

# *Tactics of the Antifeminist Backlash Against Canadian National Woman Abuse Surveys*

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*Canada is experiencing a major antifeminist backlash against the results of two Canadian national surveys on woman abuse. The main objectives of this article are to provide examples of the key tactics used in this backlash, such as misleading interpretations of Conflict Tactics Scales data, and to briefly suggest several ways of challenging and resisting them.*

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As anecdotal information and data from flawed research instruments pass for "truth" among political pundits aiming to push back the tide of feminist advances, a critical examination of the sources of these claims becomes essential.

Bonnycastle and Rigakos (1998, p. 22)

Since the early 1990s, several U.S. feminist scholars who conducted groundbreaking survey research on sexual, physical, and psychological variants of woman abuse in intimate heterosexual relationships (e.g., Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Russell, 1990) have repeatedly been accused of promoting "victim feminism" (Wolf, 1993), "wildly" exaggerating the rates of male-to-female victimization (Gilbert, 1997), and perpetuating the "myth of female innocence" (Pearson, 1997a). Of course, not all U.S. citizens agree with these criticisms; however, they have garnered considerable support, especially in the public consciousness and in some academic and clinical circles (Renzetti, 1994).

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The same problem exists in Canada (DeKeseredy & MacLean, 1998; Doob, 1995; Johnson, 1995). In fact, this country is now witnessing a major antifeminist backlash against the results of the Canadian national survey (CNS) on woman abuse in university/college dating relationships and the Canadian Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS) (DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1993; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998c; Johnson, 1996; Statistics Canada, 1993). The main objectives of this article are to provide examples of the backlash tactics used by some prominent critics of these studies and to briefly suggest several ways of challenging and resisting them.

### BUT WOMEN DO IT TOO

One of the key tactics used by Canadian antifeminists to challenge the overwhelming evidence of women's experience of male physical, psychological, and sexual violence is to say, "But women do it too," or "Women are just as bad as men." For example, in mid-June 1998, Roger Gallaway, an Ontario liberal member of Parliament and co-chair of the controversial Senate-Commons Committee on Child Custody and Access, told *Ottawa Citizen* reporter Chris Cobb (1998, p. A3) that "in society at large women are as equally violent as men." To support claims such as this, those whom Schwartz and Koss (1998) refer to as "backlash critics" often provide anecdotal stories of sensational and statistically infrequent violent crimes committed by a few Canadian women. Such an approach is not new (Chesney-Lind, in press). In fact, Lombroso (1895/1958) devoted a substantial part of his book *The Female Offender* to gruesome vignettes of female murderers.

Consider, too, Canadian journalist Patricia Pearson (1997a), author of *When She Was Bad: Violent Women and the Myth of Innocence*. To buttress her sexual symmetry of violence thesis, Pearson provides a detailed account of the Karla Homolka murder case. Homolka and her husband, Paul Bernardo, sexually assaulted and murdered three young southern Ontario women, including her sister, at the start of this decade. These crimes shocked and angered many Canadians and, not surprisingly, generated an unprecedented amount of media coverage. However, Pearson's account of the Homolka case does not prove that women are equally violent as men, and it is not a typical example of female

violence. Nor is this case a typical example of serial murder or sexual assault. For example, a biographical case study analysis of serial murders that occurred in the United States between 1800 and 1995 identified 337 male offenders and only 62 female perpetrators (Hickey, 1997). Furthermore, no study has found that men and women are equally likely to sexually abuse members of the opposite sex (Stanko, 1997). Nevertheless, Pearson (1997a, p. 9) ignores these facts and uses the Homolka case to challenge scientific literature showing men to be the "standard bearers of violence" in domestic and public domains.

Whether people such as Pearson provide solid empirical support for the sexual symmetry thesis, however, does not seem to matter in a "general atmosphere of mistrust and a well-organized backlash against feminism" (Levan, 1996, p. 350). *When She Was Bad* has generated considerable praise, and some parts of it were summarized in the September 1997 edition of *Saturday Night* (Pearson, 1997b), one of Canada's most widely read magazines. The following is an example of the type of support garnered by Pearson's antifeminist work:

*Saturday Night* and author Patricia Pearson have displayed considerable courage in revealing the facts about female violence against men in the face of a societal cover-up of truly epic proportions.

