Sexual Assault Reporting Rates in Canada: An Exploration of Factors Involved in
Victims Reporting Decisions

By

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ABSTRACT

The following thesis considers the issue of reporting sexual victimization. The research asks: What factors contribute to a victim's decision not to report sexual assault to the police? The thesis utilizes the General Social Survey from 2009 examining data from those who reported being sexually assaulted between February of 2008 and February of 2009 (n=548). Crosstabulation analysis was run on the factors thought to influence decision making, against the reasons that people stated for not reporting their sexual assault to police. The perception of police bias by the victim, fear of revenge, and believing the incident was a personal matter were found to be significant in terms of the relationship to the offender as well as social networks. A multi-variate regression model was used in order to determine the odds ratios for a number of factors including the relationship of the offender, trust the victim has in family, whether or not they confided in social networks and their marital status. Results show that those who were assaulted by acquaintances or talked to medical personal were less likely to report, and those who were assaulted by family, talked to their families, or were married were more likely to report the assault. The findings of the study are consistent with the literature from the past thirty years in that victim blaming appears to still play a significant role in the decision to report to police or not. The research also indicates that social networks may play a critical role in the decisions of sexual assault victims, but ultimately concludes that this area is under researched and more research is needed.

Keywords: Sexual Assault, Rape, Sexual Violence, Violence Against Women.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In Canada, one in four women will be sexually assaulted, and 86% of all sexual assault victims are women and girls (Johnson 2012:613). Despite such prevalence, it is known that incidents of sexual assault are underreported within the criminal justice system (Kelly & Stermac 2008:31; Brennan & Taylor-Butts 2008:2). Studies estimate that between 1% and 16% of sexual assault victims report their crimes (Abel & Rouleau 1990; Kong et al. 2003:6; Besserer & Trainor 1999; Bolen & Scannapieco 1999; Fisher et al. 2003; Kelly & Stermac 2008).

Scholarly literature indicates that the decision to report any crime to authorities is a complex process for many victims. It is arguably more complex when that crime is sexual assault. Based on research over the past three decades, victims consider a number of factors before reporting to police, including: their gender; the circumstances of the incident; the environment; their age; the relationship they have to the perpetrator; and their perception of the justice system. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, there has been little change in reporting rates of sexual violence in the past three decades. Since the 1980s, reporting rates remain at approximately 10%. To this end, the question thus becomes: Why does underreporting continue?

Research indicates that victims of sexual assault are often scrutinized for promiscuity, dress, behaviour, and/or the company they keep (Belknap 2010; Amstadter et al. 2010; Gadalla & Suarez 2010; Weiss 2011). Victims are questioned about the precautions they took to ensure their safety (Lizotte 1985; Correia 2002; Weiss 2011);

with questions focusing on alcohol consumption; dressing modestly; and not walking alone at night (Weiss 2011). As a result of societal reinforcement, through the idea of rape myths, victims often believe that they are at fault for their assault. Research suggests that sexual assault goes unreported because of these societal attitudes and myths (Weiss 2011; Beattie et al. 2003; Bull & Sleath 2009; Kelly & Stermac 2008). A major theme for underreporting sexual assault is the notion of victim blaming, or responsibilization (Weiss 2011; Walker et al. 2005; Pino 1999; Mullaney 2007; Kelly & Stermac 2008; Graham 2006; Randall 2010). Victims report that they worry that others will blame them. As a result, they do not want family, friends, or other social actors (including the police), told of their victimization (Bachman 1998; Allen 2007; Weiss 2011; Cohen et al. 2013).

In this regard, the current study examines individual reasons that victims express for not reporting sexual assault to police, and the overarching social factors that contribute. Reporting sexual assault is a complicated process, and is more complex when it is considered that victims may have multiple reasons for not reporting to police. The goal of the thesis, therefore, is to further explore the factors that contribute to a victim's decision not to report sexual assault to the police. Using the 2009 victimization data from Statistics Canada, an analysis will be performed of the factors involved in the reporting decisions of sexual assault victims. The data will be analyzed using crosstabulation for exploratory purposes, and logistic regression for the main analysis. In order to develop a better understanding of the roles each factor plays in the decision process of victims reporting sexual assault.

1.2 BRIEF HISTORY OF SEXUAL ASSAULT LAW IN CANADA

Before delving into the issue of sexual assault, it is important to have a general understanding of sexual assault law in Canada. Since the research will explore why sexual assault victims do not report to the police (whom we know to be public servants within the criminal justice system), it is necessary to appreciate how sexual assault laws have developed over time. To this end, it is also important to discuss the way the criminal code has conceptualized sexual assault, and how that has led to the decision of exclusively using the term sexual assault instead of "rape."

The word "rape" no longer exists in the Canadian Criminal Code, and was instead replaced with a three-tier sexual assault model, when the laws were overhauled in 1983 (MacKinnon 1989; Kong et al. 2003). More specifically, under Bill C-127 sexual assault laws were divided into three distinct levels (labeled one through three). Additionally, spousal immunity was eliminated; as were resistance rules (evidence that the victim physically resisted the accused); and recent complaint rules (complaints had to be made promptly in order to establish 'credibility') (Kong et al. 2003; Ehrlich 2012). The law also stated that a victim's sexual history can not be presented in court as evidence of consent (this would become a legal issue for the next decade as courts struggled with the social mores that caused sexual history to be used in the first place) (Kong et al. 2003).

Level 1 Sexual Assault (Section 271 of the Criminal Code) is described as "an assault committed in circumstances of a sexual nature such that the sexual integrity of the victim is violated." Within level 1 sexual assault, physical injuries are either minor or not present at all (Kong et al. 2003:5). Level 2 Sexual Assault (Section 272 of the Criminal Code) includes sexual assault with a weapon; sexual assault while issuing threats; and sexual assault causing bodily harm. Finally, Sexual Assault Level 3 is characterized by

the victim being "wounded, maimed, disfigured, or having his or her life endangered"

(Kong et al. 2003:5). Both level's 2 and 3 come with minimum mandatory sentences of

four years in prison. Level 2 can result in a maximum 14 years imprisonment, and level 3

can result in a life sentence (Kong et al. 2003).

In a 1987 Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) decision (R.v. Chase), the courts

provided Canadians with a definition of sexual assault:

> Sexual assault does not focus solely on the part of the body part
> touched. It also deals with the nature of the contact, the situation
> in which it occurred, and the words and gestures accompanying
> the act, and all other circumstances surrounding the conduct,
> including threats, which may or may not be accompanied by
> force. (Kong et al. 2011:11)

In other words, the Court ruled that sexual assault can be more than just

grabbing a body part; it includes factors occurring within the situation. These

factors can include language, and perceived threats. By redefining sexual assault

in this way it sought to acknowledge the force, threats, and power behind it.

In 1991, the Court released another landmark, if controversial, decision regarding

sexual assault in Canada. The Supreme Court, in R. v. Seaboyer, declared

unconstitutional the 1983 provision stating that defendants would not be allowed to

examine the sexual history of their accusers (Kong et al. 2003). The Supreme Court ruled

that the provision may infringe on a defendant's right to a fair trial. In response, in 1992,

the government drafted Bill C-49 (the "rape shield law"). Bill C-49 introduced a test to

determine whether or not a 'complainant's' sexual history could be used as evidence in a

trial (Kong et al. 2003:11). In addition, the Courts clarified the meaning of consent, by

including a definition. The new definition of consent eliminated the defense of

'misunderstanding' resulting from intoxication or recklessness; and stated that consent must be a voluntary agreement (Kong et al. 2003; Sheehy 2012).

To aide in the decision process of sexual histories, in R. v. O'Connor, the Courts ruled that the counseling and personal records of a complainant could be ordered to be presented at trial. To comply, in 1997, the Parliament of Canada presented legislation outlining the exact circumstances to which a complainant's history could be used (Kong et al. 2003). Since the 1997 decision, the Supreme Court of Canada has issued two decisions regarding sexual assault laws. In 1999, in R.v. Mills, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of allowing a complainant's records at trial if approved by a judge (Kong et al. 2003). Second, in 2000, the Supreme Court of Canada issued a decision, in R.v. Darrach, in which they upheld the constitutionality of the 1992 "rape shield" legislation (Kong et al. 2003).

While it is important to acknowledge progress made in Canadian law over the past 30 years, it is also important to note that the treatment of sexual assault victims, by actors within the justice system, may still be influenced by past laws and current social stereotypes. These influences will be examined further in Chapters 2 and 3.

1.3 SUMMARY

The following thesis will begin with the theoretical framework for the project. The framework will outline the importance of language use, and the role gender plays in understanding sexual assault. Following the theoretical framework, the current literature available on reporting sexual assault will be examined. The thesis will discuss the methodology used. To this end, the data analysis consists of a cross tabulation for exploratory purposes, followed by a logistic regression, to understand the complex

reporting patterns of victims. The results section will examine the significant factors that could contribute to the decision to report sexual assault. Finally, I will discuss the implications of the results in the final section "discussion and conclusion."

Chapter 2: Theory

2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The following chapter will examine the theoretical concepts underlying the

project. The chapter explores how cultural language can guide social construction. The

poststructural conception of language is based on Saussure's theory, which states that

meaning is produced within language, instead of reflected by language (Weedon 1996). A

second theoretical consideration is the concept of victim blaming, explained within the

literature as a way of responsibilizing (or blaming) the victims of crime. By blaming the

victim, society takes the focus away from the collective and places it squarely on the

individual. Finally, the chapter will examine the construction of gender; specifically, the

way in which both sex and gender is made real through societal means of construction

(such as through the use of language). Reflecting on the ways in which sex and gender is

constructed allows for a better understanding of how sexual assault is gendered in nature.

2.1 FEMINIST POSTSTRUCURALISM & LANGUAGE USE

Language contains signifiers that underpin the cultural context of words and

phrases. These signifiers can lend subtlety, meaning, and intention to language that must

be considered. Borrowing from feminist poststructuralism, the use of language will be a

major theme throughout the theoretical framework for the project. As will be

demonstrated throughout Chapters 2 and 3, language use is a central debate in feminist

literature. In the context of this thesis, the language use debate is exemplified in whether

one subscribes to the term victim or survivor, victim blaming or responsibilization, sexual

assault or rape. The subscription to the chosen terminology has meaning, and powerful messages (further discussed in the next section).

Weedon (1996) argues that language: "is where our sense of self, and subjectivity is constructed" (p. 21). Weedon (1996) explains that the construction of language changes meaning from culture to culture. She uses the examples of masculinity and femininity, and the way in which their meanings vary from place to place. For example, the meaning of "woman" is not fixed naturally; instead, it is a social construction, and "subject to change" through language (Weedon 1996). These meanings can vary within a culture over time. In 1927, for example, Time Magazine printed a news story explaining appropriate colour for the genders, citing pink for boys, and blue for girls (Maglaty 2011). Yet today, it is common to associate pink with girls, and blue with boys. For example, in order to make the gender of a newborn baby transparent, a parent or guardian may wrap a newborn baby girl in a pink blanket to communicate her gender.

The ways in which society interprets, or applies meaning, depends on the discourses presented through language (Weedon 1996). Just as the meaning of "woman" is not fixed (as Weedon argues), neither is the meaning of "victim." It is possible to change what it means to be a victim through language discourse. Ristock (2002) argues that a postmodern perspective "deconstructs assumptions found in discourses and further challenges the 'either/or' binaries that one often works within and have us consider 'both/and' or 'neither/nor' constructions of social reality" (p.22). The chapter examines the theoretical framework by focusing on language that constructs the reality of sexual assault victims, as well as the gendered, and social understandings of this crime. The language discourse framework will be utilized throughout the remainder of the discussion

(see chapter six). Specifically, the theoretical section will discuss the problem of working strictly within binary language.

Survivor vs. Victim

The use of the terms 'survivor' or 'victim' is a controversial topic within feminism. There are advocates on both sides. On the one side, advocates for the use of the word survivor have argued that the use of the word survivor resists the connotations surrounding the word victim (Dunn 2010). As a result of the association with 'weakness' that the word victim carries, a very specific movement emerged in which the word survivor has been used in place of the term victim in feminist literature (Dunn 2010).

Other feminist researchers, however, do not necessarily see the debate as a surviour versus victim ideology. Rather, they see the use of the word surviour as a coping mechanism. Dunn (2010) argues that women who experience horrible events in their lives will literally fight to survive. The survival fight results in the word surviour. Yet, by arguing that only the word surviour should be used, they are ignoring the ways in which other women cope, and survive such ordeals; which thereby makes an entire section of their narrative (that of the victim) invisible (Dunn 2010). In other words, by insisting only the label surviour be used, all other modes of identification are silenced.

The surviour movement began as a way to confront male violence, and reconceptualise female victimization. Dunn (2010) argues that this conceptualization was a way for women to reclaim their self-respect, and the respect of others. For example, Kathleen Barry (1979) further makes the argument that:

> The status of victim creates a mind set eliciting pity and sorrow.
> Victimization denies the woman the integrity of her humanity through
> the whole experience, and it creates a framework for others to know

> her not as a person but as a victim, someone to whom violence was done…victimization is an objectification which establishes new standards for defining experience; those standards dismiss any question of will, and deny that the women even while enduring sexual violence is a living, changing, growing, interactive person (as cited in 2010:40).

In other words, by using the term victim, scholars are robbing women of their agency; creating an identity associated with weakness and/or helplessness. Through what Dunn (2010) calls the "Cultural Code of Agency," victims are judged not to be victims (p.193). If everyone has free will, then victimization occurs through poor choices (Dunn 2010:6). Therefore, it is argued that by redefining victim to surviour, resistance to cultural codes begin to emerge. Therefore, women who have experienced sexual violence can be seen as individuals who struggled, rather than a collective of helpless victims. The "Cultural Code of Agency" is based on the assumption that all individuals have free will, making us all accountable for our own actions (Dunn 2010:5). It is the cultural code that causes the automatic gravitation towards victim blaming.

However, other feminists see this as a means of giving in, and reinforcing the victim blaming ideology that surrounds the word victim. Historically, the term victim, like femininity, has been associated with weakness, or daintiness. Phrases such as 'pussy' and 'girl' are often used to degrade a person for being weak (i.e. not masculine). Merdorossian (2014) argues that that type of association with victim is widespread, and often reinforced through societal norms. She cites the example of the presidential speech after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Towers on September 11, 2001. When originally written, George W. Bush was going to address the nation with "Today America was a victim of…" However it was felt that the use of the word 'victim' would make America seem weak, so the speech was changed to "America today was under attack"

(Merdorossian 2014:25). The previous example may seem unrelated to sexual assault, but it speaks volumes to the fear that surrounds the term victim. The point is that there is resistance to the word because it indicates weakness, and is deeply embedded within culture.

Merdorossian (2014) further argues that the feminist goal of changing the "script" from 'victim' to 'surviour' inadvertently reinforces, and justifies, a neoliberal conceptualization of victim blaming, and thus individualizing the problem (Merdorossian 2014:39). Moreover, she states that through their resistance to the negative connotation of 'victim', and in their effort to preserve the other narratives that sexual assault victims face, feminists have overlooked the unintended consequences and erased, or devalued, victimhood as an acceptable mode of identification (Merdorossian 2014:39).

Karen Weiss (2011) argues that surviour is problematized because of the connotation that a surviour does not need assistance. The preference is strength, rather than being seen as a helpless victim, needing protection. She argues that the result is a rejection of the "victim identity," in an attempt to control the way they are seen by others (Weiss 2011:15). Often a victim will place more emphasis on how she was able to fight off the attacker, or resist. These victims identify themselves as survivors, not needing help from the justice system (Weiss 2011). Weiss (2011) argues that this is particularly useful for men who have been sexually assaulted, as it allows them an outlet to maintain their masculinity. The assertion is that if victims are able to reject this label, they are embracing an attitude of self-help, rather than a reliance on institutions (Weiss 2011). In other words, by rejecting the label of victim, feminists may be unintentionally reinforcing victim mythology, and discouraging reporting to the criminal justice system.

