

Urban, Suburban, and Rural Variations in Separation/Divorce Rape/Sexual Assault: Results from the National Crime Victimization Survey

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Abstract

To date, no large study has looked at whether separation/divorce sexual assault varies across urban, suburban, and rural areas. The authors use 1992-2009 NCVS (National Crime Victimization Survey) data to estimate the percentage of separation/divorce sexual assault against women in urban, suburban, and rural communities. In addition, the authors identify and compare the relative risk of sexual assault victimization for women across areas. Findings indicate that a higher percentage of rural divorced/separated women were victims of rape/sexual assault than were urban divorced/separated women. In addition, rural separated women are victims of intimate rape/sexual assault at significantly higher rates than their suburban and urban counterparts.

Keywords

violence against women, sexual assault, marital status, separation, divorce, rural, urban, suburban

Introduction

Contrary to popular belief, most battered women eventually leave their abusive partners (DeKeseredy, Rogness, & Schwartz, 2004; Sev'er, 2002). However, abused women

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face “dangerous exits” as the risk of assault persists and often escalates at separation or divorce (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2009). A growing body of literature has begun to address the characteristics of separation/divorce assault. Exploratory research suggests that separation/divorce rape and sexual assault may be more prevalent in rural areas than in urban and suburban areas (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2009).¹ Findings based on National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) data show that rural separated and divorced women are at higher risk of being physically assaulted by partners or former partners than their nonrural counterparts (Rennison, DeKeseredy, & Dragiewicz, 2010).² However, to date, no large-scale study has looked at whether separation/divorce rape/sexual assault varies across urban, suburban, and rural areas (referred to as “geographic areas” in this article) of the United States. To address this significant research gap, we use 1992-2009 NCVS data to estimate and compare the percentage of separation/divorce rape/sexual assault against women in urban, suburban, and rural communities. In addition, we identify and compare the relative risk of rape/sexual assault victimization for women across geographic areas.

Literature Review

Women’s risk of violence does not end when they leave an abusive partner. In fact, separated and divorced women are at very high risk of the most serious forms of violence, including being beaten or killed (Brownridge, 2009; DeKeseredy (2011); Johnson & Dawson, 2011). For example, the Chicago Women’s Health Risk Study (CWHRS) found that of 59 women killed, 23% were leaving or trying to leave their partners just prior to their death (Block, 2000). Seventeen percent of the women had already left and their partners were attempting to “renew the relationship.”

Brownridge’s (2006) in-depth review of the international literature reveals that divorced women are up to 9 times more likely than married women to be physically assaulted by intimate partners. Women who are separated but not yet divorced are as much as 30 times more likely to experience this type of violence. Some studies suggest that the risk of physical assault peaks for women during the first 2 months following separation and when women attempt permanent separation through legal or other means (DeKeseredy, 2007; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2009). Women are also at risk of being stalked during and after separation/divorce. The U.S. National Violence Against Women Survey found that 42.8% of stalking victims stated that their stalking experiences started after their relationships ended (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). In addition to homicide, stalking, and physical assault, abused women face a high risk of rape and sexual assault at separation or divorce.³ For example, Fleury, Sullivan, and Bybee (2000) found that of the 49 women in their sample who were assaulted by a former partner, 20% were raped. Given the extant literature on separation/divorce assault, it is not surprising that many survivors of violence report that “they were never more frightened than in the days, weeks, or months after they moved out” (Stark, 2007, p. 116). This study seeks to contribute to the understanding of separation and divorce rape and sexual assault in order to more effectively prevent and respond to these types of violence.

Method

Data

Sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the NCVS is an ongoing, large, nationally representative survey of households and people aged 12 or older in the United States. The data are publicly available through the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD) and are collected using a rotating, stratified, multistage cluster design (Hubble, 1995; Rennison & Rand, 2007). The NCVS is fielded at a sample of housing units and group quarters in the United States and the District of Columbia. In each selected housing unit, all persons aged 12 or older in the sampled household are interviewed once every 6 months for a total of 7 interviews. The methodology of the NCVS produces data representative of the noninstitutionalized U.S. population in this age range (Bachman, 2000; Rennison & Rand, 2007), and interviews are conducted both in person and over the phone.

