

FACTORS PERTAINING TO THE REPORTING
OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

by

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ABSTRACT

The underrepresentation of particular kinds of sexual assault in official statistics has brought about a misunderstanding of the problem and the extent to which it occurs. The offence is identified according to certain stereotypes and myths, which cause women to feel guilty for assaults which are committed upon them. According to the theoretical orientation of this thesis, the existing condition is the result of roles being assigned on the basis of gender, which legitimates male domination and reflects the attitudes of a misogynous society.

The purpose of this research was to test the hypotheses formulated with this perspective as a guideline. Data were collected from interviews with 75 women, who were sexual assault victims undergoing counselling at the Sexual Assault Program of Klinik Community Health Centre in Winnipeg, during 1982 and 1983.

The variable of interest in the study was whether or not a sexual assault was reported to the police. Bivariate and discriminant function analysis demonstrated that most hypotheses were supported in the predicted direction. Women were more inclined to report an offence if: they received immediate support from others; they blamed the assailants; the offenders were strangers; they had not experi-

enced previous violence or sexual assaults; they were not incest victims; they were injured during the offence; they displayed physical resistance.

Unsupported, was the proposition that women would be more likely to report an assault if they did not adhere to a traditional role and believed in a more egalitarian system. Other relationships of interest were considered and it was found that reporting increased accordingly with age and occupational status. In addition, the opinion of the police was not found to be a factor that influenced reporting.

It was concluded that women who have been sexually assaulted are affected by circumstances which relate to their socialization and the present structure of society and these factors influence their reporting behaviour.

CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Problem

It has become obvious that rape/sexual assault is a vastly under-reported crime. It has been estimated that only ten percent of these offences come to the attention of the police. This estimate has been supported consistently in recent research (see: Ennis, 1967; Medea and Thompson, 1974; Gager and Schurr, 1976; Clark and Lewis, 1977; Robin, 1977; Uniform Crime Reports, 1977; Brickman, 1979; Katz and Mazur, 1979; Dean and DeBruyn-Kops, 1982). The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (1981) estimates that one out of every five women in Canada is sexually assaulted during her lifetime. Using the ratio of ten unreported to one reported assault, Kinnon's Report on Sexual Assault in Canada (1981) estimates that there are over one hundred and fifteen thousand victims of sexual assaults each year (pp:1-2).

The evidence is clear that police reports are not an accurate representation of the incidence of sexual assault. It is therefore impossible to realistically study the severity and the extent of the problem because of information lacking in present data. Official statistics, the main

source of data applied to rape/sexual assault studies, mask the nature of these offences because unreported cases cannot be assumed to be comparable to those reported. Amir (1971) suggests that disparity of age and familiarity between the victim and offender may be factors that determine reporting. Katz and Mazur (1979) refer to differences in the setting of the assault, victim-offender relationships, types of assaults, emotional - physical state of the victim after an assault and Edwards (1981) alludes to class differences and attitudes towards the legal system. Certain victims are more likely than others to report an offence to the police, but correlates of the decision to report have not been systematically studied (Edwards, 1981:135-136). Some common factors probably exist in both reported and unreported cases. It is therefore essential to examine the criteria which differentiate between women who do make an official report and those who do not. As stated by Clark and Lewis, "We cannot hope to have anything like a complete picture of rape until all victims are willing to report the crime" (1977:41).

Sexual Assault Centres (Crisis Centres) have emerged to provide an alternative method of reporting sexual offences. Although these centres offer service to women who have reported their victimization "officially" to the police, many of their clients have not wished to become in-

volved in the criminal justice system. A large number of these women are sexual assault and incest "survivors" attempting to deal with assaults of the past, possibly never revealed to anyone before (Klinic, 1980). In the words of Gager and Schurr, "This despair is often unexpressed and lies festering, deeply suppressed, and unrecognized by the woman herself until years afterward" (1976:26).

The present research is based on interviews with women who have been in contact with a sexual assault centre. By examining the assault from the victim's perspective, we can hope to gain some insight into the social factors that shape women's decisions with regards to reporting. These data will be analyzed so as to examine the relationship between reporting sexual assault and characteristics of the offence and victim. The theoretical framework for this research is grounded in feminist theory which states that violence against women is the inevitable result of a sexist society in which males are seen as naturally dominant and females as inherently passive (Brownmiller, 1975; Clark and Lewis, 1977). Further, the secrecy surrounding sexual assaults serves to perpetuate the stereotypes and myths, thereby allowing this condition to be maintained (see: Griffin, 1971; Brownmiller, 1975; Clark and Lewis, 1977; Klein, 1981).

For the purpose of this research, the terms rape and sexual assault will be used interchangeably and will embody all acts of sexual violence towards females, regardless of age. Except when referring to studies specifically dealing with "rape", sexual assaults will be defined as: Any sexual act forced on a female against her will. Force will be defined as: The exertion of power including physical violence, threats, trickery, blackmail or authority; including a child consenting to sex with an adult, since a child "cannot give informed consent" (Finkelhor, 1979a:696).

All acts of sex forced on unwilling victims deserve to be treated in concept as equally grave offences in the eyes of the law, for the avenue of penetration is less significant than the intent to degrade (Brownmiller 1975:425).

Literature Review

The historical position of women as the property of men (see Brownmiller, 1975), cultural beliefs premised upon the natural superiority of the male sex, and deeply rooted definitions of the nature of women govern the attitudes that are prevalent towards sexual assault and the beliefs about victims. There persists a basic assumption that men and women are different, referring not to anatomical differences, but social ones. It is believed that women are innately passive and dependent, while men are naturally aggressive and strong. Susan Griffin maintains that:

To be submissive is to defer to masculine strength; is to lack muscular development or any interest in defending oneself; is to let doors be opened, to have one's arm held when crossing the street. To be feminine is to wear shoes which make it difficult to run; skirts which inhibit one's stride; underclothes which inhibit the circulation (1971:234).

A woman has learned to make herself as attractive as possible for potential male mates. She has been socialized to be seductive in dress and manner, but to remain chaste. She has learned that she is expected to deny her sexuality because it is "a commodity on the marriage market" and "marriage is the cultural goal" (Kasinsky 1975:18). Achieving this goal perpetuates the patriarchal system of family life in which men are the "providers and protectors" while women remain "dependent" (1975:18).

Violence against women is the natural consequence of a system whereby one sex has power over the other. Patriarchal power demands rigorous control over subordinates and sexual assault is one way of exercising this control. "Rape is simply at the end of the continuum of male-aggressive, female-passive patterns, and an arbitrary line has been drawn to mark it off from the rest of such relationships" (Medea and Thompson, 1974:11).

From the time children learn to comprehend, sex role stereotyping has begun to permeate their consciousness. Fairy tales represent the ideal reality for children. For example, they learn about Little Red Riding Hood, whose need for male protection is expressed by the brave woodsman who saves her. Or of Sleeping Beauty, who, until awakened by a handsome prince come to claim her (virginity) remains unconscious and virtuous (a-sexual). Finally, there is Cinderella, the portrait of the passive, dependent female who is rewarded for her nurturance, patience and beauty by Prince Charming, the strong, protective male (Brownmiller, 1975:343,44). This method of indoctrination is supplemented by reinforcing daily behaviour that is socially desirable. "Don't cry; be a man!" is the phrase often directed at boys, while tears are endured and even encouraged in girls. Typically, boys are given guns and trucks to play with, while

girls are encouraged to be little mothers. The psychological training of women to be passive and nurturant has strengthened the traditional definition of the female personality. This definition is one that is internalized by women as well as men and results in a system whereby women expect to be dominated. "For every man there is always someone lower on the social scale on whom he can take out his aggressions. And that is any woman alive" (Griffin, 1971:237). Certain acts of violence are committed by males against females for no other reason than the fact that they are female. In a society where women can be bought, used for entertainment, viewed in pornographic magazines and films, bound, beaten and mutilated, a belief system has developed that says this is how women should be treated. The image of the unwilling woman who is overpowered by a passionate male is a popular movie theme and one which provides cultural approval for this type of sexual interaction. The impression derived from this aggressive - passive form of behaviour is that women wish to be dominated and that they secretly harbour a "rape wish". In research done by Riger, Gordon and LeBailly (1978) on the impact of the fear of crime on women, it was found that women are more afraid than men and also take more precautions to avoid victimization. The fear of rape is second only to fear of murder among women (Brodyaga et al., 1975) and Riger et al. (1978:280,81) observed that many women attempted to

restrict activities, such as using public transportation, going to laundromats, or being out alone at night, even though many of these pursuits were necessary in order to function within society.

In addition to what a woman has learned about her role, she has acquired the mythology surrounding sexual assault that causes her to look for fault within herself. She may question her own behaviour and appearance to assess what she has done to deserve an attack. In many cases, if there is little violence, or if she knows her assailant, a woman may not identify herself as a sexual assault victim (D. Russell 1975; Clark and Lewis, 1977). Since aggression and violence is commonplace to many women in their relationships, a sexual assault may be just a step further along the continuum and not obviously distinguishable to the victim or the offender. It is not unusual for men to believe they have been unfairly accused when they overcome resisting women because sexual conquest is part of the patriarchal ideology. Groth asserts that "all nonconsenting sexual encounters are assaults" (1979:2) and D. Russell advises that as long as victims continue to blame themselves, they will remain passive victims (1975:51).

There is a double standard of sexual behaviour for

males and females which is maintained by prominent myths. Women are believed to be "either virtuous or sexual" and virtuous women are expected to deny their sexuality (Williams and Holmes, 1981:64). Male sexuality is perceived as "natural" and males are considered to be unable to control themselves after they reach a "certain point" (1981:63,64). It is popular knowledge that a woman may cause her own sexual assault by allowing a man to "lose control" and consequently "only got what she asked for" (Groth, 1979:7). Wilson and Nias (1976) found no evidence to suggest that men are unable to control their sexual behaviour (in Wilson, 1978:91). This was substantiated by Groth, who contends that "rape is never the result simply of sexual arousal that has no other opportunity for gratification" (1979:5).

It is proposed that as a direct result of socialized myths and stereotypes, women may refuse to report a sexual assault. Although much of the recent literature absolves the woman from responsibility for her own victimization (Weis and Borges, 1973; Fattah, 1980), victim precipitation and its particular application to sexual assault has received considerable attention in the literature (Amir, 1971; Curtis, 1974). This term suggests that the victims of crimes have participated in their own victimizations and

denies the ultimate responsibility of the offenders. The offender's interpretation of the victim's intention becomes paramount and he may obscure her resistance with his own motive. A victim's reputation may be reason enough for an attack (Amir, 1971:266) and it is believed that an assault may occur because of risks taken by the victim (1971:266). Reynolds maintains that "rape is viewed as a legitimate punishment for women who give the appearance of violating traditional female role expectations" (1974:65). This view permeates all of society and is shared by police, the criminal justice system, assailants and victims. Wilson, in his Brisbane study, found no support for the victim precipitation theory (1978:29,44) and Fattah clearly disagrees with the emphasis on a victim's behaviour preceding an attack:

Becoming a victim is not a matter of choice. Most victims do not voluntarily assume this role. They are forced into this role through the offender's behaviour (1980:5).

