk of further assaults. Accordingly, after gaining consent of the participant, I transferred this information over to their YSB worker (all 5 participants were YSB counselling, drop-in, employment or young offender unit clients). I assessed one participant to be at risk for committing suicide, and this information was immediately transferred to his YSB worker with his consent.

3.5 Screening Sample Characteristics

The mean age of the 90 participants was 15.8 years. Visible minorities made up a small (10%) proportion of the sample (9 participants), and most of the participants were heterosexual. Six participants reported that they were gay, and 4 participants said that they were bisexual. The mean school grade completed for the sample was 8.9. At the time of the interviews, 1/2 of the sample was living away from home in a young offender open custody facility, group home, rooming

house/apartment, or in a shelter. Thirty-six respondents had received or were currently receiving counselling services. Twenty-five participants had grown up in low-income housing projects, and 39 participants reported that their primary caregiver(s) owned their own homes. Thirty-five participants had parents with post-high school education. In addition to these demographic characteristics, 92% of the sample reported behaviour which was emotionally abusive, 55% of the sample reported behaviour which was physically abusive, and 64% of the sample reported behaviour which was sexually abusive (see pp.34-36 for criteria used to classify this behaviour).

3.6 Screening Interview Questions

Physically and verbally abusive behaviour was assessed using a modified version of Straus & Gelles (1986) Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS). These scales are widely used in studies on violence against women and they are found to be reliable and have concurrent and construct validity (Straus, 1990) . For this project, the CTS were modified to address some of their shortcomings (see Breines and Gordon, 1983; Smith, 1987; Saunders, 1989; DeKeseredy, 1992; Dobash et al., 1992). The CTS are made up of sixteen items describing two ways of handling interpersonal conflict: psychological abuse and physical violence. Only those incidents that occurred since the participants' thirteenth birthday were assessed for the purpose of this study.

The physical abuse component of the CTS is made up of nine violence items used by Straus and Gelles:

- threw something at her
- grabbed or shoved her
- slapped her
- kicked, bit or hit her with a fist
- hit or tried to hit her with something
- beat her up
- choked her
- threatened her with a knife or gun
- used a knife or a gun on her.

The last six items make up Straus et al's (1981) severe violence index. The psychological abuse component of the CTS is composed of seven modified items of Straus and Gelles' verbal aggression sub-scale:

insulted or swore at her
 did or said something to get back at her
 threatened to hit or throw something at her
 threw, smashed or kicked something.

Two new items were added to this sub-scale that were first utilized in Statistic

Canada's National Telephone Survey on Violence Against Women:

put her down in front of friends and family
 accused her of having affairs or flirting with other men.

A modification of Koss et al.'s (1987) Sexual Experiences Survey (SES) was used to assess sexually abusive behaviours. The 8 items were subdivided into four types of sexual abuse: unwanted sexual contact (questions a,b), sexual coercion (question e), attempted rape (questions c,d), and rape (questions f, g, h). The SES is a valid and reliable measure and has been extensively used in North America (Koss and Gidycz, 1985).

- a) Have you engaged in sex play (fondling, kissing, or petting, but not intercourse) with a female when she didn't want to by overwhelming her with continual arguments and pressure?
- b) Have you engaged in sex play (fondling, kissing, or petting, but not intercourse) with a female when she didn't want to by threatening or using some degree of physical force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.)?
- c) Have you attempted sexual intercourse (getting on top of her, attempting to insert penis) with a female when she didn't want it by threatening or using some degree of physical force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.) but intercourse did not occur?
- d) Have you attempted sexual intercourse with a female (getting on top of her, attempting to insert penis) when she didn't want it because she was drunk or high, but intercourse did not occur?
- e) Have you engaged in sexual intercourse with a female when she didn't want to by overwhelming her with continual arguments or pressure?
- f) Have you engaged in sexual intercourse with a female when she didn't want to because she was drunk or high?
- g) Have you engaged in sexual intercourse with a female when she didn't want to by threatening or using some degree of physical force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.)?
- h) Have you engaged in sex acts (anal or oral intercourse or penetration by objects other than the penis) with a female when she didn't want to by threatening or using some degree of physical force (twisting her arm,

holding her down, etc.)?

Adherence to familial patriarchal beliefs was assessed by using two slightly modified scales used by Smith (1990): Patriarchal Beliefs and Approval of Violence Against Wives. Further, Burt's (1980) Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence Scale was used to measure participants' approval of using violence to have sex. In the Approval of Violence Against Wives Scale, participants were asked if they would agree or disagree with a male slapping his girlfriend in the following situations:

she won't do what he tells her to do
 she insults him when they are home alone
 she insults him in public
 she comes home drunk
 she is crying
 she won't have sex with him
 he learns that she is dating another male
 she hits him first when they are having an argument.

In the Patriarchal Beliefs Scale, participants were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

A male and his wife/girlfriend should have equal say in deciding how to spend the family income.
 A male and his wife/girlfriend should share the household chores if they are both working outside the home.
 A male has the right to decide whether or not his wife/girlfriend should go out in the evening with her friends.
 A male has the right to decide whether or not his wife/girlfriend should work outside the home.
 Sometimes it is important for a male to show his wife/girlfriend that he is the head of the house.
 Any woman who is raped is at least partly to blame.
 A male has the right to have sex with his wife/girlfriend when he wants, even though she may not want to.
 If a male hits his wife/girlfriend, it is because he's lost his temper and gone out of control.

The items used from the Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence Scale to assess respondents' approval of using violence to have sex were the following:

Being roughed up is sexually stimulating to many women.

Many times a woman will pretend she doesn't want to have sex because she doesn't want to seem loose, but she is really hoping the man will just take over.

To assess the influence of any pro-abuse beliefs of male peers and family members, a modified version of Smith's (1990) Approval of Violence Against Wives Scale was again used. To assess the influence of the male peer group in supporting and legitimating abusive behaviour, (pro-abuse attitudes, pressure to have sex, routine activities, informational support, attachments to abusive peers), a modified version of Smith's (1990) Approval of Violence Against Wives Scale was again used. In addition, a modified version of DeKeseredy and Kelly's (1993 b) peer support questions was used. These questions include the following:

Of all your friends, whom do you spend more time with:

- _____ female friends
- _____ male friends
- _____ mixed group of friends

Describe for me three things which you do with your male friends that take up most of this time:

As far as you know, have any of your male friends forced sex on girls/women?

As far as you know, have any of your male friends used physical force on girls/women?

As far as you know, have any of your male friends ever insulted, put down or threatened girls/women?

Have any of your male friends ever told you that it is all right for a male to use physical force against girls/women in certain situations?

Have any of your male friends ever told you that girls/women should have sex with you when you want?

Have any of your male friends ever told you that if a male spends money on a date, she should have sex with him in return?

Have any of your male friends ever told you that it is all right for a guy to insult/put down or threaten girls/women in certain situations?

Have any of your male friends placed pressure on you to have sex with female?

To assess the influence of male family members in supporting and legitimating abusive behaviour a modified version of DeKeseredy and Kelly's (1993 b) male peer

support questions was again used, substituting "male relatives" for "male friends" (see above).

To assess the influence of masculine identity, participants were asked the following questions:

What is the ideal man?

What is the ideal woman?

Do you have any favourite male rock music, movie or sports stars?

3.7 Defining Girlfriend Abuse

In the 90 screening interviews the participants told me about their sexual experiences and methods of resolving conflict with their girlfriends. Their reported behaviour was classified into the categories of physical, sexual and emotional abuse based upon the illegality of some of the specific behaviour, and the definitions of abuse offered in the literature (Koss and Oros, 1982; Straus and Gelles, 1986). The criteria used to classify emotional abuse was an affirmative response to one or more items on Straus and Gelles' (1986) psychological abuse index on the Conflict Tactics Scale (see p.31).

The participants' emotionally abusive behaviour against their girlfriends included: repeatedly insulting, screaming, swearing at and putting them down both alone and in front of friends and family; threatening to use physical violence or to murder them¹²; throwing, smashing, kicking and destroying property in their presence; stalking and monitoring their routine activities; repeatedly accusing them of having affairs or flirting with other males; beating up their new and old boyfriends in their presence; and threatening to hurt themselves or their girlfriends if they left them. Ninety-two percent of the 90 participants reported behaviour with their girlfriends which could be classified as emotionally abusive according to these criteria. Nineteen percent of the participants were exclusively emotionally abusive. Forty-six percent of the participants were emotionally, physically and sexually abusive; 18% of the

¹² Uttering threats of physical violence and death are contrary to Section 264 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

participants were emotionally and sexually abusive; and 9% of the participants were emotionally and physically abusive.

The criteria used to classify physical abuse was an affirmative response to one or more items on Straus and Gelles' (1986) physical abuse component of the Conflict Tactics Scales (see p.30). The participants' physically abusive behaviour against their girlfriends included: throwing objects at them, pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping, kicking, punching, hitting with objects, beating, choking, threatening with a knife or gun, and using a knife or gun on them. Fifty-five percent of the 90 participants reported behaviour with girlfriends which could be classified as physically abusive according to these criteria. These males had physically assaulted their girlfriends at least on one occasion since age 13. Approximately 1/2 of these 90 males engaged in minor forms of physical abuse (throwing something at them, pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping) and almost 1/4 reported having used one or more acts of severe¹³ violence (punching, kicking, beating, choking, using a knife or a gun). In only one case was there only one act of minor violence. Instead, participants reported patterns of physical abuse that were ongoing and paired with emotional abuse (9%), or both sexual and emotional abuse (46%).

The criteria used to classify sexual abuse was an affirmative response to one or more items on Koss and Oros' (1982) modified Sexual Experiences Survey (see pp. 31-32). The participants' sexually abusive behaviour against their girlfriends included: unwanted sexual contact (sexual touching subsequent to the use of verbal pressure, threats of physical force or actual physical force); sexual coercion (anal, oral or vaginal intercourse subsequent to the use of verbal pressure; and rape (oral, anal or vaginal penetration against consent through the use of force, threat of physical

¹³ These definitions of minor and severe violence are taken from Straus and Gelles, 1986. All of these physically abusive behaviours could be classified as common assault (Section 265), aggravated assault (Section 268), or assault with a weapon or assault causing bodily harm (Section 267) in the Criminal Code of Canada.

violence, or intentional incapacitation¹⁴. Sixty-four percent of the 90 participants reported behaviour with girlfriends which could be classified as sexually abusive according to these criteria. These males had sexually assaulted their girlfriends on at least one occasion since the age of 13 years. Thirty-nine percent of the 90 participants reported acts categorized as unwanted sexual contact, 47% reported acts categorized as sexual coercion, 5% reported acts categorized as attempted rape, and 16% of the participants reported acts categorized as rapes. In most cases the sexual abuse was paired with emotional abuse (18%) or both emotional and physical abuse (46%). All of the rapists reported having perpetrated many acts of unwanted sexual contact and sexual coercion. All of the sexually coercive males reported having perpetrated many acts of unwanted sexual contact.

3.8 Key Concepts

The first key concept to be tested in the screening interviews was familial patriarchal ideology. Over 70% of these participants who reported to have abused a girlfriend agreed with at least one of the statements in the Patriarchal Beliefs Scale (p. 32). Fifty-six percent of these same participants who reported to have abused a girlfriend agreed with at least one of the statements in the Approval of Violence Against Wives Scale (p. 32). From Smith (1990), familial patriarchal ideology is defined as a set of beliefs that legitimize male power and authority over women in marriage or in a marriage-like arrangement. The ideals of familial patriarchy are the requirements of female obedience, respect, loyalty, dependency, sexual access, and sexual fidelity. These ideals were measured with the Patriarchal Beliefs Scale.

The second key concept to be tested in the screening interviews was masculine identity. A common pattern of masculine ideals, values and anxieties were reported by the participants. Over 80% of the screening interview participants provided

¹⁴ This categorization of sexually abusive behaviour is based upon Koss and Oros, 1982. These behaviours could be classified as sexual assault (Section 271), aggravated sexual assault (Section 273) or sexual assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (Section 272) in the Criminal Code of Canada. Although the legal terminology for what used to be termed "rape" in Canada was changed to "sexual assault" in 1983, Koss and Oros' terminology will be used for the purposes of this paper.

indicators of a common masculine identity, defining the "ideal man" as someone who is a breadwinner, heterosexual, muscular and tough, independent, and who has money, a good job, and an education.

This data supported some of the conclusions reached in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. There were indicators of a common pattern of values and beliefs consistent with a rigid definition of masculinity, related to the public, objective masculine space. These youth described to me elements of the main patterns of hegemonic masculinity described in the theory and research on low income male youth (Chambliss, 1973; Willis, 1977; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1985; Messerschmidt, 1986, 1993; Connell, 1992): subordination of women and gays, and a connection to abusive behaviour and toughness. Accordingly, the following definition of masculine identity was developed. The marginal male masculine identity refers to both the subjective inner space and sense of self, and to related individual behaviours. This identity in marginal males is often characterized by a public, objective display of power over gays, females and other males. The traditional male role is pursued to an extreme. Abusive behaviour, toughness, competitiveness and dominance are common descriptors of this masculine identity. This form of masculine identity is described as "protest masculinity" by Connell (1993). However, a minority of marginal males may also practise two other forms of masculine identity: complicit and negative masculinity. Connell (1992) describes marginal males with a complicit masculine identity as individuals who participate in the subordination of females and gays without resorting to physical or sexual violence. Instead, there is conscious participation in the maintenance of heterosexual male dominance through the use of psychological control, manipulation, and the use of male privilege. These males are not physically abusive. However, they are emotionally abusive. Finally, individuals with negative masculine identities practise behaviour contrary to those of the traditional masculine identity. This identity is characteristic of gays, bi-sexuals and transvestites.

The final key concept which was tested in the screening interviews was the peer group/gang affiliations of the participants. One of the goals of the screening interviews was to test DeKeseredy's (1988) male peer support model. DeKeseredy

(1988) argues that woman abuse in dating relationships is related to a number of "support functions" performed by male peers. His male peer support model is derived from social support theory, which explains how social integration and interpersonal dynamics impact upon people's capabilities in dealing with stressful life events. DeKeseredy hypothesizes that social exchanges with male friends can encourage and legitimate girlfriend abuse. Five variants of this model were assessed: routine activities, informational support, attachments to abusive peers, patriarchal attitudes, and pressure to have sex. The most frequently engaged-in activities by abusive participants in the screening sample were: drug/alcohol use (71%); criminal activities, such as auto theft, drug-dealing, weapons offenses, and aggravated assaults (59%); hanging out at malls and pool halls (51%); sports (41%); and gang-related activities (35%). Of the screening interview participants who were abusive, 95% had at least a few peers¹⁵ who told them to abuse their girlfriends. Ninety-two percent of these same youth said they had male peers who would approve of a male slapping his girlfriend. Finally, 97% of these same abusive screening interview participants reported that male friends had pressured them to have sex with their girlfriends. This latter finding is not surprising, given that having sex is a common aspect of adolescent male socialization (Chablis, 1973; Heward, 1988; Messerschmidt, 1993).

Participation in gang-related activities by abusive male participants was identified as a central theme in the screening interviews. Many of these participants indicated their gangs provided them with a place to meet many unmet needs (status, identity, acceptance). These issues appeared to have little to do with supporting and legitimating abusive behaviour. Mathew's (1993) concept of a continuum of male peer group/gangs, spanning from "groups of friends" to "hard-core criminal gangs" was tested. The data supported the existence of this continuum, although this concept is to be expanded upon in the in-depth interviews. The male peer group/gangs identified by the participants were situated along Mathew's continuum based upon their degree of

¹⁵ Screening interview participants were asked to state how many of their male friends (all, most, a few, none) had told them to abuse their girlfriends.

organization for criminal objectives. Thirty of the participants were placed towards the hard-core gang end of the continuum based upon their participation in collective criminal activity. Forty of these youth were located towards the middle of the continuum based upon their occasional participation in collective criminal activity, and twenty participants were placed towards the "group of friends" end of the continuum based upon their lack of participation in collective criminal activity. From Mathews (1993:73-74) the male peer group/gang is defined as "a group of three or more youth whose membership, though often fluid, consists of at least a stable core of members who are recognized by themselves or others as a group/gang, and who band together for social, cultural, or other reasons and impulsively or intentionally plan and commit anti-social, delinquent, or illegal acts".

3.9 In-Depth Interviews

From the screening sample, 30 marginal youth were selected with whom to conduct a second set of in-depth, follow-up interviews (see Appendix B, In-Depth Interview Questions). The objectives of these 30 in-depth semi-structured interviews were to develop the key concepts identified in the screening interviews, and answer the two central research questions of this thesis: How do these males make sense of their participation in their abusive behaviour? What insights can be derived from using the key concepts to analyze the participants' behaviour in a broader social context? The interviews were conducted during January and February 1994.

All of the thirty marginal youth selected for the second set of interviews had physically and/or sexually and/or emotionally abused a girlfriend. None of these participants was in counselling for abusive behaviour at the time of these interviews, nor had they ever participated in such counselling. I interviewed only those male youth who agreed to let me speak with their current or ex-girlfriend, for the purpose of supporting safety planning, explaining legal rights, offering referrals to local services for abused females, and explaining my research. I did not attempt to verify with these females the male participant's accounts of his abusive behaviour because I believed

that this may have put these girlfriends at further risk of assault¹⁶.

I encountered numerous difficulties when attempting to find those participants who were not living at home. However, through word of mouth at YSB's Drop-In Centres, the Salvation Army Youth Shelter, and the Britannia Boys and Girls Club, I was able to eventually reconnect with these participants. An additional point of difficulty arose when I had to reject 10 screening sample participants for in-depth interviews because they refused to consent to my contacting their girlfriends (see p.25).

The in-depth interviews were again conducted at three main locations: Britannia Boys and Girls Club, Salvation Army Youth Shelter, and YSB program sites (drop-ins, residences, employment office, young offender's unit). I again decided against audio taping due to the sensitive nature of the research topic. Each interview took an average 3 hours to complete.

3.10 Characteristics of In-Depth Interview Sample

All of the 30 in-depth interview participants reported physically, sexually and/or emotionally abusive behaviour. Twelve of the 30 participants were in a current relationship with a girlfriend. In addition, all 30 youth were economically and socially marginal, based upon the following criteria. They all had poor relations with their families and received little or no financial support from them. Twenty-four were beaten by fathers and witnessed beatings of their mothers by fathers (see Chapter 4). Sixteen participants were living away from home: 9 lived in a rooming house, shelter or on the street; 5 lived in a young offenders or group home; 2 lived in a rented house or apartment. The 14 participants who lived at home told me that they spent very little time there. Therefore, parental control was minimal with these youth. In addition, almost all participants were from working class neighbourhoods or government subsidized low-income housing projects. The mean school grade completed was 8.3, with a range of grades from 6 - 10. Many of these youth had dropped out of school, and the remaining youth reported that although they were still registered in school,

¹⁶ See Adams (1988) and Totten, Manton and Baker (1995) for further discussion related to this issue.

they were either failing or frequently absent. The average age of these youth was 15.6 years, with a range of 14 - 17 years. Twenty-seven of these youth were heterosexual, 2 were bisexual, and 1 participant was gay.

3.11 In-Depth Interview Questions

The dialogue in the in-depth interviews was free-flowing. I began by reviewing the completed 1993 interview, and asked the participants the questions indicated below. Although I attempted to maintain the sequence of these questions, this was not possible in many cases. In all interviews, however, the last 5 questions listed below were asked at the end of the interview. These 5 questions focused on defining the participants' behaviour as abusive and challenging them to accept responsibility for this behaviour.

What do you think about your family?

- How do you feel about the way they treat you?
- Was/Is there any abuse between your parents? What type? How often?
- Did/Do you experience any abuse from your parents?
- How have your parents influenced you?
- What kinds of beliefs or values does your family have around male and female roles?

What does it meant to you --- to be male?

Do you think this has anything to do with the way you get along with

- females
- gays
- other guys

I'd like to ask you some questions about your relationships with girlfriends over the past year.

- Have you had a sexual relationship?

If yes: Can you tell me about it?

To assess whether sex was consensual or forced:

- Was verbal pressure used to persuade a female to have sex?
- Were verbal threats used to force a female to have sex?
- Was physical force used to have sex?
- Were drugs and/or alcohol used to overcome resistance?

Please tell me how many times, if any, you have done any of these things to your girlfriends during the past year (repeat Screening Interview Questions for emotional and physical abuse).

I'm a bit worried that I haven't asked the right questions. Have you had any other experiences in which you physically, sexually, or emotionally harmed a girlfriend during the past year?

I'd like to find out about the emotions and feelings that you have/had about the abuse. How does/did it feel to be abusive in a relationship? What kinds of emotions did/do you experience at the time of the abusive incident(s)? Immediately after?

How do you feel about the abuse now?

What do you think led you to be abusive?

Do you think the way you see yourself as a guy has anything to do with you being abusive?

What helped/would help you to stop being abusive?

What kinds of things do you think could have prevented you from being abusive?

3.12 Analyzing the In-Depth Interview Data

Data for the 30 in-depth interviews consisted of detailed, handwritten recordings made by myself during and immediately following each interview. During each interview I noted as much as I could and immediately following the interview transcribed these notes into long form. The narratives were therefore recorded as close to verbatim as possible. This work took approximately 1½ - 2 hours after the 3 hour interview. At most, I was able to conduct 2 interviews per day. These data were analyzed in order to organize the narratives into meaningful patterns around the conceptual categories tested in the 90 screening interviews (the impact of familial patriarchal ideology, masculine identity, male peer group/gang affiliation).

Although I attempted "to document the world from the point of view of the people studied" (Hammersley, 1992: 165), the accounts during the in-depth interviews could not simply be taken at face value. I expected there to be inconsistencies. Given my clinical experience working with abusive male youth, the existing literature on adult male abusers (Gondolf, 1987; Adams, 1988; Ptacek, 1988; Eisikovitz and Edelson, 1989; Scully, 1990), and the screening interviews, it was expected that the participants would rationalize, legitimize, and minimize their behaviour. To make

sense of the participants' accounts, two issues¹⁷ were considered: researcher-participant relationship, and the "truth-status" (Silverman, 1993) of the participants' accounts.

The relationship between me and the participants included issues related to my personal motivation and position, my pro-feminist value orientation (see p.3, Chapter 1), and the transfer from "facilitate the narrative" interviewer role to confrontative counsellor role (Ptacek, 1988) following the collection of the interview data. The in-depth interviews conducted were quasi-clinical¹⁸ in nature. To the best of my knowledge, this type of method has not been attempted before on a similar sample. I could not deny the fact that I was an experienced social worker, nor that the subject matter contained serious ethical dilemmas (see pp.24-27). Accordingly, I felt that I had an ethical and moral obligation to step outside of the traditional sociological interviewer role. In order to ensure the safety of the participants' girlfriends, I understood that I had no choice but to challenge the participants to take responsibility for their abusive behaviour. Given my clinical experience, I anticipated that some participants might become angry or threatening when confronted. In fact, this only occurred in two interviews. In one situation, Mike, a burly 17 year old street youth who had tattoos covering his arms, hands and neck, told me "So you're saying I beat and rape women?...Fuck you! I don't need this shit!" (#42:8). He then abruptly got up and left, slamming the door. This was the only interview in which I feared for my personal safety. In the other case, Curt, also a 17 year old street youth, told me "Fuck you!" (#30:7) and left abruptly when I confronted him about his behaviour. In one other case, Colin, a 16 year old staying at a shelter, told me "I don't need this shit from you" (#69:7) and got up in silence, shuffling his feet at the door for what seemed like an eternity for me. He took my business card and left the room, not making eye

¹⁷ Ptacek (1988) conducted in-depth interviews with a small sample (18) of adult woman abusers who were in a group treatment program for male batterers. He looked at similar issues when analyzing the accounts of his participants.

¹⁸ Quasi-clinical refers to the counselling role I undertook at the end of each interview to challenge these youth to take responsibility for their abusive behaviour. I also counselled some of these youth regarding suicide.

contact with me for quite some time. In this situation, I did not fear for my safety, although I was uncomfortable with Colin shuffling his feet in silence at the door, undecided as to whether to stay or go. I did not know what to expect from him next in this situation.

Related to the counselling role I assumed at the end of each in-depth interview was the fact that 10 of these participants broke down and cried when describing the hopelessness and despair they felt about their economic futures. The participants related these feelings to their perceived masculine deficits. Although all participants were not asked whether they had attempted suicide, I questioned these 10 youth because they appeared to be depressed at this point in the interview. Nine of these participants told me that they had attempted suicide previously, and I assessed 3 of these participants to be at risk for attempting suicide at that point in time. All three were provided with crisis counselling by YSB workers immediately following the interview. Only 3 of the 30 participants followed up on counselling referrals regarding their abusive behaviour. In contrast, 8 of the 12 current or ex-girlfriends of the participants I contacted pursued counselling with a YSB worker regarding their victimization (18 of the participants did not have a girlfriend, or an ex-girlfriend I was able to contact at the time of the in-depth interviews).