While the need for resistance to patriarchy should not be overlooked, it is important to ensure that the subject positions are considered and respected. As Merdorossian (2014) points out, by ignoring the term "victim," or erasing it from the narrative through the sole use of the word "survivor," we risk reinforcing the victim blaming ideology.

Therefore, the study used the term "victim" instead of "surviour" for two reasons. First, the term survivor may be alienating some victim narratives. Secondly, since this research is concerned with why victims do not report sexual assault to the police (whom service the Canadian Criminal Justice System), the terminology should be the same as the courts to ensure consistency and understanding throughout the research process.

Responsibalization, Victim Blaming, and the Just World Belief

The phrase "blaming the victim" was first coined by sociologist William Ryan in his 1976 book titled "Victim Blaming," which addressed poverty among African Americans in the United States of America. Ryan (1976) argued that poverty is a result of the social structure, and is not the fault of the individual. Whereas, victim blaming, Ryan argues, assigns fault to victims' decisions or behaviours. In the case of sexual assault, victims are seen as provoking the attack. There is an overwhelming consensus that societal opinion promotes responsibilization on the part of the victim. In other words, social norms dictate that women are responsible for their own safety. Part of that responsibility is acting as sexual gatekeepers to men.

The acceptance of rape myths perpetuates victim blaming by justifying the actions of the offender, and furthering the myth of responsibilizing the victim. As victims are often women, Randall (2010) explains that responsibilization is the "idea that women are,

and should be, responsible for navigating their own safety, for managing men's sexual attention and aggression, and also for accurately assessing and avoiding risk" (p.409). It should be noted that Randall (2010) also argues against using the term 'responsibilization,' because the language individualizes sexual assault. The use of the term responsibilization moves the focus from the public's responsibility, back to the victim of the crime, perpetuating rape mythology (p. 409). In other words, Randall argues that 'victim blaming' should be the term used to ensure the offender is the focus, rather than the individual.

Many victims see themselves as partially responsible for the crime, because society views women as responsible for their own victimization. Victim blaming is applied more so if drugs or alcohol are involved; or if there are concerns about the victim's dress or behaviour (Bachman 1998; Allen 2007; Kelly & Stermac 2008; Belknap 2010; Randall 2010; Weiss 2010). Responsibilization helps to perpetuate the myth that women ask to be raped by dressing inappropriately, or putting themselves into situations that are known to be dangerous (Burt 1980). Suggesting that the myth of responsibilization is used to socialize women to believe that they are the gatekeepers to sex, and therefore are responsible to ensure their safety.

Comack and Peter (2005) make a similar argument, stating that our government's subscription to neoliberalism (the idea that individuals must take responsibility for themselves and 'manage their own risk') results in this 'self responsibilization' on the part of the sexual assault victim (p.285). The result is a shift to neoliberalism and individual responsibility on the part of the victim. This ideology does not just manifest within sexual assault. Victims of domestic violence, natural disasters, poverty, and

homelessness are also often blamed for their situation (Ryan 1976; Davis & French 2008; Hawlket et al. 2013; Yamawaki 2014). Victims of Hurricane Katrina, for example, were scrutinized for living close to sea level, or not leaving when warned of the strength of the storm (Davis & French 2008). No thought was given to the socioeconomic circumstances of the victims.

The myth of responsibilization (or victim blaming) perpetuates the behavioural myths of sexual assault. For example, Court of Queen's Bench Justice Robert Dewar, in 2011, sentenced a defendant in a rape case to a conditional sentence (instead of a term of prison) because of 'inviting circumstances' caused by her clothing choices (McIntyre 2011). Such decisions within the court process further embed societal expectations of women, such as women as sexual gatekeepers. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 3, the notion of responsiablization, or victim blaming, is a major theme in sexual assault literature, and has remained consistently so over the past three decades of research. Women are taught that they, and they alone, are responsible for both their actions, and the actions of men sexually. The result is unfair treatment of sexual assault victims during trial, as well as an internalization of the victim blaming ideology; resulting in the creation of women as sexual gatekeepers. It should be noted, however, by creating women as sexual gatekeepers, male victims of sexual assault are also harmed in the process (this is explored further in Chapter 3).

The myth of responsiablization effectively makes women sexual gatekeepers; however, it has also acted as a kind of justification to the "just world hypothesis". The just world belief is the belief that there is no such thing as an innocent victim. The theory states that if something happens to someone, they must have done something to deserve

it, or cause it (Bull & Sleath 2010). In other words, it is the belief that bad things happen only to those who deserve it. People will continue to blame victims to feel safe, because victims are a constant reminder of their vulnerability. As a result, people do not want to consider the possibility that they could lose control over their environment (Bull & Sleath 2010).

By having this false sense of security, they are able to reassure themselves that nothing bad will happen. In other words, as long as they do not act inappropriately, they will not fall victim. For example, in the case of sexual assault, if they do not act like a victim (e.g., wear short skirts, or get drunk at a bar), they will not end up in the same position and thus avoid sexual assault. Studies (Bull & Sleath 2010; Stormwall; Alfredsson & Landstor 2013) have found that the Just World Belief and victim blaming are highly correlated. Those who are homeless, or out of work, are often criticized for being lazy (Ryan1976). Socioeconomic or mental health factors may not be taken into consideration for their current circumstances. By blaming those who are homeless for their situation, they are convinced that such a circumstance cannot happen to them. Simply put, those that subscribe to this belief are more likely to have high levels of rape myth acceptance, and a tendency to blame the victim.

The 'just world' understanding is learned through our own social interactions passed down through mythology, informal policies (such as school dress code policies), and reinforced through laws and quasi laws, combined with the ideology of a just world, result in the creation of gendered frameworks, which are internalized by both men and women.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING A GENDERED FRAMEWORK

Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemony is a term developed by Gramsci in 1971, in an attempt to make sense of class relations within societies (Jefferson 2002). Specifically, Gramsci used hegemony to understand the rationalization of rulership in non-coercive societies characterized by class inequality (Jefferson 2002). Hegemony is the process in which the ruling class sustains its rule, through the production of consent (hegemonic), rather than obtaining the consent through force or coercion (Jefferson 2002). It was through Gramsci's work that the concept of hegemonic masculinity was explored, and then applied to feminine-masculine interactions.

The term hegemonic masculinity was developed as a way of understanding "a pattern of practice that allowed men's dominance over women to continue" (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005:832). The concept is often associated with being unemotional, aggressive, and dispassionate (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005). Hegemonic masculinity is seen as the embodiment of what it means to be a 'man,' and thus requires that men position themselves in relation to hegemonic masculinity and, conversely, femininity. Connell and Messerschmidt further describe how some "patterns of aggression" have been linked with what they call the 'chase of hegemonic masculinity' (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005). They argue that it is this indication that allows people to see that masculinity is not a 'fixed entity,' but simply embodied into a man, or the characteristics of that man. It is established, maintained, and reproduced within society (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005).

In other words, hegemonic masculinity can be reconstructed; it does not have to represent a form of domination over women. Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) argue that masculinities are modeled and learned in "schools, neighbourhoods, through peer structure, dating patterns homophobic speech, and harassment." If this is the case, it is possible to shift the understanding of what masculinity is by re-appropriating it within the greater culture, to change what it means to be masculine or feminine (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005:839). Some scholars refer to this as what it means to be a 'real man' or 'real woman.' As long as hegemonic masculinity persists, in its current construction, gender inequality will also persist and women will always be situated in relation to men. Constructing masculinity in opposition to femininity is problematic because it allows (mainly) men to dominate (mainly) women, perpetuating the cycle of gender related violence. Thus the construction of masculinity is important to understand within a gendered framework when examining sexual assault. It is through this understanding that social situations can be examined that normalize violence against women, as well as how masculinity has constructed sexual assault against males as a form of weakness.

Women, Men, Femininity and Masculinity

According to Butler, our bodies and gender are socially constructed (Butler 1990). Bodies are understood through the social construction of what it means to be feminine or masculine. Moreover, she argues that sex itself (male or female) is a social construct (even though we have been taught that it is biological in nature) (Butler 1990). Butler argues that sex embodies gender, meaning that sex has taken on the characteristics of gender, thus making it no more than a social construction. Sex is made to be real through the construction of the two-sex model (Butler 1988). In other words, a two-sex model has

been established through the historical establishment of gender roles, types, norms etc. The process is treated as a natural one, but it is not natural. The social significance of our bodies is only through the social categories of male and female that society has created (Butler 1988; 2004).

Butler further argues that being male or female, man or woman, is no more than a performance, and not a reality (it is not an absolute truth) (Butler 1990). Ultimately, she argues that sex has been reified and constructed into a two-sex binary model; male and female. Therefore, if there is no biological basis for sex, sex does not exist. Gender reality, according to Butler, is performative in nature; meaning that it can only be real to the extent that we perform it (Butler 1988). That is, people become subjects of their performances. People are subjected to socially constituted norms and practices within society, while emphasizing the role of the structured 'scripts' and discourses (Butler 1988). She therefore argues that sex performance is a historical cultural evolution.

As a result of the socialization process, there are clear, differentiated, behavioural expectations for men and women. West and Zimmerman (1987) refer to this process as "doing gender" (p. 98). They argue that "doing gender" means we are creating differences between boys and girls, which later result in differences between men and women (p. 98). These differences are not biological differences; they are socially constructed differences (e.g. women should be responsible for domestic, and men for labour). Cahill (2001) argues it is these categorizations that are essential for girls and boys to learn what it means to be masculine or feminine. Once young children learn their gender, it becomes a life-long 'self regulating' process of gender performativity.

Performativity is therefore the mode of understanding gender and is crucial in sexual assault research, and social change. West and Zimmerman (1987) argue that social change must be at both an institutional and cultural level. To make progress in reporting rates, what it means to be feminine or masculine should be tackled first; changing what it means to be each. For example, the phrase "you are such a girl" implies weakness of the intended target. Mardorossian (2014) argues that the normalization of devaluing the feminine defines what it means to be masculine in opposition to the feminine. Holding masculinity as superior to the feminine, positions masculinity as 'drawing its strength from dominance over women's weakness" (10). She argues that the understanding of sexual assault must be reframed to "normative masculinities" dependency on the domination of femininity (Mardorossian 2014:133). If sexual assault is examined in this manner, one can begin to deconstruct normalized sexual assault within culture, and thus examine underlying causes to low reporting rates (Marorossian 2014). Such social construction of gender, and language use, produce the neo-liberal victim blaming ideology that becomes internalized by victims of sexual assault, resulting in lower reporting rates.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Research indicates that making the decision to report a crime to the justice system is a complex process for many victims. There are a number of factors that are involved in a decision to report. The following chapter is divided into 5 sections: rape mythology; the criminal justice system; impact on reporting; social networks; and ideal victims. More specifically, the first section provides a brief overview of the ways rape mythology contributes to the lack of reporting, with a focus on internalized victim blaming. The section has been separated into female rape mythology, and male rape mythology. Section two examines the literature available on how the criminal justice system responds to victims of sexual assault. Section three explores the current research on sexual victimization and the criminal justice system. Section four reviews the roles that social networks play in the reporting decisions of victims. Section five discusses the research on the impact of the ideal victim on reporting.

3.1 RAPE MYTHS

Foundational to the decision not to report, are rape myths. Rape myths are "[stereotypes], or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists" (Burt 1980:217). Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) argue that rape myths are "those attitudes and beliefs that are generally false, but are widely and persistently held and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women" (134). Rape myths typically take the form of victim blaming rhetoric, focusing on descriptors of the victim. These descriptors include (but are not limited to) immodesty, inclinations towards promiscuity, and a lack of visible evidence of self-defence.

Despite the falsehood of rape myths, rape myth acceptance is a prominent theme in the research. The question is why? In addition to serving to reinforce preconceived opinions, rape myths serve numerous purposes. Defense attorneys utilize rape myths to justify the actions of perpetrators, or cast doubt on the seriousness of the crime. Citizens use rape myths to inform the illusion of a just world, and the role of hierarchy in society. Moral purists use rape myths to justify rape as a consequence of immoral behaviour, and the righteousness of their convictions.

The literature on this topic has changed very little in the last thirty years. The same themes and myths emerge in the literature today, as they did 30 years ago. As such, rape myths are deeply ingrained in society, the criminal justice system, and victims. This is true to the point where many victims use rape myths to blame themselves. Given the pervasiveness of rape myth acceptance, it is unsurprising that it significantly impacts the willingness of sexual assault victims to report their victimization.

Women & Rape Mythology

Sexual gatekeeping

Women are expected to act as sexual gatekeepers. To reinforce rape mythology, slut shaming, responsiablization, and legitimize the just world ideologies, society finds subtle ways of ensuring this agenda. An example of such is with school dress code policies. By targeting young girls clothing choices, society sends the message that they are responsible for men's sexual urges, and therefore are to blame for inappropriate action by men. In other words, by instilling this responsibilization from such a young age, the message we are sending young girls is that they are 100% responsible for the behaviour of men. In essence, we are socially constructing them, in grade school, to be

sexual gatekeepers.

Skelton & Burkhart (1980), for example, presented 112 female undergrad students with rape scenarios. The students were asked if they thought the scenario was rape, and about their own willingness to report to friends, family, or police. The study found that the most important factor was the use of force (Skelton & Burkhart 1980). Participants were more likely to report the assault if force was used, and injuries sustained, than if consent was compromised by intoxication (Skelton & Burkhart 1980).

Rape myth acceptance & false reports

Rape myth acceptance, and its impact on victims of sexual assault, has been at the forefront of feminist literature since the 1980s. Common myths that people subscribe to include: women are more likely to be raped by strangers; rape only happens to young attractive women; no means yes; only virgins can be raped; if a woman is drunk or wearing revealing clothing, she is at fault; once a man is aroused, he cannot stop; and women use rape reporting as a weapon (Burt 1980; Chapleau et al. 2008; Ryan 2011). These rape myths have found their way into mainstream society, and have a tremendous impact on reporting in North America. Rape myth acceptance can be seen as an endorsement of rape myths. It has an impact on the ways that victims of rape are perceived, the ways in which victims are treated by others (including the courts and their friends and families), and it continues to reinforce the cultural acceptance of sexual assault (thereby normalizing it) (Burt 1980; Brownmiller 1975; Torrey 1991).

Using a random sample from the general public, Burt (1980) measured the impact that several rape myths would have on a person's willingness to convict a defendant. She found traditional gender roles to be a significant predictor of rape myth acceptance, and

responsible for individuals harbouring negative blaming attitudes. The scholarly literature has been clear over the last three decades that rape myth acceptance is linked to victim blaming and lower reporting rates (Burt 1980; Torrey 1991; Lonsway & Fitzgearld 1994; Jordan 2004; Suarez & Gadalla 2010; Ryan 2011; Heath et al. 2013).

Those who believe rape myths often believe in false reporting. False reporting is the myth that women use false sexual assault allegations as a weapon against men, or as a way to deflect blame for (perceived) poor decisions. The literature shows that, contrary to popular belief, false reports are very rare. Only somewhere between 2% and 8% of sexual assault allegations are considered false, or unfounded, by the criminal justice system (Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994; Flowe et al. 2007; Belknap 2010). Flowe et al. (2007) note that the US Department of Justice has determined that other crimes only have false allegations listed at 2%, indicating that sexual assault is much higher than other crimes. However, Flowe et al. (2007) argue that many of the claims that are found to be false include both complaints that are deemed false; and those cases that were dismissed due to a lack of evidence, or uncooperative witnesses or victims (p. 161). It would be reasonable to conclude that the justice system's numbers are overestimates, given that they include numerous factors outside of the control of victims.

