

**University Students' Perceptions and Reactions
To Aboriginal Women Victims of Sexual Assault**

by

Judy M. Kienas

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
The University of Manitoba
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

Master of Arts

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Abstract

There has been speculation that society responds to Aboriginal female victims of violence with a “casual indifference” that is indicative of apathy to these women. This study evaluated whether participants would perceive and respond differently to vignettes of sexual assault victims depending on the victim’s and perpetrator’s race (Aboriginal or Caucasian), whether the victim has consumed alcohol, and the participant’s gender. As predicted, compared to female participants, male participants reported a greater tendency towards victim minimization and victim blaming, less anger and pity, less desire to protest, and desired a shorter length of punishment for the perpetrator. Also, a significant effect was found for the interaction between race of victim, perpetrator, and alcohol consumption with the least desire to protest occurring when the victim was Caucasian, the perpetrator was Aboriginal, and no alcohol was consumed. Implications of these findings, limitations of this study, and suggestions for future research are discussed.

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University Students' Perceptions and Reactions to Aboriginal Women Victims of Sexual Assault

Introduction

Violence towards Aboriginal women constitutes a major societal problem in Canada today. Results of the 2004 General Social Survey (GSS) revealed that the rate of violence perpetrated against Aboriginal women was 3.5 times higher than the rate reported for Non-Aboriginal women in Canada (Brzozowshi, Taylor-Butts, & Johnson, 2006). In terms of specific types of violence, the reported rate of homicide for Canadian Aboriginal women was more than 6 times higher than that reported for non-Aboriginal Canadian women. Aboriginal women were also approximately three and a half times more likely to report suffering from spousal violence in comparison to non-Aboriginal women. When reporting spousal abuse, Aboriginal women were more likely to report more severe forms of spousal abuse (54% of Aboriginal women compared with 37% of non-Aboriginal women) such as being beaten, choked, threatened with or had a gun or a knife used against them, or being sexually assaulted (Brzozowshi et al., 2006; Johnson, 2006).

Similar statistics have been reported in the United States, with the American Indians and Crime Report released by the U.S. Department of Justice (Greenfield & Smith, 1999) reporting that the annual rate of violent crime committed against Native American women was approximately 3.5 times higher than any other female ethnic group in the U.S., at a rate almost 50% higher than that reported for African American males. These findings are consistent with the findings of the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS; Tjaden & Thomas, 2000) which reported that in the U.S. Native

American women were significantly more likely to have experienced rape and physical assault (65%) than women on the whole (55%). Given the magnitude of this social problem, it has been concluded by one researcher in the area of family violence that “clearly, violence against Aboriginal women is a pressing social problem that requires immediate attention by researchers, service providers, and policy makers” (Brownridge, 2003, p. 65).

Regardless of the statistical evidence identifying violence against Aboriginal women as an important social issue, it has been suggested that this issue has been for the most part received by society with what Hunter (2005), an expert on Aboriginal political issues, has termed “casual indifference”. Hunter further stated that this “casual indifference” operates at both a structural level throughout Canadian institutions as well as within the general population. Hunter pointed out that while several Aboriginal women had been the victims in a number of recent well-publicized murder or suspected murder cases such as the Penticton Murders, this type of media and public response is not typical. Rather these high profile cases appear to reflect only a small proportion of the existing problem of violence against Aboriginal women. For example, even though the Native Women’s Association of Canada has records of over 500 Aboriginal women who have been listed as murdered or missing, it is believed that even these numbers do not reflect the true extent of this problem as many incidents of violence perpetrated against Aboriginal women are believed to go unreported or under-investigated (Hunter, 2005).

One anecdotal example of this “casual indifference” is seen in regards to the media/public response of the 1996 conviction of John Martin Crawford in the serial killings of three Aboriginal women in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Although most

Canadians are familiar with the names of other Canadian serial murders such as Paul Bernardo or Charles Ng, few Canadians are familiar with the name John Martin Crawford. It has been speculated that one reason for this lies in the lack of media coverage given to this case that many feel is reflective of a double standard that exists when it comes to reporting crimes reported against Aboriginal people (Bergman & Goulding, 1996, June, 6). According to Bergman and Goulding, the national media rarely reported on the trial case and most major newspapers including Western Canadian dailies tended to run very brief accounts of the trial. This lack of coverage at the time led some Aboriginal leaders to speculate that the media was not interested in reporting crimes committed against Indigenous people (Bergman & Goulding, 1996). Goulding (2001), an award winning journalist and author notes the connection between the media and society overall stating:

The mainstream media, as both a mirror of society's values and the messenger that delivers the dispatches it senses the public is keen to receive, make a judgment based on what they deem important and worthy of space or air time. The writers and editors working there bring an inherent prejudice to the workplace, much of it rooted in ignorance.... The public, seeing through the eyes of the mainstream media, has a very different view of tragedies affecting Caucasian society. Canadians have rightfully come to share the grief carried by the families of Leslie Mahaffy and Kristen French. Likewise, our hearts went out to the family of Melanie Carpenter, who was killed in British Columbia by Fernand Edmond Auger, a convicted sex offender, in January 1995, the same month that John Crawford was arrested in Saskatoon. Carpenter's murder sparked

national outrage and led to renewed calls for harsher treatment of dangerous offenders. (pp. 212-214).

Since then Goulding has been quoted in The Edmonton Journal as stating “I don’t think the general public cares much about missing or murdered Aboriginal women....It’s all part of this indifference to the lives of Aboriginal people. They just don’t seem to matter as much as white people.” (Purday, 2003, November 26)

In addition to these allegations that the popular media is not interested in reporting stories of violence when the victims are Aboriginal women, others have relegated blame for apathy over this issue to the Canadian government. For example, a recent report by Amnesty International Canada (2004, October 4) entitled *Stolen Sisters* levels criticism at the Canadian government noting that it has been remiss in protecting the human rights of Aboriginal women:

When indigenous women are targeted for racist, sexist attacks by private individuals and are not assured the necessary levels of protection in the face of that violence, a range of their fundamental human rights are at stake. This includes the right to life, the right to be protected against torture and ill treatment, the right to security of the person, and the right to both sexual and racial equality.

Canada has ratified all of the key human rights treaties that guarantee these fundamental rights (p. 2).

It further notes that the United Nations, as well as several of Canada’s own government commissions, have called on the Canadian government to address these issues and ensure police and courts take steps to ensure the rights and safety of Canadian Aboriginal women.

This claim that there is apathy towards protecting the rights of Aboriginal women in Canada has been somewhat supported by a recent study by Dylan, Regehr, and Alaggia (2008) that asked Aboriginal women who experienced sexual violence about their experiences with the criminal justice system. This study concluded that race is a key determinant in how a victim will be perceived by the people in the criminal justice system. Participants reported that racism was an important factor in shaping their interactions with various members of the judicial system and in particular perceived police to be indifferent or unresponsive. Participants noted that lack of appropriate response by police left them feeling vulnerable and unsafe. Therefore, this study lends support to the claim that Aboriginal women who experience sexual violence will experience “casual indifference” in the responses of the Canadian legal system.

Regardless of the important societal implications of the existence of this “casual indifference”, a search of the research literature revealed that very little work has been done to verify empirically that this hypothesized “casual indifference” exists within the Canadian general public. This is not surprising given the lack of studies that examine people’s attitudes and perceptions of Aboriginal women who have been victimized. The purpose of this study was to empirically evaluate the hypothesis that individuals respond differently to Aboriginal women who are victims of violence than to non-Aboriginal women, and specifically to victims of sexual assault.

Literature Review

Factors Linked to Societal Indifference to the Violence Experienced by Aboriginal Women

A recent report published by the Pacific Association of First Nations Women, B.C. Women's Hospital and Health Centre, and the B.C. Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs (2005) identified several possible factors that may be linked to societal indifference to the plight of Aboriginal women and their experiences of violence. This report examined ten studies and one book specifically related to Aboriginal women and violence. The studies included *Aboriginal Women* in the Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission Final Report (2001), Amnesty International's *Stolen Sisters* report (2004), *Family Violence in Aboriginal Communities: An Aboriginal Perspective* (1996), *Understanding the Role of Healing in Aboriginal Communities* (1994), *Aboriginal Domestic Violence in Canada* (2003), *Violence in Aboriginal Communities* in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1994), *Hear First Nations Women Speak* (1993), *A Resource Guide on Family Violence Issues for Aboriginal Communities* (1994), *The Start of Something Powerful: Strategizing for Safer Communities of BC Aboriginal Women* (2003), and *The Principles of a Renewed Relationship* in *Volume 1: Looking Forward Looking Back* (1993). The results of this review concluded that "colonialism, racism, sexism, paternalistic measures and programming are all identified as contributing to the development, continuation and societal acceptance of violence, victimization and deaths of Aboriginal women" (Pacific Association of First Nations Women, B.C. Women's Hospital and Health Centre & B.C. Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs, 2005, p. 4).

Although a thorough examination of all of these factors is beyond the scope of this paper, a short review of how these factors pertain specifically to societal perceptions of Aboriginal women is provided to acknowledge the impact of these factors on the lives of Aboriginal women.

It has been claimed that the roots of violence against Aboriginal woman can be traced to colonization where violence against Aboriginal women was viewed as an integral part of Euro-American domination. As pointed out by David Stannard (1992), the destruction of a people is intrinsically linked to controlling the reproductive abilities of the women of the targeted people. Therefore, as part of their strategic plan to conquer Indigenous people, colonizers often advocated the killing of Indigenous women and children to help ensure the destruction of Indigenous peoples. One of the most famous examples of this type of genocidal thinking is the Sand Creek massacre of 1864 where Colonel Chivington stated the now infamous phrase "Lice breed nits" in defense of the United States army's massacre of over 150 unarmed men, women, and children. Clearly, the use of violence against Indigenous women has a long history of being sanctioned in North America (Smith & Ross, 2004).

It has also been argued that the impact of White Europeans' cultural view of women has contributed to the violence currently experienced by Indigenous women (Bubar & Thurman, 2004). Bubar and Thurman (2004) assert that before colonization Indigenous women for the most part lived in egalitarian societies where they were honored and respected members of their communities. However, according to LaRocque (1994), with the progression of colonialism and European patriarchy, the status of Aboriginal women began to diminish with Aboriginal women being subjugated not only

to racism, but also to sexism. LaRocque (1994) further notes that sexual violence is related to racism and sexism in that it contributes to a situation in which Aboriginal women are viewed as and treated as sexual objects, as exemplified by the dehumanizing portrayal of Aboriginal women as “squaws”, which renders all Aboriginal women vulnerable to violence.

Colonization and subsequent federal policy have also led to the reduction in the status of Aboriginal women and their marginalization in society as a whole. For example, according to Amnesty International Canada (2004, October 4), the erosion of more than two-thirds of the land base of Indigenous people and lack of resource rights has left Aboriginal nations unable to build their communities and structure the employment opportunities necessary for the achievement of self-sufficiency for Aboriginal people and left Aboriginal people on “the edge of economic, cultural, and political extinction (p. 7). In 2001 it was estimated that the unemployment rate in Canada was approximately 19% for the Aboriginal population compared to a rate of 7% for the non-Aboriginal population (Brzozowshi et al., 2006). Specifically, the unemployment rate of Aboriginal women at the time of the 2001 census was 17%, roughly double the rate of non-Aboriginal women (7%; Hull, 2006). Also, in 2000, the median income for Aboriginal people was only 60% of the non-Aboriginal median income (\$13,500 vs. 22,400; Brzozowshi et al., 2006). The average income of Aboriginal women in 2000 was approximately 72% of the average income of non-Aboriginal women and approximately 75% of the average income of Aboriginal men (Hull, 2006). High unemployment and poverty both act to maintain Aboriginal women’s marginalized status in Canadian society.

Another example of a government policy that has had devastating effects is the policy of removing Aboriginal children from their families and forcing them to attend boarding schools where many Aboriginal children experienced emotional, spiritual, physical, and sexual abuse. The residential school system originated with the establishment of missionary schools by various religious organizations in Canada during the beginning of colonization (Indian Residential School Resolution Canada, n.d.). By 1874 the federal government began to take an active role in the development and administration of these schools in order to meet its legal obligation to educate Aboriginal people under the Indian Act. It was not until 1969 that the government assumed full responsibility for all residential schools and by the mid-1970s had dismantled the majority of these schools. However, the last federally run residential school did not close until 1996 (Indian Residential School Resolution Canada, n.d.). It is estimated that approximately 100,000 Aboriginal children attended residential schools throughout the years that they operated (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, n.d.). There are approximately 80,000 people alive today who attended these schools (Indian Residential School Resolution Canada, n.d.). The effects of these residential schools have been conceptualized as the source of intergenerational trauma for many Aboriginal people and have been linked to many individuals' and communities' continuing struggles with issues such as physical and sexual abuse, family violence, and drug and alcohol abuse (Amnesty International Canada, 2004, October 4; Johnson, 2006; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). Connected to the residential school experience is the loss of cultural identity. While losing one's culture is not seen as a direct cause of violence, it has been speculated that the resulting feelings of loss of identity, not belonging, and lack of self-

worth may leave young Aboriginal women vulnerable to exploitation (Amnesty International Canada, 2004, October 4).