As a former men's-issues columnist for *The Globe and Mail* and the *Vancouver Sun*, and as a former counsellor specializing in men's issues, I have observed an unwritten male code that puts women's emotional needs ahead of men's; and notwithstanding the glaring media spotlight on men's violence, a strong impulse in men to "protect" women and deny their own pain. That unwritten code is the main reason men don't report spousal violence against them and why they are often ridiculed when they do. (Raeside, 1997, p. 11)

Such support moves well beyond journalistic circles. For example, in response to Pearson's (1997b) attack on the CNS, I wrote a letter challenging her "mutual combat" perspective to *Saturday Night*, and the editor published it in the November edition (see DeKeseredy, 1997a). Two weeks after it was released, I received a long, spiteful letter from "Ken,"<sup>1</sup> who started his attack on me by stating,

I was glad to read Patricia Pearson's article and sad to read your letter. To round up the usual cliches, I think that you are in an ivory

tower and are ignorant of the world. In time, the urban myth that women are angels and men are demons will seem as quaint as Conan Doyle's belief in fairies. Careerists with a vested interest in an out-moded ideology will then have to find a new racket.

Patriarchal attitudes and beliefs that might not be supported on a regular basis can be activated and supported when men continually read anecdotal stories such as those reported by Pearson (1997a, 1997b) and Fekete (1994), as well as antifeminist letters to the editor. These publications can also convince men that support for their views is widespread. This is not to say that men will automatically change their opinions because they read books like Pearson's (1997a) and Fekete's (1994) or antifeminist letters in newspapers. Rather, men who are confused or who are actively seeking support for their views and not finding support from their friends may find great comfort, solace, and support in "knowing" that their views are widely shared by journalists, academics, and various members of the general population (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998a).

### MISLEADING INTERPRETATIONS OF CONFLICT TACTICS SCALES DATA

Canadian "media darlings of the antifeminist backlash" (Renzetti, 1997) such as Fekete (1994), Greenfield (1997a, 1997b), Pearson (1997a, 1997b), and Sommer (1998) use more than just anecdotal material to challenge the CNS and VAWS. They and some abusive men who are required to attend batterers' programs also offer misleading interpretations of Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS) data to add scientific legitimacy to their assertions (Dankwort, 1994; Johnson, 1995).<sup>2</sup> Developed by Straus (1979) to study violence within families, the CTS and modified versions of it appear in over 100 scientific journal articles and in at least 15 North American books (Straus, 1990). When used to measure violence in marital/cohabiting and dating relationships, the CTS asks both men and women to report which of a series of reported tactics were used during a conflict situation. These tactics could range from pushing and shoving to shooting.

Unfortunately, it is rare that a study combines the CTS with any question of meaning, motive, or outcome (e.g., injury).<sup>3</sup> Thus,

shoving someone down a flight of stairs or shoving someone out of the way who is blocking your escape might be counted as equally violent acts. Furthermore, being kicked with an open-toed sandal might count equally with having your kneecap shattered by a steel-toed work boot (Dobash & Dobash, 1992). It should also be noted that using the CTS alone almost always results in eliciting rates of female-to-male violence that are slightly higher than those for male-to-female violence. For example, Sugarman and Hotaling's (1989) comprehensive review of dating violence prevalence studies shows that most of them have found that on average, women report using somewhat higher rates of physical aggression than men (39.3% vs. 32.9%). Stets and Henderson's (1991) U.S. national survey of "never married people" between the ages of 18 and 30 produced similar CTS-based results, and so did marital violence surveys conducted in Canada and the United States by Brinkerhoff and Lupri (1988), Sommer (1994), Straus and Gelles (1986), Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz (1981), and Steinmetz (1977-1978). The CTS data generated by these and other studies have led many people to conclude that wives, female cohabitants, and female dating partners are the primary aggressors, or at least equal aggressors. As Renzetti (1994) points out in her critique of antifeminist backlash arguments, "All of this evidence taken together supposedly undermines the feminist theory of domestic violence, which advocates of the 'women are as violent as men' position portray as unitary and invariable" (p. 196).