Clark and Lewis (1977) found no justification for "victim-blaming" and Rabkin (1979) counters a victim precipitation theory with the fact that rape is premeditated, confirming Amir's 1971 findings. Groth, in his clinical study of offenders emphasized the fact that "rape is serving non-sexual needs. It is the sexual expression of power and anger" (1979:2). To see a sexual assault of any kind as an

expression of sexual desire results in transferring the blame from the offender to the victim. Looking at motives in the sexual assault of children, Groth and Burgess (1977) found that power and control issues, hostility and aggression, not sexual gratification were the causes. Rush describes a multitude of ways that children are sexually used by men who prefer them "because a child, more than a woman, has less experience, less physical strength, is more trusting of and dependent upon adults..." (1980:2). Yet, noted authority, Dr. Benjamin Spock warns of seductive three-to-six year olds, encouraging the image of "the sexually dangerous female child" (Rush, 1980:143). Looking at recent statistics on child sexual abuse suggests that it is widespread and of "epidemic" proportion (1980:5). Furthermore, a girl is more likely to be sexually abused by her father, uncle, or other trusted male adult than by a stranger (Finkelhor, 1979; Berliner and Stevens, 1979). Blaming or disbelieving the child preserves the right for the dominant male to molest children and discounts the physical and emotional consequences for the child.

"Family rape is probably one of the most unreported forms of rape that there is" (Wilson, 1978:40). Although M. Russell (1979) observed in her Vancouver rape study that the police were informed more often when an attack was

perpetrated by a family member as opposed to by a stranger, she suggests caution in generalizing from this finding due to the small number of cases involved. Additionally, Russell suggests that the decision to report a family member to any outside agency is a major issue and once done, (as it had been in her study) may facilitate a report to the police (1979:15). The National Crime Survey Panel Report (1975) showed more strangers among unreported cases of rape in Los Angeles, but Amir, 1971; D. Russell, 1975; Wilson, 1978; Groth, 1979; Rabkin, 1979; Sanders, 1980; Skelton and Burkhart, 1980; Kinnon, 1981; Klein, 1981, offer support for the theory that women will more likely report an assault if it has been committed by a stranger. Reporting a family member to the police for sexually assaulting a child or adolescent depends on "the family relationship of the perpetrator and child, the amount of physical trauma that resulted, the ages of the people involved, and the family and/or community view of sexual activity between family members" (Burgess, Holmstrom and McCausland in Burgess et al., 1978:115). Forced sex in marriage was found to occur over twice as frequently as that of rape by a stranger, and was posited to be the most common kind of sexual assault (Finkelhor and Yllo, 1981:461). It was found in this study that women tended to blame themselves for the attacks (1981:477). Marriage, by law has given husbands access to their wives' bodies and although legal reform has been introduced

to alter the situation, as long as women believe they are responsible for what happens to them in marriage, be it battering or sexual assault, the condition will remain the same. As indicated by Hilberman and Munson (1977) it is imperative for women to realize that their behaviour will not prevent the violence (in Hirsch, 1981:187), and that traditional belief in the ultimate authority of men must be broken. As expressed by Gager and Schurr (1976), the indoctrination begins early, in the home and is upheld by society.

It may be that sexual molestation by adult males of female children ---and the subsequent negative "community" response---are key factors in preparing women for their adult sex roles. Socialized to feel shame and guilt about female sexuality, trained to passivity and silence, girl children grow up accepting all forms of subordination to the boys and men around them. It is, as feminists point out, excellent training for victimization...and silence (1976:60).

Other positions of power outside the family can be highly effective in coercing a female into having sex. Doctors, bosses and professors operate from positions of authority which can facilitate sexual exploitation and may serve to protect them from being reported (Weis and Borges, 1973:95). "As these cases customarily go unreported, the stereotypes about rape and rapists are maintained" (1973:95).

As a direct result of socialized myths and stereotypes, women and girls more often than not refuse to report a sexual assault. Shame, embarrassment, guilt and the fear of the response of others deter them from making their victimizations a public concern. Most research indicates that a sexual assault resembling the social stereotype of rape is most likely to be reported. Generally this assault is the one that comes to the attention of the general population via the media and conforms to the notion of a sex-starved stranger jumping out of the bushes. These assaults are comparatively rare and disguise the more subtle and private forms of abuse that are kept hidden. Sexual assault victims are extremely isolated and rather than seeing themselves in the larger social context, they feel as though they are the only victims of their circumstances. Results of the Winnipeg Rape Incidence Survey suggest that 88 percent of rapes and 93 percent of sexual assaults are not reported to the police (Brickman, Briere et al., 1980).

M. Russell found that younger age and sexual inexperience are associated with greater emotional trauma and consequently, increased likelihood of police reporting (1979: 15). Her results are inconsistent with those of Weis and Borges who observed that the more traumatized a victim is, the less likely she is to report an attack to the police

(1973:107). Groth also refers to the amount of trauma a victim experiences as a factor in deciding whether or not to report. Trauma increases as a result of "significant others" treating an assault as something that should not be discussed (1979:191).

Burgess and Holmstrom (1974) introduced the term, rape trauma syndrome, to describe the effects of sexual assault on the victim. These effects refer to both attempted and completed assaults, describing short and long term physical and emotional responses. One manifestation of this syndrome is the "silent reaction to rape", occurring in the victim who has not reported the assault to anyone, has not dealt with feelings and reactions to the incident and who, because of this silence, has further burdened herself psychologically (1974:985). Weis and Borges hypothesize that incest victims may be unable to deal with openly expressing their feelings of ambivalence (1973:96). Prostitutes, accustomed to being used as "sexual objects" are also unlikely to report an assault, but Weis and Borges argue:

The widely-held conception that rape is primarily a sexual act easily leads to the argument that for sexually experienced women one more "act" should not matter. If however, rape is understood as humiliation, violation of self-determination and an intimate attack on the woman's personhood, then the extent of her previous sexual experience should bear little impact on the treatment she deserves as an authentic rape victim (1973:96).

Ennis has suggested that if a rape was not completed, a victim may not report an assault, depending on her sense of whether or not she was harmed (1967:42). His perspective argues that ultimately, a woman's view of the world might cause her to believe that a crime did not take place if she managed to escape or stop the assault. Burgess and Holmstrom (1975) would assume that the effects of rape trauma syndrome are independent of the assault being completed. In their study, they found that the major cause of the varied symptoms of rape trauma syndrome was the extent to which victims experienced the fear of "physical injury, mutilation and death" (1975:48). In contrast, Wilson (1978) found that feelings of "degradation, humiliation and self-incrimination" were more predominant than the fear (1978:48). The trauma associated with these emotions was discussed by Burgess and Holmstrom, but believed to be less significant than the fear, especially the fear of dying (1975:39).

After a female has been assaulted and actually defines the incident as a sexual assault, she must decide whether or not she wants to tell anyone. If she chooses to relate the experience it is necessary to determine whether she wants to do this officially, in other words, to report the offence to the police. The two options, of reporting or not reporting a sexual assault to the police, have been supple-

mented by a third alternative, that of contacting a sexual assault centre. This choice may happen singly or in addition to a police report and will provide the victim with emotional support, counselling, as well as information on all options available to her. The victim's fear of police reporting was found to be a major problem facing crisis centres (Mills, 1977:229) and often third-party (anonymous) reports are made so that the victim feels that she has taken some control over the situation, but at the same time will not be subjected to the legal process. Another benefit of this alternative of reporting is that information about the offender and circumstances of the assault is submitted to the police in the event of a further offence. In addition to the benefits mentioned, the anonymous reports can provide additional information on the incidence of sexual assault.

The police traditionally have dealt with sexual assault as an act that is sexual in nature rather than viewing it as an aggressive assault on the person (Bard and Ellison, 1974:168). Many jurisdictions have set up special squads to deal with sexual assault, but often are only in contact with a victim after a uniformed officer has made a report. By this time, unsympathetic or disbelieving attitudes may have convinced the victim to stop the investigation. Wilson

describes the formation of special squads as "public relations trickery" because the remaining officers maintain their "traditional conservative views" (1978:98). There is considerable evidence to suggest that the public has a low opinion of law enforcement and the legal system. Ennis (1967) cites several reasons emanating from the National Opinion Research Center Victimization survey to explain why police are not informed of serious crimes (including rape). Among them were: "police couldn't do anything", "was private, not criminal affair", "not sure if real offenders would be caught", "police wouldn't want to be bothered", "did not want to harm offender", "did not want to take time", "too confused or upset to notify police", "afraid of reprisal" and "didn't know how or if they should notify police" (1967:44). Many of these factors suggest that a decision of whether or not to report might emerge from the victim's opinion of police and her concept of their effectiveness. Dean and deBruyn-Kops cite "fear of police attitudes and procedures" as an important factor in victims deciding not to report (1982:63). "Anticipated police hostility", "police would not have enough evidence", "police would not do anything", and concern about the hostility of the courts were presented by Wilson as some of the reasons why women in his study did not report (1978:58). Williams and Holmes (1981) concur with the foregoing studies.

Wilson (1978) attempted to observe some typical patterns in unreported rape, although categories are, as he says, considerably limited, with wide variation occurring in each. Wilson has categorized various types of rape and utilizes these divisions in his analysis. The first two categories (blitz rapes) would most likely account for the vast majority of reported assaults since they were committed by strangers. Blitz attacks refer to sudden assaults where the victim and offender are generally unacquainted (1978: 34-36). It is interesting to note that the typical reasons given for not reporting this type of assault are police related, while the known-offender types of rape are typically not reported because of social stigma and social attitudes (1978:45).¹

¹ Wilson's Typology of Unreported Rape will not serve as a model for the present research and is merely presented as an example of one researcher's attempt to study unreported rape.

Wilson's Typical Patterns in Unreported Rape
(1978:45)

Type of Rape	Victim-Offender Association	Social Class of Offender	Degree of Force Used	Background Characteristics of Victim	Typical Reasons For Not Reporting
Random blitz rape	No prior interaction	Generally working class	Generally considerable force used	Women of all ages and social backgrounds	Hostility of police. Not enough police interest.
Specific blitz rape	"	"	"	Typically young women	"
White Collar rape	Prior professional interaction	Middle class	Verbal persuasion and little force used	Typically women between twenty and forty from the middle class	General social stigma
Power with trickery rape	Often prior adult interaction with child victim	Working and middle class	Verbal persuasion and no force used	Typically victim is young. All social classes	Afraid of relatives' reaction
Family rape	Family interaction in past	"	Generally some force used	"	"
Ceremonial rape	Some prior interaction	"	"	Typically victim is young and often working class	Generally stigma and wanted to forget all about rape
Friendship rape	Considerable prior interaction	Generally middle class	Verbal persuasion and some force used	Women of all ages and social backgrounds	"
Situational rape	Superficial prior interaction	Working and middle class	Generally considerable force used	Typically victim is young. All social classes	"

Propositions derived from Feminist theory were tested by the formulation of hypotheses which will be discussed in the following section. Feminist theory is derived from Marxist-Conflict theories (Eisenstein, 1979), but is unique in the aspect of its focus. Specifically, it is the only theory which is gender-based i.e. roles assigned on the basis of sex. According to this perspective, power has historically been assigned to males (Brownmiller, 1975). The various groups within the women's movement share this view of the world and approach issues by examining the social relations which define their individual reality. By using personal experience as well as this general view of the world, feminists attempt to explain their status and understand the way in which it is connected to society. Patriarchy and the resulting oppression of females have given rise to myths that have developed and flourished throughout the centuries, perpetuating the imbalance of power and permitting violence towards the less powerful.

Hypotheses

It has been stated above that sexual assaults are acts of aggression whereby force is a fundamental element and violence is often involved. Sometimes the force is subtle, but nonetheless involves power and dominance. The actual incidence of these offences is unknown because the victims of sexual assaults encounter difficulties not experienced by other assault victims, which deter them from reporting.