A final example of how federal policies have led to the economic, cultural, and political marginalization of Aboriginal people is a series of laws that were passed in hopes of assimilating Aboriginal people by encouraging them to renounce their status as Aboriginal people. In 1857, a law was passed that encouraged assimilation by allowing Aboriginal men to renounce both their Aboriginal status and the right to live on reserve lands. Due the fact that the status of Aboriginal women at the time was solely based on the status of their fathers or husbands, this led to many Aboriginal women being stripped of their ancestral rights. This problem was exacerbated by the passing of a second law in 1869 that stated that any Aboriginal woman who married a man outside of her community would be stripped of her Aboriginal status, even if the man was Aboriginal. Furthermore, this law would apply to the women's children, who would also be denied status. These laws were not overturned until 1985, after more than a century of implementation. For women affected by these laws, the results were loss of independent standing in their communities and increased dependence on their spouses (Amnesty International Canada, 2004, October 4). Policies such as these, as well as others, have led to economic deprivation and loss of status that has left Aboriginal women marginalized in society.

In summation, it has been speculated that several factors specific to the experience of being an Aboriginal woman have influenced societal attitudes to these women's experience of violence. The fact that violence against Aboriginal women has been sanctioned in the past, that racism and sexism still influence societal perceptions of

these women, and that many Aboriginal woman find themselves marginalized in Canadian society, may be contributing to a situation where the violation of the welfare and safety of these women is met with the hypothesized “casual indifference”. Working on the premise that these factors are indeed involved, the literature on intergroup perceptions of violence is reviewed next in order to understand why certain groups may be more susceptible to “casual indifference”.

Theories of Intergroup Perceptions of Violence and Stereotypes

Previous research has suggested that when the victim of a violent crime is from a different ethnic background, a stereotype may be activated that causes the victim to be perceived as belonging to a different social category (Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994). Working on the premise that this occurs when the general public reacts to stories of violence perpetrated against Aboriginal women, first stereotypes of Aboriginal women that have been proposed will be discussed and then an examination of the empirical evidence that supports the existence of these stereotypes will be provided. Various social psychology theories will then be discussed as they pertain to stereotypes of Aboriginal women. Finally, by combining insights from all these areas of research, a theoretical argument is constructed as to how to study the proposed existence of “casual indifference” to the plight of Aboriginal women who experience violence.

Stereotypes. In searching for literature on stereotypes specific to Aboriginal Canadian women, research verifying the existence of stereotypes in Canadian society was not found. However, in the United States, Bird (1999) has noted that there are predominantly two popular stereotypes of Native American women: The Pocahontas/princess stereotype and the squaw stereotype. Bird further notes that both of

these stereotypes have led to the objectification of Native American women. For example, it has been suggested that the Pocahontas/princess myth has played an integral part in justifying Caucasian dominance as a symbol of exoticism and welcoming, as she falls in love with a White European man and prefers him to Native American men. Bird (1999) writes "the American Indian princess became an important, non-threatening symbol of White American's right to be here because she was always willing to sacrifice her happiness, cultural identity, and even her life for the good of the new nation" (p. 72). According to Portman and Herring (2001) the contrast of this pure virginal stereotype of the young Native American women waiting to be deflowered is the squaw stereotype that portrays Native American women as "barely human" (p. 189). Bird (1999) writes that according to this stereotype, the squaw is "a drudge who is at the beck and call of her savage husband, produces baby after baby, and has sex indiscriminately with both Whites and Indians" (p. 73). Note that both of these stereotypes represent Native American women as existing to serve White men. Medicine (1988, as cited in Portman & Herring, 2001) further comments that these stereotypes continue to influence attitudes towards Native American women through their perpetuation in a mainstream media that rarely reports contemporary, realistic depictions of Native American women. Although it cannot be said with certainty that Bird's (1999) review of the stereotypes of Native women in the U.S are reflective of stereotypes held by Canadians of Aboriginal women, it does support the argument that negative stereotypes about Aboriginal women exist.

Further support for the existence of negative stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples in Canada is provided by a study by Voraaurer, Main, and O'Connell (1998) that asked participants their beliefs about how Caucasian Canadians view Aboriginal Canadians.

This study found that participants believed that Caucasian Canadians were more likely to view Aboriginal Canadians as opposed to Caucasian Canadians as possessing traits that were categorized into central themes of laziness, rebelliousness, lack of ambition, low status, unscientific nature, and unsociability. Also of note, in the miscellaneous category, participants were significantly more likely to endorse the traits alcoholic and sad as traits that Caucasian Canadians view as constituting beliefs about Aboriginal Canadians.

However, this particular study did not differentiate between how these stereotypic traits may differ with respect to how Aboriginal women are perceived as opposed to Aboriginal Canadians in general. Therefore, issues of sexist stereotypes that may pertain specifically to Aboriginal women were not addressed. It should also be noted that this study does not provide direct evidence that these stereotypes exist, but merely that participants believe that these stereotypes are held by Caucasian Canadians.

Therefore, in concluding this section on stereotypes and Aboriginal peoples, it should be noted that very little direct support for the existence of negative stereotypes of Aboriginal women was found in the literature. Although this lack of empirical support in the literature provides little support for building a theoretical argument that perceptions of Aboriginal women who are victims of violence may be influenced by negative stereotypes, it can also be argued that no empirical evidence was found in the literature arguing against the presence of negative stereotypes of Aboriginal women. This paper therefore proceeds on the premise that it is plausible that negative stereotypes of Aboriginal women are present in Canadian society.

Feminist theory. If stereotypes of Aboriginal women exist in Canadian society, the question then becomes how might they act to influence society's reactions to

Aboriginal women who are victims of violence? Feminist literature suggests that the roots of the many negative stereotypes that exist of women of colour are embedded in racist and sexist ideologies (Donovan & Williams, 2002; Holzman 1996). Based on the theoretical concept of intersectionality, feminist writers have noted that women of color often face diverse oppressions, experiencing not only sexism, but racism, classism, the effects of colonization, as well as other oppressions that shape women's experiences of violence (Bograd, 2005; Crenshaw, 1994, Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). When viewed through a White patriarchal worldview that objectifies women of color as objects of entitlement, women of color become more vulnerable to violence. For example, Smith and Ross (2004) note that in patriarchal thinking, only a body that is "pure" can be violated and that violation of female bodies considered inherently impure or dirty is of no consequence. The authors go on to conclude that Native American women by virtue of their race are therefore considered unrapeable (Smith & Ross, 2004). This patriarchal worldview has led Ramirez (2004) to state "Colonial images and tales support a culture in our society that sanctions violence against Native American women" (p. 103).

Social justice theory. In terms of social justice theory, Deutch (1974; 1984) has noted the connection between cultural myths/stereotypes and the distribution of social justice. He states that the ideology and myths of any society help to define and justify the values used to legitimize the different positions within the society and to determine who should hold positions (Deutch, 1984). He points to various examples of this phenomenon including how the myth of America as the "land of equal opportunity" helps keep the American poor pacified by the belief that if they just keep working hard, one day they will reap the rewards of their labor and how myths surrounding white supremacy have

been used to justify deferential treatment of Caucasian and African Americans. However, Deutch (1984) has described three situations that can challenge these myths. First, Deutch notes that if there is a breakdown of consensual norms in a society, as might occur during a period of rapid social change or intra-societal conflict, the legitimacy of traditional myths and values may be brought into question and debunked. Also, if there is a failure on the part of a society to deliver the entitlements that society itself has defined as legitimate for one's position, the resulting deprivation can act as a catalyst for challenging the existing myths and values surrounding entitlement. Finally, if there is exposure within a society to new ideologies and new examples that are accepted as legitimate by many people, this may also result in a rejection of the previously held myths. To date, it should be noted that none of these conditions have been met on a social scale large enough to lead to rejection of the myths that bind Aboriginal women to a subordinate position in society. Therefore, if myths/stereotypes exist, it can be argued that these myths/stereotypes may be being used to justify Canadian society's failure to ensure the rights and safety of Aboriginal women and thus avoid the costs of doing so.

System justification theory. System justification theory builds on Deutch's (1974; 1984) concepts of how social justice is distributed by proposing that there is a general system justification motive that is often employed to defend and justify the status quo of the existing social order (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). One way people do this is by employing stereotypes to rationalize social and economic status differences between groups (Jost et al., 2004). In particular, when faced with threats to the legitimacy of their sociopolitical system, people should be motivated to restore their faith in the status quo by engaging in the endorsement and cognitive activations of stereotypes of high and low

status groups whose specific content justifies social inequity (Jost et al., 2004). Given the growing number of reports demanding the rights and safety of Aboriginal women be recognized such as the *Violence in Aboriginal Communities* (LaRocque, 1994) report, the *Stolen Sisters* report (Amnesty International Canada, 2004, October 4), and the *Researched to Death: B. C. Aboriginal Women and Violence Final Report* (Pacific Association of First Nations Women, B. C. Women's Hospital and Health Centre, and B. C. Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs, 2005), it can be argued that the existing Canadian sociopolitical system is increasingly under pressure to treat Aboriginal women more fairly.

Although empirical research accessing the pressure to recognize the rights of Aboriginal people is not available to substantiate the claim that Canadian society is under increasing pressure to recognize the rights of Aboriginal Peoples in general, some anecdotal evidence is present. One example of anecdotal evidence to support the existence of this growing demand is the recent passing of the Specific Claims Tribunal Act in June of 2008 (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2008). The purpose of this act is to improve and speed up the resolution of specific land claims. Under this act, a tribunal has been set up to review specific land claims and has the power to award compensation up to 150 million dollars per claim. As of September 30, 2008, there are 138 claims currently under review.

Another example of the increased need for recognition of the abuse that Aboriginal people have suffered is the approval of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement on September 19, 2007 (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2009). This settlement includes provisions for payments for former Indian Residential

School residents, establishment of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission, commemorative activities, and measures to support healing through various programs. Therefore, it is possible that pressure to secure the rights and safety of Aboriginal women (and Aboriginal peoples in general) may be leading to the endorsement and cognitive activations of negative stereotypes of Aboriginal women.

Self-categorization theory. Self-categorization theory states that people self-categorize as group members if a social categorization into in-group and out-group membership can be meaningfully applied to a particular social context (Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Turner, 1987). According to this theory (Turner, 1987), categorization of the victim as belonging to a different social category can produce increased perceptions of inter-categorical differences and intra-categorical similarities. As a result of this categorization, the process of interpreting and encoding information about someone will differ depending on whether that person is seen as a member of one's in-group or as being a member of an out-group. An in-group is defined as a group that one belongs to or identifies with, while an out-group is a group of individuals that one does not belong to or identify with (Lindsay, Paulhus, & Nairne, 2008). Stereotypes are linked to self-categorization in that stereotypes also act to exaggerate people's perceptions of differences between groups while at the same time underestimating differences within group members (Wade, Tavris, Saucier, & Elias, 2007)).

An example of how this process can influence people is illustrated in a study by Duncan (1976). In this study, Caucasian Americans were asked to label the behavior of an actor in a film who shoves another actor. If the actor was African American, his actions were more likely to be labeled aggressive than if the actor was Caucasian. The

Caucasian actor's behavior was more likely to be labeled as fooling around by participants in the study. This study demonstrates the effect of racial stereotypes on people's perceptions of perpetrators of violence and how their actions were minimized or not depending on how participants categorized them based on racial stereotypes that African American males are more aggressive than Caucasian American males. This theory lends support to the hypothesis that victims of violent incidents may also be perceived differently based on stereotypes that are activated by the observer, particularly if the victim is from a lower status group than the observer. Given the marginalized position in Canadian society within which many Aboriginal women find themselves, it is possible that negative stereotypes are activated via the self-categorization process in a way that affects people's perceptions of Aboriginal women who have experienced violence.

Moral disengagement. Other theories have suggested different explanations as to why some victims are perceived differently than others. For example, Bandura (1990) has postulated that the act of perceiving another person as human activates a number of empathetic reactions that preclude mistreatment without creating a feeling of personal distress. However, if the other person is not seen as being human, people can disengage from normal moral self-sanctions that typically prevent the mistreatment of others through a number of different mechanisms. These mechanisms include moral justification, advantageous comparison, and euphemistic labeling to justify reprehensible conduct. They also include the obscuring of personal agency through the displacement of responsibility as well as the diffusion of responsibility. Detrimental effects can be disregarded or distorted through mechanisms of minimizing, ignoring, or misconstruing

the consequences. Finally, mechanisms can act via blaming and/or dehumanizing the victim. Once these mechanisms have been successfully employed, moral disengagement is said to have occurred. Given the concern over the proposed existence of stereotypes of Aboriginal women that view these women as “barely human” (Portman & Herring, 2001, p. 189), this theory may explain the lack of concern that is said to exist over violence directed at Aboriginal women. However, to date, no research has been conducted to investigate whether the mechanisms proposed by this theory do indeed operate in creating different reactions to Aboriginal women who are victims of violence as opposed to Caucasian women.

Moral exclusion. Another theory which offers an alternative explanation of why some victims of violence may be perceived differently than other victims is the theory of moral exclusion. Opatow (1990) states that “moral exclusion occurs when individuals or groups are perceived as outside the boundary in which moral values, rules, and considerations of fairness apply” (p. 1). She further states that each individual has a set of beliefs about who should be treated justly and these beliefs shape who is included in our “moral community”. Examples of those typically included in our moral community include family, friends, compatriots, etc. Those considered outside of our moral community are perceived as “nonentities”. As noted by Opatow (1990), the consequences of moral exclusion can be mild or severe. In its severest forms moral exclusion contributes to violations of human rights, political repression, slavery, and genocide. In its milder forms “harm doing results from unconcern or unawareness of other’s needs or entitlements to basic resources, such as housing, health services, respect, and fair treatment” (p. 2). Also, according to Opatow (1990) “one’s scope of justice is largely

determined by the prevailing social order, which defines both our relationships with others and our beliefs about their entitlements” (p. 6).