Rape shield legislation has been introduced in Canada and the United States to limit the use of victims' sexual histories in court. In the United States, most states have limited the use of sexual history, unless it relates to the victim's history with the defendant, or if it provides information on pregnancy (Flowe et al. 2007). In Canada, a judge must review reasoning, and make a decision on the admission of sexual history at trial (Sheehy 2012; Kong et al. 2003).

Flowe et al. (2007) examined the likelihood that women with extensive sex histories view non-consensual sex as rape (and report to the justice system). Further, they investigated the circumstances women would report consensual sex, knowingly, as rape. Women with extensive sex histories were not more likely, than other women, to say that they would report consensual sex (Flow et al. 2007). Additionally, those with few previous sexual partners were more likely to indicate that they would report rape as a form of revenge (Flowe et al. 2007). The findings in this research are inconsistent with the myth that sexually promiscuous women are more likely to make false allegations than those that are promiscuous.

As demonstrated by the literature, little has changed since Brownmiller (1975) published her work arguing that rape was a crime defined by men, rather than the women it actually affects. Brownmiller (1975) argues that all men benefit from rape as a way of reinforcing patriarchy, or male dominance, by keeping all women in a state of fear. Rape legislation changes have not stopped lawyers from examining backgrounds, and sexual histories of victims. Nor has it stopped rape mythology reinforcing the belief that victims of sexual assault, or rape are 'sluts' (Ehrlich 2012).

Lawyers have designed questions that allow them to use rape mythology to their advantage, while manoeuvring around rape shield laws (Ehrlich 2012). Recently, a former Canadian prosecutor wrote an opinion piece for the Huffington Post, in response to criticism against the women that came forward (not soon enough in the opinion of many media outlets) in the recent Jian Gohmenshi sexual assault case. In her piece, she described the questions that lawyers often use to get around these laws:

> How much did you drink on the evening in question?...
> Did you take cocaine, marijuana, ecstasy? How much?

> Are you a frequent user of drugs and alcohol?; In fact you
> were very intoxicated by the time you and my client got
> back to his home, isn't that the case? I suggest that a lot
> of your memory of the events is very hazy due to your
> intoxication at the time, yes? Do you have a drug or alcohol
> problem?; Are you currently under the care of a psychiatrist?
> The court has released your medical and psychiatric records,
> so I'd just like to go through these notes your psychiatrist and
> doctor wrote about you; You sent quite a collection of nude
> photos to my client, didn't you?; …In fact you're a very experienced young
> woman, isn't that so? And this wasn't your first experience
> with rough sex, was it? You're no stranger to edgy sex, correct?
> (Garossiono 2014).

Garossino (2014) goes on to explain that she has seen cases where women were assaulted in their beds, via break and enter, and they were still cross-examined regarding what they had to drink that evening. In other words, lawyers have relied upon rape mythology to sway juries from conviction, and have largely succeeded, which has had an impact on both reporting and conviction rates in Canada.

Male Rape Myths

When it comes to victim blaming, men face similar hardships as women. As with the sexual victimization of women, rape myths can be seen as foundational to victim blaming. However, these myths take different forms than the myths for women. The myths focus on the masculine traits of men. For example, men are expected to be able to defend themselves against sexual assault. This is especially true when it comes to men being assaulted by women (Bull & Sleath 2009).

Often, masculinity requirements also mean that normal biological reactions (such as achieving erection) are used to dismiss sexual assault claims, because these reactions are viewed as a sign of consent (or, in the case of male on male sexual assault, a sign of closeted homosexuality) (Howard 1984; Coxell & King 1996; Davis & Rogers 2005;

Graham 2006; Weiss 2009; Sleath & Bull 2010; Weiss 2010). Such myths are based in the traditional ideologies of gender roles and views of masculinity, which indicate that men should be dominant, strong, heterosexual, and assertive.

Hegemonic masculinity

While it is thought that women are victimized more than men, law enforcement estimates that sexual assault is severely underreported by men. For instance, Sleath and Bull (2010) found that only 5 out of 40 (12.5%) male sexual assault victims reported to police. Most of the men who did report, stated that they regretted doing so; mainly because, in their opinion, police were unsympathetic and/or disinterested (Sleath & Bull 2010). Additionally, those who did report and whose case went to trial indicated that the court process was worse than the initial victimization (Sleath & Bull 2010). Kelly and Stermac (2008) found similar results, stating that victims of sexual assault often report that the judicial process is more traumatic than the original assault, regardless of gender.

Male rape myths are based in the traditional ideologies of gender roles and views of masculinity. Men are socialized to be strong, in control of situations, dominant, and responsible for their safety. A man is expected to be able to defend himself. In contrast, women are socialized to be passive, modest, emotional, and dominated (Walker et al. 2005; Graham 2006; Mullaney 2007; Weiss 2011; Pino & Meier 1999).

Like women, men internalize these expectations, shaping their identities around gender roles (Walker et al. 2005; Graham 2006; Bull & Sleath 2010; Weiss 2010; Capers 2011). Individuals are molded with these characteristics. If a man is victimized sexually, it calls his identity into question, and it is perceived (through the loss of control, or confusion over their sexual identity) as a threat to his masculinity, or what it means to be

a 'real man' (Davies & Rogers 2006; Weiss 2010:294; Turchik & Edwards 2012). As a result, men will often deny the assault, or find alternative ways of dealing with the issue in a non-legal capacity (Weiss 2010; Capers 2011; Sleath & Bull 2009; Walker et al. 2005).

Howard (1984) explored traditional gender roles in relation to the perception of sexual assault victims. He found that male victims of assault were blamed when they did not fight back. In contrast, women were less likely to be blamed for being unable to fight off their attackers (Howard 1984). In another study, Weiss (2010) examined the National Crime Victimization Survey between 1992 and 2000 to explore male rape narratives. The study found that men are more likely to report sexual assault when assaulted by another man, than by a woman (22% versus 7%) (Weiss 2010:286). This finding speaks to the stigma experienced by men when they are unable to fight off an attacker who is female; therefore, experiencing a threat to their masculine identity.

Both Howard (1984) and Weiss (2010) speak to the role that traditional gender expectation, and the social construction of masculinity and femininity, play in the perpetuation of internalized victim blaming. If the victims of sexual assault do not fit the structure of the "real" victim, they are unlikely to report. Often overlooked is the harm that hegemonic masculinity causes men, as well as women. As Cahill (2000) argues, the concepts created around masculinity are not consistent with how we have constructed the rape victim. The sexual assault victim is constructed as weak, and defenseless (i.e. feminine and not masculine) (Cahill 2000); thereby rendering being a sexual assault victim inconsistent with the masculinity concepts of strength and dominance.

Prison rape

One common rape myth is the belief that men are only sexually assaulted in prison, making it part of the deterrence framework within the criminal justice system. While it is not true that sexual assault of men only happens in prisons, it is true that sexual assault in prisons is an epidemic. Additionally, there is a perception, or acceptance, that sexual assault in prison is part of the punishment. This normalization of sexual assault in prisons demonstrates how intimately connected masculinity is to sexual assault. By making sexual assault (normally a heinous crime) part of the punishment structure, society uses the removal of masculinity as a deterrent.

Capers (2011) found, in a 2000 study of male American inmates, that approximately 21% of prisoners reported forced sex. Capers (2011) also cites a Department of Justice report stating that 13% of offenders alleged being sexually assaulted in prison. However, due to the dangers of appearing weak in prison, and the possibility of retaliation by the offender, that number is probably very conservative (Department of Justice 2012). For instance, prisoners will be less likely to report their assaults to the prison authorities, because of fear of retribution (Capers 2011:1261). Other studies have found similar findings including one by Ellenbogen (2009), which found that there were 411 assaults in Ontario prisons that were reported in a three-month span (p. 346).

Prison culture promotes a structure of protection. Those who are deemed to be weaker inmates are termed as 'punks' and those that protect these 'punks,' are called 'man,' 'daddy,' or 'pitcher' (Trammell 2011; Eigenberg 2000; Knowles 1999). In this type of relationship, the 'punk' is protected by the 'daddy' from others in prison, and as payment he must perform sexual acts. In other situations, inmates may take on gendered

roles of 'wife' and 'husband' (Trammell 2011:307). The 'wife' inmate is responsible for laundry and housekeeping, but is also often expected to perform sexual acts for the 'husband' (Trammell 2011; Knowles 1999). Eigenberg (2000) also found a distinction between 'punks' who are forced into the role of property, and 'fags' who seek out protection voluntarily (p.419). While the current research will not be focusing on male prison rape specifically, understanding the masculine discourse of a prison setting is useful. More specifically, it is important because the exaggerated masculinity that occurs within prison helps emphasize hegemonic masculinity, and the hierarchy that becomes instilled in men through normal socialization.

Homosexuality & the biological argument

The myths discussed previously, help socially construct male identity, intensifying problems men have after a sexual assault. By constructing sexual assault as feminine, the male body is constructed as (un)rapable. Society has constructed sexual assault as only the problem of a woman. That is, men are largely identified in the literature as perpetrators, and women as victims (Graham 2006). For example, until 2012, the United States Department of Justice did not recognize men as victims of sexual assault. Under the old definition, sexual assault was deemed to be, "the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will." The act of rape was interpreted specifically as vaginal penetration only (Department of Justice 2012). The definition was altered to read, "penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration, penetration with objects, and rape of males," now acknowledging men as potential victims of sexual assault as well as women (Department of Justice 2012).

Sexual assault toward men is constructed as being both socially and biologically

impossible. Reporting patterns show that men are more likely to report a sexual assault when the perpetrator was male, rather than report a sexual assault perpetrated by a female offender (Weiss 2010: 286). Yet research indicates that men are often the perpetrators of sexual violence against both men and women (Coxell & King 1996; Allen 2007; Sleath & Bull 2009). Graham (2006) argues that men face an additional stigma with sexual victimization, that of homosexuality. Sexuality is important to the discourse of male sexual assault, because heterosexuality is deeply connected to masculinity. Homosexuality is considered to be effeminate (Graham 2006). Due to this deep connection, men who are sexually assaulted by other men are often assumed to be homosexual, and lying about being assaulted in order to cover up their homosexual behaviour.

Summary

Weiss (2010) argues that self-blame becomes a product of rape mythology. 'Bad girls" do something to provoke sexual assault and "real men" are powerful and not victims (Weiss 2010). Men who are victims have failed in their masculine duty to defend themselves. Humiliation becomes a product of rape mythology. Myths are inherently connected to barriers that victims face when thinking about reporting, as well as all the reasons they may choose not to come forward. Rape myths can provide comfort to women and men because they allow them to distance themselves, and their own behaviour, from the possibility of being victims, or perpetrators, of rape (Ryan 2011: 775). Unfortunately, the result can be additional trauma for sexual assault victims. These rape myths are therefore, arguably at the core of reporting issues within society.

3.2 THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The scholarly literature regarding the criminal justice system, in regards to sexual assault, has been consistent over the last three decades – victims of sexual assault report distrust in the Criminal Justice System. In a sample of over 102 women from Canada (who had been victims of sexual assault), 38% stated that they did not bother to report their assault because of negative perceptions of the justice system (Kelly & Stermac 2008: 34). Victims feared that they would not be believed, or taken seriously by police, or courts (Kelly & Stermac 2008). Felson and Pare (2008) found that these complaints remained the same regardless of gender. Using the National Violence Against Women and Men survey, Felson and Pare (2008) found that the most common complaint among both men and women was the leniency shown by the criminal justice system. Further, many respondents reported they felt as though police officers were not sensitive to the situation (Felson & Pare 2008).

The majority of victims, who did report their sexual victimization, regretted reporting to the Criminal Justice System, indicating that police were unsympathetic, or disinterested (Sleath & Bull 2010). Additionally, those who did report indicated that the court process, within the criminal justice system, was worse than the initial victimization (Sleath & Bull, 2010). Kelly and Stermac (2008) found similar results, stating that victims of sexual assault often claim that getting assistance from the authorities is just as, if not more, traumatic then the original assault, regardless of gender.

There has also been literature examining how police react to reports of sexual assault. Page (2010) surveyed 891 police officers, and found that 93% believed that any woman can be sexually assaulted, but only 19% were likely to believe a married female

victim could be sexually assaulted by her significant other (p. 325). Further, 66% of police officers stated that any man could be raped, but only 44% were likely to believe a male victim (Page 2010:325). The same study found that almost half of the officers were unlikely to believe a prostitute who claimed she was raped, but 95% were likely to believe a virgin, and 97% were likely to believe a 'professional' woman (Page 2010:325). Similarly, Jan Jordan (2004) found that police judge a victim's credibility based on a variety of factors including: alcohol consumption, previous relationships with the accused, whether or not injuries were sustained, and how quickly the victim reported to police.

Impact on Reporting
Reasons for reporting

Although sexual assault is one of the most underreported crimes to police, some victims do report. While studies conflict why people are reporting, there are a few themes that emerge from the literature. Sexual assault victims tend to report to prevent future attacks, to stop the incident, or to catch the offender (Bachman 1998; Vopni 2006; Weiss 2011; Cohen et al. 2013).

Assaults that involved a weapon (widely thought of as proof of force) were also more likely to be reported than assaults without the use of force or a weapon. For example, Bachman (1998), found that 41% of sexual assaults reported to police involved a weapon, as opposed to 23% that did not involve a weapon (Bachman 1998:22). In addition, Bachman (1998) found that if injuries were present, victims were more likely to report to police. Such findings have changed little over the past three decades. Skelton and Burkhart (1980) found that victims who did not sustain a physical injury during the

assault were less likely to report than those who did. Participants in multiple studies feared that they would face skepticism from police (Schwendinger & Schwendinger 1974; Field 1978; Skelton & Burkhart 1980; Bachman 1998; Cohen et al. 2013). In other words, those who wanted to report feared not being believed by police.

Reasons against reporting

Often victims explain that they feel at fault because they got drunk, were dressed in a way that invited attention, fear of revenge from the accused, or they sent mixed messages (Skelton & Burkhart 1980; Fisher et al. 2003; Felson & Pare 2005; Kelly & Sternmac 2008; Belknap 2010; Gadalla & Suarez 2010; Taylor & Gassner 2010; Amstadter et al. 2010). A victim's relationship to the offender may have a significant impact on the decision to report to the justice system. In particular, those assaulted by strangers are far more likely to report than those assaulted by people they know (Skelton & Burkhart 1980; Fisher et al. 2003; Felson & Pare, 2005; Allen 2010; Weiss, 2011). Bachman (1998) found that victims who were assaulted by strangers were more likely to report to police than those victimized by intimate partners. The study further found that, of those that reported to police, 19% were in an intimate relationship with offender, 27% were victimized by a family member, 26% by a friend or acquaintance, and 32% by a stranger (Bachman 1998:20). In other words, those who were sexually assaulted by a stranger were more likely to report than those whom were sexually assaulted by a significant other.

Other studies have found that there is a fear of revenge on the part of many victims (Bachman 1998; Allen 2010; Taylor & Gesser 2010; Cohen et al. 2013); however, results remain inconsistent at best. For example, Bachman (1998) found that 1

in 10 victims of assault cited fear of revenge as the reason for not reporting, while Cohen et al. (2013) found that almost 7 in 10 (or 70% of his participants) cited fear of revenge. Amstader et al. (2010) found that fear of revenge was the primary reason their participants had for not going to the police.