Numerous writers have stated that the fear of ill-treatment by police and the justice system plays the major role in nonreporting of sexual assault offences (Schram et al., 1978; Wilson, 1978; Williams and Holmes, 1981). Yet, when victims were interviewed for the study of Forcible Rape (Schram et al., 1978) to determine their rationale for reporting a rape to the police, the majority of them responded with reasons related to the expectations of receiving justice from the very system that deterred others.

Irwin Deutscher (1966) cites numerous studies indicating that behaviour and attitudes are often incongruous. What one says and/or does depends on the situation and how it is defined by the individual. That is not to say that behaviour and attitude never match, but rather that there is evidence that the relationship varies. Repression is a

common defence mechanism which would prevent an accurate description of events (1966:248). In a crisis situation, this may be a particularly significant argument since the ability of an individual to think clearly, make rational decisions or recall details may be seriously impaired (Bard and Ellison, 1974:5).

Deciding to report (or not report) a sexual assault is a social process in which consideration of the effects of the attack itself, the circumstances surrounding the incident and factors related to the victim herself as well as her relationship to the offender must be examined in order to determine consistent patterns. Socialized modes of behaviour and expectations brought about by learned stereotypes result in guilt and shame suffered by victims of sexual assault, but as indicated by Fattah (1980:13) all victims do not react the same in similar circumstances. Hence, sexual assault and the concomitant response of reporting the offence must be determined by factors other than the assault itself. By using the victim's perception of her victimization as well as her overt behaviour (reporting/not reporting) we can hopefully obtain information that will more clearly define the relevant factors that lead to a decision of whether or not to report a sexual assault to the police. At present, information is

inadequate and provides an incomplete picture of why women choose one alternative over another. Since it is clear that an overwhelming number of sexual assaults go unreported, an understanding of this complex issue is potentially a useful tool for public education.

Notman and Nadelson point out that "the response of those from whom she seeks support" is an important aspect of how a victim reacts to an assault (in McCombie, 1980:132). It follows, accordingly that this is a vital issue when a victim must decide whether or not to report an assault. If the response reinforces the guilt and shame already felt by most sexual assault victims, it is not likely that an attempt will be made to seek justice from the legal system. The first hypothesis relates to this primary contact.

- (1) A victim will more likely report a sexual assault to the police if a supportive response has been given by the first person informed of the attack.

Unlike other crimes, there is a stigma attached to being a victim of a "sexual crime". A sexual assault victim is often seen as being responsible for her own victimization by placing herself in a vulnerable situation or by behaving irresponsibly and "asking for it". Almost all women will hold themselves at least partly responsible for a sexual assault and as Wilson affirms, the fact that society is

known to condemn the victim, may cause her to withdraw from reporting (1978:110). A further step in this process is the extent to which a woman has accepted her traditional role in society relative to a principle of equality between the sexes. The second and third hypotheses will test the significance of these attitudes.

- (2) The more blame a victim attributes to herself, the less likely she is to report a sexual assault to the police.
- (3) A victim will more likely report a sexual assault to the police if she does not adhere strictly to the traditional role of women.

Many sources have indicated that the victim who knows the offender experiences more self-blame than if the attack was perpetrated by a stranger (Brodyaga et al., 1975:289). If self-blame is a factor that inhibits women from reporting an assault (hypothesis 2), then the relationship between the offender and the victim is significant. Depending on whether he is a former lover, friend, acquaintance, stranger, or a family member, the victim of a sexual assault will usually experience varying degrees of reluctance to report.

- (4) Police reporting will differ according to the degree of the relationship between the victim and offender, with strangers being the most reported.

Groth has said that "many women have such a low sense

of self-worth that they don't feel they can expect to be treated as equal, worthy people" (1979:81). To the extent that females are socialized in their feminine role, as the property of males, they are limited in their view of personal freedom. Women have been trained to normalize violence (MacLeod, 1980:32) and they learn at an early age to submit to being sexually used (Roberts, 1982:2). "Children who have been sexually abused, and children and women who have been raped have their concepts of themselves as sex objects strengthened" (Hirsch, 1981:62). The fifth and sixth hypotheses will test the significance of the victim's life experience on reporting a sexual assault to the police.

- (5) A victim will be less likely to report a sexual assault to the police if she has a history of being subjected to violence.
- (6) A victim will be less likely to report a sexual assault to the police if she has a history of incest.

Skelton and Burkhart (1980) found that the degree of force used was an important factor in a rape being reported. Injury to the victim would define the attack according to the "social stereotype" of an authentic assault (1980:234), thus acting to diminish guilt. The assumption that a crime of violence must be accompanied by injuries, communicates the message that if sexual assault is a violent crime and there are no injuries sustained, there must not have been

a sexual assault. Therefore, a victim without injury may fear disbelief from the police, which will deter her from reporting a sexual assault.

- (7) Police reporting will differ according to the degree of injury sustained by the victim, with greater injury being the most reported.

Although police generally advise women not to resist an attack in order to avoid serious injury or death, Curtis (1976) has suggested that physical resistance results in less emotional trauma for the victim. Weis and Borges (1973) have proposed an inverse relationship between greater trauma and the likelihood of reporting a sexual assault to the police. The eighth hypothesis will test the relationship between physical resistance and reporting.

- (8) Police reporting will differ according to the degree of resistance exhibited by the victim, with greater resistance being the most reported.

CHAPTER 2
METHODOLOGY

1. Sample

The subjects in this study consisted of 75 female victims who had contacted the Sexual Assault Program of Klinik, a Community Health Centre based in Winnipeg. Klinik is the only agency of its kind, serving a community of 600,000. The program offers 24-hour service, providing information advocacy, support and counselling to sexual assault victims. The sample consisted of victims of sexual assault who were chosen on the basis of availability.

Prior to beginning the research, Klinik was approached with a request for access to clients and files. Permission was granted with two stipulations. The first was that the researcher agree to undergo intensive training by the agency as a sexual assault counsellor. The reason for this condition was a concern that the researcher should be sensitive to the issue of sexual assault and should be equipped to deal with potential traumatic effects resulting from an interview. The second requirement was that absolute confidentiality of names and identifying information be respected. Once these requirements were met, the study was approved. Interviews were conducted over a period of 2 years in 1982 and 1983.

Associate sexual assault counsellors were asked for assistance in obtaining the sample. Victims were to be approached by their respective counsellors and asked if they would be willing to participate in the research. Prospective participants included any female who had personal contact with a sexual assault counsellor at Klinik and who would consent to an interview with the researcher. All clients counselled by the researcher were included in the sample.

There were several problems associated with gathering a sample in this manner. Random sampling procedures were not employed due to a number of constraints. The selection of subjects depended on the willingness of volunteer counsellors to co-operate with the researcher and understandably there was varied interest among them. Additionally, there was a constant turnover of personnel. In some cases clients moved away or in some way "disappeared" before an interview could be arranged. Moreover, there were a substantial number of "no-shows" after appointments had been set up, as well as phone-in clients who preferred no personal contact at all.

The group that was studied is neither representative of all sexually assaulted women in Winnipeg nor a random selection of victims served by Klinik. It is, however, a source

of information about sexual assault victims who might not be represented in official statistics. Most of those selected for the study came to Klinik for sexual assault counselling, but others initially contacted the agency for other problems such as depression or suicide counselling. These clients were often recognized by crisis workers to be sexual assault victims.

The demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Tables 1 thru 7. The ages of victims at the time of the offence ranged from pre-school to a woman in her sixties. The majority of victims in the study were under 14 (35%). As shown in Table 1, there were fewer respondents in each successive age category.

Forty-three percent of the sample contacted Klinik because of a past offence while recent offences constituted 49 percent of the sample. Past offences referred to those occurring prior to six months before contact with Klinik. Offences that were still on-going at the time of contact with Klinik made up 8 percent of the sample. For past offences that continued over a period of several years, the age at which the offence began was used for coding purposes. Past offences often referred to incest and the assaults may have begun when the victim was four and continued until she

TABLE 1
AGE OF VICTIM

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
14 and under	26	35
15 to 19	18	24
20 to 24	13	17
25 to 29	10	13
30 to 34	2	3
35 to 39	2	3
40 to 44	2	3
45 to 49	1	1
60 and older	1	1
TOTAL	75	100

was seventeen. This case was coded 14 and under as the longest period of the offence happened during the earlier period. On-going offences at the time of the interview were assigned the current age because in each case it was a recent assault that precipitated the call to Klinik. On-going offences were viewed as being similar to recent offences perpetrated on victims who had experienced previous assaults.

TABLE 2
TEMPORAL INFORMATION

WHEN OFFENCE OCCURRED	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Recent	37	49
Past	32	43
Ongoing	6	8
TOTAL	75	100

At the time of the offence, 79 percent of the victims were single, 11 percent divorced and 8 percent married.

TABLE 3
MARITAL STATUS OF VICTIM

MARITAL STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Married	6	8
Single	59	79
Divorced	8	11
Common Law	1	1
Widow	1	1
TOTAL	75	100

The vast majority of victims (87%) were Caucasian,

12 percent were Native and 1 percent Asian.

TABLE 4
RACE OF VICTIM

RACE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Caucasian	65	87
Native	9	12
Asian	1	1
TOTAL	75	100

The offences occurred mainly within the inner city (45%), followed by Winnipeg suburbs (27%), rural Manitoba (15%) and outside of Manitoba (12%)

TABLE 5
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF ASSAULT

LOCATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Inner City	34	45
Suburb - Winnipeg	20	27
Other Urban-Manitoba	1	1
Rural Manitoba	11	15
Outside Manitoba	9	12
TOTAL	75	100

The educational status of victims at the time of the offence ranged from no formal schooling to university graduation. The largest category consisted of women who had attended or completed high school (53%). The next largest group was in the elementary or pre-school category (32%) while 15 percent had university or professional training.

TABLE 6
EDUCATION OF VICTIM

EDUCATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
No Formal Schooling	2	3
Some Elementary	21	28
Complete Elementary	1	1
Some High School	23	30
Complete High School	17	23
Some University (and Professional Training)	6	8
TOTAL	75	100

Occupational status was determined by applying the Blishen socioeconomic rank (Blishen, 1961) to victims' occupations. In the event that the victim was a child or full-time student, the occupations of fathers or guardians were

used. The scale was divided into four classes: lower (to 30.00 on Blishen Scale), lower middle (30.01 to 39.00 on Blishen), middle (39.01 to 59.00 on Blishen), upper (59.00 plus on Blishen). According to this division, 29 percent of the victims were lower status, 16 percent were lower middle, 19 percent were middle and 27 percent were upper status. The remaining 9 percent could not be identified in this manner.

TABLE 7
OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF VICTIM OR LEGAL GUARDIAN

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Lower	22	29
Lower Middle	12	16
Middle	14	19
Upper	20	27
Insufficient Information	7	9
TOTAL	75	100

* Blishen, 1961: See discussion above for method of classification.

2. Data Collection

Interviews were conducted in a counselling office at Klinik and were administered by the researcher. Length of the interviews varied from one to three hours, depending on the ease with which the respondent was able to discuss her experiences.