Opatow (1990), like Bandura (1990), has also proposed a number of mechanisms that can lead to moral exclusion. She divides these mechanisms into either exclusion-specific (unlikely to be employed in common interpersonal relations) or ordinary (frequently occurring in everyday life). Examples of exclusion-specific mechanisms include biased evaluation of groups (unflattering comparisons between one's own group and another group are made or believing in the superiority of one's own group), derogation (the disparaging of others by regarding them as lower life forms or inferior beings), dehumanization (the repudiating of other's humanity, dignity, ability to feel and/or entitlement to compassion), fear of contamination (perceiving contact as threatening to one's own well-being), accelerating the pace of harm doing to reduce remorse and inhibitions, open approval of destructive behavior, reducing moral standards, blaming the victim, self-righteous comparisons (justifying harmful acts by contrasting them with morally condemnable atrocities committed by others), and desecration. It is possible that one or more of these mechanisms are being implemented by the members of the dominant society in the purported moral exclusion of Aboriginal women. Specifically, for the purposes of this study, victim blaming and the repudiation of Aboriginal women's humanity will be focused on. However, once again no research has been conducted to investigate whether any of the mechanisms proposed by this theory do indeed operate in creating different reactions to Aboriginal women who are victims of violence as opposed to Caucasian women.

Infrahumanization. Another theory that has been postulated to describe why differences in attitudes between in- and out-groups exist is that of infrahumanization. Researchers in this area contend that people have a greater tendency to see their own in-group as more human than perceived out-groups (Leyens et al., 2000, 2003). This was demonstrated in a classic study by Leyens and colleagues (2001) in which it was shown that participants were much more likely to attribute what has been referred to as secondary emotions to in-group members than to out-group members. Primary emotions such as pleasure, fear, anger, and attraction are not considered uniquely human since animals are capable of experiencing these emotions as well as humans. In contrast, secondary emotions such as love, guilt, humiliation, and hope are considered to be uniquely human and more representative of “human essence”.

Other research has also demonstrated that people have a tendency to avoid attributing secondary emotions to members of out-groups and will even refute evidence that out-group members do indeed experience such emotions (Gaunt, Leyens, & Syndic, 2004). Work by Vaes, Paladino, Castelli, Leyens, and Giovanazzi (2003) has shown that when members of out-groups express their needs in terms of these emotions people are less likely to help out-group members. Through the process of infrahumanization, it appears that members of out-groups may be less likely to be seen as negatively affected by violence than their in-group counterparts since they are seen as less affected on a secondary emotional level. Based on this theory it can be speculated that perhaps Aboriginal women who are the victims of violence may be perceived as being less emotionally impacted by violence than other victims.

Belief in a just world. Another theory that has been proposed to explain how people respond to victims is the theory of belief in a just world (Lerner, 1980; Lerner & Miller, 1978; Lerner & Simmons, 1966). The belief in a just world theory states that it is important for individuals to believe that individuals get what they deserve and deserve what they get in order to maintain a belief in an orderly and predictable social world (Lerner, 1980). Furthermore, it has been proposed that this belief may enable individuals to make sense of negative events in their social world (Lerner, Miller, & Holmes, 1976). For example, it has been found that the more an individual endorses just world beliefs, the less likely s/he is to report feeling vulnerable to various threats (Bulman & Wortman, 1977; Hafer & Olson, 1993; Lambert, Burroughs, & Nguyen, 1999).

It has been proposed that the suffering of innocent victims presents a cognitive threat to an individual's belief in a just world. Two ways this threat can be resolved are by either trying to compensate the victim or by derogating the character of the victim to make the victim seem more deserving of his/her fate (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). Furthermore, given the fact that restoring justice may be costly, it can be argued that by blaming and derogating the victim the cost of restoring justice can be avoided (Lodewijkx, Kwaadsteniet, & Nijstad, 2005). However, it should be noted that victim blaming is less likely to occur when individuals identify with the victim (Chaikin & Darley, 1973; Lerner & Mathews, 1967).

Building on Lerner's just-world theory, Lodewijkx et al.(2005) investigated how research participants in the Netherlands perceived victims of violence when the victims differed in ethnicity. This study investigated victim ethnicity and the presence of an opportunity to blame the victim as variables that could affect identification with the

victim, perceived senselessness of the violent act, victim blaming, and participants' protest and the desired length of penalty for the offender. The study described a violent incident in which a male assailant assaulted a male victim who was described as either as being a member of an ethnic minority or not. In the opportunity to blame condition, the victim was portrayed as being responsible for damage to the perpetrator's property. The researchers found that an act of violence committed against a victim belonging to an ethnic minority was perceived to be more deserved and less senseless than a similar violent act directed against a non-ethnic minority victim in the opportunity to blame condition. The desired penalty for the offender was also shorter in this condition. The study found no reliable effects of victim ethnicity within the no-blame condition in which the information regarding the victim's role in damaging the perpetrator's property was not given. The same study also found that identification with the ethnic minority victim was less strong compared to identification with the non-minority victim in the blame-opportunity condition, but not in the no-blame condition. The results of this study led the authors to conclude that "that just-world theory offers a promising approach to investigate factors determining the labeling of violent incidents as senseless by outside, uninvolved observers" (p. 1361).

The effect of an opportunity to blame the victim was also investigated in a study by Van Zomeren and Lodewijkx (2005) in which the presence or absence of an opportunity to blame a victim of violence altered participants' identification with the victim, as well as feelings of anger and pity and a willingness to protest and help. They also found that while feelings of pity predicted helping tendencies they did not predict protest tendencies. This is in contrast to anger, which predicted both helping and protest

tendencies. This is in keeping with a study by Yerby, Dumont, Wigboldus, and Gordijn (2003) that found that when people perceive victims of harmful behavior as belonging to their group, they feel more anger, and this anger increases their intentions to try to rectify the situation. These studies suggest that in investigating if perceptions of victims of violence differ if the victim is described as an Aboriginal woman, not only should the effects of ethnicity be explored, but also the presence of an opportunity to blame the victim.

Summary. In summary, after reviewing the social psychology literature in regards to stereotypes and feminist theory, social justice theory, system justification theory, self-categorization theory, moral disengagement, moral exclusion, inhumanization, and belief in a just world theory, it has been noted that a number of theories have been proposed as to why and how people perceive and respond to some groups of people differently than others. While it is unclear if society perceives and responds to Aboriginal women as a group differently on the whole, the focus of this research is limited to perceptions and responses specific to Aboriginal women who are victims of violence. Also, while an investigation of all the mechanisms proposed by the theories previously described is beyond the scope of this research, insights from the various theories were used to identify a number of variables to investigate in hopes of identifying if “casual indifference” exists in Canadian society in regards to Aboriginal women who have experienced sexual assault.

Given that several of the theories previously described propose that sometimes members of other groups are seen as not only different than members of one’s own group, but also as less than members of the in-group, it was hypothesized that minimization of

the Aboriginal women's experience may occur. It was also hypothesized that victim blaming may be more likely to occur when the victim is described as an Aboriginal woman as opposed to a Caucasian woman given the possible costs of restoring justice to this population. Given the extreme marginalization of Aboriginal women and the negative stereotypes that are said to exist, it may also be that members of Canadian society are less able to identify with Aboriginal women who are the victims of violence than with Caucasian victims of violence, and therefore may respond with less feelings of pity or anger, less tendency to protest, and less desire to seek restorative justice for the victim in terms of the length of penalty for the offender. Through the investigation of these variables it was hoped to empirically evaluate whether Aboriginal women who are the victims of violence are perceived differently than other victims.

Defining Violence for the Purpose of this Study

In terms of investigating how Aboriginal women who experience violence are perceived, a specific form of violence must be chosen. While the Canadian Criminal Code does not list as a specific offence violence against women, according to Johnson (2006), the provisions "that most commonly apply to cases against women include the offences of assault, sexual assault, criminal harassment, threats of violence, forcible confinement and homicide"(p. 9). Given that one possible reason for the magnitude of violence perpetrated against Aboriginal women is the double bind of racism and sexism, it was decided to focus this research on sexual violence.

Sexual violence has been defined as any form of non-consensual or forced sexual activity or touching, including rape (Johnson, 2006). Sexual assault has long been recognized as an example of interpersonal violence (Burt, 1980) and there is a substantial

body of research in regards to how victims are perceived. Furthermore, statistics have shown that in Canada, sexual assault is a crime of violence disproportionately experienced by Aboriginal people. According to the 2004 General Social Survey (GSS), the rate of sexual assault in Canada was 526 per 100,000 on reserves, in comparison to approximately 74 per 100,000 being reported for Canadians on the whole (Brzozowski et al., 2006). Unfortunately, the GSS does not identify male and female victims separately, nor does it include a statistic for non-Aboriginal victims specifically. It also does not identify the race of the perpetrators in the sexual assaults specific to Aboriginal women. More specific findings have been reported in the United States, such as the findings of the National Violence Against Women Survey which found that American Indian and Alaska Native women experience seven sexual assaults per 1000 per year compared to three per 1000 among Black Americans, two per 1000 among Caucasian Americans, and one per 1000 among Asian Americans (Tjaden & Theonnes, 2000).

The results of the 2004 GSS found that Aboriginal people were more likely to report being victimized by someone who was known to them (56%) than non-Aboriginal victims (41%) and that most incidents of violence committed against Aboriginal people were most likely to occur in or around the victim's home (34%) in contrast to non-Aboriginal victims (17%) (Brzozowski et al., 2006). Therefore, it was decided for the purpose of this study to focus on a sexual assault where the perpetrator was known to the victim and where the assault occurs in the victim's home.

It was also decided to include alcohol consumption as a variable in this study since the results of the 2004 GSS also found that Aboriginal victims of violent crime were more likely than non-Aboriginal victims to have consumed an intoxicant

(Brzozowski et al., 2006). Research shows that alcohol consumption is often reported in incidents of sexual assault (Abbey, Clinton, McAuslan, Zawacki, & Buck, 2002; Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, Clinton, & McAuslan, 2004). Including alcohol consumption as a variable in this study allowed for the manipulation of the presence or absence of a blame opportunity.

In summation, sexual assault was chosen as the focus of this research based on the facts that it is a form of violence that has been linked to sexist attitudes, that a substantial body of research already exists in terms of people's perceptions of sexual assault victims, and that the statistical data provided by the 2004 GSS (Brzozowski et al., 2006) states that sexual assault is a type of violence disproportionately experienced by Aboriginal women. It was also decided to focus this study on a sexual assault where the perpetrator is known to the victim and where the assault occurs in the victim's home based on the statistical data provided by the 2004 GSS (Brzozowski et al., 2006). Finally, it was also decided to include alcohol consumption as a variable in this study since the results of the 2004 GSS also found that Aboriginal victims of violent crime were more likely than non-Aboriginal victims to have consumed an intoxicant (Brzozowski et al., 2006) and including alcohol consumption as a variable in this study allowed for the manipulation of the presence or absence of a blame opportunity.

A Review of Existing Literature on Factors Affecting the Perception of Sexual Assault Victims

According to the existing sexual assault literature, race, acquaintance with the perpetrator, and alcohol consumption are all known factors that affect how people perceive sexual assault victims. The sexual assault literature will be reviewed in the areas

of interracial sexual assault, acquaintance versus stranger sexual assault, and the effects of alcohol consumption on how victims of sexual assault are perceived.

Race and sexual assault. Empirical investigations have begun to explore the role that racial differences may play in influencing perceptions of sexual assault victims, particularly in terms of how race may relate to victim blaming. For example, some researchers have claimed that racial stereotypes are more likely to be evoked in interracial sexual assaults than in intra-racial sexual assaults and are therefore more likely to lead to victim blaming (George & Martinez, 2002). Some studies have begun to assess this claim by altering how the race of a sexual assault victim influences whether participants engage in victim blaming by using a variety of combinations of Caucasian Americans and African American characters in a sexual assault vignette. These studies are presumed to activate the "Blacks are more sexual" stereotype. For example, George and Martinez (2002) found that whether victims were African Americans or Caucasian Americans, victims were blamed more if raped interracially. Willis (1992) found that college students held the African American victim of a date rape more responsible for the sexual assault than the Caucasian American victim regardless of whether the perpetrator was described as African American or Caucasian American. Willis (1992) also found that both African American and Caucasian American victims were seen as less credible if they had been involved with an African American in a dating scenario. Varelas and Foley (1998) found that Caucasian American participants attributed less blame to Caucasian American victims than to African American victims of an African American rapist. In terms of work being done with victims of other ethnicities, Jimenez and Abreu (2002) also found differences in victim blaming in Latino/a and Caucasian interracial rape

scenarios. Their work indicated that Caucasian American women have stronger positive attitudes towards sexual assault victims and more accurate perceptions of sexual assault when the victim is portrayed as Caucasian rather than Latina.