There has never been any question that some women strike some men, sometimes with the intent to injure. That there are battered husbands, male dating partners, and estranged male husbands and cohabiting partners is not a subject for disagreement either (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1993). Nevertheless, studies that rely on simple counts of events do not mitigate and change the meaning of the conclusion that women are the overwhelmingly predominant victims of intimate violence for several reasons. For example, the CTS alone cannot accurately determine gender variations in intimate violence because of the following:

- Males are more likely to underreport their violence (Browning & Dutton, 1986; Edleson & Brygger, 1996; Ellis, 1995; Jouriles & O'Leary, 1985).
- The CTS measures only conflict-instigated violence and thus ignores male violence that stems from attempts to control women or violence that

does not stem from any single identifiable cause (e.g., dispute, difference, or spat) (Browne, 1987; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998b; Ellis, 1995).<sup>4</sup>

- The CTS excludes acts of sexual violence (e.g., marital rape) and other highly injurious assaults on women, such as scratches, burning, and suffocation (DeKeseredy & MacLean, 1998; Smith, 1986).<sup>5</sup>
- The CTS does not measure the contexts, meanings, and motives of violence (Breines & Gordon, 1983; DeKeseredy, Saunders, Schwartz, & Alvi, 1997; Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992).

In sum, CTS data alone do not reflect the reality of dating, post-separation, and marital/cohabiting violence. Still, the above criticisms are quickly dismissed by supporters of the sexual symmetry thesis (e.g., Fekete, 1994; Sommer, 1998) because they claim that those who view male-to-female violence "through a feminist lens" (Yllo, 1993) have not presented reliable and valid data that refute their mutual combat perspective. To address this concern, DeKeseredy and Kelly (1993) added slightly modified versions of Saunders's (1986) context, meaning, and motive questions to the CTS used in their Canadian national study of woman abuse in dating. Two identical sets of the following questions were placed in different sections of the CTS administered to the men and women in DeKeseredy and Kelly's (1993) sample. One set followed the first three violence items, and the other followed the last six.<sup>6</sup>

- On items \_\_\_\_ what percentage of these times overall do you estimate that in doing these actions you were primarily motivated by acting in self-defense, that is, protecting yourself from immediate physical harm?
- On items \_\_\_\_ what percentage of these times overall do you estimate that in doing these actions you were trying to fight back in a situation where you were not the first to use these or similar tactics?
- On items \_\_\_\_ what percentage of these times overall do you estimate that you used these actions on your dating partners before they actually attacked you or threatened to attack you?

After each question, there was a line with 0% and 100% at opposite ends marked at every 10 percentage points. Respondents were asked to mark anywhere on the line. They were not asked to divide a total of 100% among the three motivation items, but rather to assign a percentage score to each type of motivation. In other words, the three forms of motivation were not stated in mutually exclusive terms. The last question, on initiation of an assault, could, when a respondent feared for her safety, be self-

defensive; but, as was the case in Saunders's (1986) study of battered women, this point was not clearly defined in DeKeseredy and Kelly's (1993) research.

DeKeseredy et al. (1997) analyzed the data generated by the above items, and because their findings are described fully in a recent issue of *Sociological Spectrum* and elsewhere (DeKeseredy & MacLean, 1998; DeKeseredy & MacLeod, 1997; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998a), they will be discussed here only briefly. At first glance, some of DeKeseredy et al.'s (1997) results seem to support the sexual symmetry or mutual combat thesis. For example, almost half (46.1%) of the 1,835 female respondents reported engaging in any type of violence, although most of the acts were at the upper (more "minor") end of the CTS. Only 1 woman reported using a knife or a gun on a male dating partner.

However, when women's motives for violence are taken into account, a dramatically different picture emerges, one that seriously challenges the increasingly common assertion that women are extremely violent, perhaps as violent as men. In fact, DeKeseredy et al. (1997) found that only a distinct minority of women reported that they had ever initiated a physical attack since leaving high school. For example, 37% of the women who used "minor" forms of violence initiated an attack at some time, and 43% initiated "severe" violent acts at least once. However, only 7% of the women who used "minor" violence always (100% of the time) attacked first, whereas only 10% of the women who reported using "severe" violence were always the ones who initiated an attack.