A data collection instrument was designed to secure the information required for this study (see Appendix A). It included a number of items adapted from existing schedules: Rape in Winnipeg: A Descriptive and Analytic Study (Gibson, 1978); Rape Crisis Program - Initial Assessment Form; Attitudes Towards Women Scale (Spence and Helmreich, 1978). The instrument incorporated both forced choice answers containing the appropriate codes, and open-ended items designed to elicit information about the assault that initiated the call to Klinik and report on behaviour as well as attitudes and opinions. Open-ended responses were recorded as fully as possible to maintain accuracy, and consistency was achieved by using a single interviewer. After the data collection was completed the information was compiled separately for each open-ended item in order to develop coding categories. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in the analysis of the data.

3. Measurement of Variables

The following is a discussion about the manner in which the main variables were defined. Items on the schedule (Appendix A) are not worded exactly as they were asked since the instrument was used as the basis for interviews. The questions were asked in a consistent manner by the interviewer and will be described in this section.

Dependent Variable

a) Reported to Police

The dependent variable in this study was whether or not a sexual assault was reported to the police. This was measured by the following question which was derived from the data collection schedule.

Item 53 "Did you report the assault to the police?"

- 1) yes
- 2) no

Of the total number of 75 respondents, 44 percent reported affirmatively and the remaining 56 percent replied negatively. A frequency distribution of reporting and nonreporting appears in the following table.

TABLE 8
DISTRIBUTION OF ASSAULTS-REPORTED AND UNREPORTED

REPORTED	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Yes	33	44
No	42	56
TOTAL	75	100

Independent Variables

b) Nature of Response of First Person Told

The nature of the response of the first person told of the assault by the victim was operationalized in the following manner:

Item 24 "Who was the first person you told about the assault?"

Item 25 "What was the reaction of _____?"

The open-ended replies to item 25 were collapsed to differentiate between a supportive and nonsupportive response. Examples of a supportive response included, "tried to make me feel better", "shared same experience", "called Klinik for assistance". A nonsupportive response incorporated, "blamed me", "told me to forget about it", "became hysterical" and similar types of reactions. Seventy-three percent of the

victims received a supportive response and 27 percent received a nonsupportive response. A frequency distribution of the nature of response from the first person told about the assault appears in the following table.

TABLE 9
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES FROM FIRST PERSON

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Supportive	55	73
Nonsupportive	20	27
TOTAL	75	100

c) Attribution of Blame

In order to measure victims' attribution of blame, the following item was administered from the schedule:

Item 29 "Who did you blame for the assault?"

- 1) Blames assailant
- 2) Blames self
- 3) Blames both
- 4) Other

Other included, "son, for leaving the door open", "God" and "Mother, for not doing anything about it." Categories were collapsed to form three items of self, shared blame, assailant. The 3 cases contained in the "other" category were coded as shared blame. Of 75 respondents, 56 percent blamed

themselves, 31 percent shared blame and only 13 percent blamed the assailant. A frequency distribution of victims' attribution of blame is presented in the following table.

TABLE 10
DISTRIBUTION OF VICTIM ATTRIBUTION OF BLAME

BLAME	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Self	42	56
Shared Blame	23	31
Assailant	10	13
TOTAL	75	100

d) Adherence to the Traditional Role of Women

The extent of Victims' acceptance of a traditional role was measured with the short, fifteen-item version of the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence and Helmreich, 1978). The scale is composed of statements delineating various roles that women may fulfill. Respondents indicate their agreement or disagreement on a four point continuum:

- 1) agree strongly
- 2) agree mildly
- 3) disagree mildly
- 4) disagree strongly

Items are scored 0 to 3. A low score indicates acceptance of the traditional role, while a high score suggests a more egalitarian attitude towards the role of women. Although the cut-off points were decided upon arbitrarily, there seemed to be a natural clustering of responses within each quarter of the scale (Table 11) and this appeared to be the appropriate division. The reliability coefficient for the Attitudes Toward Women Scale as an indicator is Alpha = .89. The high Alpha suggests that the index is an acceptable measure.

TABLE 11
DISTRIBUTION OF RESULTS ON ATW SCALE

ATTITUDE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Strongly Traditional	19	25
Mildly Traditional	17	23
Mildly Non Traditional	12	16
Strongly Non Traditional	27	36
TOTAL	75	100

* Spence and Helmreich, 1978: See discussion above for method of scoring.

e) Relationship Between Offender and Victim

Offender-Victims relationships were operationalized by applying the following item from the data collection schedule. Respondents were asked:

Item 6 "What was your relationship to the offender?" Responses were recorded as stated by the victim and were later condensed into four categories ranging from least known to most familiar:

- 1) Stranger
- 2) Casually known
- 3) Familiarly known
- 4) Family.

A stranger was defined as someone with whom the victim had no prior contact, or someone she had met that day, resulting in the assault. The casually known category included acquaintance, employer, neighbour, friend or relative of friend. The familiarly known category included friend, boyfriend, family friend. Family included father, brother, step father, foster father, cousin, uncle, grandfather, husband and common law. A frequency distribution of this item (Table 12) showed that 21 percent of the offenders were strangers, 23 percent were known casually, 19 percent were familiar and 37 percent were family members.

TABLE 12
DISTRIBUTION OF VICTIM-OFFENDER RELATIONSHIPS

RELATIONSHIP	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Stranger	16	21
Casually Known	17	23
Familiarly Known	14	19
Family	28	37
TOTAL	75	100

f) Life Experience of Victim

There were three items used to indicate factors relating to past experience of victims which might influence reporting behaviour. The first of these was whether or not the victim had been subjected to nonsexual violence. Respondents were asked the following question:

Item 37 "Were you a victim of violence?"

- 1) yes
- 2) no

Sixty-one percent of the 75 respondents indicated that they were victims of violence. A frequency distribution of violence in the victims' backgrounds appears in the following table.

TABLE 13A
DISTRIBUTION OF VIOLENCE IN BACKGROUND OF VICTIM

VIOLENCE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Yes	46	61
No	29	39
TOTAL	75	100

The second item looked at whether the victims were also subjected to incest. Incest included sexual contact with her father, stepfather, foster father, brother, grandfather, cousin or uncle. Respondents were asked the following question:

Item 39 "Were you a victim of incest?"

- 1) yes
- 2) no

If the respondent was classified initially as an incest victim, "yes" was automatically assigned. Fifty-one percent of 74 respondents (one could not recall) said they had been incest victims. A frequency distribution of incest in the victims' backgrounds is presented in the following table.

TABLE 13B
INCEST IN BACKGROUND OF VICTIM

INCEST	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Yes	38	51
No	36	49
TOTAL	74	100

The third item, a previous assault in the victims' background was used as a further indicator of life experience that might affect a decision to report. Victims were asked the following question:

Item 41 "Were you sexually assaulted prior to the incident by anyone other than a family member?"

- 1) yes
- 2) no

Incest was excluded from this item. Forty-five percent of 73 respondents recalled previous assaults. One of the victims was unable to remember an incident, but thought there was a possibility that she had been sexually assaulted by someone other than a family member. This case was deleted. A frequency distribution of previous assaults in the victims' background is described in the following table.

TABLE 13C
PREVIOUS SEXUAL ASSAULT

PREVIOUS ASSAULT	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Yes	33	45
No	40	55
TOTAL	73	100

g) Injury Sustained by Victim

The degree of injury sustained by the victim was studied to determine whether this affected reporting. Victims were asked the following question:

Item 65 "Did you suffer any injuries?"

- 1) yes
- 2) no

Respondents who gave an affirmative reply were asked for a response to the next item.

Item 66 "Could you discuss the nature of those injuries?"

Responses were recorded as described by the victim. For analysis, they were later collapsed into a continuum of three categories:

- 1) less severity
- 2) medium severity
- 3) high severity.

Less severity included bruises, soreness, black eye, and cuts without bleeding. Medium severity contained bleeding cuts not requiring stitches, blows to the head and stretch marks from pulled skin. High severity took into account any injury requiring stitches, severe internal injuries, rope and cigarette burns. Both the dichotomized yes - no variable and the continuum of severity were individually applied as independent variables on reporting behaviour. A frequency distribution in Table 14A shows 33 percent of the total number of respondents sustained injury. Forty percent of the 25 injured respondents received the least severe, 28 percent medium severe and 32 percent most severe injury (Table 14B).

TABLE 14A
DISTRIBUTION OF INJURY SUSTAINED

INJURY	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Yes	25	33
No	50	67
TOTAL	75	100

TABLE 14B
NATURE OF INJURY

INJURY	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Less Severe	10	40
Medium Severe	7	28
High Severe	8	32
TOTAL	25	100

h) Resistance Exhibited by Victim

Victim resistance was examined to assess the extent to which this was a factor influencing reporting behaviour.

Victims were asked the following question:

Item 15 "Did you resist?"

- 1) yes
- 2) no

Seventy-four respondents were able to reply to this question (one victim was unconscious and couldn't remember) and of these, Table 15A indicates that 46 percent resisted. The extent to which a victim resisted was operationalized with the following item:

Item 17 "What was your behaviour like during the assault?"

- 1) Passed out
- 2) Kept quite and motionless
- 3) Tried to reason with assailant
- 4) Begged, pleaded, cried
- 5) Screamed
- 6) Tried to push away
- 7) Kicked, hit, scratched
- 8) Used weapon
- 9) Other

The responses were collapsed to form three categories of behaviour:

- 1) Passive
- 2) Verbal
- 3) Aggressive

When a response included more than one category, the more aggressive term was coded. In other words, if a victim screamed and fought the aggressive category would have been used. Of the total 75 respondents 48 percent were passive, 31 percent responded verbally and 21 percent were aggressive.

TABLE 15A
DISTRIBUTION OF RESISTANCE EXHIBITED

RESISTANCE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Yes	34	46
No	40	54
TOTAL	74	100

TABLE 15B
BEHAVIOUR OF VICTIM DURING ATTACK

BEHAVIOUR	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Passive	36	48
Verbal	23	31
Aggressive	16	21
TOTAL	75	100

i) Opinion of Police

Victims' perception of police was surveyed in order to ascertain whether a relationship existed between attitudes towards police and reporting behaviour. Respondents were asked the following question:

Item 62 "What is your opinion of police?"

Open-ended responses were recorded in full and later collapsed into three categories:

- 1) Negative
- 2) Neutral
- 3) Positive

Negative comments included, "they side with men (chauvinists)", "they are on an ego trip", "they wouldn't believe me", "they discriminate", "don't trust them". Neutral opinions consisted of "there are good ones and bad ones", "haven't had

anything to do with them", "never thought about it". Positive opinion was coded for replies such as "they do their job", "kind and helpful", "depend on them for protection". The following table demonstrates that 37 percent of the 75 respondents had a negative opinion, 27 percent were neutral and 36 percent had a positive opinion of police.

TABLE 16
DISTRIBUTION OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS POLICE

ATTITUDE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Negative	28	37
Neutral	20	27
Positive	27	36
TOTAL	75	100

4. Data Analysis

Crosstabulations of the various independent variables on the dependent variable (reporting behaviour) will be presented and discussed in Chapter 3.

Gamma, has been employed as a measure of association to measure the degree to which the variables are related.

Gamma indicates how well one can predict ordering on one variable from ordering on another. The numerical value of Gamma represents the degree of association and the sign represents the association as positive or negative. The strengths of the relationships have been determined on the following basis:

Low relationship	.10
Moderate relationship	.11 to .30
High relationship	.31 and over

Chi-square was reported as a test of statistical significance between the dependent and independent variables. Chi-square is used to determine whether or not obtained frequencies differ significantly from those expected. The value obtained from computing the difference between the observed and expected frequencies indicates whether the difference has occurred by chance. Because of the exploratory nature of this study and the relatively small sample, .10 was selected as the level of significance.