The second issue considered when analyzing the data involved the "truth status" (Silverman, 1993) of the participants' accounts. All of the accounts have similar patterns, replete with internal inconsistencies. I will argue in the following chapters that the participants used "socially approved vocabularies" (Scott and Lyman, 1968: 46,52), in which they justified their abusive behaviours. These young men consistently told me that my interpretation of their behaviour was wrong. These youth had a persona to maintain, and their accounts were characterized by elements of boasting, bragging and machismo. Despite the fact that I challenged and probed their understanding of their behaviour, there was a high degree of consistency in their narratives. These youth may not have been articulate enough to verbalize the inconsistencies in their accounts. However, the fact that many of the participants broke down and cried led me to believe that they realized the incongruities in their

accounts. It doesn't really matter if elements of these accounts are untruthful, because the focus of this project is on the perceptions of the participants; how they understood themselves and others. Their accounts are the data. These youth, like any other group of people, lived in socially constructed worlds. More importantly, I believe that the measures used are valid and reliable. Based on my clinical experience with this population, the literature on abusive males, and the similarities in the accounts, the data should be representative of similar samples.

Chapter 4

Acquiring Familial Patriarchal Ideology in Early Childhood

In this chapter the acquisition of familial patriarchal ideology in early childhood is explored. The impact of the participants' common early childhood experiences of being beaten and emotionally abused and witnessing the abuse of their mothers by father figures is discussed. As well, the participants' socialization at home into the ideology of familial patriarchy is examined. Socialization plays a key role in how the participants made sense of their abusive upbringing. It also helps us analyze the participants' understanding of their abusive childhood. The chapter presents examples of the participants' common experiences and analyzes these experiences in light of both how the participants made sense of them and how we can understand the participants' behaviour as a social phenomenon. That is, how we, as outside observers, can better comprehend the participants' world from their viewpoint.

Data consist of detailed recordings made by me during and immediately following each interview. A systematic search for patterns, explanations and meanings in the data provides the insights into the central research questions of this study. These questions are the following: How do these males make sense of their participation in their abusive behaviour? What insights can be derived from using the key concepts that will help us analyze the participants' behaviour in a broader social context?

4.1 Common early childhood experiences:

In the current study, all participants were asked the following questions about their family:

- What do you think about your family?
- How do you feel about the way they treat you?
- Was/is there any abuse between your parents? If yes, what type? How often?
- Did/do you experience any abuse from your parents?
- How have your parents influenced you?

When asked these questions, 24 participants reported incidents throughout their

childhood in which they experienced beatings and severe emotional abuse by father-figures¹⁹. These same 24 participants also reported incidents throughout their childhood in which they witnessed the beatings and severe emotional abuse of their mothers by father-figures. In addition to this group of 24, 2 other participants were unwilling to talk about issues of child abuse and wife assault. Fourteen of these same 24 participants were living at home at the time of the interviews.

The criteria used to classify the participants' reports of these incidents into the categories of beatings and severe emotional abuse are based upon Straus and Gelles' (1986) severe violence index and psychological abuse index of the Conflict Tactics Scale (see p. 29). Beatings included incidents reported by the participants wherein they or their mothers were repeatedly kicked, punched, hit with objects, choked, strapped, burned, thrown down stairs or through walls by father-figures. Injuries requiring medical attention were reported as a result of these beatings, and the police and/or child welfare authorities were reported to be involved as well. Severe emotional abuse included incidents reported by the participants wherein they or their mothers were repeatedly threatened with physical violence or death, screamed at, belittled and humiliated, or had their possessions destroyed by father-figures. It became necessary for me to categorize these actions of father-figures in this way because only a small minority of the participants understood the behaviour in these incidents to be abusive and wrong (see below).

A number of common themes emerge from the participants' accounts of witnessing their mothers being beaten and emotionally abused and being beaten and emotionally abused themselves by father-figures. First, despite the participants' reports of horrific abuse by their fathers, step-fathers, and mothers' boyfriends, only 5 of these males indicated that this behaviour was abusive and wrong. The majority of the participants may have been affected by the abuse (as displayed by depression, suicide attempts and psychological problems). However, they told me that they were treated

¹⁹ I define the term "father-figures" to include the natural fathers, step-fathers, and mothers' boyfriends of the participants.

"okay" or "fine" by their families. This inability to articulate the possible impact of their victimization by severe child abuse supports previous findings in this area (Kivel, 1992). In the following account, Paul, a 16 year old street youth, spoke about his feelings of rejection and hurt. The fact that Paul was adopted at an early age by an aunt and uncle, whom he reported to be caring and loving, probably influenced his ability to tell me about his personal pain:

Paul: I was adopted by my aunt and uncle when I was 2. My Dad broke my jaw when I was a baby. I've never seen my real parents since.

M.T.: That's rough (silence). How does it make you feel - to know that your natural parents hurt you so badly that you had to get another mom and dad?

Paul: Hurt, I guess. I mean they rejected me - almost killed me. I mean, my aunt and uncle took me in and raised me. They're good people. But it still doesn't change the fact that my real mom and dad hurt me so badly - would have killed me, I bet - that I was taken away. I guess I have felt unwanted (silence) (#67: 1-2)

By contrast in the next account Nick, a 17 year old Francophone street youth and gang member, told me that his father tried to kill him when he disclosed that he might be gay. Following this brutal assault at the age of 11 or 12 years, Nick's father and uncle gave him money every week to use prostitutes to "fix" his sexual attraction to males. Although Nick was taken into the care of the Quebec child welfare authority following the assault, and then adopted by his grandparents, his father continued to exert psychological control over Nick through the provision of money for buying services of prostitutes:

Nick: Well, I've never told anybody this. I don't know why the fuck I'm gonna tell you but here goes. I can remember way back wondering what the fuck? I'd get hard-ons for guys and girls. Like I was some kind of pervert. And I'd shoot a load when I was sleeping -but sometimes I'd be dreaming about a guy.

M.T.: Shoot a load?

Nick: A wet dream.

M.T.: Oh yeah. Sorry. I've got a thick head.

Nick: So I thought what the fuck. I was about 11 or 12. I thought I was going crazy. So I asked my fucking Dad. He was some pissed. He kicked the living shit outta me. He threw me through some drywall. He was screaming at me 'No son of mine's gonna be a fuckin' queer! No son of mine's gonna be a fuckin' queer!' Then he put his hands around my throat and held me up against the wall and screamed in my face 'Don't you ever, ever tell anyone what you

just said to me. From now on, it's my rules. You're gonna get fucked every night by a cunt even if it costs me a million dollars'. And that's when I started using 'hos...

At this point in the interview, Nick's eyes glazed over, and he disengaged from the interview for approximately 3 minutes. In the abuse literature, this is referred to as disassociation. Disassociation is reported to be a common coping mechanism used by abuse survivors (for example, see Bass & Davis, 1988; Butler, 1979). Disassociation allows a person to temporarily exit from reality and the emotional pain associated with trauma.

As is clear in his statement when he said, "I think I've got it under control now" (see bottom of this page), Nick suggested he was to blame for the abuse because of his sexual attraction to males. At no point in the interview did Nick tell me that his father's actions were wrong. Instead, Nick indicated that his father's violence was a legitimate attempt to cure him of his homosexual desires. Nick seemed to rationalize his father introducing him to and supporting his use of prostitutes. In fact, Nick told me that most fathers do this with their sons around the age of 12 years. When Nick said to me "and that's when I started using 'hos", it was as if this was a choice he made of his own free will. Nick did not relate it to almost having been killed by his father.

The account continues:

Nick: Yeah. That's why I had to go live with my grandparents. So did my brother and sister. DPJ (Quebec child welfare) took us away for a while and then we were adopted by my grandparents.

M.T. Because of the violence?

Nick: Yeah.

M.T. You know I'll have to call the DPJ just to make sure your Dad isn't abusing any kids.

Nick: I don't give a fuck. Just don't tell him it had anything to do with me. He'd kill me. I'm serious.

M.T. So your Dad would still wire you money even after you got adopted?

Nick: Yeah. We still got to see him.

M.T. I see. So have you ever had sex with a guy?

Nick: Fuck no. I'm too scared. All I can think of is my Dad's hands around my throat. I'll never do that. He'd kill me.

M.T. Do you want to sleep with another guy?

Nick: Kind of. But it's not worth it. I think I've got it under control now.

M.T. What?

Nick: As long as I'm fucking 'hos - those little cunts - pretty often, and I'm fighting a lot, I don't really think of being attracted to another guy. (# 66:9 - 11).

Prior to this section of the interview, Nick told me that his father and uncle were members of a notorious motorcycle gang. Nick described routinely seeing women led around the house on spiked dog chains by male family members, and that his uncle was in jail for murdering a woman. As well, Nick described his sexual relations with prostitutes:

"I fuck them really hard. When I fuck them too hard, they scream. I like it when they scream. I never force them, I always pay... You can't hurt a prostitute" (pp. 3,7)

This is an example of how the participants, like Nick, were engaging in behaviour that in most contexts would be seen as criminal. However, these youth did not see their behaviour as such.

Nick seemed to be able to neutralize the conflicts in his life. For example, Nick was brutally abused and likewise witnessed woman abuse by his father at home, yet justified his own sexual violence against prostitutes. Nick did not present his sexual relationships with prostitutes as involving women. Instead, he told me that prostitutes were "little cunts": inanimate sexual objects. Nick routinely beat up gays on the street with his gang, yet had homosexual desires. Finally, despite almost being killed and his ongoing fear of being killed by his father due to his sexual orientation, Nick suggested this was his own problem: "I think I've got it under control now".

Another common theme which emerges during the participants' accounts of their early childhood was being told by abusive father-figures to either abuse or not abuse women. Thirteen participants were routinely instructed by father-figures who were abusing their mothers and themselves to physically, sexually and/or emotionally abuse women. Eight participants were routinely told not to abuse women by abusive father-figures. Two participants experienced both sets of instructions from different father-figures. On a related theme, striking differences are apparent in the participant's

articulation of their mother's beatings and severe emotional abuse. The majority of the participants who witnessed their natural fathers abuse their mothers (11 out of 12) reported these assaults as justifiable and caused by their mother. By contrast, the majority (10 out of 12) of these youth who saw their mothers being abused by other father-figures (step-fathers, boyfriends) presented these assaults as wrong. The next section "Socialization into the ideology of familial patriarchy" explores these issues further.

In the following account, Nolan, a 17 year old aboriginal Satanic cult member who resided at home, told me about how every single male family member (natural father, step-father, grand-father, uncle) had been abusive towards female family members and/or himself. He was severely abused as a child and explained how this had left him feeling "worthless - like a piece of shit". Nolan had attempted suicide a number of times, routinely cut his forearms with knives, and reported being manic-depressive²⁰. Nolan's ability to talk about the impact of this abuse was probably related to his history of psychiatric involvement.

Nolan: Yeah. My real Dad beat my Mom. And I've been told that he ritually abused me.

M.T. Really. what happened?

Nolan: I guess he burned and strapped me a lot. I was too young to remember.

M.T. So who told you that you were ritually abused?

Nolan: My Mom and shrinks. I've had a few of them. My step-Dad's not much better. He's been really violent. He threatens to kick the shit outta me. Once he slapped my Mom. She kicked him in the nuts. He's told me lots of times that if a girl hits you or touches you where you don't want to be touched, punch her out. I guess you could say the men in my family don't treat women very well. My uncle's told me that if you do things for a girl, she's got to fuck you. My grandfather and my real Dad put women down all the time. They call them 'Hey bitch, you goddam whore' all the time. I know my grand-father sexually assaulted 2 of my cousins.

M.T. That's no picnic. It must be rough.

Nolan: Yeah.

M.T. How do you think that has affected you?

Nolan: Well, I think I'm worthless - like a piece of shit. I guess it's been all the put-downs and physical violence. It gets to you after a while. I've seen

²⁰ Nolan informed me that his psychiatrist told him he was manic-depressive.

psychiatrists at the hospital (pseud). I'm on medication. They say I'm a manic-depressive.

M.T. What does that mean to you?

Nolan: That I'm pretty fucked up. (# 71: 2-3)

Nolan did not say there was anything wrong with his step-father telling him repeatedly "if a girl hits you or touches you where you don't want to be touched, punch her out", or his uncle telling him that "if you do things for a girl, she's got to fuck you". Later on in the interview, Nolan told me: "My uncle always says to me 'She's gotta fuck you. She's gotta. You're doing stuff for her so she's gotta fuck you'. He doesn't think there's any choice" (laughing). I asked Nolan: "Is your uncle right?" Nolan replied: "I dunno (serious). Maybe (long silence). I guess he is" (p.4)

Nolan reported that he could understand how being severely abused himself "got to him after a while", and how it has caused him to have serious psychological problems and to attempt to take his own life a number of times. However, he did not identify his own abusive behaviour against his girlfriend as causing her similar suffering. Nolan stated that "the men in my family don't treat women very well". Throughout the interview, however, Nolan distanced himself from his male relatives. It is interesting that on the one hand, Nolan seemed to neutralize his own abusiveness, but on the other hand he could identify the abusive behaviour of the other men in his family. As well, Nolan did not question being told to abuse women by male family members. Ironically, Nolan's uncle who instructed him to sexually abuse women was the same uncle whose 2 daughters were sexually assaulted by Nolan's grandfather (his uncle's father).

In this next account, Paul, a gay 17 year old, explained to me how his violent father would tell him, after beating his mother, "don't hit women". Paul told me that his father's abusiveness was wrong, and that at a young age he decided that the only way not to be like his father was to be gay.

Paul: ... And I hustled for 2 months right after I left home - that would have been over a year ago.

M.T. You hustled?

Paul: Yeah. On Mackenzie. You know. I was turning tricks for bucks. I had no money. I guess I should tell you I'm gay... I was still in the closet then. My

Dad's an alcoholic. Everyone had to listen to him. He was the boss and he solved everything by violence. If he didn't like dinner, he beat my mom. He put my Mom's head through dry walls, hit her chest with a hammer. When he broke her wrist, I called 911. Every day, it was 'You're stupid. You can't cook, clean. You'll never do anything.' He'd say to me 'I'll kill you. I dare you to try to hit me. It will get even worse.' Then he would tell me 'Don't hit women' (silence). They found out I was gay a while ago. Ever since then, they've been bugging me about sleeping with women.

M.T. I can see why you got out of there when you did. It must have been rough.

Paul: Yeah (silence). The guys I know are all queens (drag queens). I hang out with lots of women.... Well, I see my Mom occasionally. No one else. They all fucked me too bad. I mean, a guy can only get hurt so much and then he moves on...

I don't think it's any coincidence that I discovered I was gay so young, and that I did this with my Dad being so verbally and physically violent. What a role model. And being adopted on top of that! I think I rejected all that typical male bullshit at an early age because of him. I mean. I've never fought guys, never played sports, and obviously I haven't been keeping track of all the broads I've recently laid (laughing)...

At first it was hard. I was suicidal for a while. And hustling on MacKenzie was weird. I mean I hadn't come out to anyone but I knew I was gay. I had no money and no place to stay. And I had had no emotional attachment to anyone. (# 36: 2-6)

When Paul stated "I mean, a guy can only get hurt so much and then he moves on", he employed a common, everyday expression ("move on") to describe his own radical lifestyle change. Paul suggested that by rejecting his father's heterosexuality, he would break the cycle of violence. In fact, Paul not only turned to a gay lifestyle; he now only associated with drag queens (most of whom prostituted as women), gays, and straight women. Paul was the only participant who reported his natural father's wife abuse as wrong. As for being told by his Dad "don't hit women", Paul never did. Instead, he sexually and emotionally abused 2 girlfriends while he was still "in the closet" regarding his sexual orientation. Pretending that he was heterosexual, Paul told me that he abused his girlfriends "for social approval" (p.4). Paul did not identify his own abusiveness as in any way being related to his father's behaviour, perhaps because he decided that he was gay. His father, of course, was not gay. However, when Paul abused his girlfriends, he was pretending to be heterosexual. Paul did not verbalize

the inconsistency in this situation.

In this next excerpt, John, a 16 year old living at home with his mother, used humour to avoid talking about the suffering he and his mother endured because of his natural father's violence. John made sense of his father's abusiveness by rationalizing it; he explained how his father was an alcoholic and unemployed. John laughed when telling me how his father always told him 'never hit a girl, no matter what'. Although he indicated an understanding of the irony of his father's words, John did not relate his own abusive behaviour with girlfriends as being wrong or in anyway similar to the behaviour of his father. He told me at the end of the account "I've never hit a girl. I'm not like my Dad".

John: ...Yeah. He's an alcoholic though. He's in AA now. He used to beat the shit outta me and my mom. I was too young to remember. I know he tried to choke me once (laughing). He didn't succeed. When he's drunk, I don't know what he's capable of. I know he beat my Mom real bad. And he threatened her - he said he was gonna kill her all the time. Funny thing is, he always tells me 'Never hit a girl, no matter what'. What a laugh. Him telling me that. He's one to talk, he is. Tried to kill both of us and all. He's unemployed now though. I don't have the balls to tell him where to go. Maybe I will when he starts working. But I know it's different for guys and girls. It's bad if you hit a girl. Girls are weaker, I'd never hit a girl. Never. But now if she started beating on me first, I think I'd probably hit her back - just to protect myself and all.

M.T. It sounds like your home was pretty rough.

John: Yeah. I guess so.

M.T. Do you think you have been affected by any of that?

John: Yeah. Of course. I mean I've learned the hard way why a guy can't hit a girl. I'll never do that. I saw how much it hurt my Mom.

M.T. And you too.

John: Yeah (silence, eyes tearing) I've never hit a girl. I'm not like my Dad... (#53:1)

A final common theme which emerges during the participants' accounts of their early childhood was protecting mothers and paying back boyfriends and stepfathers for the beatings. Six of the 12 participants who witnessed their mothers being abused by men other than their natural fathers told me that they used violence to protect their mothers from the abuse. None of the 12 participants who witnessed their natural fathers abuse their mothers told me that they attempted to stop their father's

abusiveness. This is not surprising, given that 11 of these same 12 participants seemed to justify their natural father's wife abuse. (See next section on "Socialization into the ideology of familial patriarchy", for further discussion on this issue). Similarly, 10 of the 12 participants who witnessed their mothers being abused by men other than their natural fathers (including the 6 who used violence to protect their mother) told me that they beat up stranger-rapists and woman-beaters in their community as part of regular gang activities. By contrast, only 3 of the 12 participants who witnessed their natural fathers abuse their mothers reported engaging in similar activities. Chapter 6 "Group/Gang Affiliations", will explore this issue in greater detail.

In the following account, Don, a 15 year old residing in an open custody young offender facility, justified being charged with threatening to kill his mother and sister. He told me that "they stole my liquor at home. They're both alcoholics". He matter-of-factly spoke of his violent, chaotic home life.

M.T. So what is it like at home? Were there ever any fights or arguments?

Don: I don't have much to do with them. I got charged with uttering threats against my sister and my mom. I told them I was gonna kill them. They stole my liquor at home. They're both alcoholics. My Mom's ex-boyfriend, I punched him in the head. He tried to break her leg and I chased him out with a baseball bat. He beat on me and my sister all the time. I told him 'if you hit her, I'll kill you'. And my step-Dad, I'll punch him out if he touches my sister. He always calls them 'bitch'. Once my sister knocked me out. She hit me over the head with a billy club. I punched her back when I woke up. (#13: 2)

Don described using violence to protect himself, his mother and sister at home. However, he seemed to legitimate his own threats made against his mother and sister. The abusiveness at home was so routine that after being knocked out by his sister with a billy club, it was perfectly normal to have "punched her back when I woke up".

In this final account, William, a 15 year old gang member, told me how he paid one of his mother's boyfriends back for abusing both her and himself. Despite having his head put through a wall by his mother's boyfriend, he told me that his family treated him "okay, I guess."

M.T. ...Okay. What do you think about your family? I mean, how do they treat you?

William: Okay, I guess.... I think some of them hit her. I dunno. I remember they called her 'you fucking bitch' all the time. This one asshole used to say to me

'I'm hitting you because I can't hit her'. He threatened to put my head through a wall - and he did it. I slashed the fucker's tires and cracked his head with a crowbar. Me and my buddies are tracking some of them down. We gotta pay them back...Yeah. They used to say 'if any bitch fools with you, smack her.' (#58: 2-3)

Like many of the other participants, William seemed to make sense of the abuse at home by distancing himself from his mother's boyfriend: "I slashed the fucker's tires and cracked his head with a crowbar". Although William prided himself on "paying them back", he didn't verbalize any inconsistency when he told me "Yeah. They used to say 'If any bitch fools with you, smack her'". He told me later on in the interview that it was okay for a guy to hit his girlfriend "if she hits him first, fucks around, you know, turned into a slut or got into porno" (p.7). It is interesting that on the one hand, William indicated that his mother's boyfriend's assaults were wrong, and worthy of revenge. However, on the other hand, he agreed with their (his mother's boyfriends) instructions to use physical force against other women should they violate certain feminine codes of behaviour. This apparent inconsistency in Williams' account is illustrative of the other narratives. These young men appeared to be confused and at times terrified by the violence in their lives.

4.2 Socialization into the ideology of familial patriarchy:

In order to better understand the participant's interpretation of their early childhood experiences, I now examine the findings related to their socialization into the ideology of familial patriarchy. In Chapter 2, familial patriarchal ideology is defined as a set of beliefs that legitimize male power and authority over women in marriage or in a marriage-like arrangement. The ideals of familial patriarchy are suggested to be the requirements of female obedience, respect, loyalty, dependency, sexual access, and sexual fidelity (Smith, 1990). Patriarchy is defined as "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (Walby, 1990). The concept of patriarchy implies both a structure, in which men have more power and privilege than women, and an ideology that legitimizes male

dominance (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Eisenstein, 1980; Messerschmidt, 1986; Smith, 1990; Walby, 1990).

A number of themes emerged when I asked the participants about the kinds of beliefs and values their parent(s) had around male and female roles, and if they thought that their parents' beliefs had influenced them. Twenty-seven of the participants described rigid, patriarchal gender roles of their mothers and father-figures in their natural families. They reported that their mothers did all of the cooking, cleaning and childcare. They defined their father-figures as breadwinners and "bringing home the bacon"²¹, despite the fact that most of these men were unemployed and dependent upon their partner's Family Benefits (social assistance) cheque or upon their own government cheque. These men were characterized as being the boss and in control of virtually all aspects of family life. The remaining 3 participants who did not define familial roles as such had no father-figure in their home at the time of the interview. Of these same 27 participants, 24 told me that they witnessed their father-figure(s) repeatedly beat and degrade their mothers, and these same 24 youth likewise had been chronically abused by these same father-figures.

Not surprisingly, almost all of the participants appeared to have internalized the patriarchal value set modelled at home at a very young age. When asked what they thought about the following familial patriarchal beliefs, 26 of the 30 respondents told me that they agreed with one or more of these statements:

- A male has the right to decide whether or not his wife/girlfriend should go out in the evening with her friends
- A male has the right to decide whether or not his wife/girlfriend should work outside the home
- Sometimes it is important for a male to show his wife/girlfriend that he is the head of the house
- A male has the right to have sex with his wife/girlfriend when he wants, even though she may not want to

It must be stressed that adherence to one or more of these beliefs is likely quite

²¹ In many families these beliefs and values could also be described as "traditional", and involve no abusive behaviour.

common in the general population, and in most of these instances there is no associated abusive behaviour. However, the situations of the participants in this study were very different. Not only did these youth adhere to familial patriarchal beliefs, but almost all participants supported the use of violence against women if they failed to meet the expectations of what they called "the good bitch". These expectations are described by Smith (1990), and include the following ideals of familial patriarchy: obedience, respect, loyalty, dependency, sexual access, sexual fidelity. When asked what they thought of the following statements, 27 of the 30 participants told me that they agreed with a male slapping his girlfriend in one or more of these situations:

- She won't do what he tells her to do
- She insults him when they are home alone
- She insults him in public
- She comes home drunk
- She is sobbing hysterically
- She won't have sex with him
- He learns that she is dating another male

In summary, twenty-five participants adhered to at least one familial patriarchal belief along with at least one attitude supporting the abuse of women. In addition, 2 participants agreed with at least one attitude supporting woman abuse, and one participant adhered only to familial patriarchal beliefs. Only 2 participants did not adhere to any of these beliefs or attitudes.

In this next account, Phil, a 14 year old living at home, demonstrated that he had already internalized the patriarchal value set of his family:

M.T. ... So who does the cooking and cleaning at home?

Phil: (snorting) Who else? The old lady of course. It's only right that way.

M.T. Oh?

Phil: Yeah. If a guy does that shit, he'll only get nagged anyway. I mean, the guy brings home the money, pays the bills, the food, and puts clothes on her back.

M.T. But your Dad doesn't work.

Phil: So. He's the head of the house. He makes all the decisions.

M.T. So what happens if the guy's girlfriend or wife doesn't think that's the way things should be?

Phil: Of course he's gotta keep her in line. Like if she disses me in front of my friends, that would be embarrassing. I'd punch her out. If she's fucking around on me or beats on me, I'd punch her out. If she won't fuck when I'm

ready, I'd just go fuck someone else.

M.T. So you and your older brother - they think this way too?