As pointed out in Table 1,<sup>7</sup> a substantial amount of violence reported by women was in self-defense, but most women did not report using "minor" (60.9%) or "severe" (56.5%) acts of violence in self-defense. Table 1 also shows that many women were fighting back. Many, although not most, of women's acts are either self-defensive or fighting back. Within each level of violence severity, self-defense and fighting back were positively and significantly correlated with each other ( $r = .67, p = .000$  for "minor" violence;  $r = .72, p = .001$  for "severe" violence). Initiating an attack, however, was very weakly and nonsignificantly correlated with either self-defense or fighting back ( $r = .05, p = .07$  for self-defense;  $r = -.05, p = .18$  for fighting back).

**TABLE 1**  
**Percentage of Women Using**  
**Different Motives for Violence by Frequency of Violence**

<i>Motive</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>1%-49%</i>	<i>50%-99%</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>"Minor" violence</i>					
Self-defense	678	63.3	20.1	10.7	6.9
Fighting back	677	53.6	23.2	16.1	7.1
Initiate attack	663	63.3	19.7	9.7	7.3
<i>"Severe" violence</i>					
Self-defense	367	56.5	21.6	13.4	8.5
Fighting back	359	48.9	26.7	15.2	9.2
Initiate attack	359	56.8	20.9	12.4	9.9

Several other results are also worth noting (DeKeseredy et al., 1997):

- The women who report higher levels of self-defensive violence also report higher levels of violence committed against them.
- Women who used self-defensive violence experienced much higher rates of sexual abuse in dating since leaving high school than other women in the survey.
- Women who report that their violence was always in self-defense were about twice as likely to claim that they were made upset because their male dating partners tried to get them to engage in behavior they had seen in pornographic media.
- Women who experienced psychological abuse, threats, and physical abuse in combination since leaving high school were much more likely to respond with self-defensive violence (about 80%, compared with 36%-42% of all other victimized women).

Studies done by DeKeseredy et al. (1997) and Saunders (1986) demonstrate the importance of moving beyond simply counting acts of violence and using measures of motives. Moreover, their data tell us that much of the violence by Canadian women should not be labeled "male partner abuse." Unfortunately, these and similar findings are typically ignored or dismissed by much of the mainstream media, Pearson (1997a, 1997b), Greenfield (1997a, 1997b), and other prominent Canadian backlash critics. Some of these people have even published articles and books accusing me of hiding these female-to-male violence data (Fekete, 1994; Pearson, 1997a, 1997b; Sommer, 1998). It is to this issue I turn next.



### WELL-PLACED LIES<sup>8</sup>

All of the CNS data are in the public domain. In other words, the data set is available at many Canadian universities and at some government agencies, such as Health Canada. Thus, anyone who wants to do secondary data analysis is free to do so. Furthermore, most of the CNS results, including the women's use of violence data, are published in several books and journals. Nevertheless, some antifeminists have attempted to discredit the CNS and me by stating that I am keeping the women's-use-of-violence data to myself. Consider the following assertion made by Pearson (1997b) in *Saturday Night*:

In Canada, the federal government allotted \$250,000 to a research project on comparative rates of violence in dating relationships. In 1993, the lead researcher, Carleton University sociologist Walter DeKeseredy, released only his data on victimized women, generating a wave of violence-against-women headlines and conveying the impression that Canadian college campuses were bastions of violent misogyny. Assaults by women in premarital romance are among the best documented in the field. Nevertheless DeKeseredy said in a 1994 telephone interview, "the battered-husband syndrome is a backlash. Men are using this information to keep women out of shelters." In fact, men are not using this information for anything, because academics are keeping it to themselves. (p. 94)

Obviously, my coresearchers and I did not hide the CNS female violence data. As for the telephone interview, Pearson has never talked to me.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, it is fair to assume that many people view her well-placed lie as a fact.