Discriminant analysis, a statistic that distinguishes between two or more groups, was utilized to assess the key variables in predicting reporting behaviour. Ten variables were examined as possible determinants of reporting. This final statistic provided further evidence for the variables that were recognized as having an influence on reporting

sexual assaults.

Statistical analyses were supplemented by a discussion of the qualitative data that were compiled during the interviewing.

CHAPTER 3

FINDINGS

HYPOTHESIS 1:

A victim will more likely report a sexual assault to the police if a supportive response has been given by the first person informed of the attack.

The nature of the response of the first person told about the offence was examined in relation to whether or not the offence was reported to the police. Cases where the police were the first told (15%) were excluded from this analysis. As shown in Table 17, victims who received a supportive response from the first person they told were more likely to report the offence than those who received a nonsupportive response. Of those who received a supportive response, 47 percent reported the offence to the police, compared with only 21 percent of those who received a nonsupportive response. The correlation is relatively strong, having a Gamma of .53, and applying the chi-square test, is significant at the .10 level.

Thus, the support a victim receives initially after an assault does influence victim reporting behaviour. One young victim talked about being awakened and assaulted by a stranger while on her summer vacation. She had been sleeping in a tent near her parents' trailer. When told of the

incident, her mother angrily replied, "It's your own fault. You insisted on taking your dog along so you had to sleep in the tent with him. Next time you'll know better." No report was made in this case by parents or victim. A woman decided to seek counselling after several attempts at suicide. She recalled her mother walking into her bedroom while her father was in the process of molesting her. The memory she retained was, "My mother started screaming and became hysterical. I always thought I had done something wrong." Subsequent assaults reinforced her guilt.

Many victims who experienced support and sympathy from the first person they told of an assault said that it helped to diminish some of the guilt they were feeling. One victim described a series of clandestine visits from her stepfather that progressed from sexual touching to intercourse. He had always warned that she would be blamed if anyone found out. She finally decided to run away from home, but before leaving, told her sister about the assaults. To her surprise, she discovered that her sister had also been enduring these violations. They both held onto each other and cried, feeling somewhat relieved that they were not alone. Together they informed their mother and subsequently the police were notified. "It was so important to be believed. I always thought it happened because of something I was doing. I

felt dirty and ashamed. When my sister told me it happened to her, I started to understand."

TABLE 17
RESPONSE OF FIRST PERSON TOLD BY WHETHER
OFFENCE WAS REPORTED TO THE POLICE
(In Percent)

Nature of Response		
Reported to Police	Supportive	Nonsupportive
Yes	47	21
No	<u>53</u>	<u>79</u>
	100	100
N	(51)	(19)

Gamma = .53

Chi-Square = 2.89 (significance = .09)

HYPOTHESIS 2:

The more blame a victim attributes to herself, the less likely she is to report a sexual assault to the police.

Victim attribution of blame was examined in relation to whether or not the offence was reported to the police. As shown in Table 18, victims who blamed themselves only,

were less likely to report an assault than victims who shared blame with the offender (or other) and were most likely to report when they blamed the assailant alone. Of those who blamed themselves, 31 percent reported the offence, compared to 48 percent of those who shared blame and 90 percent of those who blamed the assailant. It is instructive to note in Table 18 that only 10 respondents out of a total of 75 blamed the assailant alone for the offence. The relationship is strongly negative ($\text{Gamma} = -.58$) and is significant at the .10 level.

As Wilson (1978) indicated in his research, the predominant effects experienced by sexual assault victims were feelings of "degradation, humiliation and self-incrimination." This was evident in the present study and results suggest that these feelings did influence reporting behaviour.

One of the victims who did not report explained that her boyfriend had been "taking advantage" of her, spending her money and "cheating". She had decided to end the relationship and refused to see him. One night he knocked on her door, pleading for a chance to speak to her. When she unlocked the door, he grabbed her and began tearing at her clothes. As she cried and pleaded, he dragged her into the bedroom, sexually assaulted her and walked out, leaving her

on the bed shaken. During the interview, she said, "After he left me, I laid there for a long time, not believing what had happened. I wondered if my blouse had been too revealing or if I had just hurt him so much that he had to hurt me back. Maybe I made him remember being rejected by his mother." At no time did it occur to this woman that the responsibility for the attack should be solely attributed to the offender. Another striking example of self-blame was disclosed during an interview with a woman who had responded to a request for directions while walking home from the library one afternoon. A male stopped his car and called out to her, indicating that he was looking for a street that she recognized as being only two blocks away. She walked over to the car to assist him and he pointed a gun at her, telling her to get in the car. She was blindfolded and taken to a place where she was sexually assaulted and tortured for the next fifteen hours. This assault, obviously an extreme of the media stereotype, was reported directly to the police. The victim, however, maintained that the fault was hers because she "should have known better than to speak to a stranger."

TABLE 18
WHO VICTIM BLAMED BY WHETHER OFFENCE
WAS REPORTED TO POLICE

(In Percent)

Who Victim Blamed			
Reported to Police	Self	Shared	Assailant
Yes	31	48	90
No	<u>69</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>10</u>
	100	100	100
N	(42)	(23)	(10)

Gamma = $-.58$

Chi-square = 11.6 (significance = $.003$)

HYPOTHESIS 3:

A victim will more likely report a sexual assault to the police if she does not adhere strictly to the traditional role of women.

The findings of this study do not support the hypothesis (Table 19). Victims with traditional attitudes towards the role of women in society were somewhat more likely to report the offence to the police than those with egalitarian attitudes. Fifty-eight percent of respondents with extremely traditional attitudes reported sexual assaults to the police, compared with 59 percent of those with somewhat traditional attitudes, 33 percent with somewhat egalitarian attitudes and 30 percent with extremely egalitarian

attitudes. Results suggest that there is a positive relationship between reporting and adherence to traditional attitudes with a Gamma of .38. The relationship is not significant at the .10 level.

One aspect of the methodological design of this study that may have influenced these findings concerns the timing of the interviews. Many of the victims were interviewed after they had been involved in counselling at Klinik for a period of time. Feminist counselling,² which serves to raise the consciousness of clients, may have influenced their attitudes regarding the role of women. This being the case, the results may be spurious and the self-reported egalitarian attitudes may reflect an intellectualized response that developed after the onset of counselling. These attitudes may have been learned through counselling, but were not necessarily incorporated into their behaviour. As one respondent aptly stated, "I know how I'm supposed to think . . . and really I do feel that way, but my life is such a contradiction."

Length of time respondents were exposed to counselling was not controlled for. It is possible that the traditional responses came from women who were the most recent entrants into the counselling program at the time of the interview.

² Feminist counselling looks at the experience of the client and places it in the context of the existing power structures in society and traditional notions of authority and ownership based on sex. Pathology is not recognized as existing in the individual, but rather within society and the problems associated with attempting to adjust to this system.

TABLE 19
 ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ROLE OF WOMEN BY WHETHER
 OFFENCE WAS REPORTED TO THE POLICE

(In Percent)

Attitudes				
Reported to Police	Extremely Traditional	Somewhat Traditional	Somewhat Egalitarian	Extremely Egalitarian
Yes	58	59	33	30
No	<u>42</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>70</u>
	100	100	100	100
N	(19)	(17)	(12)	(27)

Gamma = .38

Chi- square = 5.82 (significance = .12)

HYPOTHESIS 4:

Police reporting will differ according to the degree of the relationship between the victim and offender, with victims being more likely to report strangers.

The relationship between victim and offender was examined in order to look for a connection to reporting. It was found that strangers were the most likely to be reported, while family members were the least reported (Table 20). Seventy-five percent of offenders who were strangers, 47 percent of offenders who were casually known, 43 percent of

offenders who were familiarly known and 25 percent of offenders who were family members were reported to the police. Although the smallest percentage of offences reported to the police were committed by family members, Table 20 demonstrates that they constitute the greatest number of offenders in the study. There is a strong, positive correlation between degree of relationship and reporting, with a Gamma of .52. The relationship is significant at the .10 level.

Previous researchers have suggested that sexual assaults by strangers are more likely to be reported because these assaults reflect the cultural assumptions and are more readily perceived as authentic by others as well as by the victim herself (McDermott in Katz and Mazur, 1979:51). One item on the schedule asked women why they had decided not to report an assault. Most respondents who knew the offenders did not consider reporting to be a real option because the relationships often disguised the culpability of the offenders. As self-blame has been found to inhibit reporting, it follows that an offence is less likely to be reported if it does not fit the stereotypical notion of what women, themselves have been socialized to believe. Replies such as, "The police wouldn't care", "I didn't think it was a police matter", "I didn't think I would be believed" were typical of the 69 percent who did not report in the high

relationship categories, (i.e. familiar known and family). Although research suggests that the most prevalent type of assault is one that happens between people who know each other, it is greatly under-reported (Lott et al., 1982:308).

TABLE 20
VICTIM-OFFENDER RELATIONSHIP BY WHETHER THE
OFFENCE WAS REPORTED TO THE POLICE
(In Percent)

Victim-Offender Relationship				
Reported to Police	Stranger	Casual Known	Familiar Known	Family
Yes	75	47	43	25
No	<u>25</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>75</u>
	100	100	100	100
N	(16)	(17)	(14)	(28)

Gamma = .52

Chi-square = 10.4 (significance .02)

HYPOTHESIS 5:

A victim will be less likely to report a sexual assault to the police if she has a history of being subjected to violence.

Background violence was examined in relation to whether or not the offence was reported to the police. In Table 21,

it is seen that victims who had not been subjected to past violence were slightly more likely to report an assault. Of women who said they had suffered violence in their past, 41 percent reported the offence, as compared to 48 percent of those who said they had not experienced any violence in their past. The correlation is relatively weak ($\Gamma = -.14$) and is not significant at the .10 level.

An additional variable was examined in order to ascertain if previous violence was a factor in reporting. A previous sexual assault (excluding incest) was considered in relation to whether the offence was reported to the police. Table 22 demonstrates that victims who had been previously assaulted were less likely to report an assault than those who had not been previously assaulted. Results indicate that 36 percent of previously assaulted victims reported the offence to the police, as compared to 48 percent, who had not been sexually assaulted in the past. A moderate, negative Γ of $-.23$ suggests some support for the hypothesis, though it is not statistically significant.

The fact that some women have learned to expect violence during their lifetime was evident from interviews. One respondent who had never reported an assault told of a series of abusive relationships and sexual assaults through-

out her life. When asked about violence in her background, she replied, "Not really. My parents punished me, but they weren't what I would call violent. They used to make me keep tabasco sauce in my mouth for an hour and they'd hit me with a metal belt. My counsellor said that was violence, but I never had anything to compare it to." Another woman described a father who was inclined to "blow up" without any warning. "He often beat me with a belt until I was black and blue and several times he cut me with a knife. I never thought that treatment was extraordinary. I thought that was what happened to bad people." Another victim described the punishment she and her sisters received for being "bad". "My father used to make us kneel down without shirts and then he hit us across our backs with his razor-strop." Forty-six victims told of varying degrees of cruelty that they had suffered at the hands of parents, step-parents, etc. The least dramatic were comments like, "Oh, my parents knocked me around a little" or "My father beat my mother and they both beat me and my brothers."