The NCVS data offer important contributions to the extant literature on geographic variations in rape and sexual assault. The data can be generalized to noninstitutionalized women aged 12 or older, which is an advantage over nonrepresentative studies. Since the NCVS offers a large sample, it enables the disaggregation of rape/sexual assault against women in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Another benefit of the NCVS is that the data include crimes that were and were not reported to the police. This is an especially important point given that rape and other forms of sexual assault are among the least reported types of violence. In fact, of all violent crimes, rapes are the least likely to be reported to police (Catalano, 2006).

Sample

To investigate urban, suburban, and rural variations in separation/divorce rape and sexual assault against women, this research utilizes a sample of threatened, attempted, and completed rape and sexual assault victimizations committed by a current or a former intimate partner. The analytic sample begins with 1992 data because this is the first year of NCVS data gathered following a major redesign that included significant improvements in the measurement of rape and sexual assault. Since post-1992 data were gathered using significantly different methods, they are not comparable to pre-1992 data (Rand, 2009; Rennison & Rand, 2007). The year 2009 was selected as the terminal year because it is the most recent data available at the time of this work.⁴ Finally, the NCVS sample has historically been characterized by high response rates in the 90 percentiles for households and from about the mid-80 percentiles to mid-90 percentiles for individuals. On average, from 1992 to 2009, approximately 99,000 households and 184,000 persons were interviewed annually for the survey.

The sample used for analysis was restricted to threatened, attempted, and completed rape and sexual assault victimizations by an intimate partner. Rape is defined in the NCVS as forced sexual intercourse that includes psychological coercion and physical force, including heterosexual and same-sex rape, as well as rapes committed against

men and women. Attempted rape includes verbal threats of rape. Sexual assault is distinct from rape or attempted rape and consists of incidents involving attacks or attempted attacks associated with unwanted sexual contact between victims and offenders. Sexual assaults may or may not involve force and include such behaviours as grabbing, fondling, and verbal threats.⁵

We define an intimate partner as a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend, and intimate relationships include both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Intimate partner is determined in this research based on the following NCVS question: "What is the relationship of the offender to you?" Response categories used to construct intimate partner includes current spouse, former spouse, and current or former boyfriend or girlfriend.⁶ A final restriction used to construct the analytic sample was to include only female victims of intimate partner rape/sexual assault. This restriction resulted in 1,062,367 intimate partner rape/sexual assault victimizations in our analytic sample (weighted cases; 449,918 unweighted cases).

Measures

Geographic area. The analyses compare estimates of separation/divorce rape/sexual assault among women living in urban, suburban, and rural areas. These areas are based on categories determined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which defines central city, outside central city, and nonmetropolitan areas.⁷ The geographic categories used in this research are consistent with extant research based on data collected by federal statistical agencies (see, for example, Duhart, 2000). For our purposes, we utilized the more colloquial language of urban, suburban, and rural areas. There are no missing data for the geographic region variable in the NCVS.

Marital status. Victims' marital status in the NCVS is measured using five categories: never married, married, widowed, divorced, and separated. Marital categories are self-identified by the respondent and correspond to status at the time of the interview, not necessarily when the victimization occurred. The survey does not ascertain whether the respondent's marital status changed between the time of the victimization and the subsequent survey. Although we have information for all five marital status categories, our analyses focus primarily on divorced and separated respondents.

Rape/sexual assault. As noted above, the NCVS defines rape as forced sexual intercourse that includes psychological coercion and physical force. Attempted rape includes verbal threats of rape, and sexual assault consists of incidents involving attacks or attempted attacks generally associated with unwanted sexual contact between victims and offenders. The measurement of rape and sexual assault in the NCVS is complex. Although a respondent may reveal such a victimization at any time during the interview, several question items ask specifically about rape and sexual assault. The full series of questions that are designed to elicit rape and sexual assault victimizations are included below in the Appendix. A positive response to any of these questions indicates that there was a threatened, attempted, or completed sexual assault.

For additional detailed information on the data collection procedures used in the NCVS, see Rennison and Rand (2007).

Analytic Strategy

To examine the relationship between separation/divorce, geographic areas, and rape/sexual assault against women, contingency table analyses are used. This approach requires special attention when using NCVS data because estimates are subject to sampling error, and they come from a complex methodology utilizing (among other things) clusters. Thus, it is inappropriate to utilize analytic techniques that assume a simple random sample when analyzing NCVS data because they underestimate the standard errors and result in incorrect inferences about statistical significance.