Only one previous study was found that examined the effect of interchanging the race of rape victims with Aboriginal women and women of other ethnic identities. In this study, Pfeifer and Ogloff (2003) asked participants to read a transcript of a sexual assault trial where the ethnic background of both the defendant and the victim was varied. The victim was described as being English, French, or Native Canadian. Their results showed that if the defendant was described as English Canadian, participants overall rated the defendant as less guilty when the victim was described as Native Canadian as opposed to if the victim was described as French or English Canadian. If the race of the defendant was held constant, "participants were significantly more likely to rate the defendant as more guilty if the victim was portrayed as English ...or French Canadian...as opposed to Native Canadian" (p. 305). Furthermore, the participants rated the Native Canadian victim as less attractive, less honest, and more irresponsible than either the English or French Canadian victims when asked to rate the victim on these three personality traits. The study is limited in that it did not directly address the issue of whether the participants were engaging in victim blaming or not. Also, the study did not include an analysis of possible participant gender effects. It is also interesting to note that when participants in the study were asked to rate the guilt of the defendant using the Legal Standard Guild Rating that includes instructions to the mock jurors to guide their decision, the aforementioned prejudicial ratings were no longer found. However, even taking these limitations into consideration, this study does support the hypothesis that participants in

this study will hold different attitudes towards Aboriginal victims of sexual assault as opposed to Caucasian victims.

Alcohol consumption and perceptions of sexual assault victims. Research shows that alcohol consumption is often reported in incidents of sexual assault (Abbey, Clinton, McAuslan, Zawacki, & Buck, 2002; Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, Clinton, & McAuslan, 2004). For example, in a national survey of higher education students conducted in the United States, Ullman, Karabatsos, and Koss (1999) reported that alcohol consumption was present in 42% of all acts of sexual coercion and 55% of acts classified as rape. Other researchers that studied incidents of college rape have estimated that alcohol was consumed in 72% of rape victims (Mohler, Dowdall, & Wechsler, 2004).

Alcohol consumption is known to affect both men's and women's perceptions of the degree to which someone is seen as sexually available and willing (George, Lehman, Cue, & Martinez, 1997). Furthermore, previous research suggests that rape victims who consume alcohol prior to the assault are more likely to be deemed responsible for the attack than victims who do not consume alcohol (Hammock & Richardson, 1997; Richardson & Campbell, 1982; Scronce & Corcoran, 1991; Wenger & Bornstein, 2006), although some studies have not found this effect (Dent & Arias, 1990; Norris & Cubbins, 1992).

One possible explanation for these conflicting results has been suggested by Pollard (1992) who noted in his review of existing sexual assault literature that there are limits to generalizing the results of a specific variable on victim judgment given the differences in populations studied, methods used, and the interactional effect of other variables in the study. For example, Norris and Cubbins (1992) noted that unlike most of

the previous research conducted on the effects of alcohol, their study included a description both of physical and sexual aggression in the depicted vignette. Therefore, it is possible that the researchers in this study did not find an effect of alcohol on victim blaming due to the interactional effect of adding victim resistance into the vignette.

Another potential methodological concern according to Stormo, Lang, and Stritzke (1997) is that researchers are not always specific in defining the level of alcohol consumed by the victim. These researchers note that some studies in this area have failed to provide a precise manipulation of the level of intoxication of the victim, portraying the victim as either "sober" or "drunk" and, specifically in the case of the study conducted by Dent and Arias (1990), the researchers did not provide any explicit descriptors of drunkenness in the vignettes used. Results of the Stormo, Lang, and Arias (1990) study that varied the levels of intoxication of the victim into none, low, moderate, and high, found that in comparisons of conditions where both the victim and the perpetrator were depicted as having consumed equivalent amounts of alcohol, participants were more likely to rate the victim as more responsible and blameworthy, particularly if the vignette described clear signs of behavioral impairment. These results led the researchers to conclude "that it is not the act of alcohol consumption per se that leads to greater judgments of victim blame, but rather that relatively clear signs of intoxication must be present before others are inclined to see a female rape victim as more responsible and blameworthy of her misfortune" (p. 299). In summation, this review of the literature on the effects of alcohol on victim blaming suggests that alcohol consumption is linked to increased victim blaming, although other factors such as the addition of a description of physical resistance or level of intoxication may alter this relationship.

Acquaintance versus stranger sexual assault. In reviewing the literature on acquaintance versus stranger rape, it has been generally found that greater victim blaming occurs within the context of acquaintance rape (Frese, Moya, & Megias, 2004; George & Martinez, 2002; Schuller & Klippenstine, 2004). Furthermore, in cases of acquaintance rape, it has been suggested that the victim's alcohol consumption interacts with the relational history of the victim and perpetrator. For example, Hammock and Richardson (1997) found that when the relationship between a victim and a perpetrator was not close, if the victim was intoxicated, the victim was seen as more responsible than a non-intoxicated victim. However, if the defendant and victim were portrayed as previously dating, this pattern was reversed. This has led to speculation that

The nature of the relationship appears to create expectancies about what sorts of behavior are appropriate: If a man assaults a new acquaintance after getting her drunk, then she is at fault, presumably for having put herself in that position; but if a man assaults a romantic partner (e.g., girlfriend, fiancée) after getting her drunk, then he is at fault, presumably for having violated her trust. (Wenger & Bernstein, 2006, p. 548)

Based on this review of the literature, it appears that acquaintance sexual assault where the victim has had only minimal acquaintance with her attacker (regardless of whether the victim has consumed alcohol or not) is the condition most likely to lead to victim blaming.

Participant gender and perceptions of sexual assault victims. Previous research has generated considerable evidence to support the hypothesis that the gender of participants is a strong predictor of how rape victims will be perceived with women

generally tending to be more sympathetic to rape victims than men (Fischer, 1991, 1997; George & Martinez, 2002; Hammock & Richardson 1997; Jimenez & Abreu, 2003). In one review of several previously published studies of experimental depictions of rape, Pollard (1992) found that “females make more pro-victim judgments than do males” (p. 307). Furthermore, this effect has been found in both stranger (Hammock & Richardson, 1997; Johnson, Jackson, Gatto, & Nowak, 1995; Schutte & Hosch, 1997) and acquaintance rape cases (Fischer, 1991, 1997; Jimenez & Abreu, 2003).

However, some studies have found the reverse effect of gender differences in victim blaming if the victim was described as having consumed alcohol. In one study that investigated the influence of the victim’s consumption of alcohol on perceptions of stranger and acquaintance rape, Scronce and Corcoran (1995) found that female participants were more likely to blame the victim if she had consumed alcohol prior to the assault. In another study by Stormo et al. (1997) in which the level of victim and perpetrator intoxication was varied, participants assigned more responsibility and blame to victims if the victim was described as moderately or highly intoxicated than when she consumed a soft drink or a non-intoxicating dose of alcohol when both members of the couple were portrayed as equally intoxicated, but female participants showed a greater tendency to blame the victim than male participants.

Not all studies have found this effect. One study of the effects of victim substance use and relationship closeness found that female participants perceived the victim as more credible than male participants regardless of the victim’s substance use history (Wenger & Bornstein, 2006). However, these researchers note that given the relatively small number of male participants included in this study there may not have

been adequate power to detect the interaction between substance use conditions and participant gender. Overall, existing literature on the interactional effects of victim alcohol consumption and participant gender appear to be more supportive of the hypothesis that female participants will be more likely to blame victims of sexual assault than male participants if alcohol is consumed by the victim.

Summary. In summation, although numerous studies have been conducted that support the view that altering the ethnicity of sexual assault victims may differentially affect how participants perceive them, only one study (Pfeifer & Ogloff, 2003) was found that compared participants' perceptions of Aboriginal assault victims to English and French assault victims. Furthermore, this study is limited in that it only asked participants to rate the defendant's guilt and the personality traits of the victim as being either attractive or unattractive, honest or dishonest, or responsible or irresponsible. It does not directly address the issue of victim blaming, nor does it include an analysis of possible participant gender effects. Given the lack of research in this area, a notable gap in the literature has been identified.

Although a review of the sexual assault literature and the effects of alcohol on perceptions of victims suggests that alcohol consumption is linked to victim blaming, once again no research was found that investigated if this effect is present if the victim is Aboriginal. While most of the literature reviewed supports a link between greater victim blaming within the context of acquaintance rape as opposed to stranger rape, once again no research was found that investigated if this effect is present if the victim is Aboriginal.

Finally, while the sexual assault literature supports the existence of sex differences in perceptions of victims, no research was found that investigated if this effect

is found if the victim is portrayed as Aboriginal. Neither has previous research investigated participant gender effect on the interaction between race of the victim and alcohol consumption.

This study makes a number of contributions to existing research. It not only sought to compare how Aboriginal women victims are perceived in comparison to Caucasian women victims, but it also investigated the role of alcohol consumption and participant gender on participants' perceptions of both Aboriginal and Caucasian victims, and possible interactions between these variables.

The Present Study

The purpose of the present study was to empirically investigate whether or not participants perceive and respond to victims of a sexual assault differently depending on the victim's and perpetrator's race (specifically Aboriginal and Caucasian comparisons) and whether the victim has consumed alcohol. The effect of participant gender was also investigated. The effects of these four independent variables (i.e., the victim's and perpetrator's race, alcohol consumption, and gender of study participants) on the level of victim minimization, victim blaming, identification with the victim, feelings of anger and pity, behavioral tendencies to protest, and the desired length of penalty for the perpetrator were examined. A complete list of hypotheses for this study can be found in Table 1.

In terms of main effects, it was hypothesized that when the victim is an Aboriginal woman as opposed to a Caucasian woman, participants would report a greater tendency towards victim minimization, a greater tendency towards victim blaming, less identification with the victim, less feelings of anger and pity, less of a tendency to protest, and less of a desire to punish the perpetrator. This hypothesis was based on research on

Table 1

Hypothesis Table

Independent	
Variable(s)	Hypothesis
1. Main Effects	
Race of Victim (RV)	Aboriginal victims will receive less pro-victim responses than Caucasian victims.
Race of Perpetrator (RP)	None.
Alcohol Consumption (AC)	Victims that consume alcohol will receive less pro-victim responses than those who do not.
Participant Gender (PG)	Male participants will endorse pro-victim responses less than female participants.
2. 2-Way Interactions	
RV x RP	Victims of interracial rape will receive less pro-victim responses than victims of intraracial rape.
RV x AC	Aboriginal victims who consume alcohol will receive less pro-victim responses than Caucasian victims who consume alcohol.
RV x PG	None.

Hypothesis Table (continued)

Independent	
Variable(s)	Hypothesis
RP x AC	None.
RP x PG	None.
AC x PG	Female participants will endorse pro-victim statements less than male participants if the victim has consumed alcohol.
3. 3-Way Interactions	
RV x RP x AC	Aboriginal victims who consumed alcohol and were assaulted by Caucasian perpetrators will receive the least pro-victim responses.
RV x RP x PG	None.
RP x AC x PG	None.
4. 4-Way Interactions	
RV x RP x AC x PG	None.

previous research by Pfefer and Ogloff (2003) that found that participants were significantly more likely to rate the defendant in a sexual assault case as more guilty if the victim was portrayed as English or French Canadian as opposed to Native Canadian when the race of the defendant was held constant which suggests that Aboriginal victims of sexual assault may be perceived in less pro-victim ways. Supporting arguments for this hypothesis are also grounded in such theories such as intersectionality (Bograd, 2005; Crenshaw, 1994; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005), social justice theory (Deutch 1974; 1984), system justification theory (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004), self-categorization theory (Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Turner, 1987), moral disengagement (Bandura, 1990), moral exclusion (Opotow, 1990) and inhumanization (Leyens et al., 2000, 2003).

No main effect of perpetrator race was hypothesized based on previous research that studied interracial rapes in both African American/ Caucasian American rape scenarios (George & Martinez, 2002; Willis, 1992) and Latino/a and Caucasian American rape scenarios (Jimenez & Abreu, 2002) that found that altering the race of the perpetrator did not affect how participants perceived victims.

It was also hypothesized that when the victim has consumed alcohol as opposed to none, participants would report a greater tendency towards victim minimization, a greater tendency towards victim blaming, less identification with the victim, less feelings of anger and pity, less of a tendency to protest, and less of a desire to punish the perpetrator. This hypothesis was based on previous literature that suggests that rape victims who consume alcohol prior to the assault are more likely to be deemed responsible for the attack than victims who do not consume alcohol (Hammock & Richardson, 1997; Richardson & Campbell, 1982; Scronce & Corcoran, 1991; Wenger &

Bornstein, 2006), particularly if the level of intoxication is clearly defined (Stormo et al, 1990) and no description of the victim's resistance is given (Norris & Cubbins, 1992).

It was further hypothesized that there would be a main effect of gender with male participants as opposed to female participants reporting a greater tendency towards victim minimization, a greater tendency towards victim blaming, less identification with the victim, less feelings of anger and pity, less of a tendency to protest, and less of a desire to punish the perpetrator. This hypothesis was based on previous research that found that participant gender is a strong predictor of how rape victims will be perceived with women generally tending to be more sympathetic to rape victims than men (Fischer, 1991, 1997; George & Martinez, 2002; Hammock & Richardson 1997; Jimenez & Abreu, 2003, Pollard, 1992).

It terms of two way interaction effects of the independent variables, it was hypothesized that participants would report a greater tendency towards victim minimization and victim blaming, less tendency to identify with the victim, less feelings of anger and pity, less tendency to protest, and less desire to punish the perpetrator in interracial rapes than in intraracial rapes. This hypothesis was based on research by George and Martinez (2002) that found that victims were blamed more if raped interracially in African American/Caucasian American rape scenarios. It has been speculated by these researchers that stereotype activation is more likely to occur in interracial rape scenarios.