Phil: Of course. That's why they have holes - to fuck. Barefoot and pregnant. That's the way it should be. (#6:2)

Clearly, Phil made sense of his world through a familial patriarchal lens. He indicated that this gender order is moral and natural, because "that's the way it should be". He made sense of the beatings by his natural father of his mother by seeing these assaults as justified; Phil told me "of course he's gotta keep her in line". Clearly, Phil also supported the use of violence against women who failed to conform to the roles ascribed to them in this patriarchal world. Phil told me that his Dad was the head of the house and made all the decisions because he "brings home the money, pays the bills, the food and puts clothes on her back." It made no difference to Phil that his father didn't work. After all, "it's only right that way".

Steve, a 15 year old youth who lived at home with his natural parents, also did not indicate an awareness of the apparently incongruent situation with his unemployed father being the "boss" despite depending upon his wife's welfare cheque. Steve uncritically internalized the rigid gender order modelled at home, telling me "It's only right":

Steve: ... My Dad makes the decisions, if that's what you mean. He's the boss of the house. It's only right. I'm gonna bring in the money, so I'll make the decisions and put down the rules. So it's only fair that the man decides what to do - he brings home the dollars. It'll be the same with me. The woman should stay at home and look after the kids. That's what my mom does and it works. Because it works, it's important that everyone understands that my Dad's in charge.

M.T. So what happens if your Mom doesn't like it?

Steve: She does. I mean sometimes my Dad has to set her straight to remind her who's boss. But it all works out. That's the way it should be and that's the way I'm gonna run my house.

M.T. But your Dad hasn't really worked much - and the welfare cheque goes to your mother.

Steve: So. It's still his money. And even if he hasn't worked much, he's been looking for work. And like I said, he usually has worked 1 or 2 weeks every year. My Mom has never worked.

M.T. You told me she looks after kids at home. Doesn't she get paid for that?

Steve: Yeah. But it's not really work. It's only woman's work. It doesn't really

count. I mean compared to my Dad's work, it's nothing (long silence)...

M.T. So why don't you hang out with girls?

Steve: They're pussies. I'm no faggot. We look at them and pick them up. But hang out with them? I don't think so. They're not my friends. They're just not. A guy's friends with guys only. Females, you know you can't trust them. What good are pussies for? Fucking. That's about it. They'll try to fuck you if you don't fuck them first.

M.T. When you say females will fuck you - is that the same as guys fucking them?

Steve: (laughing) Of course not. When guys fuck, it's wham bam thank you ma'am (gyrating pelvis, holding arms out, simulating sexual intercourse). When a bitch fucks a guy, that's making him look stupid. It has nothin' to do with sex (laughing). You don't think this is funny (silence). I guess not. Well, someday maybe you will (silence).

It's not just fucking in bed. When a girl goes with a guy, she's his. She can't do that shit. It's like an agreement with her boyfriend. If she can't live up to her end of the deal, she's got what's coming to her. (#87:2-3, 9-10)

Like Phil, Steve witnessed his natural father beat his mother, and seemed to rationalize it as justifiable. Steve saw his Dad's treatment of his mother as natural:

"I mean sometimes my Dad has to set her straight to remind her who's boss. But it all works out. That's the way it should be and that's the way I'm gonna run my house".

Steve also made many misogynist statements. In his eyes, women cannot be trusted, let alone be your friend. Instead, they are inanimate sexual objects, "pussies". Parallel to his portrayal of his mother as being a piece of property belonging to his father, Steve told me "When a girl goes with a guy, she's his." Likewise, just as Steve devalued his mother's childrearing ("It's only woman's work. It doesn't really count. It's nothing"), the only role he saw fit for girls ("pussies") was "fucking". Finally, in Steve's patriarchal world view, like that of his father's, there were clear consequences for girls who stepped outside of their roles. He told me:

"It's like an agreement with her boyfriend. If she can't live up to her end of the deal, she's got what's coming to her".

In the following account, Colin, a 16 year old Francophone street youth, described his need to fight back against "all this equal rights bullshit". Characterizing his mother as a "bitch" and a "fool", he told me that she "fucked him (his father) bad" after the separation, because she kept the house and:

Colin: ... My Dad's in a shithole apartment. My mom kept the house when they split - in Luskville (laughing sarcastic voice).

M.T. So you didn't agree with that?

Colin: Fuck no. My Dad earned the bacon. He brought home the money. He shoulda got the house. She's nothin' without him. It's not fair. A man makes the decisions at home. He's the head of the joint. The woman should stay at home. It's the woman's job. Men don't do dishes. They don't do nothin' inside. He's doing the real work. He's got the pay cheque. Fuck her if she just wants to go out with her friends and shit. He shouldn't let her.

M.T. So why did your parents split? Were there any arguments or fights?

Colin: It was constant arguing, my Dad with my Mom. But it was always mutual putdowns. He never assaulted her or nothin'. Once he threw an axe at me. I was 10. I guess he was pretty violent with me. But that bitch never shoulda kicked him out. He's got no bitch now. She's a fool. On welfare and all. I mean he provided for her (silence).

M. T. You sound pissed off at your mom.

Colin: Big time. She fucked him bad.

M.T. So was there any violence between them?

Colin: No, never. My Mom and Dad always told me not to hit girls. Girls are weaker and they can't defend themselves. It's different for guys. It's sad to hit girls. But they want all this equal rights bullshit. And we can't lay a hand on them. They've got all the fuckin' rights they need. It's time to give some back. (#69:2)

Colin's anger and hatred of women appeared to be rooted in his understanding of his home life. There are many inconsistencies in Colin's account, none of which he pointed out. In the above excerpt, Colin denied that his father assaulted his mother, yet described beatings to me later on in the interview. He seemed to be able to neutralize the fact that "Once he (Dad) threw an axe at me. I was 10." The reason for this may be found in his statement "My Mom and Dad always told me not to hit girls". Although his father told him this, Colin witnessed him (Dad) beating his mother²². Further, Colin totally devalued everything about his mother, referring to her as "that bitch". Colin appeared to believe that his mother deserved to be beaten. He indicated that she, along with all women in general, had stolen the rights of men. Colin's struggle with this issue is apparent when he told me:

²² Despite telling me that "he never assaulted her or nothin'" (p. 59), Colin told me later on that his father beat his mother.

"It's sad to hit girls. But they want all this equal rights bullshit. And we can't lay a hand on them. They've got all the fuckin' rights they need."

This account is representative of the other narratives, in that Colin denied that he abused his girlfriends, and seemed to justify his behaviour by blaming women for stepping outside of their traditional roles.

In this final account, Dillon, a 14 year old living in an open custody young offender facility, expressed many disturbingly misogynistic beliefs. It soon became apparent to me that his value system was rooted in his understanding of the cause of his father's unemployment: his mother working as a secretary! Dillon's account is rich with conflicting statements, none of which he seemed able to recognize.

M.T. Do you like girls?

Dillon: (silence) No. Not really. (silence) I hate those bitches. Fucking cunts.

M.T. Why?

Dillon: They're all the same, you know.

M.T. Really.

Dillon: Yeah. Always trying to show you up - be better than you. I hate it when a girl does that to me. It's as if they're telling the whole world 'Look at that idiot. He can't even get a job. He can't even get it up'. They're always trying to make us look bad. So fuck em. I'll get them before they get me. Now take my mother. She's a nice woman and all, but she makes more money than my Dad. He's sitting at home on the pog (U.I.) or welfare and she's out having a ball working.

M.T. As a secretary.

Dillon: Exactly. She's out doing whatever the fuck she wants while he's at home too embarrassed to go out. She doesn't mean it but it's like she's pussywhipping him.

M.T. Oh?

Dillon: Yeah. It's like she was fucking around on him. Well she is, in a way. She's doing what he's supposed to be doing. It's like she's walking around with some other guy's dick in her, and everyone's laughing at my Dad. That bothers me.

M.T. So you're angry at your Mom because she works full time and makes more money than your Dad?

Dillon: Yeah.

M.T. Is she screwing around on him?

Dillon: Not with another guy. But she's screwing with his job.

M.T. His job?

Dillon: Yeah. He's the one who should be working.

M.T. She's a secretary. You mean your Dad should be a secretary?

Dillon: Fuck no. He's not a pinko-queer. But she's working so he can't...

M.T. I'm still trying to figure out how come you hate women so much. Is it just your mother?

Dillon: Fuck no. That's part of it. But she's no different than any other bitch out

there. Those cunts have all taken this equal rights bullshit too far. It's hard enough for a man to get a job now, let alone when all the bitches want to work too. It was never like that. When girls used to stay at home to do the cooking and shit, they never took a man's job away. Now those little cunts think they've got balls. They think they can take all our jobs and at the same time they tell us 'Don't lay a hand on me. I'll have you up on assault charges' or they'll cry 'rape'. Who the fuck do those little cunts think they are? It's not fair. That's why I hate those little bitches. Equal rights has sweet fuck all to do with it. They just want us guys to look like a piece of shit. (#25:7 - 10).

Although Dillon denied that his hatred of women originated from his hatred of his mother, his account suggests this to be the case. Prior to the above excerpt, Dillon described to me a brutal patriarchal home, witnessing numerous beatings of his mother by his father. Dillon seemed to be able to justify these beatings because he saw his mother as having stepped outside of her natural and acceptable role. In fact, although Dillon initially denied that his father beat him, he inadvertently told me about his Children's Aid Society (C.A.S.) worker after the interview. I later found out that Dillon was a C.A.S. ward because of his father's beatings.

Dillon was probably talking about his mother when he told me:

"But she's no different than any other bitch out there. Those cunts have taken this equal rights bullshit too far. It's hard enough for a man to get a job now let alone when all the bitches want to work too...When girls used to stay at home to do the cooking and shit, they never took a man's job away. Now those little cunts think they have balls".

Dillon used sexual imagery when he talked about how his mother had humiliated his father by working as a secretary:

"...it's like she's pussywhipping him... It's like she's walking around with some other guy's dick in her and everyone's laughing at my Dad."

To Dillon, it would appear that a job was a penis. Only men can work outside the home. Women like his mother "think they've got balls" when they work. Because she was not at home, Dillon indicated that his mother was unfaithful. Dillon made sense of his father's unemployment by blaming his mother for taking his job. In Dillon's patriarchal world, fathers are supposed to be the breadwinners and the "pussywhippers". By working, Dillon suggested that his mother not only had taken his

father's job (despite stating that his father can't be a secretary because "he's not a pinko-queer"), but had rendered him (his father) sexually impotent.

Despite being only 14 years old, Dillon's internalization of his father's patriarchal value set and abusive behaviour is striking. Dillon seemed to justify his violent, chaotic family life with the help of his familial patriarchal beliefs. Seen in this light, everything made sense to Dillon: his father's unemployment, his mother working outside the home, the child abuse, and the wife-beating. Within this context, Dillon's girlfriend abuse makes perfect sense as well. After all, girls "just want us guys to look like a piece of shit". The way in which he presented his abusive childhood is illustrative of the other accounts. Familial patriarchal beliefs seem to play a crucial role in justifying abusive experiences. Further, it would be surprising if these young men did not adhere to an ideology of familial patriarchy. They were acting according to values modelled by their families.

Discussion

The data on the early childhood experiences of the participants verify and expand upon those issues raised in the literature reviewed. The findings of my study suggest confirmation of reports of many previous studies regarding the serious consequences of witnessing wife assault and being victimized by child abuse (for example, Kazdin et al., 1985; Wolfe et al., 1985; Deukin, 1985; Jaffe et al., 1986; Aber et al., 1989; Allen and Tarnowski, 1989; Jaffe and Reitzel, 1990; Mangold and Koski, 1990; Jaffe et al., 1990; Fantuzzo et al., 1991; Holden and Ritchie, 1991; Kaufman, 1991; Wind and Sivers, 1992). Most participants did not indicate that they had been adversely affected by this abuse or even defined their victimization as abusive. However, they experienced many of the indicators of abuse described in the literature. These indicators include: criminal behaviour, suicide attempts, depressive symptomatology and emotional problems, psychological distress, abuse perpetration against family members, peers, strangers, and girlfriends.

How can we make sense of the participant's description of their mother's and

their own victimization by their father figures? The literature reviewed does not examine this issue in any great detail. It is common for boys to lack the language necessary to describe their pain and suffering associated with being victimized (for example, see Kivel, 1992). Talking about being victimized and the associated feelings was not presented by the participants to be masculine (see Chapter 5). As well, the adherence to familial patriarchal beliefs by virtually all of the participants may have significantly influenced the way in which they understood their childhood. These beliefs seem to play a role in legitimizing and rationalizing a terrifying childhood.

The data suggest that the participant's familial patriarchal beliefs provide a common lens through which they interpreted their own and their mother's victimization. The participants indicated that their birth fathers had a natural and moral authority to enforce a strictly gendered behavioural code. The beatings and emotional abuse were justifiable, normal, and acceptable. After all, one day they too would be the boss, ruler of their home. Viewed through this lens, conflicting instructions by these same fathers to either abuse or not abuse women did not appear to be incongruent to the participants. In contrast, the majority of participants who were victimized and witnessed their mother's victimization by other father-figures (step-fathers, boyfriends) indicated that these assaults were wrong. They did not portray these males as being the legitimate heads of their families. Instead, they reported their natural fathers to be the only legitimate rulers of the house. As a result, one-half of these same participants fought back against their step-father's and mother's boyfriend's abusiveness. In contrast, none of the participants who witnessed or were victimized by their natural father's abusiveness retaliated against him with violence.

I am suggesting that the participants' girlfriend abuse is linked to the fact that they witnessed father-figures abuse their mothers. They were also brutally abused by these same father-figures. De Maris (1987), Gwartney-Gibbs et al. (1987), Marshall and Rose (1987, 1988), Breslin et al. (1990), and Foo and Margolin (1995), among others, have previously suggested this link. Do existing concepts help us understand this association? Proponents of the intergenerational transmission of violence theory maintain that adult violence between intimates is learned by experiencing or witnessing

violence in the family of origin (Widom, 1989). Carroll (1977) and Herrenkohl et al. (1983), amongst others, report that direct imitation, displacement of anger from parents to children, the use of aggression as a coping strategy, and elevated frustration, tension, and sensitivity to power imbalances are a result of being raised in a conflictual, coercive, and low-warmth family and are possible ways aggression is transmitted.

Kaufman and Zigler (1993) and Langhinrichsen - Rahling et al. (1995) criticize this theory for its lack of empirical support, its gender insensitivity, its failure to distinguish witnessing from experiencing child abuse, and its failure to explain how youth may learn to become violent in extra-familial contexts. My data may support some of the criticisms levelled at the intergenerational transmission theorists by Kaufman and Zigler (1993) and Langhinrichsen - Rahling et al. (1995). Clearly, none of the participants in my study reported witnessing their mothers beat father-figures or reported being beaten themselves by their mothers²³. Instead, all reported beatings were male-perpetrated. Further, the intergenerational transmission theory cannot explain why only some of the participants reported perpetrating abuse at home, and all of them were abusive in extra-familial contexts. Finally, the potential role played by attitudes and extra-familial factors (such as familial patriarchal ideology, masculine identity, peer/gang affiliation) are not addressed by these theorists. Despite these limitations, many elements of this research are useful in examining the current project.

An expanded version of Bandura's (1973) modelling theory of aggression may be useful as well in examining the link between the participants' victimization by child abuse, witnessing the abuse of their mothers, and their perpetration of girlfriend abuse. Bandura and others hypothesize that children learn to behave aggressively by modelling aggressive behaviours they have seen by other family members. Jaffe et al. (1986) hypothesize that children who witness wife assault tend to learn that conflict is resolved through violence, violence is a normal part of family interaction, and that

²³ Just because participants did not report being beaten or witnessing mothers beat fathers does not mean that it didn't happen. It may be more shameful to admit that a woman would dare beat or injure a man.

violence is an acceptable way to manage stress. Although none of the participants in my study portrayed their behaviour to be in any way modelling that of their father-figures, the similarities are undeniable. This theory is useful in that it makes the behavioural links between child abuse, witnessing wife assault, and girlfriend abuse clearer.

Both modelling and intergenerational theories are helpful in explaining the participants' presentation of their common early childhood experiences. The participants may have learned the behaviour of their father-figures during their childhood, along with their parents' familial patriarchal world view. This behaviour, attitudes and beliefs may have been acquired at the same time.

This data on the socialization into the ideology of familial patriarchy in the early childhood of the participants verifies and expands upon those issues raised in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The feminist body of work on patriarchy and woman abuse is largely based upon the reports of female survivors of male violence in the adult population (Brownmiller, 1976; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Russell, 1984, 1990; Okun, 1986; Smith, 1990). Based upon these data, researchers have made untested assumptions about the patriarchal motivations of adult male abusers (Liddle, 1989). This research suggests that adherence to an ideology of familial patriarchy is a risk-marker for abusive behaviour. Further, low income males are suggested to have higher rates of adherence to these beliefs (as well as higher rates of physical wife assault) compared to middle class adult men (Straus et al, 1981; Smith, 1986, 1990; Kennedy and Dutton, 1989, 1990; Lupri, 1990).

With a few exceptions, the concept of patriarchy is not included in any consistent way in existing research on girlfriend abuse. The few studies which address this issue are quantitative and focus on a college/university population (DeKeseredy and Kelly, 1993b; Foo and Margolin, 1995). There are no previous qualitative studies exploring the role of patriarchy in girlfriend abuse by marginal male youth. Finally, scant attention is paid in this body of research to how children acquire familial patriarchal value sets. Instead, researchers such as Kanin (1967) and DeKeseredy (1990) assume that patriarchal practices are developed in peer groups in high school or

university settings. Although not specific to girlfriend abuse, the literature on working-class counter-school cultures suggests that sexism plays a key role in those school settings, wherein young boys devalue and objectify girls (Willis, 1977, McRobbie, 1980; Spender, 1982; McLaren, 1986) and behave with a sense of superiority (Willis, 1977; McLaren, 1986).

The data in my study suggest that the participants initially acquired their familial patriarchal belief systems in their natural families at a very young age. These families were characterized by rigid gender roles and father-figures who beat and emotionally abused the participants and their mothers. The participants acquired a common lens through which to view their contradictory and terrifying childhoods. They made sense of their own and their mother's victimization by abusive father-figures by adhering to patriarchal beliefs. This finding challenges Kanin (1967) and DeKeseredy's (1990) assumption that the male peer group is the primary source of patriarchal practices among males.

It seemed to make perfect sense to participants that their natural fathers, whom they portrayed as the legitimate rulers of their home, beat and degraded their mothers for not obeying house rules. The participants who witnessed their mothers being abused by men other than their natural fathers indicated that those assaults were unjustified. These men, not being their natural fathers, could not be the natural heads of their families. However, irrespective of whether they presented their mother's victimization to be right or wrong, they internalized patriarchal beliefs and attitudes supporting the use of violence against women who violated these beliefs. Further, the majority of the participants seemed to be able to legitimize their own beatings and emotional abuse by father-figures and denied there to be any negative consequences as a result of these assaults. The participants' description of their own victimization makes sense when we consider that most of these adolescents portrayed father-figures as being the natural rulers of their families who had to be obeyed at all costs.

These findings verify and expand upon Bandura's (1973) concept of social learning and Ulbrich and Huber's (1981) and Smith and William's (1992) assumption that being abused as a child and witnessing wife assault can lead to the formation of

pro-abuse beliefs. Unlike Ulbrich and Huber (1981) and Smith and Williams (1992), however, I am suggesting that the formation of patriarchal beliefs in boys, (which may be associated with attitudes supporting violence against women) may also be rooted in witnessing and experiencing severe and prolonged abuse from a male caregiver. I am proposing a more dynamic conceptualization in the patriarchal belief formation of girlfriend abusers. The development of this belief system in these boys initially may have been an effective mechanism to cope with childhoods characterized by male-perpetrated abuse. I am therefore suggesting that the participants in my study acquired their patriarchal and pro-abuse beliefs at such an early age for a number of reasons: they modelled the patriarchal and abusive behaviour of their father-figures; these beliefs helped them understand the traumatic abuse at home; and they received explicit instructions from male family members to abuse women if they stepped outside of their expected roles.

The findings in this section suggest support for the hypothesis of feminist researchers that perceived threat to patriarchal power is a key motive for woman abuse by adult men. In addition, support is found for the feminist assumption that patriarchal husbands may beat their wives. However, in contrast to previous data, my data on these abusive father-figures comes from the sons, not the wives, of these men. Half of the participants were from homes where the father-figure never or rarely worked. Instead, these men depended upon the participant's mother's welfare cheque or their own government cheque for an income. These men had no economic power base to legitimize their patriarchal power, yet the participants nevertheless indicated that they were the breadwinners and the heads of their families. The participants did not suggest there was any inconsistency with an unemployed breadwinner ruling their family. My findings in this area verify and expand upon Rubin's (1976) explanation of the differential impact of eroding patriarchal power on individuals in different social classes. Rubin argues that working class males are socialized into a role of dominance, aggression, and power; however, they are unable to wield this power outside of their family, primarily because of their lack of authority in the workplace. Rubin therefore hypothesizes that working class males are more likely to overtly

dominate female partners. Applied to my data, Rubin's argument makes sense: all of the father-figures who physically and emotionally abused the participants and their mothers were either unemployed or working in low-paying service sector jobs. One of the ways in which they may have compensated for their eroding patriarchal power base was to physically and emotionally abuse their wives, girlfriends and sons.

Despite the fact that none of the participants identified the apparent incongruity of their "unemployed breadwinner" fathers, I suggest that this striking image in their childhood challenged their masculine identities. All of the participants expressed feelings of hopelessness about their economic futures, and directly related this to their own masculine fears and anxieties. The findings related to this issue are explored in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

The Role of Masculine Identity

This chapter explores the common experience of the participants of defining their masculine identity and analyzes the similar methods by which they coped with challenges to their masculine identities. Section 5.1 examines the participants' definition of what constituted an "ideal man" and explores how they presented their masculine identities to be linked to these masculine ideals. Section 5.2 examines the participants' fears and anxieties about their own masculine identities. Section 5.3 explores the common ways in which the participants protested against and compensated for their perceived masculine deficits. As was done in Chapter 4, examples of the participants' common experiences are provided in each of these sections. These experiences are analyzed in light of both how the participants made sense of these experiences and how we can understand the participants' behaviour as a social phenomenon.

In Chapter 4, I suggest that participant's familial patriarchal beliefs provided them with a common lens through which to understand their childhoods. I suggest that the participants acquired this belief system at an early age for a number of reasons: they modelled the patriarchal and abusive behaviour of their father-figures; these beliefs helped them understand the traumatic abuse at home; and they received explicit instructions from male family members to abuse women if they stepped outside of their expected roles. Participants indicated that their natural fathers were the legitimate rulers of their home. These youth seemed to justify the abuse of their mothers because they did not obey house rules. The participants who witnessed their mothers being abused by men other than their natural fathers considered these assaults to be unjustified. These men, not being their natural fathers, could not be the natural heads of their families. However, regardless of whether they indicated their mother's victimization to be right or wrong, the participants internalized patriarchal beliefs and attitudes supporting the use of violence against women who violated these beliefs. Further, the majority of the participants seemed to neutralize the impact of their own

beatings and emotional abuse by father-figures. The participants' apparent rationalization of their own victimization makes sense when we consider that most of these adolescents identified their father-figures as being the natural rulers of their families who had to be obeyed at all costs.

In this chapter, I suggest that the participants' masculine identities exaggerated the familial patriarchal lens through which they understood their world. Gender role socialization in patriarchal capitalism is theorized to associate aggression, dominance, and violence with masculinity and power. Femininity and powerlessness are believed to be associated with passivity, dependence, and non-violence. In patriarchal cultures, it is argued, most males are socialized to believe that they are superior to females and therefore have the right to control and dominate female intimates. Most boys grow up believing that they are entitled to power and privilege because they are males (Brownmiller, 1976; Rubin, 1983; Messerschmidt 1986, 1993).

Sennett and Cobb (1973), and Rubin (1983) document the individual feelings of alienation and personal insecurity in the working class. They argue that the structure of the American ideological and economic system explains the origins of these feelings of inadequacy and frustration. This system is founded ideologically upon the belief that anyone with enough desire and hard work can move up within the class system. For most, however, making it in the "land of opportunity" is a false dream. The reality of the structural barriers preventing most people from rising within the class system causes individual feelings of low self-worth:

Working men intellectually reject the idea that endless opportunity exists for the competent. And yet the institutions of class force them to apply the idea to themselves: if I don't escape being part of the woodwork it's because I didn't develop my powers enough. Thus, talk about how arbitrary a class society's reward system is will be greeted with general agreement with the proviso that in my own class, I should have made more of myself. (Sennet and Cobb, 1973: 250-251).

Accordingly, many men understand the traditional "breadwinner" role to be a key definer of what it means to be a man. To be the material provider for one's family is reported by many men to be a fundamental aspect of masculine identity

(Sennett and Cobb, 1973; Gandolf, 1985; Rubin, 1983). Half of the participants came from homes where the father-figure never or rarely worked. Instead, these men depended upon the participant's mother's welfare cheque or their own government cheque for an income. These men had no economic base to legitimize their patriarchal power, yet the participants nevertheless identified them to be the breadwinners and the heads of their families. The participants did not indicate there to be any inconsistency with an unemployed breadwinner ruling their family.