To account for this, all comparisons of estimates using NCVS data presented here are conducted using specialized formulae created by the Census Bureau made specifically for the NCVS. These tests use generalized variance function constant parameters to calculate variance estimates, standard errors, and confidence intervals. When a difference is discussed as “statistically different” or “significantly different” in the text, this means the difference is significant at the $p < .05$ level. When a difference in estimates is described as “slight” or “somewhat different,” the difference is significant at the $p < .10$ level. Caution is warranted when comparing victimization estimates not explicitly discussed in the findings. What may appear to be a large difference between estimates may not be statistically different. In contrast, seemingly similar estimate differences may in fact be statistically significant. All estimates and comparisons reported are based on data that have been weighted using the appropriate weights located on the data files.⁸

Results

Before addressing the main objectives of the research, it is important to describe the sample used. Table 1 shows that the largest percentage of intimate rape/sexual assault victimizations against women occurred in suburban areas (46.1%) and the smallest portion took place in rural areas (23.5%). Most of these victimizations involved non-Hispanic Whites (74.5%) with a mean age of 29.3 years who lived in a household with an annual income of about US\$20,000. The offenders in these victimizations were primarily male (98.2%), White (70.0%) and aged 30 or older (51.6%). Finally, in general, the intimate partner rape/sexual assaults in our sample were committed by an unarmed offender (86.2%), in or near the victim’s home (69.4%). There were rarely third parties or bystanders present (17.9%), or more than one offender (1.8%). Finally, most of the victimizations in our sample were not reported to the police (71.4%).

Our first task is to estimate and compare the percentage of intimate partner rape/sexual assault victimizations experienced by divorced and separated women in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Results provided in Table 2 indicate that a somewhat higher percentage of rural divorced/separated women were victims of rape/sexual assault

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of Variables Used in the Analyses of Intimate Female Rape/ Sexual Assault Victimization

Primary variable of interest	%	Offender characteristics (continued)	%
MSA		Age	
Urban	30.4	Less than 18	9.1
Suburban	46.1	18 to 20	8.9
Rural	23.5	21 to 29	27.0
		All aged 30 or older	51.6
Victim characteristics		Mixed age group	0.6
Marital status		Missing data	2.8
Never married	45.3	Gender	
Married	10.7	Male	98.2
Widowed	1.2	Female	0.6
Divorced	20.5	Both male and female	0.9
Separated	22.3	Don't know	0.2
Race/Hispanic origin		Incident characteristics	
White non-Hispanic	74.5	Weapon presence	
Black non-Hispanic	16.0	Yes	9.8
American Indian non-Hispanic	1.3	No	86.2
Asian non-Hispanic	1.2	Don't know	4.0
More than one race, non-Hispanic	0.7		
Hispanic, any race	6.3	Injury	
Age, <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	29.3 (10.9)	No injury	26.4
		Serious	4.6
		Minor	32.9
Annual household income <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)*	7.2 (4.4)	Completed rape with no additional injury	36.1
		Location of rape/sexual assault	
Home ownership		In/near victim's home	69.4
Owned	43.3	In/near neighbor, friend, relative's home	19.4
Rented	56.7	Open area/on street/ public transportation	4.7
		School	1.3
Offender characteristics		Commercial place	1.6
Race		Parking lot/garage	0.7
White	70.0	Other location	2.9
Black	19.7		

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Offender Characteristics (continued)	%	Incident characteristics (continued)	%
Other	7.7	Third-party presence	
Mixed race/ethnicity group	0.6	Bystanders present	17.9
Don't know	1.9	No bystanders	80.2
		Missing data	1.9
Number of offenders		Reporting rape/sexual assault to police	
One	98.3	Reported	28.6
Two or more	1.8	Not reported	71.4

Note: The NCVS (National Crime Victimization Survey NCVS) uses 14 categories of unequal width to measure annual household income. These categories are as follows: (1) Less than US\$5,000, (2) US\$5,000 to US\$7,499, (3) US\$7,500 to US\$9,999, (4) US\$10,000 to US\$12,499, (5) US\$12,500 to US\$14,999, (6) US\$15,000 to US\$17,499, (7) US\$17,500 to US\$19,999, (8) US\$20,000 to US\$24,999, (9) US\$25,000 to US\$29,999, (10) US\$30,000 to US\$34,999, (11) US\$35,000 to US\$39,999, (12) US\$40,000 to US\$49,999, (13) US\$50,000 to US\$74,999, (14) US\$75,000 and greater. MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area).