It was also hypothesized that Aboriginal victims who consumed alcohol would be judged more harshly than Caucasian victims who consumed alcohol with participants reporting a greater tendency towards victim minimization and victim blaming, less

tendency to identify with the victim, less feelings of anger and pity, less tendency to protest and less desire to punish the perpetrator. This hypothesis was based on the premise that negative stereotypes in regards to Aboriginal Canadians and alcoholism are believed to exist (Voraaurer et al., 1998), that negative stereotypes in regards to Aboriginal women being promiscuous are believed to exist (Bird, 1999), and research that supports that alcohol consumption affects participants' perceptions of the degree to which someone is seen as sexually available and willing (George et al., 1997). Furthermore, the consumption of alcohol was hypothesized to act as a variable which creates a condition that will increase victim blaming. Research by Lodewijkx et al. (2005) found that when an act of violence was committed against a victim belonging to an ethnic minority, it was perceived to be more deserved and less senseless than a similar violent act directed against a non-ethnic minority victim only if the victim was seen to be in some way as blameworthy for the incident.

In term of interactional effects of participant gender, it was hypothesized that in the conditions where the victim was described as consuming alcohol, that female participants, as opposed to male participants, would report a greater tendency towards victim minimization, a greater tendency towards victim blaming, less identification with the victim, less feelings of anger and pity, less of a tendency to protest, and less of a desire to punish the perpetrator. This hypothesis was based on previous research by Scronce and Corcoran (1995) and Stormo et al. (1997) that both found that female participants were more likely to blame the victim if she had consumed alcohol prior to the assault.

No two way interactions between race of the victim and participant gender, race of perpetrator and alcohol consumption, and race of perpetrator and participant gender were hypothesized.

In terms of three way interactions, it was hypothesized that participants in the Aboriginal victim / Caucasian perpetrator / alcohol consumption condition would report the greatest tendency towards victim minimization, the greatest tendency towards victim blaming, the least identification with the victim, less feelings of anger and pity, the least tendency to protest, and the least desire to punish the perpetrator. This hypothesis is based on the premise that the victim in this situation may be perceived as being more sexually available given her choices to fraternize interracially while consuming alcohol.

Given the lack of any previous literature to substantiate the presence of interactions amongst race of victim by race of perpetrator by participant gender, race of victim by alcohol consumption by participant gender, race of perpetrator by alcohol consumption by participant gender, and race of victim by race of perpetrator by alcohol consumption by participant gender, no interactions were hypothesized.

Method

Participants

Participants were 336 students enrolled in Introduction to Psychology courses. Of the 336 students recruited, nine students opted out of the study, and one participant's questionnaire was removed from the results due to an overabundance of missing data, leaving 326 students who completed the study. The sample consisted of 143 males (43.9 %) and 183 females (56.1 %). Mean age of the 321 participants who reported their age was 20.0 years ($SD = 3.6$ years). Of the 325 participants who self reported their ethnic identification, 12 (3.7 %) identified themselves as Aboriginal, 53 (16.3%) as Asian, 16 (4.9%) as Black, 208 (63.8 %) as White, 24 (7.4%) as other, 7 (2.1%) as belonging to more than one of the groups listed, and 5 (1.5%) as belonging to more than of the groups listed with one of the groups being Aboriginal. Of the 314 participants who reported their household income, 34 (10.8%) reported a household income of less than or equal to \$15,000 per year, 26 (8.3%) between \$15,001 and \$30,000 per year, 73 (23.2%) between \$30,001 and \$60,000 per year, 75 (23.9%) between 60,001 and 90,000 per year, and 106 (33.8%) over \$90,000 per year. Two hundred and thirty-four participants reported that they were in their first year of university (71.8%), 59 were in their second year (18.1%), and only 33 (10%) of the students self reporting not being a first or second year student.

Measures

Demographic measure. Demographic data was collected from the participants including gender, age, ethnic identification, household income, and the number of years they have attended university. A copy of this measure is included in Appendix A.

Victim minimization. To measure victim minimization, participants were asked to rate their perceptions of the sexual interaction described in the vignette they read on a 7 point rating scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (a great extent) on a modified version (the original scale used a 1 to 10 scale) of the Rape-Supportive Attributions Scale (RSAS; Langhinrichsen-Rohling & Monson, 1998) that assesses the participant's minimization of the seriousness of the rape. The scale is composed of four questions (How violent do you feel this situation was? How psychologically damaged do you feel Crystal will be from this experience? To what degree were Joe's actions a violation of Crystal's rights? How certain are you that this incident would be considered rape?). For the last question the scale ranges from 1 (definitely not rape) to 7 (definitely rape). Total scores range from 7 to 28 on the modified scale used for this study. Lower scores on this scale are associated with a greater degree of minimization of the rape. The authors of this scale report an alpha reliability coefficient of .82. Other research using this scale has reported finding a comparable alpha reliability coefficient of .84 (Yamawaki, Darby, & Queiroz, 2007). The obtained alpha reliability for this study was .78.

Victim blaming. To measure victim blame, participants were asked to rate their perceptions of how much blame the victim deserves asking them two questions about how responsible the victim was for the incident and if the victim provoked the incident. These questions were taken from the Victim Blame Scale (VBS) originally created by Langhinrichsen-Rohling and Monson (1998). The original scale consists of four questions with an alpha reliability of .64. The shortened two-question version of this scale that was used in this study was used in a study by Yamawaki et al. (2007), who reported a much-improved alpha reliability coefficient of .82. The first question (How

much control did Crystal have in this situation?) in the original VBS scale was rated on a 0 (minimal) to 9 (maximal) scale and the second question (How obligated was Crystal to engage in sexual relations in this case?) was originally rated on a 0 (not at all) to 9 (a great extent) scale. The scale was further modified for this study in that participants were asked to rate their responses on 7-point Likert-type scales. Also, to increase the number of items in the measure, three additional items were added. The first of these items (To what extent do you believe Crystal can be blamed for the incident?) was taken from a study by Lodewijkx et al. (2005) and is considered to tap into the construct of victim blaming. This item is rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly blamed) to 7 (not blamed at all). The second additional item (Do you think Crystal did anything to encourage what happened?) was taken from a study by Szymanski, Devlin, Chrisler, and Vyse (1993) and is also considered to tap into the construct of victim blaming. For the purpose of this study it was modified from an 11-point scale to a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (definitely) to 7 (not at all). The last item (The choices Crystal made placed her in danger.) was created specifically for this study and was rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (definitely) to 7 (not at all). The obtained alpha reliability for this scale was .56. Further reliability testing determined that no combination of the different questions produced an acceptable alpha reliability. Therefore, it was decided to proceed by using only the scores for the question "To what extent do you believe Crystal can be blamed for the incident?" as this question appeared to have the greatest face validity. This item was rated on a 1 to 7 scale with lower scores associated with a greater degree of victim blaming.

Identification with the victim. To measure participants' identification with the victim a modified version of a scale consisting of three subscales developed by Lodewijx et al. (2005) were used. The first scale measured participants' global identification with the victim by asking participants to rate on a scale ranging from 1 (very strongly) to 7 (not at all) their response to the question "To what extent do you identify with Crystal?" The second scale also measured identification, but focused on measuring participants' level of personal identification with the victim. This scale uses a different scale that also ranges from 1 (very strongly agree) to 7 (do not agree at all) to rate participants' responses to two questions (I personally empathize with Crystal and I feel involved with the suffering of Crystal). The authors of the second scale report an alpha reliability coefficient of .78. To measure the construct of identification, the authors of these scales combined the items of these two scales plus a third scale on position identification (the construct of "that could be me") not included in this study. No alpha reliability coefficient was given for the overall identification scale. The obtained alpha reliability for this study was .61. No combination of the questions produced an acceptable alpha reliability for this measure. Therefore, it was decided to proceed by using only the scores for the question "To what extent do you identify with Crystal?" as this question appeared to have the greatest face validity. This item was rated on a 1 to 7 scale with lower scores associated with a greater degree of identification with the victim.

Feelings of anger and pity. To measure participants' feelings of anger, a modified version of a scale by van Zomeren and Lodewijx (2005) was used. This scale measures feelings of anger by asking participants to rate on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much) how much they agree with four items (When I read the newspaper article, I felt

angry/furious/displeased/powerless). The authors of this scale report a Cronbach's alpha of .90. The obtained alpha reliability for this study was .61. By removing the last question from the measure a new alpha reliability of .89 was obtained. Thus, the version of the scale used in this study was comprised of the first three items.

Pity was measured in a similar manner using a modified version of a scale also developed by van Zomeren and Lodewijkje (2005). This scale measures feelings of pity by asking participants to rate on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much) how much they agree with three items (When I read the newspaper article, I felt *pity/compassion/sorry* for the victim). The authors of this scale report an alpha reliability coefficient of .85. For the purposes of this study the questions were modified by replacing the phrase "newspaper article" with the word "story". The obtained alpha reliability for this study was .87.

Behavioral tendencies to protest. To measure participants' behavioral tendencies, a shortened version of a scale developed by van Zomeren and Lodewijkx (2005) was used. Only four of the original six items were deemed appropriate for this study. This scale measures behavioral tendencies by asking participants to rate on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much) how much they agree with four items (I would like to do something *as a signal of protest against society/to prevent something like this from happening again/to share my powerlessness with others and I would like to sign an on-line condolence register*). The authors of the original scale report an alpha reliability coefficient of .91. The obtained alpha reliability for this study was .84.

Desired length of penalty for the perpetrator. To measure participants' desire to see the perpetrator punished, participants were asked to rate how long a jail sentence they

feel the perpetrator should receive for his victimization of the victim. This question was based on a question from the Rape Responsibility Questionnaire (RRQ; Deitz., Littman., & Bentley, 1984) that was modified by Szymanski et al. (1993). This question (How much time do you think Joe should spend in prison?) was rated on a scale from 1 (no time at all) to 7 (more than 40 years). Higher scores reflect a greater desire to seek punishment for the perpetrator.

Design and Procedures

Eight different rape vignettes were created. The eight vignettes were similar in wording, but with each vignette representing a specific combination of three of the study's independent variables: race of victim, race of perpetrator, and alcohol consumption. Therefore, in four of the vignettes the victim was portrayed as Aboriginal and in the other four as Caucasian. Also, in four of the vignettes, the perpetrator was portrayed as Aboriginal in the other four as Caucasian. In four of the vignettes the victim was portrayed as having consumed alcohol and in the other four not. The vignettes, based on previous published vignettes by Stormo, Lang, and Strizke (1997), are as follows:

While attending a house party, Crystal meets Joe. Crystal is a 20-year-old *Aboriginal/Caucasian* female and Joe is a *Aboriginal/Caucasian* male in his mid-20s. Joe offers Crystal a *beer/soft drink* and the two strike up a conversation. *Crystal accepts the beer. She has previously consumed 5 beers throughout the course of the evening/Crystal accepts the soft drink.* After a while, Crystal announces that it is getting late and wishes to leave the party. Joe offers to give a Crystal a ride home so that she does not have to walk home. *Crystal is beginning to feel the effects of the alcohol that she has consumed and decides to accept*

Joe's offer rather than walk/Crystal accepts Joe's offer rather than walk. Upon arrival at Crystal's apartment, Joe asks if he can come in to use the washroom. Crystal agrees and lets Joe in to use the washroom. However, when Crystal tries to end the evening, Joe refuses to leave and ignores Crystal's verbal and physical resistance culminating in the couple having sexual intercourse despite Crystal's lack of consent.

These various combinations of the three independent variables in the vignettes, as well as the desire to probe for gender differences among the participants of the study, resulted in a 2 (race of victim) X 2 (race of perpetrator) X 2 (alcohol consumption) X 2 (participant gender) MANOVA design.

Participants in this study were recruited from the pool of students enrolled in Introductory Psychology courses at the University of Manitoba. To be eligible for this study all participants had to be Canadian citizens or have landed immigrant status. This exclusion criterion was considered necessary to ensure that participants had been sufficiently exposed to Canadian culture and Aboriginal people to have an informed opinion and for the sample to be more generalizable to the population of Canadian society. Of the 326 participants who completed the study, 212 completed the study in person and 114 completed the study via the internet using the on-line survey generating program Survey Monkey. It was decided to post the study on-line after several attempts to recruit the required number of participants proved unsuccessful. A copy of the online recruitment statement is included in Appendix B. Also, as the first year psychology pool recruiting deadline was drawing to a close, participants of both genders were recruited simultaneously, rather than separately as originally planned.

Participants who completed the study in person signed informed consent forms and were randomly assigned to each of the eight experimental conditions. Participants who were recruited online were randomly assigned to one of eight different survey created using Survey Monkey and e-mailed the appropriate Uniform Resource Locator (URL) site by the program. On-line participants indicated their informed consent by clicking on an icon at the bottom of the consent form.

In order to minimize biasing participants' perceptions, the study was labeled "Perceptions of Interpersonal Behaviour" in the sign-up description of this study.

Instructions to all participants read as follows:

Following is a short account of an interaction between two people. Please read the account and, after you have finished reading, complete all items on the questionnaire provided.

All participants were asked to complete a post-experimental questionnaire in response to the vignette presented to them. Copies of the questionnaires can be found in Appendix C and D. The average length of time the participants took to complete the entire study was to be between 10 and 15 minutes. After completion of the forms students were given a debriefing statement explaining the purpose of the study and how to contact the researcher for further information on the results of the study (Appendix D). In exchange for participating in this study, each student received 1 credit towards his or her required Psychology research participation credits.

Results

Data Screening. Prior to analysis, each separate question of the participant questionnaire was examined for out of range values, plausible means and standard deviations, univariate outliers, and missing data. Group mean substitution was used to replace missing data with cases when fewer than 5 values were missing. This resulted in the omission of one case due to an excessive number of missing data, leaving the final number of usable cases at 326. The mean cell size of the 16 cells was 20.38 ($SD = 2.92$) and ranged from 17 to 25.