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Despite the fact that none of the participants verbalized the apparent incongruity in the situations of their "unemployed breadwinner" fathers, this does not necessarily mean that they were not aware of this. It may have been too painful to admit. I suggest in this chapter that this striking image in their childhood contributed to a struggle in their masculine identities. All of the participants expressed feelings of hopelessness about their economic futures, and directly related this to their own masculine fears and anxieties.

5.1 Understanding the Ideal Man

All participants were asked to describe the characteristics of the "ideal man". When asked this question, 29 of the 30 participants told me that the ideal man is

physically tough and strong; has material possessions, a good job, and is a breadwinner; is heterosexual and has sex often; and is in control of women and his life.

Don, a 15 year old residing in an open custody young offender facility, described the ideal man to me:

Don: ... Well, he can't hit girls, and he's gotta be nice to girls. And he doesn't pick fights with anyone. He only fights if he's picked on - and then he's gotta punch the other guy out. And sexually, it's gotta be equal - they gotta treat each other the same.

And a job, with lots of money. It's good to have a job so you don't have to steal.

M.T.: I see.

Don: And a good car, and a place to live - you know, an apartment or a house. And good health - no AIDS.

M.T.: What do you mean by good health?

Don: Strong - well built. A guy's gotta be able to defend himself - to protect himself and his friends from being picked on.

M.T.: Picked on by who?

Don: Other guys. Like I said, a guy can't ever hit a girl. That's the worst thing a guy could ever do. (# 13:6)

Don told me later in the interview that he was like this "ideal man", with the exception of not having material possessions, money, and a job. In this context, Don's account is replete with conflicting statements. He is skinny and short, weighing no more than 90 pounds. He has been charged with uttering death threats against his mother and sister, and told me that he had threatened other girls with knives. He also told me of sexual behaviour categorized as rape. Despite this, Don told me twice in this short conversation that the "ideal man" can't hit girls, and that sexual relationships must be equal. He also told me that this man has got to be tough and muscular. Don, however, appeared to be physically weak. These inconsistencies were highlighted when Don talked about the ideal man needing to protect himself from being "picked on". There is a theme of defensiveness throughout this account.

Interestingly, Don's mother worked throughout his childhood in low-paying service jobs. Although he reported his natural father to always have worked, Don had

had no contact with him since the age of 4 years²⁴. None of his mother's boyfriends nor his stepfather had ever worked, instead depending upon his mother for financial support. Don indicated that the father-figures in his life were not comparable to the "ideal man", primarily because they had never worked.

Colin, a 16 year old Francophone street youth, spoke about how the "ideal man" provides for his family, and is clearly the boss at home:

Colin: ... Well, he's gotta have a family, a wife and kids. That's real important. Especially if he's got no job. Now a good job or even any kind of job, is real important. Now if a man's got no job, he would still have his family. He should respect his parents and listen to them. And his wife and kids should do the same. They would have to respect him and listen to him (silence). A house and a car are also important. It's kind of like showing you're a man, I guess. They're proof that a guy's successful. I mean, if a guy's got a nice house and a fast car, people know he's got a good job and cares for his family. That's real important. And I guess a man's gotta be tough. He's gotta take care of himself and look out for his family. If a man can't do that, he's nothin'. As long as a man's got a wife and kids who respect him, do as he says, and he's tough enough to stand up for himself, he can get by without the rest. (# 69:5-6)

Living on the street, Colin had no job, money, material possessions, or "nice house". Yet he still equated these things with masculine ideals, stating: "It's kind of like showing you're a man...that a guy's successful". Life has been tough for Colin. He has never had the material wealth he associated with the ideal man.

Like Don, Colin did not relate his father with the "ideal man". He reported his father to have worked only a couple of months each year, and being dependent upon his mother's welfare cheque and unemployment insurance to survive. Nor did Colin report his mother to have any respect at all for his father. She apparently divorced him and kept the family home.

Colin's last statement in this account reveals a struggle with his definition of what it means to be male. A man can "get by without the rest" (being the material provider) if he is physically tough and can control his family. In Colin's view,

²⁴ In Don's case, his familial patriarchal beliefs appeared to be learned from his mother, her boyfriends, and his step-father.

gaining the respect of one's wife and children appears to be based upon getting them to obey.

John, a 16 year old who grew up with an unemployed alcoholic father, again emphasized the importance of being the material provider. In John's opinion, it was still possible to be a man if you were out of work, as long as you were heterosexual and didn't lose a fight:

John: Yeah. A man's nothin' if he's got no work. Without money, a guy's spineless. It can really hurt a man if he can't work. Look at my Dad - poor son of a bitch. I'd love to tell him where to go, but he's defenceless. A guy's got sweek fuck all without a job and money.... A guy's gotta have a house, and a car. And a good education. And he can't be a faggot - no queer shit for me. A faggot's no guy. And it's real important that he stand up for himself to other guys. He's gotta fight back. A guy can't lose a fight. To get the shit kicked outta you, that's almost as bad as being queer (silence).

M.T.: And where would being outta work fit in?

John: I guess it wouldn't be as bad as losing a fight or being a faggot. I mean, if you're outta work, you can always defend yourself. If you're working and you can't stand up for yourself, you're nothing. You're not much of a man. (#53:2- 3)

Growing up with an unemployed father seems to have influenced John's ideas about the "ideal man". Although John told me that he hated his father because of how he beat his mother and himself, he seemed to neutralize this by saying his father was defenceless; he had no job or money. However, John noted that a defenceless (unemployed) man can as a last resort defend himself with his fists, stating: "I mean, if you're outta work, you can always defend yourself".

These accounts illustrate the common set of masculine ideals held by the participants, and the similarity in symbols used when talking about these ideals. Their views of the ideal man (physical toughness and strength, material possessions, breadwinner, heterosexual and frequent sex, in control of life and women), are similar to the masculine ideals identified in theory and research on middle and upper-class youth (Chambliss, 1973; Greenberg, 1977; Tolson, 1977; Kessler et al., 1985; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1985; Heward, 1988; Connell, 1989; Messner, 1989; Messerschmidt, 1993). This body of work identifies material success, employment,

being a provider and being able to take care of yourself as fairly common images for boys and the way they are socialized. However, there are some important differences. The masculine ideals identified by the participants most closely reflect those masculine values identified in the literature to be associated with working class and marginalized male youth, whose access to the labour market is severely limited or non-existent (Chambliss, 1973; Willis, 1977; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1985; Messerschmidt, 1986, 1993; Connell, 1992; Cernkovich and Giordano, 1992). Despite the fact that I did not mention unemployment when asking the participants about the qualities of the ideal man, they all identified minimum set of qualities necessary for an unemployed "ideal man". The fact that the majority of the participants came from a home where the father-figure was unemployed may have influenced their definition of these masculine ideals.

I then asked the participants the following questions about their own masculine identity:

What does it mean to you -- to be male?

Do you think this has anything to do with the way you get along with females, gays, and other guys?

When asked these questions, 29 of the 30 participants told me that they were like the "ideal man" they previously had described to me, with one exception: they had no material possessions, job, and questioned their chances of being a breadwinner. These youth described themselves as powerful fighters, "fuckers", gang members, and protectors of women. They explicitly told me that they were not "faggots", "bitches", or "pussies", "wimps", woman-beaters, or rapists.

Brian, a 14 year old skinhead gang member, told me that he had recently returned home after living on the streets for a couple of years. He described the power hierarchy in his world. He appeared to associate his masculine identity with beating up the less-powerful:

Brian: If I can't work it'll be hard to get people to respect me. It's like a kind of status. But I know as long as people know not to fuck with me - well, I'll always have that. As long as I've got my balls, I'll be alright (laughing). A guy's nothing without that. No, let's say I wasn't a fighter or I was a faggot,

or I was a nigger. Now that would be bad. They ain't got nothing - no respect, no power. It's all about power really. I mean, I get what I want because people know if I don't get it, I'll kick the shit outta them.

M.T.: So, do girls respect you?

Brian: Fuck, yeah.

M.T.: Are they afraid of you?

Brian: Afraid? No. They know I'll protect them and kick the shit outta any guy who tries to fuck them. Girls like that... I know. I can smell a faggot a mile away. They all talk the same, dress the same, act the same. A faggot's a woman with a cock. He acts like a woman, but he's got a cock instead of a pussy. So what does he do? He rams it up another guy's asshole. Figure that one out. That's why I never bend down (laughing)... (#88: 7,9).

Katz (1988) has previously identified a power hierarchy in the world of violent, marginal young criminals. From a social-psychological viewpoint, he suggests that male youth with few resources find excitement and adventure in violent crime, simultaneously finding an outlet to express their anger and rage. Brian, like the male youth identified by Katz, controlled the less-powerful through physical and sexual violence. Girls, gays, and racial minorities occupied the bottom rungs of his power hierarchy. Brian told me "it's all about power... I get what I want because people know if I don't get it, I'll kick the shit outta them". Twenty-nine of the 30 participants identified a similar power hierarchy in their accounts.

This 14 year old told me that all of his friends were pimps. In the absence of material possessions, masculinity is down to the basics: strength and guns:

M.T.: ... So, are you anything like all those things you said you liked about a guy?

Phil: Of course. Everything but the house, car, and bucks. But my friends have a car, and I get lots of money - not from a job (laughing). It's enough to get them to fuck and listen to you. Money is real important. I can take care of myself. Besides, I'm no faggot.

M. So?

Phil: We fuckin' roll faggots for a laugh. Sometimes they have money - sometimes a jacket. Goddam queers. They're not men. Bitches. No, they're worse than bitches. They haven't got any balls, you know? What the fuck do they have balls for - to ram each other up the ass? Whata laugh when we find one.

M.T.: So you're violent with gays?

Phil: Fuckin' right. So I'm no faggot. And at least I've got my strength. Nobody can take that away from a guy - even if he's got nothing else. He's still strong and can pound the crap outta anyone. A guy can never lose that. Strength and guns. If you can't beat 'em, shoot 'em.

M.T.: So, if you have a gun you're strong?

Phil: Yeah. No one will ever fuck with you. You get respect. (# 6:5-6)

When Phil told me that "at least I've got my strength. Nobody can take that away from a guy", he may have meant that he had nothing left to lose. Indicating that his economic future was in jeopardy, he seemed to neutralize this issue by presenting himself as powerful and invincible. Guns, fists, and a penis appear to compensate for lack of material possessions. In this account, Phil highlights a common theme found in all but one of the interviews: a belief that no matter what else happens, a guy will always have his physical strength, guns, and "balls". This finding confirms the results of previous research in the area of marginal male youth and masculinity (Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1983; Messerschmidt, 1986, 1993; Connell, 1991; Hill and Santiago, 1992). The importance Phil and the other participants placed upon frequent sexual activity also confirms previous findings in the literature on similar samples (Willis, 1977; Campbell, 1984; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1985; Fishman, 1988).

Brian told me about how beating up people made him feel powerful. He described for me the key features of being male:

Brian: ... Fight. Especially with niggers, faggots and other guys. But faggots and niggers don't have balls so they're not really guys. Black balls and no balls (laughing). Yeah. We're pretty violent. We'll fight over just about anything.

M.T.: So what do you get out of fighting? How does it make you feel?

Brian: It's just me. I mean, when you kick the shit outta someone, you know you're respected. He won't touch you again and neither will his friends. People know real quick who can fight and who can't.

M.T.: So, do people know you can fight?

Brian: Oh yeah. They know. They look up to me. My friends know that I'll always help them to get someone. It's a feeling of knowing nobody's ever gonna fuck with you. Yeah. It makes me feel good to know nobody's ever gonna push me around. I guess I can get pretty much whatever I want because people respect me. (# 88:6-7)

Similar to the themes identified in virtually all of the other participants' accounts, Brian told me how "kicking the shit outta someone" made him feel powerful and respected. When he told me that "it's a feeling of knowing nobody's ever gonna

fuck with you", he highlighted a pattern of defensive posturing found in 29 of the 30 interviews. Despite describing themselves as being powerful and invincible when beating up the less-powerful, the participants made numerous statements regarding the necessity of defending themselves. This pattern has been previously identified in the literature (Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1985; Messerschmidt, 1986, 1993; Chambliss, 1973; Willis, 1977). Brian, like most of the other participants, did not indicate there to be a conflict between feeling that he constantly had to defend himself and "knowing nobody's ever gonna fuck with you". However, there may have been a number of reasons because of which these youth did not verbalize this and other inconsistencies in their accounts. These adolescents may in fact have been aware of these issues, yet lacked the verbal skills to express these thoughts. Perhaps these conflicts were simply too painful to deal with.

5.2 Challenges to Masculine Identity

When asked about whether or not they could achieve the material wealth, good jobs and breadwinner status they described when telling me about the "ideal man", 2 participants reported that they would, and the accounts of the remaining 28 youth were characterized by despair and hopelessness. These 28 participants told me that they would have no job or a "shit job", would be dependent upon crime or welfare for money, and would have few material possessions. Although I did not ask all participants about whether they had attempted suicide or not, I questioned 9 youth regarding this issue because they appeared to be depressed at this point in the interview (see p. 44).

In this next account, Jim, a 15 year old "skateboarder" in a young offender detention facility, matter-of-factly told me that he was not ever going to achieve the economic standards of a middle class lifestyle, and was therefore choosing a future of crime for material gain.

Jim: I've got nothing, I mean as a guy. If you take away the fucking, girls, and fighting I've got sweet fuck all. I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth. There's fuck all I can do about that. So now it really pisses me when I see some rich motherfucker my age driving around in a fast car with lots of gold.

'Cause I know that'll never be me. I'll never have any of that shit from a real job - like a lawyer or a doctor. If I get a job it'll be picking up garbage or flipping burgers. Well, excuse me. I think I'll steal cars and deal. But guys like me I figure we're real men compared to those rich son of a bitches. We gotta fight and live on the edge to get our cash. Them, those faggots go off to some pukey university and come out millionaires. Not me. Where I come from, you drop outta school early and drop into crime earlier. We don't need any of that 9 to 5 kiss-ass bullshit. You gotta have more balls to make it rich my way. Those rich faggots get it all handed to them on a fucking silver platter. They're pussies. They probably get rammed up the ass every night by their boss.

M.T.: Rammed up the ass by their boss?

Jim: Yeah. You gotta be a fuckin' faggot - kissing some guy's ass - to get a job like that. (#11: 9, 10)

Jim seemed to neutralize the fact that he believed he had "nothing ... as a guy" without the "fucking, girls, and fighting". He negated everything masculine about middle and upper-class life, telling me that "rich son of a bitches" were all "faggots" or "pussies". If you were rich, according to Jim, you couldn't be a man. Despite his bravado, his feelings of inadequacy and frustration regarding his lack of economic opportunity are apparent. The insights of Sennett and Cobb (1973) and Rubin (1983) are applicable here, as well as Matza's (1964) concepts of negation and neutralization. Jim clearly recognized that he had no economic future. Accordingly, he negated anything masculine about employment, material possessions, and wealth.

Dave, a 16 year old street youth, also reported that he had no economic future. He told me that "It's like I was born a guy but no one gave me the stuff I need to be successful".

Dave: But it's like I've got nothing left - I mean, to me - as a guy, I've got no good job - no money, house, car and shit. I'm a fucking Indian. So I've got my balls for fucking and being blown whenever I want. And I've got my fists. I've got fuckall else. It's like I was born a guy but no one gave me the stuff I need to be successful. I was fucked as soon as I was born. So I'm fucked as a guy. I've got my prick, my fists, and a girlfriend to tell what to do. Fuck all else. I'm no fucking man unless I've got those things. The only thing going my way as a guy is that I'm not queer. Can you imagine a queer unemployed Indian? You might as well kill yourself. You'd be a nothing. Zero. Cut off your cock and flush it. (#47:7)

Building upon Sennett and Cobb's (1973) concept of the hidden injuries of class, Dave was also deeply affected by racism. He articulated that he had no future, and felt worthless. He stated that his "prick", "fists", and "girlfriends to tell what to do" were his only remaining defences of his masculinity.

Twenty-seven of the participants told me they were heterosexual, 2 were bisexual, and one told me that he was gay. With the exception of the gay participant, all of these young males told me about having to continually prove their heterosexuality to their male peers, and many expressed anxieties about their sexuality. Bob, an Afro-American 16 year old, who was a ward of the Children's Aid Society, broke down when telling me about his sexual anxieties:

Bob: (Sobbing) I guess I am trying to prove myself to my friends. I mean, would you like to be called a faggot and a pussy all the time? I gotta show them that I can fuck, and fuck a lot. I'm no queer.

M.T.: So if you were queer, what would that mean?

Bob: What's the point to life if you're a faggot? You would be nothing.

M.T.: So to be a guy, it's like you have to fuck lots of girls.

Bob: Yeah. To prove that you're not a faggot.

M.T.: And the money, cars?

Bob: You mean are they as important as fucking?

M.T.: Yeah, I guess so.

Bob: Well, it's not so bad if you've got a girlfriend. I mean, you can handle not having too much money and shit. (# 50:8)

The emphasis which Bob and the other participants placed upon frequent sexual activity confirms previous findings in the research on this topic (Willis, 1977; Campbell, 1984; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1985; Fishman, 1988). This body of work suggests that marginal male youth present heterosexual intercourse to be a fundamental behaviour through which manhood and heterosexuality are proven. Bob, like the other participants, spoke about the tremendous pressure he was under to demonstrate to his friends that he was not gay or female. When he asked me "Would you like to be called a faggot and a pussy all the time?", he revealed not only this constant harassment by his male peers, but also his own fears about his sexuality. Although Bob told me a number of times that he was not gay, he sobbed throughout this conversation. Bob, like the other participants, seemed to be obsessed with proving

that he was "no faggot". Further, Bob compared the importance of having material possessions to "fucking" when he talked about his own masculine identity. Bob revealed that by having a girlfriend, he was proving to his friends that he was not gay. Clearly, he saw this as being more important than having money and cars. Following this account, Bob went on to tell me that having money and cars "is the guy thing to do", and that he would be embarrassed if his girlfriend "showed him up" by having money. However, he then qualified this statement, telling me "But if you're fucking, it wouldn't be so bad". Bob's apparent fears about his sexuality were representative of the fears expressed by the other youth in this study.

Sylvain was a 17 year old Francophone who recently moved into a rooming house after living on the street for a couple of years. Like Bob, he also had serious questions about his sexuality. However, Sylvain appeared to legitimate these questions by relating them to his father's violence:

Sylvain: Yeah. I guess so. I mean, I guess I can tell you. I went through a period of time - a couple of years - I was I guess 13 or 14. I didn't know if I was queer or straight - like normal. And I think it was because my Dad was so violent - and he is obviously not a queer. It was like I thought - stupid, isn't it - that if I was gay, I wouldn't be like him. and that lasted for a while. I've never told any one (crying, long silence). Now I know I'm not gay.

M.T.: It would still be okay if you were.

Sylvain: Well, I'm not. But it's like I had to get rid of everything my father stood for to not be violent. So I guess I have rejected some of that stuff but also kept some of it. It's weird. I kind of feel that I am floating in space - neither in or out. Maybe it would have been easier if I would have been gay. (#41:7)

Crying throughout this conversation, it was evident to me that Sylvain found speaking about this issue extremely painful. Also, there were many inconsistencies in his account. Although Sylvain desperately wanted to "get rid of everything my father stood for," he was abusing his girlfriend. He seemed to neutralize his own actions with his girlfriend. How can such similar behaviour be articulated to be so different by Sylvain? Part of the answer to this question may be found in Sylvain's questions about his own sexuality. Sylvain stated that "If I was gay, I wouldn't be like him". Although Sylvain told me a number of times that he was not gay, he also described

feeling "that I am floating in space - neither in or out". Further on in this conversation, still speaking about his sexuality, Sylvain told me "It's kind of like I'm caught between these 2 worlds". The conflicting statements are apparent here. Sylvain's imagery of floating between 2 worlds in outer space may represent his struggle with his own sexual orientation.

Fifteen of the participants told me that they routinely beat up gays. When I asked these participants why they did this, they spoke about how important it was to prove that you were not gay, and defend yourself against homosexuals.

Brian, 14 years of age, spoke defensively about beating up "faggots". It is clear from this conversation that he felt threatened by gays.

Brian: We roll 'em all the time. Not for their fuckin' jackets but just because they're fags. You gotta watch out for them. Bend over and they'll ram their cock up your ass. It's fucking disgusting. We always keep an eye out for fuckin' fags. You never know when they'll try to ram you. (#88:2)

This pattern of defensive posturing when talking about gays is common in most of the participants' accounts. Like Brian, these participants appeared to indicate that they faced a daily risk of being raped by gays, and that the only way to protect themselves from this constant threat was to beat up anyone they thought was gay. Clearly, these participants' fear of being raped by a homosexual was unfounded. None of these youth reported having been sexually assaulted by a gay, nor did any of them report having been physically assaulted or harassed by gays. In fact, with the exception of the one gay participant, these youth reported having no contact with gays apart from perpetrating frequent beatings upon them.

John, a 17 year old gang member, was candid about why he "beats on faggots", and "gets into a different pussy every night":

John: ... If you want the truth I think a lot of it's about a guy being paranoid that his friends will think he's a faggot. So if you beat on faggots and get into a different pussy every night, no fucker in their right mind would ever think you were a queer. I've never had a faggot for a friend. The only faggots I've ever known are the ones we've pounded. Even when I was really young - like around 8 or 9, I can remember beating guys me and my friends knew were faggots. (#53:11)

John clearly identified that by beating up gays and having sex with a different girl every night, he was proving his heterosexuality. Would John have felt so compelled to prove his masculinity in such a public way if he believed he had a viable economic future? This question will be explored in the final section of this chapter.

5.3 Protest and Compensation: Constructing Manhood

In the final section of this chapter, I explore how the participants made sense of the challenges to their masculine identities. I suggest that these youth compensated for and protested against their lack of economic future and sexual fears by engaging in a common set of behaviours with their girlfriends. They may also have simply been defending against their own insecurities. I argue that their masculine identities exaggerated the familial patriarchal lens through which these males understood their world.

The concept of abuse was based upon what the participants told me about their sexual experiences and methods of resolving conflict with their girlfriends. Their reported behaviour was classified into the categories of physical, sexual and emotional abuse based upon the illegality of some of the specific behaviour and the definitions of abuse offered in the literature²⁵. All 30 participants reported behaviour with their girlfriends which was emotionally abusive. None of these participants was exclusively emotionally abusive. Instead, 21 participants were emotionally, physically and sexually abusive; 7 participants were emotionally and sexually abusive; and 2 participants were emotionally and physically abusive. Twenty-three participants reported behaviour with girlfriends which was physically abusive. These males had physically assaulted their girlfriends on at least one occasion since age 13. Of this number, 12 participants engaged in minor forms of physical abuse (throwing something at her, pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping) and 11 participants reported

²⁵ The criteria for the classification of physical, sexual and emotional abuse are discussed in detail on pp. 34-36.

having used one or more acts of severe²⁶ violence (punching, kicking, beating, choking, using a knife or a gun). In only one case was there only one act of minor violence. Instead, participants reported patterns of physical abuse that were ongoing and paired with other types of abuse. Twenty-eight participants reported behaviour with girlfriends which was sexually abusive. These males had sexually assaulted their girlfriends on at least one occasion since the age of 13 years. Five participants reported acts of unwanted sexual contact, 5 reported acts of sexual coercion, and 18 participants reported acts of rape²⁷. In all cases the sexual abuse was paired with other types of abuse. All of the participants who reported acts of rape also reported having perpetrated many acts of unwanted sexual contact and sexual coercion. All of the sexually coercive males but one reported perpetrating many acts of unwanted sexual contact.

The patterns of abusive behaviour in my study expand upon those findings in the existing literature on woman abuse. This literature suggests that abusers tend to perpetrate one or two forms of abuse in a given assault, and rarely exhibit all three forms of abusive behaviour in the same incident (for example, see DeKeseredy, 1988; DeKeseredy and Hinch, 1991). Clearly, my findings do not support this idea. Twenty-one of the 30 participants in my study engaged in all 3 forms of girlfriend abuse during many of the assaults they committed.

In contrast to this categorization of abuse, none of the participants defined their behaviour as abusive. Their definition of abuse was limited to violent rapes and physical beatings by male strangers on females unrelated to them. They indicated to me that their behaviour was normal.

Dave, a 16 year old street youth, told me about how treating his girlfriend in an

²⁶ These definitions of minor and severe violence are taken from Straus and Gelles, 1986. All of these physically abusive behaviours could be classified as physical assault in the Criminal Code of Canada.