Table 2. Percentage of Female Victims of Intimate Rape/Sexual Assault in Urban, Suburban, and Rural Areas by Marital Status

Marital status	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Total
Never married	51.1	47.1	34.5	45.3
Married	12.0	10.1	10.1	10.7
Widowed	0.8	1.4	1.4	1.2
Divorced/ separated	36.0	41.5	54.0	42.8
Divorced	20.1	18.0	25.8	20.5
Separated	15.9	23.5	28.3	22.3
Total	100	100	100	100

than were urban divorced/separated women ($p < .10$). Specifically, among those who were divorced/separated, 54.0% of rural women compared to 36.0% of urban women were victims of an intimate rape/sexual assault. Although other apparent differences between estimates in this table appeared large (e.g., 54.0% and 41.5%), they did not rise to the level of statistical differences at either the $p < .05$ or the $p < .10$ level.

Although informative, a comparison of percentages cannot inform us about the relative risk of victimization among the groups, given differential populations in urban, suburban, and rural areas. To accomplish this, we compare intimate partner rape/sexual assault victimization rates per 1,000 women in each geographic area by

Table 3. Rate per 1,000 Female Victims of Intimate Rape/Sexual Assault by Geographic Region

Marital status	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Total
Never married	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.8
Married	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Widowed	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Divorced/separated	1.4	1.7	3.1	1.9
Divorced	1.0	0.9	1.8	1.1
Separated	2.5	5.5	8.7	4.8
Total	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5

marital status. Table 3 shows that separated/divorced rural women are victims of intimate partner rape/sexual assault at significantly higher rates than are suburban and urban separated/divorced women ($p < .05$). That is, 3.1 rural women (per 1,000) are victims of intimate rape/sexual assault, which is significantly higher than the proportion of 1.7 suburban women (per 1,000), and 1.4 urban women (per 1,000) who experience the same violence. Table 2 illustrates that this significant difference is driven by violence experienced by separated women. Significance testing failed to indicate significant differences in rates of intimate rape/sexual assault among divorced women. In contrast, significant differences are found when considering separated women. Specifically, 8.7 rural separated women (per 1,000) are victims of intimate rape/sexual assault, which is significantly higher than the proportion of 0.9 suburban separated women (per 1,000) and 2.5 urban separated women (per 1,000) who experience the same violence ($p < .05$).

Discussion

Rural crimes, including male assaults on women, are among the least studied social problems in criminology (DeKeseredy, Donnermeyer, Schwartz, Tunnell, & Hall, 2007). As Donnermeyer, Jobes, and Barclay (2006) stated in their comprehensive review of rural crime research, "if rural crime was considered at all, it was a convenient 'ideal type' contrasted with the criminogenic conditions assumed to exist exclusively in urban locations. Rural crime was rarely examined, either comparatively with urban crime or as a subject worthy of investigation in its own right" (p. 199). The data presented here paint a different picture of rural life. Our findings indicate that the period following exiting relationships is significantly more dangerous for rural women than it is for their urban and suburban counterparts. As noted above, rural separated women experience intimate rape/sexual assault at rates more than 3 times higher than their urban counterparts. Rural separated women are raped/sexually assaulted by an intimate partner at rates about 1.6 times higher than similarly situated suburban women.

Our findings, however, should be interpreted with some caution. First, although the NCVS offers an important opportunity to examine rape and sexual assault across geographic areas, it is limited to persons who live in a noninstitutionalized housing unit or group quarter. Thus, homeless people, crews of vessels, institutionalized people (e.g., prisoners), and members of the armed forces living in military barracks are excluded from the NCVS sample. Second, as is the case with any research focused on sensitive issues, some acts of violence against women may not be revealed to field representatives. Because the NCVS is presented to respondents in the context of a crime survey, some respondents may not reveal victimizations they do not identify as crimes due to their relationship with the perpetrator or for other reasons (Koss, 1996; Littleton & Henderson, 2009; Schwartz, 2000; Schwartz & Leggett, 1999).

Although large-scale representative sample surveys of violence against women that are not explicitly contextualized as crime surveys elicit much higher figures (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2011; Fisher, 2009; Mihalic & Elliott, 1997; Smith, 1994), all surveys focused on violence against women suffer from underreporting. Even with the methodological advances that have occurred over the past 40 years, what the late Michael D. Smith (1987) stated more than 20 years ago still holds true, "Obtaining accurate estimates of the extent of woman abuse in the population at large remains perhaps the biggest methodological challenge in survey research on this topic" (p. 185).