TABLE 21

VIOLENCE IN THE BACKGROUND OF THE VICTIM BY
WHETHER OFFENCE WAS REPORTED TO THE POLICE

(In Percent)

Violence in Victims' Background		
Reported to Police	Yes	No
Yes	41	48
No	<u>59</u>	<u>52</u>
	100	100
N	(46)	(29)

Gamma = -.14

Chi-square = .12 (significance = .72)

TABLE 22

PREVIOUS SEXUAL ASSAULT BY WHETHER OFFENCE
STUDIED WAS REPORTED TO THE POLICE

(In Percent)

Reported to Police	Previous Assault	
	Yes	No
Yes	36	48
No	<u>64</u>	<u>52</u>
	100	100
N	(33)	(40)

Gamma = -.23

Chi-square = .52 (significance = .47)

HYPOTHESIS 6:

A victim will be less likely to report a sexual assault to the police if she has a history of incest.

Incest was used as another indicator of past experience of the victim. A history of incest was tested in relation to whether or not the offence was reported to the police. As shown in Table 23, victims who were also victims of incest, were less likely to report an offence to the police. Of those who were victims of incest, 37 percent reported the offence, compared with 50 percent of those who were not. The correlation is moderately negative ($\text{Gamma} = -.26$) and is not significant at the .10 level.

Among the women who reported being victims of incest, many never thought about reporting as an option. "I didn't know I had any rights. I was only a kid." or "I never thought of it." were replies often heard. One of the respondents recalled her experience: "My father used to come into our bedroom at night and point to one of us. That meant it was our turn and we knew what was expected of us. We each tried to sleep farthest from the door because the one closest seemed to get picked most often." Another woman described being kept a prisoner by her father for twenty years. "My stepmother knew what was happening, but

she didn't do anything, so I never told anyone." Still, another case involved a second generation, "My grandfather would always come to my bed when I slept there. He used to touch me and masturbate on me. I always felt so bad, but I didn't know what to do." Statistics claim one in three female children are sexually assaulted and that 75 percent of these assaults are committed by a male relative (deFrancis, 1965:66). This early socialization teaches children to accept sexual assault as normal and results of this study offer some evidence that the acquired self-concept continues long after the incest has ceased.

TABLE 23

INCEST IN THE BACKGROUND OF THE VICTIM BY
WHETHER OFFENCE WAS REPORTED TO THE POLICE

(In Percent)

Reported to Police	Incest in Victims' Background	
	Yes	No
Yes	37	50
No	<u>63</u>	<u>50</u>
	100	100
N	(20)	(36)

Gamma = -.26

Chi-square = .82 (significance = .36)

HYPOTHESIS 7:

Police reporting will differ according to the degree of injury sustained by the victim, with greater injury being the most reported.

There were two indicators of injury to the victim. The first, whether the victim was injured, was examined in relationship to reporting. Table 24 demonstrates that respondents were twice as likely to report an assault to the police if they sustained injury than if they did not. Sixty-eight percent of victims who were injured reported the assault to the police, while only 32 percent who were not injured, reported. A strong association is found between injury to the victim and reporting, with a Gamma of .64. The relationship is statistically significant at the .10 level.

The effect on reporting of the second indicator, severity of injury, was less clear. As seen in Table 25, of those injured, victims with the most severe injury (88%) reported most often, but victims with the least severe injury (70%) reported more often than those with medium severity (43%). A possible explanation for these results may be due to the method used to determine severity in the lower two categories. For example, a decision to categorize a black eye as less serious than blows to the head is an arbitrary decision on the part of the researcher. The

extent to which a victim has been socialized to accept violence as normal must also be taken into account. Notably, of all victims who were injured (33% of the total population), 68 percent reported the offence. There is a moderate association, with a Gamma of .26 and the relationship is statistically significant at the .10 level.

An assault that results in visible injury conforms to the acceptable social criterion of a violent crime. Therefore, injury may permit a victim to more easily define a sexual assault as an illegal act. As one victim stated, "I didn't think there was any sense in reporting it. I had no injuries . . . who would believe me?" Another woman said, "I knew it would be my word against his. I wasn't even sure it was a crime."

TABLE 24

INJURY SUSTAINED BY VICTIM BY WHETHER
OFFENCE WAS REPORTED TO THE POLICE

(In Percent)

Reported to Police	Injury to Victim	
	Yes	No
Yes	68	32
No	<u>32</u>	<u>68</u>
	100	100
N	(25)	(50)

Gamma = .64

Chi-square = 7.4 (significance = .007)

TABLE 25

NATURE OF INJURY SUSTAINED BY VICTIM BY WHETHER
OFFENCE WAS REPORTED TO THE POLICE

(In Percent)

Reported to Police	Nature of Injury		
	Less Severe	Medium Severe	High Severe
Yes	70	43	88
No	<u>30</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>12</u>
	100	100	100
N	(10)	(7)	(8)

Gamma = .26

Chi-square = 6.04 (significance .05)

HYPOTHESIS 8:

Police reporting will differ according to the degree of resistance exhibited by the victim, with greater reporting of cases where resistance was given.

There were two variables dealing with victim resistance. The first, whether the victim resisted was studied in relation to reporting. Table 26 shows an extremely weak association with a Gamma of .09 and is not statistically significant at the .10 level. Of those who did resist, 47 percent reported the offence as compared to 42 percent who did not resist.

The second variable, victim's behaviour during the offence was examined in order to determine whether it had an effect on reporting. Findings indicate a weak association, with a Gamma of -.10 and it remains nonsignificant. Table 27 demonstrates that as the victim became more aggressive, she was more likely to report. Of those who were passive, 42 percent reported, while 44 percent who expressed verbal resistance and 50 percent who aggressively resisted, reported the offence.

Individual definition of a situation must be taken into consideration when assessing these findings. For example, one respondent who had taken eight years of instruction in

in Tai Kwan Do recalled the warning of her instructor: "He told us if we didn't think we could overpower the enemy, we shouldn't try. This guy told me he was trained to kill and I wasn't about to test his ability. So I didn't use what I'd learned and at least I didn't get beaten up or killed." This woman did report the assault, but justified her compliance by reiterating what the instructor had told her. Stranger assaults were often accompanied by a threat to kill and although most of the women did not resist when confronted in this manner, their interpretation of the situation in many cases warranted a report to the police.

TABLE 26
RESISTANCE EXHIBITED BY VICTIM BY WHETHER
OFFENCE WAS REPORTED TO THE POLICE
(In Percent)

Reported to Police	Resistance by Victim	
	Yes	No
Yes	47	42
No	<u>53</u>	58
	100	100
N	(34)	(40)

Gamma = .09

Chi-square = .03 (significance = .87)

TABLE 27
 BEHAVIOUR OF VICTIM DURING OFFENCE BY WHETHER
 OFFENCE WAS REPORTED TO THE POLICE

(In Percent)

Reported to Police	Behaviour of Victim		
	Passive	Verbal	Aggressive
Yes	42	44	50
No	<u>58</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>50</u>
	100	100	100
N	(36)	(23)	(16)

Gamma = -.10

Chi-square = .32 (significance = .85)

Other Correlates of Reporting

Other relationships were studied in addition to those generated by the hypotheses. The first of these was the association between age and reporting. It was found (Table 28) that as age increases, so does reporting. A high correlation is indicated, with a Gamma of .55 and is statistically significant at the .10 level. These findings duplicated those of Bart (1975) who did an analysis of 100 questionnaires distributed at womens' centres.

TABLE 28

AGE OF VICTIM BY WHETHER THE OFFENCE
WAS REPORTED TO THE POLICE

(In Percent)

Reported to Police	14 & Under	15 - 19	20 - 24	25 - 30	30 & Over
Yes	23	39	54	60	88
No	<u>77</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>12</u>
	100	100	100	100	100
N	(26)	(18)	(13)	(10)	(8)

Gamma = .55

Chi-square = 12.50 (significance = .01)

Opinion of police was considered to determine whether this had an effect on reporting. It was found that a positive opinion, followed by a negative opinion and finally a neutral opinion were associated with reporting. The correlation is moderate, with a Gamma of .27 and is not significant. Of victims with a positive opinion, 59 percent reported compared with 39 percent of victims with a negative opinion and 30 percent of victims with a neutral opinion (Table 29). These results suggest that a negative opinion of police stated by the victim does not necessarily preclude a report to the police. A crosstabulation was done to control for police treatment of victims to determine whether

this had an effect on their attitudes toward police. It was discovered that treatment by police was related to attitude and that if a victim was treated badly by police, her attitude was almost always negative. If a victim was treated well, she almost always had a positive opinion. These findings suggest that the attitude towards police may be a consequence of reporting to police rather than a cause.

TABLE 29
OPINION OF POLICE BY WHETHER OFFENCE
WAS REPORTED TO THE POLICE

(In Percent)

Reported to Police	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Yes	39	30	59
No	<u>61</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>41</u>
	100	100	100
N	(28)	(20)	(27)

Gamma = .27

Chi-square = 4.39 (significance = .11)

Occupational status was examined in relation to reporting. Results indicate that upper status women reported the most often. Of the upper class victims 50 percent reported

as compared with 41 percent of lower class, 33 percent of lower middle, and 36 percent of middle class victims. The correlation is low, with a Gamma of $-.11$ and it is not significant at the $.10$ level.

TABLE 30
OCCUPATIONAL STATUS BY WHETHER OFFENCE
WAS REPORTED TO THE POLICE
(In Percent)

Reported to Police	Occupational Status			
	Lower	Lower Middle	Middle	Upper
Yes	41	33	36	50
No	<u>59</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>50</u>
	100	100	100	100
N	(22)	(12)	(14)	(20)

Gamma = $-.11$

Chi-square = 1.12 (significance = $.77$)

Findings with incest removed

Victim-offender relationships in this study are arranged along a continuum from least familiar (stranger) to most familiar (family), with family as the largest category. Recent literature does not differentiate between sexual assault of family members as opposed to other persons (Clark & Lewis, 1977; Meyers, 1979; Brickman et al, 1979; Kaplan, 1983).

However, given the large number of incest cases in the study and acknowledging the age and power differential of this type of assault, analysis was carried out with incest cases removed. This was performed in order to determine whether this sizeable group within the sample made any difference in the outcome of the analysis.

Hypothesis 1. The correlation remained the same between the response of the first person told and reporting with a Gamma of .51, but was not significant at the .10 level. The change in significance may be due to the sensitive nature of the chi-square test to the number of cases. With incest removed, the number of cases decreased.

Hypothesis 2. The relationship between victim's attribution of blame and reporting remained essentially the same (Gamma = $-.57$) but was not significant at the .10 level.

Hypothesis 3. There was no change in the association between attitudes towards women and reporting. Results still indicated that reporting was more highly correlated with traditional attitudes than egalitarian attitudes. Gamma rose to .41 and the relationship again, was not found to be significant.

Hypothesis 4. When incest was removed from the analysis the direction remained the same, with strangers and casual relationships related to higher reporting. Gamma was .34 and with the decline in the number of cases the chi-square was not significant at the .10 level.

Hypothesis 5. The correlation remained consistent with incest removed, indicating that past violence and non-reporting were related. Gamma dropped to $-.09$ and the relationship remained nonsignificant.

The association between previous sexual assault and nonreporting remained the same (Gamma = .22) and was not significant at the .10 level.

Hypothesis 6. When incest was removed as the offence, incest in the victims' past showed a very slight relationship to reporting. Gamma was only .07 and it was not significant.

Hypothesis 7. The correlation remained the same between injury to the victim and reporting (Gamma = .63) and it was significant at the .10 level.