²⁷ This categorization of sexually abusive behaviours was based upon Koss and Oros (1982). All of these sexually abusive behaviours could be classified as sexual assault in the Criminal Code of Canada. Although the legal terminology for what used to be known as rape in Canada was changed to sexual assault in 1982. Koss and Oros' terminology was used for the purpose of this paper.

abusive way was a means of covering up his own insecurity. He told me that he owned his girlfriend's sexual body parts. He denied being abusive:

Dave: Yeah. I would say I'm supposed to be superior. But you know this male superiority thing is a pretty hard thing to do if you're a fucking unemployed Indian on welfare. Am I superior? I don't think so. Am I gonna let her know it? I don't think so. So what do I do? I guess you could say it's like putting on hockey equipment. Then nobody can see how scared shitless you are. It's like I have the hockey pads I put on everyday before I see her and I never can let her see beneath my pads. She'd laugh at the real me. Scared shitless and feeling totally worthless. It's weird how treating a girl like that makes you feel better. It's the same as not ever being pussy whipped. It's like it doesn't matter if you never speak to your girlfriend or think she's a fat pig. As long as no one fucks her when I'm going with her, that's what's important... My girlfriend's pussy is mine as long as we're together. Fuck, if I can't even have that I'm nothing of a man - zero. Like I said, I've got sweet fuckall else.

M.T.: What about her mouth?

Dave: What?

M.T.: Her mouth. You told me it's mostly blow jobs she gives you.

Dave: Well, her mouth is her pussy. It's all the same. It's all fucking to me - wherever I stick my cock - whether it's in her mouth or her cunt or up her ass. It doesn't matter. The main thing is that she doesn't fuck any other guy while we're going together (silence). (#47:8,9)

As Katz (1988) has previously argued, 2 planes of reality are evident in Dave's life. In his mundane, everyday existence, Dave was a "fucking unemployed Indian on welfare... scared shitless and totally worthless." He was acutely aware of the reality of his future, a future of homelessness, dependency and racism. At the same time, he stated that as a male, he was "supposed to be superior" to females. He realized that being an Ojibway without a job or material possessions made it difficult to assert his dominance over his girlfriend. Dave compensated for the absence of these traditional male entitlements by sexually, emotionally and physically abusing his girlfriend. His use of the imagery of putting on hockey equipment when dominating his girlfriend was indicative of a second, ideal plane of reality in his life. In this ideal world, Dave was momentarily at the top of the power hierarchy. He felt confidently masculine, and did not speak about his lack of access to material possessions or a job. On this plane of reality, Dave suggested his life was exciting and seductive. By using images of a hockey game, Dave demonstrated that he had created this ideal plane. When Dave

was raping his girlfriend, his feelings of inadequacy and worthlessness were transformed into feelings of power. Dave told me: "It's weird how treating a girl like that makes you feel better."

Like Dave, most of the participants used fairly homogeneous symbols in their accounts which indicated the existence of two different but interrelated value sets or planes of reality. They spoke of a mundane, everyday reality, characterized by boredom and an occupation with survival on the streets and the drudgery of daily life. They talked about feeling powerless, worthless and humiliated. They related these feelings to being abused as children, a lack of access to material possessions and a job, and fears about their sexuality. In contrast, these participants also created symbols and images of an ideal plane of reality, characterized by a rigidly gendered power hierarchy, abuse of girlfriends and violence against gays and racial minorities. These males told me that they felt superior, righteously moral, confidently masculine and in complete control at these times.

How can we make sense of the apparent existence of these two planes of reality? Later in this section, I suggest that the participants engaged in behaviour characteristic of their ideal plane of reality as a way of protesting against and compensating for the unattainable ideals and masculine anxieties which defined their mundane, everyday reality. They may also have been covering up their fears and insecurities. In so doing, they were exaggerating the familial patriarchal lens they had acquired early in their childhood.

Dave justified being abusive. How was it possible for Dave to apparently neutralize the fact that his frequent oral and anal rapes of his girlfriend may have caused her pain or suffering? Dave believed that he owned his girlfriend. He indicated that any of her orifices in which he had inserted his penis were his. As this account continued, it was apparent that Dave denied his girlfriend's humanity:

M.T.: You said sticking your cock up her ass. Do you do that?

Dave: (silence, looking at floor, shuffling feet) Yeah. I've done it (silence).

Sometimes I'll get her to blow me after we've ass fucked (silence). Sometimes I like that...

Yeah. If she's gonna get me to ass-fuck her, it's the least she can do, blow me

clean. It's her shit so she can blow me clean. So I know she wants it up the ass or we wouldn't do it. But eating her own shit? I dunno. But she's responsible for it. There's no way I'm gonna get her shit on my dick and stop there. It works both ways this equal rights shit. I do something for her and she's gotta do something for me. So yeah. I like it. It makes me feel good.

M.T.: When you're ass-fucking, and getting blowed by her, are you standing or lying down or what?

Dave: Standing. How else would I be?

M.T.: So she is... (silence)

Dave: On her knees when she's blowing me and like a dog on her hands and knees when we're ass-fucking. There's really no other way to do it (silence)...

M.T.: Do you ever think your girlfriend's a dog?

Dave: Sometimes I think of those pornos when we're ass-fucking. I guess she's kinda like a dog. (#47: 9-10)

Dave's indication that his girlfriend was nothing more than a sexual object confirms previous findings in the literature on marginal male youth's sexual objectification of women (Willis, 1977; Campbell, 1984; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1985; Fishman, 1988; Messerschmidt, 1986, 1993). Dave justified his actions as moral and righteous, seen through the patriarchal lens through which he viewed the world. He clearly identified that it was his girlfriend's duty to perform fellatio on him after anal sex. He told me:

"there's no way I'm gonna get her shit on my dick and stop there. It works both ways this equal rights shit. I do something for her and she's gotta do something for me".

Dave was able to deny any wrongness on his part by placing the blame on his girlfriend for her excrement on his penis. Analyzed from within Dave's viewpoint, his behaviour makes sense. Dave did not verbalize the wrongfulness in his actions. Dave's familial patriarchal beliefs are representative of those beliefs held by many of the other participants. Their accounts suggest that these beliefs, in interaction with their masculine identities, had to be constantly reinforced and confirmed. If this is the case, their beliefs and identities may not have been firm. Instead, they may have been malleable.

A central inconsistency in the accounts of all the participants lies in the fact that the participants told me that they were not abusive, despite describing to me

behaviour categorized as abusive. Further, the majority of these males told me about protecting defenceless women in their community by hunting down suspected violent rapists and woman-beaters. Chapter 6 explores the circumstances under which these similar situations were defined as being so very different. Sykes and Matza (1957) and Matza (1964) suggest that juvenile delinquents employ techniques of neutralization which allow them to carry on with their lives while engaging in deviant behaviour. This concept is helpful in analyzing the participants' behaviour. Much of the data from this dissertation appears to support the work of these researchers in this area. Seen through a familial patriarchal lens, these males did not identify their behaviour as being wrong. Instead, they portrayed their values and actions to be morally right and superior to those societal values in their mundane, everyday reality. Their accounts are characterized by the use of a vocabulary of adjustment (Kanin, 1967), in which their socially unacceptable behaviour was denied through the sophisticated use of justifications. Based upon the work of Ptacek (1988), justifications are defined as the denial of wrongness. Denial characterizes the accounts of all participants in this study; they reported their behaviour as non-abusive and justifiable for 2 reasons:

- 1) any injury suffered or pain inflicted on their girlfriends was denied.

They seemed to be able to neutralize any suffering caused by their beatings, rapes, and threats of violence;

- 2) the failure of their girlfriends to fulfil the obligations of what the participants referred to as the "good bitch". These males symbolized their behaviour as righteous and in defence of a higher moral order.

They described their girlfriends as failing to abide by the rules of this idealized, abstract plane of reality²⁸.

Therefore, the participants did not make excuses to deny responsibility for their actions. This contrasts with the existing clinical literature on abuse. For example, in Ptacek's (1988) sample of abusive adult men enrolled in a group treatment program,

²⁸ I do not want to leave the reader with the impression that the girlfriends of the participants were all passive victims. Undoubtedly, some females are abusive, and some of these girlfriends probably engaged in abusive behaviour with the participants as well.

the majority of participants reported their behaviour as abusive but excused them (denied responsibility) because they lost control (substance abuse, frustration/aggression, psychiatric problems) or were physically or verbally provoked by their wives. Although a small minority of participants in my sample used similar excuses, they likewise strongly denied any wrongness on their part.

This next account provides more striking images, illustrating the participants' two planes of reality. Marty, a 16 year old ex-racist skinhead, told me about the "power high... a feeling of being king shit" he used to get when beating up racial minorities and gays. His description of the dress and behavioural codes of the Heritage Front, and how his feelings of being "scared shitless... a loser" were transformed into a "power high" when perpetrating violence confirm Katz's (1988) findings in this area (see Ch. 5, p. 78).

Marty: At the time, it was a high. A power high. It was a feeling of being king shit - no one could touch you. It was like niggers were to blame for everything and we made them pay for everything. They were the reason we had no money, no jobs, no decent place to live. Being a part of the Front (Heritage Front) gave us a sense of belonging. We felt like we were accepted and someone cared for us. They told us we had an important job to do. We felt really important - because we were white - because we were guys. I mean skins don't exactly respect females either. At lot of them pounded on their girlfriends too. It wasn't just blacks. And gays as well. People think skins just hate blacks. It's not true. They hate gays, women - you name it. I think I was part of it because it made me feel good as a guy - respected. I had status. It was like I was a member of some very important club - doing really important work. Kicking the living shit out of anything that wasn't like me. It gave me an image - as a guy I mean. With the docs, a shaved head, the bomber jacket, the white laces - people automatically know you're part of the Heritage Front. They're scared of you even though they know nothing about you. It's sad, really. Most of the guys into it were losers - stupid, no money, no place to stay, addicts. It's like we didn't want anyone to see that side of us - a guy who really has no balls pretending he's got the biggest prick in the world. It's all about fear and status. I was scared shitless inside - I felt like shit, a loser. But as soon as people knew I was a skin, that all changed. I had power. Respect. People were scared of me and didn't know all the shitty stuff inside of me that I was hiding. (#63:5-6)

Steve, a 15 year old youth in grade 9, told me about how his behaviour was caused by girls who pissed him off, made him look stupid, and didn't know their

place in society. He told me they all liked to be hit, but that he was not abusive.

Steve: One time at school I slammed her against a locker. I choked her until she was red. She was making me look stupid with lies and shit. I got sent to the pickle room. I was talked to by the psychiatrist. I almost got suspended. The principle is an asshole. Last year I shoved a girl into a snowbank. There was a big block of ice in it. I rammed her in. I wanted to hurt her... Yeah. I've got nothing to hide. Who'd believed it? Locked in a fucking pickle room for just giving my ex what she wanted. I told you that she's weird. She always was wanting me to hit her. It was nothin'. I never even laid a hand on her (long silence).

M.T.: You told me before that you choked her until she was red against a locker.

Steve: Yeah. But I never hurt her. She turns red when she knows she's wrong - kind of like being embarrassed. (Blushing) I wouldn'ta done anything if she hadn't made me look so stupid. What she said was all lies. She made me look like a goof in front of my friends. If she would'a only listened to me, I never would'a gotten in shit. It was all her fuckin' fault.

M.T.: So do you like girls?

Steve: No, not really... I think most of them are stupid bitches. I'll call them bitch, slut, whore all the time. They're always trying to show me up - make me look stupid, like a goof. What am I supposed to do - sit there and look stupid? No, I can't do that... (#87:5-6)

Steve's account is riddled with inconsistencies. At one moment, he was telling me about choking his ex-girlfriend "until she was red" and how his school dealt with the matter. A few seconds later, he told me that his ex-girlfriend wanted him to do it, and that in fact he "never even laid a hand on her". Under what circumstances could Steve present his violence to be non-abusive? His account was characterized by the use of a vocabulary of adjustment (Kanin, 1967), in which he denied his socially unacceptable behaviours through a complex use of justifications. Steve knew the assault on his ex-girlfriend was socially unacceptable because he got caught by the school administration. However, he denied the wrongness of the attack by justifying his actions. He told me that she "was making me look stupid with lies and shit" and wouldn't listen to him, and that "the principal is an asshole". He denied that his ex-girlfriend suffered any injuries as a result of the choking, attributing the redness of her face to having been embarrassed. The inconsistencies and complex usage of justifications in the accounts of all participants suggest that these youth did indeed

have some insight into their behaviour. It would seem as if these young men were putting on an act for themselves and their peers to cover up their insecurities²⁹

As Steve's account continued, it was clear that he, like Dave, created a second, ideal plane of reality. On this second plane, Steve didn't have to face girls who were "always trying to show me up - make me look stupid, like a goof". In this alternate plane, Steve told me that everybody knew their place, and he felt respected as a guy:

Steve: It's all about knowing your place in society. Some girls do, but most girls don't know what they're supposed to do. It really pisses me off when I see a girl who pretends that she doesn't have to be in her place. I feel like I have to teach her a lesson. How the fuck are girls ever gonna know that their job is to take care of shit at home - cooking, cleaning, the kids - if we don't tell them? I mean, it's me who's supposed to be making the big bucks to support my family. Where the fuck do girls get off thinking that they can do it too?... I've never agreed with hitting a girl and I never will. I think I treat girls really well. In fact, I think I'm doing them a favour. They're gonna find out sooner or later that they can't fuck around with a guy.... I mean, can you imagine if guys didn't do that - I mean, making sure that women do what they're supposed to be doing instead of fucking around? What a fucked up world it would be. No, guys need to remind girls that they should be doing what they're supposed to be doing. I mean, all this equal rights bullshit! Women have all the equality they need. The bottom line is that men are more important - we do the necessary things - working, bringing the bacon home, protecting our families - and if a woman's not going to respect that, then fuck her. A guy's gotta take that responsibility and tell 'er not to fuck around.

M.T.: So how does it make you feel, when you're treating a girl like that?

Steve: It's the only way. So I feel good. It feels right. It's like I've got my place in the world and I know women do too. I guess you could say that it makes me feel respected as a guy. (#87:6-8)

Confirming what Katz (1988) has argued, Steve was describing a moral, righteous plane of reality. Unlike Katz's thesis, however, the foundation of Steve's superior moral plane was gender: he told me that "the bottom line is that men are more important." Steve, like many of the other participants, symbolized his abusive behaviour as righteous and in defence of this higher moral order. In Steve's mundane, everyday reality, girls "don't know their place"; they had too many rights. Masculine

²⁹ This is similar to what Matza (1964) has termed "the situation of company".

identity was directly challenged because the position of men as material providers was threatened.

Prior to this account, Steve told me that his father had never worked. Instead, as Steve bitterly recounted, he had to depend upon his wife's welfare cheque and under-the-table babysitting earnings. In Steve's ideal plane of reality, his anxieties about not being a material provider were compensated for. Girls were taught by boys "that their job is to take care of the shit at home", so that Steve could be "making the big bucks to support my family." Girlfriend abuse was therefore justified. In Steve's ideal plane of reality, all of his masculine fears and anxieties dissipated. He told me that in this rigid gender order, "I feel good. It feels right. I guess you could say that it makes me feel respected as a guy."

Like Steve, all the other participants shared a common set of symbols, ideals and values when telling me about the role of males and females in society. When discussing their mundane, everyday reality, these males made frequent reference to the rights of females, the power women now hold, and the need to put them back in their place. In contrast, when they spoke of their ideal plane of reality, girlfriends were required to be obedient, respectful, loyal, dependent, accessible sexually at all times, and faithful. In this brutally abusive, patriarchal gender hierarchy their girlfriends were "taught" the rules of this superior set of moral values and they were disciplined for stepping outside of this righteous code of conduct. The other participants, like Steve, did not present their behaviour with their girlfriends as abusive. Instead, they justified their actions because of the failure of their girlfriends to fulfil the obligations of what the participants referred to as "the good bitch".

This final account highlights the ways in which the participants compensated for, protested against, and covered up their perceived masculine deficits. Paul, a 16 year old street youth, told me that he liked to be in control sexually. I asked him how that made him feel:

Paul: So it's like I control the sex - the fucking - and it makes the other stuff seem better. I mean, there's nothin' I can do about not being able to pay her back

physically - hitting her. I won't even try³⁰. So it's like I've gotta prove it sexually - I mean, that I'm good - that I can fuck with the best of them...

M.T.: So when you're fucking a girl really hard - rough, you called it - what's going through your head - what are you thinking?

Paul: It's like being high. It's a total rush. Not just getting your rocks off. It's more than that. It's like you're in control; you're on top of the world. No one can fuck with you.

M.T.: Do you think you'll ever be a doctor³¹?

Paul: (Silence) No.

M.T.: Will you ever have lots of cash?

Paul: Probably not.

M.T. A house, car?

Paul: (Shaking his head, beginning to cry) I guess it's not in the books for me. Who am I fooling? Maybe deep down I do think about that. It's like I'm being weighed on the scale. I mean, how I think of me as a guy. I know I won't have that shit you just asked me about, so what do I have? It's like I have to exaggerate the stuff I have - so I can live with myself as a guy, I mean. Being a guy isn't all it's made out to be... I don't trust no one and I know there's nobody who really cares about me. I guess I'm pretty lonely and scared shitless about who I am - what other people think of me as a guy (crying). (#67: 7-8)

5.4 Discussion

Up to the point when I began questioning the participants about their economic futures, 29 of these 30 youth told me that they were just like the "ideal man" they had described to me. A common set of masculine ideals and similar imagery was used when telling me about these ideals. These ideals are comparable to those identified in the literature on middle and upper-class youth (see p. 76) and most clearly reflect those masculine values described in the literature on working-class and marginal male youth. They were like this ideal man, they told me, with the exception of not having material possessions and a job. Consistent with this literature, the participants spoke about the bare minimum set of qualities in their identities which characterized their masculinity. They characterized themselves as powerful, sexual, fighting machines. They spoke about being "King shit" in a hierarchy of the powerless; a hierarchy made

³⁰ There was a conflict in Paul's statement here. He later told me that he did hit his girlfriend.

³¹ I asked Paul this question at this point in time because I had not yet probed his future aspirations, and I was worried that he might have ended the interview without discussing this issue.

up of girls, gays, and racial minorities. When initially speaking about their masculine identities, therefore, none of the participants talked about personal feelings of inadequacy or failure regarding the difficulties they faced in acquiring material wealth and good jobs.

How can we explain such similar self-reports of masculine identities? It is helpful to revisit the common early childhood experiences of the participants. The fact that the majority of the participants came from families where father-figures were not working may have been related to their definition of their masculine ideals and identities. It is striking that despite not mentioning unemployment when asking the participants about their masculine ideals and identities, this issue dominated their accounts on this topic. However, when I began probing around the issue of their lack of economic future, one-half of the participants broke down and cried. It was as if I had opened an emotional floodgate. I questioned 9 of these participants regarding any past suicide attempts and present plans to kill themselves because of their apparent hopelessness and despair regarding this issue.

The participants made use of a common set of symbols when talking with me about their future expectations. Twenty-eight of these males clearly stated that due to their lack of economic opportunity, their future would be defined by economic powerlessness: no job or a "shit job"; little money, forcing a dependence on welfare or crime; and few material possessions. Usually in the same breath, they told me "but I still will have my balls and my fists". Clearly, therefore, the participants identified their lack of an economic future. This finding, that these participants expressed feelings of powerlessness, despair and humiliation regarding their economic futures, expands upon Sennett and Cobb's (1973), Rubin's (1983), and Connell's (1991) work in this area. These researchers focus on an adult population, whereas the sample in my study ranged in age from 13 - 17 years. The data from my study suggests that the realities of a life based upon no future are verbalized at an early age by marginal male youth.

Around the same time that we were discussing these issues, most of the participants told me about their anxieties and fears surrounding their sexuality.

Twenty-nine of the participants spoke about their need to have frequent sexual intercourse to prove that they were heterosexual. One-half of these youth told me that they regularly beat up gays to protect themselves from being raped and to demonstrate that they themselves were not gay. All of these youth employed defensive posturing when I questioned them about their sexual orientation. These findings verify and expand upon the existing literature in this area. A significant body of work exists on the anxieties and fears adult men hold about their sexuality and homosexuality (Ellis, 1980; Connell, 1987; Kimmell and Fracher, 1987; Kimmell, 1990; Edwards, 1990). The fact that a significant number of marginal males perpetrate violence against gays has been previously documented (Beirne and Messerschmidt, 1991; Comstock, 1991; Weissman, 1992; Harry, 1992), as well as the finding that these youth report frequent sexual activity to be an important component of proving masculinity (see p.82). These issues suggest that these young men may have been confused and struggling to make sense of the fear and pain in their lives.

Tolson (1977) offers one of the very first accounts of working-class masculinity. Tolson argues that manual labour, the workplace, and the wage are the primary avenues for the construction and expression of masculinity. Tolson's model assumes working-class males to be working, and their masculinity to be constructed and expressed primarily through labour market processes and the familial status of being the breadwinner. However, since the writing of The Limits of Masculinity, underemployment and unemployment have become chronic, stable factors in all modern, industrialized nations. Tolson's model has only limited explanatory power when applied to the situations of the participants in my sample. All of the participants were being socialized into a role of dominance, aggression, and power. However, they knew that they would most likely be unable to wield this power outside of peer and family relationships. They identified that their access to the institutional benefits of patriarchy -- a house, a car, a good job -- had been blocked. These youth seemed to indicate a realization that they had only minimal access to the traditional resources associated with male dominance and authority. It is apparent that these youth had only a limited variety of resources at hand to practise their gender.

How did the participants make sense of their situations? Their lives were characterized by an extreme pursuit of the traditional male attributes of toughness, competitiveness, and dominance. Building upon the arguments of Rubin (1976), Klein (1982), Messerschmidt (1986,1993), and Connell (1992), I suggest that the behaviour of the participants was in part a response to their blocked access to the traditional institutional benefits of patriarchy. The physical, sexual, and emotional abuse of girlfriends by the participants compensated for and masked the perceived threat to their masculine identities. I suggest that the construction of masculinity was an ongoing process for these marginal male youth, and that the practice of girlfriend abuse was an aspect of their identity construction.

Connell (1992) suggests that there are at least three distinct forms of masculinity evident in male youth on the margins of the labour market. Some males practise individual and collective behaviours along a path out of traditional masculine identity. Transvestites, gays, and bi-sexuals typify those males practising a negative or transformist masculinity. Other males participate in the subordination of females and gays without resorting to physical and sexual violence. Instead, there is conscious participation in the maintenance of heterosexual male dominance through the use of non-violent, emotional abuse. Psychological control and manipulation of the less powerful is exerted through isolation, intimidation, emotional rejection and humiliation, verbal abuse, and the use of male privilege by these males who practise a complicit masculinity. Finally, of the three forms of masculinity identified by Connell, his concept of protest masculinity is most closely associated with the behaviour of 29 of the participants in my study. As Connell argues, I suggest that these youth played out their marginalization in a hypermasculine fashion. Reacting to their economic powerlessness, they acted out the traditional, aggressive male role, enforcing the social relations of patriarchy in a violent way. They presented a public, objective display of masculine power over gays, females, and other males. The participants were both protesting against the unattainable imperatives of the masculine ideal, and using the only means that they had to defend themselves. Abusive and violent behaviour compensated for whatever could not be realized. The male attributes of toughness,

competitiveness and dominance were pursued to the extreme.

The findings of my study expand upon the work done by Rubin (1976), Klein (1982) and Messerschmidt (1986, 1992) in this area. The participants indicated that they were being socialized into a role of dominance, aggression, and power. They referred to themselves as being superior to girls and gays. They identified that they had been denied access to the economic rewards of middle and upper class heterosexual males. They may have known that they would not be able to wield any power outside of their personal relationships. Abusive behaviour may have been one of the few resources over which the participants had control. Their masculine identities may have been reaffirmed and expressed by exerting power and control over girls and gays.

I suggest that masculine identity was consistent with the familial patriarchal lens of the participants. I am arguing that the participants exhibited a common type of masculinity, in which they pursued the traditional male attributes of toughness, competitiveness and dominance to the extreme. Protesting against their marginalization, their abusive behaviour may have compensated for their economic powerlessness. This common type of masculinity exaggerated their familial patriarchal beliefs which were acquired in early childhood. Defining their world from this viewpoint, they did not present their abusive behaviour as incongruous. They were engaging in behaviour that in most contexts would be defined as criminal, yet they indicated that their actions were moral and righteous. They were acting according to their values and those of their peers and families. These youth had learned how to protect their own self-image and overcome challenges to their masculine identities by picking on the less powerful. However, the participants may also have been attempting to protect themselves. Many of the narratives are characterized by a theme of constantly having to defend oneself. The way in which they defined their masculine identities suggests a constant need for reinforcement and self-affirmation. This may explain in part the persistence of their abusive behaviour.

In Chapter 6, I argue that the participants' male peer groups/gangs buttressed

their familial patriarchal beliefs, masculine values and behaviour. These groups/ gangs provided the participants with acceptance and identity, yet also appeared to threaten masculine identity. This entrenchment of abusive behaviour, familial patriarchal ideology, and rigid definition of masculinity resulted in significant harm to girlfriends, racial and sexual minorities, and to themselves.