Although our research adds to the growing number of studies of rural woman abuse, such as those conducted by Bachman and Saltzman (1995), Brownridge (2009), Websdale, (1998), and Websdale and Johnson (1995), there is still much we do not know about separation/divorce rape and sexual assault in nonmetropolitan areas. One new research direction is to study variations among rural communities (Weisheit, Falcone, & Wells, 2006). Future research should also attempt to test theories of separation/divorce rape and sexual assault (DeKeseredy et al., 2007, 2004). In addition, research needs to examine how factors such as race and ethnicity intersect with geographic location to shape crime. For example, American Indians comprise a disproportionately rural population (Wells & Falcone, 2008), so the problems identified by research with rural women may contribute to our understanding of the well-documented jurisdictional problems with law enforcement, systemic racism, and limited economic resources for dealing with violence against women in these communities.

As Logan, Stevenson, Evans, and Leukefeld (2004) correctly point out, "Creative solutions must be developed in order to serve women with victimization histories within the context of the specific communities where these women live" (p. 58). Rural women's greater risk of separation/divorce rape and sexual assault crosses several key areas for policy and practice around violence against women, including postseparation victimization of mothers in the context of child custody exchange and visitation (Hardesty, 2002), violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women (Luna-Firebaugh, 2006; Wood & Magen, 2009), barriers to service for rape survivors (Logan, Evans, Stevenson, & Jordan, 2005), and the continued failings of criminal justice responses to sexual assault (Caringella, 2009).

Our findings provide support for programs targeting the specific needs of rural and other underserved communities, which are already an explicit part of antiviolenence initiatives at the federal level. For example, the Office on Violence Against Women has administered rural grants since 1994, and the 2005 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) earmarked funds for rural programs targeting sexual assault. VAWA has also provided grants to address violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women, who experience the highest rates of criminal victimization and sexual violence of any group in the United States (Luna-Firebaugh, 2006; Wood & Magen, 2009). Funding for programs that recognize and address the ongoing risk of violence after separation will play a vital role in efforts to prevent violence against women in rural and other areas. Research on separation/divorce sexual assault in rural areas is still in its early stages, and studies like this one represent first steps toward improving our understanding of this problem in order to better prevent it. Continued research using both quantitative and qualitative methods is essential to this work.

Appendix

The first series of questions used in the NCVS to identify rapes and sexual assaults are found on the NCVS-1 Basic Screen Questionnaire (known as the Screener).⁹ The first question on the screener that offers the possibility of uncovering a rape or sexual assault (as well as other personal and property crimes) is question 40a, which asks, “40a. (Other than any incident already mentioned,) since ____, (year),¹⁰ were you attacked or threatened OR did you have something stolen from you—

- (a) At home including the porch or yard—
- (b) At or near a friend’s, relative’s or neighbor’s home—
- (c) At work or school—
- (d) In places such as a storage shed, or laundry room, a shopping mall, restaurant, bank or airport—
- (e) While riding in any vehicle—
- (f) On the street or in a parking lot—
- (g) At such places as a party, theater, gym, picnic area, bowling lanes, or while fishing or hunting—OR
- (h) Did anyone ATTEMPT to attack or ATTEMPT to steal anything belong to you from any of these places?¹¹

Question 41a also serves to uncover victimizations, including rape and sexual assault, using this language: “41a. (Other than any incidents already mentioned,) has anyone attacked or threatened you in any of these ways (Exclude telephone threats).” The relevant response categories used to identify a rape or sexual assault are as follows:

- (e) “Any rape, attempted rape or other type of sexual attack—
- (g) Any attack or threat or use of force by anyone at all? Please mention it even if you are not certain it was a crime.”

Question 42a was included in the NCVS in an effort to elicit responses and cue the respondent regarding violence by persons known to the victim. This is an especially important question for the measurement of rape and sexual assault. It is worded as follows: “42a. People often don’t think of incident committed by someone they know. (Other than any incidents already mentioned,) did you have something stolen from you OR were you attacked or threatened by (Exclude telephone threats)—

- (a) Someone at work or school—
- (b) A neighbor or friend—
- (c) A relative or family member—
- (d) any other person you’ve met or known?”

Yet another question included on the screener that is useful in uncovering rape and sexual assault is Question 43a. It asks, “43a. Incidents involving forced or unwanted sexual acts are often difficult to talk about. (Other than any incidents already mentioned,) have you been forced or coerced to engage in unwanted sexual activity by—

- (a) Someone you didn’t know before—
- (b) A casual acquaintance—OR
- (c) Someone you know well?”