Rape myths are only a part of the connection. Heavily cited reasons for not reporting are those associated with the criminal justice system. Police officers, judges, prosecutors, and others that work within the justice system, are members of society and therefore may be influenced by rape mythology (Taylor & Gassner 2010). Fear of bias within the criminal justice system by official's also play a key part in the under-reporting of sexual assault. Victims fear that the police will be biased against them because of their own actions, or circumstances. Others worry that police simply will not take them seriously as victims (Bachman 1998; Allen 2010; Randall 2010; Amstader et al. 2010; Zinzow & Thompson 2011; Cohen et al. 2013). Finally, others report that they believe that the assault can be handled outside of the justice system, or they are not sure that a crime has been committed (Bachman 1998; Kelly & Sternmac; Vopni 2006; 2008; Weiss 2010; Amstadter et al. 2010; Cohen et al. 2013).

3.4 SOCIAL NETWORKS

The relationship between social networks and the underreporting of sexual violence is an under-researched area, but one that is beginning to garner more attention. Social networking literature began to emerge in the 1980s, and has gained momentum in the last decade. Cluss et al (1983) found that victims had no significant differences in social support prior to making reporting decisions. Conversely, Feldman-Summers & Ashworth (1981) found that the perceptions of a victims' social group were crucial in

reporting decisions. They also found that the more a woman's social group wanted her to report to police, the greater the chance she would do so (Feldman-Summers 1981). A large study, conducted in 1989, examined data from 3,132 participants seeking to determine how helpful their social networks were in coping with sexual assault (Golding et al. 1989). They found that 447 of the participants disclosed their sexual assault to their networks, of which nearly 60% had talked to a friend or family member (Golding et al. 1989:91). Other disclosures involved rape centres, medical personal, legal professionals, or religious leaders (Golding et al. 1989). Results indicated that friends and family were seen as helpful by approximately 67% of the participants (Golding et al. 1989:91).

More recently, a body of literature has emerged that examines how victims perceived the reactions from their social networks (Davis et al. 1991; Campbell et al. 2001; Filipas & Ullman 2001; Ahrens 2006). These studies examine the perceptions sexual assault victims had of the reactions of their social networks. Further, they investigated the impact those perceptions had on their decision to report to the criminal justice system. Henrietta Filipas and Sarah Ullman (2001) recruited 323 adult sexual assault victims and surveyed them regarding whom they confided in about their sexual assault. The purpose of the study was to examine the types of social reactions women received from these support sources, and to find out what their experiences were (Filipas & Ullman 2001). The authors found that 94.2% of victims report to friends and relatives, while 52% report to mental health officials, and 26.4% reported to police agencies (Filipas & Ullman 2001:680).

Results from the same study show that approximately 80% of the women received 'negative reactions' such as victim blaming, stigmatization, and discouragement (Filipas

& Ullman 2001:680). In addition to this, family members, specifically parents, were most often referred to negatively (in that they promoted rape myths) (Filipas & Ullman 2001). The myths were often focused on victim blaming, but also questioned the validity of spousal sexual assault claims (Filipas & Ullman 2001).

Ahrens (2006) sought to understand how these negative reactions impact reporting. The research, which explored the narratives of 8 participants, found that victims were often silenced as a result of disclosing to their social networks (Ahrens 2006). They found two significant factors (consistent with past research) that lead victims to shy away from the justice system. That is, if participants received negative reactions from professionals, friends, family, or peers, they were more likely to decide against reporting, and engage in self-blame (Ahrens 2006). Additionally, negative reactions were likely to cause participants to question if their experiences counted as a 'real rape' (Ahrens 2006). In other words, if victims were responded to negatively by social networks, the result was often victims reevaluating if what happened to them was indeed 'rape.'

Many of the studies examined how social networks impact victim's psychological adjustment. Davis, Brickman & Baker (1991) examined 105 participants over the age of 18 and found that, while supportive behaviour had no impact, unsupportive behaviour had a strong inverse relationship to the psychological adjustment of the victim (Davis & Brickman & Baker 1991). However, results of a study performed in 2001 on 102 participants found different results. Those victims who had received supportive behaviour from their social networks reported adjusting better than those who received negative support (Campbell et al. 2001).

3.5 IDEAL VICTIMS

Feminist scholars have argued that laws perpetuate heteronormativity. As a result, it protects male offenders rather than protecting female victims. These scholars argue that the justice system perpetuates a rape culture as an implication to the justice system being "male." Smart (1989), for example, explores how the law reinforces the sexualization of women's bodies through the process of rape trials. Smart argues that culture is designed to meet the needs of men or what she refers to as the "phallocentric culture" (Smart 1989). The phallocentric culture places more value on those traits that can be identified as masculine, and less value on those that are identified as feminine. Circumstances in phallocentric culture allow for the social construction of women's bodies, and consciousness. Through culture, women learn a standard of consent and sexuality that is imposed on them. Women are taught that they are to be chased.

In terms of prosecution in a rape trial, it is on the woman to show that she did not enjoy being sexually assaulted (Smart 1989). Women must deny enjoyment, because the reception of pleasure presumes consent (Smart 1989). In other words, the possibility of pleasure erases any responsibility for male behaviour. During the rape trial, Smart (1989) notes male sexuality, and its satisfaction, is justification for not taking women seriously. That is, being a sexual predator is normal and desirable for men, and women are seen as the gatekeepers of morality.

Melanie Randall (2010) argues that the "non-ideal" victim narrative undermines women who deviate from the norm. Women's bodies can be controlled through these discourses based in law and gender norms. Monica Burman (2010) argues that these "less innocent victims" are constructed in such a way that they are agents interacting with men,

allowing for the shift from the perpetrator to the female victim. Burman (2010) further states that discourses of the 'innocent victim' are allowed only if women conform to gender norms. In the context of sexual assault, this can take the form of women being weaker than their attackers; and subordinate attitudes on the part of the victim (Burman 2010).

As a result of these myths making their way into mainstream culture, the just world belief (the belief that moral behaviour directly impacts sexual assault, and immoral behaviour can be blamed for sexual assault) causes victims of sexual assault to internalize this responsablization (Correia 2002; Egan & Wilson 2012:346). To this end, victims that have higher rates of rape myth acceptance are less likely to report their assaults than victims who do not (Burt 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgearld 1994; Buddie & Miller 2001; Allen 2007).

Ryan (2011) states that there is a connection between the 'sexual scripts' and rape myths. Ryan argues that rape myths provide a type of familiarity, or "comfort" to both men and women. Rape myths allow those within society to put distance between their potential behaviour, and the behaviour of a victim (Ryan 2011:775). In other words, sexual scripts and rape myths allow people to construct the rape victim as the 'other,' resulting in a false sense of security. The vast majority of scholarly literature on victim blaming does indeed point to a direct link between rape myths, sex role socialization, and the tendency to blame victims of assault.

Many scholars (Lizotte 1985; Bull & Sleath 2009; Weiss 2009; Burnman 2010; Randall 2010; Weiss 2010; Capers 2011; Egan & Wilson 2012) argue that our understandings of femininity, masculinity, and the resulting sex role expectations,

contribute to the current rape culture, and therefore the myths that contribute to blaming sexual assault victims. Traditional beliefs about gender and sexuality normalize these myths, so that sexual aggression towards women is expected. These beliefs perpetuate the idea that women are expected to be responsible for 'negotiating' and mitigating men's sexual advances (Randall 2010:432).

Howard (1984) conducted one of the earliest studies documenting the negative impact of masculinity on male rape reporting. The goal of the study was to examine the differences between the way in which women and men are blamed for being sexually assaulted. The study found that men were blamed when the behaviour demonstrated did not fall into a traditionally masculine category. Examples include not fighting back, being scared, and/or not escaping their attackers (Howard 1984). Conversely, the female victim of the sexual assault was blamed for being careless about where she was, and for going out alone (Howard 1984). The Howard (1984) study was the first to examine not just the root cause in the under reporting of male rape, but also to show that gender was not a significant factor in the blaming of sexual assault victims. Put another way, both men and women are blamed; it is how they are blamed that differs.

Comack & Peter (2005) take the concept of the ideal victim one step further. It is not enough for a victim to be an ideal victim at the time she is victimized; to be taken seriously, she must continue to be an ideal victim (Comack & Peter 2005). For example, they refer to "self-mutilation", and "flip flopping" on the part of the victim (Comack & Peter 2005). Even though self-mutilation may have been a coping method, and a result of severe trauma on the part of the victim, it makes her seem unstable, and therefore no longer an ideal victim (Comack & Peter 2005). The make-up of an ideal victim, coupled

with the requirement to continue to be an ideal victim, becomes important when understanding reporting patterns. For example, Vopni (2006) found that upon reporting to police, victims were warned about giving false reports, and told that they were not 'acting like' rape victims (Vopni 2006:111).

3.6 SIGNIFICANCE & CONCLUSION

By understanding Smart's analysis of the rape trial in the 1980s, coupled with the consideration of the scholarly literature, it is clear that not much has changed in 30 years. Non-reporting rates still remain high in North America with sexual assault victims reporting much the same reasoning as those in the past as to why they prefer not to report. Victims continue to be re-victimized by the trial process. As such, researchers should take a new path, and examine how other barriers impact reporting decisions. Given the foundational role that rape mythology plays in the perpetuation of rape culture, it is important to examine how this emerges in all factors considered by victims of sexual assault before reporting.

Research on gender discrimination and victim blaming suggest that sex crimes are not prosecuted vigorously, because the majority of victims in these crimes are perceived to be women who put themselves in harm's way. As such, the current study will explore the factors that contribute to this pattern of under reporting. Taylor & Gassner (2010) describe the police as the "gatekeepers for victim access to the criminal justice system" (Taylor & Gassner 2010:243). For all intents and purposes, the police are the ones that decide whether the crime will be brought to the attention of the courts (Taylor & Gassner 2010). In other words, the police are the first point of contact a victim has with the criminal justice system. Describing police as the "gatekeepers" to the justice system

emphasizes the important role they play for a victim in the process of reporting. Given the consistency in low reporting rates over the last three decades, along with the prevalence of rape mythology, it is clear that sexual assault is still a relevant issue for both men and women.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.0 EMPIRICAL EXPECTATIONS

The following section outlines the methodology for the current study. The chapter will outline the data collection methods, the measures used, and the analytic strategy. The question the thesis seeks to examine is: why does the underreporting of sexual assault continue despite thirty years of discussion, legislation, and research? The answer to the question may lay within the gaps that exist in the literature, there are two obvious gaps. One of the major gaps within the literature is the lack of exploration regarding what influence social relationships have on the decisions that sexual assault victims make in terms of reporting. Secondly, while we know that there is a problem regarding why people do not report, there is less literature available on why they do decide to report. This is important to understand in conjunction with why people do not report sexual assault.

Data on Victimization conducted by Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, in 2009 was used for this project. The survey was conducted between February and November of 2009, and all participants were 15 years or older at the time of contact (Statistics Canada 2009). Samples were pulled from every province and 3 territories. Territory data is only available through the Research Data Centres and the application to the RDC for this particular project was denied. Interviews were administered via telephone, through random digit dialing (Statistics Canada 2009).

Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) was used to collect all data (Statistics Canada 2009). Responses from participants were entered directly into computers, and transferred electronically for processing and coding (Statistics Canada

2009). Exclusions included homes without telephones, respondents under the age of 15, and anyone institutionalized at the time the survey was conducted (Statistics Canada 2009).

The 2009 GSS contains two separate, but related files: a main file and an incident file. Data from both files were used in the study, because the incident file includes many follow-up questions, which are pertinent to this study. As such, the incident file was merged with the main file by using the "add variables" function within IBM SPSS. The General Social Survey includes all those ages 15 and older, however, the sample for the current project was reduced to anyone who has experienced sexual assault (of any kind) in the 12 months prior to the survey (n=548).

4.1 MEASURES

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable used for this study was: whether or not sexual assault was reported to the police. In order to form this dependent variable, two questions, or variables, were merged. Variable "XAI_Q240 (ex-spousal)" was merged with variable "PFO_Q100" all of which ask: "Did the police ever find out about the violence in any way (last 12 months)?" (Statistics Canada 2009). "PFO_Q100" was merged with "XAI_Q240" because the General Social Survey excluded ex-partner violence from the "PFO_Q100" question and instead separated it into a separate category.

Independent Variable

Social networks

While social networks have not been covered extensively in sexual assault literature, there are indications that social networks have the potential to influence reporting decisions. As such, the current project included several variables that focus on social networks. In particular, the GSS asks victims of crime who they spoke to, besides the police, about the incident. In order to explore how social networks influence victim's decision 3 groups of questions were examined: trust in others, marital status, and conversations with others.

Four variables were used to measure various aspects of trust. These questions are based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "cannot be trusted" to "can be trusted a lot" (SD=.552, M=2.78). Using a Bogardus-type of social distance scale, questions measure the level of trust respondents have for various individuals. The current study only examined how much the respondent trusted their family members. Variables were computed into a composite index. The levels of trust were divided into "little or no trust" coded as TRT_Q310 (n=36), "moderate trust" (n=48), and "trust a lot" (n=464). Little or no trust was composed of selections one and two on the likert scale, moderate trust was composed of selection three on the likert scale and four and five on the likert scale was coded as can be trusted a lot.

The project examined 6 questions related to conversations victims may have had with those within their social networks. Specifically, the question that asked "other than police, did you ever talk to anyone else about this incident, such as: Family (XTA_Q110), friend or neighbour (XTA_Q120), co-worker (XTA_Q130), doctor or nurse (XTA_Q140), a lawyer, (XTA_Q150) priest, rabbi, imam, elder or another spiritual

advisor (XTA_Q160)? Speaking with Family (n=402 m=.74 sd=.441), friend or neighbour (n=427 m=.79 sd=.410), and co-worker (n=262 m=.48 sd=.500) were all recoded into new dichotomous variables (1 and 0). Due to the low number of victims that spoke with doctors, lawyers, or religious personal these 3 questions were merged into a new variable and recoded into a new dichotomous variable (1 and 0) to form a new category of "other" (n=169 m=.32 sd=.466). By examining reporting rates for those that spoke to others about their experiences, we can begin to understand if, and how, victim's social networks may influence decision-making.

In addition to variables measuring levels of trust, two additional questions were included as potential predictors: marital status, and whom (other than police) the victim spoke to about the incident. Marital status (CMR_Q110) was recoded into "marital" (n=548 m=1.81 sd=.801) where 1 is equal to those who are either married or in common law relationships (n=236), 2 is equal to widowed, separated, or divorced (n=178), and 3 was equal to single or never married (n=134). By examining 'spouse,' one aspect of a victim's social network can be explored, in terms of whether such victims are more or less likely to report a sexual assault to police.

Offender relations and respondent sex

Question OCE_Q140G was used to explore the relationship between the offender and the victim. This question was included in the model to determine the types of sexual assaults that are most likely to go unreported. The question was recoded into "offender" in order to collapse categories together (m=1.96 sd=.876). The question ended up with 4 categories instead of 7 categories. One is equal Family (n=197) which included: family member, boyfriend, girlfriend, ex-family, ex-boyfriend, ex-girlfriend. Two is equal to

acquaintance (n=202) including: friend, acquaintance, co-worker, boss, classmate, and teacher. Three is equal to stranger (n=125), and four is equal to other (n=24).

For the purpose of statistical analysis, the stranger variable was used as the reference category in order to act as the comparative category, because research shows that assaults perpetrated by strangers are more likely to be taken seriously by agents of the criminal justice system.

Sense of Belonging to Community

A total of 11 questions were examined for sense of belonging to one's neighbourhood. Only two questions grouped together reliably and were computed into a new variable "belong." The new variable was composed of questions SBL_Q100 and SBL_Q140. Question SBL_Q100 asks respondents if they know 'most,' 'many,' 'few,' or 'no' people in their neighbourhood. In this case, the 'most' and 'many' attributes were grouped together, while the 'few' or 'no' values will be recoded together. The second part of the "belong" variable was composed of question SBL_Q140 that asked how the respondent would describe their own sense of belonging to their community. Reliability was examined using SPSS and deemed very good (Spearman's r= .44). By measuring the sense of belonging a victim has to his or her local communities, an understanding can be developed about how this form of support can impact reporting rates.