To give the impression that they present both sides of a debate, many newspaper and magazine editors publish responses to anti-feminist editorials and articles such as Pearson's (1997b). Nevertheless, feminist scholars and activists are generally not given equal space to present their research and views, or to resist or challenge conservatives' attacks on their work (Doob, 1995; Kasinsky, 1998). Furthermore, their letters and articles are often subject to greater editorial control. For example, I called the editor of *Saturday Night* to express my concern about the errors included in Pearson's (1997b) article and her neglect to mention my coauthored research on female-to-male violence, and to ask for equal space to

respond to her piece. One of his assistants told me that an article of equal length was out of the question because "this is no longer a topic of major public concern" and that I should submit a letter to the editor. So I did and cited the *Sociological Spectrum* piece (see DeKeseredy et al., 1997).

Rather than simply publish my letter (see DeKeseredy, 1997a), an editorial assistant asked me to courier him a copy of the *Sociological Spectrum* article so that he could do some "fact checking." I then asked him if he or someone else who works for *Saturday Night* checked Pearson's (1997b) "facts," and he said he "didn't know for sure; however, it seems that no one did." Keep in mind that Pearson is one of *Saturday Night*'s contributing editors.

To make a long story short, my letter was published in the November 1997 issue (see DeKeseredy, 1997a), but my statement about not being interviewed was excluded. Furthermore, the title was changed from "Keeping It to Themselves: Academic Research on Female-to-Male Violence in Dating" to "Fighting Words." Moreover, although Pearson (1997b) does not cite the *Sociological Spectrum* piece in her (1997a) book, the following editor's note was added to my letter: "Patricia Pearson acknowledges the study cited by Dr. DeKeseredy in her book, *When She Was Bad: Violent Women and the Myth of Innocence*" (see DeKeseredy, 1997a, p. 11).

Another example of the ways in which well-placed lies about Canadian woman abuse surveys and those who conduct them are supported by the media is warranted here. Nathan Greenfield (1997a), a professor of English at Algonquin College in Ottawa, Ontario, published a long article in the *Ottawa Citizen* titled "The Demonization of Men: Radical Feminists Wrong to Declare All Men Violent." There are many problems with this piece. In fact, it is riddled with factual errors,<sup>10</sup> and Greenfield accuses the VAWS and me of helping "to create a trope which equates 'male' with violence" (p. A17).

VAWS researchers (e.g., Johnson, 1996) and I never said that all men are violent or abusive. Nevertheless, the editor of the *Ottawa Citizen*'s Argument and Observation page never bothered to check Greenfield's "facts." Nor did he give me equal space to respond to Greenfield's article (see DeKeseredy, 1997b). Furthermore, the *Ottawa Citizen* gave Greenfield another opportunity to tarnish my research and credibility by publishing his letter titled

"Tactics of Demonization Superbly Illustrated" (Greenfield, 1997b). In this letter, he accuses me of trying to stifle "fair inquiry and democratic debate," among other things. This is not surprising, given that many conservatives attempt to discredit feminists struggling to end woman abuse and other symptoms of gender inequality by shifting the focus of discussion to concerns about "political correctness," "freedom of speech," "academic freedom," and "individual rights" (Johnson, 1995). Some even go as far as to label feminist survey researchers and other feminist scholars as "fem-nazis," "McCarthyites," or members of the "feminist thought police" (Hornosty, 1996).

Some Canadian backlash critics do not rely on the media to disseminate their well-placed lies. Rather, these people, whom Thorne-Finch (1992) refers to as "reinforcers of the status quo," send unpublished "academic" papers and petitions to university/college professors and government officials. One example is University of Alberta philosopher Ferrel Christensen, who on January 12, 1996, sent a letter to Health Canada, the federal agency that funded the CNS and VAWS, and to the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association (CSAA). He enclosed a petition and unpublished article titled "A Case of Distorted Science in Canada" (1995), claiming that I and Katharine Kelly had violated ethical principles and presented CNS data to the media, federal government, and the general public that intentionally distorted the perception of truth. It should be noted that only six other people signed this petition, and the CSAA and Health Canada did not find us guilty of violating ethical principles. This is not surprising, since we had obtained approval to administer questionnaires from 44 different ethical review committees situated at each of the institutions included in the CNS.