Following each of these screener questions, the respondent is asked “how many times” the type of victimization revealed occurred. For each victimization uncovered, an NCVS-2 Crime Incident Report is completed.¹² This document gathers a wide variety of details about the victimization, including victim, offender, and incident characteristics. It includes questions relevant to identifying rape and sexual assault. For example, Question 27 asks, “27. What actually happened? Anything else? Mark (x) all that apply. FIELD REPRESENTATIVE—If box 4, ASK—Do you mean forced or coerced sexual intercourse including attempts?” Response categories pertinent to the measurement of rape and sexual assault for this question are as follows:

1. Unwanted sexual contact with force (grabbing, fondling, etc.)
2. Unwanted sexual contact without force (grabbing, fondling, etc.)

The next question offers another opportunity for the screener to uncover attempted rape and sexual assault. It asks, “28a. How did the offender TRY to attack you? Any other way? A follow-up question used to identify threats using the same response categories is, “28b. How were you threatened? Any other way? Mark (x) all that apply. FIELD REPRESENTATIVE—If box 5, ASK—Do you mean forced or coerced sexual intercourse including attempts?” Relevant response categories for these questions include the following:

1. Verbal threat of rape
2. Unwanted sexual contact with force (grabbing, fondling, etc.)

Rape and sexual assault can also be identified in Question 29 on the incident report where the respondent is asked, “29. How were you attacked? Any other way? Mark (x) all that apply. FIELD REPRESENTATIVE—if raped, ASK—Do you mean forced or coerced sexual intercourse? If tried to rape, ASK—Do you mean attempted forced or coerced sexual intercourse?” Relevant response categories used to uncover rapes or sexual assaults are as follows:

1. Raped
2. Tried to rape
3. Sexual assault other than rape or attempted rape

A rape or sexual assault can also be revealed in questions focused on injuries sustained by the victim during the victimization. Question 31 asks, “What were the injuries you suffered, if any? Anything else? FIELD REPRESENTATIVE—If raped and box 1 in item 29 is NOT marked, ASK—Do you mean forced or coerced sexual intercourse? If attempted rape and box 2 in item 29 is NOT marked, ASK—Do you mean attempted forced or coerced sexual intercourse?” Response categories for Question 31 includes the following.

1. Raped
2. Attempted rape
3. Sexual assault other than rape or attempted rape

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Notes

1. There is also a growing body of international social scientific knowledge challenging the popular notion that rural communities are less violent than urban areas (Barclay, Donnermeyer, Scott, & Hogg, 2007; Donnermeyer & DeKeseredy, 2008; Donnermeyer, Jobes, & Barclay, 2006).
2. Rennison, DeKeseredy, and Dragiewicz (2010) operationalized nonfatal violence by combining measures of attempted and completed rape/sexual assault, robbery, aggravated

assault, and simple assault. However, they do not report data on the extent and distribution of rape/sexual assault in rural and nonrural areas.

3. See DeKeseredy, Rogness, and Schwartz (2004) and DeKeseredy and Schwartz (2009) for reviews of separation/divorce sexual assault literature.
4. The year 2006 was excluded from the analytic sample due to several major methodological changes in the NCVS (National Crime Victimization Survey) that took effect in 2006 that negatively impacted the quality of data collected—especially as it related to rural areas. The changes included the elimination of centralized CATI, a sample reduction, and the inclusion of unbounded surveys in the NCVS. For more information on issues with the 2006 data, see Truman and Rand (2010).
5. Greater detail on the measurement of rape and sexual assault is found in the Measures section.
6. Although it is possible to identify which current or former relationships are heterosexual and which are between persons of the same sex, we did not disaggregate the data in this fashion. Thus, findings reflect both same-sex and heterosexual relationships.
7. Measuring geographic region is surprisingly complex and involves considerations such as region, data, and information from the decennial census. For additional information on this concept, see <http://www.census.gov/geo/www/GARM/Ch13GARM.pdf>; <http://www.census.gov/population/www/metroareas/metrodef.html>, and <http://www.census.gov/population/>
8. For more information on NCVS weighting procedures see Rennison and Rand (2007).
9. For the NCVS-1 screener, see <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/ncvs104.pdf>
10. The NCVS uses a 6-month retrospective period. The field representative reads the actual date that corresponds to the individual respondent's 6-month retrospective period.
11. For the NCVS-1 screener, see <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/ncvs104.pdf>
12. For the NCVS-2 incident report, see <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/ncvs204.pdf>

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