The relationships between nature of injury and reporting stayed consistent with the previous analysis except that 100 percent of the high severity victims reported. Gamma was still .26 and it remained significant at the .10 level.

Hypothesis 8. The relationship between resistance of the victim and reporting reversed, with a Gamma of $-.28$. It was not significant at the .10 level.

Behaviour of victim also changed with passive behaviour having a slightly greater relationship to reporting than aggressive resistance. Gamma was .10 and the correlation was still not significant.

Clearly, the removal of incest in the analysis of the data indicates that the effect is minimal. It would appear safe to say that the change in the analysis of Hypothesis 8 was nothing more than an anomaly, perhaps caused by the small sample. This also applied to the very slight alteration in Hypothesis 6. Overall, the results remained the same and provided support for the position that incest should be treated as an act of power and violence that has a serious and lasting effect on the victims. There need be no distinction made because the assault is committed by a family member.

Discriminant Functions Analysis

As a confirmatory test of the findings discussed, 10 variables were entered into a discriminant function analysis in order to identify the variables that best discriminated between those who reported and those who did not report sexual assault. The variables entered included:

1. Nature of response of first person
2. Attribution of blame
3. Adherence to the traditional role of women
4. Relationship between offender and victim
5. Violence in the background of victim
6. Incest in the background of victim
7. Previous assault
8. Injury sustained by victim
9. Resistance exhibited by victim
10. Victim's opinion of police.

The pairwise correlation of the variables entered is small for all pairs, indicating that the variables are all independent of one another. Presented in Table 31 are standardized discriminant coefficients. These can be interpreted much like a Beta coefficient is in a multiple regression analysis (Nie et al., 1975). The larger the size of the coefficient, the more important the variable is for discriminating between reporting and nonreporting. A positive sign signifies a direct association to nonreporting and a negative sign signifies a direct association to reporting. Five of the 10 independent variables had discriminatory power for distinguishing between the reporting

groups using the .10 level of significance.

The most important variable affecting reporting was victim-offender relationship. The more distant the relationship between the victim and the offender, the more likely the victim was to report the offence. Of second importance was attribution of blame. The more a victim blamed herself, the less inclined she was to report the offence. The third most important variable was the nature of the response of the first person told about the offence by the victim. A supportive response was more likely to result in reporting. Fourth was adherence to the traditional role of women. The women who were the most traditional were the most likely to report the offence. The final significant coefficient was injury to the victim. If a victim was injured, she was more likely to report the offence. The remaining variables were related to reporting/nonreporting in the predicted direction, but the relationship was not statistically significant.

The canonical correlation coefficient was .64, giving an eta-square of .41. The measure is equivalent to R^2 and means that 41 percent of the variance in the discriminant function is explained by the composition of the groups.

Table 32 shows that the discriminant function is relatively successful in classifying respondents into the reporting and nonreporting groups. Overall, 77.78 percent of cases are correctly classified by the discriminant function.

TABLE 31
DISCRIMINANT COEFFICIENTS FOR VARIABLES RELATING TO
REPORTING AND NONREPORTING OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Variable	Standardized Coefficient	F Ratio	Significance Level
Relationship Between Victim and Offender	.69	8.00	.006
Attribution of Blame	.56	11.87	.001
Nature of Response of First Person	-.45	5.33	.02
Adherence to Traditional Role	-.44	4.13	.05
Injury Sustained by Victim	-.42	8.98	.003
Previous Assault	.33	.71	.40
Resistance of Victim	.27	.14	.71
Violence in Background of Victim	-.17	.53	.47
Victims' Opinion of Police	-.12	.26	.61
Incest in Background of Victim	-.06	1.95	.17

Canonical Correlation Coefficient = .64

Eta-Square = .41

TABLE 32
RESULTS OF CLASSIFICATION INTO REPORTING
AND NONREPORTING GROUPS

(In Percent)

Actual Group	Number of Cases	Predicted Group Membership	
		1	2
Group 1 (Reported)	31	74.2	25.8
Group 2 (Nonreported)	41	19.5	80.5

Percent of "Grouped" cases correctly classified: 77.78%

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study has been to identify some of the factors that influence women in deciding whether or not to report a sexual assault to the police. The underrepresentation of sexual assault in official statistics is not surprising when one considers the stigma experienced by the victims. This is the only crime in which the onus may be on the victim to prove her innocence. Official statistics give the false impression that sexual assault is a rare occurrence.

The present study has taken a feminist approach to the problem of reporting. The conditions for the subjugation of women have arisen from the historical role of women as property. There exists an unequal distribution of power based on sexuality. Male and female sex roles are structured so that males are the dominant group while females are submissive. This belief has permeated every facet of society and has influenced the attitudes of both men and women in regards to sexual offences.

The conclusions of this study give general support to the theory. Because the study is exploratory, some of the findings cannot be compared to previous research. However, possibilities for further research have been introduced.

Data were gathered from the Sexual Assault Program of Klinik Community Health Centre. Victims who were receiving counselling for sexual assault were approached to take part in the study. Seventy-five women were interviewed by the researcher. The women in the sample came from a variety of backgrounds.

Approximately one-third of the victims had either no schooling or only elementary school education at the time of the offence. Over half (53%) were attending school or were graduates of high school and 15 percent had received university or professional training.

Occupational status of the victims or victims' families ranged from 29 percent on the lower end of the scale to 27 percent on the upper end, with a distribution of 35 percent between the extremes. Nine percent were not employed. Women with high occupational status were more likely to report an assault than women with lower status. This was

consistent with Bart's findings, which indicated that women with professional occupations tended to report more often than other women. This may be because professional women were more likely to be believed by the police (Clark and Lewis, 1977:85) or because they are likely to be the best informed of their rights.

Well over half of the victims (59%) were under 19 at the time of the offence. Thirty percent were in their twenties and only 11 percent were over 30. Many other studies have found youth to be a vulnerability factor in sexual assault. Age distribution was similar in Schram's (1978) and Meyer's (1979) research. Brickman et al. (1979) in the Winnipeg Rape Incidence Survey found that more than half of the respondents reported being under 17 at the time of their assaults. Results of this study showed that reporting increased with age. Bart's findings concurred with these.

More than three quarters of the victims in the study were single when they were assaulted, while 12 percent were divorced or widowed and 9 percent were married or living as married. Meyer's findings were identical to these. Clark and Lewis (1977) indicated that 54 percent of their sample

were single, 17 percent were separated or divorced and 29 percent were married or living as married. Some of the differences between Clark and Lewis's findings and those of the present study may be due to the fact that girls under 14 were not included in their study.

The majority of the sample in this study were Caucasian women. Thirteen percent were Asian, native Indian or Metis. However, this may not reflect actual victimization patterns. Kilpatrick, Veronen and Resick (1979) conducted a study at a rape crisis centre in South Carolina. Despite the large Black population, 61 percent of the respondents were Caucasian and 37 percent were Black. Crisis Centres have typically been staffed by White middle class women and the possibility exists that this limits the appeal for women of other races to seek help from these agencies.

The dependent variable in this study was reporting or nonreporting of sexual assaults to the police. The independent variables were: nature of response of the first person told of the assault by the victim, attribution of blame by the victim, victim's adherence to the traditional role of women, relationship between offender and victim, victim's background pertaining to violence, incest and previous

assaults, injury sustained by the victim and attitudes towards the police.

The first hypothesis, that the response of the first person that the victim tells about the assault is crucial in determining whether a victim will report it to the police, was supported. According to Feminist theory, the sexual assault victim has been socialized to feel guilty regardless of the circumstances of the offence. The experience is shaped further by the attitudes and judgments of the significant others in the victim's life. Husbands may view the assault as a form of adultery and parents may respond with anger because they feel guilty for having been unable to protect the victim. Incest victims seldom get any support from their families and if they attempt to report the assault, they are often not believed. Although a supportive response does not eradicate the humiliation of a sexual assault, it does encourage the victim to report the offence to the police.

The second hypothesis, that a victim's inclination towards self-blame was a factor which would deter her from reporting was also supported. During the interviews, it was discovered that almost all of the victims (87%) felt that they were either entirely or at least partly to blame for

the offence. Other researchers have found self-blame to be a prevalent response from sexual assault victims (Russell, 1979; Sanders, 1980; Williams and Holmes, 1981). Women have been socialized to believe that they are responsible for controlling mens' sexual behaviour as well as their own and will feel responsible for being vulnerable to an assault. Incest victims become compliant because they lack choice and then feel guilty for not stopping the activity.

The third hypothesis, that a woman will more likely report an assault if she does not adhere to the traditional role of women, was not supported. Methodological problems may have been responsible for this outcome. Many of the women interviewed for the study had undergone a feminist-oriented counselling program prior to the interview, so that the attitudes expressed in the interview may have been different than those which existed at the time of the assault. However, Williams and Holmes also found little support for this hypothesis (1981:160), so feminist attitudes may not increase the likelihood of reporting sexual assault.

Hypothesis 4, which dealt with victim-offender relationships, was supported. Offences were most often reported when committed by a stranger. Reporting decreased as the

relationship increased in familiarity, with family members being reported the least often. An attack by a stranger fits the public image of a "real" assault. As the relationship between victim and offender becomes closer, defining the assault as a criminal offence becomes more difficult. Furthermore, interpreting sexual assault as an act of passion, rather than what it is - an expression of power and hostility, shifts the responsibility for the act from the offender to the victim. Previous research has found degree of relationship to affect reporting (Rabkin, 1979; Klein, 1981; Lott et al., 1982).

Hypothesis 5, which looked at background violence and previous assaults and hypothesis 6, which dealt with incest in the victim's past, were not supported at the .10 level, but the relationships were in the predicted direction. Other studies have provided support for these hypotheses. Kinnon reported that previous assaults led to further victimization, predisposing women to feel like they were "damaged goods", making them believe they were "unworthy of respect" (1981:7). An important part of the socialization of women is interpreting violence and control as normal interaction between males and females. Hence, depending on a woman's past experience, if she has always been subjected to violence and/or forced sex, she will be more likely to

define an aggressive situation as normal. The expectations and definitions that women have internalized, serve to maintain the secrecy surrounding sexual assault. Therefore, reporting a sexual assault is contingent on factors relating to the individual's experience, which affects her perception of how she defines the assault.

With regards to Hypothesis 7, it was found that injury to the victim was highly related to reporting. Problems of classifying the degree of injury as less or medium severity limited the interpretation of the second indicator, but it was evident that the most severe injuries were the most often reported to the police. This study supports the findings of previous research (Ennis, 1967; Amir, 1971; Brodyaga, 1975; Skelton and Burkhart, 1980) who all found that the most serious attacks, with the most severe injury are the ones most reported. Injury assists the victim in defining the assault according to the stereotype. Violent crime is, by definition accompanied by injuries. Therefore if there are no injuries, the victim feels it will be difficult to prove that a crime took place.

Although Hypothesis 8 received only slight support there was some evidence that physical resistance was correlated with reporting. Women have been assigned the task of

protecting themselves from sexual assault since sexuality is thought to be their most valuable asset. Womens' resistance is usually seen as female coquetry, an expression of a desire to be overcome. In order for resistance to be taken seriously, it would require severe injury and would more likely be reported.