Chapter 6

Group/Gang Affiliations

This chapter explores the common experience of the participants of partaking in group/gang activities and the impact of these activities on girlfriend abuse. Section 6.1 examines the participants' abandonment of their natural families and explores how they defined their groups/gangs as their "new" families. Section 6.2 examines the socialization into the group/gang, including familial patriarchal values and support for abusive behaviour. Section 6.3 explores the common ways in which the participants engaged in group/gang assaults on females and on males they referred to as rapists and woman beaters. I argue that the participants' male peer groups/gangs buttressed their familial patriarchal beliefs, masculine values and behaviour. I suggest that these groups/gangs provided the participants with acceptance and identity, yet also threatened this very same masculine identity. I argue that this entrenchment of abusive behaviour, familial patriarchal belief system, and rigid definition of masculinity also supported harm to girlfriends, racial and sexual minorities (gay, lesbian, bisexual youth), and to themselves. As was done in Chapters 4 and 5, each of these sections gives examples of the participants' common experiences and analyzes these experiences in light of both how the participants made sense of them and how we can understand the participants' behaviour as a social phenomenon. That is, the analysis focuses on how we as outside observers can better comprehend the participants' world view.

6.1 Abandoning Natural Families

As was discussed in Chapter 4, 24 of the 30 participants reported incidents throughout their childhood in which they experienced beatings and severe emotional abuse by father-figures. These same 24 participants also reported incidents throughout their childhood in which they witnessed beatings and severe emotional abuse of their mothers by father-figures. Of this same group of 24, 14 participants told me that their caregiver(s) used substances (drugs and/or alcohol) and /or engaged in criminal

activities on most days. In addition to this group, 2 other participants were unwilling to talk about issues of child abuse and wife assault. These 26 participants reported having minimal contact with their families of origin. Only four participants, all of whom were living at home at the time of the interview, told me that they had conflict-free, harmonious relationships with their families. A total of 14 of the 30 participants were living at home at the time of this study³².

The family of origin did not exist as a viable place for 26 of the 30 participants. It is not surprising, therefore, that these youth had little or no contact with their families. Seventeen of these participants told me that they belonged to gangs and the remaining 13 participants reported belonging to male peer groups. Based upon Mathews' (1993) youth gangs/groups continuum (see p. 21-22), I distinguished groups from gangs. All participants told me that they spent at least 4 - 5 hours each day with their male peer groups/gangs. The 17 gang members named 11 different gangs³³ to which they belonged. These 17 participants told me that the activities of their gangs were focused upon collective violence with varying degrees of criminal motivation. Using Mathews' continuum, the key defining feature which distinguished gangs from groups was the participants' involvement in criminal activity. The 11 different gangs described by these 17 participants had varying degrees of organization for criminal objectives. Only 2 of these 11 gangs can be classified as "hard core criminal" using Mathews' definition. One of these hard core criminal gangs was the Skinheads. Over the past couple of years in Ottawa-Carleton, the Skinheads have demonstrated a high degree of organization for criminal objectives, including aggravated and common assaults on racial minorities, sexual minorities, and women. The participants who told me that they were Skinheads also reported frequently engaging in other criminal activities, including auto theft, robbery, break and enter,

³² Ten of the participants who were living at home at the time of this project told me that despite being under the same roof as other family members, they had little to do with them.

³³ With the exception of the well-known hard-core criminal gangs (for example, Skinheads), actual gang names are not presented here to protect participants' anonymity.

drug-dealing, and pimping. The second hard core gang in which some participants reported membership also has had a high profile related to criminal activities in Ottawa-Carleton over the past couple of years. Members of this gang told me that they frequently engaged in collective crimes including aggravated and common assaults, pimping, gun trafficking, auto theft, robbery, and break and enter. Although all of the 13 participants who belonged to male peer groups engaged in collective violence, criminal activity was not the motive for this violence.

These 26 participants spoke of their groups/gangs as refuges from their abusive and chaotic childhood. For these youth, their peer groups/gangs had replaced their natural families. With no familial reference point from which to gain acceptance and a sense of belonging, the importance of the peer group may have escalated for these youth. In order to survive, many of these youth gained acceptance into gangs where criminal activity for material gain was commonplace. When talking about their gangs, most of these participants used distorted images of happy nuclear families. They told me that these groups/gangs provided them with feelings of acceptance, status and identity. Their language of family did not fit the violent street behaviour of their fellow gang members. Therefore, contrary to DeKeseredy's assumption, the peer groups/gangs of the research participants were much more than resource pools that encouraged and legitimized girlfriend abuse. These peer groups/gangs were described by these youth as the families they never had.

The following brief accounts demonstrate how the participants reported their groups/gangs to have replaced their natural families:

Carl: Lots of assaults, B and E's, auto theft and shit. And tons of drugs. Hash, all the chemicals. We're always high. And sometimes we just hang out. What the fuck do you want? It's my family. I got nothin' else. It's like I'm divorced from those fuckers who said they were my parents. Now I've got no parents and lots of brothers. It's great. No asshole parents to beat you all the time. So yeah. Gang is family... (44:3)

John: What home? I've got nothin'. The old gang (pseud) were my home. I'm looking for a new one now. I think the new gang (pseud) will be it... Yeah. I've got no other family. I mean I do but they're not my family. Too much violence and shit. Too heavy for me. It's a lot better this way. No one

to tell you what the fuck to do. (#53:10)

Paul: Well, I see my Mom occasionally. No one else. They all fucked me too bad. I mean, a guy can only get hurt so much and then he moves on.... You could say I've been adopted by a bunch of queens (laughing)... (36:4)

Carl, John and Paul grew up watching their mothers being beaten and emotionally degraded. Likewise, they themselves had been subjected to routine beatings and emotional degradation during their childhood. At the time of the interviews, Carl and John told me that they spent 5-6 hours most days with their gangs. Based upon Mathews' (1993) continuum, I classified their gangs as hard-core criminal. Paul told me that he spent most of his time with a group of drag-queens (this was not a gang).

Like the other participants, these 3 youth seemed to indicate that their group/gangs were their home, their family. Their use of distorted images of happy families when describing the brutal violence of their groups/gangs is striking. That is, they articulated their own victimization by child abuse, but appeared to be able to neutralize their own engagement in collective group/gang violence. None of these youth verbalized an awareness of this apparent inconsistency. Instead, they talked about having an identity, a sense of belonging, and a feeling of acceptance in their groups/gangs.

6.2 Socialization into the Group/Gang

Five aspects of DeKeseredy's (1988, 1993) male peer support model were examined: routine activities, beliefs supporting abusive behaviour, pressure to have sex, informational support, and attachments to abusive peers.

Routine Activities

All participants were asked if and how much time they spent each week with male friends. All participants were also asked to describe the three things which they did with their male friends that took up most of this time spent together. When asked these questions, most of these youth told me that they spent 4 - 5 hours most days with their male friends. Only 4 of the 30 participants reported having regular contact

with family members, despite the fact that 14 of these youth told me that they lived at home.

The most frequently engaged-in activities reported by the participants were drug and alcohol use (23 cases), criminal activities (such as auto theft, drug dealing, weapons offenses, aggravated assaults (23 cases), hanging out (at malls, pool halls, on the street) (22 cases), and sports (11 cases). Twenty-one participants reported that they engaged in 3 or more of these activities, and all 30 participants told me that they engaged in at least one of these routine activities.

The following three brief accounts are representative of the routine activities of the participants:

Brad: I'm with the Gang (pseud) all the time - for at least a couple of days a week... Lots of partying. I drink probably 5 days a week. About 7 beers a day. And we're junior delinquent mafia: auto theft, assaults, rolling, swarming Lots of that. (# 4:4)

Brian: When I'm on the streets there's anywhere from 10 - 15 of us (guys)...

M.T.: And how often are you with them for?

Brian: Every day, all week... criminal shit. We drive stolen cars to the States and sell them. And lots of partying. Drinking and chemicals. I started when I was 9. And I'm a Skin. So we're into violence a lot. And we hang out at arcades and malls. (#88:3)

Phil: I'm with them (guys) every day for 6 or 7 hours.

M.T.: So what do you usually do with them?

Phil: Drinking at bars. Working on cars. And picking up girls and dealing. Criminal shit. We drive around. There's 5 or 6 of us picking up girls and screwing them... They're (male friends) all 18, 19, 20. Some of them are pimps. But I'm not. (# 6:3)

These findings correspond with the literature on the routine activities of working class and marginal male youth (Chambliss, 1973; Willis, 1977; Messerschmidt, 1983, 1993; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1985; Connell, 1992). Brad, Brian, and Phil spent a significant portion of their waking hours with their group/gangs. Their group/gang activities were characterized by substance abuse, crime, violence, and boredom (hanging out). Recall that in Chapters 4 and 5, I describe Katz (1988) as having identified a power hierarchy in the world of violent,

marginal young criminals. From a social-psychological viewpoint, he suggests that male youth with few resources find excitement and adventure in violent crime, simultaneously finding an outlet to express their anger and rage. Confirming Katz' (1988) hypothesis, I am suggesting that many of the participants created their own excitement and thrills through crime, violence, and substance abuse to contrast the boring, daily drudgery of hanging out. As is suggested in Chapter 5, there is evidence supporting two planes of reality in the lives of the participants. In these two different but inter-related planes of reality, participants spoke of a mundane, everyday reality characterized by boredom and an preoccupation with survival on the streets and the drudgery of daily life. They talked about feeling powerless, worthless and humiliated. They related these feelings to having been abused as children, a lack of access to material possessions and a job and fears about their sexuality. In contrast, these participants also created symbols and images of an ideal plane of reality, characterized by a rigidly gendered power hierarchy, abuse against girlfriends and violence against gays and racial minorities. These males suggested that they felt superior, righteously moral, confidently masculine and in complete control at these times.

Beliefs Supporting Abusive Behaviour

When asked if their male peers would approve of a male slapping his girlfriend in the following situations, 29 participants told me that their friends would agree with slapping their girlfriends in at least one of the following situations:

- she won't do what he tells her
- she insults him when they are alone
- she insults him in public
- she gets drunk during an evening out together
- she is sobbing hysterically
- she won't have sex with him
- he learns that she is dating another man

The most commonly identified situations were "she won't do what he tells her", "she insults him when they are alone", and "he learns that she is dating another man". All 29 youth said that their friends would slap their girlfriends if they were unfaithful.

In Chapter 4, I report that 27 of the 30 participants agreed with at least one of these same attitudes supporting girlfriend abuse. I suggest that the participants

acquired their patriarchal and pro-abuse beliefs at an early age for a number of reasons: they modelled the patriarchal and abusive behaviour of their father-figures; these beliefs helped them understand the traumatic abuse at home; and they received explicit instructions from male family members to abuse women if they stepped outside of their expected roles. My data expand upon the work of Kanin (1967), DeKeseredy (1988), and DeKeseredy and Kelly (1993b). These researchers hypothesize that patriarchal peer group practices are central to university/college dating relationships, and that male students who hold familial patriarchal attitudes and beliefs and who are supported by their male peers are most likely to assault their dating partners. Further, my data support the existence of a patriarchal structure of youth subculture in the context of economic marginalization (Cohen, 1955; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; McRobbie and Garber, 1976; Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Kanin, 1967; Brake, 1980, 1985) and Muncie's (1981) assumption that patriarchal male peer groups supportive of abusive behaviour are most likely formed in high school.

Pressure to have Sex:

Twenty-nine participants told me that their male peers regularly pressured them to have sex. The following accounts are representative and reflect the nature of this pressure:

Phil: ... It's always 'C'mon, you faggot. What's the matter, can't get it up? Fuck her. Fuck her. What are you, a fucking queer? A woman? A bitch? (# 6:3)

Curtis: I've been bugged a lot. They'd say 'Did you fuck her yet, did you bang her? What are you, a fag? (#60:4)

Stewart: There's tons of pressure, like 'Did you fuck her yet? Did you get banged? What did you do with her, what did you do?' I have a girlfriend - there's no 5 knuckle shuffle for me.

MT.: 5 knuckle shuffle?

Stewart: You know, jerking off. (# 56: 4)

Colin: All the time (laughing). They'll say 'Women are only good for fucking. Go fuck her.' They'll say 'If you spend money on her, she's gotta fuck you in return.' (# 69: 4)

These data verify previous findings in the literature on male peer group/gangs and sexual activity (Willis, 1977; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1983; Campbell, 1984; Fishman, 1988;) and expand upon DeKeseredy and Kelly's (1993b) work with a college/university sample.

Informational Support

When asked if their male peers had told them to use physical force, sexual force, and insult/put down/threaten their girlfriends in certain situations, 29 participants told me that this happened regularly.

The following accounts summarize the nature and variety of instructions given to participants by their male peers regarding the circumstances under which they should abuse their girlfriends.

Brian: ... They all do. They'll say if she sleeps around call her a whore. If she does something stupid, if she screws around, call her a scanky cunt, a fucking lesbo dyke bitch (#88:6)

Steve: They'll say give her a bitch slap if she mouths off or hits you first. But it's only if she's your girlfriend. I mean, they joke about it all the time. If she pisses you, smack her. If she gets drunk and makes an idiot of herself, smack her. If she fucks around on you - you know, talks to other guys, give a bitch slap'... Girls are good for two things: cooking and screwing. I go along with it. There's tons of joking about sex. 'What base are you at? First? Dump her'. If you want your friends to look up to you and like you then treat girls like shit. Like I said, girls are good for cooking and cleaning. They're not my friends. (#87: 4-5)

Finally, this member of a violent youth gang told me how his male peers encouraged him to "fake-rape" his girlfriend and film it so that the gang could watch it:

Stewart: They all can't wait until the next time we hop in bed. They love hearing about that shit. I mean, that's where I get half my ideas.

M.T.: Your ideas?

Stewart: Yeah. The fake-raping shit. My buddies told me about that. And spanking. I mean, we rent S&M pornos sometimes. They show pretty much everything - group sex, leather, chains, violence. But you can always tell that those bitches love it and beg for more. So I guess you could say that my friends are cheering me on.

M.T.: Cheering you on?

Stewart: Yeah. Sometimes I think they like it more than I do. They want me to film a fake-rape sometime...

M.T.: How does it make you feel, telling your friends about your sex life?

Stewart: (silence) Pretty good I guess. They think I've got balls (silence).

M.T.: Is that a good feeling for a guy or a not so good feeling?

Stewart: Good, I guess. I think they look up to me for that shit. (#56:4-5; 10 - 11)

The explicit instructions which Brian, Steve and Stewart received from their peers to physically, sexually and emotionally abuse their girlfriends typify the informational support received by all participants except one. My findings expand upon and challenge (see next section) the conclusions of the few quantitative studies conducted on samples of college and university students (DeKeseredy, 1988; DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 1993; DeKeseredy and Kelly, 1993b).

Steve and Stewart's accounts were characterized by images of game-playing and sports. Steve told me that his friends "Joke... all the time" about "bitch-slaps" and "screwing". He used imagery of a baseball game when recounting his friends' encouragement to have intercourse: "What base are you at? First? Dump her". Likewise, Stewart's account used imagery of a sporting event. Stewart told me "my friends are cheering me on... they want me to film a fake-rape". These images of game-playing and sports again verify Katz' (1988) ideas regarding two planes of reality and the creativity and seduction of youth crime. I suggest that Stewart seemed to be able to justify his actions, because he believed that "those bitches love it and beg for more". I am suggesting that Stewart, like most of the other participants, created a moral and righteous code of behaviour in his second plane of reality. He indicated that his friends thought he's "got balls" and "look up" to him because of his stories of sado-masochistic sex with his girlfriend. This hierarchy of the powerless, a concept introduced in Chapter 5 and credited to Katz (1988), characterizes most of the participants' accounts as well. Steve told me that "if you want your friends to look up to you and like you, then treat girls like shit".

6.3 On the Hunt: Attachments to Abusive Peers

When asked if any of their male friends had used physical force, forced sex, and insulted/put down/threatened females, all 30 participants told me that at least a couple of their male peers had committed abusive acts against their girlfriends. Further, all participants reported abusive group/gang incidents with females. All participants likewise told me about individual acts of abuse against their girlfriends.

The following 3 accounts reflect the collective nature of the girlfriend abuse committed by all participants:

Serge: ... At a dance, this girl slapped this guy. He punched her back. And my best friend pushed his girlfriend to the floor once... All my friends and me, we all think the same about what girls should and shouldn't do. We all think that girls should do what we want them to. And it pisses us off when they don't. So I've seen some of them when they've hit girls. And all the time we are just joking around, calling them names - slut, cunt, whore, bitch, fat cow - we all do it. So I guess you could say that we all agree to treat girls like we do. We're just all the same.. (#10:6,9)

Chuck:..We grab their asses, breasts. It's just for fun. One of my friends grabbed this girl and she slapped him. When I see a girl with big tits at school, I start play fighting with her so I can feel her breasts. I always say 'I'm sorry. I slipped'... Well, I guess we're having fun - sexually, I mean. We all get hard-ons... When we look at girls, that's all we look at. You can tell if they're wearing a bra or not, what kind of underwear they have on. That's all we talk about 'Did you see her tits? She's got bikinis on'. It's not important what they think... I guess we think that because they have big tits, they automatically want us to touch them...

We'll chase a girl down at school or in the park (motioning behind him, out the window). And then we'll trip her or corner her. Some of us will hold her and we'll grab her nipples hard. It makes them purple. It didn't hurt them though. Because their nipples always got hard...

You know, we used to play this other game a lot at school. We call it giving girls Robin Hoods. We'd pull their bra straps at the back real hard. You could hear it snap back. Sometimes we broke their bras (silence). They always took off to the can after that happened.

M.T.: Oh?

Chuck:Yeah. We could tell that when they came back sometimes they didn't have their bras on any more. I guess we kinda broke them by pulling too hard.

M.T.: Did you want to break them?

Chuck: I guess we did.

M.T.: Why?

Chuck:Because we wanted to see their tits... Yeah. it was all a game. We'd all have fun.

M.T.: Your male friends?

Chuck: Yeah. There'd be about 4 or 5 of us and just one girl at a time. We all thought it was a good laugh...

You know what else we'd do? We could tell when they had their period.

They'd all of a sudden get up to go to the can. So we'd steal that shit they'd stuff in their cunt.

M.T.: Oh?

Chuck: Yeah. You know, when a girl bleeds and smells like a dead fish, so she has to stuff that shit in her pussy to make it stop. We'd take them outta their bags or purses and play monkey in the middle. We'd tell everyone on the school yard.

We'd make them cry. I guess they'd get pretty embarrassed if they got blood on their pants.

M.T.: So how did that make you feel?

Chuck: We were having a ball. We all thought it was a riot. It was all in fun. We were just joking. But that menstruation shit is gross. That's disgusting what girls do. They shouldn't do it or if they have to, they shouldn't do it around us. It's like they're some kind of fucking animal - not human. They should go somewhere else at that time of month. They shouldn't be doing that bleeding around us. It's sick. I'm disgusted by it... But it made us feel like king shit.

M.T.: King shit?

Chuck: Yeah. Like we know something real personal about them that really upset them. And we knew exactly how to make them cry like babies. Nobody fucked with us, because they didn't want it to be their turn next. (#81:3, 6-11)

Paul: But I guess you could say that we all tease each other about beaver hunting.

M.T.: Beaver hunting?

Paul: Yeah. Finding pussy. It's like a contest. You gotta fuck your brains out - every night if you can. So I guess you could say that my friends - we all tell each other to go do it - fuck anything on two legs that's got tits. It doesn't matter what hole you ram your cock in.

M.T.: Oh.

Paul: Yeah - her mouth, her cunt, or up her ass. And we talk about it all the time. It's a joke. But I guess it's like there's pressure to be the best - to fuck girls no matter what they want. Like it's about getting girls to do whatever you want them to do. Sexually. It's like the more of that you do, the more you feel part of the gang. My friends look up to me for doing that. It's like kind of status. We've got our old meeting place down by the river. We each have our own tree.

M.T.: Tree?

Paul: Yeah. We keep score. We've done it for a couple of years. Every different girl you fuck, it's another notch in your tree (silence).

M.T.: Oh.

Paul: Yeah. And sometimes you get another notch if you've done something else than straight fucking. That's the easiest.

M.T.: Oh. Like what?

Paul: Well, like cumming in her face. Shooting your load in her face if you know she doesn't like it. Or getting her to blow you after you've straight fucked or done it up her ass.

M.T.: Oh.

Paul: Yeah. It's like a contest. (#67: 9 - 10)

Serge, Chuck, and Paul used symbols characteristic of children's play, sporting events and comedies when telling me about their group/gang's treatment of females.

Like these 3 youth, the other participants described their abusive behaviour with their girlfriends as playful, funny, and game-like. Most participants referred to their behaviour as "joking around" and often laughed when telling me about these incidents. Serge, Chuck, and Paul told me that they were "just joking around", "play fighting", "having fun" and "playing games". They described their behaviour (which was classified as abusive) as children's games and sporting contests: Robin Hoods, Purple Nipples, Monkey in the Middle, Beaver Hunting. The participants' usage of this type of language again confirms Katz' (1988) concept of two planes of reality in his work with violent young criminals.

I am suggesting that the participants created an exciting, seductive plane of reality to relieve the drudgery and hopelessness of their daily existence. As if on a superior moral plane, many participants told me about the important role their groups/gangs played in teaching and disciplining their girlfriends regarding rules of conduct. Serge told me:

"All my friends and me, we all think the same about what girls should and shouldn't do. We all think that girls should do what we want them to. And it pisses us off when they don't".

Chuck told me:

"We think that because they have big tits, they automatically want us to touch them... Some of us will hold her and we'll grab her nipples hard. It makes them purple. It didn't hurt them though... When a girl bleeds and smells like a dead fish... It's like they're some kind of fucking animal - not human... They shouldn't be doing that bleeding around us. It's sick".

As Katz has argued, the participants were able to momentarily transcend their perceived worthlessness and the futility of their daily lives at these times. Feelings of powerlessness were transcended when these participants defined themselves to be at the top of the hierarchy. Chuck told me "it made us feel like king shit... Nobody fucked with us because they didn't want it to be their turn next". Paul informed me "Like it's about getting girls to do whatever you want them to... My friends look up to me for doing that. It's kind of like status".

The collective nature of the physical, sexual and emotional abuse perpetrated by the participants against their girlfriends is disturbing. Whereas previous research suggests that peer supported girlfriend abuse consists primarily of individual acts of violence against girlfriends (DeKeseredy, 1988; DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 1993;

DeKeseredy and Kelly, 1993b), my qualitative data suggest something very different. All of the participants reported many collective as well as individual acts of abuse against their girlfriends. The most commonly identified types of collective acts of abuse against females were emotional and sexual abuse. All of the participants participated in at least one collective act³⁴ of emotional or sexual abuse.

One of the most striking inconsistencies in the accounts appeared when these youth talked about the rapes and beatings other males apparently committed. The participants at times used symbols characteristic of romantic nobility. As if on a superior moral plane, 18 of the 30 participants spoke of their groups/gangs being on a mission to rid their community of violent rapists and woman beaters. The accounts of William, Stewart, Brad and Don were representative of these 18 participants:

William: We track down guys who beat up and rape girls. It's what we do. (#58:3)

Stewart: Well, we're 23 guys in the gang (pseud). We clean up Orleans.

M.T.: Oh?

Stewart: Yeah. We beat the shit out of guys who beat up their girlfriends. We've kicked the shit out of 6 guys so far - for rape too. We're still looking for James Box (pseud).

M.T.: So you're into violence?

Stewart: Just with guys - no girls³⁵. (# 56:3)

Brad: I've used tons of violence against guys who have assaulted their girlfriends. Kicked the living shit out of them. It's just not right (playing with gun on necklace) ... We kick the shit outta guys we know who have raped or beaten girls.

M.T.: I'm trying to understand how your gang (pseud) is against rape and beating girls, but some gang (pseud) members pimp girls. I'm confused.

Brad: They only pimp girls who want to work the streets. There is no forcing going on.

M.T.: Oh.

Brad: Yeah. 'Ho's are all bitches any way. They wouldn't be 'hoing if they didn't want to. Pimps are just doing them a favour, protecting them from violent tricks... What's a 'ho? Shit. That's all. (# 4:6,10,11,12)

³⁴ Collective act of abuse means that at least two males engaged in the abusive incident.

³⁵ Stewart later told me that he hit his girlfriend.

Don: We beat up guys who hit girls. We were walking down the street and we saw this guy punch a girl in the face. We beat him up... We're into kicking the shit outta guys who rape and beat girls. We track them down and kick the shit outta them. That's important. That's the worst. A guy cannot hit a girl...

M.T.: Why do you think it's important for me - and for other people, I assume - to know that you beat up guys who abuse females?

Don: I dunno. I guess I'm proving something.

M.T.: Proving what?