Well-placed lies or rumors such as these, however, are difficult to dispel and can cause feminist students of woman abuse and other progressives considerable emotional harm, jeopardize their career mobility, and damage their scholarly reputations. For example, Stark-Adamec (1996, p. 25) found that if the targets of well-placed lies try to correct misinterpretations or misinformation, they are not likely to be believed because

- they are perceived as being "defensive,"<sup>11</sup>
- primacy is a more powerful technique of communication than is recency (Markus & Zajonc, 1985),

- even well-informed and “intelligent people” tend to believe that “where there’s smoke, there’s fire.”

Some victims of well-placed lies, regardless of how skillful they are at resisting and challenging them, become marginalized. Colleagues, government officials, students, and others avoid interacting with them because they do not want to be “tarred with the same brush” (Stark-Adamec, 1996). In addition to experiencing isolation and stigmatization, some victims of character assassination have to deal with “unscrupulous others.” According to Stark-Adamec (1996, p. 26), these are individuals who are “bent on revenge” and use well-placed lies to “justify” to themselves further violence, thereby escalating the irreversible damage.

In sum, well-placed lies are part and parcel of the antifeminist backlash against Canadian survey research on woman abuse. Furthermore, the mainstream media are often complicit with Pearson, Greenfield, and other proponents of the patriarchal status quo in supporting and reproducing rumors, well-placed lies, male power and privilege, the oppression of women, and woman abuse (Kasinsky, 1998). Of course, the media’s treatment of woman abuse and feminists who study this problem is not uniform. The fact that articles and letters such as mine get published in the mainstream press demonstrates that the media will often give public attention and legitimacy to woman abuse and feminist resistance. However, as Caringella-MacDonald and Humphries (1998) point out, “Although audiences are offered some choices or variation in the images of women, the range is not wide, the frequency is still low, and the gestalt is unimpressive. Images are restrained within acceptable limits” (p. 7).

## INTIMIDATION AND HARASSMENT

Gurney (1985) and Huff (1997) sensitize us to the importance of considering how much harassment feminist researchers are willing to put up with and how they will deal with it before they start gathering woman abuse data and after they disseminate their results to the general public. Of course, all progressive researchers and activists should expect to be baited (Stanko, 1997); however, this often involves the use of hate mail, anonymous phone calls, and other means of instilling fear. For example, shortly after

Katharine Kelly and I released the CNS incidence and prevalence data<sup>12</sup> to the press in February 1993, I received hate letters, some of which included pictures of aborted fetuses, and harassing phone calls from anonymous "men's rights" advocates. At the same time, the all-female support staff at Carleton University's Department of Sociology and Anthropology received so many harassing phone calls that a male student was hired to answer phone calls in the department's main office over the next week or so.

Prior to these events, I viewed Canada Post and the telephone as necessary instruments of communication. However, they soon became frightening "tools of intimidation" (Stanko, 1990), something many women have known for years. Although studies such as the British Crime Survey typically do not find an association between receiving obscene or harassing phone calls and actually being a victim of physical or sexual assault (DeKeseredy & Hinch, 1991; Pease, 1985), it is only in retrospect that a frightening phone call or letter can be designated as insignificant (Kelly & Radford, 1987). For example, immediately after I got my first harassing phone call about the CNS, I, like many female victims of obscene phone calls, thought that the perpetrator was going to act upon his abusive threats. This is not an irrational perception, since some violent men follow up their assaults with phone calls (Stanko, 1990).

What made matters worse was that several prominent people at Carleton University, including some high-ranking administrators, did not take my fears seriously. For example, after I told one administrator about a spiteful letter that was sent to me, he said, "You shouldn't be surprised. This is what happens when you do that type of research. It goes with the territory." Obviously, what he did not understand is that there is no antifeminist or harassment gene in human beings and that harassment, woman abuse, and sexism are not immutable behaviors. They can be eliminated if people take the time and effort to do so (Stark-Adamec, 1996).

## CONCLUSIONS

The tactics of the antifeminist backlash described here and in other sources (e.g., Caringella-MacDonald, 1998; DeKeseredy, 1996; Doob, 1995; Faludi, 1991; Johnson, 1995; Renzetti, 1994;

Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1994) are not restricted to Canada and, unfortunately, will never go away until we see a major transformation to a democratic socialist feminist society. Obviously, this is not likely to happen in the near future (Messerschmidt, 1986). Although many feminist scholars involved in the struggle to overcome woman abuse have made considerable headway, the battle over how this problem will be portrayed is far from won (Caringella-MacDonald & Humphries, 1998). Thus, progressive modes of resistance that can be used under the current social order need to be considered, such as "newsmaking criminology." This approach is defined as "the conscious efforts of criminologists and others to participate in the presentation of 'newsworthy' items about crime and justice" (Barak, 1988, p. 565).