Perception of the Criminal Justice System

Perceptions of the criminal justice system: Scholarly literature shows that perception of the criminal justice system has a significant impact on a victim's decision to report. Therefore, a total of 13 questions were examined to account for victim's

perceptions of the criminal justice system. The questions ask respondents about their

perceptions of the local police agencies (Table 1), and the criminal courts (Table 2).

Current research shows that victims of sexual assault view the criminal justice system in

a negative way. Researchers have found that victims view the system as too lenient

towards offenders, while being unsympathetic towards victims, victims also fear that the

courts will revictimize them or worse will not take them seriously (Felson & Pare 2008;

Kelly & Sternmac 2008; Sleath & Bull 2010). Given the research in this area I grouped

the questions from the GSS (2009) on perceptions of police together, and those on

perception of courts together.

Table 1: Confidence in the Police

PLP_Q110	*Effectiveness of local police at enforcing laws?*
PLP_Q150	*Effectiveness of local police at ensuring the safety of the citizens in your area*
PLP_Q160	*Effectiveness of local police at treating people fairly*
PLP_Q140	*Effectiveness of local police at supplying crime reduction information to the public*
PLP_Q120	*Effectiveness of local police at promptly responding to calls*
PLP_Q130	*Effectiveness of local police at being approachable and easy to talk to*
Cronbach's Alpha .888	

Table 2: Confidence in the Court System

PCC_Q110	*Effectiveness of Canadian Criminal Courts at providing justice quickly*
PCC_Q130	*Effectiveness of the Canadian Criminal Courts at determining guilt or innocence*
PCC_Q120	*Effectiveness of Canadian Criminal Courts at helping the victim*
PCC_Q140	*Effectiveness of Canadian Criminal Courts at ensuring a fair trial for the accused*
PCC_Q150	*Perceptions of severity of sentencing decisions by courts*

Cronbach's Alpha .815

Respondent Sex

Gender (SEX) was coded into dichotomous variables (yes/no, coded 1, 0) to create a new variable "NSEX" (n=548 m=.66 sd=.474) before being included in the logistic regression model. Categories of sex included: (0) Male (n=186) and (1) Female (n=362). Male will be used as the reference category to determine if gender has an impact on the decision to report sexual assault.

Age

"AGEGR5" (n=548 m=7.93 sd= 3.144) was used as the variable to examine age of the respondents. 40-49 was the mean age of the sample group.

Due to sampling limitations this sample only had 8 people under the age of 18 participate in the study (or 1%) and only an additional 32 between the ages of 18-25 (or 5%). Given such the small sample size under 18 years of age childhood sexual assaults were not specifically examined in this project as the sample only relayed information

about assaults that took place in the past 12 months. The largest age sample came from those ages 45-49 (n=75).

4.2 ANALYTIC STRATEGY

As mentioned, the central purpose of the project was to identify which covariates aid in predicting who is more likely to report an incident of sexual assault to police. As such, logistic regression was used to accomplish this task. Logistic regression is a multivariate statistical technique used on a binary outcome variable (Tabachnik & Fidell 2013), which is appropriate for the current analysis, because the dependent variable is "report" or "did not report." In this regard, logistic regression was used to account for a number of variables within the model, in order to determine what impact they have on the probability that someone would report sexual assault to the police. For example, is a person who revealed sexual assault to a family member more likely to report to the police?

There was missing data that needed to be considered. To properly deal with the missing data, the multiple imputation method was used. The purpose of the multiple imputation technique is to generate multiple complete datasets that can be used in analysis. The benefit of using multiple imputation method is that it can be used to assess patterns of missing values. In particular, a pattern analysis was performed in order to determine the method of imputation that should be used. Based on the performance the Mersenne twister option, with the automatic option (to a maximum of 25 iterations), was used to provide estimation values on the missing data. Mersenne twister option (new random number generator) was used for estimating the values on all missing data within the Multiple Imputation. The method produced 25 iterations of the data, all of which were

similar to one another. Where pooled data was available (the logistic regressions) pooled data was used. However, the cross tabulations did not have pooled data available and therefore the original dataset was used.

The multiple imputation method was chosen as it is considered to be the best way to deal with missing values, because, unlike estimated maximization, it randomly generates values based on the predictors within the model (Tabachnik & Fidell 2013). The advantage of using this technique is that it does not make any assumptions about missing data (Tabachnik & Fidell 2013).

Bootstrapping was also used in the proposed analysis. In particular, bootstrapping is one method that can be employed to understand sampling errors that may occur within a dataset. As with any probability-based sampling methods, it is possible that parameter estimates vary from sample to sample (Statistics Canada 2009). Bootstrap weights can therefore be used to calculate more accurate individual variances of the estimates (Statistics Canada 2009).

The concept behind bootstrapping is that the researcher can take the original sample, which represents the population, and resample the sample (with replacement) (Efron & Tibshirani 1994). In other words, a bootstrap sample is obtained by randomly sampling from the original sample which was sampled 'n' times, with replacement (Efron & Tibshirani 1994). Many bootstrap samples are created through this resampling technique. The bootstrap method is repeated hundreds of times. Each new sample that is created may contain some data points from the original parent sample multiple times, while some data points may not be represented at all (Efron & Tibshirani 1994). Once subsamples are generated from the original parent sample, a histogram can be created to

estimate the variance within the original sample. Thus, allowing sampling errors to be examined.

Statistics Canada (2009) used the process of estimation to extrapolate to the wider general population within Canada. In particular, sample weights have been calculated using a "post strata" technique, to match the census population estimates in Canada (Statistics Canada 2009:7). Estimation is the idea each person represents more than just themselves in the survey (Statistics Canada 2009). For example, if a population has 1000, people but only 2% are sampled in a survey, each person is thought to represent 50 people (Statistics Canada 2009). In other words, 50 persons (in the example) becomes the weighting factor for the survey.

As mentioned, there are two files that were created out of the 2009 survey. The main file used three different weighting factors; two of which pertain to the data used in this project (Statistics Canada 2009). The first was "WGHT_PER" and was used as the weighting factor at an individual level (Statistics Canada 2009). The weighting is used for all individual estimates. For example, the number of people that feel safe while walking home at night. The second weight used that impacts the data is "WGHT_ABU." This weighting variable is required in order to estimate the number of victimization incidents that occurred over the past 12 months (Statistics Canada 2009). The third weighting used by Statistics Canada (2009) is "WGHT_HSD," which estimates the number of households with a particular characteristic. For the purposes of this study, the focus is on the individual level, and therefore "WGHT_PER" was used and not the household weight. Finally, the incident file contains the reports of 'victimization incidents' experienced by participants of the survey (Statistics Canada 2009:16). As with the main

file, each person (or victimization incident) is thought to represent more than just one person, and is given the weighting factor "WGHT_VIC" (Statistics Canada 2009).

Finally, an application was put forth to the RDC but was rejected. The RDC feedback stated that the First Nations data, and the data on partner sexual assault was small and therefore the information would not be useful to the study. As such the Northern communities in Canada, as well as anyone that was sexually assaulted by a partner were not included in this study. More about this will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Chapter 5: Results

5.0 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The following chapter reports the results of the analysis of the project. Specifically, univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses are presented in each turn. Only 38% of those whom were sexually assaulted, in 2009, decided to report the victimization to the police.

5.1 EXPLORING NON-REPORTING THROUGH CROSS TABULATION

For exploratory purposes, cross tabulation was run on the factors thought to influence decision making, against the reasons that people stated for not reporting their sexual assault to police. Those sexually assaulted by their ex-partner were segmented from those who were sexually assaulted by strangers, acquaintances, family, or others. Each will be discussed in turn.

Police Bias

The police bias question asked participants if they did not report to police because they felt that the "police would have bias". Those assaulted by acquaintances or others were less likely to have the preconceived notion that police would have bias against them than those who were assaulted by either strangers or family (Table 3). These bivariate results indicated that 85% of those assaulted by family members and 86.5% of strangers felt that police would hold a bias against them if they reported. Whereas those who were assaulted by acquaintances or others only felt that the police would be bias in approximately 68% of cases (X^2(3, N=320)=18.80, p=.003).

Table 3: Relationship status of offender by Opinion of police bias

Would police have bias?	Family	Acquaintance	Stanger	Other
Yes	85% (34)	67% (112)	86.5% (83)	68.4% (13)
No	15% (6)	32.1% (53)	13.5% (13)	31.6% (6)
P < .01, Cramer's V = .21, N=320 (missing n=20)				
Note: sample size is recorded in parentheses				

Table 4 below indicates that those who did not have conversations with other people were more likely to have a pre-conceived notion that police would be bias against them than those that did have conversations with others. The bivariate results indicated that those that spoke with other people believed that police would be bias against them in 78.5% of cases versus just 53.3% (X^2(1,N=295)=9.33,p=.002).

Table 4: Conversations with "Others" by Police Bias

Would police have bias?	Did Not Talk to Others	Did Talk to Others
Yes	78.5% (208)	53.3% (16)
No	21.5% (57)	46.7% (14)
P < .01, Cramer's V = .18, N=295 (missing n=45)		
Note: sample size is recorded in parentheses		

Further the bivariate results indicate that marital status also may impact police bias perception (Table 5). Those who are widowed, separated, or divorced (88%) were more likely to say that police would be bias against them than those who were either married, common law (71%), or single (72%) (X^2(2,N=325)=8.06,p=.02).

Table 5: Marital Status by Opinion of police bias

Would police have bias?	Married or Common Law	Widow, Separated, Divorced	Single
Yes	71.4% (132)	87.8% (65)	72.7% (48)
No	28.6% (53)	12.2% (9)	27.6% (18)
P < .01, Cramer's V = .16, N=325 (missing n=0)			
Note: sample size is recorded in parentheses			

Table 6: Talked to Family by Opinion of police bias		
Would police have bias?	Talked to Family- Yes	Talked to Family- No
Yes	25% (2)	4.8% (20)
No	75% (6)	95.1% (39)
P < .05, Cramer's V = .16, N=49 (missing n=0)		
Note: sample size is recorded in parentheses		

Finally, when exploring the bivariate results of those who talked to a family member (Table 6), those who had a conversation were more likely to believe that the police would have bias against them than those who did not speak with their family (25% vs 4.8%) $(X^2(1,N=49)=2.73,p=.05)$.

Fear of Revenge

The fear of revenge question asked participants if they did not report because they "fear of revenge" from the offender. Those who spoke with family members (25%) were significantly more likely to cite fear of revenge by the assailant than those who did not speak with their family members (7.3%) $(X^2(1,N=293)=14.20,p=.000)$. These results are indicated in Table 7.

Table 7: Talk to Family by Fear of Revenge		
Fear of Revenge	Talk to Family- Yes	Talk to Family- No
Yes	25% (46)	7.3% (8)
No	75% (138)	92.7% (101)
P < .001, Cramer's V = .22, N=293 (missing n=47)		
Note: sample size is recorded in parentheses		

Table 8: Conversation with "Others" by Fear of Revenge		
Fear of Revenge	Did not Talk to Others	Did Talk to Others
Yes	16.7(44)	33.3% (10)
No	83.3% (219)	66.7% (20)
P < .05, Cramer's V = .13, N=293 (missing n=47)		
Note: sample size is recorded in parentheses		

Those who did have conversations with Others (Table 8) (lawyers, religious

personal, doctors, nurses, and teachers) were twice as likely to say they did fear revenge

(33.3%) than those who did not spoke with others (17 %) (X^2(1,N=293)=4.94,p=.03).

Personal Matter

Participants were asked if they did not report to police because they felt that the

assault was a "personal matter". Bivariate results from Table 9 show that their assailants

were either family members, or strangers were more likely to cite that they felt it were a

personal matter (85% and 86.5%) than those who were assaulted by either acquaintances

or others (68%) (X^2(3,N=323)=13.92,p=.000).

Table 9: Relationship status of offender by Failed to Report; Personal Matter?				
Would police have bias?	Family	Acquaintance	Stanger	Other
Yes	85% (34)	67.9% (112)	86.5% (83)	68.4% (13)
No	27.5% (11)	10.1% (17)	30.2% (29)	15.8% (3)
P < .01, Cramer's V = .24, N=323 (missing n=17)				
Note: sample size is recorded in parentheses				

Table 10: Gender of Victim by Failed to Report; Personal Matter?		
Personal Matter	Male	Female
Yes	87% (106)	78% (162)
No	12.4% (15)	21.7% (45)
P < .05, Cramer's V = .01, N=328 (missing n=12)		
Note: sample size is recorded in parentheses		

The bivariate results in Table 10 show that gender also made a difference in terms

of considering sexual assault a "personal matter." Males were slightly more likely to say

that this was a personal matter than were females (87% vs 78%)

(X^2(1,N=328)=4.46,p=.04).

Family Dynamics, Offenders, and Trust

Family dynamics, offenders, and trust levels have the strongest relationships among the reporting variables. This section will examine how these impact police bias, and the police finding out about the sexual assault. I examined how trust would factor into decisions of victims to report or not report to police. Table 11 shows that victims who both trusted and did not trust their families overall believed police would be bias (74% versus 85%). (X^2(2,N=544)=19.40,p=.000).

Table 11: Trust in Family by Police Bias		
Would police have bias?	Does Not Trust A Lot	Does Trust A Lot
Yes	84.8% (28)	74.4% (215)
No	15.2% (5)	25.6% (74)
P < .01, Cramer's V = .07, N=322 (missing n=18)		
Note: sample size is recorded in parentheses		

In terms of trust within family dynamics Table 12 shows that those individuals who chose to speak to their family members (49%)were more likely to report to police than those who did not have conversations with their families (14%). (X^2(1,N=510)=50.50,p=.000).

Table 12: Conversation with Family by Police Found Out		
Police Found out	Talked to Family- No	Talked to Family- Yes
Yes	14.2% (19)	49% (185)
No	85.8% (115)	50.8% (191)
P < .01, Cramer's V = .19, N=500 (missing n=48)		
Note: sample size is recorded in parentheses		

The offender's relationships to victims of sexual assault had the strongest relationship predictor of reporting (Table 13). Results show that those who were sexually assaulted by acquaintances were significantly less likely to report sexual assault (11%) than if they were assaulted by family (78%), strangers (21%), or others (21%)

$(X^2(3,N=539)=210.10,p=.000)$. Those who were assaulted by family members were

much more likely to report than those assaulted by anyone other category of offender

$(X^2(3,N=539)=210.10,p=.000)$.

Table 13: Relationship Status of Offender by Police Found Out

Police Found out	Family	Acquaintance	Strangers	Other
Yes	77.9% (152)	11.2% (22)	21.1 % (26)	20.8% (5)
No	22.1 % (43)	88.8% (175)	78.9% (97)	79.2% (19)
P < .01, Cramer's V = .62, N=539 (missing n=9)				
Note: sample size is recorded in parentheses				

Table 14: Marital Status by Police Found Out

Police Found out	Married or Common Law	Widowed, Separated, or Divorced	Single
Yes	19.9% (47)	55.7% (98)	44.7% (59)
No	80.1% (189)	44.3% (78)	55.3%(73)
P < .01, Cramer's V = .33, N=544 (missing n=4)			
Note: sample size is recorded in parentheses			

Results from Table 14 indicate that those who reported being married or common

law were significantly less likely to report (80%) than those who were widowed,

separated, divorced (44%) or single (55%) $(X^2(2,N=544)=58.88,p=.000)$.