A summary descriptive statistics for the dependent measures is provided in Table 2. For the victim minimization measure, possible scores ranged from 4 to 28, and actual scores ranged from nine to 28. The score mean score was 24.62 ($SD = 3.51$) and the median was 26. These scores indicated that the reported level of victim minimization was in the lower range of the scale (higher scores indicate lower levels of victim minimization) and suggests that a ceiling effect was present for this measure. Given the changes to the measure originally used by Langhinrichsen-Rohling and Monson (1998), a direct comparison of the mean score of the study to the original study is not possible, but a ceiling effect was not found in the Langhinrichsen-Rohling and Monson (1998) study.

In terms of the scores on the victim blaming measure, possible scores ranged from 1 to 7 and the actual range was from 1 to 7. The score mean score was 5.48 ($SD = 1.34$) and the median was 6. These scores indicated that the reported level of victim blaming in this study was in the lower range of the scale (higher scores indicate lower levels of victim blaming) and suggests that a ceiling effect was present for this study. Given the changes to the measure originally used by Langhinrichsen-Rohling and Monson (1998), a

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Alpha Reliability Coefficients of the Dependent

Variables (not transformed)

Dependent Reliability	Standard			Alpha
Variable Coefficient	Mean	Deviation	Median	
1. VM	24.62	3.51	26	.78
2. VB	5.48	1.34	6	-
3. ID	5.01	1.72	5	-
4. AN	14.15	4.67	15	.89
5. PI	16.18	4.04	17	.85
6. PR	16.24	5.70	16	.84
7. LP	4.27	1.49	4	-

Note. VM = Victim Minimization, VB = Victim Blaming, ID = Identification with the Victim, AN = Anger, PI = Pity, PR = Protest, LP = Length of Penalty.

direct comparison of the mean score of the study to the original study is not possible, but a ceiling effect was not found in the Langhinrichsen-Rohling and Monson (1998) study.

The possible scores of the identification with the victim measure also ranged from 1 to 7 and the actual range was from 1 to 7. The score mean score was 5.01 ($SD = 1.72$) and the median was 5. These scores indicated that the reported level of identification with the victim in this study was in the lower range of the scale (higher scores indicate lower levels of identification), but a ceiling effect was not present. Given the changes to the measure originally used by Lodewijkx et al. (2005), a direct comparison of the mean score of the study to the original study is not possible.

For the feelings of anger measure, possible scores ranged from 3 to 21, and the actual range was from 3 to 21. The score mean score was 14.15 ($SD = 4.67$) and the median was 15. These scores indicated that the reported level of anger in this study was in the higher range of the scale (higher scores indicate higher levels of anger) but does not suggest that a ceiling effect was present for this study. Given the changes to the measure originally used by van Zomeren and Lodewijkx (2005), a direct comparison of mean scores to the original study is not possible.

In terms of the scores on the feelings of pity measure, possible scores ranged from 3 to 21, and the actual range was from 3 to 21. The score mean score was 16.18 ($SD = 4.04$) and the median was 17. These scores indicated that the reported level of pity in this study was in the higher range of the scale (higher scores indicate higher levels of pity) but does not suggest that a ceiling effect was present for this study. In comparison to the measure originally used by van Zomeren and Lodewijkx (2005), they reported that the

mean score for pity was 5.11 ($SD = 1.45$), which converts to 15.33, a similar score to the one obtained in this study.

In terms of the scores on the behavioral tendency to protest measure, possible scores ranged from 4 to 28, and the actual range was from 4 to 28. The score mean score was 16.24 ($SD = 5.70$) and the median was 16. These scores indicated that the reported level of protest in this study was in the higher range of the scale (higher scores indicate higher levels of protest) but does not suggest that a ceiling effect was present for this study. Given the changes to the measure originally used by van Zomeren and Lodewijkx (2005), a direct comparison of mean scores to the original study is not possible.

In terms of the scores on the desired length of penalty for the perpetrator, possible scores ranged from 1 to 7, and the actual range was from 1 to 7. The score mean score was 4.27 ($SD = 1.49$) and the median was 4. These scores indicated that the level of length of penalty in present study was in the mid range. Given the changes to the measure originally used by Szymanski et al. (1993), a direct comparison of mean scores to the original study is not possible.

Preliminary analysis revealed a skewed negative distribution for five of the seven dependent variables: minimization, blaming, identification, anger, and pity. Therefore, transformations to induce normality of the distributions of the five variables were attempted. As formulas for computing transformed variables are computed for positive skewed data, a reverse-coding process known as reflection was applied to all five measures to reverse the skewness of the distributions. Logarithmic transformations and square root transformations were then performed on the five measures. Logarithmic transformations significantly decreased skewness for the measures of blaming and

identification. Logarithmic transformations did not decrease the skewness for the measures of minimization, anger, or pity. Square root transformations significantly decreased skewness for anger and pity, but not for minimization. Therefore the logarithmic transformations of blaming and identification, the square root transformations of anger and pity, and the original minimization variables were used in subsequent analyses.

To test for differences between the group of participants who participated in person versus the participants who participated on-line, ANOVAs were run on age, ethnic identification, gender, number of years in school, income, and the seven dependent variables. No significant differences were found on the variables of age, ethnic identification, gender, number of years in school, income, minimization, identification, anger, and length of penalty. Significant differences were found for blaming, pity, and protest, with participants that completed the study on-line reporting more victim blaming, less pity, and less desire to protest (see Table 3). To control for the differences found in the dependent variables due to recruitment method, it was decided to include in the study design recruitment method as a covariate in a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) design.

Correlations amongst the dependent variables were then examined to determine if any of the dependent variables were too highly correlated to include in the MANOVA. As shown in Table 4, no correlation exceeded .65. Based on Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) who advise against including two variables with a bivariate correlation of .70 or more in the same analysis, multicollinearity was not considered a problem.

Table 3

Analysis of Variance for Mode of Participation

Variable	<u>Group 1</u>		<u>Group 2</u>		<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
1. Age	20.24	(4.21)	19.46	(2.09)	1, 320	3.312	.070
2. Ethnicity	3.61	(1.19)	3.81	(0.92)	1, 323	2.328	.128
3. Income	3.61	(1.26)	3.62	(1.41)	1, 313	.000	.989
4. School Year	1.48	(0.89)	1.37	(0.73)	1, 325	1.221	.270
5. Gender	1.56	(0.50)	1.56	(0.50)	1, 325	.000	.999
6. VM	24.85	(3.22)	24.20	(3.98)	1, 325	2.562	.110
7. VB	5.68	(1.07)	5.11	(1.68)	1, 325	5.952	.015
8. ID	5.08	(1.68)	4.89	(1.81)	1, 325	.380	.538
9. AN	14.29	(4.69)	13.89	(4.66)	1, 325	.590	.443
10. PI	16.53	(3.99)	15.52	(4.06)	1, 325	5.255	.023
11. PR	16.82	(5.44)	15.15	(6.02)	1, 325	6.523	.011
12. LP	4.34	(1.52)	4.15	(1.44)	1, 325	1.192	.276

Note. VM = Victim Minimization, VB = Victim Blaming, ID = Identification with the Victim, AN = Anger, PI = Pity, PR = Protest, LP = Length of Penalty.

Table 4

Pearson Correlations for the Seven Dependent Variables

DV	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. VM	-						
2. VB	-.326**	-					
3. ID	-.120*	.077	-				
4. AN	-.387**	-.323**	-.053	-			
5. PI	-.520**	.414**	.081	.647**	-		
6. PR	.292**	-.249**	.101	-.541**	-.531**	-	
7. LP	.394**	-.165**	-.030	-.402**	-.371**	.350**	-

Note. MN = Minimization of Victim, VB = Victim Blaming (reflected logarithmic transformation), ID = Identification with the Victim (reflected logarithmic transformation), AN = Anger (reflected square root transformation), PI = Pity (reflected square root transformation), PR = Protest, LP = Length of Penalty.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Tests of Hypotheses. A 2 (race of victim) X 2 (race of perpetrator) X 2 (alcohol consumption) X 2 (participant gender) multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was performed on the seven different dependent variables: victim minimization, victim blaming, identification with the victim, feelings of anger and pity, desire to protest, and length of penalty. Method of completing the study (in person vs. on-line) was the covariate variable. The overall probability alpha for the MANCOVA and subsequent separate ANCOVAs to probe any significant effects was set at .05.

A check for homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices revealed no significant results for either the Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices or the Levine's Test of Equality of Error Variances.

This omnibus test produced two statistically significant multivariate effects. A main effect for participant gender, Wilks' Lambda = .877, $F(7, 303) = 6.057$, $p = .000$, partial eta squared = .123 was found. A three-way interaction between race of victim and race of perpetrator and alcohol consumption, Wilks' Lambda = .954, $F(7, 303) = 2.069$, $p = .047$, partial eta squared = .046 was also found.

Follow-up analysis of covariance (ANCOVAs) demonstrated statistically significant differences for the main effect of participant gender on minimization, $F(1, 309) = 7.627$, $p = .006$, partial eta squared = .024, victim blaming, $F(1, 309) = 4.977$, $p = .026$, partial eta squared = .016, feelings of anger, $F(1, 309) = 20.675$, $p = .000$, partial eta squared = .063, feelings of pity, $F(1, 309) = 31.965$, $p = .000$, partial eta squared = .094, tendency to protest, $F(1, 309) = 31.096$, $p = .000$, partial eta squared = .091, and length of penalty, $F(1, 309) = 7.730$, $p = .006$, partial eta squared = .024. Scores indicated that males as opposed to females were more minimizing of the victim's experience, more

blaming of the victim, reported less anger, less pity, less tendency to protest, and recommended a shorter length of penalty for the perpetrator. There was no main effect of gender on identification with the victim. These results, along with means and standard deviations of the dependent variables can be found in Table 5.

Follow-up univariate analyses of variance for the three-way interaction between race of victim by race of perpetrator by alcohol consumption demonstrated no statistically significant differences. It had been hypothesized that the Aboriginal victim by Caucasian perpetrator by alcohol consumed condition would be the least pro-victim condition, but with no significant differences being found, no support for this hypothesis was found.

To investigate this interaction further, a second MANCOVA was performed that collapsed race of victim and race of perpetrator into one variable with four levels of sexual assault racial composition. These levels were: Aboriginal victim and Aboriginal perpetrator, Aboriginal victim and Caucasian perpetrator, Caucasian victim and Aboriginal perpetrator, and Caucasian victim and Caucasian perpetrator. In this analysis both method of participation and gender were designated as a covariates to explore the hypothesis that the racial composition of the rape scenario and the presence or absence of alcohol consumption would interact. Results of this MANCOVA did not reveal any significant main effect of racial composition of the rape, but did reveal a significant two way effect for type of rape and alcohol consumption, Wilks' Lambda = .888, $F(21, 899.703) = 1.794$, $p = .016$, partial eta squared = .039. Follow up univariate analyses of variance for this interaction revealed a significant result for the dependent variable of tendency to protest, $F(3, 316) = 4.403$, $p = .006$, partial eta squared = .038. These results indicate that participants were generally more likely to protest the occurrence of the rape

Table 5

The Effect of Gender on the Dependent Variables

Dependent	<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>		$F(1, 309)$	p
Variable	M	SD	M	SD		
1. MN	24.03	(3.58)	25.09	(3.40)	7.63	.01
2. VB	5.29	(1.41)	5.62	(1.27)	4.98	.03
3. ID	5.04	(1.57)	4.98	(1.84)	0.18	.67
4. AN	12.83	(4.85)	15.17	(4.27)	20.68	.00
5. PI	14.82	(4.31)	17.23	(3.47)	31.97	.00
6. PR	14.40	(5.49)	17.68	(5.45)	31.10	.00
7. LP	4.02	(1.56)	4.47	(1.41)	7.73	.01

Note. MN = Minimization of Victim, VB = Victim Blaming, ID = Identification with the Victim, AN = Anger, PI = Pity, PR = Protest, LP = Length of Penalty (Means and Standard Deviations have been converted back to their original form).

if alcohol had not been consumed by the victim with the exception if the victim was portrayed as Caucasian and the perpetrator as Aboriginal (see Table 6 and Figure 1). This finding contradicts the hypothesis that the Aboriginal victim by Caucasian perpetrator by alcohol consumed condition would be the least pro-victim condition. A complete list of the hypotheses and the results of each hypothesis can be found in Table 7.

Table 6

The Effect of the Interaction between Racial Compositions of the Sexual Assault Scenario and Alcohol Consumption on Desire to Protest the Victimization of the Victim.

Racial Composition of the Rape	<u>Alcohol</u>		<u>No Alcohol</u>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Aboriginal Victim x Aboriginal Perpetrator	15.83	(5.88)	16.38	(4.65)
2. Aboriginal Victim x Caucasian Perpetrator	16.00	(5.88)	17.35	(5.83)
3. Caucasian Victim x Aboriginal Perpetrator	17.33	(5.47)	14.34	(5.72)
4. Caucasian Victim x Caucasian Perpetrator	15.09	(6.00)	17.52	(5.70)

Figure Caption

Figure 1. The effect of perpetrator's race, race of victim, and consumption of alcohol on desire to protest the victimization of the victim.