For example, although the media often present misleading and antifeminist messages about woman abuse (Caringella-MacDonald & Humphries, 1998; Kasinsky, 1998), those involved in the struggle to eliminate physical, psychological, and sexual violence against women should develop relationships with progressive reporters who are more likely to report alternative interpretations of social problems (Barak, 1988). Making links with reporters involves letting them know that researchers are available for comment on issues such as those raised by Pearson (1997a, 1997b) and Fekete (1994). They should also work on newspaper op-ed pieces and other stories that have been traditionally unproductive in terms of academic career credentials.

Schwartz and Koss (1998) suggest another method of dealing with the backlash, and that is to "rise above it." For example, woman abuse surveys such as Koss et al.'s (1987) and the VAWS are accused of being advocacy studies (Gilbert, 1997). According to Schwartz and Koss (1998), this is something to be proud of and not something to be defensive about. They further contend that advocacy research is what feminist researchers should be doing. Thus, instead of debating with people like Gilbert, Pearson, and Fekete, feminist survey researchers should integrate scientific goals with a commitment to advocacy; develop research techniques that help curb woman abuse; and struggle to improve the quality of life of women who have survived male physical, sexual, and psychological assaults. For Schwartz and Koss (1998), "The goal is to plan to have research actually achieve advocacy goals,

rather than to feel criticized when it turns out that something we have done has been of service to programs in the field" (p. 10).

Other, and perhaps better, strategies could be proposed here, but it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss them. However, as several feminist scholars who have directly experienced the brutal consequences of the antifeminist backlash described here point out (e.g., Mattley, 1997; Stanko, 1997), we also need to recognize the importance of social support. Social support enables feminist scholars and activists to continue to muster up energy and resources to challenge and resist the backlash. Thus, we need to develop strong ties with other feminist scholars and collectives, and we should share our personal and emotional reactions. Furthermore, we must provide others who are struggling to end woman abuse and other forms of structured social inequality with social support. Indeed, "Building alliances for social support and social change is one way to combat the feelings of isolation and frustration many of us working in the field . . . inevitably feel" (Stanko, 1997, p. 84).

## NOTES

1. This is a pseudonym to protect the author's identity.

2. For example, one abusive man in a British Columbia batterers' program brought in studies that offered misleading interpretations of CTS data to obstruct profeminist counselors' attempts to get group participants to accept responsibility for their abusive conduct (Dankwort, 1994).

3. The CTS2 (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1995), however, includes several injury or physical outcome measures, such as "I needed a doctor because of a fight with my partner."

4. Men are far more likely than women to use control-instigated violence (Browne, 1987; Ellis, 1995).

5. The CTS2 (Straus et al., 1995), however, measures seven types of sexual assault and includes more physical abuse items.

6. This version of the CTS measured events that took place since leaving high school. The first three items (threw something; pushed, grabbed, or shoved; and slapped) are often defined as minor acts because they are viewed as less dangerous (Straus, 1990), although at times their consequences can be severe. The last six items make up what Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz (1981) refer to as a severe violence subscale.

7. This is a slightly modified version of a table constructed by DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1998c, p. 77).

8. This term is used by Stark-Adamec (1996) in her analysis of rumors used by academics to discredit each other.

9. However, her research assistant called me twice and asked for a list of some of my publications on woman abuse in dating. She never asked me about my politics or my opinions on the backlash.

10. For example, he states that Mary Koss created the CTS.
11. According to Stark-Adamec (1996), many people refer to Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth: "methinks the lady doth protest too much."
12. Incidence refers here to the percentage of women who stated that they were physically, sexually, or psychologically abused and the percentage of men who indicated that they were abusive in the year before the survey. Prevalence is, since they left high school, the percentage of men who reported having been abusive and the percentage of women who indicated having been abused.

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