Table 15: Conversations with Co-workers or neighbours by Police Found Out

Police Found out	Talked to Co-Workers- No	Talked to Co-Workers-Yes
Yes	35.3% (95)	45.1%(110)
No	64.7% (172)	54.9%(134)
P < .05, Cramer's V = .10, N=511 (missing n=37)		
Note: sample size is recorded in parentheses		

The bivariate results from Table 15 indicate that those who had conversations

with co-workers were more likely to report to police (45%) than those who did not speak

with their co-workers (35%) $(X^2(1,N=510)=5.03,p=.02)$.

Table 16: Conversations with Others by Police Found Out

Police Found out	Talked to Others- No	Talked to Others-Yes
Yes	21.8% (76)	79% (128)
No	78.2% (272)	21% (34)
P < .01, Cramer's V = .54, N=510 (missing n=38)		
Note: sample size is recorded in parentheses		

Finally, the bivariate results indicated in Table 16 show that those who did speak with others were significantly more likely to report to police (79%) than those who did not speak to others about their sexual assault (22%) (X^2(1,N=510)=150.56,p=.000).

5.2 EXAMINING THE FACTORS OF NON-REPORTING THROUGH LOGISTIC REGRESSION

Table 17 below shows the dependent and independent variables used in the logistic regression model below. It breaks down the case numbers for each category as well as the overall percentage out of the total case number (n=548). For example, out of 548 participants in the study 460 of them trusted their families a lot.

Table 17: Descriptive Statistics of Variables for Logistic Regression		
Variables	N	Percent
Dependent Variables		
Report to Police (Yes)	208	
Report to police (No)	340	
Independent Variables		
Trust Family A lot	460	84%
Trust family little	36	7%
Trust family moderately	48	9%
Married	236	43%
Widow/Separated/Divorce	179	33%
Single	133	24%
Gender- Male	186	34%
Gender- Female	362	66%
Talked to Other	172	31%
Talked to Co-worker	262	48%
Talked to Family	400	73%
Offender-Family or ex	195	36%
Offender- Acquaintance	197	36%
Offender- Stranger	123	22%
Offender- Other	24	4%
Total Cases		548

Logistic regression was performed to examine odds ratios [Exp(B)] of factors contributing to the non-reporting of sexual assault to police. The purpose of this model was to determine what factors influence the decisions of victims of sexual assault to not report to police, with a special interest on the impact, if any, of social networks on these decisions. This was done in four blocks. Below each block is examined separately, and a summary of the model is provided.

In block one of the analysis, I aimed to determine how the offender relationship status would impact non-reporting among sexual assault victims in Canada. As Table 18

shows, both "family" and "acquaintance" had significant relationships to victims at the p<.05 levels. The strongest relationship to the victim not reporting was familiarity with the offender. If a victim is attacked by someone they know, they were almost three times less likely to report to police than if they were attacked by a stranger (Exp (B)=2.6, p<.01).

Table 18: Offender Relationship Status- Block 1

Variables	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95% CI	Upper Limit 95% CI
Offender Relationship: Family **	-.078	.045	.135
Offender Relationship: Acquaintance *	2.6	1.11	3.83
Offender Relationship: Other	.998	.339	2.94
** P<.01 *P<.05 Cox & Snell .34 Nagelkerke R .44			
Reference Category: Offender Relationship-Strangers			

For block two of this analysis (Table 19), confidence in police and courts were added to the model. While neither of these were statistically significant, both family, and acquaintance relationships remained significant to the model at the p<.05 level. Those who were assaulted by acquaintances were still two times less likely to report to police than those attacked by strangers (Exp (B)=2.07, p<.01).

Table 19: Confidence in Criminal Justice System- Block 2

Variables	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95% CI	Upper Limit 95% CI
Offender Relationship: Family **	.007	.044	.134
Offender Relationship: Acquaintance *	2.07	1.11	3.86
Offender Relationship: Other	-.012	.334	2.92
Confidence in Police	-.012	.947	1.11
Confidence in Courts	-.017	.892	1.09
**p<.01 *p<.05 Cox & Snell .33 Nagelkerke R .44			
Reference Category: Offender Relationship-Strangers			

In block three (Table 20), family trust a lot, trust family little, trust family moderately, talking to others, talking to neighbours or friends, talking to family, and sense of belonging, were all added to the model. Offender remained statistically significant at p<.01 levels, while being attacked by an acquaintance resulted in a victim being 2 times less likely to report the crime to police than if they were attacked by a stranger (Exp (B)=2.07, p<.05). Talked to family and talking to others were statistically significant at p<.01 levels, while a lot of trust in family and moderate trust in family was significant at the p<.05 level. Those who trusted their families a lot were three times less likely to report to police than those who trusted there family only a little (Exp (B)=3.04, p<.05), while those reported only trusting their family moderately were 2.5 times less likely to report sexual assault to police than those who trusted their family only a little (Exp (B)=2.43, p<.05). Further, those who talked to other people (defined as lawyers, religious personal, medical personal etc.) were 6 times less likely to report the crime to police than those who did not (Exp (B)=6.17, p<.05).

Table 20: Family Dynamics-Block 3

Variables	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95% CI	Upper Limit 95% CI
Offender Relationship: Family **	.172	.093	.320
Offender Relationship: Acquaintance *	2.57	1.28	5.13
Trust in Family: a lot*	3.04	1.15	8.03
Trust in Family moderately	2.43	.715	8.25
Talked to Others (Nurses, Doctors, Lawyers & Religious Personal) **	6.17	3.51	10.82
Talked to Family**	.362	.189	.693
Offender Relationship: Other	.511	.500	5.56
Confidence in Police	.036	.949	1.14
Confidence Courts	1.01	.910	1.13
Trust Family (Mod)	2.43	.715	8.25
Talk to Friend/Neighbour	.908	.496	1.66
Talk to Co-Worker	.835	.499	1.40
Sense of Belonging	1.02	.865	1.2
**p<.01 *p<.05 Cox & Snell .42 Nagelkerke R .57			

Reference Categories: Offender Relationship- Stranger, Little Trust in Family

For the fourth and final block (Table 21), sex, age, and marital status (married or common law, separated or divorced, and single) were added to the model. Only marital status was significant. Those who reported being widowed, single, or divorced were 2 times more likely to report than those who were married or common law (Exp (B)=.475, p<.05). Further, in this model, both a lot of trust in family, and moderate trust in family dropped off in the pooled data. However, in the 25 iterations, moderate trust bounced between significant at the p<.05 level and the p<.06 level. Relationship with offender remained a strong predictor of reporting. Those who were assaulted by acquaintances are still significant and almost 3 times less likely to report to police than those attacked by strangers (Exp (B)=2.63, p<.01). Victims who decided to talk to lawyers, medical

personal, or religious personal was significant at the p<.01 level, and were 5.5 times less

likely to report to police than those who did not (Exp (B)=5.5, p<.01).

Table 21: Marital Status-Block 4

Variables	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95% CI	Upper Limit 95% CI
Offender Relationship: Family **	.194	.102	.369
Offender Relationship: Acquaintance *	2.63	1.30	5.31
Talked to Family*	.370	.190	.721
Talked to Others (Nurses, Doctors, Lawyers & Religious Personal) **	5.55	3.12	9.09
Marital Status: Widowed, Separated, Divorced *	.475	.254	.886
Confidence in Police	1.05	.957	1.15
Confidence in Courts	1.00	.902	1.12
Trust in Family (Mod)	2.06	.594	7.10
Talk to Friend or Neighbour	.917	.494	1.70
Talk to Co-Worker	.820	.483	1.39
Sense of Belonging	.981	.828	1.16
Gender of Respondent	.993	.565	1.75
Marital Status Single	.544	.280	1.06
Age of Respondent	1.09	.991	1.19
** P<.01 * P<.05, Cox & Snell.48 Nagelkerke R .65			
Reference Categories: Offender Relationship- Stranger, Marital Status- Married/CL			

5.3 EXAMINING THE FACTORS OF REPORTING

Given this thesis focuses on why people choose not to report, this analysis was

done in an exploratory matter, as it is important to consider why people do chose to

report in order to understand the larger picture. To do this, I ran some single block

logistic regression models. Two of these returned significant results at the p<.05 level.

First, those who talked to co-workers (Table 22) were less likely to say that they did it in

order to get protection [Exp(B)=.252. p<.05]. Secondly, those who talked to "others"

(Table 22) (lawyers, medical doctors, nurses, or religious personal) were ten times more

likely to report to police on the recommendation of someone else [Exp(B)=10.14. p<.01].

Table 22: -Co-Workers by To Stop the Incident or For Protection

Variables	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95% CI	Upper Limit 95% CI
Talked to Co-workers*	.252	.068	.940
P<.05 Cox & Snell .17 Nagelkerke R .22			

Table 23: Talked to Others by Recommended by Someone Else

Variables	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95% CI	Upper Limit 95% CI
Talked to Others	10.14	1.70	60.56
P<.05 Cox & Snell .17 Nagelkerke R .22			

Logistic regression was again performed to examine odds ratios [Exp(B)] of

factors contributing to the non-reporting of sexual assault to police. The purpose of this

model was to determine the factors that influence the decisions of victims of sexual

assault who do report to police, with a special interest on the impact, if any, of social

networks on these decisions. This was done in four blocks, again for this section I will

only report the significant findings. Below I will examine each block separately, and then

provide a summary of the model.

In block one (Table 24), of the analysis I aimed to determine how the offender

relationship status would impact reporting among sexual assault victims in Canada. The

strongest relationship to the victim reporting was if the offender was a family member

(p<.001). If a victim was attacked by someone in their family they were almost thirteen

times more likely to report it to police than those attacked by strangers ([Exp (B)=12.71, p<.01]. In block two confidence in the courts and police were added. Confidence in the courts, however, was not significant (Table 25). Family offender remained significant, and victims were still almost thirteen times more likely to report to police than those attacked by strangers ([Exp (B)=12.90, p<.01].

Table 24: Offender Relationship Status Likely to Report- Block 1

Variables	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95% CI	Upper Limit 95% CI
Offender Relationship: Family **	12.70	7.34	22.00
Offender Relationship: Acquaintance *	.261	.900	.020

**p<.01 *p<.05
Cox & Snell .32
Nagelkerke R .44
Reference Category: Strangers

Table 25: Confidence in Criminal Justice System Likely to Report- Block 2

Variables	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95% CI	Upper Limit 95% CI
Offender Relationship: Family **	12.90	7.42	22.41
Offender Relationship: Acquaintance *	.485	.902	.020
Confidence in Police	.982	.905	1.07
Confidence in Courts	1.02	.929	1.12

**p<.01 *p<.05
Cox & Snell .32
Nagelkerke R .44
Reference Category: Strangers

For block three of the analysis (Table 26), sense of belonging, talking to neighbours or friends, talking to others, talking to family, and trust family a lot or moderately were added to the model. Those who were victimized by someone in their family were still statistically significant and remained more likely to report to police

almost six times more than those victimized by strangers ([Exp (B)=5.7, p<.01]). Talking

to family members was also statistically significant and victims were three times more

likely to report to police if they spoke to family members then if they did not speak with

family members ([Exp (B)=2.66, p<.01]).

Table 26: Family Dynamics Likely to Report- Block 3

Variables	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95% CI	Upper Limit 95% CI
Offender Relationship: Family **	5.47	2.96	10.10
Offender Relationship: Acquaintance *	.406	.207	.795
Trust In Family: Moderate *	.315	.119	.836
Talked To Family**	2.90	1.53	5.51
Talked to Others (Nurses, Doctors, Lawyers & Religious Personal) **	.145	.085	.246
Offender Relationship: Other	.597	.181	1.97
Confidence in Police	.971	.882	1.07
Confidence in Courts	.996	.897	1.11
Sense of Belonging	.990	.840	1.17
Talk to Friend or Neighbour	1.08	.588	1.99
Trust Family (Mod)	.346	.124	1.45
**p<.01 *p<.05 Cox & Snell .42 Nagelkerke R .57			
Reference Categories: Offender Relationship (Stranger); Trust in Family (Little Trust)			

For the final block (Table 27) in the model age, sex, and marital status were all

added. While marital status proved to be significant, the other newly added factors were

not. Both offenders, and speaking to social networks, remained significant but trust

dropped off and was no longer significant (although it varied between p =.05 and p=.06

in the iterations generated by the multiple imputation). Those who were victimized by

family members remained five times more likely to report to police than those victimized

by strangers ([Exp (B)=5.1, p<.01]). Those victims who spoke to their family members

about their assaults were almost three times more likely to report to police than those who did not ([Exp (B)=2.58, p<.05]). Finally, those who were widowed, separated, or divorced were two times more likely to report to police, than those who were married or common law ([Exp (B)=2.15, p<.05]).

Table 27: Marital Status Likely to Report- Block 4

Variables	Odds Ratio	Lower Limit 95% CI	Upper Limit 95% CI
Offender Relationship: Family **	5.1	2.69	9.77
Offender Relationship: Acquaintance *	.388	.193	.780
Talked To Family*	2.58	1.33	5.03
Talked to Others (Nurses, Doctors, Lawyers & Religious Personal) **	.183	.104	.320
Marital Status: widowed Separated or Divorced *	.766	1.16	4.0
Trust Family (A lot)	.399	.149	1.07
Offender Relationship: Other	.643	.194	2.14
Confidence in Police	.959	.867	1.06
Confidence in Courts	1.01	.902	1.12
Trust Family (Mod)	.497	.143	1.72
Talk to Friend or Neighbour	1.08	.572	2.02
Talk to Co-Worker	1.23	.723	2.08
Sense of Belonging	1.03	.868	1.22
Gender of Respondent	.990	.562	1.75
Marital Status: Single	1.87	.963	3.62
Age of Respondent	.924	.842	3.62

**p<.01 *p<.05 Cox & Snell .483 Nagelkerke R .650
Reference Categories: Stranger Relationship, Little Trust, Married/CL

5.5 REASONS FOR REPORTING

For exploratory purposes, I also examined the questions that the GSS (2009) asks of victims under the heading: "why did you report to police." These are split up into four

categories: victims that reported their ex-spouse, victims that reported someone (other than an ex-spouse), victims who did not report their ex-spouse, and finally victims that did not report (other than their ex).

Those who answered these questions, and were assaulted by an ex (Table 28), were most likely to cite protection as their number one reason for reporting the incident to police (91%). This was followed by the belief that it was their duty to report the incident (46%). Other reasons cited by those reporting their ex were to punish them (23%), and because someone else suggested that they report to police (26%).

When victims of sexual assault reported (excluding ex) (Table 29), 92% indicated that they felt it was their duty to report to police, and only 52% said they reported to stop the violence or receive protection (to be discuss further in chapter 6). Other cited reasons included to have the perpetrator arrested (75%), and because someone else suggested that they report the incident to police (9%).