Table 7

Hypothesis Table 2

Independent		
Variable(s)	Hypothesis	Result
1. Main Effects		
Race of Victim (RV)	Aboriginal victims will receive less pro-victim responses than Caucasian victims.	Not Supported
Alcohol Consumption (AC)	Victims that consume alcohol will receive less pro-victim responses than those who do not.	Not supported
Participant Gender (PG)	Male participants will endorse pro-victim responses less than female participants.	Supported for victim minimization, victim blaming, anger, pity, protest and length of penalty.
2. 2-Way Interactions		
RV x Race of Perpetrator (RP)	Victims of interracial rape will receive less pro-victim responses than victims of intraracial rape.	Not Supported

Hypothesis Table 2 (continued)

Independent		
Variable(s)	Hypothesis	
RV x AC	Aboriginal victims who consume alcohol will receive less pro-victim responses than Caucasian victims who consume alcohol.	Not Supported
AC x PG	Female participants will endorse pro-victim statements less than male participants if the victim has consumed alcohol.	Not supported
3. 3-Way Interactions		
RV x RP x AC	Aboriginal victims who consumed alcohol and were assaulted by Caucasian perpetrators will receive the least pro-victim responses.	Not supported, Caucasian victims who did not consume alcohol and were assaulted by an Aboriginal perpetrator received the least protest

Discussion

In terms of the hypothesized main effects, no main effects were found for race of victim or alcohol consumption. However, a main effect of gender was found on six of the seven dependent variables. The direction of the mean rating scores supports the hypotheses that males as opposed to females would be more minimizing of the victim's experience, more blaming of the victim, report less anger, less pity, less tendency to protest, and desiring less length of penalty for the perpetrator. However, the hypothesized main effect of gender on victim identification was not found.

The lack of results to support a main effect for the hypothesis that participants would respond differently to sexual assault victims depending on the race of victim was surprising given the previous literature on race and sexual assault. Pfeifer and Ogloff's (2003) had noted that in their study that the Aboriginal victim of a sexual assault was seen as less attractive, less honest, and more irresponsible than either English or French Canadian victims. Other studies that examined the effect of victim race comparing African American victims to Caucasian victims (Varley & Foley, 1998; Willis 1992) also supported the hypothesis that non-Caucasian victims would be blamed more than Caucasian victims.

The findings of this study do not support theoretical arguments that racial prejudice or the activation of racial stereotypes play a role in how participants respond to sexual assault victims. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution given the design of this study. This study is a vignette study, and while vignette studies have typically been employed in studying participants' reactions to rape victims, Jimenez and Abrea (2003) have argued that vignette studies "may not accurately assess the true

attitudinal perceptions of participants” (p. 255). They go on to caution that the findings of vignette studies need to be interpreted accordingly due to the possibility of the effect of social bias on responses to the self-report measures used in this type of study.

This position that study designs that rely on self report measures may not be the best method to study prejudice is supported by Dovidio (2001). His research has found that there may be conflict between the denial of personal prejudice and underlying unconscious negative feelings and beliefs that are not captured in traditional self report measures of overt attitudes. He supports that implicit racial attitudes and stereotypes are best measured using response latency procedures, memory tasks, physiological measures, and indirect self measures. While the present study did measure behavioral tendency for participants to protest, it did not measure any actual behavioral differences, and the results may have differed if participants’ actual responses had been measured. For example, participants could be asked to sign a mock on line condolence register rather than rate their willingness to do so on a self report measure.

The findings of this study that participants who completed the study in-person as opposed to on-line reported more victim blaming, less feelings of pity, and less desire to protest does suggest that social bias may have played a factor in participants’ self-reported responses. It has been speculated that Web surveys increase the social distance between the researcher and the participant and therefore reduce social desirability effects (Holbrook, Green, & Krosnick, 2003). In a comparison of the two different data collecting methodologies, Heerwegh (2009) found that administering face to face interviews as opposed to an on-line survey mode generated more socially desirable results. The fact that differences were found in three of the seven dependent measures

indicates that social bias may have played a role in how participant responded due to the presence of the investigator in the in-person mode as opposed to on-line mode. It highlights that in terms of victim blaming, feelings of pity, and desire to protest that participants in this study may have felt uncomfortable reporting their true feelings. This suggests the need for other methods of investigating responses to Aboriginal female victims of violence that do not require self reporting to reduce social desirability effects and capture true responses.

The lack of results to support the hypothesis that participants would respond differently to sexual assault victims depending on whether the victim consumed alcohol or not was also surprising based on previous literature. Several studies have previously found that rape victims who consume alcohol prior to the assault are more likely to be deemed responsible for the attack than victims who do not consume alcohol (Hammock & Richardson, 1997; Richardson & Campbell, 1982; Scronce & Corcoran, 1991; Wenger & Bornstien, 2006).

One possible explanation for the lack of results found in this study may have been that the scenarios used in this study may have been written in a way that was not ambivalent enough about the fact that sexual intercourse occurred without the victim's consent. The scenarios were written this way due to the exploratory nature of this study to clearly identify the female in the scenarios as a victim, but perhaps a more ambivalently worded scenario that left the question more open to debate would have resulted in different results. This explanation is based on research by Dovidio and Gaertner (2000) that showed that in tests of making job candidate selections, participants were more likely to recommend White candidates than Black candidates only in the condition where the

candidates' qualifications for the position were less clear (Moderate Qualifications) as opposed to the other two conditions (Strong Qualifications and Weak Qualifications). Therefore if the vignette had been written in a way that implied more ambiguity as to whether consent was actually given, for example if the victim was stating consent was not given and the perpetrator stating consent was, perhaps the results would have been more as hypothesized. This explanation may explain the fact that consumption of alcohol had no main effect on victim blaming, even though this independent variable was specifically incorporated into the study to act as an opportunity to blame the victim.

A related methodological issue that may have affected the validity of the results is the presence of ceiling effects in some of the dependent variables. For example, five of the seven dependent variables in the study were negatively skewed and in particular the minimization measure and the victim blaming measure had medians very close to the upper range of their measure. This suggests that these two measures may not have been sensitive enough to capture group differences with smaller effect sizes amongst the various vignettes scenarios. Future research in this area would need to address this issue by developing measures of the dependent variables that are more sensitive to subtle differences in responses to the constructs as well as having established strong psychometric properties.

In terms of gender effects, the finding that male participants would respond to sexual assault victims with a greater tendency to minimize the victim's experience is in keeping with previous reported sexual assault literature (Pollard, 1992). In his review of the sexual assault literature, Pollard (1992) notes that female participants are more likely to perceive the victim as being more harmed by the assault than male participants. The

findings that male participants would respond to sexual assault victims with greater blaming of the victim (George & Martinez, 2002; Jimenez & Abreu, 2003; Pollard, 1992) and desire a shorter length of penalty for the perpetrator (Pollard, 1992) are also supported by previous literature. However, the finding that the participant's gender did not impact identification with the victim was unexpected and contradicts the findings of Szymanski et al. (1993) that found a significant gender difference in participant's self reported identification with a sexual assault victim ($p < .001$). Overall the levels of minimization reported by all participants in this study were low, while Szymanski et al. (1993) reported values in the upper and middle range of scale. This finding may be explained by the fact that different sexual assaults scenarios were used in the two studies. The findings that males reported less anger, pity and desire to protest represents new information as these constructs have not previously studied in the area of sexual assault. In conclusion, while male participants generally endorsed pro-victim responses in response to the sexual assault scenario, there were small but significant decreases in the levels of pro-victim responses made by male participants as opposed to female participants in six of the seven dependent variables.

The finding of this study that gender is an important variable in understanding responses to sexual assault victims supports the presence of a gender bias in this area. However, according to a recent review of key factors shaping attitudes to violence against women by Flood and Pease (2009), it is not gender per se, but gender orientations that shape men's and women's responses. This review found that while for men there was an association between traditional gender-role attitudes and greater acceptance of violence against women, this was not true for women. It also suggests the need for

interventions such as educational campaigns to address male adherence to sexist, patriarchal, and hostile attitudes towards women as a way of shaping more positive societal attitudes towards women who are victims of violence.

Given the fact that this study was conducted on a sample of university students, it is unclear if the results of this study can be generalized to members of Canadian society as a whole. According to Varelas and Foley (1998), "U.S. college students are less likely to be prejudiced and more likely to be educated about rape myths than the general public" (p. 399). This assertion is supported by Dovidio (2001) who concurs that college students are generally more liberal than the public at large.

Furthermore, participants in this study represented a restricted age range ($M = 20.0$, $S.D. = 3.6$). According to Statistics Canada (2009), Canadians falling into the 15 to 24 age category represents only 13.7% of Canadians. Also, while results of the 2006 Canadian Census approximate the percentage of visible minorities in Canada as less than 16% (Statistics Canada, 2006), the percentage of participants in this study self-reporting as visible minorities is estimated at being between 21.2% and 28.6 %. It is possible that the results of this study would have been quite different if conducted on a sample more reflective of the Canadian population and are not generalizable to non-college populations.

None of the hypothesized two way interactions that were hypothesized were supported by the results of the study. The first of these hypotheses, that victims of interracial rapes would elicit lower levels of pro-victim responses in comparison to victims of intraracial rapes, was not supported. This was surprising given previous research on African /Caucasian American sexual assault literature that found that victims,

whether African American or Caucasian American, of interracial rapes were blamed more (George & Martinez, 2002; Willis, 1992). The findings of this study suggest that interracial sexual assaults between Caucasian/African American are not comparable to interracial sexual assaults between Aboriginal/Caucasian Canadians.

The hypothesis that Aboriginal victims who consumed alcohol would elicit lower levels of pro-victim responses was also not supported. This suggests that negative stereotypes surrounding Aboriginal Peoples and the use of alcohol (Vorauner, et al., 1998) and sexual promiscuity (Bird, 1999) were not activated via the self-categorization process (Turner, 1987) in the participants. Again, this finding may be attributable to the lack of ambiguity in the study about the victim's lack of consent.

The hypothesis that alcohol consumption would interact with the gender of the participant with females reporting lower levels of pro-victim responses than males if the victim had consumed alcohol was not supported. This may have been due to the fact that alcohol consumption as an independent variable did not have a main effect in the study and did not act to create a blaming opportunity condition.

In terms of the significant three way interaction between race of victim by race of perpetrator by alcohol consumption that was found in the MANCOVA, but not found in any of the separate ANCOVAs, the finding suggests that it is only when the dependent variables were considered in combination that this effect was actually found. This finding can be explained by the fact that a MANCOVA can occasionally be more powerful than a separate ANCOVA (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Furthermore, the follow up MANCOVA that was performed appeared to support the validity of this interaction in that it also found a significant interaction between the

racial composition of the rape scenario and the consumption of alcohol. The separate ANCOVAs showed support for this interaction on only one of the seven dependent variables: desire to protest the victimization of the victim. However, the direction of the mean rating scores did not support the study's hypothesis that an Aboriginal victim who had consumed alcohol and was sexually assaulted by a Caucasian perpetrator would be the condition that would elicit the least pro-victim tendencies. Instead it was the condition where a Caucasian victim who had not consumed any alcohol and was raped by an Aboriginal perpetrator that elicited the least pro-victim responses. This result was not expected and appears to reflect greater apathy towards Caucasian victims of sexual assault who chose to fraternize with Aboriginal men when sober.

It appears that participants felt that the victim in this scenario was seen as acting under such conditions as to not create as great a societal concern as the other scenarios and less deserving of public outcry and/or protest. George and Martinez (2002) have suggested a number of possible explanations for this result. One rationale is that Caucasian women who fraternize with non-Caucasian men may be seen as less reputable than other Caucasian women. Also, the salience of race may make gender roles more pronounced with sexual scripts that women should act as sexual gatekeepers being more pronounced. A Caucasian woman who chooses to interact with a non-Caucasian male may be seen as more adventuresome, daring, and unconventional and therefore also seen as practicing more free will in her choices and more blame worthy. By choosing to interact with an Aboriginal male, the Caucasian victim may be seen as violating societal norms as to who is considered an appropriate escort given the presence of racist stereotypes that portray Aboriginal males as "violent" and "savage" (LaRocque, 1994).

As the Caucasian victim in the study who was interracially raped and consumed alcohol elicited a greater tendency within participants to protest it may be that this victim was seen as less responsible for her choice given her state of inebriation. This finding suggests the possibility of a racist/sexist response to Caucasian women who chose to fraternize with Aboriginal men of their own volition. However, given the lack of direct research to support this stance, the reason(s) for this finding remain speculative.

Given the overall lack of significant findings in this study, this study does not provide support for the hypothesis that Aboriginal female victims of violence are perceived and responded to in ways different than Caucasian female victims. This lack of findings is surprising giving a recent qualitative study that found that for Aboriginal victims of sexual violence, race is a key determinant in the manner in which a victim will be perceived by the justice system (Dylan et al., 2008). It may be that there are differences in how structural organizations such as the justice system respond to Aboriginal victims as opposed to the general public. However, it may be that this exploratory study failed to tap into constructs that give a more accurate measure of Canadians' responses to Aboriginal women who experience violence or that the design of the study or the sample used were not able to detect the complexities of the role that race of the victim plays in attitudes towards victims of sexual assault..

Theoretical Implications

Given the significant gender effects with males reporting less pro-victim tendencies than female, this study does support feminist theory that sexist ideology in males still impacts beliefs about victims of sexual assault. This suggests the need for anti-

sexist interventions such as sensitivity and awareness training, as well as sexual assault prevention programs (Sapp et al., 1999).

In terms of theoretical implications, the lack of results found in this study does not provide support for the theories of social justice theory, system justification theory, self-categorization theory, moral disengagement, moral exclusion, or inhumanization. Although it had been hypothesized that ethnicity of the victim would affect participants' responses to the victim, no effect was found. Therefore there is no evidence to indicate that participants in the Aboriginal victim condition experienced any activation of negative stereotypes surrounding Aboriginal women or that participants saw the Aboriginal victim as belonging to an out-group different from their own group, or less human than Caucasian victims.