Don: That I'm a guy. But now that you put it that way, I'm beating up other guys for exactly what I'm doing. I guess I'm lying about it - covering up my own shit. I mean, if I show other people I'm against abusive guys, they'll think wow - he's cool. They respect me for it. But I'm doing the same shit.
(#18:4,5,7)

6.4 Discussion

These accounts illustrate one of the most striking findings of this study: most participants seemed to be able to justify their own abusive behaviour, yet at the same time were on a mission to rid their community of perceived rapists and woman beaters. How could such similar behaviour be presented so differently by the participants? It is helpful to revisit the early childhood of these 18 participants. Recall in Chapter 4, I report that 15 participants were routinely instructed by father-figures (who were abusing their mothers and themselves) to physically, sexually and/or emotionally abuse women. I also report significant differences in the participants' descriptions of their mothers' beatings and severe emotional abuse. The majority of the participants who witnessed their natural fathers abuse their mothers (11 out of 12) justified these assaults, indicating that they were caused by their mother. By contrast, the majority (10 out of 12) of the youth who saw their mothers being abused by other father-figures (step-fathers, boyfriends) said these assaults were wrong. It is not surprising, therefore, when I report that 6 of the 12 participants, who witnessed their mothers being abused by men other than their natural fathers, told me that they used violence to protect their mothers from the abuse. None of the 12 participants who witnessed their natural fathers abuse their mothers told me that they intervened in these assaults. I suggest that the reason why they did not protect their mothers was because of their familial patriarchal ideology. They appeared to justify their father's abusive behaviour. Of the 18 participants who told me that they beat up stranger rapists and woman beaters, 10 witnessed their mothers being abused by men other than their natural fathers (including the 6 who used violence to protect their mothers), 5 denied that their mothers were abused or refused to discuss this issue, and only 3 of these

participants witnessed their mothers being abused by their natural fathers.

Therefore, I am suggesting that one of the reasons why these 18 participants reportedly beat up stranger-rapists and woman beaters was because they defined these perceived abusers as having no moral authority to enforce their male dominance over females who were not their girlfriends. Comparable to how they portrayed their mothers' abuse by step-fathers or boyfriends as unjustified (these participants didn't identify these father-figures as the legitimate rulers of their homes), I suggest that they likewise presented the abuse of females by male strangers as unjustified. These participants did not identify these male strangers as having a natural and moral authority over those females. Just as how they viewed their mothers' abusive boyfriends and step-fathers as interlopers, they portrayed these stranger rapists and woman beaters to be interlopers as well. In contrast, they justified their own abusive behaviour with their girlfriends. I am proposing that the participants' peer groups/gangs may have reinforced this familial patriarchal lens developed in early childhood through which they made sense of their worlds.

There is an additional factor which may help us in making sense of the participants' lack of articulation regarding the apparent conflict between their own abusive behaviour and their mission to rid the community of perceived rapists and woman beaters. I am arguing that the peer groups/gangs of the participants also reinforced their masculine values and abusive behaviour. Recall that in Chapter 5, I suggest that the participants' masculine identity exaggerated their familial patriarchal value set. I argue that the participants exhibited a common type of masculinity in which they pursued the traditional male attributes of toughness, competitiveness and dominance to the extreme. Protesting against their marginalization, I suggest that their abusive behaviour compensated for and masked their economic powerlessness and sexual anxieties. Their common type of masculinity exaggerated their familial patriarchal beliefs which were acquired in early childhood. Defining their world from this viewpoint, I suggest that they did not verbalize the apparent inconsistency of their abusive behaviour. They were engaging in behaviour that in most contexts would be defined as criminal, yet they presented their actions as moral and righteous. I propose that these youth learned to protect their own self-image and overcome challenges to their masculine identities by picking on the less powerful.

Extending this line of argument, I propose that the male peer groups/gangs buttressed the masculine identities of the participants. When I asked Don "Why do you think it's important for me - and other people, I assume - to know that you beat

up guys who abuse females?", he responded:

"I guess I'm proving something... That I'm a guy... I'm beating up other guys for exactly what I'm doing. I guess I'm lying about it, covering up my own shit... If I show other people I'm against abusive guys, they'll think wow - he's cool. They respect me for it."

Don was the only participant who verbalized insight into his seemingly incongruous behaviour. Nonetheless, I suggest that his identification of the apparent conflict between beating up unfamiliar rapists and woman beaters, while at the same time perpetrating girlfriend abuse, is applicable to the other participants as well. Like Don, the participants were scared young people who referred to their lives as being worthless. They routinely exhibited defensive posturing, indicating that they had to constantly protect themselves from the outside world. They learned how to protect their own self-image by picking on the less powerful. Their masculine identity was reaffirmed and expressed by exerting raw power over the less powerful. In order to construct who and what they were, the participants had to draw the line with what they were not. Expanding upon Cohen's (1955) concept of reaction formation, these participants presented their behaviour as being exactly the opposite to the behaviour of the stranger rapist and woman beater. I suggest that the participants recognized too much of themselves in the stranger-rapist and woman beater, and were afraid that they were going to become just like them.

Cohen's (1955) analysis of reaction formation hinges upon his assumption that working class juvenile delinquents, having internalized middle class cultural standards, protect their self-image from failure to achieve these standards. They deny any attachments to the material benefits of middle class success. Expanding upon this concept, I am proposing that deep down inside, the participants recognized that they were like the rapists and woman beaters they claimed to be hunting. They were attempting to convince themselves and others that they were exactly the opposite. They protected their own self-image by exerting brute force over the less powerful, while at the same time displaying a public disdain for rapists and woman beaters. Like Cohen, I am suggesting that the participants had accepted conventional values and norms and had feelings of guilt and shame resulting from status problems. I am

arguing that these youth played out their marginalization in a hyper-masculine fashion. Reacting to their economic powerlessness, they acted out the traditional aggressive male role, enforcing the social relations of patriarchy in a violent way. They presented a public, objective display of masculine power over gays, females and other males. They were protesting against the unattainable imperatives of the masculine ideal. Their abusive and violent behaviour compensated for and covered up whatever could not be realized.

The findings related to abandoning natural families verify the conclusions of the contemporary literature on collective youth violence and youth gangs (Baron, 1989; Brownfield and Thompson, 1991; Percy, 1991; Copple, 1993; Mathews, 1993; Gordon, 1994). All participants were asked if the members of their male peer group/gang held beliefs supporting abusive behaviour, pressured them to have sex, and if they had been told by these members to abuse their girlfriends in certain situations. Twenty-nine participants told me that they received all three types of peer support. Accordingly, this qualitative data provides limited support for the assumptions made by the handful of quantitative researchers working in this area (DeKeseredy, 1988; DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 1993; DeKeseredy and Kelly, 1993b). My data provide detail regarding the dynamics of peer support outlined by these authors, and suggest a more dynamic, complex role played by these groups/gangs.

There are striking parallels between the instructions to abuse females received from male peers and those received from father-figures of the participants in early childhood. In Chapter 4 I report that 13 participants were routinely instructed by father-figures (who were abusing their mothers and themselves) to abuse females. There is also a remarkable similarity between the socialization into the ideology of familial patriarchy of the participants as children and their socialization into their groups/gangs as adolescents. Recall that in Chapter 4, I report that 27 participants described to me rigid, patriarchal gender roles of their mothers and father-figures in their natural families. Twenty-nine participants reported that their peers adhered to at least one belief supporting physical girlfriend abuse. I am suggesting that the male peer group/gang buttressed the familial patriarchal ideology of the participants which

was initially acquired in early childhood. This suggestion directly challenges the hypothesis of Kanin (1967) and DeKeseredy that the male peer group is the primary source of male patriarchal practices. Instead, my data suggest that the adherence to familial patriarchal beliefs by the participants was grounded in their families of origin which were characterized by rigid gender roles.

Further, I am arguing that the male peer group/gang also reinforced the participants' individual usage of a vocabulary of adjustment (Kanin, 1967), in which they denied their socially unacceptable behaviour through the sophisticated usage of justifications. The individual participants' denial of wrongdoing regarding their abusive behaviour was reinforced in their peer groups/gangs through the informational support and pressure to have sex by group/gang members. Attachments to abusive peers and the participation in collective assaults on females also played a key role in buttressing individual accounts of denial of wrongdoing.

Support is found for Mathews' (1993) youth gang/groups continuum. Of the 23 participants who routinely engaged in criminal activities (auto theft, drug-dealing, aggravated and common assault, weapons trafficking, robbery, break and enter), 17 belonged to gangs. These gangs engaged in collective violence and crime. The remaining 13 participants belonged to school and neighbourhood-based male peer groups. Six of these youth also engaged in collective violence with their peer group, although criminal activity was not the motive for this violence.

The participants were engaging in defensive posturing and self-protection from the outside world. In their male peer groups/gangs, the participants found a haven of moral superiority, reinforced by peer group/gang members and the status derived from participation in group/gang activities. Peer group/gang affiliations reinforced the familial patriarchal beliefs of the participants, originally acquired in their early childhood. The participants acquired their patriarchal and pro-abuse beliefs at an early age for a number of reasons: they modelled the patriarchal and abusive behaviour of their father-figures, these beliefs helped them rationalize the beatings and emotional abuse at home, and some received explicit instructions from male family members to abuse women if they stepped outside of their expected roles. The participants were

invoking in their peer groups/gangs the very situations which characterized their families of origin. These youth, along with group/gang members, held patriarchal and pro-abuse beliefs and were abusive towards females, racial minorities, and gays. These participants also received explicit instructions from group/gang members to abuse females.

Chapter 7

Summary and Conclusions

This dissertation was undertaken with the objective of addressing some of the limitations of existing studies on girlfriend abuse. These studies rely mainly upon the reports of females who have been victimized by males. The collection of incidence and prevalence data was the main goal of these studies. There are not any qualitative, in-depth interviews with abusive male youth. In particular, the intentions, meanings and motives of abusive male youth, from their perspective, are not researched. In this study, abusive male youth were asked why they do what they do, and what their behaviour means. The qualitative data from this dissertation therefore expand and qualify the existing quantitative data on this topic. In addition, this dissertation focused on a type of sample which has not been researched previously in this field. By engaging marginal males as participants this project addressed the college/university sample bias in existing studies. This study also targetted the sector of the population where abuse is most prevalent.

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore how marginal male youth who are abusive make sense of their behaviour, and how we can understand their behaviour as a social phenomenon. In other words, how we, as outside observers, can better analyze their world from their definition of the situation. In the analysis of how these males define their situation, our comprehension of their behaviour in a social context is enhanced. A multi-method research design was employed which identified three key concepts in the literature: familial patriarchal ideology, masculine identity, and male peer group/gang affiliation. The concepts were tested in the initial set of 90 screening interviews. In addition to accomplishing this objective, the screening interviews were used to develop a definition of abuse, assess the schedule of interview questions, and select a sample of 30 marginal, abusive male youth for in-depth interviews. Following the screening interviews, the following research questions were developed: How do marginal males make sense of their participation in their abusive behaviour? What insights can be derived from the key concepts that will help us analyze the

participants' behaviour in a broader social context?

In the exploration of these research questions during the 30 in-depth interviews, three major themes were identified. These themes are presented and analyzed in the three findings chapters of this dissertation. The first theme, acquiring familial patriarchal ideology in early childhood, is examined in Chapter 4. In this chapter, the findings indicate that 24 participants were beaten and emotionally abused, and witnessed their mother's beatings and emotional abuse, by father figures. Most of these participants did not verbalize that their own victimization by father-figures was abusive or wrong. One-half of these 30 participants were routinely instructed by father-figures to abuse women. Almost all of these participants who witnessed their biological fathers abuse their mothers said these assaults were justifiable and caused by their mother. In contrast, almost all of those youth who saw their mothers being abused by non-biological father figures said these assaults were unjustified. One-half of the 12 participants who witnessed their mothers abused by non-biological father-figures stated that they used violence to protect their mothers from abuse. None of the 12 youth who witnessed their biological fathers abuse their mothers reported that they attempted to stop their fathers abusiveness.

The data on the participants' socialization into the ideology of familial patriarchy suggest that the participant's familial patriarchal beliefs provided them with a common lens through which to understand their childhoods. It is argued that the participants may have acquired this belief system at an early age for a number of reasons: they modelled the patriarchal and abusive behaviour of their father-figures; these beliefs helped them understand the traumatic abuse at home; and they received explicit instructions from male family members to abuse women if they stepped outside of their expected roles. It made some sense to participants that their biological fathers, whom they indicated to be the legitimate rulers of their home, beat and degraded their mothers for not obeying house rules. The participants who witnessed their mothers being abused by non-biological fathers considered those assaults to be unjustified. They indicated that these men, not being their biological fathers, could not be the natural heads of their families. However, regardless of whether they defined

their mother's victimization to be right or wrong, the participants internalized patriarchal beliefs and attitudes supporting abuse against women who violated these beliefs. Further, the majority of the participants did not indicate that their own beatings and emotional abuse by father-figures was unjustified or had negative consequences for themselves. The participants' description of their own victimization makes sense when we consider that most of these adolescents saw their father-figures as being the natural rulers of their families who had to be obeyed at all costs.

The second theme which was identified during the in-depth interviews relates to the formation of the participant's masculine identity. This theme is explored in Chapter 5. In this chapter the findings suggest that almost all participants used similar imagery to describe a common set of masculine ideals. These ideals are comparable to those identified in the literature on middle and upper-class youth and most closely reflect those masculine values described in the literature on working-class and marginal male youth. They characterized themselves as powerful, sexual, fighting machines. They spoke about being 'King Shit' in a hierarchy of the powerless; a hierarchy made up of girls, gays and racial minorities. When initially speaking about their masculine identities, therefore, none of the participants talked about personal feelings of inadequacy or failure regarding the difficulties they faced in acquiring material wealth and good jobs.

However, when probing began around the issue of their lack of economic future, one-half of the participants broke down and cried. It was as if an emotional floodgate had opened. Nine of these participants were questioned regarding past suicide attempts and present plans to kill themselves because of their apparent hopelessness and despair regarding this issue.

The participants made use of a common set of symbols when talking about their future expectations. Twenty-eight of these males clearly stated that due to their lack of economic opportunity, their future would be defined by economic powerlessness: no job or a 'shit job'; little money, forcing a dependence on welfare or crime; and few material possessions. Usually in the same breath, they said 'but I still have my balls and my fists'. The participants clearly articulated their lack of an

economic future. This finding, that these participants expressed feelings of powerlessness, despair and humiliation regarding their economic futures, expands upon Sennett's and Cobb's (1973), Rubin's (1983) and Connell's (1991) work in this area. These researchers focus on an adult population, whereas the sample age range in this dissertation was 13-17 years. The data from this dissertation suggest that the realities of a life based upon a dismal economic future are identified at an early age by marginal male youth.

When discussing the above issues, most of the participants spoke about their anxieties and fears surrounding their sexuality. Twenty-nine of the participants spoke about their need to have frequent sexual intercourse to prove that they were heterosexual. One-half of these youth said that they regularly beat up gays to protect themselves from being raped and to demonstrate that they were not gay. All of these youth employed defensive posturing when questioned about their sexual orientation. Data analysis indicates that they were acting in self-defence. The findings verify and expand upon the existing literature in this area.

How did the participants make sense of challenges to their masculine identities? It is suggested that these youth compensated for, protested against, and masked their lack of economic future and sexual fears by engaging in a common set of behaviours with their girlfriends. It is argued that their masculine identities exaggerated the familial patriarchal lens through which these males understood their world. Their lives were characterized by an extreme pursuit of the traditional male attributes of toughness, competitiveness, and dominance. Building upon the work of Rubin (1976), Klein (1982), Messerschmidt (1986, 1993), and Connell (1992), it is suggested that the behaviour of the participants was in part a response to their blocked access to the traditional institutional benefits of patriarchy. The physical, sexual, and emotional abuse of girlfriends by participants compensated for the perceived threat to their masculine identities. The construction of masculinity was an ongoing process for these marginal male youth, and the practice of girlfriend abuse was an aspect of their identity construction.

Connell (1992) suggests that there are at least three distinct forms of

masculinity evident in male youth on the fringe of the labour market. Of the three forms of masculinity identified by Connell, his concept of protest masculinity is most closely associated with the behaviour of 29 of the participants in this dissertation. Supporting the work of Connell, it is suggested that these youth played out their marginalization in a hypermasculine fashion. Reacting to their economic powerlessness, they acted out the traditional, aggressive male role, enforcing the social relations of patriarchy in a violent way. They presented a public, objective display of masculine power over gays, females, and other males. The participants protested against the unattainable imperatives of the masculine ideal. Abusive and violent behaviour compensated for whatever could not be realized. The male attributes of toughness, competitiveness and dominance were pursued to the extreme. The participants provided indicators that they were being socialized into a role of dominance, aggression, and power. They indicated that they were superior to girls and gays. They also demonstrated awareness that they were being denied access to the economic rewards of middle and upper class heterosexual males. They were aware that they might not be able to wield any power outside of their personal relationships. Abusive behaviour may have been one of the few resources over which the participants had control. Their masculine identities may have been reaffirmed and expressed by exerting power and control over girls and gays.

It is suggested that masculine identity exaggerated the familial patriarchal lens of the participants. This common type of masculinity interacted with their familial patriarchal beliefs which were acquired in early childhood. Making sense of their world from this viewpoint, they did not verbalize that their abusive behaviour was inconsistent. They were engaging in behaviour that in most contexts would be defined as criminal, yet they interpreted their actions as moral and righteous. They did not indicate that their participation in this behaviour was abusive. Instead, evidence is presented which suggests the existence of two interrelated value sets or planes of reality for most participants. The first plane was characterized by boredom, drudgery, powerlessness and a preoccupation with daily living. The second plane was defined by this hierarchy of the powerless. Feelings of moral superiority were evoked in the

participants when abusing the less-powerful.

The final theme which was identified during the in-depth interviews related to the participants' group/gang affiliations. This theme is explored in Chapter 6. In this chapter, it is argued that the family of origin did not exist as a viable place for almost all of the participants. These youth had little or no contact with their families due to the abuse at home. All participants reported that they spent at least 4-5 hours each day with their male peer groups/gangs. These groups/gangs provided the participants with acceptance and identity, and also threatened these very same masculine identities. These findings verify the conclusions of the contemporary literature on collective youth violence and youth gangs (Baron, 1989; Brownfield and Thompson, 1991; Pearcy, 1991; Copple, 1993; Mathews, 1993; Gordon, 1994; Caputo, 1994).

Almost all participants reported that the members of their male peer group/gang held beliefs supporting abusive behaviour, pressured them to have sex, and told them to abuse their girlfriends in certain situations. There are striking parallels between the instructions to abuse females received from male peers and those received from father-figures of the participants in early childhood. There are also distinct parallels between the socialization into the ideology of familial patriarchy of the participants as children and their socialization into their groups/gangs as adolescents. It is suggested that the male peer group/gang buttressed the familial patriarchal value set of the participants which was initially acquired in early childhood. The data suggest that the adherence to familial patriarchal beliefs by the participants was grounded in the rigid gender roles in their families of origin.

As well, male peers may have played a significant role in threatening as well as reinforcing the construction of male identity in opposition to females, gays, and minorities. The message appears to have been that if these adolescents did not dominate these people, they were perceived to be less of a man. These young males seemed to attach significant meaning to humiliating each other. Being able to put down others would appear to elevate the status of those who could do it successfully.

Further, it is argued that the male peer group/gang also reinforced the participants' individual usage of a vocabulary of adjustment (Kanin, 1967), in which

they denied their socially unacceptable behaviour through the sophisticated usage of justifications. The individual participants' denial of wrongdoing regarding their abusive behaviour was reinforced in their peer groups/gangs through the informational support and pressure to have sex by group/gang members. Attachments to abusive peers and the participation in collective assaults on females also played a key role in buttressing individual accounts of denial of wrongdoing. Finally, support is found for Mathew's (1993) youth gang/groups continuum.

An intriguing finding of this study is that most participants did not talk about the apparent incongruity between their abusive behaviour and their mission to rid their community of perceived rapists and woman beaters. How could the participants present such similar behaviour so differently? Of the eighteen participants who reported that they beat up stranger rapists and woman beaters, ten witnessed their mothers being abused by non-biological fathers (including the 6 who used violence to protect their mothers), 5 denied that their mothers were abused or refused to discuss this issue, and only 3 of these participants witnessed their mothers being abused by their natural fathers. One of the reasons why these 18 participants reportedly beat up stranger-rapists and woman beaters may have been because they believed these perceived abusers to have had no moral authority to enforce their dominance over females who were not their girlfriends. Comparable to how they presented their mothers' abuse by step-fathers or boyfriends to be unjustified (these participants said that these father-figures were not the legitimate rulers of their homes), they likewise said the abuse of females by male strangers is unjustified. These participants reported that these male strangers did not have a natural and moral authority over those females. Just as how they viewed their mothers' abusive boyfriends and step-fathers as interlopers, they suggested these stranger rapists and woman beaters to be interlopers as well. In contrast, they justified their own behaviour with their girlfriends. The participants' peer groups/gangs may have reinforced this familial patriarchal lens developed in early childhood through which these participants understood their worlds. Alternatively, the biological father may have been viewed to be part of the identity of these adolescents. It was easier to dissociate from the step-father or other males, which may have been

rejected more easily as identity was being constructed.

There is an additional factor to be considered in the participants' lack of verbalization regarding the apparent conflict between their own abusive behaviour and their mission to rid the community of perceived rapists and woman beaters. The peer groups/gangs of the participants also reinforced their masculine values and abusive behaviour. The participants were scared young people who indicated that their lives were worthless. They routinely exhibited defensive posturing, understanding that they had to constantly protect themselves from the outside world. They learned how to protect their self-image by picking on the less powerful. Masculine identity was reaffirmed and expressed by exerting raw power over the less powerful. In order to construct who and what they were, the participants had to draw the line demarcating what they were not. It is argued that this idea expands upon Cohen's (1955) concept of reaction formation.

Cohen's (1955) analysis hinges upon his assumption that working class juvenile delinquents, having internalized middle class cultural standards, protect their self-image from failure to achieve these standards. They deny any attachments to the material benefits of middle class success. In Chapter 6 of this dissertation, it is proposed that the participants suspected that they were like the rapists and woman beaters they claimed to be hunting. They were attempting to convince themselves and others that they were exactly the opposite. They protected their self-image by exerting brute force over the less powerful, while at the same time displaying a public disdain for rapists and woman beaters. Similar to Cohen, it is suggested that the participants accepted some conventional values and norms and had feelings of guilt and shame resulting from status problems. These youth played out their marginalization in a hyper-masculine fashion. Reacting to their economic powerlessness, they acted out the traditional aggressive male role, enforcing the social relations of patriarchy in a violent way. They presented a public, objective display of masculine power over gays, females and other males. They were protesting against the unattainable imperatives of the masculine ideal. Their abusive and violent behaviour compensated for whatever could not be realized.

In their male peer groups/gangs, the participants found a haven of moral superiority, reinforced by peer group/gang members and the status derived from participation in group/gang activities. Peer group/gang affiliations reinforced the familial patriarchal value sets of the participants, originally acquired in their early childhood. The participants were invoking in their peer groups/gangs the very situations which characterized their families of origin. The findings of this dissertation highlight the possible interactive effects of familial patriarchal ideology, masculine identity, and male peer group/gang affiliation. An example of how familial patriarchal ideology may penetrate marginal male youth culture is provided. The lives of the participants were raw; the niceties of middle class culture were stripped away.

Messerschmidt (1993:131) writes:

"Boys will be boys differently, depending upon their position in social structures and, therefore, upon their access to power and resources. Social structures situate young men in a common relation to other young men and in such a way that they share structural space. Collectively, young men experience their daily world from a particular position in society and differentially construct the ideals of hegemonic masculinity".

Class deprivation, "where the claim to power that is central to hegemonic masculinity is constantly negated by facts of economic and cultural weakness" (Connell, 1992:32) has blocked access by these marginal males to the institutional benefits of patriarchy. The girlfriend abuse committed by the participants is suggested to be a microsocial expression of the broader hegemonic gender order, and may have served to maintain consensus and achieve masculinity. These youth were engaging in ongoing tactics to define themselves vis à vis the broader structure of power and were compensating for their failure to achieve the masculine ideals of the hegemonic norm.

The individual behaviour of the participants was shaped by their relationship to their families and peers and was constrained by their economic and social marginalization. Their abusive behaviour cannot be explained by individual personality factors or unique situations alone. These adolescents all shared a common structural space and shared a common world view. The similarity in their masculine

identities is striking. As such, their behaviour can be considered as social. These youth had a shared definition of their situation. Their reality was negotiated and challenged regularly. These adolescents created meaning out of what they believed to be hopeless lives. The social conditions of patriarchy and marginalization influenced their values and beliefs which in turn shaped their behaviour. As such, their behaviour was socially conditioned, and can be explained by examining their common definition of their situation. These adolescents constructed³⁶ their behaviour from a limited range of possibilities. Unable to meet the social obligations of the successful male, they defined themselves and derived meaning from a different set of criteria. Their common masculine identities were acquired and negotiated through their relationships with peers, and can therefore be viewed as a social phenomenon. In addition, the findings inform feminist theory on familial patriarchal ideology. This concept has been widely used in the literature without being empirically grounded. The findings suggest that the participants' familial patriarchal beliefs, grounded in their families of origin, were translated into concrete, harmful actions.