Table 28: Summary why people report their ex

Variables	Yes	No
To stop the Violence or receive protection	102 91%	9 8%
To punish ex	26 23%	85 76%
It was my duty to report	51 46%	60 54%
Someone else recommended I report	29 26%	82 74%
Total	111	

Table 29: Summary why people report their sexual assault

Variables	Yes	No
To stop the Violence or receive protection	52% (26)	24 (46%)
To have them arrested	75% (38)	25% (13)
It was my duty to report	92% (47)	8% (4)
Someone else recommended I report	9% (10)	81% (41)
Total		51

Table 30: Summary why people did not report (ex)

Variables	Yes	No
Dealt with it another way	78% (50)	22% (14)
Fear of revenge	32% (20)	68% (43)
Police couldn't do anything about it	15% (25)	60% (38)
Police wouldn't help	15% (10)	84% (53)
Did not want to get involved with the police	58% (37)	42% (27)
Did not want ex jailed or arrested	51% (33)	48% (31)
Was a personal matter	70% (45)	30% (19)
Little or No confidence in the CRJS	27% (17)	47% (73)
Did not want anyone to know	45% (29)	55% (35)
Fear of publicity	15% (10)	84% (54)
Wasn't important enough	55% (35)	45% (29)
Total		64

Table 31: Summary why people did not report

Variables	Yes	No
Dealt with it another way	49%	50%
	(263)	(269)
Fear of Revenge	9%	90%
	(53)	(479)
Police couldn't do anything about it	47%	51%
	(255)	(272)
Police wouldn't help	18%	80%
	(97)	(424)
Did not want to get involved with police	43%	56%
	(231)	(298)
Not important enough	44%	24%
	(233)	(129)
Personal Matter	47%	52%
	(252)	(276)
Police would be bias	8%	50%
	(42)	(481)
Little or no confidence in the justice system	12%	87%
	(64)	(464)
Total	528	

Of those who answered the standard General Social Survey (2009) questions

regarding why they chose not to report their ex to police (Table 30), most said that they

dealt with it in another way (78%), that they considered it a personal matter (70%), or

that it wasn't important enough (55%). Very few victims of sexual assault were

concerned with what would happen in the Criminal justice system (27%), whether people

knew about it (45%), that there would be publicity surrounding the incident (15%), or

that the police would not help them (15%).

Of those that answered the General Social Survey (2009) regarding why they

chose not to report their experience to police (excluding 'ex') (Table 31), the majority

said that it was dealt with another way (49%); that it was a personal matter (47%); or that police could not do anything about it (49%). As with the people who did not report their ex's, victims sexually assaulted by others were not concerned with the criminal justice system (12%), or concerned that the police would have bias (8%). The biggest difference between the two groups was that those who were sexually assaulted by their ex were more afraid of revenge than those who were not assaulted by their ex (32% vs. 9%).

5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Table 32 below shows the final conclusions from the logistic regression model. The model shows that those who are victimized by family are 5 times more likely to report to police, and acquaintances almost 3 times less likely to report to police than strangers. Those that had conversations about their victimization with family members were 2.5 times more likely to report than those victims that did not have a conversation with family.

Alternatively, those that had conversations with others were 5.5 times less likely to report to police than those that did not have those conversations. The model also indicated that relationship status may influence the decision to report. Those who were widowed, separated, or divorced were 2 time more likely to report to police than those victims who were married or in common law relationships. Finally, while trust was not significant in Block 4 of the pooled data it tended to go back and forth in the data sets and averaged out at $p < .06$ indicating that it is possible trust may play a role in reporting decisions. More research would be needed in this area to come to a conclusion though.

Table 32: Summary of Logistic Regression Results

Variables	Odds
Offender Relationship: Family**	~5 Times more likely to report than stranger's category
Offender Relationship: Acquaintance *	~2.6 times less likely to report than stranger's category
Talked to Family *	~2.5 times more likely to report
Talked to Nurse, Doctor, Lawyer, or Religious Personal **	~5.5 times less likely to report
Marital Status: Widowed, Separated, Divorced*	~2 times more likely to report than married or common law
Trust Family A lot *	~ 2.63 times less likely to report than little trust in family
Talked to Others**	~5.55 times less likely to report
**p<.01, *p<.05	

Based on the information gathered by the logistic regression we can conclude that social networks is a mixed bag when it comes to influencing the decisions of sexual assault victims. Some forms of social networks are likely to influence victims to report while others are more likely to turn them away from reporting.

Logistic regression was performed to examine the odds ratios [Exp(B)] of factors contributing to the non-reporting of sexual assault to police. The purpose of these models, then, was to determine the odds that a victim of sexual assault would not report to police. The chapter 6 will unpack and discuss these results. They will examine why underreporting is occurring, what impact social networks and offender status could have on these decisions as well as discuss and examine how the criminal justice system could be contributing to these results.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.0 DISSCUSSION OF FINDINGS

As already established in the literature, under-reporting is a serious issue when it comes to sexual assault (Abel& Rouleau, 1990; Beattie et al, 2003; Besserer & Trainor, 2000; Bolen & Scannapieco, 1999; Fisher et al 2003; Kelly & Stermac 2008). Little has changed within the literature in the last thirty years. For instance, previous studies have consistently found that sexual assault is not reported due to victim blaming, perceptions of bias within the justice system, and an overall feeling of responsibalization on the part of the victim. This is particularly true for women. The goal of this study was to examine the reasons that victims of sexual assault do not report the crime to police. The results of this project have found that there still is not much difference between the reasons people gave thirty years ago, and the reasons people give now. However, there was at least one somewhat unexplored factor that appears to be significant: the role that victims' social networks play in their decision-making process.

The following chapter unpacks, and discusses, the results from chapter 5, and explore social networking influences. The chapter is divided into the following four sections. Section one will provide a summary of the findings, which will unpack significant factors in decision making. The first section also examines how those odds compare to what victims said are the reasons they did not report sexual assault. Section two examines the importance of reporting, and the reasons given by victims for why they report to police. Section three examines policy implications and suggestions. Specifically, it addresses ways to emphasize the importance of reporting sexual assault to police, and

how to make people feel safe when reporting. Section four outlines limitations, opportunities for future research, and concluding remarks.

6.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Relation to Offender

The previous relationship that the victim had with the offender is linked to reporting decisions by the victim. Results from the current project are interesting because they show that those who are assaulted by family members are five times more likely to report to police than those who are assaulted by strangers. This contradicts the literature in that typically those who are assaulted by strangers have otherwise been found more likely to report to police (Skelton & Burkhart 1980; Fish et al 2003; Felson and Pare 2005; Allen 2010; Weiss 2011). The literature frames stranger rape under the notions of ideal victims and victim blaming, as victims of assault reported that they were taken less seriously when they reported being assaulted by someone they know (Lizotte, 1985; Weiss, 2011; Felson & Pare, 2005).

If we take what the literature has shown over the past thirty years, and apply it to the findings from the 2009 General Social Survey, there are a few possibilities that may explain the shift. The first possibility is that others within the family found out about the sexual violence and reported it to police. For example, a parent reporting to the police on behalf of a minor.

A second possibility could be traced back to the victim blaming framework. It is possible that those who are assaulted by strangers internalize the blame, and therefore are more reluctant to go to police than those assaulted by family members. The literature

shows that those assaulted are often questioned about their behaviour, their state of mind (e.g. intoxication), and their dress (Smart 1989; Bachman 1998; Fisher et al 2003; Belknap 2010; Cohen et al 2013). These questions are less likely to be asked in a situation where someone has been assaulted by a family member.

Culturally, it is more difficult to see a victim of such an assault as 'asking for it', or leading on a family member. While the belief that a victim leading on an offender is most prevalent when a victim is assaulted by an acquaintance, it is possible that the belief may not be entirely absent when someone is assaulted by a stranger. In other words, though literature has showed that victims are more likely to be seen as "ideal victims," when assaulted by strangers there may still be victim blaming, or the expectation of victim blaming, when victims make their final reporting decisions. The exploratory findings in the thesis support the victim blaming framework as a possible explanation. In all major categories of offender types, victims believed that police would show some kind of bias towards them.

Eighty-seven percent of victims of sexual assault who classified their offender as a stranger thought police would be bias against them. The number of victims who felt that police would show bias against them is interesting because it is at odds with the "ideal victim" theory presented by feminist scholars such as Randall (2010). While it is documented within the research that the criminal justice system seems to respond to sexual assaults differently based on offender-victim relationship (Burt 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994; Allen 2007; Smart 1989; Correia 2002; Burman 2010; Randall 2010; Egan & Wilson 2012), that narrative does not seem to have been internalized by victims of sexual assault.

It is possible that victim blaming has become apparent within the media, court rooms, and everyday language, that all victims worry about how they will be perceived. Though as we will see this is beginning to change.

Social Networks

There is little research that specifically examines sexual assault victims' reporting decisions and how they are connected to their social networks. There are some studies that have found that victims have been blamed for the sexual assault by family and friends (Pino, 1999; Gadalla & Suarez, 2010; Kelly & Stermac, 2008; Allen, 2007; Weiss, 2011), but none of them have directly linked not reporting to police with victims' social networks. In 2004, Filipas and Ullman found that 94% of victims talked to their friends or family, and that 52% talked to medical personal. Of these victims, 80% received negative reactions from these networks, and only 26% went on to report to police (Filipas & Ullman 2004). Feldman-Summers (1981) found that if a victim's family did not want them to go to police, they were less likely to do so. It is possible that those who spoke with their social networks were discouraged from entering the justice system due to the poor perception of the system (Kelly & Stermac, 2008; Allen, 2007; Burt & Clay-Werner 2011). The findings of this thesis support the current literature in that there does seem to be a connection between social networks and reporting. Future research would have to be pursued to confirm any connections.

By performing a regression analysis on the General Social Survey, I was able to explore how trust in social networks, and confiding in social networks, potentially influenced the decision to report. Those who trusted their families "a lot," and talked to their families, were less likely to report to police than those who trusted their families,

but did not speak with them. Further, those who did not trust their families "a lot," but did speak with them, were more likely to report to police. The exploratory cross tabulations revealed that those who do not trust their families "a lot" overwhelmingly believed that police would be biased (85%), and those that did not trust their families "a lot" also did not trust that police would be impartial (74%).

However, speaking to families or not, did not appear to impact victims' expectations of police bias. 75% of victims who spoke with family members thought police would not have bias against them, while 95% of those who did not speak to family thought police would not have bias against them. We can speculate that not speaking with family increases the chance that a victim will have a perception of police bias. That said, the level of trust victims had with their families changed the results. Those who trusted their families "little" reported to police 69% of the time, whereas those who trusted their families "a lot" reported to police 35% of the time. In other words, victims who trusted their families were less likely to report their sexual assault to the police. Further, those who spoke with other types of social networks (medical personal, lawyers, or religious personal), reported to police in almost 80% of the cases. However, those who did not speak with other types of social networks, reported to police in only 20% of cases.

The victim blaming framework is important to utilize in order to examine these social networks, and their potential influence on victims. It is possible that those who choose to speak with their families were either blamed by them, or they were warned that the criminal justice system may blame them. Carol Smart's analysis of the rape trial is useful in understanding society's reception of victims of sexual assault. She argued that it is the responsibility of the female victim to demonstrate that she did not enjoy being

sexually assaulted. Women must deny enjoyment, because the reception of pleasure presumes consent (Smart 1989). In other words, the possibility of pleasure erases any responsibility for male behaviour. During a rape trial, Smart (1989) notes male sexuality, and its satisfaction, is justification for not taking women seriously. Given the documented treatment of women during such trials, and the literature that emphasizes victim blaming as a primary reason for low reporting, it is possible that a victim's social network would worry about them reporting to law enforcement.

To understand the impact that the perceptions of the criminal justice system could have on victims and their social networks, we have to first examine confidence in the criminal justice system (see below). The victim blaming explanation is a good launching point for examining this further given victims who spoke with professionals reported at a rate of 80%. However, it is also possible that the family, and the victim decided that it would be best to treat the assault as a personal matter to deal with. Victims reported to the GSS (2009) that they saw their assault as a personal matter (74%) or that they had dealt with it another way (77%).

Gender

The current study had a rather high percent of male respondents at 34% (n=186) while women made of the majority of the study at 66% (n=362). Given the higher percentage of male victims in the study it was a good opportunity to explore if factors impacted the genders differently. The project only had one significant result indicating that being male or female may influence your decision to report, and it remained insignificant in the logistic regression model, to police in that men were slightly more likely than women to cite "personal reasons" as a factor in their decision to not report to police (87% versus 78%).

The result of gender consistently being found statistically non-significant is substantively significant in that it implies there really is no difference in the factors that men consider when making their reporting decisions and those factors that women consider when making their reporting decisions. As with women men have said they often regret having made the decision to report to police due to their treatment, or they simply never reported due to the embarrassment of not being able to be 'manly' enough to fight off an attacker (Pino & Meier 1999; Mullaney 2007; Bull & Sleath 2010). Many of the studies had concluded that both men and women internalize blame. In other words, men are expected to be in control of situations at all time, and be powerful if they have been sexually victimized that identity is brought into question (Weiss 2010). On the other hand, women are expected to be proper and modest and if they are assaulted are often questioned on how their behaviour may have brought this on (Dunn 2010; Weiss 2010).

The fact that gender was not statistically significant is substantively very important because it means that men either have faced the same issue was women have in the criminal justice system, or they are worried about the same things impacted them that women tend to be concerned with.

Confidence in the criminal Justice System

The current study did find when examining the reasons people do not report to police using the GSS questions that one in five victims reported not trusting the criminal justice system to help them. The criminal justice system contains many elements, not just the trial portion. Some victims of sexual assault feared that the police would have bias against them, or that they could not or would not help them. Some said that they had little to no confidence in the justice system itself.

We needn't look far within the justice system to find examples of what victims mean. For example, in 2011 Justice Robert Dewar ruled that a victim of sexual assault was partly responsible for her rape due to her behaviour and the clothing she was wearing. Justice Dewar went as far as to reference the tube top, makeup and high heels the victim was wearing the night of the attack (CBC 2011). In November 2011, the Canadian Judicial Council announced that while the judge's remarks were "insensitive," he would not face any reprimands (CBC 2011).

Not long after this case, Justice Robin Camp made headlines, for asking a victim of sexual assault why she could not "keep her knees together" (Krugel 2016; Crawford 2017). The justice also referenced her as the accused on several occasions, and commented that "pain and sex go together" (Krugel 2016). In the case of this justice, the Canadian Judicial Council concluded that "Justice Camp's conduct is so manifestly and profoundly destructive of the concept of the impartiality, integrity and independence of the judicial role that public confidence sufficiently undermined to render the judge incapable of executing the judicial office" (Crawford 2017). In response to the Council's recommendation, Justice Camp resigned his position on the Alberta bench in March of 2017. It is clear that some progress is being made. Unlike the Council's decision in 2011, the Council emphasized the conduct of the judge in this case stating "judges are expected to demonstrate knowledge of social issues, awareness of changes in social values, humility, tolerance and respect for others…those are the vary qualities that sustain public confidence in the judiciary" (Crawford 2017).

In March 2017, a Halifax justice acquitted a taxi driver in the sexual assault of a woman Halifax police found unconscious in the back of his cab (Star 2017). In a ruling

statement, Justice Lenehan acknowledged that a person is incapable of consent if they are indeed unconscious, or are so intoxicated they are not able to understand or perceive the current situation. However, Justice Lenehan followed saying that, "This does not mean, however, that an intoxicated person cannot consent to sexual activity, clearly a drunk can consent." Justice Lenehan ruled that the crown failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the victim did not consent to sexual conduct (Star 2017). As will be discussed in section 6.4, the Justice was correct in his ruling from a legal standpoint, but it does little to assure victims they will be treated fairly within the justice system.

Randall 2010 defines responsibalization as "the idea that women are, and should be, responsible for navigating their own safety, for managing men's sexual attention and aggression, and also for accurately assessing and avoiding risk." (p. 409) Other research has found that victim blaming is more likely if drugs or alcohol were involved in the incident, or if dress and behaviour were deemed inappropriate (Bachman 1998; Allen 2007; Kelly & Sternmac 2008; Belknap 2010; Randall 2010; Weiss 2010). Court cases in recent years further this in the Canadian court system.