Opinion of police did not affect reporting. This was an additional finding in the study which was not formulated as a hypothesis, but is of general interest and related to the literature review. According to the literature, opinion of police appeared to be a generally accepted factor influencing reporting (Ennis, 1967; Robin, 1977, Schram, 1978; Williams and Holmes, 1981; Dean and deBruyn-Kops, 1982; Kaplan, 1982). Only one study found little support for concern about police hostility as a factor of nonreporting (Wilson, 1978). In the present research, although victims who had a positive opinion of police reported most often, victims who had a negative opinion reported more often than those with a neutral opinion. A further test indicated that how the victim was treated when she did report was related to having a positive opinion of police. Therefore, these findings are inconclusive. Based on this study and Wilson's work, further research in this area is warranted.

Analysis of the data was repeated with incest as an offence removed so as to acknowledge the extreme age and power differential. Results demonstrate that there is no rationale for treating this offence as distinct from any other sexual assault associated with a power relationship.

In order to corroborate the findings of the bivariate examination of the variables, a discriminate function analysis was employed. Five of the independent variables were classified as most important, relative to the others for distinguishing between those who reported and those who did not report. In order of importance they were: relationship between victim and offender, attribution of blame, nature of response of first person, adherence to the traditional role, injury sustained by victim.

The interviews revealed that the effects of socialization in a misogynous society caused the women to impute blame to themselves for harm inflicted upon them by others. As long as men and women are divided on the basis of sex discrimination, violence against women will continue and women will remain silent.

At the outset, methodological difficulties were pointed out and as such, results of this study are not general-

izable. As an exploratory study, the task has been to point out several variables that influence reporting behaviour of sexual assault victims and provide objectives for further investigation and generalization.

From the data presented it can be concluded that a Feminist theory of sexual assault and the resultant effect on reporting has provided a theoretical base for further studies in this field of inquiry. An obligation implicit in Feminist theory is education.

In summary, it is anticipated that the contribution of this research will be to provide a better understanding of the reasons why some sexual assaults are reported and others are not. With more knowledge in this area, women will presumably be less isolated after an attack and realize that the blame is not theirs. There is a need for women to organize themselves and help each other to change attitudes (stereotypes, myths) and then behaviour (reporting). Changes must originate with the individual and extend beyond to social, legal and political institutions. These assaults must be made public. There are major implications for the victim and for society at large.

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APPENDIX 1

DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE

Schedule Number _____

Department of Sociology
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Sexual Assault in Manitoba
A descriptive and analytical study

CASE IDENTIFICATION SHEET

Sexual Assault file number _____

Date when the sexual assault occurred _____

SEXUAL ASSAULT IN MANITOBA

DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE OFFENSE

1. Classification of the offense:

- | | |
|------------------------|---------|
| Rape | 1 |
| Attempted rape | 2 |
| Indecent assault | 3 |
| Other (please specify) | 4 _____ |
| No information | 9 |

2. Temporal information:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Year of the offense | _____ |
| Past offense | _____ |
| Ongoing | _____ |

3. Geographic location:

- Inner city - Winnipeg
- Suburb - Winnipeg
- Other Urban - Manitoba
- Rural Manitoba
- Outside Manitoba

4. Place of offense:

Victim's residence	01	
Offender's residence	02	
Mutual domicile	03	
Other residence	04	
Vehicle	05	
Public street or lane	06	
Public building	07	
Public park	08	
Other place (please specify)	10	_____
No information	99	.

5. Activity immediately preceding attack: (circle one)

Dating	1	
Babysitting	2	
Social gathering	3	
Public gathering	4	
Public transportation	5	
Hitchhiking	6	
Walking	7	
At school	8	
At work	10	
At home	11	
Other (specify)	99	_____

6. Offender-victim relationship:

Stranger	01	
Acquaintance	02	
Neighbour	03	
Friend	04	
Boyfriend	05	
Ex-boyfriend	06	
Family friend	07	
Relative (specify)	08	_____
Co-worker/classmate	10	
Employer/teacher	11	
Husband	12	
Common-law	13	
Separated	14	
Ex-husband	15	
Other (specify)	16	_____
No information	99	

7. Offense reported to Klinik by:

Victim	01
Partner/mate	02
Friend	03
Boyfriend	04
Father	05
Mother	06
Other relative	07
Neighbour	08
Employer	10
School	11
Hospital	12
Police	13
Other (specify)	14 _____
No information	99

8. Number of victims _____

9. Number of offenders _____

10. Use of alcohol:

a) Present in victim and offender	1
b) Present in victim but not in offender	2
c) Present in offender but not in victim	3
d) Not present in either offender or in victim	4
e) No information	9

11. How did the offender initially contact the victim?
Explain circumstances leading up to the attack.

12. Verbal threats:

Yes	1
No	2
No information	9

13. Use of physical force:

Yes	1
No	2
No information	9

14. Nature of force or intimidation used:

Inferred threat	1
Verbal threat of force	2
Coersion	3
Physical	4
Weapon	5
Other (specify)	6 _____

15. Resistance by victim:

Yes	1
No	2
No information	9

16. Describe the victim's reaction when the threat of assault became apparent:

17. Victim's behavior during attack:

Passed out	1
Kept quiet and motionless	2
Tried to reason with assailant	3
Begged, pleaded, cried	4
Screamed	5
Tried to push away	6
Kicked, hit, scratched	7
Used weapon	8
Other (specify)	10 _____

18. How did the offender respond to this behavior?
(please describe)

19. Type of sexual contact:

Genital intercourse	1
Fellatio	2
Cunnilingus	3
Anal intercourse	4
Combination of first three	5
Other (specify)	6 _____
<hr/>	
No information	9

20. Conversation between offender and victim:

Yes	1
No	2
No information	9

21. If "yes" to # 20, please indicate when the conversation occurred and provide some indication of its substance.

22. Did the offender attempt to normalize or explain the attack to the victim?

Yes	1
No	2
No information	9

23. If "Yes" to #22, discuss his attempts in as much detail as possible, i.e., Did he apologize, ask to meet her again, say he was doing her a favour, etc.

24. Who was the first person told of the assault by the victim?

25. What was the reaction of this person (or persons)?

26. How soon after the assault was Klinik contacted?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Immediately (less than 24 hrs) | 01 |
| 25 - 48 hrs. | 02 |
| 49 hrs. - 7 days | 03 |
| 8 days - less than 1 month | 04 |
| 1 - 6 months | 05 |
| 7 - 11 months | 06 |
| 1 - 2 years | 07 |
| 3 - 5 years | 08 |
| 6 - 10 years | 10 |
| More than 10 years | 11 |
| Continuous (explain) | _____ |

27. If there was a delay, what were the reasons?

28. Why did you come to Klinik?

29. Victim's focus on blame for the attack:

Blames assailant	1
Blames self	2
Both of above	3
Other (explain)	4 _____

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE VICTIM

30. Age of the victim at the time of the offense:

Age	_____
No information	99

31. Marital status at the time of the offense:

Married	1
Single	2
Divorced	3
Separated	4
Common law	5
Other (specify)	6 _____
No information	9

32. Race of the victim:

33. Religious:

Yes	1
No	2

34. Victim's occupation:

35. Occupation of victim's father or guardian if #34 not applicable

36. Educational level of the victim: (circle one)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| No formal schooling | 1 |
| Some elementary school | 2 |
| Completed elementary school | 3 |
| Some high school | 4 |
| Completed high school | 5 |
| Some college | 6 |
| College degree | 7 |
| Other (please specify) | 8 _____ |
| No information | 9 |

III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

37. Victim is/was a victim of violence:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| No information | 9 |

38. If "yes", describe the nature of the violence.

39. Victim is/was a victim of incest:

Yes	1
No	2
No information	9

40. If "yes", describe the nature of the incest:

41. Was the victim sexually assaulted prior to incident, except incest?

Yes	1
No	2
No information	9

42. Nature of assault(s):

Rape	1
Attempted rape	2
Other (specify)	3 _____

43. Age at first attack:

44. Number of prior attacks:

45. Were any reported to police?

Yes	1
No	2

IV. DESCRIPTION OF THE OFFENDER

46. Sex of the offender: (circle one)

male	1
female	2

47. Age of the offender at the time of the offense:

Under 14 years	01
15 - 19 years	02
20 - 24 years	03
25 - 29 years	04
30 - 34 years	05
35 - 39 years	06
40 - 44 years	07
45 - 49 years	08
50 - 54 years	10
55 - 59 years	11
60 years and over	12
no information	99

48. Marital status of the offender: (circle one)

- | | |
|-----------------|---------|
| Married | 1 |
| Single | 2 |
| Divorced | 3 |
| Separated | 4 |
| Common law | 5 |
| Other (specify) | 6 _____ |
| No information | 9 |

49. Race of the offender:

50. Occupation of the offender:

51. Occupation of offender's father or guardian if #50 not applicable:

52. Educational level of the offender: (circle one)

- No formal schooling 1
- Some elementary school 2
- Completed elementary school 3
- Some high school 4
- Completed high school 5
- Some college 6
- College degree 7
- Other (please specify) 8 _____
- No information 9

V. POLICE PROCESS

53. Offence reported to police:

- Yes 1
- No 2

54. If "yes", how were you treated?

55. If "no", why not?

56. Offence reported:

Formally	1
Informally	2
Anonymously	3

57. Offence reported:

Before Klinik	1
After Klinik	2

58. Who reported offence to police:

Victim	1
Other	2

59. Report accepted by police:

Yes	1
No	2

60. If "no", specify:

61. Was the investigation terminated at the request of the victim?

Yes	1
No	2

62. If "yes", give details (i.e., stage of termination, reasons)

63. What is your opinion of police?

VI. MEDICAL PROCESS

64. Did the victim go to a medical facility?

Yes	1
No	2
No information	9

65. When did the victim go to a medical facility?

Before the initial contact with Klinik	1
After the initial contact with Klinik	2
No information	9

66. Were any injuries suffered by the victim?

Yes	1
No	2
No information	9

67. If "yes", discuss the nature of those injuries.

68. What assistance did you need following the attack?

Information	1
Medical attention	2
Emotional support	3
Combination of first and third of above	4
Combination of second and third of above	5
Combination of first three of above	6
Other (specify)	7 _____

ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN SCALE

(Spence & Helmreich, 1978:237)

FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING 15 ITEMS, CIRCLE A,B,C, OR D ACCORDING TO YOUR BELIEFS.

The statements listed below describe attitudes toward the roles of women in society which different people have. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions. You are asked to express your feeling about each statement by indicating whether you (A) agree strongly, (B) agree mildly, (C) disagree mildly, or (D) disagree strongly.

1. Swearing and obscenity are more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man.

A B C D

Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

2. Under modern economic conditions with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as washing dishes and doing the laundry.

A B C D

Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

3. It is insulting to women to have the "obey" clause remain in the marriage service.

A B C D

Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

4. A woman should be as free as a man to propose marriage.

A B C D

Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

5. Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers.

A B C D

Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

6. Women should assume their rightful place in business and all the professionals along with men.

A B C D

Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

7. A woman should not expect to go to exactly the same places or to have quite the same freedom of action as a man.

A B C D

Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

8. It is ridiculous for a woman to run a locomotive and for a man to darn socks.

A B C D

Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

9. The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men.

A B C D

Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

10. Women should be given equal opportunity with men for apprenticeship in the various trades.

A B C D

Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

11. Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally the expense when they go out together

A B C D

Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

12. Sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.

A B C D

Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

13. In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of children.

A B C D

Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

14. Economic and social freedom is worth far more to women than acceptance of the ideal of femininity which has been set up by men.

A B C D

Agree strongly Agree mildly Disagree mildly Disagree strongly

15. There are many jobs in which men should be given preference over women in being hired or promoted.

A

B

C

D

Agree
strongly

Agree
mildly

Disagree
mildly

Disagree
strongly