Not only may the participants have been protesting against the unattainable imperatives of the masculine ideal, they may simply have been using the only means that they had to defend themselves. If these adolescents truly "protested" this much, surely they must have been uncertain about their behaviour. Only one participant verbalized awareness of the inconsistencies in his account. However, it must be remembered that these adolescents were for the most part school dropouts and were lacking in literacy skills. The fact that they did not articulate an awareness of the incongruous nature of their narratives does not necessarily mean that they were unaware of these conflicts. These young men struggled to make sense of their lives, as is true of all of us. While their discourse may indicate a firm commitment to what they were saying, some of their behaviour and dialogue indicates doubt, uncertainty, and at times horror and fear. In many instances they may have been putting on an act

³⁶ The participants' identity construction involved both an active, social aspect and a more passive, cognitive aspect. I use the term "negotiation" to imply the former, and the term "construction" to imply the latter.

for themselves and others to mask these feelings. This would support the existence of two reality planes.

The findings generated in this study are suggested to be valid and reliable, and should be generalizable to similar groups of marginal youth. The sampling procedures used are solid. Despite the fact that the findings are reported from a sample that was not randomly selected, they are nonetheless considered to be valid and representative of the marginal male youth population in a large, urban centre. Following grounded theory, the findings suggest testable hypotheses. For example, the more marginal the male youth, the greater the expression of violent patriarchy. The preconstructed scales tested in the screening interviews have been proven to have high validity and reliability. The findings of both the screening and in-depth interviews have a high degree of consistency, suggesting that the data are credible. The findings support and expand upon the data in the existing literature, suggesting conceptual validity. The reliability or repeatability of the measures should be good. These measurements should consistently yield similar results in comparable samples.

Further research should follow up on a number of important questions raised in this project. Both qualitative and quantitative research designs would be useful in addressing these issues. First, qualitative study using similar methods is necessary on a sample of non-marginal male adolescents who are abusive. This would permit further investigation into the role marginalization may play in abuse perpetration. For example, one might expect the masculine identities of non-marginal youth to be different than those of marginal youth. Similarly, a comparable research design can be used on a sample of marginal male youth who are not abusive. This would permit study of how these young men deal with issues of marginalization without resorting to abusive behaviour. After all, it is only a minority of these youth who actually are abusive.

In addition, future research should include the girlfriends of these youth in the sample. By so doing, it would be possible to compare data from perpetrators and victims, and examine the role played by females in abusive behaviour. This may increase the accuracy of the data, and would shed important light on the following

questions: Do girlfriends defend themselves during assaults? If so, how? Are female youth abusive? How do females make sense of their victimization by males? Are the concepts of familial patriarchal ideology, feminine identity and peer group/gang affiliations useful in understanding their behaviour as a social phenomenon?

Further, similar research is necessary with a sample of younger males. The data in this current project suggest that abusive behaviour is learned at a young age, and that familial patriarchal ideology, masculine identity, and peer group/gang involvement impact upon the abusive behaviour of pre-adolescent males. Additional investigation of these issues with a sample of boys as young as 8 years of age is warranted.

The types of research noted above must inform social policy and programs. There are a number of social policy and practice implications arising from this study. To begin, the vast majority of the participants had never been charged (nor convicted) of any of the many serious assaults they committed against their girlfriends. Most of these youth could be charged with a variety of offenses, including: common assault; aggravated assault; assault with a weapon; assault causing bodily harm; uttering threats of physical violence or death; sexual assault; aggravated sexual assault; sexual assault with a weapon; sexual assault causing bodily harm. How can so many serious crimes go undetected? According to many social workers and victims, female survivors of these assaults are probably reluctant to lay complaints with the police for fear of retaliation by the perpetrator. As well, current policing practices do not make it easy for such complaints to be laid. Without a mandatory charge policy for such cases, an abused girlfriend must testify against the alleged perpetrator in court if there is to be any reasonable chance of conviction.

Due to the fact that almost all of the assaults committed by the participants went undetected by the criminal justice system, it is suggested that there are currently few sanctions against these types of behaviour. If these youth understand that their abusive behaviour is unlikely to be made public, there is little incentive to stop. Related to this issue is the fact that even when caught, abusive males have very little motivation to change their abusive behaviour (Gondolf, 1987; Ptacek, 1988; Adams,

1988; Totten et al., 1995). Despite being confronted by me regarding their abuse perpetration, very few participants followed up on referrals made for counselling. It is suggested, therefore, that any youth convicted on a charge related to girlfriend abuse should have to participate in a mandatory, therapeutic-educational group for perpetrators of woman abuse. The content of this type of group has been developed (Totten et al., 1995).

Second, the findings in this study suggest that male youth at risk of becoming abusive can be identified at an early age. The risk-markers identified in this study for predicting adolescent abusive behaviour include: victimization by child abuse and witnessing wife assault; adherence to familial patriarchal beliefs; a "protest" masculine identity; affiliations with violent peer groups/gangs; and marginalization. Early identification, monitoring and treatment of these children can prevent the future victimization of gays, girlfriends and racial minorities. Primary school teachers and social service professionals can play key roles concerning this issue. Outreach to young abused women in school settings is also necessary. It is also logical to assume that these types of interventions may decrease the significant problem of wife assault.

Findings in this dissertation suggest that some abusive males may not define their behaviour to be harmful or wrong. Likewise, many social work practitioners (including this writer) suggest that abused females define many of these abusive behaviour as justified and caused by their own wrongdoing. These issues point to a need for abuse education to be incorporated into primary and high school core curriculum. Sporadic attempts have been initiated by some local school boards in Ottawa-Carleton to address this issue. For example, the Ottawa Board of Education has incorporated into its learning objectives for transition years (high school) students basic education on abuse. However, full implementation of this curriculum has not been initiated because of limited resources. The Carleton Board of Education is currently offering abuse education in selected schools. However, this was only made possible through a one-time grant to the Kanata Community Resource Centre. If abuse education were to be implemented as part of the core curriculum for primary and secondary students, it is suggested that young people would be in a much better

position to define certain behaviour as abusive.

On a related theme, the issue of sexual harassment and abuse against female students in primary and secondary schools should be explored. The participants reported numerous instances of abuses against female students which had gone undetected. Although some local schools are to be congratulated on their peer conflict resolution programs and 'zero tolerance' policies on violence, these initiatives may not be presently effective in dealing with abuses against female students.

The third social policy and practice implication arising from this dissertation concerns issues related to poverty and unemployment. The findings suggest that economic marginalization was a key factor related to the participants' abusive behaviour. With one exception, all participants identified their future to be hopeless. They believed that their chances of securing a meaningful, average-wage job were minimal. Most grew up with unemployed or working-poor caregivers. They felt helpless and humiliated about their future employment prospects. Abusive behaviour was the currency of trade for these youth. It is suggested that these future expectations reported by the participants were, for the most part, realistic.

These findings suggest the necessity of helping marginal people find a viable future. Although poverty and unemployment cannot excuse abusive behaviour, it is suggested that these factors help explain this behaviour. Many studies conclude that the most effective way to reduce youth crime is to combat its root causes: poverty, unemployment, and child abuse (for example, Currie, 1985; National Crime Prevention Council, 1995). Accordingly, it is put forth by this writer that co-ordinated national, provincial and municipal youth employment strategies may aid in confronting the social problem of male perpetrated abusive behaviour. These strategies would include the creation of meaningful and adequately paying jobs for all youth, and effective employment and educational programs for marginal youth. Through the provision of meaningful and adequately paying work, it is suggested that levels of youth violence and crime may decrease. Through employment, marginal males may be provided the opportunity to achieve those masculine ideals they so desperately want. These youth should be given the option to control their own destiny, and plan a

meaningful career. Employment, instead of abusive behaviour, may become central in constituting their masculine identity. Through the process of realizing their own potential, positive feelings of self-worth may emerge. Given the opportunity to make a contribution to their community and have these contributions valued may instil a sense of belonging. The participants in this study were compelled to create violent peer groups/gangs from which they found their sense of belonging. Youth must be given concrete proof that there is reason to be hopeful about their futures. Feelings of hopelessness and humiliation contribute to abusive behaviour.

In addition, these strategies and programs should also be directed at adults. Those individuals who are unable to work should be guaranteed adequate rates of social assistance or a guaranteed annual income. Radical social policy changes like adequate income maintenance programs for the unemployable and single parents with young children would confront the grinding poverty which characterized the childhoods of many of the research participants. Basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter and medical services must be provided. This study suggests that basic needs, if left unmet, can contribute to abusive behaviour. This does not mean that wealthy males are not abusive. Clearly, some of these individuals are. The point here is that poverty and unemployment may be contributing factors to abusive behaviour in some males.

The fourth social policy and practice implication arising from this dissertation concerns the development of comprehensive family support programs, including child abuse and wife abuse prevention initiatives. The findings from this study, along with the many other studies referred to in this dissertation, suggest a strong link between abuse victimization and perpetration in males. Again, this hypothesis does not seek to excuse abusive behaviour; instead, it may be helpful in explaining and reducing this behaviour. The youth in this project were not given the opportunity to develop their identities in supportive, nurturing, abuse-free families. Children who grow up in healthy environments have a better chance to develop into healthy adolescents and to make a smooth transition into adulthood. Instead, the participants were robbed of their childhoods. They never experienced the warmth and love of caring familial

relationships. Their childhood was characterized by terror and trauma. Until this cycle of abuse and neglect is stopped, youth violence will continue to be a major social problem. This study suggests that abusive behaviour is learned in part through parental modelling. Unless parents model alternative behaviour, children will learn that solving problems by means of force is acceptable and desirable.

Compared to existing family support programs, the type of intervention described here is radical and intrusive. However, child abuse and wife assault will not be confronted without this kind of fundamental rethinking of social policy and practice. The answer is not for child protection agencies to take all abused and neglected children into residential care, nor should all abused women have to take refuge in shelters. These solutions are expensive, disruptive, and have not been effective in combatting child abuse and wife assault. Many of the participants had been taken into the care of the Children's Aid Society or had received community-based child protection services. These interventions did not protect them from being beaten and witnessing the beatings of their mothers. Likewise, many of the participants' mothers had taken refuge in shelters for battered women. Although these shelters provided temporary relief from the beatings, they could not prevent nor provide long-term solutions to wife assault.

Instead, fundamental changes are required in the way we raise our children and respond to situations of child abuse and neglect, and wife assault. An effective system for identifying, supporting and monitoring parents at high risk for abusing or neglecting their children must be implemented. Sanctions for child abuse, child neglect and wife assault must become meaningful and severe. Existing studies and practice suggest that effective sanctions are those which are harsh, and made public. Court ordered, effective treatment must be pursued for convicted abusers.

The findings of some studies, along with this one, suggest that in addition to the reasons mentioned above, some young people may form gangs because of unmet needs related to status, identity and acceptance. By strengthening support services to families, it is suggested that the numbers of youth involved in gangs may be reduced. If families are able to meet these basic human needs, it is logical to assume that some youth may not seek out gangs to replace their biological families.

These proposed initiatives, if undertaken in a comprehensive manner, may begin to chip away at patriarchal structures and ideologies. The findings of this study, along with those of the many other researchers referred to in this dissertation, suggest that patriarchy is strongly associated with child abuse and woman abuse.

The types of issues raised here point to the necessity of addressing fundamental problems with the nature of our social order. The social problems of child abuse, wife assault, youth violence, poverty and unemployment cannot be effectively confronted without making basic changes to the social relations of power in patriarchal-capitalist society. To the extent to which these social relations of gender, class and race continue to be translated into power differences, these social problems will persist.

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Appendix A
Screening Interview Questions

Mark Totten

First/Street Name: _____

Interview Number: _____

Date: _____

Start/Finish Time: _____

Visible Minority ____ yes

 ____ no

My name is Mark Totten. I am a Ph.D. student in Sociology. I also work for the Youth Services Bureau. I am doing research on problems in male-female dating relationships. Please answer each question as honestly as you can. All of your answers will be kept strictly confidential. However, if you tell me that any child under the age of 16 years is being abused or is currently at risk of being abused, I must report this to the C.A.S. by law.

If you do not wish to answer a particular question, tell me and we will go on to the next question. The consent form states that you understand what you are being asked to do in this interview and that you understand that your answers will be kept confidential.

You will be paid \$10.00 for this interview.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I hereby give my informed consent to be interviewed. I understand the nature of my involvement, and I have been assured that my answers will be kept strictly confidential. At no point during future analysis will I be identified by name. I further understand that the questionnaire and the information recorded from these questionnaires will be destroyed after the information has been used in the study for which it was intended. Any quotations from this interview will appear without anything which identifies who I am.

I am also aware that I have the right to refuse to answer any questions and that I may withdraw at any time. I agree that the researcher may also terminate this survey with me at any time.

Finally, I understand that there is no risk to me, my friends or my relatives stemming from my involvement in this study.

Please initial or make your mark _____ Date: _____

I want to begin with some general background questions.

1. How old are you?
2. Where are you currently living?
3. What is the highest school grade you have completed? (If still in school, indicate grade and type).
4. Did your parent(s) bring you up? __ yes __ no

If yes, which parent?

If no, who brought you up?

Any other siblings/relatives in your home?

5. What was the main source of income in your family (i.e. welfare, alimony, disability, work)? Who provided most of the income in your family while you were growing up?
6. When you were growing up, was your _____ usually working?

If no, probe for duration of unemployment, reasons why.

__ underclass

If yes, was s/he self-employed or working for someone else?

Probe: Self-employed: Did s/he usually have paid employees working for her/him, or did s/he usually work by her/himself?

- ☐ capitalist
- ☐ old middle class

Probe: Someone else: Did s/he usually work as a manager or supervisor?

- ☐ new middle class
- ☐ working class

7. What is the highest level of school completed by your parent(s)/person(s) who brought you up?
8. What would the total income/earnings (before taxes) of your _____ be for last year?
9. If you support yourself, what was your total income/earnings (before taxes) for last year?
10. What kind of place (i.e. residence) did you grow up in (i.e. apartment, public housing, owned home)?
11. Are you straight/gay/bi-sexual?

The next questions are about the things you do with your friends and relatives, and what they think about females.

12. Of all your friends, who do you spend more time with:

_____ female friends

_____ male friends

_____ mixed group of friends

Probe: For how much time each week?

13. Of all your relatives, who do you spend more time with:

_____ female relatives

_____ male relatives

_____ male and female relatives together

Probe: For how much time each week?

14. Describe for me three things which you do with your male friends that take up most of this time:

1.

2.

3.

15. Describe for me three things which you do with your male relatives that take up most of this time.

1.

2.

3.

16. As far as you know, how many of your male friends (all, most, a few, none) have forced sex on girls/women?

Probe: Relation to victim, frequency, description of incident(s).

17. As far as you know, how many of your male relatives (all, most, a few, none) have forced sex on girls/women?

18. As far as you know, how many of your male friends (all, most, a few, none) have used physical force on girls/women?

Probe: Relation to victim, frequency, description of incident(s).

19. As far as you know, how many of your male relatives (all, most, a few, none) have used physical force on girls/woman?

20. As far as you know, how many of your male friends (all, most, a few, none) have insulted, put down or threatened girls/women?

Probe: Relation to victim, frequency, description of incident(s)

21. As far as you know, how many of your male relatives (all, most, a few, none) have insulted, put down or threatened girls/women?

22. How many of your male friends (all, most, a few, none) have ever told you that it is all right for a male to use physical force against girls/women in certain situations?

Probe: Against which girls/women, what kinds of situations

23. How many of your male relatives (all, most, a few, none) have ever told you that it is all right for a male to use physical force against girls/women in certain situations?

Probe: Against which girls/women, what kinds of situations

24. How many of your male friends (all, most, a few, none) have ever told you that girls/women should have sex with you when you want?

Probe:

25. How many of your male relatives (all, most, a few, none) have ever told you that girls/women should have sex with you when you want?

Probe:

26. How many of your male friends (all, most, a few, none) have ever told you that if a male spends money on a date, she should have sex with him in return?

Probe:

27. How many of your male relatives (all, most, a few, none) have ever told you that if a male spends money on a date, she should have sex with him in return?

Probe:

28. How many of your male friends (all, most, a few, none) have ever told you that it is all right for a guy to insult/put down girls/women in certain situations?

Probe: Which girls/women, what situations

29. How many of your male relatives (all, most, a few, none) have ever told you that it is all right for a guy to insult/put down girls/women in certain situations?

Probe: Which girls/women; what situations

30. How much pressure, if any, have male friends placed on you to have sex with females?
31. How much pressure, if any, have male relatives placed on you to have sex with females?

32. Some people think it is all right for a male to slap a female in certain situations. Other people think it is not all right. For each of the following situations, please tell me if your male friends, female friends, male relatives, and female relatives would strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree with a male slapping a female if

Male F. Fem. F. Male R. Fem.R.

- a) she won't do what he tells her to do
- b) she insults him when they are alone
- c) she insults him in public
- d) she gets drunk during an evening out together
- e) she is sobbing hysterically
- f) she won't have sex with him
- g) he learns that she is dating another man
- h) she hits him first when they are having an argument.

33. For each of the following situations, please tell me if you would strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree with a male slapping his girlfriend if
- a) she won't do what he tells her to do
 - b) she insults him when they are home alone
 - c) she insults him in public
 - d) she comes home drunk
 - e) she is sobbing hysterically
 - f) she won't have sex with him
 - g) he learns that she is dating another male
 - h) she hits him first when they are having an argument

34. For each of the following statements, please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.
- a) A male and his wife/girlfriend should have equal say in deciding how to spend the family income
 - b) A male and his wife/girlfriend should share the household chores if they are both working outside the home
 - c) A male has the right to decide whether or not his wife/girlfriend should go out in the evening with her friends
 - d) A male has the right to decide whether or not his wife/girlfriend should work outside the home
 - e) Sometimes it is important for a male to show his wife/girlfriend that he is the head of the house
 - f) Any woman who is raped is at least partly to blame
 - g) A male has the right to have sex with his wife/girlfriend when he wants, even though she may not want to

- h) If a male hits his wife/girlfriend, it is because he's lost his temper and gone out of control

35. Next, I would like you to give me 10 quick answers to the question, "What is the ideal man?"

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

36. Now I am going to read you some more statements. Please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

a. A man is never justified in hitting his wife.

1. strongly agree 2. agree 3. disagree 4. strongly disagree

b. Being roughed up is sexually stimulating to many women.

4. strongly agree 3. agree 2. disagree 1. strongly disagree

c. Many times a woman will pretend she doesn't want to have sex because she doesn't want to seem loose, but she is really hoping the man will just take over.

4. strongly agree 3. agree 2. disagree 1. strongly disagree

d. A wife should move out of the house if her husband hits her.

1. strongly agree 2. agree 3. disagree 4. strongly disagree

e. Sometimes the only way a man can get a cold woman turned on is to use some force.

4. strongly agree 3. agree 2. disagree 1. strongly disagree

f. Most women dislike men who try to be too physical with them.

1. strongly agree 2. agree 3. disagree 4. strongly disagree

g. Most men like a woman to put up a struggle before agreeing to have sex.

4. strongly agree 3. agree 2. disagree 1. strongly disagree

h. When a woman says no to sex, it doesn't mean the man should give up.

4. strongly agree 3. agree 2. disagree 1. strongly disagree

i. Some women like to be hit, they seem to think it means you care for them.

4. strongly agree 3. agree 2. disagree 1. strongly disagree

j. The woman should be in control during a sexual encounter.

1. strongly agree 2. agree 3. disagree 4. strongly disagree

37. Have you ever dated a girl/woman?

38. The next questions are about your sexual experiences with girlfriends.

Probe: Frequency, context. If no assaults, probe why.

a) Have you engaged in sex play (fondling, kissing, or petting, but not intercourse) with a female when she didn't want to by overwhelming her with continual arguments and pressure?

b) Have you engaged in sex play (fondling, kissing, or petting, but not intercourse) with a female when she didn't want to by threatening or using some degree of physical force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.)?

- c) Have you attempted sexual intercourse (getting on top of her, attempting to insert penis) with a female when she didn't want it by threatening or using some degree of physical force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.) but intercourse did not occur?
 - d) Have you attempted sexual intercourse with a female (getting on top of her, attempting to insert penis) when she didn't want it because she was drunk or high, but intercourse did not occur?
 - e) Have you engaged in sexual intercourse with a female when she didn't want to by overwhelming her with continual arguments or pressure?
 - f) Have you engaged in sexual intercourse with a female when she didn't want to because she was drunk or high?
 - g) Have you engaged in sexual intercourse with a female when she didn't want to by threatening or using some degree of physical force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.)
 - h) Have you engaged in sex acts (anal or oral intercourse or penetration by objects other than the penis) with a female when she didn't want to by threatening or using some degree of physical force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.)?
39. Please tell me how many times, if any, you have done the following things to your girlfriends.
(Frequency:)

- a) Insulted or swore at her
- b) Put her down in front of friends or family
- c) Accused her of having affairs or flirting with other men
- d) Did or said something to spite her
- e) Threatened to hit or throw something at her
- f) Threw, smashed or kicked something
- g) Threw something at her
- h) Pushed, grabbed or shoved her

- i) Slapped her
- j) Kicked, bit, or hit her with your fist
- k) Hit or tried to hit her with your fist
- l) Beat her up
- m) Choked her
- n) Threatened her with a knife or a gun
- o) Used a knife or gun on her

40. I really appreciate the time you have taken to complete this interview. I'd like to assure you that everything you have told me will remain strictly confidential. I realize that the topics covered in this interview are sensitive and that many males don't want to talk about these issues. I'm also a bit worried that I haven't asked the right questions. Have you had any other experiences in which you physically, sexually, or emotionally harmed any girlfriends that you would like to talk about?

Is there anything that came up in this interview for which you would like counselling/support? If yes, provide relevant referral information.

Appendix B

In-depth Interview Questions

(n = 30)

First/Street Name: _____

Interview Number: _____

Date: _____

Start/Finish Time: _____

My name is Mark Totten. I am a Ph.D. student in sociology. I also work for the Youth Services Bureau. I am doing research on problems in male-female dating relationships. You have agreed to let me interview you as a followup to the interview we did about one year ago. You understand that I will be contacting your (ex)girlfriend to explain what I am doing, and to make sure that she is safe. Please answer each question as honestly as you can. All of your answers will be kept strictly confidential. However, if you tell me that any child under the age of 16 years is being abused or is currently at risk of being abused, I must report this to the C.A.S. by law.

If you do not wish to answer a particular question, tell me and we will go on to the next question. The consent form states that you understand what you are being asked to do in this interview and that you understand that your answers will be kept confidential.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I hereby give my informed consent to be interviewed. I understand the nature of my involvement, and I have been assured that my answers will be kept strictly confidential. At no point during future analysis will I be identified by name. I further understand that the questionnaire and the information recorded from these questionnaires will be destroyed after the information has been used in the study for which it was intended. Any quotations from this interview will appear without anything which identifies who I am.

I am also aware that I have the right to refuse to answer any questions and that I may withdraw at any time. I agree that the researcher may also terminate this survey with me at any time.

Finally, I understand that there is no risk to me, my friends or my relatives stemming from my involvement in this study.

Please initial or make your mark _____ Date: _____

Begin with completed 1993 interview, probing at identified questions and inserting following questions.

Following # 11:

What do you think about your family?

- How do you feel about the way they treat you?
- Was/Is there any abuse between your parents? What type? How often?
- How did/do you experience any abuse from your parents?
- How have your parents influenced you?
- What kinds of beliefs or values does your family have around male and female roles?

Following # 35:

What does it mean to you ... to be male?

Do you think this has anything to do with the way you get along with

- females
- gays
- other guys

Following # 38:

I'd like to ask you some questions about your relationships with girlfriends over the past year.

- Have you had a sexual relationship?

If yes: can you tell me about it? **If no:** go to number 26.

Probe: To assess whether sex was consensual or forced:

- Was verbal pressure used to persuade female to have sex?
- Were verbal threats used to force female to have sex?
- Was physical force used to have sex?
- Were drugs and/or alcohol used to overcome resistance?

After # 39:

Please tell me how many times, if any, you have done any of these same things to your girlfriends during the past year.

- a. Insulted or swore at her
- b. Put her down in front of friends or family
- c. Accused her of screwing around
- d. Did or said something to get back at her
- e. Threatened to hit or throw something at her
- f. Threw, smashed or kicked something
- g. Threw something at her
- h. Pushed, grabbed or shoved her
- i. Slapped her
- j. Kicked, bit, or hit her with your fist
- k. Hit or tried to hit her with your fist

- l. Beat her up
- m. Choked her
- n. Threatened her with a knife or a gun
- o. Used a knife or gun on her

After # 40:

I'm a bit worried that I haven't asked the right questions. Have you had any other experiences in which you physically, sexually, or emotionally harmed a girlfriend during the past year?

- 41. I'd like to find out about the emotions and feelings you have/had about the abuse. How does/did it feel to be abusive in a relationship? What kinds of emotions did/do you experience at the time of the abusive incident(s)? Immediately after?
- 42. How do you feel about the abuse now?
- 43. What do you think led you to be abusive?

Do you think that the way you see yourself as being a guy has anything to do with you being abusive?

- 44. What helped/would help you to stop being abusive?
- 45. What kinds of things do you think could have prevented you from being abusive?

Provide relevant referral info.