These example cases show that responsibalization, and victim blaming, are both prevalent in the criminal justice system. When analyzing the language Justices choose to use, and the verdicts and sentencing they pronounce, it sends a particular message about the courts and the belief of the ideal victim. These court decisions all contribute to embedding societal expectations of sexual assault victims, and shake the perception of that system causing low reporting rates. The Canadian Judicial Council's acknowledgement is a step in the right direction to try and limit the problems related to perception and the justice system. However, the conduct of the three judges shows that

while laws may have attempted to curb victim blaming by introducing rape shield like protections, these recent cases show us that little has really changed.

In 1987, West and Zimmerman argued that "doing gender" is a process we learn over time as a result of socialization that teaches us there is a clear, differentiated, behavioural expectations for men and women (West and Zimmerman 1987:98). They argue that "doing gender" means we are creating differences between boys and girls, which later result in differences between men and women (West & Zimmerman 1987:98). The above court cases show us little has changed, as the courts still have two separate behavioural expectations for men and women. The literature states strongly that the perception of the criminal justice system is an important factor when victims debate if they should report (Schewendinger & Schwendinger 1974; Field 1978; Skelton & Burkhart 1980; Smart 1989; Bachman 1998; Allen 2010; Randall 2010; Thompson 2011; Cohen et al 2013). Kelly and Sternmac (2008) found that almost 40% of victims did not report to police because of their perceptions. Additionally, research on individuals within the justice system has found such bias. Page (2010) found that almost 50% of police officers said they wouldn't believe a prostitute if she said she were raped. However, 95% of police officers reported that they would believe a virgin or a professional woman. Jordan (2005) found that police will often judge a victim's credibility based on whether alcohol was consumed, and what the past relationship was with the offender. My results (found in chapter 5) seem to be consistent with such literature. Victims fear that they will be victimized by the justice system, or simply not believed at all. Cahill (2001) argues that this process, what West & Zimmerman refer to as "doing gender," begins when children learn gender; they begin to self-regulate and thus could be susceptible to

believing rape myths and other victim blaming ideologies. As a result of the socialization process, policy will be a key weapon in fighting these notions, which is discussed below.

6.2 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Little progress seems to have been made in terms of the treatment of sexual assault cases and its victims. In 1989 Carol Smart argued that the law reinforced a phallocentric culture where women learn a specific, imposed standard of consent. Twenty-one years later Burman (2010) argued that less innocent victims are constructed by the system as an innocent victim only if women conform to gender norms. The cases discussed in the previous section clearly exemplify what Smart (1989) and Burman (2010) were arguing. However, there are several policy changes Canada could make to begin to combat these social problems.

First, only judges that know and understand sexual assault law should oversee the proceedings in such cases. For example, Justice Camp career was focused on contractual, bankruptcy, and trust law, oversaw the sexual assault trial that would eventually lead to his resignation (star 2017). Several times in one public statement Judge Camp admitted to not being an expert in sexual assault law. In March 2017, the House of Commons unanimously fast tracked a bill (introduced by the opposition party) that would require judges to take courses in sexual assault law (star 2017). While this is a promising idea, it is not enough. For example, with regard to case law, the Halifax judge that (from section 6.1) was not incorrect when he made his ruling to acquit. Currently our Canadian Criminal Code defines consent in subsection 273.1(1) as "the voluntary agreement of the complainant to engage in the sexual activity in question (Department of Justice 2015).

Conduct short of a voluntary agreement to engage in sexual activity does not constitute

consent as a matter of law." Further, subsection 273.1(2) sets out very specific situations

in which there is no consent in law; no consent is obtained if:

1. where the agreement is expressed by the words or conduct of a person other than the complainant
2. where the complainant is incapable of consenting to the activity
3. where the accused induces the complainant to engage in the activity by abusing a position of trust, power or authority
4. where the complainant expresses, by words or conduct, a lack of agreement to engage in the activity, or
5. where the complainant, having consented to engage in sexual activity, expresses, by words or conduct, a lack of agreement to continue to engage in the activity (Department of Justice 2015).

As a result, we need to revisit how we define consent in Canada and ensure our consent

laws are doing what they are intended to do. To this end, we can use language that is

clear how we define consent including exactly what it means to be unable to consent to

sexual activity.

We also need to make sure that support services are accessible to victims (both

men and women), and that victims know they are available. To communicate this, police,

medical professionals, and assault centres could work together to communicate to victims

and the public that these resources are available. Often we forget that changing the

perceptions of victims starts before they are victims. Thus, victims who choose not to

come forward are making an informed decision. The Government of Canada could

implement grants to provide funding for these programs. It is a good start that the

Government of Canada wants to assure the judges are trained in sexual assault case law,

but if the law is flawed it will be of little consequence, as we saw in Halifax.

In the previous section, we saw that even though laws may be in place to protect victims, human error and judgement are still factors. Therefore, we must broaden our scope, and attempt to change overarching societal views.

Weiss (2011) reported that the rejection of victim as an identity is a major obstacle. The term victim is often associated with being weak, or passive. As a result, we have seen a shift in language. For example, many victims of sexual assault identify with the term 'surviour' instead of 'victim.' For men in particular the rejection of the "victim identity" is high, as victimhood damages their masculinity (Weiss 2011; Merorossian 2014). However, it is problematic to reject the victim identity altogether, as we may inadvertently be reinforcing victim blaming ideology (Weiss 2011 Merorossian 2014). To combat this line of thought, we should explore an educational approach to understanding sexual assault and consent.

First, the concept of victim blaming needs to be introduced into sex education classes in schools and aimed at both girls and boys. While consent is covered in sex education programs across Canada, the introduction of the topic is varied (Young 2015). I would recommend that instead of introducing consent as a standalone topic, it should be included as part of all other topics. Its definition should be consistent, and repeatedly discussed to ensure students are understanding consent from an early age. Introducing the concept of consent to young students could be as simple as explaining that they have the right to refuse hugs. Emphasizing these ideas and concepts throughout their school years has several benefits. First, by emphasizing consent early and often, we can begin to combat mixed messages from media. Second, we help children understand that they are allowed to say "no" to unwanted touching. Finally, we can begin to combat the idea that

the 'victim identity' is something to be ashamed of. If we move away from the idea that being a victim somehow makes you weak, it has the potential to improve reporting rates, particularly among male victims. (Weiss 2011).

Lastly, given research is consistently finding that men suffer from victim blaming, and face the same obstacles that women do when considering their decision more services specifically for men should be funded across Canada. Many rape crisis centres across Canada do not allow men to access their services in order to protect women. While this is understandable Canada should focus on how they can meet the needs of men while protecting the needs of all victims. Very few centres have programs for both men and women but it may be possible to draw on the few centres that have programs for both genders such as Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse who offers male victims individual counselling as well as group counselling (CCASA 2012).

6.3 FUTURE RESEARCH, LIMITATIONS

Only 38% of those surveyed for the General Social Survey in 2009 reported their sexual assault to police. Based on research over the past three decades, victims consider several factors before reporting to police, including the gender of the victim; the circumstances of the incident; the environment; the victim's age; the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator; and the victim's perception of the justice system. For exploratory purposes, I examined the reasons people said that they did or did not report to police. In terms of not reporting, there were three main areas that people stated. Not having confidence in the criminal justice system was the least likely reason given for not reporting. A total of 12% of victims felt that they had little or no confidence in the criminal justice system, 8% felt that the police would be biased against them, 19% felt

that police would not help them, and 44% did not want police involved. The second area was largely personal reasons. Almost half of all respondents said they either "dealt with it another way," or they "considered it a personal matter." Lastly, 64% of victims reported that their assault "was not important." The reasons for not reporting are consistent with the literature. Rape myths, victim blaming, the criminal justice system have all been cited as reasons for over thirty years.

There are several limitations to this study. The first limitation to the study is sampling age. Research shows that those between the ages of 15-24 are most vulnerable to sexual assault (Status of Women in Canada 2016). Due to the sampling methodology of the GSS (2009) only 7% of those surveyed were in that age group. Because Statistics Canada contacted people by landline for participation in this study which is problematic because the Canadian population is continuously moving away from landlines and towards other technology such as mobile devices (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission 2015). According to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) while the majority of homes in Canada still have landlines (78%) more also have mobile phones (85%) and the number continues to drop (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission 2015). Given so many households have mobile devices it is probable that those between the ages of 15 and 24 do not use their household landline and are therefore less likely to have had the chance to answer this survey resulting in the survey being skewed towards an older population. Indeed looking at the age groups the mean sample age was 40 to 44 and 75% of the sample was 35 years of age or older.

The second limitation is that it is impossible to tell whether the social networks were the first point of contact for those in this study. The first point of contact could be a crucial interaction for a victim of sexual violence, but the GSS does not allow us to know if they had already decided not to report when they approached their social networks. Secondly, the Research Data Centre denied my application to access the Northern Canadian Territories data, and spousal violence records. They stated that this information would not make any difference to the research, and that the samples were small. However, without data from the North, and without access to spousal records, there is not a way to generalize to those segments of the population, or examine the reasons for low reporting in spousal abuse. Finally, the sample was fairly small (only examining 548 sexual assault victims), and it only included sexual violence from the last 12 months. As such, generalizing this to the entire Canadian population should be done with reservation and caution.

The last limitation of the study is the examination of the reasons that victims were allowed to select from within the GSS. The list of reasons given by the GSS may have been interpreted by victims one way, and meant in another. They also did not necessarily capture the entire picture and therefore victims may have simply selected the closest selection that matched their own reasoning. Nevertheless, the selections made by victims does correlate with current literature on the subject as well as the outcomes of other analyses used in this study.

While many projects have examined sexual assault and reporting rates, this thesis can serve as a starting point for future research, and has identified a major gap in the literature in that the impact of social networks on reporting has been understudied. First, a

qualitative component should be included in future studies to ask participants why they did or did not report to police, who they spoke to about the assault, whether those conversations influenced their decision to report, and their experiences with different networks. The study should also include people who are in the social networks of victims. Such research should ask networks how they perceive the justice system and victims of sexual assault. Future research should examine how police found out about any sexual assaults, or why they did not. It should also include a component examining the offender's relationship with the victim. Finally, it should include the perceptions of victims and the system by both social networks and victims.

Comparing the 2014 GSS with the 2009 survey may also be useful for future research. In doing so it would be possible to see if there is a shift in factors in terms of reporting to police. A longitudinal trend approach may also be useful and would allow the scope to be widened from sexual assaults that happened in the last year to sexual assaults in say the last 10 years (as the GSS only examines those in the last year). Another possibility would be to combine such studies in order to make use of the statistics while providing a narrative from a longer time period. By widening the scope from one year to a longitudinal trend study it would allow us to monitor changes and the impact of any new policies. For example, the Government of Canada has instituted that all judges should have sexual assault law training (Zilio 2017).

A longitudinal study would allow us to find out if the change is having a positive impact. Further, future research should factor in the order of contact with networks, services, and the criminal justice system that victims work through. For example, are

victims of sexual assault speaking to their families first, or do they approach other forms of social networks first (friends, medical, services).

It would also be worth exploring if victims of sexual assault are making their reporting decisions before they engage with their social networks or after. This is important because it can indicate exactly how important the beliefs, and perceptions of those who surround the victims in terms of reporting decisions. For example, if the social network a victim has disclosed to believes that the police will have bias against them and therefore they should not report, will the victim be more likely to believe the police will have bias? This has the possibility to impact not only how we approach sexual assault research, but also how we approach policy and campaigns. For example, if social networks beliefs impact victims in such a way we should aim consent and sexual assault education at those people as well as victims.

The current project has identified a potentially important point of contact for victims of sexual assault that is largely under researched in social networks. Future research should focus on this area to discover new ways of understanding underreporting. Future research should also make sure to include the reasons why people choose to report. It would be helpful to examine more narratives to understand what the process of reporting was like for victims, and whether they would report again, or advise a friend to do the same.

Lastly, spousal or intimate partner sexual assault should be included to develop a better understanding of the struggles of this category of sexual assault victim. It would be important to separate ex-partner violence and spousal violence in order to determine if there are special circumstances for these victims.

6.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Reporting rates of sexual assault in Canada are as low as 8%, indicating that Canada has a problem relating to victims of these crimes. Literature in this area has shown that this is due to the victim blaming mentality within society. This study has revealed some important findings in terms of sexual assault and reporting specifically identifying social networks as an important factor to examine further. Although, the study has been largely exploratory in nature, the significance of social networks barriers to reporting sexual assault should not be overlooked. These findings contribute to the literature on sexual assault by opening the door on a new area of exploration, where future research could prove valuable in helping victims of sexual violence, through awareness of services, perceptions, influence, actions, crime policy, and social programing. Research in this area should focus on influencing policy, giving feedback on educational programing, and examining police and court procedure.

The thesis takes the position that reporting sexual assault is important not only for ensuring victims get justice but also as a means to help fight rape myths, rape culture, and victim blaming. In particular to push society away from victim blaming, specifically around acquaintance centered sexual assault. It is important to note that reporting sexual abuse is a personal decision and each victim must do what is best for his or her own personal situation. The current research does not condemn or condone such decisions; rather, the position taken is that is unacceptable if any victim of sexual assault to base his or her decision of not reporting due to fear of re-victimization and being blamed. Taking the the position that it is unacceptable that some sexual assault victims feel they cannot report due to fear of re-victimization and blame.

Going beyond the need for justice for victims reporting sexual assault is important for two additional reasons. First, not only are offenders are not held culpable for their crimes they are free to continue sexually victimizing other people. Lisak & Miller (2002) examined this problem deeming it "undetected rape" or "hidden rape" concluding that a majority of self-reporting 'rapists' were also guilty of multiple offenses, on multiple different people. Additionally, they found that the majority (80%) of these assaults the offenders committed against people within their "social networks" particularly on acquaintances (Lisak & Miller 2002:81). The authors make the argument that the social networks of these offenders should be examined or investigated in order to find other victims of crime who may come forward if they know there are other people that will come forward with them in hopes of prosecuting more sexual predators. I argue that this is an important outcome of reporting however I would also make the argument that this approach could go a long way in normalizing the reporting of sexual assault. People generally do not think twice about reporting a mugging, or carjacking to the police but consistently think about the consequences of reporting sexual abuse to the police.

Second, it is important to report sexual assault to the police to normalize reporting sexually assault as the crime that it is just as you would any other crime. The Government of Canada should expand on their current definition of what it means to obtain consent for sexual activity.

To address these two issues, educational programs should be implemented in schools from an early age, and the legal definition of consent should be further expanded in terms of what it means to be incapable of consenting. While it is widely considered that an intoxicated person cannot consent to sexual activity recent court cases suggest

there is ambiguity and confusion around consent. We need to limit that ambiguity in order to prevent miscarriage of justice while being clear to Canadian citizens what it means to obtain consent.

Next, Consent and victim blaming should be added to sex education in Canada at every level. For example, in elementary school a focus on consent and understanding could be introduced as simply explaining to children that their bodies are their own and if they do not want to hug someone they do not have to. Our understandings of consent needs to be a focal point in our culture in order to normalize that unwanted touching of any kind is a crime against persons and built on from that initial concept. Research such as this thesis has the potential to influence these factors, and develop new programs geared at families, medical personal, and school aged children.

By examining why people do not report sexual assault we can begin to understand the problems within society that cause low reporting such as victim blaming. It also highlights why reporting sexual assault is important. Further, we can continue to identify overlooked issue and build new ways to address the problem. This project concludes that victim blaming remains a top cause of non-reporting in Canada. In order to begin to address this consent should be normalized in our society in order to start to combat the problem of sexual assault, specifically acquaintance sexual assault. Further research should be conducted on how education programs that focus on language use and consent, and policy change could impact the normalization of reporting sexual assault. More research is needed on how social networks impact the reporting decisions of victims in order to determine how to address the problem with not only victims of sexual assault who worry about the consequences of reporting but also their social networks who may

hold victim blaming beliefs or also be concerned about how reporting may negatively

impact the victim.

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