However, the findings of this study should not be viewed as a contradiction of previous research conducted on how people view victims of violent crime. For example, Loewijkx et al. (2005) noted that in their research that it was only when the participants were given an opportunity to blame the victim that ethnicity had an effect on victim blaming and desired length of penalty for the perpetrator. Loewijkx et al. (2005) interpreted this finding as support for the belief in a just world theory. It is possible that the study's lack of findings may be related to the failure of the consumption of alcohol by the victim to be seen by participants as a viable opportunity to blame the victim rather than as a contradiction of the theoretical arguments made by Loewijkx et al. (2005).

Further Research

Recommendations for further research include studying the issue of societal apathy towards Aboriginal women who experience violence using a sample that is more reflective of the Canadian population and using experimental techniques that control more for self report bias. For example, sampling should include participants with a greater range of educational levels and age. Future research would also benefit from using a sample that is more representative of Canada's present ethnic composition. Future research may also benefit from using such techniques as on-line data collection and measure responses using more behavioral techniques such as people's willingness to actually go line to sign a petition against violence against Aboriginal women or sign up to volunteer some of their time to fund raise for this issue.

Studies conducting research in this area should also be conducted on other forms of violence. This study focused on sexual assault only and it is not clear whether people's reactions to Aboriginal women who experience sexual assault are generalizable to other types of violence such as murder, domestic assault, etc., that Aboriginal women experience.

It is also recommended that given the findings of this study that participants reported less tendency to protest sexual assault when the victim was portrayed as both Caucasian and as not consuming alcohol, and the perpetrator was portrayed as Aboriginal, more research be conducted on how victims and perpetrators of sexual assault are perceived under these circumstances. This type of research may lead to the development of more complex models that account for these differences in perceptions. This research could include studying archival research on actual sexual assault trial outcomes as well people's behavioral responses to both victims and perpetrators under these conditions.

The possibility that this particular combination of factors in the context of sexual assaults induces a unique bias in how Caucasian victims and/or Aboriginal perpetrators are perceived merits further study.

Conclusions

It was hoped that this study would further our understanding of how Canadians perceive and respond to Aboriginal women victims of sexual assault. According to Flood and Pease (2009) attitudes towards violence against women are linked to the perpetration of violence, the victim's response to violence, and the community's response. These researchers note that societal attitudes "shape the formal responses of professional and institutions to the victims and perpetrators of violence against women, including police officers, judges, priests, social workers, doctors, and so on" (p. 127). By learning more about people's perceptions and responses, it was hoped that information would be gained to aid in addressing the issue of "casual indifference" that many people feel surround the issue of violence towards Aboriginal women.

For example, if Canadians in general are not apathetic to the plight of Aboriginal women who experience violence, this suggests that the development of a grassroots movement to demand the equal treatment of Aboriginal women by the justice system, rather than perpetuate what has been referred to by Dylan et al. (2008) as the "second assault" on Aboriginal victims by the justice system and particularly by police is possible. If, on the other hand, Canadians are apathetic to the plight of Aboriginal women who experience violence, it suggests that action of some kind should be taken to raise Canadians' consciousness of the effects of this societal apathy as a first step towards alleviating this problem. Unfortunately, the results of this study are not conclusive and

further research is needed to evaluate further this issue before a course of action can be appropriately developed.

It is hoped further research in this area will lead to greater support for the development of more culturally competent treatment services for both Aboriginal victims and perpetrators that specifically address issues that pertain to this population. According to Sue and Sue (1999), cultural competence underscores the recognition of clients' cultures and uses this knowledge to develop effective treatment. Johnson and Cameron (2001) have noted that it can be difficult for Aboriginal people to find and access culturally competent treatment. For example, one recent study that spoke to Aboriginal women who had had been victims of sexual assault noted that while participants generally described their involvement with therapists and advocates in positive terms, there was a noticeable absence of discussion of race issues (Dylan et al., 2008). Lack of knowledge about societal attitudes that shape the experiences of Aboriginal women who have experienced violence limits the development of effective culturally competent therapeutic responses.

The absence of culturally competent treatments may detract from the healing process as it has been noted that it is a common belief amongst Aboriginal peoples that current problems are connected to past and contemporary traumas and therefore should be addressed within this context. For this reason it had been suggested that that the development of Aboriginal therapy models should be derived from the Aboriginal culture itself rather than reworking current mainstream therapeutic models to include Aboriginal content (McCabe, 2007). One reason for this is that mainstream therapeutic models are thought to ignore important aspects of healing that have been identified by Aboriginal

peoples. Hunter, Logan, Goulet, and Barton (2006) noted in their study on Aboriginal healing the importance of following a cultural path that includes a regaining of culture stating “in grief and through trauma, participants learned to rely on traditional teachings for strength. Many diverse traditional ceremonies were mentioned, ranging from drumming, talking circles, sweat lodges, the sacred pipe, stories, healers, and smudging”(p. 17). This stance has been supported by research by Chandler and Lalonde (1998) that found that efforts to reestablish the continuity of cultural transmission through securing or attempting to secure self-government, title to traditional lands, control of educational, health, police and fire services and establishment of cultural facilities were predictive of decreased rates of suicide amongst Aboriginal youth in British Columbia.

Researchers have also noted that in Aboriginal healing models, healing is seen as going beyond an individual process to include family, community, and global processes (Hunter et al., 2006). Therefore, it is important to learn more about how society perceives and responds to Aboriginal violence as these beliefs may impact both the victim’s and the perpetrator’s healing process. Furthermore, Hunter et al. (2007) have noted in their model of holistic healing the importance of the concept of balance. Balance is seen as consisting of spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical aspects which are all of equal strength, energy, and power. Regaining balance is seen as an important aspect of health and sharing with people that can be trusted is seen as empowering. However, Bohn (2003) has noted that it is often difficult for marginalized communities to address and speak out about issues that carry the stigma of violence, as doing so may feel like reinforcement of negative stereotypes. McGillivray and Comaskey (2000) have noted that this can lead to community denial of violence and to the normalization of intimate violence in isolated

Aboriginal communities, complicating system response. Therefore, if this study is truly reflective of societal responses, it may indicate a societal willingness to respond to Aboriginal women who have been victimized with the empathy and respect they deserve, and ultimately support these women and their communities on their healing journey.

In conclusion, this study has many limitations and any conclusions drawn from this study need to be interpreted with extreme caution. However, this study has contributed to the existing research in this area in that it has highlighted the need for future research in the area of how society responds to Aboriginal women who have experienced violence. It also makes methodological recommendations for how to improve future research in this area. It revealed a significant participant gender effect on six of the seven dependent variables, suggesting the need for interventions surrounding attitudes related to gender and sexuality that condone violence towards women. It also revealed an unpredicted finding that suggests the need for further research on how Caucasian victims of sexual assault are perceived when the perpetrator is Aboriginal. It is hoped that future research will be able to provide more conclusive findings to evaluate whether “casual indifference” towards Aboriginal women exists.

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Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

The following information is being collected solely for the purpose of describing the characteristics of the group of people responding to this survey. Please provide your information and, where applicable, place an "x" next to the corresponding answer in the following categories:

1. Gender :

☐ Male
☐ Female

2. Age :

years.

3. Ethnic Identification (Check all that apply):

☐ Aboriginal
☐ Asian
☐ Black
☐ White
☐ Other (please specify) _____

4. Household Income per Year (If you live with your parents please include their income as well):

☐ Below \$15,000/year
☐ \$15,001 – \$30,000/year
☐ \$30,001 – \$60,000/year
☐ \$60,001 – \$90,000/year
☐ over \$90,000/year

5. How long have you been attending university?

☐ in 1st year
☐ in 2nd year
☐ in 3rd year
☐ in 4th year
☐ > 4 years

Appendix B

Online Recruitment Statement

1) Study name: Perceptions of Interpersonal Behaviour

2) Researcher's name, title, and contact information:

Judy Kienas, M.A.

e-mail: kienas@cc.umanitoba.ca,

telephone: 474-9349

3) Type of thesis and supervisor's name, title, and contact information:

This research is being conducted as part of a master's thesis in the Department of Psychology (Clinical Program) at the University of Manitoba under the supervision of

Dr. Diane Hiebert Murphy, PhD, C. Psych.

e-mail: hiebrt@cc.umanitoba.ca

telephone: 474-8283

4) Description of the study:

The purpose of this study is to ask university students about their perceptions and reactions to an incident that will be described in a short story. The story is about a man and a woman and includes a brief description of a sexual encounter that occurs without the woman's consent. After reading this story participants will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire that asks for some descriptive demographic data and a second questionnaire asking for his/her perceptions and reactions to the story. The questions will ask participants for their personal opinions; therefore there are no right or wrong answers. It is anticipated that participation in this study will take less than 20 minutes. It is not anticipated that participants will experience any harmful effects of participating. To be eligible for this study participants must be Canadian citizens or have landed immigrant status. In exchange for participating in this study, each student will receive 1 credit towards his or her required Psychology research participation credits. If you wish to complete the survey online please sign up for a time slot that lists its location as online and a link to the study will be provided to you. Participants are not given the study URL until after they sign up. Note that the survey must be completed by the time listed in the time slot to receive credit for the study.

Appendix C

Participant Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions based on your personal opinion of the story you just read. There are no right or wrong answers and all your responses will be kept confidential. Please complete all the questions in this questionnaire. Please **circle the number** on the scale that best reflects your answer.

1. How violent do you feel this situation was?

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(not at all) (a great extent)

2. How psychologically damaged do you feel Crystal will be from this experience?

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(not at all) (a great extent)

3. To what degree were Joe's actions a violation of Crystal's rights?

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(not at all) (a great extent)

4. How certain are you that this incident would be considered rape?

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(definitely not rape) (definitely rape)

5. How much control did Crystal have in this situation?

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(minimal) (maximal)

6. How obligated was Crystal to engage in sexual relations in this case?

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(not at all) (a great extent)

7. To what extent do you believe Crystal can be blamed for the incident?

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(strongly blamed) (not blamed at all)

8. Do you think Crystal did anything to encourage what happened?

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(definitely) (not at all)

9. The choices Crystal made placed her in danger.

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(definitely) (not at all)

10. To what extent do you identify with Crystal?

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(very strongly) (not at all)

11. I personally empathize with Crystal.

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(very strongly agree) (do not agree at all)

12. I feel involved with the suffering of Crystal.

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(very strongly agree) (do not agree at all)

13. When I read the story, I felt angry.

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(not at all) (very much)

14. When I read the story, I felt furious.

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(not at all) (very much)

15. When I read the story, I felt displeased.

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(not at all) (very much)

16. When I read the story, I felt powerless.

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(not at all) (very much)

17. When I read the story, I felt pity for Crystal.

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(not at all) (very much)

18. When I read the story, I felt compassion for Crystal.

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(not at all) (very much)

19. When I read the story, I felt sorry for Crystal.

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(not at all) (very much)

20. I would like to do something as a signal of protest against society.

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(not at all) (very much)

21. I would like to do something to prevent something like this from happening again.

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(not at all) (very much)

22. I would like to do something/share my powerlessness with others.

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(not at all) (very much)

23. I would like to sign an on-line condolence register.

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(not at all) (very much)

24. How much time do you think Joe should spend in prison if any?

1----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5----- 6----- 7
(no time at all) (more than 40 years)

Appendix D

Debriefing Letter

Dear Participant:

Violence towards Aboriginal women constitutes a major societal problem in Canada today. Results of the 2004 General Social Survey (GSS) revealed that the rate of violence perpetrated against Aboriginal women was 3.5 times higher than the rate reported for Non-Aboriginal women in Canada. Also, the reported rate of homicide for Canadian Aboriginal women was more than 6 times higher than that reported for non-Aboriginal Canadian women (Brzozowshi, Taylor-Butts, & Johnson, 2006). Furthermore, Aboriginal women were approximately three and a half times more likely to report suffering from spousal violence in comparison to non-Aboriginal women and to report more severe forms of spousal abuse (54% of Aboriginal women compared with 37% of non-Aboriginal women) such as being beaten, choked, threatened with or had a gun or a knife used against them, or being sexually assaulted (Brzozowshi et al., 2006; Johnson, 2006).

Regardless of the statistical evidence supporting the magnitude of violence against Aboriginal women as an important social issue, there appears to be a general consensus that this issue has been for the most part received by society with what Hunter (2005), an expert on Aboriginal political issues, has termed "casual indifference". This has led to speculation that society in general responds differently to victims of violence if the victim is an Aboriginal woman as opposed to being a white woman.

The purpose of this study was to explore how participants' perceptions of a victim of violence may differ depending on different factors such as the race of the perpetrator (Aboriginal or White), the race of the victim (Aboriginal or White) and whether the victim had consumed alcohol or not. Therefore, the story that you read was only one story of a possible eight stories that were created to reflect different combinations of these factors. Participants' data from each of the eight different stories will be grouped together and analyzed for group differences. By studying how these factors effect or do not effect people's perceptions of victims of violence it hoped to gain a greater understanding of how to support all victims of violence.

The results of this analysis should be completed by February and the results of the study will be posted on a bulletin board outside of the Psychology Undergraduate Advisor's Office P410 in the Duff Roblin Building. Also, if you wish, you may contact the principal researcher at the e-mail address provided below to have a copy of the results of this study e-mailed directly to you.

Thank you once again for participating in this study.

Sincerely,
Judy Kienas